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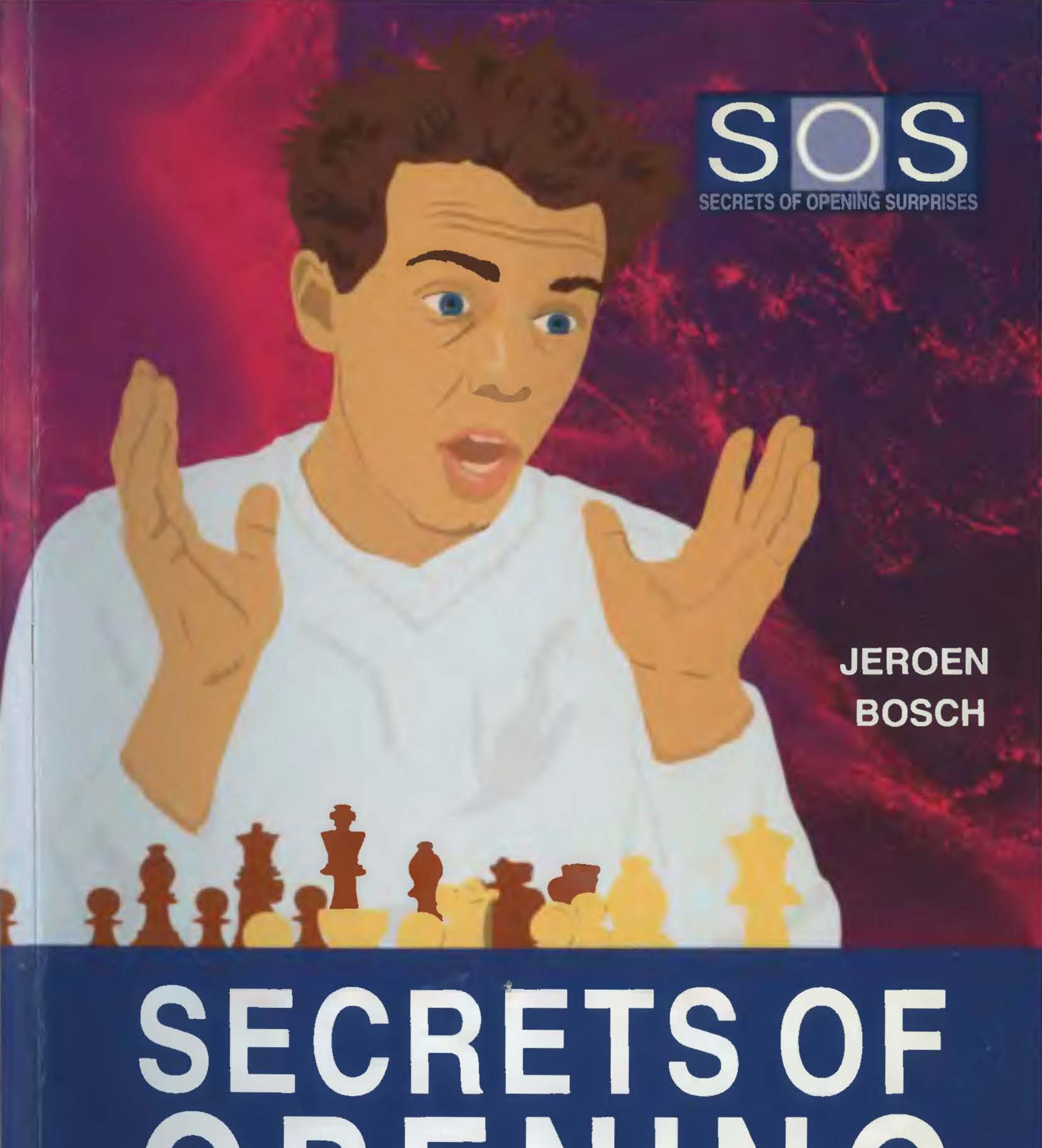
SECRETS OF OPENING SURPRISES



JEROEN
BOSCH

SECRETS OF OPENING SURPRISES

Tired of main lines? Shock your opponent with an SOS!

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VOL. 3

SOS

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see page 144

Jeroen Bosch, editor

SECRETS OF OPENING SURPRISES

No time to study main lines? Shock your opponent with an SOS!

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SOS – Secrets of Opening Surprises 3

SECRETS OF OPENING SURPRISES

3

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JEROEN BOSCH

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Jeroen Bosch

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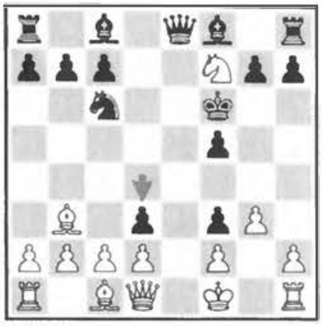

Winning the SOS Competition

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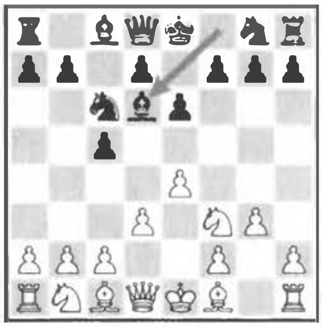
Mikhail Gurevich

Portisch's Ingenious Idea



King's Indian Reversed with 4...♗d6!?

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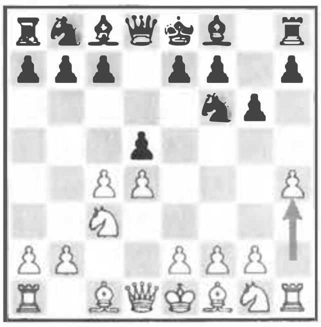
A Flank Attack in the Grünfeld



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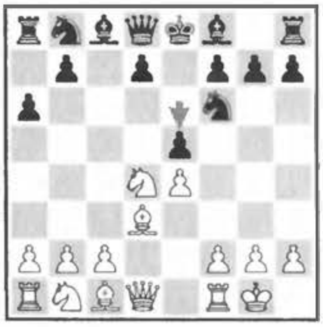
Catch-as-catch-Kan?



Sicilian Kan Variation with 6...e6-e5!?

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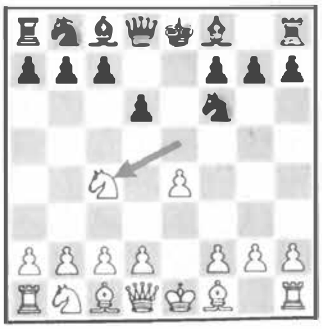
David Navara

The Paulsen Attack in the Petroff



Play 4.♘c4!? en route to e3

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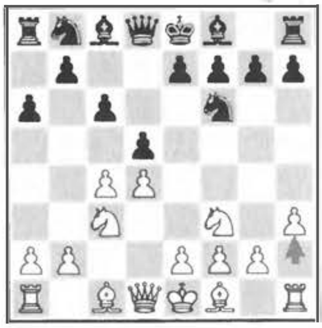
Let's wait together in the Slav



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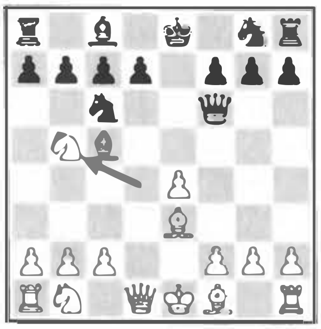
Surprise in the Scotch



Play the Blumenfeld Attack – 6.♘b5

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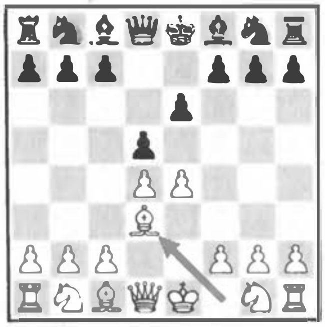
Out of the French Book



1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♗d3

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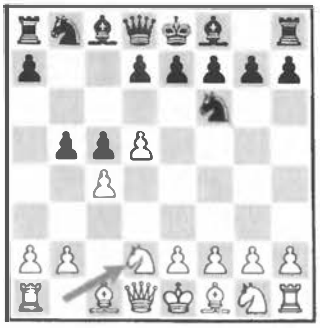
Alexander Beliavsky

Volga Gambit with 4.♘d2



A modest move

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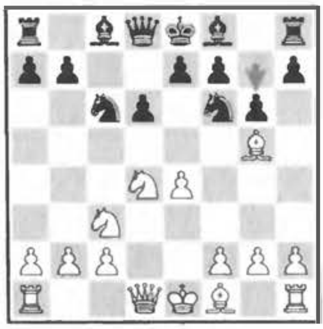
Oleg Chernikov

Provocation in the Rauzer: 6...g6



Combining the Rauzer and the Dragon

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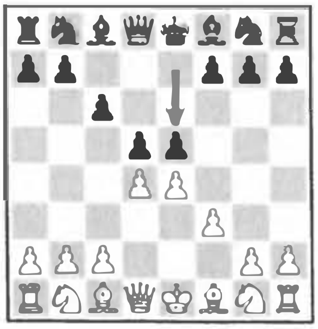
Caro-Kann Fantasy Variation



1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.f3 e5!?

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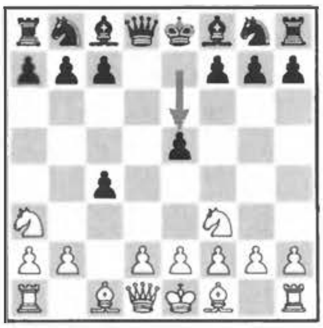
A Central Thrust in the Réti



3...e5!? - Unhinging your opponent

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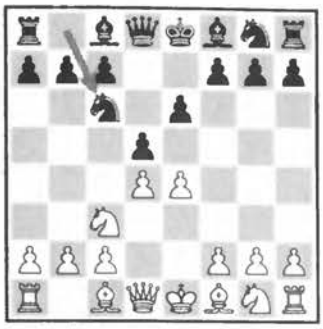
Karel van der Weide

A French Nimzowitsch



A Little Weird: 3...♘c6

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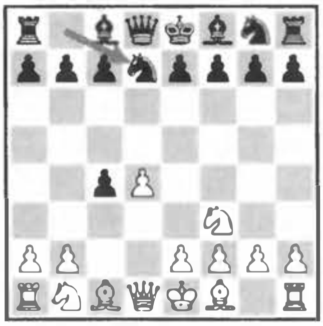
Glenn Flear

Protecting the Gambit Pawn in the QGA



Play 3...♘d7!?

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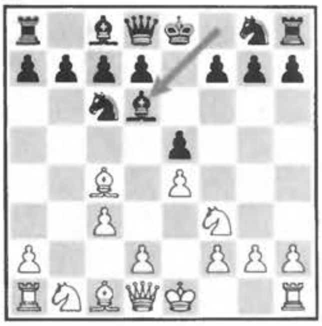
Jeroen Bosch

Evans Gambit: 'Stoneware' Defence



5...♗d6!? – Old Wine in New Bottles

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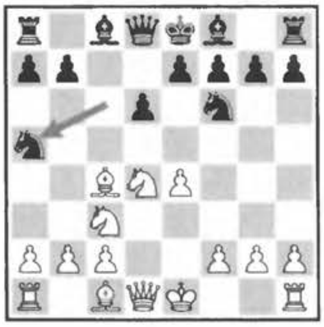
Adrian Mikhalchishin

A Sozin Opening Surprise



Hitting the bishop with 6...♘a5!?

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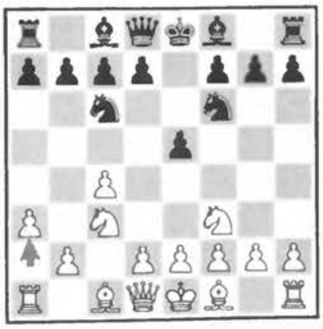
Mikhail Gurevich

English or Sicilian Reversed



The 'modest' 4.a3!?

CHAPTER 1

Jeroen Bosch

The SOS Files

Albin Galore

SOS-2, Chapter 5, p.38

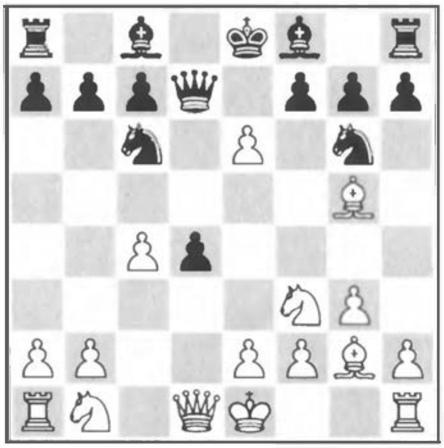
There have been plenty of high-profile clashes in the Albin lately. Especially, Morozevich and Nakamura are putting up a decent Albin show, employing of course Morozevich's interpretation with 5...♘ge7.

☐ **Alexey Dreev**
■ **Hikaru Nakamura**
Gibraltar 2005

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e5

I wonder how often Dreev has been confronted with the Albin in a serious game.

3.dxe5 d4 4.♘f3 ♘c6 5.g3 ♘ge7 6.♗g2 ♘g6 7.♗g5 ♕d7 8.e6



In reply to 8.0-0, 8...h6! was Morozevich's crucial novelty against Gelfand in Monaco 2004 (see SOS-2). After 9.♗f4 ♘xf4 10.gxf4 g5 11.♘bd2 gxf4 a recent game Narciso Dublan-Fluvia, Badalona 2005, went: 12.♔h1 (12.♘e4 was Gelfand's choice) 12...♗g7 13.♘b3 ♘xe5 14.♘fxd4 0-0 15.♕c2 ♕g4 16.♗e4 ♕h5 17.♖g1 c5 18.♗f3 ♘xf3 19.♘xf3 ♔h8 20.♕d2 ♕f5 21.♘c1 ♗e6 22.♘d3 ♖ad8 23.♖ac1 ♗e5 24.b3 ♕e4 with a sharp game and approximately equal chances.

8...fxe6

In Wiley-Rudolf, Budapest 2005, Black had compensation for the pawn after 8...♗b4+!?N 9.♘bd2 ♕xe6 10.a3 ♗xd2+ 11.♕xd2 h6 12.♗f4 ♘xf4 13.♕xf4 ♕xc4 14.♖c1 ♕b5 15.♘xd4 ♘xd4 16.♕xd4 0-0 17.♖xc7 ♖e8.

9.a3

The main continuation is 9.0-0e5 and now:

● 10.♘bd2 h6 11.♗h4 ♗d6?! (11...♗e7 as in Krasenkow-Morozevich, Podolsk 1993, is preferable) 12.c5! (the same trick as in Van Wely-Morozevich, Monaco 2004 – that game went 10.♕a4 ♗d6 11.♘bd2 h6 12.c5) 12...♗xc5 (12...♗e7) 13.♕c2 ♘xh4 14.♘xh4 ♗b6 15.♘g6 ♖g8 16.♕c4 ♕e6 17.♗xc6+ (17.♗d5 ♕xg6 18.♗xg8 (18.♗xc6+ ♔f8) 18...♗h3 with a certain amount of counterplay to compensate for the exchange) 17...bxc6 18.♘xe5 ♕xc4 19.♘dxc4 and White was better in Susan Polgar-Nakamura, Virginia Beach rapid 2005.

● 10.a3 a5 11.♕a4 h6 12.♗c1 ♘d8. Black opts for the ending and is playing it safe (one would think other openings would be better suited for such an approach!). 13.♕xd7+ ♗xd7 14.b3 ♘e6. Black has no problems in this ending. The players agreed a draw here. Izoria-Nikolaidis, Athens 2005.

9...a5

Not allowing 10.b4, which would gain space on the queenside.

10.♕a4 h6

This is always useful, Black will be able to develop his bishop to e7. He has to watch out, though, for tricks involving the unprotected knight on g6.

11.♗c1

Un-developing the bishop, but leaving the d2-square available for his knight. If White hadn't played 9.a3 he could have contemplated playing ♗d2 and ♘a3.

11...e5 12.♘bd2 ♗e7 13.0-0 0-0

A fairly balanced position. Black's space advantage in the centre (due to the Albin pawn on d4) is neutralized by White's control over the e4-square and the h1-a8 diagonal. White now starts his offensive on the queenside.

14.b4 ♘d8

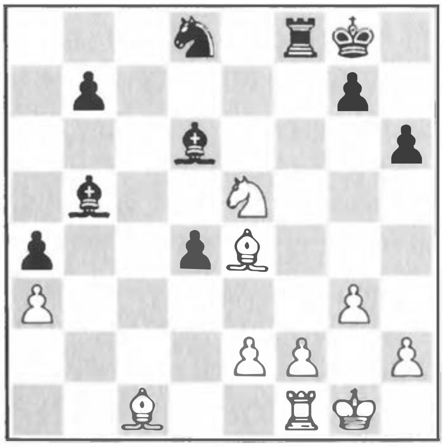
A sensible reaction.

15.♕xd7 ♗xd7 16.b5 a4! 17.♘e1 c6 18.♖b1 cxb5 19.cxb5 ♖a5 20.♗e4 ♘h8 21.♘d3 ♘hf7 22.♘c4

Exchanging his weak b-pawn for the e-pawn.

22...♖xb5 23.♖xb5 ♗xb5 24.♘cxe5 ♘xe5 25.♘xe5 ♗d6

Not 25...♗xe2? when 26.♖e1 ♗b5 27.♘g6 is unpleasant.



26.♗d5+

Dreev forces the draw, as he is definitely not better after 26.♘d3 ♖e8 27.♗f3 ♗c6.

26...♔h7 27.♗e4+ ♔g8 28.♗d5+ ♔h7 29.♗e4+ ½-½

☐ **Ivan Sokolov**
■ **Alexander Morozevich**
Wijk aan Zee 2005

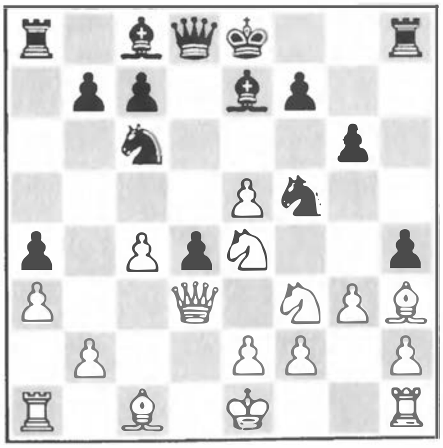
1.d4 d5 2.c4 e5 3.dxe5 d4 4.♘f3 ♘c6 5.♘bd2 ♘ge7!? 6.♘b3 ♘f5!

Stronger than 6...♘g6 7.♘bxd4 which offers Black no compensation.

7.a3

It would be interesting to know what Morozevich had in mind after the 'boring' 7.e4!?. The ending after 7...dxe3 8.♕xd8+ ♘xd8 9.fxe3 first occurred in the stem game Lehmann-Smederevac, Hoogovens Beverwijk 1965. After 9...♘c6 10.♗d3 ♘fe7 11.♘bd4 ♗g4 12.h3 ♗xf3 13.♘xf3 ♘g6 14.♗xg6 hxg6 15.♔e2 Smederevac held a draw after many adventures. The Dutch Hoogovens company is now part of the Corus concern – did Morozevich know about this historically significant game? In a recent game 9...♗b4+ was played, after 10.♔f2 ♘e6 11.♗d3 ♘c5 12.♘xc5 ♗xc5 13.a3 a5 14.b3 0-0 15.♗d2 ♖d8 16.♔e2 White skilfully exploited his endgame plus in Fluvia Poyatos-Fluvia, Badalona 2005.

7...♗e7 8.g3 a5 9.♕d3 a4 10.♘bd2 h5 11.♗h3 g6 12.♘e4 h4



With a good feeling for symmetry Black pushes both his rook-pawns to the fourth rank. His last move is in fact a mistake as 13.g4! ♘g7 14.♗d2 ♘e6 15.0-0-0 is virtually winning as Morozevich himself indicated after the game.

13.♗f4? hxg3 14.hxg3 ♘g7

Here 14...♘xg3 is answered by 15.♗d7+! ♔xd7 16.♖xh8 ♕xh8 17.♘xg3 ♔e8 18.0-0-0 when White is at least somewhat better.

15.♗g2

Instead of the text, 15.♘f6+ ♗xf6 16.exf6 ♘e6 17.♕e4 was better.

15...♖xh1+ 16.♗xh1 ♗f5 17.♘fg5 ♘a5!

Not 17...♗xg5? 18.♗xg5 ♗xe4 19.♕d2! which gives White a superior game. Morozevich just continues to play his trademark type of chess. In soccer terms we would call Morozevich an exponent of Dutch total football. He uses the wings to make the board as 'broad' as possible.

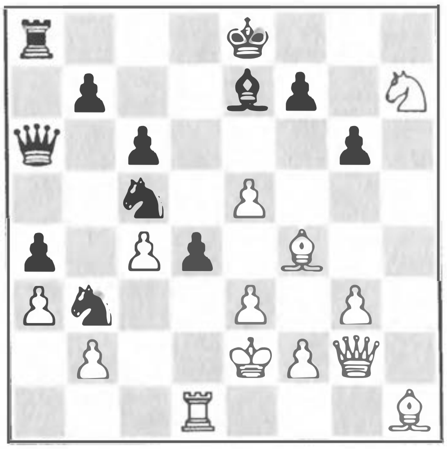
18.♕f3 ♘e6 19.♘h7

19.♘xe6 was less ambitious and wiser.

19...♗xe4 20.♕xe4 c6 21.e3?

Now Morozevich develops a raging initiative.

21...♘b3 22.♖d1 ♕a5+ 23.♔e2 ♘ec5 24.♕g2 ♕a6



White's game is beyond saving.

25.♔f1 ♕xc4+ 26.♔g1 ♕c2 27.♕f3 d3 28.♗g5 ♘e4! 29.♗xe7 ♘xf2! 30.♕xf2 ♕xd1+ 31.♔g2 ♕c2 32.♗d6 0-0-0 Or 32...d2. **33.♔g1 ♕xf2+ 34.♔xf2 ♖h8 0-1**

☐ **Veselin Topalov**
■ **Alexander Morozevich**
Monte Carlo rapid 2005

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e5 3.dxe5 d4 4.♘f3 ♘c6 5.a3 ♘ge7

Morozevich always plays 5...♘ge7 – regardless whether White plays 5.g3, 5.♘bd2 or 5.a3 as in the present game. Established Albin theory cites 5...♗e6 with approximately equal chances.

6.b4

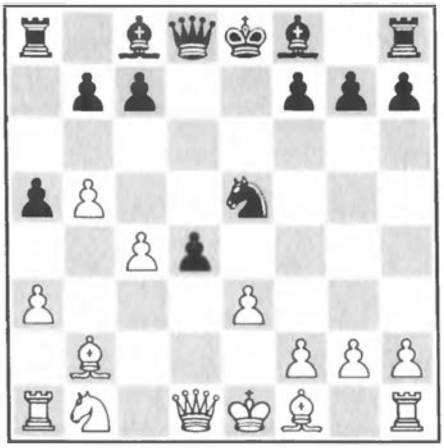
More interesting than 6.g3 ♘g6 7.♗g2 ♘gxe5. Topalov isn't going to give up the gambit pawn for nothing.

6...♘g6 7.♗b2 a5!

A useful interpolation to weaken White's queenside before taking on e5.

8.b5 ♘cxe5 9.♘xe5 ♘xe5 10.e3

Here 10.♗xd4 ♞xc4 11.e3 transposes. Not 10.♕xd4?! ♕xd4 11.♗xd4 ♘xc4 with a nice ending for Black.



10...♗e6 11.♗xd4 ♘xc4 12.♕c2 ♘d6 13.♗d3

Considering Black's next move 13.♘d2 comes into consideration. Nothing special is 13.♘c3 ♘f5 14.♗e5 ♗d6.

13...♕g5!?

Morozevich typically seeks complications. Both g2 and b5 are under attack.

14.f4 ♕h4+ 15.g3 ♕h5

According to Nunn White is better after

15...♕h3 16.♔f2. Obviously 16.♕xc7 would be a big blunder because of both 16...♕g2 and 16...♖c8.

16.♘c3 ♘f5?!

John Nunn gives 16...a4 17.0-0 ♗b3 concluding that White is slighty better.

17.0-0 0-0-0

17...♘xd4 18.exd4 doesn't work for Black because of the threat 19.f5 – his king won't find a safe haven in time. For example 18...♗d6 19.f5 ♗d7 20.♖ae1+.

18.♗a7!

Excellent play by Topalov. For the moment the bishop cannot be trapped, while it assists in a deadly attack on Black's monarch.

18...♕g4 19.♘e4

Computer programs quickly indicate that White wins here with 19.♘a4! when a powerful check on b6 can only be prevented with the futile attempt to run (but not hide) with 19...♔d7.

19...♖d7 20.♖fd1

And again Topalov misses a good opportunity (remember that this is a rapid game). White has an edge after both 20.♘f2! ♕g6 21.♖fc1, and 20.♗e2 ♕g6 21.♖fd1 (Nunn).

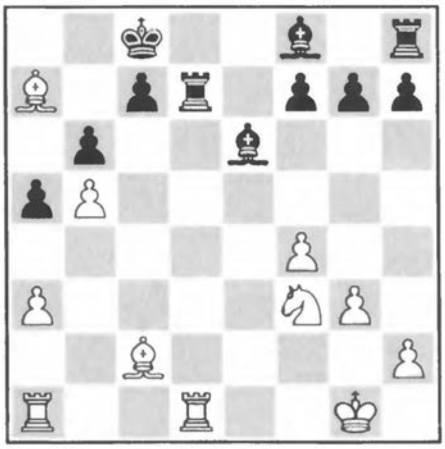
20...♕f3

The queen now causes enough confusion.

21.♘g5

Winning a piece but suddenly the odd position of the bishop on a7 will tell.

21...♘xe3! 22.♘xf3 ♘xc2 23.♗xc2 b6



The trap snaps shut!

24.♘e5 ♖xd1+ 25.♖xd1 ♗xa3 26.f5 ♗a2

Aesthetically pleasing and also the only move of course. Topalov's next move is a clear mistake.

27.♖a1? ♗c5+ 28.♔f1 ♖e8! 29.♖e1

29.♖xa2 ♖xe5 and the bishop on a7 is lost. This was still the best chance as the opposite coloured bishops (after a subsequent ♗xb6) offer White some hope for the draw.

29...f6!

Liquidating into a won ending.

30.♘d3 ♖xe1+ 31.♔xe1 ♗d6 32.♘c1 ♗d5

Black's bishops dominate, the rest is easy.

33.♗b3 ♗e4 34.♗xb6 cxb6 35.♗e6+ ♔c7 36.♔e2 ♗e5 37.♘d3 ♔d6 38.♔e3 ♗d5 0-1

Falling Short in the fast Lane

SOS-2, Chapter 8, p.63

Nigel Short played 3...h6 in the French Tarrasch at the 2004 Olympiad. He got a decent position, but unfortunately missed a spectacular tactic.

☐ **Gary Lane**
■ **Nigel Short**
Calvia ol 2004

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 h6 4.c3

The main line is 4.♘gf3 ♘f6 5.e5 ♘fd7 6.♗d3 c5 7.c3 ♘c6. In Purtov-Shtyrenkov, Alushta 2004, Black went 7...b6 instead, after 8.♕e2 a5 9.0-0 (9.a4 ♗a6 10.♗b5!?) 9...♗a6 10.c4 (10.♗xa6 ♘xa6 11.c4) 10...♘c6 11.cxd5 ♗xd3 12.♕xd3 ♘b4 13.♕e4 ♘xd5 he had realized his positional idea.

4...c5 5.♘gf3

The recent Navara-Cifka, Karlovy Vary 2005, went: 5.exd5 ♕xd5 (5...exd5) 6.♘gf3

♘c6?! (stronger is 6...cxd4! 7.♘xd4 – 7.♗c4 ♕h5 – 7...♘f6 as in a game Kudrin-Atalik, see SOS-2) 7.♗c4 (now White gains some time, play transposes into a normal Tarrasch line where ...h6 is not so useful) 7...♕d8 8.♘b3 cxd4 9.♘bxd4 ♘xd4 10.♘xd4 a6 11.♗f4± ♗d6? and this is a blunder because of 12.♘c6! bxc6 13.♕xd6 ♕xd6 14.♗xd6 with a big edge due to the pair of bishops.

5...♘f6 6.exd5 ♘xd5 7.♘b3 ♘d7 8.♗d3 ♕c7

Gaining a useful tempo because of the threatened fork.

9.♗c2 b6 10.0-0 ♗b7 11.♖e1 ♗e7

Black is fine here.

12.♘e5 ♘xe5 13.dxe5 0-0-0 14.♕g4 h5 15.♕c4

15.♕xg7? ♗h4! traps her majesty.

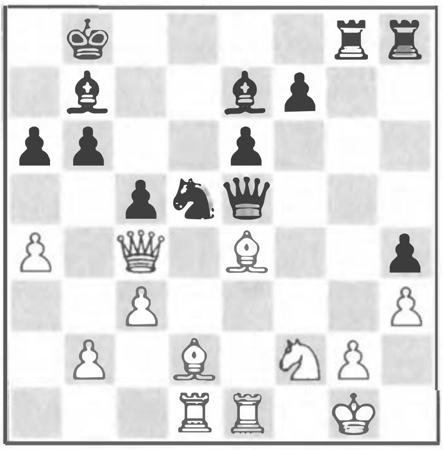
15...g5

Perhaps the crude 15...♕c6!? 16.♗e4 f5 17.exf6 gxf6 when 18.♗f3 is perhaps a tad better for White.

16.a4 a6 17.♗d2 ♔b8 18.♖ad1 g4 19.♘c1 ♖dg8 20.♗e4 h4 21.♘d3 g3?!

This should have been prepared, for instance by 21...♔a7.

22.h3 gxf2+ 23.♘xf2 ♕xe5?



The point of Short's previous moves. There is a flaw however, for, after

24.♗xd5! ♗xd5

(instead 24...♕xd5 25.♗f4+ wins even more easily) White has

25.♕xd5! ♕xd5

25...♕xe1+ 26.♖xe1 exd5 27.♖xe7 is rather similar to the game.

26.♗f4+ ♗d6 27.♗xd6+ ♔c8 28.♖xd5 exd5 29.♖e7 ♖h6 30.♗f4 ♖hg6 31.g4! hxg3 32.♘g4

and Black's rook and pawns are no match for the well-coordinated White pieces.

32...♖8g7 33.♔g2 d4 34.cxd4 cxd4 35.♗e5 d3 36.♖c7+

36.♗xg7 ♖xg4 was the trap, even though 37.♗c3 wins comfortably. But not 37.hxg4? d2 38.♖e8+ ♔c7 (38...♔d7? 39.♖e4+–) 39.♖e7+ ♔c8 with a draw, as 39...♔c6? 40.♗e5 loses.

36...♔d8 37.♖c3 ♖xg4

Otherwise White's win is elementary.

38.♖xd3+ ♔e7 39.hxg4 ♖xg4 40.♖d4 ♖g5 41.♗f4 ♖g6 42.♗xg3 a5 43.b3 ♖c6 44.♖c4 ♔d7 45.♔f3

Some accuracy is still required. Not 45.♖xc6? ♔xc6 and with 46...b5 coming White would have to resign himself to the draw.

45...♖f6+ 46.♗f4 ♖c6 47.♔e4 ♖e6+ 48.♔d5 ♖f6 49.♗e5 ♖f3 50.♖c7+ ♔d8 51.♖c3 ♖xc3 52.♗xc3 ♔d7 53.♗e5 f5 54.♗f4 1-0

Radulski's Ruy Lopez

SOS-2, Chapter 16, p.121

Glenn Flear's exposé on the Fianchetto Spanish featured a spectacular game by Julian Radulski. In a subsequent game Radulski has refrained from the most critical line (7...♕b4+) – let's investigate why!

☐ **Oliver Organdziev**
■ **Julian Radulski**
Vrnjacka Banja 2004

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 g6 4.d4

A forcing line. More in Ruy Lopez style are:

– **4.c3** a6 5.♗xc6 dxc6 6.d4 exd4 7.cxd4 ♗g4 8.0-0 (8.♗e3 see SOS-2, the miniature game Jakubowski-Spicak, Polanczyk 2000, which ended in a quick win for Black) 8...♗g7 9.♘c3 ♘e7 10.♗f4 0-0 11.h3 (forcing his opponent to finally take on d4) 11...♗xf3 12.♕xf3 ♗xd4 13.♖ad1 c5 14.b4 b6 15.bxc5 bxc5 16.♘a4 ♕e8 17.♕a3 ♕c6 18.♖xd4 cxd4 19.♕xe7 ♖fe8 20.♕a3 ♖xe4 21.♖c1 ♕e8 22.♗xc7 d3 and Black was winning (but only drew) in Volokitin-Stevic, Celje 2004.

– **4.0-0** ♗g7 5.c3 a6 6.♗a4 d6 7.d4 ♗d7 8.d5 (8.♖e1 ♘ge7 9.♗e3 0-0 10.♕d2 ♘xd4! 11.cxd4 ♗xa4 is a useful trick to know: 12.♕b4 exd4 13.♗xd4 c5 14.♕xa4 cxd4, with a good game for Black, Fluvia Poyatos-Narciso Dublan, Mataro 2005) 8...♘ce7 9.c4 h6 10.♘c3 f5 11.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 12.♘e1 and now:

● 12...fxe4 seems to give White a slight edge: 13.♘xe4 ♘f6 14.♘xf6+ ♗xf6 15.♘f3 ♗g7 16.♘d2 0-0 17.♘e4 ♘f5 18.♗e3 ♘d4 19.♖c1 ♔h7 20.f3 ♖f7 21.♗xd4 exd4 22.♕b3 b6 23.♖ce1±, Stellwagen-Gagunashvili, Vlissingen 2004.

● 12...♘f6 13.f3 0-0 14.♘d3 c6?! (this was a move on the wrong side of the board, correct was 14...g5, see SOS 2, the game Khalifman-Short, Moscow 2001) 15.♗e3 cxd5 16.cxd5 ♖f7 17.♕b3 ♖af8 18.♘f2 and White was better in Gelfand-Malaniuk, Tallinn Keres memorial rapid 2005.

4...exd4 5.♗g5 ♗e7 6.♗xe7 ♕xe7

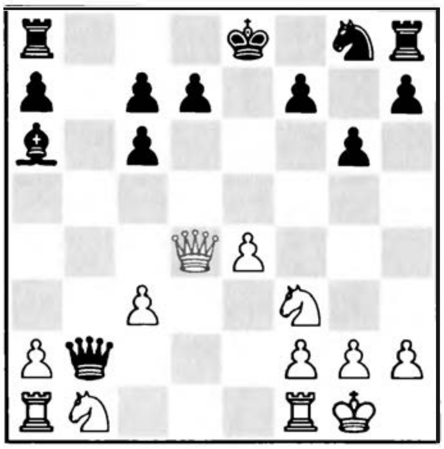
A slightly boring line is 6...♘gxe7 7.♘xd4 d5. White had a marginal advantage after 8.♘c3 dxe4 9.♗xc6+ ♘xc6 10.♘xc6 ♕xd1+ 11.♖xd1 bxc6 12.♘xe4 ♗f5 in Klovans-Shabanov, Satka 2004. Curiously, it was Black who missed a win in a pawn ending with his final (35th) move.

7.♗xc6

Not mentioned in SOS-2 was the less forcing 7.0-0!?. While this is hardly critical our SOS-expert on this line – Glenn Flear – has let us know that it is important to continue with 7...♘f6 8.e5 ♘h5! (8...♘xe5? 9.♖e1) 9.♖e1 0-0 10.♗xc6 dxc6 11.♕xd4 ♗f5 with unclear play as in Galdunts-Giorgadze, Podolsk 1989. SOS-fans of the Fianchetto line better take note of 8...♘h5!

7...dxc6

Rather than the text, 7...♕b4+ was Glenn Flear's main line (from the game Zozulia-Radulski, Marseille 2004). However, he later pointed out that there might be a few problems connected to the audacious queen check. After 8.c3 ♕xb2 9.♕xd4 bxc6 10.0-0 ♗a6



Flear now believes that 11.♘bd2! is very strong for White.

Another critical try is 11.♖e1!? f6 (11...♕xa1 12.♕xh8 0-0-0 13.♕d4 allows White a strong initiative according to Flear) 12.♘bd2 ♕b6 13.♕a4 ♗b5 14.♕a3 ♕a6 15.♕b2 ♘e7 (15...d6?! 16.e5!) 16.c4 ♗xc4 17.♕xf6 ♖f8 18.♕g7 as in the game Boudre-Flear, Bagnols-sur-Cèze 2004. And now, rather than the weakening 18...h5, Black should play 18...♗g8! when the struggle remains unclear (Flear).

8.♕xd4 ♘f6 9.♘c3 ♗g4 10.♘d2 ♗e6

Or 10...c5 11.♕e3 0-0-0 12.h3 ♗d7 13.0-0-0 ♗c6 14.f3 b6 15.♘c4 and now 15...♕e6 keeps about equal chances. In Vokarev-

Malaniuk, Alushta 2004, there followed instead 15...h5?! 16.♕g5!±.

11.f3 c5 12.♕e3 0-0-0 13.0-0-0 ♖d4 14.♖he1 ♖hd8

with an equal game.

More Moro

SOS-2, Chapter 2, p.17

Who else than Alexander Morozevich could be expected to play an SOS versus Bareev's solid Caro-Kann. By the way, the fact that this was a blindfold game is quite relevant to the eventual outcome.

☐ **Alexander Morozevich**
■ **Evgeny Bareev**
Monte Carlo blindfold 2005

1.e4 c6 2.♘f3 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.♘e5!

Attaboy!

4...e6 5.d4 ♘c6

Black has hardly chosen the most critical approach. In SOS-2 Ian Rogers now recommended 6.c3 ♗d6 7.f4!?. Moro's

6.♗b5

is perhaps less precise. The pin is not as effective because Black can still play ...♘ge7. Compare this to Sebag-Xu Yuanyuan, Cannes 2004, (see SOS-2) where after 4.♘e5 Black went 4...♘c6 5.d4 ♘f6 6.♗b5! ♕b6?! 7.c4! dxc4 8.♘c3 e6 9.♕a4! with a nice initiative.

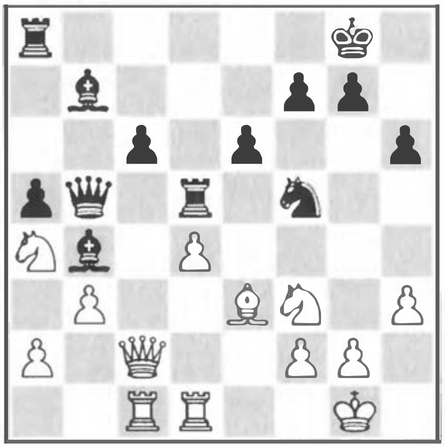
6...♕b6 7.c4 ♗b4+ 8.♘c3 ♘e7 9.0-0 0-0 10.♗xc6 bxc6 11.♘a4 ♕d8 12.♕c2 ♗d6 13.♖e1 ♕c7 14.♗d2 ♘f5 15.♘f3 dxc4 16.♕xc4 a5 17.♘c5

White has a slight edge.

17...♕b6 18.♖ac1 h6 19.b3 ♖d8 20.♕c2 ♗f8

20...♘xd4 21.♘xd4 ♗xc5 22.♕xc5 ♕xc5 23.♖xc5 ♖xd4.

21.♗e3 ♖d5 22.h3 ♕b5 23.♘a4 ♗b4 24.♖ed1 ♗b7



Morozevich now starts a creative combination which unfortunately contains a big hole.

25.a3? ♗xa3 26.♘c3

Winning the exchange?

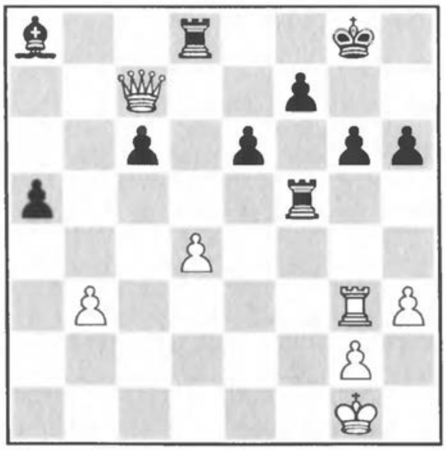
26...♘xe3! 27.fxe3 ♗xc1 28.♘xb5

Winning the queen?

28...♗xe3+ 29.♔h1 ♖xb5 30.♕e4 ♗g5 31.♘xg5 ♖xg5

Hm, perhaps a rook, bishop and two pawns is a bit too much for only a queen?

32.♖d2 ♖f5 33.♕e3 ♖d5 34.♕f4 ♖d7 35.♕e5 ♖d5 36.♕c7 ♖b5 37.♖d3 ♖c8 38.♕d7 ♖f8 39.♔h2 ♗a8 40.♖c3 ♖b7 41.♕d6 ♖bb8 42.♖g3 ♖b5 43.♕e7 ♖f5 44.♕h4 ♔h8 45.♕e7 ♔g8 46.♔g1 g6 47.♕a7 ♖d8 48.♕c7



After a lenghty manoeuvring game White has managed to get the kind of one-move threat on the board that is all-important for these blindfold games.

48...h5?? 49.♕xd8+ 1-0

Probably this was more of a surprise for Bareev than his opponent's opening's choice...

SOS Miniature

SOS-1, Chapter 9, p.81

The following game (published in *British Chess Magazine*) is perhaps not exactly the most relevant update of our surprise weapon against the 2.c3 Sicilian. However, it sure is good fun!

☐ **Blair Connell**
■ **Nick Pelling**
England tt 2004

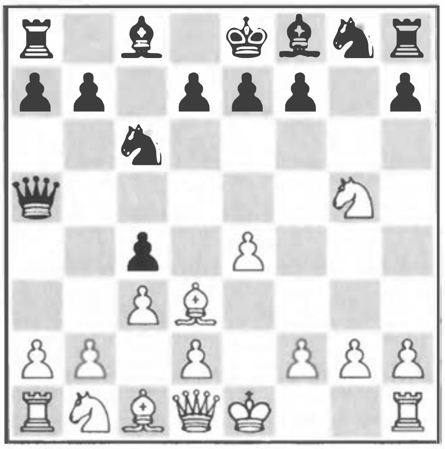
1.e4 c5 2.c3 ♕a5 3.♘f3 ♘c6 4.♗d3

This 'counter-SOS' is not as stupid as it looks – think of the anti-Sicilian line 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.c3 ♘f6 4.♗d3. White plans to castle, play ♗c2 and d4. Black had a nice brain wave now – based on a cheapo.

4...g5!?

Playing on the dark-squares, sometimes ...g4 is annoying too. But can't he just take the bugger?

5.♘xg5 c4



Ouch! A double attack.

6.♕h5

This looks good: 6...♘h6 7.♗xc4 is curtains. However, your computer will like 6.♘xf7! ♔xf7 7.♗xc4+ and it is right. With three pawns for the piece and a potentially powerful centre, not to mention Black's unsafe king, White has superior chances.

6...♘f6!

A cruel reply, White can take f7 with check but still loses a piece.

7.♕xf7+ ♔d8 8.♘xh7

The desperado of a desperate man. White is much worse anyway, but his lack of coordination could not be better illustrated than by

8...♘e5 0-1

Armenian Tiger Wins SOS Prize

SOS-2, Chapter 12, p.91

Tigran Petrosian is a common Armenian name, and rightly so. With his refined and acutely developed sense of danger the 9th World Champion must have looked down from chess heaven in a state of shock at this effort of his compatriot and namesake. Following a piece sacrifice on move 4 in Glek's Four Knights, Petrosian boldly takes his king forward to f6 to avoid a quick draw by repetition. Clearly, a deserving winner of the SOS Competition.

☐ **Deep Sengupta**
■ **Tigran L. Petrosian**
Kochin jr 2004

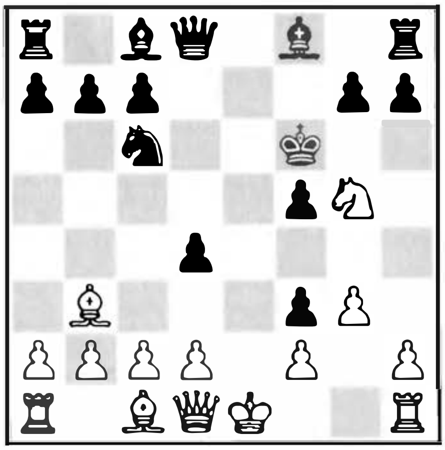
1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♘c3 ♘c6 4.g3 ♘xe4!? 5.♘xe4 d5 6.♘c3 d4 7.♘e4 f5 8.♘eg5 e4 9.♗c4 exf3 10.♗f7+

10.♘xf3 was Smirin-Macieja, Czech tt 2003/04, see SOS-2.

10...♔d7 11.♗e6+ ♔e8 12.♗f7+

Aiming for a quick draw, but Tigran is out for blood!

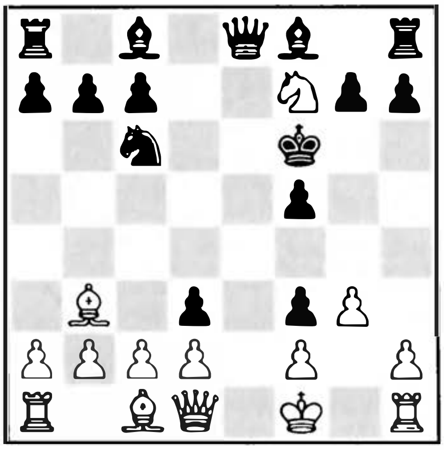
12...♔e7! 13.♗b3 ♔f6!



14.♘f7?

Missing Black's 15th, much safer was 14.d3 ♕e7+ 15.♔f1 ♕e2+ 16.♕xe2 fxe2+ 17.♔xe2 when Black is fine in the ending, but White has no particular problems either.

14...♕e8+ 15.♔f1 d3!



Paralyzing White's queenside, freeing the d4-square for the knight, introducing a big queen check on e2, and ignoring his rook on h8 completely.

16.♕xf3

16.♘xh8 ♘d4! 17.c3 ♕h5 (17...♕e2+ is perhaps what a human would play in practice: 18.♕xe2 fxe2+ 19.♔g2 ♘xb3 20.axb3 ♗e6 21.c4 ♗d7 and Black should win) 18.h3 (18.cxd4 ♕h3+ 19.♔e1 ♕g2 20.♖f1 f4 and 21...♗h3 will kill White) 18...♘e2 threatening 19...f4 19.♗f7 (yes it's a computer defence) 19...g6 20.♕a4 f4 with a very strong attack (Short). Black wins after 16.cxd3 f4 17.h3 ♘d4 (17...♕e2+ 18.♕xe2 fxe2+ 19.♔g2 f3+) 18.♘xh8 ♕h5.

16...♘d4 17.♕xd3 ♘xb3 18.♘xh8 ♕c6!

An excellent intermediate move.

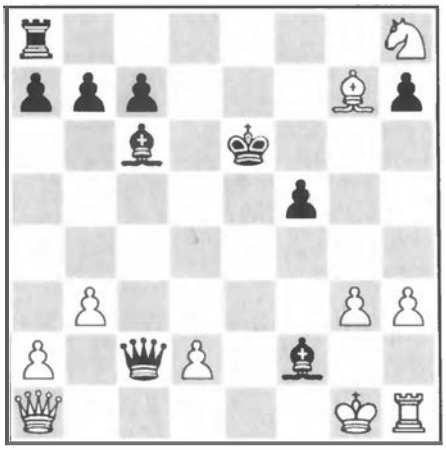
19.♔g1 ♘xa1 20.b3 ♕xc2?!

Much better was 20...♔e6 or even 20...♔e7. Now White restores material equilibrium.

21.♕d4+ ♔e6 22.♕xa1 ♗d7 23.♗b2 ♗c6 24.h3 ♗c5

There is a huge difference in activity, especially Black's menacing bishop pair is a formidable force.

25.♗xg7 ♗xf2+!



26.♔h2

26.♔xf2 ♕xd2+ 27.♔f1 ♕g2+ wins.

26...♕e4?

26...♗xg3+! 27.♔xg3 ♕d3+ 28.♔h4 ♕d8+ (this wins as any computer will point out. It's not so easy for a human to spot such a long backward move though) 29.♔g3 ♕g5+ 30.♔f2 ♕xd2+ 31.♔g3 ♕e3+ 32.♔h4 ♕f4+ 33.♔h5 ♗f3 mates.

27.♕f6+ ♔d5 28.♖c1?

Sengupta misses a saving opportunity (made possible by Black's 26th move), 28.♖f1 would have made it difficult for Black.

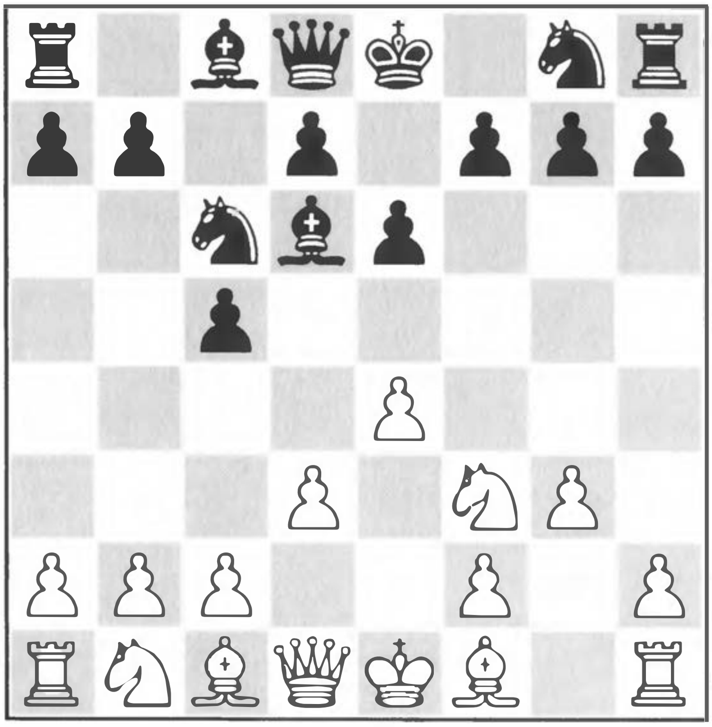
28...♖e8 29.♖c4? ♗g1+!

And mates. **0-1**

CHAPTER 2

Mikhail Gurevich

Portisch's Ingenious Idea



King's Indian Reversed with 4...♗d6!?

The following short draw is important for the introduction of an ingenious plan to counter White's King's Indian set-up against both the Sicilian and the French. A revelation in the development of Chess Theory!

☐ **Vladislav Tkachiev**
■ **Lajos Portisch**
Tilburg 1994

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d3 ♘c6 4.g3 ♗d6!?

This new and original move was introduced in this game by the great Creator of Opening theory, Lajos Portisch. Obviously, many players, including the author of these lines, have developed the ideas behind this 'artificial' move. We have to admit the theoretical significance of this variation, as it applies to both the Sicilian and the French Defence. The common replies to 4.g3 are: 4...d5, 4...♘ge7, 4...b6, or 4...g6. In developing the bishop in front of the d-pawn Black aims for the quickest possible development of his pieces – without revealing the pawn structure he intends to build! Black wants to play ♘ge7, 0-0, ♗c7, and then d7-d6, or d7-d5, depending upon White's choice of strategy. Although developing a piece in front of the pawn goes against the traditional rules of chess strategy, practice has seen no refutation of Portisch's idea – at least so far...

After ten years of practice in this line the number of its supporters is rising, as the flexible pawn structure gives Black many opportunities. Grandmasters Kengis, Ehlvest, Kveinis and others play this provocative idea. Some variations after 4...♗d6 lead to typical Hedgehog-schemes (when White pushes d3-d4, and takes back with a piece after cxd4). In some games transpositions – or more accurately 'similarities' – to the Réti Opening, or to the Snake Variation of the Benoni (1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 c5 4.d5 exd5 5.cxd5 ♗d6) occur. With reference to the Snake Variation please note that in our line Black will not give up space.

If a classical player like Lajos Portisch breaks the strategical rules by putting a piece in front of a pawn it must be good. Let's follow a possible line of reasoning when examining the alternatives. The bishop must be developed anyway, so the choice is between the e7-, g7- or d6-square. Positioned on e7 the bishop is not active enough, g7 looks like the perfect location for the bishop, although by playing g6 Black weakens his pawn structure, and in particular the dark squares on the kingside. So, Portisch arrived at the conclusion that the black bishop may well start to operate on the diagonals a7-g1 or a5-e1. Here I'm trying to analyse the process of creation, to explain the logic behind the fantasy of Creator. This is not an easy task. However, I can assure the Reader – as I have known Portisch and his healthy approach to life, for many years – that the Maestro was not drunk during the game. So, don't you ever believe that the bishop's coming to d6 was just a slip of the finger.

5.♗e3

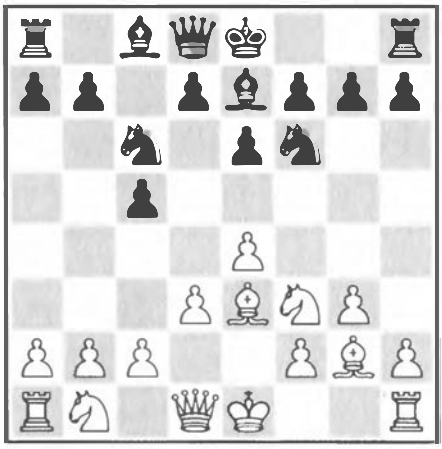
Tkachiev recognizes Black's intention to transfer the bishop to c7, and plays prophylactically attacking the c5-pawn. His example did not find many followers, as the bishop is not well placed on e3, and might be targeted by ♘g8-f6-g4, or by d7-d5-d4 (as happens in the game).

See the other games for White's main move 5.♗g2.

5...♘f6 6.♗g2

Here 6.♘c3 ♘g4 7.♗c1 0-0 8.♗g2 ♗c7 9.0-0 ♕e7?! 10.♘d2 ♘f6 11.♘c4 a6 12.a4 ♖b8 13.♘e3 led to an unclear position in Lang-Bezold, Deizisau 2002. The strongest player eventually emerged successful after the complications.

6...♗e7!?



Portisch has first 'provoked' his opponent to put his bishop on e3, and now he simply retreats the bishop to e7 with the idea of d7-d5-d4.

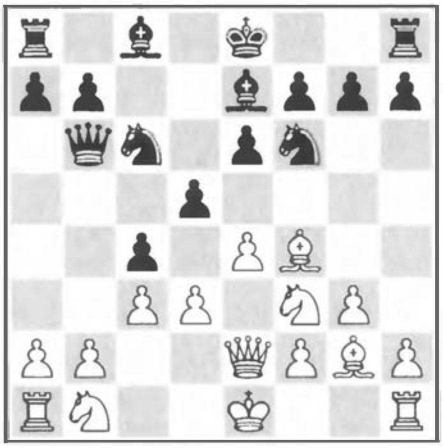
I think Portisch would have loved to place the bishop on c7. But to make this possible Black would have to play b6, protecting the c5-pawn, and this would disconnect the bishop from the a5/b6-squares. At least such was Portisch's understanding at the moment of the game as I see it. Mind you, this was my understanding too when confronted with this problem. The Baltic Grandmasters, however, found a new solution to this problem. But let's not rush things at this point. More explanation will be given in our next game (Yudasin-Ehlvest).

Instead of 6...♗e7 the aggressive 6...♘g4 looks more persistent, undermining the position of White's bishop on e3. For example: 7.♗g5 ♗e7 (also interesting is 7...f6) 8.♗xe7 ♕xe7 9.h3 ♘h6 10.♘bd2 d6 11.0-0 e5 12.♘e1 0-0 (with a very comfortable position) 13.g4!? (this kind of 'pseudo-activity' has to be avoided, as it weakens numerous squares around White's king) 13...♘d4 14.♘c4 ♘e6 15.♘e3 ♘f4 and Black is much better, Rivas Romero-Rocius, corr. 2002.

7.♕e2 d5 8.♗f4

Just like Portisch, Tkachiev is playing with the same piece twice in the opening. Here it constitutes an unpleasant necessity. Neither 8.exd5 ♘xd5 nor 8.e5?! ♘d7 9.♗f4 g5 10.♗c1 g4 could satisfy Vladislav Tkachiev. Black would get the better chances in both cases.

8...♕b6 9.c3 c4!?



This breaks White's pawn centre, and leads to an original position. In case of 9...0-0 10.e5 the centre would – at least temporarily – be blocked. In such a situation there is always the danger that Black's king would come under attack. This is an option, that Portisch does not even want to consider. However, in my opinion, it is not an obvious decision to avoid the natural 9...0-0 10.e5. After 10...♘d7 11.0-0 f6 12.exf6 ♘xf6 the position is not so clear.

The move in our main game opens the centre, and with an open centre, as my respectable Readers will probably know, flank attacks are not so dangerous.

10.dxc4 ♘xe4 11.♘e5 0-0 12.0-0 ♖e8 13.♕c2!?

This is an accurate move, with the idea of 14.♘d2 Tkachiev keeps the balance in the game.

13...♘f6 14.♘d2

And here the opponents agreed a draw in this highly interesting theoretical duel. Actually, the position is still full of life. White may even have some symbolic initiative. However, Black's position is solid with no particular weaknesses. So, there must be another practical explanation why the opponents agreed to such a 'grandmaster draw'.

For us, the significance of the game is clear. With Portisch's 4...♗d6 a variation was born and it started Life on its own. As I will demonstrate below it is alive and well today.

☐ **Leonid Yudasin**
■ **Jaan Ehlvest**
New York 2003

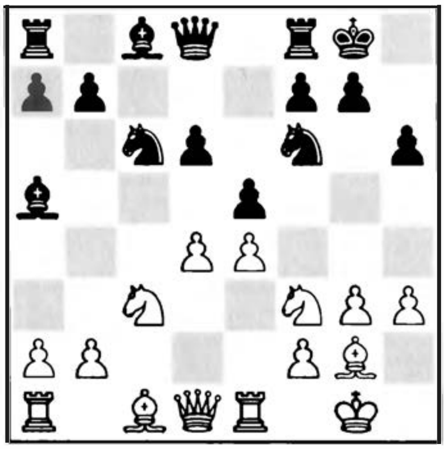
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d3 ♘c6 4.g3 ♗d6 5.♗g2

This is the main line of the variation. White finishes his development of the kingside without paying any attention to the opponent's 'strange' manoeuvres. With his strong control of the centre White will later make a choice out of two typical plans: (1) central play, or (2) a kingside attack. This game will illustrate the first (most classical) plan.

In the following game White tries to refute Black's strategy by building a strong pawn centre even before finishing his development. In a way, a natural reaction considering the exposed bishop on d6: 5.c3 ♗c7 6.♗e3 d6 7.d4 cxd4 8.cxd4 ♘f6 9.♘bd2 0-0 10.♗d3. Everything would be fine here, if only the g-pawn would be on g2. Here, the main supporter of our system Edvin Kengis, immediately underlines the disadvantages of White's strategy: 10...e5 (with such ideas as 11...♗h3 and 11...♘g4, Kengis fights White's 'strong' pawn centre, and tries to establish control over the dark squares. The move 10...♘g4 was also interesting, winning two bishops, and e6-e5 will follow) 11.d5 ♘b4 12.♗e2 ♘g4 13.a3 ♘xe3 14.fxe3 ♘a6 15.b4 ♘b8 16.0-0 ♗h3 17.♖f2 ♘d7 18.♘h4 ♘f6, Saulespurens-Kengis, Riga 2004. The knight enters into play, and Black is much better considering his two powerful bishops.

5...♘ge7

Kveinis has chosen another set-up here: 5...♗c7 6.0-0 ♘f6 (another square for the knight) 7.♖e1 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.h3 h6 10.d4 cxd4 11.cxd4 ♗a5 12.♘c3?! (this is a primitive reaction – and the reason for White's future problems. The stronger 12.♗d2 needs to be researched) 12...e5.



Exactly like in the previous Saulespurens-Kengis game. It is an interesting strategical point of Black's strategy. Note that both Kengis and Kveinis don't mind allowing White to build a strong e4-d4 pawn centre. Moreover, they develop their pieces in the most flexible way and provoke their opponents to build this centre, only in order to attack and destroy it later on. A controversial strategy perhaps, but we cannot find a game where it was refuted. The game now continued 13.d5 ♗xc3 14.bxc3 ♘a5 15.♞h4 ♗d7 16.♗e3 ♘c4 (Black's game is preferable) 17.♘f5 ♗xf5 18.exf5 ♘xe3 19.♖xe3 ♕a5 20.c4 ♖ac8 and Black is clearly better, Namyslo-Kveinis, Dresden 1996.

6.0-0 0-0

Ehlvest develops his pieces in a most economic fashion.

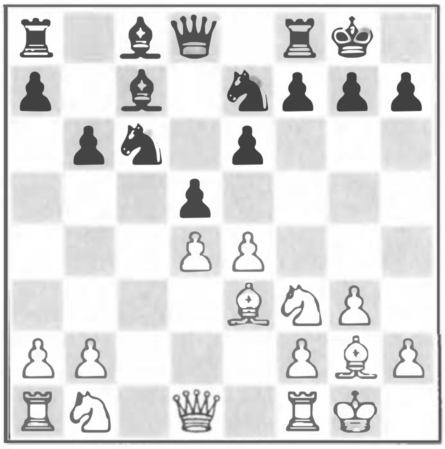
7.♗e3

This move was always worrying me, that is why I would play the bishop to c7 earlier. Black now has to play

7...b6 8.c3 ♗c7

when the bishop doesn't enter the a7-g1 or a5-e1 diagonals. This looks problematic to me, but it doesn't worry Jaan Ehlvest.

9.d4 cxd4 10.cxd4 d5!



Here it comes, this illustrates the flexibility of the whole idea behind 4...♗d6. Black did not hurry with his choice of pawn structure earlier in the game, having developed his pieces while keeping all 'pawn-options' open. Ehlvest has waited for the best moment for counterplay in the centre. Let White strike first, let him show his intentions, and define his pawn structure. Only then you show him that the right counter-measures have been prepared.

The set-up with d7-d6 and e6-e5, as in the comments above, would not be logical here, as the bishop on c7 is blocked by the b6-pawn. So, Ehlvest fights for the centre in a different manner, provoking his opponent to close it, and after

11.e5

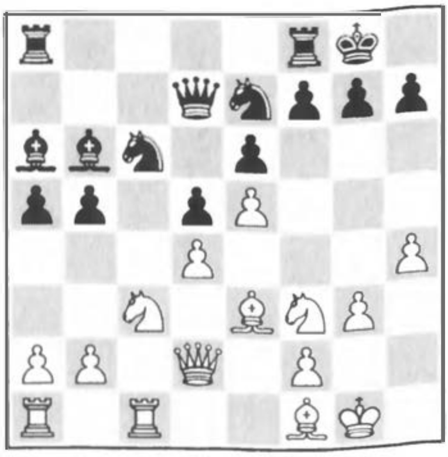
play has been transferred to a kind of 3.e5 Variation of the French Defence, where White's bishop has absolutely no business on g2 whatsoever.

Black would also have a good game had Yudasin tried to keep the centre open. For example, after 11.♘c3 dxe4 12.♘xe4 ♗b7 13.♖c1 ♖c8 Black has fine counterplay.

11...a5!

An introduction to a deep plan, Black's bishops are coming to a6 and b6, and the queenside-pawns will advance to claim space on the queenside.

12.♕d2 ♗a6 13.♖c1 b5 14.♘c3 ♗b6 15.h4 ♕d7 16.♗f1



The wrong choice in my opinion. Yudasin tries to resist on the queenside. Probably, 16.♘e2 was better, with the idea of ♘e2-f4-h5 attacking the opponent's king: 16...♘f5 17.♘f4 b4 (it isn't easy for White to develop activity on the kingside, but it was the only way to put at least some psychological pressure on the opponent) 18.♗h3 a4 19.♘h5.

16...f6!?

Ehlvest starts a kind of global warfare. Aggression all over the board.

17.exf6 ♖xf6 18.♘h2

Here 18.♘e5 was better: 18...♘xe5 19.dxe5 ♗xe3 20.♕xe3 d4 21.♖d1 with an unclear position, but Yudasin had no Fritz to his assistance.

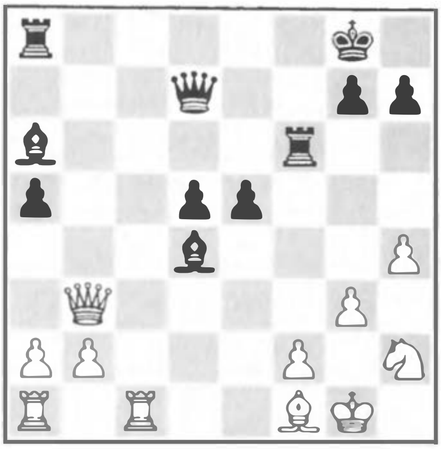
18...♘f5! 19.♘xb5

Or 19.♗xb5 ♗xb5 20.♘xb5 ♘xe3 21.fxe3 e5∓ and Black develops a strong initiative.

19...♘xe3 20.♕xe3

Of course 20.fxe3 ♖xf1+ 21.♘xf1 ♗xb5∓ is unacceptable for White.

20...e5 21.♕b3 ♘xd4 22.♘xd4 ♗xd4



What a career for the bishop! Here we see the full realization of Black's strategy. White is lost.

23.♘g4 ♖b6 24.♘xe5

A desperate act.

24...♕d6 25.♖c6 ♖xc6 26.♘xc6 ♕xc6 27.♖d1 ♗c4 28.♕c2 ♕c5 29.♕d2 ♗xf1 30.♕xd4 ♕xd4 31.♖xd4 ♗e2 32.♖xd5 ♗c4

And here was the right moment to stop the clock.

33.♖d2 ♗xa2 34.♔g2 ♗b3 35.g4 a4 36.♔g3 ♖e8 37.h5 ♔f7 38.♔f4 h6 39.f3 ♖e7 40.g5 hxg5+ 41.♔xg5 ♖e5+ 42.♔h4 ♖d5 43.♖e2 ♔f6 44.♖g2 ♖d4+ 45.♔g3 ♖c4 46.♖d2 ♖c2 47.♖d6+ ♔e7 48.♖a6 ♖xb2 49.f4 ♖a2 50.f5 ♖a1

White resigned.

Looking through the games so far, one may come to a clear conclusion: the plan of creating a strong pawn centre doesn't work for White. The pawn manoeuvres d2-d3-d4, in connection with g3, are not dangerous for Black.

☐ **Vladislav Nevednichy**
■ **Mihailo Prusikin**
Miskolc (Hungary) 2004

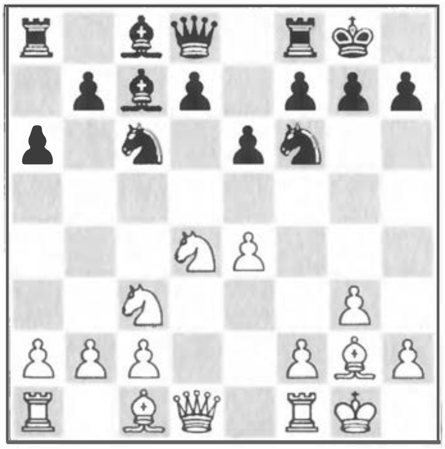
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d3 ♘c6 4.g3 ♗d6 5.♗g2 ♗c7 6.0-0

Black had no opening problems in the following rapid game: 6.d4 cxd4 7.♘xd4 ♘ge7 (7...♘f6!?) 8.0-0 a6 9.♘c3 0-0 10.♗e3 d6 11.♖e1 ♘xd4 12.♗xd4 e5 13.♗e3 b5 14.f4 ♗b7 15.fxe5 dxe5 16.♗c5 ♖e8? (here Edvin missed a chance to seize an initiative: 16...♗b6 17.♗xb6 ♕xb6+ 18.♔h1 ♖ad8∓) 17.♕h5 ♘g6 18.♖ad1 ♕c8 19.♗h3 ♖e6 20.♗xe6 fxe6 21.♕g4 b4 22.♗xb4 1-0 Magem Badals-Kengis, Liepaja 2001.

6...♘f6 7.♘c3 0-0 8.d4

A completely different approach. Nevednichy has developed his pieces, and then breaks in the centre, effectively transposing the game into an open Sicilian.

8...cxd4 9.♘xd4 a6



The game has transposed to a Hedgehog-like system. I don't see any danger for Black in this kind of position for two reasons. First, White spent a tempo on playing d3 and then d4. Second, one of the possible plans in the Hedgehog for Black is the manoeuvre ♗f8-e7-d8-c7 where the bishop is well placed usually. Simple calculation shows that Black economized and won a tempo by putting his bishop to c7 in only two moves.

10.h3 h6 11.♗e3 d5

Counterplay in the centre – an active (but unforced) response to White's strategy.

12.exd5

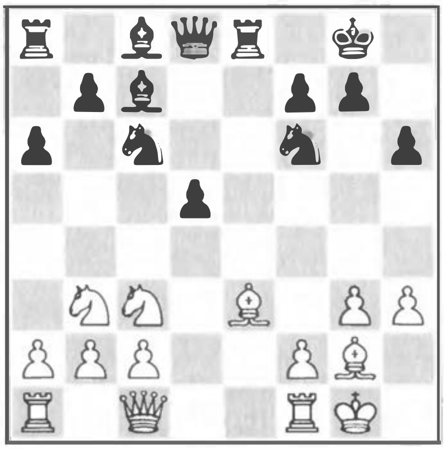
Interesting was 12.f4!? with the idea of 13.e5 – controlling the centre. In case of 12...dxe4 (12...♘xd4 13.♕xd4!? dxe4 14.♘xe4±) 13.♘xc6 bxc6 14.♘xe4 White is slightly better.

12...exd5

Being an old fan of isolated pawns myself, I feel, that Black has plenty of counterchances here.

13.♘b3 ♖e8 14.♕c1

Uncertain play by White now provoked the German player into a promising exchange sacrifice.



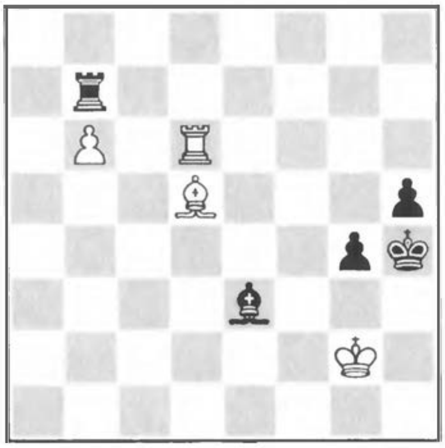
14...♖xe3!? 15.fxe3

Naturally, 15.♕xe3 d4 is out of the question.

15...♗xg3

Here two powerful bishops and the compro-

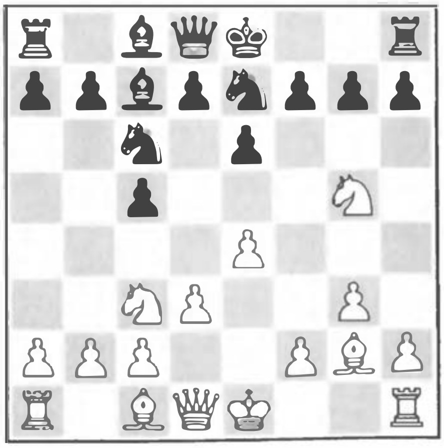
mised position of White's king give Black more than enough compensation. The theoretically significant part of the game has passed. Suffice to say that Nevednichy was very fortunate to save the game.
16.♕d2 ♗e6 17.♖ad1 ♗e5 18.♘xd5 ♘xd5 19.♗xd5 ♕g5+ 20.♕g2 ♕xe3+ 21.♔h1 ♗xh3 22.♕f3 ♕xf3+ 23.♖xf3 ♗g4 24.♖xf7 ♗xd1 25.♖f1+ ♔h8 26.♖xd1 ♖d8 27.♘c5 ♘b4 28.c4 b6 29.♘e6 ♖d6 30.b3 ♘xa2 31.♖e1 ♗f6 32.♘f4 ♖d8 33.♖e6 ♖b8 34.♔g2 ♘b4 35.♗e4 a5 36.♔f3 ♘a6 37.♗c2 ♘c5 38.♖c6 ♘d7 39.♘g6+ ♔g8 40.♗f5 ♘e5+ 41.♘xe5 ♗xe5 42.♔e4 ♗c3 43.♗e6+ ♔h8 44.♗c8 g6 45.♗h3 ♔g7 46.♖c7+ ♔f6 47.♖c6+ ♔g5 48.♗e6 h5 49.♗f7 ♗f6 50.c5 ♖b7 51.♗e6 bxc5 52.♖xc5+ ♔h4 53.♖xa5 ♖e7 54.♖a6 ♗c3 55.♔f3 ♗d4 56.b4 g5 57.♔e4 ♗f2 58.♔f3 ♗g1 59.b5 g4+ 60.♔g2 ♗d4 61.♖d6 ♗e3 62.b6 ♖b7 63.♗d5



63...♖b8 After 63...♖xb6 64.♖xb6 ♗xb6 the resulting opposite-coloured bishop ending is a theoretical draw. **64.b7 ♖f8 65.♖e6 ♗a7 66.♖e2 ♖d8 67.♗e4 ♖d1 68.♖f2 ♖e1 69.♗c6 ♔g5 70.♖f8 ♖e2+ 71.♔f1 ♖c2 72.♗e4 ♖c4 73.♗d5 ♖f4+ 74.♖xf4 ♔xf4 75.♔g2 h4 76.♗e6 h3+ 77.♔h1 ♔g3 78.♗xg4 ♔xg4**
Draw.

☐ **Alexander Dgebuadze**
■ **Mikhail Gurevich**
Antwerp 1999

1.e4 e6 2.d3 c5 3.♘f3 ♘c6 4.g3 ♗d6 5.♗g2 ♗c7
After 5...♘ge7 6.0-0 ♗c7 it is possible to play 7.♘h4 with the idea of 8.f4 and an attack on the kingside. This is typical of Fedorov's approach. This player is always looking for the opponent's king.
It was now correct to play: 7...d5 (flank activity had to be met by central counterplay) 8.f4 (8.♘d2 b6 9.f4 ♗b7 10.f5 ♕d7) 8...dxe4 9.dxe4 ♕xd1 10.♖xd1 b6 with an unclear 'endgame'.
Kengis instead went: 7...♘g6 (a nervous reaction, that I don't understand) 8.♘xg6 hxg6 9.♘c3 a6 10.a3 b5 11.♗e3 ♕e7?! (it was a bad day for Edvin, he misses the following blow. Correct was 11...d6) 12.♘d5! exd5 13.exd5 ♗b7 14.dxc6 ♗xc6 15.♗xc6 dxc6 16.♕f3 (Black's position now collapses) 16...♕d6 17.♗f4 ♕f6 18.♕e3+ ♔d7 19.♗xc7 ♔xc7 20.♕xc5 and White is a pawn up in a superior position. Fedorov-Kengis, Vilnius 1997.
6.♘c3 ♘ge7 7.♘g5!?



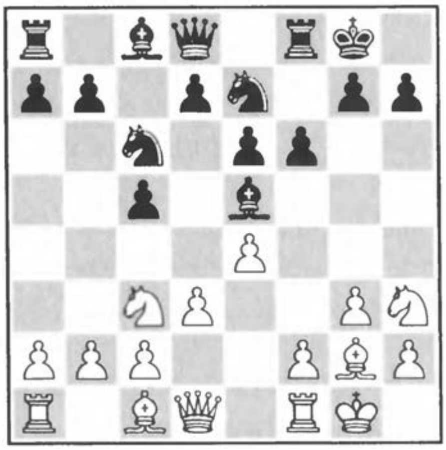
Inspired by Fedorov's ideas, my opponent introduces an interesting novelty. The threats are 8.♕h5 and 8.f4, followed by

9.♘f3 gaining space and developing activity on the kingside.

7...f6

Another way to react was 7...h6 8.♘h3 (8.♕h5 g6 9.♕h4 ♘d4) 8...d5 9.0-0 0-0 10.f4 with an unclear position.

8.♘h3 0-0 9.0-0 ♗e5!?



An interesting waiting move. I try to provoke f4 before breaking in the centre. Note that 9...d5 10.exd5 exd5 11.♘f4 would give White a certain initiative.

10.♞e2 d5 11.c3 d4 12.c4

A surprising transposition to a King's Indian defence type of position. The centre is blocked, which gives my opponent some chances to attack on the kingside, but I have more space and good perspectives on the queenside.

12...♖b8 13.f4 ♗c7 14.g4 b5 15.cxb5 ♖xb5 16.♔h1!?

Planning 17.f5. In reply to the immediate 16.f5 there follows 16...♗e5 17.♘hf4 ♕d6 with unclear play.

16...♗d7 17.f5 ♕b8

It is important not to close the centre completely, thus avoiding a straight attack. Moreover, control over the e5-square is important.

18.♘hf4 ♗xf4 19.♘xf4 ♕d6!?

Intending 20...♘e5. Bad is 19...e5 20.♘h5 ♕d6 21.b3 ♖fb8 22.g5 with an attack.

20.fxe6?! ♗xe6 21.♘xe6 ♕xe6

With the centre closed White's bishops are paralysed.

22.g5 ♘e5∓ 23.gxf6 ♖xf6 24.♖xf6 ♕xf6 25.♕a4 a6 26.♗d2

Stronger was 26.♕c2 ♕h4 and Black is only slightly better.

26...♖xb2 27.♖f1

Not 27.♕e8+ ♕f8 28.♕h5 ♘xd3–+.

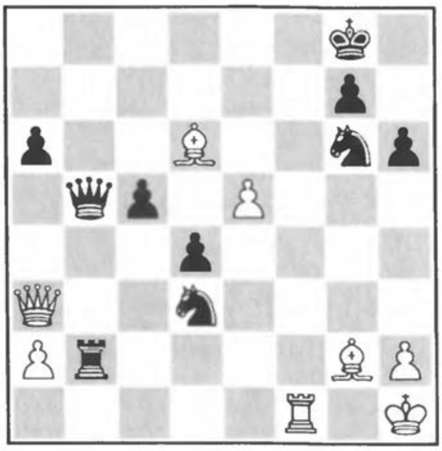
27...♕g6 28.♕a3 ♕b6

Losing is 28...♖xd2?? 29.♕b3+. But 28...♘c4 29.dxc4 ♖xd2 30.♕f3 h6 is also better for Black.

29.♗a5 ♕b5 30.♗c7 ♘xd3

Black now has a winning position.

31.♗d6 ♘g6 32.e5 h6?!



Unfortunately, *Zeitnot* starts to interfere. Instead 32...♖xg2 33.♔xg2 c4 followed by 34...h6 and 35...♕d5 was totally winning.

33.e6 ♖xg2 34.♔xg2 ♕c6+ 35.♔g1 ♕xd6 36.♕xd3 ♕xe6 37.♕f5∞ ♕e3+

No better is 37...♕xf5 38.♖xf5 c4 39.♔f2.

38.♔h1 ♘e5 39.♕e6+ ♔h7 40.♕f5+ g6 41.♕f6!= ♕e4+ 42.♔g1 ♕g4+

42...h5 43.h4!=.

43.♔h1 ♕e4+ 44.♔g1

Draw.

Considering all commented games I could come to only one logical conclusion: White has to be extremely lucky to survive after Portisch's ingenious ♗d6 idea!

I had already finished this article when fate, and Alexander Dgebuadze, gave me an opportunity to check and test the above evaluations. When we met in the French league, Dgebuadze gave me a chance to repeat the line, and I was feeling kind of obliged to let him show what he had prepared.

☐ **Alexander Dgebuadze**
■ **Mikhail Gurevich**
French tt 2005

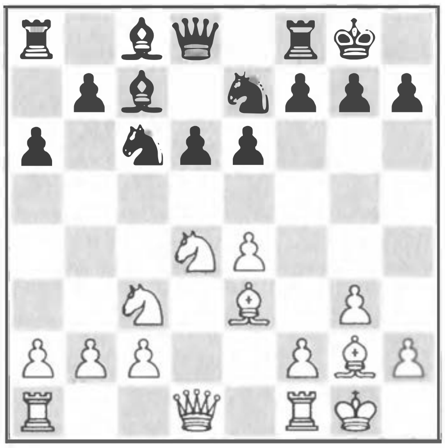
1.e4 e6 2.d3 c5 3.♘f3 ♞c6 4.g3 ♗d6 5.♗g2 ♘ge7 6.♘c3 ♗c7 7.♗e3

For 7.♘g5 (Dgebuadze-Gurevich, Antwerp 1999) see the previous game.

7...d6 8.d4

This time Dgebuadze makes the choice toward central strategy.

8...cxd4 9.♞xd4 0-0 10.0-0 a6



This might be an important position for the evaluation of the whole variation. White's strategy is simple, logical and transparent. His pieces are mobilized, White has more space and a certain amount of control of the centre. With his following move my opponent connects the rooks in order to develop them along the e- and d-files.

11.♕d2

A Theoretical Novelty. It is a purely classical move, but it has its drawbacks.

● 11.♕h5 ♘xd4 12.♗xd4 e5 13.♗e3 ♗b6 14.♖fe1 ♗e6 15.♖ad1 ♖c8 16.♖d2 ♗a5 17.♖ed1 ♖c6 18.f4 f6 19.♕h4 ♘g6 20.♕h5 exf4 21.♗xf4 ♘xf4 22.gxf4 ♗b6+ 23.♔h1 ♗e3∓, K.Larsen-Zagorskis, Copenhagen 1998.

● 11.♖e1 ♘xd4 12.♗xd4 e5 13.♗e3 b5 14.f4 ♗b7 15.fxe5 dxe5 16.♗c5 (Stronger is 16...♗b6!?∓) Magem Badals-Kengis, Liepaja 2001.

In my opinion, 11.♕e2 and 11.f4 need to be studied.

11...♘xd4 12.♗xd4 ♘c6 13.♗e3 ♞e5!?

This is the point, and, it seems to me, that my opponent missed it. After the exchange of one pair of knights White's space advantage is irrelevant, and my second knight develops quickly forward, creating the unpleasant threat of 14...♘c4. White needs to lose some time to neutralize the threat.

14.♕e2 b5

Black's initiative develops quickly and naturally. Already at this point I knew I had a good game, as Black holds the initiative.

15.a3

Black is also slightly better after 15.b3 b4 16.♘a4 (16.♘d1 a5↑) 16...♗d7.

15...♘c4 16.♗c1

An unpleasant necessity in order not to give his opponent the simple advantage of the two bishops.

Thus, 16.e5 is well-met by 16...♘xe3 17.♕xe3 ♖b8.

16...♗b7 17.b3

A better chance was perhaps 17.a4 ♕d7 18.axb5 axb5 19.♖xa8 ♖xa8 20.b3 ♘e5 21.♘xb5 (or 21.♕xb5 ♕c8! 22.♕e2 ♗a6 23.♘b5 ♕d7 24.c4 ♗xb5 25.cxb5 ♖b8=) 21...♖a2 with compensation.

17...♗a5!?

Not allowing my opponent a second for relaxation.

18.♘d1

This is passive, but the alternatives are no better:

- 18.bxc4♗xc3 19.♖b1 ♗c620.♕d3♗e5.
- 18.♘xb5 ♘e5! 19.♘d4 (19.b4 axb5 20.bxa5 ♕xa5) 19...♗c3 20.♗e3 ♗xa1 21.♖xa1∓.

18...♘e5 19.♗b2 ♕c7 20.♖c1 b4!

An essential brick in Black's strategical plan. As White moves his pieces to the kingside, it's extremely important to break on the opposite side and to distract the opponent.

21.axb4 ♗xb4 22.♘e3 a5

Intending both 23...a4, and 23...♗a6.

23.f4 ♘d7 24.♔h1

Or 24.f5 ♗c5 (24...e5!?) 25.♔h1 ♘e5∞. Black is slightly better after 24.♕g4 ♗c3.

24...a4!?

Simple and persistent. As I don't see any real threats to my king I continue my strategy. Instead 24...♗a6 25.c4 ♘c5 26.♕g4 would have handed White the initiative.

25.bxa4 ♖xa4 26.c4

Finally creating the threat of 27.♕g4.

26...♗a3!

Trying to eliminate the 'main enemy' of my king.

27.♖a1

Or 27.♗xa3 ♖xa3∓.

27...♖fa8 28.♗c3

But not 28.♖xa3 ♖xa3 29.♕g4 g6 30.f5 ♘e5 31.♗xe5 dxe5 32.fxe6 ♖a1∓.

28...♗b4! 29.♖xa4 ♖xa4 30.♗a1?!

With the desperate hope to proceed with the attack. Stronger was 30.♗xb4 ♖xb4 31.♖d1 ♘c5 32.♕d2 ♖b6 33.e5 ♗xg2+ 34.♘xg2 ♘e4 35.♕d4 ♕b7, though Black clearly holds the initiative.

30...♗c5∓

I enjoy the bishop's manoeuvres in this game. Each move of the bishop works as a nail in the coffin of my opponent's strategy.

31.♘g4

Here 31.♕g4 is refuted by the elementary 31...♖xa1 32.♖xa1 ♗xe3 winning.

31...♗a6

White's position collapses as a house of cards.

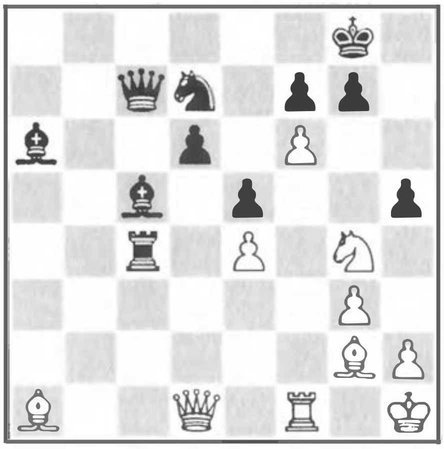
32.f5!?

The attack fails after 32.♘h6+ gxh6 33.♕g4+ ♔f8 34.♕g7+ ♔e7 35.f5 e5 36.f6+ ♔e8.

32...e5!

Much simpler than 32...♗xc4 33.♘h6+ gxh6 (33...♔f8 34.♗xg7+! ♔xg7 35.♕g4+ with attack) 34.♕g4+ ♔f8 35.♕g7+ (or 35.fxe6 ♘e5 36.♗xe5 dxe5 37.♖xf7+ ♕xf7 38.exf7 ♖a1+ 39.♗f1 ♖xf1+ 40.♔g2 ♖f2+) 35...♔e8 when Black is also better.

33.♕d1 ♖xc4 34.f6 h5!



A final touch. Black gains a decisive material edge.

35.fxg7

White's weak back rank is the problem after 35.♘h6+ gxh6 36.♕xh5 ♘xf6 37.♖xf6 (37.♕xh6 ♘xe4) 37...♖c1+.

35...hxg4 36.♕xg4

Again the back rank tactics work for Black in the line 36.♕d2 ♘f6! 37.♖xf6 ♗e3! 38.♕xe3 ♖c1+ and wins.

36...♘f6! 37.♕h4

37.♖xf6 ♖c1+.

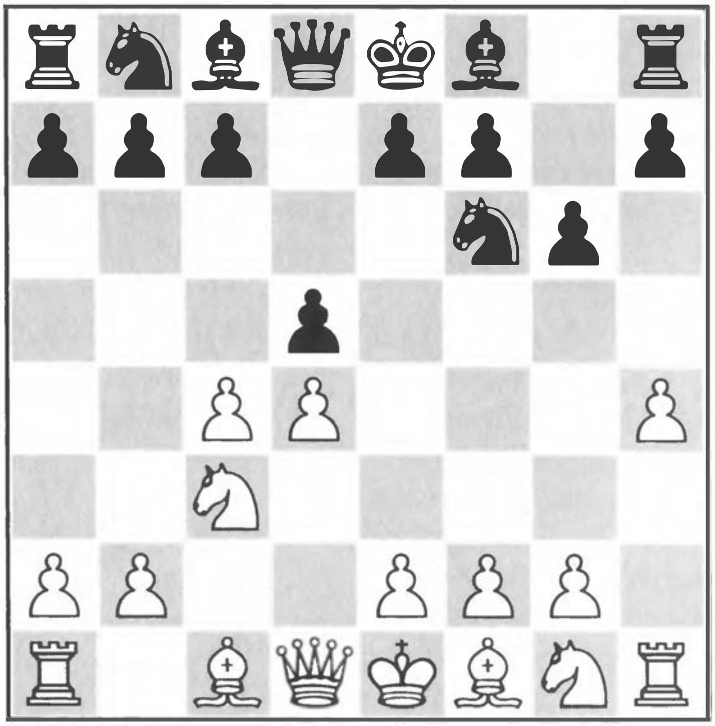
37...♘h7 38.♗b2 ♖c2 39.♖b1 ♕b8

White resigned. I hope you enjoyed the game as well as I did, my dear Reader.

CHAPTER 3

Jeroen Bosch

A Flank Attack in the Grünfeld



4.h4 – Still following a central strategy

Keeping your main line repertoire against the Grünfeld up-to-date is an arduous task. Ernst Grünfeld's hypermodern weapon has evolved into one of the most respectable defences against 1.d4. Not surprisingly, the theoretical workload for both sides is wholly in line with this status. If you are looking for a weapon against the Grünfeld this SOS chapter will be of interest to you.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.h4

Why not embark on a flank attack the next time you encounter the Grünfeld? The idea of 4.h4 (apart from probing the 'weakness' g6) is that the knight on f6 cannot defend the squares d5 and h5 simultaneously. Thus after Black's most natural move 4...♗g7. White plays 5.h5. when after 5...♘xh5, he gains an edge in the centre with 6.cxd5. Somewhat paradoxically, this simple line demonstrates that with 4.h4 White is still following a central strategy.

In another form this idea is known from a (Grünfeld) line against the English: 1.c4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 d5 3.cxd5 ♘xd5 4.♘f3 g6 5.h4!?. Here the knight has already been lured to the centre. Consequently, White plans the crude 6.h5. Two miniature wins by Jeroen Piket (both in active chess) demonstrate the dangers facing Black:

– 5...♗g7 6.h5 ♘c6 7.g3 ♗g4 8.h6 (the h-pawn is making a career for itself, Black now gives up both his bishops. He should perhaps have opted for the simple 8...♗f6) 8...♗xc3 9.bxc3 ♗xf3 10.exf3 ♕d6 11.♗e2 0-0-0 12.♕b3 f5 13.a4 e5 14.a5 e4 15.f4 ♘f6 16.0-0 ♘g4 17.♗a3 ♕xd2? (a clear mistake in a difficult situation; 17...♕d7 was forced) 18.a6! (now that the a-pawn has also reached the sixth rank, the game is over) 18...♘a5 19.axb7+ ♔b8 20.♕b5 e3 21.♗c5! exf2+ 22.♖xf2, and Black resigned, 1-0. Piket-Shirov, Monte Carlo rapid 1998.

– 5...♘f6 (taking the assault of the h-pawn seriously) 6.d4 ♗g7 7.e4 0-0 8.♗e2 c5 9.d5 e6 10.h5! ♘xh5 11.g4 (according to Shipov White should have played 11.♘g5!?, with the better chances) 11...♘f6 12.♗g5 ♕b6 (Black could have taken advantage of White's 11th move with Shipov's 12...♕a5!) 13.♗xf6 ♗xf6 14.♕d2 ♗g7 15.0-0-0 ♘d7 16.g5 c4 17.♖h2 ♖e8 18.d6 ♖d8 19.♕f4 ♕a5 (it is fitting that White now dealt the decisive blow along the h-file) 20.♖xh7! and White won, Piket-Svidler, Internet, KasparovChess 2000.

After this brief outing into the English Opening, we will examine the virtues (and vices) of 4.h4.

Let us divide the material along thematic lines:

I Natural development – ignoring the march of the h-pawn.

II Prophylaxis – stopping the march of the h-pawn.

III Acting in the centre – neutralizing the march of the h-pawn.

Section I features the 'naive' **4...♗g7**. The second section examines the 'automatic' responses of the h-pawn: **4...h6** and **4...h5**. Finally, all central responses are the subject of section III. Thus, Black can counterattack with **4...c5**, give up the centre with **4...dxc4**, or strengthen d5 with **4...c6**.

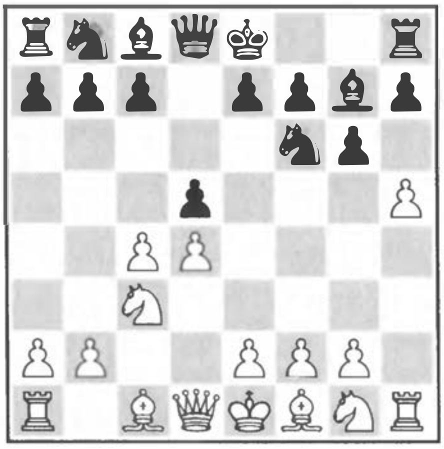
I Natural development

4...♗g7

The most natural move, but it falls right into White's main idea.

5.h5!

This is the crux. Note that 5.cxd5 ♘xd5 6.h5 c5! (Williams-Beaumont, England tt 1998) favours Black.



5...♘xh5

Considering the circumstances this is Black's best bet. With 5...0-0 Black castles into it, which surely justifies 4.h4 and 5.h5! After 6.hxg6 hxg6 the simple 7.♗h6 (Davies) gives White an attack. The ugly 5...gxh5? gives White a pleasant choice. Bosboom-Gorissen, Haarlem 2002, went: 6.cxd5 ♘xd5 7.♖xh5± ♘xc3 8.bxc3 ♘d7 9.♖b1 c5 10.♕a4 cxd4 11.cxd4 ♔f8 12.e3, and White was better. Finally, 5...dxc4 6.h6 ♗f8 7.e4 is simply disastrous for Black.

6.cxd5 ♘f6

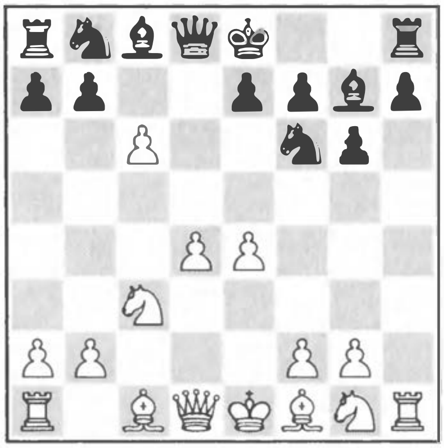
Moving the knight back into the fray. In practice Black has also attacked the centre here with his c-pawn:

– 6...c5 7.dxc5 ♕a5 8.e4 (or simply 8.♗d2 ♕xc5 9.e4) 8...♕xc5 9.♗e2?! (this allows Black's next move, simply 9.♗d2 preserves an edge) 9...♗d4!? 10.♗xh5 ♗xf2+ 11.♔f1 ♗xg1 (11...gxh5) 12.♖xg1 gxh5 13.♕xh5 ♘d7 14.♕e2 b6 15.♗e3 ♕a5 16.♘b5 ♘f6 17.d6 ♗d7 18.♘c7+ ♔d8 19.♗d4 ♕g5

20.e5 ♖c8 21.♕e3 ♕xe3 22.♗xe3 exd6 23.exd6 ♘e4∓, Sulyok-Nemeth, Hungary 1993.

– 6...c6 7.e4 (7.dxc6 ♗xd4 is about equal) 7...cxd5 (7...♘f6 8.dxc6 transposes to the main line) 8.e5! (threatening to win the knight. Black is now forced to a sad regrouping of his troops) 8...♗f8 9.g4 ♘g7 (White has obvious compensation for the sacrificed pawn) 10.♗g2 e6 11.♗h6 ♘c6 12.♘ge2 ♗d7 13.♕d2 f6 14.exf6 ♕xf6 15.♖h3! ♗b4 16.♖f3 ♕e7 17.♗g5 ♕d6 18.a3 ♗xc3 19.♘xc3 ♘a5 20.♕e2 ♖f8 21.♘xd5!, and White won in Shliperman-Ady, New York 1999.

7.e4 c6 8.dxc6



8...bxc6

Black accepts a clearly inferior pawn structure because 8...♘xc6 is met by 9.d5. The pawn sacrifice 8...0-0 9.cxb7 ♗xb7 is also inadequate. White has a pleasant choice between

– 10.e5 ♘d5 11.♗h6 ♗xh6 12.♖xh6 ♕b6 13.♕d2± Johnsrud-Scarani, e-mail corr. 2000, and

– 10.f3 ♘c6 11.♗e3 ♕c7 12.♗b5 ♕b6 13.♕d2 ♖fd8 14.♘ge2 ♗a6, Seres-Balinov, Budapest 1999. Now 15.d5 would have given White a decisive edge.

9.♗e2 ♗a6 10.♘f3

White has a clear structural edge here. The game Seres-Dembo, Budapest 2001, went:

10...♕a5 11.0-0 0-0 12.♗g5 h6 13.♗h4 ♗xe2 14.♕xe2 ♖e8?!

Slightly better was 14...e6 15.e5 ♘d5 16.♘e4. However, since 16...g5? is refuted by 17.♗xg5 hxg5 18.♘fxg5 (Davies), Black's position remains unenviable.

15.♖ac1 ♕a6 16.♕c2 ♘bd7 17.e5 ♘h7 18.e6! fxe6 19.♕xg6 ♘hf8 20.♕g3 ♕d3 21.♖fe1 ♕f5 22.♘e4 ♕d5 23.b3 ♔h8 24.♕h3 ♕f5 25.♖xc6 ♕xh3 26.gxh3 ♘g6 27.♗g3 ♘gf8 28.♘c5 ♘xc5 29.dxc5 ♖ed8 30.♖c7 ♖ac8 31.♖xe7 ♖xc5 32.♖xa7 ♖d3 33.♔g2 ♖c2 34.♖e4 1-0

II Prophylaxis

Black can, of course, stop the h-pawn dead in its tracks by playing 4...h5. Similarly, 4...h6 serves the same purpose, as 5.h5 g5 favours Black. Still, these 'automatic' responses will not solve Black's opening problems.

4...h6?!

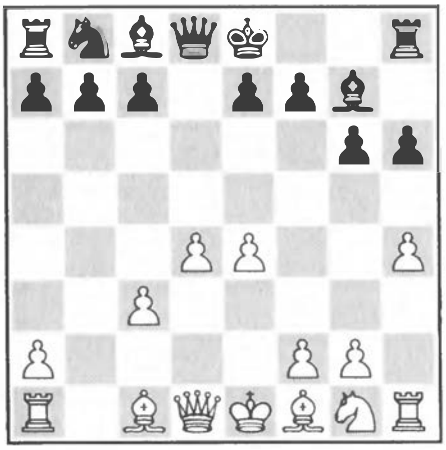
I don't like this move, although it is better than 4...h5. The pawn on h6 is vulnerable and provides White with an easy target. In Chichkin-Nasikan, Kiev 1999, Black opted for 4...h5?! Play continued: 5.♗g5 (this demonstrates that 4...h5 is worse than 4.h4!. Since White's bishop is now protected on g5, Black does not have the customary ...♘e4 response) 5...dxc4 6.e4 ♗g7 7.♗xc4 (White has a superior position) 7...♘h7?! 8.♗e3± ♘c6 9.♘ge2 e5 10.d5 ♘e7 11.♗c5 b6 12.♗a3 c5? 13.dxc6 ♕xd1+ 14.♖xd1 ♘xc6 15.♘b5, and White was winning.

5.cxd5

Less good is 5.♘f3 ♗g7 6.♗f4 c6 7.e3 ♕b6 8.♕d2 ♘e4!, with approximate equality in Seres-Blasko, Budapest 2001.

5...♘xd5 6.e4 ♘xc3 7.bxc3 ♗g7

A standard Grünfeld position but for the position of the h-pawns. The difference favours White. Davies's suggestion of 8.♗e3, followed by ♕d2, is one good set-up to take advantage of the inclusion of 4.h4 h6.



The game Seres-Nagy, Budapest 1998, went instead:

8.♗c4 c5 9.♘e2 ♘c6 10.♗e3 0-0 11.♖c1 a6

Instead of the text 11...♕a5 was better.

12.♕d2 ♔h7 13.h5 g5 14.e5! ♔h8 15.f4 f6 16.0-0 ♗g4 17.♘g3

With a clear edge for White.

17...b5 18.♗b3 ♕a5 19.exf6 exf6 20.d5 c4 21.♗c2 ♖ad8 22.♗b1 ♘e7 23.d6 ♘c8 24.♕c2 f5 25.fxg5 ♘xd6 26.♖f4

The threat is 27.♖xg4.

26...♕a4 27.♕xa4 bxa4 28.g6 ♘b5

Or 28...♗e5 29.♗d4±.

29.♖xc4 ♘xc3 30.♔h2 ♘xb1 31.♖xb1 ♖d3 32.♗f4 ♖a3 33.♖b7+– ♖xa2 34.♖cc7 ♗f3 35.♖xg7 ♖xg2+ 36.♔h3 ♖xg3+ 37.♔xg3 ♗xb7 38.♖xb7 ♖e8 39.♗xh6 a3 40.♗g7+ 1-0

III Acting in the centre

Clearly, sections I and II leave White with a pleasant opening edge. Nothing but good news for our SOS line so far! If Black is to find an adequate response to 4.h4 it will have to be in the current section. The three moves that I represent here have in common that they concentrate first and foremost on the centre. Having lumped them together for this reason, it is only fair to add that they are also fundamentally different. Let us divide them accordingly into:

A) 4...c5
B) 4...dxc4
C) 4...c6

Lines A and B are tactical in nature, whereas line C is Black's most solid option.

Variation A

So far, I have not mentioned that the most faithful adherent of 4.h4 is the Hungarian IM Lajos Seres. His games constitute the main body of this article. Seres is, however, not the inventor of 4.h4. This 'honour' goes to grandmaster Alexander Zaitsev. This player, incidentally, should not be mistaken for his namesake Igor Zaitsev, Anatoly Karpov's long-time second. Alexander Zaitsev can boast, for instance, shared 1st/2nd place in the 36th Soviet Championship of 1968 (losing the play-off for the title 2½-3½ to Lev Polugaevsky). In the stem game with 4.h4 he managed to beat no less a player than Vasily Smyslov.

Here is the stem game:

□ **Alexander Zaitsev**
■ **Vasily Smyslov**
Sochi 1963

4...c5 5.cxd5

Here 5.dxc5 is best. Note that 5.h5? is bad due to 5...cxd4.

5...♘xd5 6.dxc5!?

6.h5 ♗g7 7.hxg6 hxg6 8.♖xh8+ ♗xh8∓.

6...♘xc3 7.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 8.bxc3 ♗g7

Black appears to have no problems in this ending. All the more interesting that Zaitsev is able to outplay his famous opponent in his own territory.

9.♔d2 ♗f5

Stronger is 9...♞a6 10.♗a3 (10.c6 ♘c5 – Davies – is clearly in Black's favour) 10...♗f5, and if now 11.f3 then 11...♗h6+ 12.e3 ♔c7 13.♗xa6 ♖ad8+ 14.♔e1 bxa6.

10.f3! ♘d7

Better is 10...♗h6+ 11.♔d1 ♗xc1 12.♔xc1 ♔c7.

11.e4 ♗e6 12.c6!

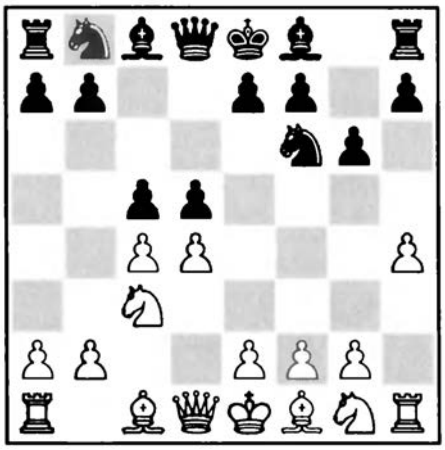
Much better than 12.♗a3 ♖c8∓.

12...bxc6 13.♘e2 ♗c4 14.♔c2 ♔c7 15.h5 e5?! 16.♗e3 ♗e6 17.♞c1 a5 18.♘b3 f5 19.♘d2 f4 20.♗f2 g5 21.♗c4 ♖he8 22.♗xe6 ♖xe6 23.♘c4 ♗f8 24.♖hd1 ♖b8 25.♘xa5 ♖h6 26.♖d2 ♖xh5 27.♖ad1 ♘f6 28.♘c4 c5 29.♘xe5 g4 30.♘f7 gxf3 31.gxf3 ♖h2 32.e5 ♘d5 33.♖xd5 ♖xf2+ 34.♔d3 ♖xf3+ 35.♔c4 ♖e3 36.♖d7+ ♔c6 37.♘d8+ ♖xd8 38.♖xd8 ♖e4+ 39.♔b3 ♗e7 40.♖c8+ ♔b7 41.♖e8 ♗h4 42.♖d7+ ♔c6 43.♖xh7 f3 44.c4 1-0

An impressive win that had little to do with the opening, though. Clearly, White must improve upon Zaitsev's 5.cxd5.

4...c5

Increasing the tension in the centre, and thereby giving White no time for 5.h5.

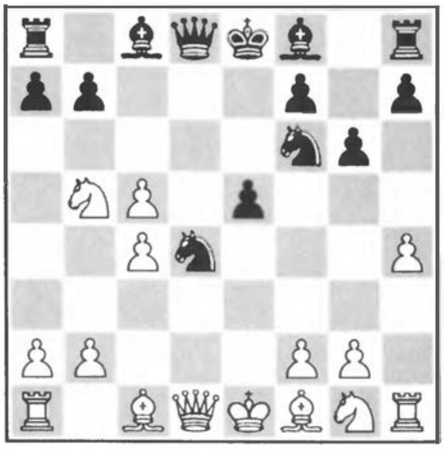


5.dxc5

This is the only serious test of Black's idea.

5...♗g7

A major alternative is **5...d4**, when play sharpens considerably: 6.♘b5 ♘c6 7.e3 (or 7.♘f3 e5 8.♗g5 ♗e7) 7...e5 8.exd4 ♘xd4 (but not 8...exd4 9.♗f4).



A tense situation in which White has tried the following moves:

- 9.♘f3?! (this is certainly not the correct choice) 9...♗xc5 10.♘bxd4 exd4 11.♗d3 ♗g4 12.♗g5 ♕e7+ 13.♔f1 h6 14.♗f4 ♘h5 15.♗d2 ♔f8, and Black was better in Porat-Jerez, Andorra 2001.
- 9.♘xd4 exd4 10.♗d3 ♗g7 11.♗f4 0-0 12.♘f3 ♖e8+ 13.♔f1 ♗g4 14.♕c2 ♘h5 15.♗d6 ♗xf3 16.gxf3 ♗e5 with unclear play in Gozzoli-Van der Weide, La Fere 2004.
- 9.b4!? a5 10.♗g5 ♗e7 11.♘xd4 (11.♘f3 was my recommendation in New In Chess Magazine 2004/2) 11...exd4 12.b5 h6 13.♗f4 ♗xc5 14.♗d3 ♗b4+ 15.♔f1 ♗g4 16.f3 ♗e6 17.♘e2 and both sides had their chances in Cebalo-Sebenik, Pula 2004.

6.cxd5 ♕a5

This was Black's idea, but his initiative is easily stymied.

7.♗d2 ♕xc5 8.e4 0-0 9.♗e2

Preventing both ♘g4 and ♗g4. Black does not have enough compensation for the pawn. The game Seres-Orso, Hungary 1997, continued:

9...e6 10.♖c1! ♘a6 11.♘h3!? exd5

12.e5!? 12.♘xd5. **12...♘d7 13.♘f4 ♘xe5 14.♘cxd5** Black's queen is in major trouble. **14...♕d4** 14...♕d6 15.♗xa6!. **15.♕b3 ♘g4 16.♕g3 ♖e8 17.♗c3 ♕c4 18.0-0!+– ♖xe2 19.♗xg7 ♖c2 20.♗c3 ♖xc1 21.♖xc1 h5** 22.f3 22.♘xg6! fxg6 23.♕d6 and wins. **22...♕c5+ 23.♔h1 ♘e3 24.♘xe3 ♕xe3 25.♖e1** Black resigned, for if the queen moves, White mates with ♖e8-h8.

Variation B

Black releases the central tension, thereby relieving his knight of the task of defending d5. Play resembles the Queen's Gambit Accepted with the moves g6 and h4 thrown in. Tactics reign supreme in this line.

4...dxc4 5.e4 c5

White gains the initiative after 5...♘c6 6.d5 ♘e5 7.♕d4 ♘d3+ 8.♗xd3 cxd3 9.h5 Cordes-Karelin, e-mail corr. 2000.

6.d5 b5

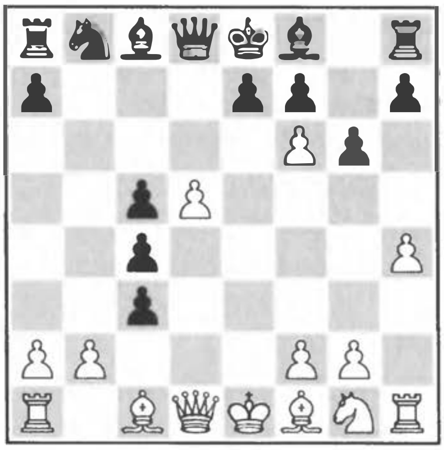
Otherwise White would simply retrieve the pawn with excellent play.

7.e5 b4 8.exf6

Here 8.♘a4 ♘xd5 9.♗xc4 yields some compensation for the pawn. Bosboom-Goormachtigh, Haarlem 1998, continued: 9...e6 10.♗g5 ♕c7 (10...♗e7 11.♘xc5) 11.♘f3 ♗b7 12.h5 ♖g8 13.h6 ♘d7 14.0-0!?, and White won.

8...bxc3

This position should be compared to a well-known line from the Queen's Gambit Accepted: 1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e4 c5 4.d5 ♘f6 5.♘c3 b5 6.e5 b4 7.exf6 bxc3. In the QGA White now takes back on c3. In our Grünfeld SOS he can play more aggressively. The inclusion of h2-h4 and g7-g6 generally favours White. He can probe Black's kingside with h5 (although this is a double-edged sword, of course), while the main a1-h8 diagonal is also weakened because of g6.

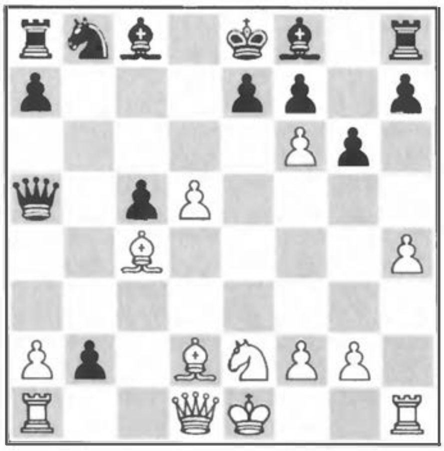


9.♗xc4

What happens if White takes back on c3? After 9.bxc3 ♘d7 it looks as if White can advantageously play 10.h5. However, Leviczki-Varadi, Szombathely 2003, went: 10...♘b6! 11.hxg6 fxg6 12.♗xc4 exf6 (even better than 12...♘xc4 13.♕a4+ ♔f7 14.♕xc4 exf6) 13.♗d3 f5! 14.c4 ♗g7 15.♖b1 0-0 16.♘e2 ♗a6 17.♕c2 ♕d6∓.

9...♘d7

The most natural reply; Black aims to take back on f6 with the knight. After 10.fxe7 ♕xe7+ he gains time. No good is 9...cxb2 10.♗xb2±. There is, however, a sharp alternative available in the form of 9...♕a5!?. White is forced to sacrifice material with 10.♘e2!? cxb2+ 11.♗d2



11...♕b6? (now White gets a virtually winning position for nothing. Still, after the critical 11...bxa1♕ 12.♕xa1 ♕b6 13.fxe7 f6 14.exf8♕+ ♖xf8 15.0-0 White has huge compensation for the exchange) 12.♖b1 exf6 (or 12...♗f5 13.♕a4+ ♘d7 14.♗b5↑) 13.♕a4+ ♞d7 (13...♗d7 14.♕a3) 14.♖h3! h5? 15.♖b3 ♕c7 16.d6 ♗xd6 17.♗a5 ♕b8 18.♖1xb2, 1-0 Cordes-Greger, Germany 2000.

10.♕a4!

Not allowing Black to take back on f6 with the knight.

10...♕b6 11.bxc3 ♕xf6 12.♘e2 ♗g7 13.♗b5

This move prevents Black from castling. White is better and won convincingly in Seres-Pribyl, Liechtenstein 2000:

13...a6 14.♗e3 ♖b8 15.♗c6 ♕f5 16.0-0

Black is unable to complete his development and is therefore fighting a lost cause.

16...♕d3

Not 16...0-0? as 17.♘g3 wins on the spot.

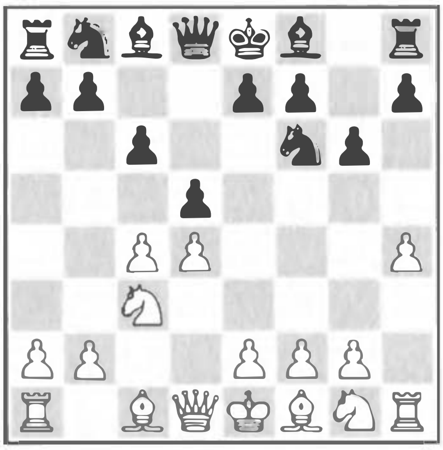
17.♖fe1 ♖b2 18.♘f4 ♕xc3 19.♖ac1 ♕b4 20.♗xc5 ♕xa4 21.♗xa4 e5

Instead of resigning.

22.dxe6 fxe6 23.♖xe6+ ♔f7 24.♖e7+ ♔f6 25.♗xd7 ♗xd7 26.♖xd7 ♗h6 27.♗d4+ 1-0

Variation C

4...c6



This is Black's most solid option. The move is perhaps not in keeping with the Grünfeld player's customary active temperament, though. Yet this set-up, similar to the Schlechter Variation, is not without logic. The move 4.h4 was aimed at the knight's inability to defend both squares d5 and h5. With 4...c6 Black overprotects d5, so that 5.h5 is no longer a threat. The pawn on h4 looks slightly awkward now.

5.cxd5

Clarifying the situation in the centre. No good is **5.♗f4** which is solidly met by 5...dxc4, with advantage.

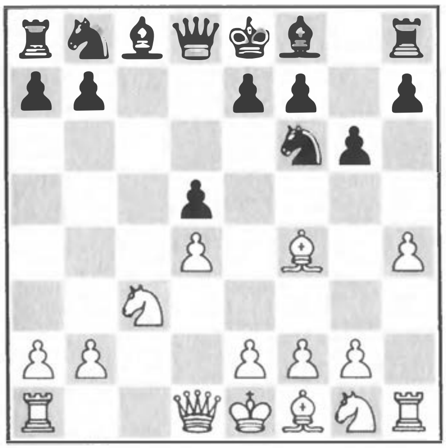
Practice has also seen **5.e3** ♝g7 6.♗d2 0-0 7.♖c1 when Black has chosen the Schlechter set-up. White has yet to develop his kingside. He deliberately waits, though: ♘f3 would allow ...♗g4, while ♗e2/d3 is met by ...dc4. Kruppa-Aronian, Linares 1998, saw: 7...♘bd7?! (this is a mistake, as the knight is misplaced after the exchange on d5 – it then belongs on c6. There are several playable alternatives: 7...♗f5, 7...♗e6 and 7...a6 spring to mind) 8.cxd5! cxd5 9.♘f3 a6 10.♕b3 e6 11.a4 ♖e8 12.♗e2±.

Also interesting is **5.♗g5** ♝g7 6.♗xf6 ♗xf6 7.cxd5 cxd5 8.e3 ♘c6 9.h5 g5 10.h6 e6 and in Claverie-Goloschapov, Le Touquet 2004, a draw was agreed. Apparently, the stronger (second) player did not trust his position here.

5...cxd5 6.♗f4

Controlling the e5 square, which is important, as the following game demonstrates: 6.♗g5 ♗g7 7.e3 ♘c6 8.♗d3 0-0 9.♘ge2 e5 10.dxe5 ♘xe5 11.♗c2 ♗e6 12.♘d4 ♖c8 13.♖b1 a6 14.♕e2 b5 15.♘xe6 fxe6 16.0-0 ♕c7 and in Parker-Webb, England 2001, a draw was agreed, but Black is slightly better. Note that we have a Slav Exchange here with h4 and g6 thrown in. A set-up with g6 is not to be recommended in the Slav Exchange. On the other hand, after 1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6

3.cxd5 cxd5 4.♘c3 ♘f6 5.♗f4 g6?! nobody would play 6.h4?! either. On the whole, White seems to be slightly better.



6...♗g7

To get a feel for the resulting positions, here are some other practical examples:

– 6...a6 7.e3 ♗g7 8.♗e2 (hoping to play h5 at some point) 8...h5?! 9.♘f3 ♘c6 10.♘e5 (now the position has stabilized. White has a favourable Slav Exchange) 10...0-0 11.0-0 ♗f5 12.♕b3 ♘a5 13.♕b4 ♘e4 14.♘xe4 ♗xe4 15.♖fc1± ♗xe5 16.dxe5 b5 17.a4 bxa4 18.♖xa4 ♘c4 19.b3 ♘b2 20.♖xa6 ♖xa6 21.♗xa6 ♘d3 22.♗xd3 ♗xd3 23.e6! f6 24.♖c7 ♖e8 25.♖b7 ♗a6 26.♖b8 ♗c8 27.♕c5 ♖f8 28.b4 1-0 Seres-Farkas, Szeged 1998.

– 6...♘c6 7.♘f3 ♗g7 8.e3 0-0 9.♘e5 ♕b6 10.♘xc6 bxc6 11.♕d2 ♖e8 12.♗e2 h6 13.♘a4 ♕b7 14.♘c5 ♕b6 15.♖c1 ♘d7 16.♘xd7 ♗xd7 17.0-0 e5 18.♗xe5 ♗xe5 19.dxe5 ♖xe5 20.♖fd1 ♖e4 21.g3 ♗g4 22.♗xg4 ♖xg4 23.b4± Krzyzanowski-Ros, e-mail corr. 2000.

– 6...♘c6 7.e3 a6 8.♗e2 ♗g7 9.h5 ♘e4 10.hxg6 hxg6 11.♖xh8+ ♗xh8 12.♘xe4 dxe4 13.♕c2 ♕a5+ 14.♔f1 ♗e6 15.♕xe4 ♗xa2 16.♘f3 ♗d5 17.♖xa5 ♗xe4 18.♖c5 ♖c8 19.♘d2 ♗f5 20.♗f3 ♘d8 21.♖c7 ♖xc7 22.♗xc7 b5 23.♘b3± Kahn-Szeberenyi, Budapest 2000.

7.e3 0-0

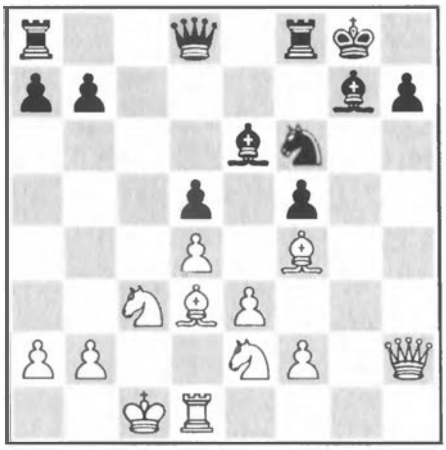
7...♘c6 8.h5 (this looks a bit drastic. The modest 8.♗e2 threatens h5 at some point. White has the slightly better chances) 8...0-0 (why not 8...♘xh5? Was White really planning 9.♖xh5 gxh5 10.♕xh5?) 9.hxg6 hxg6 10.♘f3 ♕b6 and Black is just in time to keep White busy; play is about equal, Bosboom-I.Sokolov, Leeuwarden 1997.

8.h5!

Black must have underestimated this exchange sacrifice. With the king on g8 – cf. Bosboom-Sokolov – White's compensation is obvious.

8...♘xh5 9.♖xh5 gxh5 10.♕xh5 f5 11.♗d3 e6 12.g4 ♘d7 13.gxf5 ♘f6 14.♕h2 exf5 15.♘ge2 ♗e6 16.0-0-0

White has excellent compensation for the exchange



16...♖f7 17.♖g1 ♖c8 18.f3 ♔h8 19.♔b1 ♖c6 20.♖h1 ♕g8 21.♘b5

Threatening both 22.♘d6 and 22.♘xa7.

21...♘e8 22.♘xa7 ♖b6 23.♘b5 ♗f6 24.♘bc3 ♖g7 25.♘a4 ♖c6 26.♘c5 ♗c8 27.♘g3 b6 28.♗b5!

Winning material.

28...bxc5 29.♗xc6 cxd4 30.♗xe8 dxe3

Black is trying to confuse the issue, but is getting nowhere.

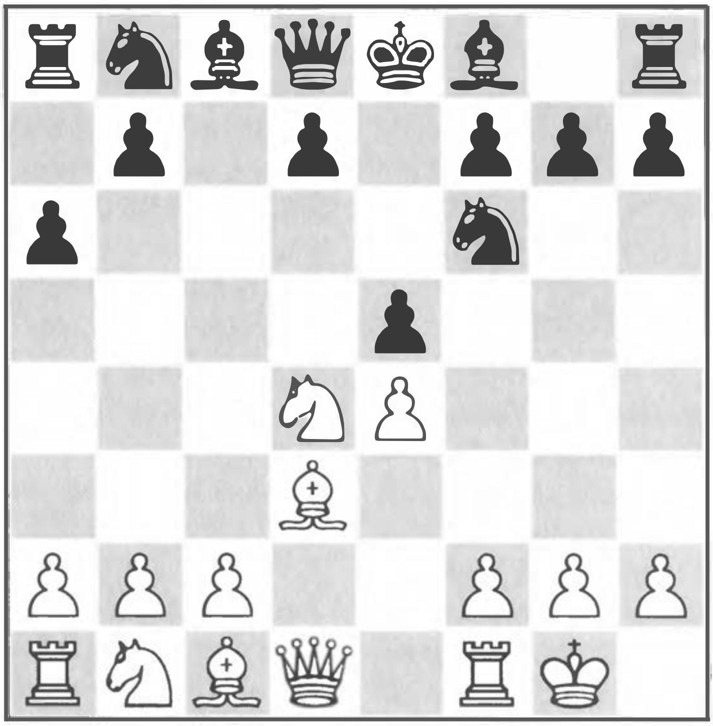
31.♗b5 d4 32.♘h5 ♖g2 33.♗e5!

And after this neat finish Black resigned. Cebalo-Brkic, Nova Gorica 2005.

CHAPTER 4

Oleg Romanishin

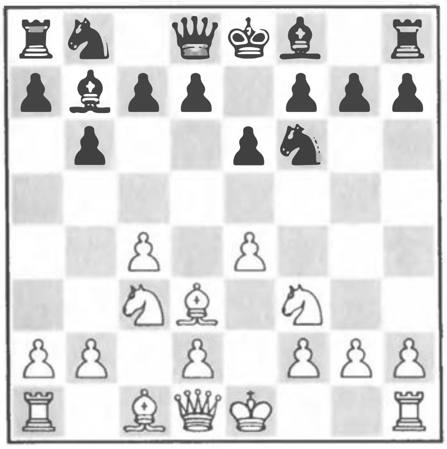
Catch-as-catch-Kan?



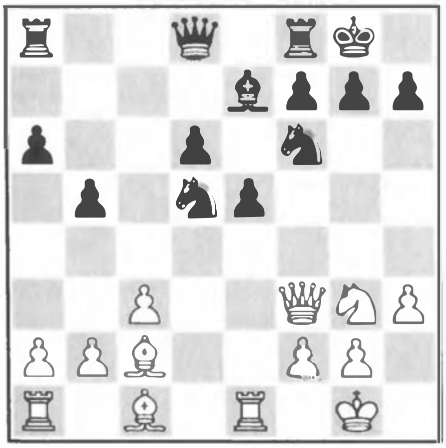
Sicilian Kan Variation with 6...e6-e5!?

Home preparation is becoming increasingly more important, as our rate of play is getting faster and faster. In the old days, facing a novelty during the game, you could just spend some time to find, if not the best, than at least a reasonable continuation. These days, you will have to react almost immediately, otherwise you'll be under time pressure until the end of the game. In my opinion this is an important argument against the new time control. The creative side of chess suffers too much at the expense of this strange wish to have chess players play with their 'hands' rather than with their heads. Indeed, even in the games of top players, a lot of mistakes occur – one need only examine the games from the 2004 FIDE World Championship. When a mistake is the result of strong and interesting play by one of the players, a so-called 'forced error', then there is no problem. But mostly these mistakes were merely the logical consequences of the new regulations. If you want to profit from this aspect of modern chess, then it is very useful to surprise your opponent with an unexpected manoeuvre, and better still, with some sharp variations. Even if the complications are slightly dubious: there is every chance of success as long as your opponent lacks the time to calculate deeply! Of course, objectively bad variations can never be recommended.

In the Soviet Championship of 1975 I managed to surprise two famous grandmasters: Tigran Petrosian with 1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 b6 4.e4 ♗b7 5.♗d3!?N



and Efim Geller with a pawn sacrifice after 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♗e7 6.♖e1 b5 7.♗b3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.d4 ♗g4 10.d5 ♘a5 11.♗c2 c6 12.h3 ♗xf3 13.♕xf3 cxd5 14.exd5 ♘c4 15.♘d2 ♘b6 16.♘f1! ♘bxd5 17.♘g3



winning both games. Later Tigran Petrosian said to me: 'You are lucky, to have shot two novelties in one tournament. Nevertheless, the event doesn't consist of those two games, but of the other fifteen' (the Soviet Championships were mostly played with eighteen participants).

The move **6...e6-e5!?** in the Sicilian Kan Variation is another way to start a psychological fight. Sometimes it is very efficient to radically change the course of play – avoiding your opponent's preparation and thwarting his expectations. Of course, White can steer the game into a well-known line from the Najdorf Variation with 7.♘b3 d6 8.♘c3 ♗e7 9.♗e2. However, there won't be all that many players ready to give back a tempo. On the other hand, White must realize that with a bishop on d3 he does not have enough control over the d5- and g4-squares. Nevertheless, it is clear that transferring the game to the 6.♗e2 line in the Najdorf is not the critical test of this variation. So after, 6...e5 White should look for other possibilities.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 a6 5.♗d3 ♘f6 6.0-0 e5!?

This move looks a bit strange and leads to positions that are not typical for the Paulsen/Kan Variation. It was, perhaps for the first time, played in the game Fedorowicz-Dorfman, New York Open 1989, which went: 7.♘f3 d6 8.♘c3 ♗e7 9.a4 b6 10.♘d2 0-0 11.♘c4.

I've played several games with this system, and I'll mention them with some short analyses. White has several options after the audacious **6...e5**:

A) 7.♘f5
B) 7.♘e2
C) 7.♘f3
D) 7.♘b3
E) 7.♗g5

Variation A

7.♘f5?!

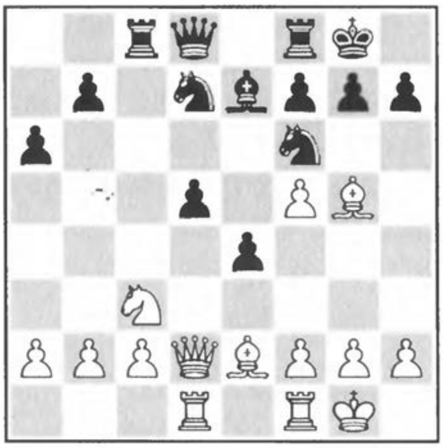
Hardly critical, Black gets to play both ...e5 and ...d5.

7...d5 8.♗g5

Of course not 8.exd5? e4.

8...♗xf5 9.exf5 e4

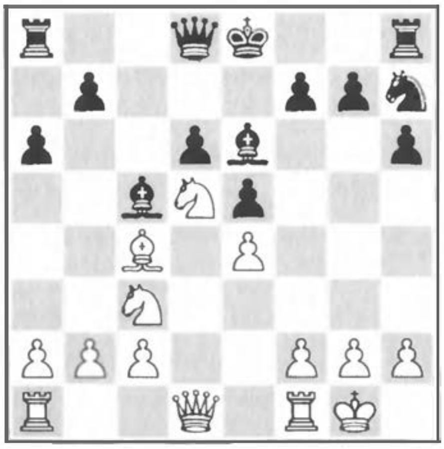
White would answer 9...♗e7 with 10.c4, when 10...e4 is well-met by 11.♗c2.
10.♗e2 ♗e7 11.♘c3 ♘bd7 12.♕d2 0-0 13.♖ad1 ♖c8



With more or less equal chances.

Variation B

7.♘e2 ♗c5
Developing the bishop outside the pawn-chain.
8.♗g5 d6 9.♘bc3 ♘bd7 10.♘d5 h6 11.♗xf6 ♘xf6 12.♘ec3
This is the point of White's 7th move – he gains control over the d5-square.
12...♗e6 13.♗c4 ♘h7!?



This odd move is in fact a nice strategical manoeuvre, which leaves White with two knights for only one square.
14.♕d3 0-0 15.♖ad1 ♖c8
Ipavec-Romanishin, Nova Gorica 1999.

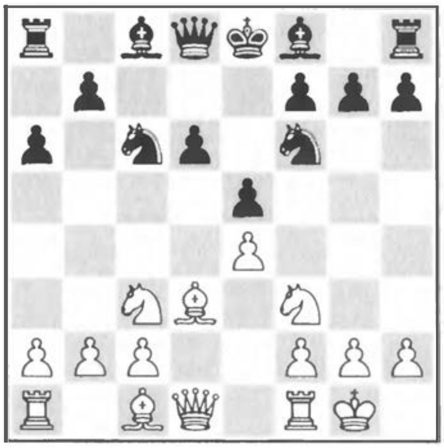
Variation C

7.♘f3 ♘c6
Here 7...d6?! 8.c4 is preferable for White.

C1) 8.♘c3
C2) 8.c4

Variation C1

8.♘c3 d6



Black has a decent position, as is demonstrated by the next two lines:

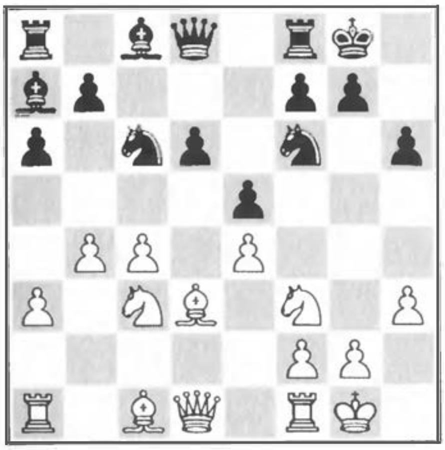
- **9.♘d5 ♘xd5 10.exd5 ♘e7 11.c4 g6** looks OK for Black. A playable alternative is **11...♘g6**.
- **9.♗g5 ♗e7 10.♗xf6 ♗xf6 11.♘d5 0-0 12.c3 ♗e6 13.♗c4 ♖c8 14.♕d3 ♘a5 15.♗b3 ♗g5 16.♖ad1 ♗h6 17.♕e2 ♔h8 18.♗c2 ♘c4 19.♗b3 ♘a5 20.♗c2 ♘c4 21.♗b3**

Play is about equal here. I now played somewhat inaccurately:
21...b5 22.a4 f5 23.exf5 ♗xf5 24.axb5 axb5 25.♗c2± Kutuzovic-Romanishin, Pula 1998.

Variation C2

8.c4 ♗c5 9.♘c3 d6 10.h3 h6
Both sides have prevented the pinning of their knights.

11.a3 0-0 12.b4 ♗a7



Black should be fine. Thus, **13.♕e2** may be answered by both 13...♘h5!? and by 13...♘d4 14.♘xd4 exd4 15.♘d5 ♗e6. While, **13.♖e1** presents no problems for the second player after 13...♗e6 14.♗e3 ♗xe3 15.♖xe3 ♘d4.

Variation D

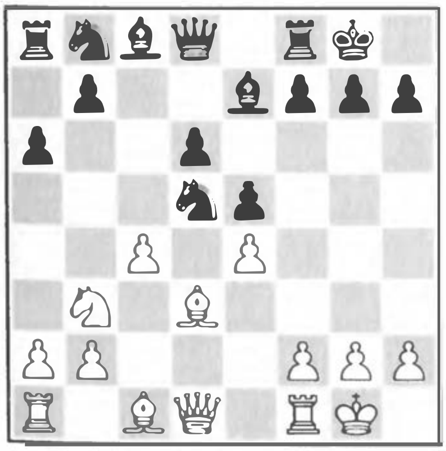
7.♘b3 d6

D1) 8.c4
D2) 8.♘c3

Variation D1

8.c4 ♗e7 9.♘c3 0-0 10.♘d5 ♘xd5

It was more flexible not to open the c-line and to keep the position closed with 10...♘bd7 11.♗e3 a5.



11.exd5?

From time to time the Computer makes such stupid moves. After 11.cxd5 ♘d7 (11...f5 12.exf5 ♗xf5 13.♗xf5 ♖xf5 14.♘d2 ♘d7 15.♘e4 is simply better for White) 12.♗e3 ♗g5 13.♕d2 ♗xe3 14.♕xe3 a5 Black should keep the position.

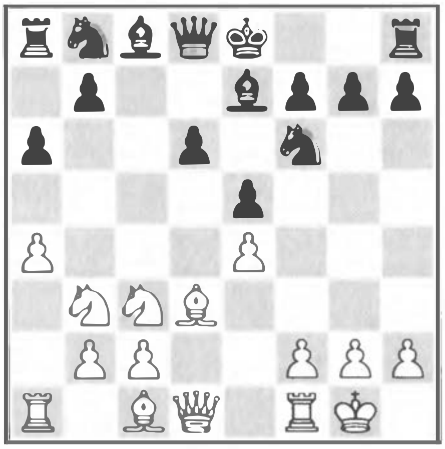
11...f5 12.♗d2 a5 13.a4 b6 14.♗c2 ♘a6 15.♕e2 ♗f6∓

PConNers (computer)-Romanishin, Lippstadt 1999.

Variation D1

8.♘c3 ♗e7 9.a4

Like I mentioned above, White can simply transfer to a well-known Najdorf line here with 9.♗e2, but – and here is the catch – who is going to throw away a tempo like that?



This position occurred twice in my own practice.

- **9...b6 10.♗g5 ♘bd7 11.♘d2 ♘c5?! 12.♗xf6 ♗xf6 13.♘c4 ♗b7**

And now White withdrew his bishop:

14.♗e2

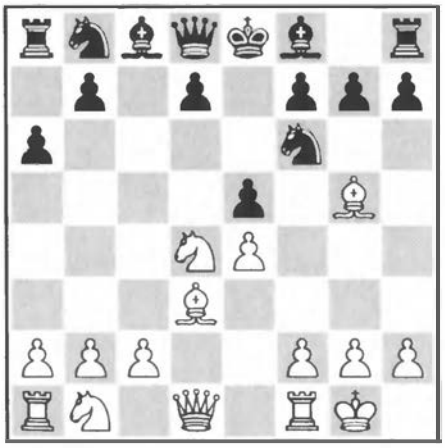
With a slight edge in Herrera-Romanishin, Linares 1999.

- **9...♗e6 10.♗e3 ♘c6 11.♘d2 ♖c8 12.♗c4 0-0 13.♗g5 ♘b4 14.♗xf6 ♗xf6 15.♘d5 ♘xd5 16.♗xd5 ♗xd5 17.exd5 ♗g5 18.♘f3 f5**

And Black was slightly better in the game McShane-Romanishin, Lippstadt 1999.

Variation E

7.♗g5!?



This brilliant move was invented by the British grandmaster Peter Wells. Perhaps, it the most promising, and certainly the most dangerous, continuation. Let us first investigate the dangers that Black is running here by examining two sample lines:

– 7...exd4?! 8.e5 ♕a5 9.♗d2 followed by 10.exf6 gives White excellent attacking chances.

– 7...d6?! 8.♘f5 ♗xf5 9.♗xf6! gxf6 10.exf5 d5 11.c4 dxc4 12.♗xc4 ♕xd1 13.♖xd1 ♘c6 14.♘c3 ♗e7 15.♗d5 ♖b8 16.♗xc6+ bxc6 17.♘a4± was the stem game Wells-Romanishin, Berlin 1999. The game ended in a draw, but White has a considerable positional advantage at this stage.

After 7.♗g5 Black's two main options are:

E1) 7...h6
E2) 7...d5

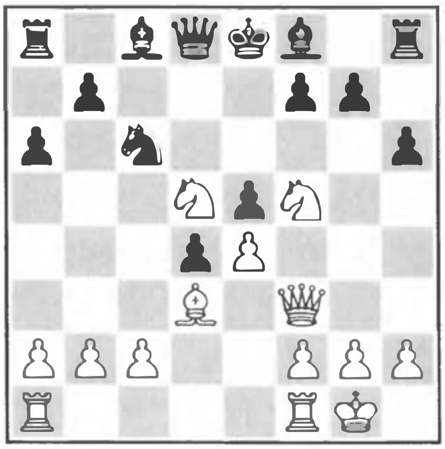
Variation E1

7...h6!? 8.♗xf6 ♕xf6 9.♘f5

After 9.♘f3 ♗c5 10.♘c3 d6 11.♘d5 ♕d8 12.♘h4!? 0-0 13.♘f5 ♗xf5 14.exf5 ♘d7 Black has an equal game.

9...d5 10.♘c3 d4 11.♘d5 ♕d8 12.♕f3 ♘c6

If Black plays the immediate 12...g6 White has the retort 13.♕g3! planning 13...♘c6 14.♘xd4! with a clear edge.



In this complex position White has two options:

● **13.c3 g6 14.♘xd4 exd4 15.♘f6+ ♔e7 16.♘d5+** to repeat the moves.

● **13.♗c4 ♗e6**

Of course not 13...g6? 14.♘g3 ♗g7 15.♘b6. The move 13...♘a5 is simply answered by 14.♗b3.

14.♕g3 g6 15.♘d4

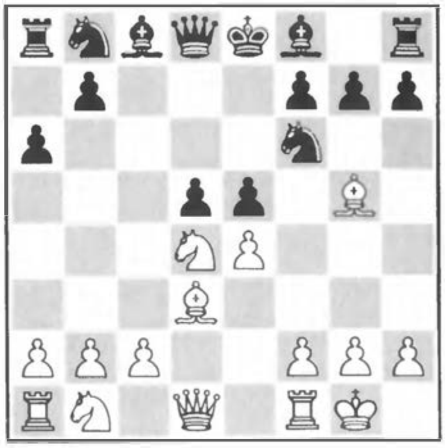
Dubious is 15.f4 gf5 16.fe5 ♕g5 (or first 16...f4) 17.♘c7 ♔d8.

15...ed4 16.♘c7 ♚d7 17.♗e6 fe6 18.♘a8 ♕a8

And Black is OK in this sharp position.

Variation E2

7...d5



8.♘f3

Best, by attacking e5 White keeps the initiative. Black, however, is now able to transfer the game into a sharp 'ending'.

8...dxe4

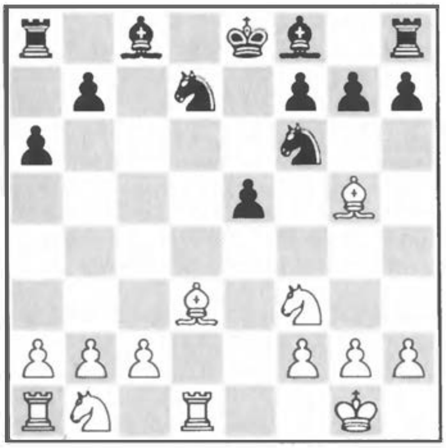
No good is 8...♘c6? 9.exd5 ♕xd5 10.♗xf6 gxf6 11.c4! ♕d8 12.♘c3 f5 13.♕e2 ♗g7 14.♖ad1 when White has a dangerous initiative.

9.♗xe4 ♕xd1 10.♖xd1 ♘bd7!?

The text is better than 10...♝e7 11.♗xf6 ♗xf6 12.♘c3 ♘d7 13.♘d5 ♗d8 14.c4 0-0 15.b4 f5 16.♗c2 and White keeps a slight advantage.

After 10...♘bd7 Black intends to counter 11.♗f5 by 11...♘b6! 12.♗xc8♖xc8 13.♘xe5 (or 13.♘c3 ♘fd7) 13...♖xc2 with adequate counterplay. Therefore White continues

11.♗d3



E21) 11...h6!?
E22) 11...♘d5!?

Variation E21

11...h6!? 12.♗h4

Alternatively, 12.♗xf6 gxf6 13.♘c3 ♘b6 14.♘h4 is well-met by 14...♗b4!, intending 15.♗e4 ♝xc3 16.bxc3 ♘a4!.

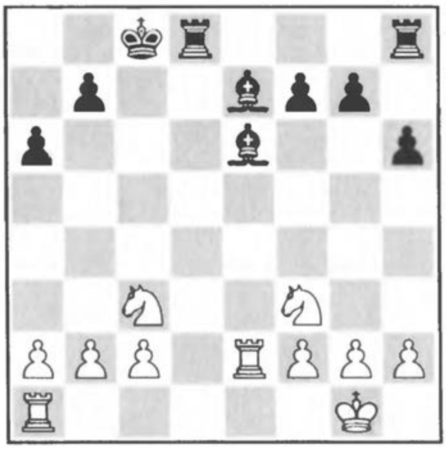
12...e4 13.♖e1 ♗e7

Don't fall for 13...g5? 14.♗g3 ♗e7 15.♘c3 exd3 16.♗d6.

14.♗xf6

And here White can take a wrong turn with 14.♗xe4? g5 15.♗g3 ♘xe4 16.♖xe4 f5.

14...♘xf6 15.♗xe4 ♘xe4 16.♖xe4 ♗f5 17.♖e2 ♗e6 18.♘c3 0-0-0



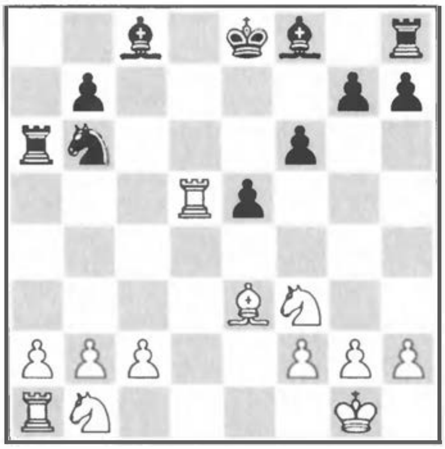
With good compensation due to the pair of bishops.

Variation E22

11...♘d5!?

Offering a pawn.

12.♗xa6 ♖xa6 13.♖xd5 f6 14.♗e3 ♘b6



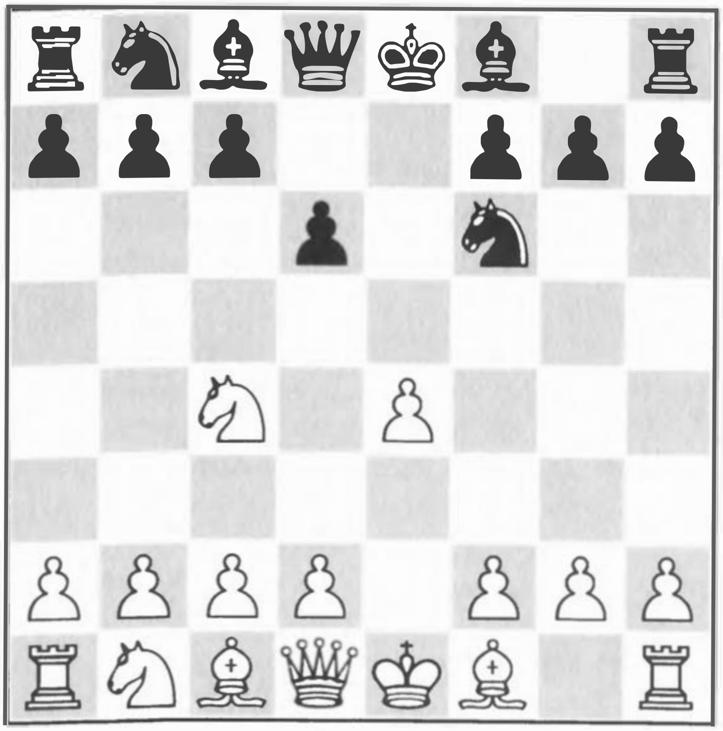
Black has compensation for the pawn as the following lines should prove:

- **15.♖d1** ♝f5 16.c3 ♘c4 17.♗c1 ♗xb1 18.♖xb1 ♖xa2=.
- **15.♖b5** ♘c4 16.♘bd2 (16.♘c3 ♖c6) 16...♘xe3 17.fxe3 ♖c6 18.c4 b6.
- **15.♗xb6** ♖xb6 16.b3.

CHAPTER 5

David Navara

The Paulsen Attack in the Petroff



Play 4.♘c4!? en route to e3

Introduction

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♘xe5 d6 4.♘c4

According to my database, Louis Paulsen was the first player who played this line. He played it twice in 1887. Let us start with comparing the surprising knight move with the familiar 4.♘f3. White's knight is exposed on c4, so subsequently White often has to play ♘e3. Surprisingly, the knight might be very well-placed here. It attacks the d5-pawn, especially in combination with ♗d3 and c4. In comparison to the classical variations, the pieces of both sides are in worse places. Clearly, the positions that arise from Paulsen's Variation are far more unusual. To be honest, objectively I think that 4.♘c4 allows Black to equalize at some point. However, let us not forget that in the main line White must make a big effort to reach a slightly better position. It is for this reason that I employed this variation against GM Alexandra Kosteniuk. She reacted well and reached equality in the early stage of the game. A few months later, GM Shirov played the Petroff defence against me. He told me he was looking forward to meeting 4.♘c4. Be that as it may, let's look at (and play) Paulsen's 4.♘c4.

Naturally, the move

4...♘xe4

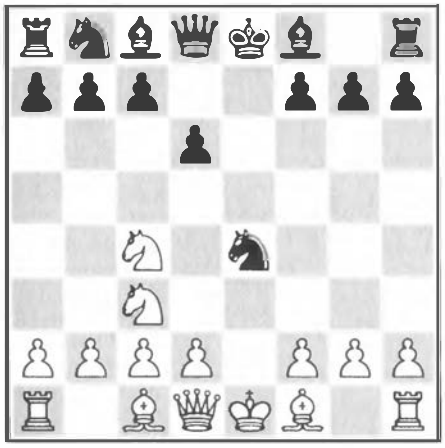
is practically forced, as 4...♕e7 5.♘e3 ♘xe4 6.d4 is advantageous for White. Now White has three normal continuations:

– 5.♘c3
– 5.d4 d5 6.♘e3
– 5.♕e2

Other moves are not very good, e.g. 5.d3 ♘f6 6.d4 d5 7.♘e5 is a transposition into an exchange variation of the French Defence. 7.♘e3 does not seem very dangerous, either. In my opinion, the black knight is more vulnerable on e4. So more logical is 5.♘e3, when 5...d5 (5...g6=) 6.d4 is a mere transposition, whereas 6.♗e2 ♗e6 is too passive.

Old Main Line

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♘xe5 d6 4.♘c4 ♘xe4 5.♘c3



This move caused a revival of this variation in the 1990s. However, this line is not very dangerous for Black.

5...♘xc3

Black has satisfactory results with 5...♘f6 (I find this retreat a bit strange, but the knight on c4 is not placed ideally) 6.d4 ♗e7 (6...d5 7.♘e5± looks like a strange version of the Exchange Variation of the French Defence. White's chances are only slightly better) 7.♗e2 (7.♗d3 ♘c6 8.d5 ♘e5 9.♘xe5 dxe5 10.0-0 0-0 11.♖e1 ♘d7 12.♗f5 ♘b6 13.♗xc8 was played in a game Khairullin-Bezgodov. According to Bezgodov, both ♖xc8 and ♕xc8 should be sufficient for equality as Black has enough compensation for the pawn after 14.♖xe5 ♗f6) 7...0-0 8.0-0 d5 9.♘e5 (9.♘e3 ♗e6 followed by c5 is OK for Black) 9...♗f5 with equal play.

6.bxc3

The alternative is 6.dxc3 d5 7.♘e3, when after 7...c6 8.♕d4!? the lines fork:

– Black's queen would be misplaced after 8...♕b6 9.♕f4.

– 8...♘d7 9.c4! (9.♗d3 ♕f6!?=) 9...♕f6 10.♕xf6 ♘xf6 11.cxd5 cxd5 12.c3 (12.♗b5+ ♗d7 13.♗xd7+ ♔xd7 14.0-0 ♗c5 and the white knight is misplaced). I do not know whether White objectively stands a bit better or not, but 12...♗c5 13.♘c2 ♗f5 14.♗e3 is preferable for White.

– 8...♗e6 9.f4 (otherwise would Black play ♘d7) 9...f6 10.c4 c5 (10...dxc4 11.♕e4 ♕e7 12.♗xc4 ♗xc4 13.♕xc4 ♕b4+ 14.♗d2±) 11.♕d3 d4 12.♕e4 ♕e7 13.♘d5 ♗xd5 14.♕xe7+ ♗xe7 (14...♔xe7!? 15.cxd5 ♔d6 16.g3 ♘d7 17.c4 f5=) 15.cxd5 ♘d7 16.c4, Sulskis-Zulfugarli, Bydgoszcz 1999, seems to be equal.

Instead of 7...c6 Black can also play 7...♗e6!?, as the game is equal after both 8.♗d3 ♗c5, and 8.♕h5 ♕d6 9.♗d2 ♘d7 10.0-0-0 0-0-0, Benjamin-Lev, London 1987.

6...d5 7.♘e3 c6

This move, which prepares 8...♗d6, seems to be the best reaction to White's set-up.

8.d4 ♘d7

After 8...♗d6 9.♗d3 (9.c4 dxc4 10.♗xc4 0-0 11.0-0) 9...0-0 10.0-0 f5 11.f4 ♗e6 Black has equalized. In Mochna-Sudakova, St Petersburg 2002, White continued 12.g4?!, but Black was better after 12...fxg4 13.f5 ♕h4 14.♘xg4 ♗f7 15.♗f4 ♗xf4 16.♖xf4 ♕g5 17.♕f1 ♘d7 (17...h5 18.h4!).

9.♗d3 ♘f6 10.0-0 ♗e7 11.♘f5 ♗xf5 12.♗xf5 0-0

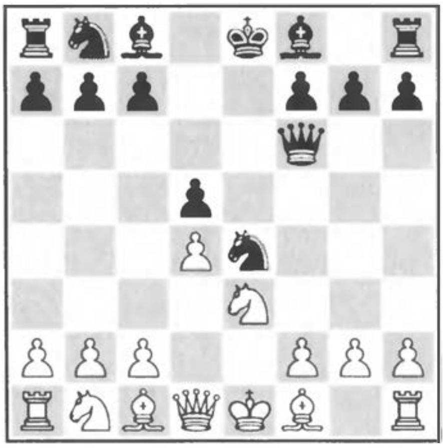
White has the bishop pair, but his pawn structure gives Black enough counter-chances, Velickovic-Mikhalchishin, Cetinje 1992.

Paulsen's idea

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♘xe5 d6 4.♘c4 ♘xe4 5.d4 d5 6.♘e3

This is Paulsen's idea. GM Smagin played it until 1990.

6...♕f6



We will treat this as the main line, because Black has terrible results with many of the normal moves, including 6...♗e6, 6...♗e7 and so on. Let us investigate, for, objectively, they cannot be all that bad:

● **6...♗e6** 7.♗d3 ♗d6, with two options.

– 8.c4 ♗b4+?! (8...c6 9.♕b3 ♕c7=) 9.♔f1! 0-0? (9...c6 10.cxd5 cxd5 11.♗xe4 dxe4 12.d5 ♗d7 13.♕d4 and the arising complications seem to be in White's favour) 10.a3 ♗e7 11.cxd5 ♗xd5 12.♘xd5 ♕xd5 13.♕e2+– ♕c6 14.♕xe4 ♕xc1+ 15.♔e2 ♕xb2+ 16.♘d2 f5 (16...g6 17.♖hb1) 17.♕xe7 ♘c6.

– 8.0-0 0-0 9.c4 c6 10.♘c3 (10.♗xe4 dxe4 11.d5 cxd5 12.cxd5 ♗d7 13.♘c3 ♕h4 14.g3 ♕e7 15.f3 exf3 16.♕xf3=) 10...♘xc3 11.bxc3 ♘d7 equal.

Instead of 7.♗d3 I played 7.♘d2?! ♘xd2 8.♗xd2 c5! when Black had easily equalised in Navara-Kosteniuk, Lausanne 2004: 9.♗b5+ ♘c6 10.♗c3 (10.c3=) 10...♕b6 11.♗xc6+ bxc6 12.0-0 and now White has to be careful. After 12...♗d6 13.♕d2 0-0 14.dxc5 ♗xc5 15.b4 the game was equal.

● **6...♗e7** 7.♗d3 (after 7.♘d2 ♘xd2 8.♗xd2 White has at best a tiny edge) 7...0-0 8.0-0 ♘f6 (8...♘c6 9.c3) 9.♘f5 (or 9.♘d2 c5!? 10.dxc5 ♗xc5 11.♘b3 ♗b6 12.♘f5 ♘e4=) 9...♗xf5 10.♗xf5 with a minimal advantage.

● **6...c6** and again White can consider both 7.♗d3 and 7.♘d2.

– 7.♗d3 ♗d6, and now:

  – 8.c4 0-0 9.cxd5 ♕h4 10.♗xe4 (10.g3 ♗xg3 11.fxg3 ♘xg3∞) 10...♕xe4 11.♘c3 ♕h4 with good compensation.

  – 8.♘d2 f5 is also good for Black. In Tigran L. Petrosian-Nasri, Fajr 2003, White played 9.c4 f4 10.cxd5 ♘xd2 11.♘c2, but Black reached a good position after 11...♕e7+ 12.♕e2 (12.♔xd2 0-0=∞) 12...♘f3+! 13.gxf3 ♕xe2+ 14.♔xe2 cxd5.

  – 8.0-0 0-0 9.c4 ♗e6 (for some strange reason, this move has not been played so far) 10.♘c3 (10.♗xe4 dxe4 11.♘c3 f5 12.d5 cxd5 13.cxd5 ♗d7 looks like an equal position, especially since 14.♘c4 fails to 14...♗xh2+) 10...♘xc3 11.bxc3 ♘d7 with equality.

– More chances for an advantage are offered by 7.♘d2 ♘xd2 (7...♗d6 8.♘xe4 dxe4 9.♗c4 0-0 10.0-0 with an idea f2-f3 is a bit unpleasant for Black. Perhaps simply 7...♗e7!?) 8.♗xd2 ♘d7 (White's pieces are a bit better placed, but Black has no major problems) 9.♕e2 (or 9.♕f3!?) 9...♕e7 10.0-0-0 ♘f6 11.♗b4 ♕e6 12.♗xf8 ♖xf8 planning ♗d7, 0-0-0.

● **6...♘c6** 7.c3 ♗e6 8.♘d2 (8.♗d3 ♕h4!? 9.♕f3 0-0-0 10.♘d2!?) 8...f5 9.♕b3!?.

● **6...g6** was twice played by Mikhalchishin, but White was better in Smagin-Mikhalchishin, Russian Championship Riga 1985, after 7.♘d2 ♗g7 8.♘xe4 dxe4 9.c3 0-0 10.♗c4 ♘d7 11.0-0 c5 12.dxc5 ♘xc5 13.♕c2 ♗e6 14.♖d1! (Smagin).

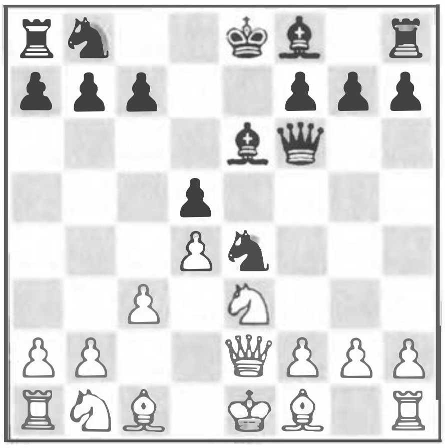
7.♕e2

More spectacular is 7.♗b5+ which was once played by Smagin: 7...c6 8.0-0cxb5 (accepting the challenge, 8...♗e6 leads to an equal position) 9.♘xd5 ♕d6 10.♖e1 ♕xd5 11.♞c3 ♕d8 12.♖xe4+ ♗e7 13.♗g5 (in the game happened 13.♕e2, when Black could have played 13...♗f5 14.♖e5 ♘c6∓. However, Black transposed to the main line after 13...♘c6 14.♗g5) 13...♘c6 (13...f6 14.♗xf6 gxf6 15.♕h5+ ♔f8 16.♖ae1 ♘c6 17.♘d5 probably leads to a draw) 14.♕e2

- 14...f6 15.d5 ♘e5 (15...♗f5 16.dxc6 ♗xe4 17.♕xe4=) 16.♘xb5 is about equal, as White has enough compensation after 16...a6 (16...0-0 17.d6 ♗xd6 18.♖d1) 17.♖xe5! fxe5 18.♗xe7 ♔xe7 19.♕xe5+.
- 14...♗e6 15.♗xe7 ♘xe7 16.d5 ♘xd5 17.♖d1 is equal according to Smagin.
- 14...♗f5 15.♗xe7 ♘xe7 16.♖e5 0-0 17.♖xe7 ½-½ Smagin-Makarichev, Moscow 1987.

7...♗e6 8.c3

But not 8.g3? ♕xd4 (Sulskis-Mamedyarov, Dubai 2002) 9.♕b5+ ♘d7 10.♕xb7 ♖b8 11.♕xc7 ♗d6 12.♕c6 0-0∓ (12...♖xb2!?).



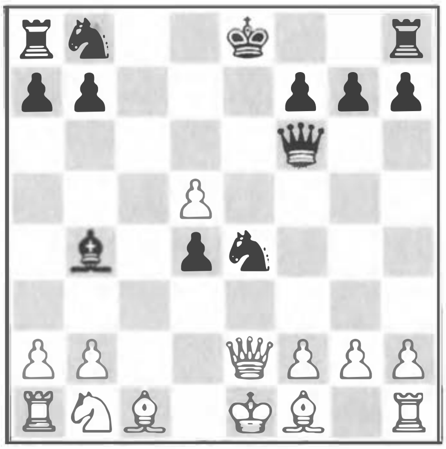
8...c6!

Less accurate is **8...♘c6**. White should not play 9.g3, as this allows Black to play 9...0-0-0 10.♗g2 ♕g6 (10...h5 11.♘d2 ♘xd2 12.♗xd2 h4 is about equal) 11.♘d2 f5 12.♘xe4 fxe4 13.f3 (13.♗d2 h5!?) 13...exf3 14.♗xf3 ♗d6 with equality.

Stronger is 9.♘d2 0-0-0, when:

- 10.♘xd5 cannot offer White any advantage. The following continuation seems to be the simplest way to equality: 10...♗xd5 11.♘xe4 ♗xe4 (11...♕g6!? 12.♘g3 ♗d6 promises Black full compensation, e.g. 13.♕h5 ♕e6+ 14.♗e3 g6=) 12.♕xe4 ♘xd4! 13.♗d3 (not 13.cxd4?? ♗b4+, after 13.♗e3 ♘f5 Black has no problems) 13...♗c5. The game is equal. Therefore, stronger is
- 10.g3 ♘xd2 (10...♕g6 11.♘xe4 dxe4 12.♗g2 f5 13.f3 seems to be slightly better for White as Black's knight is not placed very well) 11.♗xd2 h5 12.h4± (12.♗g2 Smagin-Makarichev, Moscow 1990, 12...h4 13.0-0-0 is also playable) and White has better prospects owing to the weakness of the d5-pawn. White intends 13.0-0-0, ♗g2, ♗f3, ♘g2, ♘f4.

8...c5 was played only once, in Jansa-Volkmann (Austria tt 2002), but it deserves serious attention. After 9.c4! (9.dxc5 ♗xc5 and White's knight is placed pretty badly) 9...cxd4 10.♘xd5 ♗xd5 11.cxd5 ♗b4+



Not dangerous is 12.♔d1: 12...♕e7 13.f3 (13.♘d2 ♗xd2 14.♗xd2 ♘d7=) 13...♘f6 (13...♘d6?! 14.a3 ♗a5 15.♗f4) 14.♕xe7+ (14.a3 ♗d6 15.♕xe7+ ♔xe7 16.♗c4 ♘bd7 does not cause a big difference) 14...♔xe7 15.♗c4 ♖c8 and Black has equalised.

Therefore, Jansa played 12.♗d2, when after

12...♕e7 13.♗xb4 ♕xb4+ 14.♘d2 ♕xd2+ 15.♕xd2 ♘xd2 16.♔xd2 ♔e7 17.♔d3 ♖d8, as in the game, I think that White could have preserved some edge with 18.♔xd4 (18.♖e1+ ♔f6 19.♔xd4 ♘c6+ and ♘e7 is good for Black) 18...♘c6+ 19.♔c5 (19.♔e4 f5+=) 19...♘e5 20.♖d1 ♖ac8+ 21.♔d4 ♔d6 (21...♔f6 22.f4) 22.♖e1, but I can easily be wrong.

Instead of going for the ending, Black could also try 14...♔d8!?, and White has to be careful in order to avoid difficulties: 15.f3! (15.0-0-0 ♕c5+ is good for Black after both 16.♔b1 d3! 17.♕e1 ♕c2+ 18.♔a1 ♘xf2 19.♖c1 ♖e8! and 16.♘c4 ♖e8 with threats 17...d3 and 17...b5) 15...♘g3 16.hxg3 ♖e8 17.♖xh7 ♖xe2+ 18.♗xe2 and White has a small advantage as the move 18...♔e7 (18...♕f8 19.0-0-0 ♘d7 20.♘e4±; 18...♘d7 19.♖h8+ ♘f8 20.a3 ♕e7 21.♘e4±) is met by 19.♖h8! ♕c5 20.♘e4 (20.♗c4!?) 20...♕xd5 21.♖c1.

9.♘d2

White cannot get along without this move and 9.g3 ♘d7 10.♗g2 ♕g6 (10...♗d6!? 11.f3 ♗xg3+!; 11...♘g5 12.h4 ♗xg3+ 13.♔d1) 11.♘d2 f5 is OK for Black. After 12.♘xe4!? (White needs to destroy Black's centre otherwise he would be worse) the chances are equal:

– 12...fxe4 13.f3 ♘f6 (13...exf3 14.♗xf3 0-0-0 15.♘g2!?) 14.fxe4 ♘xe4 15.0-00-0-0.

– 12...dxe4 13.f3exf3 14.♗xf3 0-0-0 15.0-0 ♗d6 16.d5 cxd5 17.♘xd5.

9...♘xd2

Also playable is 9...♘d7: 10.g3 ♕g6 11.♘xe4 dxe4 12.♗g2 f5 13.f3 exf3 14.♗xf3 0-0-0 15.0-0 ♗d6 16.d5 cxd5 17.♘xd5=, Yegiazarian-Mamedyarov, Tbilisi 2001.

10.♗xd2

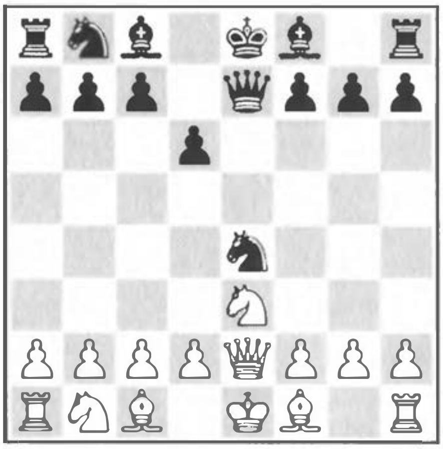
Nothing is promised by 10.♕xd2.

10...♘d7 11.g3 ♗d6 12.♗g2 0-0 13.0-0 ♕g6

With equality.

The strongest line

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♘xe5 d6 4.♘c4 ♘xe4 5.♕e2 ♕e7 6.♘e3



This line is the 'youngest' one. White has good results with it. Nevertheless, Black should not have any problems if he plays well.

Innocuous is 6.d3 ♘f6 7.♗g5 ♗e6; ♘c4 is not placed very well, now.

6...c6

Sensible is 6...♘f6. Nothing is gained by 7.b3 ♘c6 8.♗b2 ♗e6, or by 7.d4 d5 8.b3 ♘c6 9.c3 ♗d7.

White's main attempt after 6...♘f6 is 7.g3:

– 7...♗d7 8.♗g2 ♗c6 9.f3 g6 10.♘c3 (10.0-0 ♗g7 11.♖e1 0-0 12.d4 ♖e8 is OK for Black, as 12.c4 is harmless due to 12...d5) 10...♘bd7! (10...♗g7 11.d4 0-0 12.d5 ♗d7 13.0-0 and White was better, Planinc-Jones, Nice Olympiad 1974) 11.d4 ♘b6 12.♗d2 planning to castle queenside is slightly better for White owing to a spatial advantage.

– 7...d5 (for some curious reason, this move was not played so far) 8.d4 ♘c6 9.c3 ♗e6 10.♗g2 0-0-0 11.0-0 and Black cannot be worse after both 11...h5 and 11...♕d7.

Playable is 6...♗e6 7.g3 (7.d4 d5 8.♘d2 might be more dangerous) 7...♘c6 8.♗g2 d5 9.0-0 0-0-0 10.c3 h5 when Black was OK, Cabrilo-Marciano, Sabac 1998.

7.c4 g6 8.d3

Alternatively, 8.g3 does not seem to be very dangerous 8...♗g7 9.♗g2 0-0 10.0-0 ♘g5 (also logical is 10...♖e8). So far the game B.Jaracz-Lysiak, Wisla Hugart open 1999. In this position a logical continuation wouldbe 11.♘c3♗h3 12.f4♗.xg2 13.♕xg2 ♘e6 after which 14.f5 ♘c5 15.f6 does not work: 15...♗xf6 16.♘ed5 cxd5 17.♘xd5 ♗d4+.

8...♘g5

Also natural is 8...♘f6:

● 9.♘c3 .♗g7 10.g3 0-0 11.♗g2 ♘a6 was played in the game Sasu-Ionescu, Bucharest 1998. The game continued 12.d4 ♘c7 13.d5 (13.0-0 d5 14.b3!?=) after which Black could play 13...cxd5 14.♘cxd5 (14.cxd5 b6) 14...♘cxd5 15.♘xd5 ♘xd5 16.♗xd5 ♖e8 with a pleasant game. I would prefer 12.0-0, especially when it is not a good idea to play 12...♘c5?! 13.d4 ♘ce4? because of 14.♘c2 ♖e8 15.♖e1. White position seems a bit better to me.

● 9.b3!? ♗g7 10.♗b2 0-0 11.♘c3

– 11...♖e8!? 12.0-0-0 d5 13.d4 ♗e6 (13...♗h6 14.h3!? ♗xe3+ 15.♕xe3 ♕xe3+ 16.fxe3 ♖xe3 17.g4=) 14.♕f3 leads to a complicated position with equal chances.

– 11...a5 12.0-0-0 ♘bd7. Would you guess that this position originated from the Petroff Defence? 13.♖e1 ♘b6 14.♘g4 ♕xe2?! (14...♗e6 15.♘xf6+ .♗xf6 gives Black more play, a5-a4 might be dangerous) 15.♘xf6+ ♗xf6 16.♗xe2± happened in Cicak-Oral, Ostrava 1998.

9.♗d2 ♗g7 10.♗c3 ♗xc3+ 11.♘xc3 ♘e6 12.♘c2

More promising than 12.0-0-0 ♘d4 13.♕d2 ♗e6 14.♘e2, which is about equal after 14...♕f6 15.♘xd4 ♕xd4 16.♘c2 ♕f6.

12...c5

Black misses his g7-bishop after 12...0-0 13.0-0-0±.

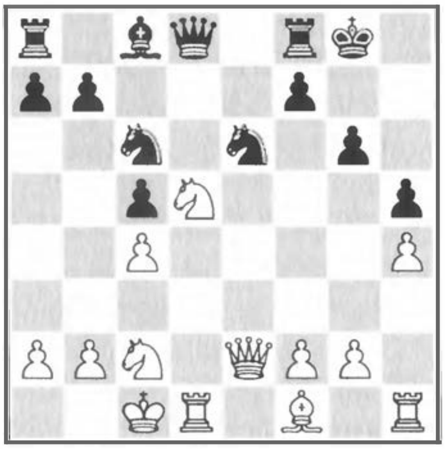
13.♘d5 ♕d8 14.h4

This may not be the strongest move. 14.0-0-0!? ♘c6 15.d4 0-0 16.dxc5 dxc5 17.h4 ♘ed4 18.♘xd4 cxd4 19.h5 b5 leads to complications which seem to be favourable for White after 20.♕f3 (20.cxb5 ♕xd5 21.bxc6 ♗e6↑) 20...♗f5 21.g4 ♕g5+ 22.♖d2 ♘e5 23.♕a3! (23.♕g3 ♘xg4 24.f3 ♖ac8 25.♖g1 d3) 23...♘xg4 24.f4 ♕d8 25.♘e7+ and White is better, especially after: 25...♔g7 26.♗g2 ♘e3 27.♗xa8 ♕xa8 28.♖dh2.

14...h5?!

Better is 14...♘c6 15.h5 0-0 16.0-0-0 ♘ed4, e.g. 17.♘xd4 ♘xd4 18.♘e7+ ♔g7 19.♕e3 ♗e6 20.hxg6 hxg6 and Black has no problems.

15.0-0-0 ♘c6 16.d4 0-0 17.dxc5 dxc5



And now, instead of 18.♕e3 (as in Cabrilo-Marjanovic, Pancevo 1987) when Black could have equalized with 18...♘ed4!, I prefer

18.g4 ♘ed4

Of course, 18...hxg4 19.♕xg4 is very risky, too.

19.♘xd4 ♘xd4 20.♕e5 f6 21.♘e7+

21.♕e4!? f5 22.gxf5 ♗xf5 23.♘e7+ is also very promising.

21...♔f7 22.♕xc5 ♕xe7 23.♕xe7+ ♔xe7 24.♖xd4

And after 25.♗g2 White will have a huge advantage.

Let us examine two recent games in this modern line.

☐ **Mladen Palac**
■ **Ante Saric**
Zagreb ch-CRO 2004

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♘xe5 d6 4.♘c4 ♘xe4 5.♕e2 ♕e7 6.♘e3 ♘f6 7.d4 g6

I believe that 7...d5 is stronger.

8.♘c3 c6

White can choose between two promising moves after 8...♗g7 as both 9.g3 and 9.♘ed5 ♘xd5 10.♘xd5 ♕xe2+ 11.♗xe2 ♔d7 give him the slightly better chances.

9.d5

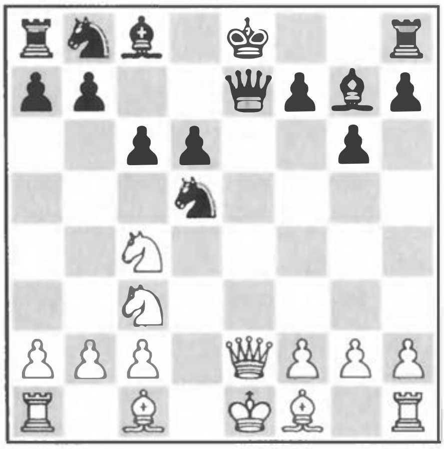
Otherwise Black would play d6-d5 with a solid position.

9...♗g7

The move 9...♘bd7 also has its drawbacks: 10.♗d2 (10.g3 ♘b6 11.♗g2 cxd5 12.♘cxd5 ♘bxd5 13.♘xd5 ♘xd5 14.♗xd5 ♗e6 15.♗g2 ♗g7=) 10...♗g7 11.0-0-0 ♘b6 (11...0-0 12.♘c4±) 12.♘c4 (12.♕f3 ♕c7±) 12...♕xe2 13.♗xe2 ♘xc4 14.♗xc4 White is better as Black has serious problems with his d6-pawn.

10.♘c4 ♘xd5

Black does not want to develop the white bishop for free: 10...♕xe2+?! 11.♗xe2 ♘xd5 12.♘xd5 cxd5 13.♘xd6+ is quite similar to the game continuation.



11.♘xd5

I believe that 11.♘xd6+ was stronger, e.g. 11...♔d7 12.♕xe7+ ♔xe7 13.♘xc8+ ♖xc8 14.♗g5+ ♗f6 15.♘xd5+ cxd5 16.♗xf6+ ♔xf6 17.0-0-0±.

11...♕xe2+

Another possibility was 11...cxd5 12.♘xd6+ ♔d7 13.♕xe7+ (13.♘xc8 ♖xc8 14.♗e3? ♕b4+ 15.c3? ♗xc3+) 13...♔xe7 and now:

- 14.♘xc8+ ♖xc8 15.♗d3 (15.♗g5+ f6 16.♗d2 ♖xc2 17.♗c3 d4 18.♗xd4 ♘c6 19.♗c3 ♖d8 20.♗e2 ♘e5) 15...♘c6 16.♗g5+±, Black has to be cautious in order to fully equalise.
- 14.♘b5!? ♔d7 (14...♘a6 15.♗g5+±) 15.♗e3 ♗xb2 16.♖d1 might be a better try.

12.♗xe2 cxd5 13.♘xd6+ ♔d7

Here 13...♔e7 is also unpleasant as a result of 14.♘b5 (14.♘xc8+?! ♖xc8 15.♗g5+ f6! 16.♗d2 ♖xc2 17.♗c3 ♘d7 18.♔d1 ♖xc3 19.bxc3 f5=) 14...♘a6 (14...♔d7 15.♗f4) 15.♗g5+±.

14.♘xf7 ♖e8

Black has some compensation for the pawn, since the white king is not placed ideally.

15.♔d1!?

15.c3 ♘c6 16.♗e3 might be a good alternative to the text.

15...♘c6

15...♖f8 16.♘g5 ♖xf2 17.♗f3 leads to a loss of an exchange. Black will have some compensation, but not enough.

16.♗g4+

After 16.♗f3 (16.♗f4?? ♖f8 17.♗g4+ ♔e7) White can win a second pawn: 16...♔e7 17.♗xd5, but Black's compensation seems to be very good after 17...♗e6 18.♗xe6 ♔xe6 19.♘g5+ ♔f5 20.♘f3 ♖ad8+ 21.♗d2±.

16...♔c7?

16...♔e7 17.♗xc8 ♖axc8 18.♘g5 ♔d7 seems to be good for Black as he threatens to play 19...♘b4. After the text White keeps a material advantage and Black has not enough compensation.

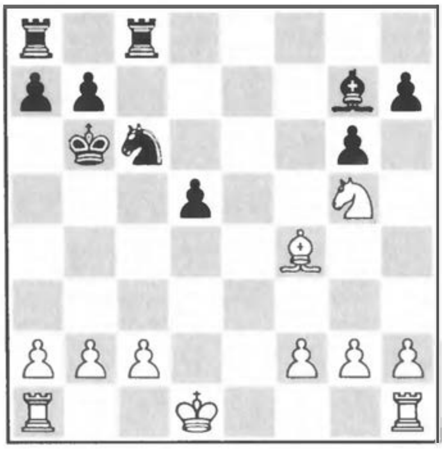
17.♗f4+ ♔b6 18.♗xc8

Also good is 18.♗f3!?.

18...♖exc8

Not 18...♖axc8? 19.♘d6+–.

19.♘g5



Now White is a clear pawn up. Black rooks are no more active than White's.

19...♔a6 20.♘e6 ♗xb2 21.♖b1 ♗d4 22.♘c7+ ♖xc7 23.♗xc7 ♗xf2 24.♖f1 ♖c8 25.♖xf2 ♖xc7 26.♖f6 ♖e7 27.♔d2 ♖e4 28.♖f7 ♖h4 29.♖bxb7 ♖xh2 30.♖xh7 ♖xg2+ 31.♔c1 g5?!

Here 31...d4± was more tenacious.

32.♖bd7+– d4 33.♖h6 ♔b5 34.♖b7+ 1-0

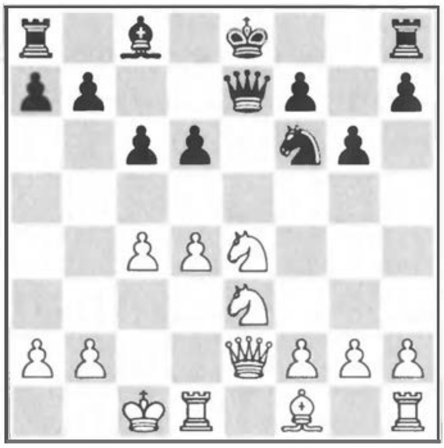
□ **Tatiana Kosintseva**

■ **Ivan Akimov**

St Petersburg 2003

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♘xe5 d6 4.♘c4 ♘xe4 5.♕e2 ♕e7 6.♘e3 c6 7.c4 g6 8.d3 ♘c5 9.♗d2 ♗g7 10.♗c3 ♗xc3+ 11.♘xc3 ♘bd7 12.0-0-0 ♘f6 13.d4 ♘a6?!

This is a little dubious. Instead, 13...♘ce4 looks much more natural and I think it should be better. Nevertheless, White maintains a slight edge after 14.♘xe4



● 14...♕xe4

Now after 15.g3?! ♕xh1 I think that Black has a few ways to a draw after 16.♘d5+ (16.♗g2 ♕xd1+ 17.♘xd1+!?=):

- 16...♔f8 17.♕e7+ ♔g8.
- 16...♘e4.
- 16...♗e6 17.♘xf6+ ♔e7 18.d5 ♔xf6 19.dxe6 d5 20.♖e1 (20.f3 ♕g1 21.f4 ♔g7 22.exf7 ♕c5) 20...♕e4=.

However, on move 15 White can play 15.f3 ♕e7 16.♕d2±.

● 14...♘xe4 15.♕c2 0-0 16.♗d3± due to the control of the centre and the safer position of the white king.

14.♕f3 ♘c7 15.♗d3 0-0

15...♘e6 16.d5 ♘d4 17.♕f4 (17.♕g3?? ♘h5) 17...♕e5 18.♕xe5+ dxe5 19.♖he1 is also better for White, because 19...0-0 is met by 20.♘c2 ♘xc2 21.♔xc2 cxd5 22.cxd5 and Black has significant problems with his central pawn (♖e2, ♖de1).

16.h4

White had another promising continuation: 16.♖he1 ♘e6?! (16...♕d8) 17.d5 ♘d4 18.♕f4 ♕e5 19.♕h4!±.

16...d5

Here 16...h5± has other drawbacks, the g6-pawn becomes weak and 17.♖he1 ♕d8 18.♕g3 followed by f2-f4-f5 is very dangerous. 16...♘e6 17.♗c2 (or 17.♗e2) does not change a lot.

17.cxd5 ♘cxd5 18.♘cxd5 cxd5

No better is 18...♘xd5, since 19.♘xd5 cxd5 20.h5 is also better for White, as the line 20...♕g5+ 21.♔b1 ♗g4 22.♕g3 is dangerous only for Black.

19.♔b1

19.♘xd5 ♘xd5 20.♕xd5 ♗e6 gives Black good counterplay.

19...♗e6 20.h5 ♖ad8

If Black takes on h5 – 20...♘xh5 – then simplest is 21.♘xd5 ♗xd5 22.♕xd5±. True, the more spectacular 21.♖xh5 gxh5 22.♗xh7+ leads to a win after 22...♔xh7? 23.♕xh5+ ♔g7 24.♘xd5 ♕d8 (24...♗xd5 25.♕g4+ ♔f6 26.♕h4+ ♔e6 27.♖e1++–; 24...♗f5+ 25.♕xf5±) 25.♖d3 ♗f5 26.♕xf5 ♖e8 27.♖g3+ ♔f8 28.♕h5+–.

However, Black has 22...♔g7 which leads to a position with mutual chances.

21.g4 ♖d6 22.g5 ♘e4

Here 22...♘xh5 23.♖xh5 gxh5 24.♗xh7+ ♔g7 25.♕xh5 ♗c8 26.♘xd5 is also favourable for White, but Black can still fight after 26...♕e6 27.♘f6 ♕h3 28.♗e4±.

23.♗xe4 dxe4 24.♕f4

White knight is very well placed, now. It helps to neutralise the black bishop's attacking power after d4-d5.

24...♖b6?

Black's attack can be successfully parried. It was better to keep the rook on the d-file with 24...♖fd8 25.♕e5 ♕d7. The direct approach is not the best now: 26.h6?! (26.hxg6 fxg6 27.♕xe4 ♗d5 28.♘xd5 ♖xd5±) 26...f6 27.gxf6 ♕f7.

Note that White is clearly better after 24...♗d5 25.♘g4 e3 26.f3.

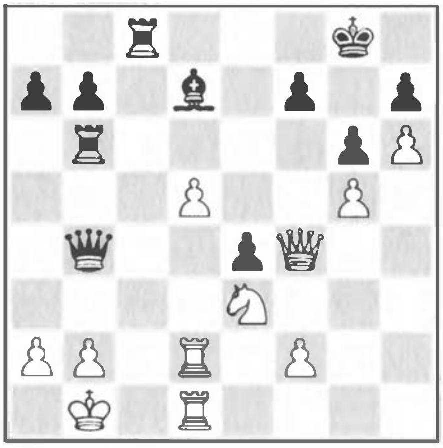
25.♖d2

This move is more solid than the alternative 25.d5 ♕b4 26.b3 ♗d7±.

25...♕b4

Black cannot prevent White from playing d4-d5.

26.♖hd1 ♖c8 27.d5 ♗d7 28.h6



28...♖e8?!

Alas, 28...♗b5 would allow a beautiful finale after 29.♕e5 ♗d3+ (29...f6 30.gxf6 ♖f8± is better, but not satisfactory) 30.♖xd3! f6! 31.gxf6 exd3 32.♘c4!! (Fritz).

- 32...♖xc4 33.♕e8+ ♕f8 34.f7+
- 32...♕xc4 33.f7+ ♔xf7 34.♕g7+ ♔e8 35.♖e1+ with mate, or
- 32...♖a6 33.f7+ ♔xf7 34.♕g7+ ♔e8 35.d6 ♖xd6 36.♘xd6+ ♕xd6 37.♖e1+ ♔d8 38.♕g8+ ♔d7 39.♕f7++–.
- Best is 32...♖f8 33.♘xb6 ♕xb6 34.♖xd3 ♕xf6 (34...♕xf2 35.♕e6+ ♔h8 36.♖e3+–) 35.f4 and White has a winning position.

29.d6

Now the weakness of the black king turns out to be decisive.

29...♕b5 30.♘d5 ♗f5 31.♕e3 ♖xd6 32.♘e7+

Even stronger is 32.♕c3 f6 33.♕c7. However, the text move is good enough.

32...♖xe7 33.♖xd6 ♗e6?!

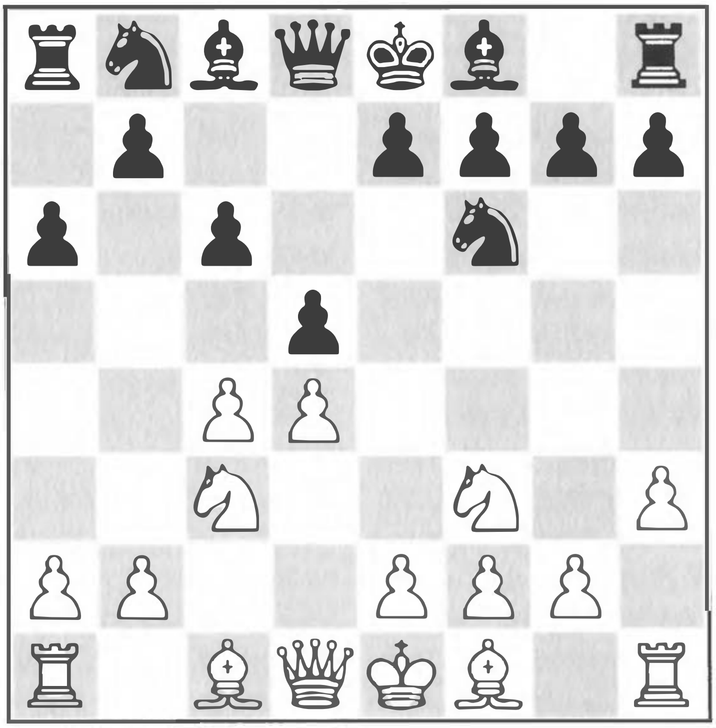
33...f6+–.

34.♕d4 **1-0**

CHAPTER 6

Dorian Rogozenko

Let's wait together in the Slav



The Chebanenko Variation with 5.h3!?

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 a6

The move 4...a6 has proved to be a tough nut to crack and in spite of various continuations for the first player, Black is usually happy with the resulting positions. Finding an advantage for White against the Chebanenko Slav is certainly not an easy task, but what about surprising your opponent?

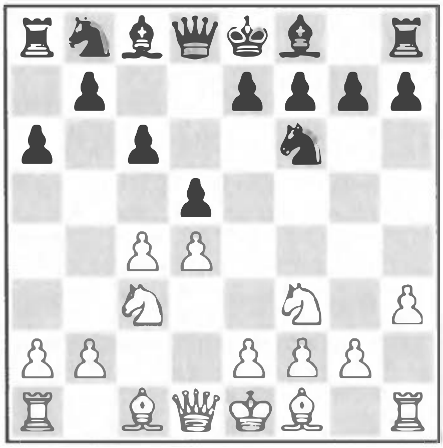
First of all let's figure out the purpose of the move 4...a6. One might think that by playing 4...a6 Black wants to play ...b5. However, that's only a (rather small) part of the story. For instance, after 1.d4 a6 Black also wants to play ...b5, which does not mean that 1...a6 is a good or popular continuation.

I was a pupil of Chebanenko's myself and followed the development of 4...a6 long before it became popular on the highest level. Therefore, I can tell the reader that when in the late 1980-ies we (Moldavian players) were using this move at different Soviet tournaments, the reaction was something like 'come on guys, what are you, beginners or what?'. Indeed, at first sight, the advance of the a-pawn seems to serve only one purpose: to follow-up with ...b5 and nothing else.

In fact the real advantage of the move 4...a6 lies far beyond the mere preparation of ...b5. Without making any serious concessions (like giving up the centre with 4...dxc4, or closing the diagonal for the bishop on c8 with 4...e6) Black passes the ball into White's court and wants to force his opponent to make those concessions. For example a natural developing move like 5.♗f4 has the drawback that after 5...dxc4 6.a4 Black plays 6...♘d5, attacking the bishop. The move 5.♗g5 before Black has played ...e6 always means that White must reckon with the immediate answer ...♘e4. The move 5.e3 is just the sort of concession I was talking about, since it closes the diagonal of the bishop on c1, and allows Black to comfortably develop his bishop on g4. The advance 5.a4 before Black has played ...dxc4 creates some weaknesses in the queenside pawn formation. The most principled answer to the Chebanenko Slav is probably 5.c5, but without being forced to release the central tension, in a way White gives up the fight for the centre. Please don't get me wrong: some of the above-mentioned possibilities to meet the Chebanenko Slav are by no means weak. What I am arguing is that usually after White's fifth move Black will be satisfied in having forced his opponent to make some sort of concession.

Therefore, I would suggest the following SOS-solution to meet the 'ugly-looking' 4...a6. Let's play an even more surprising advance from the other side.

5.h3!?



In 1997 when I saw this move for the first time my reaction was 'what is this beginner-like kind of play?'. Doesn't it remind you of something mentioned above? Strangely enough, facing it as Black in a Bundesliga game I felt quite uncomfortable, since I couldn't get rid of the feeling that my opponent was trying to trick me. Why was that? Very simple – 4...a6 suddenly appears to be just a 'pale waiting attempt', since it has been answered with an even more provoking 'waiting' move. Hmm, I felt confused.

With the move 5.h3 White asks his opponent: 'OK, great, I practically changed nothing in the position, now show me the merits of 4...a6'.

We'll see below that this provoking and waiting attitude is not only unexpected for Black, but is also quite a reasonable approach from White. Just like 4...a6, the move 5.h3 has benefits beyond the 'wait and see' strategy. First of all later on White can develop the bishop to f4, not fearing its exchange after ...♘h5. Secondly, the move 5.h3 fits in rather well with almost any future arrangement of White's pieces. Of course taking control over the g4-square will often turn out to be useful for the first player. In modern opening theory the advance g2-g4 has become a rather common theme, so I would not be surprised if in the future we'll see that the main reason for playing 5.h3 is to follow-up with g2-g4.

☐ **Rainer Knaak**
■ **Dorian Rogozenko**
Germany Bundesliga 1996/97

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 a6 5.h3 e6

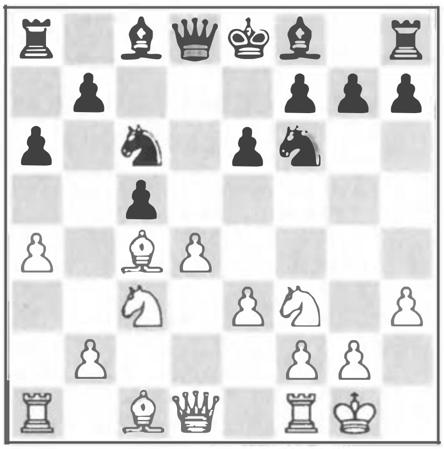
The main alternative **5...b5** is analysed in the next game.

Some respectable grandmasters have recommended **5...dxc4**. Nevertheless I think that taking on c4 here is a dubious continuation. In most of the variations given below we will see that the pawn on h3 favours White. Let us investigate the situation after 6.a4:

● 6...♗f5 7.e3 e6 8.♗xc4 h6 9.♕b3 ♕c7 10.0-0 ♘bd7 11.♖e1 ♗e7 12.e4 ♗h7 13.♗d2 0-0 14.a5± Stocek-Berthelot, Sautron 2003.

● 6...♘d5 7.a5! (7.e4 ♘xc3 8.bxc3 b5) 7...♗f5 8.e3 ♗d3 (8...e6 9.♗xc4 ♗b4 10.♕b3±; 8...♘b4 9.e4±) 9.♗xd3 cxd3 10.♕xd3 ♘b4 11.♕e2 ♘d7 12.0-0. White will play e3-e4 next with a clear advantage. Please note that if Black would have had the pawn on a5 and White the pawn on a4, the position would have been close to equal. In the game Eingorn-Volkov, St Petersburg 1996, Black now tried a radical method to solve the opening problems. It brought him nothing but trouble, though: 12...♕c7 13.e4 e5 14.dxe5 ♘xe5 15.♗f4 f6 16.♘xe5 fxe5 17.♕h5+ ♕f7 18.♕xe5+ ♗e7 19.♖ad1 and White is winning.

● 6...e6 7.e3 (this is simple and good. White can also play the sharper 7.e4 ♗b4 8.♕c2 b5 9.♗e2 with compensation for the pawn. The game Hellsten-M.Andersson, Sweden 1999, continued: 9...♘bd7 10.0-0 ♗b7 11.e5 ♘d5 12.♘e4 f5?! 13.exf6 gxf6 14.b3 cxb3 15.♕xb3 ♕e7 16.♘e5! – after this unexpected blow Black is in dire straits – 16...0-0 17.♘xd7 ♕xd7 18.♗h6 ♕e7 19.♗xf8 ♖xf8 20.♖fc1 and White confidently converted his extra exchange into a full point) 7...c5 (7...b6 8.♗xc4 ♗b7 9.0-0 ♗e7 10.♕e2 ♘bd7 11.e4 b5 12.♗d3 b4 13.e5 bxc3 14.exf6 ♘xf6 15.bxc3 c5 16.♖b1 ♗xf3 17.♕xf3 ♕d5 18.♕e2 ♕c6 19.♗g5 ♘d5 20.♗xe7 ♔xe7 21.♕f3± Lerner-Ragozin, Metz 1996) 8.♗xc4 ♞c6 9.0-0



An amazing situation: we have a position from the Queen's Gambit Accepted (QGA) with an extra tempo for White – the pawn on h3 instead of h2. The chances that this will be favourable for Black are very small. This would occur only in case of a kingside attack with the pieces, when the first player won't have the possibility to use square h3 for the rook. However, much more realistic is that only White will benefit from the pawn on h3, since it restricts Black's options. Normally in the QGA in a similar position from the last diagram Black has two possible plans:

– to take on d4 and play against the IQP, or
– (a safer plan) to develop ♕c7, ♗e7(♗d6), 0-0, b6 and ♗b7.

In the second case White often plays for d4-d5, followed by e3-e4. The move h3 is very useful for that plan, which means that if Black doesn't wish to recognize the fact that pawn on h3 clearly favours White, he is practically forced to play against the isolated pawn. 9...♗e7 10.♕e2 cxd4 11.♖d1 e5 (11...0-0 12.exd4 ♘b4 13.♘e5 ♘bd5 14.♗g5 ♘xc3 15.bxc3 ♘d5 16.♗d2 ♗d7 17.♗d3 ♕c7 18.♕h5 f5 19.♖e1 ♗d6 20.♕f3 ♖ae8 21.a5± Golod-Yeke, Izmir 2004) 12.exd4exd4 13.♗e3! (with the pawn on h2 in a similar position of the Queen's Gambit Accepted this move would have been bad in view of the answer ...♗g4!) 13...0-0 14.♘xd4 ♕c7 15.♘xc6 bxc6 16.a5 c5 17.♘a4 ♗b7 18.♘b6 ♕c6 19.♕f1 ♖ad8 20.♖dc1 and White was slightly better in Speelman-Schandorff, Calvia ol 2004.

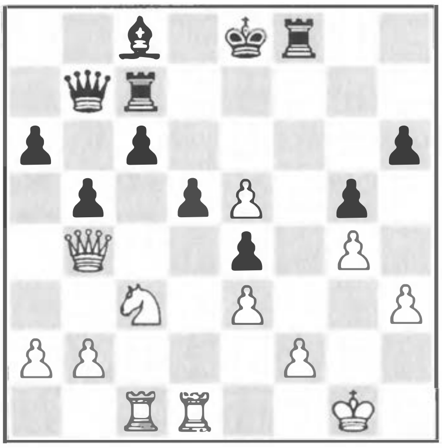
6.c5!?

White's idea is to play just as in the line 5.c5, where the set-up with the pawn on e6 is not the most optimal for Black.

I should like to present the reader with some other options too:

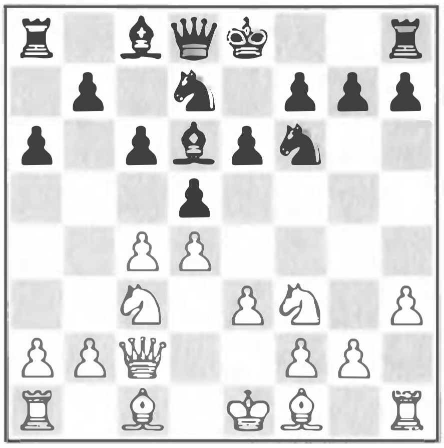
● **6.cxd5** brings nothing: 6...exd5 (or 6...cxd5 7.♗f4 ♗d6=) 7.♗f4 (7.♕c2 ♗d6 8.♗g5 ♘bd7 9.e3 h6=) 7...♗f5 8.♕b3 ♖a7 9.e3 ♘bd7 10.♗e2 ♘e4 11.0-0 ♗e7 12.♘xe4 ♗xe4 ½-½ Sokolov-Ehlvest, Reykjavik 2001.

● **6.♗g5** h6 (6...dxc4!? 7.e4 b5 8.e5 h6∞) 7.♗h4 g5 8.♗g3 ♞e4 (again the most principled move is 8...dxc4) 9.♗e5 f6 10.♗xb8 ♖xb8 11.e3 ♕a5 12.♕b3 ♗d6 (12...♗b4 13.♖c1∞) 13.♗d3 f5 14.g4 b5 15.cxd5 exd5 16.♖c1 ♖f8?! 17.♗xe4! fxe4 18.♘e5 ♗xe5 19.dxe5 ♖b7 20.0-0 ♖c7 21.♖fd1± ♕b6 22.♕b4 ♕b7



23.♘xe4! c5 (23...dxe4 24.♖d8+! ♔xd8 25.♕xf8+ ♔d7 26.♖d1+ ♔e6 27.♕f6 mate) 24.♘d6+ ♔d7 25.♘xb7 cxb4 26.e6+ 1-0 Handke-Volkov, Port Erin 2004.

● **6.e3** (together with 6.c5 this gives White the best chances for an advantage) 6...♘bd7 (6...c5 7.cxd5 exd5 8.♗d3 – 8.♗e2!? – 8...♘c6 9.0-0 ♗d6 10.dxc5 ♗xc5 11.e4 dxe4 12.♘xe4 ♗e7 13.♕e2 ♘xe4 14.♗xe4 0-0 15.♗f4 ♖e8 16.♕c2 h6 17.♗xc6 bxc6 18.♕xc6 ♗e6 19.♖fd1 ♕a5 20.♘d4 ♖ac8 21.♕f3 ♗f6 22.♗d2 ♕b6 23.♗c3± Eingorn-Kir.Georgiev, Halkidiki 2002) 7.♕c2 ♗d6

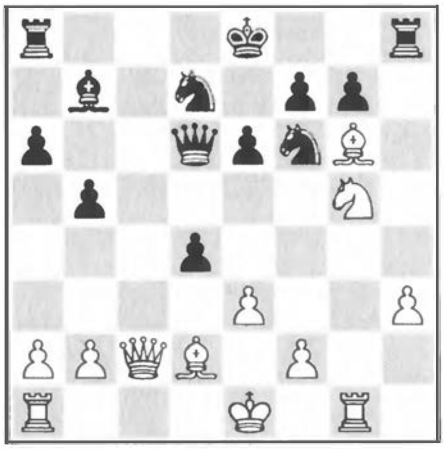


Now we have the Meran Variation with the moves h3 and a6 included. The position after 8.g4!? h6 can even arise via a 'pure Meran' move order: 1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.e3 ♘bd7 6.♕c2 ♗d6 7.g4 h6 8.h3 a6.

Does White have the advantage? Objectively the position offers mutual chances, but it is very likely that your opponent will be surprised finding himself in a such position: when Black is playing the Chebanenko Slav I doubt that he would be happy suddenly to find himself within the realm of a sharp variation from the Meran. Here are a few practical examples:

– 9.♖g1 dxc4 10.e4 e5 11.g5 hxg5 12.♗xg5 b5 13.0-0-0 ♕c7 14.♗e3 g6 15.dxe5 ♘xe5 16.♘g5 ♗b7 17.f4 ♘d3+ 18.♗xd3 cxd3 19.♖xd3 ♗xf4 20.♗xf4 ♕xf4+ 21.♔b1 White is better thanks to the safer position of his king. In the game Dao Thien Hai-S.Farago, Budapest 1995 Black quickly lost after 21...♕e5 22.♕f2 ♔e7 23.♘f3 ♕c7 24.♕c5+ ♔e8 25.e5 ♘d7 26.♕e3 ♘f8 27.♘e4.

– 9.♗d2 dxc4 10.♗xc4 b5 11.♗d3 ♗b7 (according to Zviagintsev White's chances are also preferable after 11...c5 12.♘e4 ♘xe4 13.♗xe4 ♖b8 14.0-0-0) 12.g5 hxg5 13.♘xg5 ♕e7 14.♖g1 c5 15.♘ce4 cxd4 16.♘xd6+ ♕xd6 17.♗g6!



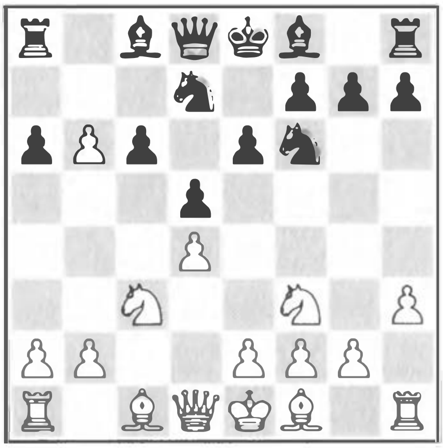
This position is from Zviagintsev-Burmakin, St Petersburg 1999. After 17...♘e5 White could have achieved a big advantage with 18.♗xf7+!. Therefore in Nybäck-Dautov, Calvia ol 2004, Black improved with 17...0-0 18.♗xf7+ ♖xf7 19.♘xf7 ♔xf7 20.♕g6+ ♔e7 21.♕xg7+ ♔e8 22.exd4 (Zviagintsev mentioned already back in 1999 that White achieves a clear advantage in the endgame after 22.♕h8+ ♕f8 23.♕xf8+ ♔xf8 24.exd4. Maybe this evaluation is a bit too optimistic though) 22...♕xd4 23.♖d1 ♕e4+ 24.♗e3 ♕b4+ 25.♖d2 ♖c8 26.♕g6+ ♔e7 27.♖g4 ♗f3 28.♕g7+ and the players agreed to a draw. The general impression is that only White can search for further improvements, since he always has a draw in the pocket.

6...b6

The only way to get counterplay is connected to this advance. Leaving it for a later stage offers White an additional possibility to protect the pawn c5 with b2-b4: 6...♘bd7 7.♗f4 b6 8.b4 a5 9.a3 and White is slightly better. Or 6...♗e7 7.♗f4 0-0 8.e3 b6 9.b4 a5 10.a3 also with a slight edge for White.

7.cxb6 ♘bd7

Simply bad is 7...♕xb6?! 8.♘a4! ♗b4+ 9.♗d2 ♕a5 10.a3 ♗xd2+ 11.♘xd2±.



8.g3!?

Interesting play. Stocek-Movsesian, Czech Republic 2003/04, went 8.e3 ♕xb6 9.♗d3 c5 10.0-0 ♗e7 11.♘a4 ♕a7 12.dxc5 ♘xc5 13.♘xc5 ♕xc5 14.b3 0-0 15.♗b2 ♗d7 16.♘e5 ♗b5 17.♖c1 ♕b6 18.♗xb5 axb5 19.♘c6 ♗a3 20.♗xf6 gxf6 21.♕g4+ ♔h8 22.♕h4 ♔g7 23.♕g3+ ♔h8 24.♕h4 ½-½. In my opinion the move 8.♗f4!?, followed by e2-e3, deserves attention.

8...♕xb6

Black captured with the knight in Handke-Miloradovic, Stockholm 2004. After 8...♘xb6 9.♗g2 ♗d6 (9...c5 10.0-0 ♗e7 11.b3±) 10.0-0 0-0 11.b3 c5 12.♗a3 c4 13.♗c5 cxb3 14.axb3 ♖b8 15.♘e5 ♕c7 16.b4 ♘fd7 17.♘d3 ♘c4 18.e4! ♗xc5 19.bxc5 dxe4 20.♘xe4± a5? 21.♕c2 ♗a6 22.♖fc1 h6 23.♖a4 White was winning.

9.♗g2 c5

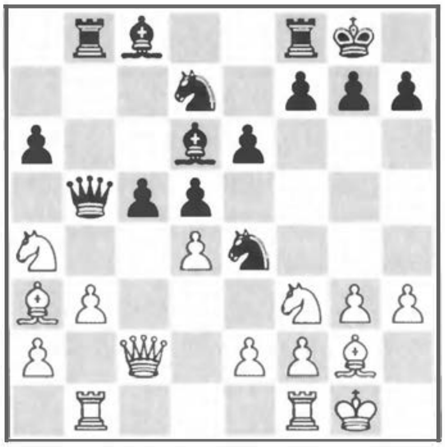
A logical move, which, however, does not reach equality. In a later Bundesliga game I postponed this advance for a while, but apparently White keeps the better prospects anyway: 9...♗d6 10.0-0 0-0 11.♕c2 (11.e4?! ♘xe4 12.♘xe4 dxe4 13.♘g5 f5! 14.♘xe6 ♖e8∓, also interesting is 11.♖b1!?)

11...c5. Here in the game Ftacnik-Rogozenko, Bundesliga 2000/01, my opponent played 12.dxc5 ♘xc5 13.♗e3 and after the precise 13...♗d7! Black equalized completely. Stronger for White was 12.♗e3! with an edge.

10.0-0 ♗d6 11.♖b1 0-0 12.♘a4! ♕b5 13.b3 ♖b8

White also has a slight edge after 13...♗b7 14.dxc5 ♘xc5 15.♘d4 ♕e8 (15...♕a5? 16.b4 ♕xa4 17.bxc5+−) 16.♗a3 ♕e7 17.♘xc5 ♗xc5 18.♗xc5 ♕xc5 19.b4.

14.♗a3 ♘e4 15.♕c2



This position is slightly better for White. The second player can hardly achieve more than an endgame where White will have a queenside majority. Clearly, Black may never hope to achieve more than a draw.

15...♕a5

Or 15...♗b7 16.dxc5 ♘dxc5 17.♘xc5 ♘xc5 18.♘g5±.

16.dxc5 ♘dxc5 17.♘g5!

After this strong move Black faces an unpleasant choice. 17.♘xc5 ♘xc5 is more or less equal.

17...♘xg5

The knight will be completely misplaced on g5, but I didn't like 17...f5 18.♘xe4 ♘xe4 19.♗xd6 ♘xd6 20.♕c5, with a clear positional advantage for White.

18.♗xc5 ♗xc5 19.♕xc5!

Unclear is 19.♘xc5 e5!?.

19...♖b5

After 19...♕xc5 20.♘xc5 e5 21.♗xd5 ♗xh3 22.♖fd1 White is much better thanks to his queenside pawn majority and the poor position of the knight on g5.

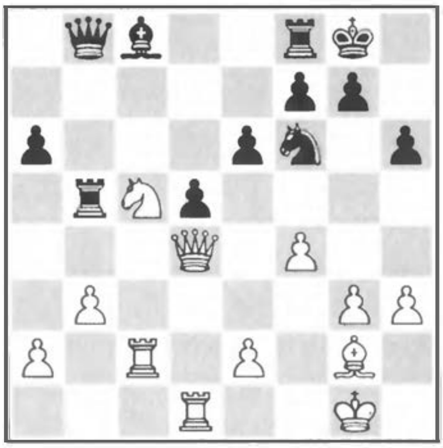
20.♕e3 h6 21.♖fd1

White has a small, but stable advantage.

21...♕b4

No better is 21...♖b7 22.♖bc1 ♖c7 23.♖xc7 ♕xc7 24.♖c1±.

22.♖bc1 ♕d6 23.f4! ♘h7 24.♖c2 ♘f6 25.♕d4 ♕b8 26.♘c5



Very skilful play by Knaak. Something definitely went wrong for Black, since now White is already much better.

26...♖b4 27.♕f2 a5 28.♖dc1 ♖b5 29.♕e3 ♕a7 30.♔f2 ♗b7 31.♘xb7 ♕xb7 32.♖c7 ♕b8 33.♕a7 ♕d8

Black keeps the queens on the board since 33...♕xa7+ 34.♖xa7 is completely hopeless.

34.♕a6 ♖b8 35.♕xa5 ♖a8 36.♕d2 ♕b8 37.♖7c2 ♕b6+ 38.♕e3 d4 39.♕d3 ♖a3

Black does not have sufficient compensation for the pawn, but finally in this game he has some activity at least.

40.♖c6 ♕a7 41.♖c7 ♕b6 42.♖1c6 ♕b8 43.♖c2 ♖d8 44.♗b7 ♖f8 45.♗f3

But not 45.♕xd4? ♖a7 46.♕b4 ♘d5−+.

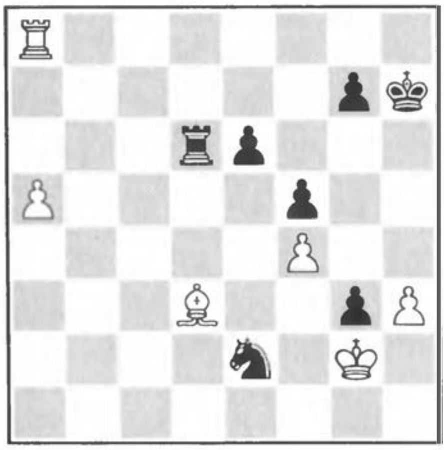
45...♖d8 46.♔g2 h5 47.♕c4 h4 48.♕c5! ♖a6 49.♖b7 ♕d6 50.♕xd6 ♖dxd6 51.a4+– hxg3 52.♖d2?

White spoils a very good game in a technically winning position. The easiest win was 52.♖cc7.

52...♘d7! 53.♖b4?! ♘c5 54.♖bxd4 ♖xd4 55.♖xd4 ♘xb3 56.♖d8+ ♔h7 57.♖a8 ♖d6 58.a5 ♘d4 59.♗e4+?

This mistake caused by the time-trouble allows Black to escape using tactical motifs connected with the passed pawn on g3. On the other hand it is also very likely that Black can reach a draw in the endgame after 59.♔xg3 ♘xf3 60.♔xf3 ♖d2 61.a6 ♖a2 62.h4 ♔g6.

59...f5 60.♗d3 ♘xe2!



Unexpectedly the pawn g3 saves the day.

61.♗xe2 ♖d2 62.♔xg3

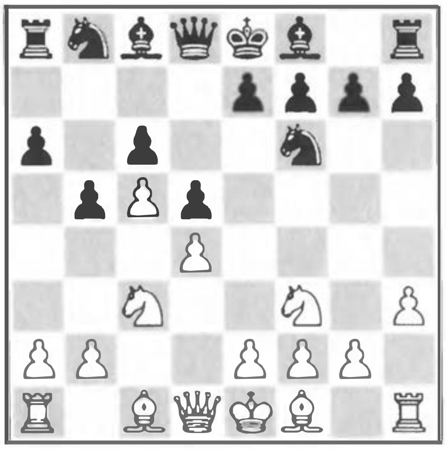
Or 62.♔f3 g2 with a draw.

62...♖xe2 63.a6 ♖e3+ 64.♔g2 ♖e4 65.a7 ♖a4 66.♔f3 ♖a3+ 67.♔e2 g6

½-½

☐ **Peter Heine Nielsen**
■ **Dorian Rogozenko**
Germany Bundesliga 2000/01

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 a6 5.h3 b5 6.c5

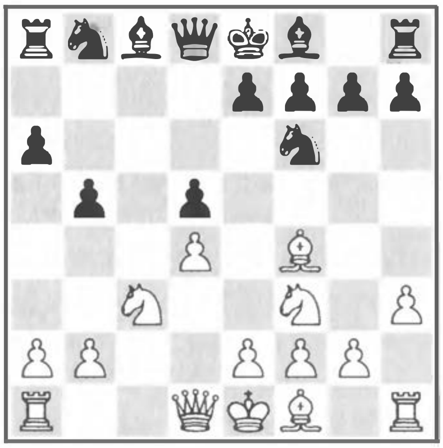


The differences with regard to the line 5.c5 are obvious – White has the pawn on h3 and Black the pawn on b5 instead of b7. Let's see who will benefit from this. Black can claim that his queenside is not blockaded and with his pawn on b5 the weakness of square b6 (and sometimes of pawn b7 as well) is practically non-existent. Besides, White's space advantage is less obvious now. This is correct and it is also what I thought during the game. However, the more I delved into the position the more I realized that White's advantages are no less valuable. Here they are:

1. Black does not have at his disposal the counterplay with b7-b6
2. The pawn on h3 is a necessary move in the line 5.c5, since the best diagonal for White's dark-squared bishop is b8-h2 and on f4 the bishop needs to be protected against the exchange ...♘h5. With the pawn on h3 the move ...♘h5 is obviously pointless due to the answer ♗h2
3. The advance e2-e4 is much more dangerous for Black now, since now the weakness of pawn c6 will be fatal. Therefore Black must prevent e2-e4 at all costs.

In my opinion White is slightly better in the diagram position and I am not the only one to affirm that. Viktor Bologan expressed the same opinion already in 1997, when he faced the move 5.h3 for the first time.

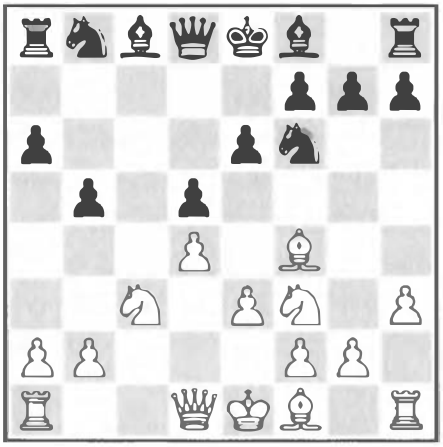
Apart from 6.c5 White has an interesting option to transpose into a kind of position similar to the Exchange Variation of the Slav Defence with **6.cxd5**. The justification of this decision is that with the pawn on b5 Black's development options are considerably restricted. Nevertheless the drawback is obvious too – the arising positions offer both sides limited fighting resources. After 6...cxd5 7.♗f4 Black has several options:



● 7...♗f5? (with the pawn on b5 Black should keep the bishop on the queenside) 8.e3 e6 9.♖c1 ♗e7 10.a4 and Black has problems protecting his weaknesses. The game Eingorn-Gärtner, Oberwart 1998, continued 10...b4 11.♘e2 (11.♘b1!? is also interesting, going to d2 and then to b3) 11...♖a7 12.♘g3 ♗g6 13.♗d3 0-0 14.0-0 ♗d6 15.♗xg6 hxg6 16.♗xd6 ♕xd6 17.♕c2 ♘bd7 18.b3. White has a stable advantage. Eingorn gradually increased it: 18...a5 19.♕c6 ♕b8 20.♖c2 ♖d8 21.♖fc1 ♘e8 22.♘e2 ♖c7 23.♕a6 ♖a7 24.♕d3 ♖c7 25.♖xc7 ♘xc7 26.♘e5! ♘xe5 27.dxe5. White's next is ♘d4 and Black won't be able to protect pawns a5 and then b4.

● After 7...♘c6 8.e3 e6 9.♗d3 ♗d6 White must choose between 10.♗xd6 ♕xd6 11.♖c1, or 10.a4!? b4 (10...♗xf4 11.axb5!) 11.♘e2, in both cases the first player is only marginally better. Considerably weaker is 10.♗g5?! h6 11.♗xf6 ♕xf6 12.♖c1 ♗d7! 13.0-0 0-0 14.♘d2 ♘a5∓ Rogozenko-Saltaev, 's-Hertogenbosch 2003.

● 7...e6 8.e3



8...♗d6 (less good is 8...♗e7 9.♗d3 ♗b7 10.0-0 0-0 – 10...♘c6 11.♖c1 0-0 12.a4 b4 13.♘b1 ♕b6 14.♘bd2± Eingorn-Lendwai, Oberwart 2002 – 11.a4 b4 12.♘b1 ♘c6 13.♘bd2 ♘a5 14.♕e2 with a slight plus in Zviagintsev-Bologan, New York 1997) 9.♗xd6 (9.♘e5!? 0-0 10.♗d3 ♗b7 – 10...♘bd7? 11.♘xf7! – 11.♗g5 ♗e7 12.0-0 ♘bd7 13.f4 ♘e4! 14.♗xe4 dxe4 15.♗xe7 ♕xe7 16.♖c1 ♖ac8 17.♘xd7 ♕xd7 and in Legky-Komliakov, Sevastopol 1997, Black didn't have any real problems to hold the draw) 9...♕xd6 10.♗d3 ♘bd7 11.0-0 ♗b7 12.♘e2 0-0 13.a4 ♗c6 14.a5 ♘e4 15.♘f4 ♖ac8 16.♗e2 ♗b7 17.♘d3 ♕e7 18.♘d2 ♘d6 19.♘b3 ♘c4 20.♖a2 ♖c7 21.♘bc5 ♘xc5 22.♘xc5 ♖fc8 23.♗d3 White has a positional advantage, Gareev-Krivoborodov, Kaluga 2003.

Let us return to our main game after 5.h3 b5 6.c5.

6...♗f5

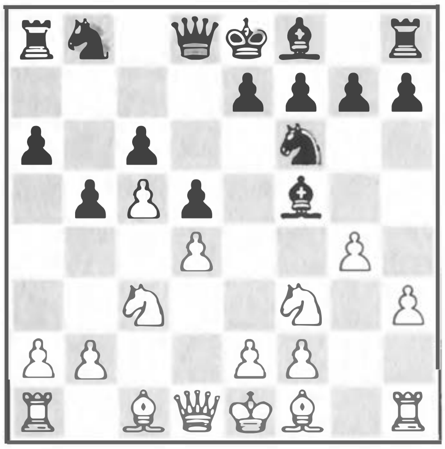
There are two alternatives:

– **6...♘e4** was never met in practice. After 7.a4! the position looks better for White.

– **6...g6** 7.♗f4 ♗g7 8.e3 0-0 9.♗d3 ♘fd7. Here in the game Braun-Murariu, Obrenovac 2004, White played 10.b4 a5 11.a3 f6

12.e4 axb4 13.axb4 ♖xa1 14.♕xa1 e5 15.♗e3 and now instead of 15...dxe4 16.♘xe4 exd4 17.♗xd4 ♘e5 18.♗e2!±, Black should have started convenient complications with 15...f5. Therefore, stronger was the simple 10.0-0 with advantage. Now if 10...f6, then 11.e4! b4 (even worse is 11...e5 12.♗e3 f5 13.exd5 e4 14.dxc6 ♘xc6 15.♘xe4 fxe4 16.♗xe4±) 12.♘e2 e5 13.♗g3 dxe4 14.♗xe4 f5 15.♗d3 e4 16.♗c4+ ♔h8 17.♘d2. Black has serious problems with the development of the queenside. Besides, his position contains a lot of weaknesses.

7.g4!



It's a pity not to play this advance with tempo, even if 7.♗f4 is not a bad move either.

7...♗e4

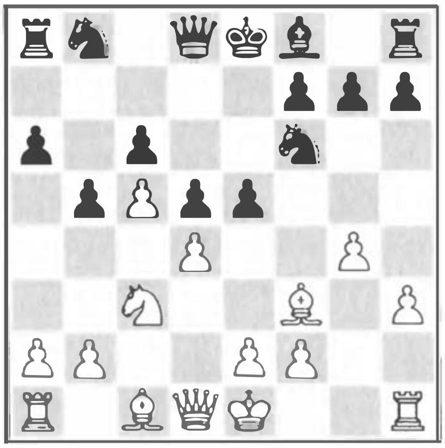
Practice has also seen 7...♗g6 8.♘e5! (8.♗g2 is just marginally better for White) 8...♘fd7 9.♘xg6 hxg6 10.e4 e6 (10...b4 11.♘xd5! cxd5 12.exd5 ♘f6 13.♗g2≌) 11.♗g2 ♗e7 12.0-0 ♖a7 13.♕d3 dxe4 14.♕xe4 g5 15.f4± Lautier-Marzolo, Senat 2003.

8.♗g2 ♗xf3

What else? White threatens 9.g5. For instance: 8...♘bd7 9.g5 ♘h5 10.♘xe4 dxe4 11.♘d2±. Or 8...g6 9.g5 ♗xf3 10.♗xf3 ♘fd7 11.e4, with a clear initiative.

9.exf3

Here 9.♗xf3 e5 also deserves attention



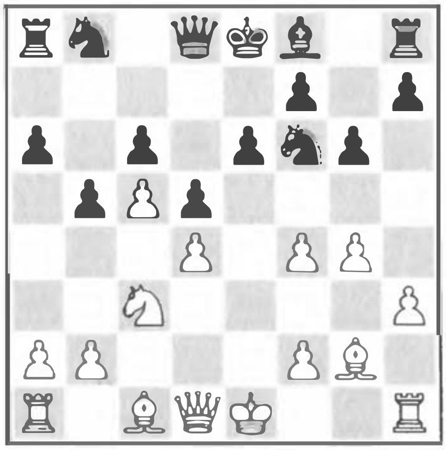
This advance of the e-pawn was the idea of my previous move. Without it Black is just clearly worse. Now White has at his disposal an interesting piece sacrifice, which I underestimated during the game: 10.dxe5 ♘fd7 11.♘xd5! cxd5 12.♕xd5 ♖a7 13.c6 ♗b4+ 14.♔f1 ♘b6 15.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 16.♗f4 ♖c7 17.♖c1 and White has excellent compensation for the piece.

9...e6

White is also slightly better after 9...g6 10.0-0 (10.♗f4!? ♗g7 11.♕d2 0-0 12.♗h6) 10...♗g7 11.♖e1.

10.f4 g6

White's advantage is out of the question after 10...h5 11.g5 ♘g8 12.f5! exf5 13.0-0. Maybe objectively best was 10...♗e7, hoping to hold an inferior position.



11.f5?!

This is a poor decision, helping Black to open the e-file for counterplay. 11.♗e3 seems more to the point. White has a space advantage, and although it is certainly not easy to break through Black's bastions, it is definitely the first player who has the better prospects. Black's problem in such positions is his lack of counterplay. The second player must mainly wait and try to be prepared for White's actions.

11...exf5 12.gxf5 ♗g7 13.♗e3 0-0

Black is doing okay here. From the opening point of view the rest is not really relevant, since White could have achieved an advantage earlier.

14.♕f3

Or 14.♕d2!? ♖e8 15.0-0-0 unclear.

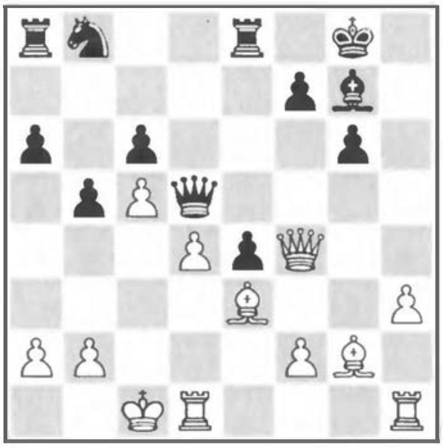
14...♖e8

Weaker is 14...♘e4?! 15.♘xe4 dxe4 16.♕xe4 ♖e8 17.♕d3 ♕xd4 18.♕xd4 ♗xd4 19.0-0-0 ♗xe3+ 20.fxe3 and Black remains with an undeveloped queenside.

15.0-0-0 ♘e4!? 16.fxg6 hxg6

More solid was 16...fxg6!? with the idea ...♖a7-f7, but during the game I felt that Black is able to create counterplay after White starts to advance the h-pawn.

17.♘xe4 dxe4 18.♕f4 ♕d5



19.h4

Double-edged is 19.♔b1 ♘d7 20.h4 ♘f6.

19...♘d7 20.h5 gxh5!

Far better than 20...♘xc5? 21.hxg6 fxg6 22.dxc5 ♕xa2 23.♖d6! ♕xb2+ 24.♔d1 ♖ad8 25.♗d2±.

21.♖dg1

This is superficial and without concrete support. Correct was 21.♔b1 ♘f8 22.♕h4=.

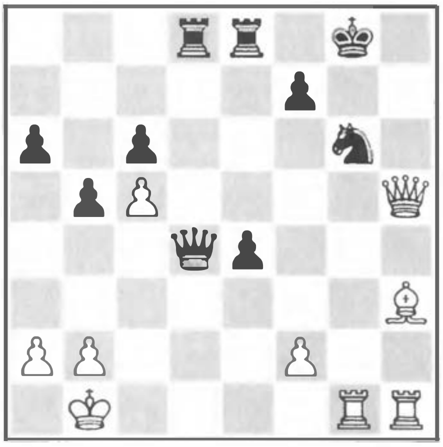
21...♘f8 22.♗h3 ♘g6 23.♕f5?

The last chance to hold the balance was 23.♕g5 ♕xg5 24.♖xg5 ♖ad8 25.♗f5 ♗xd4 26.♗xg6 fxg6 27.♖xg6+ ♔f7 28.♖xc6 ♖e5.

23...♖ad8!∓

After this precise move bringing the last piece into play, Black's advantage is clear. 23...♕xa2 24.♕xh5 ♖ad8 25.♗f5 ♕c4+ 26.♔b1 ♕d3+ 27.♔a1 ♖xd4 28.♗xd4 ♕xd4 29.♕e2 ♘f4 30.♕c2 was far from clear to me, due to the open g- and h-files. Unfortunately it took me too much time to figure out the most precise continuations.

24.♔b1 ♗xd4 25.♗xd4 ♕xd4 26.♕xh5



26...♕f6??

A silly blunder in time-trouble. After the simple 26...♕g7 with the same threat of 27...♖d2, White must play 27.♕e2 (other moves lose at once: 27.♗f5 ♖d2–+; 27.♖d1 ♘f4 28.♕h4 ♖xd1+ 29.♖xd1 ♘d3–+), but after 27...♖d5 with a pawn up and no real attack for White the position is technically winning for Black.

27.♗f5 ♖d2 28.♕h7+

This is the difference. The queen on g7 would have protected against this check, which for some strange reason I thought was completely harmless. Maybe this is the right place to recall that years ago, during our training hours, Chebanenko would lose any interest and he even used to stop analysing the games if he knew that I had been in time trouble. He used to say: 'In time-trouble one does not think normally, so I see no point to search for reasonable explanations of the mistakes. As a result I see no point of watching it at all'. I brought up this episode in order to avoid any other explanation for the lack of detailed comments of the remaining part of the game. Black is now dead lost.

28...♔f8 29.♕h6+ ♔g8 30.♕xd2 ♕xf5 31.♕h6 e3+? 32.♔a1 ♕f6

I was about to get mated after 32...exf2 33.♕h8 mate.

33.fxe3 ♖e5 34.♕h3 ♖e6

Another nice mate on h8 exploiting the pin on the g-file is: 34...♖xc5 35.♕c8+ ♔g7 36.♕h8 mate.

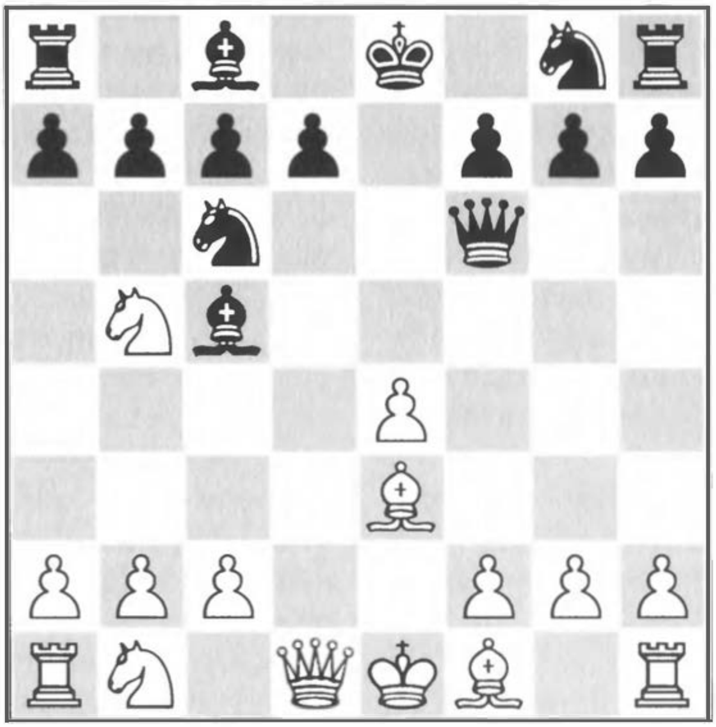
35.♖f1 ♕g7 36.♕f5 a5 37.♕g5 a4 38.♖d1 ♖e8 39.♖d8 ♖xd8 40.♕xd8+ ♘f8 41.a3 ♕g2 42.♖d1 ♔g7 43.♕d4+ ♔g8 44.e4 ♕c2 45.♖f1! ♘g6 46.♕d8+ ♔h7 47.♖xf7+ ♔h6 48.♕d4 ♕c1+ 49.♔a2 ♕g5 50.♕g7+ 1-0

In conclusion, sometimes a good waiting move can be well met by another waiting answer. Not only can you pass the ball back into your opponent's court. What is more, you can also hide your aggressive intentions very well (just look at those possible mates at the end of my game versus Nielsen). And yes, the move 5.h3 clearly contains the element of surprise as well. Can you expect more from a single marginal pawn advance on move 5?

CHAPTER 7

Jeroen Bosch

Surprise in the Scotch



Play the Blumenfeld Attack – 6.♘b5

This chapter features a surprise weapon for White in the Scotch versus 4...♗c5. The word 'surprise' is not necessarily synonymous with 'novel', of course. The whole line was first played by Blumenfeld over a century ago! It was popular in the first decade of the 20th century, only to fall into neglect for the next 80 years or so. Recently Blumenfeld's idea was taken up by grandmasters Zelcic and Nataf. Subsequently, even Ponomariov has given it a try.

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 exd4 4.♘xd4 ♗c5 5.♗e3

Here 5.♘xc6 is the other main line. While 5.♘b3 used to be popular, it is hardly played these days. Neither is 5.♘f5 for that matter.

5...♕f6

Lasker's suggestion of 5...♗b6 is a (minor) alternative here, when 6.♘f5 is widely acknowledged to yield White an edge. After the text White's usual response is 6.c3. However, why not attack your opponent head-on?

6.♘b5!?

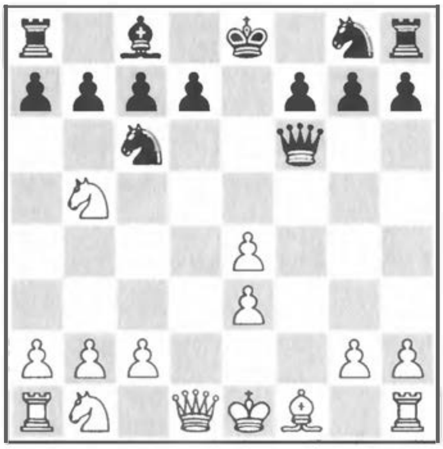
This is called the Blumenfeld Attack by Estrin and Panov, probably because of the game Blumenfeld-W.Cohn, Berlin 1903/04. White accepts a serious structural weakness – isolated doubled pawns – in return for a lasting initiative. Blumenfeld was a strong master, but on the whole it is not his chess games for which he is remembered by the chess world. He made important contributions to the field of opening theory. Think of the Blumenfeld Gambit: 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 c5 4.d5 b5, and also of the Blumenfeld Attack in the Meran: 1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.e3 ♘bd7 6.♗d3 dxc4 7.♗xc4 b5 8.♗d3 a6 9.e4 c5 10.e5 cxd4 11.♘xb5. Blumenfeld is also known for his research into the psychological aspects of our game. Chess trainers all over the world advise their impatient or blunder-prone pupils to first write down their move on the score sheet, to double-check it for gross mistakes, and only then to execute it on the board. Sensible advice, first formulated by Blumenfeld and therefore rightly known as 'Blumenfeld's rule'. Coming back to 6.♘b5, this move (just as Blumenfeld's other opening variations) starts major complications right from the start. Play has an open, tactical character which ought to suit the player of the Scotch.

6...♗xe3

The only natural response to White's audacious knight move. There is a practical example with 6...♗b4+: 7.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 8.♘xd2 ♕e5 (8...♕d8 9.♕g4!) 9.♗d3 ♘d4? 10.♘c4 ♕c5 11.b4!, and White won in Hari-Drozg, Slovenia 1996. However, Black could have put up some serious resistance now with 11...♕xb4+ 12.c3 ♕xb5 13.♘d6+ cxd6 14.♗xb5 ♘xb5. In answer to the check I would recommend 7.c3 ♗a5 8.♘d2 a6 9.♘a3!?, which is very pleasant for White.

7.fxe3

The isolated doubled e-pawns look extremely ugly. Indeed, in an ending White's pawn structure would be a very serious deficit. Still, in a middlegame there are also some positive features connected to the e3-e4 pawn set-up. The white pieces may find useful strongholds in the centre on the squares d4, d5, f4 and f5. Moreover, the half-open d- and f-file may be used to good effect. The direct threat of 8.♘xc7 forces Black to make up his mind. Should he protect c7 (and how?), or should he counterattack with 7...♕h4+ and 8...♕xe4? Unattractive, by the way, is 7...♕xb2?! 8.♘1c3! ♕b4 9.♘xc7+ ♔d8 10.♕d2±.



We will investigate:

A) 7...♔d8
B) 7...♕d8
C) 7...♕e5
D) 7...♕h4+

Variation A

7...♔d8

Postponing his decision about where to move the queen. Black reasons that he will have to defend c7 with his king anyway (which is indeed true in some lines). Still, it means giving up the right to castle as early as move 7!

8.♘1c3 ♘ge7

Not, of course, 8...a6? 9.♘xc7+–.

9.♕f3!?

Now that Black has moved his g8 knight White proposes a queen swap, either to improve his own structure (gxf3) or to fracture his opponent's (gxf6).

Less good is 9.♗c4, although in the game

Gantner-Manz, Germany 1991/92, interesting complications arose after 9...d6 10.♕d2 ♘e5 11.♗e2 ♗e6 12.♘xc7!? ♔xc7 13.♘b5+ ♔d8 14.♕xd6+ ♗d7 (14...♘d7 15.♕c7+ ♔e8 16.0-0-0±) 15.♕c7+ ♔e8 16.♘d6+ ♔f8 17.♖f1 ♕e6 18.♘xf7!? ♘xf7 19.♖d1. Black could now have won with 19...♗c6. After the game continuation 19...♖c8? White could have landed a spectacular blow with 20.♖xd7!+– (instead of 20.♕xd7).

A serious alternative, though, is **9.♕d2!?**. In the game N.Kosintseva-Petrukhin, Dagomys 2003, Black now played the loosening 9...a6 10.♘d4 b5?! when after 11.0-0-0 ♘e5 12.♗e2 d6 13.♖hf1 ♕h6 14.♘f3 ♘g4 White correctly invested some material with 15.e5! ♘xe3 16.exd6 cxd6 17.♘g5! ♘xf1 18.♖xf1 ♗e6 19.♘ce4 with a winning attack.

Preferable – after 9.♕d2 a6 10.♘d4 – is 10...♘e5 11.0-0-0 d6 12.♗e2 with a balanced position. Black's king will stay in the centre for some time to come, meaning that White has definite attacking chances. On the other hand, Black is pretty solid and has some long-term advantages.

9...♕h4+

White has a pleasant ending after 9...♕xf3 10.gxf3. The game Gaponenko-Stiazhkina, Belgrade 2001, continued 10...d6 11.♖g1 g6 12.0-0-0 a6 13.♘d4 ♘xd4 14.♖xd4 (14.exd4!?) 14...♗e6 15.f4 f6 16.♖d2 ♔e8 17.♗g2 ♖b8 18.♗f3 ♔f7 19.h4±.

Perhaps Black should opt for the ending after 9...d6!? 10.♗e2?! ♘e5 11.♕xf6 gxf6 12.0-0 f5 as in Remmler-Korneev, Böblingen 2003.

10.g3 ♕h6 11.♕f4!

White nevertheless succeeds in exchanging the queens under favourable circumstances.

11...♕xf4 12.gxf4 a6 13.♘d4 ♘xd4 14.exd4

And White had a slight edge in Kecic-Milosevic, Kranj 1999.

Variation B

7...♕d8

Defending c7 with the queen without interpolating the check on h4 (line D2) is less logical.

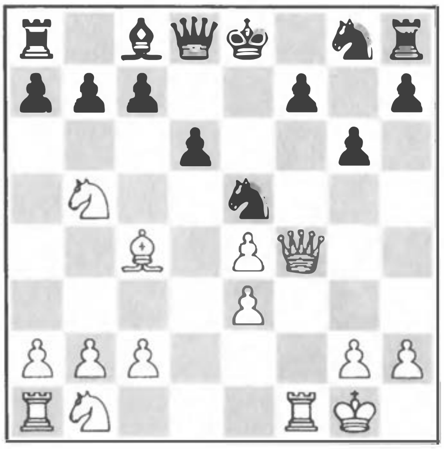
8.♕g4 g6?!

This is the most popular move in practice. Worse than the text is 8...♘f6? 9.♘xc7+! ♕xc7 10.♕xg7 ♖g8 11.♕xf6 ♘b4 12.♘a3 and White was clearly better in Mieses-Lester, London 1944. However, the alternative 8...♔f8 is probably a lot stronger. Black does not weaken the dark squares, which eases his defensive task. Chances are probably about equal. For example, 9.♕f4 d6 10.♘1c3 a6 11.♘d4 ♘e5 12.0-0-0 ♘f6=, Farah-Bielicki, Buenos Aires 1992.

9.♕f4 d6 10.♗c4 ♘e5

Bad is 10...♘f6? 11.0-0 ♘e5 12.♕xf6 ♕xf6 13.♖xf6±, Schneider-Spranger, Oberhof 1998.

11.0-0



11...♕d7

The only move in this difficult position for Black. However, as the queen will have to move later on, (she is clearly obstructing Black's development) this move involves a further loss of tempo. To illustrate the problems that Black is facing:

– 11...♗e6 12.♗xe6 fxe6 13.♘1c3± (immediately winning is 13.♘xc7+! ♕xc7 14.♕f8+ ♔d7 15.♕xa8+–) 13...♔d7?

14.♖ad1 ♔c8 15.♕xe5 1-0, Blumenfeld-Helbach, St Petersburg 1905.

– 11...♕e7 12.♘1c3 c6 (not much better is 12...g5 13.♕f2 c6 14.♗xf7+ ♔d7 15.♘d4± R.Swinkels-De Vreugt, Hoogeveen 2004) 13.♘xd6+ (13.♗xf7+ is also completely winning) 13...♕xd6 14.♗xf7+ ♔e7 15.♕h4+ ♔f8 16.♗xg8+ ♔xg8 17.♖ad1 ♕e6 18.♖d8+ ♔g7 19.♖xh8 ♔xh8 20.♕d8+ 1-0, Batkovic-Jevtic, Belgrade 1993.

12.♘1a3!

Keeping the momentum, and therefore stronger than 12.♗e2 a6 13.♘d4 ♕e7 14.♘c3 ♗e6 15.♘d5 ♗xd5 16.exd5 h5 17.♘f3 ♘xf3+ 18.♖xf3 ♘h6 19.♕a4+, Gaponenko-Maric, Vrnjacka Banja 1996. Although in that case White keeps some advantage too.

Equally good as the text-move, though, is **12.♘d2** as Zelcic played against Abbas at the 2004 Olympiad in Calvia. White won convincingly after 12...h5 13.♘c3 ♖h7 14.♗b3 ♕g4 15.♘d5! ♔d8 16.♘f6 ♘xf6 (16...♕xf4 17.exf4 ♘xf6 18.fxe5+–) 17.♕xf6+ ♔e8 18.♘f3! ♘xf3+ 19.♖xf3 ♕d7 20.♖af1 ♕e7 21.♗xf7+ and Black resigned.

12...a6

Clearly, 12...♘xc4 13.♘xc4 leaves Black defenceless against the menacing threats on d6 and c7.

While, the immediate 12...♕e7 fails to 13.♗xf7+! ♘xf7 14.♘xc7+ ♕xc7 15.♘b5 ♕e7 16.♕xf7+ ♕xf7 17.♘xd6+ ♔e7 18.♘xf7 ♗e6 19.♘xh8 ♘f6 20.♘xg6+ and White's rook and four(!) pawns are stronger than the two pieces.

13.♘d4 ♕e7 14.♘f3

Ready to exchange an important defender.

14...♘xc4 15.♘xc4

White's enormous lead in development now gives him the edge. Zelcic won convincingly after:

15...♗e6 16.e5! dxe5 17.♘cxe5 0-0-0 18.♘d4 f6 19.♘ec6! bxc6 20.♘xc6 ♕c5 21.♘xd8 ♔xd8 22.♖ad1+ ♔e7 23.♖d3 g5 24.♕f3 ♕e5 25.♕a8 ♗d7 26.♖fd1 ♗e8 27.♖c3 ♔f7 28.♕xa6 c6 29.♕c4+ ♔g7 30.♕d4+– ♕e6 31.a4 ♘e7 32.♕d6 ♕xd6 33.♖xd6 ♘d5 34.♖b3 ♗f7 35.♖b7 ♔g6 36.e4 ♘e3 37.e5 ♗d5 38.♖xf6+ ♔h5 39.a5 ♘xg2 40.a6 ♘e1 41.a7 1-0

Zelcic-Kuba, Pula 2003.

Variation C

7...♕e5

This is Bronstein's move.

8.♕d5

This move forces Black to protect c7 with his king, and, therefore, looks strong. Still, Black is often forced to play ♔d8 at some point anyway. In any case, there are clearly some interesting alternatives at this stage:

- No good is 8.♘1c3?! after both 8...a6 9.♘d4 ♘f6 10.♘xc6 dxc6 11.♕d4 ♕e7∓ Oksanen-Rautio, Finland 1999/00, and 8...♘f6 9.♕f3 a6 10.♘a3 d6 11.♘c4 ♕e7 12.h3 0-0 Mammola-Masera, Sottomarina 1973, White has no compensation whatsoever for his structural deficit.
- In practice White has also been successful with moving the knight to the edge of the board with 8.♘1a3!? ♘ce7?! 9.♘c4 ♕c5 10.c3 d6 11.b4 ♕c6 12.♕d4 ♘f6 13.♘a5 ♕d7 14.e5! ♘f5 15.♕f4 ♘h5 16.♕f3± Stamnov-Pancevski, Skopje 1998. However, in reply to 8.♘1a3 the customary 8...♔d8 looks stronger.
- 8.♘d2 ♔d8 (not 8...♘f6 9.♘c4!+–) and now the lines fork:

– 9.♘c3 ♘f6 10.♕f3 d6 11.h3 ♗e6 12.0-0-0 ♕c5 (12...♖e8 13.♗b5 a6 14.♗xc6 bxc6 15.♕f4 ♗d7 16.♕h4 ♕h5 was Lipman-Averbakh, Moscow 1978) 13.♕f4 ♘e5 14.♔b1 ♔e7 15.♘f3 ♘g6 16.♕g5

♕xg5 17.♘xg5 c6∓ Ruotanen-Peretjatkowicz, cr 1973.

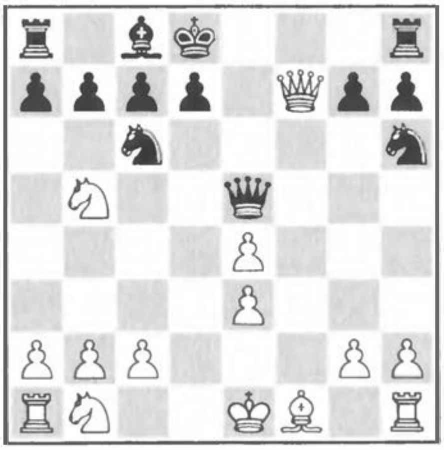
– 9.♗d3 looks stronger, after 9...♘f6 10.0-0d6 11.♘f3 ♕e7 (11...♕xb2? 12.♖b1 ♕xa2 13.e5!) 12.♕e1 ♗d7 13.♕g3 Pinkas-Sokolov, Lublin 1974, White keeps the initiative, according to Gutman. The more recent Predojevic-Tomashevsky, Halkidiki 2003, went 9...♘h6 10.0-0 b6 11.♕e1 f6 12.♘f3 ♕e7 13.♘c3 ♘e5 14.♘d5 ♕d6 15.♕g3.

8...♔d8 9.♕xf7

Alternatively, 9.♘1c3!? may also be investigated. For example, 9...♘f6 (9...♘h6!?) 10.♕xf7 ♘xe4 (10...♕g5 11.0-0-0 and Black's king will be stuck in the centre for a long time) 11.♘xe4 ♕xe4 12.0-0-0 (12.♕xg7 ♕xe3+ 13.♗e2 ♖e8 14.♕f6+ ♖e7 15.♕h8+ is a draw) 12...♕e7 (12...♕xe3+ 13.♔b1 will only make matters worse, as White can use the open e-file for his attack as well) 13.♕f4 d6 14.♗d3 ♘e5 15.♖hf1 ♗d7 16.♘d4 g6 17.♘f3 ♖f8?! 18.♕b4 ♘c6 19.♕xb7 ♖b8 20.♕a6 ♖b6 21.♕a3 ♕xe3+ 22.♔b1 ♗f5? 23.♘h4 a5? 24.♖fe1 ♕g5 25.♗xf5 ♕xh4 26.♖xd6+ 1-0 Kecic-Tavcar, Ljubljana 1998.

9...♘h6

This is stronger than 9...♘ge7 10.♘1c3 a6 11.♘a3 b5 12.0-0-0d6 13.♕f3 ♗e6 14.♘d5 ♗xd5 15.exd5 ♘a5 16.♕f4!? ♘g6 17.♕xe5 ♘xe5 18.♗e2 ♔e7 19.b4!± Bontempi-Taccalati, Italy 1996.



After the text Black gets a counterattack, according to an analysis by Estrin and Panov. However, after

10.♕f4!

White can at the cost of some material take over the attack. The game Stöcker-Nowack, Schleswig Holstein 1996, continued quite romantically with

10...♕xb2 11.♕xc7+ ♔e8 12.♘1c3!?

Here 12.♕d6 ♕xa1 13.♘c7+ ♔d8 14.♘e6+ draws.

12...♕xa1+ 13.♔d2 ♘f7 14.♕f4! ♔f8

Equally bad is 14...♘ce5 15.♘d6+! ♔e7 16.♘xf7 ♘xf7 17.♗c4 ♕xh1 18.♕xf7+ ♔d8 19.♕xg7, winning. In my opinion 14...♘fe5! with a very unclear position is best.

15.♘d6

Also winning is 15.♗c4.

15...♘e5 16.♘xf7 ♘g6

Or 16...♘xf7 17.♗c4+–.

17.♕d6+ ♔g8 18.♗c4 h6 19.♘g5

Mate.

Variation D

7...♕h4+

The main line.

8.g3

Now the lines fork:

D1) 8...♕xe4
D2) 8...♕d8

Variation D1

8...♕xe4 9.♘xc7+

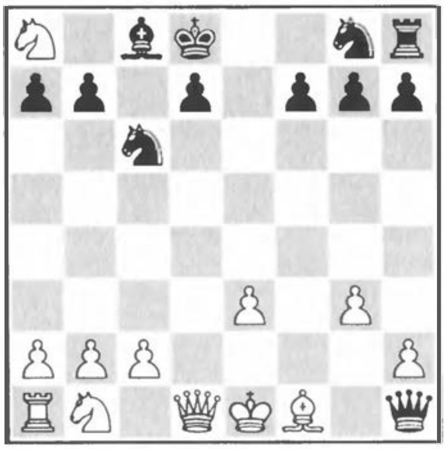
White should take the rook now, for after 9.♘1c3 ♕xh1 10.♘xc7+ ♔d8 11.♕d6 ♘f6 12.♘xa8 there is Fine's recommendation of 12...♕f3! to consider. Instead, 12...♘e8?! proved less good in Blackburne-Ward, London 1907. White won after 13.♕f4 f6 14.0-0-0 ♘e5 15.♘d5 ♕xh2 16.♗b5 ♘c6 17.♘ac7 ♕h6 18.♘e6+! dxe6 19.♘b6+ ♔e7

20.♘xc8+ ♔f8 21.♕f3 ♘e5 22.♕e4 ♕g6 23.♕b4+ 1-0.

9...♔d8

As always the king should go to d8. After 9...♔f8? 10.♘xa8 ♕xh1 11.♕d2 h5 12.♘c3 h4 13.0-0-0 ♕f3 14.♗g2 ♕g4 15.♕d6+ ♘ge7 16.♕c7 d6 17.♖xd6 g6, Müller-Stockfleth, Hamburg 1989, White gets a winning advantage with 18.♖d8+! ♔g7 19.♖xh8 ♔xh8 20.♗xc6 ♘xc6 21.♕xf7.

10.♘xa8 ♕xh1



So after a mere 10 moves we have reached a position that is completely unclear, and might just as well have been played in the 19th century. Material is equal, Black's king is worse placed than White's. White's knight on a8 is trapped, but it could also turn out to be a major asset in a direct attack (square c7!).

11.♕d6

The most popular move, and it sure looks logical. A recent but dubious attempt is 11.♕d2?! when after 11...♕e4 12.♘c3 ♕e5 13.0-0-0 ♘f6 14.♘b5 ♖e8 15.♞d6 ♖e7 16.♗g2 ♘e8 17.♘c4 ♕c5 18.♕c3 b5! 19.♗xc6 bxc4 Black was winning in N.Kosintseva-Velcheva, Istanbul 2003.

Worthy of serious attention though is **11.♕g4!?**. The attack on g7 is rather annoying for the second player.

– White gets a superior ending after 11...♕d5? 12.♕xg7 ♕e5 13.♕f8+ ♕e8 14.♕xe8+ ♔xe8 15.♘c7+ Benderac-Drljevic, Herceg Novi 2001.

– 11...g6 also looks weak after 12.♘d2 ♕xh2 13.0-0-0 ♕h5 14.♕f4 ♕e5 15.♕xf7 ♘ge7 16.♘c4 ♕b8 17.♘d6 ♕xa8 18.♕f6 ♖g8 19.♗c4+– Godani-Duarte, Pontremoli 1998.

Black has some stronger moves at his disposal though:

– Langer-Kamberi, Oklahoma 2003, ended in a repetition after 11...♕g1 12.♕xg7 ♕xe3+ 13.♗e2 ♕g1+ 14.♗f1 ♕e3+ and so on.

– Also interesting is 11...♘ge7 12.♘c3 (12.♕xg7 ♖g8↑) 12...♕xh2 13.0-0-0 h5 14.♕f4 h4, which is given by some sources as better for Black. However, it seems to me that 15.♘e4! gives White a tremendous attack. Instead of 12...♕xh2 Black should prefer my suggestion (in NIC Magazine 2003/7) of 12...♘e5!?. This was tested in R.Swinkels-Hallebeek, Eindhoven 2004: 13.♕xg7 ♘f3+ 14.♔f2 ♖g8 15.♕xh7 ♘xh2 16.♕e4 ♘g4+ 17.♔e2, and now according to Hallebeek best was 17...♕h2+ planning 18.♗g2? ♘f5! and 18.♕g2 b6!.

11...♘f6 12.♘d2!

This time there are no playable alternatives. There is no time to pull the knight back: 12.♘c7? ♕f3 13.♘c3 ♕xe3+ 14.♗e2 ♘d4 15.♘7b5 ♘f3+ 0-1 Penillas Mendez-Prieto, Asturias 1998. Also bad is 12.♕c7+ ♔e7 13.♘c3 ♕f3 14.e4 ♖e8 15.♖d1 ♘xe4∓ Haapaniemi-Pitkanen, Helsinki 2000. While 12.♘c3 ♕f3∓ was an old analysis by Keres. In all these lines ♕f3 is the key counter-attacking move, which is why 12.♘d2 is necessary.

White is now ready to castle queenside leaving Black two possibilities:

D11) 12...♘e8
D12) 12...♘e4

Variation D11

12...♘e8

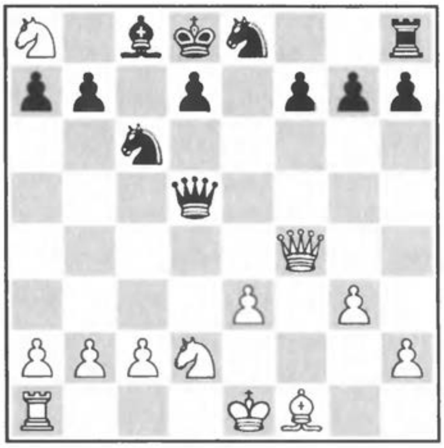
According to an analysis by Estrin and Panov, Black is better now. This verdict turns out to be too optimistic. The text defends the important c7 square. Here is what happens if White is given free rein:

– 12...♖e8 13.0-0-0 ♕d5 14.♕c7+ ♔e7 15.♘c4 ♕c5 16.♘d6+– Haapaniemi-Tuomala, Finland 1986.

– 12...♕d5 13.♕c7+ ♔e7 14.0-0-0 ♕e5?! (14...♕c5!? 15.♗g2 ♖e8 Hallebeek) 15.♘c4 ♕xc7 16.♘xc7 ♖d8 17.♘d6± Janz-Von Rahden, Binz 1995.

13.♕f4 ♕d5

Keres ended his analysis here, opining that Black was better. More recently Gutman has argued that the opposite is true! Instead of Keres' move, 13...♕xh2 14.0-0-0 ♕h6, Crespo-Pock, cr 2000, also merits attention.



14.0-0-0!

Not fearing 14...♕xa2! White is losing the trapped knight after 14.♗c4? ♕e5 15.0-0-0 ♕xf4 16.exf4 b6 17.♗xf7 ♗b7 18.♘xb6 axb6–+ Bucan-Bogic, Yugoslavia cr 1983.

14...♕e5

For after 14...♕xa2 15.♘b3!, and the Black queen is merely trapped on a2: 15...♘a5? fails to 16.♕g5+.

15.♘f3

White won in Guez-Lebon, Bethune 2004, with the direct 15.♕xf7 ♕b8 16.♘e4 ♘e5? (16...♕xa8 17.♗h3+–) 17.♕f4+–.

15...♕xf4 16.exf4 f6 17.♘d4

This is rightly given by Gutman as advantageous for White, as Black has no way of winning the a8 knight.

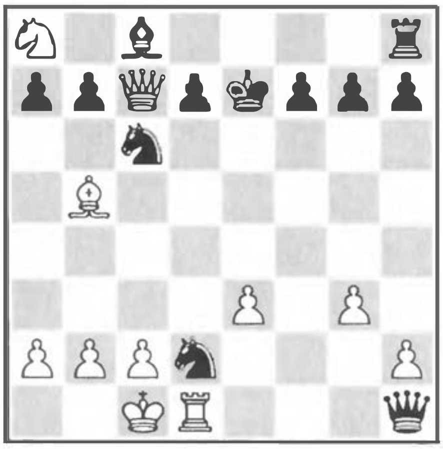
Variation D12

12...♘e4!

Play now assumes a forced character.

13.♕c7+ ♔e7 14.0-0-0 ♘xd2 15.♗b5!

If it wasn't for this move White would be in serious trouble. However, this has been known for more than 50 years now.



15...♕e4!

This is Gutman's discovery, which appears to save the entire line for Black. Turning 12...♘e4? into 12...♘e4! so to speak. Thus Black is inferior after both:

– 15...♕xh2 16.♗xc6 bxc6 17.♕e5+ ♔d8 18.♕c7+ ♔e7 19.♕e5+ ♔d8 20.♕xg7± Schneider-Leuchter, Bad Wiessee 1999, and

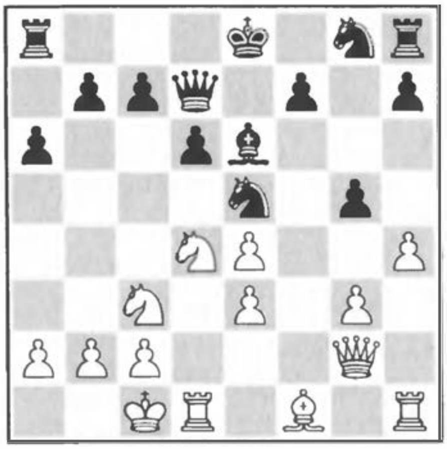
– 15...♕d5 16.♗xc6 bxc6, and now White must realize that there is no hurry to recapture on d2, with 17.♕xa7!±. Instead the game Mieses-Sergeant, Hastings 1945/46, went 17.♖xd2 ♕c5 18.♖d4 f6 19.b4 ♕c3 20.♖e4+ ♔f7 21.♕xa7 ♖e8 22.♖xe8 ♕e1+ 23.♔b2 ♕xb4+ 24.♔c1 ♕e1+ 25.♔b2 ♕b4+ 26.♔c1 ½-½.

16.♗xc6 bxc6 17.♖xd2 ♕xe3

18.♕d6+ ♔d8 19.♕c7+
with a draw by perpetual is Gutman's main line.
If this analysis of 12...♘e4 is correct (and it is quite possible that discoveries can be made here), then White should turn his attention to 11.♕g4, as given above.

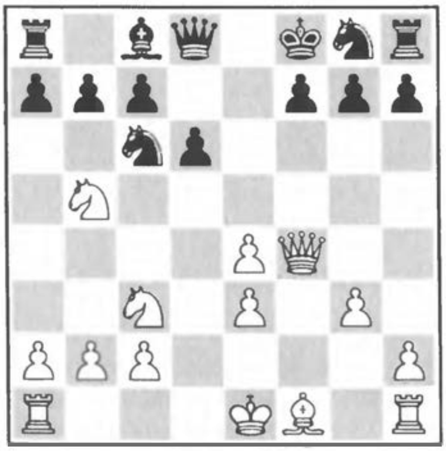
Variation D2

8...♕d8
Naturally this must be compared to the immediate 7...♕d8 (line B).
9.♕g4
Here 9.♘1c3 a6 10.♘d4 ♘e5 11.♗g2 d6 12.0-0 was Nimzowitsch-Spielmann, München 1905. According to ECO play would have been equal after 12...♘e7. Actually, Black's position looks just better. White has no tactical chances to make up for his structural deficits.
9...♔f8
Again it is better to avoid weakening the dark squares. After **9...g6** 10.♕f4 d6 11.♗c4 ♗e6 (11...♘e5? 12.0-0 ♕e7 13.♘1c3 c6 14.♗xf7+ – or 14.♘xd6+ – 1-0 Berndtsson Kullberg-Bengtsson, Copenhagen 1916. This win is identical to that in the line with 7...♕d8) 12.♗xe6 fxe6 13.0-0 ♘ge7 14.♘1c3 (this is better than 14.♕f7+ ♔d7 15.♖f6?– 15.♘d4– 15...♕g8 16.♘c3 ♕xf7 17.♖xf7 ♘e5∓ Mieses-Johner, Berlin 1924) 14...♘e5 15.♕f6 ♔d7 16.♘d4 ♕g8 17.♘cb5 ♘7c6 18.♘xc6 bxc6 19.♖ad1! ♖f8 20.♕xe5 ♖xf1+ 21.♔xf1 ♕f7+ (21...cxb5 22.♕xb5+ ♔e7 23.e5±) 22.♔g2 ♖f8 23.♘xd6 ♕f3+ 24.♔h3 ♕xd1 25.♕g7+ ♔xd6 26.♕xf8+ Spielmann-Rubinstein, Stockholm 1919, and White won this queen ending easily.
However, there is something to be said for Godena's **9...g5!?**. By moving the g-pawn two steps forward Black not only defends against the threat on g7, but he also takes the important f4-square from White's queen. After 10.♘1c3 d6 11.♕e2 a6 12.♘d4 ♘e5 13.♕g2 (13.♘f5) 13...♗e6 14.0-0-0 ♕d7 15.h4 Black faces a difficult choice. Should he move forward with the g-pawn or take on h4?



- 15...g4 16.♗e2 0-0-0 17.♘d5 ♗xd5 18.exd5 ♘e7 19.♖hf1 h5 20.e4± Predojevic-Kizov, Belgrade 2004.
- 15...gxh4 16.gxh4 ♗g4 (Godena gives 16...0-0-0 17.♕g7 ♘e7 18.♘xe6 fxe6 19.♗h3 ♘7g6 as about equal) 17.♗e2 ♘e7 with fairly even chances in Ponomariov-Godena, Plovdiv tt 2003.

10.♕f4 d6 11.♘1c3
Stronger than the immediate 11.♗c4 ♘e5 12.0-0 ♘h6 (12...♘f6=) 13.♗b3 ♗h3 14.♘1c3!? ♗xf1 15.♖xf1 as in Blumenfeld-W.Cohn, Berlin City Championship 1903/04, the stem game of the 6.♘b5 line.



11...♘ge7

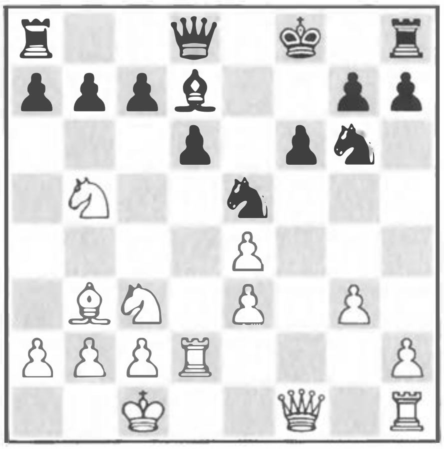
This is an unfortunate idea. In general Black should place his knights on e5 and f6. The game Bernstein-Swiderski, Ostend 1907, went instead: 11...♘e5 12.0-0-0. The point of 11.♘1c3 is that White will castle queenside rather than kingside. After 12...♗g4 13.♗e2 h5 14.♗xg4 hxg4 15.♘d5 the white knights are taking up a menacing position: 15...g5 16.♕f5 ♘h6 17.♕f2 c6 18.♘dc7 ♔g7 19.♘xa8 cxb5 20.♖hf1 ♔h7 21.♕e2 ♕e7 22.♘b6 axb6 23.♕xb5 ♕c7 24.♖f6 ♔g7? 25.♖fxd6 ♖c8?? 26.♕xe5+ 1-0.

However, readers might like to investigate 11...a6 12.♘d4 ♘e5 13.0-0-0 ♘f6 14.♗e2, which is given as equal by Gutman. Instead of the last move, 14.h3!? is a minor improvement.

12.♗c4 f6

Preparing ♘g6, but Black is going to regret the weakening of the diagonal a2-g8. After 12...♘e5 13.♗b3 White also has a pleasant edge.

13.0-0-0 ♘g6 14.♕f1 ♘ce5 15.♗b3 ♗g4 16.♖d2 ♗d7



Black's single pride and joy is the stronghold on e5, but to adapt an aphorism of Tarrasch: one strong square does not make for a strong position.

17.h3! h5

Otherwise White just goes g4.

18.♘d4 c6 19.♘f5

All these knight jumps demonstrate the advantages of the e3-e4 structure.

19...♗xf5 20.exf5 ♘e7 21.e4

Now White has a huge edge. The Black king is in mortal danger.

21...a5 22.♗e6 ♕c7 23.g4 g5? 24.h4!

What follows is a massacre.

24...gxh4

Also losing is 24...♘xg4 25.hxg5 fxg5 26.f6 ♘g6 27.♗xg4 hxg4 28.♖xh8+ ♘xh8 29.♕f5.

25.♖xh4 ♕b6 26.♘d1

Not even allowing Black the pleasure of ♕e3.

26...♔g7 27.gxh5 ♔h7 28.♖g2 ♖hg8 29.♖g6!

In such a position good moves are easy to find. Naturally just taking the rook also wins.

29...♕d8 30.♕f4 ♕f8 31.♖h2 ♖h8 32.♘e3 ♖e8 33.♖hg2 ♘5xg6 34.fxg6+ ♔g7 35.♖h2 f5 36.exf5 ♘xg6 37.f6+ 1-0

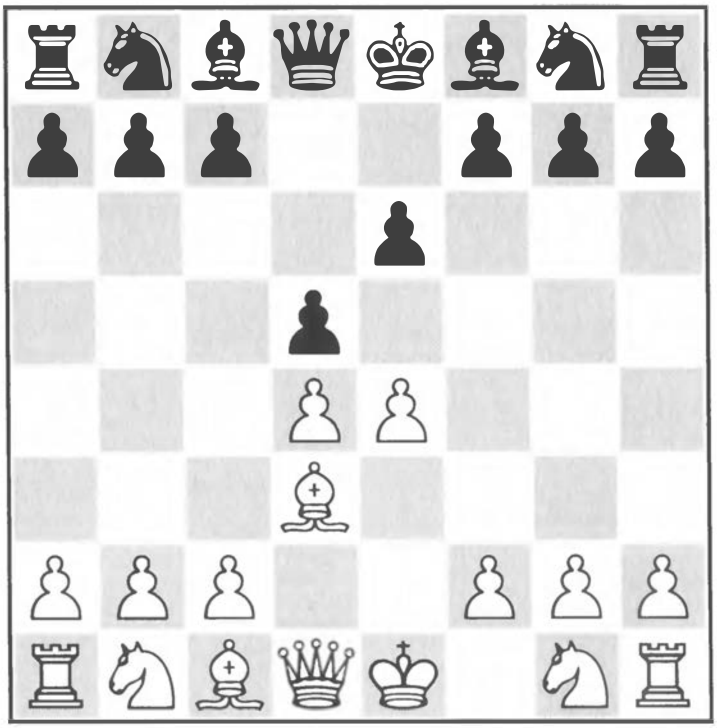
Nataf-Onischuk, Montreal 2003.

So the next time you are facing this line of the Scotch, write down the move 6.♘b5 on your score sheet, think of Blumenfeld, and play it!

CHAPTER 8

Mark Bluvshtein

Out of the French Book



1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♗d3

Doesn't it sometimes feel as if there is so much theory to know, and even if you know it there doesn't seem to be any advantage for White? This was my feeling about the French Defence. Every time I play it I need to know tons of theory, which is supposed to bring an advantage that is hardly discernible. The line with 3.♗d3 has never been seriously analyzed until this article. I am the only player in the world who plays this line on a regular basis against top class opposition. Most of the ideas are shown in my games, but the credit should go to my former trainer Yuri Ochkoos who showed this line to me with confidence. He introduced me to it and tested most of our analysis himself. The best thing about this line from my point of view is that everything is to be solved over the board. No real analysis has been done in this line. Games in this line always become entertaining in no time! I am not a fan of theory, never was. I enjoy playing chess in unfamiliar territory for both players. Surprisingly, this line has brought me unbelievable success in important games. Hope you enjoy!

Clearly, 3.♗d3 is a very rare move, but it is connected with several positional ideas. White will castle kingside as soon as possible. The bishop move does not block any pieces, and is a standard developing move.

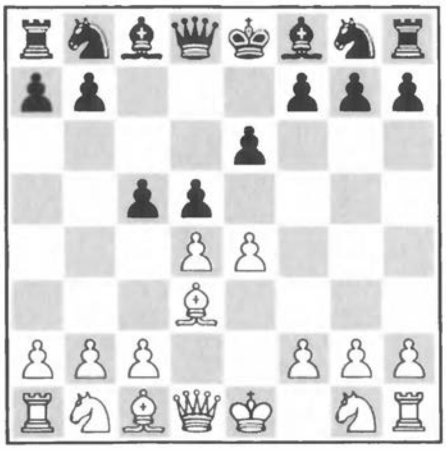
In contrast, 3.♘d2 for example blocks the dark squared bishop, which does not make much sense. With 3.♗d3 you keep your options open. At first, this move does not seem to make much sense due to dxe4 followed by ♘f6, thus Black gains time in development. However, it is not so simple, as the light-squared bishop on the long diagonal is controlling the board. This is a great line to surprise Black. Every French player has played the ♘c3 and ♘d2 lines hundreds of times, while the quiet ♗d3 line immediately takes the opposition out of book, on move 3!

By the way, the natural 3...♘f6 is no good, for, after 3...♘f6 4.e5 ♘fd7 5.♘f3 c5 6.c3, White is significantly better positioned in comparison to similar lines in the Advance Variation or the Tarrasch Variation.

Studying the following illustrative games is all you need to play 3.♗d3 confidently in your next game.

☐ **Mark Bluvshtein**
■ **Jean-Marc Degraeve**
Montreal 2002

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♗d3 c5



Black is trying to over take the initiative. The idea is to make the bishop on d3 feel misplaced as quickly as possible.

4.c3 ♘c6 5.♘e2 cxd4

This is a good move, but Black has a sensible alternative here. After 5...dxe4 6.♗xe4 ♘f6 7.♗f3 ♗e7 8.0-0 0-0 9.♗e3 ♕c7 10.♘d2 ♖d8 the position is about equal. Also good in this line is 7...cxd4 8.cxd4 ♗d6 9.♘bc3 0-0 10.0-0 h6. This is no typical isolated pawn position. White's bishop on f3 looks misplaced but actually controls the main diagonal and therefore his counterpart on c8 with ease. With the idea of ♘e7 Black looks OK though. This actually transposes to the remark on move 6.

A sample line after 5...♘f6 is: 6.♗g5 dxe4 7.♗xe4 ♗e7 8.♗xf6 ♗xf6 9.♗xc6+ bxc6 10.dxc5 0-0 11.♕xd8 ♖xd8 12.♘d2 ♗a6 13.♘g3 ♖ab8 when Black has some compensation for the pawn.

6.cxd4

This is better than 6.♘xd4 ♘xd4 7.cxd4 dxe4 8.♗xe4 ♘f6 9.♗f3 ♗d6.

6...♘b4

Interesting play. In Bluvshtein-Barsov, Montreal 2002, there followed: 6...dxe4 7.♗xe4 ♘f6 8.♗f3 ♗d6 9.♘bc3 0-0 10.0-0 h6 11..♗e3 ♘e7. GM Barsov plays the position with good understanding, he is aiming to blockade the pawn. Chances were about equal after 12.♘e4 ♘xe4 13.♗xe4 ♗d7.

7.♗b5+

Black is fine after 7.e5 ♘xd3+ 8.♕xd3 ♗d7.

7...♗d7 8.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 9.e5

White has more space, but Black is comfortable enough as shown by GM Degraeve.

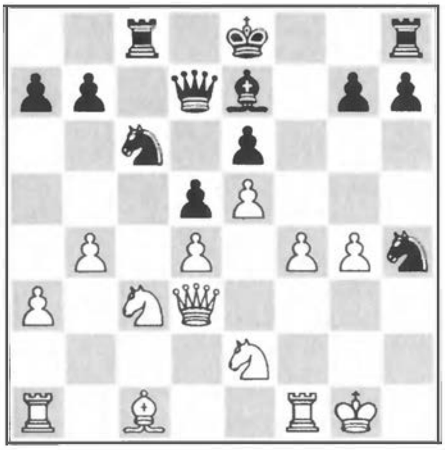
9...♘e7 10.♘bc3 ♘f5 11.a3 ♘c6 12.b4 ♗e7 13.0-0 ♖c8 14.♕d3 f6 15.g4

15.f4 0-0 Black is again very comfortable.

15...♘h4 16.f4 f5 17.h3

Positionally undesirable is 17.g5 h6 when Black is slightly better.

17...fxg4 18.hxg4



18...h5 19.gxh5

After the positionally desirable 19.f5 Black gets a winning attack with 19...hxg4 20.fxe6 ♕xe6 21.♘f4 ♕h6.

19...♘f5

Black has more than sufficient compensation for the pawn. Important squares are controlled by Black, and the white king is not as safe as White would like.

20.♔g2

20.b5 ♘cxd4 21.♘xd4 ♘xd4 22.♕xd4 ♗c5–+.

20...♗h4 21.♘b5 ♘ce7 22.a4 a6 23.♘d6+ ♘xd6 24.exd6 ♘f5 25.b5 ♖xh5 26.bxa6 bxa6 27.♗a3 ♔f7 28.♖fc1 ♖xc1 29.♖xc1 ♘xd6 30.♗xd6 ♕xd6 31.♖c8 ♖h6 32.♖a8 ♗e7 33.♖xa6 ♕b4 34.f5 ♕b8 35.♕g3

Correct was 35.fxe6+ ♔g8 36.♘g3.

35...♕b1 36.fxe6+ ♔g8 37.♖a8+ ♔h7 38.♔f2 ♗h4 0-1

□ **Maxim Uritzky**

■ **Eduardas Rozentalis**

Israel 1999

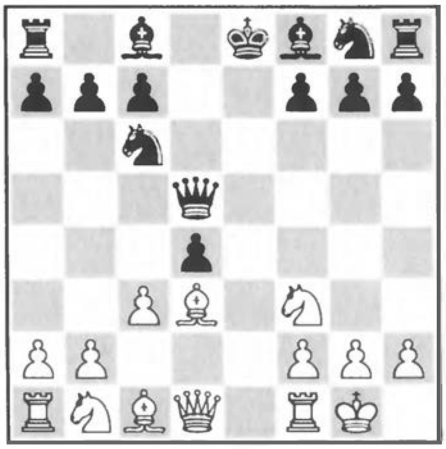
1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♗d3 ♘c6

Rozentalis always comes up with interesting ideas in the French, and this is another one.

4.c3

Or 4.♘f3 ♘b4 – and it is impossible to imagine that Black can ever really be worse with the two bishops.

4...e5 5.♘f3 exd4 6.exd5 ♕xd5 7.0-0



It seems as if here White is developing very quickly.

7...♗d6 8.cxd4 ♘ge7 9.♘c3 ♕h5 10.♘e4

White is slightly better here.

10...0-0 11.♘xd6 cxd6 12.h3 ♘b4 13.♗b1

White keeps his bishop pair.

13...♕b5 14.♖e1 ♘bd5 15.♗d3 ♕b6 16.♗g5 ♘c6 17.♕e2 ♘db4 18.d5!

Trading the bishop pair for a considerable space advantage.

18...♘xd3 19.♕xd3 ♘b4 20.♕e4 f5 21.♕c4 ♗d7 22.♖e7 ♖f7 23.♖ae1 ♖c8 24.♕b3 ♖cf8 25.♗d2!

Well-played! With simple means White has achieved a winning position.

25...♘a6 26.♕xb6 axb6 27.♘g5 ♘c7 28.♖xf7 ♖xf7 29.♘xf7 ♔xf7 30.♗f4 ♘xd5 31.♗xd6 ♗c6 32.f3 ♔f6 33.♔f2 h5 34.h4 g6 35.a3 b5 36.♖e2 ♔f7 37.♔e1 ♔f6 38.♔d2 f4 39.♗e5+ ♔f7 40.♖e4 1-0

A nice game by Uritzky, showing a good level of class in defeating Rozentalis after getting an advantage in the opening.

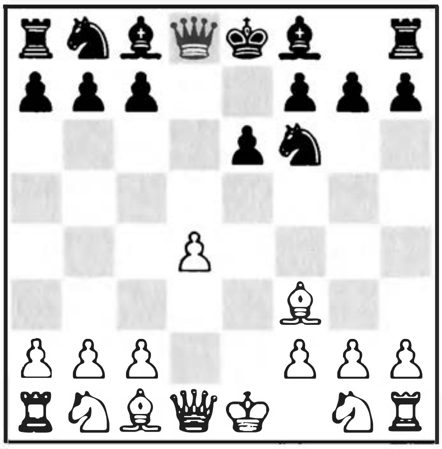
In the remainder of the games we will examine Black's main option to 'refute' 3.♗d3.

☐ **Mark Bluvshtein**
■ **Heikki Westerinen**
Gausdal 2003

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♗d3 dxe4

The most obvious solution to the opening problem. Black wins a tempo off of ♘f6 pushing the bishop back.

4.♗xe4 ♘f6 5.♗f3



This is the idea behind 3.♗d3, now the development of the black light squared bishop must be delayed. The white knight will settle nicely into the e2, c3 squares. White's idea is to simply develop.

5...♗e7

Black makes a very simple decision to keep developing.

6.♘e2 0-0 7.0-0 c5!

It is hard to come up with a better plan than c5, the only active way to play the position. Black's problem here is that the light-squared bishop will never get the chance to develop to a powerful square. White's light-squared bishop, on the other hand, has already found the long diagonal on which he is comfortable.

8.dxc5 ♗xc5 9.♕xd8 ♖xd8 10.♘bc3 ♘c6 11.♗f4 ♗d7

An effort to connect the rooks and keeping the position solid. 11...e5 12.♗g5 (Black has weakened a few squares for the development of the light squared bishop) 12...♗f5 (Black is quite comfortable in this position) 13.♖ac1.

12.♖ad1 ♗e8 13.a3

White is dreaming about somehow advancing the queenside pawns with b4 and c4.

13...a6 14.♘e4 ♘xe4 15.♗xe4

Black's position looks very passive now.

15...♖ac8 16.b4 ♗a7 17.c4

The queenside majority is set in motion.

17...f6 18.♗e3± ♗xe3 19.fxe3 ♖xd1 20.♖xd1 ♗h5 21.♔f2 ♔f8 22.♖d7 ♘e5 23.♖xb7 ♖xc4 24.♘d4 ♗f7 25.h3 f5 26.♗b1 f4 27.exf4 ♖xd4 28.fxe5 ♖d2+ 29.♔e3

Setting off on an impressive journey.

29...♖xg2 30.♔d4 ♖d2+ 31.♔c5 ♗e8 32.♔b6 ♖h2 33.♖a7

The white king wins this game.

33...♗b5 34.a4 ♗xa4 35.♖xa6 ♗e8 36.♗e4 ♖xh3 37.b5 ♗xb5 38.♔xb5 ♖e3 39.♖a4 ♔e7 40.♔c5 ♖c3+ 41.♔d4 ♖h3 42.♖a7+ ♔f8 43.♗d3 1-0

☐ **Mark Bluvshtein**
■ **Yaqoov Vaingorten**
Montreal 2001

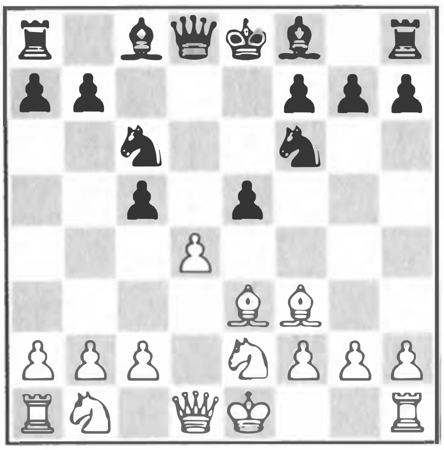
1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♗d3 dxe4 4.♗xe4 ♘f6 5.♗f3 c5

This is the main variation. The idea is to put pressure on White's d4 pawn, as well as play ♘c6 without leaving the c7 pawn behind.

6.♘e2 ♘c6 7.♗e3

I have never seen an opening where White develops pieces like this. White's idea is to simply castle next move. A very unorthodox formation of white pieces at the board's line of scrimmage.

7...e5



This is a very critical line. The idea is to take advantage of the f3 bishop not having any squares. As well as hoping to exchange queens and putting the white king on d1.

8.♗xc6+ bxc6 9.c3

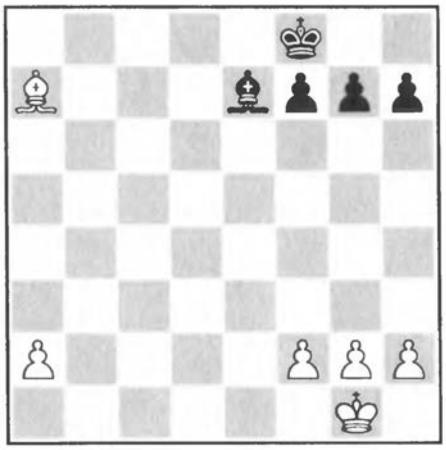
9.dxe5 ♕xd1+ 10.♔xd1 ♘g4 and Black has satisfactory compensation which is shown by the fact that the king is stuck on d1, and at any time Black can take the e5 pawn back. Here Black holds the initiative. Even worse is 9.dxc5 ♕xd1+ 10.♔xd1 ♘g4∓.

9...cxd4 10.cxd4 exd4 11.♕xd4 ♕xd4 12.♗xd4 ♗e7 13.♘bc3 0-0 14.0-0

The result of this game does not really provide a clear look on the position. A realistic evaluation is equal. Black has the two bishops, but a weakness on c6. This asset cancels out the liability.

14...c5 15.♗e3 ♗d7 16.♘f4 ♗c6 17.♘d3 ♖fc8 18.♖fd1 ♘e4 19.♘xe4 ♗xe4 20.♖ac1 ♗d5 21.b3 a5 22.♘xc5 ♗c6 23.♘d7 ♗xd7 24.♖xd7 ♖xc1+ 25.♗xc1 ♔f8 26.♗e3 a4 27.bxa4 ♖xa4 28.♖a7 ♖xa7 29.♗xa7

White has been able to win the weak c-pawn, and transformed the game into a technically winning bishop ending.



29...♔e8 30.♗d4 g6 31.a4 ♗b4 32.♔f1 ♔d7 33.♔e2 ♔c6 34.♔d3 ♔d5 35.♗b6 ♔c6 36.♗e3 ♔d5 37.h3 h5 38.♗b6 f5 39.f3 g5 40.a5 ♔c6 41.♔c4 ♗d2 42.♗d8 g4 43.a6 ♗c1 44.a7 ♔b7 45.♗b6 gxf3 46.gxf3 f4 47.♔d3 ♔a8 48.♔e4 ♗d2 49.♗d4 ♔b7 50.♔f5 ♗e3 51.♗f6 ♗xa7 52.♔g5 ♔c6 53.♔xh5 ♔d5 54.♔g6 ♗d4 55.♗xd4 ♔xd4 56.♔f5 ♔e3 57.♔g4 1-0

☐ **Mark Bluvshtein**
■ **Keith Arkell**
Gausdal 2002

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♗d3 dxe4 4.♗xe4 ♘f6 5.♗f3 c5 6.♘e2 ♘c6 7.♗e3 ♘d5

This move makes great sense, trying to get rid of the bishop on e3.

8.♗xd5 ♕xd5

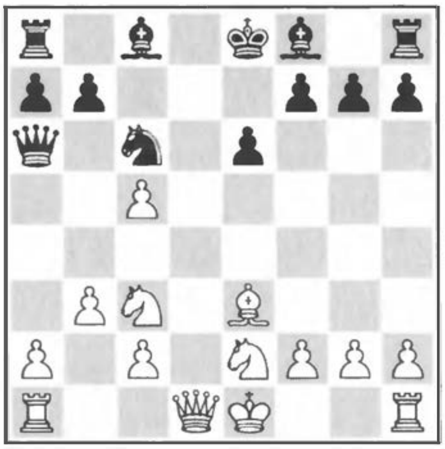
After 8...exd5 9.dxc5± White is simply a pawn up. The c5 pawn is doubled and quite weak. The d5 pawn though is also weak and isolated.

9.♘bc3 ♕c4

Or 9...♕xg2 10.♖g1 ♕xh2 11.♗f4±. White's next move is ♘b5, and Black's pieces simply are not developed fast enough.

10.b3 ♕a6 11.dxc5

White is simply up a pawn. All counterplay was quickly deflected.



11...♗e7 12.♕d3 ♘b4 13.♕e4 ♕a3 14.0-0 f5 15.♕c4 ♘xc2 16.♘b5 ♘xe3 17.fxe3 ♕a5 18.b4 ♕d8 19.♖ad1 ♗d7 20.♘d6+ ♗xd6 21.♖xd6 ♕e7 22.♖fd1 ♖d8 23.b5 ♕g5 24.c6 ♕xe3+ 25.♚h1 bxc6 26.bxc6 0-0 27.♖xd7 ♖c8 28.♕d4 ♕g5 29.♕e5 ♖xc6 30.♞d4 ♖c1 31.♞xe6 ♖xd1+ 32.♖xd1 ♕f6 33.♕d5 1-0

☐ **Mark Bluvshtein**
■ **Hoang Thanh Trang**
Budapest 2003

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♗d3 dxe4 4.♗xe4 ♘f6 5.♗f3 c5 6.♘e2 ♘c6 7.♗e3 cxd4

Here 7...♕b6 – trying to go after the 'poisoned' pawn – is quite risky. After 8.♘bc3 ♕xb2 9.dxc5 all of White's pieces are developed, while Black's pieces are far behind. Equally bad is 8...cxd4 9.♘xd4 ♗c5 10.♗xc6+ bxc6 11.0-0±. White is simply much better in this position, the threat of ♘a4 is coming. Black's pieces are badly misplaced.

8.♘xd4 ♘e5

The idea is simple and obvious: to get rid of White's bishop, or to at least kick it off the long diagonal.

The alternative was 8...♘xd4 9.♕xd4, when there are two options:

– 9...♕xd4 10.♗xd4±. This transition to a simpler position helps White. There is no evident way of getting the light-squared bishop on c8 out. After White plays ♘c3 and long castle it is clear that White has an edge.

– 9...♕a5+ 10.♘c3 e5 11.♕c4 ♗e6 12.♗c6+! ♘d7 13.♗d5 ♗xd5 14.♕xd5 ♕xd5 15.♘xd5 ♖c8 16.0-0-0. And White is slightly more comfortable in this ending and won in Bluvshtein-Gorlin, Chicago 2002.

9.0-0

White's plan is to fight for an advantage with his edge in development.

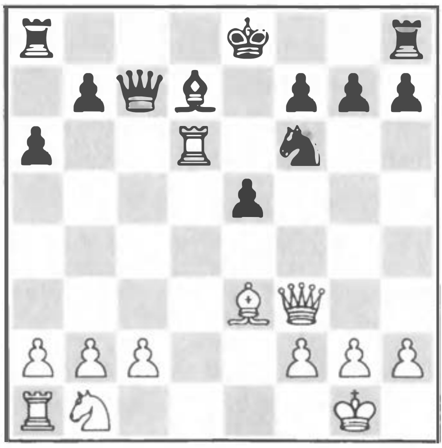
9...♘xf3+ 10.♕xf3 e5

After 10...♗e7 11.♖d1± White's pieces are very active.

11.♘b5 a6 12.♖d1 ♗d7 13.♘d6+ ♗xd6 14.♖xd6

White is already feeling very comfortable with the position.

14...♕c7



15.♖xf6 gxf6 16.♕xf6± ♖g8 17.♗g5 ♗c6 18.♘c3

Black is completely dominated.

18...h6 19.♕xh6 b5 20.♖d1 ♖b8 21.♕f6 ♔f8 22.♗h6+ ♔e8 23.♘d5 ♖xg2+ 24.♔f1

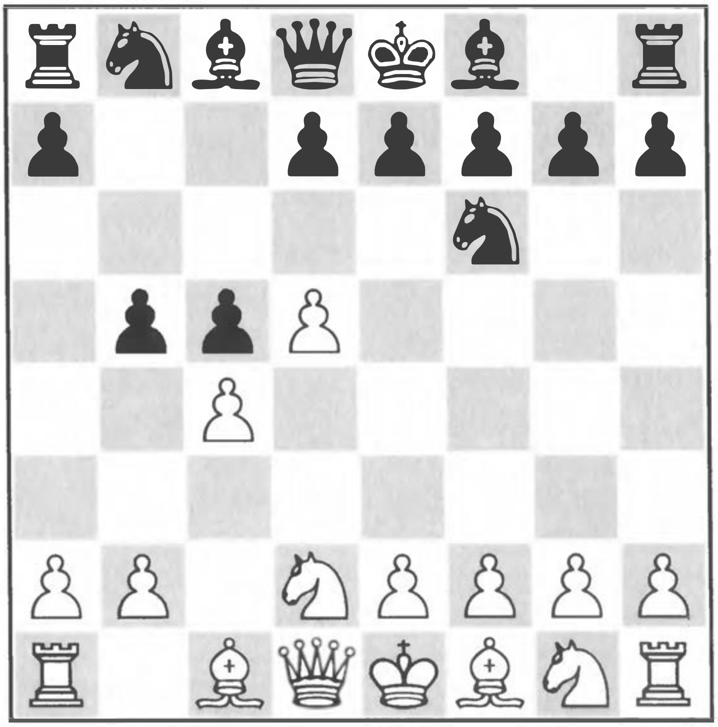
This is a bit sharper than necessary, but is a nice way to finish a sharp game.

24...♗xd5 25.♖xd5 ♕c4+ 26.♖d3 ♕e4 27.♕h8+ ♔e7 28.♕xb8 ♖g6 29.♗g5+ 1-0

CHAPTER 9

Alexander Beliavsky & Adrian Mikhalchishin

Volga Gambit with 4.♘d2



A modest move

In principle, the Volga gambit can be combated in two ways: (A) accept all the sacrifices; (B) avoid falling in with the opponent's wishes and pay no attention to his tactical trickery. For many years I (Alexander Beliavsky) have followed the first strategy, but in recent times I have decided to switch to strategy B. I very much like it, although as yet it has produced no tangible results.

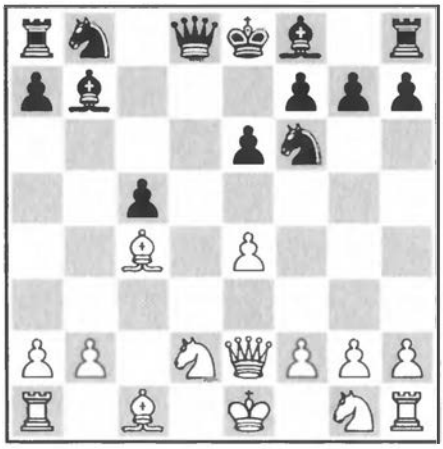
In recent times the set-up with the modest 4.♘d2 has begun to occur very often in my games. The move 4.♘d2 against the Volga Gambit is a very cunning and complicated (for both sides) weapon. Black has four fundamentally different responses:

● 4...b4, avoiding a clash in the centre. However, to me this appears to favour White – he has very simple and concrete play.

● 4...♛a5 is an exclusively tactical move. It is not in the spirit of the position. Catastrophes are possible, as in the game Beliavsky-Bukal.

● 4...g6!? is an interesting continuation, aiming for free development and subsequent play in the centre, as in the game Beliavsky-Martinez. This is not at all a bad plan.

● 4...bxc4 5.e4 e6 6.dxe6 dxe6 7.♗xc4 ♗b7 8.♛e2. In my opinion, this is the critical position of the entire system, and it is on its evaluation that the fate of the variation depends (see the diagram on the next page).



In Beliavsky-Sermek, Black chose the plan of fighting for the e5 square – 8...♘bd7, 9...♕c7 and 10...♗d6, which led to very sharp play. In this variation White needs to seek an improvement.

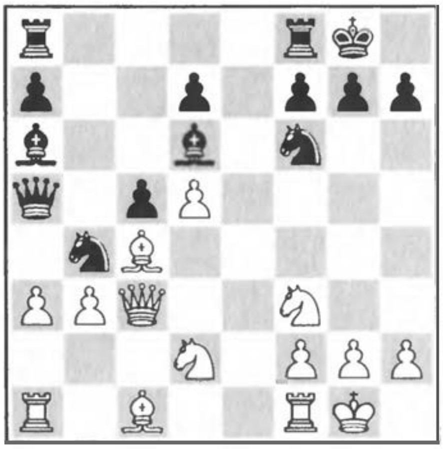
The second plan, involving a fight for the d4 square, was chosen by Fogarasi, Hungary 2001. Here White's chances are nevertheless somewhat better.

We will investigate the positions arising after 4.♘d2 bxc4 5.e4 on the basis of three of my games. Here are some 'stage directions' considering Black's alternatives:

● **4...b4 5.e4** And White continues naturally with ♗d3, ♘gf3 and 0-0. Sometimes adding f4 for even more punch in the centre.

● **4...g6 5.e4 d6 6.cxb5 a6 7.a4?!** This is not the best move. Simply 7.♘gf3 is correct. **7...♗g7 8.♘gf3 0-0 9.♖a3 e6 10.dxe6 ♝xe6 11.♗e2 axb5 12.♗xb5 ♕c7 13.0-0 ♘c6 14.♖e1 d5! 15.exd5 ♞xd5 16.♘e4 ♘cb4 17.♕e2 ♗f5!** with an unclear game in Beliavsky-Martinez, Las Vegas 2000.

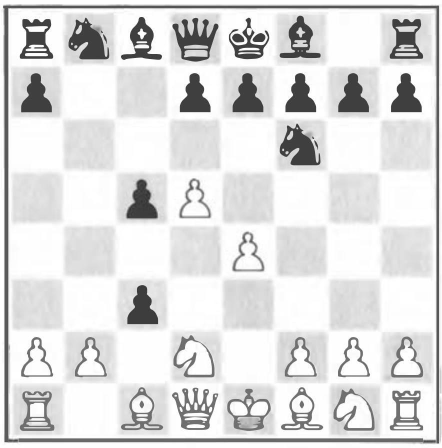
● **4...♕a5 5.♕c2 bxc4 6.e4 e6 7.♗xc4 ♘a6 8.♘f3 ♘b4 9.♕c3 exd5 10.exd5 ♗d6?** This is a blunder. Black had to play 10...♕c7! **11.0-0 0-0 12.a3 ♗a6 13.b3!**



And Black resigned for he is losing a piece, Beliavsky-Bukal, Nova Gorica 1999.

☐ **Alexander Beliavsky**
■ **Tibor Fogarasi**
Hungary tt 1998/99

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5 4.♘d2 bxc4 5.e4 c3



To weaken White's pawn structure. Another common move is 5...d6, when White continues 6.♗xc4 g6 7.b3 ♗g7 8.♗b2 0-0 9.♘gf3.
6.bxc3 d6 7.c4 g6 8.♗b2 ♗g7 9.♗d3
The main attraction of the whole 4.♘d2 line is that White has so many natural moves at his disposal.
9...0-0 10.♖b1
It is also possible to play 10.♕c2. However,

after 10...e5 White should play 11.♘e2 ♘h5 12.0-0± as in the main game, rather than 11.dxe6 ♗xe6 12.♘e2 ♘c6 13.a3 ♖b8 14.♗c3 ♘g4 15.♗xg7 ♔xg7 16.0-0 ♕f6 17.♖a2 g5!∓, Grachev-Poluliakhov, Krasnodar 2002.

10...e5 11.♘e2 ♘h5 12.0-0 ♘d7

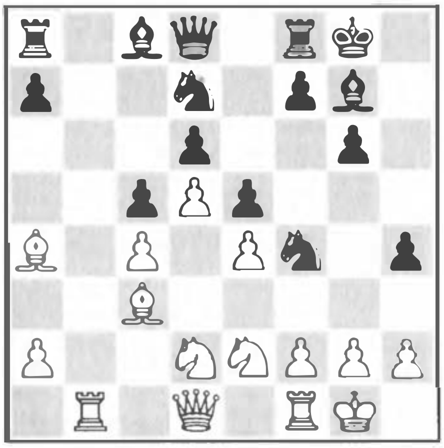
Alternatively, Black could play 12...♗h6!? intending 13...♘f4.

13.♗c3

And here 13.g3!? to prevent the knight from coming to f4 was entirely possible.

13...♘f4 14.♗c2 h5 15.♗a4 h4

Now it was definitely time for 15...♗h6.



16.♖b3

White could also enter the following forced line: 16.♘xf4 exf4 17.♗xg7 ♔xg7 18.♗c6 ♖b8 19.♕f3 ♕f6 20.♕a3±.

16...h3 17.g3 ♘h5

Or 17...♘xe2+ 18.♕xe2 ♘b6 19.♗c6 ♖b8 20.♖fb1 with a slight plus for White.

18.f4!? exf4 19.♗xg7 ♔xg7 20.gxf4

White is not forced to recapture on f4. He is also slightly better after 20.♗xd7!? ♗xd7 21.♕a1+ ♔g8 22.♘xf4 ♘xf4 23.♖xf4.

20...♕h4 21.♔h1 ♖b8 22.♕a1+ ♔g8 23.♘f3 ♕e7 24.♖xb8 ♘xb8 25.e5 ♗f5! 26.♕c3 ♘d7 27.♘g3

Perhaps 27.♖e1!?.

27...♘xg3+ 28.hxg3 dxe5

And here Black could keep the tension with 28...♖b8!?.

29.fxe5 ♗e4 30.♗xd7 ♕xd7 31.♔h2 ♕g4 32.♘g1! ♗f5 33.♖f4 ♕d1 34.♕f3?!

Missing the last chance for some advantage with 34.♕b2! ♖e8 35.♘f3.

34...♕e1! 35.♕e2 ♕xe2+ 36.♘xe2 ♖e8 37.g4!

Now a drawn rook ending is reached.

37...♖xe5 38.gxf5 ♖xe2+ 39.♔xh3 gxf5 40.♖xf5 ♖xa2 41.d6 ♖d2 42.♖xc5 ♖xd6 43.♖a5 a6 44.♔g3 ♖d4

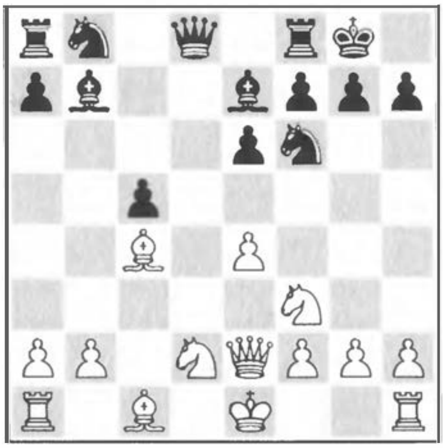
Draw.

□ **Alexander Beliavsky**
■ **Tibor Fogarasi**
Hungary tt 2001

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5 4.♘d2 bxc4 5.e4 e6 6.dxe6 dxe6 7.♗xc4 ♗b7

As mentioned above, I consider this to be the critical continuation.

8.♕e2 ♗e7!? 9.♘gf3 0-0



10.0-0

There is something to be said for delaying castling. After 10.b3!? ♘c6 11.♗b2 ♘d4 12.♘xd4 cxd4 13.0-0 White has kept a slight opening edge.

10...♘c6 11.♘b3

Trickier is 11.♖d1!?, hoping for 11...♘d4? 12.♞xd4 cxd4 13.e5! and White is better.

11...a5!?

But not 11...♕c7 12.e5 ♘d7 13.♗f4 when White's advantage is not to be disputed.

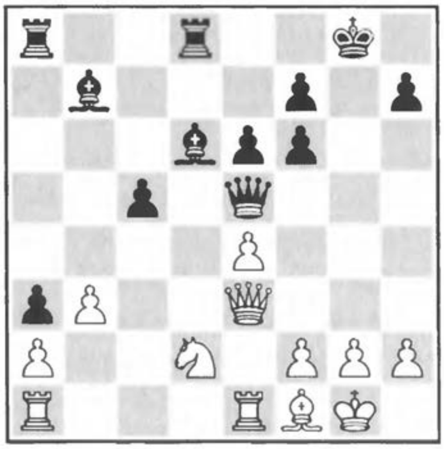
12.♗g5 a4 13.♗xf6

Making use of the fact that the b3-knight is still attacking c5. Not 13.♖fd1 ♕c7 14.♘bd2 ♘g4 and Black has grabbed the initiative.

13...gxf6 14.♘bd2 a3 15.b3

The game is unclear after 15.♘b3 axb2 16.♕xb2 ♕c7.

15...♘d4 16.♘xd4 ♕xd4 17.♖fe1 ♕e5 18.♕e3 ♖fd8 19.♗f1 ♗d6



20.♘f3?

Stronger was 20.g3!? planning 21.♘c4 with a nice edge.

20...♕f4 21.g3 ♕xe3 22.♖xe3 ♗f8 23.♖ae1 ♗h6 24.♖c3 ♗d2!

Correctly exchanging the bishop pair for a rook on the second rank. The advantage has clearly passed to Black. White must defend accurately to keep the draw.

25.♘xd2 ♖xd2 26.♖e2 ♖xe2 27.♗xe2 ♗xe4 28.♗f3!

But not 28.♖xc5 ♗b1 29.♖c1 ♗xa2 30.♗c4 ♖b8 with a clear endgame plus.

28...♗xf3 29.♖xf3 ♖d8

Bad was 29...f5? 30.♖c3 ♖a5 31.♔f1 intending ♔e2-d3-c4, b3-b4±.

30.♖c3 ♖d2 31.♖xc5 ♖xa2 32.♖a5 ♔g7 33.b4 ♖b2 34.♖xa3 ♖xb4 35.♔g2 f5 36.♖a2 e5 37.♖a5 f6 38.♖a8 h5 39.♖a7+ ♔g6 40.♖a8 f4 41.♖g8+ ♔f5 42.♖h8 ♔g6 43.♖g8+ ♔h7 44.♖a8 ♔g6

Draw.

☐ **Alexander Beliavsky**
■ **Drazen Sermek**
Bled tt 2000

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5 4.♘d2 bxc4 5.e4 e6 6.dxe6 dxe6

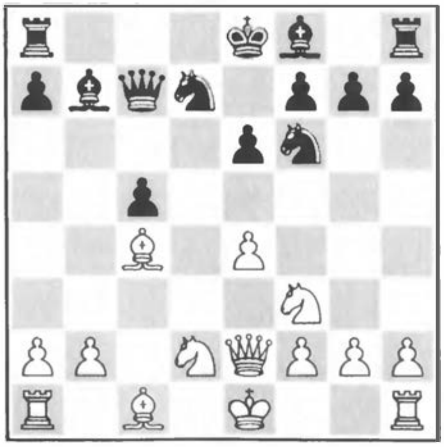
Taking back with the f-pawn is not a good idea. White is better after 6...fxe6 7.e5 ♘d5 8.♘xc4 ♕h4 9.♘f3 ♕e4+ 10.♕e2 ♕xe2+ 11.♗xe2 ♗a6 12.♘a5 ♗e7 13.♗d2.

7.♗xc4 ♗b7 8.♕e2

Possibly White can even play differently here. How about 8.f3!? ♘c6 9.♘e2 ♗d6 10.0-0 ♗e5 11.♘b3±?

8...♘bd7 9.♘gf3 ♕c7

Black fights for control over the e5-square with all his might.



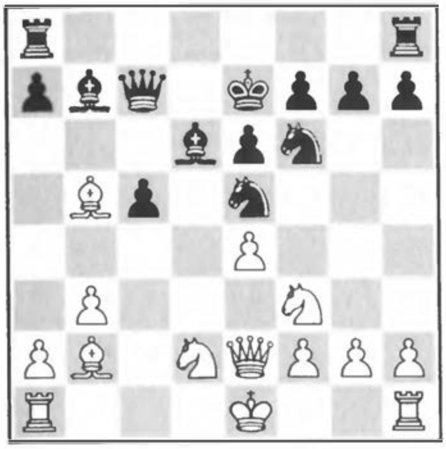
10.b3

And White does just the same! Castling is no better, as Black has 10.0-0 ♗d6 11.♖e1 ♘e5 12.♗b5+ ♔e7 13.♘xe5 ♗xe5 14.♘f3 ♖hd8!?. The king on e7 causes Black no headaches.

10...♗d6 11.♗b2 ♘e5!?

Here 11...♗f4!? 12.0-0 ♖d8 13.♖fd1 0-0 is about equal.

12.♗b5+ ♔e7



13.0-0?!

It was still too early for castling. Still, after 13.♖d1 ♘xf3+ 14.♕xf3 ♕a5 15.♗a4 c4 Black has counterplay too.

13...♘xf3+ 14.♘xf3 ♘xe4 15.♖ac1

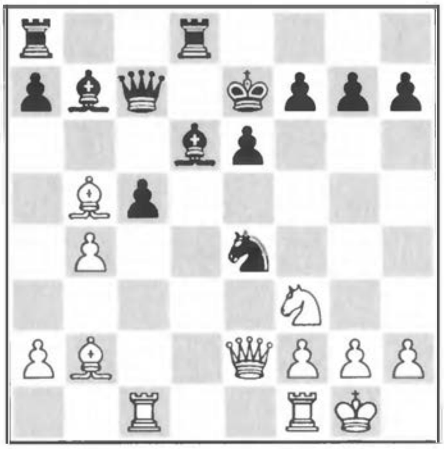
White plays for compensation. Clearly, 15.♗xg7 ♖hg8 16.♕b2 f6 17.♗h6 ♖g6 18.♗e3 ♖ag8 with an attack, was not to his liking.

15...♖hd8

Also 15...♘f6!? to put the onus on White was possible.

16.b4!?

Again it is dangerous to play 16.♗xg7!?, as 16...♖g8 17.♕b2 f6 18.♗h6 ♗f4!? gives Black an attack. However, in the game Black also grabs the initiative.



16...♗xh2+! 17.♘xh2

No better is 17.♔h1 ♗f4.

17...♖d2 18.♖xc5 ♕b6 19.♕c4 ♖xb2 20.a4 a6!

Accepting the sacrifice with 20...♘xc5 gives White decent compensation after 21.bxc5 ♕c7 22.♕h4+ ♔f8 23.c6.

21.♖c7+ ♔f8 22.♖xb7 ♕xb7 23.♗c6 ♖c8 24.♗xe4 ♖xc4 25.♗xb7 ♖cxb4 26.♗xa6 ♖xa4 27.♗d3 ♖d4

Correct was 27...h6 28.♘f3 g5 and Black has all the chances in this ending.

28.♗a6 ♖a4 29.♗d3 e5? 30.♖e1 ♖d4

Black allows White to escape to an elementary draw.

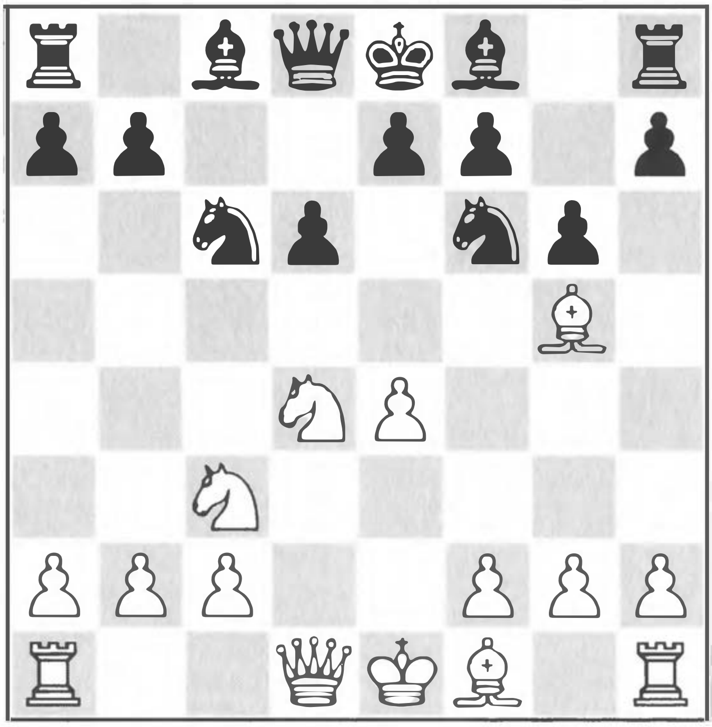
31.♗xh7! g6 32.♘f3 ♖f4 33.♗xg6 fxg6 34.♖xe5

Draw.

CHAPTER 10

Oleg Chernikov

Provocation in the Rauzer: 6...g6



Combining the Rauzer and the Dragon

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 d6 6.♗g5 g6

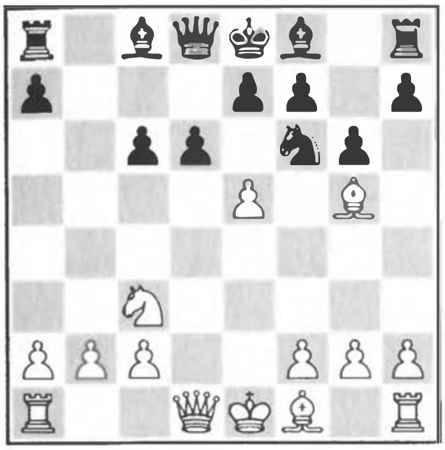
A surprising answer to Rauzer's 6.♗g5, since the bishop move is thought to prevent Black's fianchetto. The idea of 6...g6 is to forcibly transpose into the Dragon Variation. Black as though ignores the move ♗f6, subsequently pinning his hopes on his f8 bishop. The source game Gromek-Bondarevsky, Lodz 1955, is widely known: 7.♗xf6 exf6 8.♗e2 ♗g7 9.♘db5 0-0 10.♕xd6 f5 11.0-0 fxe4 12.♕xd8 ♖xd8 13.♘xe4 ♗xb2∓.

Later, the first edition of the Encyclopaedia of Chess Openings cited the games Kärner-Chernikov, Soviet Union 1965: 7.♗xf6 exf6 8.♕d2 ♗g7 9.♘db5 0-0 10.♘xd6 f5 11.0-0-0 ♕a5=∞, and Suetin-Gurgenidze, Tbilisi 1969: 7.♗xf6 exf6 8.♗b5 ♗d7 9.0-0 ♗g7 10.♕d2 0-0 11.♘b3 f5!=.

Over the 50 years(!) since the time of the first known game, not so many games have been played with this variation. The aim of this article is to show in more detail the history of the development of the variation and to demonstrate the most relevant games played with this variation. So, in the position after 6.♗g5 g6, the most critical continuation is

7.♗xf6 exf6

But sometimes White avoids this in favour of the sharp **7.♘xc6 bxc6 8.e5**.



Several games on this theme have been played largely by the author of this article, in which Black successfully defends and even launches a counterattack: **8...dxe5 9.♕f3**:

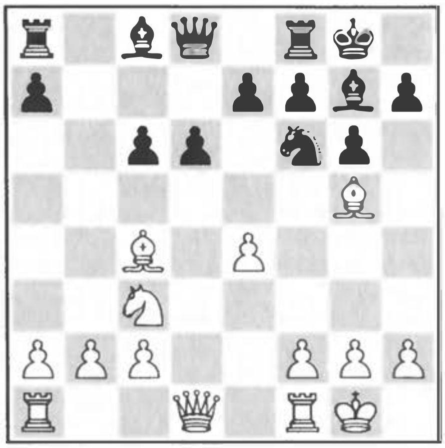
● 9...♗g7 10.♕xc6+ ♗d7 11.♕c5 0-0 12.♗e2 ♕b8 13.0-0 ♕xb2 14.♗f3 ♖ac8 15.♕xe7 ♖fe8 16.♕d6 ♖e6 17.♕d1 ♕xc3 18.♗xf6 ♗b5 19.♗xg7 ♗xf1 20.♗h6 ♗b5∓ and Black converted his material advantage, Kokorin-Chernikov, Soviet Union 1962.

The following reply is also interesting:

● 9...♗d7 10.0-0-0 ♗g7 11.♗xf6 exf6 12.♘e4 ♕e7 13.♘d6+ ♔f8 14.♗c4 ♗h6+ 15.♔b1 ♗e6=/∞ 16.♕xc6 ♖d8 17.♗xe6?. This is a blunder because of 17...♕xe6 18.♖he1 ♔e7! winning a piece and the game, Bastrikov-Chernikov, Soviet Union 1963.

The exchange of queens after **8...dxe5 9.♕xd8+** (instead of 9.♕f3) also does not promise White any advantage: 9...♔xd8 10.0-0-0+ ♔e8 11.♗c4 ♗g7 12.♖he1 ♘d7 13.♘a4 f5!? (14.f4 was threatened) 14.f3 ♖f8 15.♖d3 ♘b6 16.♘xb6 axb6 17.♖ed1 ♗a6 18.♖a3 b5 and Black retained his extra pawn, Sporyagin-Chernikov, Soviet Union 1963.

Quieter positions arise when instead of 8.e5 White plays the more restrained **8.♗c4 ♗g7 9.0-0 0-0**:



● 10.♕d2 ♖e8 11.♗b3 ♕a5 12.♖ad1 ♘d7 13.f4 ♘c5 14.♕e3 ♕b6 15.♖fe1 ♘xb3 16.axb3 ♗e6 17.♕xb6 axb6=, Fri-Chernikov, Soviet Union 1963.

● 10.♗b3 ♗e6!? 11.♗xe6 fxe6 12.e5!? dxe5 13.♕e2 ♘d5 14.♗d2 ♕b6 15.♘e4 ♕xb2 16.♖fb1 ♕xc2 17.♖c1 ♘f4 18.♕e3 ♕b2 19.g3 ♘d5 and White's slight initiative hardly compensates for the three (!) missing pawns, Matyukov-Chernikov, Soviet Union 1963.

Let us turn to the main reply, the variation 6...g6 7.♗xf6 exf6.

In this position White has a number of continuations, which we will examine in the following order:

A) 8.♗e2
B) 8.♗c4
C) 8.♗b5
D) 8.♕d2
E) 8.♘b3

Variation A

8.♗e2

Along with 8.♗c4 and 8.♗b5, this is the most frequently occurring continuation.

8...♗g7

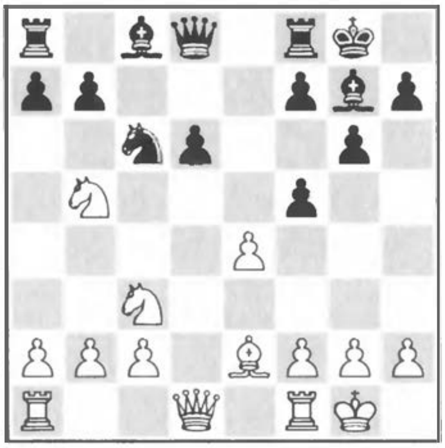
Sacrificing the d6 pawn, is the main variation, but since 8.♗e2 is not the most active continuation, 8...a6 is possible. One game went 9.♕d2 ♝g7 10.♖d1 0-0 11.♘xc6 bxc6 12.0-0 ♖b8 13.♕xd6 ♕xd6 14.♖xd6 ♖xb2 15.♖xc6 f5 16.exf5 ♖xc2 17.f6 ♗xf6 18.♖xf6 ♖xc3 19.♝xa6 ♗e6 20.a4 ♖a8 21.♗b5 ♝c4 ½-½, Stoica-Tischbierek, Romania 1984.

A1) 9.0-0
A2) 9.♘db5

Variation A1

9.0-0 0-0 10.♘db5 f5

This is a recurring theme in all lines. Black needs to open the main diagonal for his 'Dragon-bishop'.



11.♕xd6

Relatively the best move, although it must be clear that the endgame is advantageous for Black. Even worse are:

– 11.exf5 ♝xf5 12.♘xd6 ♗xc2 13.♕xc2 ♕xd6 14.♕a4 ♘d4 15.♖fe1 ♕b6 16.♖ab1 ♖ac8 17.♗f1 ♖fd8 18.h3 ♘f5 19.♕b5 ♕xb5 20.♘xb5 ♖c2∓, Ivlev-Chernikov, Soviet Union 1964.

– 11.♗f3 ♝e5 12.exf5 ♗xf5 13.♕d2 a6 14.♘a3 ♖c8 15.♞c4 ♞d4 16.♘xe5 dxe5 ∓ 17.♖fd1? ♗xc2 18.♗xb7 ♗xd1∓ Korkishko-Chernikov, Soviet Union 1960.

11...a6 12.♕xd8 ♖xd8 13.♘c7 ♖a7 14.♘7d5 fxe4 15.♖ad1 ♘d4 16.f3!? b5 17.♔f2 f5 18.a4

Preferable was 18.fxe4 with an equal position.

18...♖ad7 19.axb5 axb5 20.f4 ♗b7 21.♘e3 ♗c6

Black is slightly better, Kurolap-Chernikov, Soviet Union 1960.

Variation A2

9.♘db5

This looks more energetic than 9.0-0.

9...0-0

And now White has to decide how to take on d6:

● 10.♘xd6 f5 11.exf5 (a later game went 11.0-0 ♘d4 12.♞xc8 ♖xc8 13.♗d3 f4? – too optimistic; easy play was given by 13...b5 with compensation for the pawn – 14.♞d5 ♗e5 15.c3 ♘e6 16.♖e1 ♔g7 17.♕e2 h5 18.♖ad1 ♕h4 19.f3 ♕g5 20.♕f2±, Vitinik-Chernikov, Vladivostok 1990) 11...♕a5 12.0-0 ♖d8!? (Black is close to equality after 12...♗xf5 13.♘xf5 ♕xf5) 13.fxg6 hxg6 14.♘ce4 ♗e5 15.♗c4 ♗xd6 16.♞xd6 ♕c5 17.♗xf7+ ♔g7 18.♗xg6! ♖xd6 19.♗d3 ♘e5 20.♕e2 ♗g4 21.♕e4 ♖h8=∞, Zhilin-Chernikov, Soviet Union 1961.

● 10.♕xd6 f5 11.♕xd8 ♖xd8 12.0-0 a6?! 13.♘c7 ♖a7 14.♖ad1 ♖xd1 15.♖xd1 b5 16.♘e8! b4 17.♘a4 ♘d4 18.♗c4 ♖d7 19.♔f1 ♗e5 20.♘b6 ♖e7 21.♘xc8 ♖xe8 22.♘d6 ♗xd6 23.♖xd4 ♖xe4 24.♗xf7+ ♔xf7 25.♖xd6 ♖c4 26.♖d2±, Tappyrov-Chernikov, Soviet Union 1972. Not wasting a tempo with 12...fxe4! comes into consideration; as the above game shows, the knight at e8 stood well.

Variation B

8.♗c4

Along with 8.♗b5, one of the most active continuations.

8...♗g7

The main move. Others have also occurred:

– 8...♘e5?! 9.♗b3 a6 10.f4 ♘d7 11.♕f3 ♗g7 12.0-0-0 0-0 13.♔b1 ♘c5 14.f5 ♗d7 15.h4 ♞xb3 16.cxb3 ♖e8 17.h5 g5±, I.Gurevich-Burnett, USA 1986, and

– 8...♗e7? 9.♕d2 0-0 10.0-0-0 ♖e8 11.♔b1 a6 12.h4 h5 13.f3 ♔g7 14.♖dg1 ♘xd4 15.♕xd4 ♖h8 16.g4 ♗e6 17.♘d5±, Roiz Baztan-Igea, Oviedo rapid 1991.

After 8...♗g7 White must decide whether to castle kingside or queenside:

B1) 9.0-0
B2) 9.♞db5

Variation B1

9.0-0 0-0 10.♘db5

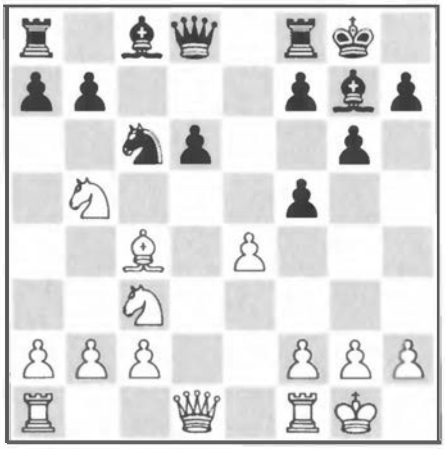
The most thematic continuation. White was not very successful with the alternatives:

● 10.♗d5 ♕b6 11.♘db5 f5 12.♖b1 ♗e5 13.♘a3 f4 14.♘c4 ♕c5 15.b4 ♕d4=, Mudrak-Chernikov, Soviet Union 1965.

● 10.♘xc6 bxc6 11.♕f3 ♕b6 12.♗b3 f5 13.♖ad1 ♗e5 14.♖fe1 a5 15.a4 ♕c7 16.h4? f4 17.♘e2 ♕e7 18.g3 fxg3 19.fxg3 h5∓, Gedevanishvili-Chernikov, Soviet Union 1973.

● 10.♘de2 f5 11.exf5 ♗xf5 12.♘g3 (passive is 12.♕d2 ♖c8 13.♖ad1 ♘e5 14.♗d5 ♘c4 15.♗xc4 ♖xc4 16.♕xd6 ♕xd6 17.♖xd6 ♗xc2 18.♖d7 ♖b4 19.b3 ♗f5∓ Cesnauskas-Chernikov, Soviet Union 1973) 12...♗c8 13.♗b3 ♖b8 14.f4 ♘d4 15.♘d5 b5 16.c3 ♘xb3 17.axb3 a5 18.f5 ♖e8 19.♕d3 ♖e5 20.♔h1 ♗b7 21.♘e3 ♕g5 22.♘c2 ♖be8 23.fxg6 hxg6∓, Sleich-Chernikov, Decin 1997.

10...f5



In practice Black was able to keep the balance:

● 11.exf5 ♗xf5 12.♘xd6 ♗xc2! (the alternative is 12...♗xc3 13.♘xf5 ♗xb2 14.♖b1 ♗f6 15.♘d6 ♘e5 16.♖xb7 ♗e7 17.♘xf7 ♘xf7 18.♖d7 ♕c8 19.♗d5 ♕c5 20.♗xa8 ♖xa8 21.♖e1± Tukmakov-Gurgenidze, Kiev 1969) 13.♘xb7 ♕xd1 14.♘xd1 ♖ab8 15.♘d6 ♘a5 16.♘e3 ♘xc4 17.♘dxc4 ♗d3 18.♖fd1 ♗xc4 19.♘xc4 ♖fc8 20.♖ac1 ♗xb2=, Volkovich-Chernikov, 1961.

● 11.♘xd6 ♘d4 12.♘xc8 ♖xc8 13.♗b3 (the alternative is 13.♗d5 f4? – a mistake; 13...b5! 14.a3 a5 is correct; the standard minority attack leads to equality – 14.♘e2 ♘e6 15.c3 f3?! 16.gxf3 ♘g5 17.♕d3 ♘h3+ 18.♔g2 ♕h4 19.f4 ♕g4+ 20.♔h1 ♘xf4 21.♘xf4 ♕xf4 22.♖ad1±, Kopylov-Chernikov, 1961) 13...♘xb3 14.axb3 ♗xc3 15.bxc3 fxe4= 16.♕e1 ♕b6 17.c4 ♖fe8 18.♕e3 ♕xe3 19.fxe3 a6 20.♖fd1 b5=, Vitolins-Chernikov, 1975.

Variation B2

9.♘db5 0-0 10.♕xd6 f5 11.0-0-0

There are now two queen moves to consider:

B21) 11...♕a5
B22) 11...♕g5+

Variation B21

11...♕a5 12.♕c7 a6 13.♕xa5 ♞xa5 14.♘d6!

The strongest; the more usual 14.♘c7 does not give any advantage after 14...♖a7 15.♗b3 ♗xc3 16.bxc3 fxe4 17.♖he1 b5 18.♘d5 f5 19.♘b6+ ♔g7 20.♖d6 ♖c7 21.♔b2 ♗b7 22.g3 ♖f6 23.♖ed1 ♖xd6 24.♖xd6 ♗c6 25.c4 bxc4 26.♘xc4 ♘b7 ½-½, Kholmov-Chernikov, 1982.

14...♘xc4 15.♘xc4 ♗xc3?!

It is possibly better to retain both bishops: 15...♗e6 16.♘b6 ♖ad8 with quite good compensation for the pawn.

16.bxc3 fxe4 17.♘b6 ♖b8 18.♖d6 ♖e8 19.c4! ♔g7? 19...e3!?±. **20.♖e1 ♗f5 21.♔b2 ♖bd8 22.c5 ♖b8** 22...♖xd6∞. **23.♔c3 ♖e7 24.♖e3±** Petrushin-Chernikov, Soviet Union 1973.

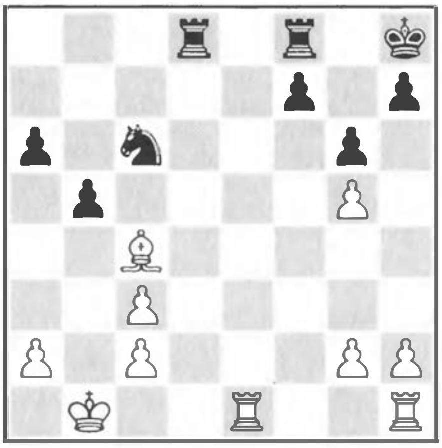
Instead of 11...♕a5, more complicated play results from:

Variation B22

11...♕g5+

In the books this move is given a poor assessment. 11...♕g5+? 12.f4 ♕xg2 13.e5±, but after 12...♕h6! (instead of 12...♕xg2) all is not yet clear. Several games played at quite high level provide confirmation of this.

12.f4 ♕h6 13.♔b1 fxe4 14.♘xe4 ♗g4 15.♖de1 a6 16.♘bc3 ♖ad8 17.♘f6+ ♔h8 18.♘xg4 ♕h4 19.♕c5 ♕xg4 20.♕g5 ♕xg5 21.fxg5 ♗xc3 22.bxc3 b5



I had no problems in two of my games:

– 23.♗d3 ♖d5 24.♗e4 ♖c5 25.♗xc6 ♖xc6 26.♖e3 ♖c4 27.g3 h6!= 28.gxh6 ♔h7 29.♖f1 f5 30.♖e6 ♖fc8 with equality, Mokry-Chernikov, Rimavska Sobota 1990.

– the later game Klovans-Chernikov, Drieskirchen 1998, went 23.♗b3 ♖d2 24.g3 ♔g7 25.h4 ♘a5 26.♖hf1 ♘c4 27.♗xc4 bxc4= 28.♖e4 ♖g2 29.♖xc4 ♖xg3 30.♖a4 ♖xc3 31.♖xa6 ♖c4 32.♖h1 ♖e8 33.♖a3 ♖e2 34.♖f1 ♖cxc2, ½-½.

The 'improvement' employed by the author in a comparatively recent game, **15...♖ad8** (instead of 15...a6) proved not the best continuation: 16.♘f6+ ♔h8 17.♘xg4 ♕h4 18.♕c7! ♕xg4 19.♘d6 ♕d7 20.♕xd7 ♖xd7 21.♞e4 ♘d4 22.c3 ♖c8? 23..♗xf7 ♖f8 24.♗c4 b5 25.♗d3 ♘f3 26.♖d1+–, Goloschapov-Chernikov, Moscow 2002.

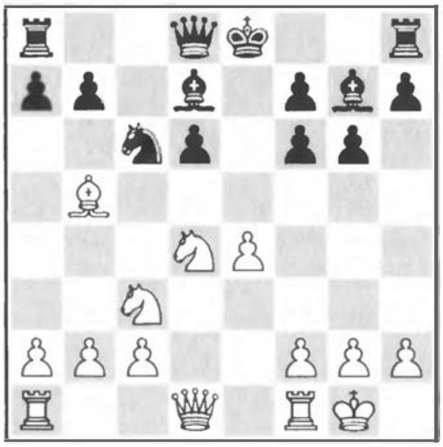
Variation C

8.♗b5 ♗d7

In this position 9.0-0 often occurs with numerous branches, as well as the knight retreats 9.♘de2 and 9.♘b3. We will examine the variations in order.

Variation C1

9.0-0 ♗g7



10.♘de2

Here various other moves have been played:

● 10.♘d5 0-0 11.c3 ♖e8 12.♗d3 ½-½. After 12....♗e6 the game is completely equal, Petrushin-Chernikov, 1973.

● 10..♗xc6 bxc6 11.♘de2 ♗e6 12.♕d3 ♕c7 13.♖ad1 ♖d8 14.♘d40-0 15.♕a6 ♖c8 16.♘ce2 ♖fe8 17.c4 ♕b6 18.♕xb6 axb6 19.♘xe6 ♖xe6 20.♘c3 ♖a8=, Ermakov-Chernikov, 1965.

● 10.f4 ♕b6 11.♗xc6 bxc6 12.♘a4 ♕a5 13.♘c3 f5 14.♔h1 0-0 15.exf5 ♕b4 16.♘b3 ♗xf5 17.a3 ♕b6 18.♕d2 ♖ab8 19.♖ad1 ♖fd8∓, Ukhanov-Chernikov, 1960.

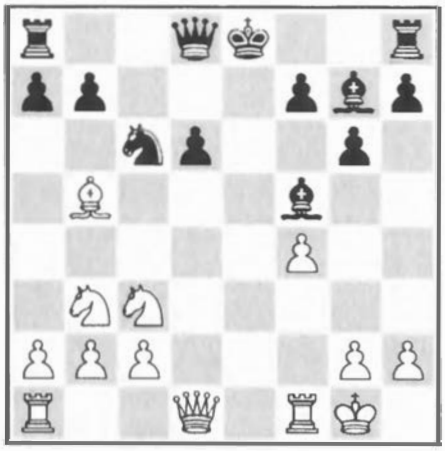
● 10.♘xc6 bxc6 (10...♗xc6 is also not bad) 11.♗a4 ♗f8 (the natural 11...♕c7 is inferior: 12.♕d2 ♖d8 13.♖ad1 ♗e6 14.♘d5! ♕b7 15.♘b4±) 12.♕d2 ♕a5 13.♖ad1 ♗e7 14.♕h6 ♗f8 15.♕d2 ♗e7= Belyaev-Chernikov, 1960.

● 10.♕d2 0-0 11.♘b3 (another plan is 11.♖ad1 f5 12.♗xc6 bxc6 13.exf5 d5 with counterplay, or 12.♘xc6 ♗xc6 13.♗xc6 bxc6 14.exf5 d5 15.fxg6 hxg6 with quite good play for Black) 11...f5 12.♕xd6 fxe4 13.♘c5 ♗c8 14.♘5xe4 ♘d4 15.♕xd8 ♖xd8 16.♗d3 ♗f5 17.f3 ♖ac8, ½-½ Suetin-Gurgenidze, Tbilisi 1969.

However, the main alternative to 10.♘de2 is **10.♘b3**. After **10...♗e6** White has tried:

11.♕d2 0-0 12.♖ad1 f5 13.♖fe1 (another game went 13.♗xc6 bxc6 14.♘d4 ♕b6 15.exf5 ♗c4 16.♖fe1 ♕xb2 17.♖b1 ♕a3 18.♘e4 ♖fe8 19.f6 d5 20.♘f5 ♗f8 21.♖e3 ♕xa2 22.♘c3 ♕a3 23.♖h3 d4∞ Novopashin-Chernikov, Dnepropetrovsk 1964) 13...♗e5 14.♗xc6 bxc6 15.f4 ♕b6+ 16.♔h1 ♗g7 17.♕xd6 ♖ad8 18.♕c5 ♗xb3 19.♕xb6 axb6 20.axb3 fxe4 21.♘xe4 ♗xb2=, Skotorenko-Chernikov, 1962.

A sharper continuation is **11.f4** (instead of 11.♕d2) 11...f5!? (of course, it is possible to allow the squeeze f4-f5 and then bring out the bishop via h6 to e3 and d4, but in this case White has a slight advantage) 12.exf5 ♗xf5 (White is slightly better after 12...gxf5) 13.g4! ♗e6 14.f5 ♗xb3! 15.axb3 ♕b6+ 16.♔h1 ♗xc3 17.bxc3 ♕xb5 18.♕xd6 (18.♖e1+ ♔d7!) 18...♘e7 19.♖fe1 0-0 20.♖xe7 ♖ad8∞.



In Palac-Chernikov, Rimavska Sobota 1990, 13.♖e1+ was played instead of 13.g4 and the players agreed a draw. White has nothing in particular after either 13...♗e6 14.f5 gxf5 15.♘d5 0-0 or 14.♗c4 0-0 15.♗xe6 fxe6 16.♖xe6 ♖xf4= 17.♖xd6? ♗d4+∓.

10...♗e6

Rather than 10...♗c8 11.♕d2 0-0 12.♖ad1 f5 13.exf5 ♗xf5 14.♗xc6 bxc6 15.♘d4 ♗g4 16.f3 ♗d7 17.♘b3 d5 18.♘a4 ♕c7 19.♘ac5± Van den Doel-Bakhtadze, 1993.

11.♕d2

In the variation 11.♘f4 (instead of 11.♕d2) 11...0-0 12.♘xe6 fxe6 13.♗c4 ♕e7 14.f4 f5 Black has at least equal chances.

11...0-0

And now:

● 12.♖ad1 f5 13.♘f4 ♗c8? 14.♖fe1 ♘d4 15.♘fd5 ♕a5 16.exf5 ♗xf5 17.♗d3 ♗g4? (17...♗xd3 18.♕xd3±) 18.♕g5! (threatening 19.♕xg4 and 19.♘f6+) 18...♗f5 19.♘f6+ ♗xf6 20.♕xf6 ♘e6 21.♗xf5 ♕xf5 22.♕xf5 gxf5 23.♖xd6±, Klovans-Chernikov, Weilburg 1998. The variation can be improved with 13...♘d4 (instead of 13...♗c8) 14.♘xe6 fxe6 15.♗c4 fxe4∞ or 15.♗d3 ♕f6=, when Black's centralised knight securely covers his weakened pawn chain.

● 12.♖fd1 f5 13.♕xd6 ♕b6 14.♗xc6 bxc6 15.♕f4 ♕xb2 16.♖ab1 ♕a3 17.♕d6 ♕xd6 18.♖xd6 fxe4 19.a4 ♗e5 20.♖xc6 ♖ac8 21.♖xc8 ♖xc8∓, Zhelnin-Chernikov, 1972.

● 12.♗a4 f5 13.exf5 ♗xf5 14.♖ad1 ♘a5 15.♗b3 ♘xb3 16.cxb3 h5 17.h3 h4 18.♕xd6 ♗c2 19.♕xd8 ♖axd8 20.♖d5 ♖xd5 21.♘xd5 ♗xb2∓, Astashin-Chernikov, 1974.

Let us turn to variations in which White immediately retreats his knight with 9.♘de2 or 9.♘b3, retaining the possibility of 0-0-0.

Variation C2

9.♘de2 ♗e6

A game of the Dragon expert Eduard Gufeld went 9...a6 10.♗a4 ♗e7?! – dubious, with all respect to the grandmaster – 11.♘d5 0-0 12.c3 f5 13.exf5 ♗xf5 14.0-0 ♗f6 15.♘g3 ♗c8 16.♘xf6+ ♕xf6 17.♘e4 ♕e5 18.♗xc6 bxc6 19.♘xd6 ♗e6 20.♖e1 ♕f4 21.c4 c5 22.♘e4 ♗xc4 23.♕c1 ♕xc1 24.♖exc1±, Bronstein-Gufeld, Tbilisi 1969.

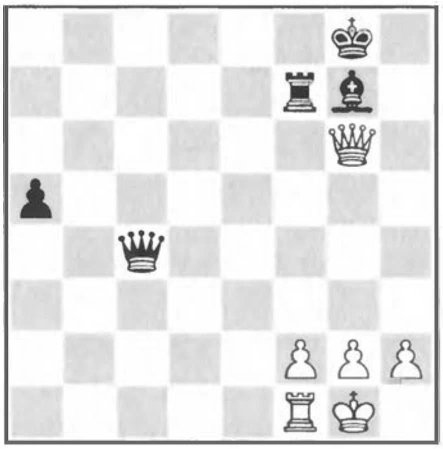
● **10.h4 ♗g7 11.h5 0-0 12.♘f4 ♕e7 13.hxg6 hxg6 14.♘cd5 ♗xd5 15.♕xd5 ♖fe8 16.f3 f5!∓ 17.♔f1 ♕f6 18.♕b3 fxe4 19.♘d5 ♕d8 20.♖d1 a6 21.♗e2 ♘d4** and Black was slightly better in Astashin-Chernikov, 1973.

● **10.♕d2 ♗g7** Apart from this natural move, Black can also consider 10...a6 11.♗a4 ♖c8 12.0-0-0 ♗e7 or 12...b5, refraining from the development of his dark-square bishop; however, White has a slight advantage. **11.♘d4 ♖c8 12.♖d1** 12.0-0-0 is better. **12...♔e7?!** Optimistic, of course; if White had played 12.0-0-0, this move would have been very risky. **13.0-0 ♘xd4 14.♕xd4 ♕b6 15.♕xb6 axb6 16.♗a4 ♖c5 17.♖fe1 f5 18.♘d5+ ♗xd5 19.exd5+ ♗e5=** Matanovic-Chernikov, Elista 2002.

The game examined below was played by two strong grandmasters, but with the rather slow manoeuvre ♘d4-e2-f4 White is not able to refute the variation.

● **10.♘f4 ♗g7 11.♕d3 0-0 12.♘xe6 fxe6 13.♖d1 f5 14.♗xc6 bxc6 15.♕xd6 ♕b6 16.0-0 ♕xb2 17.♘a4 ♕xa2 18.♘c5 fxe4?** 18...♖fe8!. **19.♘xe6 ♖f6 20.♕xc6 ♖af8 21.c4?** 21.♖d6. **21...e3! 22.♕d5 ♖f5 23.♕b7 ♖5f7 24.♕b1 ♕xc4 25.♘xf8 e2 26.♘xg6 exf1♕+ 27.♖xf1 hxg6 28.♕xg6 a5**

and Black's sole surviving pawn decided the outcome of the game, Nataf-Nisipeanu, Germany Bundesliga 2004/05.



Variation C3

9.♘b3 ♗e6 10.f4

The most critical continuation 10.0-0 a6 11.♗e2♗g7 12.f4 f5 13.exf5 ♗xf5 14.♗d3±, recommended in the Encyclopaedia of Chess Openings, is not obligatory for Black. 10...♗g7, instead of 10...a6, leads to variation C1, notes to move 10, where an advantage for White has not been demonstrated.

10...♗g7

Here 10...f5 is also not bad.

11.f5 gxf5 12.♘d4 0-0 13.♘xe6 fxe6 14.exf5 d5 15.0-0 ♘e7 16.♔h1 d4 17.♘e2 ♘xf5 18.♖xf5!? exf5 19.♘f4 ♕d6∞ Bergin-Chernikov, 1963.

Variation D

8.♕d2

A very rare continuation is 8.g3 ♗g7 9.♘db5 0-0 10.♕xd6 f5 11.♗g2 ♕a5 12.♕a3 ♕xa3 13.♘xa3 fxe4∓ 14.0-0-0 ♗g4 15.♖d5 ♗xc3 16.bxc3 f5 17.h3 ♗h5 18.♖e1 ♖ae8 19.♘c4 ♖e7 20.♘e3 ♘e5!⩱, Delektorsky-Chernikov, 1961.

Reckless is 8.h4 ♗g7 (or 8...h5=) 9.h5 0-0 10.hxg6 hxg6 11.♗c4 f5? (much better was 11...♘xd4! 12.♕xd4 f5⩱) 12.♘xf5! ♗xf5 13.exf5 ♕a5 14.fxg6 ♗xc3+ 15.♔f1 ♗f6 16.♖h5 ♘e5 17.♗xf7+ ♖xf7 18.gxf7+ ♔xf7 unclear, Belov-Chernikov, 1966.

8...♗g7

The main continuation. Instead 8...a6? has been played, but is not rated highly: 9.0-0-0 ♘e5 10.♔b1 h5 11.f4 ♗h6 12.h3 h4 13.♘d5 ♘d7 14.♕b4 ♘c5 15.e5 fxe5 16.fxe5 0-0 17.♘f6+ ♔g7 18.♘f3 ♕e7 19.♕xh4 ♖d8 1-0, Tseshkovsky-Polovodin, Moscow 1992.

9.♘db5

Or 9.0-0-0 0-0 and now:

● 10.♘b3 f5 11.h4!?a5 12.♗b5 ♕b6 13.a4 fxe4 14.h5 ♗e6 15.hxg6 hxg6 16.♘xe4 ♗xb3 17.♕f4 ♖fd8 18.cxb3 ♘e5∓. As often happens in the Dragon Variation, the attack on the queenside proved effective, Genin-Chernikov, 1962.

● 10.♘xc6 bxc6 11.♕xd6 ♕b6 12.♕d4 ♕xd4? (the exchange of queens is not obligatory – 12...♕b7, 12...♕b8 or 12...♕a5 all give prospects of an attack, and if Black wants to exchange queens, he should play 12...f5! 13.♕xb6 axb6, when he has a fully equal game) 13.♖xd4± ♗e6 14.♗d3 c5 15.♖a4 ♖fd8 16.f4 ♗h6 17.g3 ♖d6 18.♗c4±, Mrdja-Berna, Rome 1990.

9...0-0 10.♘xd6

Or 10.♕xd6 ♕a5 11.♗d3 a6 12.♘c7 ♖d8 13.♕g3 f5 14.♘xa8 ♗xc3+ 15.♔f1 ♗xb2 16.♖e1 ♗c3 17.♖c1 f4 18.♕h4 ♗e6 0-1, Shahade-Kacheishvili, New York 2002. Also very strong is 11...f5 (instead of 11...a6) 12.exf5 a6 13.f6? ♖e8+ 14.♔f1 ♗f8 15.♕f4 axb5 16.♘xb5 ♘e5 17.♗e2 ♗d7–+, G.Mukhin-Chernikov, Ozery 1997.

10...f5 11.0-0-0 ♕a5

Alternatively, 11...♕f6!? also comes into consideration.

12.♗c4

More thematic than 12.exf5 ♖d8 13.♕d5 ♖xd6 14.♕xd6 ♗xc3 15.bxc3 ♗xf5 16.♗d3 ♖d8 17.♕f6 ♕a3+ 18.♔b1 ♖d6! 19.♕xd6 ♕xd6∓, Kärner-Chernikov, 1965.

12...fxe4 12...♘d4. **13.♘cxe4 ♕b6?** 13...♕e5!=∞. **14.♗b3 ♗e6 15.♕d3 ♘d4 16.♗xe6 ♘xe6 17.♕b3 ♕a6 18.♘xf7??** 18.c3±. **18...♖xf7 19.♖d6 ♘d4**–+ Plokhushko-Chernikov, 1973.

Variation E

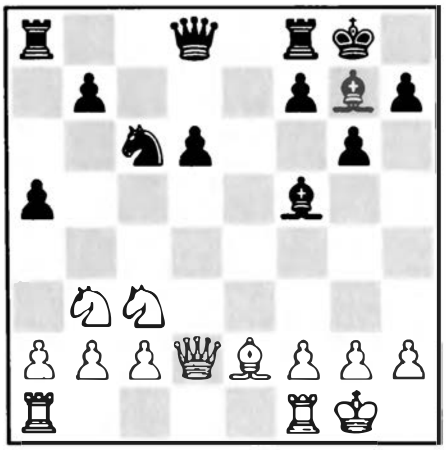
8.♘b3

A quiet continuation, usually associated with kingside castling.

8...♗g7 9.♗e2

Another move is 9.♗d3 0-0 10.0-0 a5 11.a4 ♘b4 12.♘d5 ♘xd3 13.♕xd3 f5 14.c3 ♖e8 15.exf5 ♗xf5 16.♕d2 ♖c8 17.♘d4 ♗e4∓ 18.♘b5 ♖c5 19.♘e3 ♖h5 20.h3? (20.♕xd6∓) 20...♖xh3! 21.f3 ♗xf3! 22.gxh3 ♕g5+ 23.♔f2 ♗h6 24.♖ae1 ♗c6 25.♕d4 ♖e4 26.♕d2 ♕f4+ 27.♔g1 ♕g3+ 28.♕g2 ♖xe3 29.♕xg3 ♖xg3+ 30.♔f2 ♖g2+ 0-1, Tappyrov-Chernikov, 1973.

9...0-0 10.0-0 f5 11.exf5 ♗xf5 12.♕d2 a5!



Also possible is 12...♘b4 13.♗d1 ♕h4 14.a3 ♘c6 15.g3 ♕f6 16.f4 d5 17.♗f3 d4 18.♘e4 ♕d8=∞ Privorotsky-Chernikov, 1967.

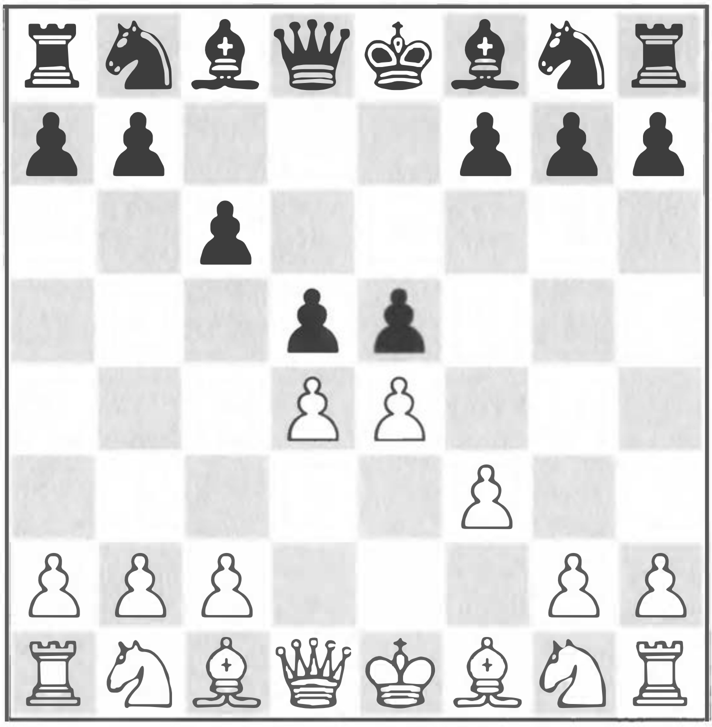
13.a3 a4 14.♘c1 d5 15.♗d3 d4 16.♘3e2 ♗g4 17.h3 ♗d7 18.♗e4 ♖e8 19.♕f4 ♖a5 20.♘xd4 ♘e5∓ Cherskikh-Chernikov, 1974.

Summing up, it can be stated that the 6.♗g5 g6 system is perfectly viable and, taking account of the surprise element, you could score well in practice. After all, White has to conduct the fight in a strategically very complicated situation. Take a chance with it!

CHAPTER 11

Ian Rogers

Caro-Kann Fantasy Variation



1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.f3 e5!?

Combatting the Fantasy Variation – 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.f3 – can be an annoying problem for Caro-Kann players. Transposing to a French Defence via 3...e6 4.♗e3 ♘f6 5.e5 ♘fd7 6.f4 is hardly attractive to most Caro-Kann devotees. while the main line – 3...dxe4 4.fxe4 e5 5.♘f3 gives White the type of attacking position he is hoping for when playing this line. However Black has another alternative – grabbing the initiative immediately through

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.f3 e5!?

The advantage of this move compared to the 3...dxe4 4.fxe4 e5 5.♘f3 line is obvious – White does not have f3 for his knight. However the disadvantage is that White can now win a pawn and try to hang on to it. The weakness of the a7-g1 diagonal will then be of paramount importance and the soundness of 3...e5 will stand or fall on the question of whether Black's control of that diagonal is worth a pawn. In theory the compensation may not be 100% adequate but, as with the 1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♘f6 3.d4 ♗g4 4.f3 ♗f5 line – another variation where at first sight the f3 weakness could not possibly be worth a pawn, in practice Black scores well. Since after 3...e5 Black has the threat of capturing on e4 followed by 5...♕h4+, White's options are relatively limited.

4.dxe5

Grabbing the gambit pawn is the only critical continuation.

After **4.exd5** Black has a choice of attractive possibilities. The main line is **4...exd4**.

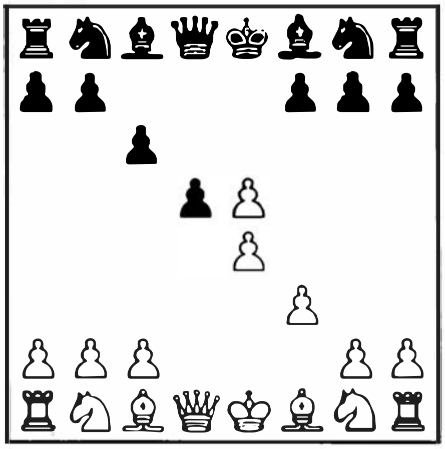
However, apart from the simple 4...♕h4+ which equalises instantly, Black can also try 4...♕xd5!?, as played in the original 3...e5 game in 1932 between CHO'D Alexander and Sir George Thomas. To judge just how good Black's position is after 4...♕xd5, consider the opening line 1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♕xd5 3.d4 c6 and ask yourself why any player would choose 4.f3? here, asking for Black to blow open the position with 4...e5. The Alexander-Thomas game continued 5.♗e3 ♘f6 6.♘e2 exd4 7.♗xd4 ♗e7 8.♘bc3 ♕a5 9.♕d2 0-0 10.0-0-0 ♗e6 11.♔b1 c5? 12.♗xf6 ♗xf6 13.♘d5 ♕xd2 14.♘xf6+ gxf6 15.♖xd2 ♘c6 when, even after his inferior 11th move, Black had no trouble holding a draw.

After **5.♕xd4 cxd5** White may again live to regret his f3 move as the normal anti-isolated pawn strategies are not available. Play can continue **6.♘c3 ♗e6!?** (6...♘f6 7.♗g5 ♗e7 8.♗d3 ♘c6 9.♕f2 0-0 also gave Black a very comfortable isolated queen's pawn position in Tereladze-Meskhi, Batumi Open 2003) **7.♗f4 ♘c6 8.♗b5 ♘f6 9.0-0-0** and now **9...♗e7** and **10...0-0-0** is probably the simplest equalising method, as opposed to 9...♕a5 which also led to no trouble at all after 10.♘h3?! (10.♘ge2) 10...0-0-0 11.♗xc6 bxc6 12.♕a4 ♕xa4 13.♘xa4 ♗xh3 14.gxh3 ½-½ Obst-Giang Nguyen, Canberra 2004.

4.♘c3 is a sensible but rarely played try. Black has always responded **4...exd4** (although 4...dxe4 5.dxe5 ♕xd1+ 6.♔xd1 exf3 7.♘xf3 ♘d7 does not seem at all dangerous for Black) **5.♕xd4 ♘f6 6.♗g5 ♗e7 7.0-0-0 0-0 8.e5** (the critical test in this line comes when White grabs the d-pawn with 8.exd5 cxd5 9.♘xd5 ♘xd5 10.♗xe7 ♕xe7 11.♕xd5 but after 11...♗e6 12.♕e4 ♘d7!? White must be prepared for a difficult defensive task ahead) **8...♘fd7 9.♗xe7 ♕xe7 10.f4 f6 11.♘f3 fxe5 12.fxe5 ♘c5** and Black had no problems, going on to win in Lutikov-Bronstein, Moscow 1972.

4.♘e2?! is as awkward as it looks: **4...dxe4 5.fxe4 ♕h4+ 6.♘g3 ♗d6** and Black was very comfortable in Cvitanic-Trbojevic, Szeged 1994.

4.♗e3?! dxe4 5.♗c4 has been tried as a Blackmar-Diemer style gambit, but after **5...♘h6! 6.♕d2** (6.♗xh6 ♕h4+) **6...♘f5** White is already worse.



4...♗c5

Here **4...dxe4?!** leads to a highly unpleasant endgame after **5.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 6.fxe4 ♗e6 7.♘f3 ♘d7 8.♗f4 ♘e7 9.♘bd2 ♘g6 10.♗g3** when Black will probably never regain his pawn.

Therefore the choice for Black is between the text move and **4...♕b6!?** – the first of many moments when Black can choose to play ...♕b6.

After 4...♕b6 White's best is to transpose back to the main line with **5.♘c3**

Alternatives also tend to transpose back to 4...♗c5, e.g.

– 5.♗d3 ♗c5 will lead to 4...♗c5 lines, although Galkin tried 5...dxe4!? 6.♗xe4 ♕a5+ 7.♘c3 ♕xe5 and held off White's development advantage after 8.♘ge2 ♘f6 9.♗f4 ♕a5 10.0-0 ♗e7 11.♕e1 0-0 12.♘d5!? ♕c5+ 13.♗e3 cxd5! 14.♗xh7+ ♔xh7 15.♗xc5 ♗xc5+ with an unbalanced struggle which was drawn ten moves later in Ivanov-Galkin, St Petersburg 1993.

– 5.g3!? is not as silly as it looks, but after 5...♗c5 6.♘h3 (the point) 6...dxe4 7.fxe4 ♗e6 followed by ...♘d7 and ...0-0-0, Black has more than enough for the pawn.

– 5.exd5 ♗c5 transposes to variations considered under 4...♗c5.

After 5.♘c3 Black may have nothing better than **5...♗c5** since 5...d4?! 6.♘ce2 c5?! (6...♗c5 is a better try) 7.♘f4 ♘e7 8.♘d5 ♘xd5 9.exd5 c4 10.♘e2 ♗c5 11.♘g3 ♘d7 12.f4 should have proved far too extravagant for Black in Butkiewicz-Maciaga, Wysowa 2003. (Black won anyway.)

5.♘c3

The only good way to prevent Black from causing havoc with 5...♕b6.

The most popular alternative to 5.♘c3 is **5.♗d3** and since the frequently played **5...♕b6** has some problems, there may be a need to investigate:

– 5...dxe4!? 6.♗xe4 ♗f2+ 7.♔e2 ♕xd1+ 8.♔xd1 ♘d7 9.f4 f6!? which may be playable for Black, although few 3...e5 players seem to want to steer towards an endgame.

– 5...♗e6 has been tried a number of times and looks rather insipid. However after 6.♘c3 Black can try 6...♕b6! (not 6...f6?! 7.exd5 cxd5 8.♕e2! ♗d4 9.♘b5 fxe5 Vasconcellos-Anic, Paris 1993, and now White could have secured a huge advantage after 10.♘xd4 ♕h4+ 11.g3 ♕xd4 12.c3 ♕b6 13.♕xe5) with the idea that after 7.♘a4?! (7.♘ge2! is the real test of Black's plan) 7...♕a5+ 8.c3 ♗xg1 9.♖xg1 dxe4 hits a bishop, enabling Black to capture on e5 with a much better version of the main ♘c3-a4 line.

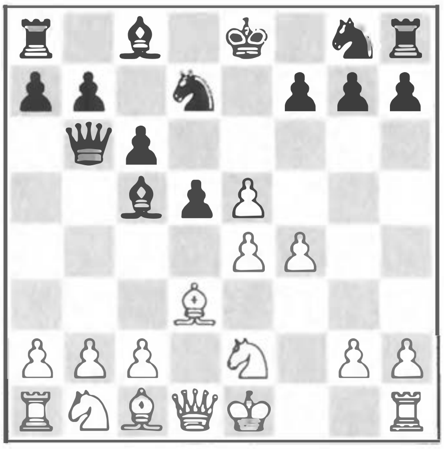
– 5...♗xg1?! 6.♖xg1 ♕h4+ 7.g3 ♕xh2 8.♗e3 when White has the two bishops at no cost.

6.♘e2 ♘d7. As usual in this line, the check on f2 should usually be kept in reserve. It is less precise to play:

– 6...dxe4 in view of 7.♗xe4! (and not 7.fxe4?! ♘d7 8.♗f4 ♗f2+ 9.♔f1 ♗e3! when Black will win back the pawn with a superior pawn structure) 7...♘d7 8.f4.

– 6...♗f2+?! 7.♔f1 ♘d7 8.f4♘e7 9.♘bc3 leaves the bishop on f2 misplaced and 10.♘a4 in the air.

7.f4



Only hanging on to the e pawn makes sense as can be seen from:

– 7.exd5 ♘xe5 8.♘f4 ♘f6 9.♘c3 g5 10.♕e2 (10.♘fe2 ♘xf3+! is Black's idea) and now instead of 10...0-0? 11.♕xe5 ♖e8 12.♘e6! as in Müller-Bruchmann, Germany 1997, Black should have played 10...♗d6 11.♘h3 ♗xh3 12.gxh3 0-0-0 with a dangerous initiative.

– 7.♗f4 ♘e7 8.♘bc3 d4 9.♘a4 ♕a5+ 10.c3 dxc3 11.♘axc3 ♘g6 and Black was fine in Mashinskaya-Chasovnikova, Moscow RUS Women's Ch. 1999.

7...♘h6!?. Now the threat of 8...♘g4 gives White something to worry about.

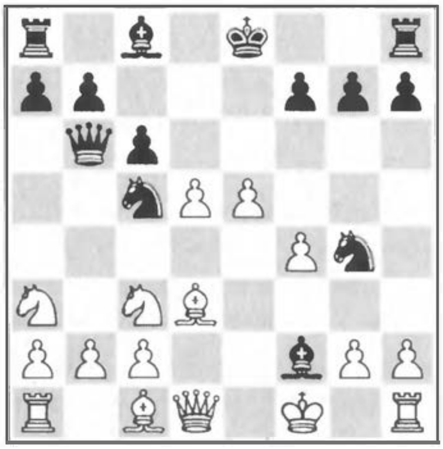
Black can also try interpolating

7...dxe4 8.♗xe4 before 8...♘h6 but this also runs into 9.♘ec3! (9.c3, intending 10.♘d4, is less incisive in view of 9...♗f2+ 10.♔f1 ♘c5 11.♘d2 ♗e6 12.♘d4 and now instead of 12...♗e3?! as in Thornert-Livner, Borlange 1995, Black should play 12...♗xd4 13.cxd4 ♘xe4 14.♘xe4 0-0 with ample compensation for the pawn) 9...♗f2+ 10.♔f1 ♘c5 11.♘d2! and the threat of 12.♘c4 gives White the edge, e.g. 11...♗e6 12.f5!.

8.♘ec3!

- 8.h3 wastes an important tempo and after 8...♗f2+ 9.♔f1 dxe4 10.♗xe4 ♘c5 11.♘d2 ♗e6 12.g4?! (12.b4!? has the clever idea 12...♕xb4? 13.c3 ♕b6 14.♖b1, but instead Black can play 12...♘a6 when Black is fine after both 13.a3 0-0-0 and 13.f5!? ♘xf5 14.♗xf5 ♗xf5 15.♘c4 ♖d8! 16.♘d6+ ♖xd6 17.♕xd6 ♗h4) 12...0-0-0 13.♘c3 ♗e3 14.f5 ♘xe4 15.♘cxe4 ♗d5 16.♘d6+ ♖xd6 17.exd6 ♕d4!, Black soon won in Nikolova-Frenklakh, Zagan 1997.
- 8.♘g3 ♗f2+ 9.♔f1 ♘c5 10.♕f3? ♗d4! when the dual threats of ...♗g4 and ...♗xb2 win for Black, Elgaard-Hartvig, Hedehusene 1994.

8...♗f2+ 9.♔f1 ♘c5 10.exd5 ♘g4 11.♘a3



It is not clear where Black's attack is going. So 5.♗d3 ♕b6 is currently under a cloud.

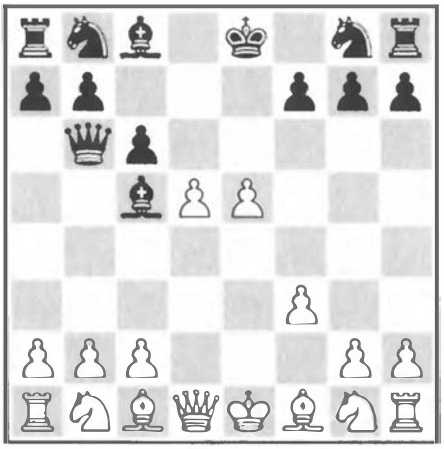
Other fifth moves for White are less testing. **5.♘e2** is a curious plan, intending to bring the king's knight to c3. Not surprisingly, Black has many attractive options:

5...♘d7

- 5...♕b6!? 6.♘ec3 ♗f2+ 7.♔e2 ♗d4 should be enough to turn most players off this idea for White, while
- 5...dxe4 6.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 7.fxe4 ♘d7 8.♗f4 ♘e7 is a safe enough equalising method for the faint-hearted.

6.♘ec3 ♘xe5 7.exd5 ♕h4+ 8.g3 ♕e7 9.♘e4 ♘f6 10.♘bc3 ♘xd5 11.♘xd5 ♘xf3+! 12.♕xf3 cxd5 13.♗b5+ ♔f8 14.♗d3 dxe4 15.♕xe4 ♗h3 16.♕xe7+ ♔xe7 and Black eventually converted his tiny endgame advantage in Smagin-Meduna, Prague 1992. However Meduna could have saved himself a lot of trouble had he played 10...♘xe4! 11.♘xe4 ♗f5 when White has difficulties in surviving the opening.

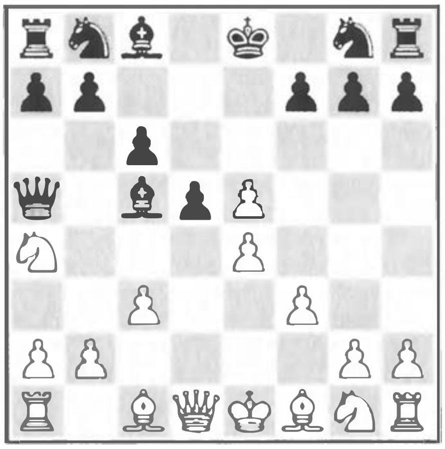
Of course if White tries to be greedy with **5.exd5** then **5...♕b6** causes big problems for White (although 5...cxd5 6.♗b5+ ♘c6 is not bad either).



White is then forced to play **6.♘h3** (the Bronstein-like 6.d6!? ♗f2+ 7.♔e2 ♗xg1 8.♕d3 actually secured a full point in the game Agomeri-Boccia Mattia, Italy 1997, after 8...♗d4 9.♘d2 ♗e6 10.f4 but the result would have been reversed had Black found 8...♘d7! 9.f4 ♕f2+ 10.♔d1 ♘c5 when the threat of 11...♗g4+ decides) **6...♗xh3 7.gxh3** and now Black should probably play **7...♕b4+** (7...♗f2+!? 8.♔e2 ♗d4! and the similar 7...cxd5!? 8.♘c3 ♗f2+ 9.♔e2 ♗d4! give excellent value for a pawn as well) forcing **8.♕d2** (since 8.♘c3 ♕h4+ 9.♔e2 ♕f2+ 10.♔d3 ♕d4+ and 8.c3 ♕h4+ 9.♔d2 ♘d7 are dreadful for White). Then after **8...♕h4+ 9.♔d1 ♘d7**, White will need to play well just to survive.

5...♘e7!?

Not many players have been willing to try this move, which argues that the weaknesses in White's position are long-term and do not need to be exploited immediately. Most players prefer **5...♕b6** but it is far from clear that the main line **6.♘a4! ♕a5+ 7.c3** is satisfactory for Black. Black should continue **7...♗xg1** (7...♗f8 is hardly in the spirit of the variation, and after 8.b4 ♕c7 9.exd5 ♕xe5+ 10.♕e2 ♕xe2+ 11.♘xe2 even a player as strong as Vladimir Tukmakov was not able to hold the resulting endgame in Gallagher-Tukmakov, Geneva 1994) **8.♖xg1**



Inserting 8.b4 ♕c7 before 9.♖xg1 is not helpful because of 9...♘e7! (9...♕xe5 10.♕d4 ♘d7 (10...♕xd4 11.cxd4 dxe4 12.fxe4 gives White a safe advantage, with the pair of bishops and big pawn centre) 11.♕xe5+ ♘xe5 12.exd5 cxd5 13.♗f4 f6 14.0-0-0 and White was well on top in Smagin-Berg, Copenhagen 1993) 10.exd5 ♕xe5+ 11.♔f2 (on 11.♕e2 ♕xh2!? is playable for Black) 11...0-0 12.d6!? ♖d8 13.♕e1 ♕xd6 14.♗g5 ♖e8 15.♖d1 ♕c7 when White's slightly exposed king counter-balanced his initiative in Mitkov-Izeta, San Sebastian 1993. Note that White gains nothing here by playing 16.♗f4?! ♕xf4 17.♕xe7 due to the simple 17...♗d7!.

8...dxe4 and now White should preserve the e5 pawn, although exactly how is far from clear. The obvious move is **9.f4!** but there are two other serious options:

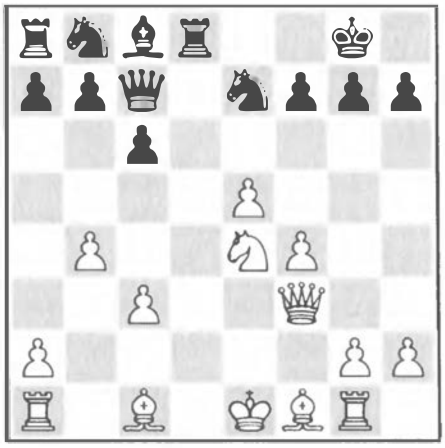
- 9.♗f4 ♘d7! (dubious is 9...♘e7 10.b4! ♕d5 (10...♕c7 11.♕d6±) 11.c4 ♕xd1+ (11...♕e6 12.♘c5 ♕f5 13.♗g3 ♘g6 14.♘xe4 0-0 15.♘d6 ♕e6 16.f4 ♕e7 17.c5 and White had the advantage in Kalendovsky-Mlynek, Brno 1999) 12.♖xd1 ♘g6 13.♗g3 ♘d7 14.f4 with a typical endgame where White's bishops and space advantage are worth a lot) 10.b4 ♕d8 11.♕d4 ♘e7 12.♕xe4 ♘d5 and Black probably has enough for his pawn, e.g. 13.♗d2 (13.0-0-0 a5! 14.b5 (14.e6 ♘7f6!∞) 14...♕e7 is a total mess) 13...0-0 14.♗d3 ♘5f6 15.♕d4 ♘xe5! and Black was already slightly better in Wartlick-Metz, Schwäbisch Gmünd 2001.
- 9.♕d4 exf3 (9...♘e7 is well met by 10.♗g5! ♘g6 (10...♘f5?! 11.♕xe4 0-0 12.g4± Czebe-Stummer, Budapest 1993; 10...f6 11.exf6 ♕xg5 12.fxe7±) 11.♘c5 0-0 12.h4 b6? (12...♖e8 13.♘xe4 ♖xe5 14.b4 ♕c7 15.h5±) 13.♘xe4± and Black was in dreadful trouble in Beblik-Franke, Germany 2001) 10.♗f4 (10.gxf3 may be a better try, but Black should be OK after

10...♘e7) 10...♘e7 was satisfactory for Black in Priser-Theon, Guingamp 2002.

9...♘e7 Not the only option:

- After 9...♘d7 10.b4 ♕d8 11.♕d4 Black should resist the temptation to grab the h-pawn and play 11...♘e7 12.♕xe4 0-0 13.♗d2 b5 14.♘c5?! ♘xc5 15.bxc5 ♗f5 16.♕f3 f6 17.g4 ♗e6 18.exf6 ♖xf6 19.f5 ♗d5 20.♕g3 ♕f8 when Black was very active and went on to win in Tirard-Giffard, Hamburg 1996. However White can improve with 14.♘b2 when Black's compensation for the pawn is nebulous.
- However 9...♗e6?! is not to be recommended. After 10.b4 ♕c7 11.♘c5 the bishop on e6 proved to be misplaced in Torok-Balogh, Hungary 1999.

10.b4 (10.g4!? ♘d7 11.b4 ♕d8! 12.♕d4 0-0 13.♕xe4 is similar to the game Tirard-Giffard but with the strange g4 thrown in. Black should have ample counterplay after 13...♘d5) **10...♕c7 11.♘c5 0-0 12.♘xe4 ♖d8 13.♕f3**



At first sight Black has nothing for the pawn but as usual in this line, the lack of pawn protection for the White king can tell in the long run. In the game Maslak-Martynov, Serpukhov 1999, Black generated sufficient counterplay after **13...a5! 14.bxa5 ♕xa5 15.♗e2 ♘a6 16.♗e3 ♘f5=∞ 17.♔f2 ♗e6 18.g4 ♘xe3 19.♕xe3 ♘c7 20.c4 b5** but if you do not trust Black's compensation in such positions, 5...♕b6 will not be your choice.

However **5...♗e6!?** is worthy of attention. The bishop on e6 can be vulnerable to a later f4-f5 but first White must find a useful developing move. (As usual, exchanging on d5 gives away the c6 square to the Black knight and makes Black's life easy.) White should probably try **6.♗d3** (6.♘ge2?! ♕b6 7.♘f4 ♗f2+ 8.♔e2 ♗d4 9.exd5 cxd5 10.♗e3 ♘c6 11.♗xd4 ♘xd4+ 12.♔e1 ♘e7 and Black was in control in Czebe-Szabolcsi, Budapest 1998, since 13.♘a4 allows 13...♘xc2+!. Note that 6.f4?! ♕b6! is even worse, e.g. 7.♘f3? ♗f2+ 8.♔e2 dxe4 and Black wins) and now Black can switch plans with **6...♕b6!?** because 7.♘a4?! ♕a5+ 8.c3 ♗xg1 9.♖xg1 dxe4 10.♗xe4 ♕xe5 is at least equal for Black. However White can improve with **7.♘ge2**, when Black should probably disrupt the White king with **7...♗f2+ 8.♔f1 ♗h4**, with a messy position with which Black should not be too unhappy.

6.♗d3

Clearly, 6.exd5 cxd5 7.♗d3 0-0 8.f4 ♘bc6 9.♕h5 g6 10.♕h4 f6! gives precisely the sort of wide open position Black dreams of when playing this line. After 11.♘f3 (11.exf6 can be met by 11...♕e8!? – 11...♘f5 12.f7+! ♔g7 13.♕xd8 ♖xd8 is only equal – with the idea 12.fxe7? ♗xe7!, winning) 11...♘f5 12.♕h3 fxe5 and Black was already well on top in Libiszewski-Sulava, Monaco IM 2003.

In Mannion-Gormally, British Championship 2004, 6.f4 worked out well for White after 6...♗b4?! 7.♘f3 0-0 8.♗d2 ♗xc3 9.♗xc3 ♕b6 10.♗d3 ♘a6 11.♕e2 ♘c5 12.0-0-0 and Black had nothing for the pawn. However, 6...♕b6 looks logical, since 7.♘a4 allows 7...♕b4+. After 6...♕b6 7.♘f3 ♗f2+ 8.♔e2

♗c5, 9.♘a4 is still not playable so Black will have time to start developing.

6...0-0!?

Continuing to play calmly. Of course it was still possible to play 6...♕b6, transposing to positions similar to those considered earlier after 7.♘ge2. Note once again that the position of the bishop on d3 makes 7.♘a4?! unplayable in view of 7...♕a5+ 8.c3 ♗xg1 9.♖xg1 dxe4.

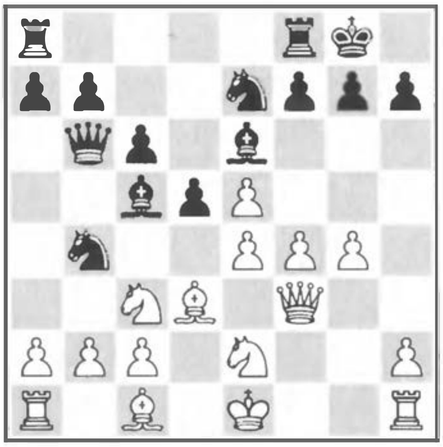
7.f4 ♘a6!? 8.♕f3

8.♘f3 is the critical test of Black's play. Can Black really have enough for the pawn in this position? I doubt it, yet I also had my doubts about Black's compensation in the game continuation and even after exchanges, Black wins the game fairly comfortably. So presumably Black would reply 8...♘b4, capture the bishop and then try to show that White's pawn centre (and king) are not going anywhere.

8...♕b6 9.♘ge2 ♘b4 10.g4?!

If White wants to play f5 and shut the c8 bishop out of the game, he should do so immediately.

10...♗e6!



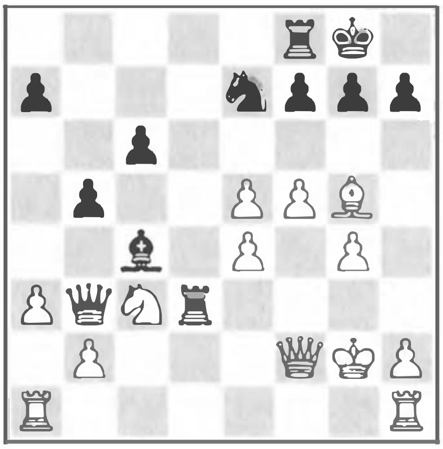
11.♔f1

A sign that not all is well with White's position. However after 11.f5 dxe4 12.♗xe4 ♗d5, Black's pieces coordinate beautifully and the e5 pawn may soon come under attack with ...♖e8.

11...♘xd3 12.cxd3 ♖ad8 13.♘a4 ♕a5 14.♘xc5 ♕xc5 15.♘c3

In theory the exchanges should have eased White's position, yet the king on f1 remains a big handicap, e.g. 15.f5 dxe4 16.dxe4 and now Black can choose between 16...♕xe5!? and the simple 16...♗c4.

15...b5! 16.♕f2 ♕b4 17.f5 dxe4! 18.a3 ♕b3 19.dxe4 ♖d3! 20.♗g5 ♗c4 21.♔g2



21...♘g6!

Now the knight is invulnerable and the fall of the e5 pawn will cause total collapse in the white position.

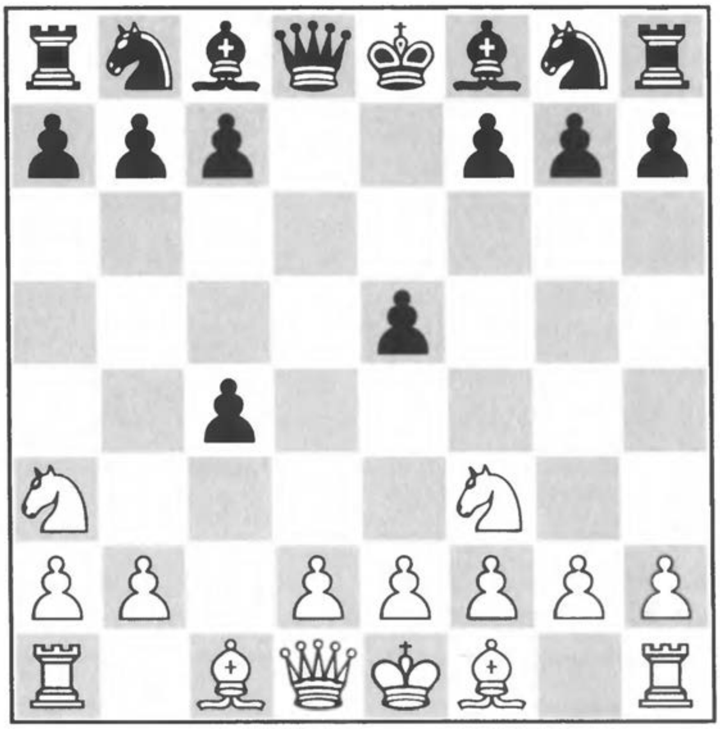
22.♘e2 ♕xb2! 23.♘c1 ♘h4+!

On 24.♗xh4, ♖d2 wins easily. This was the game Mitkov-Kallai, French Teams Ch. 1994, a convincing advertisement for 3...e5. However it should be clear from many of the examples given in this article that to play 3...e5 requires strong nerves, an ability to ignore your opponent's extra pawn and big centre and a sense of exactly the right moment to play ...♕b6. Just bear in mind that it needs even better nerves to play White – caught by surprise on the third move, keeping your king in the centre and under constant threat along the a7-g1 diagonal.

CHAPTER 12

Jeroen Bosch

A Central Thrust in the Réti



3...e5!? – Unhinging your opponent

When playing Black against the Réti it is not so easy to create unbalanced positions. On the whole, the play after 1.♘f3 tends to be less theoretical (unless White transposes to 1.d4 positions, of course, as Kramnik was wont to do). Equalizing is perhaps not your biggest worry as Black; unhinging your opponent is a lot trickier, though. In a previous SOS chapter I have made a case for 1...b5, but this may not be to everybody's taste (see Chapter 14 of *Secrets of Opening Surprises*). The present chapter advocates a bold central thrust – 3...e5!? – brainchild of that sacrificial genius Rudolf Spielmann.

1.♘f3 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.♘a3

We will focus on this move, clearly one of the main options in this position. Below you will find a list of White's alternatives, accompanied by some SOS suggestions.

- **3.e4!?** c5 4.♗xc4 ♘c6 5.0-0 e6 6.♘c3 a6 is a reliable set-up for Black. For example, 7.d3 ♘f6 8.e5 ♘d7 9.♖e1 ♗e7 10.♗f4 0-0 11.a3 b5 12.♗a2 ♗b7, with approximately equal chances in the game Krasenkow-Volzhin, Koszalin 1998.
- **3.g3**, when in practice Black often plays 3...g6 4.♗g2 ♗g7 5.♘a3 c5 6.♘xc4 ♘c6. Now after 7.0-0 the Black knight can be developed to the edge of the board with 7...♘h6!?, when 8.d3 ♘f5 gives equality.
- **3.♕a4+**, and now 3...♘d7 is most popular, e.g. 4.g3 a6 5.♕xc4 b5. Instead of 4.g3

White can also play 4.♕xc4 a6 5.d4 e6 6.♗g5 ♘gf6 7.♘c3 b5 8.♕b3 ♗b7 9.♖d1 c5= Vaulin-Sherbakov, Novgorod 1997. Slav players may prefer 3...c6 in answer to the queen check. More original than either of these moves is the manoeuvre 3...♕d7 4.♕xc4 ♕c6 to force a queen swap; now 5.b3 is best met by 5...♗e6.

● **3.e3** is the main alternative to 3.♘a3. My SOS recommendation is 3...♗e6, an original move devised by Keres.

Now the lines fork:

– 4.♘g5 ♗d5 5.e4 ♗c6 6.♗xc4 e6 7.d4 (here serious attention should be paid to 7.d3, e.g. 7...♘f6 8.0-0 h6 9.♘f3 ♗e7 10.♘c3 0-0 11.♕e2± Van der Sterren-Flear, Wijk aan Zee 1987) 7...♗e7 8.h4 ♘f6 9.♘c3 h6 10.♘xe6!? fxe6 11.e5 ♘d5 12.♕g4? (12.♕h5+! ♔d7! 13.♗xd5 ♗xd5 14.♘xd5 exd5 15.♕g4+, with a perpetual, Taimanov) 12...b5 13.♗b3 b4 14.♕xe6 bxc3 15.♕g6+ ♔f8 16.bxc3 ♗e8, and White does not have enough and lost in Darga-Keres, Beverwijk 1964.

– 4.♘a3 ♘f6 5.♘xc4 g6 (5...♗d5 introducing a set-up with e6, c5 and ♗e7 is also playable) 6.b4!? (6.b3 ♗g7 7.♗b2 0-0 8.♗e2 c5 9.0-0 ♘c6 10.♖c1 ♖c8 11.d4 cxd4 12.♘xd4 Geller-Keres, Moscow 1963, and now Suetin's recommendation 12...♘xd4, with equality) 6...♗g7 7.♗b2 0-0 8.♗e2 ♘c6 9.a3 ♕d5 10.0-0 a5 11.bxa5 ♘xa5 12.♘xa5 ♕xa5 13.♗c3 ♕a4= Kozul-Sokolov, Sarajevo 2003.

3...e5!?

The main line is 3...c5, and after 4.♘xc4 ♘c6 5.g3 either 5...f6 or 5...g6. The text was first played by Spielmann in 1925. Black grabs a lot of space and will be able to develop his pieces quickly from now on. Clearly the nature of the position is radically changed with this bold central thrust. Play becomes 'forced' and the price of each move increases.

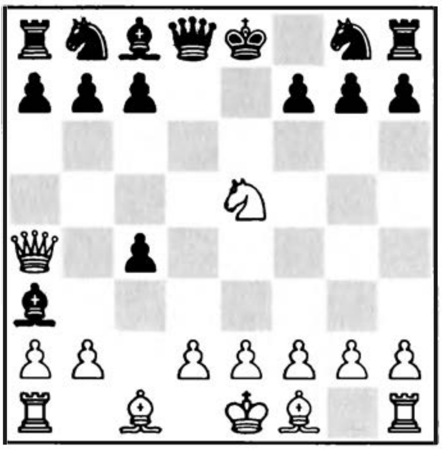
4.♘xe5

The only serious reply. Note that after 4.♘xc4? e4 the modest 5.♘g1 is forced, since 5.♘fe5? f6 loses a piece.

4...♗xa3

Pure tactics. Now 5.bxa3 fails to the double attack 5...♕d4. So White's reply is again forced.

5.♕a4+



An interesting position has arisen, Black is at a crossroads. The few theoretical works that mention 3...e5 devote their attention to 5...b5 (perhaps because of a neat tactical trap mentioned below). However, there is no objective reason to neglect 5...♘d7 which, in my opinion, contains more venom.

We will investigate:

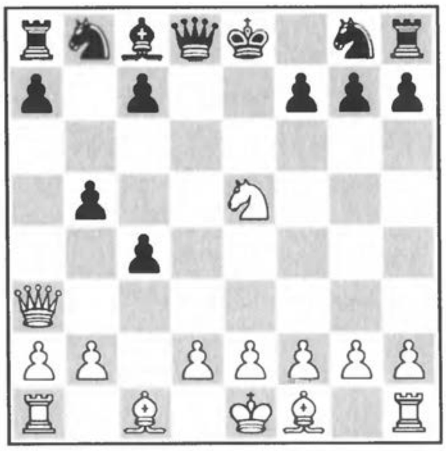
A) 5...b5
B) 5...♘d7

Variation A

5...b5

This was Spielmann's choice in the stem game against Euwe in 1925. Black forces 6.♕xa3, as 6.♕xb5+ c6 7.♘xc6 ♘xc6 8.♕xc6+ ♗d7 9.♕e4+ ♗e7 is a lot better for Black – the piece is much more important than the three pawns.

6.♕xa3



Time to take stock. Black has the freer game (his pawn on c4 gives him a space advantage for the moment), and easy development. White has some important structural advantages, though. Apart from the bishop pair, his pawn structure is also more solid. Black has weakened his queenside with 5...b5. Somewhat annoyingly, Black cannot castle kingside so easily, since the White queen is eyeing the f8 square from a3. Usually, Black will therefore play ♕d6 at some point. This means taking the game into an endgame which should suit White because of his bishop pair. In addition, Black must take care not to fall into a trap based on a combination of the weakness of the a8-h1 diagonal and square f7. Taking all factors into account, we must assess White's game as preferable.

6...♘f6

The best move, given the circumstances. Immediately losing is 6...♕d6?? 7.♕f3. Also bad is 6...♘e7, as in the game Novak-Nun, Stary Smokovec 1980. Instead of the game continuation 7.d3?, White can win on the spot with 7.♞xf7! ♔xf7 8.♕f3++–. Changing the move order does not work, though – after 7.♕f3 Black has 7...♕d5.

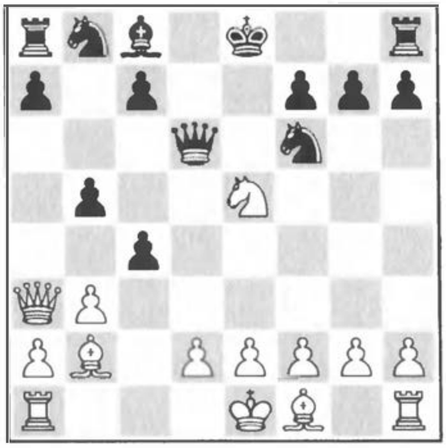
The stem game went: 6...♕d5 7.♕f3 (7.♕g3!? looks good too) 7...♘f6 8.♕xd5 ♘xd5 9.g3 f6 10.♗g2 ♗b7 11.♘g4 h5 12.♘e3 ♘xe3 13.♗xb7 ♘c2+ 14.♔d1 ♘xa1 15.♗xa8 c6 16.d3 ♔d7 17.♗e3 cxd3 18.exd3 ♘a6 19.♗xc6+ ♔xc6 20.♔d2± Euwe-Spielmann, Wiesbaden 1925. Euwe failed to bring home his advantage, though. In the same year Spielmann also tried 6...♗b7. After 7.e3 ♕d6 8.♕xd6 cxd6 9.♘f3 ♘c6 10.b3 d5 11.bxc4 dxc4 12.a4! ♗a6 (12...a6 13.♖b1) 13.♗b2 f6 14.d3± he was again in dire straits, and lost in Tartakower-Spielmann, Moscow 1925. Still, this game apparently did not dishearten anyone. In this period we also saw:

– 7.b3 ♕d6 8.♗b2 f6 9.♕xd6 cxd6 10.♘f3 cxb3 11.♘d4 a6 12.axb3 ♔d7 13.♘f5 g6 14.♘e3 ♔e6 15.♖c1 ♘c6 16.g3±, although Black won eventually, Torre-Ed.Lasker, Chicago 1926. See below.

– 7.d3 ♕d6 8.♕xd6 cxd6 9.♘f3 cxd3 10.♗f4 ♘f6 11.♗xd6± was Réti-Tartakower, Bad Homburg 1927. And this game ended in a draw.

7.d3

The following tactical trap deserves a mention: after 7.b3 ♕d6 White should avoid the natural 8.♗b2? because of



8...c3!. The point is 9.♕xd6 cxd6! when White gets only two pawns for his piece. Instead of the unfortunate bishop move White should exchange queens. A fine example (from Black's point of view) is Claesen-Motwani, Belgium tt 2002:

8.♕xd6 cxd6 9.♞f3 ♘c6 10.a4 ♘b4 11.♘d4 cxb3 12.axb5 ♗e6 13.f3 ♖c8 14.♔d1 ♘c2 15.♘xc2 ♖xc2 and Black's game is clearly preferable.

Stronger than 7.b3 is 7.♕f3. After 7...♕d5 8.d3 White preserves a slight edge after both:

– 8...cxd3 9.♕xd5 ♘xd5 10.♘xd3 0-0 11.g3± Cobb-Duncan, England 1999/00, and

– 8....♗e6 9.♕xd5 ♘xd5 10.♗d2 cxd3 11.e4 ♘b6 12.♗xd3 a6 13.b3 f6 14.♘f3± Shamkovich-Estrin, Moscow City Championship 1964.

7...♕d6

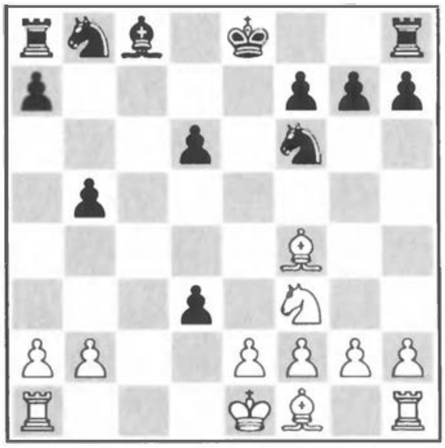
As mentioned above, Black can hardly do without this move. He needs to castle at some point. Still, White's bishop pair will now become a force to be reckoned with.

8.♕xd6 cxd6 9.♘f3 cxd3

In Alvarez-Pina, Matanzas 1992, White was better after 9...♘c6 10.♗d2 cxd3 11.♖c1 ♘e5 12.♘xe5 dxe5 13.♖c5 0-0 14.exd3.

10.♗f4

Active play by White. Also good is 10.e3 ♘c6 11.♗xd3 ♖b8 12.0-0 ♘e5 13.♗e2 ♘xf3+ Wexler-Dodero, Mar del Plata 1955, and now 14.♗xf3 rather than the game continuation 14.gxf3. In his book on the Réti, Osnos rightly indicates 11...a6 12.♗d2 ♘e5 13.♗e2 as very pleasant for White.



10...0-0

Or 10...dxe2 11.♗xe2 0-0 12.0-0 and White's bishops promise him the edge.

11.e3 ♘c6 12.♖c1 ♗b7 13.♗xd3± a6 14.♔e2 d5 15.♖hd1 ♖fe8 16.♗f5 g6 17.♗h3 ♔g7 18.♘d4 ♘xd4+ 19.♖xd4 ♗c8 20.♗xc8 ♖axc8 21.♖xc8 ♖xc8 22.♗e5+– g5 23.♖xd5 ♖c6 24.♖d6 ♖xd6 25.♗xd6 ♘e4? 26.♗e7 f6 27.f3 ♔f7 28.♗a3 1-0

Nybäck-Deva, Halkidiki 2001.

Variation B

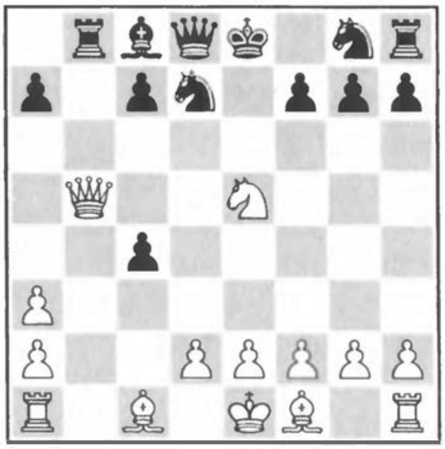
5...♘d7

First played by Edward Lasker, who had earlier used 5...b5 in a game against Carlos Torre (see Variation A; the note to 6...♘f6). The text was, in fact, a suggestion of Ossip Bernstein's in a private discussion with Edward Lasker. Black does not weaken his position (as he does with 5...b5) but simply continues his development. His intention is to sacrifice the c4-pawn for a considerable lead in development.

6.♘xd7

This is most logical. However, White may try to preserve the pressure with **6.bxa3!?**. The simple 6...c6 fails to give Black equality: 7.♘xc4 ♕e7±. After 6...♘f6 7.♘xc4 0-0 Black is a pawn down, although he may treasure some hope on account of his lead in development.

Probably insufficient is the ultra-sharp 6...b5!? 7.♕xb5 ♖b8:



A) 8.♕c6 ♖b6

– 9.♕a4 and now either 9...♕f6 or 9...♖a6 10.♕b5 ♖b6, with a draw by repetition.

– 9.♕d5 ♕f6 10.f4 ♘e7 11.♕xc4 ♘xe5 12.fxe5 ♕xe5 13.♕c3 ♕xc3 14.dxc3, with equal chances.

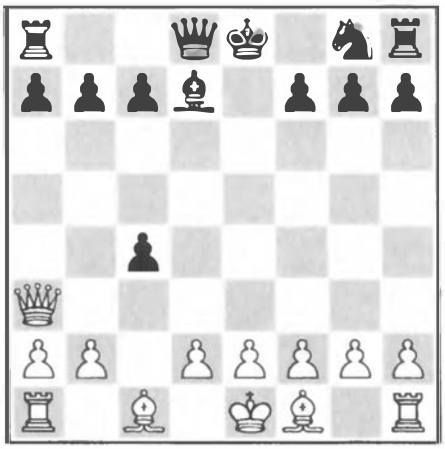
B) 8.♕a4 ♕f6 9.♘xd7 (or 9.f4!?) 9...♗xd7 10.♕xa7 ♖b6

– 11.♕a8+♔e7 12.♕e4+♖e6 13.♕b1 ♖b6 is a curious geometrical draw.

– 11.♖b1! ♖xb1 12.♕a8+ followed by 13.♕e4 check picking up the rook. Still Black has some compensation for his two-pawn deficit after 12...♗c8 13.♕e4+ ♘e7 14.♕xb1 0-0, when Black is fully developed and White's pieces are all on the first rank. Food for thought.

The safest answer to 6.bxa3 is 6...a6. In the game Tiggelman-Martyn, Belgium 1999, Black had good chances after 7.♗b2 b5 8.♕c2 ♘xe5 9.♗xe5 ♘f6 10.♖d1 ♕e7 11.♗xf6 gxf6 12.d3 ♕xa3 13.dxc4 ♕b4+ 14.♖d2 ♗e6. Instead of 7.♗b2 it is better to play 7.♘xc4, as 7...b5? fails to 8.♘d6+!. So Black should simply continue his development with 7...♘f6.

6...♗xd7 7.♕xa3



7...♘e7!

Preparing to castle and showing Black's willingness to sacrifice a pawn.

In practice Black has done well with other moves too.

● 7...♗e6!? 8.e3 (8.♕g3!? ♘f6!? 9.♕xg7 ♖g8 10.♕h6 ♕e7 with compensation) 8...♘f6 9.d3 (9.♗e2 ♕e7) 9...cxd3 10.♗xd3 ♕e7 11.♕xe7+ ♔xe7 12.0-0 ♖hd8 13.♗e2 c5, and Black had an easy game in Horowitz-Tenner, Bradley Beach 1928.

● 7...♘f6 8.e3 (8.♕c5!?) 8...♘g4!? (8...♗e6 transposes to the previous note) 9.♗e2 ♕h4 10.♗xg4 ♕xg4 was about equal in M.S.Hansen-T.Christensen, Tjalfe 1995. More ambitious is 9.♗xc4 (instead of 9.♗e2). Play becomes very sharp after 9...♕h4 10.g3 ♕f6 11.0-0 ♘e5 (11...♕f3 12.e4! ♕xe4 13.d3±) 12.♗d5 ♘f3+, with the following possibilities:

– 13.♔h1?? ♕f5 14.♗xb7 ♕h3–+.

– 13.♗xf3 ♕xf3 14.e4□ ♕xe4∓ 15.d3 ♕e7 or 15...♕d5.

– 13.♔g2! ♘g5 14.f4 ♗h3+ 15.♔g1 0-0-0 (15...♗xf1 16.♗xb7 ♖d8 17.♕a4+ ♔f8 18.♔xf1±) 16.♕b3 c6, with roughly equal chances.

8.♕c3

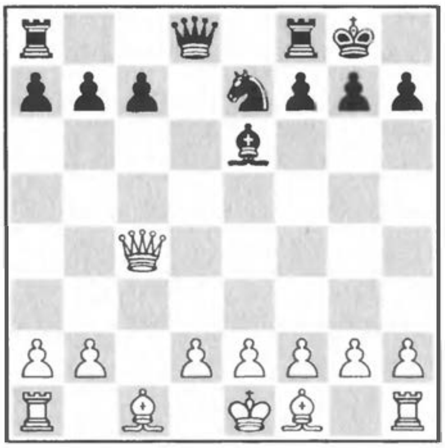
This double attack picks up the c4 pawn. The move 8.e4 refuses to take the pawn, but fails to achieve anything. The game Roe-Motwani, British Championship 1986, went 8...♗c6 9.♗xc4 ♗xe4 10.0-0 0-0 11.d3 ♗d5 12.♗g5. The weakness on d3 is compensated for by the bishop pair and some temporary activity. 12...f6 13.♗f4 ♖f7 14.♖fe1 ♘g6 (14...c6 is solid, but Motwani prefers to attack) 15.♗g3 f5 16.♗e5 f4 17.♕b3 ♗xc4 (17...c6) 18.dxc4 and now 18...♕g5?! was perhaps too sharp. The alternative 18...c6 yields equal chances.

8...0-0

This was Black's intention; at the cost of one pawn he will gain a big lead in development. One more suggestion for the reader: is 8...♗e6 9.♕xg7 ♖g8 10.♕xh7 ♕d7, planning to castle queenside, really too wild?

9.♕xc4 ♗e6

The game Century-Thomas, British Championship, Brighton 1977, saw a completely different set-up: 9...♘f5 10.e3 ♗c6 11.♕g4 ♕f6 12.♗e2 ♖fe8 13.0-0 ♖ad8. Black has compensation due to his lead in development. The game continued 14.d3 ♗d7 15.♕f4 c5 16.♖b1 ♕g6 17.♗d2 ♗c6 18.f3 (18.♗f3 ♗xf3 19.♕xf3 ♖xd3; 18.♕g4 ♘d4 19.exd4 ♖xe2 20.♕xg6 hxg6∓; 18.♗g4 ♘h4; 18.g3 ♘d4) 18...♘d4 19.♖be1 ♘xe2+ 20.♖xe2 ♕xd3. with equality. Perhaps White could have improved on move 17: 17.♖e1 ♗c6 18.g3 (18.♗f1 ♖xd3; 18.♕g4 ♕xg4 19.♗xg4 ♘h4 20.e4 ♖xd3 21.♗g5 ♘g6=) 18...♘d4 (18...♗b5) 19.exd4 ♖xe2 20.♖xe2 ♕xd3 21.♖e1 ♕xb1. Now everything would be OK for Black if it wasn't for 22.d5!± ♖e8 (22...♗xd5?? 23.♕d6+−) 23.♖xe8+ ♗xe8 24.♕e5 ♕xc1+ 25.♔g2 ♔f8 26.♕d6+ ♔g8 27.♕e7 g6 28.♕xe8+ ♔g7 29.♕e5+ ♔g8 30.d6, and White should win this queen ending.



This position is critical for the evaluation of 5...♘d7.

In his *Chess Secrets I learned from the Masters* (1951), Edward Lasker aptly summarizes White's predicament: 'White is a Pawn ahead and he has two Bishops. But how is he going to get his pieces out? No matter where the Queen moves, she will be subject to further attack by the Black minor pieces, as they gradually occupy the most aggressive posts they can find.' (p. 363, Dover, 1969)

10.♕a4

Understandably, White moves his queen somewhat 'out of reach'. On f4, h4 or c3 the queen can easily be attacked by the knight (10.♕f4 ♘d5; 10.♕h4 ♕d7; 10.♕c3 ♘d5). While 10.♕d3 is too ugly to consider (10...♕xd3, with excellent compensation). The game Lagrain-Versyck, Belgium 1998, went: 10.♕c2 ♘c6 11.e4 (11.e3 ♘b4) 11...♘d4 12.♕c3 ♖e8 (12...c5) 13.b3 ♗d5 14.f3 ♕f6 15.♗b2 c5 16.♗c4 and now, instead of 16...♖ad8?, Black should have played 16...♗xc4!, with a distinct advantage, as 17.bxc4 (17.♕xc4? ♘xf3+ 18.gxf3 ♕xf3!−+) 17...♕h4+ 18.♔f1 (18.♔d1 ♖xe4 △ 19.fxe4 ♕g4+−+) 18...♖xe4 △ 19.fxe4 ♕f4+ 20.♔e1 ♕xe4+ 21.♔d1 ♕g4+ wins.

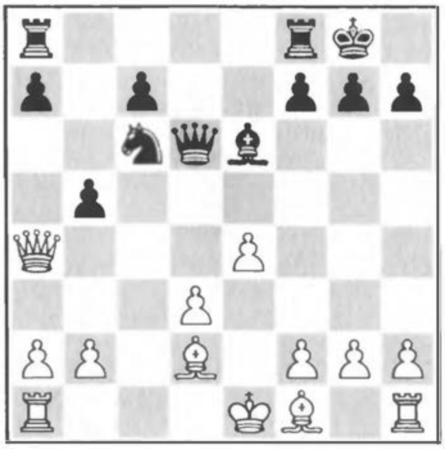
10...♕d5

Another active move hindering White's natural development. White's next chases the queen from its excellent position but accepts a gaping hole on d4.

11.e4

This is certainly not forced, but it is quite understandable. White needs to solve his main problem of developing his kingside forces and castling as soon as possible. Black's play is easier in a practical game. He will centralize his rooks along the e and d-files and move his knight into the centre. The square d4 will usually draw the knight like a magnet.

11...♕d6 12.d3 ♘c6 13.♗d2 b5!



14.♕d1

Considering how the game develops, White should perhaps have taken on b5 here. Let us investigate: 14.♕xb5 ♖ab8 15.♕a4 ♖xb2 16.♗c3 ♖xf2!? 17.♔xf2 ♕c5+ 18.d4 ♕xc3 19.♖d1 f5! 20.e5 and now:

– 20...♘b4 planning f4, e.g. 21.♕b5 (21.♗e2 f4) 21...f4 22.♕e2 c5 23.♕d2 ♕e3+ 24.♕xe3 fxe3+ 25.♔xe3 cxd4+ 26.♖xd4 (26.♔e4 g5!; 26.♔d2!? ♖f2+ 27.♔e1 ♖xa2 28.♖d2 ♖a5 29.♔f2±) 26...♘c2+ 27.♔d3 ♘xd4 28.♔xd4 with equality.

– 20...f4! 21.♖d3 ♕b2+ 22.♗e2 ♘b4, when White must return the exchange.

14...f5

Lasker energetically opens files against the uncastled white king.

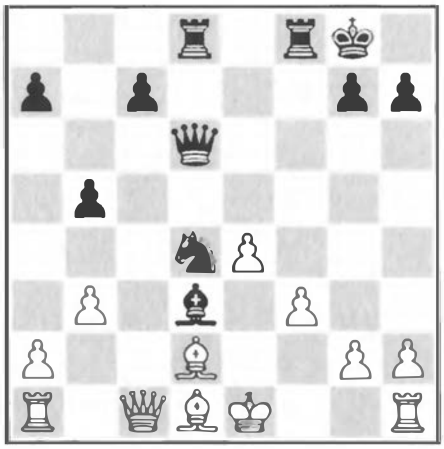
15.♗e2 fxe4 16.dxe4 ♖ad8

Black has fully mobilized his forces and prevents White from castling. With his next few moves he pursues the same goal. Black is clearly better. Taking into consideration that our main focus lies with the opening phase let us continue with some light comments.

17.♕c1 ♘d4 18.♗d1 ♗c4 19.b3 ♗d3

Emphasizing the complete success of Black's strategy. White is almost immobilized, while his harvest of one meagre pawn can be recaptured at any time.

20.f3



20...♕g6!

As Lasker indicates in his notes, this is even stronger than 20...♗xe4!? 21.0-0!, when his majesty has escaped. Not, however, 21.fxe4? ♕f6 22.♗e3 (22.♗f4 ♕xf4 23.♕xf4 ♖xf4, and Black has retrieved his investment with interest) 22...♕h4+ 23.g3 ♕xe4 24.♖f1 ♖xf1+ 25.♔xf1 ♕h1+ winning.

21.♔f2 ♕xe4

Superior is 21...♗xe4! 22.♖e1 ♘xf3 23.♗xf3 (23.gxf3 ♕d6 24.♖xe4 ♕xh2+ 25.♔e1 ♕g3+ 26.♔f1 ♖xf3+ 27.♗xf3 ♕xf3+ 28.♔g1 ♕xe4–+) 23...♗xf3 24.gxf3 ♕d6 and wins, Lasker.

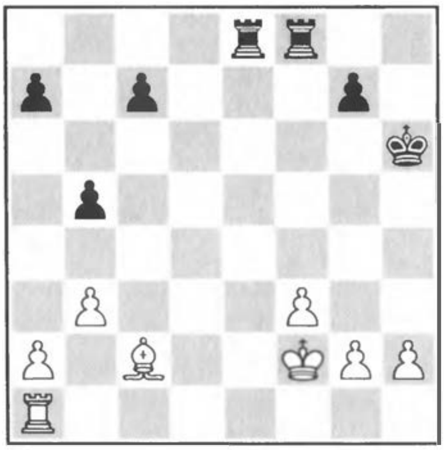
22.♗g5 ♖de8 23.♕e3 ♕f5!!

The exclams are Lasker's.

24.♕xd4 ♕xg5 25.♕xd3 ♕c5+! 26.♔f1 ♕e5 27.♔f2 ♕c5+ 28.♔f1 ♕e5 29.♔f2 ♕xa1 30.♕xh7+!

The wily Kevitz goes for the best practical chance.

30...♔xh7 31.♗c2+ ♔h6 32.♖xa1



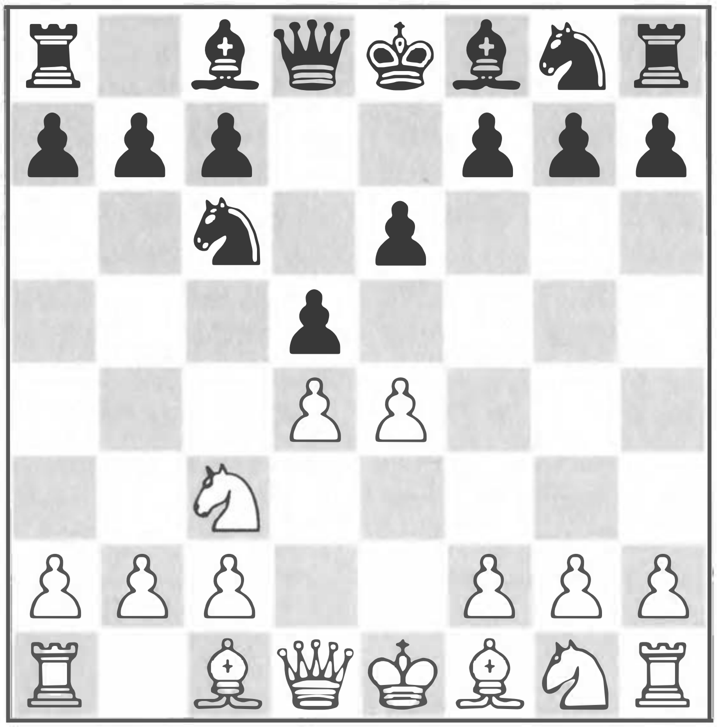
White has escaped into an ending where he has one pawn for the lost exchange. He is still lost because of Black's queenside majority, which will enable Black create a passed pawn.

Since this is not a book on endgame technique we will mercifully gloss over the rest. Suffice to say that Edward Lasker managed to lose from this position! For this tragic fact he duly praised his opponent's handling of the endgame (while castigating his own play). Kevitz-Ed.Lasker, New York, 1931.

CHAPTER 13

Karel van der Weide

A French Nimzowitsch



A Little Weird: 3...♘c6

Although 3...♘c6 may look a little weird, some strong (grand)masters have made it into a respectable line. I would like to mention Eduardas Rozentalis, Josef Klinger, Lüdger Keitlinghaus and Matthias Thesing. Occasionally it was used by world-class players like Veselin Topalov and Viktor Kortchnoi.

By playing this system, which can also occur from a real Nimzowitsch (1.e4 ♘c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 e6), Black restricts his options. The c-pawn becomes immobile and it is difficult to develop the bishop on c8. Moreover, Black looks up to a spatial problem. On the other hand, the Black position is without weaknesses. I would like to present six games to you in which White used different methods to tackle this system.

Game 1

☐ **Bart Michiels**
■ **Karel van der Weide**
Groningen 2001

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘c6 4.e5

With this move White tries to smother his opponent immediately.

4...f6

Black immediately attacks the pawn chain at the front. White keeps control over the e5 square with:

5.♗b5

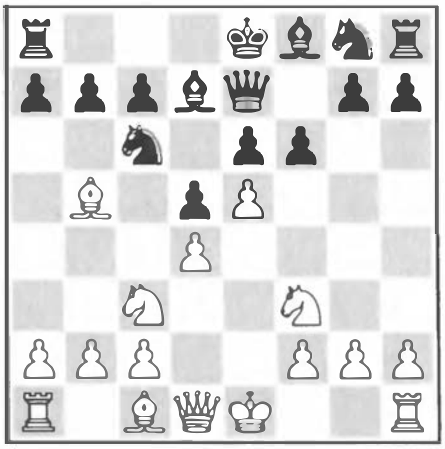
Consistent. The alternatives are inferior:

- 5.exf6?! is contradictory to White's former strategy: 5...♞xf6 6.♘f3 (after 6.♗f4 ♗d6 7.♗xd6 cxd6 8.g3 e5 Black seized the centre in Z.Polgar-Topalov, Singapore 1990) 6...♗d6 7.♗b5 (7.♗g5 0-0 8.♗d3 ♕e8 9.♕e2 ♕h5 10.h4 e5 11.dxe5 ♘xe5 12.♘xe5 ♕xe2+ 13.♘xe2 ♗xe5 definitely wasn't worse for Black, Gunnarsson-Keitlinghaus, Reykjavik 1997) 7...0-0 8.0-0 ♗d7 9.♖e1 ♕e8 10.♗xc6 ♗xc6 11.♘e5 ♗xe5 12.♖xe5 ♕f7 13.f3 ♖ae8 and a draw was agreed in Spassky-Keitlinghaus, Germany 1988.
- 5.♘f3 gives Black a choice between quiet development with 5...♗d7 or the wild 5...fxe5 6.dxe5 ♘h6 7.♗g5 ♕d7 8.♗xh6 gxh6 9.♗b5 ♕g7 10.0-0 ♗d7 11.♖e1 0-0-0, Paneque-Arencibia, Bayamo 1990.

5...♗d7 6.♘f3

The enterprising 6.♕g4 was played in Drexel-Van der Weide, Liechtenstein 1997, after 6...♕e7 7.♘f3 ♕f7 8.♗d2 0-0-0 9.0-0-0 ♘ge7 10.♖he1 ♘f5 11.♗xc6 ♗xc6 12.♕h3 ♗d7 13.g4 ♘e7 14.g5 fxg5 15.♘xg5 ♕g8 16.f4 h6 17.♘f3 ♘f5 Black was OK.

6...♕e7



In these ♘c6-lines, Black regularly aims for castling queenside. The black king is quite safe there, because the tension is on the other side of the board. 6...♗b4 is a decent alternative for those of you who are afraid the bishop will never be developed. Rolf Schwarz gave 7.♗xc6 ♗xc6 8.0-0 ♕d7 9.♘e2 0-0-0 10.c3 with a slight advantage for White.

7.0-0 ♕f7 8.♖e1

Instead of the text, 8.a3!? is a further attempt to suffocate Black, 8...0-0-0 9.b4 ♘ge7 10.♗d3 was Nijboer-van der Weide, Rotterdam 1997. Here Black definitely should have played 10...fxe5 11.dxe5 h6 with some counterplay.

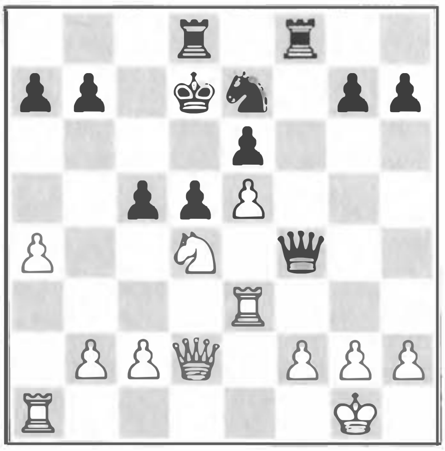
The game Maus-Keitlinghaus, Germany 1992, shows a similar position. Instead of 10.♗d3, White played 10.♖e1. Black got severely punished when he decided not to fix e5: 10...h6 11.♕d3 g5 12.exf6 ♕xf6 13.♘a4.

8...0-0-0 9.a4

Here 9.♕e2 ♘ge7 10.exf6 gxf6 11.♗f4 leads to a complicated fight for the e5-square. After ♘g6/♖e8 or ♗g7 things are unclear.

9...♗b4 10.♗d2 ♘ge7 11.♘e2 ♗xd2 12.♕xd2 fxe5 13.dxe5 ♖hf8 14.♘ed4 ♕f4 15.♖e3 ♘xd4 16.♘xd4 c5 17.♗xd7+ ♔xd7

White cannot profit from the curious position of Black's king.



18.♘b5 ♘c6 19.♕e2 ♔c8

Followed by ♔b8 gives Black a slight advantage due to his nice centre.

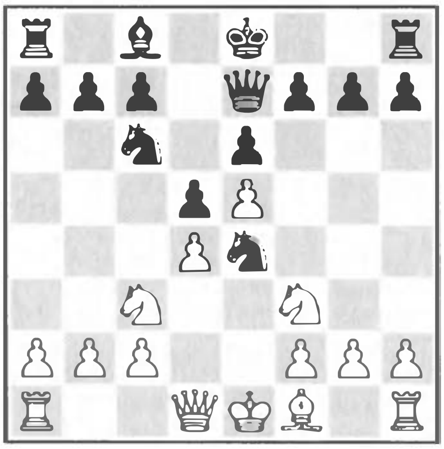
Game 2

☐ **Paul Keres**
■ **Anatoly Lein**
Baku 1961

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘c6 4.♘f3 ♘f6 5.♗g5 ♗e7 6.e5

This is how Bronstein and Keres handled the ♘c6 system. There is always some logic in exchanging your bad bishop.

6...♘e4 7.♗xe7 ♕xe7



8.♗d3

8.a3?! ♘xc3! (8...♗d7 gives White the opportunity to prevent the destruction of his pawn-structure by playing 9.♕d3) 9.bxc3 ♗d7 10.♗d3 ♘a5 11.0-0 c5 12.a4?! ♖c8 (Black's play is very easy here. Just aim for the weak c4-spot) 13.h4 cxd4 (13...0-0?? 14.♗xh7+) 14.cxd4 ♘c4 15.♕c1 h6 16.g3 0-0 17.♘d2 f5 18.f4 (after the alternatives, Black seizes the initiative: 18.exf6 ♕xf6 19.c3 e5, and 18.♘xc4 dxc4 19.♗e2 f4) 18...♖fd8 should have given Black a plus in Czap-van der Weide, Bad Wiessee 2004, because after 19.♘xc4 dxc4 20.♗e2 c3 the white pawn on d4 is a sitting duck.

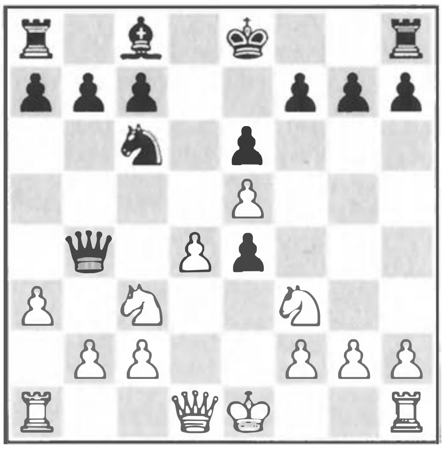
8...♕b4

It is quite interesting to play 8...♘xc3 anyway, despite the fact that White did not commit himself to a3. The extra tempo will not benefit White that much.

9.♗xe4

White has some compensation for the pawn after 9.0-0 ♘xc3 10.bxc3 ♕xc3 11.♖b1 ♕a3, but I doubt whether it is enough.

9...dxe4 10.a3



A nice *zwischenzug* which emphasizes White's main idea. The position opens up while the problematic French bishop on c8 has still not been developed.

10...♕xb2 11.♘xe4 ♕b5

The immediate retreat is best. The queen should not hang around too long: 11...b6?! 12.0-0 ♗a6 13.♖b1 ♕a2 14.♖b3 was already lost for Black in Hazai-Kekki, Espoo 1988.

12.♘ed2 ♘a5

Stronger than 12...0-0 13.c4 ♕b2 14.♖b1 ♕xa3 15.0-0 ♖d8 16.♘e4 b6 17.♘fg5 ♕e7 18.♕h5 h6 19.♘f6+, which gave White a ferocious attack in Bronstein-Zarnicki, Buenos Aires 1988.

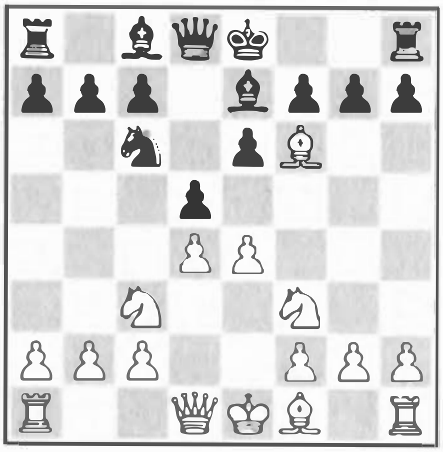
13.c4 ♕d7 14.0-0 b6 15.♖c1 ♗b7

Black's position is acceptable.

Game 3

☐ **Petr Zvara**
■ **Lüdger Keitlinghaus**
Prague 1991

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘c6 4.♘f3 ♘f6 5.♗g5 ♗e7 6.♗xf6



This is possibly too ambitious. White intends to combine the motifs we saw in Games 1 and 2. White gets rid of his bad bishop, and also wants to smother his opponent.

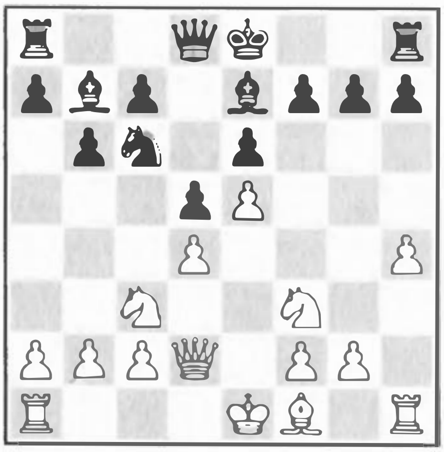
6...♗xf6 7.e5

After 7.♗b5 Black has a lot of ways to achieve counterplay. One way I really like is 7...0-0 8.0-0 ♘b8!? 9.♖e1 c5!? 10.exd5 exd5 11.dxc5 ♗xc3 12.bxc3 ♕a5, as played by both Josef Klinger and Claude Landenbergue.

7...♗e7 8.h4 b6

On the kingside the black king is an easy target, so the castling-choice is limited.

9.♕d2 ♗b7



10.♕f4

Play in the game Jonkman-Van der Weide, The Hague 2001, developed along almost identical lines: 10.0-0-0 ♕d7 11.♖h3 0-0-0 12.♘g5 ♖df8 13.f4 f6 14.exf6 gxf6 15.♘f3 ♖hg8 16.♖e1 ♖e8 17.h5 ♔b8 18.♘d1 ♗d6 19.♗b5 ♖g4 20.g3 ♖eg8 21.♕e3 a6 22.♗xc6 ♕xc6 23.♘h2 ♖4g7 24.g4 ♖e7 25.♔b1 e5 and Black got the position of his dreams.

10...h6 11.0-0-0 ♕d7 12.♖h3 ♗f8!

This subtle retreat secures the evacuation of the black king.

13.♘h2 0-0-0 14.h5 f6 15.exf6 ♗d6 16.♕d2 gxf6

Because of the bishop-pair and his central domination Black should be better.

Game 4

☐ **Jan Timman**
■ **Matthias Thesing**
Hengelo 2000

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘c6 4.♘f3 ♘f6 5.e5 ♘e4 6.♘e2

In this line White hopes to prove that the black knight on e4 is badly situated. The variations involved show little analogy with other ♘c6-lines.

6...f6 7.♘g3

The alternative 7.exf6 ♕xf6 8.♘g3 e5 can lead to enormous complications. How about these two games:

- 9.dxe5 ♘xe5 10.♕xd5 ♗b4+ 11.c3 ♘xf3+ 12.gxf3 ♘xc3 13.bxc3 ♗xc3+ 14.♗d2 ♗xa1 15.♗b5+ c6 16.0-0 ♗e6 17.♗xc6+ ♔f7 18.♘e4, Luther-Keitlinghaus, Germany Bundesliga 1990/91.
- 9.♗b5 exd4 10.0-0 ♗d7 11.c4 dxc3 12.♕xd5 0-0-0 13.♘xe4 cxb2, Hellers-Klinger, Gausdal 1986.

In both cases the resulting position is a mess.

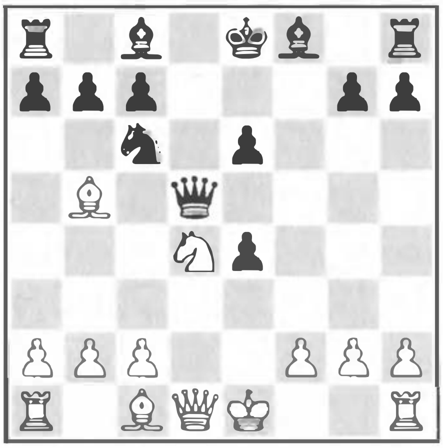
7...fxe5 8.♗b5

Recapturing with 8.dxe5 is fine for Black after 8...♗d7 9.♗d3 ♘c5 10.♘h5 ♘xd3+ 11.♕xd3 ♕e7, Hector-Rozentalis, Malmö 1993.

8...exd4

In order to avoid drawish lines, I once took a glance at 8...♗b4+ 9.c3 (9.♔f1 exd4) 9...♘xc3 10.bxc3 ♗xc3+ 11.♗d2 ♗xa1 12.♕xa1 e4 13.♘e5 ♗d7. Giving it a second thought, I saw Black was completely tight up after ♗xc6 and ♗b4. Back to the drawing board!

9.♘xe4 dxe4 10.♘xd4 ♕d5



11.♘xc6

Stronger than 11.c4?! ♗b4+ 12.♔f1 ♕d6 13.♗e3 ♗d7 14.♕a4 e5 15.♗xc6 bxc6 16.♘e2 c5 and Black was a little better, Hector-Rozentalis, Malmö 1997.

Now Thesing played

11...♕xd1+? 12.♔xd1 a6 13.♗a4 ♗d7 14.♖e1 ♗xc6 15.♗xc6+ bxc6 16.♖xe4

which gave White a clear advantage.

Therefore I think it is better to play:

11...a6 12.♕xd5 exd5 13.♘b4+ axb5 14.♘xd5 ♗d6 15.♘c3 ♗b4

With equality.

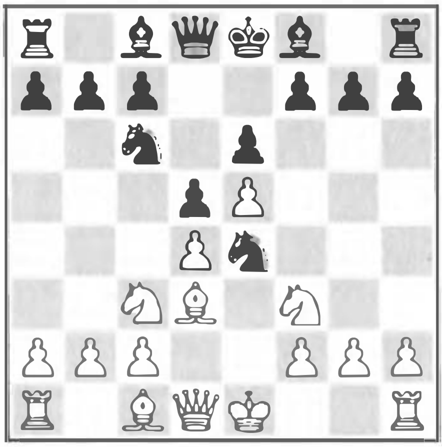
Game 5

☐ **Janis Klovans**
■ **Alexander Riazantsev**
Biel 2000

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘c6 4.♘f3 ♘f6 5.e5

Here 5.♗d3 ♗b4 transposes after 6.e5, but a separate line is 6.♗g5 dxe4 7.♗xe4 h6 8.♗xf6 ♕xf6 where Black at least has his dark-coloured bishop to count on. I should mention that both Rozentalis and Agdestein have played 5...♘b4 after 5.♗d3, so that is allowed too.

5...♘e4 6.♗d3



This is quite often played against ♘c6, so maybe it is fair to call this the main line.

6...♗b4 7.♗d2

Instead 7.0-0 is an interesting pawn sacrifice, although it should not worry Black much: 7...♘xc3 8.bxc3 ♗xc3 9.♖b1 h6. A common reply in order to prevent ♘g5. Actually, the game Koch-Prié, Paris 1989, has demonstrated that preventing the knight sortie is not obligatory: 9...♗b4 10.♘g5 ♗e7 11.♘xh7 (11.♕h5 g6 12.♕g4 ♘b4) 11...g6 12.♘f6+ ♗xf6 13.exf6 ♕xf6 and a pawn is still a pawn. Still, 9...h6 is also sufficient. Several games have shown that White has not enough compensation after 10.♗a3 a5 11.♗b5 ♗d7 12.♕d3 ♗b4.

7...♘xd2 8.♕xd2

Here Black has a choice, depending on his intentions. I will consider the solid 8...♗d7 first. We will examine the sharp 8...f6 in game 6 (Shirov-Rozentalis).

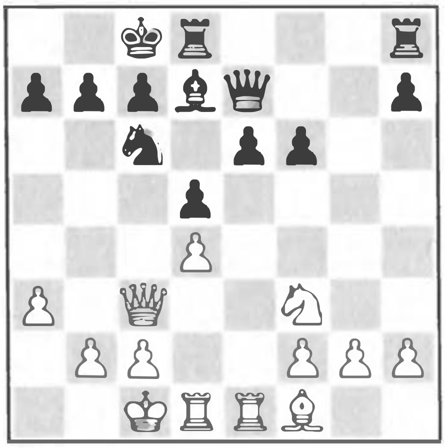
8...♗d7 9.a3 ♗xc3

Of course, it was still possible to keep the bishop on the board with ♗f8 or ♗e7. A line that was played several times by Firman goes 9...♗e7 10.0-0 g5!?. Well, why not?

10.♕xc3 f6 11.exf6

Otherwise Black will take on e5. Now there are some weaknesses for White to attack.

11...gxf6 12.0-0-0 ♕e7 13.♖he1 0-0-0 14.♗b5 ♘b8 15.♗f1 ♘c6



16.g3

Black should be able to hold after moves like ♕d6 or ♖de8. By the way, 16.♗b5 can lead to a repetition of moves.

Game 6

☐ **Alexey Shirov**
■ **Eduardas Rozentalis**
Tilburg 1993

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘c6 4.♘f3 ♘f6 5.e5 ♘e4 6.♗d3 ♗b4 7.♗d2 ♘xd2 8.♕xd2 f6

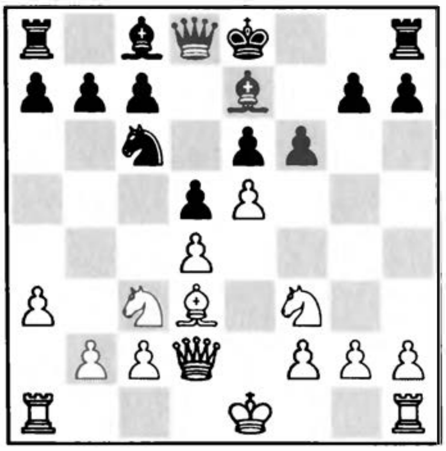
When played with the intention of keeping the dark-squared bishop this is a much sharper attempt than 8...♗d7 as in Game 5.

9.a3

Both 9.exf6 ♕xf6 and 9.♗b5 ♗d7 10.♗xc6 ♗xc6 are harmless.

9...♗e7

This is the most natural move. Still, two other bishop moves come into consideration.



How about the 'weird' 9...♗f8!?. In that case the pieces do not obstruct each other. E.g. 10.0-0 ♗d7 11.♖ael fxe5 12.♘xe5 ♘xe5 13.♖xe5 ♗d6 14.♖h5 ♕f6 and Black should be fine, De Vilder-Van der Weide, Amsterdam 1997.

Exchanging the bishop with 9...♗xc3 10.♕xc3 ♗d7 would transpose to game 5, but it is interesting to take on e5 instead of 10...♗d7: 10...fxe5 11.dxe5 ♗d7 (Rozentalis once castled here) 12.♕c5?! ♕e7 13.♕xe7+ ♔xe7 was Ott-Keitlinghaus, Germany 1989. It would appear that Black is better prepared for the ending.

10.exf6

After 10.♘e2 fxe5 11.dxe5 0-0 12.h4 Black has 12...♖xf3 13.gxf3 ♘xe5 which is a very interesting exchange sacrifice that was played twice by Rozentalis. In Yearbook 20 he comments on his game against Kuzmin, Leningrad 1990. Rozentalis considers 14.0-0-0 ♕f8 15.f4 ♘xd3+ 16.♕xd3 ♗d7 to be equal.

His game with Chandler, Germany 1992, on the other hand, went 10.h4 fxe5 11.dxe5 0-0 12.♕e2 ♕e8 13.0-0-0 ♕h5 14.♖del ♗d7 15.♖h3 ♖f4 16.♔bl ♖af8 and Black was well mobilized.

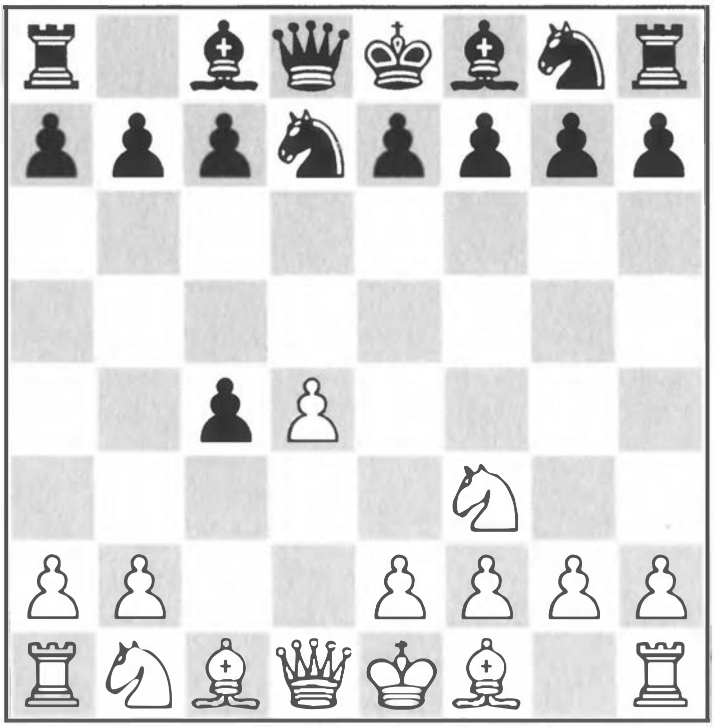
10...♗xf6 11.♗b5 0-0 12.♗xc6 bxc6 13.0-0 c5 14.dxc5 c6 15.♖fe1 ♖e8 16.♘e5 d4 17.♘a2 a5

The position is unclear.

CHAPTER 14

Glenn Flear

Protecting the Gambit Pawn in the QQA



Play 3...♘d7!?

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.♘f3

In this standard position imagine your opponent's emotions when you play

3...♘d7!?

He is already out of his theory on move 3! You intend to follow-up with ...♘b6 to protect the extra pawn and there's no obvious continuation for him. I suspect that he'll already feel a shade uncomfortable! Let's have a look at some variations and see if you agree with me that the idea holds water, with White's best chance for an edge probably being 4.e4 and 5.♗xc4. The main proponent of this line has been the Russian Dmitry Godes who over the years has tried it both over the board and in correspondence chess.

4.e4

– Instead 4.e3 is not very testing: 4...♘b6 5.♘bd2 (5.♗xc4 makes less sense here as White will realistically have to lose a tempo with e3-e4 to get his bishop out) 5...♗e6!? (not the only, but perhaps the most provocative plan for Black) 6.♘g5 (6.♘e5 ♘f6 7.f3 Farago-Kovacevic, Sarajevo 1983, and now 7...g6!) 6...♗d5 7.e4 e6 8.exd5 ♕xg5 9.dxe6 0-0-0 10.exf7 ♘h6 with great play for Black who leads in development, Nikolac-Kovacevic, Yugoslavia 1974.

– 4.♘c3 ♘b6 5.♘e5!? is interesting. 5...g6 (I'm not sure that White would feel that comfortable after 5...♗e6!? 6.e4 c6 7.♗e3 ♘f6 with some practical compensation for White but nothing concrete) 6.♘xc4 (6.e4 ♗g7 7.♗e3 ♘f6 8.f3 0-0 9.♘xc4 is analogous to a number of positions from the notes of Gavrikov-Gulko, (except that here a2-a4, a7-a5 haven't been played). Black has a Grünfeld set-up where White has a pull due to his good hold on the centre) 6...♗g7 7.♘xb6 axb6 8.♗f4 c6 9.e3 ♘f6 10.♗e5 0-0 11.♗e2 b5 12.a4! and White has the tiniest of edges, Mishuchkov-Godes, Soviet Union 1981.

– After 4.♘a3 Black can of course continue with ...♘b6 but Godes has shown a preference for playing as in a more traditional QGA aiming for an early ...c5 e.g. 4...♘gf6 5.♘xc4 e6 6.e3 ♗e7 7.♗d3 0-0 8.0-0 c5 9.♕e2 b5 10.♘ce5 c4 11.♗c2 ♗b7 12.♖d1 ♕c7 13.♘xd7 ♘xd7 14.e4 e5 Mikhalevski-Godes, Tel Aviv rapid 1996.

– 4.♕a4 aims to transpose back to familiar territory. 4...c6 (4...♘f6 transposes to the line 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♕a4+ ♘bd7 which is considered to be less likely to equalize than 4...c6 5.♕xc4 ♗f5. After 5.♘c3 e6 6.e4 ECO prefers White after both principal moves 6...a6 and 6...c5) 5.♕xc4 e5!? 6.dxe5 ♘xe5 7.♘xe5 ♕a5+ as in Efimov-Godes should be OK for Black.

4...♘b6 5.♗xc4

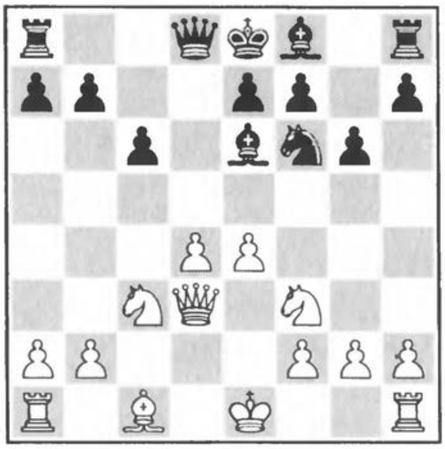
Alternatives are discussed in the notes to Gavrikov-Gulko.

5...♘xc4 6.♕a4+ c6 7.♕xc4 ♘f6 8.♘c3 ♗e6

The risky 8...b5 is featured in Bönsch-Godes. I think White should take up the gauntlet with 9.♕xc6+!.

9.♕d3 g6

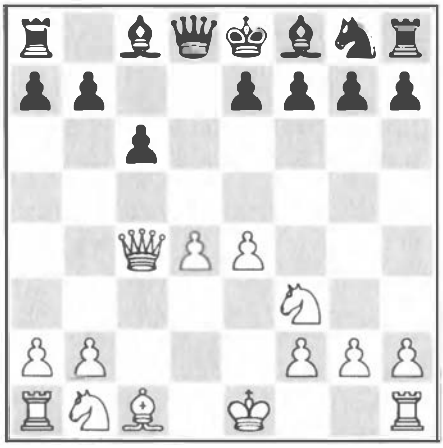
As in Sapundzhiev-Godes, see below. The position can be considered as a type of Grünfeld where White has been able to build his centre. The exchange of one pair of minor pieces should ease Black's defence, who is only slightly cramped here. Having the bishop pair may become a factor later, but at the moment it's not that significant.



If you don't mind this sort of position then 3...♘d7 could be for you. In any case one thing is clear: If you like 3...♘d7 you'll have Godes on your side!

☐ **Georgy Sapundzhiev**
■ **Dmitry Godes**
Markov mem corr 1987

1.♘f3 d5 2.d4 ♘d7!? 3.c4 dxc4 4.e4 ♘b6 5.♗xc4 ♘xc4 6.♕a4+ c6 7.♕xc4



Black has scored badly from this position which can be considered as the main line. Let's see what he can do.

7...♘f6 8.♘c3 ♗e6

For 8...b5 see Bönsch-Godes.

9.♕d3 g6 10.0-0 ♗g7 11.h3 0-0 12.♗e3

It's reminiscent of a number of lines from the Grünfeld. Black is solid but lacks counterplay, so White with a well consolidated centre keeps something out of the opening despite Black having the bishops.

12...♘e8!? 13.♘g5 ♕d7 14.♘xe6 ♕xe6 15.d5

15.f4 is well met by 15...f5! e.g. 16.e5 ♘c7 17.♘a4 b6! and Black has a nice light-squared blockade.

15...cxd5 16.♘xd5 b6 17.♕a3

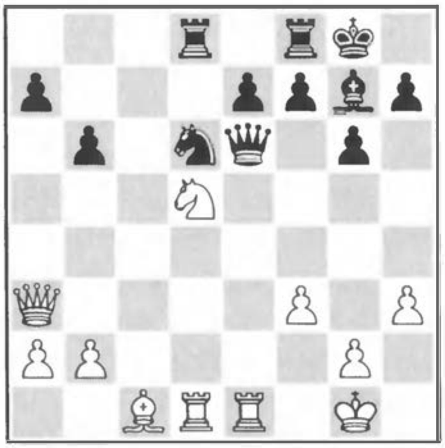
Strongest is 17.♗g5! when Black has to play precisely: 17...♗xb2 (17...f6 seems playable but a shade passive e.g. 18.♗f4 ♖d8 19.♖fd1 ♖d7 20.♖ac1 ♕f7) 18.♗xe7 (18.♖ab1 ♗f6 19.♗xf6 ♘xf6 20.♘c7 ♕xe4 leaves Black with enough compensation for the exchange) 18...♗xa1 19.♖xa1 ♘g7 20.♗xf8 ♖xf8 21.♖e1 f5! and Black seems to be OK.

17...♕xe4 18.♖ad1?

White should simply regain his pawn as after 18.♘xe7+ ♔h8 19.♖fe1 ♕b7?! White has the rather strong continuation (Black should instead settle for 19...♘f6 20.♗h6 ♕h4 21.♗xg7+ ♔xg7 when White only has a nominal pull) 20.♗d4! ♘f6 21.♕c3.

18...♘d6 19.f3 ♕e6 20.♗c1 ♖ad8 21.♖fe1

After 21.♕xa7 ♘f5 Black has good chances due to White's weakened kingside.



21...♗d4+! 22.♗e3 ♕xd5 23.♖xd4 ♕b7 24.♖ed1 ♖c8

Black has more or less consolidated the extra pawn. There are some technical difficulties due to the bishop having an influence on both wings, but Godes gets there in the end.

25.♕d3 b5 26.♗f2 a6 27.b3 ♕c6 28.♕e2 ♘f5 29.♖4d3 ♕f6 30.a4 b4!?

Another try is 30...bxa4 31.bxa4 ♖c6.

31.a5 ♖c3 32.♗e1 ♖xd3 33.♕xd3 ♖b8 34.♕e4 ♘d6 35.♕d4 ♕e6 36.♕a7 ♖b5 37.♗f2?

The best chance is 37.♕xa6!, after 37...♕e2 38.♖a1 ♕e5 (or 38...♕b2 39.♖d1 ♖g5 40.♗f2 ♕xb3) 39.♖d1 ♖xa5 Black is always better but still a long way from the full point.

37...♕xb3 38.♖e1 e5 39.♕xa6 ♕d5 40.♕a7 b3 41.♕c7 b2 42.♕d8+ ♔g7 43.♗h4 ♕d4+ 44.♔f1 ♘e4!

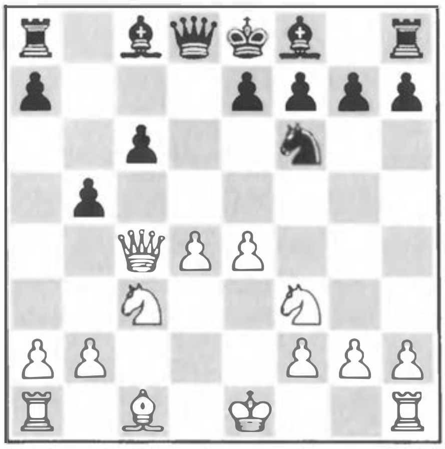
Simplifying to victory.

45.♕xd4 exd4 46.fxe4 b1♕ 47.♖xb1 ♖xb1+ 48.♔e2 ♖a1 49.♗d8 ♖a3 50.♗b6 f6 0-1

☐ **Uwe Bönsch**
■ **Dmitry Godes**
Herzliya 1993

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.♘f3 ♘d7 4.e4 ♘b6 5.♗xc4 ♘xc4 6.♕a4+ c6 7.♕xc4 ♘f6 8.♞c3 b5?!

Optimistic!



9.♕e2

A positional approach that isn't the best. In my opinion White can grab the pawn: 9.♕xc6+! ♗d7 10.♕b7 (Petursson considers White to be clearly better after 10.♕c5 e6 11.♕e5 b4 12.♘d5!) 10...♖b8 11.♕xa7 ♖a8 (after 11...b4 12.♘e2 ♘xe4 Black is still a pawn down and will need time to complete development) 12.♕c5 e6 13.♕e5 ♕a5 14.0-0 b4 15.♘d5 ♘xd5 16.exd5 f6!? (or 16...♕xd5 17.♕xd5 exd5 18.♖e1+ ♔d8 with an inferior ending) Zharkov-Godes, Riazan 1986, and Black is worse as he lacks compensation. So I can't believe in 8...b5 and prefer the solid 8...♗e6.

9...b4!?

Pushing the knight away in order to get play on the a6-f1 diagonal.

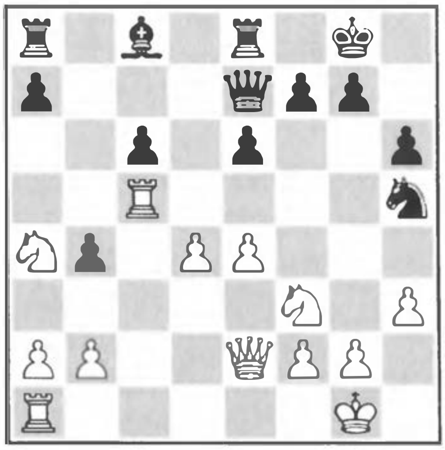
10.♘a4 e6?!

Too slow. Instead 10...♕a5! 11.b3 (11.♘c5 e6 to get the light-squared bishop on the a6-f1 diagonal. 12.♘d2 ♗xc5 13.♘b3 ♕d8 14.dxc5 a5 with ...♗a6 in the air) 11...♕b5 (or 11...♗a6 12.♕c2 ♘d7!?) 12.♕c2 ♘d7 13.♗b2 e6 14.0-0-0 ♗e7 15.♔b1 0-0 which wasn't at all clear in Miles-Bellon Lopez, Montilla 1978.

11.0-0 ♗e7 12.♗g5 0-0 13.♖fc1 h6 14.♗h4

White shouldn't be in a hurry to take the c-pawn as after 14.♗xf6 ♗xf6 15.♖xc6? he gets into hot water following 15...♗d7.

14...♖e8 15.h3 ♘h5 16.♗xe7 ♕xe7 17.♖c5



A strong positional player like Bönsch is unimpressed by his opponent's antics. His strong bind forces Black to play eccentrically to try and free his position. Afterwards he avoids the temptation to grab a pawn which would free Black's game.

17...f5!? 18.exf5 ♘f4 19.♕c4 ♕f7 20.♖e5 ♖f8 21.♖ae1 exf5 22.♕xf7+ ♔xf7 23.♖e7+ ♔g8 24.♘c5

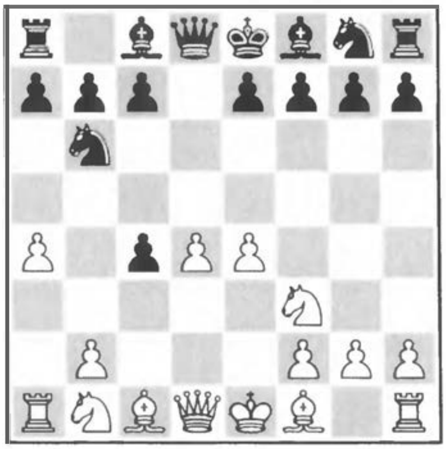
Black's weaknesses won't run away.

24...a5 25.♖c7 ♘d5 26.♖xc6

Finally! The rest is even more one-sided. Black resigned on move 41.

☐ **Viktor Gavrikov**
■ **Boris Gulko**
Frunze ch-USSR 1981

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.♘f3 ♘d7 4.e4 ♘b6 5.a4



Forcing 5...a5, which is a sensible inclusion from White's point of view. Practice has also seen:

- 5.♘e5 g6! 6.♘a3 ♘f6 7.f3 ♗g7 8.♘axc4 0-0 9.♗e3 ♘fd7 10.♘xd7 ♗xd7 11.♘a5 ♖b8 12.♗e2 c5 was fine for Black in Akopov-Godes, corr. 1986.
- 5.h3?! is tantamount to a loss of tempo. After 5...♘f6 6.♘c3 e6 7.♗xc4 ♘xc4 8.♕a4+ c6 9.♕xc4 b5! (here this works!) 10.♕xc6+ ♗d7 11.♕a6 b4 12.♘b5 ♕b8

Black was better in Zilberman-Godes, Chelyabinsk 1975.

– 5.♘c3 (this transposed from 1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.♘c3 ♘d7 4.e4 ♘b6 5.♘f3) 5...♗g4 6.♗e3 ♗xf3 7.♕xf3 e6 8.♕d1 c6 9.♗e2 ♗d6 10.0-0 ♘e7, Sadler-Vladimirov, Hastings 1990/91, with a murky game in prospect where White has some compensation for the pawn (bishop pair, centre, space etc).

5...a5 6.♘e5 ♘f6

A move order worth noting is 6...g6! with the point being that after 7.♘xc4 ♘xc4 8.♗xc4 ♗g7 Black gains a tempo against d4. 9.♗e3 ♘f6 10.f3 0-0 11.♘c3 probably yields White a small edge.

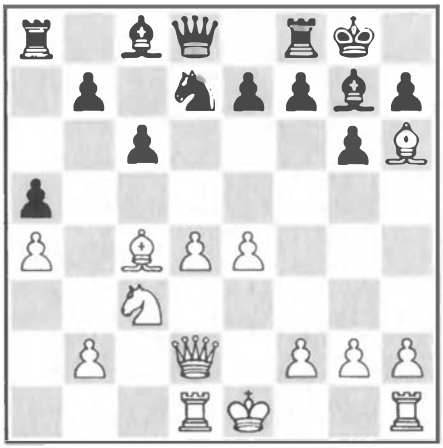
7.♘c3 ♘fd7 8.♘xc4 g6 9.♗f4

Otherwise White has tried 9.♗e3, e.g. 9...♗g7 10.♕d2 0-0 11.♗e2 c6 12.0-0 ♘xc4 13.♗xc4 ♘b6 14.♗b3 ♕d6 15.♕d3 ♗e6 16.♗xe6 ♕xe6 17.d5 cxd5 18.exd5 ♕d6 Yrjölä-Koskinen, Tampere 1991, when Black has equal chances.

9...c6 10.♕d2 ♗g7

Another move order 10...♘xc4 11.♗xc4 ♘b6 12.♗a2 ♗g7 13.♖d1 0-0 slows down the white attack but on the other hand Black is unable to access d6 with his queen as in the game.

11.♗h6 0-0 12.♖d1 ♘xc4 13.♗xc4



13...♘b6

13...♗xh6 14.♕xh6 ♕b6 is given as unclear by Gavrikov and Slekis.

14.♗a2 ♕d6 15.h4 ♗e6 16.♗xe6 fxe6?!

Opening the f-file at the cost of chronically weakening his pawns. Gavrikov suggests the more circumspect 16...♕xe6 e.g. 17.♗xg7 (instead 17.h5 ♘c4 18.♕c1 ♗xh6 19.♕xh6 ♘xb2 20.♖d2 ♘c4 21.♖d3 g5! 22.♕xg5+ ♔h8 isn't clear) 17...♔xg7 18.h5 f5!? leads to complications where White is probably a slight favourite.

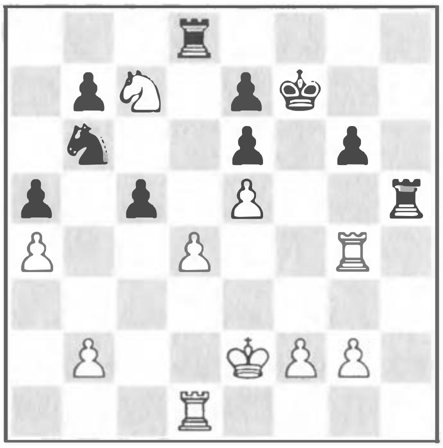
17.♗xg7 ♔xg7 18.h5 ♕f4 19.♕xf4 ♖xf4 20.hxg6 hxg6 21.♔e2

White's pleasant endgame edge is largely due to his superior structure.

21...♖ff8 22.♖h4 ♖h8 23.♖g4 ♖ad8 24.e5 c5 25.♘b5 ♖h5?

25...♖d7 26.dxc5 ♖xd1 27.♔xd1 ♘d7 represents a better chance.

26.♘c7 ♔f7



27.♘xe6! ♔xe6 28.♖xg6+ ♔f7 29.♖xb6 ♖xd4 30.♖xd4 ♖xe5+ 31.♔d3 cxd4 32.♖b5

32.♖xb7 is perhaps simplest.

32...♖e1 33.♖xa5 e5 34.♖b5 ♔e6 35.♖xb7

The rook ending should be winning but still requires good technique.

35...♖d1+ 36.♔e2 ♖a1 37.♖b4 ♔d5 38.f3 ♖g1 39.♔f2 ♖c1 40.g4 ♖c2+ 41.♔e1 e4 42.fxe4+ ♔xe4 43.♖b8 ♔e3 44.♖e8+ ♔d3 45.a5 ♖xb2 46.g5 ♖b1+ 47.♔f2 ♖b7 48.g6 ♖g7 49.a6

♔c2 50.♔e1 ♔d3 51.♖h8 ♖a7 52.♖d8 ♖g7 53.♔f2 ♔c2 54.a7! 1-0

☐ **Juraj Nikolac**
■ **Vlatko Kovacevic**
Yugoslavia 1976

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.♘f3 ♘d7 4.e3

No good is 4.♞bd2?! as it allows Black to take immediate control of events after e.g. 4...b5! 5.b3 c3 6.♘b1 b4 7.a3 c5 8.dxc5 ♞xc5 9.♕c2 ♗e6 10.e3 a5 and Black was better in Borisenko-Dorfman, Chelyabinsk 1975.

4...♘b6 5.♘bd2

Here 5.♗xc4 gives White a poorer version of 4.e4 and 5.♗xc4. White will have to play e3-e4 anyway to get his bishop out.

5...♗e6!?

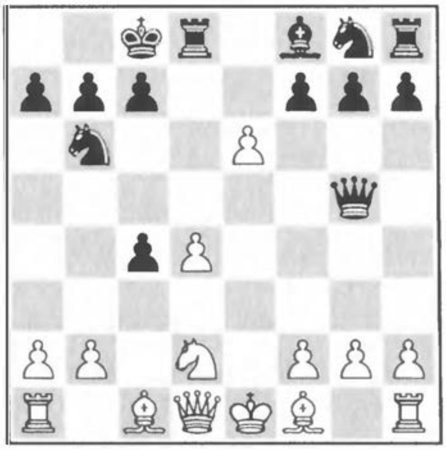
This seems perfectly sound here.

6.♘g5?!

White can try 6.♞e5 ♘f6 7.f3 as in Farago-Kovacevic, Sarajevo 1983, but after 7...g6! 8.♘dxc4 ♗g7 9.e4 0-0 10.♗e3 ♘fd7 Black has a reasonable game. Otherwise 6.♕c2 ♘f6 7.♘xc4 ♘xc4 8.♗xc4 ♗xc4 9.♕xc4 c6 10.0-0 e6 11.♗d2 ♕d5 was equal in Lukacs-Kovacevic, Tuzla 1981.

6...♗d5 7.e4 e6 8.exd5 ♕xg5 9.dxe6 0-0-0!

Rapid development is the main priority here.



10.exf7 ♘h6 11.♘f3

11.g3 is met by 11...♕e7+. I then prefer Black after 12.♗e2 ♖xd4 13.0-0 ♕xf7 14.♕c2, although Kovacevic feels that White has compensation.

11...♕g6 12.g3 ♗b4+ 13.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 14.♕xd2 ♕xf7 15.♗e2 c5 16.0-0 ♖he8

Material is equal but Black's forces are bearing down on White's centre in a menacing fashion.

17.a4

17.♖ad1 is well met by 17...♘f5.

17...cxd4 18.a5 d3 19.♗d1

Kovacevic points out that 19.axb6 is hopeless after 19...dxe2 20.bxa7 exf1♕+ 21.♔xf1 ♔c7 22.♕a5+ b6.

19...♘d5 20.a6 b5 21.♕a5 ♕d7

White is left thrashing about looking for tricks, but cannot save the game.

22.♘d2 ♘f5 23.♗g4 g6 24.♖fc1 ♔b8 25.b3 c3 26.♖xc3 ♘xc3 27.♕xc3 ♕c7 28.♕b4 ♘d4 29.♘f3 ♕b6 30.♕d2 ♘xb3 31.♕f4+ ♕c7 0-1

☐ **Igor Efimov**
■ **Dmitry Godes**
Belgorod 1989

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.♘f3 ♘d7 4.♕a4 c6

4...♘f6 is best avoided for two reasons:

1. It's too conventional (why are you reading an SOS-book anyway!) and
2. It's not that great for Black after 5.♞c3 e6 6.e4.

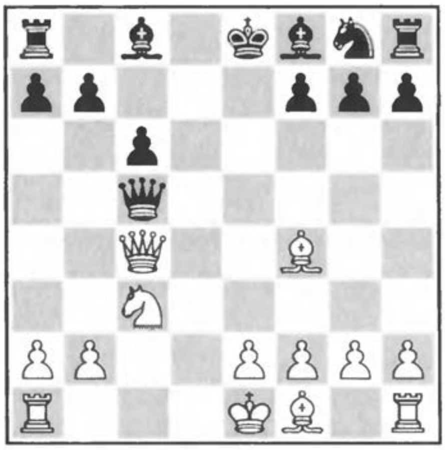
5.♕xc4 e5!

5...♘gf6 was played in Euwe-Alekhine, World Championship match Holland 1935. This position could also occur from a Slav: 1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♕c2 dxc4 5.♕xc4 ♘bd7.

6.dxe5 ♘xe5 7.♘xe5 ♕a5+ 8.♘c3

Not 8.♕c3?? ♗b4.

8...♕xe5 9.♗f4 ♕c5



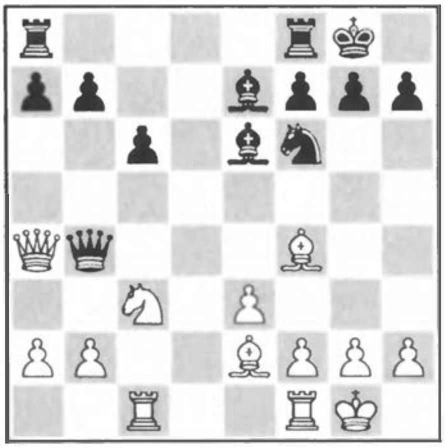
10.e3

10.e4 wasn't successful in Romsdal-Heim, Norwegian team championship 2001, as after 10...♗e6 11.♕xc5 ♗xc5 12.♗d3 0-0-0 13.♖d1 ♘e7 14.0-0♘g6 15.♗g3 ♖d7 Black had more than equalized.

10...♗e6 11.♕a4

In Shainswit-Adams, Ventnor City 1943, play was dead equal after 11.♕xc5 ♗xc5 12.0-0-0♘f6 13.a3 ♗b3 14.♖d2 0-0 15.♗d3 ♖fd8 16.♗c2.

11...♘f6 12.♗e2 ♗e7 13.0-0 0-0 14.♖ac1 ♕b4



Black has a fully satisfactory game. Efimov decides to keep the queens on in order to try and use his central pawns to generate an attack.

15.♕c2 ♖fd8 16.e4 ♖d7 17.♗d2?

A tactical error! Instead, 17.♖fd1 is about equal after 17...♖ad8 18.♖xd7 ♖xd7.

17...♕d6

Fritz would play 17...♗xa2! which looks slightly precarious but White cannot exploit Black's cheeky pawn grab, e.g. 18.♘d5 (18.♘xa2 ♕xd2) 18...♕b3 19.♘xe7+ ♖xe7 20.f3 ♕xc2 21.♖xc2 ♗e6 and Black is more or less a clear pawn to the good.

18.♗e3 ♘g4 19.♗xg4 ♗xg4 20.f4 ♗e6?!

Slightly risky as Black now loses control of the d-file. Safer is 20...♖dd8 with equality.

21.♖cd1 ♕b4 22.f5 ♖xd1 23.♖xd1 ♗c4 24.♖d7?

24.a3! ♕a5 25.♖d7 would favour White.

24...♗xa2!

Not missing the opportunity to grab the a-pawn this time around!

25.♕d2

25.♘xa2?? ♕e1 mate.

25...♗b3 26.e5 ♗f8 27.h3 a5 28.♕e2 ♖e8

Stronger is 28...a4! intending ...a3.

29.e6 fxe6?

It's still possible to play 29...a4!? with the idea of 30.♖xf7 a3.

30.f6 gxf6 31.♕h5 ♖e7 32.♖d4 ♗c4 33.♕h4?

White wins a piece with 33.♕g4+ ♖g7 34.♖xc4 ♖xg4 35.♖xg4+ ♕xg4 36.hxg4 but the ending isn't clear.

33...♕xb2

Or 33...b5 34.♕xf6 ♖g7.

34.♘e4?

Instead 34.♖xc4 ♖g7 35.♕e4 leaves Black with four pawns for the piece, but White has reasonable chances of holding his position together.

34...♖g7 35.♘xf6+ ♔h8 36.♘g4 h5??

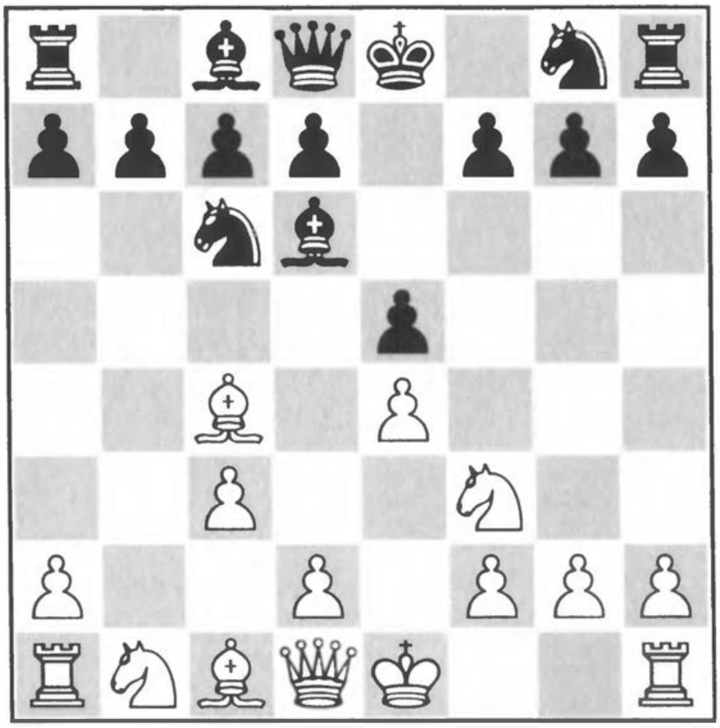
36...♗d5 locks the white rook out of play and should win. The text is crazy!

37.♖d8 ♕a3 38.♕f2 hxg4 39.♖xf8+ 1-0

CHAPTER 15

Jeroen Bosch & Carlos Matamoros

Evans Gambit: 'Stoneware' Defence



5...♗d6!? – Old Wine in New Bottles

In the famous tournament of Hastings 1895 the young Harry Pillsbury emerged victorious after 21 rounds. This caused quite a sensation since all the top players of the time – Chigorin, Lasker, Tarrasch, and Steinitz – were among the participants. Pillsbury twice defended against the Evans Gambit with the odd-looking 5...♗d6. Interestingly, this old defence of the brilliant American has in recent times been taken up by several grandmasters including among others: Alexander Grischuk and Ivan Sokolov.

Let us examine the recent (and old) theory by means of the games Jobava-Grischuk and Short-Sokolov.

☐ **Baadur Jobava**
■ **Alexander Grischuk**
Plovdiv Ech-tt 2003

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♗c5 4.b4

Here it is, the gambit devised by captain William Davies Evans around 1824. It became general practice after his 1827 win over Alexander McDonnell (one of the strongest players at the time). This game is generally considered the stem game of the Evans Gambit even though Evans himself used an inaccurate move order (4.0-0 d6 5.b4 Evans-McDonnell, London 1827). McDonnell, impressed by what the captain had shown him, used it in his famous match against De la Bourdonnais. The Frenchman himself became equally willing to sac the b-pawn in their following match games. Anderssen, Chigorin and Morphy were other adherents of the Evans Gambit in the 19th century.

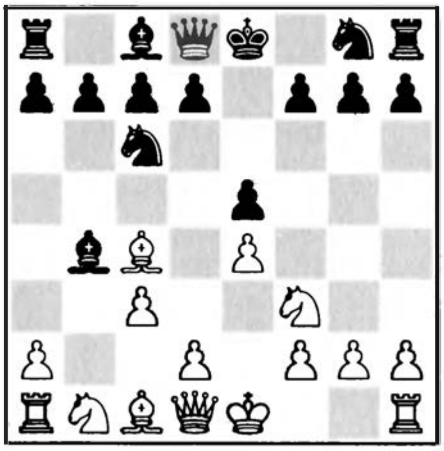
Eventually, however, the popularity of this romantic gambit waned. This was partly due to the efforts of the first and second world champion. In the case of Steinitz it is clear that the spirit of the impetuous 4.b4 went against all that he stood for in chess. However, his defensive methods were rather odd. Lasker – one of the greatest defenders in the history of chess – devised the standard defence accepted by the players of his day and modern theoreticians alike.

All was quiet on the Evans front until the mid-1990s, when none other than the 13th world champion Garry Kasparov played 4.b4 to annihilate both Anand and Piket. (It has to be said, though, that Fischer used the Evans in a few casual games – two of which made it into his *My Sixty Memorable Games*!) Kasparov's efforts put the Evans Gambit back on the modern chess map. Nowadays, Short is the strongest grandmaster to play it more or less regularly. But you can expect to meet Captain Evans' move on all levels.

4...♗xb4

Accepting the gambit pawn was once a question of honour. Nowadays all beginners grow up with the rule that the only way to refute a gambit is to accept. This SOS supports this view! Naturally, 4...♗b6 is playable. It was this move that Piket chose when Kasparov surprised him with 4.b4. After 4...♗b6 5.a4 a5 (5...a6 is considered better) 6.b5 ♘d4 7.♘xd4 ♗xd4 8.c3 ♗b6 9.d4 exd4 10.0-0 ♘e7 11.♗g5 h6 12.♗xe7 ♕xe7 13.cxd4 White had a pleasant edge in Kasparov-Piket, Amsterdam 1995.

5.c3



5...♗d6!?

The bishop retreat to d6 naturally earns the SOS stamp of approval. Pillsbury, in his choice of 5...♗d6, was influenced by two American players (Stone and Ware) which is why 5...♗d6 was called the 'Stoneware' defence according to Blackburne. The avid SOS-reader will probably recognize this move from several earlier SOS-subjects featuring ♗d6. See also Chapter 2!

Before we examine the main idea of 5...♗d6, it is useful to give a brief overview of the 'normal' lines.

– 5...♗c5?! 6.d4 exd4 7.0-0 d6 8.cxd4 ♗b6 was once the main tabiya position of the Evans Gambit. Although playable, it is illogical to give White the tempi to build up his centre.

– 5...♗e7 6.d4 ♘a5 7.♗e2 (7.♘xe5) 7...exd4 (7...d6) 8.♕xd4 ♘f6 (there are stronger alternatives at this stage, such as 8...♘c6 9.♕xg7 ♗f6 10.♕g3 d6 or 8...d5) 9.e5 ♘c6 10.♕h4 ♘d5 11.♕g3 g6 (11...♔f8) 12.0-0 ♘b6 13.c4! d6 14.♖d1 ♘d7 15.♗h6!, with excellent compensation for White. Kasparov-Anand, Riga 1995.

– 5...♗a5 is the absolute main line. 6.d4 (6.0-0 d6 7.d4 ♗b6! was Lasker's suggestion, which highlights the inaccuracy of 6.0-0) 6...d6 (6...exd4 7.0-0 ♘ge7! 8.♘g5 d5 9.exd5 ♘e5 is a modern recipe. Black is OK, as demonstrated by Short-Adams, Sarajevo

2000, and Morozevich-Adams, Wijk aan Zee 2001) 7.♕b3 ♕d7 8.dxe5 ♗b6!; with this last move (similar to Lasker's 6...♗b6 above) Black prepares ♘a5.

Looking at the 5th move alternatives, we see that White will always play 6.d4, creating an ideal pawn centre. He tries to open up the position and go for an immediate attack. With 5...♗d6 (*Überdeckung*!) Black is winning time to consolidate his position. The bishop protects e5, making it easier for Black to keep the e5 stronghold. Thus, he not only gains time for completing his development, but he also keeps the position closed for the moment. Another advantage of keeping the bishop on the a3-f8 diagonal is that ♗a3 (a standard move to prevent castling) is avoided. Naturally, there are some dangers connected to the move 5...♗d6. It takes more time to develop the c8-bishop, which might make it difficult to prevent the manoeuvre ♘h4-f5 (however, see the main game!).

6.d4

Instead, 6.0-0 is a less forcing move order. 6...♘f6 (6...♘a5 has been played here, it tries to show that 6.0-0 is inaccurate. However, I cannot recommend it on account of the simple 7.♗e2 ♘f6 8.d4, when Black must play 8...♘c6. Now 9.♗c4 transposes to the main line, but 9.dxe5 looks like a strong alternative) 7.♖e1 (7.d4 transposes to the main line) 7...♗e7! (well-played! White has dithered with 6.0-0 and 7.♖e1, giving Black time for this unexpected loss of tempo. Pillsbury now gets a 'normal', Ruy Lopez-like position with a sound pawn up) 8.d4 d6 9.♕b3 0-0 10.♘g5 ♕e8 (White's primitive attack on f7 has failed, and his pieces will be thrown back. The threat is 11...♘a5. Instead of 10...♕e8 also strong is 10...d5) 11.♕d1 h6 12.♘f3 ♗g4 13.♘a3 ♘h7 14.♖b1 ♖b8 15.♘c2 ♘g5 16.♔h1 ♔h8 17.♘e3 ♗xf3 18.gxf3 ♘h3, and Black was materially and positionally better, Schiffers-Pillsbury, Hastings 1895.

6...♘f6

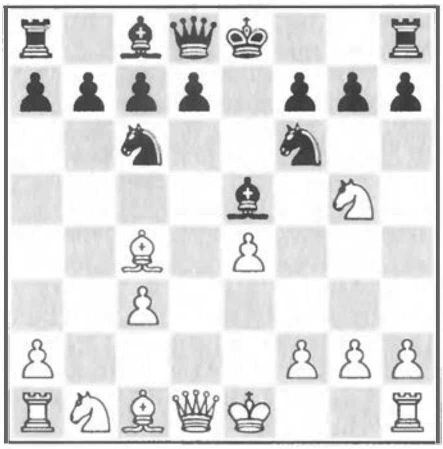
Speedy and natural development is a necessity after a move like 5...♗d6. In the 19th century players were fond of moves like: 6...h6 (McDonnell), 6...♕e7 (Kieseritzky) and 6...♕f6 (Bilguer and Hanham).

7.0-0

The most logical. Rather meek is **7.♘bd2** 0-0 8.♗b5 ♖e8 9.d5 ♘a5 10.0-0 c6 11.dxc6 dxc6, and Black was a pawn up for nothing in Szarka-Keszler, corr. 1991.

It is important to react correctly when White takes on e5.

So, after **7.dxe5** 7...♘xe5 is a mistake, because 8.♘xe5 ♗xe5 9.f4 is awkward to meet. Therefore, Black should continue 7...♗xe5, as 8.♘xe5 ♘xe5 gains a valuable tempo. After the consistent 8.♘g5 Black must take care:

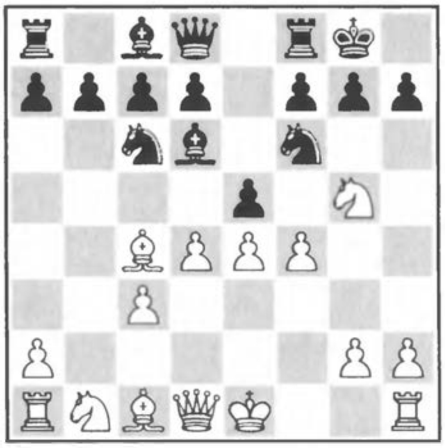


– 8...0-0?! 9.f4 h6?! 10.♘xf7 ♖xf7 11.♗xf7+ ♔xf7 12.fxe5 ♘xe5 13.0-0 d6 14.♗f4± Annageldiev-Najjar, Beirut tt 2000.

– 8...d5! (a well-timed central thrust) 9.exd5 ♘a5 10.♕a4+ c6 11.dxc6 0-0 12.♗a3 ♘xc4 13.♕xc4 (13.♗xf8? ♕d3! or 13...♗xc3+, and Black should win) 13...b5 14.♕b3?! b4!? 15.♗xb4 (15.♕xb4) 15...♖b8 16.♕c4 ♖xb4! 17.♕xb4 ♕d3 Fiorito-Krantz, corr. 1988, and White resigned as there is no satisfactory defence to the multitude of threats (♗a6, ♖e8). Instead of 14...b4 Black may also consider Stefanova's 14...♗f4 (see the note to White's 7th move in Short-Sokolov below).

Another direct attempt is: **7.♘g5** 0-0 8.♘xf7? ♖xf7 9.♗xf7+ ♔xf7 10.f4 exd4 11.e5 ♗e7 12.exf6 ♗xf6 13.0-0 d5, when Black had fine compensation for the exchange in Bird-Pillsbury, Hastings 1895, after 14.♘d2 dxc3 15.♘f3 ♔g8 16.♖b1 b6 17.♗e3 ♗g4 18.♕a4 ♗xf3 19.♖xf3 ♕d6 20.♖d1 ♖d8 21.♖h3 d4 22.♗c1 ♕e6 23.♕c2 d3! Pillsbury secured a winning advantage.

However, after 7.♘g5 0-0 the correct way to proceed is 8.f4!.



Now 8...exd4 9.e5 ♗xe5 10.♘xf7 ♖xf7 11.♗xf7+ ♔xf7 12.fxe5 ♘xe5 13.cxd4 favours White. However, for the piece sacrifice 9...♗c5 see the note to White's 7th move in Short-Sokolov below. So Black should play 8...exf4 9.e5 ♗xe5 (Here 9...♘xe5!? is a suggestion of Zaitsev's. After 10.dxe5 ♗xe5 Black has four pawns for the piece and an edge in development. This may well mean a comfortable advantage!) 10.dxe5 ♘xe5 11.♗b3 h6 12.♘h3 g5 13.0-0 (13.♗xf4!? gxf4 14.♘xf4, and White is better, according to Zaitsev) 13...d6 (13...♘g6 14.♕d3 d5 15.♖d1 ♗g4 and Black had excellent compensation in Diani-Correa, corr. 1992) 14.♘f2 ♗e6 15.♘d2 ♕d7 16.♘fe4 ♘xe4 17.♘xe4, and now Black should improve upon 17...f5? (17...♕c6 or 17...♔g7 are likely candidates) 18.♘c5 ♗xb3 19.♕xb3+ ♕f7 20.♘xb7±, Anderssen-Kieseritzky, London 1851.

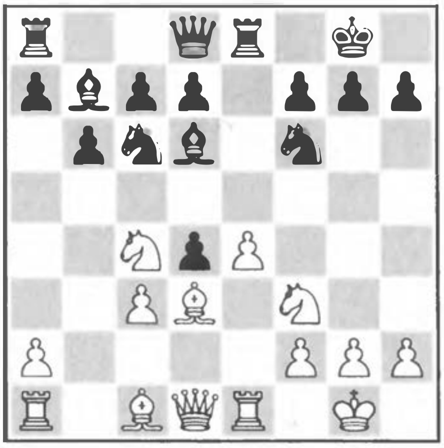
7...0-0 8.♖e1

The main move, but it is good to examine the alternatives, too.

● 8.♘bd2 ♕e7?! 9.♗d3 ♘e8?! (9...b6) 10.♘c4 f6 11.♘e3 (now it clear that White has sufficient compensation) 11...g6 12.♘d5 (12.♘g4) 12...♕d8 13.♗e3 ♗e7 14.♘d2 d6 15.f4 ♘g7 16.f5 g5 17.h4!± gxh4 18.♕g4 ♔h8 19.♕xh4 ♕d7 20.♔f2 ♗d8 21.♖h1 ♘e8 22.♖h3 ♘a5 23.♖ah1 ♖f7 24.♗e2 ♖g7 25.♗h5 ♔g8 26.♗xe8 ♕xe8 27.♕xh7+ (in style, but 27.♖g3 was also sufficient) 27...♖xh7 28.♖xh7 ♗xf5 29.exf5 ♕f8 30.♖h8+ ♔f7 31.♖1h7+ ♕g7 32.♗h6 ♕xh7 33.♖xh7+ (missing 33.♖f8 mate) 33...♔g8 34.♖g7+ ♔h8 35.♘e4 1-0 Kennedy-Pillsbury, Philadelphia 1895. This game was played before Pillsbury's triumph at Hastings!

There are improvements for Black, of course. Thus, 8...b6 was seen in Johnson-Montecatini, correspondence game 1996. After 9.♗d3 ♖e8 10.♖e1 exd4 11.cxd4 ♗f4 12.♘f1 ♗xc1 13.♖xc1 ♗b7 14.e5 White had attacking chances for the pawn.

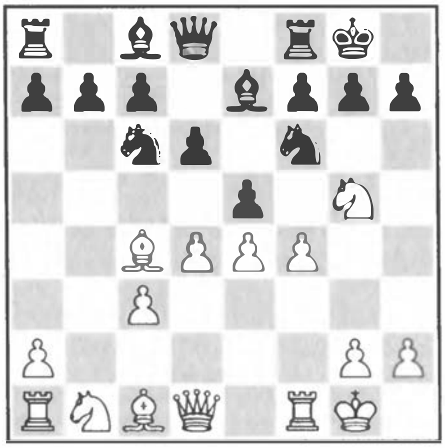
On the 10th move (so after 8.♘bd2 b6 9.♗d3 ♖e8 10.♖e1) Black, in my opinion, can play 10...♗b7!?. After 11.♘c4 exd4 there can follow:



– 12.cxd4 ♗b4!.
– 12.♘xd6 cxd6 13.cxd4 ♘b4.
– 12.e5 ♘xe5 13.♘fxe5 ♗xe5 14.♘xe5 (or 14.♖xe5 d5 15.♖xe8+ ♕xe8 16.♘a3 dxc3) 14...d6, with an unclear position.

As an afterthought, 8...h6!? is also interesting after 8.♘bd2.

● 8.♘g5 ♗e7, and now the sharp 9.f4 d6, for example:



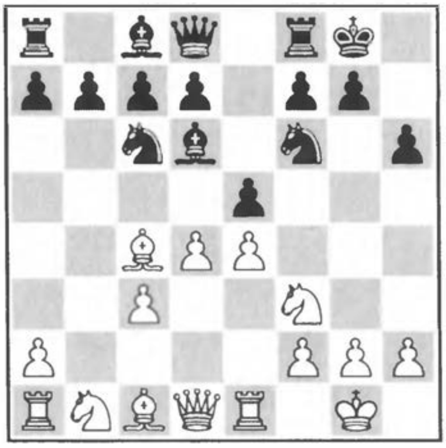
– 10.♕d3 h6 (better is 10...exd4! 11.cxd4 d5 12.exd5 (12.♗xd5 ♘xd5 13.exd5 ♗xg5 14.dxc6 ♗f6∓) 12...♘b4∓) 11.♘f3 d5?! 12.fxe5 dxc4 13.♕e2, Quintero Velez-Valencia Obando, Medellin 2000.

– 10.♘d2 exd4 11.cxd4 d5 12.exd5 h6? (correct is 12...♘xd5!, when 13.♘xf7? ♖xf7 14.♕h5 ♗e6 15.f5 has been suggested, but this loses outright to 15...♘f6) 13.♘xf7 ♖xf7 14.dxc6 ♕xd4+ 15.♔h1 ♕xa1? 16.♕b3, and White won in Seidman-Mengarini, New York 1951.

● Finally, 8.♕e2 b6 (8...h6) 9.♗d5 ♖e8 10.♗g5 ♗b7 11.♘xe5 ♗xe5 12.dxe5 ♖xe5 13.f4 ♖e8 14.e5 ♕e7 15.♗xc6 ♗xc6 16.♕c4 ♕e6! 17.♕xe6 ♖xe6 was Lawrence-Woschkat, IECG email 1998. The draw is forced after 18.exf6 ♖e2 19.♖f2 ♖e1+ 20.♖f1 ♖e2.

8...h6

Black prepares to regroup with ♖e8 and ♗f8. With 8...h6 he prevents both ♘g5 and ♗g5. A possible drawback is that the light squares on the kingside (f5, g6) are weakened. Jobava attempts to demonstrate this with his next move.



9.♘h4

Consistent in a way, but the move is refuted by Grischuk's energetic play.

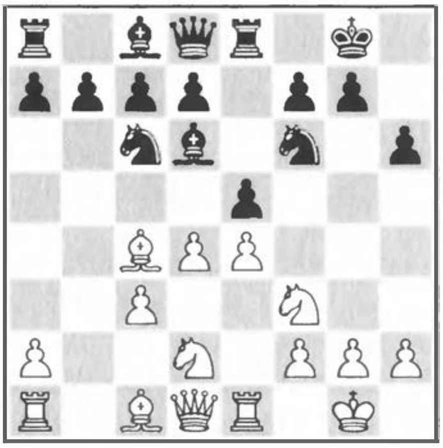
In Yearbook 70 Genna Sosonko analysed **9.♗d5** ♘xd5 10.exd5 ♘e7 11.dxe5 ♗c5 12.d6 ♘g6 (so far an analysis by Mikhalchishin who gave the verdict 'unclear', Sosonko continues his line with) 13.♗e3 cxd6 14.exd6 ♕b6 to conclude that Black is OK.

It is better to complete development first with **9.♘bd2**. Let us examine this line in some detail:

A) 9...a6 10.♗b2 b5 11.♗b3 ♖e8 12.♘h4 (only now!) 12...♘a5 13.♘f5 ♘xb3 14.axb3 exd4 15.♘xd6 cxd6 16.cxd4 d5 (or 16...♗b7 17.d5=∞) 17.e5 ♘h7 18.♗a3± Grosar-Vodopivec, Nova Gorica 1997.

B) 9...exd4 is extremely risky, but perhaps worth investigating for Black: 10.e5 (after 10.cxd4 ♗b4 Black is fine after both 11.e5 d5 and 11.d5 ♗c3) 10...dxc3 11.exd6 cxd2 12.♕xd2 cxd6 13.♕xd6 ♘e8 14.♕g3 d5 15.♗d3 (not 15.♗xh6 dxc4 16.♖xe8 ♕f6-+) 15...♔h8 16.♗a3 ♖g8 17.h4 ♕f6 (17...♘f6) 18.♖ab1 (White has obvious compensation. Pillsbury and consultants now return a pawn) 18...♗f5!? 19.♗xf5 ♕xf5 20.♖xb7 ♕g6 21.♕f4 f6 22.♕a4 ♖c8 23.♖d7 ♕f5 24.♖f7 ♕d3?! 25.h5 ♘e5 26.♖xe5 fxe5 27.♘xe5 ♕b1+ 28.♔h2 ♘f6? (better was 28...♕b8) 29.♘g6+ ♔h7 30.♖xf6!, and with this *coup de grâce* the first World Champion soon won in the exhibition game Steinitz-Pillsbury/Stone/Barry, Boston 1892.

C) 9...♖e8



This is Black's most sensible reply. There are several practical examples from this position. I think Black should be fine.

C1) 10.♗b2 b6 11.a4 ♖b8 12.h3 ♗b7 13.♗a2 ♗f8 14.♕b3 d5 15.exd5 ♘a5 16.♕c2 exd4 17.♖xe8 ♕xe8 18.♖e1 ♕d8 19.♘xd4 ♘xd5∓, Ellis-Tait, corr. 1999.

C2) 10.♗b3 ♗f8 (not 10...♘a5 11.♗c2 exd4 12.e5. However, for 10...b5 see Short-Sokolov below) 11.♘xe5 ♘xe5 12.dxe5 ♖xe5 13.♘f3 ♖e7 (or 13...♖e8 14.e5 ♘h7 15.♕d5 ♕e7 16.♗a3) 14.e5 ♘e8 15.♘h4 (Sveshnikov has timed this manoeuvre well. An alternative was 15.e6!?) 15...d5 (in view of the threat of ♘f5, Black returns material) 16.♗xd5 ♗e6 17.♗xb7 ♖d7 18.♕a4 ♖b8 19.♗e4± Sveshnikov-Zheliandinov, Bled 2000.

C3) 10.♗d3

C31) 10...♗f8 11.♘xe5 ♘xe5 12.dxe5 ♖xe5 13.f4 ♖e8 14.e5 ♘d5 15.♕f3 c6 (15...♘xc3 was recommended by Harding, but the game continuation looks stronger, for 16.♗c2! ♘b5 17.♕d3 is scary to say the least. But perhaps it would be only a draw after 17...♗c5+ 18.♔h1 ♘d4 19.♕h7+ ♔f8 20.♕h8+ ♔e7 21.♕xg7 ♘xc2) 16.♕e4 ♘f6 17.♕f3 (hoping for a draw) 17...d5 (17...♘d5) 18.♖f1 ♘g4?! (much better was 18...♗c5+ 19.♔h1 ♘g4, and with threats like ♕h4, ♘h2 and ♕b6 Black is on top) 19.♘b3 c5 20.♗c2 d4 21.h3 dxc3? 22.hxg4 c4 23.♕e4!+−, Markosian-Mukhaev, Moscow 1995.

C32) 10...exd4 11.cxd4 ♗f8 12.e5 (12.d5 ♘b4 or 12...♘e5 13.♘xe5 ♖xe5 14.♗b2 ♖e8) 12...♘d5 13.♗c4 ♘b6 14.♗b3 d6, and White has no real compensation for the pawn. The game Sermek-Mikhalchishin, Bled 2002, went: 15.♕c2 dxe5 16.♘xe5 ♘xe5 17.dxe5 ♗e6 18.♗b2 ♘d5 19.♕e4 ♘b4 20.♖ad1 ♕c8 21.a3 ♗xb3 22.♘xb3 ♘c6 23.f4 ♕e6 24.♕c2 ♕g4 25.f5 ♖ad8 26.♖xd8 ♖xd8 27.e6 f6 28.♖f1 ♕a4 29.♕c3 ♕b5 30.♕g3 ♖d3 31.♕g6 ♖xb3 32.♕f7+ ♔h7 0-1.

C4) 10.♗d5 exd4! 11.♗xc6 (or 11.cxd4 ♘xd5 12.exd5 ♖xe1+ 13.♕xe1 ♘e7 14.♕e4 c6) 11...dxc6 12.e5 dxc3 13.♘c4 ♗e7 14.♕xd8 ♖xd8 15.exf6 ♗xf6 16.♗f4 ♗e6 and according to Sosonko in Yearbook 70 Black's future is bright – 17.♘cxe5 is answered by 17...♖d5.

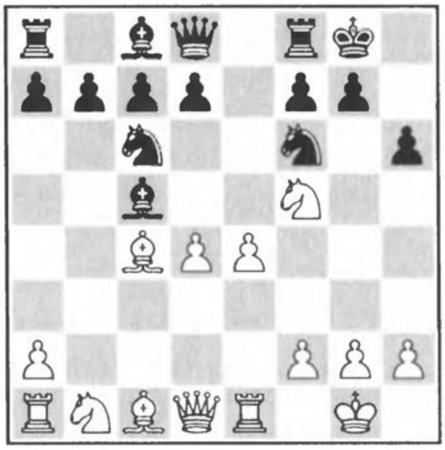
After this theoretical overview we now return to Jobava-Grischuk.

9...exd4 10.♘f5

Here 10.cxd4 is what you would expect. However, all the tactics work for Black after the intermediate 10...♗b4! 11.♗d2 ♘xe4! 12.♖xe4 (12.♗xb4 ♘xb4 13.♖xe4 d5−+) 12...d5.

10...♗c5 11.cxd4

White's position looks rather menacing. An impressive pawn centre, an outpost on f5 and an attacking bishop on c4. Grischuk has prepared a nice central thrust to counter all this.



11...d5!

Clearly reminding White that he has a hidden lead in development. Suddenly, White's attacking pieces are hanging in the air.

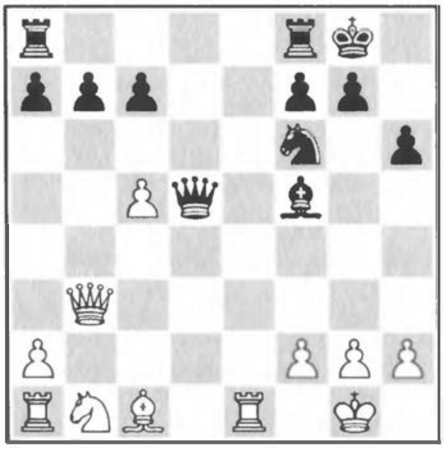
12.exd5

Worse are 12.dxc5 dxc4 13.♕xd8 ♖xd8 14.♗b2 ♗xf5 15.♗xf6 (15.exf5 ♘e4–+) 15...gxf6 16.exf5 ♖d3–+ and 12.♗xd5 ♗xf5 (12...♗b4) 13.dxc5 ♗xe4.

12...♗xf5 13.dxc5 ♘a5 14.♗b3

Possibly 14.♗b5 or 14.♗f1 are better, but White's position is not to be envied in these cases either.

14...♘xb3 15.♕xb3 ♕xd5



Black is now simply a pawn up, having kept his lead in development. The rest is a matter of technique, we could say (especially in a column on openings). However, please play through the rest of the game. Grischuk's technique may not be impeccable, but it certainly is razor-sharp.

16.♘c3 ♖fe8!

See what I mean? By gaining a tempo on White's weak back rank, the f8-rook is brought into play, threatening ♕c5. But not 16...♕xc5? 17.♗a3, nor 16...♕c6 17.♗f4 ♕xc5? 18.♖e5.

17.♗e3 ♕c6 18.♕b5

Illogical, though it is hard to give good advice here.

18...♕xb5 19.♘xb5 ♘d5 20.♗d2 ♖ed8!? 21.♖ac1 ♗g6 22.a3 c6!?

Luring the knight to d6.

23.♘d6 b6!

To undermine its position straightaway.

24.♘c4 f6 25.f3 ♗d3 26.♘b2

26.♘e3 ♘f4.

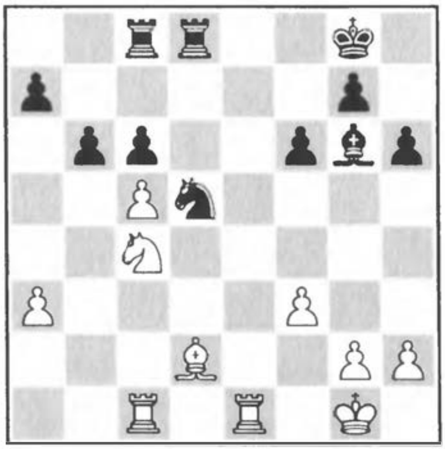
26...♗g6

The well-known Russian ploy of repeating moves in a superior position.

27.♘c4

Instead 27.cxb6 axb6 28.♖xc6 ♖xa3 was possibly a better chance for White. Exchanging pawns is generally a good idea for the defender.

27...♖ac8?!



28.♖ed1?!

Here 28.cxb6 axb6 (28...♘xb6 29.♗a5 ♖b8

30.♖e6) 29.♘xb6! ♘xb6 30.♗a5 gives White good defending chances, since Black cannot keep the knight.

After 30...♘d5 White has 31.♗xd8 ♖xd8 32.♖xc6 ♖a8 33.♖a1. So Black should go for 30...♖d3! 31.♗xb6 ♖xa3, when he is still a long way from victory.

28...♖d7 29.♗e3 ♖cd8 30.cxb6 axb6 31.♗f2 b5

Now the queenside majority gives Black a winning advantage.

32.♘a5 ♘f4

Again playing for tactics.

33.♖xd7 ♖xd7 34.♖a1

A sad necessity.

34...♖d6 35.♗e3 ♘d3 36.a4? ♖e6 37.♗d2

37.axb5 ♖xe3 (37...cxb5) 38.b6 ♖e5 39.♖b1 ♘c5.

37...♖e2 38.♖a2 ♗f7 39.♖c2 b4 40.♔f1 ♖f2+ 41.♔g1 b3 42.♖b2 ♘xb2

White resigned, as the b-pawn goes for touchdown after 43.♔xf2 ♘d1+ 44.♔e2 b2.

☐ **Nigel Short**
■ **Ivan Sokolov**
Sarajevo 2004

Comments: Carlos Matamoros

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♗c5 4.b4

At the end of the last year I played at the open section of the Drammen Festival in the company of my pupil WFM and Spain female junior champion Paloma Gutiérrez. In her very first game she had to face the Evans Gambit and although her loss was not due to the opening we decided to do some theoretical work.

4...♗xb4 5.c3 ♗d6

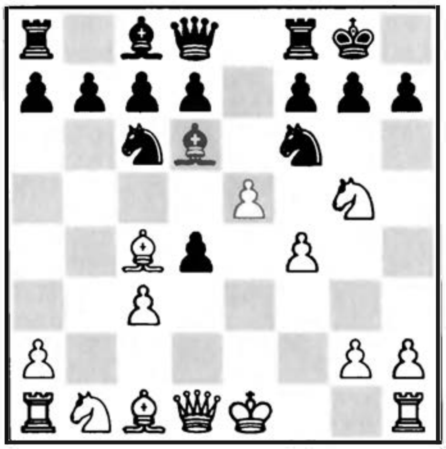
We first concentrated on the generally accepted 5...♗a5 until we saw that Short had come up with the following shot: 6.d4 exd4 7.♕b3 ♕e7 8.0-0 ♗b6 9.cxd4 ♘xd4 10.♘xd4 ♗xd4 11.♘c3 ♘f6 12.♘b5!!. There followed 12...d5 13.exd5 ♗xa1 14.♗a3 ♕e5 15.f4 ♗d4+ 16.♔h1 ♕e3 17.♘xd4! ♕xb3 18.♖e1+ ♔d8 19.♗e7+ ♔d7 20.♘xb3 with tremendous compensation although the game ended in a draw, Short-Nielsen, Skanderborg 2003. We faced ourselves with the unappealing task of improving Black's play. Luckily the Women's World Champion Stefanova came to our rescue some rounds later when in the premier group at Drammen she won a brilliant game with 5...♗d6 which caught our attention.

6.d4 ♘f6

The apparently offbeat 5...♗d6 has a quite classical idea, namely, to hold the centre. Ideally Black will unravel his pieces by means of ...h6 (to avoid ♘g5), ...♖e8 and ...♗f8. If the circumstances are unfavourable the B plan will be ...exd4 followed by the retreat of the king's bishop. In this case Black gives up the centre but only when he is more developed. Black can also play ...b6 and ...♗b7 but this seems to me reliable only in some very particular situations.

7.0-0

After 7.♘g5 0-0 8.f4 although 8...exf4 might well be playable as seen above, Paloma came out with the following interesting idea: 8...exd4!? 9.e5

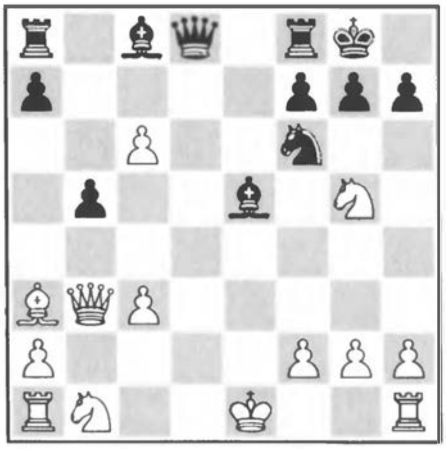


9...♗c5! (Black jettisons a piece as with

8...exf4 but wants to take advantage of White's uncastled king) 10.exf6 (this is of course critical, the alternatives shouldn't worry Black: 10.♘xf7 (10.♕d3 d5 11.exf6 ♖e8+ 12.♔f1 g6 13.♗b3 ♗f5 14.♕d1 h6 15.♘f3 ♕xf6–+) 10...♖xf7 11.♗xf7+ ♔xf7 12.exf6 ♕e8+! (an important intermediate move to avoid ♕h5+, picking the bishop on c5) 13.♔f1 (after 13.♕e2 ♕xe2+ 14.♔xe2 ♔xf6∓ Black has too many pawns for the exchange, not to mention the bishop pair) 13...♔xf6!. I really like Black's position. White's king is much more insecure than Black's and ...b6 followed by ...♗a6+ (amongst other ideas) is coming) 10...d5. If Black is allowed to play ...♖e8+, and ...♕xf6 (possible after ...h6) he will have three pawns for the piece plus attack. The following variations are only sample lines of what may happen:

- 11.♗d3 ♖e8+ 12.♔f1 g6 followed by 13...♕xf6 with good attacking chances.
- 11.♕h5 ♗f5 12.fxg7 ♖e8+ 13.♔f1 ♗g6 14.♕f3 dxc4 15.f5 ♕e7 16.g4 ♘e5 17.♕d1 ♕f6–+.
- 11.♗e2 ♕xf6∓ 12.0-0? d3+.
- 11.♗b3 ♖e8+ 12.♔f1 h6 13.♘f3 ♕xf6 14.♗xd5 dxc3∓.

The aforementioned game of Stefanova's continued **7.dxe5** ♗xe5! 8.♘g5 (8.♗a3 was played in Van der Wiel-Sokolov Leeuwarden 2004. After 8...d6 9.♗b5 ♕e7! 10.0-0 0-0 11.♘xe5 ♕xe5 12.♗d3 ♖e8 13.f4 ♕a5 14.♕c2 b6! 15.♗b2 ♗a6 16.♗xa6 ♕xa6 White was simply a pawn down) 8...d5! 9.exd5 ♘a5 10.♕a4+ c6 11.dxc6 0-0! 12.♗a3 (12.cxb7 ♗xb7 13.0-0 ♗xh2+ 14.♔xh2 ♕c7+ 15.♔g1 ♘xc4∓) 12...♘xc4 13.♕xc4 b5! 14.♕b3 (after 14.♕xb5 ♖e8 15.0-0 ♕c7 16.♘f3 a5! Black has very good compensation for just one pawn. It's not easy to find good places for both White's queen and king's rook. A sample variation: 17.♕c5 ♗a6 18.♖c1 ♖ad8 19.♘bd2 ♖d5–+) and now instead of 14...b4 as mentioned on the notes of the Jobava-Grischuk game, Stefanova came with another nice solution.



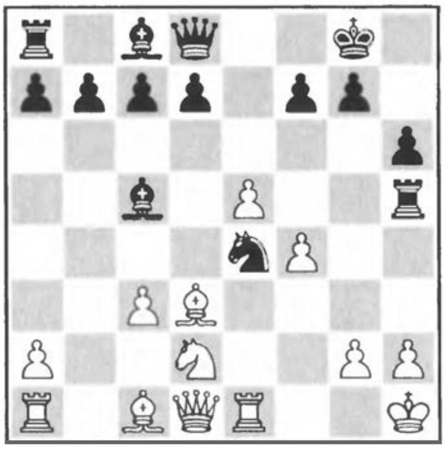
14...♗f4! 15.♗xf8 ♕e8+ 16.♔f1 ♗xg5 17.h4 ♗h6 18.♗c5 ♕xc6 19.♗d4 ♘e4 20.♕d1 ♗b7 21.♖h2 ♖d8 and due to the threats of ...b4 and ...♗f4 Black is already winning, Lie-Stefanova, Drammen 2005.

It looks logical to develop the queen's bishop before playing ♘bd2: **7.♗g5** 0-0 8.♘bd2 (on 8.0-0 there follows 8...♗e7! 9.♘bd2 – 9.dxe5 ♘xe4 – 9...d6 and White would be fine weren't for the fact that he misses a pawn on b2, Kantsler-Kosashvili, Israel 2003) 8...exd4 (Black makes use of plan B) 9.cxd4 ♗e7 10.e5 (the alternatives are no better: 10.d5 ♘a5 11.♗d3 ♘xd5!; 10.0-0 d5! 11.♗xf6! ♗xf6 12.♗xd5 ♘xd4∓) 10...♘h5! 11.♗xe7 (or 11.♗e3 d5) 11...♕xe7 12.0-0 ♘f4 13.g3 (13.♖e1 d5 14.♗b3 ♗f5∓) 13...d5! 14.♗b3 ♘e6∓.

7...0-0 8.♖e1 h6 9.♘bd2 ♖e8 10.♗b3

This retreat of the bishop eyeing f7 and preparing ♘c4 is perhaps the most dangerous move for Black. Against 10.♗d3 I very much like 10...♗f8 (10...exd4 as above is also interesting) 11.dxe5 ♘xe5 12.♘xe5 ♖xe5 13.♘f3 (13.f4 was mentioned above, but Paloma came out with 13...♗c5+!

14.♔h1 ♖h5! 15.e5 – else ...d6 or ...d5 – and now she uncorked 15...♘e4!!–+)



13...♖e8 14.e5 ♘d5 15.♗h7+ (it doesn't seem very logical to part with this important bishop but the alternative 15.♗c2 doesn't worry Black – after 15...c6! 16.♕d3 g6 followed by ...d6 Black is absolutely fine) 15...♔xh7 16.♕xd5 ♔g8 17.♗f4 (White has some pressure but Black is a pawn up, the bishop pair and no immediate danger faces him) 17...d6 18.exd6 ♖xe1+ (this looks better than 18...♗e6 from P.H.Nielsen-Johannessen, Sweden tt 2003/04, which ended in a draw after 19.♕xb7 ♗xd6 20.♗xd6 ♕xd6 21.♕b4) 19.♖xe1 cxd6 20.♘d4 (20.♖d1 ♕f6 21.♗xd6 ♗e6 22.♕xb7 ♖d8–+) 20...♕b6 and Black seems to me to be a good pawn up (21.♖e8 ♕b1+).

10...b5

Directed against ♘c4. **10...b6** may not stand up to scrutiny: 11.♘c4 ♗b7 12.d5 ♘b8 13.♘xd6 cxd6 14.♘h4!. With ideas of ♘f5, ♕f3-g3, ♗a3. Black is in grave danger.

Plan B might well do the trick **10...exd4!?** 11.cxd4 and now 11...♗b4! 12.e5 (12.d5 ♗c3 13.♖b1 ♘e5) 12...♘h7 with the idea of ...d5, for example 13.♗d5 (13.♕c2 – directed against ...d5 – 13...d5! – anyway – 14.exd6 ♖xe1+ 15.♘xe1 ♕xd6 16.♗xf7+? ♔xf7 17.♕xh7 ♘xd4–+) 13...♗xd2! (13...♘e7? 14.♗xf7+) 14.♗xd2 ♘e7 15.♗c4 d5. Now White can get his pawn back but after 16.exd6 cxd6 17.♕b3 d5! 18.♗xd5 ♘xd5 19.♖xe8+ ♕xe8 20.♕xd5 ♘f6 Black is better due to the coming blockade on d5, better bishop and better pawn structure.

For 10...♗f8 see the notes to Jobava-Grischuk. White is on top.

11.a4 b4 12.♘c4 bxc3 13.dxe5 ♗xe5 14.♘fxe5 ♘xe5 15.♘xe5 ♖xe5 16.♗f4 ♖e7 17.e5 ♘e8 18.♕d3

White has very good compensation for the invested pawn. Although Sokolov manages to get rid off the pressure by giving back the pawn I think Black would do better to improve his play before, maybe with 10...exd4.

18...d5 19.♕xc3

Interesting is 19.♗c2!?.

19...♗f5 20.♖ad1 ♖d7 21.a5 c6!

Now the knight gets back to work via c7 to e6. The passed pawn and counterplay against White's a-pawn balances White's pair of bishops.

22.♕xc6 ♖c8 23.♕a4 ♘c7 24.♗e3 ♘e6 25.a6 ♘c5 26.♗xc5 ♖xc5 27.♖d4 ♖a5 28.♕c6 ♕b6 29.♕xb6 axb6 30.f4 ♖xa6 31.♖xd5 ♖xd5 32.♗xd5 b5 33.♖c1 ♖b6 34.♔f2 b4 35.♗b3 g5 36.fxg5 hxg5 37.♔e3 ♗e6 38.♖b1 ♗xb3 39.♖xb3 ♖b5 40.♔d4 ♔g7 41.g4 ♔f8 42.♔c4 ♖xe5 43.♖xb4 ♖e2 44.h3 ♖e4+ 45.♔c5 ♖e3 46.♔d4 ♖xh3

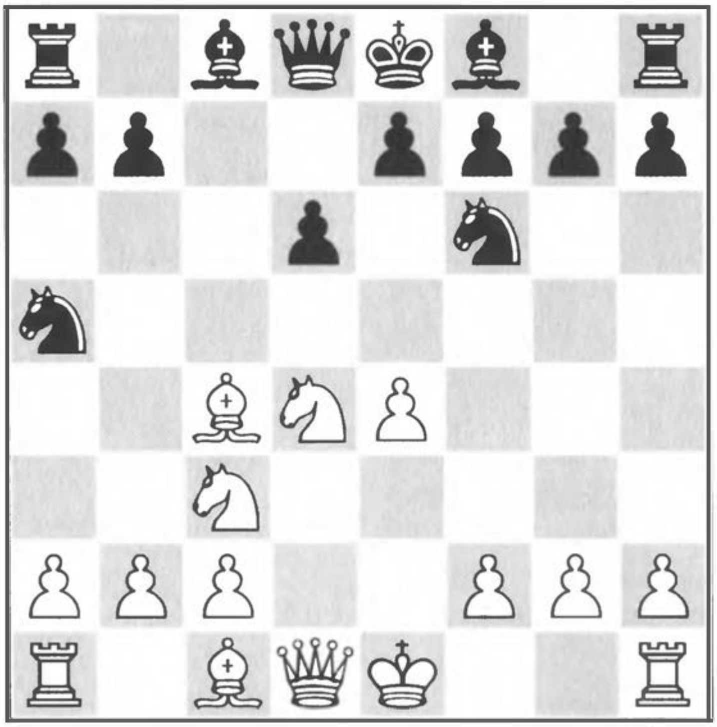
After all the Evans Gambit is just a pawn up for Black.

47.♔e4 ♔g7 **½-½**

CHAPTER 16

Adrian Mikhalchishin

A Sozin Opening Surprise



Hitting the bishop with 6...♘a5!?

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 d6 6.♗c4 ♘a5!?

This variation was introduced into modern practice by grandmasters Rashkovsky and Ubilava. It is an interesting idea, radically changing the direction of the play in this variation. White has the following continuations:

A) 7.♗b5+
B) 7.♗d3
C) 7.♗e2

Variation A

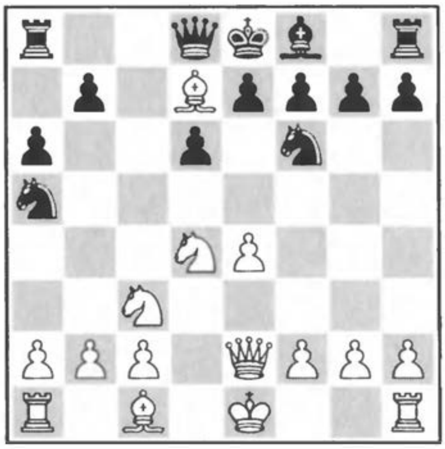
7.♗b5+ ♗d7 8.♕e2

After 8.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 9.0-0 e6 10.♕d3 ♗e7 11.b3 0-0 12.♘ce2?! (this allows the liberating 12...d5. Simply 12.♗b2 was better) 12...d5 13.exd5 ♘xd5 14.c4 ♘b4 15.♕c3 ♘ac6 Black equalises, Ciganikova-Grabics, Nadole 1995.

8...e6

It is risky to play 8...♖c8 9.♗g5 ♗xb5 10.♕xb5+ ♘d7 11.♘d5 (here 11.0-0-0 a6 12.♕e2 ♘c4 13.♘b3 is stronger) 11...♖c4! 12.♗d2 (12.0-0-0) 12...♖xd4 13.♗xa5 b6 14.♗c3 ♖xe4+ 15.♔d2 e6, and Black achieved an excellent game, Gross-Chernyshov, Czech Republic 2000/01.

However, there is the natural continuation 8...a6 to consider. After 9..♗xd7+ the lines fork:



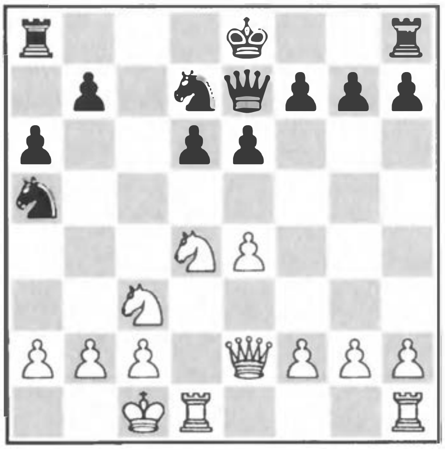
- 9...♕xd7?! 10.♗g5 e6 11.0-0-0 ♕c7 12.♗xf6 gxf6 13.f4 ♘c6 14.f5 and White has only a slight advantage, Anand-Leko, Munich blitz 1994.
- 9...♘xd7 10.0-0 g6 11.♗g5 h6 12.♗h4 ♘c6 13.♘xc6 bxc6 14.♔h1 ♕b6 15.♖ab1 ♗g7 with equality, Sluka-Chernyshov, Rymarov 1993.

If no improvement is found in our main line below, then Black may well prefer to play 8...a6 instead of 8...e6.

9.♗g5 ♗e7 10.0-0-0 a6

Forcing White to release the tension (11.♗d3 is odd of course). In practice all bishops were exchanged now.

11.♗xd7+ ♘xd7 12.♗xe7 ♕xe7



13.♘b3

In this critical position the other possible continuation is 13.f4 0-0 14.♖d3 ♖ac8 15.♖hd1 b5 16.e5 ♘c4! 17.exd6 ♕xd6! with very sharp play, Rodin-Chernyshov, Voronezh 2000.

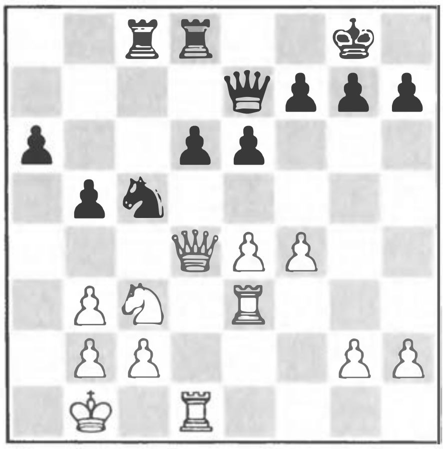
13...♘xb3+

It is a pity, but, considering the weakness of d6, Black has no choice but to take on b3.

14.axb3 ♖c8 15.♕d2 ♖c6 16.♖he1 0-0 17.♖e3 ♖d8

After 17...♕g5 18.g3 ♘f6 19.♖d3 ♕xd2+ 20.♖1xd2 ♖d8 21.e5 White clearly has the advantage in the ending, W.Arencibia-Hernandez, Oropesa del Mar 1996.

18.f4 b5 19.♔b1 ♘c5 20.♕d4 ♖cc8



21.f5!

And White has the advantage, Hracek-Chernyshov, Czech Republic 2000/01.

Variation B

7.♗d3

This was played by the great Bobby Fischer in 1964, in the first game known to the database featuring 6...♘a5.

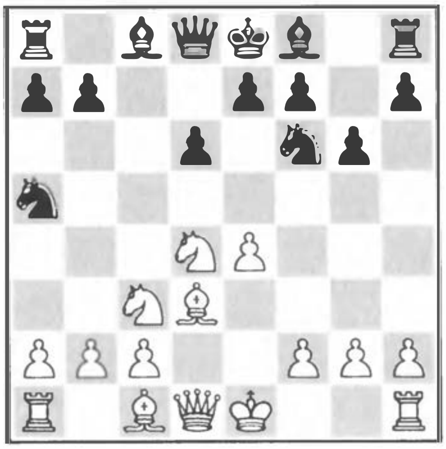
7...g6

Not illogically Black opts for a Dragon set-up. There Black often embarks upon the manoeuvre ♘c6-a5-c4. The first tempo has already been gained!

Also quite possible is 7...e5 8.♗b5+ ♗d7 9.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 10.♘b3 (or 10.♘de2 h6 11.♕d3 ♖c8 12.0-0 ♕c6 13.b3 a6 14.a4 ♗e7 15.♗d2! with advantage to White, E.Ghinda-Lendvai, Budapest 1991) 10...♘c4

11.♗g5!? (a sharp pawn sacrifice) 11...♘xb2 12.♕f3 ♕g4 13.♗xf6 ♕xf3 14.gxf3 gxf6 15.♘d5 ♖c8 with a sharp game, Fischer-Allen, Santa Barbara simul 1964.

However after 7...e6 8.0-0 ♗e7 9.f4 a6 10.♔h1 ♕c7 11.♘f3 e5 12.♕e1! White is a little better, Petrienko-Korpics, Dresden 2000.



8.0-0

There are several alternatives at this stage. In the event of **8.b3** ♘c6 9.♘xc6 bxc6 10.♗b2 ♗g7 11.0-0 0-0 12.♘a4 e5 13.c4 ♘h5 14.♘c3 ♘f4 15.♘e2 ♕a5! Black has no problems, Murko-G.Kuzmin, Alushta 2002.

Possible is **8.♗e3** ♗g7 9.f3 ♘d7 10.f4 0-0 11.♘f3 ♘c5 12.0-0 ♘xd3 13.cxd3 ♗d7 14.♕d2 e6 15.♔h1 ♘c6 16.g4 f5! with a double-edged game, Martin Gonzalez-Ubilava, Candas 1992.

Sharper is **8.♗g5** ♗g7 9.♕d2 0-0 10.0-0-0 ♘c6 11.♘f3 ♗g4 12.h4 h5 13.♗h6 ♖c8 14.♗xg7 ♔xg7 15.♖dg1! ♕a5 16.♔b1 Soloviov-Chernyshov, Pardubice 2001, and here Black should have played 16...♘b4.

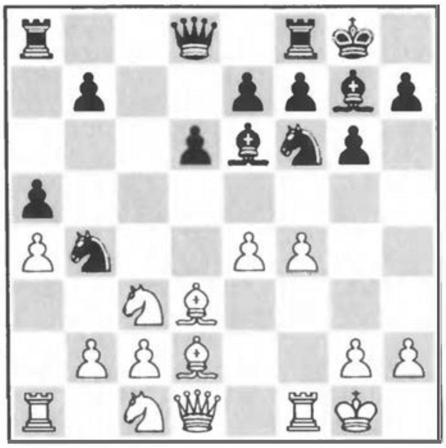
8...♗g7 9.♘b3 0-0 10.♗d2 ♘c6

The healthy Dragon-position of Black's pieces makes up for the apparent loss of tempo.

11.f4 a5!

Characteristic of the Dragon. Black forces White to stop the advance of the a-pawn with 12.a4, when he can use the b4-square for his knight.

12.a4 ♗e6 13.♘c1 ♘b4



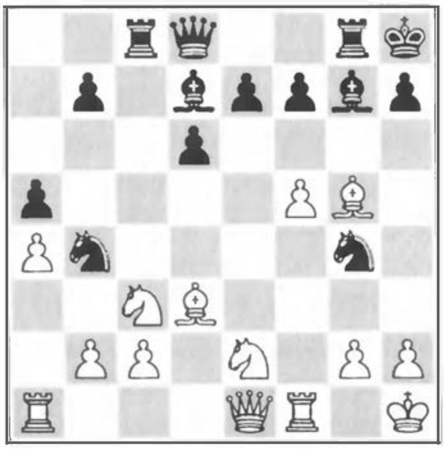
14.f5?!

Here 14.♔h1 followed by 15.♕e2 would have been better.

14...♗d7 15.♗g5 ♖c8 16.♔h1 ♔h8!

A remarkable manoeuvre– see Black's 19th move.

17.♘1e2 ♘g4! 18.♕e1 gxf5 19.exf5 ♖g8



With an excellent game for Black, Fedorov-Chernyshov, Smolensk 2000.

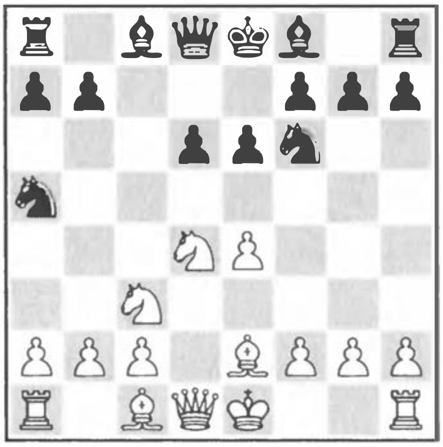
Variation C

7.♗e2 e6

Ubilava played cunningly against Sofia

Polgar: 7...a6 8.f4 e5 9.♘f3 ♕b6 10.♘d5 ♘xd5 11.exd5 ♗g4! 12.fxe5 ♗xf3! 13.♗xf3 dxe5 14.c3 ♗d6 and achieved an excellent game.

The move 7...g6 has no point – 8.♗g5 ♗g7 9.♕d2 ♘c6 10.♘b3 0-0 11.0-0 ♗e6 12.♖ad1 and White is powerfully centralised, Zimmersman-Gyorkos, Balatonbereny 1991.



8.0-0

Played in Scheveningen style. It is also possible to launch an immediate attack: **8.g4** a6 9.g5 ♘d7 10.♖g1 b5 11.a3 ♗b7 12.b3!? ♕b6 13.♕d2 ♖c8 14.♗b2 g6 15.0-0-0 e5! 16.b4! with an unclear game, Hernandez-Damaso, Novi Sad ol 1990.

Yet another possibility is **8.♗g5** a6 9.♕d3 ♗e7 10.f4 ♕c7 11.0-0?! (the more aggressive 11.0-0-0 is clearly better) 11....♗d7 12.♔h1 ♘c6 13.♖ad1 0-0 14.♕g3 ♘xd4 15.♖xd4 ♗c6 16.f5 ♔h8 17.e5! dxe5 18.♖h4 with a very complicated game, Kupreichik-Rashkovsky, Kuibyshev 1986.

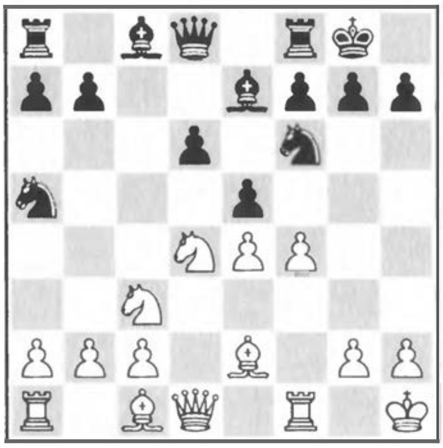
8...♗e7

In the game Dimitrov-Leko, St. Ingbert 1990, Black gained equality after 8...a6 9.a4 ♗e7 10.f4 ♕c7 11.♔h1 0-0 12.♕d3 ♗d7 13.♕g3 ♖ac8 14.♗d3 ♘c6 15.♗e3 ♘b4!.

9.f4 0-0 10.♔h1 e5!

More passive is 10...a6 11.♗f3 ♕c7 12.♕e1 ♖b8 13.a4 ♘d7 14.b3 b6 15.♗a3 ♖e8 16.♖d1 ♗b7 17.♘de2 with a slight advantage to White, Yilmaz-Leko, Budapest 1992.

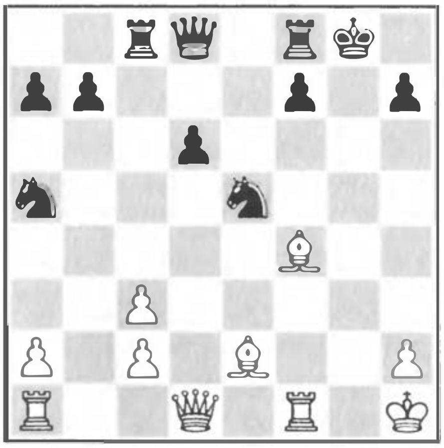
In the recent game Rocha-Bauer, Nancy 2005, Black played 10...♘d7 11.♗e3 a6 12.♕e1 ♗h4! 13.♕d2 ♕c7 14.f5 ♘e5 15.♗g5 ♗xg5 16.♕xg5 f6.



11.♘f5 ♗xf5 12.exf5 ♖c8

White now started to burn all his bridges with

13.g4 exf4 14.g5 ♘d7 15.f6!? gxf6 16.gxf6 ♗xf6 17.♗xf4 ♗xc3! 18.bxc3 ♘e5!

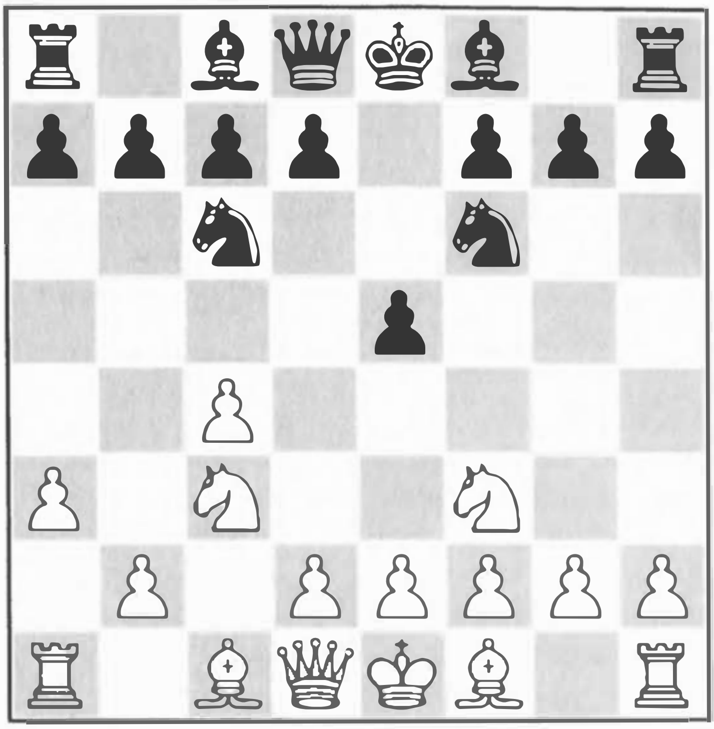


with a highly double-edged game in Doncevic-Ubilava, Pamplona 1991.

CHAPTER 17

Mikhail Gurevich

English or Sicilian Reversed



The ‘modest’ 4.a3!?

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.♘f3 ♘c6 4.a3!?
This variation in the Classical Four Knights Variation of the English Opening has been around for a hundred years or so. However, the ideas behind this line have considerably changed and developed in time – as in any other opening. Thinking back of the year 1988 I vividly remember the game Chernin-Vaganian (see our first game below) which attracted my attention to the 4.a3 variation. It was this game that made me want to learn and understand the ideas behind the move 4.a3. Alexander Chernin, is a great friend of mine, and we both (Chernin first and I followed) started to play this variation on a regular basis. Something, I've actually kept up until today. Many of the world's leading players were among my opponents as I kept testing this 'modest' 4.a3 move and – let's forget about modesty for a moment – I was satisfied with the results.

Before we proceed with the moves, let's discuss the ideas behind this 'strange' continuation. White plays a move with his rook's pawn rather than continuing to develop his pieces with more useful pawn moves like 4.g3, 4.d4, 4.d3, or 4.e3. After all, these moves would open up some diagonals for the bishops. What, then, is the idea behind 4.a3? It isn't exactly a classical approach, but let's not use the word 'classical' anymore when discussing the English Opening.

First of all, 4.a3 is a prophylactic against Black's bishop coming to b4, as in the 4.g3 ♗b4 variation. Remember, this is generally seen as Black's best option. So, it's especially advisable for rapid and blitz chess where there is always a chance the opponent will play 4...♗b4...

OK let's not kid ourselves, back to serious business. The move 4.a3! has a great psychological advantage, it might surprise – indeed even shock – our opponent(s). Just consider for a moment the situation. Put yourself in your opponent's shoes. He thought he was playing an English Opening with Black, where he properly learned all these lines after 4.g3 ♗b4. And, suddenly, he finds himself playing a Sicilian with White a tempo down – a tempo which we wisely spent on the typical Sicilian move a6 (in our case 4.a3).

White can afford to 'lose a tempo' in the opening to hide his real intentions. Indeed, 4.a3 is a flexible continuation, which leaves us many opportunities. White will start building his pawn structure depending upon Black's next move. Studying the games of the best players who employ this powerful opening weapon you will see that there are different interpretations. Every player adopts the plan (and chooses the pawn structure) that suits his taste.

So, to summarize my argument in a different way. In order to understand the move 4.a3, I can give only one recipe: learn to play Chess, and once you understand Chess, you understand how to play 4.a3. Or, alternatively, just go and play it, enjoy it and love it. And, if one day you feel that you understood it, give me a call, I will pay for the lessons...

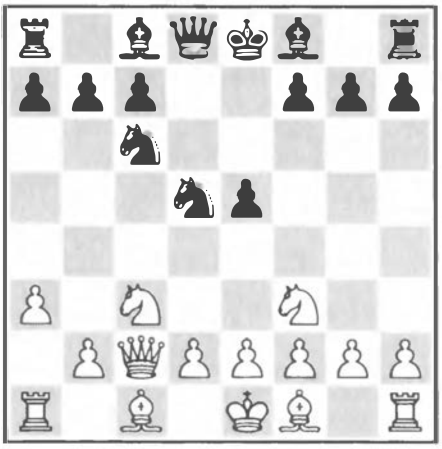
We will examine a selection of games starting with the answer that is most popular in practice: 4...d5. The final three games are devoted respectively to 4...e4, 4...d6 and 4...g6.

☐ **Rafael Vaganian**
■ **Alexander Chernin**
Naberezhnye Chelni 1988

1.c4 e5 2.♞c3 ♘f6 3.♘f3 ♘c6 4.a3!? d5

The most principled reaction, and the main line. Black occupies the centre, following the rules of classical chess. Although Chernin was not a 1.e4 player, faced by a surprise continuation, he follows the general rules. Only to find himself in an unfamiliar position a few moves later.

5.cxd5 ♘xd5 6.♕c2



An excellent (Sicilian!) move. Other continuations can be considered:

I will largely leave the alternative **6.e4** to the blind followers of the Sicilian Sveshnikov.

– After 6...♘f4 7.d3 ♗g4 8.♗e3 ♗xf3 9.♕xf3 ♘d4 10.♕d1 c6 11.g3 ♘fe6 12.♗h3 ♗e7 13.0-0 0-0 14.f4 exf4 15.gxf4 f5 16.♘e2 ♗c5, Ibragimov-Galliamova, St Petersburg 1998, Black had a comfortable game. A Sveshnikov player would seriously consider 7.d4 though.

– Rechlis-Manor, Tel Aviv 1994, went 6...♘f6 7.♗b5 ♗d6 8.d4 exd4 9.♕xd4 0-0 10.♗xc6 bxc6, when after the blunder 11.e5?, White had to suffer in order to survive: 11...♗xe5 12.♕xd8 ♗xc3+ 13.bxc3 ♖xd8 and so on.

Naturally, one can play in Scheveningen style with: **6.d3** ♗e7 7.e3 ♗e6 8.♗e2 0-0 9.0-0 a5 10.♕c2 ♘b6 11.b3 f5 12.♗b2 ♗f6 13.♘d2 ♕d7 14.♖fd1 ♖ad8 15.♖ab1 ♕f7 16.♗a1 ♗e7 17.♘b5 ♘d5 18.♘c4 ♗f6 19.♗f3, Kharlov-Stefanova, Ubeda 1999, with a complicated, typically Sicilian, position.

Also playable is **6.e3**.

6...♘xc3

Possibly not the best reaction. This exchange allows White to improve his central pawns structure. We will subsequently discuss some alternatives.

7.bxc3 ♗d6 8.g3!±

Both the exclamation mark and the evaluation are Vaganian's. They reflect his understanding of the position at the time. I don't want to be too critical. After all, we learned a lot from his games.

Still, Black didn't do anything criminal, and hardly suffers from any weaknesses. So, in my opinion, the evaluation that White is slightly better can only be justified by Vaganian's optimism and the outcome of the game.

8...♕e7 9.d3 0-0 10.♗g2 ♗d7! 11.0-0 ♘a5 12.♘d2!

Stronger than the active 12.♘g5 f5!? 13.♗d5+!? (please don't win a pawn with 13.♗xb7?! ♘xb7 14.♕b3+ ♔h8 15.♕xb7 h6 when Black is slightly better) 13...♔h8 14.♕a2 ♗e8! with unclear play.

The game is equal after 12.d4 e4! 13.♘g5 f5 14.f3 h6. Interesting is 12.e4!? c5 13.♘h4 g6, though chances are still even.

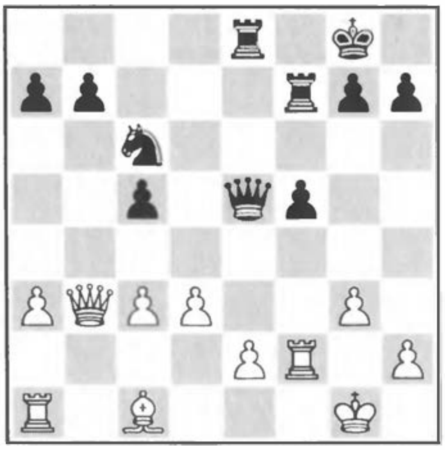
12...c5 13.♘e4 f5!?

After 13...♗c7?!, White has 14.c4 (△ ♘c3-d5, ♗b2) 14...♘c6 15.e3±.

14.♘xd6 ♕xd6 15.f4!

White has a pair of bishops and is opening up the game in the centre.

15...♖ae8 16.fxe5 ♕xe5 17.♖f2 ♗c6 18.♗xc6 ♘xc6 19.♕b3+ ♖f7



20.g4!± ♘a5 21.♕a4! ♘c6! But not 21...b6? 22.gxf5. **22.♗d2! ♖e6** White calculated: 22...fxg4 23.♖xf7 ♔xf7 24.♕c4+! (not 24.♖f1+? ♔g8 25.♕c4+ ♕e6!) 24...♕e6 25.♕xc5 ♕xe2 26.♕f5+ ♔g8 27.♖e1+−. **23.♖af1 ♖g6 24.g5!** Inaccurate is 24.♖g2?! ♕d5!. **24...♖e6** Returning to the centre as 24...h6?! fails to 25.♕c4! intending 26.♕f7 or 26.♖f5. **25.e4 g6** Or 25...f4?! 26.♗xf4 ♕xc3 27.♗d2+−. **26.♕b3 ♘a5 27.♕c2!** 27.♕d5? ♕xd5 28.exd5 ♖e8. **27...c4?!** A decisive mistake in *Zeitnot*. Rafael now converts his initiative into a winning endgame. After the stronger 27...♘c6!?, White plays 28.♕a2! planning 29.♗f4. **28.exf5 gxf5 29.d4! ♕e4 30.♕xe4 ♖xe4 31.♖xf5 ♖g4+ 32.♔h1 ♖xf5 33.♖xf5 ♘c6** No better is 33...♘b3 34.♗f4. **34.♖c5 ♖e4 35.♖xc4 ♔f7 36.♖c5 ♔g6 37.♔g1 ♖e2 38.♗f4 ♘e7 39.♔f1 ♖b2 40.♔e1 ♘f5 41.d5 ♘h4 42.♔d1 ♘g2 43.♗d2 ♔f5 44.d6+** Black resigned because of 44...♔e6 45.♖d5 ♔d7 46.♖d4.

☐ **Mikhail Gurevich**
■ **Anatoly Karpov**
Cap d'Agde 2000

This was an 'active' chess game. I present it because of the interesting strategical fight.

1.c4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 e5 3.♘f3 ♘c6 4.a3 d5 5.cxd5 ♘xd5 6.♕c2 ♘xc3 7.bxc3 ♗d6

In Chernin-Friedman, New York 1997, White was clearly better after 7...♗e7 8.g3 0-0 9.♗g2 ♖b8 10.0-0 h6 11.d4 ♗d6 12.♗b2 ♕e7 13.e3 b6 14.c4 ♖e8 15.♖fc1 e4 16.♘d2 f5 17.♘b3 ♘d8 18.c5 bxc5 19.dxc5 ♗e5 20.♗xe5 ♕xe5 21.♘d4 c6 22.♗f1 ♗d7 23.♕a4.

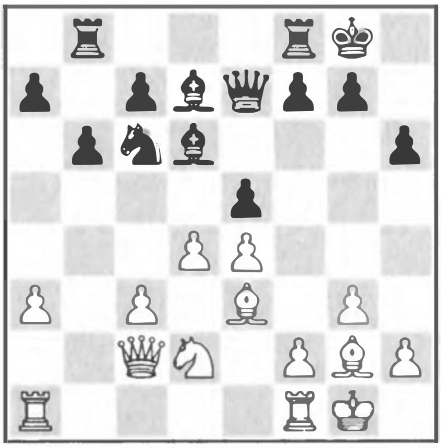
8.g3 0-0 9.♗g2 h6 10.0-0 ♖b8 11.d4

It was time to take the centre, was my feeling. After all, for how long could I play against the great Champion with my pawns on d2 and e2. Note that Karpov's strategy would have been successful in case of 11.d3 b6 12.a4 ♗b7.

11...♕e7 12.e4 ♗d7 13.♗e3 b6

The a3-pawn was untouchable: 13...♗xa3 14.d5 ♘d8 (14...♘a5 15.♕a2) 15.♘xe5. My pieces are developed, it is time to choose a plan.

14.♘d2!



Planning 15.f4 with an initiative in the centre and on the kingside.

14...♘a5 15.f4 f6

Black had to support his central pawn, but the weakness of the pawn structure on the kingside is now obvious. Naturally, I start the hunt for the opponent's monarch.

16.♘f3 ♘c4 17.♗c1 b5

Underlining my own weaknesses on the queenside.

18.♘h4 ♕e8 19.♕d1!

This is a multifunctional move. The queen eyes the kingside, and liberates the second rank for the ♖a1-a2-f2 manoeuvre, which would increase the pressure on the kingside.

19...c5!

A counter-action in the centre – a classical reaction.

20.dxe5 fxe5 21.f5 ♖f6!

This is Karpov's high class play, he prepares to occupy the d-file with counterplay in the centre.

22.g4 ♗e7 23.♕e2 ♖d6 24.♘f3 ♕d8 25.a4

While this isn't my side of the board, the temptation to get rid of a weakness (and to activate the a1-rook) was too strong.

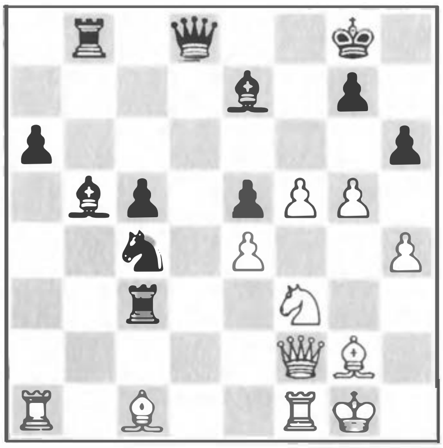
25...a6 26.axb5 ♗xb5

An active approach, although it leaves Black with numerous pawn weaknesses.

27.♕f2 ♖d3 28.h4

The sign for a decisive attack. More cautious was 28.♕e1.

28...♖xc3 29.g5



A critical position in the game – I often give it to my pupils to solve. A great example to test your chess understanding.

29...hxg5?

The wrong answer, Karpov cracks under the psychological pressure of White's attack.

After the opening up of the h-file Black's king is indefensible. Instead, Anatoly had to play 29...♖b6!, activating the last 'sleeping' piece and taking the sixth rank under control. In that case it would have been very difficult to continue the attack. After 30.f6 (30.♔h1 ♕d3 31.♕g3 ♕xe4) 30...gxf6 31.gxh6 ♔h8 the position is unclear.

30.hxg5 ♖xc1 Karpov was hoping to neutralize my attack by this exchange sacrifice, but after: **31.♖axc1 ♗xg5 32.♘xg5 ♕xg5 33.♖c3!** the attack continues, with a material edge for White. **33...♕d2 34.♕g3 ♕d4+ 35.♔h1 ♗e8** The best chance to complicate things was 35...♘d2. **36.f6 g6 37.♖d3 ♕b2 38.♖d7! ♗f7 39.♕h3** With two unavoidable threats – 40.♕h6 and 40.♖xf7 – Karpov resigned.

☐ **Alexander Chernin**
■ **Zsusza Polgar**
Brno 1993

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.♘f3 ♘c6 4.a3 d5 5.cxd5 ♘xd5 6.♕c2 ♗e7

Black wisely keeps the tension, continuing to develop her pieces.

7.e3

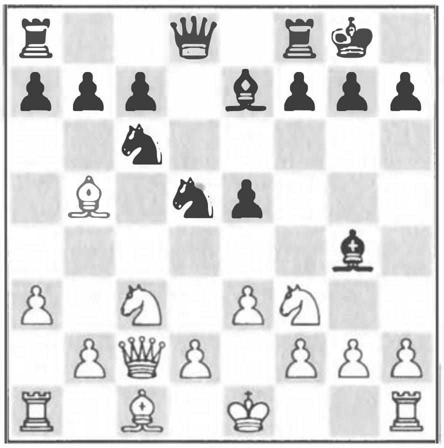
One of most critical position of the variation.

7...a6?!

Zsofa 'blinked' first. This passive move prevents the threat of 8.♗b5, but allows Alex to demonstrate the hidden dynamic resources of the position.

The best response is **7...0-0**, proceeding as quickly as possible with the development of the pieces. Let us consider two moves in this position: 8.♗b5 and 8.♘xd5.

After **8.♗b5** Black should reply with 8...♗g4!?. This is an important position for the evaluation of the variation. Below you will find some relevant examples. I would especially suggest the reader to study the intricacies of 9.♗xc6.



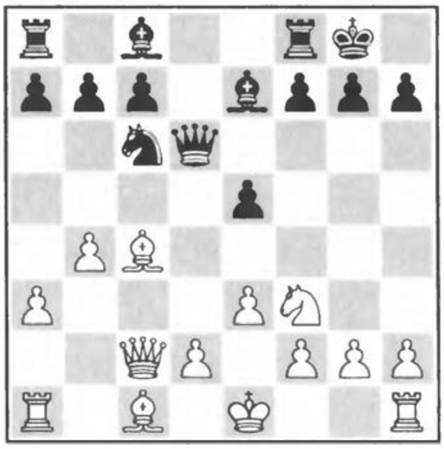
– 9.♗e2!? ♚h8 10.♘g5 ♗xg5 11.♗xg4±. White has the advantage of the two bishops, as in Matamoros Franco-Korneev, Seville 2003. In a couple of moves Korneev commits suicide: 11...f5 12.♗xf5 ♘d4 13.exd4 exd4 14.♘xd5 ♕xd5 15.♗e4 d3 16.♗xd5 ♖ae8+ 17.♔f1 dxc2 18.d3 ♗f6 19.♖a2 ♗d4 20.f3 ♗e3 21.♖a1 +–.

– 9.♕d3. A creative approach of Kortchnoi's, although it didn't bring White any particular advantage: 9...♘xc3 10.♕xd8 ♘xd8 11.bxc3 e4 12.♘e5 ♗e6 13.♗e2 f5 14.d4 exd3 15.♘xd3 ♘c6 16.♖b1 ♘a5 17.♘f4 ♗a2 18.♖b2 ♗f7 19.♖b5 ♘b3 20.0-0 ♘c5, Kortchnoi-Rublevsky, Rethymnon 2003, Black has a comfortable game.

– 9.♗xc6 ♗xf3. This is modern, a computer's approach to deal with the problems. An eye for an eye: 10..♗xb7 (10.gxf3 bxc6 11.b3 ♘xc3 12.dxc3 ♕d5 13.♔e2 e4 14.♕xe4 (14.fxe4 ♕h5+ with an initiative) 14...♕xb3 15.♖b1 ♕a2+ 16.♖b2 ♕xa3 17.♕xc6 ♗f6 18.♖b7 ♕a5 19.♗b2 ♖ad8 20.♖a1 ♕f5, Beim-Rublevsky, Frankfurt 2000, and White has constant problems with his king) 10...♗xg2 (a natural reply, but not the best one it seems to me. Both 10...♘xe3 and 10...♘b4 deserve attention) 11.♘xd5 ♗xd5 12.♗xa8 ♗xa8 13.♖g1 ♗f3 14.d3 f5 15.e4 ♔h8 16.♗e3 fxe4 17.dxe4 ♗d6

18.♖g3 a5 19.♖c1 ♕h4 20.h3 h6 21.♕d3 ♗h5 22.♗d2 ♖d8 23.♕c4 and White was better in Harikrishna-Dao Thien Hai, Calcutta 2000.

Having discussed 8.♗b5, we will now investigate **8.♘xd5**. After 8...♕xd5 White may consider 9.♗d3 g6 10.b4. Practice has seen instead 9.♗c4 ♕d6 10.b4 and now:



– 10...♗f6 11.♖b1 ♘e7 12.d3 ♗f5 13.h3 ♖ad8 14.e4 ♗e6 15.♗xe6 ♕xe6 16.0-0 ♖d7 17.♖d1 ♖fd8 18.♗e3 a6 19.a4 h6 20.♕b3 (20.b5!? was interesting pressurizing the queenside) Black is OK in the endgame. 20...♕xb3 21.♖xb3 ♘g6 22.♔f1 ½-½ Piket-Ivanchuk, Wijk aan Zee 2001.

– 10...a6!? 11.♗b2 ♗e6 (an accurate way of neutralizing the activity of White's bishops) 12.0-0!? ♗f6 (planning 12...e4) 13.♗d3!? h6 14.♗h7+ ♔h8 15.♗e4 ♗d5 16.♗c3!? (intending ♖ab1, a4, b5) 16...♖fe8! 17.♗xd5 (this allows Black to equalize the game. Play is also equal after 17.a4 ♘d4! 18.exd4 ♗xe4 19.♕xe4 exd4 20.♕xb7 ♖ab8 21.♕a7 dxc3 22.dxc3 ♗xc3 23.♖ac1 ♗b2 24.♖xc7 ♖xb4 25.♖b7. But 17.♖ab1!? continuing an active plan on the queenside was correct, then 17...♘d4 is answered by 18.♗xd4! exd4 19.♗xd5 ♕xd5 20.♕xc7±) 17...♕xd5 18.d3 ♖ad8 19.♖fd1 ♖d7 20.e4 (or 20.a4 b5 21.e4 ♕e6=) 20...♕e6 with equal chances in Gurevich-Khalifman, Wijk aan Zee 2002.

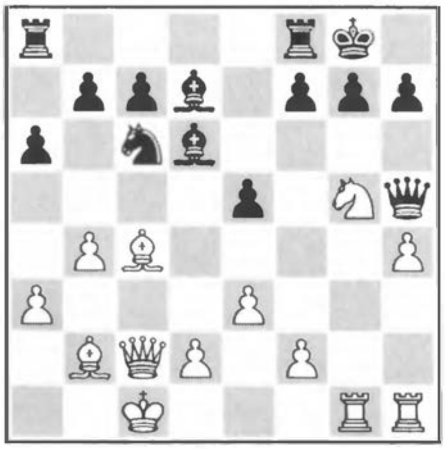
8.♘xd5!

Better than the alternatives 8.♗e2 and 8.b4 ♘xc3! 9.dxc3=.

8...♕xd5 9.♗d3!

This stops Black from castling, and creates the unpleasant threat of 10.♗e4, 11.♗xc6, and 12.♘xe5. Weaker was 9.♗c4 ♕d6 with equality.

9...♗d7 A blunder is 9...♗g4? 10.♗e4 ♕d6 11.♗xc6+ bxc6 12.♘xe5+–. **10.b4 ♕e6** Slightly unnatural, but the immediate 10...♗d6?? is met by 11.♗c4+–. **11.♗b2 ♗d6** Or 11...f5 12.0-0 e4 13.♗c4 ♕g6 14.♘e5±. **12.♘g5!** White's initiative develops naturally after this move. Less accurate was 12.0-0 ♕h6!=. **12...♕g4?!** White is also better after 12...♕h6 13.h4±. Best was 12...♕e7 13.♘e4±. **13.h4! ♕xg2** Here 13...h6 is met by 14.♘e4 (after 14.♗e2 Black has 14...♕xg2 (not 14...♕f5 15.♘e4 △ 16.g4±) 15.♗f3 ♕xh1+ 16.♗xh1 hxg5 with compensation for the queen) 14...♕xg2 15.0-0-0 with excellent compensation. **14.0-0-0 ♕g4 15.♖dg1 ♕h5 16.♗c4!** Even better than 16.♘xh7 0-0-0 17.♖xg7 ♗xb4 18.♘f6 ♕h6 19.♖xf7 ♗e6 20.♗f5±. **16...0-0** This is the only move as 16...♘d8 is answered by 17.f4+–.



17.f4?! White had an aesthetic manoeuvre available to finish Black off: 17.♗e2! ♕h6 18.♗d3! f5□ 19.♗c4+ (19.♕c4+ ♔h8 20.♘f7+? ♖xf7 21.♕xf7 ♗e6–+)

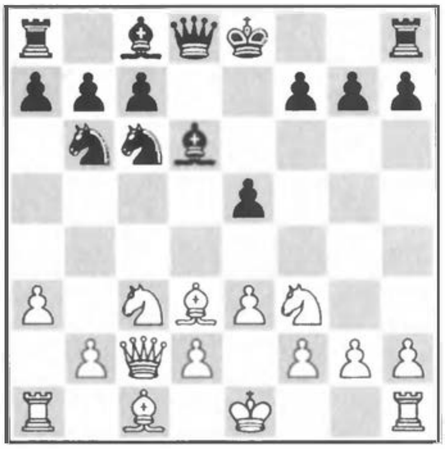
19...♔h8 20.♘f7+ ♖xf7 21.♗xf7 with a decisive edge. **17...♔h8 18.♗d5** The immediate 18.♘xf7+? fails to 18...♖xf7 19.♖g5 ♕f3 20.♖f1 ♕h3. Possible was 18.♗e2 ♕h6 19.♗d3. The text sets a trap. **18...♖ae8?** Correct was 18...f6! 19.♗f3 ♕h6 20.♗e4 exf4 21.♘xh7 fxe3!±. Now the combination from the previous note is playable. **19.♘xf7+! ♖xf7 20.♖g5** The game is over. **20...♖f5** Or 20...♗f5 21.♗xf7 ♗xc2 22.♗xh5. **21.♖xh5 ♖xh5 22.♗f7 ♖h6 23.♗xe8 ♗xe8 24.♕f5 ♖f6 25.♕c8 ♖f8 26.♖g1 ♗f7 27.♕xb7** And Black resigned. A great creative achievement of Alex Chernin.

☐ **Mikhail Gurevich**
■ **Juan Gomez Esteban**
Linares zt 1995

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.♘f3 ♘c6 4.a3 d5 5.cxd5 ♘xd5 6.♕c2 ♘b6!?

Another way to deal with the tension between these knights, although Black's knight withdraws from the action zone.

7.e3 ♗d6 8.♗d3!?



An important manœuvre. It forces Black to play:

8...h6

Which takes the square from Black's major pieces in the future, and therefore helps to protect White's king.

9.b4 0-0

Intending ...f5 and ...e4. Losing is 9...♗xb4? 10.axb4 ♘xb4 11.♗b5+ c6 12.♕e4+−. White keeps an opening advantage after 9...a6 10.♗e2 (10.♗b2 ♗xb4 11.♗e4 ♗d6 12.♗xc6+ bxc6 13.♘e4=∞) 10...0-0 11.d3 ♗e6 12.0-0 ♕e7 13.♗b2.

10.♗e2 f5 11.d3 ♕f6 12.♗b2 ♗d7!? 13.0-0 ♕g6 14.b5!?

White is also slightly better after 14.♘b5!? ♖ae8 (14...♘xb4 15.axb4 ♗xb5 16.♘xe5±) 15.♘xd6 cxd6 16.♖ac1.

14...♘e7 15.♘a4

To gain control over the e5 square. Instead 15.d4 exd4 (15...e4 16.♘e5↑) 16.♘xd4 is well-met by 16...f4! 17.♕xg6 ♘xg6.

15...f4!?

A blunder is 15...♗xb5? 16.♕b3+.

16.♘xb6 axb6

No good is the intermediate 16...♗h3. White wins after 17.♘h4 ♕g5 18.♘xa8 f3 (18...♗xg2 19.♘xg2 f3 20.♗xf3+−) 19.♗xf3 ♖xf3 20.♘xc7.

17.♔h1

Black gains the initiative after 17.♘xe5?! ♗xe5 18.♗xe5 f3 (18...♗h3 19.♗f3 fxe3 20.fxe3±) 19.♗xf3 ♖xf3 20.♕xc7 ♖f5! (20...♗h3 21.♗g3 ♘d5 22.♕xb7±) 21.d4 ♕e6 22.♕xb7 ♖af8.

17...fxe3 18.♘xe5!

Much better than 18.fxe3 ♘d5!? intending 19.♕d2 ♗xb5 20.♘xe5 ♕g5 when Black holds the intiative.

18...♗xe5 19.♗xe5 ♘d5

White is better after 19...♖xf2 20.♖xf2 exf2 21.♕xc7 ♕f5 22.♗d4!, planning moves like 23.♕g3 and 23.♖f1.

20.♕c4 ♕e6

White's game is slightly preferable after 20...♗e6 21.♕e4 ♕xe4 22.dxe4 ♘f4 23.♗xf4 ♖xf4 24.f3.

21.f4! c6 22.♕e4!?

White chances are on the kingside, worse is 22.a4 cxb5 23.axb5 ♖xa1 24.♖xa1 ♘xf4

25.♗xf4 ♕xc4 26.dxc4 ♖xf4. **22...♕f7!?** Or 22...cxb5 23.f5 ♕f7 (23...♖xf5 24.♖xf5 ♕xf5 25.♕xd5++–) 24.f6! with nice attacking chances. **23.♕f3!?** Aiming to play 24.♕g3, again eying Black's king. **23...♕g6** Again Black gets into trouble on the kingside if he takes on b5: 23...cxb5 24.♕g3 ♗c6 25.♗h5 ♕e7 26.♗g6. **24.g4! ♖ae8 25.♕g3** After 25.d4 Black was prepared to sacrifice the exchange with 25...♖xe5 26.dxe5 ♖xf4. **25...cxb5 26.♔g1 ♗c6 27.f5⩲ ♕f7 28.♖ae1?!** Equally inaccurate are 28.♗d6?! ♘c3 and 28.d4?! ♘c3 29.♕xe3 ♘xe2+ 30.♕xe2 ♕d5 31.♕a2∞. Best was 28.♗b2! (intending to attack on the kingside with h4 and g5) 28...♘f6 29.h4 ♕d5 30.♔h2 and White is better. **28...♕e7! 29.♗d6?** Another mistake. Since 29.♗b2 is met by 29...b4, White should play 29.♗a1! when 29...♕xa3? is a blunder after 30.g5! (but not 30.h4 ♘c3∓ intending 31.g5 ♕xa1!–+) 30...hxg5 31.♗xg7! (31.♕xg5 ♕e7∓) 31...♔xg7 32.♕xg5+ ♔h8 (32...♔f7 33.♗h5 mate) 33.♕h6+ ♔g8 34.♕g6+ ♔h8 35.♖f3 ♘f4 36.♕h6+ ♔g8 37.♖g3+ ♔f7 38.♖g7 mate. **29...♕f6 30.♗xf8 ♕xf8** Black has enough for the exchange. **31.f6!? ♘xf6 32.g5 hxg5 33.♕xg5 ♕c5 34.♖f5 ♕c3 35.♖ef1 ♖e6 36.♕g6 ♕d2??** This blunder decides the game. Correct was 36...♗e8 37.♕g5 and now a repetition after 37...♗c6 38.♕g6, or 37...♘h7 38.♕d8∞. **37.♖g5+– ♖e7** 37...♔f8 38.♕xg7+ ♔e8 39.♖xf6. **38.♕xf6** **1-0**

☐ **Mikhail Gurevich**
■ **Florian Handke**
Amsterdam 2002

1.c4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 e5 3.♘f3 ♘c6 4.a3 d5 5.cxd5 ♘xd5 6.♕c2 ♗e6 7.e3 ♗d6 8.b4

8.♘e4 is the alternative.

8...0-0 9.♗b2 ♕e7!?

Black may also consider 9...a6 and 9...♘xc3.

10.♗b5

Perhaps it is better to put the pawn on b5. After 10.b5!? ♘a5 (10...♘b8 11.♘xd5 ♗xd5 12.e4 ♗e6 13.♘xe5±) 11.d4 ♘xc3 12.dxe5! ♘xb5 13.exd6 ♘xd6 14.♕c3 ♕f6 15.♕xf6 gxf6 16.♗xf6 White has a slight advantage.

10...♘b6!?

Also good was 10...a5!? 11.♗xc6 (11.♘xd5 ♗xd5 12.e4 ♘d4!∓) 11...bxc6 12.bxa5 f5.

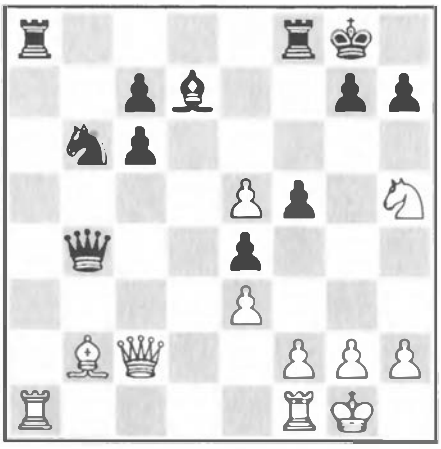
11.0-0 a5 12.♗xc6 bxc6 13.♘e4 f5 14.♘g3!?

Stronger than 14.♘c5 ♗d5.

14...♗d7

It makes sense to transfer the knight to the queenside with 14...♘c4!? 15.♗c3 e4 16.♘d4 ♘e5 17.bxa5 ♘g4.

15.d4 e4 16.♘e5 ♗xe5 17.dxe5 axb4 18.axb4 ♕xb4 19.♘h5!?



With clear intentions along the main diagonal.

19...♗e6 Or 19...♕c4 20.♕b1 ♕d3 21.♕c1∞. **20.♕xc6 ♗f7 21.♗c3 ♕c4 22.♕xc4 ♘xc4** Simpler was 22...♗xc4 23.♖fc1=. **23.♘xg7 ♔xg7 24.e6+ ♔g6 25.exf7 ♖xa1** White is slightly better in the ending after 25...♔xf7 26.♖ac1 ♖a4 27.♖fd1 ♔e6 28.♖b1. **26.♖xa1 ♔xf7**

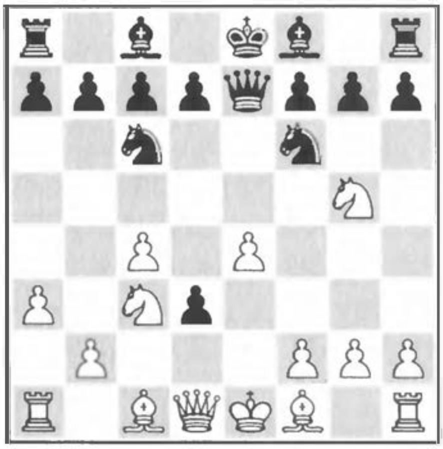
27.♖a6 ♘b6!? Planning 27...♖a8. **28.♖a7 ♘d5 29.♗d4 ♖b8 30.h4 ♖b1+ 31.♔h2 ♖c1 32.♖a6 c5 33.♖c6 c4 34.♖d6 ♘e7** This is correct. After the active 34...♘b4 White keeps a slight edge with 35.♖f6+ ♔e7 36.♖xf5 ♘d3 37.♖h5 c3 38.♖xh7+ ♔d6 39.♖h8 c2 40.♖c8 ♘xf2 41.♗b2 ♖e1. **35.♗c5 c3?** But this is a mistake. 35...♘g6 36.h5 ♘e5 37.♗d4 ♘d3 38.♖d7+ ♔e6 39.♖xh7 ♘xf2 40.♔g3 ♘d3 41.h6 c3 42.♖c7 c2 43.♔h2 ♘f2 with equality. **36.♖d7 c2 37.♖xe7+ ♔f6 38.♗a3** Play is only equal after 38.♖c7 ♖h1+ 39.♔xh1 c1♕+ 40.♔h2 ♔g6 41.♗d6. **38...♖a1 39.♖xh7 ♖xa3 40.♖h6+ ♔e5 41.♖c6 ♖a2 42.h5 c1♕** White also wins after 42...♔d5 43.♖c8 ♖a8 44.♖xc2 ♖h8 45.♔g3 ♖xh5 46.♔f4. **43.♖xc1 ♖xf2 44.h6 ♔f6 45.♔g3 ♖e2 46.♖h1 ♖xe3+ 47.♔f4 1-0**

☐ **Alexander Beliavsky**
■ **Maxim Turov**
Copenhagen 2002

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.♘f3 ♘c6 4.a3 e4

This is the most aggressive way to deal with 4.a3. The present game was responsible for putting the line out of fashion it seems.

5.♘g5 ♕e7 6.d3 exd3 7.e4!



This important new concept allows White to take the centre and to develop his pieces in the most natural way.

Previously White used to play 7.♕xd3 ♘e5 8.♕c2:

– 8...h6?! 9.♘ge4 ♘xe4 10.♘d5! ♕d6 11.♕xe4 c6 12.♘e3 (not 12.f4 cxd5 13.cxd5 f6 14.fxe5 ♕xe5 15.♕xe5+ fxe5=) 12...♕e6 13.g3 d6 14.♗g2 g6 (perhaps 14...♗e7!?) 15.f4 f5 (15...♘g4? 16.♘xg4 ♕xe4 17.♘f6++–) 16.♕d4 ♘f7 17.♗d2 ♖g8 18.0-0 ♗g7 19.♕d3 ♗d7 (19...♗xb2 20.♖ab1 ♗f6 21.♘c2 ♔f8 22.♘d4=∞) 20.♖ab1 ♗f6 21.♘c2 ♔f8 22.e4 White was better in Chernin-Mikhalevski, Beer Sheva 1993.

– 8...c6 9.e4 h6 10.♘f3! ♘xf3+ 11.gxf3 g6 12.♗e3, Nogueiras-Vilela, Matanzas Capablanca Memorial 1993.

– 8...d6 9.e3 g6 10.♗e2 ♗g7 11.h3 0-0 12.♗d2 h6 13.♘f3 ♗f5 14.♕b3 ♘d3+ 15.♗xd3 ♗xd3 16.♘e2 ♕e4 17.♖c1 ♘d7 18.♗b4 a5 19.♘g3 ♕c6 20.♕xd3 axb4 21.axb4 ♗xb2 22.♖c2 ♖a3 23.♕d2 ♘e5 24.0-0 ♕xf3 25.♖xb2 ♕c6 26.♖c2 ♖fa8 and Black was better in Kortchnoi-Ivanchuk, Roquebrune rapid 1992.

7...h6 8.♘f3 d5

Very aggressive. Black cannot take on e4.

– 8...♘xe4 9.♘d5 ♕c5 (9...♕d8 10.♗xd3 ♘c5 11.♗c2 (11.0-0) 11...♗e7 12.0-0 0-0 13.b4 with the initiative) 10.♕xd3! ♕xf2+ (10...♕a5+ 11.b4 ♗xb4+ 12.♘xb4 ♘xb4 13.♕xe4+ ♔d8 14.♗d2 ♖e8 15.♕xe8+ ♔xe8 16.♗xb4±; 10...♘xf2 11.♕e2+) 11.♔d1 ♘c5 12.♕b1! and wins because of two unavoidable threats: 13.♗e3 and 13.♘xc7+.

– 8...g6 9.♗xd3 d6 10.♘d5 ♕d8 11.0-0 ♗g7 12.h3 0-0 13.♗e3 ♖e8 14.♕c2 ♘e5 15.♘xe5 dxe5 16.♘xf6+ ♕xf6 17.c5 c6 18.♖fd1 White is slightly better, Schlosser-Schenk, Austria 2004.

9.cxd5 ♘xe4 10.♗e3 ♘xc3 11.bxc3

♘e5 12.♗xd3 ♘g4

White is also better after 12...♘xd3+ 13.♕xd3 ♕d8 14.0-0 ♗e7 15.c4 c5 16.♗f4 0-0 17.♘d2 b6 18.♖ae1 ♗d6 19.♗xd6 ♕xd6 20.♖e3 ♗d7 21.♘e4 ♕g6 22.♖g3 ♕f5 23.♕e3 ♔h7 24.♕c3 f6 25.♖e3 ♖ae8 26.♖fe1, Delchev-Papa, Zurich 2002.

13.0-0 ♘xe3 14.fxe3 ♗d7 Black does not survive after 14...♕xe3+ 15.♔h1 ♗e7 (15...♕c5 16.♘e5) 16.♗b5+. **15.e4 ♕c5+ 16.♔h1 0-0-0 17.♕b3 ♖e8 18.a4** With a decisive attack. **18...a5 19.e5 g5 20.♗b5 ♗xb5 21.axb5 b6** Or 21...g4 22.♘d4 ♖xe5 23.♖xa5±. **22.♖a4 ♔b7 23.♖c4 ♕a3 24.♕c2** With multiple threats like 25.♕e4 and 25.d6. Black resigned. An important theoretical game, notable for Beliavsky's power-play.

☐ **Mikhail Gurevich**
■ **Anatoly Karpov**
Hilversum 1993

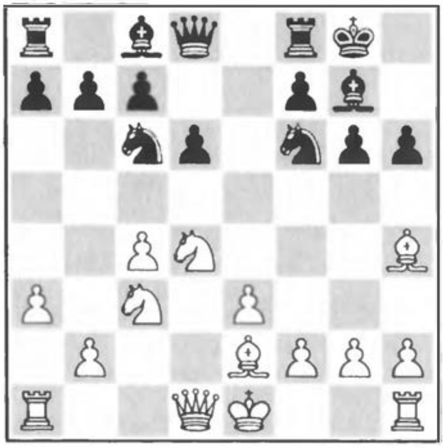
1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.♘f3 ♘c6 4.a3 d6

This continuation, as well as 4...g6, often leads to transpositions to the theoretical lines 4.g3 g6, or 4.g3 d6. That is unless White plays:

5.e3

or 5.d4. Here is the main difference in approach to the 4.a3 variation between Kortchnoi and me. I prefer to play flexible structures here, like 5.e3 or 5.d3, since they promise a long and complicated manoeuvring game. Kortchnoi uses every opportunity to open the centre with 5.d4 – in both the 4...d6 and the 4...g6 lines. In my opinion, it's just a matter of taste. Although I don't like White's pawn structure on the queenside in case of 5.d4, it leads to interesting dynamic play in the early stage of the game. It would be interesting to know Kortchnoi's opinion about the subject. However, having known him for many years, I wouldn't expect to hear any compliments with respect to my ideas...

In the following two games unclear positions arose after 5.d4 exd4 6.♘xd4 g6 7.♗g5 ♗g7 8.e3 0-0 9.♗e2 h6 10.♗h4 and now:



– 10...♘xd4 11.exd4 ♗f5 12.0-0 c6 13.g4 ♗e6 14.f4 d5 15.f5 ♗c8 16.cxd5 cxd5 17.♔h1 ♗d7 18.♗f3 ♗c6 19.♕c2 g5 20.♗g3 ♖c8 21.♕g2 ♖e8, Kortchnoi-Bacrot, Cannes 1996.

– 10...♖e8 11.♘xc6 bxc6 12.0-0 a5 13.♗f3 ♗d7 14.♖b1 ♕c8 15.♖e1 ♖b8 16.b4 axb4 17.axb4 ♘g4 18.♕b3 ♘e5 19.♗e2 ♗f5 20.e4 ♗e6 21.f4 ♘d7 22.♕c2 ♕a6 23.♗f2 ♗xc4 24.♖a1 ♗xe2 25.♖xa6 ♗xa6 26.b5 ♗b7 27.bxc6 ♗xc6 28.♘d1 ♗a8 29.♕xc7 ♘f6, Kortchnoi-Sokolov, Rethymnon 2003.

5...g6 6.d3

In a later game against Karpov I played 6.g3 ♗g7 7.♗g2 0-0 8.d3 ♗d7 9.0-0 ♕c8 10.♖b1 ♗h3 11.b4 ♗xg2 12.♔xg2 ♖e8 13.♕c2 (13.e4!?) 13...♘d8 14.♗b2 ♘e6 15.♖bd1 c6 16.h3 h5 17.♘e4 ♘xe4 18.dxe4 ♕c7 19.♖d3 a5 20.♖fd1 axb4 21.axb4 ♖ed8 22.♖3d2 and White was slightly better, Gurevich-Karpov, Cap d' Agde 2000.

6...♗g7 7.♗e2 0-0 8.0-0 ♖e8 9.♕c2 ♗f5

Anatoly would like to provoke me into

playing 10.e4 in order to meet it by 10...♗g4, when Black would control the d4-square with comfortable play.

10.♘d2!? a6!?

Not the blunder 10...d5? 11.cxd5 ♘xd5 12.♘xd5 ♕xd5 13.e4 ♘d4 14.♕d1+–.

11.♖b1

Preparing b4 rather than falling for 11.b4?! e4! 12.dxe4 ♘xe4 13.♘dxe4 ♗xe4.

11...h5 12.b4

Starting active play on the queenside.

12...♘h7 13.♘d5!?

Intending a4 and b5. The immediate 13.a4 is answered by 13...a5!?.

13...♗e6 14.a4 ♘b8!

Intending c6, d5. This is a clever way to deal with the threat of b4-b5-b6. The alternatives were:

- 14...♗xd5 15.cxd5 ♘e7 16.♕b3 c6 17.dxc6 bxc6 18.♘c4!? planning 19.♘a5, and
- 14...a5 15.b5 ♗xd5 16.cxd5 ♘b4 17.♕c4 ♘f6 18.♗f3± aiming to play 19.♗a3.

15.b5 axb5 16.axb5 c6 17.bxc6 bxc6 18.♘b6?!

Equal is 18.♘c3 d5 19.♘f3. But more interesting was 18.♘b4!?.

18...♖a7

Not 18...♖a6 19.c5 d5 20.e4! △ 21.d4.

19.c5 d5 20.e4?!

This is the cause of my future problems with the c5-pawn. Better was 20.♗b2!? with ideas of 21.♘f3 or 21.f4 and White has the better perspectives.

20...♕e7!

Emphasizing the weakness of c5. Worse is 20...d4?! 21.♘dc4 ♘d7 22.♘d6 ♖f8 23.f4±.

21.♘f3 ♖a5 22.♘a4 ♘d7 23.♗d2 ♖a7 24.♖fc1 d4 25.♖b2

Intending ♘b6. Black is slightly better after the immediate 25.♘b6 ♖a2 26.♖b2 ♖xb2 27.♕xb2 ♖b8.

25...g5!? 26.♘b6

Or 26.♗b4 g4 27.♘d2 ♗h6 28.♖cb1 h4.

26...g4 27.♘e1 ♗f8 28.♘xd7 ♕xd7 29.f4! exf4 30.♗xf4 ♖ea8 31.g3 ♖a2

Perhaps just 31...♖a5!?.

32.♗d1!

A blunder is 32.♘g2? ♖xb2 33.♕xb2 ♖a2–+.

32...♕d8 33.♘g2 ♖8a5

Stronger was 33...♘g5! 34.♗xg5 ♕xg5 35.♘f4 ♖2a5∓.

34.♖xa2 ♖xa2 35.♕b1 ♕a5

Again the alternative was 35...♘g5.

36.♗b3 ♗xb3 37.♕xb3 ♘f6

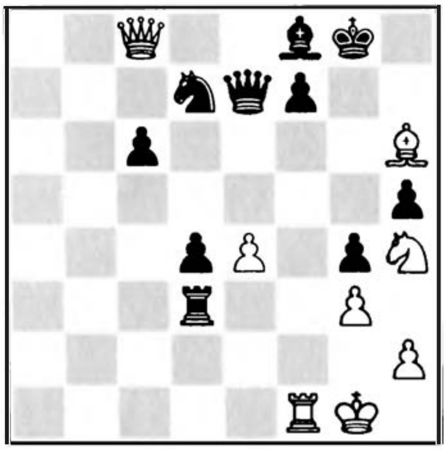
Again aiming to attack the c5-pawn with 38...♘d7.

38.♖f1!?

White leaves his c5-weakness in favour of a hunt for Black's king.

38...♖a3 39.♕b8 ♕xc5 40.♗h6 ♘d7 41.♕e8 ♕e7 42.♕c8 ♖xd3 43.♘h4!

With compensation.

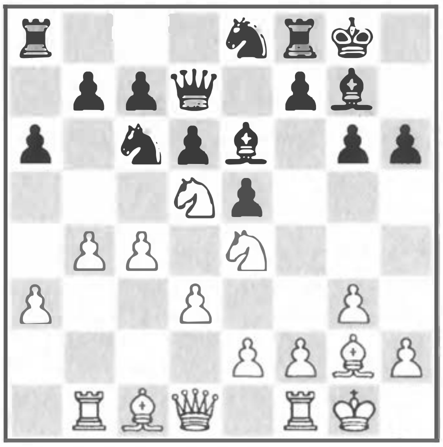


43...♕e6 44.♗xf8 ♘xf8 45.♕d8! c5 A perpetual results from 45...♕xe4 46.♕g5+ ♘g6 47.♕d8+. The same goes for 45...♖e3 46.♖f5! ♖xe4 47.♖g5+ ♔h7 48.♖xh5+ ♔g8, but not 48...♔g7? 49.♘f5+ ♔g8 50.♕xf8+ ♔xf8 51.♖h8 mate. **46.♘f5** But not 46.♖f5? ♖d1+ 47.♔g2 ♕xe4+–+. **46...♖f3 47.♖xf3** 47.♘e7+ ♔g7 48.♘f5+ ♖xf5? 49.♖xf5 ♘g6 50.♕d5± Karpov. **47...gxf3 48.♘e7+ ♔g7 49.♘f5+ ♔g8** Losing is 49...♔g6 50.h4! ♕f6 (50...♕xe4

51.♕g5+ ♔h7 52.♕g7 mate; 50...♘h7 51.♕g8+ ♔f6 52.♕g7 mate) 51.♕xf8.
50.♘e7+ ♔g7 51.♘f5+ ½-½
An interesting manoeuvring game which led to dynamic equality at the end.

☐ **Mikhail Gurevich**
■ **Attila Groszpeter**
Pardubice 2000 (5)

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.♘f3 ♘c6 4.a3 g6 5.g3 ♗g7 6.♗g2 0-0 7.d3 d6 8.0-0 h6 9.b4 a6 10.♖b1 ♗e6 11.♘d2 ♕d7 12.♘d5! ♘e8 13.♘e4!?



Intending 14.♗xh6 or 14.♘ec3. Worse was 13.a4, as in Beim-Gurevich, Bad Godesberg 2000. The game Chuchelov-Winants, Brussels 1997, saw 13.♖e1 ♗h3 14.♗h1 ♘d4 15.e3 ♘e6 16.♗b2 ♖d8 17.a4 c6 18.♘b6 ♕c7 19.a5 f5.

13...f5 14.♘ec3 ♖b8!?

Black wants to play 15...b5.

15.a4 ♘e7!?

15...a5 is best met by 16.bxa5 (rather than 16.b5 ♘d8 △ 17...b6) 16...♘xa5 17.♗a3, planning 18.c5 with good play on the queenside.

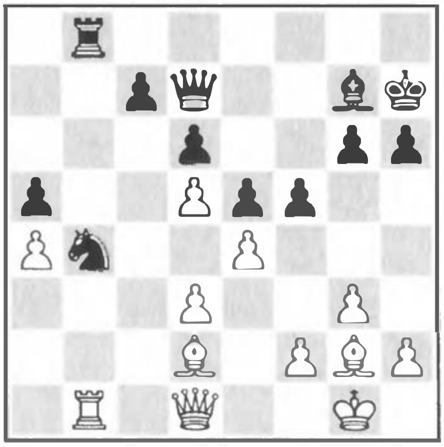
16.♗d2!?

Preparing 17.b5, since after 16.b5?! a5 17.♘xe7+ ♕xe7 18.♘d5 ♕d7 19.♗d2 Black has 19...b6.

16...♘f6?!

Correct was 16...♘c8! (planning 17...c6) 17.b5 a5 18.f4 b6 with unlcear play. Black intends 19...♘e7 and 20...♘f6.

17.♘xf6+ ♖xf6 18.b5± ♖ff8 Or 18...a5 19.♘d5 ♗xd5 20.cxd5±. **19.bxa6 bxa6 20.♕c2** Planning to exchange all rooks with 21.♖xb8 and 22.♖b1. Black's a-pawn is weak. **20...♘c6!? 21.♖xb8 ♖xb8 22.♖b1 ♘b4 23.♕d1 a5** White is slightly better after 23...c5 24.a5!?. **24.♘d5!? ♗xd5** Not 24...c5? 25.♗xh6+–. **25.cxd5 ♔h7** Aiming to exchange the dark-squared bishops with 26...h5 and 27...♗h6. **26.e4!±**



Suddenly 27.♗h3 hangs in the air with good attacking chances on the kingside. Black therefore gives a pawn pinning his hopes on the bishops of opposite colour. **26...♖f8 27.♗xb4 axb4 28.♖xb4 f4 29.a5 ♖a8 30.♕a4 ♕c8 31.♕b5 h5 32.♖b1** White prepares the put the rook behind the passed pawn with 33.♖a1. Of course not the immediate 32.♖a4? ♖b8–+. **32...fxg3 33.hxg3 ♕a6?! 34.♕xa6 ♖xa6 35.♖a1 ♗h6 36.♖a2** The ending wins for White. **36...g5 37.♗f1 ♖a7 38.♗e2 g4 39.a6 ♔g6 40.♗d1 ♗g5 41.♗a4** Black resigned since there is no good answer to the manoeuvre ♗a4-c6-b7, as 41...♖xa6 fails to 42.♗e8+.

CHAPTER 18

Who is Who

Soon after his naturalization **Mikhail Gurevich** jokingly remarked that he had even started 'to play like a Belgian' (no offence intended). Innumerable tournament wins later we know better of course. It is ages ago that Mikhail wrote a theoretical article, so should we be surprised that he wrote two chapters for this SOS volume?

In between working for his university exams and winning the Championship of his country twenty-year old Czech top grandmaster **David Navara** graciously consented to write an SOS. As there is no easy advantage for White against the Petroff anyway, you might as well play 4.♘c4!?.

Top GM **Alexander Beliavsky** – the former trainer of Karpov and Kasparov – needs no introduction of course. In this SOS Volume 'Big Al' presents his favourite weapon against the Volga Gambit.

Bucharest-based former Moldavian grandmaster **Dorian Rogozenko** has established quite a reputation for himself as a serious author. As a former student of the famous Moldavian trainer Chebanenko who could be better qualified to write on 5.h3 as the ideal weapon versus the Chebanenko Slav?

The young Canadian grandmaster **Mark Bluvshtein** is the strongest player in the world to regularly employ 3.♗d3 against the French Defence. With his natural adversity to theory he explains the ins and outs of his pet system.

How natural is it to develop your knight to c6 in the French Defence not allowing yourself the lever c7-c5? Dutch grandmaster **Karel van der Weide** explains the main ideas of the experts Rozentalis, Keitlinghaus and Thesing.

Ian Rogers has quite a reputation for playing all sorts of dodgy lines. Fact is that the man from Down Under plays the Caro-Kann more often than, say, the Scandinavian. Check out a bold central thrust versus the popular Fantasy Variation.

In a thorough theoretical overview **Oleg Chernikov** demonstrates that Black is OK in the Rauzer with 6...g6. With some 45 years of tournament experience in this line the grandmaster from Nizhny Novgorod is its main protagonist.

Former Ukrainian, now Slovenian, GM **Adrian Mikhalchishin** takes a critical SOS look at the Sozin. Why not just attack that bishop with 6...♘a5?

Carlos Matamoros, grandmaster from Ecuador, makes good use of his experience as a trainer in our chapter on Pillsbury's old weapon against the Evans Gambit.

When reviewing SOS Volume 2 in Yearbook 73, SOS-author **Glenn Flear** argued that there was no conflict of interest whatsoever. It is clearly in our SOS interest to keep him writing on surprising opening lines. So, here is Glenn's survey on a QGA sideline – why not just protect the gambit pawn?

Creativity is **Oleg Romanishin**'s hallmark. The Ukrainian grandmaster advocates to radically change the course of play in the Kan Variation by means of 6...e5!?.

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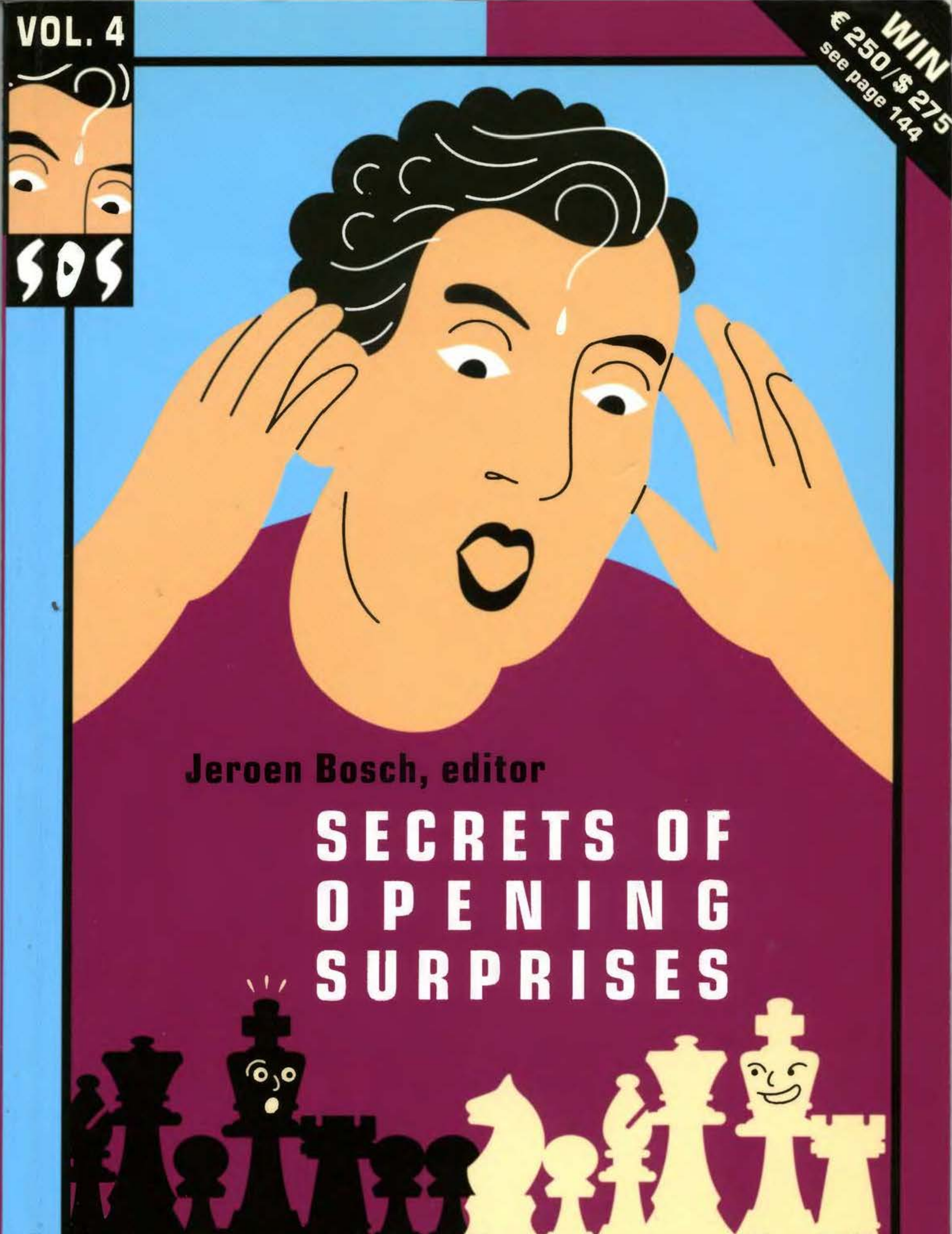
VOL. 4



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Jeroen Bosch, editor

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SECRETS OF OPENING SURPRISES

4

Edited by

JEROEN BOSCH

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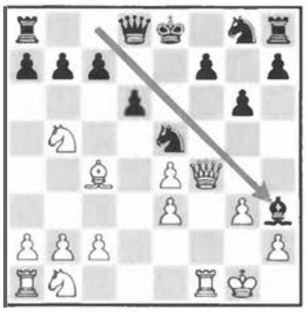
Jeroen Bosch

The SOS Files



Winning the SOS Competition

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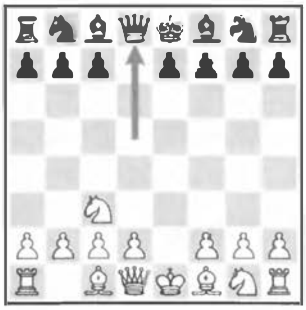
Artur Kogan

A Surprising Scandinavian



The Ilundain Variation

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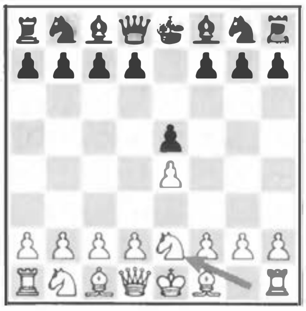
Jeroen Bosch

The Alapin Opening



1.e4 e5 2.♘e2

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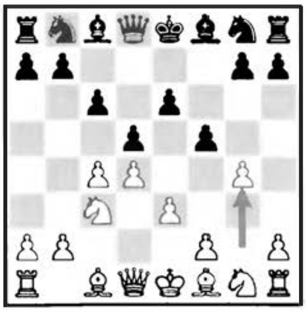
Sergey Volkov

Attacking the Slav Stonewall



Let's play 5.g4

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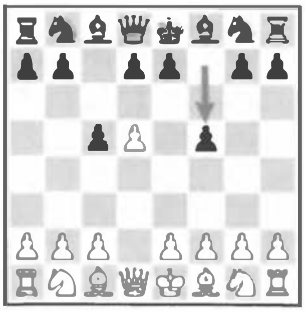
Jaan Ehlvest

The Dutch Benoni



1.d4 c5 2.d5 f5!?

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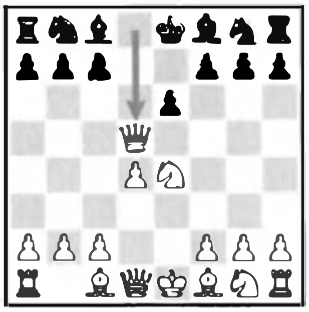
Jeroen Bosch

The Katalymov Variation



The SOS-way to play the 'quiet' Rubinstein

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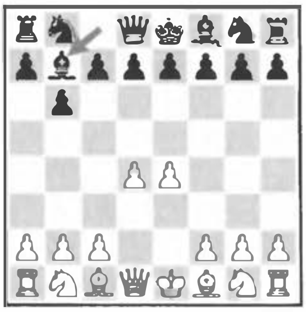
Glenn Flear

The Other Long Diagonal



Owen's 1...b6

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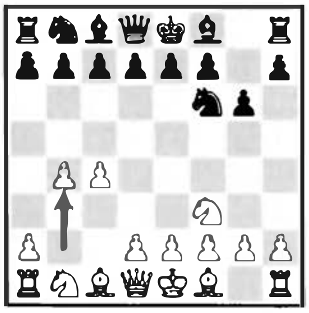
Adrian Mikhalchishin

Following Smyslov and Réti



1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.b4

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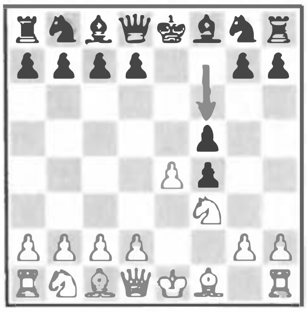
Dimitri Reinderman

King's Gambit Vienna 1903



1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.♘f3 f5!?

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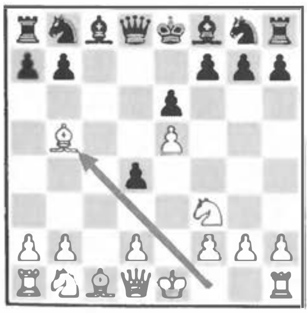
Jeroen Bosch

Move-order Your Sicilian Opponent



1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.c3 d5 4.e5!?

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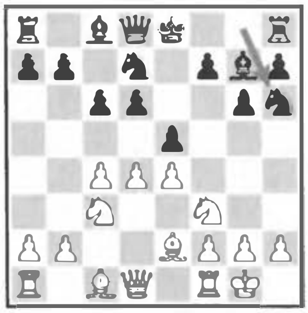
Dorian Rogozenko

An Indian SOS, Part I



A knight on the edge – 7...♞h6

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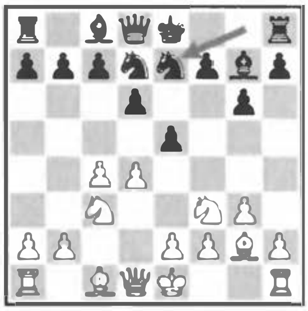
Dorian Rogozenko

An Indian SOS, Part II



Bringing the knight to c6 – 6...♘e7

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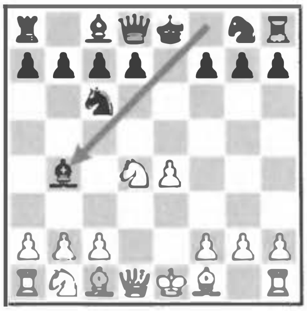
Glenn Flear

Patzer Sees a Check



1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 exd4 4.♘xd4 ♗b4+

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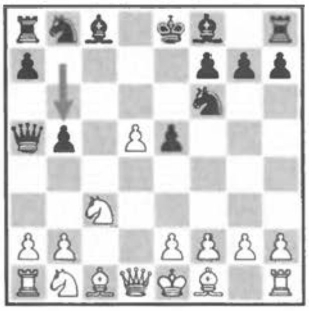
Adrian Mikhalchishin

The Bellon Gambit



When White avoids the Benoni/Volga

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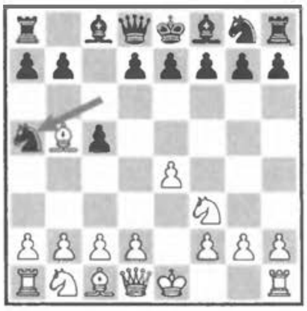
Jeroen Bosch

Kozul's SOS against the Rossolimo



Sublime provocation – 3...♘a5

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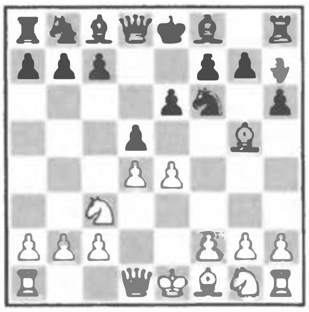
Igor Glek & Elena Sedina

Alekhine's Blunder



1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗g5 h6!?

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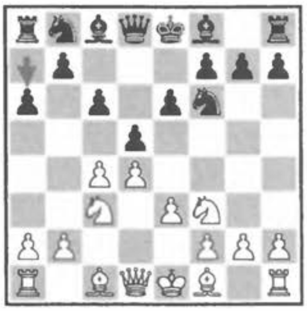
Mikhail Gurevich

Flexibility Zone



Anti-Meran with 5...a6

CHAPTER 1

Jeroen Bosch

The SOS Files

A Weird Win

SOS-3, Chapter 13, p.104

In SOS-3 Karel van der Weide explained the ins and outs of 3...♘c6 in the French. Lithuanian GM Eduardas Rozentalis recently won a 'weird' (Van der Weide's epithet for 3...♘c6) game against the talented Indian Negi.

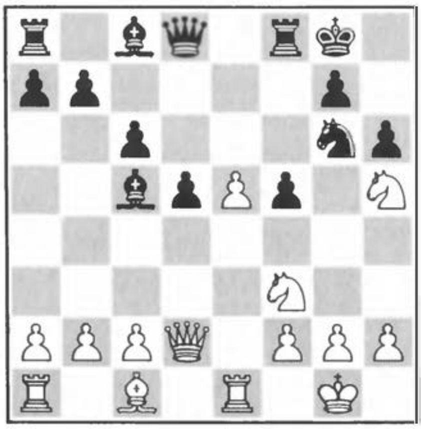
☐ **Parimarjan Negi**
■ **Eduardas Rozentalis**
Hoogeveen 2005 (3)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘c6
Karel van der Weide calls the text a little weird because Black restricts his options.
4.e5
Gaining space. The main line continues 4.♘f3 ♘f6 and now the lines fork:

● 5.e5 ♘e4 6.♗d3 ♗b4 7.♗d2 ♘xd2 8.♕xd2 f6 9.a3 ♗xc3 10.♕xc3 fxe5 11.♗b5!? exd4 (11...0-0 12.♗xc6 exd4 13.♘xd4 bxc6 14.♘xc6 ♕f6 15.♕xf6 gxf6 16.♘e7+ ♔f7 17.♘xc8 ♖fxc8∓, Babula-Matlak, Czech Republic 2004/05) 12.♗xc6+ bxc6 13.♕xc6+ ♗d7 14.♕c5 ♕e7 15.♕xc7 0-0 16.♕e5 ♖f5 17.♕xd4 ♗b5 with compensation in Ibragimov-Peric, Connecticut 2005.

● 5.♗g5 ♗e7 6.e5 ♘e4 7.♗xe7 ♕xe7 8.♗d3 ♕b4 9.0-0?! ♘xc3 10.bxc3 ♕xc3 11.♖b1 ♕a3 (Van der Weide prefers Black) 12.♕d2 ♕e7 13.♖fe1 b6 14.♗b5 ♗d7 15.c4 a6 16.♗a4 ♘a5 17.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 18.cxd5 ♕xd5 19.♖bc1 0-0-0 with a slight edge for Black in Sygulski-Heberla, Ostroda 2005.

4...♘ge7
Interesting play by Rozentalis. Van der Weide investigates the immediate 4...f6, attacking the pawn chain at the front: 5.exf6 ♘xf6 6.♘f3 ♗d6 7.♗g5 0-0 (with his easy development, Black has overcome all opening problems) 8.♗d3 (8.♕d2 ♕e8 9.♗b5 ♗d7 10.♗xc6 bxc6 11.♘e5 ♖b8 12.♖b1 c5 13.♗xf6 gxf6 14.♘xd7 ♕xd7 15.dxc5 ♗xc5 16.0-0 ♕f7, Zdebskaya-Zielinska, Chisinau 2005) 8...♕e8 9.♕e2 ♕h5 10.♗xf6 ♖xf6 11.0-0-0 ♗d7 12.♔b1 ♖af8 13.h3 ♔h8 14.♘b5 ♗f4 15.c3 a6 16.♘a3 e5 with an easy game in Kovchan-Kudin, Alushta 2005.
5.♘f3 ♘f5 6.♘e2 Uberdeckung, but 6.♗b5 followed by 7.♘e2 is an option. **6...f6** Attacking the pawn chain. **7.♘g3 fxe5 8.dxe5 ♗c5 9.♗d3 0-0 10.0-0 h6** Covering the important g5 square, but creating some weaknesses as well. **11.♗xf5 exf5 12.♘h5! ♘e7** 12...♗e6 13.♘f4 ♕d7 14.♖e1 is slightly better for White. **13.♖e1 c6 14.♕d2 ♘g6?**



15.e6? Negi misses a good chance here. After 15.♘xg7! ♔xg7 (15...f4 16.♘h5 ♗g4

17.♘f6+) 16.♕xh6+ White wins back his material with huge interest. **15...♕e7** Now Rozentalis has everything in order. **16.b3** Hoping to use the a1-h8 diagonal for an attack, but Black's next move prevents this. **16...♗b4 17.c3 ♗d6 18.♗b2 ♘h4** Making headway on the kingside. **19.♘d4 f4** Introducing the major threat of 20...♕g5. **20.g3 ♕g5 21.♕d1 c5** Very strong, although 21...f3 should win as well. **22.♗a3** 22.♘b5 fxg3 23.♘xg3 ♘f3+–+. **22...fxg3 23.hxg3 cxd4 24.f4** There is no decent alternative, White is lost in all lines. **24...♗xf4 25.♗xf8 ♗xg3 0-1**

Gotcha in the Réti!

SOS-2, Chapter 15, p.116

In SOS-2 Mihai Grünberg discussed an interesting line from the Réti, where White's main positional idea is to surround Black's advanced d-pawn, to isolate it from its defenders and finally to win it. The whole concept owes a lot to the ideas of the German chess explorer Stefan Bücker.

☐ **Martin Labollita**
■ **Rafael Leitao**
Buenos Aires 2005 (7)

1.♘f3 d5 2.c4 d4 3.c5

This is the crux. Black can no longer defend d4 in the most natural way (by means of c7-c5). The immediate threat is 4.♕a4+.

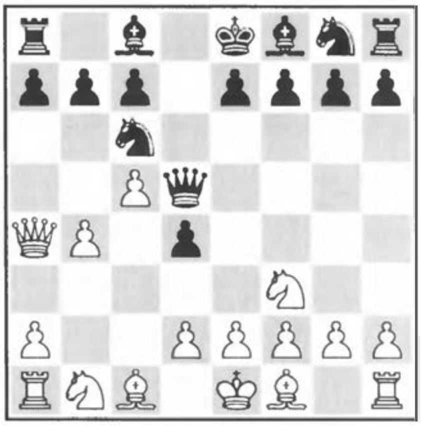
3...♘c6

The main alternative is 3...♕d5. This transposes to our main game after 4.♕a4+ ♘c6. However, Grünberg makes a strong case for the equalizing 4...♗d7 5.♕xd4 ♕xd4 6.♘xd4 e5. He therefore feels that after 3...♕d5 White should play for an advantage with 4.e3.

● 3...f6 4.♕a4+ ♘c6 5.b4 e5 6.e3 dxe3 7.fxe3 (7.dxe3 looks better for White) 7...a5 8.a3 ♗e6 9.b5 ♘ce7 10.♗c4 ♗xc4 11.♕xc4 ♕d5! 12.♕xd5 ♘xd5 13.d4 e4 and Black's game was preferable in Brustkern-B.Lengyel, Budapest 2005.

● 3...e5 is the most aggressive option. Black goes for rapid development: 4.♘xe5 ♗xc5 5.b4! ♗d6 6.♕a4+ c6 7.♘f3 b5 8.♕c2 ♘e7 (8...♗xb4 9.♗b2 d3 10.♕b3! ♗f8 11.e4) 9.♗b2 a5 10.♗xd4 and White's opening strategy was successful. Hausrath-I.Schneider, Germnay Bundesliga 2005/06.

4.♕a4 ♕d5 5.b4



5...e5

Most natural. Alternatively, Black has:

● 5...♗g4 6.♗b2 (Grünberg prefers 6.♘a3) 6...e5 7.e3!? 0-0-0 (7...♗xf3 8.gxf3 ♕xf3 9.♖g1 with compensation for the pawn) 8.♗e2 a6 9.d3 f5 10.♘bd2 ♘f6 11.e4 ♕f7 (11...fxe4 12.dxe4 ♘xe4 13.♗c4 and Black must sacrifice the knight with 13...♘xc5 14.bxc5 ♕xc5) 12.h3 ♗xf3 13.♗xf3 fxe4 14.♘xe4 with a nice positional edge in Vojinovic-Grkovic, Pirot 2004.

● 5...a5!? 6.b5 ♕xc5 7.♘a3 (7.♗b2) 7...♘b4 8.♗b2 e5 9.♖c1 (9.e3) 9...♕d5 10.♖xc7 ♗d6 11.b6+ ♔f8 12.♘b5 ♗xc7 13.♘xc7 ♗d7 14.♕b3 ♕xb3 15.axb3 ♖c8 16.♘xe5 ♗e6 17.♘c4 ♗xc4 18.bxc4 and due to his superior pawn structure and the pair of bishops, White had enough for the exchange. Glicenstein-Inkiov, Rosny-sous-Bois 2004.

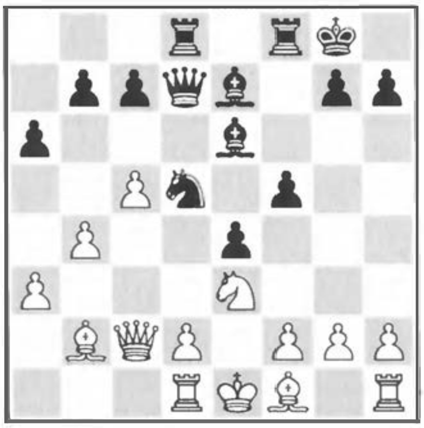
6.e3 ♗d7

Stronger than the alternatives 6...a6 7.b5 ♕xc5 8.♗a3, and 6...♗g4 7.♗e2.

7.♘a3

Not the sharpest possibility. 7.b5 ♘d8 8.♗c4 ♕e4 9.♘c3! was Grünberg-Rahman, Cairo 2000. While 7...♕xc5 8.♘a3! ♘b4 9.♗b2 dxe3 10.fxe3 ♗d6 11.d4 ♕d5 12.♗c4 ♕e4 13.0-0-0! led to a quick victory in Grünberg-Popescu, Romania tt 1998.

7...e4 8.♘b5 ♖c8 8...0-0-0 9.♘fxd4 (9.♘xa7+? ♔b8!) 9...♘xd4 10.exd4 is better for White. **9.♘fxd4 ♘xd4 10.exd4 a6** 10...♕xd4 11.♖b1 a6 12.♘xd4 ♗xa4 is slightly better for the first player. After 10...♘f6 White can either take the pawn, 11.♕xa7, or play 11.♕a5, when in both cases he has a considerable edge. **11.♘c3 ♕xd4** 11...♗xa4 12.♘xd5 is just a pawn up for White. **12.♕b3** Enticing the bishop to e6, in view of 13.♗c4. 12.♕c2 ♗c6. **12...♗e6 13.♕c2 ♘f6** 13...♕xb4 14.♖b1 ♕xc5 15.♖xb7 ♘f6 16.♗xa6. **14.♖b1 ♗e7** Black's position looks solid in a nice classical sort of way. White now manoeuvres his knight to e3, and plays the bishop to the a1-h8 diagonal. **15.♘d1 0-0 16.♘e3 ♖cd8 17.♗b2 ♕d7 18.♖d1 ♘d5! 19.a3** 19.♕xe4 f5 with compensation. **19...f5**



20.c6! bxc6 Also playable are 20...♕xc6 and 20...♘xe3. **21.♗xa6 f4 22.♘c4 c5 23.♘e5 ♕d6 24.♗c4 cxb4 25.axb4 ♖f5** This doesn't work out very well. Equal is 25...♘xb4 26.♕xe4 ♗xc4 27.♕xc4+ ♕d5. While 25...e3 looks strongest. **26.♕xe4 ♗f6 27.d4 ♕xb4+** Regaining his pawn with check, but White has a strong central postion. Leitao must have overestimated his tactical opportunities here. **28.♖d2 ♖d6 29.h4!? f3** 29...♗xe5 30.dxe5 ♕xd2+ 31.♔xd2 ♘f6+ 32.♕d4 ♖xd4+ 33.♗xd4 ♗xc4 34.exf6 should end in a draw. **30.g3 h5?!** 30...♗xe5. **31.♗d3 ♔f8?** A very bad square for the king. **32.♘c4 ♘e7?** 32...♖a6 33.♗a3 ♖xa3 34.♘xa3 ♗xd4 35.♘c4. **33.♗a3** And White won after: **33...♕c3 34.♗xd6 ♕c1+ 35.♖d1 ♕c3+ 36.♔f1 cxd6 37.♕xe6 ♖b5 38.♘xd6** **1-0**

Read SOS and Win

SOS-1, Chapter 16, p.127

The first winner of the SOS Competition was Magnus Carlsen with a devastating win over experienced GM Sergey Dolmatov in the Improved Lisitsin Gambit. White is still scoring heavily with this SOS weapon. Our next game is a curious case in point though. The first 23(!) moves can all be found in SOS-1. The game lasted three more moves. So, read SOS and win!

☐ **Goran Dizdar**
■ **Sergiu-Florin Grünberg**
Triesen 2005 (7)

1.♘f3 f5 2.d3 d6

If 2...♘f6, then 3.e4, when:

- accepting the pawn sacrifice is too dangerous: 3...fxe4 4.dxe4 ♘xe4 5.♗d3 ♘f6 6.♘g5. It is strange that black players still fall for this. SOS-1 mentions the game Lisitsin-Krogius, Leningrad 1949(!). There is no mercy for the ignorant. 6...e5 7.♘xh7 (7.♗xh7!) 7...e4? 8.♘xf6+ ♕xf6 9.♗xe4 and White was a sound pawn up in Belosvetov-Semiev, Alushta 2005.

● 3...d6 4.e5! dxe5 5.♘xe5 ♘bd7 6.♗f4 e6 7.♘c3 ♗d6 8.d4 0-0 9.♗c4 ♘b6 10.♗b3 a5 11.a4 ♘bd5 12.♘xd5 exd5 13.0-0. White has an edge owing to his control over the e5 square. Djuric-De Santis, Montecatini 2005.

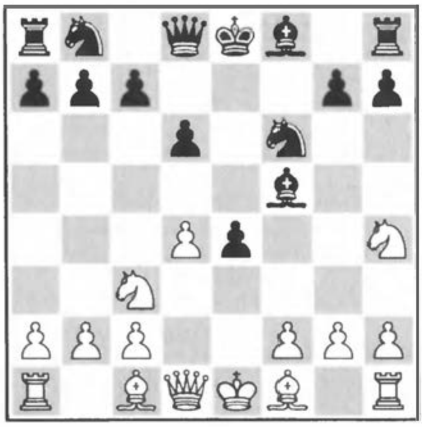
3.e4 e5 4.♘c3 ♘f6

Black, understandably, favours this over 4...♘c6 5.exf5 ♗xf5 6.d4 ♘xd4 7.♘xd4 exd4 8.♕xd4 ♘f6 9.♗c4 c6 10.♗g5 b5 11.♗b3 ♗e7 12.0-0-0 ♕d7 13.♖he1 ♔d8 14.♖xe7!, which was Carlsen's prize winning game against Dolmatov (see SOS-2).

5.exf5 ♗xf5 6.d4 e4

Mihai Grünberg fared no better with 6...♘bd7 7.♗c4 ♗g4 8.♗e3 e4 9.h3 exf3 10.hxg4 fxg2 11.♖g1 ♘b6 12.♗d3 ♘fd5 13.♕f3 ♘xe3 14.fxe3 ♕h4+ 15.♔e2 0-0-0 16.a4! h5 17.a5 ♘d7 18.a6! with a clear edge in Halkias-M.Grünberg, Olomouc 2004.

7.♘h4



7...♗g4

Or 7...♕d7 8.♗e2 d5 9.♘xf5 ♕xf5 10.g4N Sulava-Kobalia, Corsica rapid 2004.

Better is 7...♗e6 8.d5 ♗f7, when SOS-1 gives 9.♘f5 and now 9...c6 is stronger than 9...♗g6 10.♘d4 (Odendahl-Van der Elburg, Amsterdam 2002).

In Laznicka-Potapov, Olomouc 2005, there followed 9.g3 c6 10.♗g5 cxd5 11.♗b5+ ♘c6 12.♗xf6 gxf6 13.0-0 and in this complex position both sides have about equal chances.

8.♗e2 ♗xe2 9.♕xe2 d5 White now has a forcing line which gives him superior chances. **10.♗g5 ♗b4 11.♕b5+ ♘c6 12.♕xb7 ♘xd4 13.0-0-0! ♗xc3 14.bxc3 ♖b8 15.♗xf6! gxf6** Black does not get enough pawns for his piece after 15...♖xb7 16.♗xd8 ♘b5 17.♗g5 ♘xc3 18.♖de1 ♘xa2+ 19.♔d2 and White should win. **16.♕xa7 ♘b5** Or 16...♘e2+ 17.♔d2 ♘f4 and now 18.♔e3! is winning. White should also win after 16...♘c6 17.♕a4 ♕d7 18.♖he1 ♘e7 19.♖xe4. **17.♕c5 ♕d6 18.♖xd5! ♕f4+** The ending after 18...♕xc5 19.♖xc5 is an easy win. **19.♖d2 ♕xh4 20.a4! ♘d6?! 21.♕c6+ ♔f7** 21...♔d8 22.♖xd6+. **22.♕xc7+ ♔g6 23.♕xd6 ♕g5** On page 132 of SOS-1 you will find the game Löffler-Kindermann, Austria tt 2002/03, which went 23...♖b7 24.♕g3+ and White won prosaically. In this game Black's ordeal ends a lot sooner. **24.h4 ♕xg2? 25.h5+ ♔g5 26.f4+ 1-0**

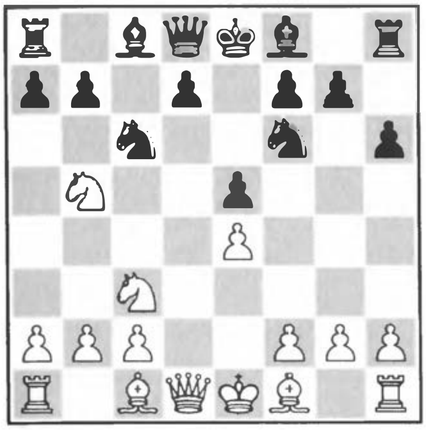
No worries in the Haberditz?

SOS-2, Chapter 10, p.78

In SOS-2 Dimitri Reinderman presented the Haberditz Variation as a means to play Sveshnikov structures without all the theory. He felt that 6...h6 was not so bad, but in a postscript he added that he was a little worried about one line in particular. In recent practice, however, Black has obtained very decent results indeed, so perhaps we can allay Reinderman's fears.

☐ **Nazar Firman**
■ **Georgy Arzumanian**
Kharkiv 2005 (2)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 e5 6.♘db5 h6



This is what the Haberditz Variation is all about. Black prevents 7.♗g5, but allows the check on d6. Here we will examine 7.♘d5 while 7.♘d6+ is the subject of the next game.

7.♘d5 ♘xd5 8.exd5 a6 9.dxc6

This is more natural than the retreat 9.♘c3, after 9...♘d4 10.♗d3 d6 11.0-0 Black should be OK.

9...axb5 10.cxd7+ ♗xd7 11.♕d5

White has a very concrete idea in mind, which turns out to be incorrect.

Black had an easy game in Daels-Nieto, Belgium 2004/05, after 11.♗d3 ♗c6 12.♕e2 ♕d5 (this is the ideal set-up for Black according to Reinderman in SOS-2) 13.f3 ♗c5 14.♗e3 ♗xe3 15.♕xe3 0-0 16.0-0 f5.

11...♕c7 12.♗d2 Of course not 12.♗xb5? ♕a5+. **12...♕c5** After 12...b4 13.♗b5 ♗c6 14.♕c4 White has a tiny little something. Also playable is 12...♗c5 13.♗c3 0-0. **13.♕b3** 13.♕xb7 ♗c6 14.b4 ♕d5 15.♕b6 ♗d6 with excellent compensation. 13.♕xc5 ♗xc5 is already easier for Black. **13...♗e7 14.♕g3 ♗f6 15.c3 ♕d5** Simply attacking a pawn. **16.♕d3 ♕e6 17.♕b1** It is clear that White's artificial manoeuvre (♕d1-d5-b3-g3-d3-b1) has not been a success. **17...♗c6 18.♗e2 0-0** Black is also better after 18...♗xg2 19.♗xb5+ ♔e7 20.♖g1 ♕h3 but the text is stronger. White can't castle in view of the simple 21...♕d5. **19.♗f3 e4 20.♗e2 e3! 21.♗xe3 ♗xg2 22.♖g1 ♕h3 23.♗f1 ♗xf1 24.♖g3 ♕xh2 25.♔xf1 ♖fe8** Black is a pawn up, but the deciding factor is of course the position of White's king. The rest requires little comment. **26.♕d1 ♗e5 27.♖g2 ♕h1+ 28.♖g1 ♕h3+ 29.♖g2 ♖a4! 30.b4 ♗xc3** And Black won easily.

The Haberditz Variation

SOS-2, Chapter 10, p.78

Scottish IM John Shaw has given the Haberditz Variation a few outings in 2005.

☐ **Hichem Hamdouchi**
■ **John Shaw**
Gibraltar 2005 (3)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 e5 6.♘db5 h6 7.♘d6+

This is more critical than 7.♘d5.

7...♗xd6 8.♕xd6 ♕e7 9.♕xe7+

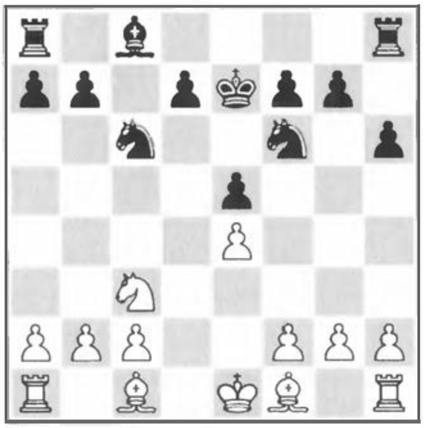
White has the advantage of the two bishops, and is not adverse to playing an ending. With his king in the centre and easy development Black holds some trumps too. Recently White has kept the queens on as well.

9.♕d2 0-0 10.♘d5 ♘xd5 11.exd5 ♘d4 12.c3 ♘f5 13.♗c4 d6 14.0-0 ♘h4! (preparing ...f5, and moving the knight to a better square – g6 and eventually e5) 15.♕e2 f5 with a comfortable Sveshnikov sort of position, Cappon-Shaw, Cappelle la Grande 2005.

9.♕d1 d6 10.♗c4 a6 11.f3 ♗e6 12.♗b3 ♘d4 13.♗e3 ♘xb3 14.axb3 0-0 15.0-0 and Black should start to prepare d6-d5, Gomez Anadon-Hernando Rodrigo, Barcelona 2005.

Previously it was thought that 9.♘b5 was strong. However, SOS-2 mentions the big improvement 9...♖b8!, when Black is fine.

9...♔xe7



10.♗e3

It is also natural to put pressure on d6 with 10.b3 d6 11.♗a3 a6 12.0-0-0 ♖d8 13.♗c4 (13.♘d5+ is a tiny edge for White according to Reinderman) 13...♗e6 14.♘d5+ ♗xd5 15.♗xd5 ♖ac8 16.♔b1 ♘xd5 17.♖xd5 ♖d7 18.♖hd1 ♖cd8 19.c4 ♔e6 20.c5 ½-½ Fercec-Runic, Ljubljana 2005.

10...d6 11.f3

Black had no problems in Vuckovic-Shaw, Cappelle la Grande 2005, after 11.h3 ♗e6 12.0-0-0 ♖ac8 13.♗e2 a6 14.g4 ♘b4! 15.a3 ♘a2+ (15...♖xc3!? 16.bxc3 – 16.axb4 ♖c7 equal – 16...♘a2+ 17.♔b2 ♘xe4 18.♗f3 ♘axc3 and two pawns are more than enough for the exchange) 16.♘xa2 ♗xa2 17.♗f3 ♘d7 18.♔d2 ♗e6 19.♔c1 g5 20.h4 f6 with equality.

11...♗e6 12.0-0-0 ♖ac8

Shaw seeks counterplay along the c-file (just as in his game against Vuckovic) rather than aiming for d6-d5. Instead, 12...♖hd8 13.♔b1 is what worried Reinderman.

13.a3 a6 14.♔b1

White has made a few useful moves, but cannot prove anything definite.

14...♘a5

Executing a typical Sicilian manoeuvre. Note that these endgame positions have little in common with the Sveshnikov.

15.g4 ♘c4 16.♗xc4 ♖xc4 17.h4 h5!

17...b5 18.g5.

18.g5 ♘d7 19.g6!? 19.♘d5+ ♗xd5 20.♖xd5 ♖hc8 is solid too. **19...f6** There now follows a lengthy manoeuvring game. **20.♖d2 ♖hc8 21.♘e2 b5 22.♘g3 ♖h8 23.♖hd1 ♖c6 24.♖g2 ♗h3 25.♖h2 ♗e6 26.♗d2 ♘f8! 27.♖g1 ♘d7** Not 27...♘xg6? 28.♘f5+! ♗xf5 29.exf5. **28.b3 ♘c5 29.♔b2 ♘b7 30.♗e3 ♘c5 31.♖d2 a5 32.♖gd1 ♘d7 33.♖g1 ♘c5 34.♖d5!? ♔d7** There was nothing too Greek about White's gift. Black has equal chances in the ending after 34...♗xd5 35.exd5 ♖a6 36.♘f5+ ♔f8 37.♘xd6 (37.♗xc5 dxc5 38.d6 ♖a7) 37...♘d3+! 38.cxd3 ♖xd6 39.♗c5 ♔e7. **35.♖dd1 ♔e7 36.♖g2 a4 37.♗xc5 ♖xc5 38.♖d3 ♖h6 39.♘f5+ ♗xf5 40.exf5 ♖h8** The rook ending ended in a draw.

Harikrishna's Winning Novelty

SOS-3, Chapter 7, p.62

The uncompromising Blumenfeld Attack in the Scotch (6.♘b5) has an impressive following. Grandmasters such as Ponomariov, Zelcic, Nataf, Areschenko and Kritz have gone for this risky line. Positionally, White is burning his bridges behind him, but he gets great attacking chances in return. Enter Pentyala Harikrishna who beat the incredible Wang Hao (until recently the strongest untitled player in the world) with a powerful novelty in a line previously thought to be virtually winning for White. That ought to be enough to win the SOS Competition wouldn't you say?

☐ **Wang Hao**
■ **Pentyala Harikrishna**
Tiayuan 2005 (5)

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 exd4 4.♘xd4 ♗c5 5.♗e3 ♕f6 6.♘b5

This is Blumenfeld's idea. The knight attacks c7, and thereby White grabs the initiative. The exchange on e3 is forced, which means that White wilfully accepts two isolated e-pawns.

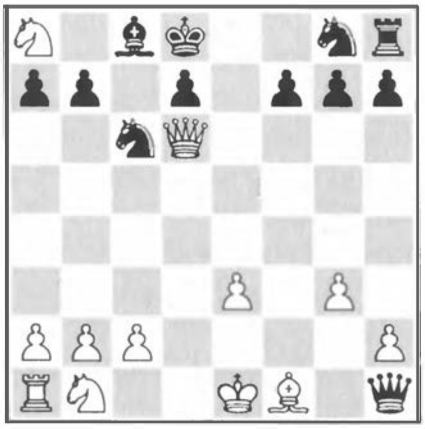
6...♗xe3 7.fxe3 ♕h4+

This intermediate check is the main line. Black can also move his king – Black is often forced to give up castling in this line: 7...♔d8 8.♘1c3 ♘ge7 9.♕d2 d6 10.0-0-0 a6 11.♘d4 ♘e5 12.♗e2 (SOS-3 mentions this line as an improvement upon N.Kosintseva-Petrukhin, Dagomys 2003). And now in Areschenko-E.Zude, Coventry 2005, White won after 12...♗e6 13.h3 h5 14.♘f3♔d7 15.♖hf1 ♖ae8 16.♕d4 ♘5c6 17.♕a4 ♔c8 (ironically, Black's king leaves the centre only to end up in mortal danger after White's next blow) 18.♗xa6! ♕h6 19.♗b5 ♕xe3+ 20.♔b1 ♔b8 21.♘d4! and so on, 1-0 (32).

Instead of 18...♕h6, 18...bxa6 19.♕xa6+ ♔b8 (19...♔d7 20.e5 ♘xe5 21.♘e4 and among the numerous threats is a devastating sacrifice on d6) 20.♘d4 loses faster.

8.g3 ♕d8

The alternative is to take on e4 and invite hair-raising complications. Let me keep you up-to-date with the most recent developments after the forced 8...♕xe4 9.♘xc7+ ♔d8 10.♘xa8 ♕xh1 11.♕d6 (the main option. For 11.♕g4 ♘ge7 – or 11...♕g1 – 12.♘c3 ♘e5, see SOS-3)



● 11...♘ge7?! 12.♘d2 ♘f5 (12...♕d5? 13.♕c7+ ♔e8 14.♕xc8+ ♘xc8 15.♘c7+ is a trick to remember) 13.♕c7+ ♔e7 14.0-0-0 ♖e8 15.♗d3? (overlooking a tactic, 15.♕f4! wins) 15...♕xd1+! 16.♔xd1 ♘xe3+ 17.♔e2 ♘d5 and Black won in Van der Poel-Hallebeek, Netherlands tt 2004.

● 11...♘f6 12.♘d2! ♕d5 (12...♘e4 13.♕c7+ ♔e7 14.0-0-0♘xd2 15.♗b5! ♕e4! is a main line as noted by Gutman – see SOS-3) 13.♕c7+ ♔e7 14.0-0-0 ♕e5? 15.♘c4 ♕xc7 16.♘xc7 ♘d8 (16...♖d8 17.♘d6± SOS-3 p.68) 17.♘d6 ♘e6 18.♘cb5 (amusingly this wins the undeveloped bishop on c8) 18...♘g4 19.♘xa7 ♘xe3 20.♘axc8+ ♔d8 21.♘xf7+ ♔xc8 22.♘xh8 ♘xd1 23.♔xd1 1-0 Kritz-Hohler, Triesen 2005.

● 11...♕e4!? Another important novelty?

– Here 12.♕c7+? ♔e7 13.♕xc8 ♕xe3+ 14.♔d1 (the only move, as 14.♗e2 ♘f6 15.♕xh8 ♘d4 loses immediately) 14...♘f6 15.♕xh8 gives White a huge material advantage, but definitely no chances for a win. 15...♘g4 (15...♘d4 is also strong) 16.c3 ♕f2 17.♗e2 ♘e3+ 18.♔d2 ♘c4+ 19.♔d1 ♘xb2+ (19...♘e3+ with a draw) 20.♔d2 ♘e5 and Black has a winning attack.

– 12.♕f8+ ♕e8 13.♕xe8+ ♔xe8, ½-½ Van der Heijden-Sula, Pardubice 2005. White's advantage is marginal after 14.♘c7+ ♔d8 15.♘d5 ♘ge7 16.♘bc3 ♘xd5 17.♘xd5.

9.♕g4

An important position for the whole line. Black has to defend against the blunt threat of 10.♕xg7. There are three options.

9...g6

This weakens the dark squares. The merit of this move depends on Harikrishna's novelty on move 12. Alternatively, Black may try **9...♔f8** 10.♕f4 d6 11.♘1c3:

– 11...♘f6 12.0-0-0 ♕e7 13.h3 a6 14.♘d4 ♗d7 15.g4 ♖e8 16.♗g2 ♕e5 17.♖hf1 White is somewhat better. Kolev-Van den Doel, Bajada de la Virgen 2005.

– 11...♘ge7 12.♗c4 f6 13.0-0-0 was Nataf-Onischuk, Montreal 2003, see SOS-3.
– 11...♘e5 12.h3?! (12.0-0-0 SOS-3) 12...♗d7 13.♘d4♘g6 14.♕f2 ♕f6 15.♕g2 ♕g5 16.0-0-0 ♘e5 17.♘d5 c6 18.♘f4 h5 19.♗e2 h4 20.♘f3 ♘xf3 21.♕xf3 ♘f6 22.gxh4 ♕e5 23.♖hg1 ♖e8 24.♗d3 ♖xh4, now White blundered with 25.♖xg7? ♔xg7 26.♕g3+ ♗g4! Kristjansson-Stefansson, Reykjavik 2005.

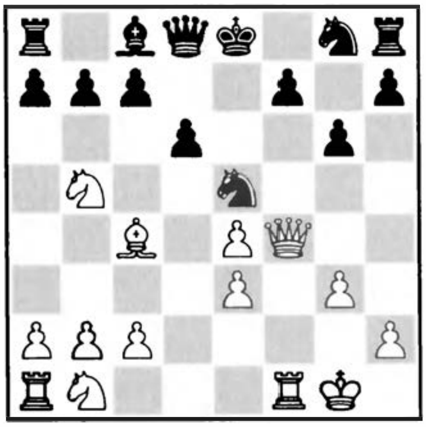
9...g5 10.♕h5?! (10.♘1c3 d6 11.♕e2 was the stem game Ponomariov-Godena, Plovdiv 2003) 10...♘e5 11.h4?! d6! 12.♗e2 a6 13.♘d4 c5 14.♘f5 ♗xf5 15.exf5 ♘f6 16.♕h6 (16.♕xg5 ♖g8 17.♕f4 ♕b6 with great compensation) 16...gxh4 17.♕xh4 ♕e7 18.♘c3 0-0-0 19.0-0-0 ♖de8 20.♕f4. White is not worse, but the stronger player won, Langer-Onischuk, Stillwater 2005.

10.♕f4 d6 11.♗c4

The most logical move, which had served White well in all previous games. In view of Harikrishna's novelty I'd advise 11.♘1c3.

11...♘e5 12.0-0

This is the point of White's play. There follows a rude awakening.



12...♗h3!N

This sacrifice improves upon the known 12...♕e7 13.♘1c3 c6 14.♗xf7+ which just wins for White, see SOS-3.

13.♗xf7+ ♔d7

Black's king is perhaps not exactly safe, but chess is a concrete game. Harikrishna intends 14...g5 followed by 15...♘h6 with a nice initiative. The extra pawn is absolutely worthless. In the game White quickly succumbs.

14.♘1c3 g5

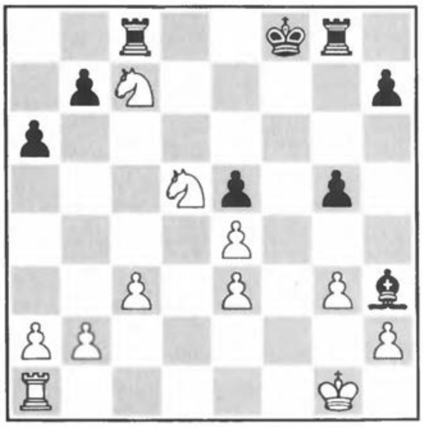
This is of course much stronger than the materialistic 14...♗xf1 15.♖xf1 ♘e7 when White has ample compensation after either 16.♘d4 or 16.♘d5.

15.♕xe5

This is a creative, but desperate, measure. Black is simply better after 15.♕f2 ♘h6.

15...dxe5 16.♖ad1+

Checking with the other rook is no better. 16.♖fd1+ ♔e7 17.♖xd8 ♖xd8 18.♗xg8 ♖hxg8 19.♘d5+ (19.♘xc7 ♖d2 is decisive) 19...♔f8 20.♘bxc7 ♖c8 21.c3 a6



and wins is what I gave on the New In Chess website for the column 'SOS Game of the Month'. Curiously enough, all this occurred in the game Swinkels-Van de Oudeweetering, Apeldoorn 2005, which continued: 22.g4 ♖g6 (even stronger than 22...♗xg4 23.♘f6 ♖xc7 24.♘xg4) 23.a4 h6 24.b4 ♖c6 25.♘b5 axb5 26.axb5 ♖xc3 27.♘xc3 ♖xc3 and Black won (on move 37).

16...♔e7 17.♘d5+

Again creative but insufficient.

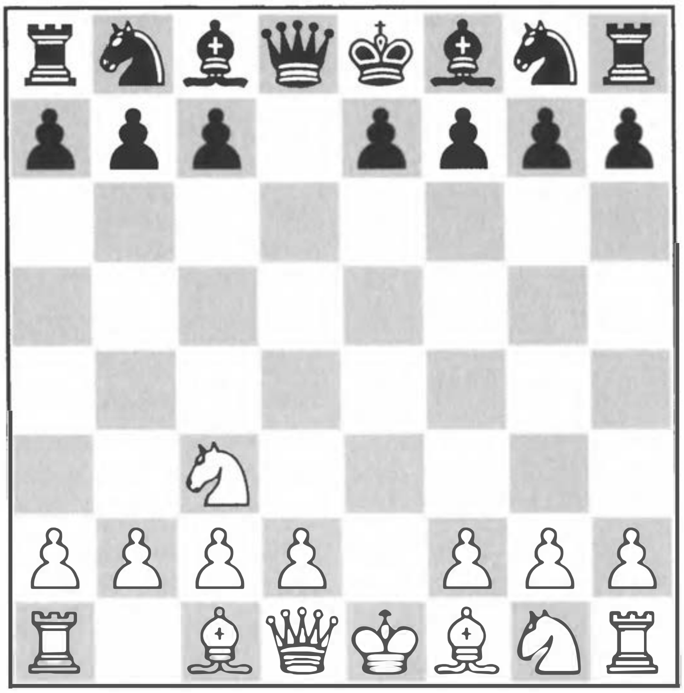
17...♔f8 18.♘bxc7 ♔g7 19.g4 ♗xg4 20.♘xa8 ♘h6

And White resigned as he cannot avoid further material losses.

CHAPTER 2

Artur Kogan

A Surprising Scandinavian



The Ilundain Variation

My story starts in the grandmaster tournament of Salou (Spain). I was leading the tournament and it was important for me to make a draw with Black in the penultimate round. My opponent was IM Ramesh (India) – quite an aggressive player. Before falling asleep I was thinking about how to surprise him. I thought for more than an hour, and just before falling a sleep (usually this is how I find my novelties!) I had a great idea. Let's play the Scandinavian!

But since I had already played a few 'normal' Scandinavians in the past I decided that I would adopt 3...♕d8 this time! I will explain the reasons behind this 'absurd queen-comeback' later on.

The funniest thing was that I thought I had invented a very profound novelty. In my pride I was sure that no GM could have ever dared to play it before. The next morning my computer showed me that I was totally wrong. The names of famous GM's such as Iosif Dorfman, Ivan Sokolov, Kiril Georgiev and even top-gun Michael Adams popped up on my screen!

However, on a regular basis 3...♕d8 was mainly used by a talented young Spanish GM named David Garcia Ilundain. We became friends later on, but in 2002 he tragically died from cancer at a very young age (31). I would like to name this line after him as he used it more often than anybody else, and even had the courage to try it against such top players as Shirov and Ponomariov. In these games he did not have any problems after the opening, demonstrating that 3...♕d8 is viable at the highest level!

☐ **R.B. Ramesh**
■ **Artur Kogan**
Salou 2001 (10)

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♕xd5 3.♘c3 ♕d8!
Here my opponent looked shocked at my queen retreat, and his face even began to change colour! Of course my play was against the rules of classical chess. Don't play the queen out so early – and here Black moved his queen twice within the space of the first three moves! And what is worse, her majesty has returned to her starting position. However, the point is that White no longer has his central e4-pawn! The obvious question is 'why did the queen return to d8, and did she not move to a5 or d6?' My experience has shown me that a queen on a5, or even on d6, will be forced to move again within a few moves. A queen on a5 will be in danger after an early ♗d2. While on d6, the queen will be harrassed by moving the bishop to f4. So my counter-question is 'why lose time moving it later?'

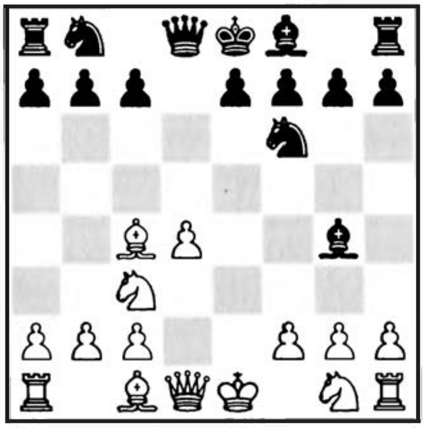
4.d4 ♘f6
Here you can see that there is nothing new about this particular pawn structure. It is especially similar to the Caro-Kann – admittedly the pawn is still on c7 for the moment! I think that anyone with a good 'positional eye' will consider the knight on c3 to be an 'ugly piece' – especially after a future c6. The knight is blocking the c-pawn, so White cannot build a strong centre. This means that White will have to move his knight from c3 at some point in the near future. This is easier said than done though. With a pawn on c6 Black controls d5 and b5. The e4-square is usually not available, due to the knight on f6. So, here we see Black regaining his lost time (♕d8xd5-d8). At first sight, this idea looks too deep, but all the sun, sea and sand of Salou can help to make the brain stronger in order to make such discoveries! Positionally Black has a solid position and good chances to create play, especially planning natural development with ...♗f5 or ...♗g4, ...c6, ...♘d7, and ...e6. The place of the dark-squared bishop depends on White's play. Even castling (kingside or queenside) depends solely on White's set-up. Black's position is still very flexible, which means that in the future there will be many different options to surprise White with! And don't forget that White has to try and prove his advantage, and not Black. So White will be feeling the pressure! As the old Russian chess school saying goes : 'if positionally you are not happy, try to play dynamically with an aggressive plan'. This is a strong piece of advice for White – but how many people think about deep ideas or plans after just three moves?

5.♗c4
This is one of the most logical developing moves. In the next games we will investigate the other options:

– 5.♘f3 is the most common move, developing and trying to get a similar position as in the normal Scandinavian.

– 5.♗g5 planning to castle quickly to the queenside. In this way White is at least playing dynamically and using the extra tempos for a plan! In any case, it should be quite clear that the only way for White to try and refute Black's plan is by castling long and trying to attack quickly. Castling kingside will play into Black's hands, who has no weaknesses and can develop all his pieces freely. More often than not it is White who falls into trouble; as he has a slight weakness on d4, and the knight on c3 which as I argued above is misplaced.

5...♗g4!?



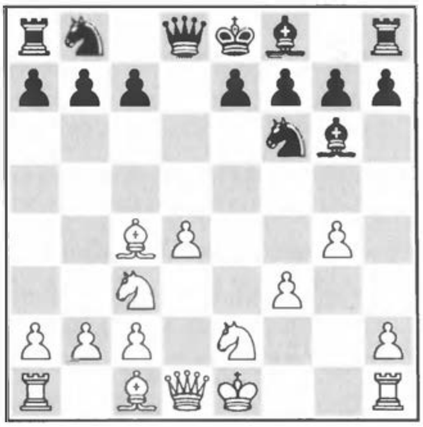
I used a similar idea with great success in a 'normal' Scandinavian against GM Movsesian – the shock of this surprise led to him being lost after the opening in this game. During my preparations for my game with Ramesh I saw that the only published game with this move was by ex-world champion Karpov who had played the Scandinavian and tried this move in 1997. (It was a shame, however, that this game was against an unrated player in a rapidplay event.) As I usually do, I only checked the games of players with an Elo above 2500. However, when I came home I was curious to find out more about my ...♕d8 idea, and found that according to my database it was first played in the year 1837! Moreover, the move 5...♗g4 had already been played in 1893! 'Wow', I thought, 'this is incredible'! More interesting still: ...♕d8 was played a few times by great players such as Blackburne, Maroczy and Pillsbury, and even by the young Capablanca! It is so hard to find something new in chess these days, maybe the conclusion is that it is best to surprise your opponent with forgotten lines?

Naturally, the provocative 5...♗g4 is not the only option. Dangerous looks 5...♗f5 6.♕f3 ♕c8 7.♗f4 with an initiative. Fully playable are: 5...c6 which usually transposes to the main line after 6.♘f3 (see Shirov-Dizdarevic below) and 5...e6 followed by ...a6, ...b5 (or ...c6, and ...b5) and ...♗b7 ideas – similar to the Meran.

6.♘ge2

The most critical is 6.f3, when 6...♗f5 is the move I would recommend:

– 7.g4 ♗g6 8.♘ge2



Now I'll show you my 'secret analysis': 8...♘c6!. Following the logics of chess, Black responds in the centre in reply to White's aggression on the flank. Now a future ...e5, or even ...♘b4 and ...♘d5 will give Black excellent counterchances. A sample line is: 9.h4 h5 10.♘f4 (normal, but it falls into a nice trap! 10.g5 ♘b4! 11.♗b3 ♘fd5 is unclear) 10...♕xd4 11.♘xg6 fxg6 12.♕e2 ♘e5! (stronger than 12...0-0-0) 13.♗e6 hxg4 14.fxg4 ♖xh4!! 15.♖xh4 ♕g1+ 16.♔d2 (16.♕f1 ♘f3+) 16...♖d8+ 17.♘d5 ♘xd5 and Black is crushing his opponent.

– 7.♘ge2 e6 8.g4 (8.0-0 is not dangerous, and in this particular situation Black has 8...♘c6! keeping an eye on d4 – so the e2-knight can't even jump to g3. A subsequent ...♗d6 gives Black nice play) is a safer move order for White.

6...e6

The oldest game in history with 5...♗g4

(that is, according to ChessBase) went in a very original but far from accurate manner: 6...♗xe2!? (probably afraid of a future f3) 7.♗xe2 g6 (a solid plan!) 8.♗f4 c6 9.♕d3 (9.♕d2) 9...♗g7 10.♗e5 (10.0-0-0 is a better idea, planning a future g4 or h4, when 10...♘d5!? is best) 10...♘bd7 11.♕g3 ♘xe5 (11...♕b6) 12.dxe5 ♘d7 13.f4 e6? (creating 'holes' for free. Much better was 13...♘c5! with a playable position) 14.♘e4 0-0 15.0-0-0, Van Vliet-Tinsley, London 1893. White has a big advantage, although he still managed to lose his way and the game later on.

7.♗g5

As I mentioned before, plans with 0-0 promise White no real advantage. This is illustrated by the following Karpov-game: 7.0-0 c6 8.♗g5 ♗e7 9.h3 ♗xe2 (Karpov decides to play it 'safe', and to finish his development quickly. He gives his light-squared bishop as he does not need it in this pawn structure. He still keeps his chances for future counterplay. Instead, 9...♗f5 was also OK – and more ambitious – since there is no reason to worry about 10.♘g3 ♗g6 11.f4 because of the trick 11...♗xc2! 12.♕xc2 ♕xd4+ and the result is a healthy pawn up for Black!) 10.♘xe2! (finally the knight has left c3) 10...♘bd7 11.♕e1 (11.♗d3! to prepare c2-c4 was White's best chance to fight for something. Anyway, Black could react with a future ...e5 with equal chances) 11...♘d5 12.♗xe7 (exchanging the pair of bishops is favourable for Black. 12.♗d2 was better) 12...♕xe7 13.♗xd5?! (clearly playing for a draw against a much stronger opponent. As usual, playing for a draw is the wrong method to score (half) points. Stronger are both 13.♗b3 and 13.♗d3 keeping equal chances) 13...cxd5, as in the game Martos-Karpov, Villarrobledo 1997. Now Black's pawn structure is already a bit better, since he can organize play on the queenside, on the open c file or with a minority attack.

7...h6

To ensure that the bishop will never get to the queenside again.

8.♗h4 ♗b4

Solid enough was 8...♗e7 9.♕d2 followed by 10.0-0-0, but I wanted to prevent queenside castling. In that case, ...h6 could prove to be a weakness.

9.0-0

My plan worked! Black is better after 9.♕d3 ♗xe2! (the point!). Now it is not so attractive to play 10.♔xe2 – 10.♕xe2 ♕xd4 – when after 10...♘c6! followed by ...♕e7 and ...0-0-0 Black gets very good chances.

In reply to 9.♕d2 best is 9...♗xe2! (better than 9...c5 10.f3 ♗f5 – 10...♘c6!? – 11.0-0-0) 10.♗xe2 c5! with unclear play.

9...c6!?

Good enough was 9...0-0 10.♘e4 ♗e7, with equality.

10.♗d3

The logical 10.♘e4 ♗e7 (also possible is 10...♘bd7) gives White no real advantage.

10...♗xe2

White was planning 11.f3.

11.♘xe2 ♘bd7 12.c3

This is the best White could hope for. The knight has moved from c3, and the d4 pawn will get some support. Black's position is rock solid and hard to break!

12...♗e7 13.a4!?

13.c4 gives more chances to fight for something.

13...a5!

Now after a future c2-c4 Black will obtain the b4-square.

14.♕b3 ♕b6 15.♕xb6 ♘xb6 16.f3 ♘fd5 17.♗f2 h5!

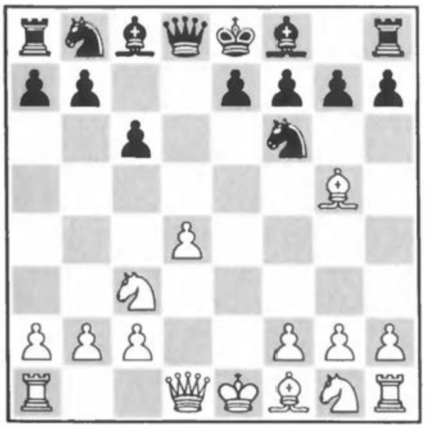
Fighting for more space on the kingside, by ... h4 or even ...g5. Black has good chances and it is really hard for White to find a good plan. However, since a draw was a good result, I used this moment and offered it.

Ramesh agreed, disappointed that he did not manage to get an attacking position with the white pieces! In the last round I managed to win, and finished as the winner of this strong closed tournament!

After using the 'Ilundain Variation' in Salou, I decided to try it a few more times in rapid chess tournaments. I achieved good results especially when employing it against strong grandmasters as a solid surprise weapon! These days there are strong players that play this line from time to time: GM's Solak and Marinkovic (Yugoslavia), Zelcic (Croatia), Popchev (Bulgaria) and WGM Martha Fierro Baquero (Ecuador). Let's see the WGM in action against a tough GM rated 274 elo-points above her!

☐ **Ildar Ibragimov**
■ **Martha Fierro Baquero**
Las Vegas 2003 (1)

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♕xd5 3.♘c3 ♕d8 4.d4 ♘f6
and now let's see another logical move for White which was already tried by GM's at the highest level – for example by Lautier!
5.♗g5 c6!



This healthy move is always useful in Black's plans. The point is to control d5, to restrict the job of the knight on c3, to open the diagonal for Black's queen to a5 or b6, and, most important, to prepare ...♗f5 (which is dangerous to play immediately because of 6.♕f3).

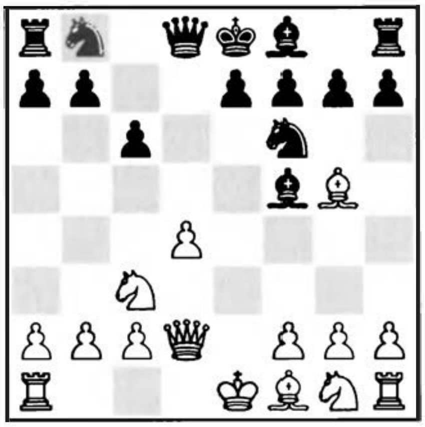
- Instead, 5...e6 6.♘e4!? would lead to the French Defence (which proves that 3...♕d8 is not so bad?).
- Worse, in my opinion, is how Ivan Sokolov played against Lautier: 5...♘bd7 6.♘f3 h6 7.♗h4 a6!? (Sokolov gave 7...e6 8.d5!? as promising: 8...e5 – if 8...♘b6 9.♗b5+ – 9.♗d3±. I think that 7...g6!? might be an interesting improvement) 8.♗d3 e6 9.♕e2 ♗e7 10.0-0-0 c5?! (better is 10...0-0, according to Lautier, but 11.♘e5 followed by f4 is much better for White) 11.d5! (11.♖he1 – Lautier – 11...cxd4 12.♘xd4±) 11...exd5 12.♖he1 d4 13.♗c4!, Lautier-I.Sokolov, Pamplona 1992/93.
- Also risky is 5...♗f5, falling into White's main trap(!): 6.♕f3!. With dynamic play White now creates a real attack: 6...♕c8 (6...♗xc2 7.♖c1 ♗g6 8.♕xb7 and 9.♘b5 hangs in the air) 7.♗c4 c6 8.♘ge2:
  - 8...e6 9.♗xf6 gxf6 10.0-0-0 (with ♘g3 or g4 coming) 10...h5 (10...♖g8 11.h3!) 11.h3!.
  - 8...♗xc2 (to at least have a pawn for all the suffering) 9.0-0 ♗g6 10.♘g3 (10.♖fe1!) 10...♘bd7 11.♖fe1 ♘b6 12.♗xf6 ♘xc4 13.♗h4 ♕d7 (13...e6 14.d5!) 14.d5! with a winning lead in development, Szabo-Fuster, Hungarian Championship, Budapest 1951.
- Interesting is 5...♗g4 6.♗e2 (6.f3 ♗e6!? followed by ...c6, ...♘bd7, ...♕a5/♕b6, and ...0-0-0 seems totally playable! Black can solve the ♗f8-problem with ... h6, ...g5, and ...♗g7) 6...♗xe2 7.♕xe2!?:
  - 7...♕xd4 (taking this pawn allows White too much time. Black falls behind in development to a risky degree) 8.♘f3 ♕b6 (8...♕d6 9.♘b5) 9.0-0-0, with a nice attacking position.

– 7...♘bd7 8.♘f3 c6 9.0-0-0 ♕a5 10.♔b1 e6 11.♘e5 ♗b4∞ was played by two strong Israeli masters! Gelfer-Czerniak, Israel 1974.

6.♗c4

No good is 6.♕d3?! ♕a5! 7.♘f3 ♗f5 8.♕d2 ♘bd7 9.♗c4 e6 10.♘h4 ♗b4 11.♘xf5 ♕xf5 12.♗d3 ♕a5 13.0-0 ♘d5, Certic-Marinkovic, Niksic 1997.

More in keeping with his fifth move is 6.♕d2 preparing queenside castling. 6...♗f5



is the most logical before playing e6 (also playble is 6...♗e6!? 7.♘f3 ♘bd7 8.a4 h6 9.♗f4 g5! 10.♗e3 ♗g7 11.♗e2 ♘g4 12.0-0-0 ♕a5 13.♔b1 ♞b6 14.b3 0-0-0 15.h3 ♘xe3 16.fxe3 ♕b4 17.♘e1 ♕a3 18.♘d3 ♔b8 19.♕c1 ♕xc1+ 20.♔xc1 ♗c8 Priborsky-Popchev, Prague 2005. Or even 6...e6 with the idea of 7...♗b4, but the light-squared bishop is a problem piece here. Finally, 6...♘bd7 may also be investigated) and now:

A) 7.♗xf6 is not dangerous: 7...gxf6 8.0-0-0:

A1) 8...♘d7 9.♗d3 ♗xd3 10.♕xd3 e6 planning 11...♕a5 and 12...0-0-0. Black is completely OK! He might get nice play on the open g-file with ...♖g8, and .. .f5, and ...♘f6 is another idea to press on d4.

A2) 8...e6 9.♘f3 ♘d7 10.♘h4 ♗g6 11.♕e3 ♕b6 12.♗c4 0-0-0 13.g3 f5 14.♘e2 ♗g7 15.♕a3 ♔b8 (15...♗h5∓) 16.♘f4 c5! 17.d5 ♘e5, Neelotpal-Paunovic, San Sebastian 2005.

B) A very interesting positional game – illustrating Black's potential in this structure – was played by the famous GM and trainer Dorfman. So, let's investigate Kaminski-Dorfman, Polanica Zdroj 1992, in detail: 7.♘f3 e6:

B1) 8.♘h4 leads to an equal position after 8...h6!. Black is fine after 9.♘xf5 hxg5 10.♘g3 ♗b4 11.0-0-0 (11.♕xg5 ♕xd4) 11...♕a5.

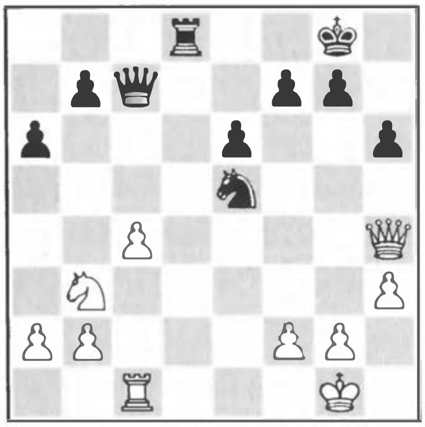
So, White should play 9.♗xf6 ♕xf6 10.♘xf5 ♕xf5 11.♗d3 ♕a5, and now:

– 12.♘e2 ♕xd2+ 13.♔xd2 ♘d7 14.c3 g6 with equal play, was played by GM Marinkovic. He soon managed to outplay his weaker opponent: 15.♔c2 ♗g7 16.♖ad1 ♘f6 17.♖he1? (17.h3=) 17...♘g4∓ Markovic-Marinkovic, Niksic 1997.

– 12.♘e4 ♕xd2+ 13.♘xd2 ♘d7 14.0-0-0 0-0-0 15.♘c4 ♔c7 16.f4 Fernandez Aguado-Dorfman, Logrono 1991.

B2) More logical is 8.0-0-0! h6 9.♗h4 ♗b4 (or 9...♘bd7) with complex play, where Black will usually castle queenside as well, or will risk castling to the other side to counterattack the white king.

B3) 8.♗d3 ♗xd3 9.♕xd3 ♘bd7 10.0-0 ♗e7 11.♘e2!. This is the best plan for White here, but note that the loss of time involved justifies moving the queen back and forth on moves 2 and 3! 11...0-0 12.c4 ♖e8 13.♘c3. White has more space, but Black has a comfortable position and equal chances. Usually Black's plan in such a structure is to put a rook on d8 to press d4, or to play c5 at the right moment. 13...♕a5 14.♖fe1 ♖ad8 15.♕c2 h6 16.♗h4 c5 17.♖ad1 cxd4 18.♘xd4 a6! (this is always necessary). Kaminski tried 19.♘b3?! (better was 19.♘f3 ♗b4 (19...♖c8) 20.♖e3=) 19...♕c7 20.♘e4 ♖c8 21.♖c1 ♘xe4 22.♕xe4 ♗xh4 23.♕xh4 ♘e5! (Black has obtained the initiative) 24.♖ed1 ♖ed8 25.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 26.h3



26...♖d7!∓ (when Black's knight will enter on d3 White will suffer; after the immediate 26...♘d3 White has 27.♖d1) 27.♕g3 ♘d3 28.♕xc7 ♖xc7 29.♖d1 (29.♖c2 ♘b4∓) 29...♘xb2 30.♖d8+ ♔h7 31.c5 ♘a4 32.♖b8 ♔g6! 33.g3 ♘xc5 34.♘xc5 ♖xc5 35.♖xb7 ♖c2 36.a3 ♖c3 37.a4 ♖c4 38.a5 ♖c5 39.♔g2 ♖xa5 40.♖a7 ♔f6 41.h4 g5 42.hxg5+ hxg5 43.g4 ♖a3 44.f3 a5, 0-1 Kaminski-Dorfman, Polanica Zdroj 1992. An excellent endgame win!

C) Kaminski was lucky to draw against a 2200-player(!): 7.♗c4 e6 8.♘ge2 ♘bd7 9.♗b3 ♗b4! 10.f3 h6 11.♗h4 ♕a5 (and Black is better after only 11 moves!) 12.a3 ♘d5 13.♗a2 ♗xc3 14.bxc3 0-0 15.c4 ♕xd2+ 16.♔xd2 ♘5f6 17.g4 ♗h7 18.♗g3 ♖fe8 19.♖he1 e5!∓ 20.dxe5 ♘xe5 21.♘d4 ♘fd7 Kaminski-Van Meter, Dallas 2001, and a draw was agreed on move 59.

D) 7.♘ge2!? e6 8.♘g3 ♗g6 9.♘ce2!? (9.h4 h6 10.♗xf6 ♕xf6 11.h5 ♗h7 12.♘ge4 ♕d8 and Black has a great version of the Caro-Kann) 9...♘bd7 10.0-0-0 ♗d6 (10...h6!) 11.h4 (11.♘f4 ♕b6 and 12...0-0-0 is fine for Black!) 11...h6 12.♗f4 ♗e7 13.♘c3 (demonstrating that White has nothing from the opening) 13...♕a5 14.♗d3 ♗xd3 15.♕xd3 0-0-0 16.♔b1 and now 16...♘b6! (16...g6?! 17.♘ge4 ♘xe4 18.♘xe4 ♘f6 19.♗e5± was Baklan-Lopez Martinez, Andorra 2001) with ...♘bd5 coming would have given Black the better chances.

6...♗f5

Also interesting is the 'characteristic' 6...♗g4 as played by the young Yugoslav GM Solak 7.f3 ♗f5 8.g4 (8.♘ge2 e6) 8...♗g6 9.h4?! (9.♕d2) 9...h5 10.♘ge2 hxg4 11.♘f4 ♗f5 12.♗xf6 gxf6 13.fxg4 ♕d6! 14.♕f3 (14.gxf5 ♕xf4 15.♕d2 ♕xf5 16.♕f2∓) 14...♗xc2 15.♖c1 ♗h7 16.♘b5 ♕d7 17.♕b3 e6 and after a tough defence Black went on to win in Markovic-Solak, Budva 2002.

7.♘f3 e6 8.♕e2

8.0-0 didn't give White much in the following game by 'the expert': 8...♗e7 9.h3 ♘bd7 10.♖e1 h6 11.♗h4 0-0 12.♗d3 ♗xd3 13.♕xd3 ♕b6 14.♖ab1 ♖fe8 15.a3 ♖ad8 16.b4 ♘d5 17.♗g3 ♘xc3 18.♕xc3 ♕a6 19.♕b3 ♘b6, Kolev-Garcia Illundain, Montcada 1999.

8...♗b4

A logical developing move, similar to how I played against Ramesh. I tried 8...♘bd7?! against GM Jansa (who is usually well-prepared on 'normal openings') and he was so surprised – spending time on every move – that he didn't manage to find the best moves. Play is equal after **9.0-0-0** ♗e7 10.♘e5 ♘d5!. However, the main problem after 8...♘bd7, which both of us underestimated during the game is **9.d5!** cxd5 10.♘xd5 ♖c8!? with the threat of 11...♖xc4, but 11.0-0-0! ♗e7 (11...♖xc4 12.♘xf6+ gxf6 13.♕xc4 fxg5 14.♘e5+–; 11...a6 12.♘d4 ♗g6 13.♘xe6! fxe6 14.♗xf6! and White wins! Surprisingly, I found out that all our post mortem analysis had already occurred (with a different move order) in Fedorchuk-Lopez Martinez, World Junior Championship, Yerevan 2000 – one year before my game!) 12.♘xe7 ♕xe7 13.♘d4 (13.♖xd7!? ♕xd7 14.♗b5

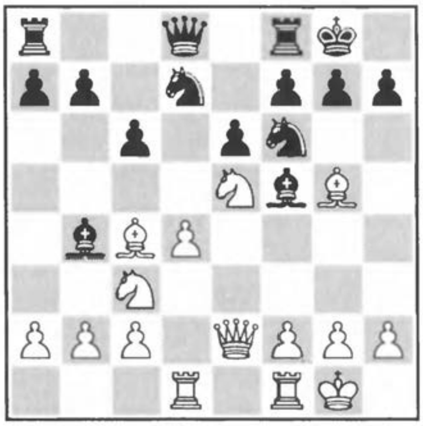
♖xc2+ 15.♕xc2 ♕xb5 16.♕c8+ ♔e7 17.♕xh8 ♕c4+ leads to perpetual check) with a dangerous attack.

Instead, Jansa played **9.♗b3!?** h6 10.♗xf6?! (10.♗h4 ♗e7 11.0-0-0 ♘d5! 12.♗xe7 ♘xc3!) 10...♕xf6 11.♘e4 ♕d8!? (equal is 11...♗xe4 12.♕xe4 ♗d6) 12.0-0-0♕c7 (refusing a draw offer) 13.♘g3:

– dangerous was 13...♗h7, since after 14.♗xe6!? fxe6 15.♕xe6+ ♗e7 16.♖he1 ♘f6 (16...♘f8 17.♕g4 g6 18.♘e5) 17.♘e5 ♖f8 18.♘f5 White has an attack.

– 13...♕f4+?! 14.♔b1 0-0-0 (14...♗g4 15.♖d3!) 15.♘xf5?! (15.d5! exd5 16.♖d4 ♗e4 17.♘xe4dxe4 18.♖xe4 ♕f6 19.♖d1 g5 20.c3±) 15...♕xf5 16.♘e5 ♘xe5 17.♕xe5 ♕xe5 (17...♕g5!?) 18.dxe5 ♖xd1+ 19.♖xd1 ♗c5 20.f4 g6 21.g4 ♖d8 22.♖xd8+ ♔xd8 23.f5 ♔e7 24.fxg6 fxg6 25.c3 ♗g1 26.h3 ♗h2 27.♔c2 ♗xe5∓ was Jansa-Kogan, Benasque 2001. The game finally finished in a ... draw!

9.0-0 0-0 10.♖ad1 ♘bd7 11.♘e5



11...♗xc3!

A concrete decision by Black to destroy White's pawn structure and attack it with the queen!

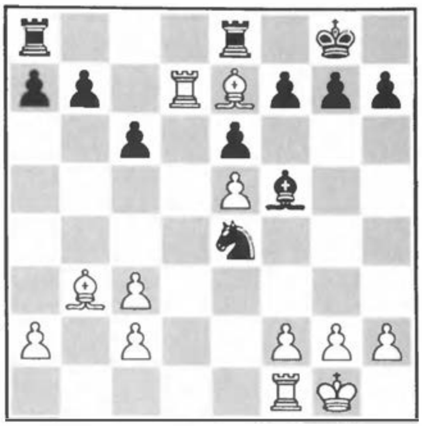
12.bxc3 ♕a5!

Black has removed her queen from the annoying pin, and now her counterplay is clear!

13.♗b3 ♘xe5

13...♕xc3 14.♘xd7 ♘xd7 15.♗d2 ♕b2 16.♗c1 ♕c3 17.♗d2 was only a draw. Maybe she was already playing for a win?

14.♕xe5 ♕xe5 15.dxe5 ♘e4 16.♗e7 ♖fe8 17.♖d7



Superficially, White appears to be better, but:

17...a5! 18.g4!?

18.a4 b5! 19.c4 ♘c3 20.cxb5 cxb5 and Black's a-pawn will be very dangerous!

18...♗g6 19.f4

Not 19.a4 b5!.

19...a4

Also possible was 19...b5 20.f5 exf5 21.gxf5 ♗h5 22.♖e1 ♘xc3 23.e6 f6! and Black's plan of ...a4 or ...♗g4 is hard to prevent.

20.♗c4 b5 21.♗d3 ♘xc3 22.f5 exf5 23.gxf5 ♗h5

White has some compensation for the pawn, but no more than that.

24.♖e1

Or 24.a3 ♘d5 25.♗d6 ♖ad8!.

24...♘d5 25.♗c5 ♘f4 26.♗f1 ♖ad8!

Also good was 26...♗g4!? 27.♖d4 ♘h3+!.

27.♖xd8 ♖xd8 28.♗d6 f6

Black managed to stop White's temporal initiative, and now, by breaking the centre, she gets a technically winning position.The rest hardly requires any comment.

29.c4 fxe5 30.c5 ♖e8 31.♗xe5 ♗f7?!

Immediately winning is 31...♗g4! 32.♖e4 ♗xf5!.

32.a3 ♗c4 33.♔f2 ♗xf1 34.♗xf4 ♖xe1 35.♔xe1 ♗d3 36.♗d2 ♔f7 37.♔f2 ♗xf5 38.♔e3 g5 39.♔d4 ♔g6
And Black won this opposite-coloured bishop ending.

And now let's see a very interesting game where one of the best chess players 'lost his head' against the ♕d8 Scandinavian!

☐ **Alexey Shirov**
■ **Emir Dizdarevic**
Calvia ol 2004 (12)

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♕xd5 3.♘c3 ♕d8 4.d4 ♘f6 5.♘f3
This is the most popular move and the main line. Black now faces a wide choice. I would advocate either the plan with ...c6 and ...♗g4/♗f5, or the plan with ...c6, ...b5 and ...♗b7 (which is how Dizdarevic beat Shirov in our main game).

5...c6

● Kiril Georgiev has successfully played 5...♗g4 6.h3:
6...♗xf3 7.♕xf3 c6 8.♗e3 e6 9.0-0-0 (here it is safer to play 9.♗d3 ♘bd7 10.0-0 ♗e7 11.♖ad1 ♕a5 12.♕g3 0-0 13.♕h4 ♕h5 14.♕xh5 ♘xh5 15.♘e4 ♘hf6 16.c3± Aronian-Collas, Cannes 1996) 9...♗b4 10.♗d2 (not 10.♗c4 ♗xc3 11.bxc3 ♕a5) 10...0-0 (10...♕xd4?! is too risky after 11.♘b5!) 11.g4?! (11.♘e4 ♗xd2+ 12.♖xd2 ♘xe4 13.♕xe4 ♘d7 leads to an equal position) 11...♕xd4 12.♗d3?! ♘bd7 13.♗f4 (13.g5? ♘e5!∓) 13...♕b6 (White has lost a pawn and still has to cope with the opponent's attack) 14.♘e2 ♖fd8 15.h4 (15.g5 ♘d5 16.♕h5 ♘f8∓) 15...♕a5∓, A. Kovacevic-Kir.Georgiev, Belgrade 1997.
Riskier is **6...♗h5** 7.g4 ♗g6 8.♘e5 e6 9.♗g2! c6 (9...♘d5 10.♘xd5 exd5 11.♕e2±) 10.0-0 ♘bd7 11.♕e2 ♘xe5 12.dxe5 ♘d5 (12...♘d7 13.f4!) 13.♘e4 ♗xe4 14.♕xe4 ♗c5 15.a3 a5 16.♖d1 (not the best option) 16...♕h4 17.♕e2 h5! 18.c4 hxg4 19.cxd5 gxh3 20.♗f3 ♗xf2+! 21.♕xf2 h2+ 22.♔f1 h1♕+ 23.♗xh1 ♕xh1+ 24.♔e2 ♕h5+ 25.♕f3 ♕xe5+∓ Hitzgerova-Duran, Klatovy 1997.

● Also normal is 5...♗f5 and here the world's number 1 played the simple 6.♗d3!? (6.♘e5 c6) 6...♗xd3 7.♕xd3 c6 8.♗g5 e6 9.0-0-0 (castling as soon as possible) 9...♘bd7 10.♘e5 ♘xe5 (10...♕a5! is an improvement here) 11.dxe5 ♕xd3 12.♖xd3 ♘d5 13.♘e4 b5 14.♖hd1 h6 15.♗h4 g5 16.♗g3 0-0-0 17.h4 ♗e7 18.h5!± with a small positional advantage that he managed to convert after demonstrating the technique of a great champion. Even more incredible is that this was a blitz game! Kasparov-Serper, Internet ICC 1998.

● Once I even thought about 5...♗e6!? which prevents 6.♗c4. The plan is to finachetto the other bishop. This has not been tried in practice, so let's see who will be the first one to employ it!

● 5...g6 was played quite a few times by the creative WGM Chelushkina: 6.♗f4 (6.♗g5 ♗g7 7.♕d2 c6 8.a3?! h6 9.♗f4 ♗e6 10.♗e2 ♘bd7 11.♘e5 ♘d5 12.♘xd5 ♗xd5 13.0-0 ♘xe5 14.dxe5 g5 15.♗g3 ♗e6 was equal in Vasquez Ramirez-Chelushkina, Bled 2002; 6.♗c4 ♗g7 7.h3 c6 8.♗f4 ♘bd7 9.0-0 0-0 10.♖e1 ♘b6 11.♗b3 a5 12.a3 ♘bd5 13.♘xd5 cxd5 14.♖e3 a4 15.♗a2 ♖e8 16.♕e2 ♗d7 17.♖e1 ♕b6 18.c3 ♗b5 19.♕c2 e6 and draw agreed in Savic-Chelushkina, Belgrade 2002) 6...c6 7.♕d2:

– Now 7...♗g7 8.0-0-0 0-0 9.♗h6 b5! gives Black counterattacking chances.

– Objectively worse is 7...♕a5?!, an interesting 'psychological move'. It should frighten White out of playing 8.0-0-0. 8.♗c4 ♗g7 9.0-0 ♕d8! (9...0-0? 10.♘d5!+–) and now the queen retreats for the second time to d8, having done its job of scaring White into castling kingside! 10.♖fe1 0-0 11.♕e2 b5 12.♗b3 a5 13.a3 e6 14.♘e4 ♘d5 15.♗d6±. Later on she managed to outplay her opponent and win. Stiazhkina-Chelushkina, Rethymnon 2003.

6.♗c4

White prevents 6...♗g4, because of 7.♗xf7+, and prepares ♘e5 with an initiative as in the normal Scandinavian with 3...♕a5.

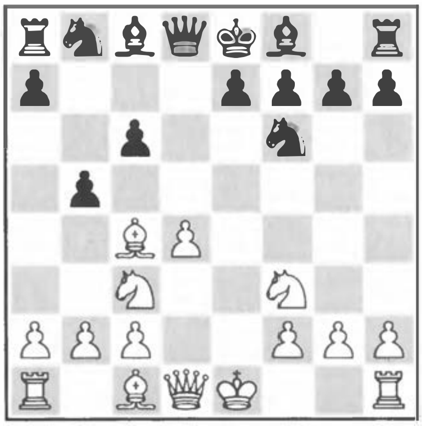
The alternative is 6.♘e5!? when

– 6...♗e6!? followed by 7...g6 will give Black a solid position with nice counterchances since all his pieces cooperate well.

– It is also possible to offer White the main line with 6...♗f5 since after 7.g4 (7.♗c4 e6) there is 7...♗e6! and ...g6 to follow.

Thirdly, Leko played 6.♗g5!? but gained no edge after 6...♗g4 7.♗xf6 exf6 8.♗e2 ♗b4 9.♕d3 0-0 10.0-0 ♘d7 11.a3 ♗a5 12.♘d2 ♗e6 13.♘c4 ♗c7 when both sides have chances, Leko-Adams, Frankfurt 1999.

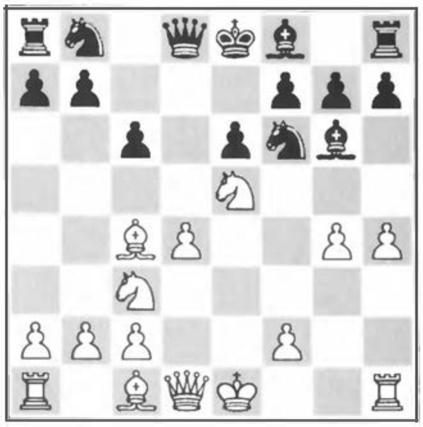
6...b5!?



This original move was first introduced into practice by the Yugoslav IM Zdravko Vukovic in 1994. Since then this has become his pet line against 1.e4. I can recommend this line for adventurous players. Incidentally, Ilundain played this too, with good results.

Also playable is the odd 6...e6!? planning ...b5, and if 7.a4!? then 7...b6!, solving the problem of the c8-bishop.

Dangerous is 6...♗f5 7.♘e5 e6 8.g4!, but only against a well-prepared opponent! 8...♗g6 9.h4!.



This is the principal move:

- Objectively best is now Adams' move: 9...♘bd7!? 10.♘xd7 (10.♕e2 ♗b4!) 10...♕xd7 11.h5 ♗e4 12.♘xe4 ♘xe4 13.♗e3 was played in Lutz-Adams, Frankfurt 1999. Now an interesting improvement might be 13...♘d6!? (13...0-0-0!? 14.c3± or the complex; 13...♗b4+!? 14.c3 ♘xc3 15.bxc3 ♗xc3+ 16.♔f1 ♗xa1 17.♕xa1 0-0-0 White is probably better, but it's still a matter of taste I guess) 14.♗d3 (14.♗b3 a5 15.a4 ♗e7 and ...0-0 and ...b5 to follow) 14...♘b5!? 15.c3 ♘c7 with the idea of ...♘d5, when Black is solid.
- 9...♗e4!? 10.♘xe4 (10.0-0 ♗d5!) 10...♘xe4 11.♕f3 (11.♘xf7 ♚xf7 12.♕f3+ ♘f6 13.g5 ♕xd4 seems OK for Black) 11...♘d6 seems a bit better for White.
- Very complex is 9...♗b4. I played it a few times, but only as a surprise weapon. Maybe, I should call it pure bluff! I'll show you what I mean:

Possible is **10.h5** ♗e4 11.f3 ♗d5 12.♗d3.

The 'normal' way to play for 'theoretical players' is **10.♖h3!?**, basing themselves on the theory of 3...♕a5. 10...♘bd7 11.♕e2 ♘b6!. This is Black's main point! With the queen on d8, instead of a5, pawn d4 is hanging! Black gets very strong counterplay after

12.h5 ♗e4:
Bad is 13.g5? ♕xd4 14.gxf6 ♕xe5 15.fxg7 ♖g8 16.♖e3 (16.h6 ♘xc4–+) 16...♖xg7! winning.

In the last round of Lisbon Open 2001 I decided to surprise the Dutch GM Harmen Jonkman. This worked very well, since I got the better position right after the opening when he played: 13.♗d2?! ♕xd4 14.♘xe4 ♕xe5?! (14...♕xb2! 15.♖d1 ♕xe5 was even better) 15.♘xf6+ gxf6 16.♗xb4 ♘xc4 17.♗c3 ♕xe2+ 18.♔xe2 e5∓, Jonkman-Kogan, Lisbon 2001.

The strongest move is 13.♗f4!, and now:

– 13...♘xc4 14.♘xc4 (14.♕xc4 ♘d5!) 14...♗xc2!? (worth considering is 14...♗g2!? 15.♖g3 ♘e4) 15.♗e5 ♗a4 16.h6! ♖g8 17.hxg7 ♖xg7 18.♕f3 ♖g6 19.g5! ♕d5!, Inarkiev-Kogan, Moscow 2002. I won in the end, but White missed his best chance here with: 20.♗xf6! ♕xc4 21.b3! ♕xc3+ 22.♕xc3 ♗xc3+ 23.♖xc3 ♗b5 24.♖h3±.

– 13...♕xd4 14.♖d1 ♗d3! (a great move by David that gives Black the advantage!) 15.♖hxd3 ♕xf4 16.♖d4 (16.♘xf7? ♕xc4 17.♘xh8 ♔e7) 16...♕h2 17.♘xf7 0-0 18.♗xe6! (18.♕e5 ♕xe5+ 19.♘xe5 ♘bd5∓), Ponomariov-Ilundain, Pamplona 1996/97. Now the game continued with 18...♘bd5!? 19.♕e5!. Black missed that after 18...♖xf7 19.♖xb4 (19.♖d8+ ♖xd8 20.♖xd8+ ♗f8∓) he has 19...♖e8! 20.♖d3!? (Ponomariov) 20...♔f8! 21.♖e3 ♖fe7 and only White can be in trouble here, as he can hardly move.

However, the big problem with 9...♗b4 is **10.f3!!**. This move I had found already during my home preparation for Ramesh, and it took me several hours to be convinced that Black is almost lost. But, at the same time, I couldn't imagine that somebody would find all this very soon. In fact it was found in the same year!

White wins after 10...0-0 11.h5! ♗xc2 12.♕xc2 ♕xd4 13.f4! and so on.

White also gets a tremendous position after 10...♘d5 11.♗xd5! (L.Perez) followed by 12.h5.

Finally, tempting is 10...♗xc2?! 11.♕xc2 ♕xd4. Unfortunately, White has the incredibly strong 12.♕e2!!. The game Perez-Lopez Martinez, Varadero II 2000, continued: 12...♗xc3+ (12...b5?! 13.♘xf7!) 13.bxc3 ♕xc3+ 14.♔f2 ♕xa1 15.♖d1! ♕c3 (15...b5 16.♗a3+–) 16.♗b2! ♕b4 17.♘xf7! 0-0 (17...♘e4+ 18.♕xe4!+–) 18.♗xf6!+– gxf6 19.♕xe6 ♕c3 (19...♔g7 20.h5! h6 21.♕f5) 20.♖d8 (20.♘g5+! ♔h8 21.♕f5+–; 20.♕e7+–) 20...♘d7 (20...♖xd8 21.♘e5+ ♔g7 22.♕f7+ ♔h8 23.♕xf6+ mate) 21.♖xa8 ♕d4+ 22.♔g2 ♕d2+ 23.♔h3 ♔g7 24.♕e7! ♕f4 25.♘g5+ 1-0.

7.♗b3 e6

Playing for a kind of Meran is especially suitable for Slav Defence players! Black wants to play ...♗b7 and ...c5 as soon as possible. White has a big choice, but Black's position seems very solid.

8.♗g5

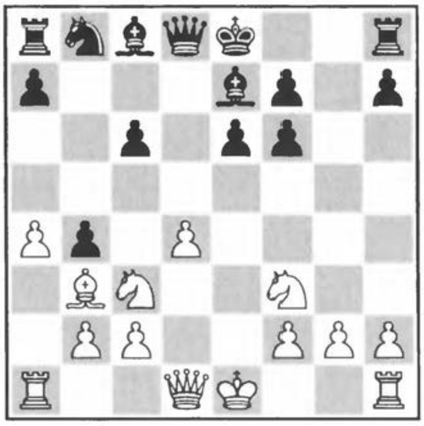
More natural is the idea of **8.0-0** ♗e7 9.♘e5 (moving the knight from c3 allows a quick ...c5: 9.♘e2 0-0 10.c3 c5! 11.♘e5 ♗b7 12.♗e3 ♘bd7 Sofronie-Vukovic, Bucharest 2000. Here we see that Black has no problems at all, and he can be confident in the future) 9...0-0 10.♗g5 a5! 11.a4 (11.a3!?) 11...b4. Now Black is finally ready for ...c5! In the meantime he has staked out some space on the queenside. 12.♗xf6? (trying to complicate things, but this sacrifice is insufficient. 12.♘e2 c5 13.dxc5 ♕c7 14.♘d3 ♘bd7 and Black is OK, as in similar positions in the Meran) 12...gxf6 13.♕h5 fxe5 14.♖ad1 ♕e8 15.♘e2 f5! 16.♕h3 e4–+ and only a miracle later on saved White in Ivanovic-Vukovic, Niksic 1994.

8.♘e5 ♗b7 9.♕e2 ♗e7 10.a4 0-0! 11.axb5 cxb5 12.♕xb5 ♕xd4 13.♗e3 ♕b4 equal in Sveshnikov-Khairullin, Krasnoyarsk 2003.

8...♗e7 9.a4!?

This was played by no less than the mighty Shirov! Even such a great player can fall into a 'psychological trap', and try to refute the line with aggressive play.

9...b4 10.♗xf6!? gxf6!



Less attractive is 10...♗xf6 11.♘e4± since Black needs to control the c5-square for the future ...c5 break.

11.♘e2 ♘a6!?

Dizdarevic continues in provocative style! Imagine Shirov's feelings at this point. Instead, 11...♗b7 followed by ...♕d6 and ...♘bd7 (and finally ...c5) was good enough for Black to equalize.

12.♕d2 h5!?

Preventing ♕h6.

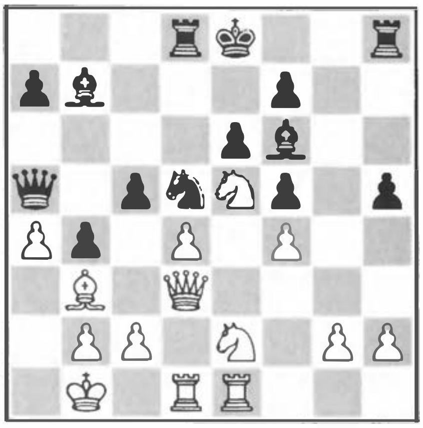
13.0-0-0?!

Here 13.0-0 was a better idea to fight for the advantage, but Shirov probably wanted to try and punish his 'provocative opponent'.

13...♘c7 14.♘e1 ♘d5 15.♘d3 ♕a5 16.f4 f5

Superficially, White looks better, but in fact Black can defend easily. White is basically out of good ideas: how do you break through to Black's king? In the meantime Black can improve his position, and prepare the 'dream break' ...c5.

17.♘e5 ♗b7 18.♔b1 ♖d8 19.♕d3 ♗f6 20.♖he1 c5!



Black is already slightly better. It is important to mention the safe place of Black's king in the centre. White's king is far less safe on b1!

21.♘g3 ♔f8!

White was clearly unhappy with his position and now tried to complicate things with:

22.dxc5 ♘c3+ 23.bxc3 ♖xd3 24.♖xd3 ♗c8!

Possibly, it was this strong defensive move that was missed by Shirov. His attack is finished and Black will escape with his extra material.

25.c6 bxc3 26.♘xf5!

A great idea by Shirov, but Black is still better after all.

26...exf5 27.♘d7+ ♔g7 28.♖g3+ ♔h6 29.♘xf6 ♗e6 30.♖e5 ♕b4 31.♘d5

31.♖b5 ♕d4!∓ (31...♕xf4 32.♘g8+) with ...♕d1 coming up.

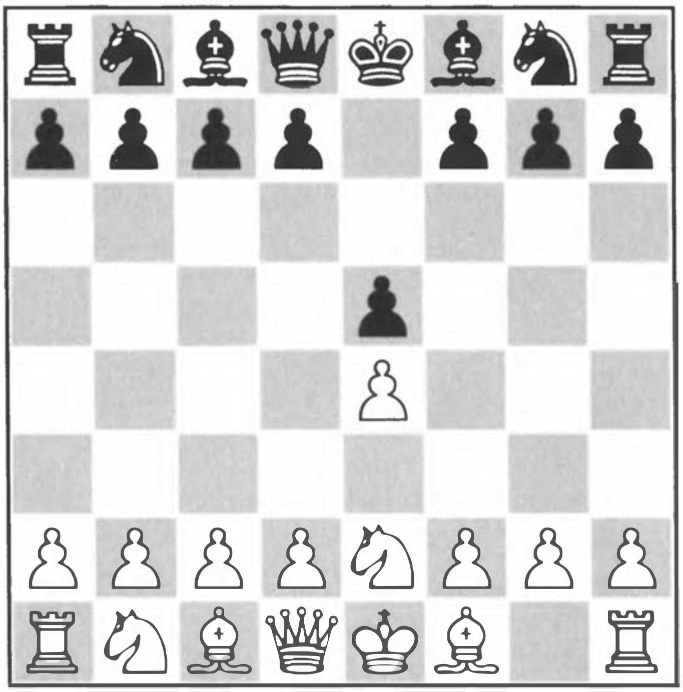
31...♗xd5 32.♖xd5 ♖e8 33.♖d1 ♖c8 34.♔a2 ♖xc6 35.♖d8 ♔h7 36.♖gg8 ♕xf4 37.♖h8+ ♔g7 38.♖hg8+ ♔f6 39.♖d7 ♕c1 40.♖xf7+ ♔e5 41.♖e8+ ♔f4 42.g3+ ♔g4 0-1

A great win by Dizdarevic, proving that Ilundain's variation is fully playable. It is an excellent surprise weapon, rich in ideas, and even against much stronger players you can go for the win.

CHAPTER 3

Jeroen Bosch

The Alapin Opening



1.e4 e5 2.♘e2

☐ **Alexey Kornev**
■ **Mieczyslaw Bakalarz**
Warsaw Ech 2005 (2)

1.e4 e5 2.♘e2

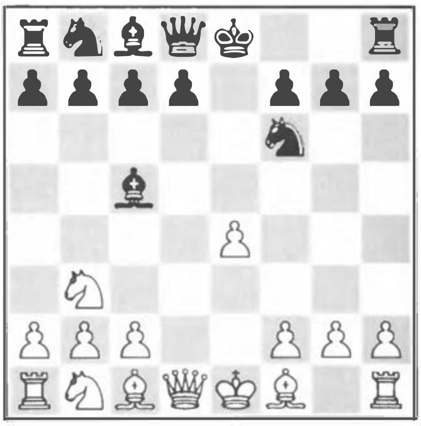
Why on earth should White play such a modest second move? True, 2.♘e2 qualifies as a developing move, but it inhibits the natural development of the light-squared bishop and forgoes the opportunity to grab the initiative (as does 2.♘f3). Black is given free rein to continue as he pleases: 2...♘c6, 2...♗c5 and 2...♘f6 are the most logical replies. From a practical point of view it is not so bad, though, to give your opponent such a freedom of choice so early in the game. Especially when you are well-prepared to meet his next few moves, you might gain valuable time on the clock. However, it is not only the surprise effect that Kornev was counting on when he confronted his opponent with 2.♘e2.

Unlike after 2.♘f3 White may still hope to realize f2-f4 within the next couple of moves. Strategically, this advance is of course highly desirable: exchanging the white f-pawn for Black's e-pawn would result in a central majority. White simply aims to play the King's Gambit without the gambit. There are clear similarities to the Vienna line 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.f4 (when 3...d5 4.fxe5 ♘xe4 is the normal continuation). Nor should we forget that White has in no way committed himself to the f4 plan yet: he might still play for d2-d4 as well. Considering the rich history of the Open Games I suppose no one will be surprised to learn that 2.♘e2 is not a modern invention. At the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century the outstanding theoretician Simon Alapin played it in numerous games, scoring some fine results with his opening too. These days, Alapin's name is mostly connected to his 2.c3 against the Sicilian, but avid SOS readers may remember a previous column on 1.d4 f5 2.♕d3!? – another creative Alapin idea.

2...♘f6

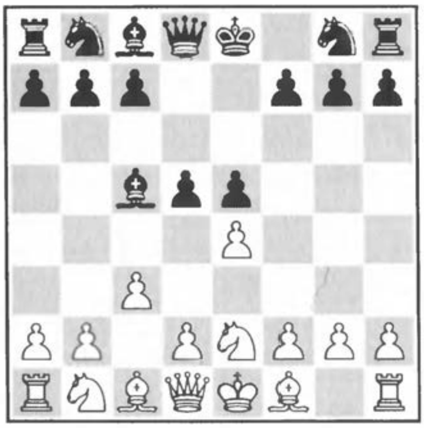
Bakalarz replies in the most natural way. Since White has omitted to attack e5, Black in his turn now seeks to grab the initiative by attacking White's e-pawn. There are several minor alternatives to consider:

- **2...♕h4** is far too extreme, of course. After 3.♘bc3 ♗c5 4.g3 (4.d4) 4...♕f6 5.d4 exd4 6.♘d5 White was better in Alapin-Albin, Berlin 1897.
- **2...f5** 3.exf5 is the King's Gambit reversed with a useful tempo up (1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.♘f3 ♘e7 is playable against the most venerable of gambits): 3...d5 4.d4 e4 5.♘g3 ♘f6 6.♗g5 ♗e7 7.♗xf6 ♗xf6 8.♕h5+ ♔f8 9.c3, and White was better in Alapin-Süchting, Berlin 1897.
- **2...d6** is slightly passive, and I don't think that you will encounter this often in practice. Still, Philidor players will be tempted to continue in this way. Now 3.d4 is a sound move, of course, but if you want to play in the spirit of Alapin go for 3.f4.
- **2...d5** is played by those who want to punish you immediately for playing such a passive move. They should be reminded, though, that after 3.exd5 ♕xd5 (3...♗c5 4.d4 exd4 5.♘xd4 ♕xd5 6.♗e3 ♘f6 7.♘c3 ♗b4 8.♘b5 ♕e5 9.♕d4 was slightly better for White in Plater-Brzozka, Lodz 1954) 4.♘bc3 ♕a5 we have reached an odd sort of Scandinavian in which White may have developed his knight somewhat passively at e2, but Black has weakened his position with the 'active' ...e5. White should be better after either 5.d4! or 5.g3, followed by ♗g2, 0-0, d3, and so on.
- **2...♗c5** is a good move that deserves to be investigated more seriously. After 3.d4 exd4 4.♘xd4 ♘c6 we have the Scotch game. However, Black can exploit the Alapin move order by postponing ...♘c6. There isn't much wrong with 4...d6, while 4...♘f6 5.♘b3 is even better (after 5.♘c3 Pillsbury played 5...d5 against Alapin, Vienna 1898, which is fine, as is the surprising 5...♘xe4 6.♘xe4 ♕e7, and the natural 5...0-0).



From the diagrammed position Black's simplest option is 5...♗b6 6.♘c3 0-0, with good development. Riskier is the greedy 5...♘xe4 6.♗d3 (6.♘xc5 ♘xc5, with insufficient compensation) 6...♕e7 7.♕e2 ♗b4+ 8.c3 ♘c5!, as given in the tournament book of Vienna 1898. For, as Denis Druash (who has written a monograph on the Alapin Opening) has noted, Alapin now intended to play 9.♗e3 ♘xd3+ 10.♕xd3 ♗d6 11.♘1d2 0-0 12.0-0-0, with obvious compensation. The whole line is tricky (prepare well and you may gain some points), but suspect. However, considering how little White achieves after 5...♗b6 and considering the fact that you cannot avoid the Scotch after 3.d4, there is not much point in playing 3.d4. You might as well prepare the Scotch proper in that case.

The ambitious 3.c3 (after 2...♗c5) at least gives the line a special Alapin ring. It worked well in Alapin-Halprin, Vienna 1898: 3...♘c6 4.d4 ♗b6 5.f4 ♘f6 6.fxe5 ♘xe4 7.♘d2 and so on. However, don't get too enthusiastic about 3.c3. In my opinion 3...d5 is an excellent answer.

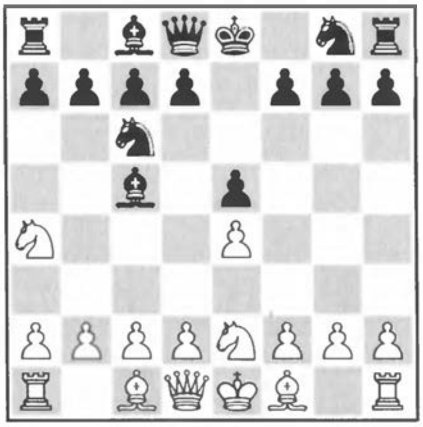


White cannot expect to gain an opening edge after 4.d4 exd4 5.cxd4 ♗b4+. Several sources indicate 4.exd5 ♕xd5 5.d4 exd4 6.cxd4 ♗b4+ 7.♘bc3, and so on. They forget to mention the stronger 5...♗b6! (Plater-Sefc, Bratislava 1957), with equality.

In practice Alapin was successful with the risky 3.f4. Objectively Black is OK after 3...d6 4.c3 ♘f6! 5.d3 ♘c6. Alapin continued his analysis with 6.h3 ♘h5 7.g3, which is anything but a confidence booster.

That leaves 3.♘bc3 as White's final try after 2...♗c5. After 3...♘c6 4.♘a4 we transpose into the next note. Black should go 3...♘f6, when 4.d4?! exd4 5.♘xd4 is fine for Black, as we have already seen. See below the note to Bakalarz's third move for more information on this position.

● **2...♘c6** is not bad either, of course, after 3.♘bc3 (3.d4 exd4 4.♘xd4 is the Scotch again, while 3...d6 is also possible) 3...♗c5 (3...♘f6 is the main game) White can have some fun by playing his knight to the rim: 4.♘a4.

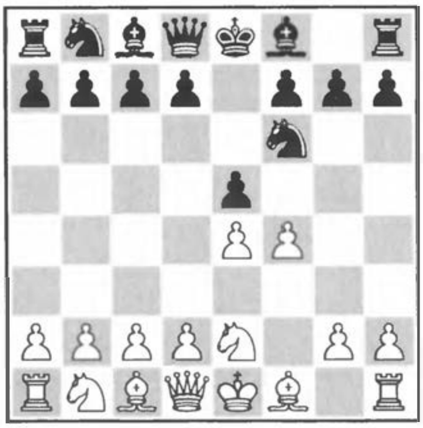


Black should continue 4...♗e7 (4...♗b6 5.♘xb6 hands White the bishop pair for free), and now 5.d4 gives White some space advantage:

- 5...exd4 6.♘xd4 ♘f6 (6...♗f6 7.♗e3 ♘ge7 8.f4 d6 9.♕d2 0-0 10.0-0-0 ♘g6 11.♘f5 ♗e6 12.g4 ♕e8 13.g5, with an attack, Plater-Dittmann, Krynica 1956) 7.♘xc6 bxc6 8.e5, which compares favourably to a main line in the Scotch, as Black cannot play 8...♕e7.
- 5...d6 6.d5 ♘b8 7.♕d3 f5?! (simply 7...♘f6) 8.exf5 ♕d7 9.♘ac3 ♕xf5 10.♘g3 and from this position Alapin scored 2-0 against Marco. 10...♕xd3 (a year later Marco opted for 10...♕f7 11.♗e2 ♘f6 12.♗e3 0-0 13.f3, but again he could not be pleased with the outcome of the opening. Alapin-Marco, Vienna 1898) 11.♗xd3 ♘f6 12.♘f5 ♗xf5 13.♗xf5, with a slight edge due to the bishop pair in this queenless middlegame. Alapin-Marco, Berlin 1897.
- Best is perhaps 5...♘f6 6.d5 ♘b8 7.♕d3 (7.f3) 7...d6, with approximate equality as in Alapin-Chigorin, Berlin 1897.

3.♘bc3

In line with Alapin's main idea behind 2.♘e2 is 3.f4!?, which is why this line deserves some space.



● 3...♘xe4 4.d3 ♘c5 5.fxe5 d5 (5...d6!?, as played by Mason against Alapin in Monaco 1901, is not bad either) 6.d4 ♘e6 or 6...♘e4 are both objectively OK for Black. Still, there are quite a few (old and new) games which suggest that these positions are full of play. To cite two modern examples:

– 6...♘e4 7.♘d2 (7...♘xd2 8.♗xd2 ♗g4 is equal, according to Keres) 7...♗f5 8.♘xe4 ♗xe4 9.♘g3 ♗g6 10.♗d3 ♘c6 11.♗e3 ♗e7 12.0-0 ♗g5 13.♕d2 ♗xe3+ 14.♕xe3 ♗xd3 15.♕xd3 0-0 16.♖f4 ♘e7 17.♖af1 ♘g6 18.♖4f2 ♕d7 19.♘f5 a5 20.♕g3 ♕e6 21.♕g4 ♔h8 22.h4 ♖g8 23.♘e3! ♕xg4 24.♘xg4 ♘xh4 25.♖xf7, and White won the ending easily. Cubas-Asfora, Ilha Solteira 2003.

– 6...♘e6 7.♘f4 (7.g3 is Pigusov's recommendation) 7...c6 (the stronger 7...c5 was played by Rubinstein against Alapin, Vienna 1908) 8.♘c3 ♗e7 9.♗e3 ♘xf4 10.♗xf4 ♗f5 11.♗d3 ♗xd3 12.♕xd3 ♘d7 13.0-0 ♘f8 14.♖f3 ♕d7 15.♖af1 ♘g6 16.♘d1 0-0 17.♘e3 f6 18.♕f5 ♕e8 19.♕e6+ ♖f7 20.♗g3 ♔h8 21.h4 ♘f8 22.♕g4 ♗d8 23.h5 h6 24.♗h4 ♘h7 25.e6, with a large advantage in Cubas-Gretarsson, Bled Olympiad 2002.

● 3...d5 4.fxe5 ♘xe4 is likely to transpose to the above line.

Crucial for the evaluation of 3.f4 is

● 3...exf4 4.♘xf4, when White has set the trap 4...♘xe4? 5.♕e2 ♕e7 6.♘d5 ♕e5 7.♘bc3, and wins.

Black has an equally cunning reply in 4...♕e7!?, forcing White to sac a pawn. Druash now favours 5.d3 d5 6.♗e2 dxe4 7.0-0, but Gerard Welling (in an extensive article on the Alapin in *Kaissiber 2*) prefers Alapin's suggestion of 5.♗e2 ♕xe4 6.0-0 ♗c5+ 7.♔h1 0-0 8.♘c3, and so on.

However, the reason why I would prefer Kornev's 3.♘bc3 to 3.f4 is the boring equalizer 4...d5 (so after 3.f4 exf4 4.♘xf4) 5.♘xd5 ♘xd5 6.exd5 ♕xd5 7.♘c3 ♕e5+. A dubious attempt to raise the stakes is 5.♕e2!?; after 5...♗e7 (5...dxe4 is the acid test of Cubas's idea) 6.♘xd5 ♘xd5 7.exd5 ♕xd5 8.♘c3 ♕d8 9.d4!? 0-0 10.♗e3 ♘c6 11.0-0-0 ♗f5 12.♕b5 ♕d7 13.♗d3 ♗xd3 14.♖xd3 a6 15.♕h5 ♘b4 16.♖dd1 c6 17.d5 ♘xd5 18.♘xd5 cxd5 19.♕xd5 ♕xd5 20.♖xd5 ♖ad8 Cubas-Neubauer (Santos 2003) was quickly drawn. FM Cubas from Paraguay has some interesting ideas in the 3.f4 line.

3...♘c6

Here 3...d5 4.exd5 ♘xd5 5.♘xd5 ♕xd5 6.♘c3 ♕d8 7.♗c4 looks a little better for White. Bakonyi-Benko, Budapest 1948, continued 7...♗e7 8.0-0 0-0 9.d3 ♘c6 10.f4.

3...♗b4 is like a Ruy Lopez reversed (the 3...♘ge7 variation). White can play 4.g3 or 4.♘g3 as in the 3...♘ge7 line, or he can play the 'Bird-move' 4.♘d5.

3...♗c5 is again natural and good.

Some research suggestions:

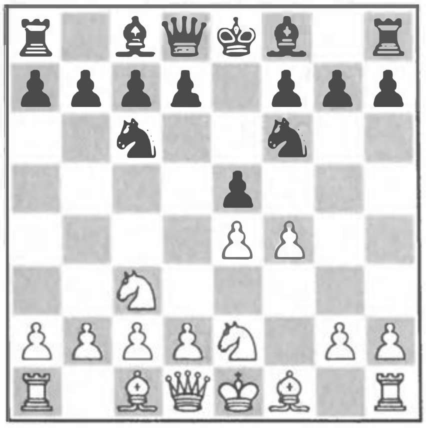
– 4.d4 exd4 5.♘xd4 has been dealt with above (2...♗c5).

– 4.f4 is best met by 4...d6, threatening 5...♘g4, and White has merely weakened his own position.

– 4.g3 could easily transpose to the Vienna game with g3. Tactically White must hope to survive after 4...♘g4 5.d4 exd4 6.♘xd4 and now 6...♕f6 (6...♘xf2 7.♔xf2 ♕f6+ 8.♔e3!? needs to be investigated too) 7.♕xg4 ♗xd4 8.♘d5 ♕xf2+ 9.♔d1 is very strong for White. It reminds me of the Vienna line: 1.e5 e5 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♗c5 4.♕g4 ♕f6 5.♘d5 ♕xf2+ 6.♔d1. A word of caution, though: after 1.e4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.g3 ♗c5 you would not seriously consider 4.♘ge2, but simply play 4.♗g2.

– 4.♘g3. Objectively, this modest move promises no advantage, of course. 4...d5 5.♗e2 ♗e6 6.d3 c6 7.f4 exf4 8.♗xf4 dxe4 9.♘gxe4 ♘xe4 10.♘xe4 ♗e7 11.0-0 0-0 12.♕d2 ♘d7 13.d4 ♘f6 14.♘xf6+ ♗xf6 15.c3 ♕a5 16.♗e3 ♖ad8 17.b4 ♕c7 18.♖xf6! gxf6 19.♗h6, and the exchange sacrifice has yielded White a tremendous position. Bakonyi-Szily, Budapest 1948.

4.f4



So here we are – the main point of 2.♘e2. Black now strikes back in the centre with

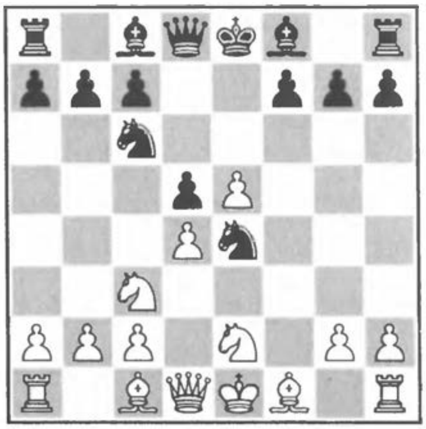
4...d5

This is the main line, but Chigorin's 4...exf4 is a reasonable alternative. As 5.♘xf4 is met strongly by 5...♗c5, White goes 5.d4 ♗b4 (5...d5) 6.d5 (6.e5 is bad after either 6...♘e4 or 6...♘d5) 6...♘xe4 7.♗xf4 ♗xc3+ (7...♘e7 8.♕d4 ♘xc3 – 8...♗xc3+ 9.bxc3 ♘f6 transposes – 9.bxc3 ♗d6 10.♕xg7 ♘g6 11.♗xd6 cxd6, and now 12.♘d4 and 12.g3 are better for White, but the forcing 12.♘f4 yields nothing after 12...♖f8 13.♘xg6 fxg6 14.♗d3 – 14.♕xh7 ♕f6 – 14...♕e7+ 15.♕xe7+ ♔xe7) 8.bxc3 ♘e7 9.♕d4 ♘f6 10.c4 d6 11.♘g3 ♘f5 12.♘xf5 ♗xf5 13.♗e2 0-0 14.0-0 ♕d7, and now Black won easily after 15.♗d3 ♗xd3 16.cxd3 ♖fe8 17.h3 ♘h5 18.g4 ♘xf4 19.♖xf4 ♖e2, etcetera. Alapin-Chigorin, Vienna 1898. Instead of 15.♗d3 Levenfish gave 15.♗g5 ♘e8 16.♖ae1 f6 17.♗h4 as better for White (ECO). Clearly there is a lot more to be said about 4...exf4.

5.fxe5

This is more promising than 5.exd5 ♘xd5 6.fxe5 ♘xe5 (also good is 6...♘xc3, as played by Harmonist) 7.d4 ♘g6 (7...♘xc3! Bücker, which is why White should prefer 7.♘xd5) 8.♘xd5 ♕xd5 9.♘f4 ♕e4+, as in Alapin-Caro, Vienna 1898. Instead of Caro's equalizing final move, Stefan Bücker has correctly noted that White has to watch out after 9...♘xf4 10.♗xf4 ♗e6.

5...♘xe4 6.d4



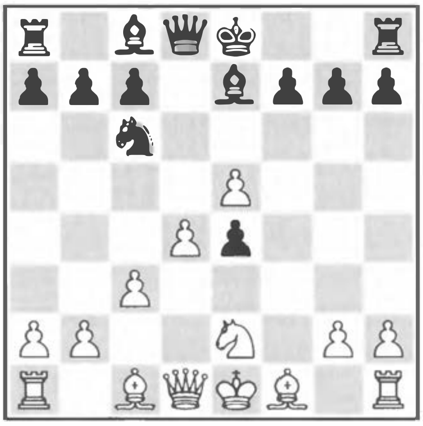
6...♗e7?!

Although natural, this move is a little passive. However, we can hardly blame Bakalarz for not knowing the ins and outs of 2.♘e2. Keres has analysed 6...♗b4 7.♗d2 ♗g4 8.♘xe4 dxe4 9.c3 ♗e7 (9...♗a5?!

10.♕c2 ♗f5 11.♘g3 ♗g6 12.♗e3 0-0 13.0-0-0 was very nice for White in Bakonyi-Exner, Hungary 1923) 10.♕c2 ♗f5 11.♘g3 ♗g6 12.♗e3 (not 12.♘xe4?! ♕d5 13.♗d3 ♞xe5! 14.dxe5 0-0-0!) 12...0-0, which he gives as equal. Nevertheless this is quite an interesting position.

A word of caution, though. In an editorial remark in *Kaissiber 2* Stefan Bücker significantly improves upon this analysis with the straightforward suggestion of 7...♗xc3! 8.♗xc3 f6.

7.♘xe4 dxe4 8.c3



White has set up a strong centre, which Bakalarz now attacks with

8...f6?!

More sound is 8...♗f5.

9.♘f4! ♗f5

Here 9...0-0 10.♗c4+ ♔h8 11.♕h5 ♕e8 12.exf6 clearly gives White something to play for. Not 9...fxe5? 10.♕h5+ ♔d7 11.dxe5.

10.exf6 ♗xf6 11.♕b3

This prevents castling and attacks b7. With simple play Kornev has obtained a superior position.

11...♕d6

Sacrificing a pawn to change the unsatisfactory course of events.

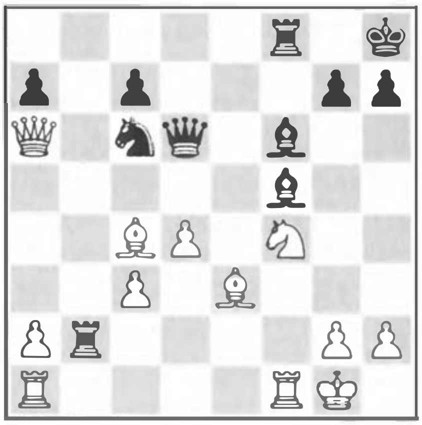
12.♕xb7 ♖b8 13.♕a6

Black has a huge edge in development, but White's position is too strong.

13...e3

This leads nowhere, but with correct play neither does 13...0-0 14.♗c4+ (14.♗e2) 14...♔h8 15.♗b3!?, but not 15.0-0?! ♖b6 16.♕a4 ♗xd4+ 17.cxd4 ♖b4.

14.♗xe3 0-0 15.♗c4+ ♔h8 16.0-0 ♖xb2



17.♗d5

Even better was 17.♘d3!.

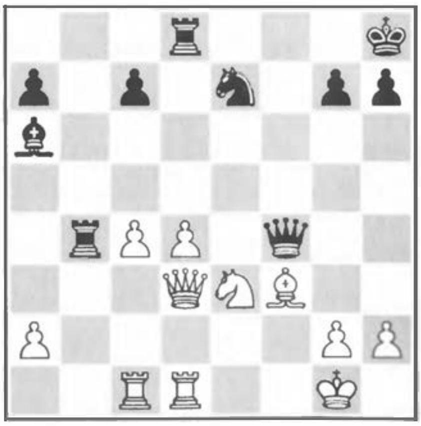
17...♖b6 18.♕c4 ♘e7 19.♗f3 ♗c8 20.♕d3 ♗a6 21.c4 ♖b4 22.♖ac1 ♗g5

Stronger was 22...♖b2 or 22...♖a4.

23.♘d5 ♗xe3+ 24.♘xe3

White is a very sound pawn up.

24...♖d8 25.♖fd1 ♕f4??

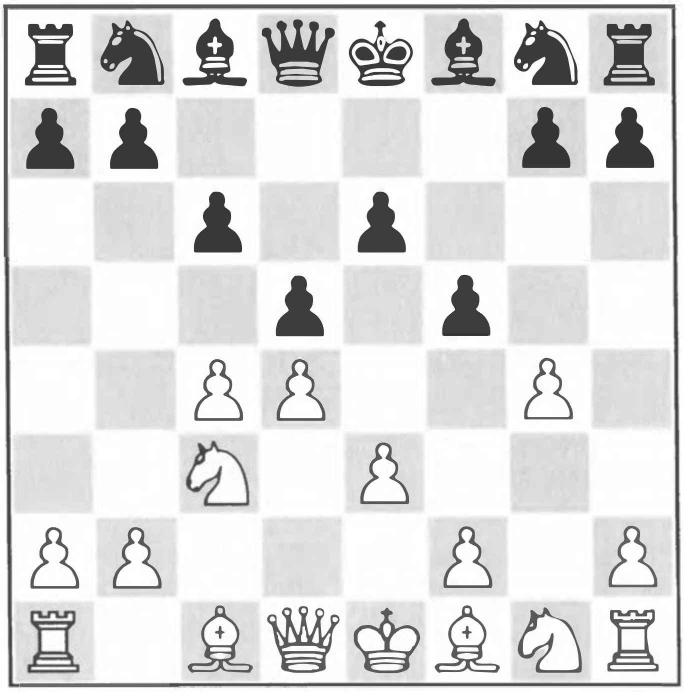


A blunder in a bad position. Here Bakalarz resigned before Kornev could execute the winning 26.♕a3

CHAPTER 4

Sergey Volkov

Attacking the Slav Stonewall



Let's play 5.g4

White often avoids the sharp Noteboom Variation with 4.e3 – aiming for the Meran. This move order allows Black, in turn, to avoid the Slav altogether and build a Dutch Stonewall. In this article I would like to discuss the sharp and double-edged 5.g4. Note that this approach is possible after 3.♘c3, and, more surprisingly, after 3.♘f3 as well!

□ **Sergey Volkov**
■ **Konstantin Landa**
Perm 1997 (7)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c6 4.e3

Avoiding the Noteboom after 4.♘f3 dxc4.

4...f5

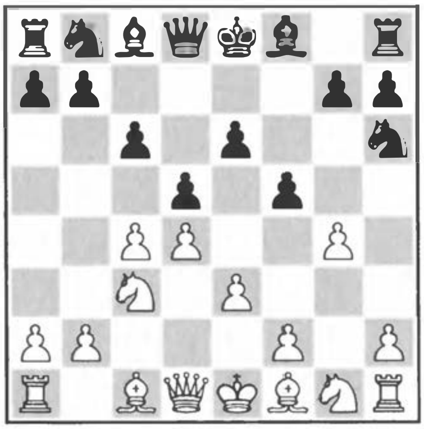
Black makes use of the Slav move order to transfer into a Dutch Stonewall where White has committed himself to a set-up with an early e3.

5.g4!?

With this logical attack with his knight's pawn, White plans to break up Black's monolithic pawn centre. The main drawback of the plan is that time for development is lost.

5...♘h6

An unusual idea in such positions. In the event of gxf5 Black plans to place his knight at f5 with gain of tempo, and his pawn remains at e6, defending d5.



6.g5

A pawn sacrifice. In the event of 6.gxf5, the line 6...♘xf5 7.♗d3 ♕f6 8.♘f3 ♗d6 9.e4 ♘xd4 10.♘xd4 ♕xd4 11.exd5 ♕e5+ leads to an equal position. Interesting is 6.h3, maintaining the tension, when the knight at h6 has no future. White can continue his development with ♘f3 after castling by Black. If the pawn is captured, White obtains an attack. For example: 6.h3 ♗d6 7.♗d3 0-0 8.♘f3 (or 8.♗d2) 8...♘d7 9.♕e2 with a pleasant edge.

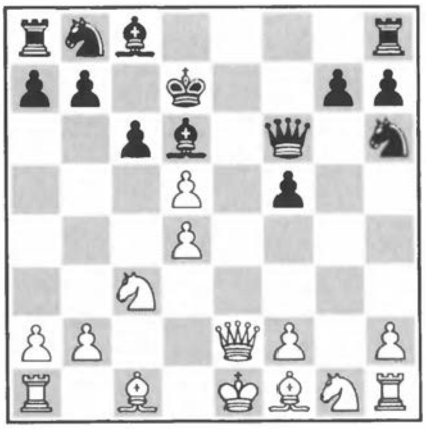
6...♕xg5

After 6...♘f7 7.h4 White gains space on the kingside and the knight at f7 still has to come into play via d6.

7.e4 ♕f6

White keeps an opening advantage after 7...♕e7 8.♗xh6 gxh6 9.♕h5+ ♔d8 10.e5.

8.exd5 exd5 9.cxd5 ♗d6 10.♕e2+ ♔d7!



11.♗xh6?

White gives up an important bishop for a knight that still needed time to come into play. The dark squares become completely weak, and all the same 0-0-0 is not possible. Playable was 11.♕f3 ♖e8+ 12.♗e2. The ending after 11.♕e6+ ♕xe6+ 12.dxe6+ ♔xe6 13.♗xh6 gxh6 14.0-0-0 is equal. Best, however, was 11.♕d3 ♖e8+ 12.♘ge2±.

11...♕xh6 12.♘f3 ♖e8 13.♘e5+ ♔c7

White misses his dark-squared bishop and is slightly worse.

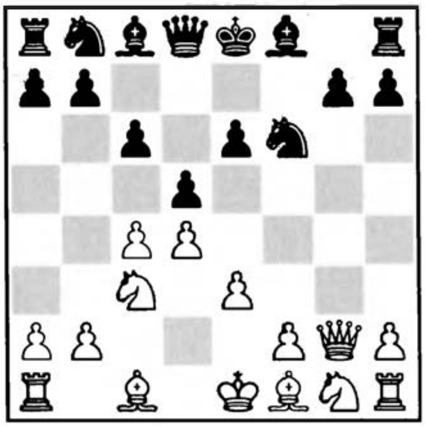
14.♗g2 ♘d7 15.f4 ♕xf4 16.dxc6 ♕h4+ Here 16...bxc6 would have retained threats to the king, which has nowhere to hide after 17.♗xc6 ♕h4+ 18.♔d1 ♕xd4+ 19.♕d2 ♕xd2+ 20.♔xd2 ♗xe5 21.♗xa8 ♘b6∓. **17.♔f1 ♕f4+ 18.♕f3 ♕xf3+ 19.♗xf3 bxc6 20.♗xc6** Much better was 20.♘xc6! ♗a6+ 21.♔g2±. **20...♗xe5 21.♗xa8 ♗a6+ 22.♔g2 ♖xa8 23.♘d5+** Not 23.dxe5 ♗b7+. **23...♔d8?** The ending is won after 23...♔d6! 24.dxe5+ ♞xe5 25.♘f4 ♗b7+ 26.♔g3 ♗xh1 27.♖xh1 g5. **24.dxe5** Now it all reduces by force to an endgame which turns out to be drawn. **24...♗b7 25.♖hd1 ♘b6 26.♔g3 ♘xd5 27.♖xd5+! ♗xd5 28.♖d1 ♔e7 29.♖xd5 ♔e6 30.♖a5 g5 31.h4 h6 32.♖a6+ ♔xe5 33.♖xh6 g4 34.♖a6 ♖d8 35.♖a5+ ♔e4 36.♖a4+ ♔e5 37.♖a5+ ♔e4 38.♖a4+ ♔e5 39.♖a5+ ½-½**

This game demonstrated the viability of the 5...♘h6 variation, but so far this idea has not been employed again.

☐ **Sergey Volkov**
■ **Vladimir Malakhov**
Elista ch-RUS 2001 (4)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c6 4.e3 f5 5.g4 ♘f6

The most critical continuation. Black disregards the break-up of his pawn centre and continues his development. After 5...fxg4?! 6.♕xg4 ♘f6 7.♕g2± the queen stands very well at g2. There is pressure on the g-file and, above all, the d1-square is vacated for White to play 0-0-0.



Thus after 7...♗d6 8.♗d2 0-0 9.0-0-0 White is somewhat better according to Tal Shaked. Sharpest is 7...c5, when Seirawan-Yermolinsky, Key West 1994, went: 8.♘f3 ♘c6 9.♗d2 a6 10.0-0-0 ♕c7 11.dxc5 ♗xc5 12.♖g1 with again a slight edge for White.

6.gxf5 exf5 7.cxd5?!

An inaccuracy. White spends time on the break-up of the centre, but he is unable to force Black to recapture with the pawn, after which there would be a weakness at d5. Stronger is 7.♕b3 ♕b6 8.cxd5 ♕xb3 9.axb3 ♘xd5 10.♘xd5 cxd5 11.♗g2 ♘c6, and now, not 12.♗xd5? ♘b4, but 12.♘e2 with a pleasant ending for White.

7...♘xd5

Of course, Black recaptures with his knight, retaining a good pawn structure.

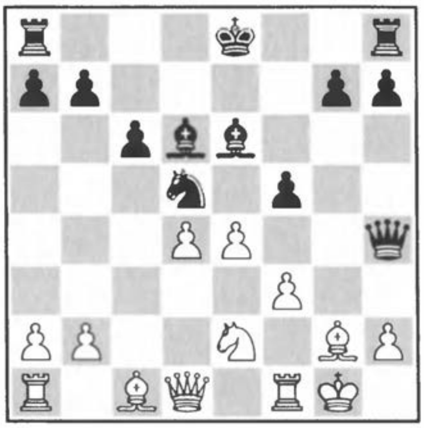
8.♘ge2 ♗e6 9.♗g2 ♘a6!

Black wins the struggle for the d5-point.

10.0-0 ♘ac7 11.♘xd5 ♘xd5 12.f3?!

White obstinately continues fighting for the d5-point. White could have kept his disadvantage at a minimum with: 12.♘c3 ♘xc3 13.bxc3 ♗d6 14.♖b1 ♕e7 15.♕a4 0-0 16.c4.

12...♗d6 13.e4 ♕h4!



By tactical means Black refutes White's plan.

14.♘g3 ♘f4 15.d5 cxd5 16.exf5 ♗f7 17.♖e1+ ♔f8 18.♗e3 h5 19.♕d2?

White should have sought salvation in the following sequence of moves: 19.♗f1! ♕f6 20.♕d2 h4 21.♘e4 dxe4 22.♗xf4 ♗c5+ 23.♗e3 ♕xf5 24.fxe4 ♕g5+ 25.♔h1 ♗xe3 26.♖xe3 equal.

19...♕g5!

The opportunity for White to disentangle himself has been missed.

20.♖ad1 ♔g8 21.♕f2

More chances were offered by 21.♔f2 h4 22.♖g1 hxg3+ 23.hxg3 ♖c8 24.gxf4 ♕xf5∓.

21...h4 22.♘e4 dxe4 23.♖xd6

Time trouble is the reason that White is continuing this game – Black did not have much time left.

23...♘h3+ 24.♔f1 ♗c4+ 25.♖e2 ♕e7 26.♗xh3 ♕xd6 27.♔e1 ♗xe2 28.♕xe2 ♕d3 29.fxe4 ♕xe4 30.♗g2 ♕b1+ 31.♔f2 ♕xf5+ 32.♔g1 ♖h5 33.♕c4+ ♔h8 34.♗xb7 ♖f8 35.b4 h3 36.♕c1 ♖g5+! 0-1

This game shows that even a slight delay allows Black to maintain his pawn centre and complete his development. The weakening of White's kingside was also felt. However, White should not have foregone the chance to play 7.♕b3.

We have seen that with the knight on c3 it is entirely possible to go for 5.g4. More adventurous still, is to play this advance with the knight on f3!

☐ **Sergey Volkov**
■ **Mikhail Kobalia**
Kazan 2005 (6)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 e6 4.e3 f5

I don't know why Kobalia chose the Dutch Defence – usually he plays more reliable Slav set-ups.

5.g4!?

Even more daring than with the knight on c3.

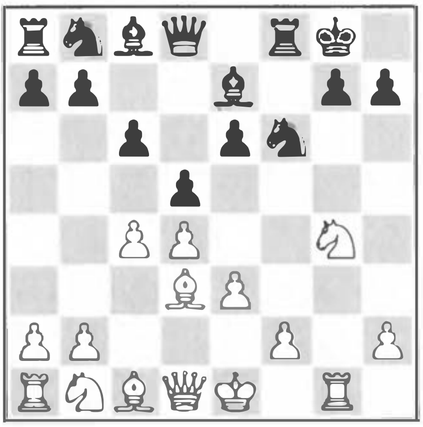
5...fxg4

A reflex move. Of course, 5...♘f6 was more accurate. See the next game.

6.♘e5 ♘f6 7.♘xg4 ♗e7

Black tries to attack the f2-point (with a subsequent ♗h4), but by a precise move order White forestalls the opponent's plans.

8.♗d3! 0-0 9.♖g1



9...♕e8

A strange move. Black prevents White's attack on the kingside (by controlling h5), but wastes some important tempi, which, in my view, is more significant.

10.♘c3 ♘xg4 11.♕xg4 ♗f6 12.♕g2

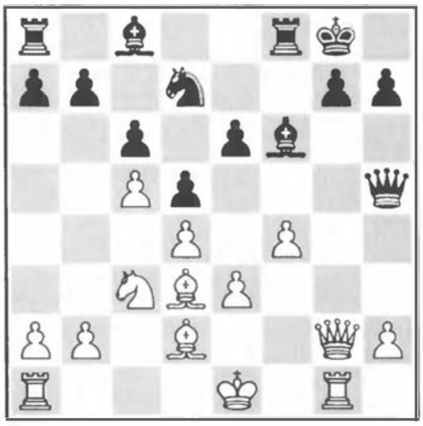
Black threatened 12...e5, and g2 is not a bad square for the queen. There was also 12.♕h3 (forcing g6), but I couldn't decide whether this move was necessary: 12...g6 'intending' 13.♗xg6 hxg6 14.♕h6, but such ideas are hardly realisable without the pieces being developed.

12...♘d7 13.♗d2 ♘b6 14.c5

After 14.cxd5 exd5 Black should not have any problems. Therefore the only way of fighting for an advantage is to continue the 'squeeze'.

14...♘d7 15.f4 ♕h5

Black prevents 0-0-0, but White finds a very strong move. It is possible that better chances were offered by 15...b6 16.cxb6 axb6 17.0-0-0 ♗a6 18.♗c2 ♗c4.



16.♕e2! ♕f7

If Black exchanges queens 16...♕xe2+, then after 17.♔xe2 he has serious problems (the rooks defend each other), since White is able to maintain his centre: 17...b6 18.b4 a5 19.a3.

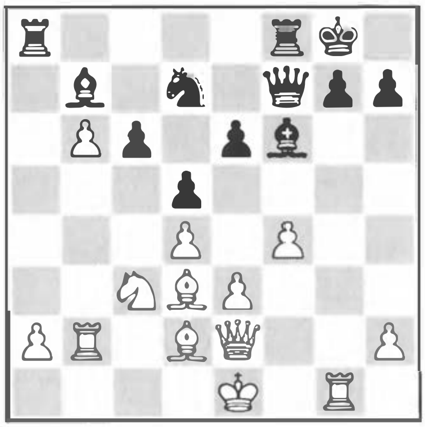
17.b4

After 17.0-0-0 there follows 17...b6, but if Black allows it, why not maintain the centre? (the king also feels alright at e1).

17...b6 18.♖b1 a5 19.cxb6!

Of course 18.♖b1 was not played in order to retreat – 19.a3 axb4 20.axb4 ♖a3, and 21...bxc5 22.bxc5 ♘xc5 is threatened.

19...axb4 20.♖xb4 ♗b7 21.♖b2



The position is quite sharp, but White has an extra pawn, for which Black does not appear to have any compensation.

21...♖fd8

Defending against the threat of ♘b5-d6 after 22...c5.

22.♕g4 c5 23.♘b5 ♘f8 24.♗c3 ♗a6 25.a4!

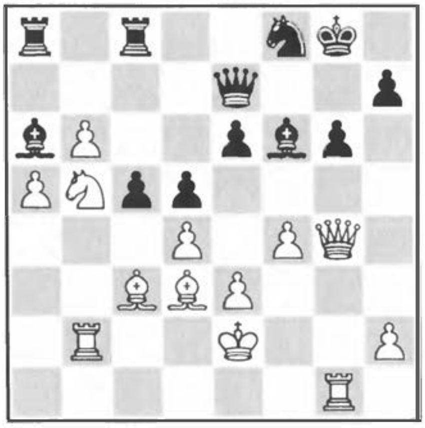
In this position I had 8 minutes left, while Misha had 25. My play is fairly simple: the position appears to be 'hanging', but with my last move I consolidate it, while my opponent tries unsuccessfully to create some threats.

25...♕e7 26.a5

Now the b6-pawn is defended, and in addition Black's pressure on the a-file is neutralised – if ♗xb5 there is ♖xb5. It is interesting that the white king stands very well at e1 – there are many open lines, but it does not disrupt the coordination of the white pieces.

26...♖dc8 27.♔e2 g6

Black cannot find anything to do – and he gives White new targets to attack. 27...♕d7 28.♘a7 ♗xd3+ 29.♔xd3 was possible, but here there is no longer any acceptable move – something has to be given up.



28.h4! ♕g7 29.h5

White's play is easy and natural.

29...cxd4

What Black has been engaged in over the last few moves is not clear. White has done everything that he wanted: both defended his b6-pawn and created play on the kingside. The game is largely decided.

30.♗xd4 ♗xd4 31.exd4 ♗xb5 32.♖xb5! ♖c3 33.hxg6 h5

Black cannot create a single problem: from b5 the rook keeps the a-file under lock and key and, especially important, also the b2-square.

34.♕g3 ♕xd4 35.g7 ♘g6 36.♕xg6

Black resigned.

☐ **Vladimir Grebionkin**
■ **Sarhan Guliev**
Nizhny Novgorod 1999 (5)

1.♘f3 d5 2.d4 c6 3.c4 e6 4.e3 f5 5.g4 ♘f6

The most critical continuation. Black continues his development, disregarding the break-up of his pawn centre.

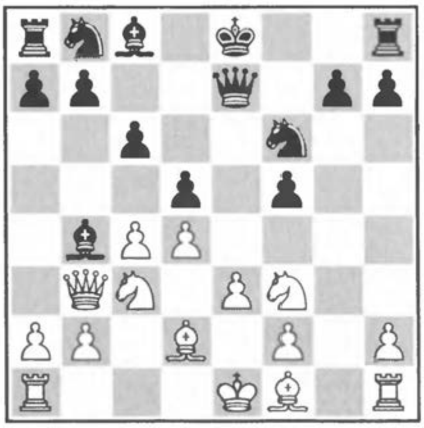
6.gxf5 exf5

There is a difference compared with the variation where White plays an early ♘c3. All the same the b1-knight goes to c3, where it exerts pressure on d5, but there the g1-knight can be developed at e2.

7.♘c3 ♗b4

Here 7...♗e6 looks more natural. After 7...♗b4 in the end Black will have to take on c3, giving up his strong bishop.

8.♕b3 ♕e7 9.♗d2



9...dxc4?!

Black weakens his centre, although for the moment he was not forced to do this. After 9...♗e6, there may follow 10.cxd5 ♘xd5 11.♗c4. Other interesting options are: 10.0-0-0 and 10.c5.

10.♗xc4 b5 11.♗e2

But here 11.♗d3 was more active, attacking the f5-pawn in case of 11...♗e6 12.♕c2.

11...♗e6 12.♕c2 0-0 13.♘e5

Possible was 13.♘g5!?

13...♗xc3?!

Why give up the bishop if this is not forced?

14.♗xc3 ♗d5 15.♖f1

Tactical complications arise after 15.f3!? ♘g4! 16.fxg4! ♗xh1 17.0-0-0 ♗e4 18.♗d3 ♗xd3 19.♕xd3 fxg4 20.d5 b4 21.♕c4 cxd5 22.♖xd5 with compensation.

15...♘e4 16.f3

Stronger is 16.♗a5!?, to preserve the bishop.

16...♘xc3 17.♕xc3 ♕e6

An unnecessary move. Black is better after 17...♘d7!.

18.a4 bxa4 19.e4 fxe4 20.fxe4 ♖xf1+ 21.♗xf1 ♗xe4 22.♖xa4

Stronger was 22.♕h3!.

22...♘d7 23.♗h3 ♗f5 24.♗xf5 ♕xf5 25.♕c4+ ♔f8 26.♕xc6?

It was essential for White to think about his king. Play would have been equal after 26.♕b4+ c5 27.♘xd7+ ♕xd7 28.♕xc5+ ♔g8. After the text Black is just better.

26...♖e8 27.♖a5 ♘xe5 28.♕d6+ ♔g8 29.♖xe5 ♕b1+ 30.♔d2 ♕xb2+ 31.♔e3 ♖f8 32.♕e6+ ♔h8 33.♖f5??

This loses immediately, whereas other continuations would have retained practical chances of a draw: 33.♕d6 ♕f2+ 34.♔d3, or 33.♕d7! ♕xh2 34.♕xa7.

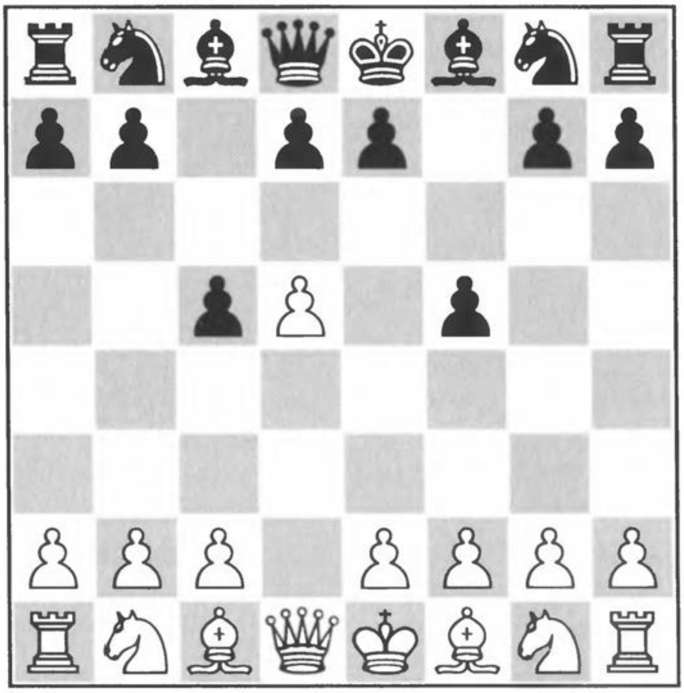
33...♕c1+ 34.♔e4 ♕e1+ 35.♔f4 g5+

0-1

CHAPTER 5

Jaan Ehlvest

The Dutch Benoni



1.d4 c5 2.d5 f5!?

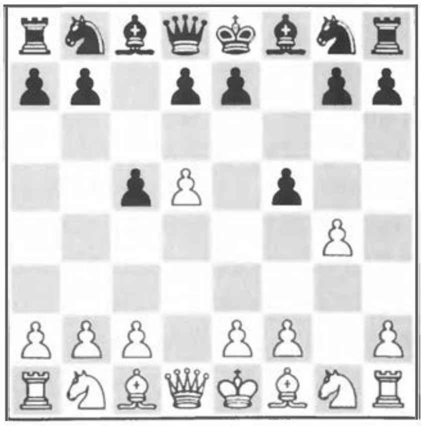
I have been playing the Leningrad Variation of the Dutch Defence all my life – I even wrote a book about it. During my early career I was a very aggressive player. This changed, however, when I started playing against the world elite around 1987. At that point, my opening repertoire underwent a complete transformation. At the highest level, there are not so many openings one can safely play. I do not quite believe, of course, that it goes so far as in the story when somebody asked Kramnik why he played the Petroff Defence and he answered that all others are simply not good enough. I think you can play all classical openings; they are called classical because decades of practice have shown that they are playable. After switching to solid openings I realized, however, that sometimes you just need to take risks, such as when you are playing a less experienced opponent, or when you have to win with the black pieces. To that end, sometimes one can do some odd things very early in the game.

I first got the idea of 1.d4 c5 2.d5 f5!? from the game Yermolinsky-Shabalov (you can find this game, as well as other games I will refer to, later in this article), although it was first used a long time ago by Saint Amant in his match against Staunton in 1843. There it didn't fare well and was forgotten for more than a century (although it was used sporadically by non-elite players). At the beginning of the 1990's it was popularized by English GM Jonathan Levitt, who called it the Clarendon Court Defence and used it on a number of occasions against strong opposition. It has also been used by a few other strong GMs, mostly as a surprise weapon. Of course, the mix of the Dutch Defence and the Benoni move c7-c5 cannot be positionally sound. The main setback, as I see it, is that you make a commitment about your pawn structure too early in the game. This gives your opponent an option to develop his pieces so that they are placed most effectively against your set-up. The big plus of this continuation, however, is that it is rarely used and even very strong players can be outplayed by a well-prepared opponent, like in the game Lputian–Tukmakov. In my own practice, I used this line a number of times and achieved some successes with it, although I suffered a major setback in the game against Izoria, where a simple plan starting with 4.f3 worked well for White. Still, I may play this variation again in the future against the right opponent. Even if you do not consider seriously playing risky lines like this for Black, I believe it is worthwhile for any 1.d4 player to study this variation, as you may always encounter an aggressive opponent who will play it against you, and you don't want to be caught unprepared! In general, as noted by Nimzowitsch, studying any specific kind of chess positions improves your overall understanding of chess. I hope that this article will help you in your progress. Enjoy!

☐ **Anjelina Belakovskaia**
■ **Jaan Ehlvest**
Stratton Mountain 1999 (2)

1.d4 c5 2.d5 f5 3.g4

This uncommon sacrifice does not create any real problems for Black. Another rare move that I would like to mention is 3.b3, which happened in a grandmaster game Stefansson-Jakubiec, Aarhus 2003, where White failed to obtain any advantage after 3...e5 4.dxe6 d5! 5.♗b2 ♗xe6 6.e3 ♘f6 7.♘h3 ♘c6 8.♘f4 ♗f7 9.♗d3 g6 10.♗b5 ♗g7 11.♗xc6+ bxc6 12.0-0 0-0 13.♘d2 ♕b6 14.♘f3 ♖ad8 15.♕c1 d4, and Black has excellent play in the centre. What connects these two moves (3.g4 and 3.b3) is that in both cases White does not seem to have a plan that effectively utilizes Black's potential weaknesses in the centre. After all, pawns do not move backwards, and after 1...c5 and 2...f5 the squares d6 and e6 may lack protection in the future. Once Black moves one of the central pawns in the normal course of development (say, d7-d6), e6 may become a glaring weakness. The game Izoria-Ehlvest is a good example of this, and Black needs to be very careful to avoid such positional problems. On the other hand, leaving the pawn on d7 may lead to other problems, as in the game Yermolinsky-Shabalov.



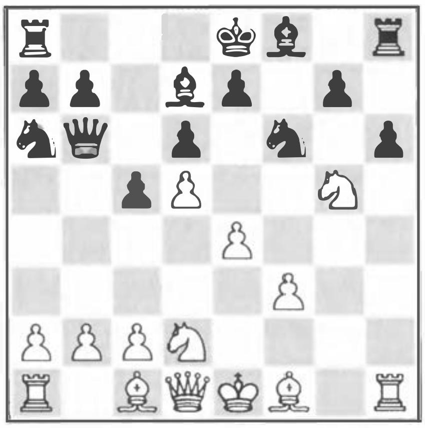
3...fxg4 4.e4

Another possible move is 4.h3, but after 4...g3 5.fxg3 e6 6.dxe6 d5! (a typical idea for Black in this variation) White has no advantage.

4...d6 5.h3 ♘f6 6.hxg4 ♗xg4

The greedy 6...♘xe4? 7.♗d3 ♘f6 8.g5 is very bad for Black.

7.f3 ♗d7 8.♘h3 ♘a6 9.♘g5 ♕b6 10.♘d2 h6



11.♗h3

This puts White's pieces in an uncomfortable situation, but even after other moves, e.g. 11.♘c4 ♕c7, Black has nothing to fear. The weakness on e6 in this line is fully compensated by the extra pawn and potentially weak position of the white king.

11...♗xh3 12.♖xh3 ♘c7 13.c4 ♖g8

Here I could have tried 13...e5!? 14.dxe6 ♗e7, when White's pawn on e6 would not last long. **14.♕a4+ ♔d8 15.♘e6+** Maybe it was better for White to take her chances with 15.♘f7+ ♔c8 16.f4, and if 16...g5, then 17.e5 with active play. After the move in the game it is White who has a weakness on e6, which would be especially pronounced in the endgame. **15...♘xe6 16.dxe6 g5 17.♘f1?! ♕c6** 17...g4 was probably a good move here, but I just wanted to get into a comfortable endgame where I can quickly win a pawn. The remainder of the game is mostly technical. **18.♕xc6 bxc6 19.♘e3 ♖g6 20.♗d2 ♘e8 21.e5 ♖xe6 22.exd6 ♘xd6 23.0-0-0 ♔e8** And Black converted his material advantage.

☐ **Andrey Belozerov**
■ **Jonathan Rowson**
Tallinn Ech-jr 1997 (11)

1.d4 c5 2.d5 f5 3.c4

This move is quite popular. White wants to support the centre before playing ♘c3.

3...♘f6 4.♘c3 g6 5.g3 d6 6.♘h3 ♘bd7 7.♘f4

This active move actually limits White's play on the kingside. A better idea is the following set-up for White that effectively meets the g5 advance used by Rowson in this game: 7.♗g2 ♗g7 8.0-0 0-0 9.♖b1! ♘e5 10.b3 a6 11.a4 ♕e8 12.♗d2 h6 13.♔h1 g5 14.f4! gxf4 15.♘xf4 and White has a long lasting positional plus. Black cannot dream of any active play because of the strong knight on f4.

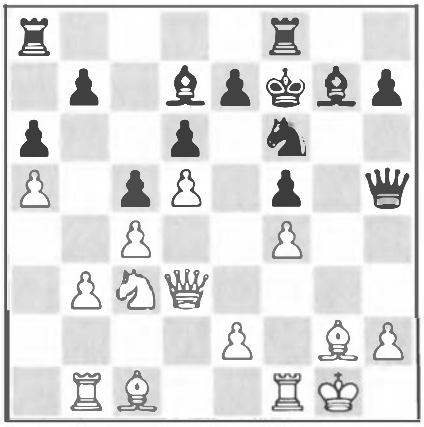
7...♘e5 8.♗g2 ♗g7 9.0-0 0-0 10.b3 a6 11.a4 ♕e8 12.a5 g5

Now Black has counterplay on the kingside.

13.♘d3 ♘xd3 14.♕xd3 ♕h5 15.f4 ♗d7 16.♖b1 gxf4 17.gxf4

Or 17.♗xf4 ♘g4 18.h3 ♘e5 19.♕d2 ♘g6 and if now 20.♗e3, then 20...♗e5.

17...♔f7

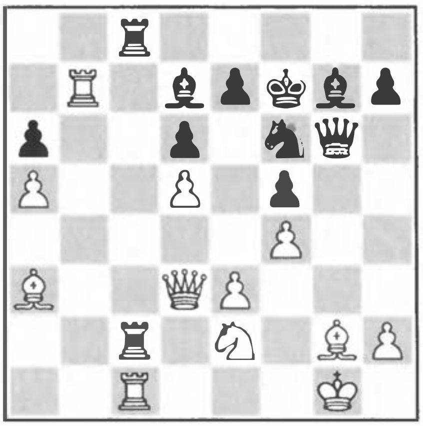


18.b4 ♖ac8 19.bxc5 ♖xc5 20.♖xb7 ♖fc8 21.e3 ♖xc4

Black is gradually outplaying his opponent. White's problem is that he had no clear plan of action after the opening, whereas Black was consistently activating his pieces.

22.♘e2 ♕g6 23.♗a3 ♖c2 24.♖c1

Here Rowson probably didn't like the simple 24...♖xc1+ 25.♗xc1 ♗b5 because of 26.♖xb5 and the passed pawn on a5 may become dangerous, although Black is likely still better. In any case, he comes up with an interesting (and possibly correct) tactical solution.



24...♖8c3!? 25.♕xc2

After 25.♕xa6 the best move is the unexpected 25...♖d2!! (Fritz) 26.♖xc3 (otherwise ♖xa3 or ♖xe3 will win for Black) 26...♖d1+ 27.♔f2 ♘g4+ 28.♔f3 ♗f6! with an unstoppable threat of ♘xh2+ and ♗h4. I doubt that Rowson had that in mind. The more human 25...♗c8 26.♖xe7+!? (26.♕xd6 ♖xc1+ 27.♘xc1 ♖xc1+ 28.♗xc1 ♗xb7) 26...♔xe7 27.♕xd6+ ♔f7 28.♕e7+ ♔g8 29.♕d8+ ♘e8 seems to work, too.

25...♖xc2 26.♖xc2 ♘xd5 27.♖xd7?

This is bad, and Black now wins quickly. After 27.♗c1 ♗a4! 28.♘g3 (moves with the c2 rook fail for tactical reasons) 28...♕e6! Black is also better. The best chance was 27.♘g3 ♘xe3 28.♖e2! (not 28.♖cc7 ♗d4 and White's king is in trouble) 28...♕e6 (what else?) 29.♗c1 ♗d4 30.♗xe3 ♗xe3+ 31.♔h1 ♗b5 32.♖xb5 axb5 33.♘f1 ♕c4 34.♖xe3 ♕a2 35.a6 ♕xa6 36.♗d5+ with practical chances.

27...♘xe3 28.♘g3 ♘xc2 29.♗xd6 ♔e6 30.♖xe7+ ♔xd6 31.♖xg7 ♕f6 32.h4 ♘e3 33.♖xh7 ♘g4 34.♖h5 ♕d4+ 35.♔h1 ♕d1+ 0-1

☐ **Iztok Jelen**
■ **Vladimir Tukmakov**
Bled 1995 (6)

1.d4 c5 2.d5 f5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗g5

This is a reasonable approach. White wants to take on f6 and double Black's pawns, which in most Dutch structures (after f7-f5) is a good positional plan.

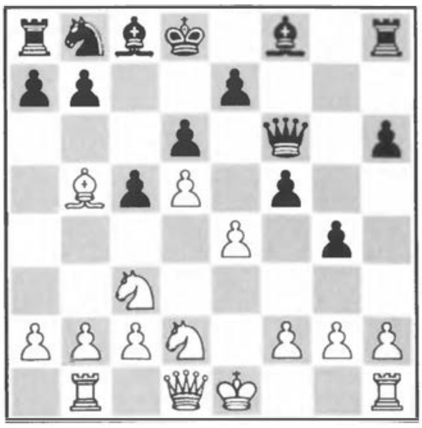
4...♕b6 5.♖b1

5.♕d2 was played in a number of games. In Alburt-Levitt, New York 1994, Black played 5...h6 and White obtained some advantage after 6.♗xf6 ♕xf6 7.0-0-0 d6 8.e4 due to better development. Another possibility for Black is the principled 5...♕xb2!?, which lead to an unclear position after 6.♖b1 ♕a3 7.♗xf6 gxf6 8.e3 in Verat-Summerscale, Cannes 1996.

5...h6 6.♗xf6 ♕xf6 7.♘f3?!

The immediate 7.e4, not giving Black time to develop, looks better here.

7...g5 8.e4 g4 9.♘d2 d6 10.♗b5+ ♔d8!



Typical for this line. The black king is quite safe in the centre.

11.exf5 ♗xf5 12.0-0 ♗g7 13.♗d3 ♘d7 14.♘c4 h5 Black has a good position. **15.♖e1?!** This move unnecessarily weakens the f2 square, which Black uses immediately. **15...♖f8 16.♕d2 ♗xd3 17.cxd3 ♕f4** Black would have a pleasant endgame after 18.♕xf4 due to the weakness of White's doubled pawns. **18.♕c2 ♘e5?!** The natural 18...♗d4 was strong. **19.♖e4 ♕f5 20.♘e3 ♕g6 21.b4 cxb4 22.♖bxb4 b6 23.♘b5?!** White should have played 23.d4 ♘f7 24.♖c4 ♘g5 25.♖c7!, when Black's king suddenly starts feeling uncomfortable. **23...♖c8 24.♕b1 a5 25.♖b3 ♗h6 26.♘f1??** A terrible blunder. After any normal move (say, 26.♘d4), White is still okay. **26...♖c1** If the queen retreats now, ♘f3+ will lead to a quick mate. **27.♕xc1 ♗xc1 28.♘d4 ♔e8 29.♖xb6 ♕f6 30.♖b8+ ♔d7 31.♖xf8 ♕xf8 32.♘e6 ♕a8 0-1**

☐ **Smbat Lputian**
■ **Vladimir Tukmakov**
Tilburg 1994 (3)

In commenting this game, I have made use of some annotations by Igor Stohl.

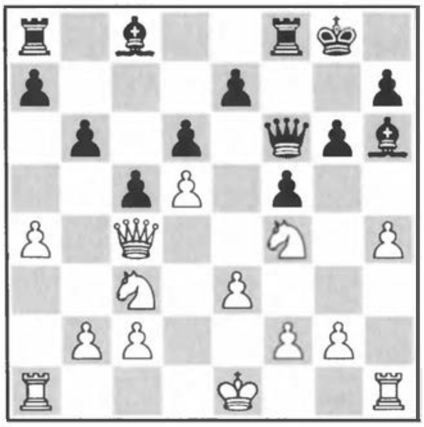
1.d4 c5 2.d5 f5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗g5 ♕b6 5.♗xf6 ♕xf6 6.e3

Taking on f6 on move 5 was a reasonable novelty for White, saving time on moves like 5.♖b1 in the previous game, which limited White options for castling. The last move, however, may be a little too slow. White could try using his advantage in development in the line 6.e4 fxe4 7.♕d2.

6...g6

A better alternative was 6...d6 7.♗b5+ (7.♘b5 ♔d8!) 7...♘d7. After the text White could have obtained a better game after 7.d6! ♕xd6 8.♕xd6 exd6 9.♘b5 ♘a6 10.0-0-0.

7.♗c4 d6 8.♘ge2 ♘d7 9.♘f4 ♘e5 10.♕e2 ♗h6 11.h4 0-0 12.a4 ♘xc4 13.♕xc4 b6



Both sides are finishing their development, and the position is complicated and unclear.

14.g3 a6 15.0-0 ♗d7 16.♘e6 ♖fb8

Black wants to play b5, but White may be able to prevent it.

17.♖fb1 ♔f7 18.♘f4 ♖b7 19.♕d3 ♖c7 20.♖a2 ♗g7 21.♔g2 ♖cc8 22.♕e2 ♗h6 23.♖ba1 ♔g8 24.♖a3 ♕f7 25.♔g1

In this closed position, both sides are manoeuvring their pieces, waiting for the right moment to open up the game.

25...♗g7 26.♖b3 ♖cb8 27.♕c4 ♗e5 28.♕e2 ♖a7 29.♔g2 h6 30.♖h1 ♖aa8 31.♕d3 ♗xc3?!

Finally Black decided to grab a pawn, and at the wrong moment. This was the chance to play 31...b5 32.axb5 axb5 33.♘xb5 ♗xf4 34.exf4 ♗xb5 35.♖xb5 ♖xb5 36.♕xb5 ♕xd5+ 37.♔h2 with an even position.

32.♖xc3 ♗xa4 33.g4?

Much better was 33.e4! ♗b5 34.♕e3, after which White's attack is dangerous, and the opening of the e-file is a serious positional threat. Even in the deep middlegame, the weakness of the e6 square may be a serious factor in this variation.

33...♗b5 34.♕d1 fxg4 35.♕xg4 ♔h7 36.♖h3 ♖g8 37.♘e6? This was the last chance for White to play 37.e4 with initiative. **37...♕f5!** Now Black forces a queen trade with a much better endgame. **38.♕xf5 gxf5+ 39.♔f3 ♖g4 40.♘f4 ♗d7 41.♖a3 a5 42.c4 ♔g7 43.♖h1?** This is a tactical blunder, although even after the best 43.♔e2 White's position is not easy to hold. **43...e5! 44.dxe6 ♗c6+ 45.♘d5 ♖xc4** Now Black is winning. **46.♖d3** After 46.♖d1 ♖b4 Black also wins easily. **46...♖e8 47.♖g1+ ♔h7 48.♔e2 ♖xe6 49.♔d2 ♖xh4 50.♘f4 ♖f6 51.♔c3 0-1**

☐ **Alexander Matros**
■ **Jaan Ehlvest**
Stockholm 1998/99 (5)

1.d4 c5 2.d5 f5 3.e4!?

This pawn sacrifice is similar to the Staunton Gambit in the Dutch (1.d4 f5 2.e4).

3...fxe4 4.♘c3 ♘f6 5.g4

This move is much more dangerous than the early 3.g4.

5...g6!

The variation 5...h6 6.g5 hxg5 7.♗xg5, where White will soon castle long with a strong attack, did not look good to me, although 7...♕b6 might be worth studying.

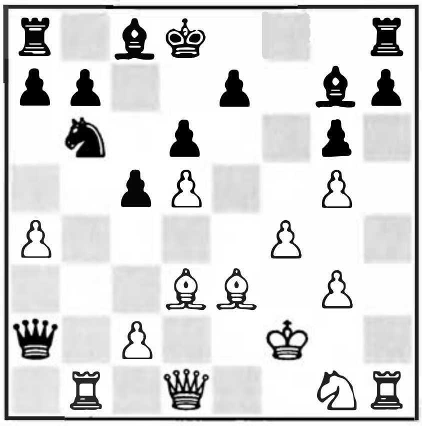
6.g5 ♘h5 7.♘xe4 d6

Now the g5 square is not available for White and the weakness on e6 is therefore well protected. The position is double-edged and White should play 8.♗g2 now. Instead he went for simplification – this is what I was afraid of before the game.

8.♘g3 ♘xg3 9.hxg3 ♘d7 10.♘h3?!

White should have played 10.f4! ♗g7 11.♗d3, and 11...0-0 is dangerous because of 12.♖xh7 ♔xh7 13.♕h5+ ♔g8 14.♗xg6. **10...♕b6 11.f4?** This is a definite error, after which Black is doing well. After 11.c3 White is probably still somewhat better.

11...♕b4+ 12.♔f2 ♕d4+ 13.♗e3 The endgame after 13.♕xd4 cxd4 is better for Black as he will have strong play on the c-file, but the pawn sacrifice is too optimistic. This game illustrates what can happen if you are playing an unfamiliar opening variation. **13...♕xb2 14.a4 ♗g7 15.♖b1 ♕a2 16.♘g1 ♘b6 17.♗d3 ♔d8!**



Parrying the threat of ♖xh7 and the king is on its typical square. **18.♘e2 ♕xd5 19.c4 ♘xc4 20.♗xc4 ♕xc4 21.♖c1 ♕e4 22.♗xc5 ♗g4 23.♘c3 ♕f5 0-1**

☐ **Nikolay Popov**
■ **Valery Zhuravliov**
Beltsy 1979

1.d4 c5 2.d5 f5 3.e4 fxe4 4.♘c3 ♘f6 5.f3

For 5.g4 look at Matros-Ehlvest above. 5.f3 is another reasonable way to sacrifice a pawn for a long-term initiative. Taking it leads to an uncomfortable position for Black, so exploring other options is worth looking at. One move that happened a number of times in practice is 5...d6, but there is no clear verdict. The game Stefanova-Miton, Spain 2005, continued 5...d6 6.fxe4 a6 7.a4 g6 8.♗e2 ♗g7 9.♘f3 0-0 10.0-0 ♘g4 11.♕e1 ♘d7 12.♕h4 ♘de5 13.♘e1 ♖xf1+ 14.♔xf1, and a draw was agreed. It seems though that after 13.♗g5! (instead of 13.♘e1?!) White has a better game.

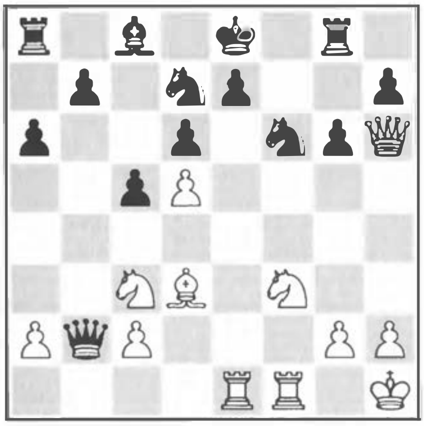
5...exf3 6.♘xf3 g6 7.♗d3 d6 8.0-0 ♗g7 9.♕e1 ♘bd7 10.♕h4 a6

Black keeps the king in the centre because after 10...0-0 11.♘g5 ♘e5 (11...c4!? 12.♗xc4 ♘e5, Fritz) 12.♖xf6 ♖xf6 13.♕xh7+ ♔f8 14.♘ce4 ♖f5 15.♗e2 or 15.g4 White has a strong attack.

11.♗h6 ♖g8 12.♖ae1

12.♗xg7 ♖xg7 13.♘g5 looks stronger here.

12...♗xh6 13.♕xh6 ♕b6 14.♔h1 ♕xb2



Now Black has gained a second pawn, which may provide sufficient compensation for his lack of development. **15.♕e3 ♖g7 16.♕h6 ♖g8 17.♕e3 ♖g7 18.♕h6 ♖f7** This refusal of a draw is not really justified, because White is better after his next move. **19.♘g5 ♘e5 20.♖xe5 dxe5 21.♘xf7 ♕xc3** Now 22.♕g7! would have given White a very strong attack. Instead the game went: **22.♘d6+?! ♔d7 23.♘c4 ♘xd5 24.♕xh7 b5 25.♖d1 ♗b7 26.♘b6+!?** Objectively best is 26.♘d2, where White still has compensation. The sacrifice, however, provides practical chances. **26...♘xb6 27.♗e4+ ♗d5** It turns out that even stronger is 27...♘d5! 28.♕f7 (or 28.♗xd5 ♗xd5 29.♖xd5+ ♔c6 30.♖d1 ♕xc2) 28...♔c7! 29.♗xd5 ♖d8! 30.♕xe7+ ♖d7 and Black should win. **28.♗xd5 ♘xd5 29.♕f7 ♔c7 30.♕xd5 ♕xc2 31.♕xe5+ ♔b6 32.♕e6+ ♔a5 33.♕e1+ b4 34.♖c1 ♕f5 35.♕xe7 ♖c8 36.h3 c4?!** This gives White the chance to open up the position of Black's king with 37.a3! bxa3 38.♕xa3+, with a likely draw. **37.♖e1?! ♖c5 38.♕d8+ ♔a4 39.♕d1+ ♔b5 40.♖f1 ♕d3** Black is winning. **41.♕c1 ♖d5 42.♕f4 c3 43.♔h2 ♔a4 44.♕f7 c2 45.♖c1 ♖c5 46.♕f2 ♖c6 47.♕f7 ♕d6+ 0-1**

☐ **Zviad Izoria**
■ **Jaan Ehlvest**
Batumi Ech 2002 (11)

1.d4 c5 2.d5 f5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.f3!?

In the previous games White played 4.e4 at once. Here my opponent, not willing to sacrifice a pawn, is preparing this advance with the logical pawn move, which had been played a few times before this game.

4...g6?!

This, however, is a dubious novelty. The move I made does not pay enough attention to White's plan, which is to play e2-e4 with the idea of e5, and if Black answers d6, take the pawn on f5, after which the e6 square becomes a perfect outpost for white knights in the middle of my position. In case of the previously tested 4...e5 Black still has problems after 5.e4 fxe4 (5...f4 6.g3 is positionally good for White) 6.fxe4 a6 7.♘f3 d6 8.a4 and square e6 is still weak. I think Black should try 4...e6 5.dxe6 (5.♗g5 h6) 5...d5 here.

5.e4 d6?!

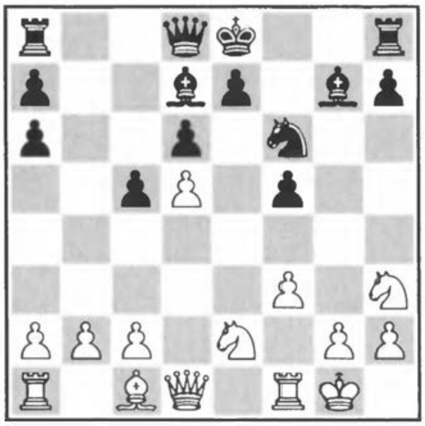
At least 5...fxe4 6.fxe4 d6 kept my kingside pawns connected.

6.♗b5+ ♗d7

In case of 6...♘bd7 White can continue as in the game.

7.exf5 gxf5 8.♘h3

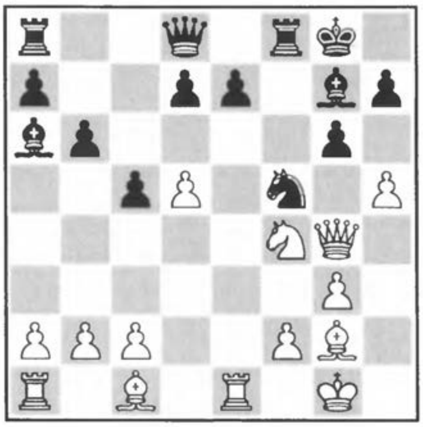
Now White has big positional advantage.
8...♘a6 9.♗xa6! bxa6 10.0-0 ♗g7 11.♘e2!



Both knights are moving toward e6!
11...0-0 12.♘ef4 h6 13.c4 ♘e8 14.♔h1 ♗d4 15.♕e2 ♔h7 The problem of my position is that I have too many weaknesses and no counterplay, having to wait for White's attack. A strong grandmaster should win such positions for White easily, which is demonstrated by my opponent. **16.♗e3 ♗h8 17.♖ae1 ♖f7 18.♕d2 ♖b8 19.b3 a5 20.♘e6 ♗xe6 21.dxe6 ♖f6 22.♗xh6! ♘c7** 22...♖xh6 23.♘g5+ ♔g8 24.♘f7 is decisive. **23.♘g5+ ♔g8 24.♘f7 ♕e8 25.♕g5+ ♔h7 26.♕h4 ♘xe6 27.♖xe6 ♖xf7 28.♖fe1 ♖b7 29.♗f8+ ♔g8 30.♖g6+ ♗g7 31.♗xg7 ♖xg7 32.♖h6 1-0**

☐ **Alex Yermolinsky**
■ **Alex Shabalov**
Boston 1999 (5)

1.d4 c5 2.d5 f5 3.g3 ♘f6 4.♗g2 g6 5.♘h3 ♗g7 6.0-0 0-0 7.♘c3 ♘a6?!
In this game the imaginative Alex Shabalov tries to avoid weakening the e6 square by not playing d7-d6 at all. However, 7...d6 8.♘f4 ♘a6, as in Kempinski-Markowski, Polanica Zdroj 1999, is probably better.
8.e4 ♘xe4 9.♘xe4 fxe4 10.♗xe4 ♘c7 11.♘f4 ♘e8?
Continuing with his plan – 11...d6 was still a possibility.
12.♗g2 ♘d6 13.♖e1 b6 14.h4 ♗a6 15.♕g4 ♘f5 16.h5

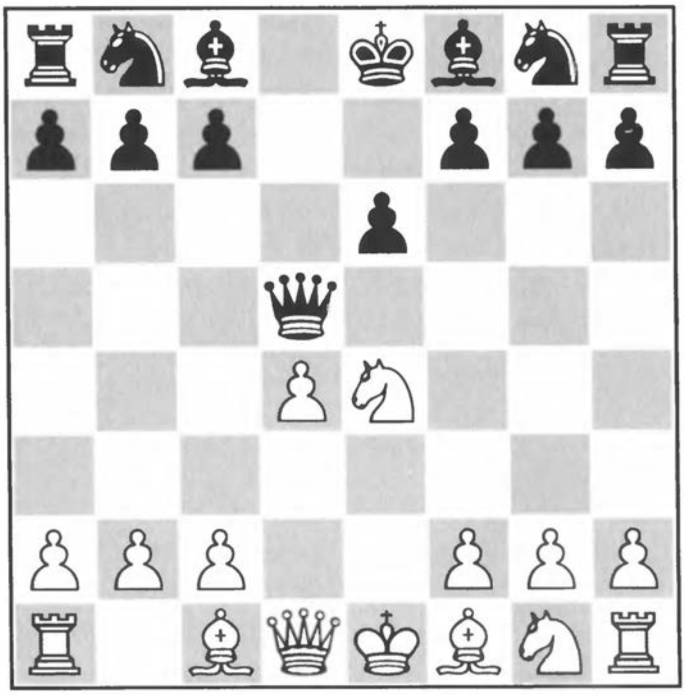


White's attack is simply too strong here.
16...g5 17.♕xg5 Yermo misses an opportunity to play 17.d6! with a bigger advantage. Now Black is able to wiggle out. **17...e5! 18.♘h3 ♕xg5 19.♗xg5 h6 20.♗e3 ♘d4 21.♗xd4 cxd4 22.♗e4 ♖ac8 23.a4 ♖c5 24.b4 ♖c3 25.a5 b5 26.♔g2 d6** In this complicated endgame each side has its own chances. **27.f3 ♗c8 28.g4 ♗f6 29.♖e2 ♗h4 30.♖b1 ♖f7 31.♖b2 a6 32.♖b1 ♖g7 33.♖h1 ♖e3 34.♖xe3 dxe3 35.♔f1 ♖c7 36.♔e2 ♖c4 37.♖b1?!** 37.g5! ♔g7 (37...♗xh3? 38.gxh6!) 38.gxh6+ would have maintained the balance. **37...♖xe4 38.fxe4 ♗xg4+ 39.♔xe3 ♗xh3 40.♔f3 ♗g5 41.♖b3 ♗d7 42.♖c3 ♗d8 43.♔g3 ♔f7 44.♖f3+ ♔e8 45.♖c3 ♔e7 ½-½**
A draw, although Black could play for a win in the final position.

CHAPTER 6

Jeroen Bosch

The Katalymov Variation



The SOS-way to play the 'quiet' Rubinstein

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♘xe4 ♛d5!?

This surprising queen move is the SOS-way to play the 'quiet' Rubinstein Variation. This line is sometimes called the Becker Variation, but it seems only fair to name it after the main protagonist Boris Katalymov who played 4...♛d5 against none other than Paul Keres in 1965. Black's centralizing queen move may remind you of the Scandinavian, but it is in fact much closer to several French lines where Black plays an early ...♛d5 (the most respectable example is 3.♘d2 c5 4.exd5 ♛xd5). There are, however, also similarities to the Caro-Kann line with ...gxf6 (in the line 5.♗d3 ♘f6 6.♘xf6+ gxf6, as in the aforementioned game Keres-Katalymov). Sometimes there are even resemblances to the Nimzo-Indian.

It is important to note the transpositions to other French lines. Thus, some lines that will be examined below may also occur via the Exchange Variation: 3.exd5 ♛xd5 and now 4.♘c3 ♗b4, but White has other possibilities on the 4th move where we will not go into. In addition, we can also arrive at the same position via the Winawer line 3.♘c3 ♝b4 4.exd5 ♛xd5. Note that in Katalymov's version both sides 'lose a move'. In the games examined below I will make no distinction between the pure Katalymov move order and the Exchange or Winawer move order.

After 4...♕d5, White is at crossroads:

I Defending the knight : 5.♗d3

II Attacking the queen: 5.♘c3

I Defending the knight

5.♗d3

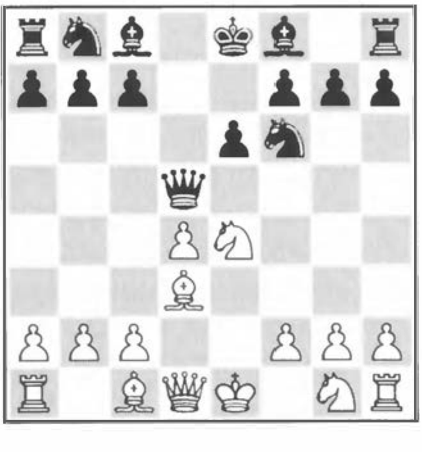
For the moment White preserves the knight on its central square.

Other moves pose no real challenge to 4...♕d5:

- 5.f3?! protects the knight, but is too ugly to contemplate.
- 5.♘g3 c5 6.♘f3 ♘f6 (a safe line is 6...cxd4 7.♕xd4 ♕xd4 8.♘xd4 a6 with an equal game, Abdulla-Schammo, Dubai Olympiad 1986) 7.♗b5+ ♘c6 8.0-0 cxd4 9.♘xd4 ♗d7 10.♗e3 ♘xd4 11.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 12.♗xd4 ♗e7 13.c3 0-0 and Black had no problems in Perenyi-L.Kiss, Nagykanizsa 1988.
- 5.♕d3 (poetic justice, her majesty personally protects the nimble knight against her rival's attack) 5...♘c6 6.♘f3 (weaker is 6.c3 e5! 7.dxe5 ♕xd3 8.♗xd3 ♘xe5 with equality. Mallee-Wockenfuss, Menden, Germany 1974) 6...♘f6 7.♘xf6+ gxf6 8.♗f4 ♗d7 9.a3 (bad is 9.♗xc7? ♘b4 10.♕d2 ♖c8) 9...0-0-0 10.♗e2 ♘e7!? 11.0-0 ♗c6 12.b4 ♕e4! and Black was already slightly better in Rej-Crouch, Copenhagen 1995.

After 5.♗d3 Black should immediately challenge the knight again with

5...♘f6



6.♘xf6+

In return for a double f-pawn White parts with his centralized knight. In practice several entirely different set-ups have been tried:

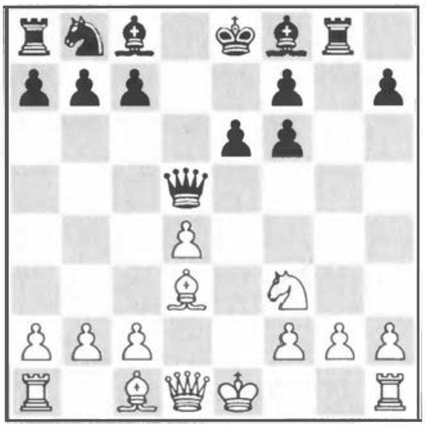
- 6.f3 (the only way to keep the knight on e4 and keep the d4-pawn defended. Still, this weakening of the g1-a7 diagonal should not dissuade Black from 4...♕d5) 6...♘a6!? 7.♘e2 ♘b4 8.♘xf6+ gxf6 9.♗e4 ♕a5 10.c3 f5! 11.♗b1 ♘d5 12.0-0 c6 13.♘f4± Vorotnikov-Dvoretsky, Beltsy 1972.
- 6.♘g3 ♗d7 7.♘f3 ♗b5 (this is a useful manoeuvre to keep in mind) 8.0-0 ♘c6 9.♗xb5 ♕xb5 10.b3 0-0-0 (safer is 10...♗e7!?) 11.c4 ♕b6 (Muratov also tried 11...♕a6 12.♗e3 ♗c5 13.b4 ♗xb4 14.♕c2 ♘g4 15.♖ab1 in Berkovich-Muratov, USSR 1976) 12.♗e3 ♗e7 13.♕e2 ♘g4 14.♖fb1 ♗f6 15.b4 and White was better in Losev-Muratov, Moscow 1976.
- 6.♕e2 White feels that his development edge and the open d-file will give him ample compensation for the pawn. In practice this is certainly dangerous. Please note though that Black's position holds no weaknesses. 6...♘xe4 7.♗xe4 ♕xd4 8.♘f3 ♕d8 9.♗d2 ♘d7 10.0-0-0 ♗d6 11.♗c3 0-0 12.h4, White had some compensation, but for equality and not for an advantage, Shamkovich-Dvoretsky, Moscow 1973.
- 6.♕f3!? ♕xd4 (exchanging a pair of knights with 6...♘xe4 before taking the pawn is a sensible solution. After 7.♕xe4 Black equalizes with 7...♕xe4+ (7...♗d7) 8.♗xe4 c5. While Dimitrov-Donchev, Elenite 1994, went: 7.♗xe4 ♕xd4 8.♘e2 ♕b6 9.♗f4 ♘d7 10.0-0-0 ♘f6 11.♘c3 ♗e7 12.♗e5 ♘xe4 13.♘xe4 0-0 14.♕c3 f6 15.♗xc7 ♕b4 16.♕xb4 ½-½) 7.♘e2 ♕d8 8.♗g5 ♗e7 9.♗xf6 (here 9.0-0-0 enables Black to exchange some minor pieces: 9...♘xe4 10.♗xe7 ♕xe7 11.♗xe4 c6 12.♕h5 ♘d7 13.♘g3 h6 14.h4 0-0 and

White did not have enough compensation in Tzermiadianos-Pandavos, Ano Liosia 1993) 9...♗xf6 10.0-0-0 ♘d7 11.♘f4 ♗e5 12.h4 ♕e7 13.g3 a5!? Black does not castle so as not to give White a clear target. Instead he seeks active play against White's king, Kotkov-Katalymov, Krasnodar 1966.

6...gxf6 7.♘f3

Again White can sac the d-pawn: 7.♕f3!? ♕xd4 (7...♕xf3 8.♘xf3 is only slightly better for White) 8.♘e2 ♕d8 9.♗f4 and White has certain compensation for the pawn.

7...♖g8



This is of course one of the main points of Katalymov's set-up. After 6...gf6 the rook shines along the g-file, and combined with the queen on d5 (or h5 if her majesty is chased from the central spot) and a bishop on d6 White will feel the pressure on his kingside. What is more, White seems to have no choice but to castle into it.

Most natural now is 8.0-0 which is what Keres played and indeed the most popular choice. Still in this double-edged position it is important to be well-prepared for the alternatives.

A) 8.c4
B) 8.♕e2
C) 8.♗f4
D) 8.0-0

Variation A

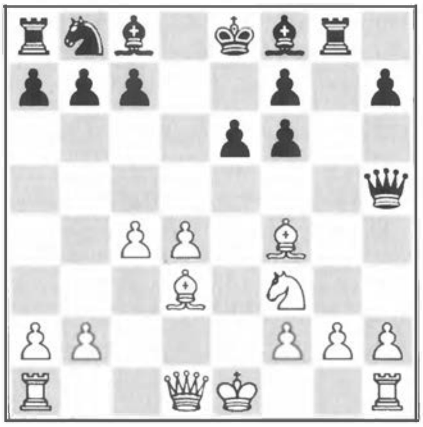
8.c4

Against the correct response this is nearly always slightly inaccurate. Black's queen aims for the h5-square anyway.

8...♕h5!

After 8...♗b4+?! 9.♗d2 (even stronger than this automatic move is 9.♔f1 ♕h5 10.♕a4+ ♘c6 11.♗e4 ♖b8 12.h3 which leaves Black virtually defenceless) 9...♗xd2+ 10.♕xd2 ♕h5 11.♖g1 ♘c6 12.0-0-0 e5 13.dxe5 (13.♗e4!) 13...fxe5 14.♘xe5!? ♘xe5 15.♗xh7 ♗f5! 16.♗xg8 (16.♗xf5! ♕xf5 17.♖ge1±) 16...♘d3+ 17.♔b1 ♘b4+ 18.♔a1 ♘c2+ 19.♔b1 ♞b4+ 20.♔a1 a draw was the result in Palmer-Camilleri, Skopje ol 1972.

9.♗f4



9...♖xg2?

Katalymov plunges into it (note that this game was played some 36 years after his game against Keres). Is it correct? No, it is not, I am afraid. Much safer is 9...♗d6 . The rest of the game is pure entertainment or even slapstick. **10.♗g3 ♗d6 11.♘h4** Catching the intrepid rook. **11...♕a5+ 12.♔f1 ♖xg3 13.hxg3 ♘c6 14.♘f3 b5** Again played without fear, but Black's compensation is clearly insufficient. Still, he managed to confuse White into losing this position somehow in Filchenkov-Katalymov, Tomsk 2002.

Variation B

8.♕e2

White prepares castling to the queenside, and takes control over the e4-square. This line is not too frightening though.

8...♕h5 A good move, but courageous players might like to investigate 8...♖xg2.

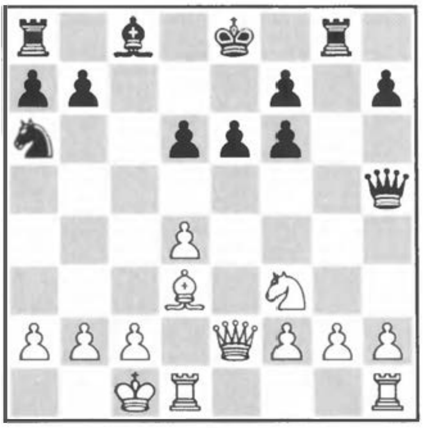
9.♗f4 ♗d6

This is always the correct response when White puts his bishop on f4.

10.♗xd6

Here 10.♗g3 ♗xg3 (10...♘c6; 10...f5 11.0-0-0 f4?! 12.♗h4±) 11.fxg3 ♖xg3?! 12.0-0-0 left White ahead in development in Levitina-Teodorescu, Medellin ol 1974, after 12...♖g7!? (12...♖g8) 13.d5 e5 14.h3 ♘d7 15.g4 ♕h6+. Instead of the game continuation 16.♔b1 White could have won with 16.g5! fxg5 17.♘xe5 ♔f8 18.♘g4 ♕d6 19.♖de1 ♔g8 20.♖hf1. Black can hardly move at all.

10...cxd6 11.0-0-0 ♘a6!?



12.♔b1

In Malesic-Maric, Yugoslavia 1966, 12.d5 e5 led to an unclear game. Naturally, 12.♗xa6 bxa6 merely opens files (and an important diagonal!) on the wrong side of the board. After 12.♔b1 Black is fine.

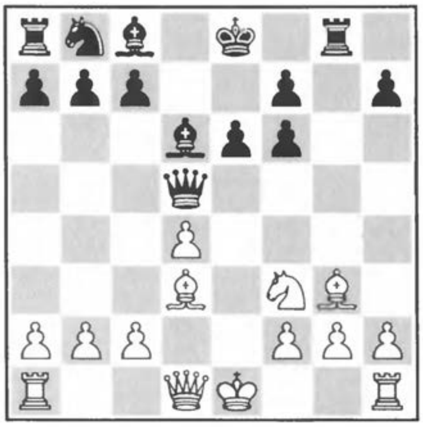
12...♘c7 13.c4 ♖xg2 Finally the time has come to take the pawn. **14.♖hg1 ♖xg1 15.♖xg1 ♔f8 16.♕e3 ♗d7 17.♕f4 ♘e8** Black's king is perfectly safe, and he is simply better. Messa-Trabattoni, Venice 1979.

Variation C

8.♗f4

Indirectly protecting the g-pawn, since 8...♖xg2? 9.♗g3 catches the rook.

8...♗d6 9.♗g3



The only critical reply. Nothing is gained by 9.c4?! ♕h5!.

In the game Bereslavsky-Chebotarev, Nizhni Novgorod 1999, White played 9.♗xd6 cxd6 10.♖g1 (10.0-0♘c6 11.♖e1 ♕h5) 10...♘c6 11.c3 h5?! 12.♕d2 e5 13.dxe5 (13.c4?♕xf3 14.gxf3 ♖xg1+ 15.♗f1 ♗h3–+) 13...fxe5 14.♗e2 and now rather than the game continuation 14...♕e4? Black should play 14...♕xd2+ 15.♘xd2 ♗g4 when he is all right in the ending.

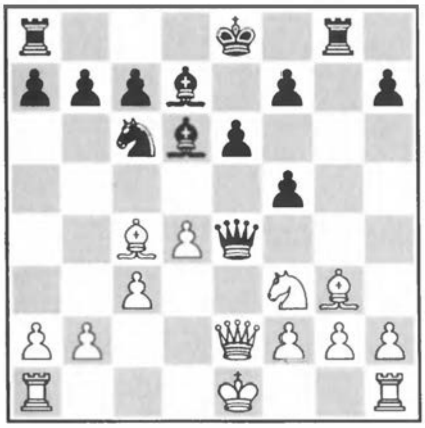
9...♘c6

Forcing but double-edged is 9...f5 10.♕d2, and now:

- 10...♘c6 11.a3 (11.c4 ♕xf3! 12.gxf3 ♗b4) 11...♗d7 12.c4 ♕a5 13.♕xa5 ♘xa5 14.b4 ♘c6 15.c5 ♗e7 16.b5 (16.♗xc7 ♗f6) 16...♘xd4 17.♘xd4 ♗f6 18.♘c2 ♗xa1 19.♘xa1 0-0-0 20.♔e2 e5 when in Ahmed Garcia-Garrido Moreno, Gijon 1999, White agreed a draw, but could have played on with 21.c6.
- 10...f4 11.♗xf4 (much more dangerous is

11.c4 ♕h5 12.♗xf4 ♖xg2 13.♗e2 ♘c6 14.0-0-0 ♗xf4 15.♕xf4 ♗d7 16.d5± Agrachev-Chernin, USSR 1976) 11...♖xg2 12.♔e2♘c6 13.♖hg1 e5!? 14.♖xg2 (14.dxe5 ♗b4 15.c3 ♗g4↑) 14...♘xd4+ 15.♘xd4 ♕xg2 16.♕e3 ♕g4+ 17.♔d2 ♕xf4 18.♕xf4 exf4= Kolas-Harestad, Norway 1997.

10.c3 Or 10.♕d2. **10...f5 11.♕e2** 11.♕d2 is now too slow: 11...f4 12.♗xf4 ♖xg2. **11...♗d7** But not 11...f4? 12.♗h4 ♖xg2 13.♗e4 ♕h5 (13...♕a5 14.♘d2 ♖g8 15.♘c4+–) 14.♘e5 ♕xe2+ 15.♔xe2±. **12.♗c4** 12.0-0-0 ♕xa2. **12...♕e4**



With equality. **13.d5?! ♘a5 14.♕xe4 fxe4 15.♘d2 ♘xc4 16.♘xc4 ♗xg3 17.hxg3 exd5 18.♘e3 ♗e6 19.♖xh7 0-0-0** and Black's game was preferable in Aridov-Tchoubar, Kiev 2003.

Variation D

8.0-0 ♘c6

Preventing 9.♗f4 with 8...♗d6 is an interesting thought:

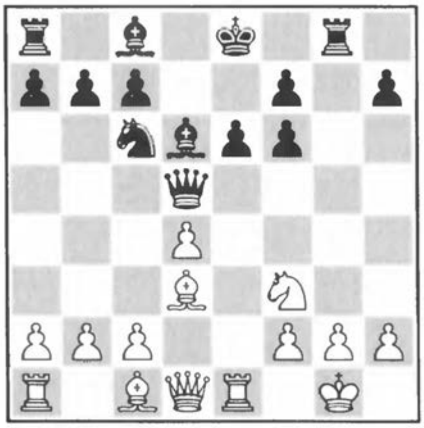
– 9.c4 ♕h5 10.c5 ♗e7 11.♗f4 ♕g4 12.♗g3 f5 13.♘e5 ♕xd1 14.♖fxd1 ♘d7 15.♘xd7 ♔xd7 16.d5 ♗xc5 (16...exd5 17.♗xf5+ ♔c6 18.♗xh7) 17.♗b5+ ♔e7 18.♗xc7 ♗d7 19.♗xd7 ♔xd7 20.♖ac1 ♔xc7 21.♖xc5+ ♔b6 and the rook ending is equal. Buljovcic-Maric, Sombor 1966.

– 9.♖e1 ♕h5 (9...♘c6 transposes to the main line) 10.c4 ♗d7 11.♗f1 ♘c6 12.c5 ♗e7 13.♗d2 e5? (going for tactics with his king still in the middle. It was correct to castle queenside) 14.d5 ♗g4 and now rather than 15.♗e2 White could have won on the spot with 15.dxc6!. Probably both players missed that after 15...♗xf3 the intermediate move 16.cxb7! works for White: 16...♖d8 17.♗b5+, Leschenko-Tchoubar, Kiev 2005.

9.♖e1

In Vandenbussche-Meier, Budva 2003, there followed 9.c4 which chases the queen to the excellent h5-square. Black won after 9...♕h5 10.♗f4 ♗d6 11.♗xd6 (11.♗g3 ♗d7) 11...cxd6 12.♖e1 e5 13.dxe5?! (13.♘xe5!? ♕xd1 14.♘xc6+ ♕xe1+ 15.♖xe1+ and White has compensation for the exchange, but Black has plenty of chances too after 15...♗e6 16.♘a5 ♔d7) 13...dxe5 14.♔h1 (14.♘xe5 ♕xd1 15.♘xc6+ ♕xe1+ 16.♖xe1+ ♗e6 is better for Black.) 14...♗d7 15.b4? 0-0-0 16.♕b1? ♖xg2! 17.♔xg2 ♗h3+ 18.♔g3 ♕g4+ mate.

9...♗d6



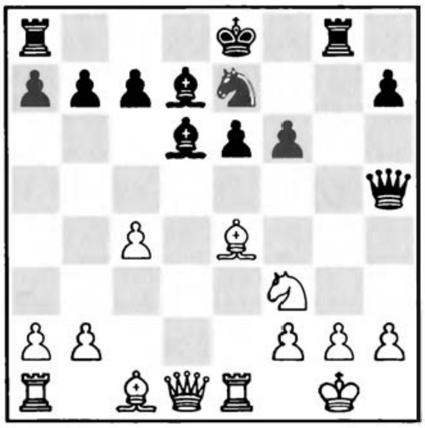
10.g3

Hoang Thanh Trang has played his own personal theme tournament in Budapest with 10.♗e4 ♕h5 11.c4 ♗d7 and now:

● 12.c5 ♗e7 13.♗f4 f5 14.♗c2 ♕g4 15.♗g3 0-0-0 16.♕d2 Palkovi-Hoang Thanh Trang, Budapest 1996. Trang could have played 16...♗e8!? attacking d4 when 17.h3 ♘xd4 18.♕a5 (18.♘xd4 ♕xd4

19.♕xd4 ♖xd4 20.♗xf5 ♗xc5∓) 18...♘xf3+ 19.♔h1! (19.gxf3 ♕f4–+) 19...♕xg3 (19...♕xh3+!? 20.gxh3 ♖xg3 21.♖ed1!; 21.fxg3 ♖d2 22.♕xd2 ♘xd2∞) 20.fxg3 ♘xe1 21.♕xa7 ♘xc2 22.♕a8+ ♔d7 23.♕a4+ is a spectacular draw.

● 12.d5 ♘e7 13.dxe6 fxe6



– 14.♗xb7 (this demonstrates the dangers that White is facing) 14...♖b8 15.♗e4 f5 16.♗c2 ♗c6 17.♗a4 and now instead of 17...♗xh2+, Yakovenko-Hoang Thanh Trang, Budapest 1996, Black should have gone for 17...♖xg2+! 18.♔f1 (18.♔xg2 ♕xh2+ 19.♔f1 ♕h3+–+) 18...♖g6 and Black is much better.

– 14.g3 0-0-0 15.♕b3 c6 (worse was 15...b6 16.♘d4 ♗c5 17.♗e3 ♗xd4 18.♗xd4 e5 19.♕a3! ♗f5? 20.♗xe5! ♗xe4 21.♖xe4 fxe5 22.♕xe7± Tolnai-Hoang Thanh Trang, Budapest 1996) 16.♘d4 e5 17.♘c2 f5 (Black has good chances here) 18.♗f3 ♕g6 19.♗e3 f4!? 20.♗xa7 ♗f5 21.♖ac1 e4 22.♗g2 e3 23.♘xe3! (23.fxe3 fxg3 is asking for it) 23...fxe3 24.♗xe3 and the game was eventually drawn, Varga-Hoang Thanh Trang, Budapest 1998.

10...♕h5

Typical for the whole line. White was threatening to take h7.

11.♗e4

Keres aims to play 12.d5, but Katalymov's next forces him to part with the bishop. More chances are perhaps offered by 11.♗e2. This threatens 12.♘g5, so Black has little choice but to continue 11...♕h3 and now if White is peacefully inclined he can take a draw by repetition with 12.♗f1 ♕h5 13.♗e2 ♕h3 14.♗f1 ♕h5 ½-½ Matanovic-Maric, Titograd 1965. However, he can also decide to play with 12.d5 ♘e7 (12...♘e5) 13.dxe6 ♗xe6 (13...fxe6±) 14.♗b5+± ♗d7 15.♗xd7+ (15.♕d5 0-0-0 16.♗xd7+ ♖xd7 17.♕xf7 ♗xg3! forces a draw) 15...♕xd7 16.♕d4 ♕g4 (16...♕f5 17.♘h4 ♕xc2 18.♗f4!±) 17.♕xg4 ♖xg4 18.c3 with a slight but definite edge for White in the ending. Glek-Hoang Thanh Trang, Budapest 1998.

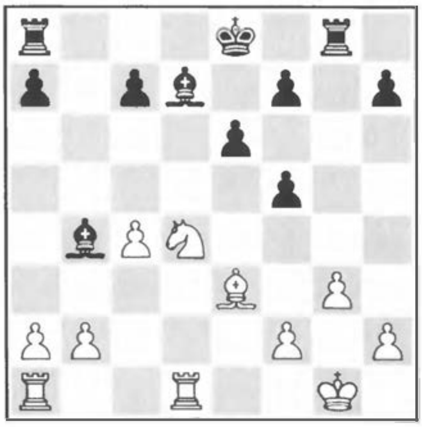
11...f5 12.♗xc6+ bxc6 13.c4 c5 14.dxc5 ♗xc5 15.♗e3

Play is equal after the greedy 15.♕d5 ♖b8 and now:

– 16.♕xc5 ♕xf3 17.♕d5 (17.♕xc7 ♗b7 18.♕xb8+ ♔d7 19.♕xb7+ ♕xb7) 17...♗b7 18.♕xf3 ♗xf3.

– 16.♕c6+ ♗d7 17.♕xc5 (not 17.♕xc7? when 17...♕xf3 18.♕xb8+ ♔e7 19.♕f4 ♗xf2+ 20.♔f1 ♕h1+ 21.♔xf2 ♕xh2+ 22.♔f1 ♖xg3 is quite a spectacular finish) 17...♕xf3 18.♕d5 ♗c6.

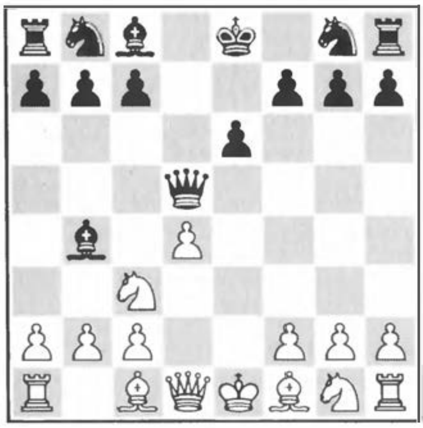
15...♗b4 16.♘d4 ♕xd1 17.♖exd1 ♗d7



And White has only a very slight edge. Keres won in the end (because he was Keres). The fact that no one has repeated this line in practice is, however, another indication that Black's problems after 4...♕d5 (if any) lie elsewhere. Keres-Katalymov, Moscow 1965.

II Attacking the queen

5.♘c3 ♗b4



Black keeps the queen on her centralized spot, and is ready to exchange the bishop for the knight if necessary. By pinning the knight Black's dark-squared bishop can influence the fight for the light squares e4 and d5.

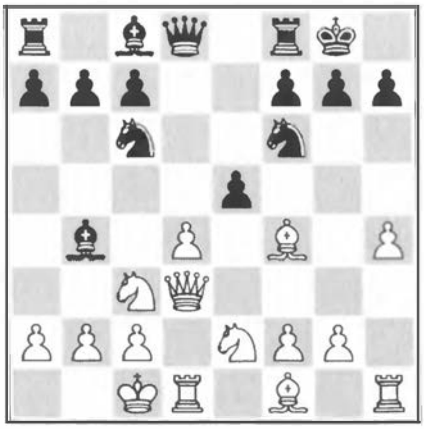
6.♘f3

Most natural but there are some other moves to consider:

● 6.♕g4!?. A well-known ploy in the French (Winawer), Black's best is probably: 6...♘c6 7.♘f3 ♘ge7 planning to answer 8.♕xg7 by 8...♖g8 9.♕xh7 e5 with ...♗f5 and castling queenside to follow.

● 6.a3. This old recommendation of Pomar immediately nets White the bishop pair but Black's superior pawn structure more than makes it up. Play sometimes resembles the Nimzo-Indian. 6...♗xc3+ 7.bxc3 ♘f6 (here 7...c5 is quite playable too: 8.♕f3?! ♘f6 9.♕xd5 exd5 10.dxc5 0-0 11.♗f4 ♖e8+ 12.♗e2 ♘e4 13.♔f1 ♘xc3∓ Vasconcellos-Van Riemsdijk, Sao Bernardo 1968) 8.♘f3 c5 (Black can postpone this and complete his development in much the same way as in the Karpov Variation of the Nimzo-Indian: ♘bd7, b6, ♗b7) 9.♗e2 ♘c6 10.0-0 0-0 11.♗b2 Planning 12.c4 and provoking Black into playing 11...c4 12.♘d2 ♘a5 13.a4 ♗d7 14.♗f3 ♕g5 15.♖e1 ♘d5 16.♘e4 (16.♖e5 ♕g6 17.♗e4 f5) 16...♕f4 17.♗c1 ♕c7 18.♕d2 ♗c6 19.♕g5 b6 20.♕h4 ♖fe8 21.♗d2 ♖ad8 and Black was doing fine in Lhagvasuren-Rogers, Novi Sad ol 1990.

● 6.♘e2 (a suggestion of Ciocaltea's. White intends 7.a3 without the risk of fracturing his structure) 6...♘c6 (note that 6...c5 is well-met by 7.a3 ♗xc3+ 8.♘xc3 ♕xd4 9.♕xd4 cxd4 10.♘b5. White is slightly better after 6...♘f6 7.a3) 7.♗f4 (after 7.♗e3 ♕d7 8.a3 ♗e7 – 8...♗xc3+ 9.♘xc3 ♘f6 – 9.g3 ♘f6 10.♗g2 b6 11.d5! exd5 12.♘xd5 ♗b7 13.♘xf6+ ♗xf6 14.♕xd7+ ♔xd7 15.0-0-0+ ♔c8 16.♘f4 was very unpleasant for our eponymous hero, Shinkevich-Katalymov, Tomsk 2001. Therefore, it is better to answer 7.♗e3 with 7...♘f6 8.a3 ♗xc3+ 9.♘xc3 ♕d7 – 9...♕d8 10.♗e2 ♘d5 11.♕d2 0-0 12.0-0-0± Kecic-Karnar, Skofja Loka 1997– 10.♗e2 b6 11.♗f3 ♗b7 12.d5 ♘a5 13.dxe6 ♕xe6 14.♗xb7 ♘xb7 15.♕f3 0-0-0 16.0-0 ♕g4 17.♕xg4+ ♘xg4 18.♗f4 and White's advantage is so small one needs a magnifying glass to see it. Navarro-Baron, Pamplona 2002/03) 7...♕d8 (losing time perhaps, but the bishop is not well placed on f4 in view of a subsequent ...♘f6-d5) 8.♕d3 ♘f6 9.0-0-0 0-0 10.h4?! (better was 10.♗g5) 10...e5!



11.dxe5 ♕xd3 12.cxd3 ♘g4 13.♗g3 ♘gxe5

14.d4 ♘g4 15.f3?! (15.d5) 15...♘e3 16.♖d3 ♘xf1 17.♖xf1 ♖e8 18.♗f4 (18.♗xc7 b6 19.♖d2 ♗a6–+) 18...b6! 19.♖e3 ♗a6 20.♖d1 ♖xe3 21.♗xe3 ♖e8 winning, Arnason-Rogers, Groningen 1990.

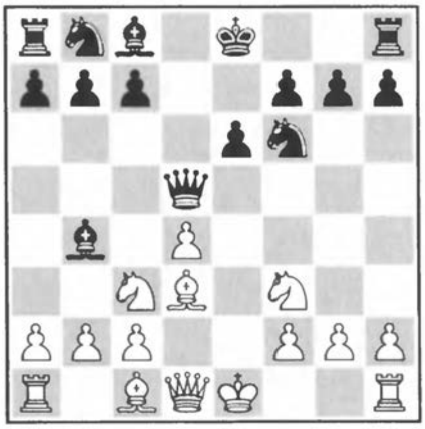
6...♘f6

This is the main line, but Black sometimes tries to exchange his 'bad' French bishop at this stage. There are two ways to implement this plan.

– **6...♗d7** I quite like this simple move – intending 7...♗b5. But unfortunately it is not so easy to improve upon Razuvaev-Kuzmin (Soviet Championship, Baku 1972): 7.♗d3 ♗b5 8.0-0 ♗xc3 9.bxc3 ♘d7 10.♖b1 a6 and now instead of the game continuation 11.c4!? ♗xc4 12.♗xc4 ♕xc4 13.♖xb7 ♘gf6 14.♗a3 ♘d5 with equality, Razuvaev indicated 11.♕e2 as better for White.

– **6...b6!?** 7.♗d3 ♘f6 8.♗d2 (White prevents the fracturing of his structure. Still, the simple 8.0-0 is perhaps stronger: 8...♗xc3 9.bxc3 ♗a6 10.♖e1 0-0 11.♗xa6 ♘xa6 12.♕d3 ♘b8 13.c4 ♕b7 14.♗a3 ♖e8 15.d5 ♘bd7 16.dxe6 ♖xe6 17.♖xe6 fxe6 18.♖e1± Lengyel-Hoang Thanh Trang, Budapest 1997) 8...♗xc3 9.♗xc3 ♗a6 (mission accomplished) 10.0-0 ♗xd3 11.♕xd3 ♘c6 12.b3 0-0 13.♗b2 ♖fd8 14.c4 ♕h5 15.♕e3 ♖d6 16.h3 ♖ad8 17.♖fe1 h6 with equality, Malbran-M.Gurevich, Philadelphia 1989.

7.♗d3



Black had no problems in Kostic-Rajkovic, Nis 1996, after 7.a3 ♗xc3+ 8.bxc3 b6 9.c4 ♕d6 10.a4 ♘bd7 11.a5 ♗b7 12.♗e2 0-0 ½-½.

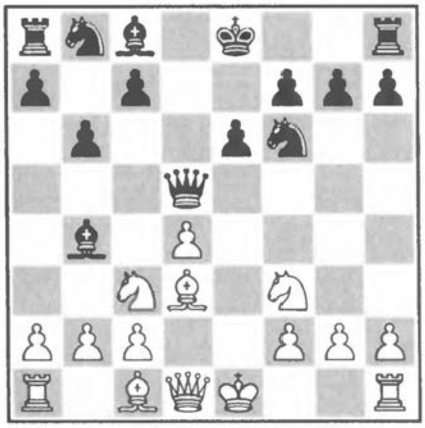
Also 7.♗d2 is hardly critical. Black is forced to give up his bishop, but gains valuable time in return. 7...♗xc3 8.♗xc3 (8.bxc3 c5) 8...b6 (8...♘c6 9.♗d3 ♘e4 10.♗xe4 ♕xe4+ 11.♕e2 ♕xe2+ 12.♔xe2 has occurred quite a few times in practice. It is an easy – but boring – way to equalize) 9.♗d3 ♗a6 (again trading the bishops is a convenient way to equalize) 10.0-0 0-0 11.♖e1 ♗xd3 12.♕xd3 ♘bd7 13.♗b4 (13.♕e2 ♖fd8 14.b3 ♕h5 15.♗b2 ♕g6 16.c4 c5 17.♖ad1 cxd4 18.♗xd4± Skorna-Hoang Thanh Trang, Budapest 1996) and now rather than 13...c5 (as in Beckemeier-Schebler, Dortmund 1998) Black can simply play 13...♖fe8 14.c4 ♕b7 with an equal game.

7...b6

Black employs a healthy Nimzo-Indian approach. The old line starts with the attempt to grab a pawn with 7...♘e4. Many strong theoreticians have devoted quite some time to this line. It really isn't worth the trouble though. I will only give the most important games here for the sake of completeness: 7...♘e4 8.0-0 ♘xc3 9.bxc3 ♗xc3 10.♖b1 (for only one pawn White has developed almost all his pieces. Black's queen and bishop are horribly vulnerable) 10...♘c6 (of course 10...♕xa2? 11.♖b3 is suicidal. The classical bishop sacrifice is the reason that Black has to postpone castling for quite some time: 10...0-0 11.♖b3 ♗a5 12.♗xh7+ ♔xh7 13.♘g5+. An old game Makarov-Dubinsky, USSR 1966, saw: 10...c5 11.♖b3 cxd4 12.♘g5±. Finally, 10...c6 is not very uplifting either after: 11.♖b3 ♗xd4 12.c4 – 12.♘xd4 ♕xd4 13.♗b2 is good too – 12...♕d8 13.♘xd4 ♕xd4 14.♕h5 ♘d7 15.♗b2 ♕c5 16.♕h4 ♕e7 17.♕g3 f6 18.♗a3 c5 19.♗xh7 ♘e5 20.♗e4± Jetzl-Czebe, Budapest 1997)

11.♗e3 ♗d7 12.♖b5! ♕d6 13.♖xb7 ♘xd4 (no better is 13...♘b4 14.♘e5 0-0 15.♗e4 ♗a4 Wall-Crouch, Newcastle 1995, as 16.a3! is very strong) 14.♘xd4 ♗xd4 15.♗xd4 ♕xd4 16.♖xc7 ♕b6 and now either 17.♖c4 as in Romanishin-Dvoretsky, Odessa 1972, or 17.♕f3!? Sax-Strobel, Vraca 1975, lead to a huge advantage for White.

Romanishin's play against Dvoretsky is exemplary, and one glance at the position after his eleventh move (11.♗e3) should convince you that White has ample compensation. Therefore, rather than grabbing a pawn, I would advocate 7...b6. Black just continues with his central (light-squared) strategy.



8.0-0

Play was equal after 8.♕e2 ♗b7 9.0-0 ♗xc3 10.bxc3 0-0 11.♖d1 ♘bd7 12.♗f4 ♖ac8 13.c4 ♕h5 14.♘d2 ♕xe2 15.♗xe2 ♖fe8, Kiroski-Dimitrov, Star Dojran 1996.

8...♗xc3

Black parts with his bishop as he intended all along. He gains time and a structural advantage in return.

9.bxc3 0-0

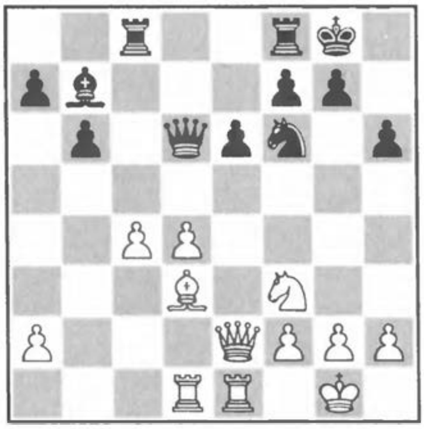
It is entirely possible to postpone castling here:

– 9...c5 10.♕e2 0-0 11.a4 ♘bd7 12.♖e1 ♗b7 13.♗a6 ♗xa6 14.♕xa6 cxd4 15.cxd4 ♖fc8∓ Foguelman-Suarez, Mar del Plata 1967.

– 9...♗a6 10.♖e1 ♗xd3 11.cxd3 0-0 12.a4 ♘bd7 13.♖b1 c5 14.♗a3 ♖fd8 15.dxc5 ♘xc5 16.♗xc5 ♕xc5∓ Julian-Prié, Cannes 1990.

– 9...♗b7 10.♗f4 c5 11.c4 ♕d7 12.dxc5 bxc5 13.♖b1 ♕c6 14.♖b5 ♘bd7 15.♕b1 ♗a6 16.♘e5 ♘xe5 17.♗xe5 (17.♖b8+ ♔e7 18.♖xh8 ♘f3+ 19.gxf3 ♖xh8∓) 17...♗xb5 18.cxb5 ♕d5∓ Brendel-Budnikov, Vienna 1991.

10.♖e1 ♘bd7 11.♗g5 ♗b7 12.♕e2 h6 13.♗f4 c5 14.♗e5 ♖ac8 15.c4 ♕c6 16.♗xf6 ♘xf6 17.c3 cxd4 18.cxd4 ♕d6 19.♖ad1



Now guess from what opening this position derived? Surely this looks more like the Karpov Variation in the Nimzo-Indian than a French Defence! Black is slightly better by the way. Rogers now plays a fine positional move, trading another pair of minor pieces.

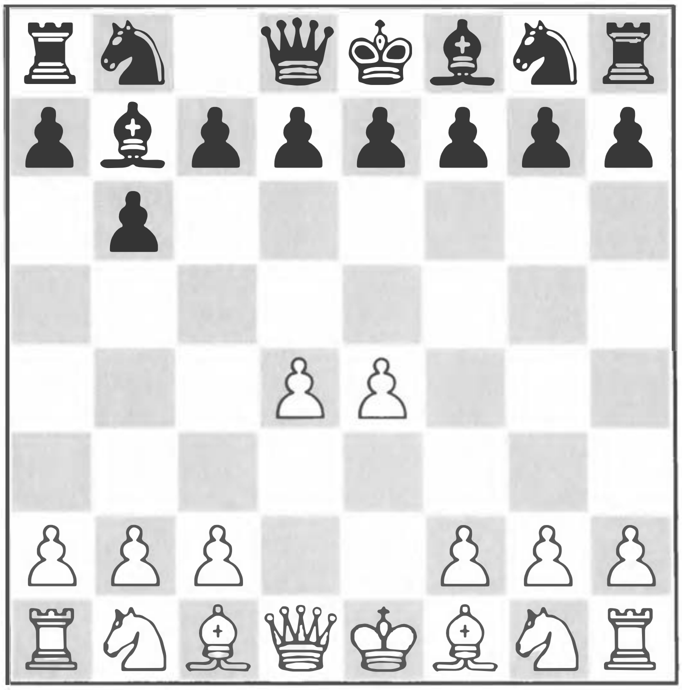
19...♗xf3! 20.♕xf3 ♖fd8 21.♗f1 ♖c7

Black has no weaknesses, while White is stuck with his hanging pawn centre. With only one pair of minor pieces White lacks the fire power that he needs to compensate for his structural weakness. Still, Black has only a very slight edge of course. He managed to win in the end, Ziatdinov-Rogers, Biel 1992.

CHAPTER 7

Glenn Flear

The Other Long Diagonal



Owen's 1...b6

After 1.e4 there are various systems that lead to Black fianchettoing his king's bishop, but it's much rarer to see him playing for action down the other long diagonal after ...♗b7. Where it does occur (in say, some lines of the French or Spanish) it's generally only once the central arena has been clarified.

So meeting 1.e4 with 1...b6 is a truly radical approach. Black neglects kingside development and, in terms of the centre, gives White carte blanche to do whatever he likes!

However Black has great flexibility and can react in various ways depending on White's choice. So White will almost certainly be out of his book, on his own and faced with unfamiliar strategies right from the beginning of the game. Not many of your opponents will relish that!

So all-in-all Owen's 1...b6 is the ultimate SOS weapon.

Throughout this survey I've been selective, highlighting various interesting options. In practical terms it's impossible to be exhaustive without upsetting the editor but because of various move order possibilities I've still included a few lines that can arise from both the English Opening and English Defence (1.c4 b6)!

So hopefully there should be enough material for readers to be confident enough to give 1...b6 a go.

In all cases covered here Black develops his king's bishop on the a3-f8 diagonal, so I've not covered the 'Hippo' (i.e. a double fianchetto with Black) which in itself could make a good subject for a future SOS survey!

There's clearly no refutation, but White undoubtedly has several ways to obtain an objective 'slight edge'. Nevertheless those who are tempted by 1...b6 are not seeking 'dry equality' but rather 'juicy complexity' and there's a good chance that they'll achieve that! There are some superb resources for Black and it's an ideal opening for those seeking to turn the tables and go for the full point.

Variation Structure

A rough guide to the covered variations:

A) 1.e4 b6 2.d4 ♗b7 3.♘c3 e6 4.a3
B) 1.e4 b6 2.d4 ♗b7 3.♗d3 ♞f6 4.♞c3 e6 5.♞f3 ♗b4
C) 1.e4 b6 2.d4 ♗b7 3.♗d3 ♘f6 4.♕e2 ♞c6 5.c3 e5
D) 1.e4 b6 2.d4 ♗b7 3.♗d3 e6 4.♘f3 c5 5.c3 ♘f6
E) 1.e4 b6 2.d4 ♗b7 3.♗d3 e6 4.c4 ♗b4+
F) 1.e4 b6 2.c4 ♗b7 3.♘c3 e5

Variation A – ♘c3 & a3

1.e4 b6 2.d4 ♗b7 3.♞c3 e6 4.a3

White spends a tempo to avoid ...♗b4. Black now needs to decide how he will counter White's centre.

4...♞f6 5.♗d3 c5

Going French with 5...d5 is also fairly popular: 6.e5 ♘fd7 7.♘f3 ♗e7 8.♘e2 c5 9.c3 ♗a6 (in comparison with some other lines of the Owen, possible is 9...c4 10.♗c2 b5 see Variation D) 10.♘f4 ♕c8 11.0-0 ♗xd3 12.♕xd3 ♕a6 (an interesting strategy) 13.♕d1 ♘c6 14.♗e3 Ehlvest-Blatny, New York 2004, and now Black should simply castle short with a satisfactory game.

6.♘f3 cxd4

Here 6...c4?! seems to be inferior: 7.♗xc4 ♞xe4 8.♞xe4 ♗xe4 9.♕e2 ♗xf3 10.♕xf3 d5 11.♗b5+ ♞d7 12.c4 and White was on top in the game R.Rodriguez-Aaron, Bangalore 1981.

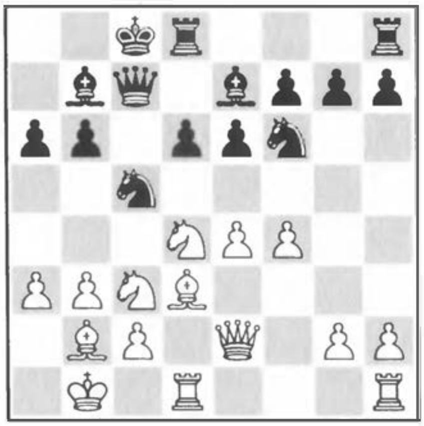
7.♘xd4 d6

Instead 7...♘c6!? is better known but the text is an interesting interpretation. Black just heads for a sound-looking Hedgehog set-up.

8.b3

In Sariego-Martin del Campo, Merida 1998, there followed: 8.0-0 ♗e7 9.f4 ♘bd7 10.♕f3 a6 11.b4 ♕c7 12.♗b2 h5!? 13.♖ae1 and in this tense position a draw was agreed.

8...♘bd7 9.♗b2 ♗e7 10.♕e2 a6 11.f4 ♕c7 12.0-0-0 ♘c5 13.♔b1 0-0-0



Ivanisevic-Bauer, Bastia rapid 2004, with a complex struggle.

Variation B – ♘c3 vs ♗b4

1.e4 b6 2.d4 ♗b7 3.♗d3 ♘f6

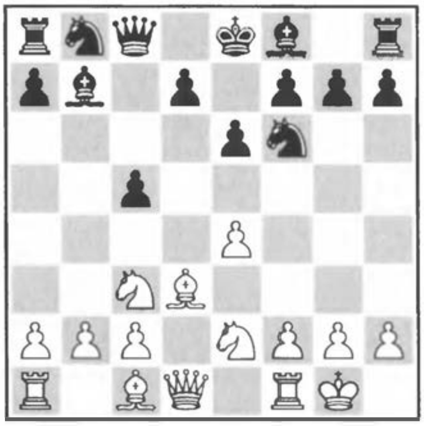
Directly attacking the e4-pawn, and thereby limiting White's options. A possible drawback is that a future e4-e5 will gain a tempo on the knight. We will also look at move orders starting with 3...e6.

4.♘c3 e6

In Variation A we covered lines involving a2-a3. It's rare to allow ...♗b4 but what happens if...

5.♘f3

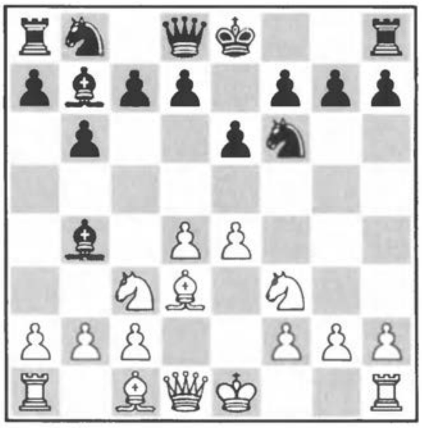
Against 5.♘ge2 there is little point in putting the bishop on b4 as this doesn't threaten to damage the white pawn structure, so it's better to attend directly to the centre. 5...c5 (5...d5?! is less appropriate here as after 6.e5 ♘fd7 White has 7.♘f4! with strong threats. After the further 7...g6 8.♕g4 ♕e7 9.♘b5 ♘a6 10.b3, Oral-Gawehns, Hamburg 1999, White was clearly better) 6.0-0 ♕c8 (of course Black can try 6...cxd4 7.♘xd4 ♘c6, with a Sicilian Defence pawn structure as in other lines, but Blatny's clever text move is specific to this position as he exploits the knight's position on e2 by threatening 7...c4 winning a piece!) 7.dxc5 bxc5



– 8.♘g3. It doesn't take much to provoke Blatny to steer the game into unfamiliar waters and after 8...h5!? 9.h4 ♞c6 10.♖e1 ♗d6 11.♘f1 ♗b8!? 12.b3 ♘e7 13.♗g5 ♘g6 he had achieved a unique position in Yudasin-Blatny, New York rapid 2004, and went on to win.

– 8.b3 ♘c6 9.♗b2 ♞b4 10.♘f4 ♗d6 11.♘h5 ♘xh5 12.♕xh5 ♘xd3 13.cxd3 ♕c6 14.♖ac1 0-0 was strategically unbalanced in Jansa-Blatny, Austria tt-2 2003/04.

5...♗b4



6.♗g5

– 6.♕e2 d5 7.exd5 (or 7.e5 ♘e4 8.♗d2 ♞xd2 9.♕xd2 ♗e7 10.h4 ♗a6 E.Berg-Blatny, Bermuda 2003, with a sound-looking French Defence for Black) 7...♕xd5!? (7...♘xd5 8.♗d2 is more common) 8.0-0 ♗xc3 9.bxc3 0-0 10.♗f4 ♖c8 11.♖fe1 c5 and Black was better in Bareev-Bauer, Enghien-les-Bains 2001.

– 6.e5 ♘e4 7.0-0 is a somewhat ambitious gambit: Black can probably get away with the booty and live to tell the day e.g. 7...♘xc3 8.bxc3 ♗xc3 9.♖b1 ♗d5 10.♘g5 ♕e7 11.♗e3 ♗xd4!?, Aveskulov-Blatny, Blitz 2004, and Black was better.

In Socko-Haba, Pardubice 1993, White did not sac a pawn but went: 7.♗xe4 ♗xe4 8.0-0, when an interesting struggle arose after 8...♗g6 9.♗g5 ♕c8 10.♘e2 h6 11.♗h4 d5 12.♘f4 ♗f5 13.♘h5 ♗f8. Here, unlike with many analogous positions with the same pawn structure, Black has achieved a fine posting for his bishop on the b1-h7 diagonal.

6...h6 7.♗xf6 ♗xc3+ 8.bxc3 ♕xf6

White has a lead in development and thus a temporary initiative, but potential problems could lie in store due to his weakened pawn structure.

9.0-0 d6

After 9...d5 White should open the position e.g. 10.exd5 ♗xd5 11.♘e5 0-0 12.♕h5 ♕d8 13.c4 ♗b7 14.d5! ♕d6 15.♖ael exd5 16.♕f5 g6 17.♕h3 ♔g7 18.♘xf7! with a strong attack, Kramnik-Ehlvest, Moscow ol 1994.

10.♘d2

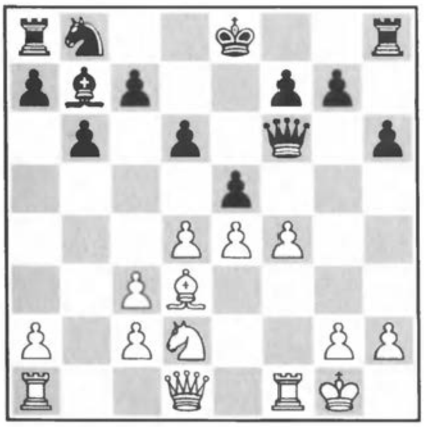
White is aiming for expansion with f2-f4. How should Black react? Now if 10...g5!?, then 11.♕e2 (White can afford to take his time as Black's king will be insecure wherever he tries to hide. 11.e5?! is too loosening: 11...dxe5 12.♞e4 ♕e7 13.dxe5 ♞d7 14.♖el 0-0-0 Akhayan-Jadoul, Belgium tt 2003/04 and Black was better) 11...e5 12.♕e3 ♞d7 13.♗b5 0-0-0 14.a4 a5 15.♖abl ♖he8 16.♖fel ♕g6 17.♕d3 ♔b8, Nikolaidis-Minasian, Panormo Zonal 1998. White has a useful queenside initiative.

The most popular is:

10...e5

but White will react with f2-f4 anyway, when Black will have to defend accurately:

11.f4!



Otherwise Black will complete development with a sound game.

11...exf4!?

The idea is that winning back the pawn will force White to open the g-file, thereupon it's less easy for him to maintain control.

– The sharp line 11...exd4 12.e5 is probably too dangerous: 12...dxe5 13.fxe5 ♕g5 14.♘f3 ♗xf3!? (14...♕e3+ 15.♔hl 0-0 16.cxd4 c5 17.♖el ♗xf3?! 18.gxf3 ♕xd4 19.♗e4, Dautov-Kengis, Daugavpils 1989, winning the exchange) 15.♖xf3! ♕xe5 16.♕el f6 17.cxd4 ♕xel+ 18.♖xel+, Sepp-Vetemaa, Bruges 1995, with more than enough compensation.

– Although 11...♕e7 has scored well in practise I'm not convinced of its soundness: 12.fxe5 dxe5 13.♗b5+! (13.♗c4 0-0 14.♕h5 ♘d7 15.♖ael ♖ae8 16.♖e3 ♘f6 Glek-Polak, Saint Vincent 2002, and Black successfully repulsed the attack) 13...c6 (13...♗c6? 14.♖f5) 14.♗c4 0-0 15.♖f5 ♘d7 16.♕h5 b5 17.♗b3 c5, Maliutin-Kramnik, Sochi 1990. I bet the majority of you didn't know that Kramnik has played 1...b6!?. He is probably aware that White has a winning attack, e.g. 18.♖afl! (instead of 18.dxc5) 18...c4 19.♘xc4 bxc4 20.♗xc4! ♔h8 21.♖xf7 ♖xf7 22.♖xf7 ♕d6 23.♕g4 and so this perhaps explains why Kramnik chose this system to play (as White) four years later against Ehlvest (see note to move 9).

12.♕f3

White could also try 12.g3 g5 13.gxf4 (or the murky 13.a4 ♘c6 14.♕e2 0-0-0 15.a5!? ♘xa5 16.♗a6 with complications in Spassky-Miles, Niksic 1983) 13...gxf4 14.♕g4 ♘d7 15.♖xf4 ♕g6 (15...♕e6!?) 16.♕g3 ♖g8, Simonet Pons-Mellado Trivino, Andorra 2001, when White probably kept a slight pull due to Black's broken kingside.

12...g5 13.♖ae1 ♕e7 14.g3 ♘d7 15.gxf4 gxf4 16.♕xf4 0-0-0

Cabrera-Pons Sastre, Palma de Mallorca 2002, with adequate counterplay.

Variation C – Blatny's ...e5

1.e4 b6 2.d4 ♗b7 3.♗d3 ♘f6!? 4.♕e2

For 4.♘d2 e6 5.♘gf3 c5 6.c3 see Variation

D. There are of course all sorts of transpositions possible between the move orders 3.♗d3 ♘f6 and 3.♗d3 e6.

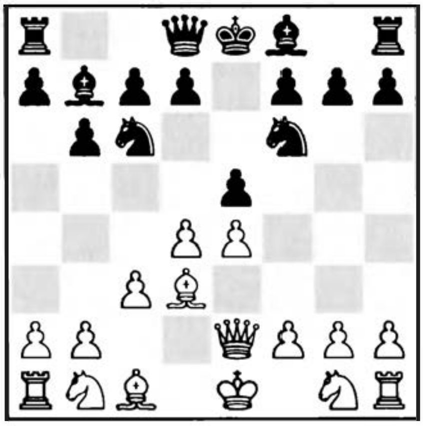
4...♘c6!?

Now it's the d-pawn under attack. Very funny, but has Black forgotten about his central pawns?

5.c3

Certainly not 5.♘f3 ♘b4 when White 'loses' his attacking bishop. 5.e5 would be answered by 5...♘xd4 6.♕e3 ♗xg2 (or similarly 6...♘xc2+ 7.♗xc2 ♗xg2 8.exf6 ♗xh1) 7.♕xd4 ♗xh1 8.exf6 exf6 with three pawns and a rook for a pair of knights. Black shouldn't be worse.

5...e5!

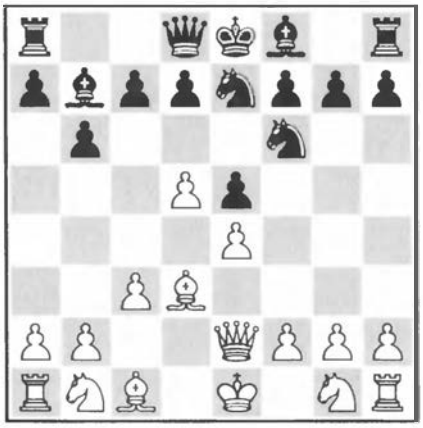


Striking back! This system has been extensively played by Pavel Blatny. The Czech GM has some useful scalps to his name, suggesting that there is a serious side to this odd-looking selection of moves.

6.♘f3

This is the most precise, as Black now has to really reply with 6...d6 which limits the active opportunities for Black's dark-squared bishop.

The problem with playing 6.d5 immediately for White is that Black can sometimes come to c5 (or occasionally b4) with his bishop giving some activity and there are less space constraints. 6...♘e7 and now:



– 7.f4 turned out disastrously in the following game: 7...exf4 8.c4 d6 9.♘f3 ♘g6 10.e5 dxe5 11.♘xe5 ♗b4+ 12.♔d1 0-0 13.♘xg6 hxg6 14.♗xf4 ♖e8 15.♕c2 ♗xd5 16.cxd5 ♘xd5 17.♗d2 ♘e3+ 18.♗xe3 ♖xe3, 0-1 Hermansen-Blatny, Los Angeles 2002.

– 7.c4 ♘g6 8.♘c3 ♗b4 (also tempting is 8...♗c5).

– 7.♘f3 ♘g6 8.g3 (after 8.0-0 ♗c5!? the obvious 9.b4 doesn't necessarily inconvenience Black: 9...♗e7 10.♘a3 0-0 11.♘c4 d6 12.g3 c6 as in Plenkovic-Polak, Split 2003, and White could not maintain his d5-pawn) 8...c6 (or even 8...♗c5 9.♘bd2 h5!? 10.h4 ♘g4 11.0-0 a5 12.♘c4 ♕e7, Esserman-Blatny, New York rapid 2003) 9.c4 ♗c5 10.♘bd2 a5, Bennett-Ivanov, New Hampshire 2000, and Black has achieved dynamic development. After the further 11.♘f1 0-0 12.♘e3 b5! 13.dxc6 ♗xc6 14.cxb5 ♗xe4 Black was already better.

6...d6 7.0-0

Now the move 7.d5! makes a great deal of sense. If Black has less space and no easy route to counterplay White must be able to keep an edge. Here are some practical examples:

– 7...♘b8!? 8.c4 ♗e7 9.♘c3 0-0 10.♗e3 ♘bd7 11.♘d2 ♘e8 12.0-0 g6 13.b4 ♘g7 14.♘b3 f5 15.f3 f4 with play as in the main line Classical King's Indian, Chiburdanidze-Jackova, Elista 2004.

– 7...♘e7 8.a4 a6 9.a5 ♕c8?! (9...bxa5 10.♖xa5 c6 is more combative) 10.♘a3 ♘d7 11.♗e3 ♘g6 12.g3 ♗e7 13.h4 with the initiative on both wings for White as in Al Modiahki-Blatny, Southampton 2003.

Instead, the move 7.♗g5 doesn't test Black, as early exchanges ease his problems: 7...♗e7 8.dxe5 dxe5 9.♘bd2 ♘d7 10.♗xe7 ♘xe7 11.0-0-0 0-0 12.♗b5 c6 13.♗c4 b5 14.♗b3 ♘g6 15.h4 ♘f4 16.♕f1 ♕e7, Agamaliev-Blatny, Blitz 2004, with equality.

7...♘d7 8.a4

The advance of the a-pawn is the most testing plan at White's disposal. Others haven't worried Pavel Blatny:

– 8.♗a6 ♕c8 9.♗xb7 ♕xb7 10.a4 g6 11.d5 ♘e7 12.a5 ♗g7 13.c4 0-0 14.♘c3 h6 15.♘e1 ♘c5 16.♗e3 f5 Baklan-Blatny, Bastia 2003, or

– 8.♘a3 ♗e7 9.♗e3 ♗f6 10.♖fd1 0-0 11.♖ac1 ♔h8 12.♗b1 ♖g8 13.b4 g5, Epishin-Blatny, Bastia 2003, and in both cases Black had found a way to generate counterplay.

8...♗e7

Stopping the a-pawn in its tracks has a downside, as Gata Kamsky demonstrated: 8...a5 9.d5 ♘e7 10.♗b5 h6 11.♘bd2 ♘g6 12.b4 ♗e7 13.bxa5 ♖xa5 14.♘c4 ♖a7 15.♗e3 0-0 16.a5 ♘c5 17.♗xc5 ♘f4 18.♕c2 bxc5, Kamsky-Blatny, New York rapid 2004, where 19.a6 left Black facing an uphill struggle.

9.d5 ♘cb8 10.a5 bxa5 11.♗e3?!

White should recapture as the further course of the game seemed fine for Black. So if 11.♖xa5 c6 12.dxc6 (or 12.b4!?) 12...♘xc6 13.♖a1 White probably has a small pull due to a slightly superior pawn structure.

11...c6 12.c4 ♘a6 13.♘bd2 ♘ac5 14.♖a3 f5 15.exf5 0-0

Shabalov-Blatny, New York rapid 2004, with excellent counterplay.

Variation D – ...c5 and ...d5

1.e4 b6 2.d4 ♗b7 3.♗d3 e6

Less forcing than 3...♘f6.

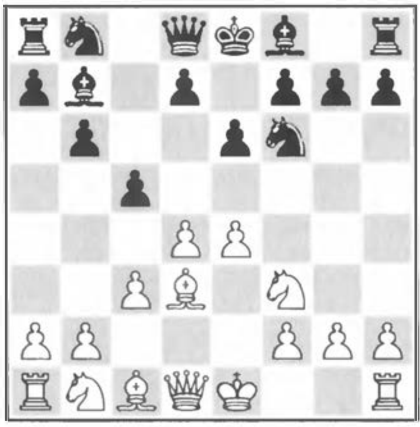
4.♘f3

Against 4.c4 an interesting try is 4...♗b4+ 5.♗d2 ♞c6, see Variation E.

4...c5 5.c3

The pawn structure after 5.♘c3 cxd4 6.♘xd4 is reminiscent of some variations of the Sicilian Defence. Black obtained interesting play after 6...♘c6 7.♘f3 ♘ge7 8.0-0 ♘g6 9.♖e1 ♗c5 10.♗g5 ♕b8 11.a3 0-0 12.h4?! ♘ce5 in Karayanni-Miles, Komotini 1992.

5...♘f6



6.♕e2

● 6.♗g5 leads to ceding the bishop for nothing special: 6...h6 7.♗xf6 ♕xf6 8.♘bd2 cxd4 9.cxd4 ♘c6 10.e5 ♕d8 11.a3 ♗e7 12.♕e2 d6 and Black has no particular problems, Rausis-Plaskett, Port Erin 1998, a game that transposed from the Torre Attack (1.d4, 2.♘f3 and 3.♗g5).

● After 6.♘bd2 Black has several plausible alternatives:

– Miles used to play 6...♗e7, e.g. 7.0-0 cxd4 8.cxd4 ♗a6 and by exchanging off a pair of bishops White's attacking chances are reduced, e.g. 9.♗xa6 ♘xa6 10.♕e2 ♘c7 11.d5 d6 12.dxe6 ♘xe6 13.♘b3 0-0 14.♖d1 ♕c8 in Lputian-Miles, Los Angeles 1991, the isolated d-pawn wasn't a significant factor.

– 6...d5 can easily transpose to the main line.

– The most precise way of entering a French-style structure is probably to play 6...♘c6 and after 7.a3 to keep a hold of b4, only then to play 7...d5, e.g. 8.e5 ♘d7 9.b4!? (9.0-0 a5 10.♜e1 c4 11.♗c2 b5 12.♘f1 h6 13.h4 b4 Narciso Dublan-Lputian, Linares 1996, gives Black an easy ride) 9...♛c7 10.0-0 cxd4 11.cxd4 a5 12.b5 ♘xd4 13.♘xd4 ♛c3 14.♘2b3 a4 15.♛d2 ♛c7 16.♘xe6 fxe6 17.♘d4 ♞c5, Jonkman-Blatny, Internet rapid 2002, and Naer-Blatny, New York rapid 2002, with unclear complications.

The position after 6.♘bd2 can also be reached via the move order 3.♝d3 ♘f6 4.♘d2 e6 5.♘gf3 c5 6.c3.

● 6.e5 ♘d5 yields a c3-Sicilian with an early ...b6. This is generally recognized as a respectable variation for Black. Here are some examples:

– 7.0-0 ♗e7 (also reasonable is 7...♘c6 8.a3 cxd4 9.cxd4 d6) 8.a3 cxd4 9.cxd4 ♝a6 10.♗xa6 ♘xa6 11.♛d3 ♘ac7 12.♘bd2 0-0 13.♘e4 f6 14.exf6 gxf6 15.♝d2 ♔h8, Maiwald-Miles, Ostend 1991.

– 7.dxc5 ♗xc5 8.0-0 ♗e7 9.♛e2 ♘c6 10.♝e4 ♘c7 11.♜d1 b5 12.♘bd2 a6 13.♘b3 ♛c8 Lautier-Miles, Biel 1992, and White could find nothing better than inducing unclear complications with 14.♗g5 ♗xg5 15.♘xg5 h6 16.♛h5 ♘xe5 17.♘c5 g6 18.♛e2 d5.

6...♗e7 7.0-0 d5 8.e5

Here 8.exd5 isn't a serious test: 8...♛xd5!? (or 8...♗xd5 9.dxc5 ♗xc5 10.♗g5 ♘bd7 11.♘bd2 ♛c7 with fairly sound development but White has a slight initiative) 9.♗b5+ ♗c6 10.dxc5 ♛xc5 11.a4 0-0 12.♗e3 ♛h5 13.♘d4 ♛xe2 14.♗xe2 ♗b7 with full equality, Zhulanov-Turikov, Tula 2004.

8...♘fd7 9.♗e3

Sometimes 9.a3 is played here but this does not necessarily change the character of the position: 9...c4 (9...a5!? has the point that if White plays 10.b3 – to dissuade ...c4 – then 10...♗a6 exchanging the light-squared bishops can be tried. After 11.♗xa6 ♘xa6 12.♗b2 0-0 13.♘bd2 ♛c8 14.c4 ♘c7 15.a4 ♘b8 16.♜ac1 ♘c6 17.♜fd1 ♛b7 Black held firm in Juswanto-Rogers, Bali 2000) 10.♗c2 b5 11.♘bd2 a5 12.♜e1 ♘c6 13.♘f1 h5 14.g3 b4 15.h4 bxc3?!. Black should delay this capture until he's better prepared to meet any white pressure on the b-file. Moiseenko-Bauer, Bilbao rapid/blitz 2004.

9...♘c6 10.a3

In order to avoid ...cxb4 cxb4 ♘b4 hitting the bishop.

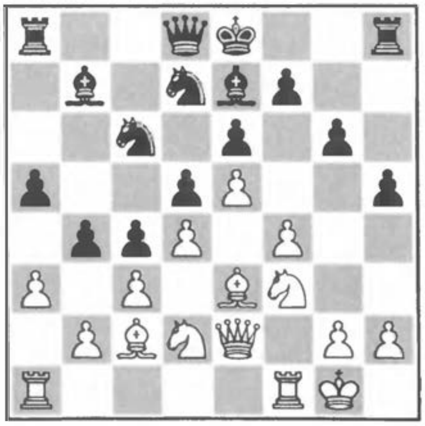
10...c4 11.♗c2 b5

Not just to block the wing, Christian Bauer aims to handle the position dynamically. After the alternative 11...♘a5 12.♘bd2 h6 13.♘e1 ♛c7 14.h4 0-0-0 15.h5 ♜dg8, Baumegger-Freitag, Austria Staatsliga 2002/03, Black was ready and waiting.

12.♘bd2 a5 13.♘e1 h5!

For space and influence.

14.f4 g6 15.♘ef3 b4!



Dautov-Bauer, Gothenburg 2005. In this blocked position, Black has matters under control on both wings.

Variation E – English Defence

1.e4 b6 2.d4 ♗b7 3.♗d3 e6

A potential problem with this move order in the 'Owen's' is that after 4.c4 play has transposed to a typical position from the English Defence. Instead of reproducing lots of standard theory, I'm proposing a SOS-style line that has been tried by Short and Speelman.

4.c4 ♗b4+ 5.♗d2

Self-pinning with 5.♘c3 yields a line where Black gets good play against the centre e.g. 5...f5:

- 6.♕h5+ g6 7.♕e2 ♘f6 8.f3 ♘c6 9.♗e3 (9.e5? is a famous blunder that has been repeated on several occasions(!): 9...♘xd4 10.♕f2 ♘h5 11.♕xd4 ♗c5, Adorjan-Spassky, Toluca Interzonal 1982, and the Hungarian GM was probably very embarrassed!) 9...fxe4 10.fxe4 e5 11.d5 ♘d4 12.♗xd4 exd4 13.a3 ♗xc3+ 14.bxc3 dxc3 15.♘f3 0-0 16.0-0 ♕e7, Gorbatow-Ehlvest, St.Petersburg 1994, with complications.
- or 6.♕e2 ♘f6 7.♗g5 0-0 8.♘f3? (8.f3 h6 9.♗h4 is better, with chances for equality!) 8...fxe4 9.♗xf6 exd3 10.♗xd8 dxe2 11.♗xc7 ♗xf3 12.gxf3 ♘c6 13.♔xe2 ♘xd4+ 14.♔d3 ♘xf3, Deriabin-Ivanova, Mariupol 2003, and Black had won a pawn.

5...♘c6!? 6.♘f3

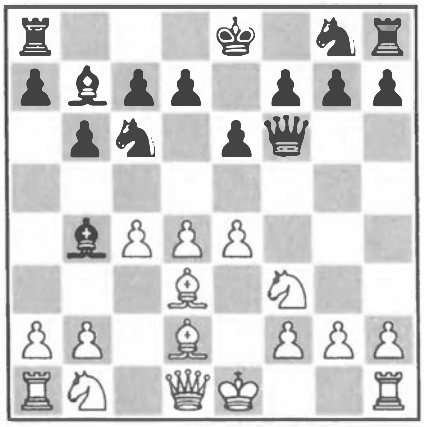
● Play is often comparable to our main line after 6.♘e2 ♕f6 e.g.:

- 7.♗xb4 ♘xb4 8.♘bc3 ♘xd3+ 9.♕xd3 a6 10.0-0 ♘e7 11.f4. White's big pawn front is impressive but Black is ready to counter as desired after: 11...♕g6! 12.f5 (after 12.d5 then 12...f5 yields counterchances) 12...exf5 13.♘f4 ♕g5 14.exf5 0-0-0 15.♘e4 ♕h6 16.♘g3 d5, Neverov-Short, Ohrid 2001, with a complicated struggle.
- 7.e5 ♗xd2+ 8.♕xd2 ♕h6 9.♕xh6 ♘xh6 10.♗e4 0-0-0 11.♘bc3 d6 (White can't maintain his advanced pawn front) 12.exd6 cxd6 equal, Ippolito-Speelman, Blitz 2000.

● 6.d5 ♗xd2+ 7.♕xd2 ♘e5 8.♘c3 ♘h6 9.f4 ♘xd3+ 10.♕xd3 f5. This may look like a game from the post-hypermodern era but it isn't! After 11.e5 we have Boden-Owen, London 1858(!). Owen now played 11...g5 but I would prefer 11...♕h4+ 12.g3 ♕e7 when White has space but Black has potential!

● After 6.♗xb4 ♘xb4 the threat against e4 enables Black to eliminate White's remaining bishop.

6...♕f6



Very provocative!

7.d5 ♗xd2+ 8.♕xd2

White has a significant space advantage.

8...♘ce7!?

8...♘d4 exchanges off a pair of knights and so eases congestion. 9.♘xd4 ♕xd4 10.♘c3 a6 11.0-0-0 ♘e7, with a playable game. Although White has his space, Black has a solid position and hopes to nibble away at White's centre.

9.♘c3 a6 10.0-0 ♕h6 11.♕c2

Retaining queens keeps up the pressure on Black.

11...♘f6 12.e5 ♘h5 13.♗e4 0-0!

An enterprising pawn sacrifice.

14.dxe6 ♗xe4 15.exf7+ ♖xf7 16.♕xe4 ♖af8

with practical chances for the pawn. Dautov-Speelman, Lippstadt 2000.

Variation F – English Opening

1.e4 b6 2.c4 ♗b7 3.♘c3 e5!?

Fixing the hole on d4. It's as if to say 'I hope you regret not having taken the chance to play d2-d4!'.

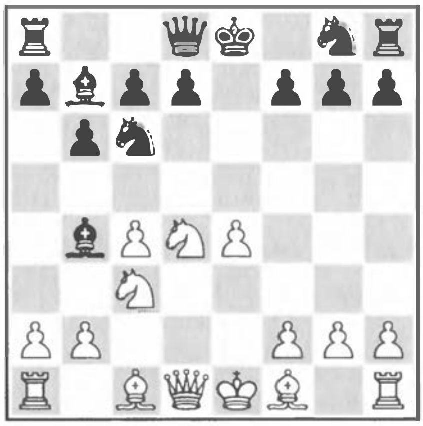
4.♘f3

4.d3 ♘c6 5.g3 ♗c5 6.♗g2 ♘ge7 7.♘f3 0-0 8.0-0 a5 (although 1...b6 can be associated with a 'light-squared' strategy, faced with a wall (c4-d3-e4) Short has dug in on the dark squares) 9.♗e3 d6 10.d4 exd4 11.♘xd4 ♘xd4 12.♗xd4 ♘c6 13.♗xc5 bxc5 14.e5! (otherwise White risks being worse) 14...dxe5 15.♘a4 ♕d6 16.♕d5 ♘d8 17.♕xc5 ♗xg2 18.♕xd6 cxd6 19.♔xg2 ♘e6, Kortchnoi-Short, Groningen 1997, with approximate equality.

4...♘c6!? 5.d4

White can also try 5.a3 to avoid ...♗b4. For instance 5...♘f6 (otherwise 5...a5!? when after 6.d4 exd4 7.♘xd4 ♗c5 8.♘db5 ♘ge7 9.♗g5 f6 10.♗f4, Varga-Mukic, Kastav 2002, Black could consider 10...♘e5 11.♗e2 0-0 12.0-0 d6) 6.b4 a5 7.b5 ♘d4 8.d3 ♘xf3+ 9.♕xf3 ♗c5 10.♘e2 h6, Varga-Breder, Budapest 2001, and after 11.g4 h5! Black was fine.

5...exd4 6.♘xd4 ♗b4



Black pins and toys with the idea of crippling White's queenside pawns with ....♗xc3+.

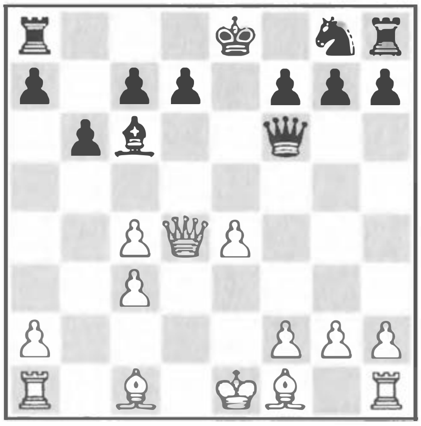
7.♘xc6

If White proceeds quietly with 7.♗e2,then 7...♘f6 8.f3 0-0 9.♗e3 ♗xc3+ 10.bxc3 ♖e8, Chernin-Benen, New York 2003, left Black with a solid enough game and better pawns. 7.♘f5 can be met by 7...♗xc3+ 8.bxc3 ♕f6.

7...♗xc3+

Possible was 7...♗xc6!? when 8.♕d4 can again be met by 8...♕f6.

8.bxc3 ♗xc6 9.♕d4 ♕f6



10.♗d3 ♕g6 11.0-0 ♞e7 12.♗a3 d6 13.f3 ♕g5

White has a lead in development and the bishop pair for his shaky pawns.

14.f4 ♕a5 15.♗b4 ♕h5 16.♖f3

White shouldn't take the g-pawn: 16.♕xg7 ♖g8 17.♕d4 ♕h3! 18.♖f2 ♘f5!.

16...♗d7 17.♖g3 ♖g8 18.♕e3

Now 18.♖xg7 is playable, but after 18...0-0-0 19.♖xg8 ♖xg8 20.♕f2 ♘g6 Black has reasonable compensation.

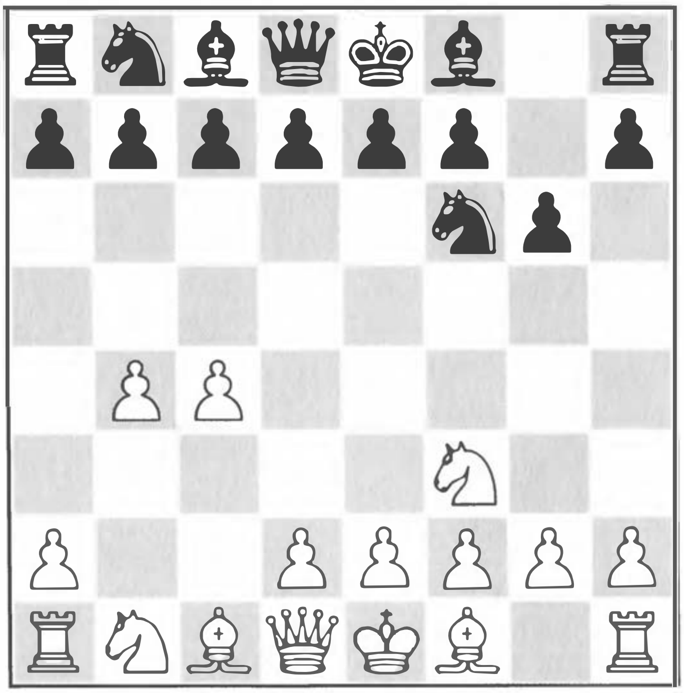
18...c5 19.♗a3 0-0-0

Delchev-Blatny, Budapest Zonal 2000, and Black was doing OK and went on to win.

CHAPTER 8

Adrian Mikhalchishin

Following Smyslov and Réti



1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.b4

This variation against the King's Indian Defence and the Grünfeld Defence was devised by the great innovator Richard Réti, but popularised by ex-world champion Vasily Smyslov, and after him by Viktor Kortchnoi, and the *Informator* chief Zdenko Krnic.

The idea of the opening is similar to the Sokolsky Opening 1.b4, and the variation 1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 e6 3.g3 b5! – which has a good reputation. In this opening there is clearly less theory, and it is important that White immediately initiates play on the queenside. Another method of playing this variation has been suggested by the English grandmaster Keith Arkell: 1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.d4 g6 3.b4 ♗g7 4.♗b2, and White delays c2-c4.

A Grünfeld set-up with 5...c6 and ...d5

☐ **Adrian Mikhalchishin**
■ **Arkady Naiditsch**
Dortmund 1998

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.b4 ♗g7 4.♗b2 0-0 5.e3 c6

Black may also consider 5...b6 6.d4 d5 7.♕b3 c5 8.dxc5 bxc5 9.b5 ♗b7 10.♘bd2 a6 11.a4 ♘bd7 12.cxd5 ♗xd5 13.♗c4 ♘b6 14.♗xd5 ♕xd5 15.bxa6 ♖xa6 16.a5 ♕xb3 with complete equality, ½-½ Psakhis-Mikhalchishin, Riga 1985.

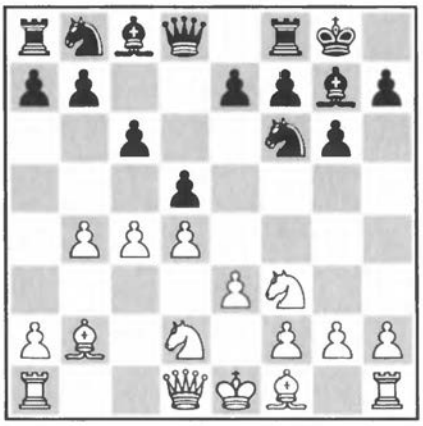
6.d4

Smyslov has played the original 6.♗e2 d5

7.♕c1!?, after 7...♗g4 8.h3 ♗xf3 9.♗xf3 ♘bd7 10.0-0 e5 11.d3♖e8 12.♖d1 ♕e7 play was equal in Smyslov-Ftacnik, Beer Sheva 1990.

6...a5

Grünfeld players will be tempted to play 6...d5 here. However, in contrast to the Grünfeld Defence, White now has 7.♘bd2!.



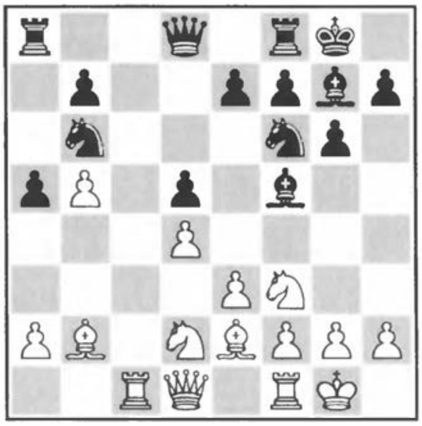
Now Black has many possibilities.

- 7...a5 (trying to lift the positional bind) 8.b5 cxb5 9.cxb5 ♘bd7 10.♗d3 ♘e8 11.♗a3 (or 11.h4!? – beginning an attack after the retreat of the knight) 11...♘b6 12.0-0 ♘d6 13.♖c1 ♗f5 14.♗xd6 ♕xd6 15.♗xf5 gxf5 16.♕c2 e6 17.♕c7 with advantage in the ending, Kortchnoi-Rogers, Novi Sadol 1990.
- 7...♗g4 8.♗e2 ♘bd7 9.h3 ♗xf3 10.♗xf3 b5 11.cxb5 cxb5 12.a4 bxa4 13.♕xa4 ♘b6 14.♕b3 ♕d7 15.0-0 ♖fc8 16.♖a5 e6 17.♖fa1 ♖c7 18.♖c5 ♖b8 19.♗e2! with the better game for White, Kortchnoi-Belotti, Novi Sad ol 1990.
- 7...♗f5 8.♗e2 ♞e4 9.0-0 ♘d7 10.♘xe4 ♗xe4 11.♘g5 ♘f6 12.♘xe4 ♘xe4 13.f3 ♘d6 14.c5 ♘f5 15.♕d3 e6 16.a4♖e8 17.g4 ♘h6 18.f4 with advantage to White, Smyslov-Tatai, Palma de Mallorca 1967.
- 7...♘e4 8.♘xe4 (play is equal after 8.♗e2 ♘d7 9.0-0 ♘df6 10.a4 ♗g4 11.b5 ♘xd2 12.♘xd2 ♗xe2 13.♕xe2 ♕d7 14.♖fc1 ♖fc8) 8...dxe4 9.♘d2 f5 10.♗e2 ♗e6 (10...e5 11.dxe5 ♕g5 12.0-0±) 11.0-0 ♘d7 12.♕c2 ♕c7 13.♘b3 ♗f7 14.♖fd1 ♘f6 15.a4 with a spatial advantage for White, Kempinski-Moor, Zug 2001.

7.b5

Gaining space on the queenside – as in the Sokolsky.

7...cxb5 8.cxb5 d5 9.♗e2 ♞bd7 10.0-0 ♞b6 11.♞bd2 ♗f5 12.♖c1



12...♘e8 More logical is 12...♕d6, preparing 13...♖fc8. **13.♗a3 ♘d6 14.♕b3 ♗e6** There is a battle in progress for the c4-point, but the more aggressive 14...a4 should have been played. **15.♘g5 ♗f5 16.♗c5 ♗h6 17.♘gf3 ♗e6 18.♘e5 ♖e8 19.♖fd1 ♖c8 20.♕a3 ♞a8** A sad necessity. **21.♕a4 ♗f5 22.♗f3 ♘c7 23.♗b6 ♘dxb5 24.♗e2** The pin is decisive. **24...♘d6 25.♕xa5 ♖a8 26.♕b4 ♖c8 27.♕a5 ♖a8 28.♕c3 ♘cb5 29.♕c5 ♕c8 30.♗xb5 ♕xc5 31.♖xc5 ♘xb5 32.♖xb5 ♖xa2 33.♖xd5 ♖b2 34.♘dc4 1-0**

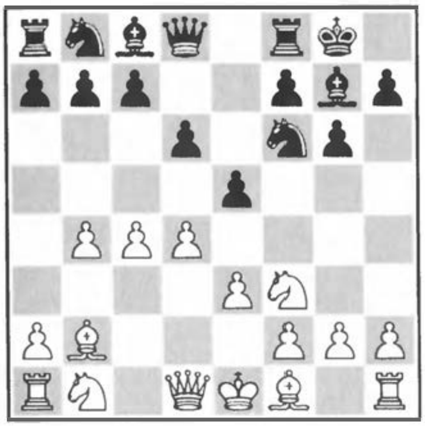
King's Indian type of set-up:

4...0-0 5.e3 d6 6.d4

Now Black has to choose – whether to play e7-e5 immediately and go in for forcing play, or prepare this advance in King's Indian style.

☐ **Bartlomiej Macieja**
■ **Jacek Gdanski**
Warsaw ch-POL 2002 (3)

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.b4 ♗g7 4.♗b2 0-0 5.e3 d6 6.d4 e5



7.dxe5

Black should know what to do after 7.♗e2. It is bad to close the centre before White has castled kingside: 7...e4? 8.♘fd2 ♖e8 9.♘c3 h5 10.♕c2 ♕e7 11.h3 c6 12.a4 ♗f5 13.b5 ♘bd7 14.a5 c5 15.♘b3 ♖ac8 16.a6 b6 17.0-0-0! cxd4 18.♘xd4± and the white king feels fine on the queenside, Krnic-Paunovic, Vrnjacka Banja 1983

Correct is 7...exd4 8.♕xd4 ♘c6 9.♕c3 ♖e8 10.0-0 ♕e7 11.b5 ♘d8 12.♘bd2 ♘e6 13.♘b3 ♘e4 14.♕c2 ♗xb2 15.♕xb2 ♘6c5 and Black has no problems, Sokolsky-Lilienthal, Kiev 1954.

7...♘g4

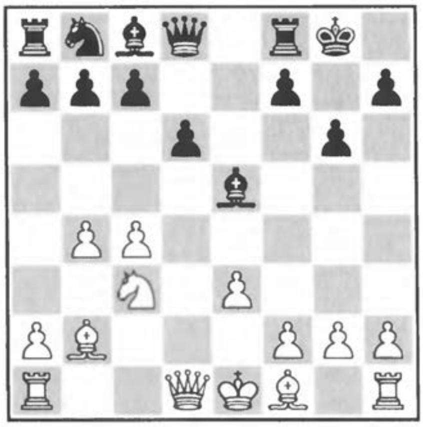
Of course 7...♘fd7 8.♘c3 ♘xe5 would transpose to the main game. Note that Black does not obtain enough compensation after 8...♘c6?! 9.exd6 ♘xb4 10.dxc7 ♕xc7 11.♗e2 ♕a5 12.0-0 ♘c5 13.♘d4± Krnic-Hazai, Vrnjacka Banja 1984.

So Black should (after 7...♘fd7 8.♘c3) continue with the standard 8...dxe5, when after 9.♗e2 the roads diverge:

- 9...a5 10.a3 c6 11.0-0 ♕e7 12.♕b3 b6 13.♖fd1 ♘a6 14.♘e4 ♘f6 15.♘g3 e4 16.♘d2 ♗b7 17.♖ab1 with advantage to White, Kempinski-Szelag, Warsaw 2002.
- 9...e4!? 10.♘d2 f5 11.♘b3 ♘e5 12.♕d5+ ♔h8 is stronger, Djurkovic-Mazi, Feffernitz 2000.

8.♘c3 ♘xe5 9.♘xe5 ♗xe5

After 9...dxe5 10.♗e2 c6 11.0-0 ♕e7 12.♕b3 ♗e6 13.b5 ♖c8 14.♗a3 ♕h4 15.g3 ♕h6 16.♘e4 ♘d7 17.♖fd1± the weakness of the d6-square is very perceptible, Mikhalchishin-Popovych, Lvov 1999.



10.♗e2

Here 10.f4 might be a better option: 10...♗g7 11.♗e2 a5 12.a3 ♗e6 13.0-0 ♘a6 14.♕b3 f5 15.♘a4 axb4 16.axb4 b5 17.♗xg7 ♔xg7 18.♕c3+ ♕f6 19.cxb5 ♕xc3 20.♘xc3 ♘xb4 21.♗f3 and Black had serious problems in the endgame in Mikhalchishin-Cigan, Bled 1998.

10...a5

The game Krnic-Van Delft, Wijk aan Zee 1999, went: 10...♘c6 11.♕b3 ♗e6 12.0-0 a5 13.b5 ♘b8 14.f4 ♗g7 15.e4 ♘d7 16.f5 ♘c5 17.♕c2 ♗d7, and now 18.♘d5 would have led to a big advantage for White.

11.a3

Less good is 11.b5 ♘d7 12.♘a4 ♕h4 13.g3 ♕f6 14.♗xe5 ♘xe5 15.♖c1 ♗h3 16.f4 ♘d7 17.♗g4 ♗xg4 18.♕xg4 ♕e7 and White has weak squares at e3 and e4, Doncea-Chr.Pedersen, Budva 2003.

11...♕h4!

This is an accurate move to prevent White from castling. White may now regret that he refrained from playing f4 when he had the chance (on his 10th move). After 11...♗e6 12.0-0 axb4 13.axb4 ♖xa1 14.♕xa1 ♘c6 15.f4 ♗g7 16.♘e4 ♗xb2 17.♕xb2 f5 18.♘g5 ♕f6 19.♕d2 ♔g7 20.♖c1 ♗g8 21.b5 ♘e7 22.c5 White seizes the initiative, Mikhalchishin-Rasik, Brno 1991.

12.g3

This weakens the kingside, but the alternatives 12.♘a4 ♗xb2 13.♘xb2 ♕f6∓, and 12.b5 ♘d7 13.♖b1 ♘c5 14.♘d5 ♗f5 15.♗xe5 dxe5∓ are worse.

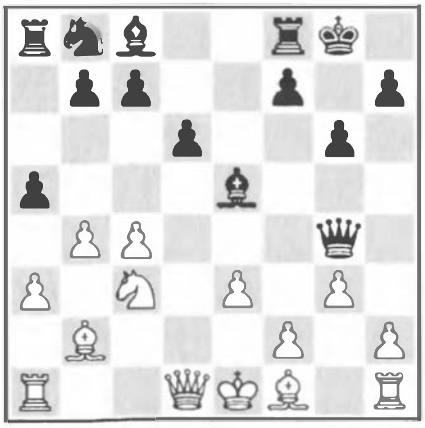
12...♕h3 13.♗f1

Here 13.f4 is bad because of 13...♕g2!.

13...♕g4

Also sufficient is 13...♕e6!?.

14.♗e2 ♕h3 15.♗f1 ♕g4



16.f3!?

Avoiding the draw is risky.

16...♕e6!∓

After 16...♕h5 17.♗g2 ♗h3 18.0-0 ♗xg2 19.♔xg2 and next 20.f4 White stands rather better.

17.♔f2 ♖e8 18.♕c1

The e3 and a1 squares must be simultaneously defended.

18...axb4 19.axb4 ♖xa1 20.♗xa1 c6!

The d5 square has to be defended. After 20...♘a6 21.f4 ♗g7 22.♘d5!± Black has problems.

21.♘e4 f5 22.♗xe5 ♕xe5 23.♘g5 ♘d7 24.h4 ♘f6 25.♗e2 h6 26.♘h3 ♗e6 27.♖d1 ♗f7 28.♕a3 ♘h5

28...d5!? would have led to a considerable sharpening of the struggle.

29.f4 ♕e4 30.♕c3 ♘f6! 31.♖xd6 ♘g4+ 32.♗xg4 fxg4 33.♘g1 ♕h1 34.♕d3 ♕h2+ 35.♔f1 ♕xg3 36.♖xg6+!

White has to save himself by perpetual check.

36...♗xg6 37.♕xg6+ ♔f8 38.♕f6+ ♔g8 39.♕g6+ ♔f8 40.♕f6+ ½-½

☐ **Alexey Dreev**
■ **David Bronstein**
Reykjavik 1990 (9)

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.b4 ♗g7 4.♗b2 0-0 5.e3 d6 6.d4 ♘bd7

Preparing e7-e5 by 6...♖e8 is less good: 7.♗e2 e5 8.dxe5 ♘g4 9.♘c3 ♘xe5 10.♘xe5 ♗xe5 11.0-0 ♘c6 12.a3 ♗e6 13.♕d2 ♗g7 14.♘d5 ♗xb2 15.♕xb2 ♘e5 16.♕d4 with advantage to White, Krnic-Knaak, Wijk aan Zee II 1988.

The inclusion of 6...a5 in this variation can in principle be considered advantageous to Black: 7.b5 ♘bd7 (after 7...e5 8.dxe5 ♘g4 9.♘c3 ♘xe5 10.♘xe5 ♗xe5 11.♗e2 ♗e6 12.♕d2 ♘d7 13.0-0 ♘b6 14.f4 ♗g7 15.♘e4 ♗xb2 16.♕xb2 f5 17.♘d2 ♕e7 18.♕d4! White is slightly better, Mikhalchishin-Zimmerman, Bled 1999) 8.♗e2 e5 9.0-0 exd4 10.exd4 ♖e8 11.♘bd2 ♘f8! 12.♖e1 ♘e6 13.g3 h6 14.♗f1 ♘g5 15.♘xg5 hxg5 16.♗g2 d5! with excellent counterplay, Nimzowitsch-Réti, Karlsbad 1923.

7.♗e2

It is possible to delay the development of the kingside by 7.♕b3 c5! (after 7...♖e8 8.♗e2 e5 9.♘c3 c6 10.0-0 ♘f8 11.d5 cxd5 12.cxd5 ♘8d7 13.♘d2 a6 14.a4 e4 15.♖ac1 White has the freer game, Mikhalchishin-Vuckovic, Nova Gorica 1998) 8.♗e2 b6 9.♘bd2 e6 10.0-0 ♗b7 11.bxc5 dxc5 12.a4 ♘e4 13.♘xe4 ♗xe4 14.♖fd1 cxd4 15.exd4 ♕c7 16.a5 ♖ab8 with a solid position for Black, Miles-Polugaevsky, London 1984.

7...e5 8.♘c3 ♖e8 9.0-0

White should not be in a hurry to castle, and therefore other continuations are of interest:

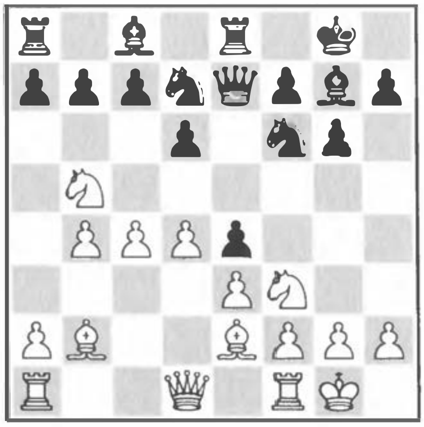
- 9.b5!? c6 10.a4 h5 11.h3 e4 12.♘d2 c5 13.dxc5 ♘xc5 14.♘b3 ♘xb3 15.♕xb3 ♗e6 16.0-0 ♖c8 17.♖fd1 and the weakness at d6 is more real than the one at c4, Gashimov-Gadjily, Baku 1999.
- 9.♕b3 exd4 10.♘xd4 a5 11.a3 axb4 12.axb4 ♖xa1+ 13.♗xa1 ♘e5 14.0-0 c6 15.♗b2 with a small advantage, Mikhalchishin-Tratar, Ptuj 1998.

9...♕e7?!

Too complicated. Clearly better was 9...e4 10.♘d2 ♘f8 11.♖e1 h5! 12.f3 exf3 13.♗xf3 ♘8h7 14.♘de4 ♗g4! 15.♘xf6+ ♘xf6 16.b5 (½-½ Mikhalchishin-Reinderman, Groningen 1992) 16...♕d7 with equality.

10.♘b5! e4

Apparently Black had counted on this intermediate move. Dreev's reply throws a spanner in the works.



11.♘xc7! exf3 12.♗xf3 ♘b6 13.♘xe8 ♕xe8 14.♕b3

In this position with a closed structure the rook and two pawns are stronger than the two pieces.

14...♘e4 15.♖fd1 d5?!

A nervy sacrifice. Better was 15...♗d7.

16.cxd5 f5 17.♖ac1 ♕f7

If 17...♗d7, then 18.d6+ ♔h8 19.♖c7 ♗a4 20.d5! ♗xb3 21.♖xg7!.

18.♖c5 ♗d7 19.♖c7 ♖b8 20.♗e2 ♘d6 21.b5! ♘e8 22.♖c5 ♗f8 23.a4! The pawn chain is more important than the exchange. **23...♘c8 24.f3 b6 25.♖c2 ♘cd6 26.♗a3 ♖d8 27.♖f1!** Preparing to strengthen the centre by e3-e4. **27...♕e7 28.♖e1 ♕h4 29.g3 ♕h6 30.♗f1 g5 31.♗b2 ♕g6 32.e4! fxe4 33.fxe4 ♘xe4 34.d6+ ♗e6** After 34...♔h8 35.♗d3 ♘8xd6 36.d5+ ♔g8 37.♗a3 the pins are very unpleasant. **35.♗c4 ♗xc4 36.♕xc4+ ♔g7 37.♖xe4! ♘xd6** After 37...♕xe4 38.d5+ wins. **38.♕c7+ ♔g8 39.♕xd8 ♕xe4 40.♕xg5+ 1-0**

Variations with c7-c5:
4...0-0 5.e3 d6 6.d4 c5

☐ **Adrian Mikhalchishin**
■ **Peter Svidler**
Warsaw 1999

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.b4 ♗g7 4.♗b2 0-0 5.e3 d6 6.d4 c5 7.b5

This is a typical continuation, although other interpretations of the position are also possible:

- 7.a3 cxd4 8.exd4 e5! 9.♗e2 (9.dxe5 dxe5 10.♕xd8 ♖xd8 11.♘xe5 ♖e8∓ is very dangerous for White) 9...e4 10.♘fd2 d5 11.0-0 ♘c6 12.b5 ♘e7 13.♘c3 ♖e8 14.♖e1?! (14.♘b3 is clearly better) 14...♘f5 with an excellent game for Black, Kortchnoi-Nunn, San Francisco 1995.
- 7.bxc5 dxc5 8.♗e2 cxd4 (White has the

advantage after 8...♘e4 9.♞bd2 ♕a5 10.0-0 ♘xd2 11.♘xd2 ♕c7 12.♘b3 cxd4 13.exd4 ♘c6 14.♕d2 ♖d8 15.d5, Kozomara-Kerkhoff, Sombor 1966) 9.exd4 ♘c6 10.0-0 ♗f5 11.d5 ♘a5 12.♘d4 ♗d7 13.♘d2 ♖c8 14.♖c1 ♕b6 15.♘4b3! ♘xb3 16.axb3 e6 17.♗a3 ♖fe8 18.c5 ♕d8 19.d6 and White has a serious advantage, Efimov-Romanishin, Reggio Emilia 1999/00.

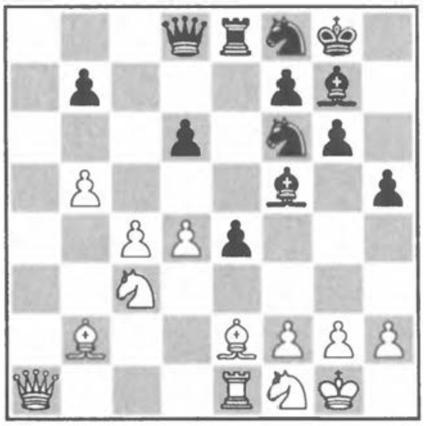
7...cxd4 8.exd4 e5

8...♘bd7 9.♗e2 b6 10.d5 ♘c5 11.♘d4 ♕c7 12.0-0 ♗b7 13.♘d2 e5 14.♘c6 with advantage to White, Mikhalchishin-Ankerst, Bled 1992.

9.♗e2

Stronger than 9.dxe5 dxe5 10.♕xd8 ♖xd8 11.♗e2 (bad is 11.♗xe5? ♖e8 12.♗e2 ♖xe5! 13.♘xe5 ♘fd7–+, Myers-Dubeck, Chicago 1973) 11...e4 and Black has a good game. In reply to 9.dxe5, less good is 9...♘g4 10.♗e2 ♘xe5 11.♘xe5 dxe5 12.0-0 ♘d7 13.♘c3 ♘c5 14.♗a3 with advantage, Papazov-P.Balogh, Tallinn 1997.

9...e4 10.♘fd2 ♖e8 11.0-0 h5! 12.♘c3 ♗f5 13.♖e1 a6 14.a4 axb5 15.axb5 ♖xa1 16.♕xa1 ♘bd7 17.♘f1 ♘f8



18.♘e3

Here 18.d5 ♘8d7 19.♘e3 was stronger, with some advantage to White.

18...♘e6! 19.♘cd5!?

Here White had several tempting continuations. Among them are: 19.♕a7!?, 19.♘xf5, and 19.d5. Such an abundance is usually an indication of an advantage for White.

19...♘xd5 20.♘xd5 h4 21.♘e3?!

A 'gentle' move. 21.b6 or 21.♕a7 was better.

21...♕a8!

Unexpectedly taking play into an endgame with the idea of exploiting the weakness of the d4 pawn.

22.♖d1

Here 22.♕c1!? came into consideration.

22...♕xa1 23.♗xa1 ♖a8 24.g3 ♗h3 25.♗f1

It really would have been better to take the pawn – 25.gxh4!?

25...♗xf1 26.♔xf1 h3!

After White's inaccuracies Black is now clearly better in the ending.

27.♘d5 ♘g5 28.♗c3 ♖a2 29.c5 dxc5 30.dxc5 ♗xc3 31.♘xc3 ♖c2 32.♘a4 e3 33.fxe3 ♘f3 0-1

The method of Rétl and Smyslov

Both these great players preferred the double fianchetto, instead of the development of the bishop at e2. The simplest way for Black is to decide on the analogous symmetrical fianchetto.

☐ **Vladimir Akopian**
■ **Alexander Khalifman**
Las Vegas 1999 (7)

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.b4 ♗g7 4.♗b2 0-0 5.g3 d6

A King's Indian set-up. However, Black has several good and practicable plans:

● 5...b6 6.♗g2 ♗b7 7.0-0 d6 8.d3 (8.d4 c5 9.a3 ♘bd7 10.♘c3 e6 11.♕b3 ♕e7 12.♖ac1 ♖fd8 13.♖fd1 ♘g4 14.♘b5 ♘ge5 with counterplay, Mikhalchishin-Golubovic, Bern 1995) 8...♘bd7 9.♘bd2 e5 10.♕c2 ♖e8

11.♖fd1 a5 12.a3 h6 13.♘f1 c5 14.b5 ♘f8 15.e3 ♕c7 16.d4 ♗e4 with equality, as in the source game Réti-Capablanca, New York 1924.

● 5...c6 6.♗g2 d5 (after 6...a5!? 7.bxa5 ♕xa5 8.0-0 d6 9.d3 ♕h5 10.♘bd2 ♗h3 11.♕c2 ♘bd7 12.♖fb1 ♗xg2 13.♔xg2 ♕a5! the game is level, Taimanov-Gligoric, Lvov 1962) 7.cxd5 (the more restrained 7.♘a3?! led after 7...♕b6 8.♕b3 ♘a6 9.♖b1 ♗f5 10.c5 ♕xb4! 11.♕xb4 ♘xb4 12.♗xf6 ♗xb1 13.♗xg7 ♔xg7 14.♘xb1 ♘xa2∓ to a position where the rook and two pawns are stronger than the bishop and knight, Aronian-Yandemirov, Linares 2000) 7...♘xd5 (satisfactory is 7...cxd5 8.0-0 a6 9.a4 ♗g4 10.d3 ♕b6 11.♘bd2! ♘c6 12.♖b1 ♗xf3 13.♘xf3 e6 14.b5 axb5 15.axb5 ♘e7 with equality, ½-½ Matulovic-Ivkov, Palma de Mallorca 1967) 8.♗xg7 ♔xg7 9.a3 a5! 10.bxa5 ♕xa5 11.0-0 ♘d7 12.♕c2 ♘7f6 13.d3 ♖d8 14.♖c1 ♘b6 15.♘bd2 ♘a4 16.♘c4 ♕h5 with adequate counterplay, Emma-Najdorf, Buenos Aires 1973.

● 5...d5!? (immediately transposing into a Grünfeld Defence) 6.cxd5 (after 6.♘a3 a5 7.b5 dxc4 8.♗g2 ♗e6 9.0-0 ♗d5 10.♕c2 c6 11.♖fe1 cxb5 12.e4 ♗c6 13.♘d4 ♘a6 Black has an excellent position, Vokac-M.Pribyl, Turnov 1996) 6...♘xd5 7.♗xg7 ♔xg7 8.♕b3 ♘f6 (after 8...♕d6 9.a3 ♕f6 10.♘c3 ♗e6 11.♕b2 ♘xc3 12.♕xc3 ♕xc3 13.dxc3 ♘d7 14.♗g2 Nikolaidis-Katsenos, Ikaria 1993 14...♗d5 the game is equal) 9.♗g2 ♘c6 (9...a5! 10.b5 c6 is stronger) 10.0-0 e5 11.d3 ♗g4 12.♘bd2, Réti-Pokorny, Mährisch Ostrau 1923. The game is equal after 12...♖b8 13.b5 ♘d4 14.♘xd4 exd4.

6.♗g2 e5 7.d3

After 7.0-0 ♖e8 (the aggressive 7...e4!? 8.♘e1 c6 can also be tried) 8.d3 e4! (here it is better not to include 8...a5 9.a3 axb4 10.axb4 ♖xa1 11.♗xa1 e4 12.dxe4 ♘xe4 13.♗xg7 ♔xg7 14.♘fd2 ♘xd2 15.♕xd2 ♘c6 16.f4! ♕f6 17.e3 and White is clearly better, Smyslov-Gufeld, Moscow 1961) 9.dxe4 ♘xe4 10.♗xg7 ♔xg7 11.♕d4+ ♕f6 12.♕xf6+ ♔xf6 13.♘d4 c6 14.f3 ♘g5 15.♘c3 ♔e7 16.f4 ♘e6 17.♘b3 ♘d8! 18.e4 ♗e6! 19.c5 dxc5 20.♘xc5 a5!= Black held the ending, Smyslov-Boleslavsky, Leningrad 1962.

7...♘h5!

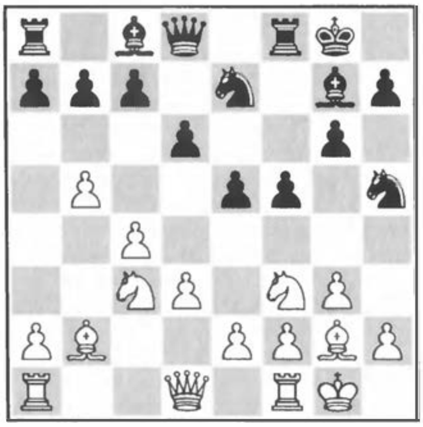
This direct implementation of the f7-f5 plan is more logical than others. If 7...♘c6, then by b5, 0-0, and a2-a4-a5 White obtains real play on the queenside.

8.♘c3

Avoiding the trap 8.0-0? e4!, although 8.♕c2 planning ♘bd2 was somewhat simpler.

8...f5 9.0-0 ♘c6 10.b5 ♘e7

Here the typical 10...♘d4 is not very good on account of 11.♘xd4 exd4 12.♘b1 followed by the knight manoeuvre ♘b1-d2-b3.



11.e4!?

Closing the centre. But 11.a4 f4 12.d4! looks rather better.

11...c5

Less good is 11...f4 12.d4!.

12.bxc6 bxc6 13.c5!

Immediately creating weaknesses in the black position.

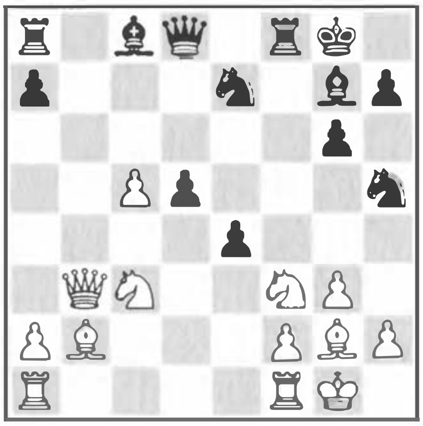
13...d5 14.exd5 cxd5 15.♕b3

White would achieve nothing with 15.d4 ♖b8 16.♕d2 e4 17.♘e5 f4!.

15...e4! 16.dxe4?

After 16.♘g5! ♘c6 17.♘xd5 ♔h8 18.♘h3 ♖b8 19.♗xg7+ ♔xg7 20.♕c4 ♘e5 very sharp play would have begun.

16...fxe4



17.♘xe4!? ♗xb2 18.♕xb2 dxe4 19.♘g5 ♗f5!

Less good was 19...♘f6 20.♘xe4 ♘xe4 21.♗xe4 ♗h3 22.♕b3+ ♖f7 23.♖fd1 ♕c8 24.♗xa8 ♕xa8 25.f3 ♕xf3 26.♕xf3 ♖xf3 27.♖ab1 when White is not worse.

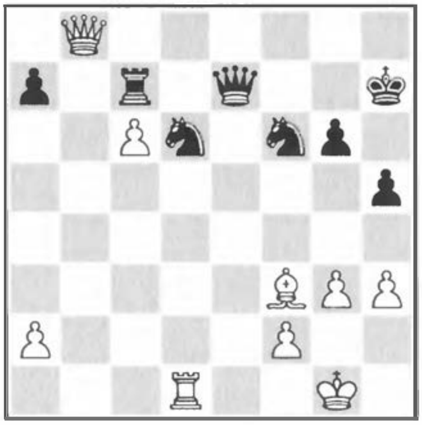
20.♘xe4 ♖b8 21.♕c3 ♘d5 22.♕a3 ♗xe4 23.♗xe4 ♘hf6 24.♗f3 ♕c7 25.♖ac1

Here 25.♖fd1 ♘e7 26.c6 really was better. trying to sharpen the play.

25...♘e7 26.c6 ♘f5 27.♕c3 ♖bc8 28.♖fe1 ♕g7 29.♖cd1 ♖c7 30.♖e6 h5 31.♕e5 ♔h7 32.h3

Garry Kasparov thought that after 32.♗e4 White could have held the position.

32...♘g8 33.♕e4 ♘f6 34.♕e5 ♘g8 35.♕e4 ♖f6 36.♖xf6 ♘xf6 37.♕b4 ♕e7 38.♕b8 ♘d6



39.g4?

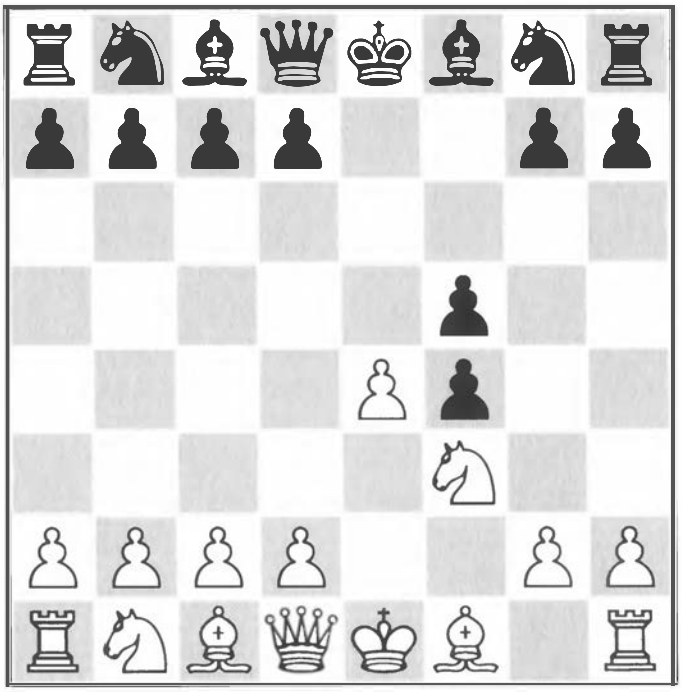
After the correct 39.♕b4! Black would have had enormous problems in converting his advantage.

39...hxg4 40.hxg4 ♘f7! 41.♔g2 ♔g7 42.♖e1 ♕d8 43.♕b2 ♘g5 44.♖e3 ♕d6! 45.♕a3 ♕xa3 46.♖xa3 ♔f7 47.♗e2 ♘e6 48.♖a4 ♘d5 49.♗f3 ♘e7 50.♔g3 ♔f6 51.♖c4 ♔e5 52.♖c1 ♘d4 53.♖e1+ ♔f6 54.♗g2 ♘exc6 55.f4 ♘e7 56.♗f1 ♖c3+ 57.♔g2 ♘c2 0-1

CHAPTER 9

Dimitri Reinderman

King's Gambit Vienna 1903



1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.♘f3 f5!?

Vienna, 1903. A ten player double round robin tournament is held, where every game has to start with the King's Gambit Accepted. It is a strong tournament, with Chigorin, Schlechter, Pillsbury and Marshall amongst the participants, and all but Gunsberg in the world top 20 according to the 1903 ranking list of chessmetrics.com. Strangely enough the theory of the King's Gambit did not develop much during this tournament.

However, there was one sideline that was popular like never before (or after). Out of the 90 games 11 featured the rare move 3...f5!?. The idea did not catch on, though. In my database the next two games were played in 1960 and 1991! So what happened in Vienna? Was the move refuted at this tournament?

The answer is affirmative, according to theory. Not only did Black score only 3½ points from these 11 games, in the game Schlechter-Teichmann 4.e5 led to a convincing win for White. This game is quoted in all theory books (or, well, the three I could find which mention 3...f5) as the refutation of 3...f5. However, the game has not been analysed very carefully. If we look at the game from a modern perspective, we will see that things are not so clear, and that 3...f5 is much better than theory gives it credit for.

☐ **Carl Schlechter**
■ **Richard Teichmann**
Vienna 1903

1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.♘f3 f5 4.e5 g5

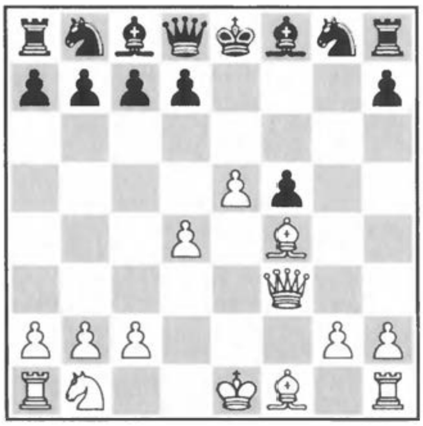
This is critical in my opinion. An old analysis by Alapin runs 4...d6 5.♕e2 dxe5 6.♘xe5 ♕e7 7.d4 g5? 8.♕h5+ ♔d8 9.♕xg5!. Black has several improvements, but I don't think any of them suffices for equality. After 4...d5 White faces a pleasant choice between:

- 5.h4!? ♗e7 6.d4 ♘h6 7.♗xf4 ♘g4 8.♘c3 as in Gunsberg-Swiderski, Vienna 1903, and
- 5.d4 g5 6.h4 g4 7.♘g1 f3 8.♗g5 fxg2 9.♗xg2 ♗e7 10.♘c3! ♗e6 11.♘ge2 (analysis Kortchnoi/Zak). In both cases with advantage for White. The text move forces White to sacrifice a piece.

5.d4

In Anderssen-S.Mieses, Breslau 1867, 5.♗c4 g4 6.♘c3 was played. After 6...gxf3 7.♕xf3 ♕h4+ 8.♔f1 ♕g4 9.♕d5 ♘e7 10.♕f7+ ♔d8 11.d4 f3 the uncle of Jacques Mieses was winning, although Anderssen managed to trick him, and steal the point.

5...g4 6.♗xf4 gxf3 7.♕xf3



From a materialistic point of view, Black is a piece for a centre pawn up. However, White has an edge in development, and Black's king doesn't feel safe with the pawn on f5. White certainly has compensation for his material deficit. But is it enough?

7...♕h4+

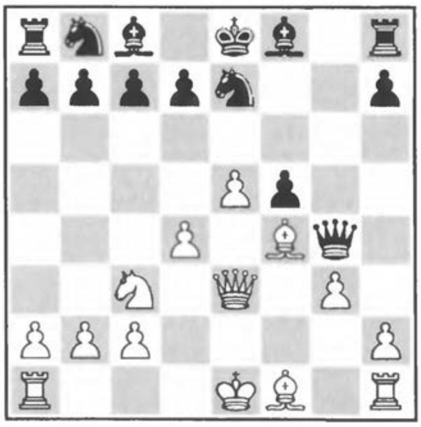
This is a natural move to prevent White's threat of 8.♕h5. However, it is definitely not the only move. Thus, 7...♕e7 8.♗c4 ♕b4+ 9.♘d2 ♕b6 10.0-0-0 ♘e7 is an option. Likewise, 7...♘e7 8.♗g5 h5 9.♘c3 ♘bc6 10.0-0-0 d5 is also a good try. Even 7...h5 could be playable. Losing, though, is 7...♘h6? 8.♕h5+ ♘f7 9.♗c4 ♕e7 10.♗g5.

8.g3 ♕g4 9.♕e3

From this square the queen defends the d-pawn and prevents d6 or d5 (for now at least). After 9.♕f2 d5 or 9.♕b3 ♘c6 Black would be very happy.

9...♘c6

The main alternative is 9...♘e7. After 10.♘c3 play might continue:



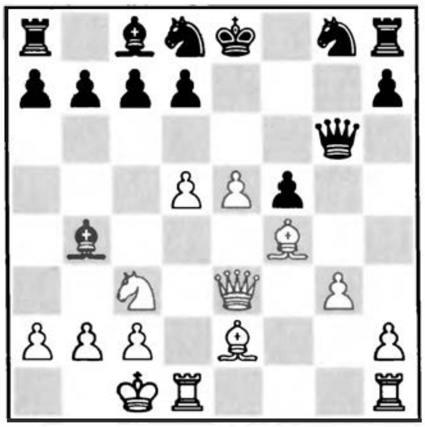
- 10...♗g7 11.d5 0-0 12.♘b5 ♘a6 13.♗e2 ♕g6 14.♗c4 ♔h8 15.d6 ♘c6 16.0-0-0 ♖e8 when White still has compensation, but nothing concrete.
- 10...♘a6 11.♗e2 ♕g6 12.0-0-0 c6 – typical computer moves, I know – planning to bring a knight to d5, while 13.g4 fxg4 14.♖hg1 ♘b4 is the tactical justification.
- 10...♘bc6 11.♗e2 ♕g8!? (of course 11...♕g6 is possible here also) 12.♗h5+ ♔d8 13.0-0-0 ♘d5 (13...♘b4 is also possible) 14.♘xd5 ♕xd5 15.♔b1 ♗e7 16.♗f3 ♕c4 17.♗e2 ♕a4 with 18...d5 or 18...♘b4 to follow.

10.♗e2 ♕g6 11.♘c3 ♗b4

Teichmann's move, after 11...♘ge7 12.0-0-0 ♘b4 White can try:

- 13.♕f3 c6 14.♗c4 b6 15.a3 ♗a6 16.♗b3 ♘bd5 17.♘xd5 cxd5 18.♗xd5 ♘xd5 19.♕xd5 ♕c6 and Black can start the technical phase.
- 13.♗f3 c6 14.♕e2 ♕e6 15.♔b1 ♗g7 16.g4 d5 and I don't see how White can prevent Black from consolidating his material advantage.
- 13.d5 c6 14.d6 (14.dxc6 dxc6 15.♖d6 ♗e6 leads to nothing) ♘ed5 15.♘xd5 ♘xd5 16.♖xd5 cxd5 17.♗f3 is the best try for White. With pawn d5 a goner, it's a rook against two pawns, but Black can hardly develop his queenside. He can exchange another piece with 17...h5 and 18...♗h6. Still, I think White has enough compensation (maybe even more).

12.d5 ♘d8 13.0-0-0



White is now threatening to win with 14.♘b5 ♗a5 15.e6.

13...a6?

Likewise, 13...♗a5 14.♘b5 a6 15.e6 dxe6 16.♘xc7+ ♗xc7 17.♗xc7 gives White good chances. Stronger is 13...c6, since 14.g4 fxg4 15.♘e4 cxd5 16.♖xd5 ♘e6 looks solid.

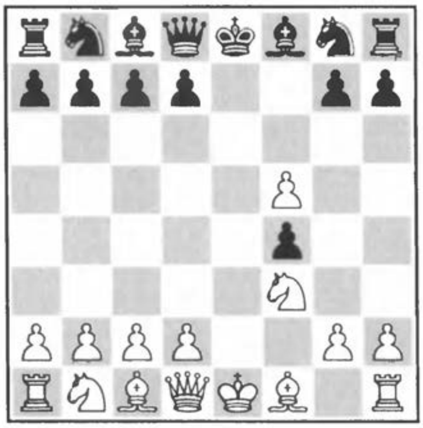
14.g4 ♘e7?

Two mistakes in a row is too much in such a volatile position. White has good compensation when Black takes the pawn. For example, 14...fxg4 15.♘e4 h5 16.h3 ♘f7 17.hxg4 h4 18.g5. However, after the text White just wins the piece back.

15.d6 ♘e6 After 15...♘ec6 16.gxf5 ♕xf5 17.♘d5 0-0 18.♗h6 Black has no good defence. **16.dxe7 ♗c5** 16...♗xc3 17.bxc3 fxg4 18.♗h6 is also good for White. **17.♕g3 ♗xe7 18.gxf5 ♕xf5 19.♗e3** Since White has the same advantages as before, without being behind in material, he is winning. **19...♗g5 20.♘d5 ♗xe3+ 21.♕xe3 ♔d8 22.♖hg1 ♕f8 23.♖df1 ♕c5 24.♕f3 ♖f8 25.♖g8 1-0**

☐ **Georg Marco**
■ **Rudolf Swiderski**
Vienna 1903

1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.♘f3 f5 4.exf5



This was the most common move in Vienna, played in 7 from the 11 games. Two games featured 4.d3, but this move hardly bothers Black. Thus, in Pillsbury-Teichmann, after 4...d5 5.exd5 ♘f6 6.♗xf4 ♘xd5 7.♗d2 ♘c6 8.♘c3 ♗c5 9.♘xd5 ♕xd5 10.c3 0-0 Black had a comfortable position.

Even worse is 4.♘c3, after 4...fxe4 5.♘xe4 d5 Black is simply a pawn up.

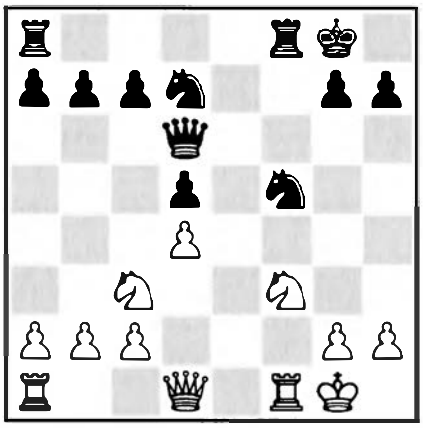
4...d5 5.d4 ♗xf5

A good alternative is Teichmann's 5...♗d6. In Mieses-Teichmann White played 6.c4, and after 6...♗xf5 7.cxd5 ♘f6 8.♘c3 0-0 9.♗e2 ♘bd7 10.0-0 h6 11.♕b3 ♘b6 12.♘e5 g5 Black was slightly better. Marco-Teichmann saw 6.♗d3 ♕f6 7.0-0 ♘c6 8.♘c3 ♘ge7 9.♘b5 0-0 10.♘xd6 ♕xd6 11.♘g5 ♗xf5 12.♗xf4 ♕g6 with equal chances.

6..♗xf4 ♗d6 7.♗xd6

Here 7.♘e5 is more ambitious, but after 7...♘f6 8.c4 0-0 9.♘c3 ♘c6 Black has enough counterplay.

7...♕xd6 8.♘c3 ♘e7 9.♗d3 0-0 10.0-0 ♘d7 11.♗xf5 ♞xf5



The position is equal.

12.♕d3 ♖f6 13.♖ae1 ♖af8 14.♘d1 c6 15.c3 ♕c7 16.♘f2 ♕f4 17.♘h3 ♕g4 18.♘f2 ♕f4 19.♘h3 ♕g4 20.♘f2 ♕f4

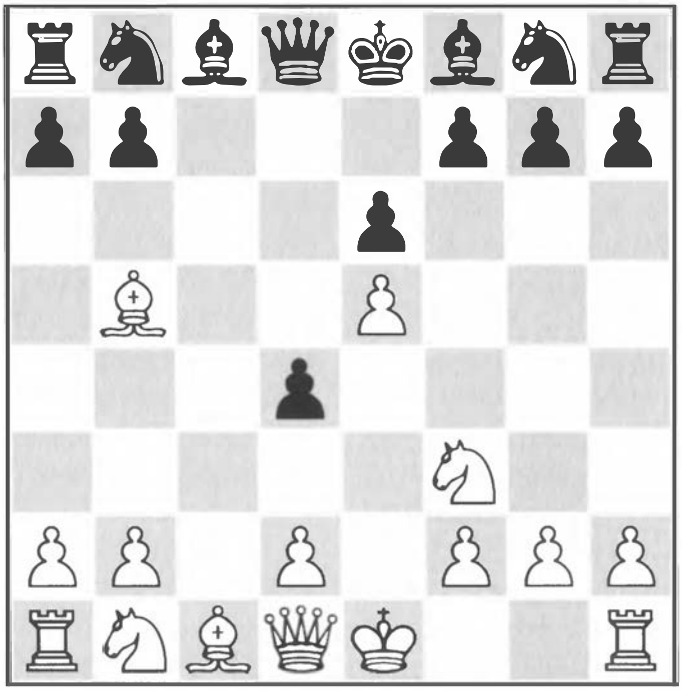
There is still some play left in the position – possible is 21.♘e5 for example – but both players were happy with a draw.

Theory is right that 4.e5 is the critical move against 3...f5, since 4.exf5 gives Black few problems. However, the move forces White to make an unclear piece sacrifice. The resulting position is difficult to evaluate, since there are a lot of possibilities for both sides. However, according to my analysis, Black has good chances for a successful defence. In 1903, we saw the rise and fall of 3...f5. Will 2006 feature the rise again? Who knows!

CHAPTER 10

Jeroen Bosch

Move-order Your Sicilian Opponent



1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.c3 d5 4.e5!?

No one likes to be 'move-ordered' out of his repertoire. This SOS aims to force Sicilian players into playing the French Defence. Interested? Check out the following nameless variation.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.c3

This is a good move order weapon against Sicilian players who do not meet 2.c3 with 2...♘f6.

3...d5

Here 3...♘f6 4.e5 ♘d5 is a regular Alapin Sicilian.

4.e5

With 4.exd5 play transposes to a normal Alapin line, whereas with the text White aims to play the French Advance Variation.

4...d4

The only way out. Here 4...♘c6 5.d4 is the Advance Variation and the main idea of White's move order. No Sicilian player likes to be tricked into the French. However, for those who want something trickier, let me point out that no less a player than Ljubojevic has played 5.♘a3!? here: 5...♗d7 6.♘c2 f6 7.d4 fxe5 8.dxe5 ♕c7 9.♗f4 ♘ge7 10.♘e3 ♘g6 11.♗g3 0-0-0 12.♘g5 (this looks strong, but Ribli has prepared an exchange sacrifice) 12...♕b6 13.♘f7 ♕xb2 14.♕c1 ♕xc1+ 15.♖xc1 c4 16.h4 ♗a3 17.♖b1 ♖hf8 18.♘xd8 ♖xd8, and Black had sufficient compensation in Ljubojevic-Ribli, Belfort 1988. In my opinion, Black should meet 5.♘a3!? with 5...d4. The position after 4...d4 actually occurs quite regularly. A popular choice now is 5.♗d3. My recommendation is:

5.cxd4 cxd4 6.♗b5+

Now Black's main reply is 6...♗d7. However, let us first investigate the sideline 6...♘c6.

The sideline

6...♘c6

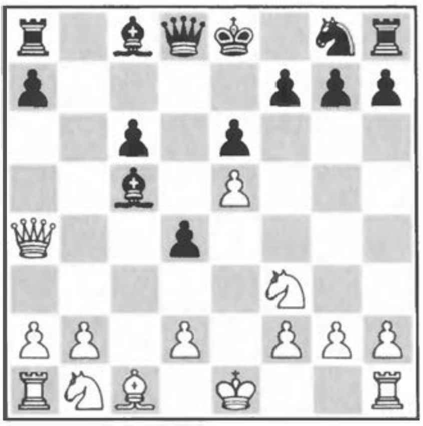
Less popular, possibly because many players are afraid to weaken their structure in view of the double attack that follows.

7.♗xc6+ bxc6 8.♕a4

The critical position. White seems to be a lot better, but things are by no means so clear. White should especially watch out for winning the weak black pawns too soon, as he may be stuck with his king in the centre and fall under the spell of a powerful black bishop pair.

8...♕b6

A tricky alternative is 8...♗c5.



White does not win a piece because of 9.♕xc6+ ♗d7 10.♕xc5? ♖c8 Niederost-Gheorghiu, Zurich 1991. Stronger is 10.♕e4 ♖c8 11.0-0 ♗c6 Mingo Fernandez-Vehi Bach, Barbera 1995, but Black still has the better chances.

So after 8...♗c5 White should either play the quiet 9.d3 ♕d5 10.♘bd2 ♗d7 11.♘e4 ♗b6 12.♘d6+ ♔e7 13.♘c4± Barlocco-Gheorghiu, Ticino 1990, or the tricky 9.♘c3!? dxc3 10.♕xc6+ ♗d7 11.♕xc5, when the game Mingo Fernandez-Castaner Halster, Sant Boi 2000, went 11...♖c8 12.♕d4 (12.♕xa7) 12...c2 13.0-0 ♘e7 14.b3 0-0 15.♗a3 ♘f5 16.♕f4 ♕c7, and now, 17.♗xf8 c1♕ 18.♖axc1 ♕xc1 19.♗b4 would have been best, when Black does not have enough for his two-pawn deficit.

9.d3

White should not take on d4, e.g. 9.♘xd4? ♗c5 10.♕xc6+ ♕xc6 11.♘xc6 a5. Equally bad is the greedy 9.♕xd4? ♗c5 10.♕h4 ♘e7 Alfaro-Manoukyan, Buenos Aires 1998, again with excellent compensation. After 9.0-0?! ♗a6 Black is fine as well.

These are playable options:

– 9.b3!? ♗a6 10.♗a3 ♘e7 11.♕xd4 ♘d5 12.♗xf8 ♔xf8 13.♕xb6 axb6 14.d4 ♘f4 15.♔d2 c5 16.♘c3 ♘xg2 17.♖hg1 ♘f4 18.♘a4, and White was slightly better in Kharlov-Pira, Paris 1991.

– 9.♘a3 ♗d7 10.♘c4 ♕c7 11.0-0 c5 12.♕c2 ♘h6 13.♞g5 ♞f5 14.♘e4 h5 15.d3 ♗e7 16.b3 a5 17.♗a3± ♖c8 18.f4 f6 19.♕e2 ♔f7 20.♖ac1 a4? 21.♗xc5! and White won in Vusatiuk-Nogin, Kiev 2000.

9...♗a6 10.♘xd4!? ♗c5 10...♗xd3 11.♗e3 **11.♗e3 ♘e7** 11...♗xd3 12.♘c3 ♘e7 13.♖d1± **12.0-0 0-0 13.♘xc6! ♘xc6 14.♗xc5 ♕xc5 15.♕xa6** White is two pawns up, which does not mean all that much, as they are weak and he has a badly developed queenside. Still, Black needs some time to regain the pawns. **15...♖ab8** Preferable was 15...♘xe5 16.♘c3, with a tiny plus. **16.♘d2! ♘xe5** 16...♖xb2 17.♘c4!±, but not 17.♖ac1 ♕xe5 18.♘c4 ♕b5!. **17.♘b3 ♕c2 18.d4 ♘g6 19.♖fc1 ♕e4** 19...♕xb2? 20.♖ab1 traps the queen, when 20...♖xb3 21.axb3 ♕xd4 22.♖d1 should win. **20.♕c6! ♕g4**

21.h3 ♕f4 22.♖c3! a5 23.♖ac1± h5?! 24.♖f3 ♕h6 25.♖c5 ♘h4 26.♖g3 ♕h7 27.♔h2 ♘f5 28.♖f3 ♘h4 29.♖fc3+– ♕h6 30.♕e4 ♘f5 31.♖xa5 ♖b4 32.♖a8 1-0 Braga-Zichichi, Italian Championship, Chianciano 1988.

The main line

6...♗d7

This is the main reply, when White has a choice between two radically different approaches.

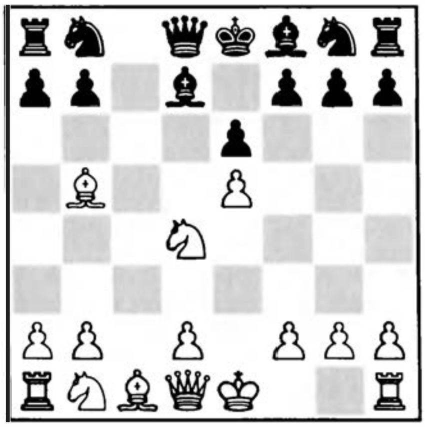
A) 7.♘xd4
B) 7.♗xd7+

Line A is overtly tactical and may be a good practical choice against an unprepared opponent. Line B is strategically sound and objectively stronger.

Variation A

7.♘xd4

A risky move, but it contains a lot of pitfalls and can be very unpleasant to meet in practice.



A1) 7...♕g5
A2) 7...♗xb5

Variation A1

7...♕g5

The most enterprising answer. With this double attack Black forces his way into White's backyard. However, the intrepid queen won't like it so much when the trap snaps shut.

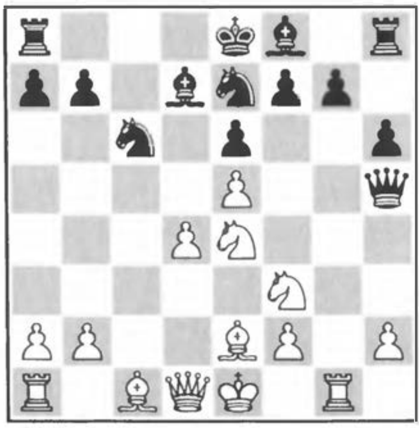
8.♘f3 ♕xg2 9.♖g1 ♕h3

Here 9...♕xg1+ gives some positional compensation for the queen. However, material counts for something, too, as Kharlov-Tunik, Cheliabinsk 1991, demonstrates: 10.♘xg1 ♗xb5 11.♘c3 ♗c6 12.♘ge2 ♘e7 13.♘d4 ♘d7 14.♘db5 ♗xb5 15.♘xb5 ♘d5 16.d4 a6 17.♘c3 ♗b4 18.♗d2 ♗xc3 19.bxc3 b5 20.♕g4 g6 21.a4 and White was winning.

10.♘c3 h6

This protects the important g5 square. Instead Mohrlok-Götz, Germany Bundesliga B 1985/86, went: 10...♘c6 11.♖g3 ♕h5 12.♖g5 ♕h6 13.d4 g6 14.♖g1 ♕g7 15.♕e2 0-0-0 16.♗g5± ♖e8 17.♘e4 h6 18.♗d2 f5 19.exf6 ♘xf6, and now, instead of the game continuation 20.♘c5?!, White has the powerful 20.♖c1!, with the idea of 21.♘e5. Unpinning with 20...♔b8 is met by 21.♘xf6 ♕xf6 22.♗xc6 ♗xc6 23.♘e5.

11.d4 ♘e7 12.♗f1 ♕h5 13.♗e2 ♘bc6 14.♘e4



14...♘f5

Practice has also seen 14...♘d5 15.♖g2 (this prepares to castle 'by hand') 15...♗b4+ 16.♔f1 ♕h3 17.♔g1 0-0-0 18.a3 ♗e7

19.♘e1! (Black's queen is still in a lot of trouble) 19...h5 when (instead of 20.♘f3 as in Cuartas-Franzoni, Biel 1981) White could have won on the spot with 20.♖g3!, e.g. 20...♕f5 21.♗d3 h4 (otherwise ♘d6 decides) 22.♖g5.

15.a3

Protecting square b4. The awkward placing of Black's queen still gives White the edge. Black achieved harmonious piece play after 15.♘g3 ♘xg3 16.hxg3 ♕f5 17.♗e3?! (better 17.a3!) 17...♘b4! 18.♖c1 ♗c6 in Ilczuk-Pieniazek, Suwalki 1999.

15...♗e7 16.♘g3! ♘xg3 17.hxg3

White's pawn structure has been restored. He has the better chances. **17...♕f5 18.♗d3 ♕g4 19.♗e3 ♖d8 20.b4 a6 21.♗e2** Again harassing the queen, this is mainly played to prepare the following knight manoeuvre. **21...♕e4 22.♘d2 ♕h7 23.♘b3 ♘b8** To meet 24.♘c5 with 24...♗c6. **24.♗d3! ♕g8** This is a sorry sight. The proud queen has come such a long way, only to be tucked away on Black's kingside! **25.♘a5 b6 26.♘c4 b5 27.♘a5 ♘c6 28.♘b3 h5 29.♕f3 h4** This futile advance demonstrates Black's helplessness. **30.♗e4 ♘b8 31.♘c5 hxg3 32.fxg3 ♖c8 33.d5 exd5 34.♗xd5 ♗c6 35.0-0-0 ♖h2 36.♖gf1 ♗xd5 37.♕xd5 ♖c6 38.♖h1 ♕h7?? 39.♖xh2 ♕xh2 40.♖h1 1-0**

Makarichev-A.Sokolov, Moscow 1981.

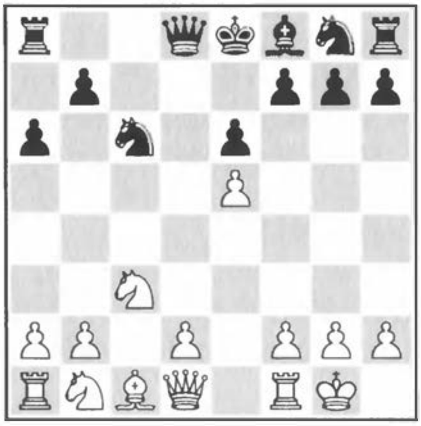
Here Black resigned, as 40...♕xg3 41.♖h8+ ♗f8 42.♖xf8+ ♔xf8 43.♕d8+ mates.

Variation A2

7...♗xb5 8.♘xb5 ♘c6

After 8...a6 9.♘5c3 ♕d4 White can play 10.♕a4+ ♕xa4 (10...♘c6!?) 11.♘xa4 ♘c6 12.f4 b5 13.♘ac3 ♘b4 14.♔d1 and in Tindall-Laxman, Jaipur 1979, White was successful with his Houdini-like act.

9.0-0 a6 10.♘5c3



A21) 10...♕d4

A22) 10...♘ge7

Variation A21

10...♕d4

The aim is twofold. Black attacks e5 once again (in hopes of taking it eventually), but in the meantime White will find it difficult to finish his development in a natural way.

11.♘e2!?

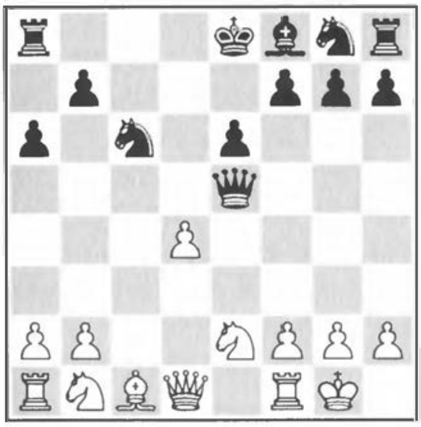
Forcing Black to take on e5, when an interesting position arises. With material equality restored, White has the inferior pawn structure (an isolated d-pawn). However, his slight lead in development – often combined with d4-d5 – can come in useful.

The alternative is 11.♖e1. Putting the rook on the e-file is useful in case Black takes the e-pawn. Moreover, White aims to chase the queen away from the annoying d4 square.

– 11...♖d8 12.♖e4 ♕d3 13.♖e3 ♕d4 14.b3 (playing for more – still this possible repetition may put a lot of black players off 10...♕d4) 14...♗c5 15.♗b2 ♕h4 16.g3 ♕h6 17.♖e1 (White is ready to consolidate with 18.♘e4, so Black acts:) 17...♗xf2+! 18.♔xf2 ♕xh2+ 19.♔f1 ♕h1+ 20.♔f2 ♕h2+ 21.♔f1 ♕h3+! 22.♔f2, and, after a few more checks, Black settled for a perpetual. Levi-Chua, Penang 1991. Superior would have been the winning 22...♘h6!.

– 11...♘ge7 12.♖e4 ♕d3 13.♖e3 ♕d7 (13...♕d4 14.♘e2 ♕d7 15.♘bc3±) 14.b3 ♘g6 15.♗a3 ♗xa3 (15...♘gxe5!? 16.♗xf8 ♔xf8 is OK for Black) 16.♘xa3 0-0 17.♘c4. Now White is slightly better, as Black has problems recovering the pawn. Yudasin-Adamski, Lvov 1983.

11...♕xe5 12.d4



12...♕h5

Controlling the fifth rank (square d5) and more or less pinning the e2 knight. Moreover, a subsequent ...♗d6 will gain a tempo. But Black has also tried to keep his queen closer to home:

– 12...♕d6 13.♘bc3 ♘f6 14.♗f4 ♕d7 15.♖e1 ♗e7, and now, instead of 16.♕d2?! (Matkowski-Symbor, Warsaw 1987), White should kill all play with 16.♗g5 0-0 17.♗xf6 ♗xf6 18.d5 or go 16.♘a4 ♘d5 17.♘c5 ♗xc5 18.dxc5.

– 12...♕c7 13.d5!? exd5 14.♘bc3 ♘f6 15.♗g5 0-0-0 (15...♗e7 16.♗xf6 ♗xf6 17.♘xd5 ♕d8 18.♕b3 0-0=) 16.♗xf6 gxf6 17.♘xd5 ♕e5 equal, Penzold-Stanke, Germany Bundesliga B 1998/99.

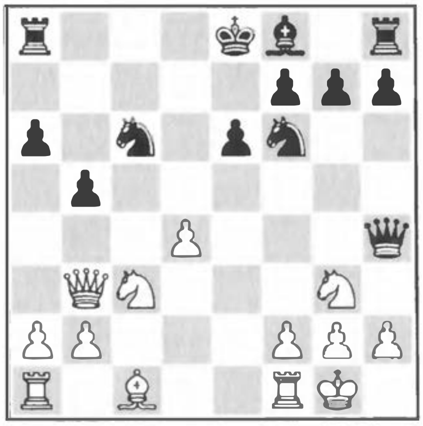
13.♘bc3 ♘f6

The natural 13...♗d6 14.h3 ♞f6 15.♕b3 b5 16.♖d1 0-0, Rocha-Savas, Mamaia 1991, led to an easy game for Black. White should play 14.♗f4!?.

14.♕b3!

This underlines the fact that her majesty is away from home (12...♕h5).

14...b5?! 15.♘g3! ♕h4



16.♘xb5! Ouch! **16...axb5 17.♕xb5 ♖c8** Now White repeats moves once before hitting on the winning idea. **18.♕b7 ♘e7 19.♕b5+ ♘c6 20.♗g5! ♕xd4 21.♗xf6** 21.♖ac1! ♕d5 22.♕a6 ♕d7 23.♗xf6 gxf6 24.♖fd1 wins. **21...gxf6 22.♖ac1 ♕b4?** 22...♕e5! **23.♕a6 ♔d7 24.♖fd1+ ♗d6 25.♖c4 ♕b8 26.♘e4+–** Hassan-Surjadnji, Cairo 1998.

Variation A22

10...♘ge7

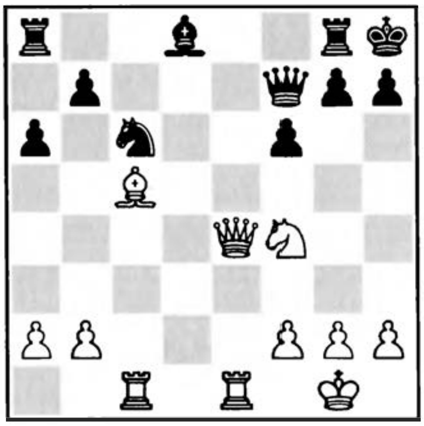
This is Black's strongest line and White's main problem in the 7.♘d4 variation. Not 10...♘xe5?! 11.d4 ♘c6 12.d5, however, with a pleasant initiative for White.

11.♘a3

White makes use of the fact that the a3-f8 diagonal is blocked (...♗a3 would be awkward). After 11.♖e1 ♘g6 White cannot keep the e-pawn. He must develop quickly, hoping to gain some initiative after Black takes e5. 12.b3 ♗e7 13.♘a3 0-0 14.♗b2 ♘gxe5 15.d4 ♘g6 16.d5?! (this break is what White had been counting on. However, Gheorghiu's reply shatters his dreams) 16...♘b4! 17.♕d4 (17.dxe6♘d3) 17...a5! 18.♖ad1 ♗f6 19.♕d2 exd5 and Black was clearly better in Kharlov-Gheorghiu, Bern 1992.

11...♘f5!

The e-pawn won't run away. After 11...♘xe5 12.d4 White is better because of his lead in development. Here's a model achievement by White: 12...♘5c6 13.♘c2 ♘d5 14.♘e3 ♘xe3 15.♗xe3 ♗e7 16.d5! exd5 17.♘xd5 0-0 18.♗b6 (despite the exchanges White clearly has the better chances. His minor pieces are actively placed and Black lacks a good square for his queen) 18...♕c8 19.♖c1 (threatening to take on c6) 19...♗d8 20.♖e1 (keeping the pressure) 20...♔h8 21.♗c5 ♖g8 22.♕f3 f6 23.♕e4 ♕d7 24.♘f4 ♕f7



25.♘g6+! (very nice!) 25...♕xg6 26.♕xg6 hxg6 27.♖e3 ♖f8 28.♗xf8 with a decisive advantage in Ekström-Illijin, Zurich 1995.

12.♘c2 ♗c5! 13.♘e4?! White should try 13.♘e3 for equality. **13...♗d4 14.♘d6+ ♘xd6 15.♘xd4 ♘xd4 16.exd6 ♕xd6** Black has won the pawn under favourable circumstances and was slightly better in Torre-Hübner, Novi Sad Olympiad 1990.

Variation B

7.♗xd7+

This is a much safer line. Let us examine two model games: Rozentalis-T.Horvath and Zhao-Kulashko.

7...♕xd7 8.d3 ♘c6 9.0-0

An interesting position has arisen. Both sides have grabbed some space (pawn e5 versus pawn d4), both sides may use a central square as their anchor point (e4 versus d5). Exchanging the light-squared bishops favours no one in particular.

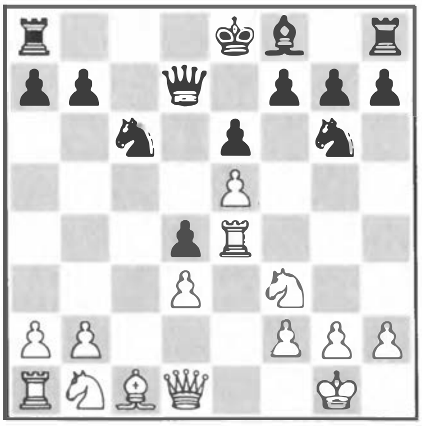
9...♘ge7 10.♖e1!

A simple enough move, but clearly the best in this position. There are several games in which White develops the bishops to f4 in order to cover e5. This plan has a serious drawback. The bishop will get stuck on g3 and function as a mere bystander. Just as in the Ruy Lopez it is not so clear at this stage how to develop the bishop, which is why it is best left alone for the moment. The move 10.♖e1 is more than just a defensive move (protecting e5). As with all prophylactic moves, it has positive aspects as well. The rook will go to e4, from which square it will attack d4 and work along the fourth rank.

10...♘g6

To put pressure on White's advanced pawn Black develops the knight to g6.

11.♖e4

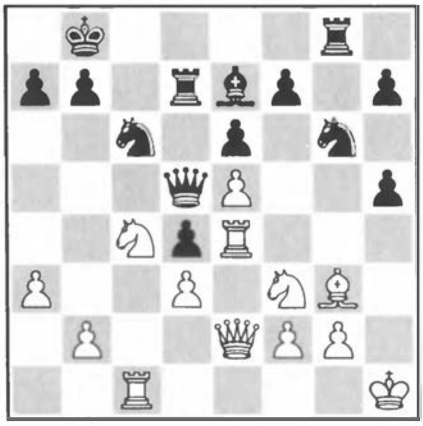


Our model games diverge here. Note that Black's main problem is his king: on the queenside things are a little airy, on the kingside, however, White is ready to attack with h2-h4-h5.

● Rozentalis-T.Horvath, Germany Bundesliga 1995/96: **11...♗c5** Protecting d4 and preparing the manoeuvre ♗b6-c7, attacking White's advanced pawn. **12.♕e2** Überdeckung and a useful waiting move. **12...♗b6?!** I don't like this move for Black, even though it is part of a logical plan. White now gets a free hand to play ♘a3-c4. Still, it is not so easy to suggest an alternative. If Black castles (to either side) White will respond with 13.h4, after which he is a little better. **13.♘a3 ♕d5** 13...♗c7 14.♘b5!. **14.♘c4 ♗c7 15.a4** Fixing the knight on the excellent square c4. **15...0-0** This invites White's next move. **16.h4! f5** Black must act, as h5-h6 was being threatened. Alternatively, Black could play 16...h6±. **17.exf6 gxf6** 17...♖xf6 18.♗g5 ♘f4 19.♗xf4 ♗xf4 20.♖e1 ♖e8 21.g3 ♗h6 (21...♗c7 22.♘g5±) 22.♞h2±. **18.♗h6 ♖fe8 19.♖e1 ♖e7?** Like it or not, 19...e5 had to be tried. **20.♖xe6 ♖xe6 21.♕xe6+ ♕xe6 22.♖xe6 ♔f7 23.♖e1** White is a sound pawn up. Rozentalis is up to the technical job. **23...♖d8 24.♗d2 ♖d5 25.g3 ♗d6 26.h5 ♘f8 27.♘xd6+ ♖xd6 28.b4 ♘d7 29.♖c1 ♘ce5 30.♘xe5+ ♘xe5 31.♖c7+ ♖d7 32.♖xd7+ ♘xd7 33.♔f1** Rozentalis has transposed into a bishop versus knight ending with pawns on both sides. **33...f5 34.♗f4 ♔e6 35.♔e2 ♘b6 36.a5 ♘d5 37.♗b8 ♘xb4** 37...a6 38.♗a7 ♘xb4 39.♗xd4 winning. **38.♗xa7 ♔d5 39.♗b6 ♔e5 40.f3 ♘c6 41.♔d2 ♔f6 42.♔c2 ♔g5 43.♔b3 f4** 43...♔xh5 44.♗c7, and his majesty will go for a stroll: ♔c4-b5-b6. **44.g4 ♔h4 45.♗c7 ♔g3 46.g5 ♘e7 47.♔c4 ♔xf3 48.♔c5!? ♔g4 49.♗xf4! ♔xf4 50.♔b6** And now it is clear why they say that the rook pawn is the knight's worst enemy in the ending. **50...♔e3 51.♔xb7 ♔xd3 52.a6 ♔c2 53.a7 d3 54.a8♕ d2 55.♕a4+ ♔c1 56.♕c4+ ♔b2 57.♕d3 ♔c1 58.♕c3+ ♔d1 59.♕c5** **1-0**

● Zhao-Kulashko, Gold Coast 1999:

11...♕d5 12.♕e2 0-0-0 At least Black has made up his mind where to tuck away his king. Funnily enough, White reacts on the other flank. **13.h4! ♗c5 14.h5 ♘f8 15.h6** Fracturing Black's pawn structure to kill his counterplay on the kingside. **15...gxh6 16.♗f4!** Not bothering to take back a fairly worthless pawn. **16...♘g6 17.♗g3 ♖d7 18.♘bd2 h5 19.♖c1 ♔b8 20.a3 ♖g8 21.♘c4 ♗e7 22.♔h1**

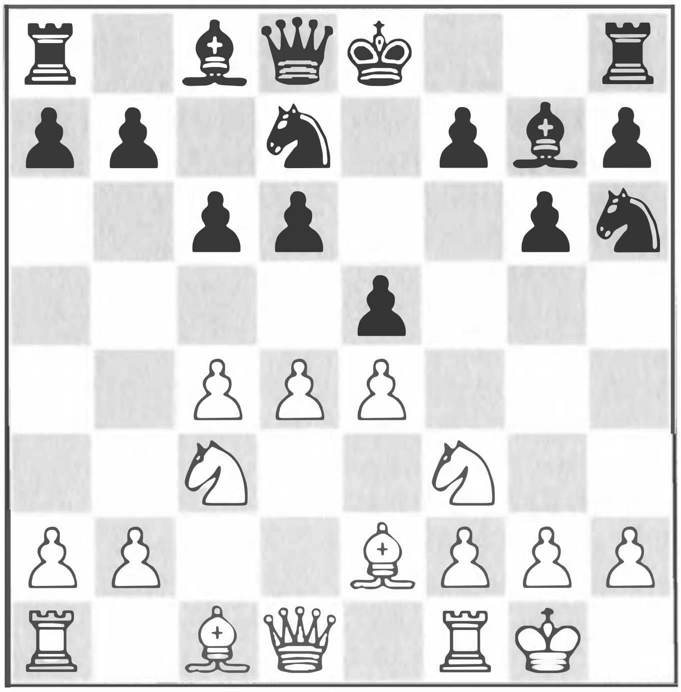


Both sides are preparing their attacks with great care. Black can only open files by means of h4-h3. White will play b4 and take it from there. **22...h4 23.♗h2 ♖c8 24.b4 h3 25.gxh3 b6 26.♗g3!** Demonstrating that he has all the time in the world, Zhao gets his king off the h1-a8 diagonal. **26...♔b7 27.♔h2 a6 28.♘fd2 ♘a7** Preparing ♘b5-c3, but Zhao will cleverly prevent this. **29.f4 ♖g8** 29...♘b5? 30.♘xb6! and wins. **30.♘f3 ♘b5 31.♕f2** Again preventing 31...♘c3. **31...f5 32.exf6 ♗xf6 33.a4 ♘d6** 33...♞c3? 34.♖xc3 dxc3 35.♕xb6+ ♔a8 36.♕xa6+ ♔b8 37.f5++–. **34.♘xd6+ ♖xd6 35.a5 b5** 35...♘e7! 36.axb6 ♘f5 37.♕c2. **36.♖c5+– ♕b3 37.f5 exf5 38.♖xf5 ♖c6 39.♘xd4 ♗xd4 40.♖f7+ ♔a8 41.♖xd4 ♘e5** Or 41...♖c2 42.♖d8+ ♖xd8 43.♖a7+ mate. **42.♖d8+** **1-0**

CHAPTER 11

Dorian Rogozenko

An Indian SOS, Part I



A knight on the edge – 7...♘h6

In the third millennium chess is different from what it used to be. The existing databases contain several millions of games and their number is growing rapidly every day. The sheer volume of information is immense, often making our memory unable to deal with it. Unfortunately the study of the opening phase requires a tremendous effort, and usually there is no time at all left for any kind of other useful preparation (like endgames, tactics etc.). In order to achieve good positions in the opening one must work a lot and keep one's repertoire up-to-date by following all new developments in the chess theory. Is this time-consuming and difficult work on openings the only way to build a solid opening repertoire? Not really! In the present chapter I would like to present a relatively rare system for Black (it is practically not analysed at all in ECO), which could suit many players and serve them as a long-term weapon against 1.d4. Its main advantages are:

1. it's a relatively simple system to learn and play.
2. it's rare and one doesn't need to update one's repertoire all the time, thus being able to concentrate on other useful work.
3. many white players are not prepared for this system and therefore it often comes as a surprise for them.
4. in spite of its appearance, the presented

system is quite solid and deep. Besides its surprise element, this system is objectively quite OK for Black. This means that even if your opponent is expecting you to play it, it will be very difficult for him to find a sensible advantage against it.

5. the system is perfect for ambitious players – usually the resulting positions are strategically complicated and that's why it is perfect to play for a win with it.

The drawback of the examined system is that White can transpose into the Pirc Defence. However, first of all not many 1.d4 players are ready to play the Pirc Defence and what's more important, even if White transposes to Pirc we'll see that with the chosen move order Black can reduce White's options considerably.

1.d4 g6

There are a quite lot of possible move orders to reach our desired position (the diagram after 7...♘h6). Everyone must figure out for himself which move order to choose. I will try to explain the advantages and drawbacks of the main alternatives.

If Black is not afraid of the classical Pirc Defence, then starting with 1...d6 has one certain advantage: many white players will play 2.♘f3 instead of 2.c4, in order to avoid the system 2.c4 e5. By forcing White to play a quick ♘g1-f3 Black avoids several other possible systems from White (such as Sämisch set-ups, or those with f2-f4).

2.c4

As mentioned above, the main drawback of the presented system is that it allows White to transpose into the Pirc Defence. However, Black can have something special in mind after 2.e4 ♗g7 3.♘c3. The most dangerous set-ups against the Pirc Defence are those where White keeps the knight on g1 for a while. Of course White can play 3.♘f3, when Black has little better than transposing into the Classical Pirc Defence with 3...d6 and then 4...♘f6. Another possible move is 3.c3, but all these variations are not the most dangerous systems against the Pirc.

By playing 3.♘c3 White wants to transpose into a Pirc where he may opt for the Austrian Attack, or for systems with ♗e3 and ♕d2. In this case, however, you can surprise your opponent with 3...d5!?. This SOS recommendation was discussed in volume one of the SOS series (SOS 1, Chapter 13, p.106).

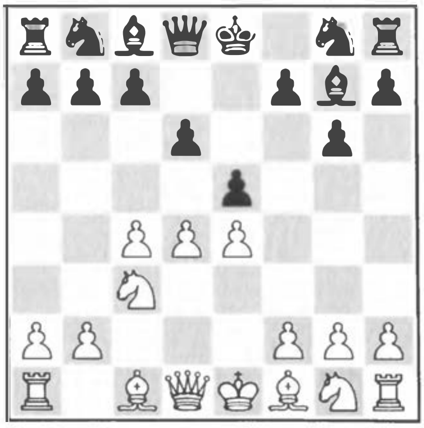
2...♗g7 3.♘c3

3.e4 d6 usually transposes to similar variations after 4.♘c3 or 4.♘f3. The move 4.f4 is not dangerous. Without the knight on f6 Black has many additional possibilities to play for a quick attack on the d4-pawn. The most attractive are 4...♘c6, and 4...c6 followed by ...♕b6. Black also achieves good play with 4...♘d7 followed by 5...e5.

3...d6 4.e4

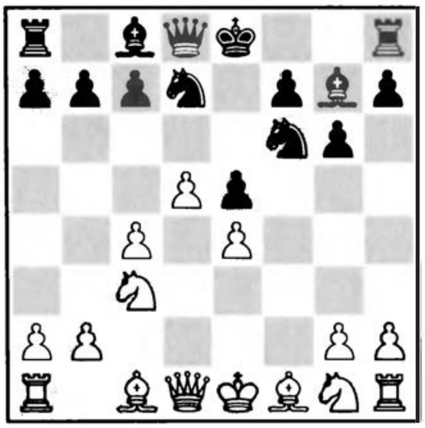
With 4.♘f3 ♘d7 5.g3 (5.e4 e5 is the main line) White is willing to transpose into a g3-King's Indian. The position of the knight on g8 allows Black to choose an independent set-up in that case as well, see the next SOS chapter.

4...e5



If for some reasons Black doesn't want to allow White the possibility to trade queens, then 4...♘d7 is a reasonable alternative, when the most popular continuation is 5.♘f3 e5 6.♗e2 c6 7.0-0, which transposes to the main line. Instead of 5.♘f3 White has other options too:

5.f4 e5 6.fxe5 (Black has good play after either 6.♘f3 exd4 7.♘xd4 ♘gf6 8.♗e2 0-0 9.0-0 c6, or 6.♗e3 exd4 7.♗xd4 ♘gf6 for instance: 8.♕d3 0-0 9.0-0-0 a6 10.g3 b5 11.cxb5 axb5 12.♕xb5 ♖b8 13.♕d3 ♗b7 with strong compensation for the pawn, Fritz2-Kasparov, Cologne blitz 1992) 6...dxe5 7.d5 ♘gf6 (both 7...♕h4+!? 8.g3 ♕d8 and 7...♘h6 8.♘f3 0-0 9.♗e2 f6 lead to double-edged play)



Now:

– 8.♗e2 0-0 9.♘f3 (9.♘h3 c5!? 10.dxc6 bxc6 11.♗e3 ♕e7 12.0-0 ♘c5 13.♘f2 ♘e6∓) 9...♘c5 10.♕c2 ♘fxe4! 11.♘xe4 ♗f5 12.♗d3 ♗xe4 13.♗xe4 f5 and Black is better.

– 8.♗d3 0-0 9.♗g5 c6 10.♘f3 ♕b6 11.♘a4 ♕b4+ 12.♗d2 ♕e7 13.0-0 cxd5 14.cxd5 b5 15.♘c3 ♘c5∓ Danner-Ermenkov, Albena 1983.

– 8.♘f3 0-0

In this complicated position Black has enough resources to use his lead in development and the somewhat weak dark squares in White's camp. The game Hjartarson-Berg, Akureyri 1994 continued 9.♗d3 (for 9.♗e2 see 8.♗e2) 9...c6 10.0-0 ♕b6+ 11.♔h1 ♘g4 12.♕e2 ♘c5 13.♗c2 f5 14.exf5 (14.h3 fxe4 15.♘xe4 ♘xe4 16.♗xe4 ♘f6 with initiative) 14...♗xf5 15.♗xf5 gxf5 (even stronger looks 15...♖xf5 16.h3 e4 17.hxg4 exf3 18.gxf3 ♖e5 with compensation) 16.h3 ♘f6 17.♗e3 ♘fe4 18.♘xe4 ♘xe4 19.♗xb6 ♘g3+ 20.♔h2 ♘xe2 21.♗c7 e4 22.♘g5 cxd5 23.♘e6 d4! and Black was soon victorious.

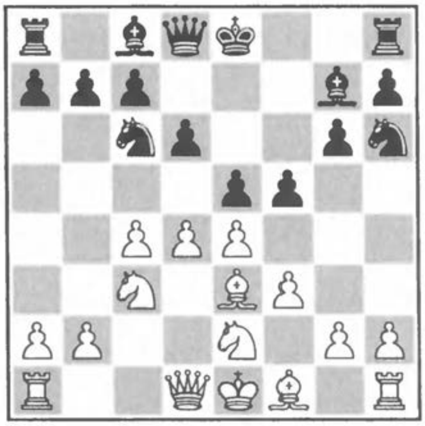
Alternatively, at move 5 White can try different kinds of transpositions into a Sämisch set-up. As usual the position of the knight on g8 leaves Black with additional options. For instance after **5.♗e3** e5 6.♘ge2 (6.d5 h5!? followed by ...♗h6 is good) besides 6...♘gf6 Black can develop the knight on h6 or e7, intending ...f5. One example: 6...♘e7 7.♕d2 0-0 8.f3 f5 9.d5 a6 10.♘c1 fxe4 11.fxe4 ♘f6 12.♗e2 ♘g4 13.♗xg4 ♗xg4 14.♘d3 ♔h8 15.♘f2 ♗d7 16.0-0 ♘g8 17.a4 ♕h4 18.a5 ♗h6 with equality in Bischoff-Reinderman, Venlo 2000.

5.♘f3

This is clearly the main move. Let us first investigate the alternative ways of dealing with the attack on d4:

● **5.♗e3** allows 5...exd4 6.♗xd4 ♘f6 and Black will win a tempo with ...♘c6, which enables him to equalize right away. In the following sharp play his chances are not worse. 7.f3 (7.♘f3 ♘c6 8.♗e3 0-0 9.♗e2 ♖e8 10.♘d2 ♘d7 11.0-0 ♘d4 12.♗d3 ♘c5 13.♘b3 ♘xd3 14.♕xd3 ♘c6 15.♖fd1 ♘e5 16.♕e2 b6= Lputian-Todorcevic, Cannes 1996) 7...0-0 8.♕d2 ♖e8 9.♘ge2 ♘c6 10.♗e3 ♘e5 11.♘f4 c6 12.h4 ♕e7 13.0-0-0 ♖d8 14.♔b1 (14.h5 g5 15.♘h3 h6∓) 14...♗e6 15.b3 d5!? 16.♘xe6 ♕xe6 (a pawn sacrifice. Good enough was also 16...fxe6) 17.cxd5 cxd5 18.exd5 ♕d7 19.♗b5 ♕d6 20.♗g5 ♖dc8 21.♗xf6 ♕xf6 22.♘e4 ♕b6 23.♗e2 a5 24.d6 a4 25.b4 a3. Black has more than enough compensation for the pawn, Budnikov-Azmaiparashvili, Moscow 1994.

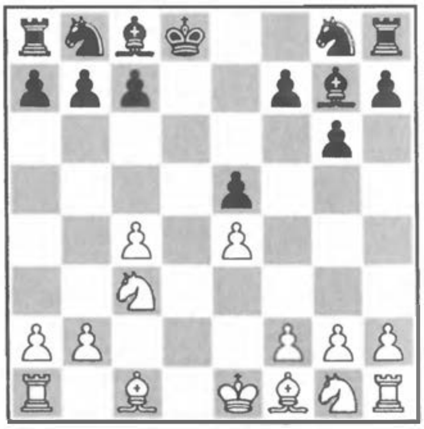
● **5.♘ge2** ♘c6 (the set-up with the knight on d7 is also playable: 5...♘d7 6.♗e3 ♘h6 7.f3 f6 8.♕d2 ♘f7 9.h4 – or 9.0-0-0 c6 with the idea ...a6 and ...b5 – 9...c6 10.h5 a6 11.hxg6 hxg6 12.♖xh8+ ♗xh8 13.d5 f5 14.b4 ♘f6 15.0-0-0 a5 16.b5 cxb5 17.cxb5 a4 18.a3 ♗d7 Black is better thanks to his safer king, De Santis-Badea, Montecatini Terme 1999) 6.♗e3 (weaker is 6.d5 ♘ce7 7.f3 f5 8.♗e3 ♗h6 with excellent prospects for Black) 6...♘h6 (this is in the spirit of the system. 6...exd4 7.♘xd4 ♘ge7 leads to another set-up, where White's chances are slightly preferable after both 8.h4 and 8.♗e2) 7.f3 f5 Black's chances are by no means worse.



8.d5 ♘e7 9.♕d2 ♘f7 10.c5 (10.g3 c5! 11.♗g2 h5! 12.0-0 h4 13.♖ae1 a6 14.b3 ♗d7∓ Ermenkov-Azmaiparashvili, Elenite 1994) 10...f4 11.♗f2 0-0 (11...g5∞ Stohl-Seirawan, Manila Interzonal 1990) 12.0-0-0 dxc5 13.♗xc5 ♘d6 14.♘g1 a6 15.h4 b6 16.♗a3 b5 17.♘h3 h6 18.♘f2 ♗d7 19.b3 ♘ec8 20.♘d3 a5 21.♗b2 ♘b7 22.♔b1 ♘cd6 23.♕f2 b4 24.♘e2 ♕e7 25.♘c5 a4 and Black is the first one to start the attack, Razuvaev-Todorcevic, Rome 1990.

● **5.d5**. This advance secures White a space advantage, but, on the other hand, closing the centre is a concession, especially here when the knight is still on g8 and Black can go for a quick ...f7-f5. Besides, the knight on g8 helps Black to support the favourable trade of the dark-squared bishops. In my opinion 5.d5 can hardly pretend to fight for an opening advantage. White simply wants to get a complicated middlegame. After 5.d5 Black has several playable options. I would suggest 5...h5!? which represents an interesting way to expand on the kingside. It rules out any g2-g4 ideas and also it makes sense to advance the h-pawn before playing ...♗h6. Last but not least, this is the kind of move that your opponent is probably not expecting. Then 6.♗d3 ♘d7 7.♘f3 (7.♘ge2 h4!) 7...h4 8.h3 (or 8.♗g5 ♗f6 9.♗e3 h3 10.g3 ♘h6) 8...♗h6 offers mutual chances. Besides 5...h5, both 5...f5 6.exf5 gxf5 7.♕h5+ ♔f8, which leads to sharp double-edged positions, and the standard 5...a5 are perfectly playable for Black. In the latter case, after 6.♗d3 ♘a6 7.♘ge2 I would advise 7...♘h6 and then ...0-0 and ...f5, or even ...f6 and ...♘f7.

● **5.dxe5**. This is considered the only reasonable alternative to 5.♘f3, although in my opinion it is inferior. 5...dxe5 (actually 5...♗xe5 is interesting too, and represents an option for those aggressive players who don't want to trade queens. However, I am an adept of 'clean' and objective play and therefore I don't see a reason why to avoid an equal endgame, with plenty of fighting resources) 6.♕xd8+ ♔xd8.



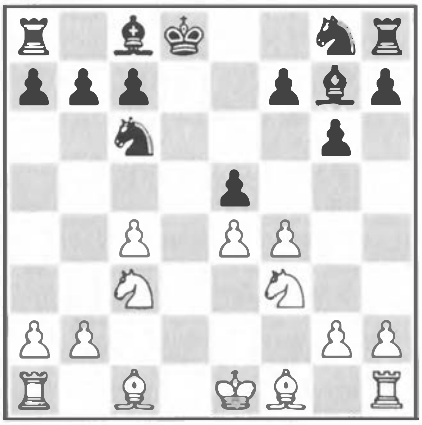
Black is doing fine in this endgame. He has a better pawn structure (viz. the 'hole' on d4) and can be optimistic about the future.

Now after quiet continuations Black will enjoy comfortable equality. Thus, after **7.♘f3** f6 8.♗e3 ♗e6, play may continue:

– 9.♗e2 c6 10.0-0 ♘d7 11.♖fd1 ♗h6 12.♗c5 ♔e8 13.♗a3 ♗f8 14.♗xf8 ♔xf8 15.b4 ♔e7 16.c5 ♘h6 17.♘d2 ♘f7 18.♘c4 ♖hc8 19.♖ac1 ♘f8 20.f3 ♗xc4 21.♗xc4 ♘d8 22.♘a4 ♘de6∓ Wang-Azmaiparashvili, Xiapu 2005, or

– 9.♘d2 ♗h6 10.♗xh6 ♘xh6 11.♗e2 c6∓ Alburt-Seirawan, Cambridge Springs 1988. In both these games Black was slightly better owing to the weakness on d4 in White's pawn formation and in both games Black succeeded to win.

Therefore, the only way to justify White's decision to enter the endgame is **7.f4**. However, this can easily backfire. 7...♘c6 (I was confronted once with 7...♗e6 8.♘f3 ♘d7 9.♗e2 h6 10.g3 and soon realized the dangers for White: 10...♘e7 11.0-0 ♖e8 12.♗e3 exf4! 13.gxf4 ♗xc3! 14.bxc3 ♘c6 15.♗d3 ♘a5 16.♘d2 f5 17.e5 ♔e7. White is struggling to survive, Rogozenko-Badea, Bucharest 1998) 8.♘f3



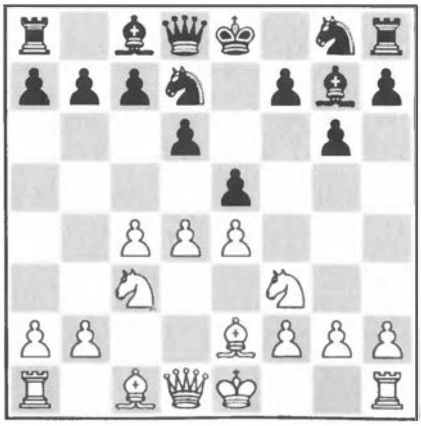
Here Black has several good possibilities:

– 8...♘d4 9.♔f2 exf4 10.♗xf4 ♘e6 11.♗d2 ♘f6 12.h3 ♘d7 13.♗d3 ♘e5 14.♗e2 c6 15.♘a4 ♘xf3 16.♗xf3 ♔c7 Black is slightly better, Petursson-Ehlvest, Yerevan ol 1996.

– 8...♗g4 9.♗e2 ♗xf3 10.♗xf3 ♘f6 11.0-0 ♖e8 12.♗e3 h5!? 13.♖ab1 exf4 14.♗xf4 ♘e5 15.b4 c6 16.b5 ♔c7 17.♘a4 ♘d7 18.♖b3 ♗f8 19.♗e2 f6 20.♗e3 ♘f7 21.♗f2 ♘d6 22.♖fb1 ♘xe4 23.bxc6 bxc6 24.♖b7+ ♔c8. White is in serious trouble, Krush-Nisipeanu, Andorra 2003.

– 8...♗e6 9.♗e3 (or 9.♔f2 ♘f6 10.♗e2 h6 11.h3 ♔c8 12.g3 ♘d7 13.♔g2 exf4 14.gxf4 ♗xc3! 15.bxc3 ♘a5 16.♘d2 c5∓ Agrest-Morozevich, Calvia ol 2004) 9...♘f6 10.h3 ♔c8 11.fxe5 ♘d7 12.♘g5 ♘d8 13.♗e2 ♘xe5 14.♘xe6 ♘xe6 (this is another kind of equal position where the future belongs rather to Black thanks to his better pawn formation) 15.0-0 c6 16.♖ad1 h5! 17.g4 h4! 18.g5 ♖e8 19.c5 ♔c7 (the knights are stronger than bishops. White tried to open the position, but got nowhere and lost) 20.♘d5+ cxd5 21.exd5 ♘f8 22.♗f4 ♖ad8 23.♗h2 ♔c8 24.c6 bxc6 25.dxc6 ♖xd1 26.♗xd1 ♖e7, winning, Bareev-Morozevich, Monaco rapid 2005.

5...♘d7 6.♗e2



Here we reach an important moment. The idea of the whole system is to develop the pieces in the following way: ...♘h6, ...0-0 and then play mainly for ...f5. If necessary, the knight can go to f7 later, where it will control the important squares d6 and g5. Sometimes in order to prepare ...f5 Black should play first ...f6 and ...♘f7. In the diagram position the problem is that if Black starts with 6...♘h6, then White uses the fact that the rook is still on h1 and plays 7.h4! followed by the inevitable further advance. Then the position after 7...f6 8.h5 ♘f7 9.♗e3 f5 10.g3 favours White. The continuation 6...f6 is not really to my taste, first of all because sometimes Black can do without this move and play ...f5 in one go at a later stage. Secondly, the move I suggest is almost always necessary for Black anyway.

6...c6

Black can hardly do without this move, since in such positions he usually needs to keep square d5 under control. For those who want to avoid the variation 6...c6 7.0-0 ♘h6 8.c5, the continuation 6...f6 may represent a reasonable alternative.

7.0-0

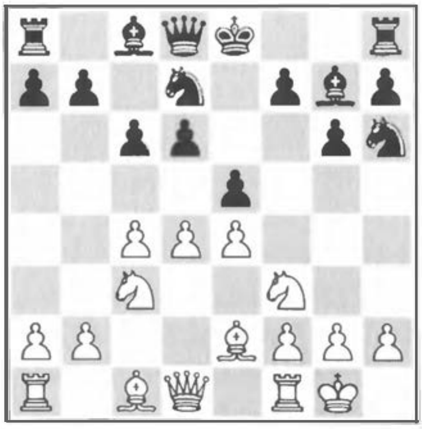
Here **7.h4** makes no sense because of 7...♘gf6 and Black keeps square h5 under control. In case of **7.♗e3** Black can play 7...♘h6, since White must reckon with ...♘g4. Then after 8.h3 (threatening 9.♕d2. 8.h4? ♘g4) Black can allow himself the slow development with 8...f6, since 8.h3 is also a waste of time and can turn out to be a weakness later. Black will finish development and play ...f5 later with good play.

White can try to be smart and make a waiting move like **7.♖b1**, with the idea 7...♘h6 8.h4. However, the move ...c6 is more useful than ♖b1. Black can continue for instance 8...♕e7 9.h5 exd4 10.♘xd4 ♘c5 with counterplay in centre. White's activity on the kingside brings him nothing here.

The only more or less reasonable alternative to 7.0-0 is **7.d5**. Then 7...c5 8.0-0 ♘h6 transposes to 7.0-0. Independent role has the move 8.g4!? instead of castling. Due to the fact that the centre is closed, White can allow himself such pawn moves on the side. However, if Black pays attention he is fine: 8...♘df6 9.h3 (9.g5 ♞h5 is good for Black, who, besides ...♘f4, also has the idea ...h6) 9...♞e7 10.♗e3 0-0 11.♘d2 ♘e8 12.♕c2 f5 13.f3 a6 14.a3 ♗d7 15.b4 b6 16.g5 ♗h8 and here a draw was agreed in Nisipeanu-Badea, Bucharest 1998. In fact Black's position is preferable thanks to the manoeuvre ♘e8-g7-h5-f4, after which White will have to play very accurately in order to avoid the opening of the position. Besides 8...♘df6, also deserving of attention is 8...f6 9.h4 ♞h6 10.♘d2 (10.g5 ♘f7 11.♗e3 f5∞) 10...♘f7 11.♘f1 a6 12.♘g3 ♖b8 13.a3 ♗h6 14.♝e3 ♗xe3 15.fxe3 0-0 with equal play, Tosic-Varlamov, St Petersburg 1993.

7...♘h6

Now that White has castled and the plan with h2-h4-h5 is no longer dangerous, Black can develop the knight to h6. Some players prefer 7...♕e7 or 7...f6 instead, but in my opinion these moves are not Black's main priority and represent a concession: 7...♕e7 defines the queen's position too early, while 7...f6 can be a loss of time, since Black often goes for the immediate ...f5 (or sometimes he doesn't advance the f-pawn at all). The only justification for refraining from 7...♘h6 is the desire to avoid White's quick c4-c5. However, I believe that 7...♘h6 8.c5 offers Black reasonable play. Moreover, as shown by N. Sulava in New In Chess Yearbook 68, after 7...♕e7 White can still go for complications with 8.c5.

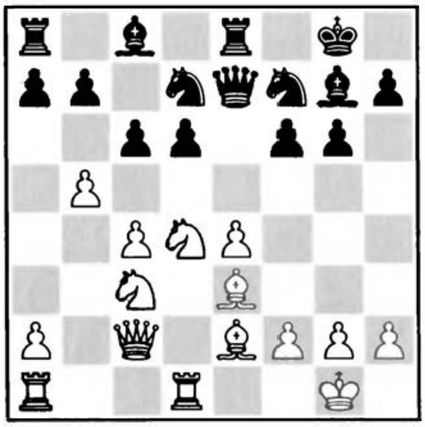


This is the position that Black has been aiming for. It can arise via various move orders. Black's idea is to castle short and then, according to circumstances, either prepare the advance ...f5, or start dynamic play with ...e5xd4 followed by ...♘e5, ...♕h4 etc. White's standard plan is to expand on the queenside with 8.♖b1 followed by b2-b4. In my opinion White's only serious possibilities to fight for an advantage are 8.d5 and 8.c5. The latter is best and will be dealt with in the last instance.

Some other moves:

● 8.dxe5 dxe5 9.b4 (after 9.b3 0-0 10.♗a3 ♖e8 the position is equal. Black plans either ...f5, or ...f6, ...♘f7 and ...♗f8) 9...0-0 10.♖b1 ♕c7 11.c5. Here Black has at his disposal two plans, which lead to equal positions. One is ...♖d8, followed by ...♘f8-e6. Another possibility is to play ...f6 followed by ...♘f7 and prepare ...f5 later on.

● 8.♗g5 is of course a poor move, since Black is happy to 'weaken' his position with ...f6. The following game is a good illustration of the resources of Black's position. 8...f6 9.♗e3 0-0 10.b4 ♘f7 11.♕c2 ♕e7 12.♖fd1 exd4 13.♘xd4 ♖e8 14.b5.



White is playing apparently logical – he attacks on the queenside. Now it is very instructive to see how in the game Sharavdorj-Kotronias, Bled ol 2002, Black took over the advantage: 14...c5 15.♘b3 ♘b6! 16.a4 ♗e6! 17.♘d2 ♘e5 18.♕b3 ♕f7! 19.♘d5 f5 20.a5 ♘xd5 21.cxd5 ♗d7 22.f3 f4! 23.♗f2 g5. White has a strategically difficult position: he can do nothing in centre and on the queenside, while Black can slowly prepare the attack on the kingside.

● 8.♗e3 0-0 9.dxe5 dxe5 10.♘d2 ♕e7 11.♕c2 f5 12.f3 f4 13.♗f2 g5 14.a3 ♘f7 (good for Black is also 14...♘c5 15.b4 ♘e6 16.c5 ♘d4) 15.b4 h5 in this double-edged position the draw was agreed, Peng-Bosboom Lanchava, Rotterdam 2000.

● 8.♖e1 0-0 9.♗f1 f6 (after 9...f5 Black must reckon with 10.dxe5 dxe5 11.♗xh6 ♗xh6 12.exf5; 9...exd4 10.♘xd4 ♘g4 leads to a theoretical variation where the knight comes to g4 from f6. According to theory White has a slight edge there) 10.♖b1 a5 11.a3 ♞f7. Such positions offer chances for both sides. In the following example Black achieved everything he dreamt of: 12.dxe5 (12.b4 axb4 13.axb4 ♖e8!? would have kept the tension) 12...dxe5 13.b4 axb4 14.axb4 ♕e7 15.♕c2 ♔h8 16.♗e3 ♘d8!? (an instructive manoeuvre) 17.♖ed1 ♘e6 18.♕d2 ♖e8 19.c5 f5 20.♕b2 f4 21.♗c1 ♘d4 22.♖d3 g5 and Black was better in the game Tzermiadianos-Cela, Panormo Zonal 1998.

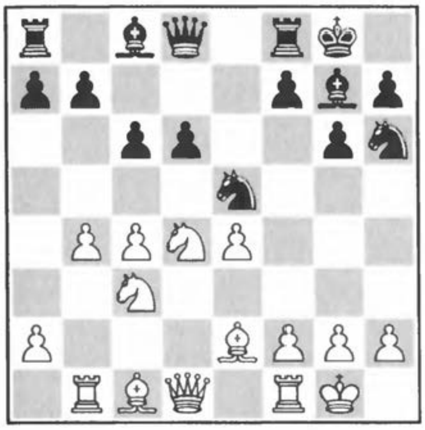
A) 8.♖b1
B) 8.d5
C) 8.c5

Variation A

8.♖b1 0-0 9.b4 exd4!

The best continuation. White started wing actions and Black opens the centre. That's why I feel that Black should try to avoid an early ...f6. Here 9...f6 is a playable move, but in my opinion thanks to his space advantage White has the slightly better prospects. Instead of the text, 9...f5 also deserves attention.

10.♘xd4 ♘e5



In this position Black has good chances to build up an initiative:

- 11.b5 ♕h4!? 12.bxc6 bxc6 13.♖b3 (after 13.f4 Black plays 13...c5!) Now the game Portisch-Meleghegyi, Hungary 1979 continued 13...♗g4 14.f3 ♗e6 15.♘xe6 fxe6 16.♕xd6 ♘hg4! 17.fxg4 ♖xf1+ 18.♗xf1 ♖f8 and in the upcoming complications White was lucky to escape with a draw. However, on move 15 and 16 White should have played f2-f4 with favourable complications. Therefore I think easiest for Black is 13...♖e8 with good play. For instance: 14.f4 ♘d7!? 15.♘xc6 ♘c5 16.♖a3 ♗b7 and Black has great activity for the pawn.
- 11.h3 ♕h4 12.♖b3 (bad is 12.f4? ♗xh3 13.fxe5 ♗xe5 with a powerful attack) 12...g5! (a strong move, which besides preventing f2-f4 also creates ideas with ...g5-g4) 13.♘f3 ♘xf3+ 14.♗xf3 g4 15.hxg4 ♘xg4 16.♗xg4 ♗xg4 17.♘e2 (17.f3? ♗e5−+; after 17.♕xd6 both 17...♗e6 and 17...♖fe8 secure an advantage) 17...♖fe8. Black is better, Donner-Ljubojevic, Nice ol 1974.

Variation B

8.d5 c5

The centre is closed and each side carries out his own play: White plays on the queenside, Black tries to organize counterplay on the kingside. As usual in such situations White often starts his play quicker, but Black's counterplay is always very dangerous.

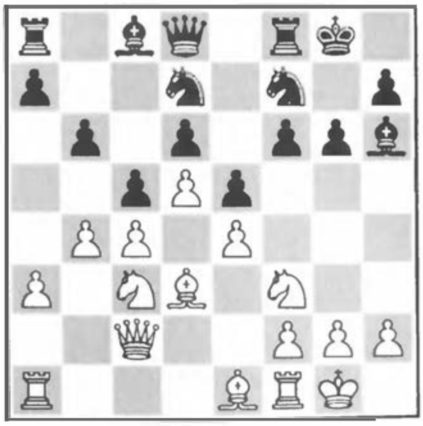
9.♗d2

The direct 9.♘b5 is met by 9...♘b6 10.a3 (not 10.b4 cxb4 11.c5 dxc5 12.d6 0-0∓) 10...a6 11.♘c3 0-0 12.b4 ♘d7 13.♘a4 b6 14.♖b1 f6 (after 14...f5 White has 15.♘g5) 15.♕c2 ♘f7 16.♗d2 ♗h6 17.♖b2 ♔h8 18.♗d3 ♗xd2 19.♘xd2 ♘h6 20.bxc5 bxc5 21.♘b3 f5 22.♕d2 ♕h4 23.f3 fxe4 24.♗xe4 ♘f6 with good counterplay, Shumiakina-Kuzmina, Elista 2003.

9...f6 10.a3

In Schaufelberger-Ljubojevic, Skopje ol 1972, there followed: 10.♖b1 0-0 11.♘e1 f5 – now that White has no ♘g5 Black can play ...f5 – 12.♘d3 ♘b6 13.♘c1 fxe4 14.♘xe4 ♗f5∓ 15.f3 ♗xe4 16.fxe4 ♕h4 with a strong initiative on the kingside.

10...0-0 11.b4 ♘f7 12.♕c2 ♗h6 13.♗e1 b6 14.♗d3



This is Rogozenko-Badea, Tusnad 2005. I remember I was happy here with my position – White has prevented ...f5 and apparently Black has no play at all. Well, after my opponent's answer 14...♘b8! I slowly started to realize that my happiness was premature, since Black will put the knight on a6, almost completely neutralizing White's activity on the queenside. Later Black can prepare ...f5. After a long thought I decided to transfer my bishop to the long diagonal and then go for f2-f4. 15.♞e2 ♗g4 16.♘d2 ♘a6 17.♘b3 ♗d7 18.♗c3 ♗g7! 19.♘d2 ♘h6! 20.h3 ♕e7 21.f4 exf4 22.♘xf4 ♘f7! (the knight repeatedly made only weird moves ♘h6-f7 and now it gets the perfect square e5. Amazing!) 23.♕d1 ♘e5 24.♗c2, and here somewhat prematurely a draw was agreed. Black has at least equal chances. He can either play 24...♕e8 in order to prevent the trade of light-squared bishops, or he can fight for the initiative right away with the active 24...b5.

Variation C

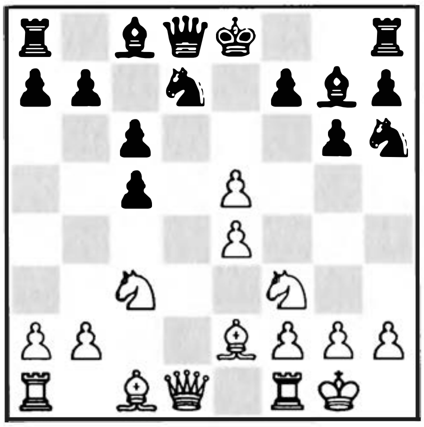
8.c5

This attempt is designed to 'punish' Black for his extravagant set-up.

8...dxc5

Another possibility is to sacrifice a pawn with 8...exd4 9.♗xh6 ♗xh6 10.♕xd4 0-0 11.cxd6 – 11.♕xd6? ♕a5 with advantage for Black – 11...♕b6, after which Black has some compensation thanks to the bishop pair and especially due to the absence of White's dark-squared bishop. However, I believe that 8...dxc5 is stronger.

9.dxe5



White's main trump is the poor position of the knight on h6 and a slight lead in development. On the other hand Black can easily attack White's pawns and once the knight from h6 will be back into play, White will start to feel uncomfortable.

9...♕c7

I like this rare continuation best. Bad is 9...♘g4? 10.e6 fxe6 11.♘g5 and White wins, but 9...0-0 is a playable alternative. Then after 10.h3 ♔h8 White has a large choice:

– 11.♕d6 ♘xe5! 12.♕xc5 ♘xf3+ 13.♗xf3 f5! and Black takes over the initiative.

– 11.♗c4 ♘g8 12.♗xf7?! ♘xe5 (even better was the simple 12...♖xf7 13.e6 ♖f8 14.exd7 ♗xd7∓) 13.♘xe5 ♕xd1 14.♖xd1 ♗xe5 15.♗xg8 ♔xg8 16.♗h6 ♖e8 17.f4 ♗d4+ 18.♔h2 ♗e6 with equality, Henley-Minaya, Tunja 1981.

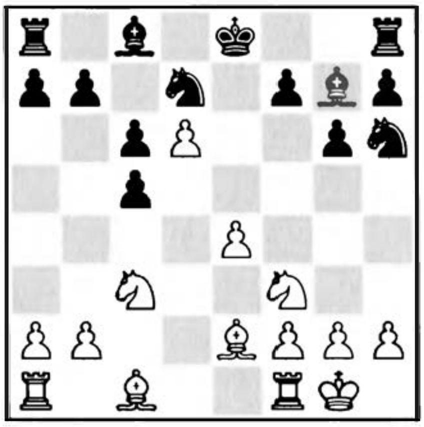
– 11.♗g5 ♕e8 12.♕d6 ♘g8 13.♗e3 ♘xe5 14.♗xc5 ♘xf3+ 15.♗xf3 f6 16.♕d4 (correct was 16.♖ad1 ♗e6 followed by ...♖f7, with complicated play) 16...♖f7 17.♗xa7 f5 Here White is walking on the edge 18.♕e3? (it was time to think about saving the game with 18.e5) 18...f4 19.♕c5 ♘f6 20.♗b6 ♘d7 21.♕b4 ♘e5 22.♖fd1 ♘xf3+ 23.gxf3 ♗xh3 Black is better, Goehler-Bosboom Lanchava, Germany 2003.

– 11.♗f4 ♕e7 12.♕d6 ♖e8 13.♕xe7 ♖xe7 14.♖ad1 ♘g8 15.♗g5 ♖e8 16.♗c4 ♘xe5 17.♘xe5 ♗xe5 18.♗xf7 ♖f8 19.♗b3 b6 20.♖d2 and a draw was agreed in Vegh-Lau, Budapest 1987. The game could continue 20...♚g7 (the immediate 20...♘f6 is bad in view of 21.♗h6) 21.♖fd1 ♘f6 22.♖d8 ♗a6 with equality.

10.♕d6

After 10.♗f4 ♘g4 11.♕d6 ♕xd6 12.exd6 f6 (Black can also consider the risky 12...b5!? 13.♘d2 ♘f8 14.h3 ♘e6 15.♗g3 ♘h6∞ 16.a4 b4 17.♘d1 f5!? 18.♗c4 f4 19.♗xe6 ♗xe6 20.♗xf4 ♘f7 with compensation for the pawn. However, the more quiet 12...f6 must be better) 13.♗g3 (or 13.♖ad1 b6 14.♗g3 a5 unclear) 13...♘ge5 14.♘d2 ♘f7 (it deserves attention to start with 14...b6, 14...0-0 or even 14...a5 – with the idea to advance the a-pawn) 15.f4 b6 16.♘c4 a5 17.a4 ♗a6 18.♖ad1 0-0 19.b3 ♖fe8 we have a very complex and unclear endgame. The pawn on d6 is blockaded and can later become weak. Black has at his disposal the plan ♘d8-e6-d4. Besides, White must always consider the advance ...b6-b5-b4. For instance after 20.♗f3 b5, or 20.♗g4 f5 21.exf5 ♘h6! Black is already much better. Even after 20.♖fe1 Black can consider 20...b5. For instance: 21.axb5 cxb5 22.♘xa5 b4 23.♘b5 ♖eb8 and White suddenly has problems with his cavalry.

10...♕xd6 11.exd6



In this complicated endgame Black's chances should not be underestimated. The pawn on d6 is well blockaded and can become a target for Black's pieces. There was one single game from this position, where after **11...0-0** 12.a4 ♔h8 13.♖d1 b6 14.♗c4 ♗b7 15.♗g5 f6 16.♗xh6 ♗xh6 17.♗e6 ♖ad8 18.a5 ♖fe8 White decided to repeat moves with 19.♗f7 ♖f8 20.♗e6 (if 20.♗b3 b5 the position would have remained double-edged) 20...♖fe8 21.♗f7 ♖f8, draw, Keene-Gaprindashvili, Dortmund 1978.

However, in my opinion it makes sense for Black to keep the king in the centre and bring his knight into play with **11...f6**. Then after 12.♗f4 ♘f7 some possible variations are:

– 13.♗c4?! ♘de5 14.♘xe5 fxe5 15.♗xf7+ ♔xf7 16.♗e3 b6∓

– 13.♖ad1 b6 14.♖fe1 a5!?∞, next Black can expand on the queenside or prepare to castle long.

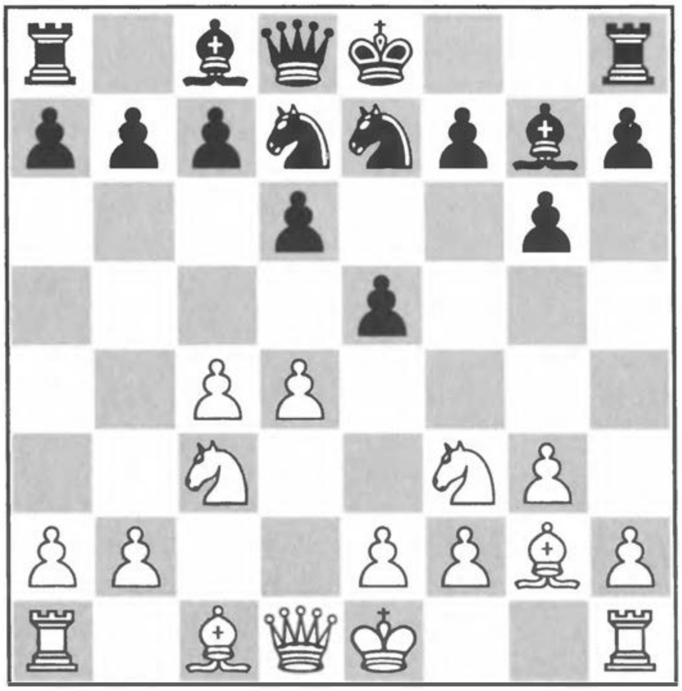
– 13.♖fd1 b6 14.a4 a5 15.♗g3 (15.♘d2 ♘de5∞) 15...♗a6 16.♗xa6 ♖xa6 17.♔f1 ♚d8!? followed by ♖e8, with approximate equality. I think that it is rather Black who has several possibilities to improve his position.

In conclusion the development of the knight on h6 instead of f6 is an interesting set-up that will very likely surprise your opponent. I also believe that for some players the discussed system can serve as a main weapon against 1.d4.

CHAPTER 12

Dorian Rogozenko

An Indian SOS, Part II



Bringing the knight to c6 – 6...♘e7

What to do with Black when after 1.d4 g6 2.c4 ♗g7 3.♘c3 d6 4.♘f3 ♘d7 White plays 5.g3, aiming for the very solid fianchetto set-up? Should Black enter the King's Indian Defence? Of course that represents a possibility, but there is a more interesting set-up, which in most cases will make white players feel more uncomfortable than when playing against the KID. After

1.d4 g6 2.c4 ♗g7 3.♘c3 d6 4.♘f3 ♘d7 5.g3 e5 6.♗g2

Black can play

6...♘e7!?

The Georgian GM Zurab Azmaiparashvili is the biggest expert of this system. Instead of to f6, the knight goes to c6. From this square the knight will, together with the g7-bishop, exert pressure on d4. In my opinion this is objectively not worse than placing the knight on f6, even if it is by far less popular. An interesting fact is that also according to ECO White has no advantage against this system.

7.0-0 0-0 8.e4

The most ambitious continuation.

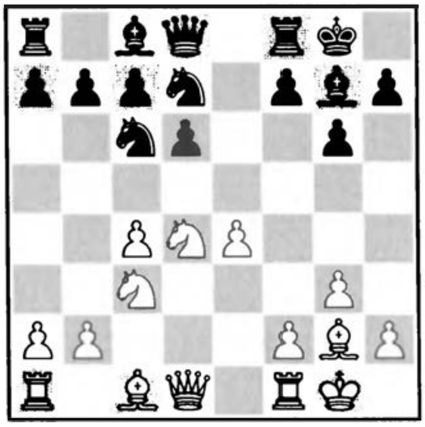
Instead, 8.dxe5 would only simplify the position and does not set even slightest problems for Black. Play is equal after 8...dxe5 9.♕c2 c6 10.♖d1 ♕c7.

8.e3 has some logic – anticipating Black's pressure on d4 White takes prophylactic measures. On the other hand, such a modest move can hardly pretend to fight for an opening advantage. Black has concrete ways to neutralize this plan starting with 8...exd4:

– 9.exd4 ♘b6 (9...d5 also equalizes) 10.b3 c5 11.♗b2 ♘c6 12.d5 ♘e5 13.♘xe5 ♗xe5= Huber-Yoos, Edmonton 2004.

– 9.♘xd4 ♘b6 10.b3 c5 11.♘de2 d5 – Black efficiently uses his knights to break White's centre – 12.♗a3 dxc4 13.♕xd8 (13.♗xc5 ♕c7=) 13...♖xd8 14.♗xc5 ♘c6 equal, but as usual equality does not mean a draw. In the game Basin-Azmaiparashvili, Minsk 1985, White failed to achieve it.

8...exd4 9.♘xd4 ♘c6



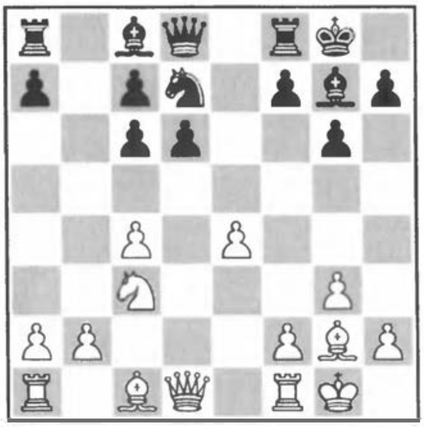
Black's main idea is to exert pressure on the dark squares. Unlike in KID-fianchetto variations, in the present system White cannot keep the knight on d4 and must make a concession.

10.♘de2

This retreat is most popular in practice. White strengthens the other knight on c3 and will protect pawn c4 by means of b2-b3. Black also has his trumps. Now that the knight left the centre, Black can arrange his pieces on active positions and combine queenside play (the advance of a-pawn) with activity in the centre and on the kingside (advance of f-pawn).

White's other options are:

- 10.♘c2?! ♘de5 11.♘e3 ♘a5 (or 11...♗e6 12.♘cd5 ♘a5 with advantage) 12.♕a4 b6 13.♘cd5 (13.f4 ♗d7 14.♕c2 ♘exc4 15.♘xc4 ♘xc4 16.♘d5 b5∓) 13...c6 14.♘b4 ♗e6 15.♕c2 ♖c8 16.♖d1 ♘axc4 17.♘xc4 ♘xc4. Black is simply a pawn up, Maris-Arnason, Katerini 1993.
- 10.♗e3 This attempt to keep the knight on d4 does not work out well: 10...♘de5 11.b3 (11.♘xc6 bxc6 12.c5 ♘c4 13.♗c1 might be the best solution, even though the question remains whether White will be able to neutralize Black's initiative and keep equality) 11...♘g4 12.♘xc6 ♘xe3! 13.♕d3 bxc6 14.♕xe3 ♖e8 Black is slightly better due to the bishop pair.
- 10.♘xc6 bxc6.



Doubled pawns are not a problem for Black in such a position, he can use the b-file to increase pressure on White's queenside.

In the diagram position White has:

– 11.♗d2 ♘e5 12.b3 c5 (12...♗g4 13.f3 ♗d7 is another reasonable possibility) 13.h3 ♗d7 14.♔h2 ♘c6 15.f4 a5 16.♖c1 ♘d4 17.♘d5 a4 Black has characteristic counterplay on the queenside, Adianto-Azmaiparashvili, Batumi rapid 2001.

– 11.f4 ♗a6 12.♖e1 (12.♕e2? ♘b6∓) 12...♗xc4 13.♕a4 (After 13.e5 dxe5 14.♗xc6 ♗e6! 15.♗xa8 ♕xa8 Black has powerful compensation for the exchange) 13...♗e6 14.♕xc6 ♘c5 15.♕b5 ♖b8 16.♕e2 ♗c8! Black has the initiative, Makarov-Todorcevic, Cetinje 1993.

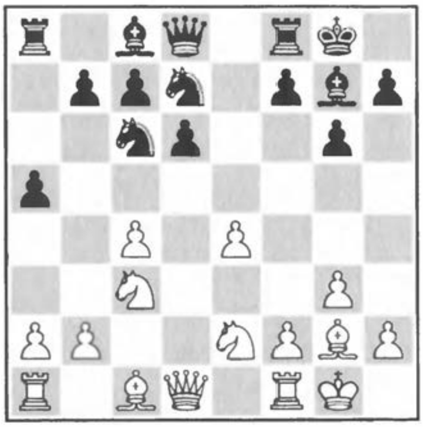
– 11.♕c2 ♘e5. The weakness of pawn c4 secures Black some initiative, although the position remains about equal:

12.b3 ♕f6 (another possibility is 12...g5!?∞) 13.♗b2 ♘f3+ 14.♔h1 ♗g4 (Again 14...g5!? is the alternative: 15.♘d1 ♘d4 16.♕d3 ♗g4 17.f3 ♗e6 18.♘e3 c5 19.♖ad1 ♕h6 20.f4 gxf4 21.gxf4 ♖ae8∞ Suciu-Marin, Tusnad 2004) 15.♕d3 (15.♘d1 ♘d4 is equal, as is 15.h3 ♘d4 16.♕d3 ♗f3) 15...♘e5 16.♕e3 ♗f3 17.♘a4 ♖fe8 18.♖ae1 ♗xg2+ 19.♔xg2 ♕e6 20.♕c3 ♗f6 21.f4 ♘d7 22.♕d2 ♗xb2 23.♕xb2 f5 with equality in Co.Ionescu-McNab, Thessaloniki ol 1988.

12.c5 ♖b8 (or 12...g5!? 13.h3 ♕f6 14.f4 gxf4 15.gxf4 ♘g6 16.e5 dxe5 17.f5 ♘f4 18..♝xf4 exf4 19.♖xf4 ♖b8∞ Verat-C.Foisor, Guingamp 2005) 13.h3 d5. Now in the game Antic-Cabrilo, Becici 1994, Black quickly achieved an advantage after 14.exd5?! cxd5 15.♗f4 (15.♘xd5 ♗xh3∓) 15...c6 16.♖fe1 ♖e8 17.b3 ♕a5∓. Instead of 14.exd5?! White should have kept the tension with 14.♖d1. Then after 14...♖e8 15.exd5 ♗f5 16.♕a4 ♘d3 Black has good compensation for the pawn.

10...a5

(Similar, although somewhat less flexible is 10...♘c5)



In this KID-like type of position Black has fairly good play. First and foremost, owing to the fact that White was forced to retreat the knight from d4, Black can create more pressure with his powerful dark-squared bishop on White's queenside. Next, Black will place the knight from d7 either to e5 or c5, advance the a-pawn and enjoy a pleasant equality.

11.h3

This prophylactic move is almost always useful for White in fianchetto variations. Other options are:

– 11.f4 After this careless move Black quickly activates all pieces: 11...♘b6 12.b3 ♗g4 13.♗b2 a4 14.♖b1 axb3 15.axb3 ♖e8 16.h3 ♗xe2 17.♘xe2 ♗xb2 18.♖xb2 ♕f6 19.♖d2 ♖a3 20.♘c1 ♖a1∓ 21.♔h2 ♖ea8 22.♕f3 ♖b1 23.♘e2 ♖xf1 24.♗xf1 ♕a1 25.♗g2 ♖a3 26.♖d3 ♘b4 27.♖c3 ♖a2 28.♘d4 ♖d2 29.♘b5 ♕b2. White is in trouble, Linqvist-Yrjölä, Jyväskylä 1999.

– 11.b3 a4 (or 11...♘c5 12.♗e3 f5! 13.♖c1 ♕e7 14.♘d5 ♕f7 15.♘ec3 ♘b4 16.♕d2 ♔h8 17.♖cd1 ♘xe4 18.♘xe4 fxe4 19.♗xe4 ♗h3 20.♖fe1 ♖ae8 21.♗g2 ♗xg2 22.♔xg2 ♘xd5 23.♕xd5 ♕xd5+ 24.♖xd5 b6 equal Sher-Conquest, Hastings 1990) 12.♖b1 axb3 13.axb3 ♖e8 (13...♘c5 14.b4 ♘e6=) 14.h3 ♘c5 15.b4 ♘e6 with equal chances.

– 11.♖b1 ♘c5 12.b3 f5 13.♗e3 ♘xe4 14.♘xe4 fxe4 15.♗xe4 ♘e5 16.f4 ♘g4 17.♗d4 ♘f6 18.♗g2 ♗f5 19.♖c1 c6 20.h3 h5 21.♘c3 ♕d7 22.♔h2 ♖ae8 again with equality Jakovljevic-Cabrilo, Jahorina 2003.

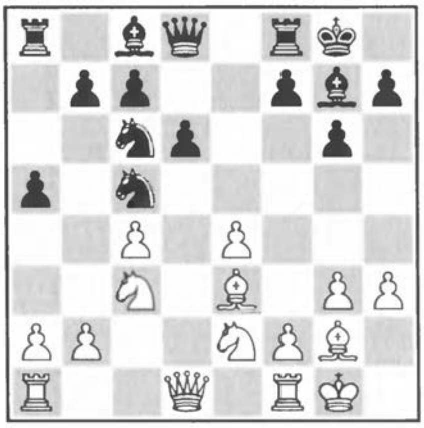
– 11.♗e3 ♘de5!? (this is why 10...a5 is somewhat more flexible than 10...♘c5: sometimes Black can make good use of the knight on e5 as well. 11...♘c5 is also perfectly playable. For instance in the game Lingnau-Schekachev, Bad Zwesten 2001, Black took over the initiative in the endgame: 12.♕d2 a4 13.♖ac1 ♘e5 14.♘b5 c6 15.♘bd4 ♕a5 16.♕xa5 ♖xa5 17.b4 axb3 18.axb3 ♖a2 19.♖b1 ♗d7∓) 12.b3 a4 13.h3 (dubious is 13.♕d2?! axb3 14.axb3 ♖xa1

15.♖xa1 ♕f6!∓ Maric-Vladimirov, Dubai 2005) 13...f5!? 14.f4 ♘f7 15.exf5 (After 15.♘xa4 ♗xa1 16.♕xa1 fxe4 17.♘ac3 ♘b4! White still has to prove compensation for the exchange) 15...♗xf5 with a complicated, double-edged position.

11...♘c5

In the internet blitz game Umansky-Azmaiparashvili, 2003, Black played 11...♘de5 12.b3 f5 13.f4 ♘f7 14.♗e3 fxe4 and after 15.♘xe4! ♖e8 16.g4 White seized the initiative, although the position remains very sharp and unclear. Instead of the risky 14...fxe4 Black should try 14...a4 or 14...♖e8.

12.♗e3



This apparently quiet position is full of tactical possibilities. Black has two possibilities:

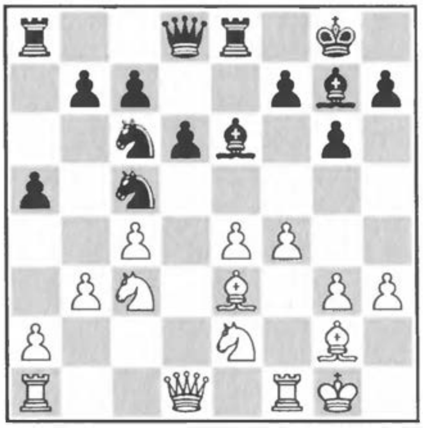
A) 12...♖e8
B) 12...♗e6

Variation A

12...♖e8 13.f4

This aggressive move (White plans 14.e5) can lead to wild complications. In case of 13.b3 a4 (less convincing is 13...f5 14.exf5 ♗xf5 15.♕d2 ♕f6 16.♖ad1 with some edge for White in Guindy-Paasikangas Tella, Stockholm 1998) 14.♖b1 axb3 15.axb3 f5 Black has sufficient counterplay.

13...♗e6 14.b3



14...♘xe4!? 15.♗xe4

15.♘xe4? ♗xh3 is bad for White.

15...♗f5!

In Anastasian-Vladimirov, Dubai 2000, Black played 15...♗xh3 16.♕d2 ♗xf1 17.♖xf1 f5 18.♗f3 ♕d7 19.♗f2 ♖ad8 20.♘d5. However, White's two minor pieces are stronger than Black's rook and pawns, therefore 15...♗f5 is preferable.

16.♗xf5 ♖xe3 17.♘d5

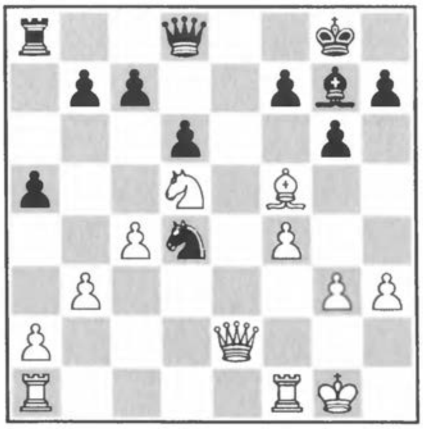
White is playing the strongest moves.

17...♖xe2

The position is a complete mess. We are following the game Vakhidov-Nisipeanu, Dubai 2004, which continued:

18.♕xe2 ♘d4

Having burnt all his bridges, Black is forced to play for complications. After the materialistic 18...♗xa1?! 19.♖xa1 ♘d4 20.♕b2 ♘xf5 21.♖e1 White is much better.



19.♕d3 ♘xf5 20.g4 After 20.♖ae1 c6 21.♘c3 d5 22.cxd5 cxd5 Black will play ...d4 and install the knight on e3, with enough compensation. **20...♗xa1 21.♖xa1 c6! 22.gxf5 cxd5 23.fxg6 hxg6 24.♕xd5 ♕b6+ 25.♔g2 ♖e8** Finally material equality is restored, but White is in trouble due to the insecure position of his king and Black's control of the e-file. Black won after: **26.♕d2 ♕c6+ 27.♔g3 ♕e4 28.♖f1 ♖e6 29.♕xa5 ♕d3+ 30.♖f3 ♕d4 31.♖f2 ♖e3+ 32.♔h2 ♖xb3 33.axb3 ♕xf2+ 34.♔h1 ♕f1+ 35.♔h2 ♕xf4+ 36.♔g2 ♕e4+ 37.♔f2 ♕c2+ 38.♔g1 ♕xb3 39.♕d8+ ♔g7 40.♕xd6 ♕xc4 41.♕e5+ ♔h7 42.♕a5 ♕d4+** and White resigned.

This nice game shows the resources of Black's position. However, instead of 19.♕d3 (see the previous diagram) the computer finds the correct way for White: **19.♕e7!** and after 19...♞xf5 20.♕xd8+ ♖xd8 21.♖ae1! (21.♖ad1 ♘xg3 22.♖f3 ♘e2+ 23.♔f2 ♘d4 24.♖fd3 ♘e6∓) 21...♘xg3 22.♖f3 ♗d4+ 23.♔h2! ♘f5 24.♘xc7 ♔f8 White is slightly better, although the endgame remains quite complicated. All these wild variations are interesting and attractive for sharp players, but Black is not forced to play in this way. There is a more reliable option:

Variation B

12...♗e6 13.b3 a4

Here 13...♖e8 14.f4 (14.♖b1 f5∞) 14...♘xe4!? leads to variation A – 12...♖e8.

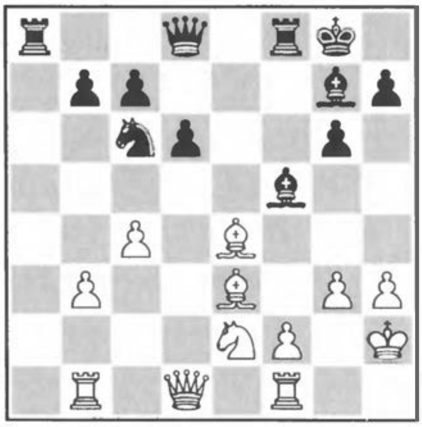
14.♖b1

In case of 14.♖c1 axb3 15.axb3 ♘b4 (not 15...♖a3?! 16.♘b5 ♖a2 17.♘f4 ♗d7? 18.♘d5± Seres-Resika, Budapest 2001) the position is double edged. For instance: 16.♘d5 (or 16.♘f4 c6!?∞) 16...♗xd5!? 17.cxd5 (after 17.exd5 ♖e8 Black has very active pieces) 17...♘cd3 18.♖b1 c5 19.dxc6 bxc6 with mutual chances.

14...axb3 15.axb3 f5 16.♔h2

16.♕d2 ♘xe4 17.♘xe4 fxe4 18.♘f4 ♕d7 19.♘xe6 ♕xe6 20.♕d5 and now in Llorente Zaro-Ugalde Ezcurra, Mislata 2003, Black could have achieved a clear advantage with 20...♕xd5 21.cxd5 ♘d4! 22.♗xd4 (22.♗xe4 loses material in view of 22...♘e2+ 23.♔g2 ♘c3) 22...♗xd4 23.♗xe4 ♖a2∓.

16...fxe4 17.♘xe4 ♘xe4 18.♗xe4 ♗f5



The position is equal. In practice two games were played:

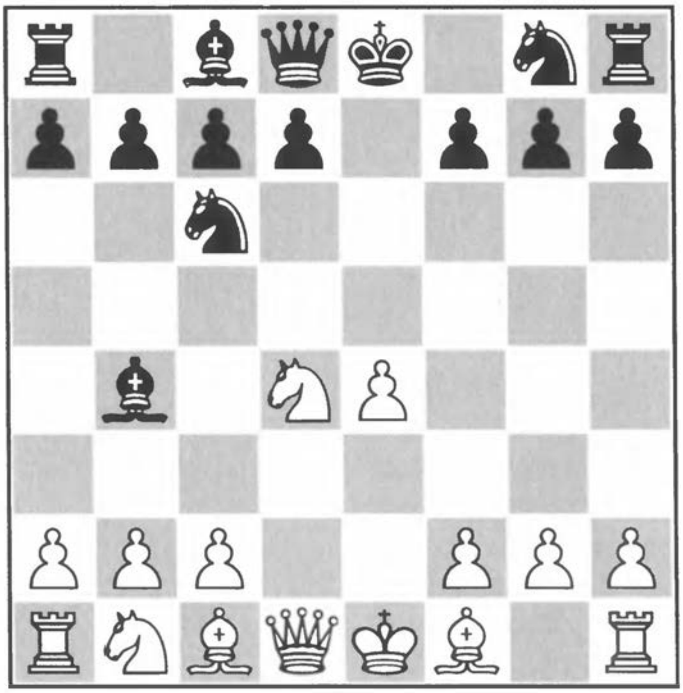
– 19.♗xf5 ♖xf5 20.♘d4 ♘xd4 21.♗xd4 ♖a2 22.♖a1 ♖xa1 23.♕xa1 ♕f8 24.♔g2 ♗xd4 25.♕xd4 ♕g7 26.♕e4 b6 27.♕e3 ♕e5 28.♕d2 ♕a5 29.♕e3 ♕a8+ 30.♔g1 ♖e5 31.♕c3, draw Velickovic-Sebenik, Maribor 2004.

– 19.♕d5+ ♔h8 20.♗xf5 ♖xf5 21.♕d2 ♕f6 22.♘f4 ♖fa5 23.♘d5 ♕f7 (Black is already slightly better) 24.♗h6 ♗e5 25.♕d3 ♖a2 26.♔g2 ♗d4 27.♕f3 ♕xf3+ 28.♔xf3 ♘e5+ 29.♔g2 (dangerous for White is 29.♔e4 ♗xf2 30.♘xc7 ♖e2+ 31.♔d5 ♘f7) 29...♘f7 30.♘xc7 ♘xh6 31.♘xa8 ♖xa8. In the game Kir. Georgiev-Azmaiparashvili, Groningen 1994, White did not succeed to defend this slightly inferior endgame.

CHAPTER 13

Glenn Flear

Patzer Sees a Check



1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 exd4 4.♘xd4 ♗b4+

After the standard moves 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 exd4 4.♘xd4, Black can soon tell White's intentions by giving check on b4. This 'patzer check' still raises a few eyebrows despite players of the stature of Miles, Tkachiev, Yandemirov and Zviagintsev, all having included it in their repertoires.

In New In Chess Yearbook 76 Afek calls 4...♗b4+ the Miles Variation and I don't think many would argue with that, as his efforts in the late '90s brought attention to this previously unpopular sideline.

The rules of chess dictate that White must meet the check and so he already has to decide between 5.c3 (gaining a tempo) and 5.♘c3 (developing a piece). If 5.♘c3 then 5...♘f6 leads to the safe (boring!?) equality of the Scotch Four Knights, whereas the principled 5.c3 signals to his opponent that he is ready to take up the gauntlet and Black should then oblige with 5...♗c5. Compared to the immediate 4...♗c5 White has an extra tempo (c2-c3) and already supports the d4-square, but, on the other hand, cannot use the natural c3-square for his queen's knight. The struggle between time and harmonious development will occupy the thoughts of both players over the subsequent few moves. Black's main decision is whether to develop with ...♘f6 (risking the pin with ♗g5) or ...♘ge7 (when ♕h5 can be annoying).

As the following lines demonstrate there is nothing seriously wrong with Black's idea and he is able to set White new problems, although I don't think it fully equalizes in all lines. But what does an edge mean? In the Miles variation it often means that White has more space but to make progress he frequently has to start pushing pawns which can easily rebound on him.

So 4....♗b4+ entices White forward. It's as if Black is cheekily saying 'Come on then, do you want to try and get me!?'.

So don't be afraid to give this disruptive check. Maybe your opponent will try and punish such a patzer's move and overpress!

Summary

In Variation A White develops in classical fashion with 6.♗c4. Although in the main line (i.e. Kuzevanova-Yandemirov) Black successfully navigated the opening and went on to win, Afek's suggestion of 10.♕h5 may give White chances of keeping an opening edge. There have been very few games in this line so I'm sticking my neck out, but I recommend the adventurous reply 6...♘f6!? and then after 7.♘xc6 bxc6 8.0-0, the brave 8...0-0!? further delaying ...d6.

I don't believe that 6.♘xc6 bxc6 7.♗d3, as in Variation B, sets many problems for Black. Afek and myself have made some improvements on an old analysis of Nataf who was clearly too optimistic about White's chances.

In the odds and ends of Variation C, White can sometimes keep a nominal pull keeping things solid e.g. 7.♘f5 or 7.♗d3.

In Variation D, after 6.♗e3 ♗b6 7.♗c4 Black has three replies (7...♘e5, 7...d6 and 7...♘ge7) all of which seem perfectly playable.

A) 6.♗c4
B) 6.♘xc6
C) 6.♗e3 ♗b6
D) 6.♗e3 ♗b6 7.♗c4

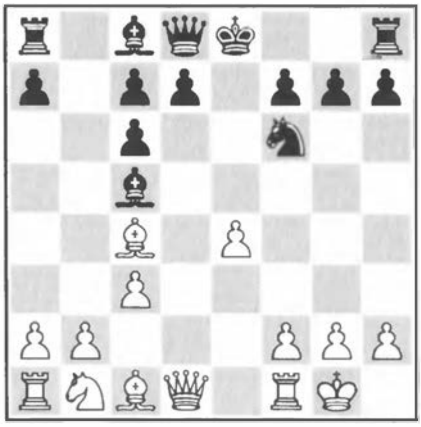
Variation A – The Immediate 6.♗c4

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 exd4 4.♘xd4 ♗b4+ 5.c3 ♗c5

The most active square.

6.♗c4 d6

A sensible move defending the c5-bishop. However, the more audacious might want to investigate 6...♘f6!? e.g. 7.♘xc6 bxc6 8.0-0 (8.e5?! ♕e7 9.0-0 ♕xe5 10.♖e1 ♘e4 – this looks precarious but seems to be OK – 11.♗e3 ♗xe3 12.♖xe3 0-0 13.♕e1 d5 14.♗d3 ♕g5 15.♗xe4 dxe4 16.♖xe4 ♗h3 17.g3 ♖ab8 and Black wasn't worse in Arzumanian-Kulicov, Kramatorsk 2003)



– 8...d6!? 9.♗g5 h6 10.♗h4 0-0 (10...g5 11.♗g3 ♘xe4 12.♖e1 d5 13.♘d2 is too risky for Black, see the next note) 11.♘d2 ♖e8 12.♖e1 and White seems to keep a pull due largely to the pin on the h4-d8 diagonal.

– 8...♘xe4 9.♕g4 d5 10.♕xg7 ♕f6 11.♕xf6 ♘xf6 12.♗d3 is playable but White has the superior pawn structure and thus keeps an edge.

– 8...0-0!? (egging White on!) 9.e5 ♘e4 10.♕f3 ♕h4 11.g3 ♘xg3?! (11...♘g5! should yield a good game) 12.♕xg3 ♕xc4 13.♗h6 g6 14.♘d2 ♕e6 15.♘e4 ♗e7 16.♗xf8 ♔xf8 Mela-Garcia Palermo, Buenos Aires 2001 and Black had insufficient compensation for the exchange.

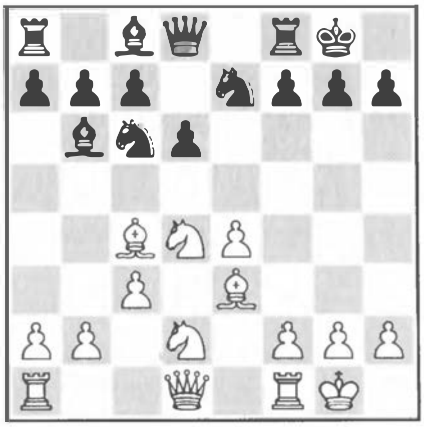
7.0-0 ♘ge7!?

After 7...♘f6 8.♘xc6! (8.♗g5 is well met by 8...h6 9.♗h4 ♘e5) 8...bxc6 9.♗g5 h6 10.♗h4 0-0 (10...g5?! 11.♗g3 ♘xe4? 12.♖e1 d5 13.♘d2 ♗f5 14.♕f3 Charbonneau-Beqo, Vancouver 2002 is too risky) 11.♘d2 ♖e8 12.♖e1 White keeps an edge as I've already stated in the previous note.

8.♗e3

If 8.♗g5!? then Black can get dynamic chances with 8...♘e5! 9.♗e2 0-0 10.♘d2 h6 11.♗h4 ♕e8

8...♗b6 9.♘d2 0-0



10.♘2f3

This is possibly not White's best. Afek suggests 10.♕h5 as an improvement when he prefers White slightly. Black could continue with 10...♘e5 (or 10...♕d7 11.h3 ♘e5 12.♗e2 f5 13.f4♘5c6 14.♗c4+ d5) 11.♗e2 f5 12.f4 ♘5c6 13.♗c4+ ♔h8 14.♖ae1 ♘xd4 15.♗xd4 ♗xd4+ 16.cxd4 d5 17.exd5 ♘xd5 and in each case White keeps a pull.

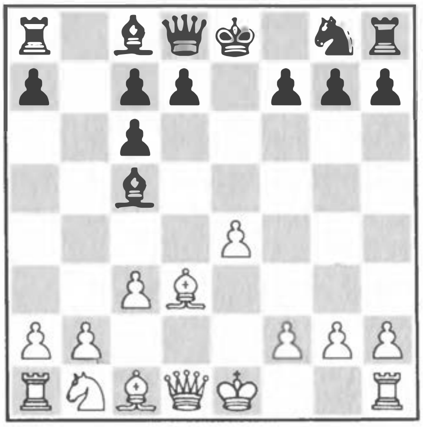
Alternatively, 10.h3?! is too slow: 10...♘xd4 11.cxd4 d5 12.exd5 ♘xd5 13.♕h5 ♗e6 Mietzner-Trabert, Athens 2004, and Black has the superior pawn structure.

10...♗g4 11.♕d2 ♕e8 12.♘xc6 ♕xc6 13.♗e2 ♕xe4 14.♗xb6 axb6 15.♖fe1 ♕d5 16.♕f4 ♕f5 17.♕g3 ♗xf3 18.♗xf3 ♘c6

and White had insufficient compensation for the pawn in Kuzevanova-Yandemirov, St.Petersburg 2004.

Variation B – 6.♘xc6

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 exd4 4.♘xd4 ♗b4+ 5.c3 ♗c5 6.♘xc6 bxc6 7.♗d3



7...♘e7!

Almost certainly best.

As 7...♘f6?! is dubious after 8.e5, Black has to play 7...d6 first and only then ...♘f6.

So, let us see 7...d6 8.♘d2 ♘f6 (8...h6 invests a further tempo but avoids the pin. 9.0-0 ♘f6 10.♘b3 ♗b6 and Black is somewhat behind in development, but can White exploit it?) 9.♘b3 ♗b6 10.♗g5 h6 11.♗h4 and as we saw in variation A, White should be a shade better once he has this pin in place.

It was instructive how Kasparov met 7...♕h4, i.e. 8.♕e2 ♘f6 9.h3! 0-0 10.g3 ♕h5 11.g4 ♕e5 12.g5 and Black had difficulties in Kasparov-Leko, Tilburg 1997.

8.h4

- Here 8.♕h5 doesn't have a good reputation: 8...d6 9.♗g5?! ♖b8! 10.b3 (Wells points out that 10.b4? fails to 10...♖xb4! 11.cxb4 ♗d4 12.♗c4 0-0 13.♕h4 ♖e8 14.♕h5 d5) 10...0-0 11.♘d2 ♕e8 12.b4 ♗b6 13.♘c4♘g6 14.♘xb6 axb6 15.♗e3 f5! Sax-Miles, Szeged 1997, and Black had the slightly better chances in the drawish ending that followed: 16.exf5 ♘f4 17.♕xe8♘xd3+ 18.♔d2 ♖xe8 19.♔xd3 ♗xf5+ 20.♔d2 c5.
- 8.♘d2 0-0 9.♘b3 ♗b6 10.c4!?c5 (block-

ing in his own bishop but in return obtaining action on the long diagonal) 11.0-0 d6 12.♖e1 ♘g6 13.♗f1 ♗b7 14.♗d2, Vorobiov-Yandemirov, St.Petersburg 2002, and now simplest is 14...♕d7 followed by ...♖ae8, completing development.

● The solid choice 8.0-0 has been the most popular, 8...0-0, and now:

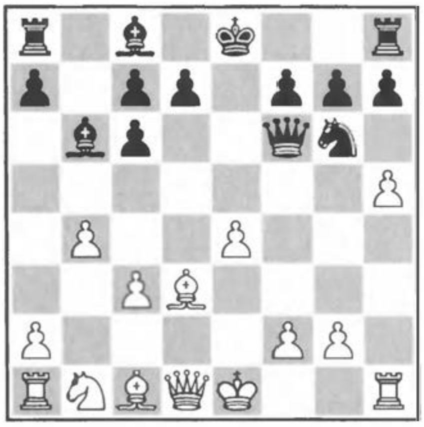
– 9.♘d2 d6 10.♘b3 ♗b6 11.♘d4 c5 (an instructive idea to use the front c-pawn as a positive feature) 12.♘e2 ♞g6 13.♗c2 c4 14.♔h1 ♘e5 equal, Zviagintsev-Khalifman, St.Petersburg 1999.

– 9.♔h1 d6 10.f4 f5 11.♞d2 ♗d7 12.♕f3 ♕c8 13.♘b3 ♗b6 14.♗e3 fxe4 15.♗xe4 ♗g4 and Black had equalized in Nataf-Godena, French tt 1999.

8...♘g6!

This was considered dubious by Nataf but Afek quite rightly believes it to be the best move! 8...0-0?! 9.h5 h6 10.♗xh6! gxh6 11.♕g4+ ♔h8 12.♕f4 left White on top (the threats are ♕xh6+ and ♕e5+ followed by ♕xc5) in Nataf-Miles, Mondariz 2000.

9.b4 ♗b6 10.h5 ♕f6!



My move. Afek's analysis continues with 10...♘e5 11.♗e2 d6! With equal chances (which improves on an analysis of Nataf where he gave White the advantage after 11...d5?! 12.h6 g6 13.f4!).

11.♕e2

Alternatives are nothing special either:

– 11.♕f3 ♘e5 12.♕xf6 ♘xd3+ 13.♔d2 gxf6 14.♔xd3 ♗xf2 leaves White a pawn down although the position remains complicated.

– 11.0-0 ♘e5 12.♗e2 d6 and Black should be comfortably placed. The h-pawn push looks distinctly out of place.

11...♘e5

It's even plausible to try 11...♘f4 12.♗xf4 ♕xf4 13.♘d2 d6 with equality.

12.♗c2

If 12.f4 then 12...♘xd3+ 13.♕xd3 a5! obtaining a clear advantage due the queenside pressure.

12...d6!

Tempting but probably not quite correct is 12...♗a6!? due to 13.♕xa6 ♕xf2+ 14.♔d1 ♕xg2 15.♖f1. Here 12...a5?! is too slow due to 13.f4.

13.f4

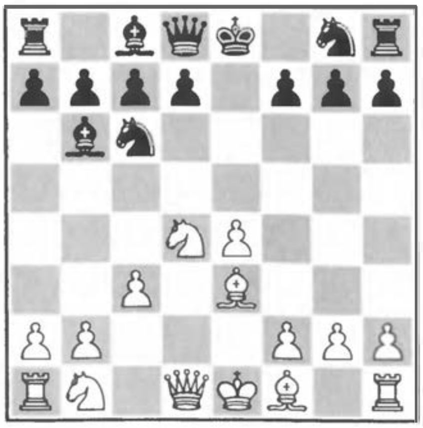
Not good but White already faces a difficult choice. For, 13.h6 can be strongly met by 13...♘g4 (or 13...g5), and 13.♗e3 is answered by 13...a5.

13...♘g4

And Black is better.

Variation C – 6.♗e3 ♗b6 7.others

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 exd4 4.♘xd4 ♗b4+ 5.c3 ♗c5 6.♗e3 ♗b6



Here we look at no less than seven alternatives to 7.♗c4 (Variation D). The high number of attempts is perhaps an indication that White players haven't been able to find a clear path to an opening advantage.

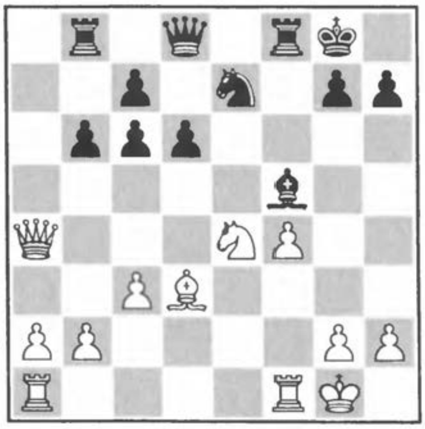
7.♘xc6

● 7.♗e2. This unambitious development doesn't seriously threaten Black. 7...♘f6 (7...♘ge7 8.c4 d6 9.0-0 0-0 10.♘c3 f5 11.♘xc6 ♘xc6 12.♗xb6 axb6 13.exf5 ♗xf5 14.♕d2 Hennigan-Miles, England 1998/99. Black's simplest is 14...♕d7 followed by ...♖ae8) 8.♘d2 0-0 9.0-0 ♖e8 Black has already equalized. 10.♘xc6 bxc6 11.♗xb6 axb6 12.♗d3 d6 13.h3 ♘d7 with good play in L.Bensdorp-Jonkman, Dieren 2003.

● 7.♕a4. White usually intends a rapid development of the queenside. There is a positional semi-threat of exchanging on c6 and b6 when, due to the pin along the a-file. Black will have to recapture away from the centre on b6:

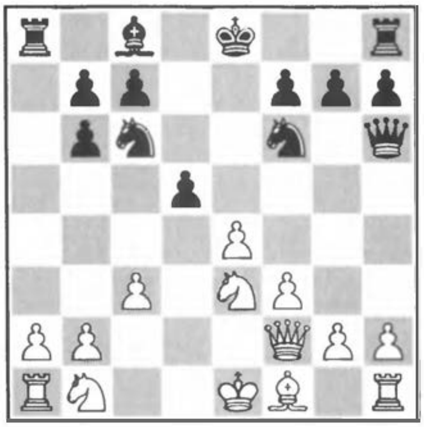
– For instance after 7...♘ge7 8.♘a3 (if 8.♘xc6 then 8...bxc6!? 9.♗xb6 cxb6 shouldn't be a major inconvenience for Black) 8...0-0 9.♖d1 ♘xd4 10.♗xd4 ♗xd4 11.♕xd4 d6 12.♗d3 ♘c6 13.♕e3 f5 Hector-Unzicker, Bundesliga 1999/00, and Black was fine.

– 7...♖b8!?. This permits any future capture on b6 to be met by ...axb6, but isn't altogether necessary. 8.♘d2 ♘ge7 9.♗e2 0-0 10.0-0 d6 11.♘xc6 bxc6 12.♗xb6 axb6 13.f4 f5 14.♗d3 fxe4 15.♞xe4 ♗f5 Black had equalized in Gildardo Garcia-Miles, Ubeda 1997.



● 7.♕g4. Kasparov's choice. 7...♕f6 8.♕g3 ♕g6 (it's foolhardy to take the pawn: 8...♘xd4?! 9.cxd4 ♗xd4 10.♗xd4 ♕xd4 11.♘c3 ♘e7 12.♕xc7 0-0 13.♖d1 ♕b4 14.♖d2 Kasparov-Unzicker, Zurich 1997, and Black cannot develop without losing his d-pawn). White has tried several moves after 8...♕g6:

– 9.♘f5 d6 10.♗xb6 axb6 11.♘e3 (Black has no problems after 11.♘xg7+ ♔f8 12.♘f5 ♗xf5 13.exf5 ♕xf5) 11...♘f6 12.f3? (correct would be 12.♘d2 ♕xg3 13.hxg3 0-0 14.f3 ♖e8 15.♔f2 with a fairly balanced position) 12...♕h6! 13.♕f2 d5! and Black seized the initiative, Nakamura-Goldin, Buenos Aires 2003.

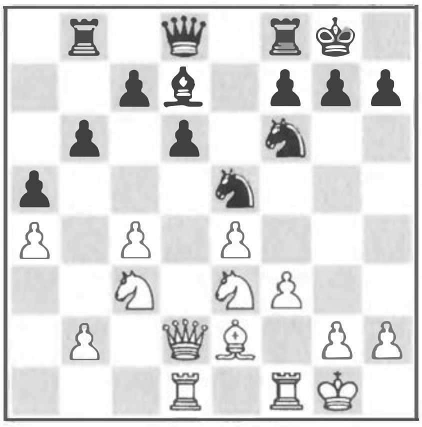


– Otherwise White has 9.♘d2 ♘ge7 10.♗c4 when after 10...d6?! (I prefer 10...♘xd4 11.♗xd4 0-0 e.g. 12.0-0 ♕xg3 13.hxg3 ♖d8 14.♖fe1 ♔f8 with near equality) 11.♕xg6 fxg6 (11...hxg6? gets into trouble after 12.♘b5!) 12.♘c2 (now after 12.♘b5(!) Black can grovel with 12...♔d8 but White would then keep an edge with 13.♗xb6 axb6 14.0-0 ♗d7 15.f4) 12...♘e5 13.♗xb6 axb6 14.♗b5+ ♗d7 15.♗xd7+ ♔xd7 16.♔e2 g5!, Trabert-Hermann, Bad Wörishofen 2004, Black was able to equalize.

– A recent try is 9.♕f4!? ♕f6 (more dynamic is 9...♘xd4!? 10.cxd4 ♘e7 11.♘c3 0-0 with an interesting struggle ahead. White bears down on the c7-square after 9...♘f6?! 10.♘b5!) 10.♘xc6 bxc6 11.♘d2 d6 12.♗d3 ♕xf4 (White also keeps a pull after 12...♗xe3 13.♕xe3 ♞e7 14.0-0 0-0 15.f4) 13.♗xf4 ♘e7 14.a4! a5 15.♘c4 and White had some pressure in Wang Hao-Torre, Kuala Lumpur 2005.

● 7.♘f5. This takes the sting out of Black's counterplay. White can then count on more space à la the Maroczy-Bind, but in practice hasn't been able to make anything of his grip on the d5-square. 7...♗xe3 8.♘xe3:

– 8...♘f6 9.f3 0-0 10.c4 ♘e5 11.♘c3 d6 12.♗e2 a6 13.♕d2 ♗d7 14.0-0 ♖b8 15.a4 Stopping any ...b5 ideas, but now the queenside pawns become fixed. 15...a5 16.♖ad1 b6,



Tseshkovsky-Golod, Biel 2005, with a continuing space edge, but it will be difficult to make progress without trying the slightly risky f3-f4.

– 8...♘ge7 9.c4 0-0 10.♘c3 d6 11.♗d3 ♘d4 12.0-0 c5!? (this is a bit committal. Is ceding the d5-square worth control of d4? Black could content himself with 12...♘ec6 13.♖c1 ♖e8 14.f4 a6 when his pawn structure is perfectly sound but White still has a pull after 15.♕h5) 13.♕h5 g6 14.♕h6 ♔h8 15.♖ae1 a6 16.♘cd5 ♘g8 17.♕f4 left White with a comfortable edge in Savchenko-Sorokin, Sochi 2004.

● 7.♘d2. Here White delays any decision about his bishops and can even think about ♘d2-c4.

– The problem with 7...♘f6 is that, as the e-pawn is defended, White has time for the annoying pin as follows 8.♘xc6! bxc6 9.♗g5! h6 10.♗h4 0-0 11.♗d3 ♖e8 Borgo-Godena, Bolzano 1998, when a draw was agreed, but White wasn't very ambitious as after 12.0-0 d5 (or 12...d6) 13.♖e1 he has a small but persistent edge.

– 7...♘ge7 8.♘c4 (or 8.♗d3!? ♘e5 9.♘c4 Zahariev-Miles, Hania 1997, when Black's simplest path to equality is 9...♘xd3+ 10.♕xd3 0-0 11.0-0 d5!; please note that 8.♗c4 could easily transpose to variation D) 8...♗xd4 9.♗xd4 0-0 10.♘e3 (10.♗d3?! makes it easy for Black who obtained the better chances after 10...d5 11.♘e3 ♘xd4 12.cxd4 dxe4 13.♗xe4 f5! 14.♗f3 f4 Hoen-Miles, Slough 1997) 10...d5 11.exd5 ♘xd5 12.♘xd5 ♕xd5 13.♗e3 ♕e6 14.♗e2 ♕g6 15.0-0 ♖d8 Dovliatov-Stryjecki, Aviles 2000, and Black is active enough to compensate White's bishop pair.

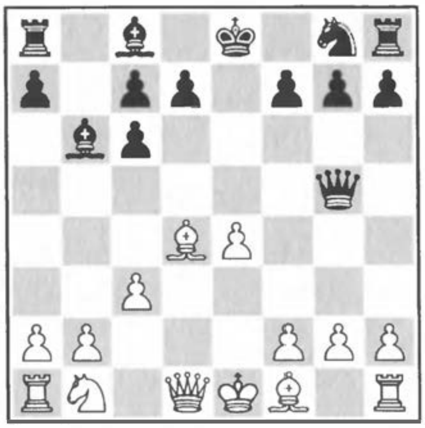
● 7.♗d3:

– After 7...♘f6 I would recommend 8.♘xc6 bxc6 9.♗g5.

– Areschenko-Bacrot, Istanbul 2003, was not very convincing: 7...d6 8.♘d2 ♘f6 9.h3 (9.♘xc6! bxc6 10.♗g5! should yield an edge) 9...0-0 10.0-0 (again 10.♘xc6! bxc6 11.♗g5 is preferable) 10...h6 play is equal 11.g4?! ♖e8 12.f3, and now Afek recommends 12...d5 when Black is better.

– 7...♘ge7 8.0-0 0-0 9.♕h5 can be met by 9...♘xd4 10.♗xd4 (Black seems to be OK following 10.cxd4 d5 11.exd5 g6 12.♕f3 ♘xd5) 10...♘g6! 11.♗xb6 axb6 12.f4 d6 and although White has some attacking chances Black is solid.

7...bxc6 8.♗d4 ♕g5!?



Highly combative. The alternative 8...♘f6 also invites White to overpress. After 9.e5 ♘d5 10.♗c4 0-0 11.0-0 Sutovsky-Onischuk, Polanica Zdroj 1999, I think that Black is doing fine after 11...♖b8!.

9.h4!?

In T.Kosintseva-Stefanova, Varna 2002, there followed 9.♘d2 ♗xd4 10.cxd4 ♖b8 11.b3 ♘f6 12.e5 ♘d5 13.g3 0-0 14.♗g2 (I'm not keen on giving up the f1-a6 diagonal but White already has holes everywhere) 14...♗a6, and Black stood well and went on to win.

9...♕g6 10.♘d2

If 10.♖h3 (why not?) then 10...♘e7! 11.♘d2 ♗xd4 12.cxd4 ♕f6 is double-edged.

10...♗xd4!

I prefer this to 10...♘f6 11.♕f3 0-0 12.♗d3 ♕g4 13.♗xf6 ♕xf3 14.♘xf3 gxf6 15.♘d4 Baklan-Vouldis, Ano Liosia 2000, as White then has the better pawn structure in the ending.

11.cxd4 ♖b8

In the spirit of the variation! White has to decide what to do with his b-pawn before continuing development.

12.h5

12.b3 may lead to weaknesses on the dark squares.

12...♕d6 13.♘b3 ♘h6

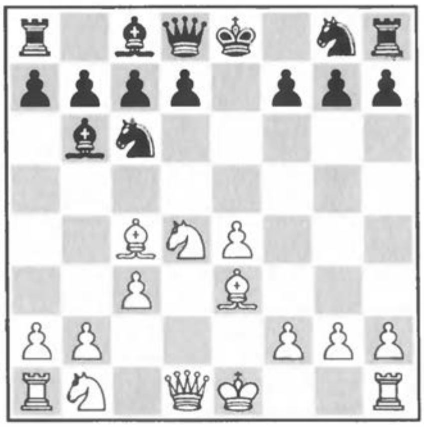
With dynamic counterplay. Amongst a wide choice of available plans Black can envisage ...a5, and/or ...0-0 followed by ...f5.

Variation D – 6.♗e3 ♗b6 7.♗c4

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 exd4 4.♘xd4 ♗b4+ 5.c3 ♗c5 6.♗e3 ♗b6

The principled move here is

7.♗c4



Now Black has three moves.

7...♘ge7

This is our main line, but the alternatives are fine too.

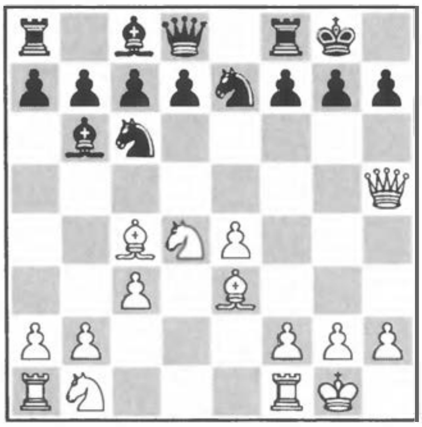
● 7...♘e5:

– Following 8.♗e2 Black has to decide whether to go for ...d5 or not: 8...♘f6 (I consider 8...d5?! to be dubious: 9.f4! – this attempt at a refutation seems justified – 9...♘g4 10.♗xg4 ♕h4+ 11.♗f2 ♕xg4 12.♕xg4 ♗xg4 13.f5 c5, E.Berg-Staniszewski, Rowy 2000, and now White failed to play the strong 14.♘b5!) 9.f4 ♘c6 10.♗f3 d6 11.♘xc6 bxc6 12.♗xb6 axb6 13.0-0 (Black obtains enough counterplay after 13.e5 ♘d5 14.♗xd5 cxd5 15.♕xd5 ♖a5 16.♕c6+ ♗d7 17.♕e4 0-0 18.0-0 dxe5) 13...0-0 14.♖e1 ♗e6 15.a4 ♕c8 16.♘d2 ♗g4 with solid equality, Garma-Torre, Quezon City 2001.

– 8.♗b3 ♘f6 9.♘c2 d6 10.f3 ♘h5!? (an unusual but exciting plan. 10...0-0 11.0-0 c6 with the idea of ...d5 should be equal) 11.0-0 ♘f4 12.♔h1 g5 13.♕d2 ♕f6, Novak-Krstic, Pula 2000.

- 7...d6 8.0-0 (Black shouldn't be troubled by 8.♘xc6 bxc6 9.♕f3, e.g. 9...♕f6 10.♕f4 ♕xf4 11.♗xf4 ♘f6 12.f3 d5 13.exd5 ♘xd5 14.♗xd5 cxd5 15.♘a3 ♗b7 16.0-0-0 0-0-0, Motylev-Zviagintsev, Linares 2000) 8...♘f6 9.♗g5!? (not as convincing here as in various analogous positions, because the e-pawn isn't defended) 9...h6 10.♗h4 ♘e5 11.♗b5+ c6 12.♗a4 g5! (it's actually safe to grab the e-pawn) 13.♗g3 ♘xe4 14.♘d2 ♘xg3 15.fxg3 ♕e7 16.♔h1 ♗g4 17.♕b3 0-0-0, Areschenko-Kulicov, Kramatorsk 2003, and White had not enough compensation.

8.0-0 0-0 9.♕h5



The only unpleasant move for Black.

9...d6

If instead 9...♘xd4 10.cxd4 d6, White can put his knight on c3. Not a good idea, as, apart from giving White an extra option, and thus better chances of an edge, in principle it's against the spirit of the Miles Variation!

10.♘d2

In Stavropoulou-Trabert, Aghia Pelagia 2004, Black found a neat riposte after 10.f4?! with 10...♘xd4 11.♗xd4 ♗xd4+ 12.cxd4 d5! 13.♗xd5? (13.exd5 ♘f5!=) 13...c6 and was already better.

10...♘xd4

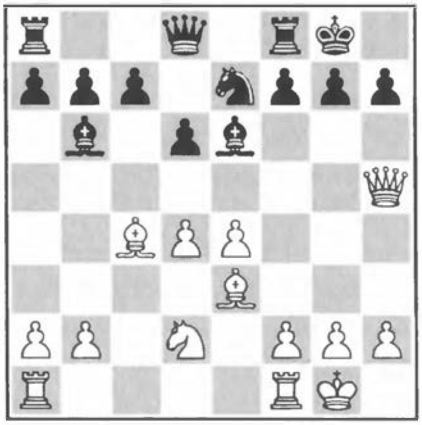
The right moment. It's best to delay this move until White has played his knight to d2. The text is therefore more appropriate than 10...♘e5 11.♗e2 f5 12.f4 ♘5c6 Rohler-Halser, Graz 2002, and now 13.♗c4+ ♔h8 14.♖ae1 and White is better mobilized and keeps some advantage.

11.cxd4

11.♗xd4 ♗e6! doesn't seem to give White much e.g. 12.♗b3 ♗xb3 13.♘xb3 ♘c6 14.a4 ♕e7 15.♖fe1 ♕e6 equal in Yagupov-Yandemirov, Tula 2003.

11...♗e6!?

Alternatively, 11...c6! angling for ...d5 should be OK, e.g. 12.♖ad1 (12.♗d3 f5=) 12...d5 with a playable game.



12.♗xe6

After 12.d5 then 12...♗xe3 13.fxe3 (13.dxe6? ♗xd2 is another good reason why Black wants the knight on d2!) 13...♗d7 14.♘f3 f6 is rock solid, especially as White's structure is compromised.

12...fxe6 13.♕h3 ♕c8 14.♘f3 e5 15.♕xc8 ♘xc8 16.♖fd1

With 16.dxe5!? ♗xe3 17.fxe3 dxe5 18.♖ac1 c6 19.♖fd1 ♘b6 20.b3 White can keep a slight pull.

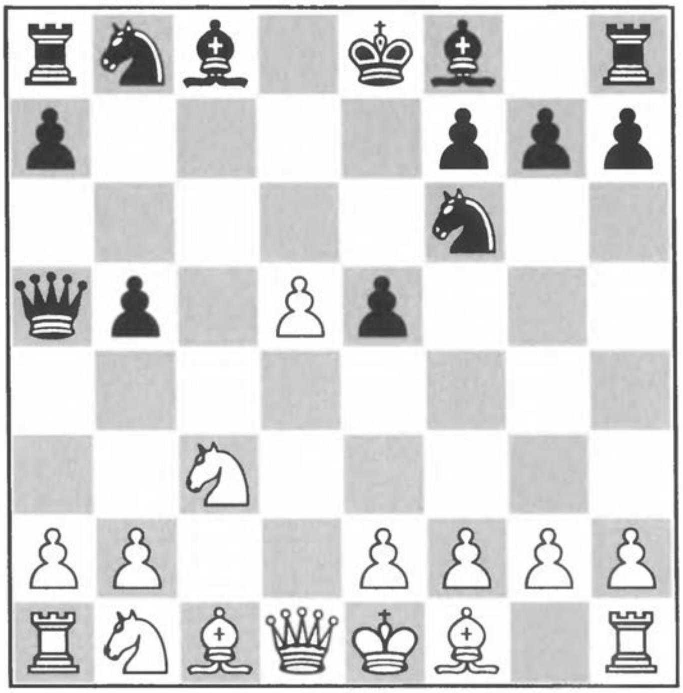
16...exd4 17.♗xd4 ♖e8 18.♖e1 ♘e7 19.♖ad1 ♘c6

With an equal position in the game Tseshkovsky-Malaniuk, Krasnodar 1999.

CHAPTER 14

Adrian Mikhalchishin

The Bellon Gambit



When White avoids the Benoni/Volga

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.♘f3

White avoids the main lines of the Benoni or the Volga Gambit.

3...cxd4 4.♘xd4 e5

A sharp attempt to gain the initiative. In practice this position also occurs via the move order 1.c4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 e5.

5.♘b5 The only serious reply. **5...d5 6.cxd5 ♕a5+**

A move that was introduced by the Spanish grandmaster Juan Manuel Bellon, well known for his sharp and inventive style. More common are 6...♗b4+ and 6...♗c5.

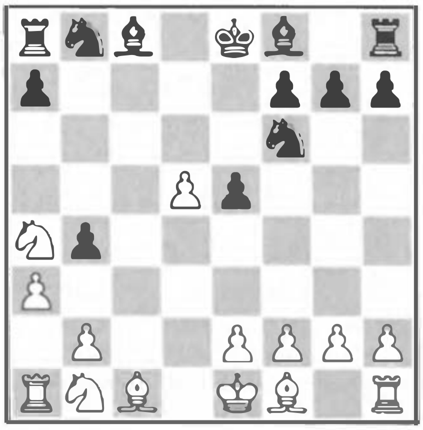
7.♘5c3 b5

The main position of the Bellon Gambit.

8.♘d2

White should concentrate on his development. Other moves are less testing.

● 8.a3 b4 9.♕a4+ ♕xa4 10.♘xa4



Black has equal chances in this ending.

– 10...♗d7 11.axb4 ♘xd5 12.b5! ♗xb5 13.e4 ♗xf1 14.♔xf1 ♘c7 15.♗e3 ♘c6 16.♘d2 ♘e6 17.g3 ♗b4 18.♔g2 0-0 19.♘c4 ♖fe8 equal, Panno-Bellon, Palma 1972.

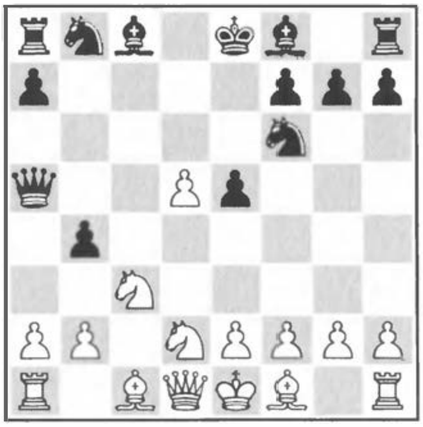
– 10...♘xd5 11.e4 ♘c7 12.♗e3 ♘c6 13.♘d2 bxa3 14.bxa3 ♘d4 15.♗xd4 exd4 16.♘b3 ♗e7 17.♘xd4 ♗d7 18.♘c3 ♗f6 19.♖d1 0–0 and Black has compensation for the pawn in the form of the two bishops, Adamski-Barlov, Prague 1981.

– 10...♘xd5 11.e4 ♘c7 12.♗c4 ♘c6 13.axb4 ♗xb4+ 14.♗d2 ♗e6 15.♗xe6 ♘xe6 16.0-0 0-0 17.♗xb4 ♘xb4 with equality in Rogers-Barlov, Bor 1986.

● 8.♕d3 b4 (not 8...♗a6 9.e4 b4 10.♘b5) 9.♕b5+ ♕xb5 10.♘xb5 ♘a6 11.♘d2 ♘xd5 12.♘c4 f6 (bad is 12...♗d7 13.e4!) 13.e4 ♘dc7 14.♘cd6+ ♔d7 15.♘xc8 ♔xc8 16.♗e3 ♔b7 17.♘xc7 ♘xc7 18.♗c4. So far we have followed Bruno-Cussac, Caorle 1982. Here 18...♗e7 19.♔e2 ♖hd8 would have given chances of equality.

● 8.e3 b4 9.♕a4+ ♕xa4 10.♘xa4 ♗d7 11.b3 ♘xd5 12.♗b2 f6 and now 13.♗c4 is slightly stronger than 13.♘d2?! ♘b6! 14.♘xb6 axb6 15.♗c4 ♗c6 16.0-0 ♘d7 17.♖fc1 ♗c5 with equality in Mikhalchishin-Wirig, Steinbrunn 2005.

8...b4



9.♘ce4

This is most testing. After 9.♘b3 ♕d8 10.♘a4 ♕xd5 11.♕xd5 ♘xd5 12.e4 Black, again, has no particular problems in the ending. He can play:

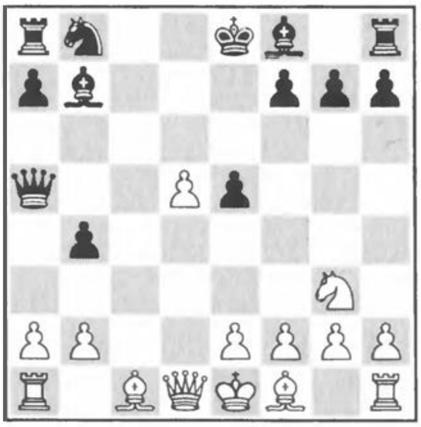
– 12...♘b6 13.♘xb6 axb6 14.♗e3 ♗e6.

– also good is 12...♘f6 13.♘ac5 (worse is 13.f3?! ♗e7 14.♘ac5 0-0 and then 15...♘bd7, exchanging the active white pieces) 13...♘bd7 14.♗e3 (14.♗b5 ♖b8) 14...♘xc5 15.♘xc5 ♗d6 16.♗b5+ ♔e7 17.♔e2 ♘d7 18.♖hc1 ♘xc5 19.♗xc5 ♗e6 with good chances of equalizing.

Also possible is 9.♕a4+ ♕xa4 10.♘xa4 ♗d7 11.b3 ♘xd5 which leads to similar positions as above.

9...♘xe4 10.♘xe4 ♗b7 Less good is 10...f5?! 11.♘g5 ♗e7 12.e4 when White is superior. **11.♘g3**

After 11.g4!? ♘a6 12.♗g2 ♖d8 13.0-0 ♗xd5 14.♗g5 ♗e7! 15.♗xe7 ♔xe7 16.♕c1 ♖he8 17.♕g5+ ♔f8 Black had no problems in Lombardy-Martin Gonzalez, Olot 1974.



11...♗xd5

Worse is 11...♕xd5 12.♕xd5 ♗xd5 13.e4 ♗e6 14.♗b5+ ♗d7 15.♗c4 ♗c5 16.♗e3! ♗xe3 17.fxe3 ♘c6 18.0-0 0-0 19.♘f5, and White's position was clearly preferable in Aseev-Vasiljevic, Budapest 1989.

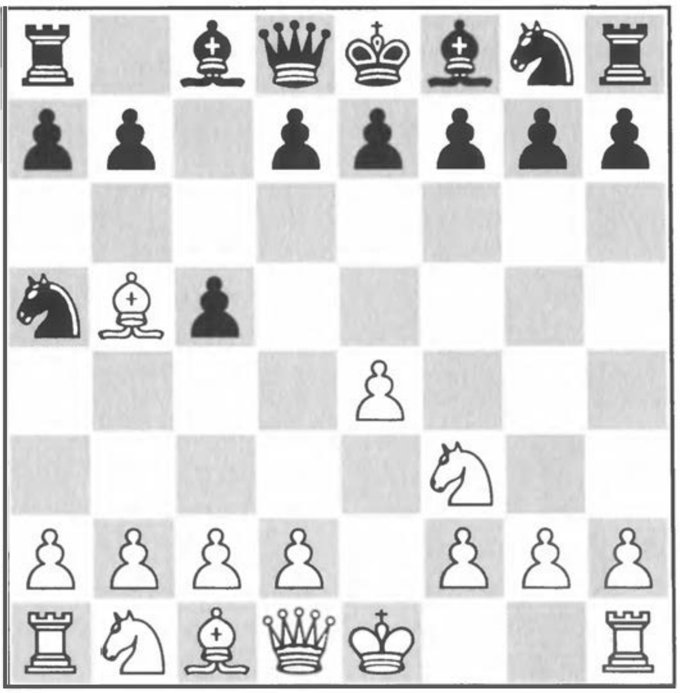
12.e4 ♗e6 13.♘f5 ♘c6 14.♗d2 g6 15.♘e3 ♗d6 16.♗c4 0-0 17.♘d5 ♗xd5 18.♗xd5 ♖ac8

And in Schroll-Schumi, Finkenstein 1990, Black had obtained equal chances.

CHAPTER 15

Jeroen Bosch

Kozul's SOS against the Rossolimo



Sublime provocation – 3...♘a5

The Rossolimo Variation is quite popular at the moment. It has always enjoyed the reputation of being one of the strongest anti-Sicilians. These days in particular it is used by many as a means of avoiding the still unshakable Sveshnikov. In this chapter we will examine a perfect SOS answer to 3.♗b5.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘a5

Yes, that's it! Black simply moves the knight to the edge, leaving the bishop to hit thin air. A subsequent a6 (and b5) will win some useful Sicilian tempi. Having thus chased away the bishop, the inexhaustible knight will either return to its c6-stable or, alternatively, comfortably rest on c4 – common practice in Taimanov and Scheveningen positions. Should we be worried by the fact that 3...♘a5 presents an outright violation of Tarrasch's famous dictum? Well, the answer is twofold I guess. John Watson has observed (in *Secrets of Modern Chess Strategy*) that chess is far less rule-bound than we may have thought in the past. As he points out, chess is always a concrete game, and general rules like 'don't move your knight to the edge of the board' may actually be counter-productive. It is clear, however, that 3...♘a5 against the Rossolimo is an extremely provocative move to say the least. So, if White were to find a line in which the knight simply finds itself stuck on the edge of the board, well, then you're in real trouble. Now, for the good news. In the past, the move 3...♘a5 found favour in the eyes of several grandmasters (enough, at least, to play it a couple of times). Vasiukov, Miles, Minasian, Fominikh and Kozul are or were among its adherents. The latter especially has used it quite often. A good way of learning a new line is by examining the games of a specialist. Therefore, our SOS investigation will concentrate on four games of Zdenko Kozul's.

☐ **Aljosa Grosar**
■ **Zdenko Kozul**
Maribor 1994 (5)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘a5 4.d4

Moving the game into an open Sicilian. Although not a bad move, it is exactly what Black intended.

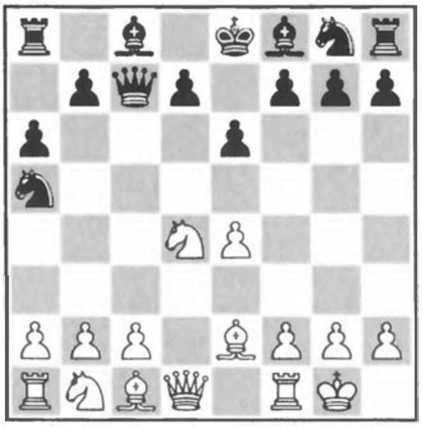
– 4.b3 (a more quiet way to develop) 4...♘f6 (and here is another provocative knight move. 4...a6) 5.e5 ♞d5 6.d4 e6 7.0-0 a6 8.♗d3 cxd4 9.♗e4! d6 10.♗xd5 exd5 11.exd6 ♘c6 12.♖e1+ ♗e6 13.♘xd4 ♘xd4 14.♕xd4 ♗xd6! 15.♕xg7 ♔d7 with interesting play. The game went 16.♗g5 ♖g8 17.♗xd8 ♖xg7 18.♗f6 ♖g6 19.♗d4 ♗h3 20.g3 ♖c8 21.c3 ♗c5, and because of White's undeveloped queenside, Black had excellent compensation for the pawn, Pavasovic-Kozul, Bled 1994.

– 4.b4 (going for immediate punishment) 4...a6 (4...cxb4 5.d4 – 5.a3 – 5...a6 6.♗d3 d5! 7.e5 ♗g4! 8.h3 ♗xf3 9.♕xf3 e6∓ Bauza-Milos, Moron 1982) 5.♗xd7+ ♗xd7 6.bxa5 ♘f6 7.♘c3 ♕xa5 8.e5 ♘g4 9.0-0 e6 10.♘e4 ♗c6 11.♖e1 0-0-0, with interesting complications in Kochetkov-Fominikh, Moscow 1995.

4...a6 5.♗e2 cxd4 6.♘xd4 ♕c7

More aggressive is 6...b5 7.0-0 ♗b7 8.♕d3 (if White has nothing better than this slow move, then 6...b5 deserves serious consideration) 8...e6 9.a4 b4 10.♘d2 ♕c7 11.f4 ♖c8 12.♔h1 ♗c5 13.b3 ♘e7, and Black was OK in Prokopchuk-Chernishov, Pardubice 1997.

7.0-0 e6



8.♕d3

With 8.c4!? White sets up a Maroczy bind, counting on 8...♘xc4 (8...♘f6 9.♘c3 b6, as in the game, is safer) 9.♗xc4 ♕xc4 10.♘c3 ♘f6 11.♗f4, planning ♖c1 and ♘a4, with compensation, according to Tamas Horvath. This verdict can be corroborated. Now 11...♗c5 appears to win a useful tempo for the defence. However, after 12.♗e5! d6 13.♗xf6 gxf6 14.♘b3! ♗b4 (14...♗d7?! 15.♖c1 ♕b4) 15.♕f3 ♗xc3 16.♖ac1 White has more than enough for the pawn.

Far too meek is 8.c3 ♘f6 9.♕c2 b5 10.b4 ♘c6 11.♘xc6 ♕xc6 12.♗d3 ♗b7 13.f3 d5, with a very satisfactory position in Konopka-Vasiukov, Moscow 1986.

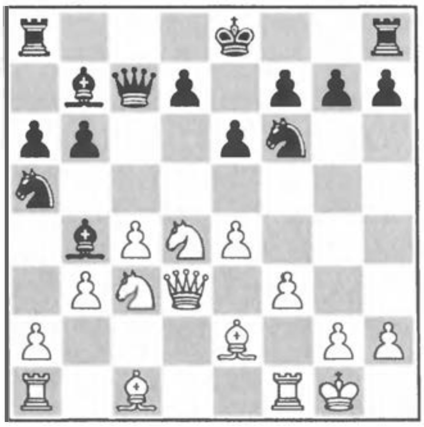
After 8.♘c3 ♘f6 9.♗g5 b5 10.♗f3 ♗b7 11.♖e1 ♗d6! 12.g3 ♗e5 13.♗g2 h6 14.♗xf6 ♗xf6 Black was already better in Blasek-Kiselev, Moscow 1990 (via transposition).

8...♘f6 9.c4 b6 10.♘c3 ♗b7 11.b3?!

According to Horvath, White is slightly better after 11.f3!. Steffen Pedersen does not agree and gives 11...♖c8 12.b3 b5 (analogous to the game) as satisfactory. However, it is here that we see that chess is a very concrete game. With the rook on c8 White can exploit the bad position of the knight on a5.

After 13.cxb5 ♕xc3 14.♕xc3 ♖xc3 15.♗d2 ♖c8 16.♖fc1! (16.♗xa5? ♗c5∓) 16...♗a3 17.♖c2 ♗c5 18.♖xc5 ♖xc5 19.♗xa5 axb5 20.♗b4 Fritz is correct in evaluating this as better for White. No worries, though. Both 12...♗d6 and 12...♗b4 are OK for Black.

11...♗b4! 12.f3



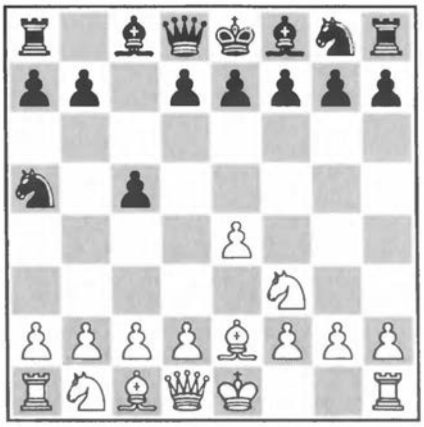
12...b5!

Black has achieved his queenside break. Note how well-positioned the knight on a5 suddenly is. White's pawn structure is going to be fractured. **13.♗d2 bxc4 14.bxc4 ♗c5 15.♔h1 ♘c6** The knight has done its job. **16.♘xc6 ♗xc6 17.f4 d6 18.f5 e5 19.♘d5 ♗xd5!** A well-known capture in such positions. It is better to exchange the bishop (which would bite on central granite anyway) than the knight. White's bishop pair is meaningless. His light-squared bishop is just plain bad in comparison to Black's good knight. **20.cxd5 h6 21.♖fc1 ♕a7 22.♖c4 0-0 23.♕g3 ♗f2! 24.♕f3 ♖fc8 25.♖ac1 ♖xc4 26.♖xc4 ♖b8 27.♕d3 ♖b2 28.♖a4?! ♕c5** Threatening 29...♕c4. **29.♖c4 ♕b6 30.♖c2 ♖b1+ 31.♖c1 ♖xc1+ 32.♗xc1 ♕a5** A double attack. **33.♗d2 ♕xa2 34.g3 a5 35.♔g2 ♗c5 36.♔f3 a4 37.♗c3 a3 38.♕c4 ♕b1 39.♔g2 a2 40.♕a6 ♗d4**

White resigned.

☐ **Vojko Zorman**
■ **Zdenko Kozul**
Ljubljana 1993

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘a5 4.♗e2



Prophylaxis. White moves the bishop before it is attacked. He must now demonstrate that the knight is badly placed on a5.

4...e6

In a later game Kozul played 4...b6 5.♘c3 (5.c4!?) 5...♗b7 6.d4 cxd4 7.♘xd4 g6 (with this double fianchetto Black transposes to some sort of Accelerated Dragon) 8.♗e3 ♗g7 9.0-0 ♘f6 10.e5 (10.f3 d6 intending 11.♗b5+ ♘d7 12.b4 ♖c8) 10...♘e4 11.♘xe4 ♗xe4 12.f3 ♗b7 13.f4 0-0 14.c4 d6 Jakupovic-Kozul, Sarajevo 1998, and Black has a decent game.

For 4...a6 5.d4 cxd4 see Grosar-Kozul. Instead 5.c4 d6 6.d4 cxd4 7.♘xd4 ♘f6 8.♘c3 g6 9.♗e3 ♗g7 10.0-0 0-0 11.f3 ♗d7 12.♕d2 ♖c8 13.b3 ♘c6 was Lein-Pinto, Saint Paul 2000. White is better in this Maroczy.

Interesting is 4...♘f6!? 5.♘c3 (5.e5) 5...d6 6.d4 cxd4 7.♕xd4 (7.♘xd4 g6 – the Dragon is Black's best Sicilian here, since the c6 knight often wanders off to a5 – and c4 – there) 7...♗d7 8.♗g5 ♘c6 9.♕d3 h6 10.♗h4 (10.♗xf6 gxf6=) 10...♕a5 11.0-0-0?! ♘b4 12.♕d2 ♘xa2+ 13.♘xa2 ♕xa2 14.♕b4 ♕a1+ 15.♔d2 ♕a4 16.♕xa4 ♗xa4

Chebotarev-Lugovoi, Elista 2001. White does not have enough for the pawn.

5.0-0 ♘f6

Provoking e5. In the stem game with 3...♘a5, Vasiukov played 5...d6. After 6.d4 cxd4 7.♘xd4 ♘f6 8.♘c3 a6 9.♗g5 ♗e7 10.♕d3 h6 11.♗h4 ♘c6 12.f4 ♗d7 13.♔h1 ♘xd4 14.♕xd4 ♗c6= 15.♖ad1 0-0 16.♖f3 ♘e8 17.♗xe7 ♕xe7 18.♖fd3 ♖c8 19.♗f3 e5 a draw was agreed in Sigurjonsson-Vasiukov, Cienfuegos 1975.

6.e5 ♘d5 7.c3

Playing for d4 is not the only reasonable set-up. For example, 7.c4 ♘f4 8.d4 ♘xe2+ 9.♕xe2 b6!?, and 7.♘c3 ♘xc3 8.dxc3 d5.

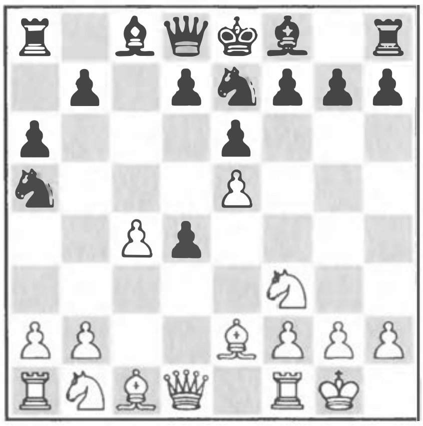
7...a6

This takes the game into the line 4.0-0 a6 5.♗e2 e6 6.c3 ♘f6 7.e5 ♘d5. See the next game: Barle-Kozul.

8.d4 cxd4 9.c4

Or 9.♕xd4 ♘c6 10.♕e4 f5 (10...d6) 11.exf6 ♘xf6 12.♕c2 ♗e7 13.c4 0-0 14.♘c3 ♕c7 15.h3 b6 with equality in Wang Hao-Howell, Halkidiki 2003. The normal reply is 9.cxd4, as in our next game.

9...♘e7



The best square in the circumstances. Black is going to attack the outpost e5.

10.♕xd4

Here the more aggressive 10.b4 deserves attention. Dragojlovic-Milanovic, Kladovo 1994, went 10...♘ac6 11.b5 axb5 12.cxb5 ♘b4 13.a3 d6 (13...♘f5; 13...b6) 14.♗b2 d3 (14...♘bd5 15.exd6 ♕xd6 is safer) 15.♗xd3 ♘xd3 16.♕xd3 dxe5? (16...♘f5!) 17.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 18.♘xe5 ♔e8 19.♘c4! ♘d5 20.♘c3±.

10...♘g6 11.♗d3

Freeing the e-file to cover e5. 11.♘c3 ♘c6 12.♕e4 ♕c7 is already awkward to meet.

11...♕c7 12.♖e1 ♘c6 13.♕e3

Not the best square in view of a subsequent ♗c5 (13.♕e4).

13...♘b4! 14.♘c3 ♗c5 15.♕e2 ♘xd3 16.♕xd3 0-0 White has the freer game (more space), but Black has good long-term prospects owing to his bishop pair. **17.h4 d6 18.exd6** Here 18.♘g5 does not work: 18...dxe5 19.h5 ♖d8 20.♕c2 ♘f8. **18...♗xd6 19.♘e4 ♗e7 20.♘eg5 ♖d8** This makes the f8 square available. **21.♕e4 h6 22.h5 ♘f8 23.♘h3 ♗d7 24.♘e5 ♗e8** A well-known manoeuvre à la Steinitz. Black now has a safe advantage. **25.♗f4 ♕c8 26.♕e3 f6!** Winning a pawn. **27.♘g6 ♗xg6 28.hxg6 e5 29.♗xh6?** A desperate move. **29...gxh6 30.♕xh6 ♕g4 31.♖e3 ♗c5! 32.♖f3** 32.♖g3?? ♕xg3. **32...♕xg6–+ 33.♕h4 ♖d4 34.♕xf6 ♕xf6 35.♖xf6 ♖xc4 36.♖d1 ♖g4 37.♖d5 ♗d4 38.b3 ♘h7 39.♖fd6 ♖f8 40.♖d7 ♘f6**

White resigned.

□ **Janez Barle**
■ **Zdenko Kozul**
Maribor 1996

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘a5 4.0-0 a6

It is better to chase away the bishop now. Should Black allow 5.♖e1, then White can withdraw the bishop to f1.

5.♗e2 e6

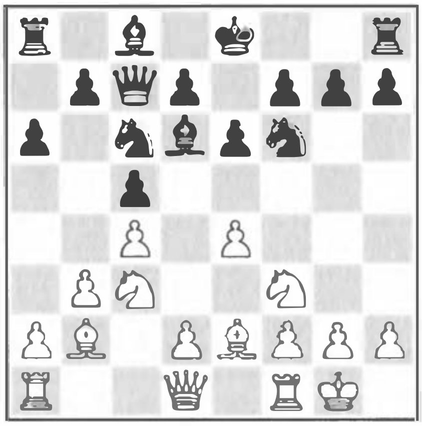
Kozul prefers this move, but 5...d6 and 5...♘f6 are playable alternatives.

6.c3

Or 6.d4 cxd4 7.♘xd4 (it is not a good idea to play a kind of Morra Gambit 7.c3?! dxc3 8.♘xc3 b5 9.♗f4 ♗b7 10.♖c1 ♖c8 11.♕d2 ♘e7 12.♖fd1 ♘g6 13.♗g3 ♗e7∓ Fröhlich-Miles, Bad Wörishofen 1997) 7...♕c7, which transposes into Grosar-Kozul.

Setting up a bind is again possible: 6.c4 ♕c7 7.♘c3, and now:

● 7...♘f6 8.b3 ♘c6 9.♗b2 ♗d6!



– 10.h3 0-0 (10...b6) 11.d4 cxd4 12.♘xd4 ♗e5 13.♘xc6 bxc6 14.♕c1 c5 15.f4 ♗d4+ 16.♔h1 d6= Sadvakasov-Fominikh, Omsk 1996.

– 10.♔h1 h5 (standard in Taimanov-like positions) 11.h3 b6 12.d4 cxd4 13.♘xd4 ♘xd4 14.♕xd4 ♗b7 15.♗f3 ♗e5 16.♘b5 axb5 17.♕xe5 ♕xe5 18.♗xe5 bxc4 19.♗xf6 gxf6 20.bxc4 ♔d8∓ Kosteniuk-Danailov, Wijk aan Zee 1999.

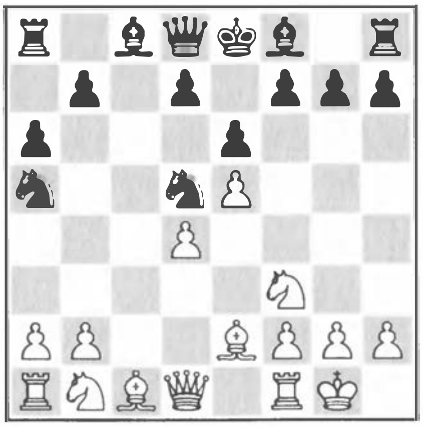
● 7...♘e7 8.b3 (8.d4) 8...♘ec6 9.d4 cxd4 10.♘xd4 ♗d6! 11.♘f3 ♘e5 12.♘d4 ♘ec6 13.♘f3 ♘e5 14.♘d4 ♘g6 Lebedev-Fominikh, Moscow 1994. Black is definitely no worse and plays for the win.

6...♘f6

This is often the best solution when White plays for the perfect centre with c3 and d4. After 7.e5 the knight obtains a good square on d5. Alternatively, 6...d5?! 7.exd5 ♕xd5 8.d4 leaves the knight misplaced on a5.

7.e5 ♘d5 8.d4 cxd4 9.cxd4

For 9.c4 and 9.♕xd4, see the previous game.

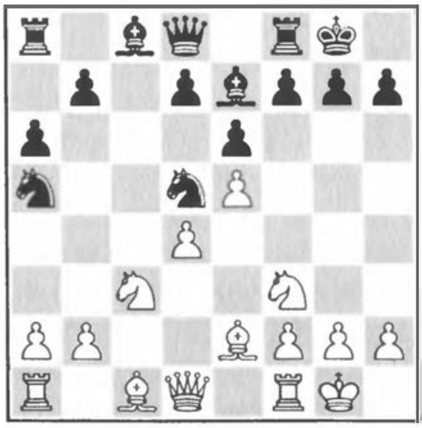


9...♗e7

A previous Kozul effort saw 9...b5 10.♗g5 (better is 10.♘c3 ♗b7 11.♘e4) 10...♕b6 11.♘c3 ♗b7 12.♘e4 h6 13.♗d2 ♘c4 (13...♘c6!?) 14.♗xc4 bxc4 15.♖c1 ♘b4 16.♗xb4 ♗xb4 17.♘ed2 ♗xd2 18.♘xd2 ♗d5 19.♘xc4 ♗xc4 20.♖xc4 ♕xb2 with equality in Arkhipov-Kozul, Munich 1993.

10.♘bd2

More common is 10.♘c3 0-0



– 11.♘xd5 exd5, followed by ...d6.

– 11.♗d3 b5?! (this is the cause of Black's future problems. Better is 11...d6 12.♕c2 g6

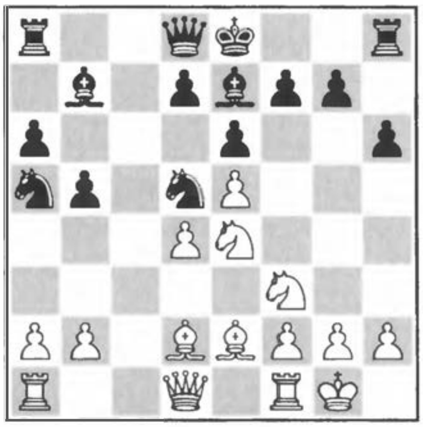
– 12...h6 13.♕e2 – 13.♘xd5 exd5 14.♗h6 ♖e8 15.♖fe1 ♗e6, with equal play) 12.♕c2 g6 13.♘xd5 exd5 14.♗h6 ♖e8 15.♖fe1 ♗b7 16.♕c1! ♘c6 17.♕f4± Kazhgaleev-Nataf, Cappelle la Grande 1995.

– 11.♘e4 b5 (11...♘c6) 12.♗g5 h6 13.♗xe7 ♕xe7 14.♕d2 ♘c6 15.♖fc1 f6 16.exf6 ♘xf6 17.♘xf6+ ♕xf6 18.d5. This looks strong, but after 18...♘e7 19.dxe6 dxe6 20.♕d4 ♘d5 Black has active piece play to compensate for his structural weaknesses. 21.♘e5 ♘f4 22.♗f3 ♗b7! 23.♖e1 ♗xf3 24.♘xf3 ♕g6∓ Jansa-Estevez Morales, Cienfuegos 1975.

10...b5 11.♘e4 h6!?

11...0-0 12.♗g5 would have transposed to the previous note (Jansa-Estevez).

12.♗d2 ♗b7



13.♞c5?!

This is too ambitious. Tamas Horvath gives 13.♗d3 ♖c8 14.♕e2 ♘c4 as unclear. Obviously Black has managed to turn his early 3...♘a5 into the start of a useful positional manoeuvre. Note that White has not played very consistently with ♗f1-b5-e2-d3.

13...♗xc5 14.dxc5 ♘c6 15.a4 b4 16.♗d3 f5 17.exf6 ♕xf6 18.♗e4

This looks strong, but as the game demonstrates, Black need not fear the exchange on d5. Black has a lot of activity anyway.

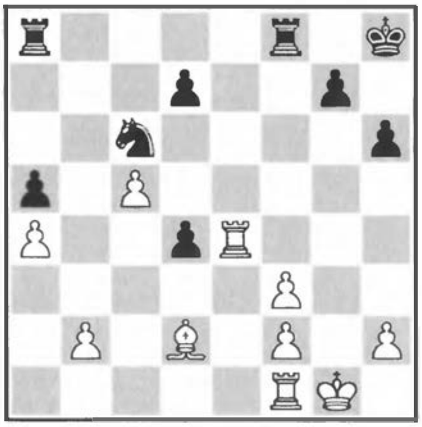
18...0-0 19.♗xd5 exd5 20.♕b3 ♔h8 21.♗xb4

White can also take on d5: 21.♕xd5 ♘a5 (21...♘d8 22.♕h5 ♗xf3 23.♕xf3 ♕xf3 24.gxf3 a5=) 22.♕h5 (22.c6 ♕xc6 23.♕xc6 (23.♕xa5 ♖xf3∓) 23...♘xc6) 22...♘b3 23.♖ad1 ♗xf3 (not 23...♕xb2? 24.♗xh6+–) 24.♕xf3 ♕xb2 25.♕d5, with roughly equal chances.

21...d4 22.♗d2 ♘d8 23.♖ae1 ♗xf3 24.♕xf3 ♕xf3 25.gxf3 a5 26.♖e4

Tamas Horvath gives 26.♖e7 ♖a7 27.♖fe1 ♘c6 28.♖e8 ♔g8∓.

26...♘c6



A complicated ending with approximately equal chances has arisen. **27.♗f4 ♖f5 28.♖c1 ♖af8 29.♗d6 ♖8f7 30.f4 ♖d5 31.♖d1 ♔h7 32.♖d3 ♔g6 33.f3 ♔f5 34.♔f2 ♖f6 35.h4 ♖e6 36.♖xe6 ♔xe6 37.♖d1 ♖h5 38.♔g3 ♔d5 39.b3 g6 40.♗f8 ♖f5 41.♗d6?!** 41.♗xh6 ♔xc5 42.♔g4 ♔b4 43.♖d3 ♔a3 44.♗g7 ♘b4 45.♖xd4 d5=. **41...♖f6 42.♔f2 ♖e6 43.♖e1?** This is a major mistake, allowing Black to play good knight versus bad bishop. With the rooks on White was in no danger of losing. **43...♖xe1 44.♔xe1 h5–+ 45.♔d2 ♘d8! 46.♔c2 ♘e6 47.♗e7 ♞xc5 48.♗d8 d3+ 49.♔c3 d2! 50.♔xd2 ♘xb3+ 51.♔c3 ♘c5 52.♗xa5 ♘xa4+** Having got rid of the pawns on the queenside, the knight is left to do what it is best at: play on one flank. **53.♔d3 ♘b2+ 54.♔e2 ♔e6 55.♗c3**

♘c4 56.♔d3 ♘d6 57.♗a5 ♔f5 58.♗c7 ♘e8 59.♗d8 ♘g7 60.♗g5 ♘e6 61.♔e3 d5 62.♗h6 ♘xf4! 63.♔d4 ♘e6+ 64.♔xd5 g5! 65.♔d6 gxh4 66.♗e3 h3 67.♗g1 ♘g5
White resigned.

☐ **Drazen Cvorovic**
■ **Zdenko Kozul**
Pula 1993 (6)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘a5 4.c3 a6

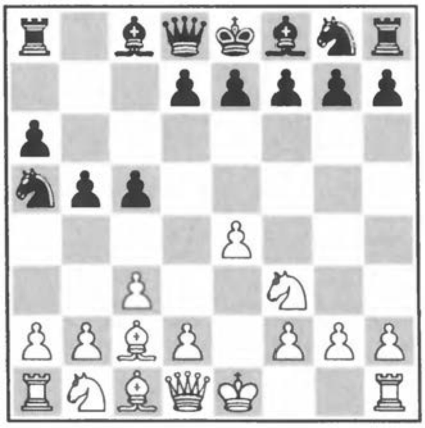
Or 4...♘f6 5.e5 ♘d5 6.d4, and now White can always withdraw his bishop to d3, with the better game.

5.♗a4

The Ruy Lopez way of handling this line is best. After 5.♗e2 ♘f6 6.e5 ♘d5 7.d4 cxd4 8.0-0 e6 9.♕xd4 play is about equal. Raiano-Nemet, Mendrisio 1988, went 9...♘c6 (9...b5 10.♘bd2 ♗b7 Gubanov-Vasiukov, St Petersburg 1996, is also possible) 10.♕d1 b5 11.a4 b4 12.c4 ♘de7 13.♘bd2 ♘g6 14.♘e4 ♗b7 15.♗g5 ♕b8 16.♘d6+ ♗xd6 17.exd6 0-0, with a decent game.

5...e6

Kozul's preferred choice. Clearly 5...b5 is an important alternative. Note that these lines will often boil down to the same thing. After **5...b5** 6.♗c2



6...e6 7.0-0 ♗b7 reaches the same position as in the game. Instead Black has also tried:

– 6...d6 7.h3 ♕c7 8.d4 e5 9.0-0 ♘f6 10.♖e1 ♗e7 11.♘bd2 0-0 12.♘f1 Maze-Kjartansson, Reykjavik 2004. This appears sound until you realize that Black is simply a tempo down on the main line of the Chigorin Variation of the Closed Spanish.

– 6...d5 7.d4 dxe4 8.♗xe4 ♗b7 9.♗xb7 ♘xb7 10.0-0 has been played by Dambrauskas, but cannot be recommended.

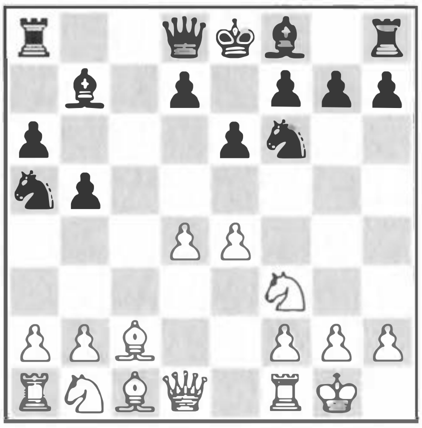
– 6...♕c7 (playing for tricks along the c-file. It loses time though) 7.0-0 ♗b7 8.d4 cxd4 9.cxd4 ♘f6 10.♖e1 ♖c8 (the point of Black's previous play, he wins a pawn. With his king stuck in the centre, this is perhaps not such a great achievement) 11.♗d3 ♘xe4 (11...♗xe4) 12.b4 ♘c3 13.♘xc3 ♕xc3 14.♗f4 ♘c4 15.♖c1 ♕xb4 16.♘g5 Bogachkov-Rodjko, Novosibirsk 1998. With an attack for the two-pawn deficit.

Also worthy of attention is **5...c4** 6.0-0 b5 7.♗c2 ♗b7 8.b3 (8.b4) 8...g6 9.♕e2 ♗g7 10.bxc4 bxc4 11.♗a3 ♘f6 12.♗b4 0-0 13.♘a3 d5 14.exd5 ♘xd5 15.♗xa5 ♕xa5 16.♘xc4 ♕c7, and Black has enough compensation for the pawn, Finkel-Rogozenko, Internet 2001.

Finally, Black can also try **5...♘f6** 6.♗c2 (6.e5 ♘d5 7.d4 cxd4 8.♕xd4 e6 9.0-0 b5 10.♗c2 ♘c6 11.♕g4∞ Novikov-Gusev, Tula 2002) 6...b5 7.0-0 ♗b7 8.♖e1 (8.e5 ♘d5 9.d4 cxd4 10.♕xd4 e6 11.♘bd2 ♘c6 12.♕e4 d6 13.exd6 ♗xd6 14.♕g4 ♘f6!= – intending 15.♕xg7 ♗xh2+! – Galego-Pinheiro, Bobadela 2002) 8...e6 9.d4 cxd4 10.♘xd4, and now instead of 10...♗e7 11.e5 ♘d5 12.♕g4, Kobelev-Fominikh, Perm 1997, Black should play 10...♘c6 or 10...♕c7.

6.0-0 b5 7.♗c2 ♗b7 8.d3

This is too meek. The only way to take advantage of the a5 knight is by grabbing hold of the centre (square d4). So White should play 8.d4 cxd4 9.cxd4 ♘f6



The critical position. Black has done fairly well in practice with 10.e5 ♘d5 11.♘bd2. Hracek-Minasian, Manila 1992, is crucial for the evaluation of this line. After 10.♕e2 ♖c8 (10...d5 11.e5 ♘e4 12.♘bd2♘xd2 13.♗xd2 ♗e7 is a possible alternative) 11.♗d3 ♗e7 (now 11...d5 12.e5 ♘e4 13.♘bd2 ♘xd2 14.♗xd2 ♗e7? 15.♗xb5+! fails because the rook does not protect a5) 12.♘c3 d5 13.e5 ♘d7 14.♗f4 ♘b8 15.g3, and although Black later won, White is better at this stage. Naturally, 10.♖e1 is a serious alternative for White. In general, the reader should decide whether he feels comfortable in the diagrammed position or whether he prefers any of the alternatives mentioned on move 5.

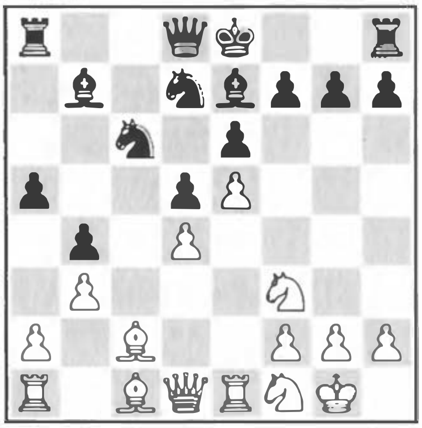
8...♘f6 9.♖e1 ♗e7 10.♘bd2 d5 11.e5 ♘d7 12.d4

Now we're heading into the French. White has prevented all ♞e4 ideas with 8.d3. However, the loss of time and Black's queenside expansion (the direct consequence of 3...♘a5 and a6, b5) give Black a lot of counterplay.

12...b4 13.cxb4 cxb4 14.b3

Perhaps White should try to do without this move, even though it means allowing the knight free access to the c4 square.

14...♘c6 15.♘f1 a5



Note that Kozul refrains from castling – he won't castle at all in this game. The pawn chain predetermines the course of game. White has more space on the kingside and should attack there. Hence, no kingside castling for Black!

16.g4

Attacking 'Luft'.

16...♗a6 17.♘g3 ♕b6

Attacking the base of the pawn chain – it falls too quickly in the game.

18.♗e3 ♘a7

On its way to some good squares.

19.♘d2?

Unattractive as it may seem, White should have cut his losses and played for a stubborn defence by exchanging his 'good bishop' with 19.♗d3.

19...♘b5

Now White is in major trouble. His next move blunders material.

20.♕f3? ♘xd4 21.♕f4 ♕c7

Unpinning and attacking, but 21...♝c5 also works.

22.♗f5? ♘c6 23.♖ac1 g5 24.♕d4 ♘xd4

Simplest.

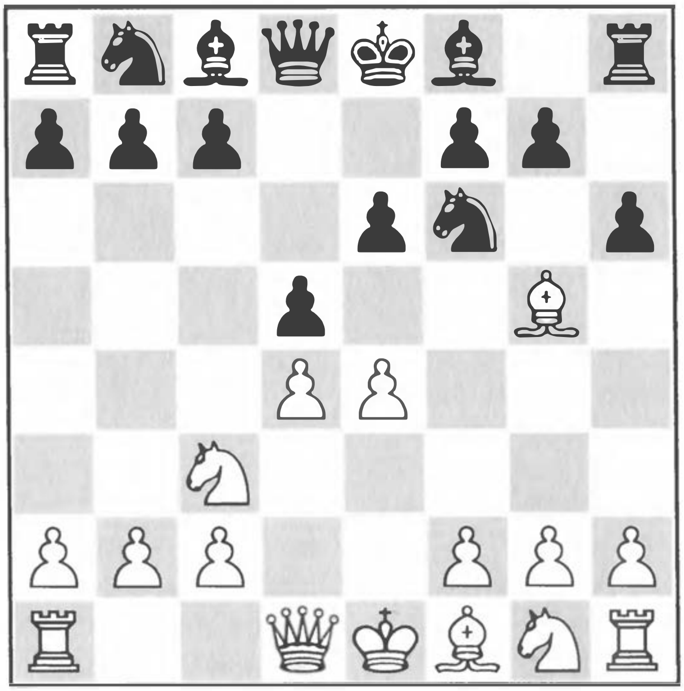
25.♖xc7 ♘b5

White resigned.

CHAPTER 16

Igor Glek & Elena Sedina

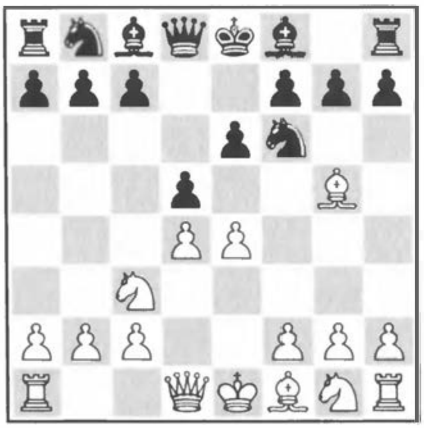
Alekhine's Blunder



1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗g5 h6!?

Introduction

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗g5



According to modern chess theory in this position Black has a choice of 3 main continuations:

1. The sharp MacCutcheon Attack: 4...♗b4.
2. The more solid and strategical 4...♗e7.
3. The attempt to simplify: 4...dxe4.

Lately, Black has some problems in my favourite MacCutcheon. And both 4...♗e7 and 4...dxe4 lead to positions with a small plus for White. Therefore, I decided to return once again to Alekhine's audacious move:

4...h6

This involves a pawn sacrifice, and was first played by Alekhine in his game against Capablanca in St Petersburg in 1914. A game that he ignominiously lost, by the way. Almost nobody remembers this move. Was it really an interesting sacrifice or, perhaps, a simple blunder of the undisputed chess genius Alexander Alekhine? Of course, we cannot answer this question. Yet, I do believe that this is one of those forgotten and unexplored variations that may offer Black a lot of practical chances. By the way, I first analysed this sacrifice back in 1995-96 together with my friend, and Moscow-based GM, Yury Piskov who played some games with this line in the 1990s.

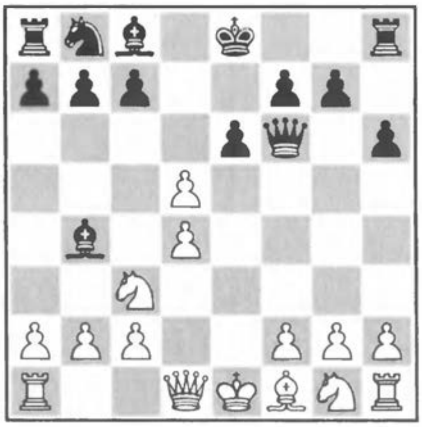
5.♗xf6

White should accept the sacrifice, as after 5.♗h4?! Black has two good options:
Firstly, Black can transpose the game into the MacCutcheon Variation with 5...♗b4, after which White has a choice between 6.exd5 ♕xd5 7.♗xf6 gxf6 and 6.e5 g5 7.♗g3. Both continuations promise White no advantage. In the first case the position of Black's pawn on h6 (instead of h7 after the 'correct' move order) can't make any difference – sometimes it even useful for Black.
Secondly, Black may consider 5...g5 6.♗g3 ♘xe4 (6...dxe4 is also possible) 7.♘xe4 dxe4 which leads to an unclear position with chances for both sides – in my opinion Black stands well.

5...♕xf6 6.exd5

After 6.e5?! ♕d8 Black has the better prospects thanks to his pair of bishops. Interesting is 6.♞f3!?. This is how GM Erik van den Doel played against me in a recent rapid game. After some minutes thinking he decided not to take the pawn. Black was OK though: 6.♞f3 ♗b4 7.♗d3 c5 8.exd5 exd5 (also not bad is 8...cxd4!? 9.♘xd4 ♕e5+ 10.♗e2 0-0 11.0-0 ♗xc3 12.bxc3 ♕xd5) 9.0-0 ♗xc3 10.bxc3 0-0 11.♘e5 ♘c6 12.♘xc6 ♕xc6 13.♖e1 c4 14.♗e2 ♖e8 15.♗f3 ♗f5 16.♕d2 ♗e4 (16...♖ad8!?) 17.♗xe4 dxe4 18.d5 ♕c5 19.♖ad1 ♖ad8 20.♕d4 ♕xd4 21.♖xd4 ♖e5 (21...f5!?) 22.♖exe4 ♖xe4 23.♖xe4 ♖xd5 24.♔f1 b5 25.♖e8+ ♔h7 26.♔e2 ♖d6 27.♖b8 a6 28.a4 ♖e6+ 29.♔d2 ♖d6+ 30.♔e2 ♖e6+ 31.♔d2, ½-½ Van den Doel-Glek, Vlaardingen rapid 2005.

6...♗b4



Now White may decide: to give a check on b5, or to take on e6 immediately. Also possible is 7.♘e2 which leads to the MacCutcheon – see the game Unzicker-Piskov. Actually, it was because of this line of the MacCutcheon that Piskov and I were stimulated to try and revive Alekhine's sacrifice. The third World Champion played

7.♗b5+

which is, probably, most dangerous for Black, and after

7...c6 8.dxc6

Alekhine made a dubious move.

8...♘xc6?!

after which Black's compensation for the pawn is not sufficient. The main continuation remains 8...bxc6 with good possibilities for counterplay (see especially the recent game Morozevich-Glek, where Black was even clearly better at the end).
Conclusion: in our opinion, 4...h6 is a playable option for Black and can be used as an alternative to the main lines. The variation leads to a sharp struggle and can be recommended to a tactical player. We hope to see more games in the near future which may

show us if Black has enough compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

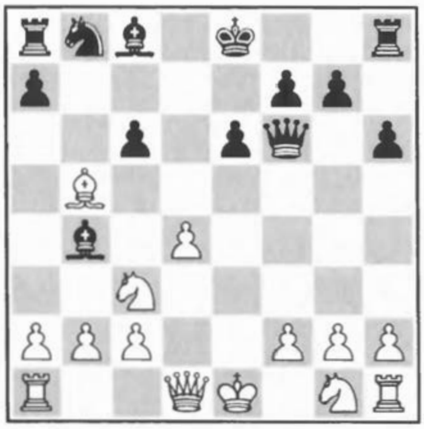
Accepting the pawn sacrifice – 7.♗b5+

☐ **Alexander Morozevich**
■ **Igor Glek**
Mainz 2005 (6)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗g5 h6 5.♗xf6 ♕xf6 6.exd5 ♗b4 7.♗b5+ c6 8.dxc6 bxc6

Alekhine played the weaker 8...♘xc6?!, and after 9.♘e2 0-0 10.0-0 ♖d8 11.♘e4 ♕h4 12.♗xc6 bxc6 13.f4 ♗a6 14.c3 ♗f8 15.♕e1 ♕h5 16.♖f2 c5 17.♘xc5 ♗xc5 18.dxc5 ♕xc5 19.♘d4 White was a sound pawn up, and Capablanca converted this advantage in exemplary fashion. Capablanca-Alekhine, St Petersburg final 1914.

Incidentally, after 8...♘xc6, 9.♘f3 looks even better than the move played by Capablanca. After 9...0-0 10.0-0 ♖d8 11.♘e4 ♕f4 12.♗xc6 bxc6 13.♕e2 ♗e7 14.♖fd1 ♖b8 15.c4 ♗b7 16.♘e5 ♗a8 17.c5, Kovchan-Vavrak, Oropesa del Mar 1998, White had achieved a winning position.



9.♗e2

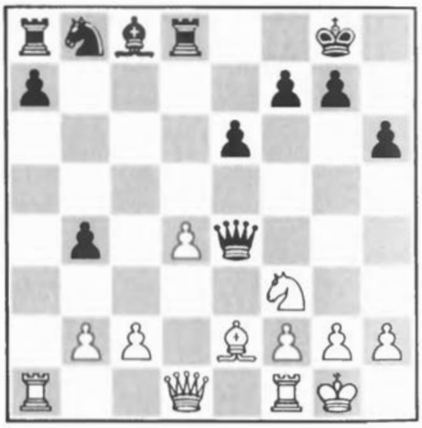
All other bishop retreats are less convincing, for example:

– 9.♗d3?! ♕xd4 10.♘e2 ♕h4 and Black has retrieved his pawn.

– 9.♗a4 0-0 10.♘f3 c5 11.0-0 (after 11.a3 Black plays 11...♗a5 and White cannot avoid the transposition 12.0-0 ♗b7) 11...♗b7 12.a3 ♗a5 13.dxc5 ♖d8 14.♕e2 ♗xf3 15.♕xf3 ♕xf3 16.gxf3 ♗xc3 17.bxc3 ♘a6 18.c6 ♘c5 19.♗b5 a6 followed by ♖a8-c8xc6, and Black has the better ending owing to White's inferior pawn structure.

– 9.♗c4 0-0 10.♘f3 c5 11.0-0 ♗b7 12.a3 ♗xc3 13.bxc3 ♖d8 14.♖b1 (after 14.♘e5 ♘c6! 15.f4 cxd4 16.♖b1 dxc3 17.♘d7 ♕e7 18.♖xb7 ♘a5 19.♖c7 ♘xc4 20.♖xc4 ♖xd7 Black is slightly better) 14...♗xf3 15.♕xf3 ♕xf3 16.gxf3 cxd4 17.cxd4 ♖xd4 18..♗b5 ♘d7 and Black's position is preferable.

9...0-0 10.♘f3 c5 11.0-0 ♖d8 12.♘e4 ♕f4 13.a3 ♕xe4 14.axb4 cxb4



15.♘d2

In Jurczynska-Krumova, Bydgoszcz 1978, 15.♖e1 ♗b7 16.♗a6 ♕c6 17.♗xb7 ♕xb7 18.♕d3 ♕d5 19.♖e5 ♕d7 20.♖c5 ♘c6 led to approximate equality.

15...♕b7 16.♗f3 ♘c6 17.♘b3 ♕b6 18.c3 bxc3 19.bxc3 ♖b8 20.♘c5 ♘e5 21.♗e2 ♘d7 22.♘a6?!

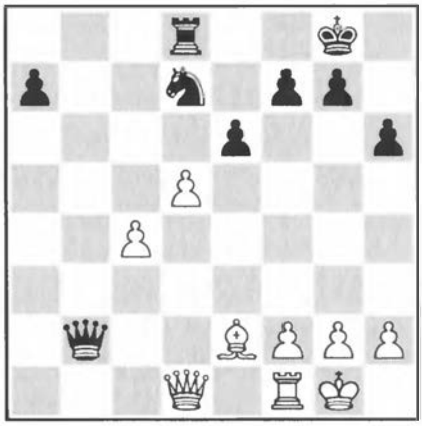
Stronger was the simple 22.♘xd7 with equal play. After the text Black is slightly better.

22...♗xa6 23.♖xa6 ♕b2! 24.♖c6 ♖bc8

This is stronger than 24...♘f6, when after

25.♗f3 e5 26.d5!? (26.♕a1 exd4 27.cxd4 ♕xd4 28.♖a6=) 26...e4, White has the exchange sacrifice 27.♖xf6 gxf6 28.♗xe4.

25.♖xc8 ♖xc8 26.c4 ♖d8 27.d5



27...♘b6

There is a good alternative in the form of 27...♘c5 28.♗f3 a5 29.♕a1 (29.♕e1 ♕b4 30.♕e2 a4∓) 29...♕xa1 30.♖xa1 a4 31.♔f1 ♔f8 (31...e5) 32.♔e2 ♖b8 33.dxe6 fxe6.

28.♖e1 ♕b4

Too sophisticated, after the simple 28...exd5!? 29.c5 (29.cxd5 ♖xd5 30.♗d3 g6) 29...♘a8 30.♕a1 ♕b4 31.c6 ♘c7 32.♖c1 ♖e8 33.♗d3 a5 Black is better. After the move in the game Alexander can wiggle out with

29.♕b1! ♕xb1 30.♖xb1 exd5 31.c5 ♘c4 32.♖d1 ♘a5

The game will also end in a draw after 32...♘e5 33.♗a6 ♔f8 34.f4 ♘c6 35.♗b7 ♘a5 36.♗xd5 ♘c6 37.♗f3 ♖xd1+ 38.♗xd1.

33.♗f3 ♖c8 34.♖xd5 ♔f8 35.g3 ½-½

☐ **Murray Chandler**
■ **Yury Piskov**
Germany Bundesliga 1995/96

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗g5 ♗b4

Note the move order in this game.

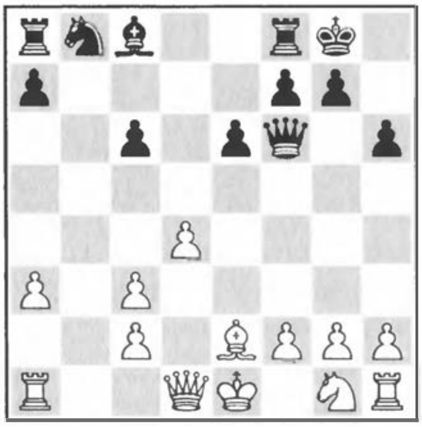
5.exd5 h6 6.♗b5+ c6 7.dxc6 bxc6 8.♗xf6 ♕xf6 9.♗e2 0-0 10.a3!?

This idea can put some obstacles in Black's way.

10...♗a5?!

The point of playing 10.a3 before 10.♘f3 is that Black cannot play 10...♗xc3+ 11.bxc3 c5?? in view of 12.♗f3.

So after, 10...♗xc3+ 11.bxc3 we should investigate:



– 11...♖d8 is probably the best move, after 12.♕d2!? White can raise some problems once again. (After 12.♘f3 c5 13.0-0 ♘c6 14.♗b5 ♗b7 15.♗xc6 ♗xc6 16.♘e5 ♖ac8 17.♕d3 cxd4 18.cxd4 ♕f4 19.♘xc6 ♖xc6 Black regains the sacrificed pawn, obtaining full equality.) 12...♘d7 (12...♗b7 13.♖b1) 13.♘f3 (13.f4 ♗b7 14.♘f3 c5 15.0-0 ♖ac8≌) 13...c5 14.0-0±.

– 11...e5?! is also insufficient for equalization: 12.♘f3 exd4 13.cxd4 c5 14.0-0 ♖d8 15.c3 ♘c6 16.♕a4 cxd4 17.♖ad1! Ranieri-Sedina, Bratto open, 2005. White maintains an extra pawn as 17...dxc3?? loses after 18.♖xd8+ ♘xd8 19.♕e8+ ♔h7 20.♕e4+ winning.

11.♘f3 c5 12.0-0 ♗xc3?

Without any doubt the consequences of the loss of tempo will be very grave for Black. The only possibility for Black to stay in the game was 12...♗b7 13.♘a4 cxd4 14.♕xd4

♕g6 with some compensation for the pawn thanks to his strong bishops.

13.bxc3 ♘c6 14.♗d3! ♖b8

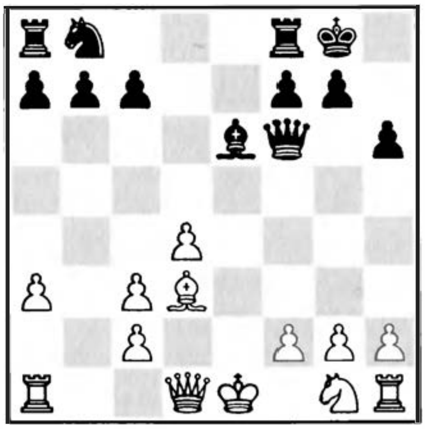
White is also better after 14...♗b7 15.♖b1 ♖ab8 16.♕e2.

15.♕e2 ♖d8 16.♕e4 ♗b7 17.♖ab1 ♗a8 18.♖xb8 ♖xb8 19.♘e5 ♘xe5 20.♕h7+ ♔f8 21.♕h8+ ♔e7 22.♕xb8 ♘f3+ 23.gxf3 ♕xf3 24.♕c7+ 1-0

Accepting the pawn sacrifice – 7.dxe6

☐ **Hikaru Nakamura**
■ **Robert Guevara**
Long Island 1998

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗g5 h6 5.♗xf6 ♕xf6 6.exd5 ♗b4 7.dxe6 ♗xe6 8.a3!? ♗xc3+ 9.bxc3 0-0 10.♗d3



10...c5

Serious attention deserves 10...♕g5!?. After 11.♘f3 ♕xg2 12.♖g1 ♕h3 13.♗e4 c6 14.♖g3 ♕h5 we have an unclear position which doesn't seem dangerous for Black. In the event of 11.♔f1 c5 Black's compensation for the pawn would be sufficient. Of course, all these ideas should be tested in practice.

11.♘e2 ♗d5 12.f3 ♕h4+ 13.g3 ♕e7 14.♔f2 cxd4 15.cxd4 ♕f6 16.♘f4 ♕xd4+ 17.♔g2 ♔h8 18.♘xd5 ♕xd5 19.♗e4 ♕xd1 20.♖hxd1 ♘c6 21.♖db1 ♖ab8 22.♖b5 ♖fc8 23.♖ab1 b6 24.♖d5 ♘e7?

The ending is about equal. Fine are 24...♖c7 and 24...g6. As well as the more forcing: 24...♖d8 25.♖xd8+ ♘xd8 26.♖d1 g6 27.♖d7 a5 28.♗d5 ♔g7 29.c4 ♔f6 30.h4 ♘e6 31.f4 b5 32.c5 b4 33.axb4 axb4 34.c6 ♖b5.

25.♖d7 f5 26.♗d3 ♘c6 27.♗xf5 ♖f8 28.♗e4 ♖bc8 29.♖bd1 a6 30.♖1d6 ♘e5 31.♖e7 ♘c4 32.♖dd7 ♘e3+ 33.♔h3 ♘f5 34.♖e5 ♘e3 35.♗b7 ♘xc2 time 1-0

☐ **Saevar Bjarnason**
■ **Jacek Bednarski**
Copenhagen 1981 (1)

1.d4 e6 2.e4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗g5 h6 5.♗xf6 ♕xf6 6.exd5 ♗b4 7.dxe6 ♗xe6 8.♘f3 0-0

This is stronger than 8...♘c6 which White may answer with 9.a3 (or 9.♗b5!? after 9...♗d5 10.0-0 ♗xc3 11.bxc3 0-0 12.♖e1 a6 13.♗d3 ♖fe8 14.♘d2 ♕g5 15.♘e4 Black does not have full compensation for a pawn) 9...♗a5 (or 9...♗xc3+ 10.bxc3 ♗d5 11.♗e2 0-0 12.0-0 ♖fe8 13.♘d2 and White has some advantage) 10.♗b5 0-0 11.0-0 ♖ad8 12.♘e4 ♕f4 13.♗xc6 bxc6 14.♘c5 ♗c4 15.♘d3 ♕f5 16.♘fe5 ♗xd3 17.♕xd3 ♕xd3 18.cxd3 and White realised his extra pawn, Alvarez del Monte-Varlotta, Uruguay 1960. That is why the text move, which prepares to attack White's centre with ...c5, is stronger.

9.♗d3

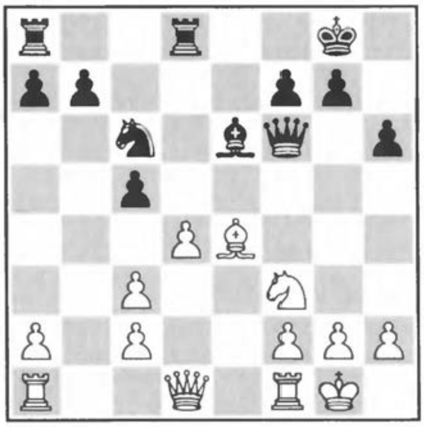
After 9.♗e2 ♖d8 10.0-0 c5 11.♕d3 Black could have equalized in Szmetan-Bronstein, Buenos Aires 1988, by playing 11...cxd4 12.♘e4 ♕g6 13.♘g3 ♕xd3 14.♗xd3 ♘c6. Also equal is 11.♘e4 (instead of Szmetan's

11.♕d3) 11...♕f4 12.a3 ♕xe4 13.axb4 cxb4.

9...c5

Regaining the pawn with 9...♗xa2?! is dubious: 10.0-0 ♗e6 11.♕e1! c6 (11...♕f4 12.♘e2!) 12.♘e4! ♕e7 13.c3 ♗d6 14.♘xd6 ♕xd6 15.♕e4 f5 16.♕e5 and White has converted his extra pawn into a big positional advantage.

10.0-0 ♗xc3 11.bxc3 ♘c6 12.♗e4 ♖fd8



13.♗xc6 bxc6 14.♕e2 ♗g4 15.♖fd1 ♖e8 16.♕d3 ♖ad8 17.♖ab1 ♗f5 18.♕d2 ♗g4 19.♕d3 ♖e6 20.♖e1 ♗xf3 21.♕xf3 cxd4 ½-½

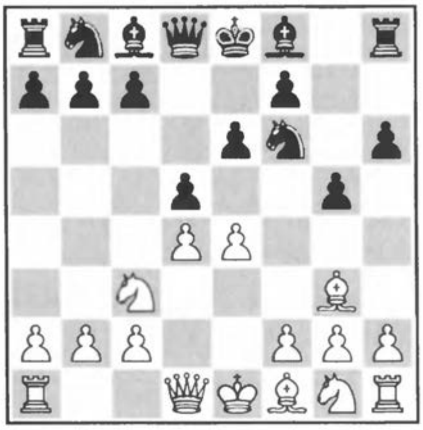
Odds and ends – declining the pawn sacrifice

☐ **Lhamsuren Myagmarsuren**
■ **Robert Byrne**
Lugano Olympiad 1968 (7)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 d5 3.♗g5 h6 4.♗h4 e6 5.e4 g5

We would reach this position via the move order 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗g5 h6 5.♗h4 g5. See Galkin-Belozerov for 5...♗b4.

6.♗g3



6...dxe4

In Wade-Pachman, Havana 1964, there followed: 6...♘xe4 7.♘xe4 dxe4 8.h4 ♗d6?! (stronger was 8...♖g8 9.hxg5 hxg5 10.♘e2 ♗d6∞) 9.♗xd6 cxd6 10.♕g4 gxh4 11.♕g7 (11.♕xe4±) 11...♖f8 12.♕xh6 ♕a5+ 13.c3 ♘c6 14.♕e3 d5 15.♘e2?! (15.♖xh4=) and now Black was clearly better after 15...♘e7 16.♕g5 ♘f5.

7.h4

Worse would be 7.f3 ♗b4 8.a3 ♗xc3+ 9.bxc3 ♘c6 10.♗b5 ♗d7 11.♕e2 ♘d5! 12.♕xe4? (12.♗c4 ♘xc3 13.♕e3 ♞d5 14.♕xe4 ♕e7∓) 12...♘xc3 13.♕d3 ♘xb5 14.♕xb5 ♘xd4 15.♕c5 ♘c6 with a winning edge in the game Gores-Todorcevic, Las Palmas 1995.

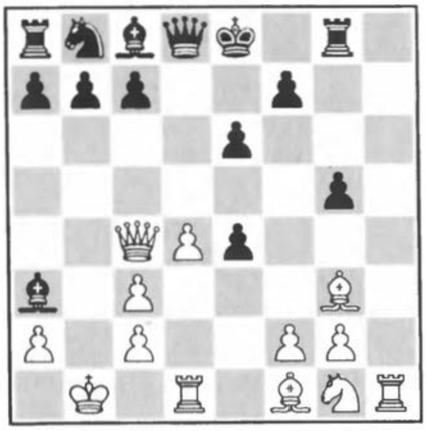
7...♖g8 8.hxg5 hxg5 9.♕e2 ♗b4 10.♕c4 ♘d5 11.0-0-0

White has compensation after 11.♘e2 ♘c6 (11...f5!?∞) 12.a3 (12.0-0-0? ♘a5–+) 12...♘a5 13.♕a2 ♗xc3+ 14.♘xc3.

11...♘xc3 12.bxc3 ♗a3+

Quite good is 12...♗d6!? 13.♗xd6 (not 13.d5 c6! 14.♗xd6 ♕xd6 15.dxc6 ♕f4+ 16.♔b1 ♘xc6∓) 13...♕xd6 14.f3 ♘c6 15.fxe4 ♕f4+ 16.♔b1 ♕xe4 17.♘f3 ♕d5 18.♖h5 ♕xc4 19.♗xc4 g4 20.♘g5 ♔e7 21.♖f1 (or 21.d5 ♘a5 22.♗e2 exd5 23.♖xd5 ♘c6 24.♖h7 ♗e6) 21...♖g7 and Black is slightly better.

13.♔b1



13...c6?!

This is dubious, much better are 13...♗d6 and 13...♘c6. Now White gains the initiative.

14.f3! ♕b6+ 15.♕b3 exf3 16.♘xf3 ♘d7 17.♗d3 ♘f8 18.♘e5 ♕xb3+ 19.axb3 ♗e7 20.♗e2 f6 21.♗h5+ ♔d8 22.♘f7+ ♔d7 23.c4 a5 24.d5! cxd5 25.cxd5 ♗b4

White would win after 25...exd5 26.♖xd5+ ♔c6 27.♗f3 and 25...e5 26.d6 ♗d8 27.♗g4+ ♔c8 28.♗xc8 ♔xf7 29.♗xb7 ♖b8 30.♗d5+. In the game Byrne manages to confuse the issue, and even win.

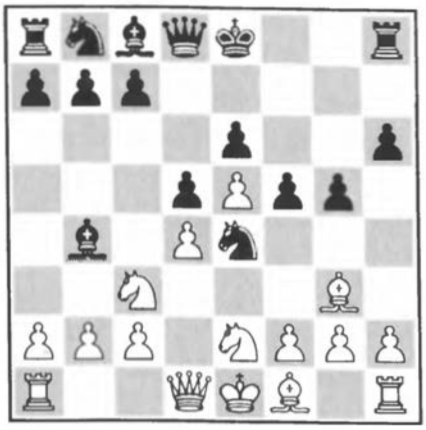
26.dxe6+ ♔xe6 27.c3 ♗xc3 28.♘h6 ♖g6 29.♗xg6 ♘xg6 30.♖d6+ ♔e7 31.♖c1 ♘f4 32.♗xf4 gxf4 33.♖cd1 a4 34.bxa4 ♖xa4 35.♔c2 ♗e5 36.♔b3 b5 37.♘g8+ ♔f7 38.♘h6+ ♔g6 39.♘g8 ♗xd6 40.♖xd6 ♔f7 41.♘xf6 ♗e6+ 0-1

☐ **Alexander Galkin**
■ **Andrey Belozerov**
Tomsk 2004 (8)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗g5 ♗b4 5.e5 h6 6.♗h4 g5

The game follows the regular MacCutcheon move order. We would reach this position after 4...h6 5.♗h4 ♗b4 6.e5 g5.

7.♗g3 ♘e4 8.♘e2 f5!



I like this much better than the other theoretical option 8...c5 9.a3 ♗xc3+ 10.♘xc3.

9.exf6 ♕xf6 10.a3

Black is also comfortable after 10.♕d3 ♘c6 11.f3 ♘xg3 12.hxg3 ♗d7. Worse is 11.0-0-0?! ♘xf2 12.♗xf2 ♕xf2, De la Riva Aguado-Vallejo Pons, Cala Galdana 1999.

10...♘xg3 11.♘xg3 0-0 12.f3 ♗xc3+ 13.bxc3 e5 14.♗e2 ♘c6 15.dxe5 ♕xe5 16.0-0 ♗e6 17.♕d2 d4 ½-½

☐ **Wolfgang Unzicker**
■ **Yury Piskov**
Germany Bundesliga 1991/92

We cite this game for the variation 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗g5 h6 5.♗xf6 ♕xf6 6.exd5 ♗b4 7.♘e2 0-0 8.a3 ♗a5 see the position in the game after Black's 8th move.

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗g5 ♗b4 5.♘e2 h6!?

The alternative in the MacCutcheon is 5...dxe4.

6.♗xf6 ♕xf6 7.a3 ♗a5! 8.exd5

This is best. After 8.b4 ♗b6 9.e5 ♕e7 10.♘a4 (10.♘f4 a5 11.b5 ♘d7 12.♗e2 ♘xe5 13.♘cxd5 exd5 14.♘xd5 ♕e6 15.♘xb6 ♘f3+ 16.gxf3 ♕xb6 and despite the minus pawn Black is better Palamara-

Guglieimetti, Ticino 1992) 10...♗d7 11.c3 0-0 12.♘f4 ♗c8 13.g3 f6 14.exf6 ♕xf6 15.♖a2 ♘c6 16.h4 ♗f7 17.♗g2 ♖ad8 18.0-0 e5 19.dxe5 ♘xe5 20.♘xd5 ♕d6 21.c4 ♘xc4 22.♘ac3 ♕xg3 23.♕e2 ♖xd5 24.♕xc4 ♖d6 White resigned in Hector-Glek, Copenhagen 1995.

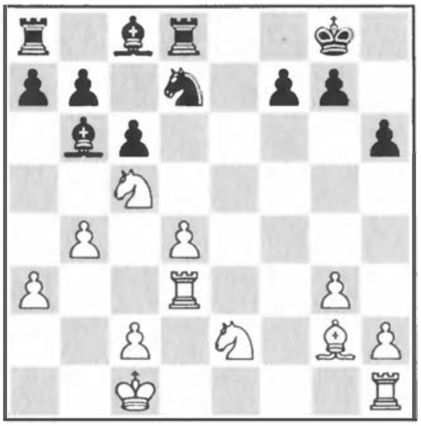
No good is 8.e5 ♕e7 9.♘g3 c5 10.♗b5+ ♘c6 11.0-0 0-0 12.♗xc6 bxc6 13.dxc5 ♕xc5 14.♘ce2 ♗c7 and Black was clearly better in Schwaegli-V.Lutz, Chiasso 1991.

Finally 8.♕d3 led to a draw after, 8...dxe4 9.♕xe4 0-0 10.♕e3 b5 11.♘g3 a6 12.♘e4 ♕e7 13.♘c5 ♗xc3+ 14.♕xc3 ♘d7 15.♘xd7 ♕xd7 16.♗e2 ♗b7 17.0-0 ♕d6 18.♖fd1 ♖ac8 19.b4 ♗d5 20.a4 c6 21.g3, ½-½ S.Polgar-Psakhis, Hoogeveen 1997.

8...0-0 9.♕d3

Bad is 9.♕d2? ♖d8 10.dxe6 ♗xe6 11.0-0-0 ♘c6∓.

9...♖d8 10.dxe6 ♗xe6 11.0-0-0 ♕xf2 12.♘e4 ♕f5 13.♘c5! ♕xd3 14.♖xd3 ♗c8 15.g3 ♘d7 16.b4 ♗b6 17.♗g2 c6



18.♘f4!

18.♖hd1 ♘f6 19.d5 cxd5 20.♗xd5 ♗f5∓, Piskov.

18...a5 19.♔b2 ♘f6 20.d5! axb4 21.axb4 ♗xc5 22.bxc5

22.dxc6 ♗d4+ 23.c3 ♗xc3+ 24.♖xc3 bxc6∓.

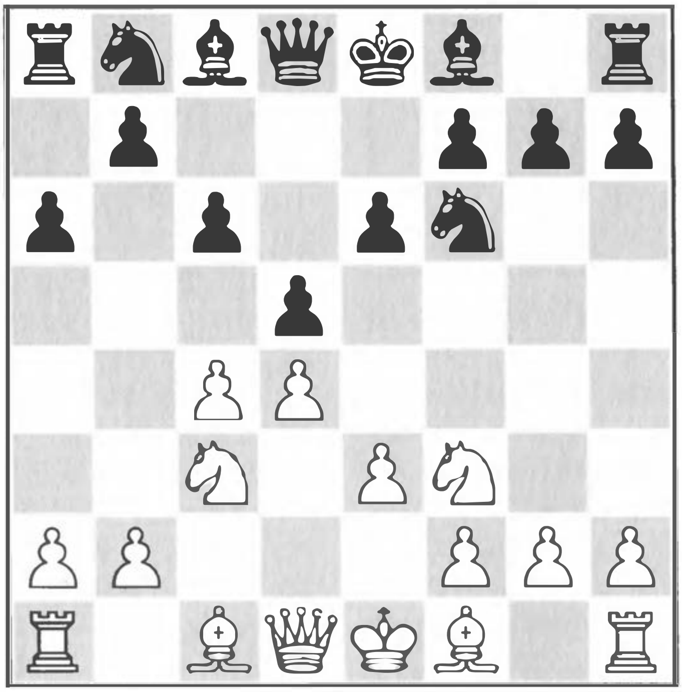
22...♗f5 23.dxc6 bxc6

And now Piskov indicated that White could have kept equal chances with 24.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 25.♗xc6 ♖c8 26.♗b5 ♖xc5 27.♗d3.

CHAPTER 17

Mikhail Gurevich

Flexibility Zone



Anti-Meran with 5...a6

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.e3 a6!?

This strange move in the Anti-Meran was recently revived, and is now enjoying its second youth. Played by Akiba Rubinstein in the late 1920s, Alexander Alekhine twice lost with Black to Max Euwe in their World Championship's match in 1935. The modern development of this variation owes much to the games of Michele Godena. I personally added this line to my repertoire after my knock-out match against Alexander Morozevich during the FIDE World Championship of Moscow 2001. As of 2002 I started playing it regularly (and not unsuccessfully I might add). The infamous game Kasparov-Fritz, which we will discuss later, gave a strong and new impulse to the latest development of this variation.

Black's ideas behind 5...a6 are deep and diverse. Black actually waits for White's next move before revealing his strategy. Depending upon White's reaction the game may transfer to the Tarrasch Defence, the Queen's Gambit Accepted, and even to Stonewall structures in some variations.

White has several playable possibilities here. The most popular continuation is 6.♕c2. Other respectable moves are: 6.c5, 6.b3 and 6.a3. After 6.♗d3 Black should transfer play directly into a respectable line from the Queen's Gambit Accepted with

6...dxc4 7.♗xc4 b5 followed by 8...c5 (or an immediate 7...c5). We will not discuss every single legal move after 5...a6. It is not the moves that are important, but the ideas behind them. I will try to explain some typical schemes and structures that may occur in this line, but first of all I would like to introduce the 'Choice of the Champions':

☐ **Max Euwe**
■ **Alexander Alekhine**
World Championship match 1935 (8)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.e3 e6 5.♘c3 a6 6.c5!?

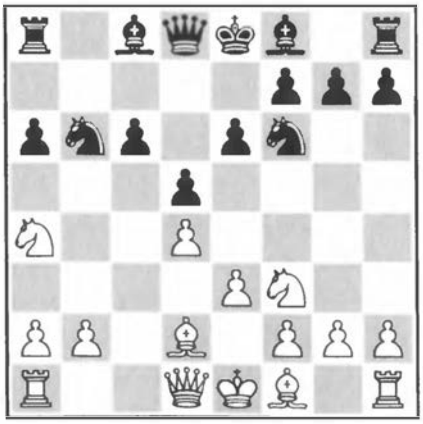
One of the most popular, and certainly the most aggressive continuation. We will discuss the pros and cons of this move later. Here I wouldn't dare to touch the remarks and evaluations made by the great Max Euwe. So, my Respectable Reader, you have no choice but to enjoy the following great piece of the history produced 70 years ago.

6...b6

Alekhine didn't manage to understand all the nuances of the position, and his opening preparation for this game (and the next) was pretty poor for our modern standards. Russian chess historians tend to explain his play in this match by the influence of alcohol. Even if they are right, it doesn't diminish the magnificent strategical performance of Max Euwe. (M.Gurevich)

In the 10th matchgame Alekhine played the more circumspect 6...♘bd7, the game continued: 7.b4 a5?! (a dubious move – see also the next game) 8.b5 ♘e4? (but this is really questionable, stronger was 8...e5) 9.♘xe4 dxe4 10.♘d2 f5 11.f3 ♕h4+? (this check does not improve Black's chances of survival. 11...exf3 12.♕xf3±) 12.g3 ♕h6 13.♕e2 ♗e7 (13...e5 14.fxe4 exd4 15.exd4 f4 16.♘f3± was indicated by Euwe) 14.♗g2 (stronger than 14.fxe4?! fxe4 15.♘xe4, Euwe) 14...0-0 15.0-0 ♘f6 16.♘c4 (not 16.fxe4 ♘g4) 16...♗d8?! 17.fxe4 fxe4 (17...♘g4 18.h3) 18.♘d6?! (considering the course of the game this is clearly inaccurate. 18.b6 or 18.a4 planning 19.♘e5±, Euwe) 18...♕g6 19.b6 ♗e7 20.♘c4 ♕g5 21.♗d2 (21.♘e5? ♗xc5!) 21...e5! (the best chance. 21...a4 22.♘e5 ♗xc5? 23.h4 ♕xg3 – 23...♕h5 24.♕xh5 ♘xh5 25.dxc5+– – 24.♗e1 winning, Euwe) 22.♘xe5 ♗e6 (22...♗xc5?? 23.♕c4+) 23.♖f4 ♕h6 24.a3 g5! 25.♖f2 ♕g7 26.♖af1 h5 27.♔h1 ♕h7 28.♗c3. Here White has some advantage. Alekhine's next pseudo-active move is a losing mistake: 28...h4? 29.gxh4 ♕xh4 (29...gxh4 30.♖g1+–) 30.♘g6 ♕h7 31.♘xf8 ♖xf8 32.d5! ♘xd5 33.♖xf8+ ♗xf8 34.♗d4 ♗e7 35.♕f2 ♕h4 36.♕xh4 gxh4 37.♗xe4 ♗d8 38.♗f5 ♗xf5 39.♖xf5 ♘e7 40.♖f6 ♘c8 41.♖xc6!. A nice way to finish the game! 1-0 Euwe-Alekhine, World Championship match 1935 (10).

7.cxb6 ♘bd7 8.♘a4 ♘xb6 9.♗d2



9...♘xa4 10.♕xa4 ♕b6!?

Here 10...♗d7 is met by 11.♘e5.

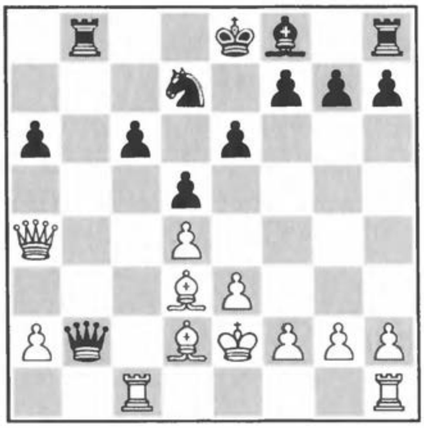
11.♖c1

This is stronger than 11.♗a5 ♕xb2 12.♕xc6+ ♘d7 when Black's active queen gives him sufficient counter chances.

11...♗d7 12.♘e5 ♕xb2 13.♘xd7 ♘xd7 14.♗d3

White loses his advantage if he takes on c6. For instance: 14.♕xc6 ♗b4 15.♗xb4 ♕xb4+ 16.♔d1 ♔e7 17.♗d3 ♖ab8, and 14.♖xc6 ♗a3 15.♖c7 ♕b1+ 16.♔e2 ♕b5+, Euwe.

14...♖b8 15.♔e2



White is better, as a6 and c6 are both weak, while 16.♖b1 is a threat.

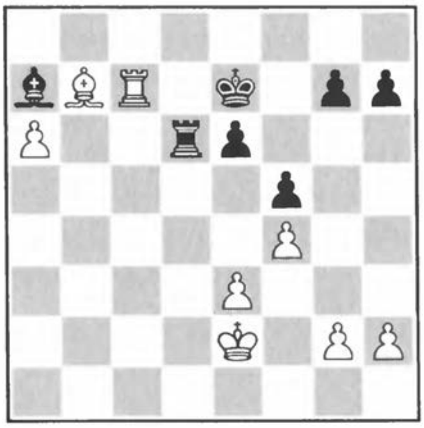
15...♖b6 16.♖b1

16.♖xc6 ♖xc6 17.♖b1! ♕a3 (17...♕xb1 18.♗xb1±) 18.♕xc6± was given by Alekhine.

16...♕a3 17.♕xa3 ♗xa3 18.♖xb6 ♘xb6 19.♖b1 ♘d7 20.♗xa6

White has a superior ending with his bishop pair, outside passed pawn and active rook.

20...♔e7 21.♖b3 21.♗b7 ♖b8 22.♖b3 ♔d6 is only equal. **21...♗d6 22.♗b7 c5 23.a4 ♗b8 24.♖b5! ♗a7 25.dxc5** Also possible was 25.a5 cxd4 26.exd4 ♗xd4? 27.a6 ♖b8 28.♗e3 and wins, Euwe. **25...♘xc5 26.♗b4 ♔d6 27.a5 ♔c7 28.♗xc5** 28.a6 ♘d7 29.♗xd5? exd5 30.♖b7+ ♔c6 31.♖xa7 was insufficient! (Euwe). **28...♗xc5 29.♗xd5 ♔d6** Now, in view of the opposite-coloured bishops, some technique is still required. Euwe is up to the task. Not 29...exd5 30.♖xc5+ ♔d6 31.♖c3 and the rook ending is winning. **30.♗b7 ♗a7 31.a6 ♖d8 32.♖b2 ♖d7 33.♖d2+ ♔e7 34.♖c2 ♖d6 35.♖c7+ ♖d7 36.♖c2 ♖d6 37.f4 f5 38.♖c8 ♖d8 39.♖c7+ ♖d7 40.♖c3 ♖d6 41.♖c7+** The sealed move.



41...♖d7 42.♖c3 ♖d6 43.h4 g6 44.♖c2 h5 45.♖c3 This spoils nothing, but White has a direct win in the opposite-coloured bishop ending: 45.♖c8! ♖d8 46.♖xd8 ♔xd8 47.e4 ♔e7 48.exf5 exf5 (planning ♔b7, Euwe) For example: 49.♗d5 ♔d6 50.♗f7 ♔c6 51.♗xg6 ♔b6 52.♗xh5 ♗b8 53.♔f3 ♔xa6 54.♗g6 ♔b5 55.♗xf5. **45...♖b6 46.♖c7+ ♔d6 47.♖g7 ♖b2+ 48.♔d3 ♖a2 49.♖xg6 ♖a3+ 50.♔c4 ♗xe3 51.♗d5! ♗xf4 52.♖xe6+ ♔c7 53.♖c6+ ♔b8 54.♖g6** Here 54.♖b6+ ♔a7 55.♔b5 does not win because of 55...♖a5+! 56.♔xa5 ♗c7. **54...♗c7 55.♗b7 ♔a7 56.♖g5 ♗d8 57.♖xh5 ♗xh4 58.♖xf5** With two pawns ahead the win is no longer problematic. Not 58.♖xh4?? ♖a4+. **58...♔b6 59.♖b5+ ♔c7 60.♖b3 ♖a5 61.♔d4 ♗f2+ 62.♔e4 ♔d6 63.♖d3+ ♔e6 64.♗c8+ ♔e7 65.♖d5 ♖a4+ 66.♔f5 ♗g3 67.♖d7+ ♔f8 68.a7 ♗f2 69.♗a6!**

Black resigned in view of 69...♖xa6 70.♖d8+ ♔e7 71.a8♕ ♖xa8 72.♖xa8. **1-0**

The following game attracted an enormous amount of attention, and gave a powerful impulse to the variation's development. Despite the Computer's loss, many more grandmasters started to play 5...a6. I would like to mention here the importance of the context in which this game was played. It was one of the last equal encounters in the historical battle between the Human and the Machine. Think of the disastrous match between Adams and Hydra and you know what I mean. We can't compete with computers anymore. So what? Let's not get depressed. Did Chess become less attractive to the Humans? I don't think so. Did the runners stop running when cars became quicker?

☐ **Garry Kasparov**
■ **COMP Fritz X3D**
New York X3D m 2003 (3)

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 d5 4.d4 c6 5.e3 a6 6.c5!?

This is an especially smart choice when playing against a computer. It closes the game, and limits the space within which the black pieces can operate. The game centres on understanding and less on calculation.

6...♘bd7

The alternative is 6...b6!? 7.cxb6 c5 8.♗d3 ♕xb6 9.0-0 ♘bd7 10.♗c2 ♗d6 11.e4 dxe4 12.♘xe4 ♘xe4 13.♗xe4 ♗b7 14.♗xb7 ♕xb7 15.dxc5 ♗xc5 16.b3 0-0 17.♗b2 ♗e7 18.♖c1 ♗f6 19.♕e2 ♗xb2 20.♕xb2 ♘f6 equal in Gavrikov-Kallai, Mazatlan 1988.

7.b4 a5?!

Not the best reaction, in my opinion, but the computer follows in the steps of the great Alexander Alekhine. There are disadvantages to the availability of a huge database! Also, I suspect, he (or she?) is desperate (can computers be desperate? ... or feel anything at all?) to open the play followed by its algorithm. No, I better stop even trying to explain the logic behind the silicon brains.

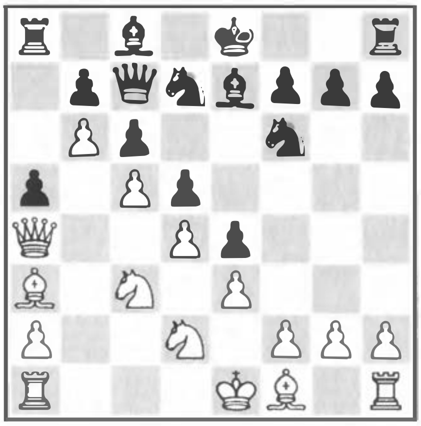
8.b5 e5 9.♕a4!?

A strong idea, probably one of Garry's numerous that lie dormant in his database. The computer knows Kasparov's moves but not his concept. In Kortchnoi-Godena, Saint Vincent 2003, there followed instead: 9.bxc6 bxc6 10.dxe5 ♘e4 11.♘xe4 dxe4 12.e6 fxe6 13.♘d4 ♘xc5 14.♗c4 ♘d3+ 15.♗xd3 ♗b4+ 16.♗d2 exd3 17.♗xb4 axb4 18.♕h5+ g6 19.♕c5 ♕d5 20.♕xc6+ ♕xc6 21.♘xc6 b3 22.♔d2 ♗b7 with an equal endgame.

9...♕c7 10.♗a3 e4??

The stupid machine shows its lack of understanding of the game. The best choice was probably 10...exd4, keeping the centre open.

11.♘d2 ♗e7 12.b6



This wins more space on the queenside, and cuts the a5 pawn off. White is strategically winning, although it requires Kasparov's technique and great accuracy to neutralize Black's counterplay on the kingside.

After 12.♗e2 h5 13.b6 ♕d8 14.h3 ♘f8 15.0-0-0 ♘e6 16.♘dxe4! White won a pawn in Reshevsky-Keres, World Championship, The Hague/Moscow 1948.

12...♕d8 13.h3 0-0 14.♘b3 ♗d6!?

Witty, but White is not forced to take.

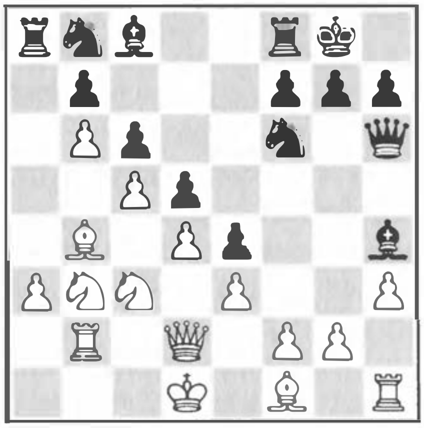
15.♖b1

15.cxd6?? ♘xb6 loses the queen.

15...♗e7 16.♘xa5

Picking the fruits of his superior opening play.

16...♘b8 17.♗b4 ♕d7 18.♖b2 ♕e6 19.♕d1 ♘fd7 20.a3 ♕h6 21.♘b3 ♗h4 22.♕d2 ♘f6 23.♔d1!



The key moment in White's strategy. The king will be well protected on the queenside, and without any danger to His Majesty, the extra pawn will tell.

23...♗e6 24.♔c1 ♖d8 25.♖c2 ♘bd7 26.♔b2 ♘f8 27.a4 ♘g6 28.a5 ♘e7 29.a6 Creating a protected passed pawn. **29...bxa6 30.♘a5 ♖db8 31.g3 ♗g5 32.♗g2 ♕g6 33.♔a1 ♔h8 34.♘a2 ♗d7 35.♗c3 ♘e8 36.♘b4 ♔g8 37.♖b1 ♗c8 38.♖a2 ♗h6 39.♗f1 ♕e6 40.♕d1 ♘f6 41.♕a4** All White's pieces participate in the attack on the queenside. Black's position collapses as a house of cards. **41...♗b7 42.♘xb7 ♖xb7 43.♘xa6 ♕d7 44.♕c2 ♔h8 45.♖b3**

I don't know exactly why the computer (or its operator) chose to resign in this particular (completely hopeless) position. Let's assume that the electricity went down. **1-0**

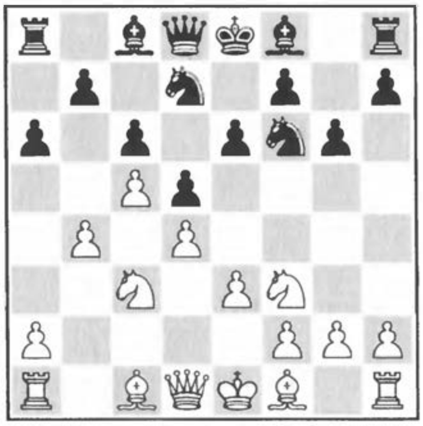
Now that we have paid our tribute to history, I would like to discuss the latest approach.

☐ **Francesco Vallejo Pons**
■ **Mikhail Gurevich**
Sanxenxo tt 2004 (5)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e3 e6 5.♘f3 a6 6.c5

A controversial move that has its pros and cons. White gains space on the queenside emphasizing the weakness of Black's pawns. However, by this move White releases the tension in the centre (c4-d5 pawn tension); his own pawn structure is static from now on.

6...♘bd7 7.b4 g6!?



Black should develop his pieces in the quickest possible way, ignoring the queenside, at least for the moment. As we saw from the previous games, all immediate tries to undermine and refute White's strategy (...b6, or ...a5) didn't work well for Black. White's pawn structure on the queenside is strong indeed, so the 'active' plans demonstrated by Alekhine and Fritz failed. With 7...g6 Black develops his bishop to g7, preparing the plan of counterplay in the centre after castling and e6-e5.

Black adopted a similar strategy in Kruppa-Vysochin, St Petersburg 2003, with 7...♕c7!? 8.♗b2 g6 9.♗d3 ♗g7 10.0-0 0-0 11.♖e1 e5 12.♘xe5 ♘xe5 13.dxe5 ♕xe5 14.♘a4 ♕c7 15.h3 ♘h5 16.♗xg7, ½-½.

8.♗b2

A new plan. Vallejo puts his bishop on the long diagonal to try and stop the e6-e5 break. In the next game we will see how I tried to play this position with White.

8...♗g7 9.♗e2 ♕c7 10.♕c2 0-0 11.♘a4!?

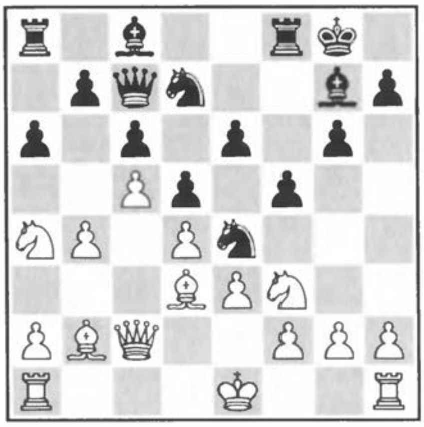
It is all about e6-e5 break. White tries to stop

it, while Black put all his energy in making it possible. Not dangerous is therefore:
11.h3 e5 12.dxe5 ♘xe5 13.♘xe5 ♕xe5 14.♘a4 ♕g5 15.g4 ♕h4 16.♘b6 ♖b8 17.♘xc8 ♖bxc8 18.♗f3 ♖ce8∓ Abdel Razik-Vysochin, Tanta City 2003.

11...♘e4

Planning 12...e5.

12.♗d3!? f5



Transferring into a Stonewall structure. Black's c8-bishop has little perspective at the moment, but e6-e5 becomes possible, and Black gains some space and good prospects for counterplay in the centre and on the kingside.

13.0-0 e5

Dubious is 13...g5?! 14.♗xe4 fxe4 15.♘xg5 ♖f6 16.f4.

14.♖ae1!?

Or 14.dxe5 ♘xe5 15.♗xe5 ♗xe5 16.♘xe5 ♕xe5 17.♘b6 ♖b8 18.a4 ♗e6 19.b5 axb5 20.axb5 f4.

14...♖e8 15.a3

If 15.♘b6 then 15...♘xb6 16.cxb6 ♕xb6 17.♘xe5 ♕xb4 18.f3 ♘g5∓.

15...♕d8!?

Prophylaxis – Black prevents White's worst piece, ♘a4, from improving. White's game is preferable after both 15...♘xf2 16.♗xf5 gxf5 17.♕xf2, and 15...♖b8 16.♘b6 ♘xb6 17.cxb6 ♕xb6 18.♘xe5.

16.♘xe5

Here 16.♘b6 ♘xb6 17.cxb6 exd4 (17...♘xf2!?) 18.♗xd4 ♗xd4 19.exd4 ♕xb6 would cast away a pawn.

16...♘xe5 17.dxe5 ♗xe5 18.♗xe5 ♖xe5 19.f3 ♘f6

I was happy enough with my position. Black has sufficient counterplay in the centre.

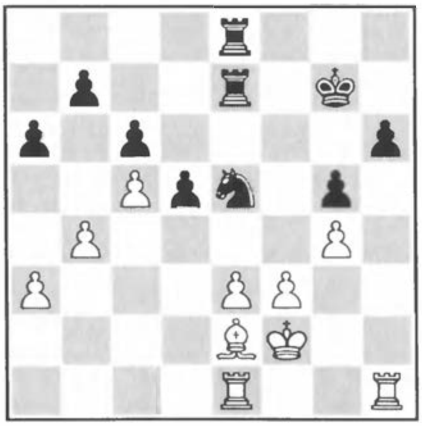
20.h3

Both sides have chances after 20.♕c3 ♕e7 21.♘b6 ♖b8 22.♕d4 ♘d7 23.♘xd7 ♗xd7 24.♖e2 ♖e8 25.♖fe1.

20...♕e7 21.♘b6 ♖b8 22.♕f2 ♗d7 23.♕h4 ♖e8 24.♘xd7

It is not much fun to exchange this bishop, but Vallejo didn't find another way of protecting the e3 pawn.
If 24.♖f2 then 24...♘h5.

24...♘xd7 25.♕xe7 ♖5xe7 26.♔f2 ♔g7 27.g4 fxg4 28.hxg4 ♘e5 29.♗e2 g5 30.♖h1 h6



31.a4?!

A serious inaccuracy in time trouble. An unnecessarily 'active' move weakens White's pawn structure. Remember Nimzowitsch's when he explains that in the a3-c5 pawn chain the a3-pawn is the base which supports the entire chain? Moving this pawn might be (and will be in this particular game) a grave mistake that will be punished.

Preferable was 31.♖hg1 ♖f8 32.♔g3 ♖fe8 33.♔f2, or 31.♖d1 ♘d7 32.♖d3.

31...♞d7 Or 31...a5 32.♖b1 (32.bxa5 ♘d7) 32...♘d7 33.♖b3 axb4 34.♖c1 d4 35.e4, unclear. **32.♗d3 a5!? 33.bxa5?** Mistakes always come in pairs. The best try to survive was a transfer to a rook endgame: 33.♗f5 axb4 34.♗xd7 ♖xd7 35.♖b1 d4 36.♖he1, or 36.e4 ♖e5 37.♖hc1 d3 38.♖xb4 d2 39.♖d1 ♖xc5 40.♖b2=. **33...♘xc5 34.♗f5 ♘xa4** This complicates the task. Stronger was 34...♖a8 35.f4 ♖xa5 winning. **35.f4 ♘c5 36.fxg5 hxg5 37.♖h5 ♔f6 38.♖eh1 ♖g7 39.♖h6+ ♔e5 40.♖1h5 ♖a8 41.♗g6 ♘e4+ 42.♗xe4 dxe4 43.♖h7 ♖ag8!?** 43...♖xh7 44.♖xh7 ♖xa5 45.♖xb7 ♖a2+ 46.♔f1 c5 47.♖g7 ♔f6 48.♖c7 ♖c2∓. **44.♖h1 ♔d5 45.♖7h6 ♖f8+ 46.♔g2 ♖f3 47.♖d1+ ♔e5–+ 48.a6 ♖xe3 49.♖f1!? ♖a3 50.♖f5+ ♔d4 51.♖d6+ ♔e3 52.axb7 ♖xb7 53.♖xg5** 53.♖xc6 ♖b2+ 54.♔g1 (54.♔g3 ♔d4+) 54...♖a1+ 55.♖f1 ♖xf1+ 56.♔xf1 ♔f3–+. **53...♔f4 54.♖f5+ ♔xg4 55.♖f8 ♖g3+ 56.♔f1 ♖b1+ 57.♔f2 e3+ 58.♔e2 ♖b2+ 59.♔f1 e2+ 60.♔f2 ♖g2+ 0-1**

An elegant way to finish Vallejo's suffering.

☐ **Mikhail Gurevich**
■ **Natalia Zhukova**
St Vincent 2004 (8)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.e3 e6 5.♘c3 a6 6.c5 ♘bd7 7.b4 g6 8.♗d3 ♗g7 9.0-0!?

Also possible is the immediate 9.e4 dxe4 10.♘xe4 ♘xe4 11.♗xe4 0-0. Now in case of 12.0-0 play would transpose to my game.

In Krasenkow-Cifuentes Parada, Sanxenxo 2003, White played the slightly primitive 12.♗f4?!. However, castling is more natural here, and I always believe that Simplicity is a sister of Genius. Cifuentes, having finished his development, now started active counterplay, breaking White's exposed pawn structure with 12...a5!?. After 13.♗d6 axb4! (13...♖e8 14.b5 cxb5∞) 14.♗xf8 ♕xf8 15.0-0 e5 White's pawn structure was destroyed. Black had excellent compensation for the sacrificed exchange after 16.dxe5 ♘xe5 17.♖c1 ♘xf3+ 18.♕xf3 ♗e6∓.

9...0-0 10.e4!?

White has finished his development and starts to play actively in the centre. O'Kelly de Galway-Cortlever, Beverwijk 1946, went 10.♗b2 e5 11.dxe5 ♘g4 12.♘a4 ♘dxe5 13.♘xe5 ♘xe5 14.♘b6 ♖b8 15.♘xc8 ♖xc8 16.♕c2 ♘xd3 17.♗xg7 ♔xg7 18.♕xd3 f5 and a draw was agreed.

10...dxe4 11.♘xe4 ♘xe4 12.♗xe4 a5!? 13.♗g5!?

Development first of all.

13...♘f6.

Here my opponent, grandmaster Zhukova, failed to find the best continuation. No good was 13...f6 14.♗d2 f5 15.♗c2↑. The best try was 13...♗f6!?, and in case of 14.♗h6 axb4!? (14...♖e8 15.a3) similar to Krasenkow-Cifuentes, although White would have an extra tempo: 15.♗xf8 ♕xf8 16.♖b1 e5 17.dxe5 ♘xe5±.

14.a3 h6 15.♗xf6 ♕xf6.

Black has gained the pair of bishops, but here this is not important, as I have: (1) managed to support my pawns, (2) have a space advantage, and (3) prevented the c8-bishop from getting out of its cage.

16.♕d2!? ♖d8 17.♕e3

With the idea of 18.♖ad1 and 19.♘e5 sealing Black's position forever.

17...♖xd4!?

The last moment for a sacrifice in a desperate try to free her forces. White would achieve his aim after 17...♕e7 18.♘e5±. Also insufficient is 17...e5 18.♘xe5 (not

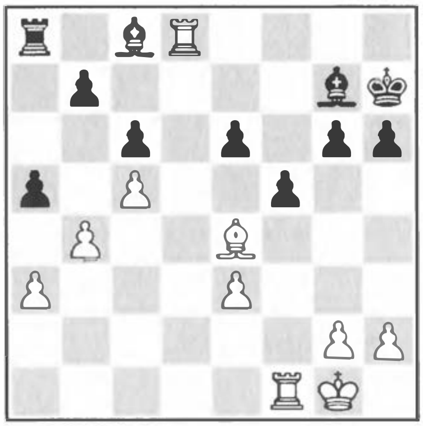
18.dxe5 ♕e7 – planning 19...♗g4 – 20.h3 ♗xe5∞) 18...♗f5 (18...axb4 19.axb4 ♖xa1 20.♖xa1 ♗f5 21.b5±) 19.b5.

18.♘xd4 ♕xd4 19.♖ad1!

An important intermediate move. White's rook enters the 8th rank decisively. Black has compensation after 19.♕xd4 ♗xd4 20.♖ad1 e5.

19...♕xe3 20.♖d8+ ♔h7 21.fxe3 f5

Not 21...axb4 22.♖xf7! bxa3 23.♗b1 winning.



22.b5!!

A big tactical solution, The white rook will be protected on the 8th rank. Less good was 22.♗c2 axb4 23.axb4 ♗f6 24.♖d3± – I didn't like the fact that my rook would be squeezed out of the 8th rank in this way. In case of 24.♖e8 ♔g7∓ my rook would be trapped.

22...cxb5 Or 22...fxe4 23.b6! intending ♖f1-f7-c7. Play might continue 23...g5 24.♖f7 ♔g6 25.♖c7 ♗b2 26.♖cxc8 ♖xc8 27.♖xc8 ♗xa3 28.♖xc6+– a nice tactic, remember Euwe-Alekhine? **23.♗d3! ♗f6** White wins after 23...b4 24.axb4 axb4 25.♗c4. **24.♖e8 b4 25.axb4 a4?!** After 25...axb4 there is the simple 26.♖b1, or the tactical line 26.♗c4 ♔g7 27.♗xe6 ♗xe6 28.♖xa8 b3 29.♖a5 ♗c4 (29...b2 30.♖b5 ♗d5 31.♖b1+–) 30.♖d1+–. **26.♗c4 a3 27.♗xe6 ♗xe6** 27...a2 28.♗xa2 ♖xa2 29.♖xc8. **28.♖xa8 ♗b2** 28...a2 29.b5 ♗c4 30.c6+–. **29.♖a7 ♗d5 30.♖d1 1-0**

Here we have seen two of my games played with different colours. I would like to explain. When one likes and understands (or thinks that one understands) a variation, it is possible to play it with both colours – especially if the variation is so unclear and full of different ideas. By playing this variation with both colours I follow in the footsteps of Bogoljubow and Euwe. Ivan Sokolov is another fine example in this same list of players.

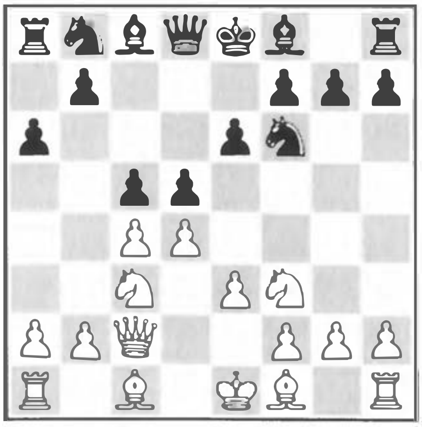
Did I pay too much attention to 6.c5? Perhaps, but my choice is explainable, as 6.c5 leads to very original positions that are typical only for this variation. Other moves will often transpose to more familiar pawn structures.

☐ **Valery Bronznik**
■ **Mikhail Gurevich**
Metz 2005 (3)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.e3 a6 6.♕c2

The most popular reaction in practice, White postpones the development of his minor pieces, hoping to develop ♗f1 in one go – in case of 6...dxc4. So, we can call the move prophylaxis against the Queen's Gambit Accepted.

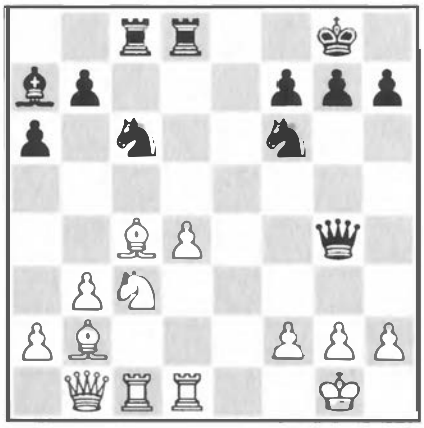
6...c5!?



Black introduces the Tarrasch Defence structure, creating a nice 'tension square' (c4, c5, d4, d5 pawns), and trying to prove that 5...a6 was more useful than 6.♕c2. Here there are two fundamentally different scenarios. In the first case Black will be 'saddled' with an isolated d5-pawn, and in the second case all the pawns involved in the tension-square will be eliminated. White has some 1.5 extra tempos in development for the moment, which is important to keep in mind should the game suddenly open up. But in both the above mentioned scenarios, the position of ♕c2 is questionable. The queen may well have to move with tempo considering the opening of the c-file. This is all very theoretical at the moment, so let's see how things go in practice.

7.cxd5 exd5 8.dxc5

Here is my first experience in this variation with White. 8.♗e2 ♘c6 9.0-0 ♗e6!? (with the idea of 10...♖c8) 10.dxc5 ♗xc5 11.b3 ♖c8 12.♗b20-0 13.♖ac1 ♗a7 14.♖fd1 ♕e7 15.♕b1 ♖fd8. Black is doing great. The isolated pawn is well protected, and White has no way to increase the pressure on the d5-square. After 16.♘g5 d4 17.♘xe6 ♕xe6 18.♗c4 ♕g4 19.exd4



I disliked my position so much here, that I offered a draw, despite the fact that it was a kind of resignation in the match. My offer was accepted immediately. Gurevich-Morozevich, Moscow 2001.

After this game I felt a strong urge to study this surprising anti-Meran. In a few months I started to play this variation, mostly with Black. And that is what I am doing until today with considerable success. There is no place for modesty here, just look at my games and the results...

8...♗xc5 9.♘e2

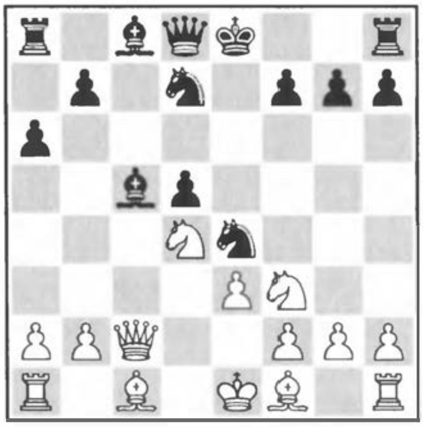
This move came as a surprise to me. The explanation is simple – life is too short to study and memorize all possible moves. So, I had to understand and to solve the problems of a new position behind the board. What should be my response and plan here? I will try to reconstruct my thoughts at that given moment, and to give my vision on the isolated pawn in general: Clearly, with 9.♘e2 White attacks the c5-bishop and moves his knight to the blockading square d4. This is an old classical way to deal with an isolated pawn. First you block the isolated pawn, then you consolidate and concentrate your forces for the ultimate attack on the isolated pawn. In modern chess grandmasters try to attack the isolated pawn directly (if the opportunity appears), or try to exchange a few pairs of minor pieces in order to neutralize the dynamic chances connected with the isolated pawn, and to attack it only later.

9...♘e4!?

This turned out to be a novelty, obviously invented by the author at the board. The player with the isolated pawn should look for active play using the space provided by the isolated pawn, and the squares which it protects (e4 and c4 in this particular case). Any unnecessary exchanges of the pieces have to be avoided ('we don't exchange the pieces when we attack' – Botvinnik). If exchanges are unavoidable, then the active side (that is the player with the isolated pawn!) should exchange different kinds of minor pieces (knights for bishops, or bishops for knights), and the player who fights against the isolated pawn should exchange similar pieces (knights for knights, and bishops for bishops). So far our discussion has been very theoretical, however, in due course we will support all these considerations.

Previously, practice had seen 9...♗d6 10.♘ed4 0-0 11.♗e2 ♖e8 12.0-0 ♗d7 13.b3 ♘c6 14.♗b2 ♘b4 15.♕b1 ♘e4 16.a3 ♘c6 17.♘xc6 bxc6 18.♕c2 a5 with dynamic chances for Black in Drozdovsky-Malakhatko, Kharkov 2004.

10.♘ed4 ♘d7!?



This looks slightly artificial perhaps, but is, in fact, a very concrete way of developing the pieces. The knight avoids the exchange on c6 (like in the previous Malakhatko game) and looks forward to kingside activity with the manoeuvre ♘d7-f6-g4. Interestingly, I handed over, and even refused to think about, the control of the blockading square d4. An alternative was 10...0-0 11.♗d3 ♕a5+!? and the check gives counterplay.

11.a3

Here 11.♗d3 is met, as planned, by 11...♘df6.

11...♘df6 12.♗d3 ♗g4

Black develops in the quickest possible way, having in mind Morozevich's manoeuvre of ...♖c8.

13.b4?!

Dubious activity. My bishop had no business on c5 anyway, but the weakness of the c4-square will be felt. Black is fine after 13.h3 ♗h5 14.0-0 ♖c8.

13...♗a7!?

Preferring the a7-g1 diagonal for the moment. After 13...♗d6 14.♗b2 ♖c8 15.♕a4+ ♗d7 16.♕b3 White is somewhat better.

14.♗b2 0-0

It was too early for 14...♖c8 because of 15.♕a4+.

15.♗e2

Preparing a square for the queen. White had some very concrete problems to solve: 15.0-0 ♖c8 and now: 16.♕e2 ♘c3 and 16.♕b3 ♗xd4 17.♗xd4 ♗xf3 18.gxf3 ♘d2.

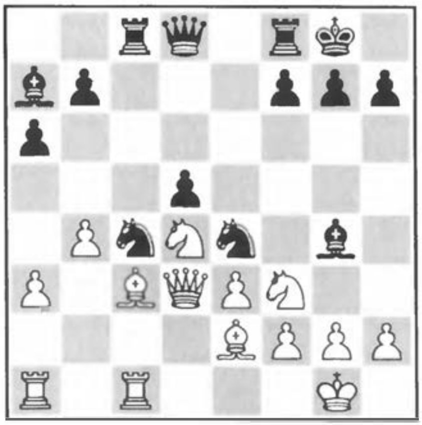
15...♖c8 16.♕d3

White's position is solid, and there is no direct active plan on the king. Therefore, I look for a way to improve my pieces.

16...♘d6!?

Planning to move the knights to the strongholds that the isolated pawn provides: 17...♘c4 and 18...♘e4 with active play.

17.0-0 ♘c4 18.♗c3 ♘e4 19.♖fc1



19...♗b8

Now I am turning my attention to the kingside. Possibly, 19...♖e8!? was even more precise, activating the last reserve.

With 19...♘xc3 Black would win the pair of bishops, but the evaluation is not clear after 20.♖xc3 ♕f6 21.♖ac1 b5.

20.♗e1 ♕f6 21.b5!?

Looking for counterplay.

21...axb5 22.♘xb5 ♖fd8 23.♖ab1 ♕h6

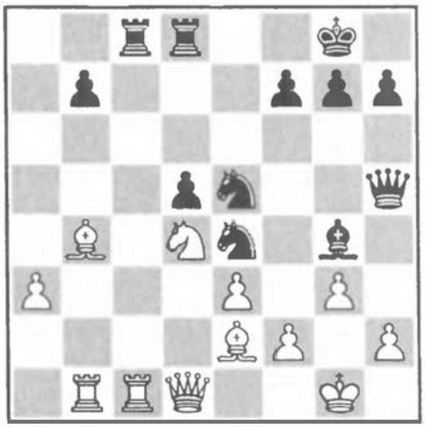
With all pieces developed, I am turning aggressive, creating some very direct threats. Play is unclear after 23...♗xf3 24.♗xf3 ♘e5 25.♕d1.

24.g3?!

This weakening of the pawn structure near the king had to be avoided.

Stronger was 24.♘bd4!? to continue White's active play on the queenside. Perhaps, the position would still have been unclear. No good is the direct 24...♘e5? 25.♘xe5 ♗xe2 (or 25...♗xe5 26.♗xg4 ♕xh2+ 27.♔f1 and here ends the attack) 26.♖xc8 ♖xc8 27.♘xe2 ♗xe5 28.f4 and White has defended and can start picking up pawns.

24...♕h5 Now Black's attack is very strong. **25.♘bd4 ♗d6** Or even 25...♗a7!?. **26.♗b4 ♗e5!** An important reserve joins the attack, the threat is 27...♗xd4. **27.♘xe5 ♘xe5 28.♕d1**



28...♘xf2! The decisive blow! **29.♔xf2 ♕xh2+ 30.♔e1 ♕xg3+ 31.♔d2 ♗xe2 32.♔xe2** The alternative recaptures do no save White either: 32.♕xe2 ♘c4+ 33.♔d3 ♕g6+, or 32.♘xe2 ♘f3+ 33.♔d3 ♕g6+. **32...♕g2+ 33.♔e1 ♕e4!?** Or 33...♖xc1 34.♖xc1 ♖e8 and the attack continues. **34.♔e2 ♖c4** White's position is hopeless. He did not survive long in zeitnot. **35.♖xc4?! dxc4 36.♗c3** Of course 36.♕c2 is impossible in view of 36...♖xd4. **36...♕g2+ 37.♔e1 ♘d3+ 0-1**

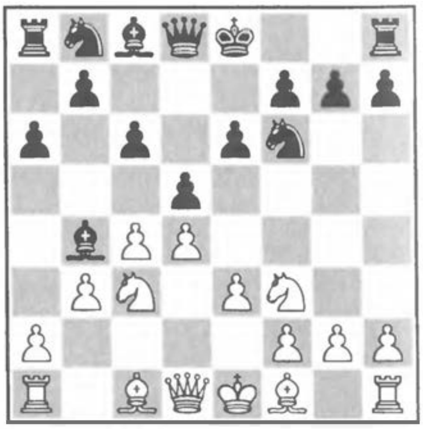
This game is a good example of how to play with an isolated pawn. And, even more important, how not to play against it. Let's learn from the mistakes of others...

☐ **Lubomir Ftacnik**
■ **Mikhail Gurevich**
Warsaw Ech 2005 (11)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.e3 a6!? 6.b3

An important continuation. White supports the c-pawn to develop the bishop to its natural d3-square (not being bothered by ...dxc4), while preparing the b2-square for the other one. Black should play

6...♗b4



7.♗d2

Forced, as 7.♗b2 would lose a pawn after 7...♕a5 8.♕c2 ♘e4 9.♖c1 ♕xa2.

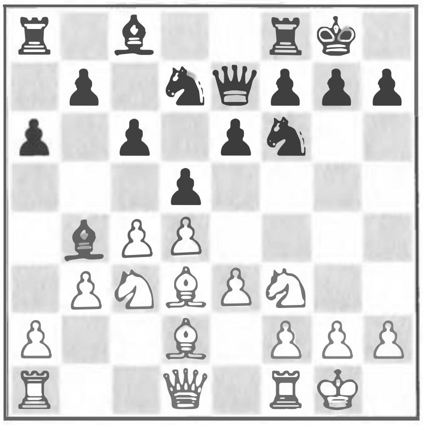
7...♘bd7

A model effort by Ivan Sokolov was 7...0-0 8.a3?! (more natural is 8.♗d3) 8...♗d6 9.b4?! (9.c5 ♗c7 10.♗d3 ♘bd7 11.♕c2 e5 leads to equality according to Ivan Sokolov) 9...♘bd7 10.♕b3 e5! (typical central activity) 11.♖d1? e4 12.♘g5 ♘g4 13.♘h3 ♘xh2 (it is not in every game that a black knight hits h2 so soon) 14.♗e2?! ♞f6 15.cxd5 cxd5 16.♘xd5 ♗e6 (to obtain control over the f3-square.) 17.♗c4 ♗xh3 18.gxh3 ♘h5 19.♘c3? ♕h4 20.♗d5 ♖ae8 21.♗xb7 ♕xh3 22.♕d5 ♘f3+ 23.♔e2 ♘g3+, 0-1 Vallejo-Sokolov, Germany Bundesliga 2004/05.

8.♗d3 0-0

Black has two different plans here. One, introduced in this game, is to retreat ♗b4 to d6 in order to support e6-e5 and to open the ways for ♗c8 – the most controversial piece in this variation.

Another set-up starts with **8...♕e7** Black has some similar ideas, but he keeps his bishop on b4. Both plans have their pluses and minuses, and both have a right to exist, I think. Let us investigate the consequences of 8...♕e7 a bit further: 9.0-0 0-0

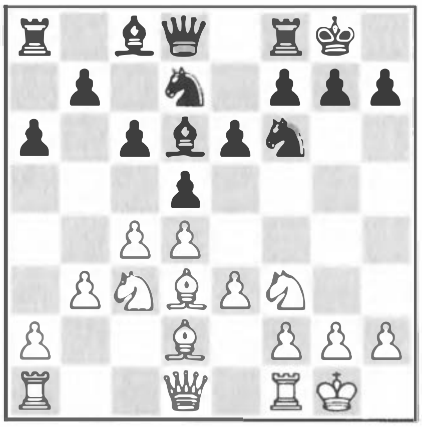


● The natural move is 10.♕c2 h6 11.♖ad1 ♖e8 12.h3 dxc4 13.bxc4 e5 14.♘e4 ♘xe4 15.♗xb4 ♕xb4 16.♗xe4 exd4 17.exd4 ♘f6 and in this fairly equal position a draw was agreed, Akopian-Gurevich, Belfort 2004.

● 10.♕c2 h6 11.♖fe1 ♖e8 12.♖ad1 e5 13.♘xe5 ♘xe5 14.dxe5 ♘g4 15.f3 dxc4 16.♗h7+ ♔h8 17.fxg4 ♗xg4 18.♘e2 ♗xd2 19.♖xd2 ♕xe5 20.♘f4 ♕c5 21.h3 ♖xe3 22.♖xe3 ♕xe3+ 23.♖f2 cxb3 24.axb3 ♗d1! 25.♕xd1 ♔xh7 26.♕c2+ ♔g8 with three pawns for the piece Dziuba-Gurevich, Cappelle la Grande 2005.

● 10.♕e1. This was an interesting invention of Ivan Sokolov's from a few years ago. White threatens to take on d5 with the knight. 10...dxc4 11.bxc4 e5 12.♗c2 ♖e8 13.c5 exd4 14.exd4 b6 15.♕xe7 ♖xe7 16.cxb6 ♘xb6 17.♖ab1 a5 18.a3 ♗xc3 19.♗xc3 ♘c4 with fairly equal chances in the game Sargissian-Gagunashvili, Warsaw 2005.

9.0-0 ♗d6



One of the important modern tabiyas of the variation. Here the centre is all important. White has to keep the c4-d5 pawn tension alive, to prepare e3-e4, to increase the tension in the centre, and to develop his problem piece: ♗d2. Black has to try to prepare e6-e5 (sometimes after releasing the tension dxc4), thereby solving the problem of the c8-bishop. So it is pure classical chess, everything is transparent, everything is about the fight for the centre, for better development of the pieces, for initiative, and for space advantage. All is classical, understandable and simple. Or is it? Let's look at the games:

10.♕c2

– 10.h3 e5 11.cxd5 cxd5 12.e4. What a tension-square d4, d5, e4, e5! How to deal with it? Usually, the one who releases the tension loses time and activity of the pieces. But the tactical nuances of the position often dictate forced replies: 12...dxe4 13.♘xe4 ♘xe4 14.♗xe4 exd4 15.♗g5 ♘f6 16.♕xd4 ♗h2+ 17.♔xh2 ♕xd4 18.♘xd4 ♘xe4 19.♗e3 ♗d7 with equality, Fridman-Naer, Minneapolis 2005.

– 10.♖c1 e5 11.cxd5 cxd5 12.dxe5 ♘xe5 13.♘xe5 ♗xe5 14.♘e2 ♘g4 15.h3 ♘f6 16.♗c3 ♕e7 17.♕c2 ♗xc3 18.♕xc3 ♗d7 19.♘d4 ♖fc8 20.♕a5 ♕d6 21.♗e2 g6 22.♗f3 Dreev-Godena, Warsaw 2005. White has got a miniscule, but unpleasant advantage. The game is a great example of how to play against the isolated pawn.

– 10.e4 dxc4 11.bxc4 e5 12.d5 ♘c5 13.♗c2 cxd5 14.cxd5 ♗g4.15.h3 ♗h5 16.a4 ♖c8 17.♖e1 ♘cd7 18.♖b1 ♖c7 19.♖b2 ♕e7 and here Black's control over the open c-file gives him the better prospects, Oei-Gurevich, Andorra la Vella 2005.

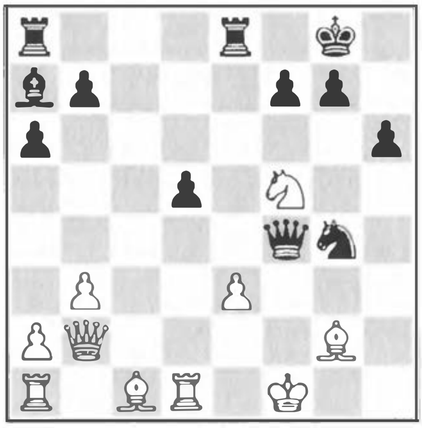
– 10.c5 ♗b8 11.♕c2 e5 12.dxe5 ♘xe5 13.♘xe5 ♗xe5 14.f4, ½-½ Gozzoli-Malakhatko, Paris 2005.

10...h6

In Shabalov-Naer, Las Vegas 2004, play was equal after 10...♖e8 11.♖fe1 h6 12.h3 e5 13.cxd5 cxd5 14.e4 dxe4 15.♘xe4 ♘xe4 16.♗xe4 exd4 17.♘xd4 ♘f6 18.♗f3 ♗e5 19.♗c3 ♕b6 20.♖ad1 ♗d7.

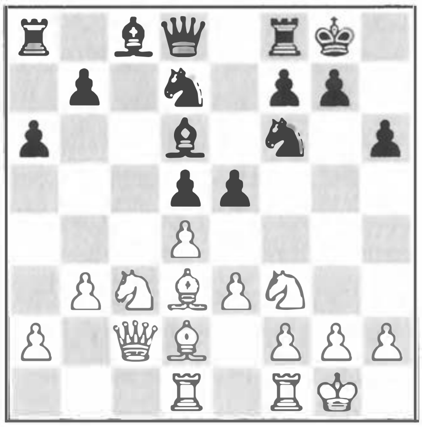
11.♖ad1

In Vatter-Godena, Pula 2004, White took the other rook. The game is well worth seeing: 11.♖fd1 e5 12.cxd5 cxd5 13.dxe5 ♘xe5 14.♘xe5 ♗xe5 15.h3 ♗e6 16.f4 ♗b8 17.♘e2 ♗a7 18.♕b2 ♕d7 19.♘d4 ♗xh3! 20.gxh3 ♕xh3 21.♗f1 ♕g3+ 22.♗g2 ♖fe8 23.♗c1 ♘g4 24.♘f5 ♕h2+ 25.♔f1 ♕xf4+!



White resigned. An excellent demonstration of the isolated pawn's advantages.

11...e5 12.cxd5 cxd5



13.e4!?

A novelty at the time. Previously 13.dxe5 ♘xe5 14.♘xe5 ♗xe5 had been played, with two examples:

– 15.♘e2 ♗g4 16.h3 ♖c8 17.♕b1 ♗d7 18.♖c1 ♕e7 19.♖xc8 ♖xc8 20.♖c1 with equality in Flear-Godena, France 2003.

– 15.f4 ♗d6 16.♗f5 ♖e8 17.♕d3 ♗xf5 18.♕xf5 ♗b4 19.♗e1 ♕b6 20.♘xd5 ♘xd5 21.♖xd5 ♗xe1 22.♖xe1 ♖xe3 and Black was slightly better in Blagojevic-Sokolov, Neum 2005.

13...dxe4

But not 13...exd4 14.♘xd5 ♘xd5 15.exd5 ♘f6 16.♘xd4±.

14.♘xe4 ♘xe4 15.♗xe4 exd4

16.♗c1!?

Here 16.♘xd4 ♘f6 17.♖fe1!? (17.♗f3 ♗xh2+ 18.♔xh2 ♕xd4=∞) was an interesting try: 17...♗g4?! (White has compensation after 17...♗xh2+ 18.♔xh2 ♕xd4 19.♗f4, Black may try 17...♖e8!?) 18.f3 ♖c8 19.♕d3±.

16...♘f6 17.♗b2

17.♖xd4 leads to equality after 17...♖e8!? 18.♗b2 ♕b6.

17...♖e8

White has the initiative after 17...♘xe4 18.♕xe4.

18.♗f5 ♕a5!

Forcing White to exchange the bishops – which is a considerable achievement.

19.♘xd4

Or 19.♗xc8 ♖axc8 20.♕b1 ♗b4!? 21.♗xd4 ♘e4 with the slightly better chances.

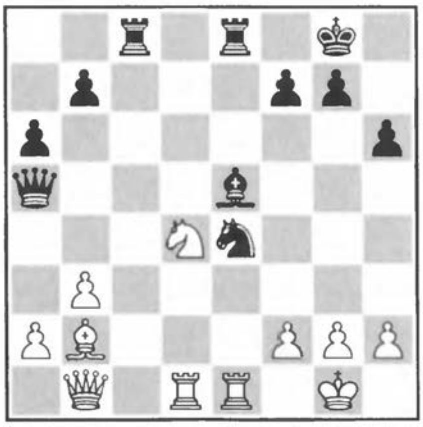
19...♗e5 20.♗xc8

Here 20.♗d3 is met by the active 20...♗g4.

20...♖axc8 21.♕b1 ♘e4

Black is better due to his harmonious development. Also interesting was 21...♘d5!? planning 22...♘f4 or 22...♘c3.

22.♖fe1?



22...♘c3? What a shame, I trusted my opponent and missed (we both did) a golden opportunity to win the game: 22...♘xf2!! 23.♔xf2 (23.♖xe5 ♘xd1 24.♖xa5 ♖e1+ mate) 23...♗xd4+ 24.♗xd4 (24.♖xd4 ♖xe1 25.♕xe1 ♖c2+ 26.♔f1 ♕xe1+ 27.♔xe1 ♖xb2–+) 24...♖xe1 25.♖xe1 ♕d2+ 26.♔f1 (26.♔g3 ♕xd4) 26...♖c2. It would be nice to add some Fritz's silicon chips to our all-to-human brains. **23.♗xc3 ♕xc3 24.♘f3 ♗f6** Black's advantage is rather symbolic. A bishop is better than a knight, but White has no weaknesses. **25.♖xe8+ ♖xe8 26.♖d3 ♕a5 27.♖d2 g6 28.g3 ♖e6 29.♕d3 ♔g7 30.♔g2 ♖c6 31.♕e4 ♕c7 32.♕e8 ♖e6!?** 32...♖d6 33.♖xd6 ♕xd6 34.h4 is equal. **33.♖d7 ♕xg3+!?** A nice tactical try to unbalance the pawn structure, and look for winning chances. **34.hxg3 ♖xe8 35.♖xb7 ♖e2 36.a4 a5 37.♖b5** But not 37.b4 ♖b2 38.b5 ♖a2∓. **37...♗c3 38.♖d5!** Planning 39.♖d3. With accurate defence White has managed to keep equal chances. **38...♖b2 39.♖d3 ♗b4 40.♘e5 ♖e2 41.♖d5 ♖b2 42.♘c4 ♖xb3 43.♘xa5 ♗xa5 44.♖xa5 ½-½**

☐ **Reynaldo Vera**
■ **Mikhail Gurevich**
Mondariz tt 2002 (5)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e3 e6 5.♘f3 a6 6.a3

A tricky variation – it is a kind of prophylaxis against both the Queen's Gambit accepted, and the Tarrasch Defence. Before we proceed, here are a couple of typical examples of Tarrasch positions with the c- and d-files open: 6.♕c2 c5 7.dxc5 ♗xc5 8.a3 and now

– 8...dxc4!? 9.♗xc4 ♘bd7 10.0-0 b5 11.♗e2 ♗b7 12.♖d1 ♕c7 13.h3 ♖c8 – Black has a great game, obviously – 14.♗d2 ♗a7 15.♖dc1 ♗b8 16.♕d1 ♗xf3 17.♗xf3 ♕h2+ 18.♔f1 0-0 with an initiative, Belli Pino-Vl.Georgiev, Bled ol 2002.

– 8...0-0 9.b4 ♗e7 10.♗b2 dxc4 11.♗xc4

♘bd7 12.0-0 b5 13.♗a2 ♗b7 14.♖fd1 (with an equal position. Black tries to destabilize the position, and to weaken the structure around White's king...) 14...♗xf3 (by the price of two bishops) 15.gxf3 ♖c8 16.♕e2 ♕c7 17.♖ac1 ♕b8 18.f4 ♘b6 19.♘b1 ♘fd7 20.♘d2 ♘a4 21.♘b3 ♖xc1 22.♖xc1 ♖c8 23.♗d4 ♖xc1+ 24.♘xc1 ♕c8 25.♘d3 ♗f6 equal, Cifuentes Parada-Gurevich, Mondariz 2002.

6...♘bd7

The most common answer. Black just plays the Meran now, where 5...a6 is presumably more useful than 6.a3.

With 6...c5 Black stubbornly insists on Tarrasch-like play. After 7.dxc5 ♗xc5, Cramling-Bellon Lopez, Palma de Mallorca 1991, went: 8.b4 ♗e7 9.♗b2 dxc4 10.♕xd8+ ♗xd8 11.♗xc4 b5 12.♗d3 ♗b7 13.♘d2 ♘bd7 14.♘ce4 ♗e7 15.♖c1 ♖c8 16.♖xc8+ ♗xc8 17.♔e2 0-0 18.♖c1 ♘d5 19.♘b3 ♗b7 20.♘a5 ♗a8 21.♘c6, with a clear advantage. Look up the game for a nice positional performance by Pia Cramling. The only question left is: did Bellon marry her before, or after the game was played?

7.b4

More restrained is 7.b3 ♗d6 8.♗b2 0-0 9.♗e2 ♘e4 10.♘xe4 dxe4 11.♘d2 f5 12.b4 ♕g5 13.g3 ♘f6 14.♕b3 ♗d7 15.♖d1 b5 16.0-0 h5 17.f4 ♕g6 18.♔h1 a5 19.bxa5 ♖xa5 20.♖g1 ♖fa8 ½-½ Epishin-Krivoshey, Navalmoral de la Mata 2004.

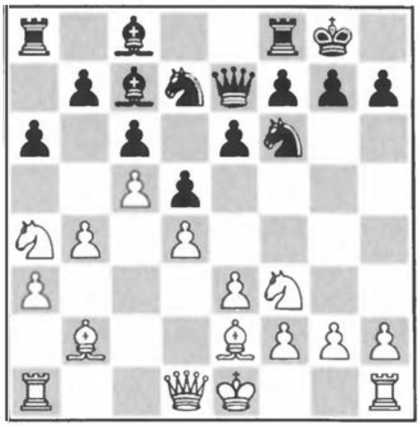
7...♗d6 8.♗b2 0-0 9.c5

The typical transformation of the pawn structure that we are so familiar with following our investigation of 6.c5. However, here the bishop may go to

9...♗c7

which changes the spirit of the position a lot. The bishop doesn't participate in the pressure on the central d4-square, but the plans involving counterplay on the kingside might be more dangerous...

10.♘a4 ♕e7 11.♗e2



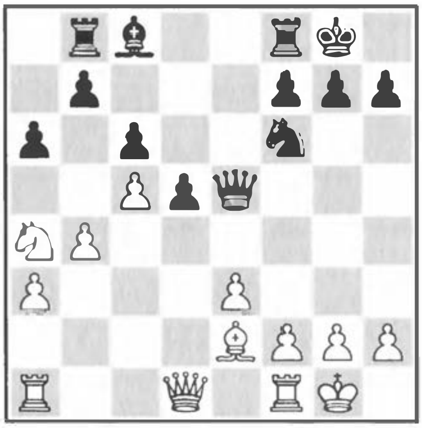
11...♖b8!?

My old invention, first played in a rapid game against Lautier. Note, that it has nothing to do with advancing the b-pawn. Black prepares the opening of the centre by e6-e5, and cleverly avoids the exchange of the 'bad' a4-knight for the c8-bishop.

Practice also saw:

- 11...e5 12.dxe5 ♘xe5 13.♘b6 ♖b8 (13...♘xf3+, the latest improvement of Godena's play: 14.gxf3 ♖b8 15.♕d4 ♖e8 16.f4 ♗f5 17.♖g1 ♔f8 18.♖g5 ♗g6 19.h4 h6 20.♖g3 ♖bd8 21.h5 ♗f5 22.♔f1 ♕e4 23.♗f3 ♕xd4 24.♗xd4 ♖e7 25.♔g1 ♘e8 26.♗d1 f6, with an unclear position in Banikas-Vysochin, Korinthos 2004) 14.♘d4 ♖e8 15.♘xc8 ♖bxc8 16.♕c2 g6 17.0-0 ♗b8 18.♖ae1 ♞eg4 19.♗xg4 ♘xg4 20.f4 ♘f6 21.♘f5 ♕e4 22.♘h6+ ♔f8 23.♕c3 ♖e6 24.♘g4 d4 25.exd4 ♕f5 26.d5 ♖xe1 27.♖xe1 and Black resigned, Krasenkow-Godena, Saint Vincent 2000.
- 11...♖e8 12.0-0 ♖b8 13.♘e5 ♘xe5 14.dxe5 ♘d7 15.♗d3 ♘xe5 16.♗xh7+ ♔xh7 17.♗xe5 ♗xe5 18.♕h5+ ♔g8 19.♕xe5 ♗d7 20.♘b6 and White was slightly better in A.Shneider-Svetushkin, Korinthos 2004.

12.0-0 e5 13.♘xe5 ♘xe5 14.dxe5 ♗xe5 15.♗xe5 ♕xe5



16.♖e1

White didn't equalize in the following rapid game: 16.♕d4 ♕c7 17.♘c3 ♖e8 18.a4 ♗f5 19.b5 a5 20.♖ac1 ♘e4 21.♗d3 ♘xc3 22.♖xc3 ♗xd3 23.♕xd3 ♖e4 24.♕c2 ♕e5∓, Lautier-Gurevich, Moscow 2002.

16...♖e8 17.♕d4 ♕g5!?

Black solved all his opening problems, and has more space due to the d5-pawn. He now starts an attack on the kingside.

18.♘c3 ♗f5 19.♗f1 ♖e6!?

Preparing the e8-square for another rook.

20.f3?!

This may cover many squares, but it still weakens the position of White's king. The best defence is always an attack. Therefore, 20.a4!? with counterplay on the queenside was a better choice: 20...♘e4 21.b5 a5.

20...♖be8 21.♔f2

With the idea to neutralize Black's activity by exchanging queens with 22.♕f4.

21...♘d7!

A powerful move that frees the 6th rank for the ♖e6 to the kingside. Moreover, it prepares 22...♘e5.

22.♕f4

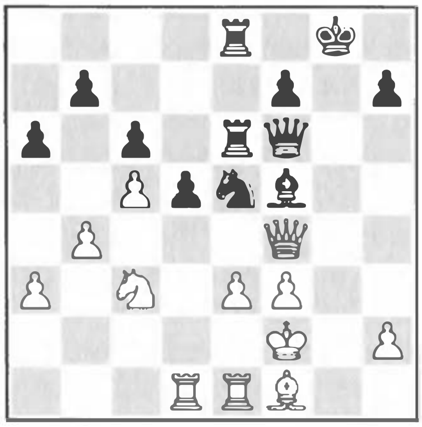
Or 22.e4 ♕h4+ 23.♔g1 ♘f6 24.g3 ♕h6 25.e5 ♘d7.

22...♕f6 23.♖ac1 g5! 24.♕d4 ♘e5 25.♖cd1

Let us analyse some alternatives:

- 25.e4?? ♘g4+
- 25.♔g1?? ♘xf3+ 26.gxf3 ♕xd4–+
- 25.h3 ♗xh3 26.gxh3 ♕xf3+ 27.♔g1 ♕g3+ 28.♔h1 ♘f3–+
- 25.♗e2 g4 26.♖cd1 (26.fxg4 ♗xg4+ 27.♔g1 ♗xe2 28.♖xe2 ♕g7) 26...♕h4+ 27.♔g1 ♖h6 28.♕f4 ♘g6 29.♕g3 ♖xe3∓

25...g4 Planning 26...♕h4 and 27...♖h6. **26.♕f4** Black wins after 26.f4 ♕h4+ 27.♔g1 ♘f3+! 28.gxf3 gxf3, and after 26.e4 ♕h4+ 27.♔g1 ♖h6! 28.exf5 ♘xf3+ 29.gxf3 ♕xh2+ mate. **26...gxf3 27.gxf3**



27...♘xf3! Not complicated, but still an elegant geometrical combination to convert Black's activity into a material advantage. **28.♘xd5** Losing are 28.♕xf3 ♕xc3 29.♕xf5 ♖f6, and 28.♔xf3 ♕xc3 29.♕xf5 ♖f6. **28...cxd5 29.♕xf3** Here 29.♔xf3 fails to 29...♗g4+ 30.♔xg4 ♖e4. **29...♗g4** The key move. **30.♕f4 ♕h4+ 31.♔g1** Here 31.♕g3 ♖f6+ 32.♔g2 ♕xg3+ 33.hxg3 ♗f3+ 34.♔h2 ♗xd1 35.♖xd1 ♖xe3 wins easily. **31...♖f6 32.♕g3 ♕xg3+** White resigned because of 33.hxg3 ♗xd1 34.♖xd1 ♖xe3. **0-1**

We will finish at this point. My modest hope, dear Respectable Brave Reader – who managed to read until this point – that the ideas which I presented here will improve your understanding of chess in general, and of this 5...a6 Meran in particular. So, let's just go and play it, test it and improve it. Good luck!

CHAPTER 18

Who is Who

Jaan Ehlvest opines that when you are playing the chess elite you need to play classical openings. However, how often is it that you sit across some 2700 player? When playing lesser mortals it pays off to adopt more riskier stuff. Ehlvest favours a jolly combination of the Dutch and the Benoni.

Playing 5...a6 in the Meran, Alexander Alekhine lost two crucial games against Max Euwe in their 1935 World Championship match. Fritz X3D went down without a (human) fight against Garry Kasparov. And, yet, **Mikhail Gurevich** presents a strong case in favour of this flexible little move. In his inimitable style the expert explains the ins and outs. A note of warning: apart from learning a surprising opening system, there is a serious risk that you learn something about chess in general.

Black has many sound set-ups against the King's Gambit. However, surprising the adepts of this venerable gambit is impossible. Or is it? **Dimitri Reinderman** went back as far as Vienna 1903 to unearth 3...f5!?.

Sun, sea and sand inspired **Artur Kogan** to invent the anti-developing move 3...♕d8 in the Scandinavian. Sober reflection, and his database, revealed that Dorfman, Sokolov, Georgiev and Adams had already employed this positionally sound set-up before him. Kogan reveals his secrets in the Ilundain Variation.

The Dutch Stonewall is a tough nut to crack. Via the Slav move order it makes sense to attack this monolithic structure with 5.g4!?. **Sergey Volkov** is one the main experts. The grandmaster from Saransk employs the bayonet attack after both 3.♘c3 and 3.♘f3.

Did Alekhine blunder when he played 4...h6 in the French Defence against Capablanca in St Petersburg 1914? In an instructive article **Igor Glek** (together with **Elena Sedina**) argues that there is more to 4...h6 than meets the prejudiced eye.

Wouldn't you like to play the King's Indian without all the theory? A solid and complete repertoire with good opportunities to play for the win as Black? In two chapters the prolific grandmaster **Dorian Rogozenko** explains all about an Indian set-up where the king's knight is developed not to f6 – but to h6 or e7.

Players of the Volga and the Benoni will be disappointed when White avoids the main lines. **Adrian Mikhalchishin** touches upon the critical lines of the Bellon Gambit – 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.♘f3 cxd4 4.♘xd4 e5 5.♘b5 d5 6.cxd5 ♕a5+!?.
The Slovenian grandmaster also surveys a Smyslov favourite – 1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.b4!? – that combines King's Indian set-ups with ideas from the Sokolsky (1.b4).

Our regular English contributor, **Glenn Flear**, examines two 'English' opening surprises. Glenn offers a repertoire based on Reverend John Owen's 1...b6. Having read his exposé it makes sense to neglect the h1-a8 diagonal no longer.
Of more recent date is Miles' favourite move against the Scotch – 4...♗b4+. Grandmasters and patzers alike will enjoy this provocative check.

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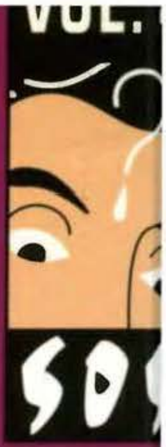

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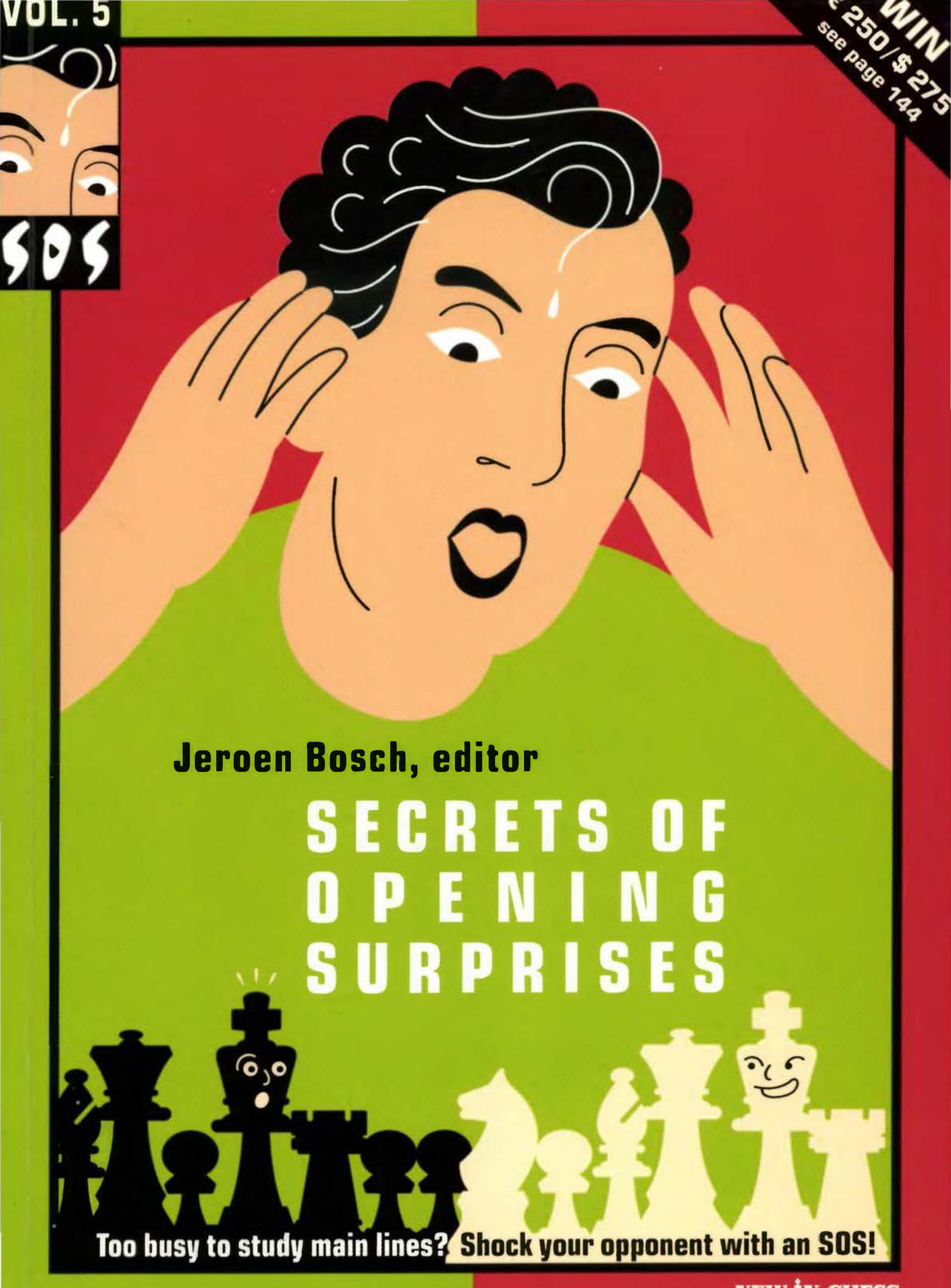

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SECRETS OF OPENING SURPRISES

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SECRETS OF OPENING SURPRISES

5

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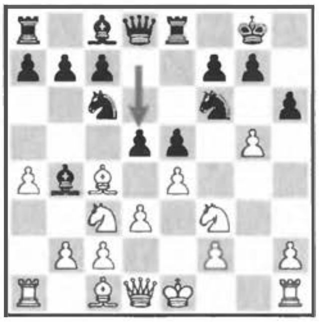
Jeroen Bosch

The SOS Files



Böhnisch-Kortchnoi after 9...d5!

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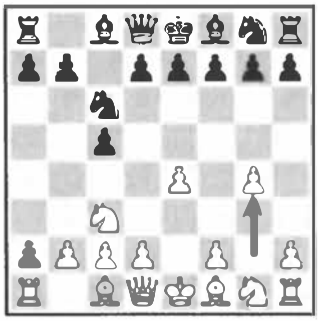
Lubos Kavalek & Jeroen Bosch

Closed Sicilian: Vinohrady Variation



1.e4 c5 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.g4

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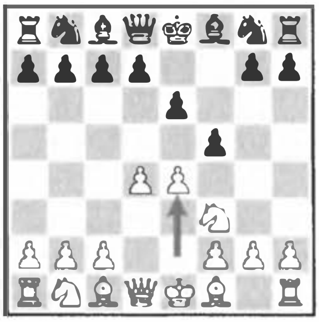
Nigel Povah

The Deferred Staunton Gambit



1.d4 e6 2.♘f3 f5 3.e4!?

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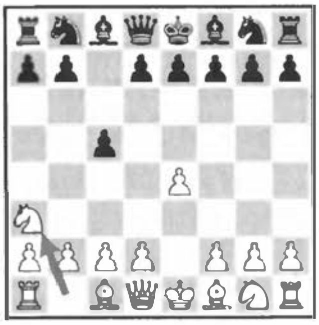
Jeroen Bosch

Zviagintsev's Sicilian Surprise



1.e4 c5 2.♘a3

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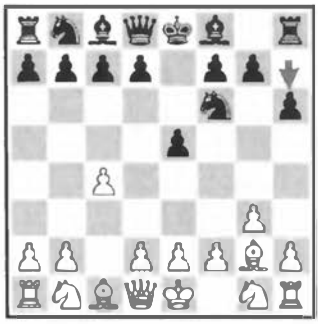
Igor Glek

English Opening: Chebanenko's 3...h6

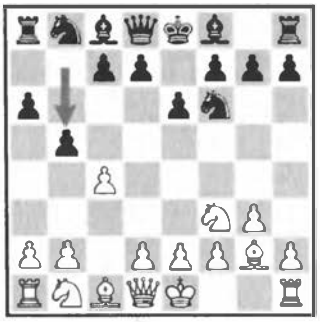


1.c4 e5 2.g3 ♘f6 3.♗g2 h6!?

CHAPTER 6 - page 53

Adrian Mikhalchishin

The Romanishin Gambit

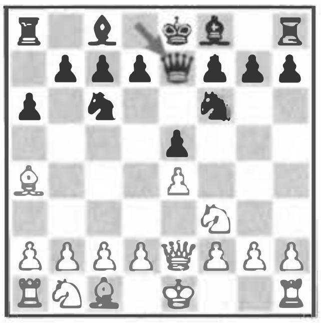


1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 a6 4.♗g2 b5!

CHAPTER 7 - page 59

Dorian Rogozenko

A Spanish Surprise from Romanishin



Facing 5.♕e2 with 5...♕e7!?

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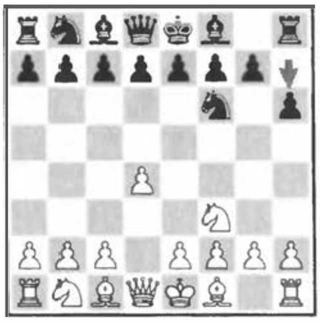
Tibor Karolyi

The Nadanian Attack



Preparing ...g5

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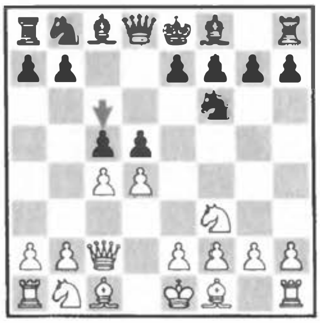
Stefan Löffler

Sacrificing a Tempo in the Slav



First 2...c6, then 4...c5

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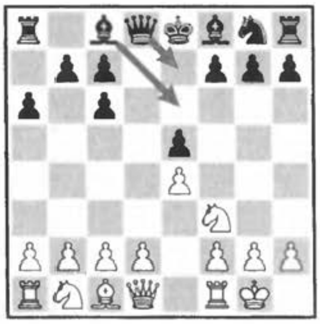
Jeroen Bosch

SOS in the Ruy Lopez Exchange



Your weapons: 5...♕e7 and 5...♗e6

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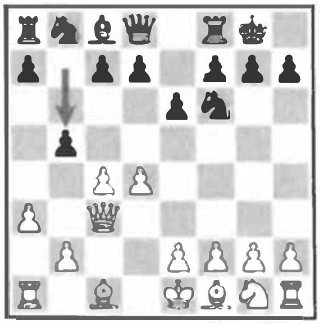
Adrian Mikhalchishin & Jeroen Bosch

Nimzo-Indian Vitolinsh Gambit



Let's play ...b5!

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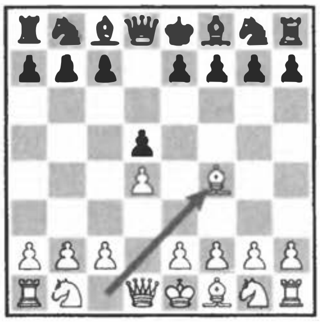
Mark van der Werf

Bishop First: 1.d4 d5 2.♗f4



The Improved London System

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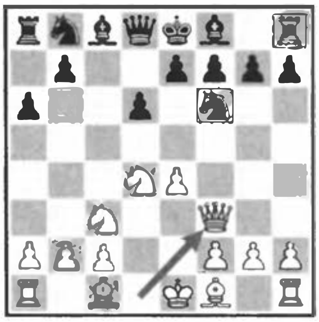
Jeroen Bosch

Surprise in the Najdorf



6.♕f3: Just another legal move?

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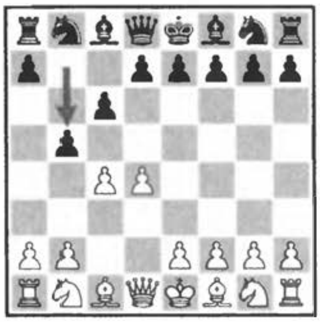
Ian Rogers

Thinking Sideways: 1.d4 c6 2.c4 b5



The Malinoise Defence

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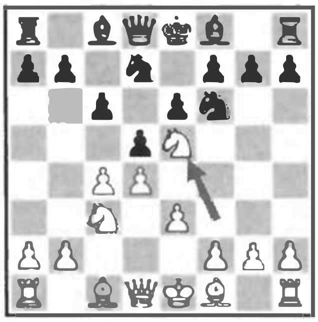
Jeroen Bosch

Rubinstein's Anti-Meran Variation



Let's play 6.♘e5

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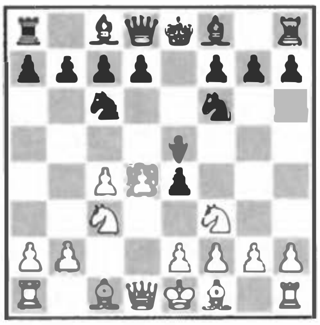
Sergey Tiviakov

English Four Knights – 4.d4 e4!?



1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.d4 e4

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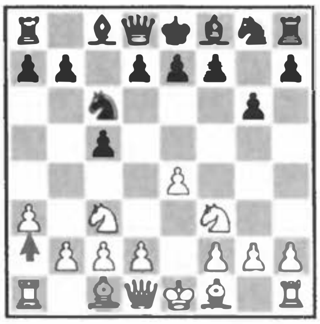
Hikaru Nakamura

Attacking the Sicilian Centre



1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 g6 4.a3!?

CHAPTER 1

Jeroen Bosch

The SOS Files

The Practical Advantage of SOS

SOS-2, Chapter 2, p.17

In a Bundesliga match early this year Karsten Müller prepared a SOS line to surprise Rustem Dautov in his favourite (and solid) Caro-Kann. His plan worked wonders. Müller's opening advantage may not have been that special, but Dautov spent a lot of time overcoming the shock of 4.♘e5. Time which he duly lacked later on in the game.

☐ **Karsten Müller**
■ **Rustem Dautov**
Germany Bundesliga 2005/06

1.e4 c6 2.♘f3 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.♘e5

This was played for the first time in 1964 by Adolivio Capece, as mentioned in *Chess Today*. Under the title 'Refining Fischer's Plan' Ian Rogers examined the line in SOS-2.

4...♘d7

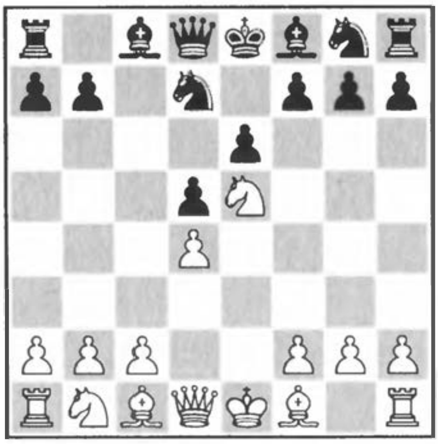
Or 4...♘c6 5.d4 ♘f6 6.♗b5! ♗d7 (best according to Rogers. Alternatively, 6...♕b6?! 7.c4! dxc4 (7...e6 8.♘c3 ♗b4 9.0-0 0-0 10.c5 ♕c7 11.♗f4 was clearly better for White in Broekmeulen-Mikanovic, Herceg Novi 2005) 8.♘c3 e6 9.♕a4 ♗d7 10.♘xd7 ♘xd7 11.♗e3 ♖d8 12.d5 ♘d4 13.dxe6 fxe6 14.0-0-0 ♗c5 15.♗xd7+! ♖xd7 16.♕xc4 and White was winning in Sebag-Xu Yuanyuan, Cannes 2004. This was the main game in SOS-2) 7.♘xd7 ♕xd7 8.c3 e6 9.0-0 (9.♘d2 ♗d6 10.♘f3 – this is possibly inaccurate because of Black's 11th move. The immediate 10.0-0 should be a bit better for White – 10...0-0 11.0-0 ♘e4 12.♖e1 f5 13.c4 a6 14.cxd5 axb5 15.dxc6 ♕xc6 16.♘g5 ♘xg5 17.♗xg5 ♕d5 and Black was somewhat better in Navara-Izoria, Ermioni Argolidas 2005) 9...♗d6 10.♖e1 0-0 11.♘d2 ♕c7 12.♘f3 (see page 21 of SOS-2) 12...♘e7 (aiming to regroup, and bringing a defender to the kingside. 12...h6 13.♕e2! (Rogers) is an improvement on Cernousek-Polak, Brno 2004. Best is possibly 12...♘e4 aiming for 13...f5, as in Navara-Izoria) 13.♗d3 ♘g6 14.g3 (controlling some important squares and preparing a future h4) 14...a6 15.♕e2 (15.h4? ♗xg3!) 15...b5 16.a3 (stopping a minority attack for some time) 16...♖ab8 17.♘e5 ♗xe5 18.dxe5 ♘d7 19.f4 and with two bishops and huge possibilities on the kingside White is much better. L.Bensdorp-Schuurman, Dutch Women's Championship, Leeuwarden 2005.

Mainly for historical reasons I should like to mention 4...♘f6 5.d4 e6 6.♘d2 (6.♗g5 ♗e7 7.♘d2 0-0 8.♗d3 ♘c6 9.♘df3 was the above-mentioned stem game Capece-Menna, Napels 1964) 6...♗e7 7.c3 (7.♗d3 0-0 8.0-0 ♘c6 9.♘df3 ♕c7 10.c3 a6 11.♕e2 b5 12.♘xc6 ♕xc6 13.a3 ♗b7 14.♗g5 ♕c7 15.♘e5 was very pleasant for White in Antoniewski-Graells, Martigny 2005) 7...0-0 8.♗d3 ♘bd7 9.f4 ♘e8 10.♕c2 f5 11.♘df3 ♘df6 12.h4 ♘d6 13.h5 ♘fe4

14.♗e3 ♗f6 15.g4 ♗d7 16.g5 ♗e7 17.♕h2 ♗e8 18.♘g6, Capece-Nathans, Ybbs 1968. Both games by Capece were mentioned in *Chess Today* No.1893.

For 4...e6 see The SOS Files of SOS-3.

5.d4 e6



In the game Dautov will eventually take on e5, when play assumes a 'French' character. It is also possible to take on e5 immediately. 5...♘xe5 6.dxe5 e6 7.♗d3 ♕c7 (Black does not really threaten to take on e5, therefore 7...♘e7 is to be preferred) 8.0-0 ♘e7 (here 8...♕xe5 9.♗b5+ ♗d7 10.♗xd7+ ♔xd7 11.♖e1 followed by 12.c4 (Golubev) gives White a dangerous initiative) 9.♘c3 ♗d7 (again White gets more than enough for the pawn after 9...♕xe5 10.♖e1 ♕b8 11.♗b5+) 10.f4 g6 11.♗e3 h5? (11...♘f5 was best according to Golubev in *Chess Today* No.1890. Now White's game plays itself) 12.♘b5 ♗xb5 13.♗xb5+ ♘c6 14.c4 a6 15.♗xc6+ bxc6 16.cxd5 cxd5 17.♖c1 ♕d7 18.♖f2!. White has a huge lead in development. The simple plan of doubling on the c-file gives a decisive edge: 18...♗e7 19.♖fc2 0-0 20.♖c7 ♕d8 21.♕a4 ♖e8? 22.♖d7 ♕b8 23.♖cc7 and White won in E.Berg-Velicka, Stockholm 2005/06.

6.♗d3 ♘e7

Before taking on e5, Dautov prepares the follow-up ♘e7-c6 to put pressure on e5. This plan looks stronger than taking on e5 immediately followed by ...♕c7 as in Berg-Velicka.

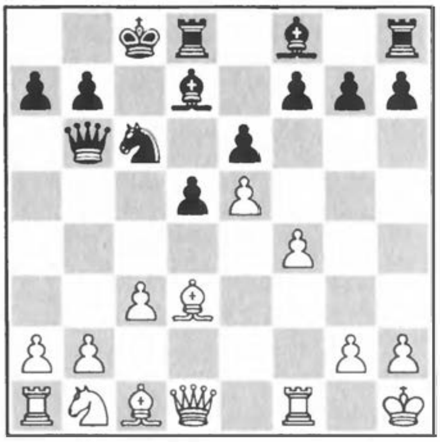
7.0-0 ♘xe5 8.dxe5 ♘c6 9.f4

The position now resembles a French Defence rather than a Caro-Kann. White's game is slightly more comfortable.

9...♕b6+

Here 9...g6 10.♘d2 (10.c3) 10...♕b6+ 11.♔h1 ♘b4 12.♗e2 ♗d7 13.c3 (13.a3 followed by c4) 13...♘a6 14.♘b3 ♗e7 15.♖f3 ♘c5 16.♗e3 ♕c7 was quite playable for Black in Abel-Gagarkine, Pardubice 2005.

10.♔h1 ♗d7 11.c3 0-0-0



White can easily attack on the kingside due to his pawn structure (e5-f4), hence it is not illogical to castle queenside.

12.♕e2

Überdeckung of e5, and enabling White to develop his queenside.

12...f6

Black has to attack the e5-pawn to gain some counterplay.

13.♗e3 ♗c5

After 13...♕c7 White has 14.♗d4 g5 15.♘d2 gxf4 16.♘f3 f5 when according to Müller in New In Chess Magazine 2006/4 he can launch an attack with 17.a4 ♔b8 18.a5 ♖g8 19.b4.

14.♗xc5 ♕xc5 15.♘d2 fxe5 16.fxe5 ♖df8 17.♘f3 h6

White is better, his attack on the queenside is easier to organize than Black's on the kingside. White has slightly more space, and his bishop is stronger than Black's 'bad' bishop.

18.♖ac1 ♕b6 19.b4 ♔b8 20.a4 ♖c8 21.♗b5!? ♖hf8 22.♕d2 a6?

Müller's provocative 21st move pays off. The a-pawn is an easy target, enabling White to open the a-file. Correct was 22...g5 and Black also has his chances in this complicated position.

23.♗d3 ♗e8 24.b5 axb5 25.axb5 ♘e7 26.♖fe1 ♗g6

Dautov has at least manoeuvred his bishop out of the 'French' pawn chain.

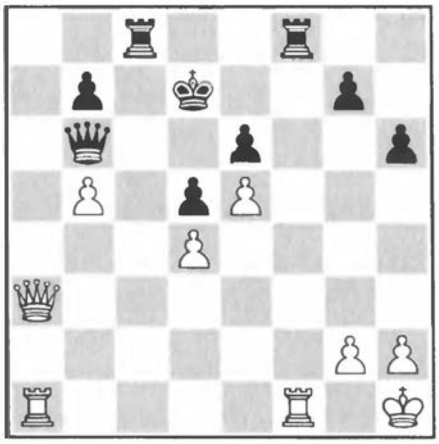
27.♗xg6 ♘xg6 28.♘d4 ♘e7 29.♖a1 ♘f5 30.♕a2 ♘xd4

Müller indicated that the immediate 30...♔c7 is stronger, when play might continue: 31.♘xf5 ♖a8! 32.♕b2 ♖xf5 33.♕b4 and White keeps the initiative.

31.cxd4

Dautov has succeeded in exchanging all minor pieces. However, in the resulting position (with only heavy pieces) the safety of the king is often a deciding factor.

31...♔c7 32.♕a3 ♔d7 33.♖f1



33...♖f5?

Reportedly, Anand indicated 33...♖a8 as the only move, but 34.♕g3 g5 35.♕d3 ♖xa1 36.♖xa1 ♔c7 still promises White a clear advantage. After the text, played in huge timetrouble, Müller has an immediate win:

34.g4! ♖xf1+ 35.♖xf1

Now the threat of 36.♖f7+ can only be parried by entering a lost queen ending.

35...♔c7 36.♖c1+ ♔b8 37.♖xc8+ ♔xc8 38.♕f8+ ♕d8 39.♕xg7 ♕a5 40.♕f8+ ♔d7 41.♕d6+ ♔c8 42.♕xe6+ ♔b8 43.♕d6+ ♔a7 44.♕c5+ ♔b8 45.♕f8+ ♔a7 46.b6+!

Transforming the game into an elementary winning pawn ending. **46...♕xb6 47.♕c5 1-0**

A Kortchnoi Surprise

SOS-1, Chapter 4, p.40

When the living legend Viktor Kortchnoi takes up an SOS you know you cannot go wrong. In a recent game Kortchnoi favoured 4...♗d6 against the Spanish Four Knights to score a devastating win.

☐ **Manfred Böhnisch**
■ **Viktor Kortchnoi**
Dresden 2006

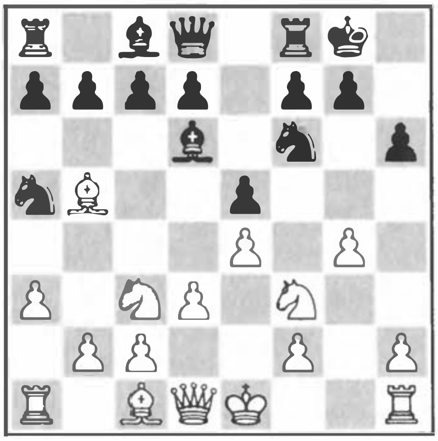
1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗b5 ♗d6

This line was recommended in SOS-1 and updated in the SOS-Files of SOS-2. Black avoids the possible simplifications that may arise after 4...♗b4 or 4...♘d4. Meanwhile, he intends a well-tested scheme of development – known from certain lines in the Ruy Lopez: ...0-0, ...♖e8, ...♗f8, and ...d5.

5.a4

The most common move is **5.d3**. The text is more or less useful – it prevents ...a6 and ...b5, it reserves a square on the a2-g8 diagonal for the bishop, and it protects b5. A possible disadvantage (see the game!) is the weakening of the square b4. Another idea behind White's fifth move is not to castle and to wait for Black to do so – in order to lash out with g4.

If White wants to make a useful waiting move then I would prefer the more restrained **5.a3** after 5...0-0 6.d3 h6?! (to stop ♗g5, but it weakens the kingside. Instead 6...♖e8 7.♗c4 ♗c5 was Yuldashev-Kayumov, Abu Dhabi 2004. See the SOS-files in SOS-2) 7.g4 (the main idea behind White's 5.a3) 7...♘a5!? (a new move for Black in this tense position. Smeets-Pavasovic, Wijk aan Zee 2004, went: 7...♗e7 8.♗xc6! dxc6 9.h3 ♕d6 10.♘h4 ♘d5! 11.♘f5 ♗xf5 12.gxf5 ♘xc3 13.bxc3, see SOS-2)



8.g5 hxg5 9.♗xg5 c6 (this was Black's idea) 10.♘h4 (very interesting is 10.d4!? cxb5 – not 10...exd4 11.♕xd4 ♗e7 12.e5! – 11.dxe5 ♗xe5 12.♘xe5 and now 12...d6? fails to 13.♘d5 winning) 10...♗e7 (10...cxb5? 11.♘f5 ♗e7 12.♘xe7+ ♕xe7 13.♘d5 ♘xd5! – otherwise White has a winning attack – 14.♗xe7 ♘xe7 is better for White despite the material balance of three minor pieces for the queen) 11.♘f5 d5 12.♘xe7+ ♕xe7 13.exd5 cxb5 14.♘e4 (much better is 14.♕f3 when White prevents 14...♗f5 and threatens 15.♘e4; after 14...♕d6 15.♗xf6 ♕xf6 16.♕xf6 gxf6 he regains his sacrificed material with 17.b4 ♘c6 18.dxc6 bxc6 and has the better ending after, say 19.a4) 14...♗f5 15.♗xf6 gxf6 16.♕d2 (16.b4 ♗g6 17.bxa5 f5 with nice counterplay) 16...♗g6 (Black cannot save his piece with 16...b6? as 17.♕h6 ♗xe4 18.dxe4 mates) 17.h4?! (17.♕xa5! with a very strong position) 17...f5 18.d6 ♕e6 19.♘g5 ♕d5 20.♖g1 ♘c6 21.c3 ♖ad8 (21...♘a5) 22.h5 ♖xd6 23.0-0-0 ♕a2 24.♘f3 b4! 25.♕c2 (25.axb4 ♘xb4!, and 25.cxb4? ♘a5!) 25...b3 26.♕b1 ♕xb1+ 27.♔xb1 ♖fd8 28.♘h4? ♖xd3 and Black won in T.Willemze-Berkvens, Hilversum 2006.

Nothing special is **5.♗xc6** dxc6 when after 6.d4 Black has 6...♗b4!. Possible is the boring 6...♗g4 7.dxe5 ♗xf3 8.♕xf3 ♗xe5 9.♗f4 ½-½ Külaots-Gausel, Gausdal 2003. Slightly better for White is 6...exd4 7.♕xd4 ♕e7 8.♗e3 ♗b4. The game Kargin-Hector, Copenhagen 2005, continued: 9.0-0-0 ♗e6 10.♗g5 ♗c5 11.♕d2 h6 12.♗h4 g5 13.♘xg5! hxg5 14.♗xg5 ♖g8 15.h4 ♗d6 16.♕d4 with an advantage.

Spraggett-Bruzon, Buenos Aires 2005, went: **5.d3** a6 (5...h6) 6.♗a4 h6 7.♘e2 0-0 8.♘g3 ♖e8 9.a3 b5 10.♗b3 ♗f8 11.0-0 d6 12.♗d2 ♗e6 13.♗xe6 ♖xe6 14.c4 bxc4 15.dxc4 ♘d4 16.♗a5 ♘xf3+ 17.♕xf3 ♕b8 18.♖ab1 ♕b7 19.♖fe1 c6 20.♕e2 g6 21.♖ed1 ♖b8 22.♘f1 d5 with an easy game for Black.

5...0-0

An earlier game with 5.a4 saw: 5...a6 6.♗c4 ♗c5 7.d3 d6 8.♗g5 h6 9.♗xf6 ♕xf6 10.♘d5 ♕d8 11.c3 (this is a position from the Canal Variation in the Italian with the moves a4 and ...a6 included. The difference clearly favours Black) 11...0-0 12.b4 ♗a7 13.h3 ♔h8! 14.0-0 f5 (with a strong initiative) 15.♕e2 fxe4 16.dxe4 ♘e7 17.♖ad1 ♘g6 18.♖d2 ♗e6 19.♗a2 ♗xd5 20.♗xd5 c6 21.♗b3 ♕e7 22.g3 ♖f6 23.♖d3 ♖af8 24.♔g2 d5 25.h4

♖f4 and White resigned in Zvedeniouk-Zhao, Sydney 2005.

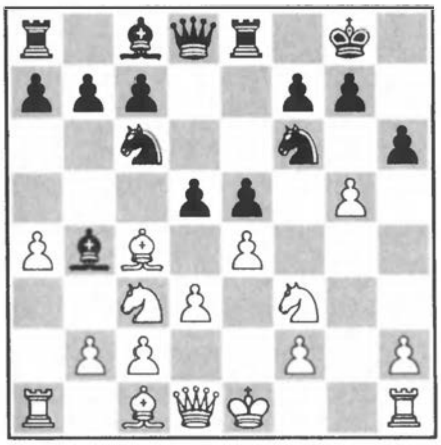
6.d3 ♖e8 7.♗c4

This prevents the natural 7...♗f8 on account of 8.♘g5.

7...h6 8.g4

This was White's idea! He has refrained from castling to be able to play this bayonet attack the moment that Black prevents ♗g5 (or ♘g5) with ...h6. Kortchnoi has a nice resource up his sleeve though!

8...♗b4! 9.g5 d5!



This is it! Black strikes in the centre in reply to White's flank attack. 'Viktor the Terrible' already holds a huge advantage.

10.exd5

For 10.gxf6 is answered by 10...♕xf6! 11.♗xd5 ♗g4.

10...♘d4 11.h3

Not 11.gxf6? ♗g4 and Black wins. Best was 11.♖g1 but after 11...♗g4 12.♖xg4 ♘xg4 13.h3 ♕d7 14.hxg4 ♕xg4 Black is much better.

11...♘xd5 12.♗d2 ♘f4 13.♗xf4 exf4+ 14.♔f1

Now Kortchnoi simplifies into an easily won position.

14...♗xc3 15.bxc3 ♘xf3 16.♕xf3 ♕xg5 With a pawn up in a superior position. **17.♖b1 c6 18.h4 ♕f6 19.a5 ♖b8 20.d4 ♗f5 21.♗d3** Not 21.♕xf4?? ♗d3+. **21...♗e6 22.♕h5 b6 23.axb6 axb6 24.f3 ♖bd8 25.♗e4** 25.♖xb6?? ♖d5 traps her majesty. **25...c5 26.♔f2 cxd4 27.♖xb6 dxc3 28.♕c5 ♖d2+ 29.♔e1 ♕d8** **0-1**

Quick wins in Alapin's line

SOS-1, Chapter 8, p.73

Some openings are more popular than others. This holds true for SOS lines as well. A case in point is Alapin's 2.♕d3 against the Dutch. OK the early queen move may not be the refutation of the Dutch, but it is sufficiently tricky to merit some attention. Yet, Alapin's line has been played in surprisingly few games ever since its publication in SOS-1. Possibly the next miniature win by the young German GM Baramidze will whet your appetite?

☐ **David Baramidze**
■ **Stefan Lupor**
Bad Wiessee 2005

1.d4 f5 2.♕d3

Here it is. White attacks f5 and prepares a quick e4. Black's possibilities are restricted.

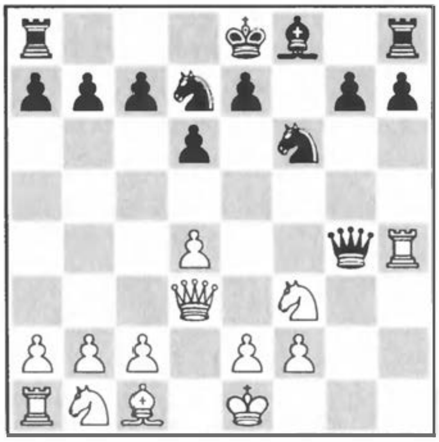
2...d5

Black is virtually forced to go for the Stonewall, and this is one of the points of 2.♕d3. How many Leningrad players like to be forced into playing such a solid but inflexible pawn structure? Both 2...g6 3.e4 fxe4 4.♕xe4 ♘f6 5.♕h4, and 2...e6 3.e4 fxe4 4.♕xe4 ♘f6 5.♕h4 are preferable for White.

White should answer **2...d6** with 3.g4 (less good is 3.e4 since Black gets an edge in development after 3...fxe4 4.♕xe4 ♘f6 5.♕h4 ♗f5) 3...fxg4 4.h3 with interesting play. Now returning material with 4...g3 is perhaps sensible, but White's game remains preferable after 5.fxg3 ♘f6 6.♗g2 or 6.e4.

Taking the pawn with 4...gxh3 gives White ample compensation after 5.♘xh3, or 5.♗xh3 ♘f6 6.♗g5.

The recent game I.Schneider-Grafl, Germany Bundesliga 2005/06 went: 4...♘f6 5.hxg4 ♗xg4 6.♗h3 (it is important to exchange the light-squared bishops, emphasizing the weaknesses in Black's position. Still, in New In Chess Magazine Schneider indicated that 6.f3! ♗e6 7.e4 is even stronger) 6...♕d7 7.♗xg4 ♕xg4 8.♘f3 ♘bd7?! (Schneider proposes 8...♘c6 as entirely satisfactory for Black) 9.♖h4!



9...♕e6 10.♘c3 ♘b6 11.♘g5 ♕c4 12.♕h3 ♘bd5 13.♘xd5 ♘xd5 (13...♕xd5 14.♘e6 ♔f7 15.♘g5+ ♔e8 16.c3±, Schneider) 14.♖xh7 ♖xh7 15.♕xh7 ♘f6 16.♕f5 ♕xd4?? (missing a devastating check) 17.♕b5+ c6 18.♕xb7 ♖d8 19.♕xc6+ ♖d7 20.♕c8+ ♖d8 21.♕xd8+ and Black resigned.

3.g4!

White is prepared to sacrifice a pawn to destroy Black's Stonewall. 3.♗f4 is not bad either, see SOS-1.

3...e6

Better is 3...fxg4 4.h3 g3, and now both 5.♕xg3 and 5.fxg3 are possible.

4.c4

4.gxf5 exf5 5.♗f4 was my recommendation in SOS-1.

4...c6 5.♘c3 ♞f6 6.cxd5 ♘xg4

Of course not 6...exd5? 7.gxf5. White's game is also preferable after 6...cxd5?! 7.gxf5 exf5 8.♗g5 and Black will have trouble keeping his d5-pawn. Black may consider 6...♘xd5 though.

7.dxe6 ♗xe6 8.♘f3

Black's central pawns have disappeared. So, he must try and control the central squares d5 and e4 with his pieces. This explains his next retreat.

8...♘f6

However he could have considered 8...♘a6 followed by 9...♘b4.

9.♖g1!?

The start of a fine career!

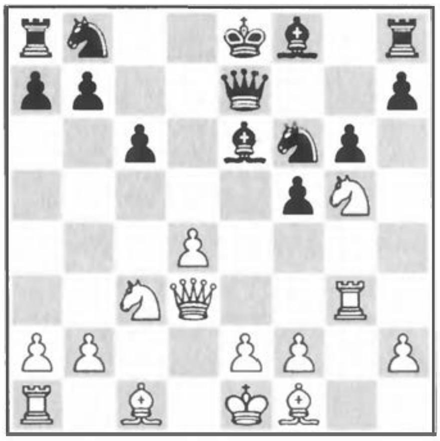
9...g6 10.♘g5

Aggressive play by Baramidze.

10...♕e7?!

In answer to 10...♗d5 White plays 11.f3!? to prepare e4.

11.♖g3!



Attaboy! Due to the unusual ♖g1-g3-e3 manoeuvre Black is in grave difficulties.

11...♘e4?

Black is already throwing in the towel, but 11...♘h5 shouldn't save Black either after 12.♖e3 (12.♖f3) 12...♘f4 (12...♕xg5?? 13.♖xe6+ and 12...♘g7 13.♘xe6 ♘xe6 14.d5 wins) 13.♕d1 ♕xg5 14.♖xe6+ ♔d8 (14...♔d7 and now both 15.♕b3 and 15.d5 win for White) 15.d5 c5 16.♕a4 ♗h6 17.d6 which is disastrous for Black.

12.♘cxe4 fxe4 13.♕xe4 ♗f5
Black aims to play an ending with a pawn down, but Baramidze is ruthless.
14.♕f4 ♔d8 15.♖e3! ♕d7 16.♘e6+! ♔c8 16...♗xe6 17.♕f6+ ♔c7 18.♕xh8 **17.♘xf8 ♖xf8 18.♖e5** This is some rook – White wants to play 19.e4. **18...♕f7?** 18...♖d8 19.e3 with a pawn (and a position) up. **19.e4 ♘d7 20.exf5 ♘xe5 21.dxe5 ♕xf5? 22.♗h3** and Black had enough. **1-0**

Crushing the Benoni Wall

SOS-2, Chapter 3, p.23

In SOS-2 Alexander Beliavsky demonstrated a direct approach to destroy the Benoni Wall. In the game below Ildar Ibragimov adds a convincing example.

☐ **Ildar Ibragimov**
■ **Emory Tate**
Las Vegas 2005

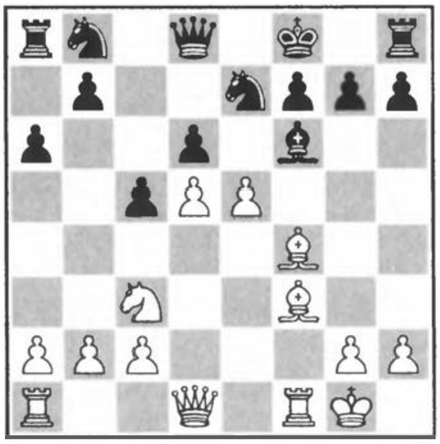
1.d4 c5 2.d5 e5 3.♘c3 d6 4.e4 ♗e7
Black plays the solid Benoni Wall hoping to exchange the dark-squared bishops (♗e7-g5) to keep firm control over the dark squares. Ibragimov's next was endorsed by Beliavsky and first played by Alekhine.
5.f4! ♗f6
Tate, not illogically, tries to take advantage of 5.f4 by immediately placing the bishop on the main diagonal. The main line is 5...exf4 6.♗xf4 and now:
– 6...♘f6 7.e5 (this is too direct, it makes sense to first develop a few pieces and only then to play for the push e4-e5. Instead, 7.♗b5+ was played by Beliavsky against Dvoretsky in 1975, whilst 20 years later he preferred 7.♗e2 against Ivanovic) 7...dxe5 8.♗xe5 0-0 9.♗e2 ♖e8 10.♕d2 ♗d6 (this neutralizes White's play and equalizes) 11.♗xd6 ♕xd6 12.♘f3 ♗g4 13.0-0 ♗xf3! 14.♗xf3 a6 with an even position in Ilincic-Kosanovic, Pancevo 2005.
– 6...♗h4+ (this check does not disturb White) 7.g3 ♗f6 8.♘b5 ♗xb2 9.♗xd6!? (to keep Black's king in the centre) 9...♕a5+ 10.♔f2 ♘f6. To prevent 11.♘c7+, but White calmly continued with 11.♔g2! ♘a6 12.♘f3 ♗d7 13.a4 ♗g4 14.♖b1 with an obvious advantage, White won after 14...♗d4 15.♘bxd4 cxd4 16.♗b5+ ♘d7 17.♕xd4 f6 18.e5 ♗xf3+ 19.♔xf3 0-0-0 20.♗xa6 1-0 Karr-Gregoire, French tt, Montpellier 2006.
– Note that 6...♗g5 7.♕d2 ♗xf4 8.♕xf4 ♕f6 9.♕xf6 ♘xf6 does not relieve Black's plight. Beliavsky now analyzes the pawn sacrifice 10.♘b5! ♔d7 11.♘f3! see SOS-2, p.25. More spectacular was the course of Sturua-Himdan, Dubai 2006: 7.♗xg5 ♕xg5 8.♘f3 ♕e7 (8...♕e3+ 9.♕e2 ♕xe2+ 10.♗xe2 and White has an edge in development) 9.♗b5+ ♘d7 10.0-0 f6 11.e5! fxe5 12.♘xe5! dxe5 13.d6 ♕e6 14.♕d5 ♕xd5 15.♘xd5 and Sturua won.
6.♘f3 ♗g4
Black increases his control over square e5 with this pin. Black has problems after 6...exf4 7.♗xf4. A quick e4-e5 can be annoying, just like the occasional ♘c3-b5.
7.♗b5+ ♔f8
Awkward, but the alternative is worse: 7...♘d7 8.0-0 a6 9.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 10.fxe5 ♗xf3?? (10...♗xe5 11.♘xe5 dxe5 12.♕e1 with a huge positional advantage, while 10...dxe5 11.♕e1 likewise, is much better for White) 11.exf6! wins on the spot!
8.0-0 exf4
A novelty for what it is worth. Black will not be in time to control the e5-square. In Maksimovic-Djuric, Bjelovar 1979, 8...♗xf3 9.♕xf3 ♕e7 was played. White now went for the strong 10.g4!, see SOS-2.
9.♗xf4 a6

I would prefer 9...♘e7, though this may be answered by 10.e5 dxe5 11.♗e3 as well. Moves like ♘e4 and d5-d6 are in the air.

10.♗e2 ♗xf3

After 10...♘e7 11.e5 ♘g6 (11...dxe5 12.♘xe5±) 12.exf6 ♘xf4 13.fxg7+ ♔xg7 14.♕d2 ♘xe2+ 15.♘xe2 Black's king is in mortal danger.

11.♗xf3 ♘e7 12.e5!



A fine positional pawn sacrifice.

12...dxe5 Here 12...♗xe5 13.♗xe5 dxe5 14.d6 ♘ec6 15.♗d5 wins, for example 15...f6 16.♕h5 ♕e8 17.♖xf6+ gxf6 18.♕h6 mates. **13.♗e3 ♘d7 14.♗g4** This opens the f-file and attacks an important defender. **14...h5 15.♗xh5** Even stronger than 15.♗xd7 ♕xd7 16.♗xc5. **15...♘b6 16.d6 ♘g8** The alternatives are no fun either. Thus, 16...♘c6 is simply met by 17.♗xc5, and 16...♘ed5 17.♘xd5 ♘xd5 18.♕xd5 ♖xh5 19.d7 just loses. **17.♘e4** Or 17.♗xc5. **17...♖c8** Or 17...♘c4 18.♗xc5 and if 18...b6 then White has 19.♘g5!. **18.♗xc5** 18.♘g5 was also very strong. **18...♘d7 19.♗e3** White has a material and a positional advantage. The Benoni Wall has been well and truly destroyed. **19...♖c6 20.c4 g6** Or 20...♖xc4 21.♕d5 winning. **21.♗g4 ♖xc4 22.♕d5 ♘b6 23.♕xb7 ♖b4 24.♖ac1 ♔g7 25.♖c7** and Black resigned.

Double Surprise in the Bundesliga

SOS-3, Chapter 8, p.71

In the concluding rounds of the German Bundesliga (played in one weekend) two interesting games were played with the SOS line versus the French – 3.♗d3. The evening before the penultimate round Henrik Rudolf was wondering what to play against the French Defence that he expected to meet. Enter Stefan Löffler (not a team-mate!) who suggested that he might like to give 3.♗d3 a try. The bishop move worked wonders for Rudolf who won after a mere 16 moves. The position after his 11th move is given in SOS-3 with the accompanying verdict by GM Bluvshtein that 'White is simply much better'. The next day, Rainer Polzin, who plays for the same Berlin-based team as Rudolf, was surprised by 1...e6 and as a counter-surprise decided to give 3.♗d3 a try as well. Polzin, having emerged from the opening with a secure advantage too, had to work a bit harder eventually grinding down his opponent in a queen ending. So, 2-0 for 3.♗d3!

☐ **Rainer Polzin**
■ **Michael Richter**
Germany Bundesliga 2005/06

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♗d3

Here we are sinning against the rules of proper development by putting the bishop out before a knight. In SOS-3 Canadian GM Mark Bluvshtein explains his liking for this non-theoretical set-up. One of the main ideas is that 3...♘f6 is now met by 4.e5 ♘fd7 5.♘f3 c5 6.c3 when White is much better compared to similar positions from the Advance Variation or the Tarrasch Variation. Black's most logical continuation is 3...dxe4 followed by 4...♘f6 hitting the bishop and thus winning a tempo for his development.

3...dxe4

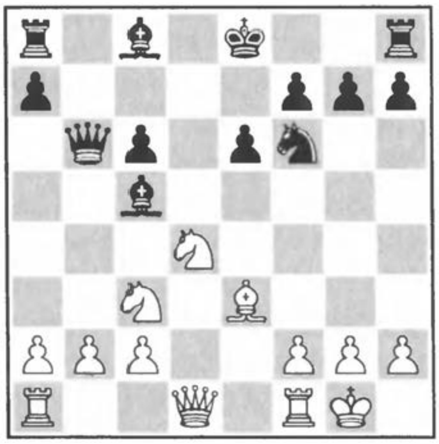
Bluvshtein also examines 3...♘c6 and 3...c5. Against the latter move French GM Robert Fontaine sacrificed a pawn for considerable compensation with: 3...c5 4.exd5 (4.c3 ♘c6 5.♘e2 cxd4 6.cxd4 ♘b4 7.♗b5+ ♗d7 8.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 9.e5 was about equal in Bluvshtein-Degraeve, Montreal 2002) 4...♕xd5 5.♘c3! ♕xd4 (5...♕xg2?? 6.♗e4 wins the queen) 6.♘f3 ♕d8 7.♗f4 with a huge edge in development. 7...a6 8.♕e2 ♗d6 9.♗xd6 ♕xd6 10.♘e4 ♕c7 11.0-0-0 ♘f6 12.♘d6+ and White had more than enough for the pawn in Fontaine-Popov, Moscow 2005.

4.♗xe4 ♘f6 5.♗f3

An unusual spot for the bishop. However, it is useful to put pressure on Black's queenside along the main diagonal.

5...♘c6

Development first, but is Black forgetting about his c-pawn? Much the most logical move is 5...c5 when after 6.♘e2 ♘c6 7.♗e3 we reach an important position for the whole line. In SOS-3 several moves are now investigated: 7...e5, 7...♘d5 and 7...cxd4. Also mentioned is the move that Henrik Rudolf encountered in his Bundesliga game: 7...♕b6 Bluvshtein calls this 'quite risky' in view of 8.♘bc3 cxd4 (8...♕xb2 9.dxc5) 9.♘xd4 ♗c5 10.♗xc6+ bxc6 11.0-0



when SOS-3 concludes that 'the threat of ♘a4 is coming', while 'Black's pieces are badly misplaced.' So true, so true. Let's see how Rudolf-Rausch, Germany Bundesliga 2005/06 concluded: 11...♘d5 12.♘a4 ♘xe3 (or 12...♕a5 13.♘xc5 ♘xe3 (13...♕xc5 14.♘xe6!) 14.♘xc6!, and 12...♕b4 13.c3) 13.fxe3 ♕a5 14.♕h5! (this wins on the spot as 14...♕xa4 15.♕xf7+ ♔d8 16.♖adl is game over) 14...g6 15.♕xc5 ♕xa4? 16.♘xc6 and Black resigned.

6.♘e2 ♗d6 7.♘bc3 ♗d7 8.♗g5

Both sides have developed their light pieces (following the rules of the development after all). White has more space, and his bishops are more actively placed. Black now tries to reduce the pressure, but slightly compromises his position in the process.

8...h6 9.♗h4 g5 10.♗g3 ♕e7

Here 10...g4 11.♗e4± ♘xe4?! 12.♘xe4 ♗xg3 13.hxg3 is better for White.

11.♕d2

Preparing to castle queenside.

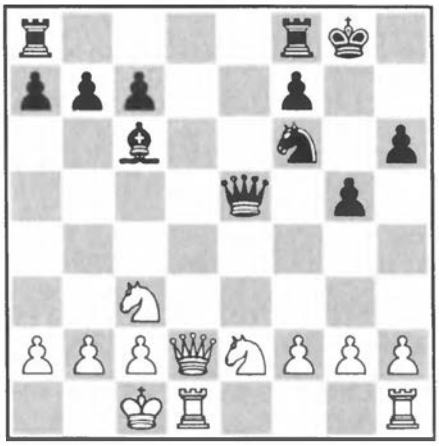
11...e5?

Black is forcing his hand, better was 11...0-0-0.

12.♗xc6

This leads to a simple position where White's advantage is clear. Much harder to evaluate is 12.dxe5 ♘xe5 13.♗xb7 ♖b8 when Black clearly has his chances too.

12...♗xc6 13.dxe5 ♗xe5 14.♗xe5 ♕xe5 15.0-0-0 0-0



So both sides have completed their development. But while White's king is safely tucked away on the queenside, Black's king will remain in permanent danger because of the pawn on g5. Polzin in fact demonstrates in the game that White is better, not so much because of Black's weakened kingside, but because of his slight lead in development (there is already a rook on d1, and White is to move here) and the vulnerability of Black's queen.

16.♘d4! ♗e4

Black loses after 16...♗xg2 17.f4! ♕xf4 18.♕xf4 gxf4 19.♖hg1 f3 20.♘xf3.

17.♖he1

Polzin continues to play 'simple chess', and is not distracted by possible attacking chances on the kingside.

17...♖ad8 18.♘xe4

Also good is 18.♕e3.

18...♘xe4 19.♕e3 ♖fe8 20.f3 c5

The only move. Not 20...♘f2? 21.♕xe5 ♖xe5 22.♖xe5 ♘xd1 23.♘f5 and Black loses his knight.

21.♕xe4 ♕b8

White will be a pawn up in the endings arising after 21...♕xe4 22.♖xe4 cxd4 (22...♖xe4 23.fxe4 cxd4 24.c3) 23.♖dxd4.

22.♘c6!?

Or 22.♕f5.

22...♖xd1+

22...♖xe4 23.♘xb8 ♖xe1 24.♖xe1 ♖xb8 25.♖e7 and, owing to the rook on the seventh rank, White has a very safe edge. Slightly better than the game continuation was 22...bxc6 23.♖xd8 (23.♕xc6 ♖xe1 24.♖xe1 ♕f4+ 25.♔b1 ♕xh2) 23...♖xd8 24.♕xc6 ♕f4+ 25.♔b1 ♕xh2.

23.♖xd1 bxc6 24.♕xc6 ♖e6 25.♕xc5 ♕xh2 26.b3 ♕xg2

Material is equal, but Black's king is in danger (an important feature in endings with heavy pieces).

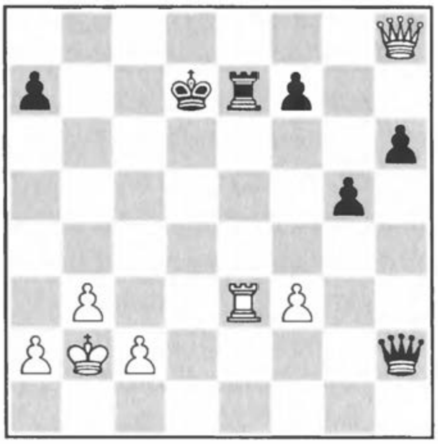
27.♖d8+ ♔h7 28.♕f8 ♔g6 29.♕g8+ ♔f6 30.♖d7 ♖e7

30...♕h1+ 31.♔b2 ♕h5 32.♖xa7 ♕g6 33.♕h8+ ♕g7 34.♕xg7+ ♔xg7 and White is better positioned for the upcoming pawn-race.

31.♕h8+ ♔e6 32.♖d3!

White is winning.

32...♕g1+ 33.♔b2 ♕h2 34.♖e3+ ♔d7 35.♖d3+ ♔e6 36.♖e3+ ♔d7



37.♕d4+

Polzin transfers to a winning queen ending. Also winning is the computer line 37.♖c3 ♖e6 38.♕c8+ ♔e7 39.♖c7+ ♔f6 40.♕h8+ ♔g6 41.♕g8+ ♔h5 42.♕xf7+ ♖g6 43.♖e7.

37...♔e8 38.♖xe7+

Here 38.♖c3! wins more easily.

38...♔xe7 39.♕xa7+ ♔f8 40.♕c5+ ♔g7 41.♕d4+ f6 42.a4 White is a pawn up, his queen is better placed, and his passed pawns run faster. The verdict is not in doubt. **42...♕c7 43.b4 h5 44.b5 h4 45.b6 ♕b8 46.♕c5** Intending 47.♕c7. but he could have won a tempo with 46.♕d7+ ♔g6 47.♕c7+–. **46...h3 47.♕c7+ ♕xc7 48.bxc7 h2 49.c8♕ h1♕ 50.♕b7+ ♔h6 51.♕c6! ♔g6 52.a5** and White won after: **52...♕g1 53.a6 ♕d4+ 54.c3 ♕d2+ 55.♔b3 ♕d1+ 56.♔b4 ♕a1 57.♔b5 ♕b2+ 58.♔a5 ♕b3 59.a7 ♕a3+ 60.♔b6 ♕b3+ 61.♔c7 ♕f7+ 62.♔b8 ♕f8+ 63.♕c8 ♕d6+ 64.♕c7 1-0**

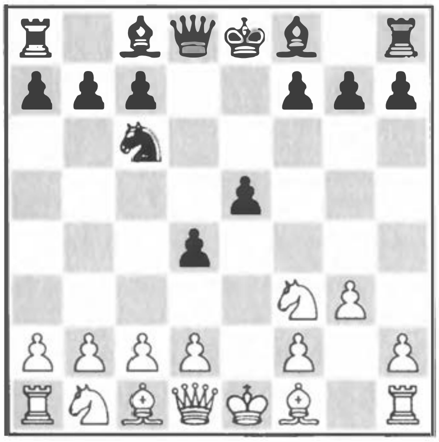
Light Relief

SOS-2, Chapter 12, p.91

In SOS-2 Igor Glek wrote an interesting article on two gambit lines against his own Glek Variation. In SOS-3 we returned to the wildest of them – the piece sac 4...♘xe4 – because of the brilliant (and SOS-Prize winning) game Sengupta-Petrosian. The present game once again illustrates how quickly Black can score when White takes up the gauntlet after 4...♘xe4.

☐ **Jason Chan**
■ **David Smerdon**
Queenstown 2006

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.g3 ♘xe4 5.♘xe4 d5 6.♘c3 d4 7.♘b1



If you play 4...♘xe4 you have to be prepared for players who will just return the piece to enter a theoretical main line in the Glek Four Knights, i.e. 7.♗g2 dxc3 8.bxc3.

Glek's main line in SOS-2 was 7.♘b5 a6 8.♘a3 e4 9.♘h4 ♗xa3 10.bxa3 0-0. Tom Chivers, one of our SOS-readers, has suggested that Black should play the more forcing 10...g5. After 11.♘g2 ♘e5 Black appears to be doing fine after 12.♗e2 ♗h3. Perhaps White should return material with 11.♗g2 gxh4 12.0-0!? (12.♗xe4 ♗h3 is unpleasant).

The other option is 7.♘e4 f5 8.♘eg5 e4 9.♗c4 exf3 10.♗f7+ which was Sengupta-Petrosian, Kochin 2004 (see SOS-3).

7...e4 8.♕e2?!

A new move, that has no eternity value. Glek mentioned 8.♘g1 returning all pieces to their starting positions in SOS-2.

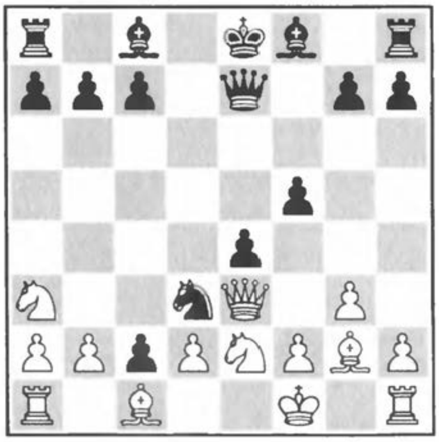
8...♕e7 9.♘g1

The inclusion of ♕e2 and ...♕e7 makes Black's next possible.

9...♘b4! 10.♘a3 d3 11.♕e3

Or 11.cxd3 ♘xd3+ 12.♔d1.

11...dxc2 12.♗g2 f5 13.♘e2 ♘d3+ 14.♔f1



14...♕e5?! 15.f4

White could have taken advantage of Black's previous move with 15.♘f4!, the idea being that 15...♘xc1 is met by 16.d4!. Correct is 15...♗xa3! 16.♘xd3 ♕b5 17.bxa3 ♕xd3+.

15...♕e6 16.♘d4 ♕f6 16...♕a6!? **17.♗xe4**

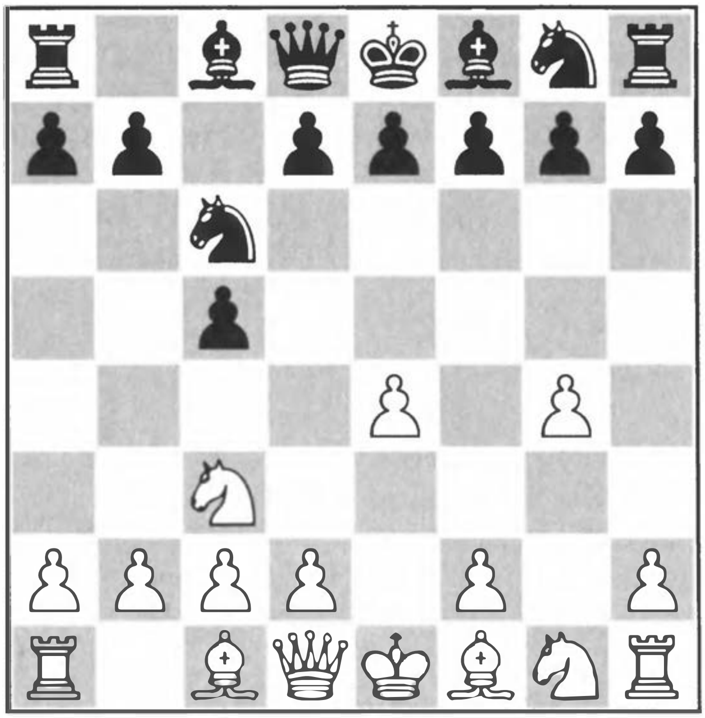
White returns the piece, but this brings no relief. Perhaps he should just grovel with 17.♘axc2.

17...fxe4 18.♕xe4+ ♗e7 19.♕xd3 ♗h3+ 20.♔e1 0-0-0 and Black wins because he regains the piece with interest. **21.♘axc2 ♗c5 22.g4 ♖he8+ 23.♔f2 ♕xf4+ 24.♕f3 ♗xd4+ 25.♘xd4 ♕xd4+ 0-1**

CHAPTER 2

Lubos Kavalek & Jeroen Bosch

Closed Sicilian: Vinohrady Variation



1.e4 c5 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.g4

Remember the story about Kasparov playing with Black in the 1997 Fontys tournament in Tilburg against the young American Tal Shaked? In a topical line of the Exchange Variation of the Grünfeld (1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.e4 ♘xc3 6.bxc3 ♗g7 7.♗e3 c5 8.♕d2) Kasparov had found a powerful novelty which he had duly analysed with his seconds Makarichev and Dokhoian and computer-checked to perfection. After the sequence 8...♕a5 9.♖b1 b6 10.♗b5+ ♗d7 11.♗e2 ♗c6 12.♗d3 ♘d7 13.♘e2 the boss played his novelty 13...♖d8!. Tal Shaked realized the strength of this move after using up an hour of his time, and lost ignominiously after 14.f3 0-0 15.h4 h5 16.♗g5 ♖fe8 17.♖c1 ♗b7 18.d5 ♘e5 19.♗b1 ♘c4 20.♕f4 ♗e5 0-1.

Now, Kasparov was not at all happy about the 'free' point he had just scored. He complained about the hours of analysis that he had thrown away on a player 300 elo-points below his strength. In his own words, he had just spent an 'atomic bomb to kill a fly'. Not all players could sympathize with Kasparov's plight, especially not Michal Krasenkow who drily remarked that Kasparov should have been happy to have been able to employ the novelty at all. Krasenkow had found the same novelty, but had got no chance yet to throw this atomic bomb (and now never would).

It is not so unusual for players to find strong novelties independently of each other – at different places, but at almost the same time. And indeed, the same sort of thing happens in scientific research as well. It seems sometimes as if a certain idea is simply 'in the air'. This is also the case with the Bayonet Attack in the Closed Sicilian that is the subject of this chapter. Around 1965 the creative Canadian Duncan Suttles 'invented' this line. He inspired his compatriot Lawrence Day to take up the variation too. But please remember that news did not travel fast forty years ago.

Around the same time in 1965, the 3.g4 variation was introduced in international competition by prominent Czech players Michael Janata (co-winner at the 1963 World Junior Championship) and Lubos Kavalek (who became international grandmaster also in 1965) at the Student Olympiad in Sinaia, Romania. It was employed as well in the same year by Czech juniors Vavruska and Petras in domestic events. Neither the Canadian branch, nor the Czech branch, knew of the developments on each other's continents.

The evidence before us suggests that the matter of chronology – who was the first to employ this line – can be satisfactorily solved. The Czechs win the historical battle hands down. It is Jaromir Kubicek who deserves full credit for being the first to invent and employ 3.g4 in the late 1950s. Lubos (formerly Lubomir) Kavalek will explain the origin of the Vinohrady (vineyards) Variation in his notes. Indeed, all historical information regarding the Czech branch of the 'viniculture' is by Kavalek. Gerard Welling, René Olthof and Adrian Mikhalchishin have all provided further background information and notes on this spicy Closed Sicilian.

Let us start with a light junior game by Kubicek to get into the right spirit.

☐ **Jaromir Kubicek**
■ **Petr Stecher**
Prague 1958

1.e4 c5 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.g4 d6 4.d3 ♘f6

Not the best reply. Kubicek played 3.g4 not only as a kind of extended king's fianchetto. Stecher's 4...♘f6 provokes Kubicek into playing his main idea: pushing the kingside pawns as in, say, the Keres Attack in the Sicilian.

5.g5 ♘g4?! 6.h3 ♘ge5 7.f4 ♘g6?! 8.h4! e6 9.h5 ♘ge7 10.♘f3 e5

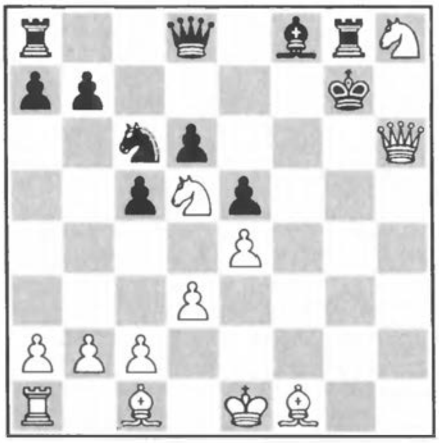
Here 10...d5 was preferable.

11.f5 g6? 12.f6 ♘g8 13.hxg6 fxg6 14.♘h4!

White has a won position. Black cannot prevent ♘xg6 as 14...♔f7? 15.♘xg6 ♔xg6 16.♕h5 mates.

14...♘xf6 15.gxf6 ♕xf6 16.♘d5 ♕d8 17.♘xg6 ♖g8 18.♖xh7 ♗e6 19.♕h5 ♗f7 20.♖xf7 ♔xf7 21.♘h8+ ♔g7 22.♕h6

Mate.



Obviously, Black did not put up much resistance, but the game shows how dangerous Kubicek's set-up can be.

It was in 1965 that Kavalek employed 3.g4 in an important international tournament.

☐ **Lubos Kavalek**
■ **Jan-Erik Westman**
Sinaia tt prel 1965 (2)

(notes by Lubos Kavalek)

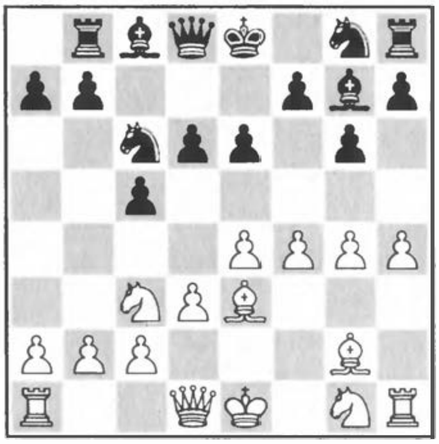
1.e4 c5 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.g4

'The Czech Double-Punch', as called by the Soviet grandmaster and theoretician Alexander Konstantinopolsky because it was also played by Michael Janata in the same match against Sweden. We named the line 'The Vinohrady Variation,' after a district in Prague where we both went to school. The spiritual father of the variation was Jaromir Kubicek, another member of our school team and a romantic player with passion for the King's and other gambits and for various unusual openings. Janata was the best player on our school team and he later went on to tie for first at the 1963 World Junior Championship with Florin Gheorghiu. Our school won the Prague scholastic championship several times. During the 1965 Student Olympiad in Sinaia, Romania, Janata and I were roommates. When we decided to introduce the Vinohrady Variation to the international scene on the same day on our boards, it caused a huge stir in the tournament hall. Kubicek's idea influenced other players from Prague. The variation took off after I published comments to this game in the Czechoslovakian monthly *Ceskoslovensky Sach*, and other Czech players began to use it. From the 1965 comments:' The move 3.g4 can't be easily refuted and it provides a good opportunity for an opening surprise. The main idea is to grab space and save a tempo in the attack from the usual slow build-up with 3.g3. The disadvantage could be the weak dark squares f4 and h4, but that is not easy to exploit it. For example, after 3...e5, White can play 4.♗c4!'.

3...g6 4.d3 ♗g7 5.♗e3 d6 6.♗g2 ♖b8

Janata was less successful against Dahl. That game went: 6...♗d7 7.h3 b5 8.♕d2 ♖b8 9.f4 e6 10.♘f3 b4 11.♘d1 ♘d4 12.0-0 ♘e7 13.c3 ♘xf3+ 14.♗xf3 ♕a5 15.f5?! bxc3 16.bxc3 exf5 17.exf5 gxf5 18.♗g5 ♗e5 19.gxf5 ♖g8 (Black takes advantage of the open g-file) 20.♗g4 f6 21.♗h6 ♗xf5 and Black was winning.

7.f4 e6 8.h4!



'Black played the opening rather passively, allowing me to gain space on the kingside and have a more comfortable game.'

8...♘ge7 9.h5 b5 10.♕d2 ♕a5

'Black plans to strike with 11...b4 and 12...d5, but White prevents it with a little combination that keeps the black king in the middle.'.

11.e5! dxe5

'Black is curious to find out what White really means. Otherwise he would play 11...d5 although after 12.♘ce2 White is better.'

12.h6 ♗f8 13.♗xc5 ♕c7 14.♘ge2 b4

'Calculating all possible variations in such a complicated position is not practical, but while my opponent was thinking I tried not to waste time: 14...exf4 15.♘xf4 ♕e5+ 16.♘e4 ♘d5 (16...f5 17.d4 ♕c7 18.♘d6+ ♔d7 19.♞f7 ♖g8 20.♗d6+−) 17.♘xd5 ♗xc5 (17...exd5 18.d4 ♕e6 19.0-0-0 dxe4 20.♗xf8 ♔xf8 21.d5 ♕e5 22.dxc6+−) 18.♘f6+ ♔f8 19.0-0-0 b4 20.♘xc5 ♕xc5 21.d4 ♕d6 22.d5 exd5 23.♕xd5 ♕xd5

(23...♕xf6 24.♕c5+ ♕e7 25.♕xc6 ♗b7 26.♕b5) 24.♗xd5 ♘d8 25.♖he1 ♘e6 26.♗xe6 ♗xe6 27.♘d7+ ♗xd7 28.♖xd7 ♖e8 29.♖xe8+ ♔xe8 30.♖xa7 ♖f8 31.a4+– and White wins (See *Ceskoslovensky Sach* 10/1965 p.151). But such calculations cost a lot of energy and are not to be recommended.

15.♘e4 ♘d5 16.♗xf8 ♔xf8 17.fxe5 ♘xe5 18.♕g5

Locking up the kingside with 18.g5 is better.

18...♗a6

Here 18...♘xg4?! is not playable because after 19.♕xg4 ♘e3 20.♕f3 ♘xc2+ 21.♔f2 ♘xa1 22.♕f6 ♖g8 23.♖xa1 White should win.

19.0-0 ♘d7 20.♘f4!

Exchanging Black's best piece.

20...♘xf4 21.♖xf4 ♔e8 22.♘f6+ ♘xf6 23.♕xf6 ♖f8 24.♖e1!

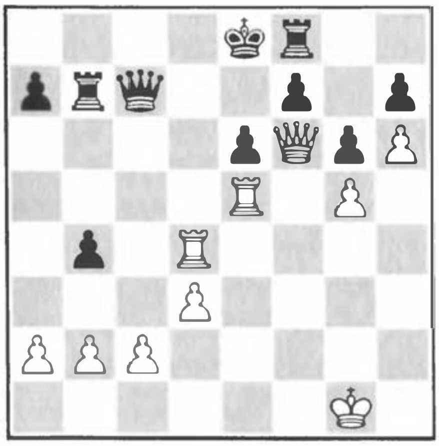
Threatening 25.♖xe6+!

24...♖b6 25.♖d4 ♕e7

Relatively the best. After 25...♖d6 26.♖xd6 ♕xd6 27.♖e4 ♕e7 28.♕e5 f6 29.♕xe6 White wins.

26.g5! ♗b7 27.♗xb7 ♖xb7 28.♖e5 ♕c7

Allowing a sharp combination. The queen exchange 28...♕xf6 loses fast: 29.gxf6 ♖d7 30.♖xb4 ♖d8 31.♖b7 ♖d7 32.♖eb5 and wins. Also after 28...♖d7 29.♖c4 wins.



29.♖xe6+! fxe6 30.♕xe6+ ♕e7 31.♕c8+ ♔f7 32.♖f4+ ♔g8 33.♖xf8+ ♕xf8 34.♕xb7 ♕c5+ 35.♔h1

Black has no good check and White threatens 34.♕g7 mate. Westman could have resigned.

35...♕d4 36.♕g7+! Simplifying into a winning pawn endgame. **36...♕xg7 37.hxg7 ♔xg7 38.♔g2 h6 39.gxh6+ ♔xh6 40.a3 a5 41.axb4 axb4 42.c4 ♔g5 43.c5 1-0**

One month before the start of the Student Olympiad in Sinaia, Duncan Suttles had already won effortlessly in the Canadian Championship with 3.g4.

☐ **Duncan Suttles**
■ **Joseph Kaltenecker**
Vancouver ch-CAN 1965 (5)

1.e4 c5 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.g4 d6 4.♗g2

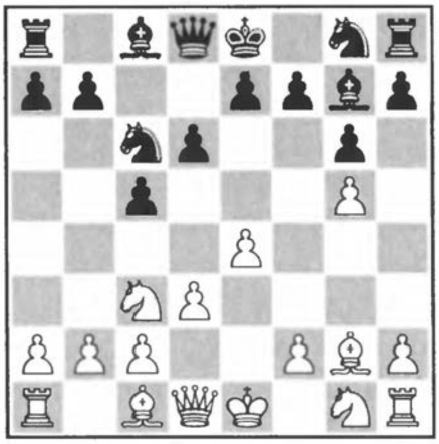
In 1968 Kubicek played in a small tournament in The Hague. I will give the game in full, as you won't find it in your database. At the time, Kubicek chose the more restrained 4.h3 The game continued 4...g6 5.d3 ♗g7 6.♗e3 e6 7.♗g2 ♘ge7 8.♕d2 h6 9.♘ge2 ♘d4 10.♘g3 ♖b8 11.f4 f5 12.gxf5 exf5 13.♘d5 ♗d7 14.c3 ♘dc6 (Kubicek now sacrificed a pawn to open files against the Black king) 15.e5!? ♘xd5 16.♗xd5 dxe5 17.0-0-0 ♘e7 18.♗b3 ♕c7 19.♖hg1 ♖f8 20.♖de1 b5 21.fxe5 c4 (Black appears to get considerable counterplay, but Kubicek has seen further) 22.e6! cxb3 (22...♗xe6 23.♗f4) 23.exd7+ ♕xd7 24.axb3 (material is equal, but the difference in the safety of the respective kings is striking) 24...♖c8 25.♘h5! ♗xc3 26.bxc3 gxh5 27.♗xh6 ♕d4 28.♗g7 ♕b4 29.♔b2 ♕d6 30.♗xf8 ♔xf8 31.♕g5 1-0 Kubicek-Van Halderen, The Hague Candidates Group 1968.

4...g6 5.d3 ♗g7 6.f4?!

Kavalek played 6.♗e3 against Westman,

which is probably stronger (and more flexible).

In the Czech Army Championship, August 1965, 6.g5!? was tested successfully in two games:



– 6...h5 7.h4 ♘d4 8.♘ce2 ♕b6 9.c3 ♘c6 10.♘f4 e6 11.♕c2 ♘ge7 12.♘ge2 e5 13.♘d5 ♘xd5 14.exd5 ♘e7 15.♘g3 ♗g4 16.♗e4 (White is somewhat better. Black now decided to castle queenside, but White's initiative develops strongly after his 17.b4 and 18.♖b1) 16...0-0-0 17.b4 ♔b8 18.♖b1 ♗c8 19.♘f1 ♘f5 20.♘d2 ♕c7 21.♘c4 f6 22.♕a4 ♗d7 23.♕a3 ♖c8 24.bxc5 ♕xc5 25.♕a6 b6? (White also wins after 25...♕c7 26.♗xf5 ♗xf5 (26...gxf5 27.♗e3 b5 28.♘xd6) 27.♗e3) 26.♗a3 1-0 Petras-Hora, Prague 1965.

– 6...h6 7.h4 hxg5 8.hxg5 ♖xh1 9.♗xh1 ♕d7 10.♗e3 ♕g4 11.♕xg4 ♗xg4 12.f3 ♗d7 13.♘ge2 0-0-0 14.0-0-0 e6 15.♗g2 (White has a definite edge in this ending) 15...♘ge7 16.♖h1 ♗e8 (16...♖h8? 17.♖xh8+♗xh8 18.♘b5 wins) 17.♖h7 ♗d4 18.♗d2! White is clearly better and won in the end. Vavruska-Goeth, Prague 1965.

Lawrence Day has played 6.h4. When practice has seen:

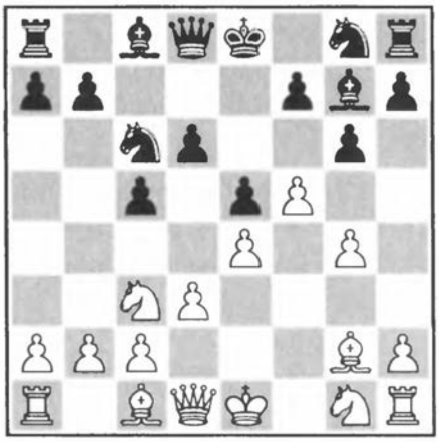
– 6...e6 7.♘h3 ♘ge7 8.♘f4 to prevent Black from playing ...d5, Day-Vranesic, Canadian speed championship, Kingston 1968.

– After 6...e5 Day recommends 7.♗e3 or even 7.g5 or 7.♘d5, but not 7.f4?! h5 8.f5 hxg4 9.♕xg4 ♘d4 with an edge for Black in Day-Martin, Ontario tt 1966.

– 6...♘f6 7.g5 ♘h5?! 8.♗d2 ♘d4 9.♖b1 ♗e5 10.♘ce2 ♗g4 11.f3 ♗e6 12.f4 ♘xe2 13.♘xe2 ♗g7 14.♗f3 (14.f5 gxf5 15.♗f3) 14...f5 15.♗xh5 gxh5 16.♘g3 fxe4 17.♘xh5 ♗f8 18.dxe4 and White was superior in Day-Spencer, Ontario Open 1967.

– 6...h6?! 7.f4 e6 8.♗e3 ♘ge7 9.♘ge2 ♘d4 10.♕d2 ♖b8 11.♘g3 b5 12.h5 b4 13.♘d1 a5 14.c3 bxc3 15.bxc3 ♘b5 16.a4 ♘c7 17.hxg6 fxg6 18.f5 with a considerable edge in Welling-Catteau, Douai 1992.

6...e5! 7.f5



Consistent with his previous move.

7...g5?

Good was 7...h5! 8.fxg6 ♕h4+ 9.♔f1 hxg4 10.gxf7+ ♔xf7 11.♗e3 ♘ge7 as was noted in *Canadian Chess Chat*. White's king is in more danger than Black's. Note that the immediate check on h4 brings nothing special: 7...♕h4+ 8.♔f1 and 8...h5 runs into 9.g5!

8.h4 h6 9.hxg5 hxg5 10.♖xh8 ♗xh8 11.♘f3 f6 12.♔f2 Black is locked up on the kingside with no counterplay in sight. **12...♕d7 13.♘d5 ♕h7?** This merely gains White a tempo later on. **14.c3 ♖b8 15.♗e3 ♗g7 16.♕b3 ♗f8 17.♖h1 ♕g7 18.♖h5 ♘h6 19.♔g3 ♘f7??** This loses on the spot, but Black's position is unenviable anyway. **20.♖h7** **1-0**

Suttles later refined his bayonet attack with 3.d3, only continuing with 4.g4 after 3...d6 or 3...g6. His main reason was to avoid 3.g4 e6 which is one of Black's strongest options (see Hort-Kindermann below). Kavalek, by the way, does not approve of the subtle 3.d3, feeling that White loses the important option of 3.g4 e5 4.♗c4!.

☐ **Duncan Suttles**
■ **Samuel Reshevsky**
New York ch-USA 1965

1.e4 c5 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.d3

So here is Suttles' preparation of the bayonet attack. Suttles by this time avoided 3.g4 because of 3...e6 when Chernikov-Titenko, RSFSR Championship 1966, went: 4.♗g2 ♘ge7 (for 4...h5 see Hort-Kindermann below) 5.f4? d5 6.e5 ♘g6 and Black was already better.

3...d6

After 3...g6 Suttles also played 4.g4. Let us examine a few games:

– 4...♗g7 5.h4 d6 (Lawrence Day has indicated that Black can play 5...♗xc3+! 6.bxc3 d5 with at least equal chances) 6.h5 gxh5 7.♖xh5 ♘f6 8.♖h4 h6 9.f4 ♗d7 10.♗g2 ♕c7 11.♘h3 0-0-0 12.♘f2 ♔b8 13.♘e2 h5 14.g5 ♘g4 15.♘h3? ♕b6? (Black wins on the spot with 15...♗xb2! 16.♗xb2? ♘e3) 16.c3 and White won, Suttles-McCormick, U.S. Open 1966.

– 4...♗g7 5.♗g2 d6 6.♘h3!? e5 7.♗g5 f6 8.♗e3 ♘ge7 9.f4 exf4 10.♘xf4 ♘e5 11.h3 0-0 12.♕d2 ♖b8 13.a4 b6 14.0-0 a6 15.b3 ♘7c6 16.♖f2 ♘d4 17.♖af1 and White was somewhat better in Ranniku-Belova, Riga 1968.

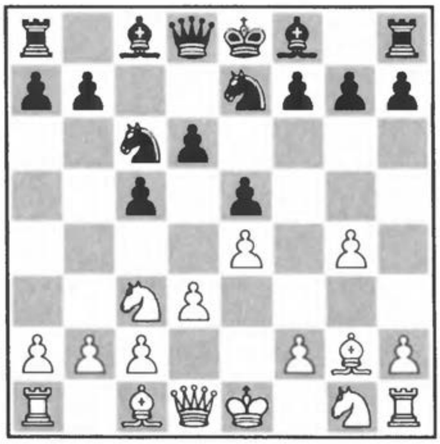
– 4...e6 5.♗g2 ♗g7 6.h4 ♘ge7 7.♗e3 d6 8.h5 ♕b6 9.♖b1 ♗d7 10.a3 f5 11.gxf5 exf5 12.♘ge2 ♘e5 (12...♘d4 13.b4±) 13.b4 ♘g4 14.bxc5 ♕a5 15.♕d2 ♘xe3 16.fxe3 ♕xc5 17.hxg6 hxg6 18.♖xh8+ ♗xh8 19.exf5 ♗c6 20.d4! ♕xf5 21.♗xc6+ bxc6 22.♘f4 ♕g4 23.♕h2 ♗f6 24.♔d2 0-0-0?! 25.♘e4 ♕f5? 26.♘xf6 ♕xf6 27.♕e2 g5 28.♘h5 ♕f5 29.♕a6+ ♔d7 30.♖b7+ 1-0 Woodhams-Neumann, World Junior Championship, Jerusalem 1967.

– 4...d6 5.♗g2 e5 6.h4!? ♗e7 7.g5 ♗e6 8.♘h3 h6 9.♘d5 hxg5 10.♘xe7 ♕xe7 11.♘xg5!? ♗d7 12.c3 0-0-0 13.♗e3 f6 14.♘f3 (Black is no worse) 14...♖f8?! 15.b4! f5 16.♗g5 ♕f7 17.bxc5 fxe4 18.dxe4 ♗g4 (18...dxc5 19.♕d6 ♗g4) 19.♗h3! ♕d7 20.♗xg4 ♕xg4 21.♘d2 ♕g2 (21...♕xd1+ 22.♖xd1 dxc5) 22.♖f1 dxc5 23.♕b3 ♕g4?! 24.f3 ♕d7 25.0-0-0 (late but effective!) 25...♔c7 26.♘c4 ♕f7 27.♖d5 ♘f6? 28.♘d6 1-0 Suttles-Blackstone, A.B. Stamer Memorial 1966.

4.g4 e5

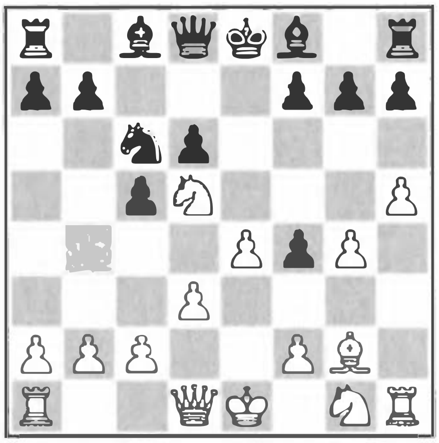
Against this ...e5 line (bearing down on the dark squares), White should probably go for a restrained set-up with h3, ♗g2, and f4. The passivity of the light-squared bishop is an important argument for Kavalek to prefer 3.g4 e5 4.♗c4!.

5.♗g2 ♘ge7



Black refrains from fianchettoing his bishop, and immediately concentrates on the weakened f4- and h4-squares.

6.h4! ♘g6 7.h5 ♘f4 8.♗xf4 exf4 9.♘d5!

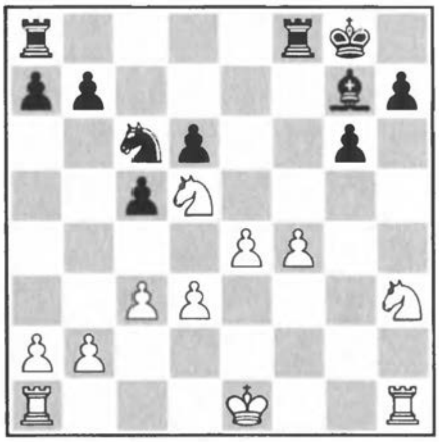


White is ok here (but not better). Reshevsky is up to the task and temporarily sacrifices a pawn.

9...g5 10.hxg6 fxg6 11.♘xf4 ♗g7 12.c3 ♕g5 13.♘d5 0-0 14.f4

Suttles prefers to give back the pawn, rather than play the passive 14.f3.

14...♕xg4 15.♕xg4 ♗xg4 16.♗h3 ♗xh3 17.♘xh3



The ending is equal. Reshevsky, as the stronger player, won in the end (51 moves).

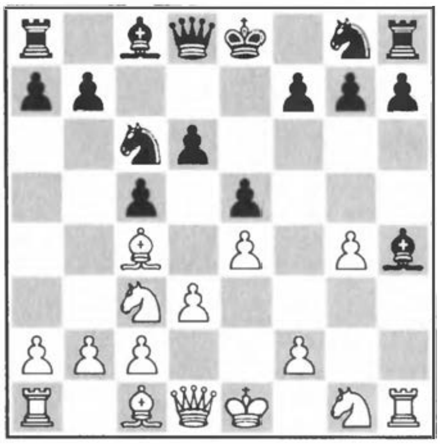
So what should we prefer: 3.g4 or 3.d3? Let us return to the Czech vineyard. In 1964 Kubicek and Kavalek played a vigourous consultation game against Vlastimil Jansa and Polish IM Jacek Bednarski.

☐ **Kubicek/Kavalek**
■ **Jansa/Bednarski**
Prague, consultation game 1964

1.e4 c5 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.g4 e5 4.♗c4! d6 5.d3 ♗e7 6.h4!?

Gaining space on the kingside, and in line with Kubicek's general idea of 3.g4. Jansa and Bednarski now take the forbidden fruit.

6...♗xh4?



7.♕f3

Romantic play by Kubicek and Kavalek. Meanwhile it was stronger to trap the bishop with 7.g5! after the forced sequence 7...♗xg5 (7...♗xf2+ 8.♔xf2 does not give enough of course) 8.♕h5 ♗e7 9.♕xf7+ ♔d7 10.♕xg7 White has regained his material with interest. For example: 10...♘f6 11.♗g5 ♕f8 12.♕xf8 ♖xf8 13.♗h6 with a clear endgame advantage.

7...♗f6

Black should prefer 7...♗e6! 8.♗xe6 fxe6 when in answer to 9.g5 he has 9...♘d4! 10.♕h5+ g6 11.♕xh4 ♘xc2+ 12.♔d1 ♘xa1.

8.g5!

Consistent.

8...♘d4 9.♕g3!

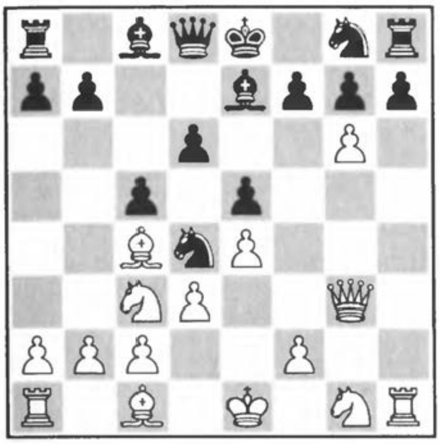
Kubicek/Kavalek continue in the style of Morphy. The whole game is actually played in the Romantic spirit of the 19th century.

Possibly, the format of the consultation game is conducive to attractive play?

9...♗e7

Instead 9...♘xc2+ 10.♔d1 ♘xa1 11.gxf6 g6 gives the whites a lot of play too.

10.g6!!



10...fxg6 11.♖xh7!

The point of the previous move.

11...♖xh7 12.♕xg6+ ♔d7 13.♕xh7 ♘f6 14.♕xg7 ♘xc2+ 15.♔d1 ♘xa1 16.♗g5 ♔c6

Jansa and Bednarski decide to play the middlegame with their king on c6. Play alters radically after 16...♕f8 17.♕xf8 ♗xf8 18.♗xf6 ♗e7 which could be about equal.

17.♘d5! ♘xd5 18.exd5+ ♔b6

The alternative is 18...♔c7 19.♗xe7 ♕d7 when 20.♘f3 ♕f5 21.♘g5 ♕g4+ 22.♔d2 ♕f4+ 23.♔e2 ♕g4+ is a draw by repetition.

19.♗xe7 ♕d7 20.♕f8 a6

An unclear ending arises after 20...♕a4+! 21.b3 ♗g4+ 22.f3 ♖xf8 23.bxa4 ♖e8 (23...♗xf3+ 24.♘xf3 ♖xf3 25.♗d8 mate!) 24.♗xd6 ♗d7 The sequence ...♕a4+ and ...♗g4+ was possibly missed by the blacks.

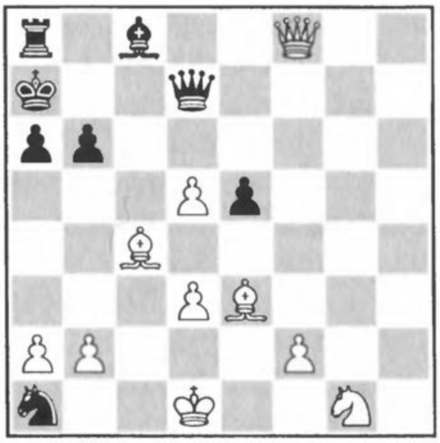
21.♗xd6 ♔a7

Now not 21...♕a4+ 22.b3 ♗g4+ 23.f3 ♖xf8 24.bxa4 ♗xf3+ 25.♘xf3 ♖xf3 26.♗xe5 winning.

22.♗xc5+

Better was 22.b3!

22...b6 23.♗e3



23...♗b7?

The final chance for 23...♕a4+ 24.b3 ♕xa2 (24...♗g4+? 25.f3 ♖xf8 26.bxa4 ♗xf3+ 27.♘xf3 ♖xf3 28.d6! should win) 25.♕e7+ ♗b7 and a perpetual is in the air.

24.♕f6 ♕c7 25.a4! a5 26.b4!

Kubicek and Kavalek continue in the same energetic style with which they have played the entire game.

26...♖g8 27.♘f3 axb4 28.a5

and the whites won...

Such chess is clearly inspiring. It is therefore not surprising that 3.g4 has always been the choice of the Czech players. In 1983 one of the strongest players of Czechoslovakia, Vlastimil Hort employed the Vinohrady Variation in a TV game against Stefan Kindermann. The German player countered with 3...e6 and Hort suffered a horrible defeat.

☐ **Vlastimil Hort**
■ **Stefan Kindermann**
Bath TV 1983

1.♘c3

Always in for a joke!

1...c5 2.e4 ♘c6 3.g4 e6!? 4.♗g2

According to Mikhalchishin 4.♘ge2 is weaker, although he feels that 4...d5 5.♘g3 d4 6.♘ce2 ♕h4 7.h3 ♗d6 8.d3 ♘ge7 9.f4 g5 10.♚f2!? leads to a complicated position.

4...h5!?

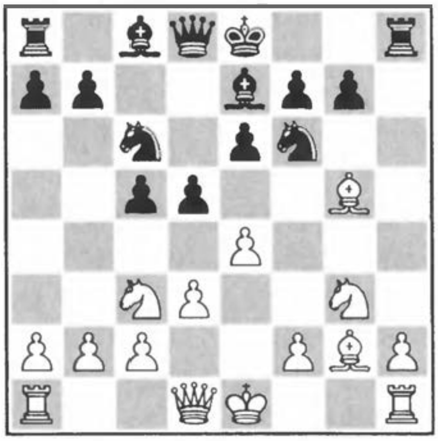
We have already noted that 4...♘ge7 5.f4? d5 6.e5 ♘g6 was unpleasant for White in Chernikov-Titenko, RSFSR Championship 1966. Stronger is 5.d3 ♘g6 (5...d5 is the alternative) 6.♘f3 ♗e7 (6...d5 7.h4 d4 8.h5 is all right for White) 7.g5 d5 8.h4 with interesting play.

Not 4...♘f6 5.g5 ♘g8 6.h4, or 4...g6 5.d3 ♗g7 6.f4 ♕h4+ 7.♔f1 and White is better as Black will lose time moving his queen again, while White has gained some useful space on the kingside.

5.gxh5 ♘f6 6.d3 ♖xh5 7.♘ge2 d5 8.♘g3

It was worth trying 8.♘f4 ♖e5 9.0-0 when, after all, the rook on e5 is in danger. 9...dxe4 10.dxe4 ♕xd1 11.♘xd1 b6 12.♘d3 ♖h5 13.e5 ♘d5 14.♘e3 ♘de7 15.♘c4 gave White something to play for in P.Roth-Miniböck, Austrian ch, Wolfsberg 1985.

8...♖h8 9.♗g5 ♗e7



10.h4?

Bad is 10.♗xf6? ♗xf6 11.exd5 ♗xc3+ 12.bxc3 exd5 when White's kingside is very weak. However, 10.♕d2 (Mikhalchishin) is clearly better, planning immediate queenside castling with a reasonable position.

10...g6

Weaker was 10...d4 11.♞ce2 e5 12.♘f5!.

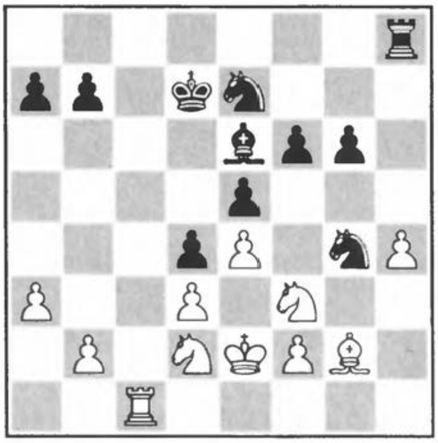
11.♕d2 d4 12.♘ce2 e5 13.a3?

Clearly better was 13.f3 ♘h5 14.0-0-0 f6 15.♗h6 (Mikhalchishin).

13...♘g4 14.♗xe7 ♕xe7 15.♕g5 ♗e6

and Black's position is slightly preferable.

16.♘g1 0-0-0 17.♕xe7 ♘xe7 18.♘f3 f6 19.♔e2 c4 20.♘f1 ♔d7 21.♘1d2 cxd3+ 22.cxd3 ♖c8 23.♖ac1 ♖xc1 24.♖xc1



Kindermann now coordinated his forces to devastating effect with

24...g5! 25.hxg5 ♘g6 26.♘e1? ♘f4+ 27.♔f1 ♘h2+ 0-1

In recent times the only Czech grandmaster to play the Vinohrady Variation is Marek Vokac. He concurs with his compatriots and plays 3.g4 rather than 3.d3 followed by 4.g4.

☐ **Marek Vokac**
■ **Stefan Koch**
Forchtenberg 2003 (1)

1.e4 c5 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.g4 e5

3...d6 4.h3 ♘d4 5.♗g2 e5 6.d3 ♗e7 7.♗e3 ♕a5 8.♘f3 ♗e6 9.♘d2 ♕d8 10.♘d5 (to be able to evict the knight from d4 with c3. White's chances are preferable) 10...♘f6 11.c3 ♘c6 12.g5 ♘d7 13.h4 f5 14.exf5 ♗xf5 15.♗e4 (with a clear positional edge) 15...0-0? 16.♕b3 and White won a pawn (and soon the game). Vokac-Jirovsky, Pribram 1998.

4.♗g2

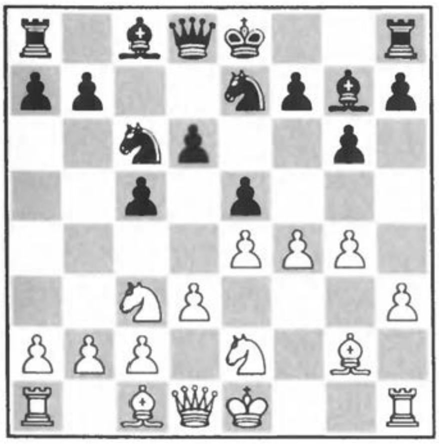
Not following in the footsteps of Kubicek/Kavalek with 4.♗c4.

4...d6 5.d3 g6

Black can aim to control the dark squares with 5...♗e7 (preparing the exchange of the dark-squared bishops) 6.♘d5 ♖b8 7.h3 ♗g5 8.♘e2 ♗xc1 9.♕xc1 ♘ge7 10.f4 0-0 (10...♘xd5 11.exd5 ♕h4+ 12.♔f1 with chances for both sides) 11.0-0 ♘d4 12.♖f2 ♘xe2+ 13.♖xe2 and White has some advantage in Vokac-Frolik, Czech Team Championship 2004/05.

Black can also try to control f4 and h4 by means of the knight. 5...♘ge7 6.♘h3 ♘g6 7.0-0 ♗e7 8.f4 exf4 9.♘xf4 ♗f6 10.♘fd5 ♗e5 11.g5 ♗e6 12.♘b5!? 0-0 13.c3 a6 14.♘a3 h6 15.♕h5! with the better game in Fabian-Dolezal, Czech Championship, Luhacovice 1968.

6.h3 ♗g7 7.♘ge2 ♘ge7 8.f4



8...f6

8...exf4 9.♗xf4 0-0 10.♕d2 gives White a slight edge.

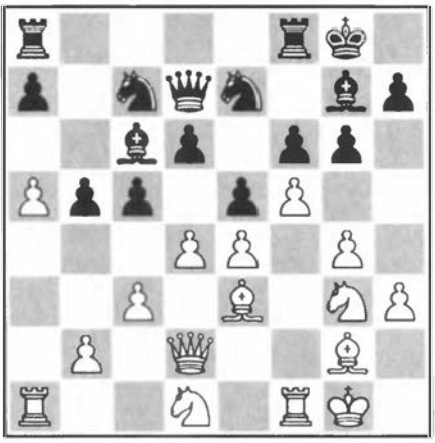
9.f5

Boxing in Black's kingside. White has won the opening battle.

9...♗d7 10.♗e3 ♘d4 11.♘g3

Not allowing Black to exchange a set of minor pieces. As usual, White will later chase the knight from d4 with c3.

11...♗c6 12.♕d2 ♕d7 13.♘d1 b6 14.c3 ♘b5 15.a4 ♘c7 16.a5 b5 17.0-0 0-0 18.d4



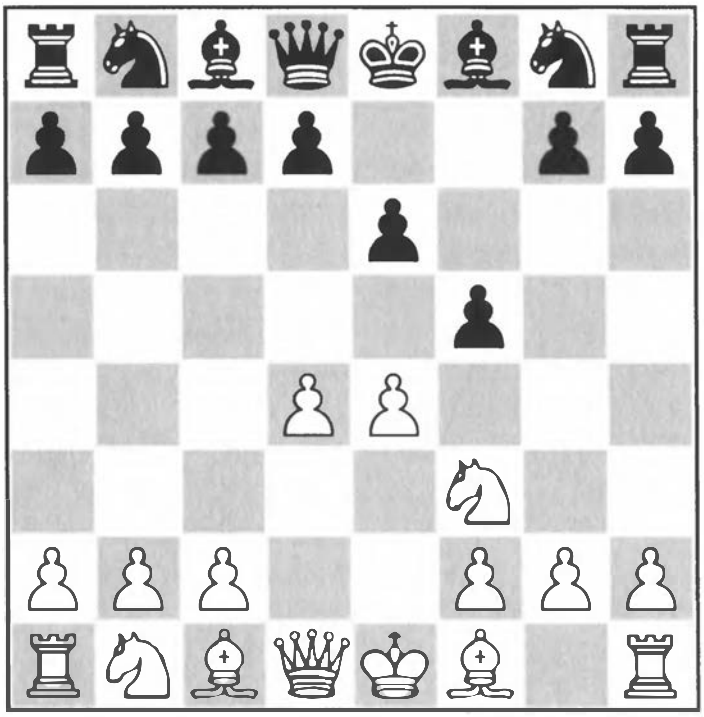
White is better in the centre and on both flanks! It looks like a Ruy Lopez gone wrong for Black.

18...♘a6 19.♘f2 ♕c7 20.d5 ♗e8 21.b3 ♔h8 22.h4 ♘g8 23.g5 Our audacious pawn continues his march. **23...b4 24.c4 ♖b8 25.♗h3 ♕d8 26.♔g2 ♖b7 27.fxg6 hxg6 28.♗g4 fxg5?** Opening the h-file, but Black's position is without prospects anyway. **29.hxg5 ♘e7 30.♖h1+ ♔g8 31.♗e6+ ♗f7 32.♘g4 ♗xe6 33.dxe6 ♘c6? 34.♕d5 ♕e8 35.e7+ ♖f7 36.♘f6+ ♗xf6 37.gxf6** and Black resigned.

CHAPTER 3

Nigel Povah

The Deferred Staunton Gambit



1.d4 e6 2.♘f3 f5 3.e4!?

1.d4 e6 2.♘f3 f5 3.e4!?

With his last move White enters a rare variation (there are only 35 games in the 2006 Mega Database!) which is a type of Deferred Staunton Gambit that was first played in 1990 by GM Joel Benjamin. It was then adopted by the Spanish GM Juan Bellon Lopez, who in his typical dynamic style won several attractive games with it. Since then it has been employed as a surprise weapon by players of varying strength, although it is rarely essayed by grandmasters who perhaps distrust White's direct approach. However, this line is gradually winning some advocates and is achieving a number of successes, the most notable of which is Gretarsson's victory over Smyslov.

With his last move, White announces his aggressive intentions, being willing to have his knight displaced in the interest of a quick kingside assault on the white squares.

3...fxe4

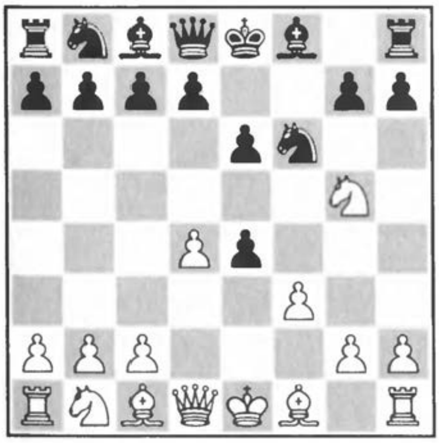
Black has little choice but to accept the offered pawn, as both 3...♘f6 4.exf5 exf5 5.♗d3 d6 6.0-0 ♗e7 7.♖e1 0-0 8.♘g5 and 3...d5 4.exf5 exf5 5.♗d3 ♘f6 6.♗g5 ♗e7 7.0-0 0-0 8.c4 give White a comfortable edge.

4.♘g5 ♘f6

The main choice, but Black has an interesting alternative in the immediate 4...d5!? 5.f3 h6 (5...♗e7 6.fxe4! ♗xg5 7.♕h5+ g6 8.♕xg5 ♕xg5 9.♗xg5 dxe4 10.♘c3 with a pleasant edge) 6.♘h3 exf3 (6...♘f6 transposes to Variation E) 7.♕xf3 (7.♘f4!? is an interesting suggestion from former Australian champion John-Paul Wallace: 7...fxg2 8.♕h5+ ♔d7 9.♗xg2 ♘f6 10.♕e2 with compensation for the pawns) 7...♕h4+ 8.g3?! (stronger was 8.♘f2 ♕xd4 9.♗d3 ♘f6 10.♗g6+ ♔d8 11.0-0 with compensation) 8...♕xd4 9.♗d3 ♘f6 10.♗g6+ ♔d8 11.♘f4 ♘c6 12.c3 ♕e5+ 13.♘e2 d4 with a clear advantage, Povah-Hinks-Edwards, England 2005.

5.f3!?

White has also tried 5.♘c3 ♗e7?! (the more sensible 5...d5 transposes to Variation E) 6.♘cxe4 b6 7.♗d3 ♘xe4 8.♘xe4 ♗a6 9.♕h5+ g6 10.♘d6+! cxd6 11.♗xg6+ hxg6 12.♕xh8+ ♔f7? 13.♕h7+ ♔f6 14.h4 ♔f5 15.f3 e5 16.♕f7+ 1-0 Sierra Canoso-Sanchez Piquero, Asturias Championship 2001.



Black now has a number of options:

A) 5...c5
B) 5...exf3
C) 5...e3
D) 5...h6
E) 5...d5

Variation A

5...c5

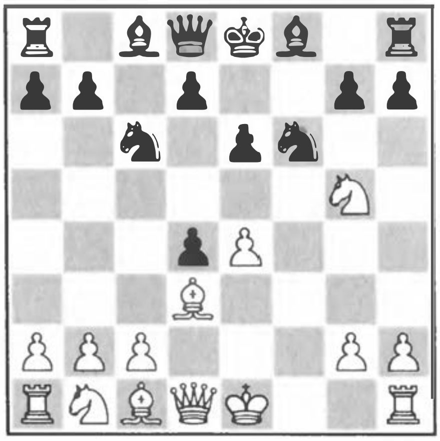
This is Black's most popular choice.

6.fxe4 cxd4 7.♗d3

White continues with his policy of rapid development, rather than wasting time recapturing the pawn with 7.♕xd4, which was played in Sokolin-Litus, Katowice 1991: 7...♘c6 8.♕e3 b6 9.♗b5 ♗c5 10.♕h3 0-0 11.♘c3 ♗f2+ 12.♔d1 h6 13.♖f1 ♗d4 and Black was slightly better.

Nor did 7.c3 work out for White after 7...♘c6 8.♗b5 ♕a5 9.♕e2? dxc3 10.bxc3 ♘d4–+ Grechkin-Ovetchkin, Russian Team Championship 1996.

7...♘c6



Black has also played 7...♗d6 here, although this usually transposes after 8.0-0 ♘c6 or 8...♗e5 9.♘d2 ♘c6.

Another attempt to deviate is 7...♕a5+!? 8.♗d2 ♗b4 9.♗xb4 ♕xb4+ 10.♘d2 ♕a5 (10...♕xb2? 11.e5 wins, after 10...♘c6 11.0-0 0-0 12.e5 ♘xe5 13.♘xh7 ♘xd3 14.♘xf6+ ♖xf6 15.♖xf6 gxf6 16.cxd3 Black's exposed king and lack of development gives White at least equality) 11.♘f3 ♘c6 12.0-0 ♕h5 13.♘c4 0-0 14.e5 ♘g4 Povah-Bigg, England 2005, when 15.h3! would have given White a clear advantage 15...♘e3 (15...♘h6 16.♘xd4! ♕xd1 17.♖axd1 ♖xf1+ 18.♗xf1 or 15...♘gxe5??

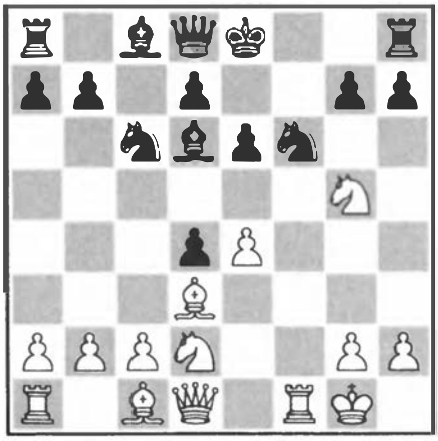
16.♘fxe5+–) 16.♘xe3 dxe3 17.♕e2 b6. Note that Black cannot take on e5: 17...♘xe5? 18.♘xe5 ♖xf1+ (18...♕xe5 19.♗xh7++–) 19.♖xf1 ♕xe5 20.♕f3 ♕f6 21.♕e4 ♕h6 22.♕b4 winning.

8.0-0 ♗d6

The usual choice, although Black can also fight for control over e5 with 8...d6 9.c3!± (9.♘d2!?) 9...h6 10.♘f3 ♗e7 11.cxd4 0-0 12.♘c3 e5 13.♗c4+ ♔h7 14.♔h1 ♗g4 15.♗e3 ♖c8 16.dxe5 dxe5 17.♗d5 with a slight edge for White in Benjamin-Machulsky, New York 1990.

But not 8...♕c7? when White's attacking possibilities became apparent with 9.♖xf6! ♘e5 (9...gxf6 10.♕h5+ ♔e7 11.♕f7+ ♔d6 12.♗f4++–) 10.♖f2 h6 11.♘f7 ♘xf7 12.♕h5 1-0 Kipper-Stolte, Germany Bundesliga B 2000/01.

9.♘d2



White has also tried 9.♘a3!? ♗e5 (9...♘e5 10.♘b5 ♗b8 11.♔h1 0-0 12.♘xd4 ♘fg4 13.♘df3 h6 14.♘h3 b6 15.♕e2 ♗b7 16.♗d2 ♗d6 17.♘xe5 ½-½, Del Rey-Arizmendi Martinez, Ibi 1996) 10.b4 0-0 11.♘c4 a6 12.a4 d6 13.♗d2 ♕e8 14.♕e2 ♕g6 15.♘xd6! ♘xb4 16.♘f5 ♘c6 17.♘h4 ♕e8 18.♖ab1 with compensation for the pawn, Bellon-Lopez-Vega Holm, Spanish ch 1994.

But 9.c3?! is less convincing: 9...dxc3 (9...0-0 10.cxd4 ♘xd4 11.♗e3 ♗e5 12.♘c3 h6 13.♘h3 d6 Eriksson-Hansen, Gausdal 1990, also favoured Black) 10.♘xc3 ♗e5 11.♕f3 ♕e7 12.♕h3 b6 13.♗e3 ♗b7 14.♘f3 0-0 15.♖ae1 ♖ae8 when White had a difficult struggle to prove he had enough play for the pawn, Bellon-Lopez-Rothen, Swedish Team Championship 1998/99.

9...♗e5

Anticipating White's threat of ♘c4, Black has also tried:

- 9...♕e7 guarding the bishop, but after 10.♘c4 ♘e5 White was able to exploit the fact that the queen was overloaded with 11.♖xf6! gxf6 (11...♘xc4 12.♕h5++–) 12.♕h5+ ♘g6 13.e5! 0-0 14.exd6 ♕g7 15.♘e4 b5 16.♗h6 ♕f7 17.♘xf6+ ♕xf6 18.♖f1 ♕xf1+ 19.♗xf1 ♖f5 20.♕g4 bxc4 21.♗xc4 ♖f7 22.h4 ♗b7 23.h5 ♖f6 24.♕xd4+– Jensen-Sobjerg, Aarhus 1991.
- Stronger is 9...♘e5 with spectacular complications after 10.♘c4! (10.♘df3?! h6 11.♘xe5 hxg5∓ Povah-Williams, England 2004) 10...♘xc4 11.♗xc4 ♕c7 (11...♗xh2+? 12.♔xh2 ♕c7+ 13.e5!+–; 11...0-0 12.♗d3) 12.♖xf6! ♗xh2+ 13.♔h1 gxf6 14.♕h5+ ♔e7 15.♕f7+ ♔d6 16.♕xf6 ♕xc4 17.♔xh2 (or 17.♕xh8 ♗g3 18.♗d2 with balanced chances) 17...♖g8 18.♘f7+ ♔c7 19.♕e5+ ♔b6 20.♕d6+ ♕c6 21.♕b4+ ♕b5 22.♕d6+ and White has no more than a repetition.

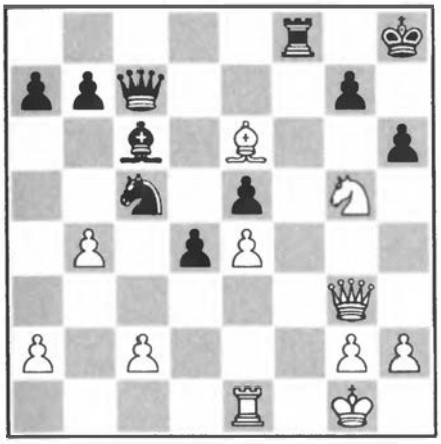
10.♘c4 0-0 11.♘xe5

Alternatively, 11.c3 d6 12.♔h1 dxc3 13.bxc3 h6 14.♘f3 ♗xc3 15.♖b1 d5 16.exd5 exd5 17.♗a3 dxc4 18.♗xc4+ ♔h8 19.♗xf8 ♕xf8 20.♕d3 ♗b4 21.♘h4 with a dangerous attack, Bellon Lopez-Vaiser, Helsinki 1991, but the immediate 11...dxc3 seems to favour Black:

- 12.♘xe5 ♕b6+ 13.♔h1 cxb2 14.♗xb2 ♕xb2 15.♘c4 ♕b5 with a slight advantage.
- 12.bxc3 ♗xc3 13.♗a3 ♗xa1 14.♕xa1 b5, with a winning position.

11...♘xe5 12.♗f4 d6 13.♗xe5 dxe5

14.♕e1! ♕c7 15.♕g3 ♗d7 16.♘f3 ♗c6 17.♖ae1 ♘d7 18.♘g5 ♘c5 19.♗c4 h6 20.♖xf8+ ♖xf8 21.♗xe6+ ♔h8 22.b4



22...♕e7?!

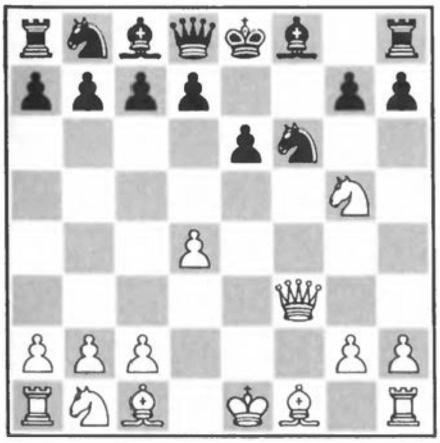
Correct was 22...♘a6 23.♗b3 with equal chances.

23.♘f7+ ♔h7? 24.♗f5+ ♔g8 25.♕g6 1-0

Povah-Hill, England 2003.

Variation B

5...exf3 6.♕xf3



With ♗d3, 0-0 and a possible ♕h3 to follow, White is well placed to exploit the open lines on the kingside, whilst Black's lack of space makes it difficult for him to mobilise his queenside forces.

6...♘c6

Here 6...♗e7 7.♗d3 ♘c6 8.c3 simply transposes, whilst attempts to disrupt White's planned development have failed as the following encounters have shown:

– 6...h6 7.♕h3 ♗d6 (7...♗e7 again transposes to the main line) 8.♗d3 0-0 9.0-0 ♕e8 (9...hxg5 10.♗xg5 ♘c6 11.♗xf6 ♖xf6 12.♕h7+ ♔f8 13.♘d2± as Black's lack of development means that White's attack is helped because he is effectively a rook up!) 10.♘c3 ♘c6 11.♖xf6 ♖xf6 12.♘ge4 ♗e7 (12...♖f8 13.♘xd6 cxd6 14.♘b5 ♕e7 15.♕g3 ♕f6 16.♗e3 ♘e7 17.♖f1 ♘f5 18.♗xf5 exf5 19.♘xd6 with balanced chances) 13.♘xf6+ ♗xf6 14.♘b5 ♕f8 (14...♕d8 15.♗xh6! ♘xd4 16.♕h5! ♘xb5 17.♗xg7 ♔xg7 18.♕h7+ ♔f8 19.♖f1+–) 15.c3 e5?! 16.♕f5 exd4 17.♗xh6 d6 18.♕h7+ ♔f7 19.♗c4+ ♗e6 20.♗xe6+ ♔xe6 21.♘xc7+ and White won quickly in Povah-D.Shaw, British Team Championship 2001/02.

– 6...c5?! 7.♗d3 ♕e7 (7...♘c6 8.♗xh7 ♖xh7 9.♘xh7 ♘xd4 10.♕d3±) 8.0-0 ♘c6 9.♗xh7! ♘xd4 (9...♖xh7 10.♘xh7 ♘xh7 – 10...♘xd4 11.♕d3± – 11.♕h5+ g6 12.♕xg6+ ♔d8 13.♖f7 ♕h4 14.♘c3+–, or 9...♘xh7 10.♕h5+ ♔d8 11.♘f7++–) 10.♗g6+ ♔d8 11.♕d3 ♔c7 12.♘f7 ♖h4?? (this blunders the rook, but 12...♖g8 13.♗f4+ ♔b6 14.♘d6 should also win) 13.♕g3+ d6 14.♕xh4 1-0 Povah-Walton, British Team Championship 2004/05.

7.c3

White has also tried 7.♗e3 ♕e7 8.♘c3 d6 9.♗b5 ♗d7 10.0-00-0-0 11.♖ae1 h6 12.♘h3 ♕f7 13.♘f4 ♗e7 14.d5 ♘e5 15.♗xd7+ ♖xd7 16.♕h3 exd5 17.♘fxd5 ♔b8 18.♗xa7+! ♔xa7 19.♘b5+ ♔b8 20.♕a3 ♖dd8 21.♘bxc7 ♕xd5 22.♘xd5 ♘xd5 23.♕b3 when Black's weak pawns and lack of co-ordination gives White at least equality. Kohout-Gdovin, Czech ch 1996.

7...♗e7

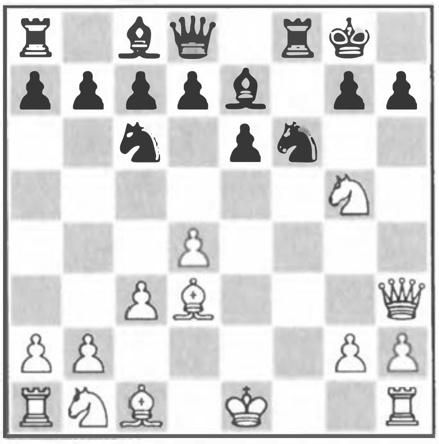
Practice has also seen:

– 7...d5?! proved to be too slow, allowing White to breakthrough before Black could get his king to safety: 8.♗d3 ♗e7 9.♗xh7 ♖xh7 10.♘xh7 e5 11.♘xf6+ ♗xf6 12.♕h5+ ♔e7 13.0-0 e4 14.♗g5+– San Emeterio Cabanes-Martinez Martin, Spanish U20 Ch 2001.

– 7...h6 8.♗d3?! (8.♕h3! transposing to either the main line or Povah-Shaw, depending on whether Black continues with ...♗e7 or...♗d6, was more prudent) 8...hxg5 9.♗g6+ ♔e7 10.♗xg5 d5 11.0-0 ♔d7 12.♘d2 ♗d6 13.h3 ♘e7 14.♗d3 c6 when White did not have enough compensation for the piece. Cebalo-Naumkin, Forli Open 1995.

– 7...b6 (trying to develop the queenside, possibly with the hope of ...♕e7 and ...0-0-0 is also too slow) 8.♗d3 ♗b7 9.♕h3! ♗d6 (9...♘e7 trying to prevent ♗g6+, leaves Black congested after the natural 10.0-0, rather than the messy 10.♘xh7!? ♘xh7 11.♕h5+ g6 12.♗xg6+ ♘xg6 13.♕xg6+ ♔e7 14.♗g5+ ♘xg5 15.♕xg5+ ♔e8 16.♕g6+ with perpetual) 10.♗g6+ ♔f8 11.0-0 ♘e7 12.♘xh7+ ♖xh7 13.♕xh7 ♘xg6 14.♕xg6 ♕e7 15.♗h6 ♔g8 16.♗xg7 ♕xg7 17.♖xf6 and wins.

8.♗d3 0-0 9.♕h3



White can also play 9.0-0 h6 when 10.♘h3 is similar to Hansen-Trabolt (see Variation D), although the bishop is better placed on e7 than d6, as Black can continue with ...d5 and ...e5.

9...h6 10.♗g6

White can also play 10.0-0 but then Black has 10...hxg5 11.♗g6 (11.♗xg5 d5 12.♗xf6 ♗xf6 13.♕h5 ♗xd4+! 14.cxd4 ♖xf1+–+) 11...g4 12.♕h4 ♖f7 13.♗xf7+ ♔xf7 14.♕xg4 ♔g8 when his chances are somewhat preferable.

10...e5!

Not 10...hxg5? 11.♗xg5+– when the threat of capturing on f6 and following up with ♕h7+ and ♕h8+ is difficult to meet, so Black has to concede material with 11...♖f7 12.0-0 d5 13.♘d2 when White has compensation.

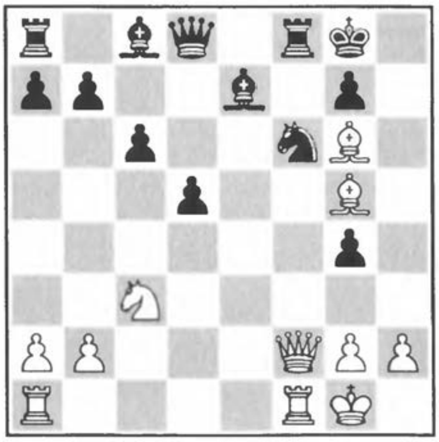
11.0-0 exd4 12.cxd4 ♘xd4?!

Missing the stronger 12...d5! when White's attack has been repelled and he will lose further material.

13.♘c3 d5 14.♕d3 hxg5

14...♘c6 makes it more difficult for White to justify his two pawn deficit.

15.♕xd4 g4 16.♗g5 c6 17.♕f2



17...♘d7??

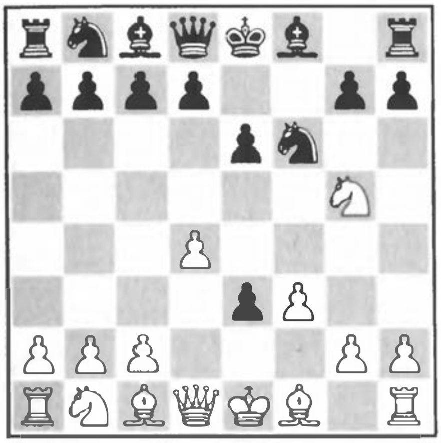
A terrible blunder: 17...♗d6 18.♕h4 ♕c7 guarding h7 along the second rank after exchanges on f6 was safer, although Black would still need to be careful after 19.♖ae1 g3 20.♗xf6 gxf6 21.♖xf6 ♖xf6 22.♕xf6 ♗g4 23.♕g5± or 22...♗h3 23.gxh3 ♖f8 24.♖e8±.

18.♗f7+ ♖xf7 19.♕xf7+ ♔h7 20.♗xe7 ♕b6+ 21.♔h1 1-0

Netusil-Vavruska, Czech ch 1993.

Variation C

5...e3



Black attempts to slow down White's attacking possibilities by declining the capture on f3, thus leaving the f-file and the d1-h5 diagonal closed.

6.♗xe3

The natural response, but it is also possible to 'play around the e3 pawn' with 6.♗d3!? ♗e7 (6...♘d5!? Fritz 7.♘xh7 ♗b4+ 8.c3 ♖xh7 9.♗g6+ ♔f8 10.♗xh7 ♕h4+ 11.g3 ♕xh7 12.cxb4 ♘xb4 13.0-0 ♘c2 14.♘a3 ♘xa1 15.♗xe3±) 7.c3!? (preparing an assault on h7. 7.f4 0-0 8.0-0 c5 9.♗xe3 ♕c7 was equal in Niemela-Rajcsanyl, Helsinki 1992) 7...c5?! (missing White's crude threat. 7...♘d5!? is again a possibility, demanding accurate play: 8.♘xh7 ♔f7! 9.f4! ♔g8 10.0-0 ♖xh7 11.♗xh7+ ♔xh7 12.c4 ♘f6 13.♗xe3 with an unclear position; or 7...0-0!? 8.♕c2 h6 9.♘h7 ♘xh7 10.♗xh7+ ♔h8 11.♗xe3 ♗g5 equal) 8.♕c2 d6? (8...cxd4 is the consistent sequel to Black's last move: 9.♗g6+ ♔f8 10.♘f7 ♕a5 11.♘xh8 ♔g8 with an unclear position) 9.dxc5 dxc5 10.♗xh7 ♘xh7 11.♕g6+ ♔d7 12.♘xh7 ♕e8?! 13.♕xg7 ♔c6 14.♘f6 ♕d8 15.♘g4 ♘d7 16.♗xe3 and White was winning in Povah-Naylor, British Team Championship 2005/06.

6...♗e7

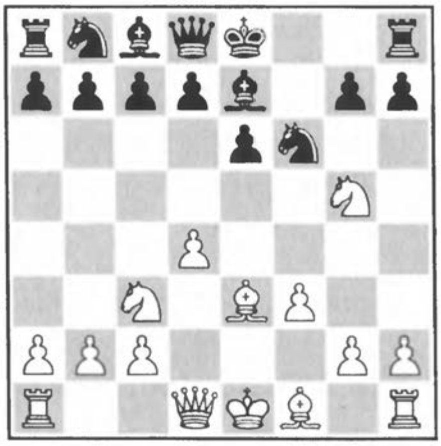
The logical continuation. Black continues his development and threatens ...♘d5 embarrassing the knight on g5. The alternatives have not worked out well for Black.

– 6...b6 7.♗d3 ♕e7 8.c3 ♗b7 9.♕c2 ♘d5 10.♗d2 g6 11.♗xg6+ hxg6 12.♕xg6+ ♔d8 13.♘f7+ ♔c8 14.♗g5 1-0 Duong Thanh Nha-Delisle, Quebec 1990.

– 6...♘d5?! (this simply loses time) 7.♗d2 ♗e7 8.f4! (supporting the knight and opening the d1-h5 diagonal) 8...♘f6 9.♗d3 0-0 10.♘c3 d5 11.♕e2 ♘c6 12.♘xe6 ♗xe6 13.♕xe6+ ♔h8 14.0-0-0 ♘xd4 15.♕h3 c5 16.♗e3 ♘c6 17.g4± with a clear kingside initiative, San Emeterio Cabanes-Serrano Nunez, San Sebastian 2000.

– 6...c5 7.♘c3 cxd4 8.♕xd4 ♘c6 9.♕h4 ♘b4 10.0-0-0 ♕a5 11.♗c4 ♗c5 12.♗xc5 ♕xc5 13.♖he1 0-0 14.a3 ♘c6 15.b4! (15.♘d5!?) 15...♕b6 16.♘d5! exd5 17.♖xd5 h6 18.♖d6+ 1-0 as White forces mate after 18...♔h8 19.♖xf6, Bellon-Lopez-Garcia Fernandez, Spanish Championship 1991.

7.♘c3



7.♗c1, as played in Bozinovic-B.Kovacevic, Zadar 1998, seems rather retrograde and Black continued 7...♘c6 8.♗d3 ♘b4 9.♗e2 c5 10.c3 ♘c6 11.dxc5 ♗xc5 with easy equality.

7...0-0

Not 7...d5?! 8.f4 (fixing the weak pawn at e6) 8...0-0 9.♕d2 a6 10.0-0-0 b5 11.g3± Karner-Raffalt, Graz 2001.

Black can also establish easy equality with 7...♘g4 8.fxg4 ♗xg5.

8.h4

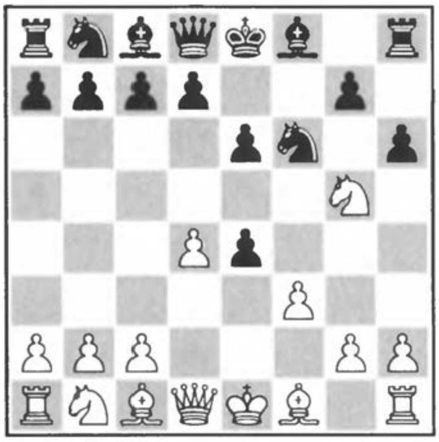
Perhaps simply 8.♗d3!?.

8...h6 9.♕d3 ♘c6 10.a3 d5 11.f4 ♗d6 12.g3 ♘e7

Play was equal in Witek-Strzemiecki, European Championship U12, Herceg Novi 2005.

Variation D

5...h6



This attempt to drive the knight away creates serious weaknesses on the light squares, which White can exploit with ♘h3-f4-g6, or a timely invasion on g6 or h5 by White's bishop or queen. Nevertheless, this was Smyslov's choice when faced with the Deferred Staunton Gambit.

6.♘h3

Of course, not 6.♘xe4? ♘xe4 7.fxe4 ♕h4+ 8.♔d2 ♕xe4 9.♗d3 ♕xg2+ 10.♔c3 ♘c6 11.a3 ♕d5 with a clear advantage in Barnstedt-Scholten, Baden 1997.

6...d5

An interesting try is 6...exf3 with some parallels to the 5...exf3 line, as the following game illustrates: 7.♕xf3 ♗d6 8.♗d3 0-0 9.0-0 ♘c6 10.c3 ♘e7 11.♘d2 ♖b8 12.♘c4 b6 13.♘xd6 cxd6 14.♕g3± as White regains the pawn with the advantage of the two bishops and kingside attacking prospects, K.Hansen-Trabolt, Logumkloster, Danish U20 Championship 1994.

But neither 6...e3 7.♗d3 ♗d6 8.♗g6+ ♔f8 9.♗xe3, nor 6...♗b4+ 7.c3 ♗a5 8.fxe4 make much sense for Black.

7.fxe4 dxe4

7...♘xe4 8.♕h5+ ♔d7 9.♗d3 is unclear, although it doesn't look very appealing for Black.

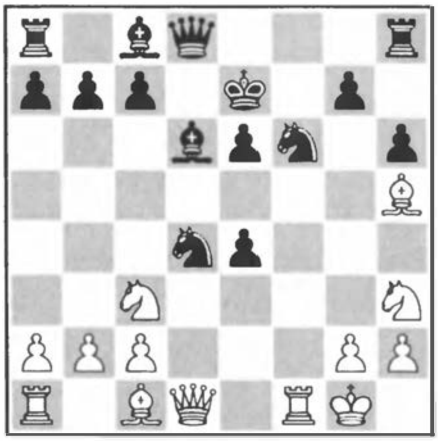
8.♗e2

With a crude threat of invading on h5 which is difficult to prevent without making further concessions.

8...♗d6 9.♗h5+ ♔e7

Or 9...♔d7 10.♘c3 b6 11.♗g6 ♗b7 12.0-0 ♖f8 Hill-Arnott, British Team Championship 2002, when 13.♘f2 ♕e7 14.a3 ♘a6 15.♖e1 would enable White to regain his pawn with at least equality.

10.0-0 ♘c6 11.♘c3 ♘xd4



12.♘xe4! ♘f5 13.♕e2 ♘xe4

13...♘d4 14.♕f2 ♖f8 15.♘xd6 ♕xd6 16.♘f4 with dangerous threats for the pawn.

14.♕xe4 ♗c5+ 15.♔h1 ♕d5 16.♕e1! ♗d6 17.♘f4 ♗xf4 18.♗xf4 ♖f8 19.♗xc7

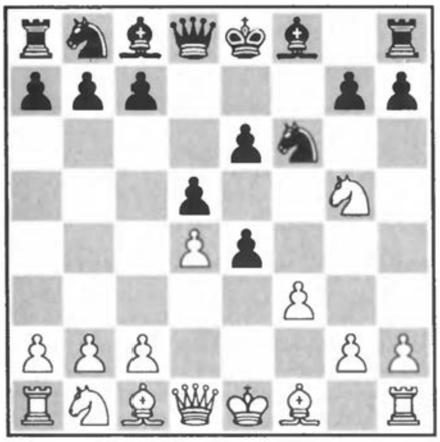
Material is equal again, and Black's position is a horrible mess.

19...a5 20.♕c3 ♖a6 21.♕a3+ ♘d6 22.♖fd1 ♕e5 23.♖xd6 ♖xd6 24.♖d1

And Black resigned in Gretarsson-Smyslov, Reykjavik 1995.

Variation E

5...d5



This move has limited independent value as it will usually transpose to Variation D after 6.fxe4 h6 7.♘h3.

6.fxe4

This is the natural response, but White can also try 6.♘c3 (sometimes reached by 5.♘c3 d5 6.f3) when Black can continue with 6...♘c6 7.♗b5 (7.fxe4 ♘xe4 8.♘gxe4 dxe4 9.♗e3 ♗e7 10.♘xe4 ♕d5 11.♗d3 0-0 Zweschper-Blum, Hofbieber 1996, when 12.♘g3 with equal chances appears to be the best way for White to proceed) 7...h6 8.♘h3 g5 9.fxe4 dxe4 10.0-0 ♗g7 11.♘xe4 0-0 12.♘xf6+ ♗xf6 13.c3 with a clear advantage, Bartlett-Ramakrishna, Canberra 2004.

6...dxe4

Here 6...♘xe4 7.♘xe4 dxe4 8.♕h5+ g6 9.♕e5 is clearly good for White. Alternatively, 6...h6 7.♘h3 transposes to Variation D as already mentioned, unless White wants to try the independent 7.e5, but after 7...hxg5 8.♗xg5 ♗e7 9.exf6 ♗xf6 it seems that the best White can hope for is equality with 10.♗xf6 ♕xf6 11.c3 ♕h4+ 12.g3 ♕e4+ 13.♔d2 0-0 14.♗h3.

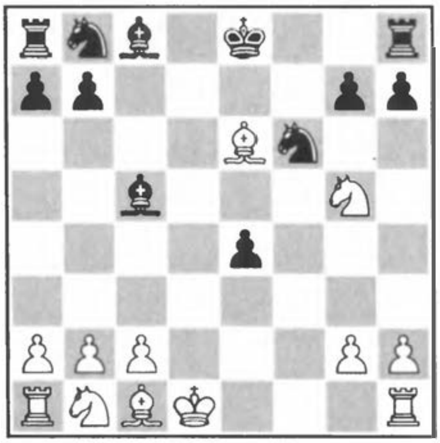
7.♗c4

When White should be better due to Black's weak e-pawns.

7...c5

This is insufficient, but 7...♘d5?! 8.0-0 ♕e7 9.♘xe4 ♘c6 10.♗g5 and 7...♕d6 8.♘c3 both favour White.

8.dxc5 ♕xd1+ 9.♔xd1 ♗xc5 10.♗xe6

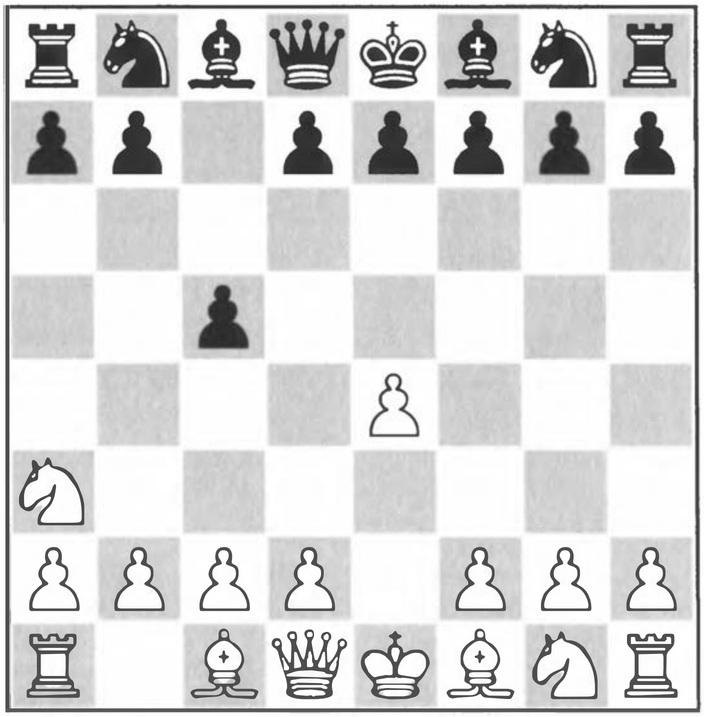


when White has the better ending due to the weak e4 pawn.

CHAPTER 4

Jeroen Bosch

Zviagintsev's Sicilian Surprise



1.e4 c5 2.♘a3

In the Russian Super-Final, Vadim Zviagintsev ventured the amazing 2.♘a3 against the Sicilian. His opponent, ex-FIDE World Champion Alexander Khalifman, reportedly burst out laughing, shaking his head in disbelief. One can imagine that Mikhail Botvinnik would have taken a less lenient attitude. A move like 2.♘a3 looks like a complete joke, an insult to a serious professional chess player – a personal insult perhaps. If we go back in history, only the 12th World Champion, Anatoly Karpov, suffered worse when a cheeky Tony Miles uncorked 1...a6 against him (and won). Zviagintsev, however, had no intention to insult, and he certainly wasn't joking either. Indeed, his knight-to-the-edge move was not meant as just a one-off surprise either. Zviagintsev obviously thinks highly of 2.♘a3, as he repeated the move against Dreev and Motylev in the same championship. His final score was a respectable 2 out of 3. Moreover, as Zviagintsev said: 'I would not know why 2.♘a3 is worse than 2.c3'!

☐ **Vadim Zviagintsev**
■ **Alexander Khalifman**
Moscow ch-RUS 2005 (2)

1.e4 c5 2.♘a3!?
Moving the knight to the edge and opening

up a whole new realm of possibilities. Black can react in numerous ways, and it will be very exciting to watch how Zviagintsev's line will develop. What are the main ideas of this move? The knight will often go to c2 after a future c3 – thus supporting the advance d2-d4. Does this mean that Zviagintsev wants to play a type of 2.c3 Sicilian? Well, not necessarily. In case of 2...♘c6 he plays 3.♗b5, going for a Rossolimo where White still has the option of playing f4 (there is no knight on f3) – see Zviagintsev-Motylev below. So with 2.♘a3 Zviagintsev keeps the option of playing Alapin or Rossolimo positions, as well as a whole new vista of play, of course. Note that White will never transpose to an open Sicilian, since the knight will always be badly placed on a3.

2...♘c6

A natural move, and one out of several sound replies.

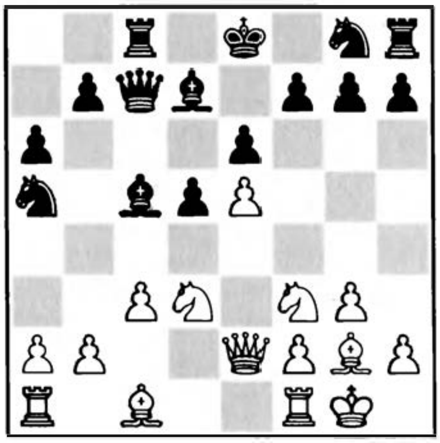
It is intriguing to speculate on what Zviagintsev had in mind against 2...d6 – if 3.♗b5+ then simply 3...♗d7. Perhaps 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♗b5+ ♗d7 5.♕e2 is not a bad set-up with a knight already on a3?.

Both 2...g6 and 2...b6 come into consideration. The knight has no immediate function in these fianchetto lines.

2...d5 is an important reply against 2.c3 – here it is less strong. 3.exd5 ♕xd5 (not 3...♘f6 4.♗b5+ ♗d7 5.c4, and White is superior) 4.♘f3, and with ♘b5 and ♗c4 in the air as tempo-gainers White has a decent future ahead of him.

The other main line against 2.c3 is 2...♘f6. Just like 2...d5 this is playable, but it certainly doesn't question the right of 2.♘a3 to exist. After 3.e5 ♘d5 you might like to investigate 4.♘f3 (or 4.d4 cxd4 5.♕xd4 e6) 4...♘c6 5.♗b5.

Dreev went for 2...e6, when the game transposed into a French type of position after 3.c3 d5 4.e5 ♘c6 5.♘f3 (Ljubojevic has played in this way via the move order 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.c3 d5 4.e5 ♘c6 5.♘a3. See SOS-4, Chapter 10, which concentrates on 4...d4 5.cxd4 cxd4 6.♗b5+) 5...♗d7 6.g3 (this is Zviagintsev's move. Ljubojevic went 6.♘c2, and after 6...f6 7.d4 fxe5 8.dxe5 ♕c7 9.♗f4 chances were about even in Ljubojevic-Ribli, Belfort 1988) 6...a6 (6...f6!?) 7.♘c2 ♖c8 8.♗g2 ♕c7 9.♕e2 c4 (otherwise White plays d4 and takes back with the c2 knight in case of ...cxd4) 10.0-0 ♗c5 11.♘ce1! ♘a5 12.d4 cxd3 13.♘xd3



and White is slightly better due to his central control, Zviagintsev-Dreev, Moscow 2005 (Round 7).

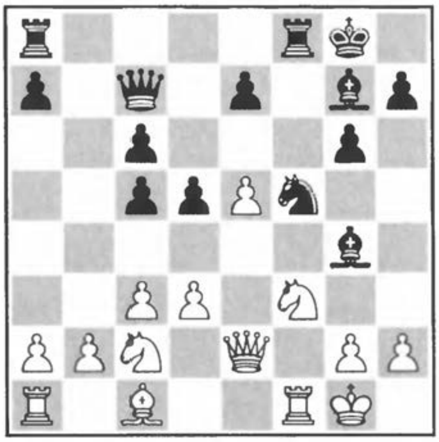
3.♗b5

This is the 'natural' option now. In a Rossolimo-like position it can be favourable that the knight is on a3 (c3 and d4 is still possible, b5 is protected). Moreover, White has the option of playing f4 before sending his second knight to its conventional square (when will we see the first games with 2.♘h3?). By the way, Zviagintsev's example was followed in the Georgian women's championship. Play was about equal after 3.♘f3 g6 4.c3 ♗g7 5.d4 cxd4 6.cxd4 d6 7.h3 ♘f6 8.♗d3 0-0 9.0-0 a6 10.♗e3 b5 11.♘c2 ♘a5 12.d5 e6 13.dxe6 ♗xe6 in Batsiashvili-Dzagnidze, Tbilisi 2006.

3...♕c7

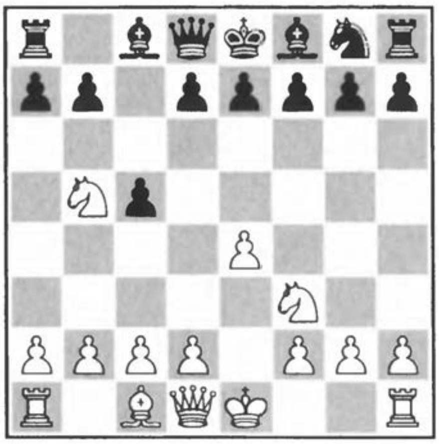
Khalifman puts his queen on a natural Sicilian square and aims to take back on c6 after a subsequent exchange. But this is costing time, and White's knights are fairly comfortable in the resulting positions.

Motylev preferred 3...g6 4.♗xc6 (this exchange is not obligatory. In a later game Zviagintsev improved his play with the flexible 4.c3 ♗g7 5.d3 ♘f6 6.f4. See the next game in this chapter: Zviagintsev-Ponomariov, Sochi 2006) 4...bxc6 5.d3 ♗g7 6.f4!? ('exploiting' the fact that this is not a Rossolimo proper) 6...d5 7.e5 (it would be nice to play 7.♕e2 first – strategically it is better to keep the pawns on e4 and f4. However, there is a tactical problem – the knight on a3 – after 7...♕a5+ 8.♗d2 ♕b6 9.♖b1, and now 9...♗xb2. This looks scary, but if necessary Black can always give up his b2 bishop for the a3 knight – with a future ...♕a6) 7...f6 8.♕e2 fxe5 9.fxe5 ♘h6 10.♘f3 ♗g4 11.0-0 0-0 12.c3 ♕c7 13.♘c2 ♘f5



and here Black's position was better in Zviagintsev-Motylev, Moscow 2005 (9).

Not so good as it may seem is 3...♘d4. Play might continue 4.♘f3 ♘xb5 5.♘xb5 (this normally arises via the move order 1.e4 c5 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘d4 4.♘f3 ♘xb5 5.♘xb5).



This type of position is dangerous for Black, as witness Van der Wiel-Spoelman, Hoogeveen 2005: 5...♘f6 6.e5 ♞d5 7.♘g5!? (very tricky – in practice Black usually goes for this position via 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗b5 ♘d4 5.e5 ♘xb5 6.♘xb5 ♘d5 7.♘g5 – both 7.c4 and 7.0-0 are decent too. Am I confusing you with all these transpositions? Zviagintsev must have thought out such things in the comfort of his study) 7...f6 (7...f5 is the other option. Bad is 7...h6? 8.♘xf7 ♔xf7 9.♕f3+ ♘f6 10.exf6 exf6 11.♕d5+ ♔g6 12.0-0, which was much better for White in Graf-Gisbrecht, German Championship 2002) 8.♕f3 (8.♕h5+ g6 9.♕f3 is more common) 8...♘b4 9.exf6 exf6 10.♕h5+ g6 11.♕e2+ ♕e7 12.♘d6+ ♔d8 13.♘gf7+ ♔c7 14.♕xe7 ♗xe7 15.♘xh8 ♗xd6 16.♔d1, and White won.

Decent alternatives are 3...e6, 3...d6 and 3...♘f6.

4.♘f3 g6

Here 4...a6 5.♗xc6 ♕xc6 is risky, but perhaps more in keeping with his third move.

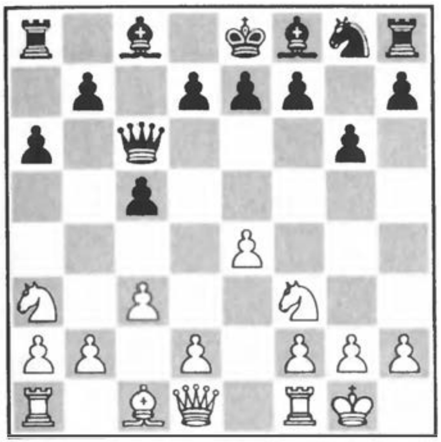
5.c3

Preparing d4 and the manoeuvre ♘a3-c2-(e3). Good is also 5.0-0 ♗g7 6.♖e1 (Sakaev).

5...a6

Khalifman questions the bishop. In reply to 5...♗g7 there follows 6.d4, when at some point 3...♕c7 may prove to have been a total waste of time.

6.♗xc6 ♕xc6 7.0-0



7...♗g7

Here 7...♕xe4?! 8.d4 gives White a very dangerous lead in development.

8.d4 d6 9.d5

White gains space and aims for a Benoni type of position. 9.♖e1 ♗g4 10.d5 also gives White a slight plus.

9...♕c7 10.h3

This prevents ...♗g4 (xf3) and thus preserves control over the important e5 square. The c8 bishop is a problem piece – Black would be quite happy to part with his bishop pair. Worthy of consideration is Shipov's 10.♗f4, preventing 10...♘f6, because of 11.e5!.

10...♘f6 11.♗f4 0-0

Not 11...♘xe4?? 12.♕a4+.

12.♖e1 b5 13.♕d2

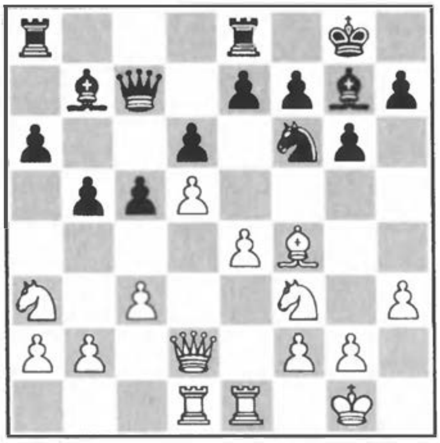
It is too early for 13.e5. After 13...♘d7 14.♕e2 ♗b7 15.♖ad1 (or 15.exd6 exd6 16.c4 bxc4 17.♘xc4 ♗xd5 18.♗xd6 ♗xc4 19.♗xc7 ♗xe2 20.♖xe2 with equal chances) Black can liquidate with 15...dxe5 16.♘xe5 ♘xe5 17.♗xe5 ♗xe5 18.♕xe5 ♕xe5 19.♖xe5 ♖fd8.

13...♗b7

Black connects his rooks. The bishop is not too active, but still of some use. On b7 the bishop attacks d5, thus preventing e4-e5 for the moment.

14.♖ad1 ♖fe8

Both sides have developed nearly all their pieces. Zviagintsev can be satisfied with his 2.♘a3 set-up. White is slightly better due to his space advantage.



15.c4

Trying to improve his knight in case of 15...bxc4?! 16.♘xc4, and 15...b4 16.♘c2. With the pawn on c4, d5 is protected, which means that e4-e5 will become a threat.

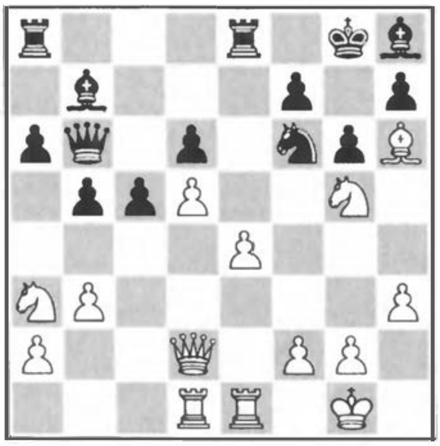
15...♕b6 16.♗h6 ♗h8 17.b3

Now that White has formed a chain (a2-b3-c4-d5) the positional threat of e4-e5 becomes real. Khalifman acts accordingly.

17...e6! 18.♘g5

White should not free the light-squared bishop. After 18.dxe6 ♖xe6 the weakness of e4 gives Black good play.

18...exd5 19.cxd5



19.exd5 is playable, but with his knight on a3 White cannot count on anything special.

19...♖e7

Both sides will double their rooks on the only (half-)open file.

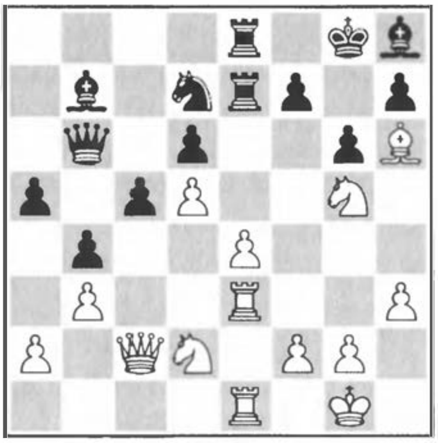
20.♖e3 ♖ae8 21.♖de1 a5!

Black must find a useful square for his light-squared bishop.

22.♘b1

Likewise, Zviagintsev has to find a comfortable spot for his audacious knight (it is now completely out of play on a3).

22...b4 23.♕c2 ♘d7 24.♘d2



24...♗a6

Following his plan of placing the bishop more actively on the a6-f1 diagonal. But 24...♗d4 would have been even better, when Black is, to say the least, not worse.

25.♘gf3 ♘e5

Khalifman is on a 'down-trend' to use a term of Yermolinsky's. The move in the game keeps equal chances, but makes things much harder for Black. It was not too late for the active 25...♗d4!?, which gives Black good counterplay after 26.♘xd4 cxd4.

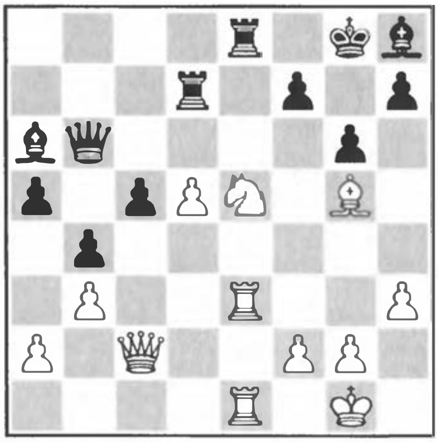
26.♗g5 ♘xf3+ 27.♘xf3

Exchanging a pair of knights favours White.

27...♖d7 28.e5!?

A principled decision, which brings the game to a crisis. The resulting position is extremely difficult to play, especially in time-trouble.

28...dxe5 29.♘xe5



29...♖xd5

Here 29...♗xe5 30.♖xe5 ♖xe5 31.♖xe5 f6 32.♖e6 should win for White.

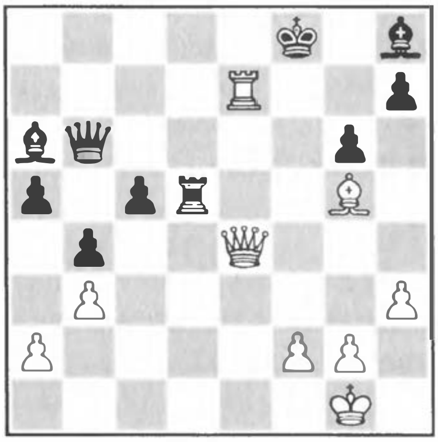
30.♘xf7!

This sacrifice was the point of 28.e5.

30...♖xe3 31.♖xe3

As Bücker has noted White can win here with 31.♘h6+ ♚f8 32.♗xe3 ♗b7, and now 32.♕e2!, and after a long and complicated line your computer will demonstrate a win.

31...♚xf7 32.♖e7+ ♚f8 33.♕e4



33...♖d1+?

This logical check (probably in time-trouble) loses the game. Khalifman should have changed the move order with 33...♕d6!, threatening 34...♖d1 mate, when Black can apparently hold the position by playing 34.♗h6+ (34.♕f3+ ♗f6 35.♕xf6+ ♕xf6

36.♗xf6) 34...♗g7! (not 34...♔g8? when 35.♖e8+ ♔f7 36.♖f8+ wins the house) 35.♗xg7+ (a blunder is 35.♖xg7?? ♖d1+) 35...♔g8 36.f4 ♗b5, defending the e8-square and coming back to the long diagonal.

34.♔h2 ♕d6+ 35.f4 ♗f6

After the unfortunate check on d1 35...♗b5 can no longer save Black; after 36.♗h6+ ♔g8 (if 36...♗g7 37.♖xg7 decides) White's queen has access to the seventh rank: 37.♕b7, and Black has no defence.

If 35...h5 then 36.♖e6 and 37.♕xg6 decides.

36.♗h6+ ♔g8 37.♕a8+

and Khalifman resigned, as 37...♕d8 38.♖e8+ is game over.

During the Russian Team Championship in Sochi, Vadim Zviagintsev repeated his brainchild against Ruslan Ponomariov. Employing a flexible set-up, Zviagintsev improved upon his earlier game against Motylev to gain a significant opening edge. He eventually ground down Ponomariov in a difficult ending. After Sochi a strong round-robin tournament took place in Sarajevo. Impressed by the results of his countryman, Vladimir Malakhov twice employed 2.♘a3. Excerpts of these games are cited in the notes to our next game.

☐ **Vadim Zviagintsev**
■ **Ruslan Ponomariov**
Sochi 2006

1.e4 c5 2.♘a3 ♘c6

Interestingly, most players play 2...♘c6 against Zviagintsev (only Dreev played 2...e6) whereas here, after 3.♗b5, it is clear that 2.♘a3 serves some purpose.

In Sarajevo Malakhov was 'less lucky':

– 2...d6 3.c3 ♘f6 4.g3 g6 (4...♘xe4? 5.♕a4+) 5.♗g2 ♗g7 6.♘e2 0-0 7.0-0 e5 8.d4 exd4 9.cxd4 ♘c6 10.d5 ♘b4 11.♘c2 with a slight edge in Malakhov-Nisipeanu, Sarajevo 2006.

– 2...a6 3.c3 ♘c6 4.♘f3 ♘f6 5.♕e2 (White has a favourable 2.c3 Sicilian after 5.e5 ♘d5 – White's second move is more useful than Black's. While after 5...♘g4 there is 6.♕e2 d6 7.exd6 ♕xd6 8.♘c4 ♕c7 9.a4 Barsky in *Chess Today*) 5...d6 6.g3 ♗g4?! 7.h3 ♗h5 8.♗g2 e6 9.0-0 ♗e7 10.d3 ♘d7 11.♘c2 ♖c8 12.g4 ♗g6 13.♘d2 e5 14.♘e3 and White is slightly better, Malakhov-Sasikiran, Sarajevo 2006.

3.♗b5 g6

The fianchetto is stronger than Khalifman's 3...♕c7. This was also Motylev's choice in the Russian Superfinal. Zviagintsev avoids the Rossolimo-like set-up that he chose in that game.

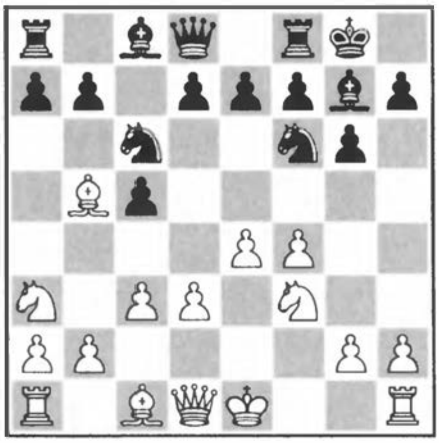
4.c3

So here is the big improvement! 4.♗xc6 bxc6 5.d3 ♗g7 6.f4 was Zviagintsev-Motylev, Moscow 2005. Note how White opted for a set-up with f4 here: taking advantage of the fact that there is no knight on f3 yet.

4...♗g7 5.d3

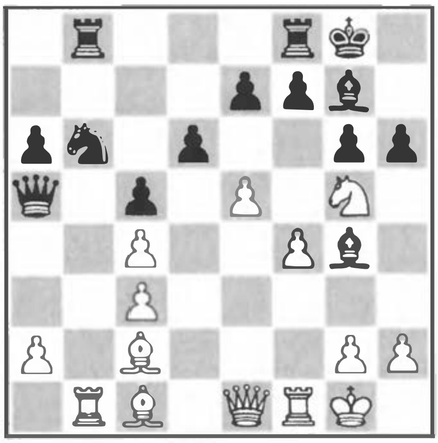
This looks modest, but White's moves should be judged as a whole. After his game against Motylev, Zviagintsev must have found the development scheme 4.c3, 5.d3, 6.f4, 7.♘f3 and 8.0–0. White may not be better in the traditional sense, but he has a flexible position and a clear plan (play on the kingside). Black, on the other hand, rather unusually for a Sicilian, is confronted with fresh problems from an extremely early phase in the game. Note that 5.♘f3 ♘f6 6.♕e2 0-0 7.0-0 a6 8.♗xc6 dxc6 9.d4 cxd4 10.cxd4 ♕c7 11.♘c4 ♗g4 12.♘ce5 ♗xf3 13.♘xf3 ♖ad8 was played in Laesson-Rogule, Tallin 2006. White is a tad better at this point.

5...♘f6 6.f4 0-0 7.♘f3



7...d6

Following in Zviagintsev's footsteps, young master B.Savchenko played the same set-up a few days later. His opponent decided to deviate here with the original 7...♘a5. After 8.0-0 a6 9.♗a4 b5 10.♗c2 d6 11.♕e1 ♖b8 12.♕h4 (Savchenko has copied Zviagintsev's plan, but Belov is faster on the queenside than Ponomariov was in the main game) 12...b4! 13.♘c4?! bxc3 14.bxc3 ♘xc4 15.dxc4 ♕a5 16.♕e1 (this retreat is necessary, Belov now opts for a dangerous knight manoeuvre: ♘d7-b6. This serves to attack White's weakened queenside, but withdraws a defender) 16...♘d7 17.e5 ♘b6 18.♖b1 ♗g4 19.♘g5!? (planning 20.♕h4, and going all-out for the attack) 19...h6



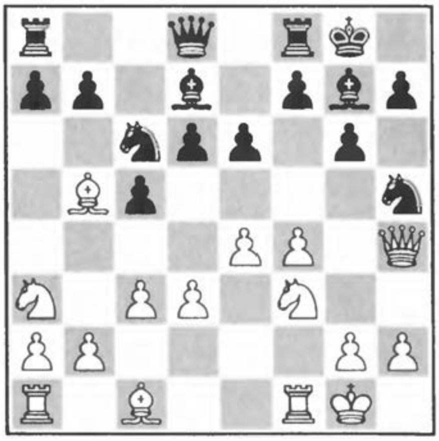
20.♘xf7 ♖xf7 (20...♔xf7! 21.f5 with huge complications) 21.♗xg6 ♕xa2 22.exd6 exd6 23.f5 (stronger than taking on f7 – White cuts off the g4-bishop, and advances another attacker. 23.♕h4!?) 23...♖f6?! (this stops the f-pawn, but misses or underestimates Savchenko's next. White is better after 23...♕xb1 24.♗xf7+, Black should have tried 23...♕xc4 when the complications continue after 24.♗xf7+ ♔xf7 25.f6 or 24...♕xf7 25.♕g3) 24.♖b2 ♕a5 (24...♕xc4? 25.♖f4) 25.h3 (regaining his sacrificed material, whilst keeping the attack) 25...♖bf8? (25...♗xf5 26.♗xf5 ♔h8) 26.hxg4 ♘xc4 27.♖b7 (White is completely winning now) 27...♘e5 28.g5 (winning an exchange – sacrificing one leads to an immediate win: 28.♖xg7+! ♔xg7 29.♗xh6+) 28...hxg5 29.♗xg5 ♘xg6? 30.♗xf6 ♖xf6 31.fxg6 ♖xg6 32.♕h4 ♗h6 33.♖f8+! 1-0 B.Savchenko-Belov, Sochi 2006.

8.0-0 ♗d7 9.♕e1 e6 10.♕h4

White has played naturally, his position is somewhat easier to play. Ponomariov now offers to exchange queens – possibly he did not expect Zviagintsev to acquiesce.

10...♘h5

Perhaps 10...♘e8!?.



11.g4!

Black is fine after 11.♕h3 f5 12.exf5 ♖xf5!.

11...♕xh4 12.♘xh4 ♗f6

This leads to an advantage for White, stronger was simply 12...♘f6.

13.♘xg6! hxg6 14.gxh5 gxh5

The pawn on h5 is weak, a fact which Zviagintsev's accentuates over his next few moves.

15.♗a4 d5?!

Stronger is Bücker's suggestion of 15...♔h7.

16.♗d1 c4

Trying to mix it up, White is comfortable after 16...h4 17.♗f3.

17.e5 ♗e7 18.dxc4 d4

No fun is 18...♗xa3 19.bxa3 dxc4 20.♗xh5 ♘e7 21.♗e3.

19.♘c2

Black has some counterplay after 19.cxd4 ♘xd4.

19...dxc3 20.bxc3 ♘a5 21.♗a3

A timely exchange of the dark-squared bishops.

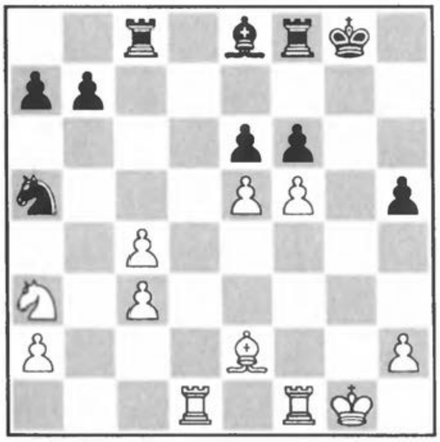
21...♗xa3 22.♘xa3 ♖ac8 23.♗e2

Hanging on to his extra pawn, while keeping the weak h-pawn on the board.

23...f6

White was ready for the king march ♔f2-e3 with a huge endgame advantage.

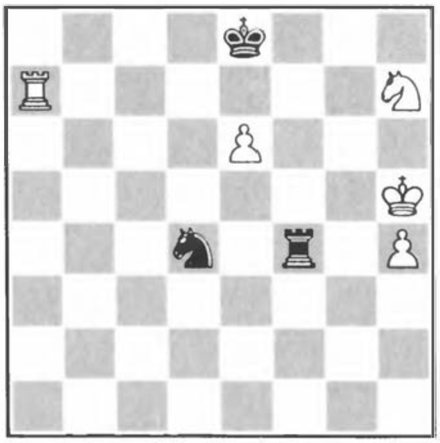
24.♖ad1 ♗e8 25.f5



25...fxe5

Or 25...exf5 26.♖xf5 fxe5 27.♖xe5 b6 and suddenly Black's king is in danger: 28.♖g5+ ♔h7 (28...♔h8 29.♖d6 ♖c6 30.♘b5) 29.♖d6 ♖c6 30.♗d3+ ♔h8 31.♘b5.

26.fxe6 ♖xf1+ 27.♖xf1 ♔g7 28.♗f3 b5!? Tenacious defence by Ponomariov, more pawns are exchanged. **29.cxb5** White has a complicated win here with 29.♘xd5! ♘xc4 30.♗b7!. **29...♖xc3 30.♘b1 ♖c5 31.♗e2 e4 32.♔f2** 32.a4 e3 gives counterplay. **32...e3+** 32...♗xb5. **33.♔xe3 ♖e5+ 34.♔f3 ♗xb5 35.♗xb5 ♖xb5 36.♖e1!** White is a healthy passed pawn up, but since there is so little material on the board the win is not 'just a matter of technique'. **36...♖f5+ 37.♔g3 ♔f8 38.♘d2 ♔e7 39.♘f3 ♖d5** 39...♘c6. **40.♔h4 ♘c4 41.♘g5 ♖d2 42.♖c1! ♘d6** 42...♖xh2+? 43.♔g3. **43.h3 ♘e8** Stronger than 43...♖xa2 44.♖c7+ ♔e8 45.♔xh5. **44.♔xh5 ♖xa2 45.♔g6 ♖a4 46.♖b1 ♘d6 47.♖b8 ♖f4 48.♖a8 ♖f6+ 49.♔h5 ♘b5 50.h4 ♖f4 51.♖h8 ♘d6?** Bücker has rightly indicated that Black can draw here with the stalemate trap 51...♘d4 52.♖h7+ ♔e8 53.♖xa7 ♘xe6. **52.♖h7+ ♔e8 53.♖xa7 ♘f5 54.♘h7 ♘d4**

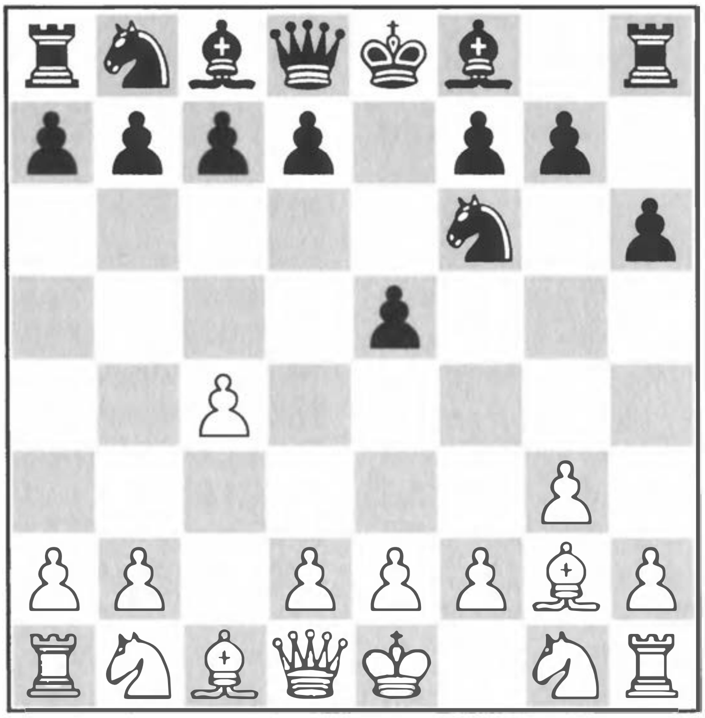


55.♔g6! There was a neat stalemate trap here: 55.♘g5? ♘xe6! 56.♘xe6 ♖xh4+!. **55...♘xe6?** More tenacious was 55...♖g4+! 56.♔f6 ♘xe6! when White must find the study-like 57.h5! ♘f4 58.♔f5! ♖h4 59.♘f6+ ♔d8 (59...♔f8 60.♔g5 wins as well) 60.♖d7+ ♔c8 61.♖d4! ♖xh5+ 62.♘xh5 ♘xh5 63.♖g4 trapping the knight. **56.♘f6+ ♔d8 57.♖a8+ ♔c7 58.♘d5+** **1-0**

CHAPTER 5

Igor Glek

English Opening: Chebanenko's 3...h6



1.c4 e5 2.g3 ♘f6 3.♗g2 h6!?

1.c4 e5 2.g3 ♘f6 3.♗g2 h6

This is one of the many opening ideas of the creative Moldovan coach Vecheslav Chebanenko (who unfortunately died too early) – among his pupils are such well-known GM's as Viktor Gavrikov, Dorian Rogozenko and Viorel Bologan.

The move 3...h6 may look a bit strange, but generally it is quite useful in the English Opening:

1. After a future ♘g1-f3 Black can play e5-e4, when White does not have ♘f3-g5.
2. In some lines White cannot play ♗c1-g5.
3. Finally, Black is asking: 'What are you going to do?'. For, in the case of the natural 4.♘c3, Black is moving the game into the territory of the Rossolimo Variation in the Sicilian. Well, admittedly, with colours reversed and some 1.5 tempo down – but in practice it's very difficult for White to prove an advantage!

This line became popular after my game against M.Gurevich (Vlissingen 2002) and has in the meantime been played by GMs like Anand, Volokitin, Morozevich and Bologan.

It is interesting to note that in the Sicilian White sometimes uses similar waiting tactics, hoping to provoke ♘c6. For example:

– 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.c3 ♗g7 4.h3!? (Glek-B.Savchenko, Moscow ch 2005).

– 1.e4 c5 2.♘a3!? (Zviagintsev-Khalifman, Moscow ch-RUS 2005).

In my opinion, after 1.c4 e5 2.g3 ♘f6 3.♗g2 h6, there are two principal approaches:

I. 4.♘c3 ♗b4, simply allowing the 'Rossolimo' (and hoping to make use of the extra time), and

II. all other moves – 4.b3, 4.a3, 4.♘f3, 4.e4, 4.d3 etc. – avoiding the 'Rossolimo'.

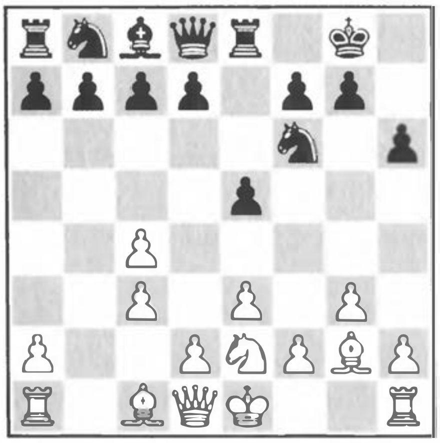
Let us look first at my game with Mikhail Gurevich – which I lost unnecessarily – and next I will present a small theoretical theoretical survey.

☐ **Mikhail Gurevich**
■ **Igor Glek**
Vlissingen 2002

1.c4 e5 2.g3 ♘f6 3.♗g2 h6

So here we are with Chebanenko's surprising waiting move. Gurevich decides to allow Black's main idea, but his subsequent follow-up with 5.e3 is harmless.

4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.e3?! ♗xc3 6.bxc3 0-0 7.♘e2 ♖e8



A useful move which prepares ...e4. No good was the immediate 7...e4?! because of 8.f3 exf3 9.♗xf3 ♘c6 10.d3 ♘e5 11.♗g2. Interesting is Gurevich's suggestion of 7...c6!?, planning 8.0-0 d5 9.cxd5 cxd5 10.♗a3 ♖e8 11.d3 ♘c6 and Black is already slightly better. White should probably play 8.♗a3!? intending 8...♖e8 9.♗d6 ♖e6 10.c5 ♘e8 11.♗h3.

8.e4 c6 9.♕b3 b6

Also playable is 9...♘a6 10.0-0 ♘c5 11.♕c2 d5 12.exd5 cxd5 13.cxd5 ♘xd5 14.d4 exd4 15.cxd4 ♘a6 16.♕b3 ♘ac7.

10.0-0 ♗a6?!

This looks impressive, but now I would prefer the simple 10...♗b7 when I believe that Black is already better – not bad for an opening surprise! 11.c5 (11.d3 d5, and 11.♖d1 (Gurevich) is met by 11...d5 12.cxd5 cxd5 13.exd5 ♗xd5 14.♗xd5 ♕xd5 15.♕xd5 ♘xd5∓):

– 11...♘a6 12.cxb6 (12.♗a3 Gurevich 12...♘xc5! 13.♗xc5 ♗a6 14.♗d6!? ♗xe2 15.♖fe1 with compensation, planning 16.d4) 12...axb6 13.d3 d5, or 13...♘c5 14.♕c2 d5.

– 11...d5 12.exd5 cxd5 13.cxb6 axb6 14.d3 ♗a6 15.♖d1 e4 16.♘f4 g5 17.dxe4 gxf4 18.exd5 ♗e2 19.♗xf4!? (19.♖d4 is met by 19...f3) 19...♗xd1 20.♖xd1 ♔g7∓.

11.♖e1 d5 12.exd5

The idea was 12.cxd5 ♗d3.

12...cxd5

Deserving of attention is 12...♗b7 13.dxc6 ♘xc6 14.♕c2 e4 15.♘f4 ♘e5.

13.cxd5 ♕c8!?

Intending 14...♗c4 or 14...♕g4.

After 13...♘bd7!? White must choose between 14.♗a3 and 14.c4. Let's analyse:

● 14.♗a3

– 14...e4 (Gurevich) 15.♕a4 (15.♘d4 ♘e5 16.d6 ♕d7=∞) 15...♗d3 16.♘f4 ♘e5 Black has compensation.

– 14...♖c8 15.♕a4 (15.d6 ♘c5 16.♗xc5 bxc5∓) 15...♗c4 (15...♗d3 16.♘c1) 16.d6 a5 17.♕c2 and Black is slightly better after both 17...b5 and 17...♘c5.

● 14.c4

– 14...e4 15.♘d4 ♘e5 16.d3 (16.♘b5 ♖c8) 16...♘xd3 17.♘c6 ♕c7 18.♖d1 ♘d7 19.♗a3 ♘7c5 20.♕c3 ♗b7 21.♘d4 ♖ad8.

– 14...♖c8 15.d3 e4 16.dxe4 (16.♘f4 exd3, or 16.♘d4 exd3) 16...♘xe4 17.♗b2 ♗xc4 18.♕d1 ♘df6 19.♘f4 ♘d6.

14.♕a4 ♘bd7 15.♗a3 ♗c4 16.d6 b5 17.♕c2 ♗d5!

Worse is 17...e4 18.♘f4 ♘e5 (18...g5 19.d3 gxf4 20.dxc4 ♕xc4 21.♖ad1 ♖ac8 22.♗c1±) 19.♗xe4 ♘xe4 20.♕xe4 ♕g4 21.♖e3±.

18.♗xd5 ♘xd5 19.♕f5 ♘7b6

Equal play arises after 19...♕c6!? 20.f4 (Here 20.♖ac1 is met by 20...♖ad8 intending 21...♕a6) 20...♕b6+ 21.d4 ♘xc3 22.♘xc3 ♕xd4+ 23.♔h1 ♕xc3 24.♕xd7 ♕f3+ 25.♔g1 ♕xa3.

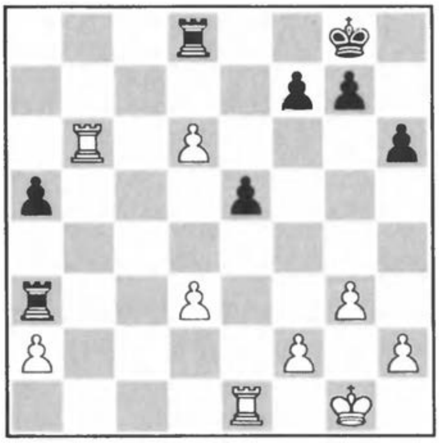
20.♕xc8 ♖axc8

Black can also take back with the other rook: 20...♖exc8!? 21.d4 (21.d3 ♘xc3 22.♘xc3 ♖xc3 23.♗b4 ♖xd3 24.♖xe5 a6 equal) 21...♘c4 22.♗c5 exd4 23.cxd4 ♖d8 24.♖ac1 ♘xd6 25.♘c3 ♘xc3 26.♖xc3 ♘c4.

21.♖ac1 ♖ed8 22.d3 a5!

Or 22...♖d7 23.♖ed1 a6 24.♔g2 ♘f6.

23.♖b1 ♘xc3 24.♘xc3 ♖xc3 25.♖xb5 ♖xa3 26.♖xb6



26...♖xd3

In time trouble I did not find the easiest way to draw: 26...f6 27.d4 exd4 28.♖e7 d3 29.♖bb7 d2 30.♖xg7+ ♔h8.

27.♖xe5 ♖3xd6 28.♖xd6 ♖xd6 29.♖xa5

A well-known technical ending. Objectively it is a draw, but White has practical chances of course.

29...♖d2 30.♔g2

30.g4.

30...h5 31.a4 ♖a2 32.h4 g6 33.♖a8+ ♔g7 34.a5 ♖a3 35.a6 ♔f6 36.♔f1 ♖a2 37.♔g1 ♔f5 38.♔g2 ♖a3 39.♖a7 ♔f6

Correct was 39...f6!.

40.♔f1 ♖a2 41.♔e1 ♔g7?

Better is 41...♔e6 42.♔d1 ♖xf2 43.♖b7 ♖a2 44.a7 ♔f5 45.♖xf7+ ♔g4 46.♖g7 ♔xg3 47.♖xg6+ ♔xh4 48.♖g7 ♔h3.

42.♔d1

And White won in the end.

I. White allows the Rossolimo set-up

4.♘c3 ♗b4

What could be more logical than playing 4.♘c3? After 4...♗b4 there is no clear way for White to achieve anything out of the opening. We have already seen that 5.e3?! ♗xc3 6.bxc3 0-0 gives nothing special.

A) 5.e4
B) 5.♕c2
C) 5.♕b3
D) 5.♘f3
E) 5.♘d5

Variation A

5.e4 ♗xc3

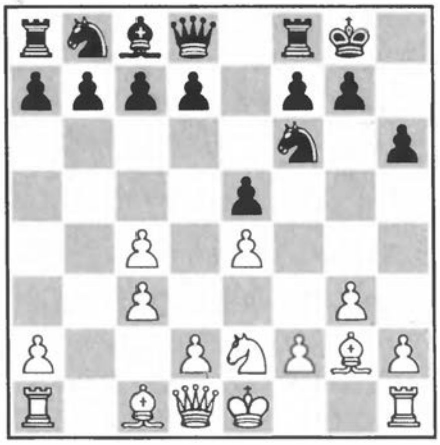
It is also possible to play 5...♘c6 6.♘ge2 ♗c5 7.0-0 a6 8.a3 d6 9.b4 ♗a7 10.h3 ♘d4 with about equal chances. Cekro-Jaracz, Belgium tt 2003/04.

6.bxc3

I believe that Black is also OK after 6.dxc3 just like in the Rossolimo Sicilian. For example, 6.dxc3 d6 7.♕e2 ♘c6 (7...♘bd7!?) 8.h3 ♗e6 9.♗e3 ♕e7 10.b3 a5 11.a4 ♘d7 12.♘f3 ♘c5 Chelushkina-Sheremetieva, Volshski 1989.

6...d6

I prefer 6...0-0 7.♘e2



- 7...♖e8 8.0-0 c6 9.♕b3 ♘a6 10.♗a3 b6 11.d3 (or 11.f4 d6 12.♖ae1 ♖b8 13.d4 c5 14.fxe5dxe5 15.d5 ♖f8 16.♘c1 ♘e8 17.♖f2 ♘d6 Bode-Baklan, Nordheim 2005) 11...d6 12.♖ad1 ♕c7 13.f4 ♘c5 14.♕c2 ♘cd7 15.♗c1 ♗b7 16.♗h3 Cekro-Glek, Vlaardingen rapid 2005, and now instead of 16...b5?! it was time for 16...d5!.
- 7...d6 8.0-0 ♗e6 9.d3 ♕c8 10.f4 (10.f3?! c6 11.♕c2 d5 12.c5 ♘bd7 13.♗e3 b6 Danzer-Maier, Bad Wiessee 1998) 10...♗h3 11.f5 ♗xg2 12.♔xg2 c6 13.♗a3 (13.h3 d5) 13...♕d7 14.h3 ♖e8 15.g4 d5 with good counterplay.

7.♘e2 ♗e6 8.d3 ♕d7 9.h3!

For if 9.0-0 ♗h3 is equal.

9...g5 10.f3 ♘a6 11.h4 0-0-0!? 12.hxg5 hxg5 13.♗xg5 ♖xh1+ 14.♗xh1 ♖h8 15.♔f2 ♘h7 16.♗h4 f5

Black has a certain amount of compensation, and later won due to a horrible blunder by White (in a winning position). Macieja-Volokitin, Bermuda 2005. I believe that Black should play 6...0-0 in this line.

Variation B

5.♕c2 0-0 6.d3

Or 6.♘f3 ♖e8 7.0-0 ♘c6 8.e4 d6 9.h3 ♘h7 10.d3 and the players agreed a draw in Miles-Oratovsky, Lisbon 2000.

6...♖e8 7.♗d2 c6 8.♞f3 d5 9.0-0 ♗f8 10.cxd5 cxd5 11.d4 e4 12.♘e5 ♘g4 13.♘xg4 ♗xg4 14.f3 exf3 15.exf3 ♗d7

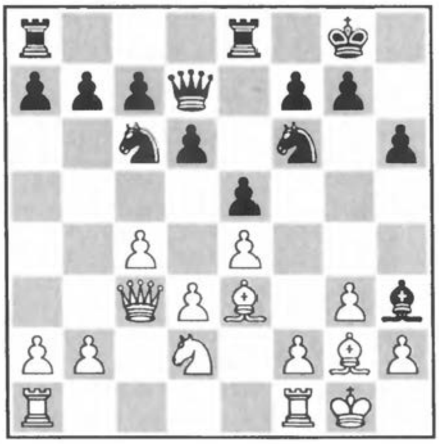
With satisfactory play for Black in G.James-M.D.Tseitlin, Port Erin 2004. Note that Black easily achieved his general plan of ...c6 and ...d5 in this game.

Variation C

5.♕b3 ♗xc3

In a rapid game I once played 5...a5!? 6.a3 ♗xc3 7.♕xc3 d6 8.d3 c5 9.e3 ♘c6 10.♘e2 0-0 11.0-0 ♕e7 NN-Glek, Gouda 2002.

6.♕xc3 d6 7.d3 0-0 8.♘f3 ♖e8 9.0-0 ♘c6 10.e4 ♗g4 11.♗e3 ♕d7 12.♘d2 ♗h3



And Black was OK in Lehtinen-N.Pedersen, Vammala 2005. After the exchange of the bishop for the knight, Black still had reasonable control over the dark squares (due to his pawns on d6, e5 and h6). Generally, setting up a battery with bishop and queen along the c8-h3 diagonal is good– aiming to exchange the fianchetto bishop.

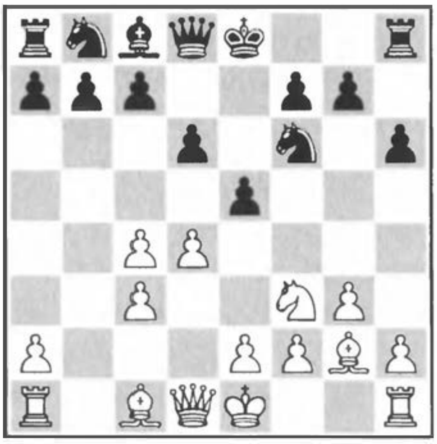
Variation D

5.♘f3 ♗xc3

Playable is 5...e4!?, as 6.♘d4 ♗xc3 7.dxc3 0-0 8.0-0 ♖e8 9.b3 d6 is equal.

6.dxc3

The alternative is 6.bxc3!? d6 (6...e4 7.♘d4 0-0 8.0-0 d6 – 8...d5 9.cxd5 ♕xd5 10.d3 – 9.d3 ♖e8) 7.d4



– 7...♘bd7 8.c5 e4 9.♘d2 dxc5 (9...e3 10.fxe3 dxc5 11.0-0 0-0 12.♘c4; 9...♕e7 10.cxd6 cxd6 11.♕c2 d5 12.c4; 9...d5 10.0-0 0-0 11.c4) 10.♘xe4 ♘xe4 11.♗xe4 0-0 12.0-0 ♖e8 13.♗g2 cxd4 14.cxd4 is slightly better for White.

– Playable is 7...♕e7!? 8.c5 e4 9.cxd6 cxd6 10.♘d2 0-0 11.0-0 ♘c6 12.♗a3 ♗f5.

– 7...e4!? 8.♘d2 ♕e7 9.♕c2 (9.♘f1 0-0 10.♘e3 c5) 9...♗f5 (better than 9...e3 10.fxe3 0-0 11.e4, or 9...0-0 10.♘xe4 ♘xe4 11.♕xe4 ♕xe4 12.♗xe4 ♖e8 13.f3) 10.♘f1 0-0 11.♘e3 Solleveld-Glek, Netherlands tt 2002. And now Black should have played: 11...♗g6 12.♖b1 (12.g4 ♕e6) 12...c5 13.d5 b6 14.0-0 ♘bd7.

6...d6 7.0-0 ♘c6 8.♘e1 ♗e6 9.b3 ♕d7 10.e4 0-0-0

The position is about equal.

11.♘c2 h5 12.f3?! h4 13.♘e3 ♘h5 14.♕e1 hxg3 15.hxg3 g6

The alternative was ♖h7, but in any case Black is doing fine here (he later lost due to a blunder). Hulak-Bologan, Ohrid 2001. So again, Black had no trouble after the exchange on c3, developing with ...♗e6 and ...♕d7. It is noteworthy that Black can even consider queenside castling.

Variation E

5.♘d5 ♗e7!?

Also not bad is 5...♘xd5 6.cxd5 0-0 and now:

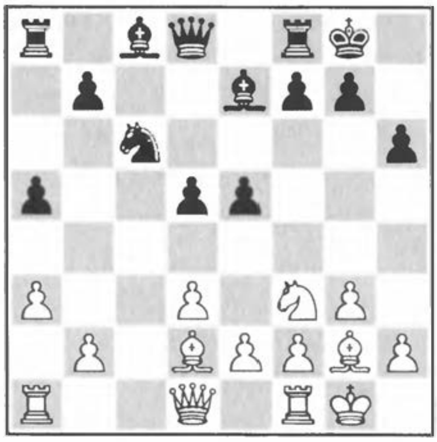
– 7.♘f3 ♖e8 8.0-0 c6 9.♕b3 ♕a5 10.a3 ♗f8 11.dxc6 ♘xc6 12.d3 d5 and Black was slightly better in Bursteinas-Gavrikov, Vilnius 2000.

– 7.e3 c6 8.♕b3 ♗a5 9.♘e2 d6 10.0-0 c5 11.d4 ♘d7 12.♕c2 b5 13.dxe5 ♘xe5 14.f4 ♘d7 15.♗d2 ♗b6 16.e4 ♖e8 17.♔h1 ♗b7 18.g4 ♗xd5 19.exd5 ♖xe2 C.Hansen-Bruzon, Skanderborg 2005.

6.♘f3 d6 7.0-0 0-0 8.d3

The final chance for 8.♘xe7+.

8...♘xd5 9.cxd5 c5 10.dxc6 ♘xc6 11.a3 a5 12.♗d2 d5



Black has achieved his aim once again.

13.♖c1 a4 14.♗c3 d4 15.♗e1 ♗e6 16.♖xc6 bxc6 17.♘xe5 c5! 18.♘c6 ♕c7 19.♘xe7+ ♕xe7 20.♗xa8 ♖xa8

With excellent compensation in Cekro-Glek, Hellevoetsluis rapid 2004. So, avoiding the exchange on c3 after 4...♗b4 with the semi-active 5.♘d5 gives nothing either. Black may either take on d5, or play 5...♗e7 as I did.

II. White's 4th move alternatives

Now what useful moves does White have apart from 4.♘c3?

A) 4.d3
B) 4.b3
C) 4.d4
D) 4.e4
E) 4.♞f3

Variation A

4.d3

This is fairly popular in practice.

4...♗b4+

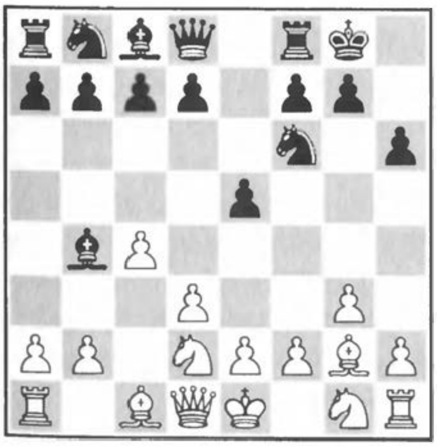
The check looks like the easiest way to equalize. Anand has played 4...♘c6 when after 5.a3 ♗c5 6.e3 a6 (6...a5) 7.♘c3 0-0 8.♘ge2 d6 9.0-0 ♖e8 10.h3 we have reached the type of position that Mikhail Gurevich plays very well, but against Anand everything is tough. Black won eventually in Gurevich-Anand, Bastia Corsica Masters rapid 2005.

Playable, but less logical, is 4...♗c5 5.♘f3 ♘c6 6.0-0 0-0 7.♘c3 ♖e8 8.a3 a5 9.b3 d6 10.♗b2 ♗g4 11.h3 ♗h5 12.♖c1 ♕d7 13.♔h2 ♖ad8 14.♘d2 ♗a7, Taylor-Vydeslaver, Rethymnon 2003.

5.♘d2

Or 5.♗d2 a5 6.♘c3 0-0 7.a3 ♗xc3 8.♗xc3 ♖e8 9.♘f3 e4 10.♘h4 exd3 11.♕xd3 d6 12.0-0 a4, Makarichev-Gavrikov, Moscow 1990.

5...0-0



In Markowski-Savchenko, Bad Zwesten 2004, there followed: 5...a5 6.♘f3 ♘c6 7.0-0 0-0 8.a3 ♗c5 9.b3 d6 10.♗b2 ♗f5 11.♕c2 ♕d7 12.e3 ♖fe8 13.♕c3 ♗h3 14.d4 exd4 15.exd4 ♗a7 16.♖ael ♗xg2 17.♔xg2 ♕f5 and Black was doing fine.

6.♘f3

If you want to play a3 now is the right time, for after a subsequent ...♖e8 the bishop can retreat to f8. Markowski-Izoria, Venaco 2005, saw: 6.a3 ♗xd2+ 7.♗xd2 ♖e8 8.♘f3 c6 9.♗c3 e4 10.dxe4 ♘xe4 11.♖c1 d5 12.cxd5 ♕xd5 13.0-0 ♘xc3 14.♖xc3 ♕h5.

6...♖e8 7.0-0 c6 8.a3 ♗f8 9.b4 d5 10.cxd5 cxd5 11.♗b2 ♗d6 12.♖c1 a5 13.b5 a4

Black has kept his bishop and managed to play ...c6 and ...d5. Serper-Berezjuk, Bela Crkva 1990.

Variation B

4.b3

The double fianchetto should not unduly worry Black. In Filipowicz-Palos, Tuzla 1990, White decided to give Black a taste of his own medicine with 4.a3!?, the game continued 4...c6 5.♘f3 e4 6.♘d4 d5 7.cxd5 ♕xd5 8.♘c2 ♕d8 9.♘c3 ♗f5 10.♘e3 ♗g6.

4...d5

There is nothing against 4...♗c5, as White does not threaten to take on e5 after 5.♗b2. Rotstein-Libiszewski, Cannes 2004, went: 5...0-0 6.e3 ♖e8 7.♘c3 c6 8.♕c2 ♗f8 9.♘e4 ♘xe4 10.♕xe4 d6 11.♘e2 ♗e6 12.0-0 ♕d7 13.♕c2 ♗h3.

5.cxd5 ♘xd5 6.♗b2 ♘c6 7.♘f3 ♗d6 8.0-0 0-0 9.♘a3 ♗xa3 10.♗xa3 ♖e8 11.♗b2 e4 12.♘e1 ♗g4

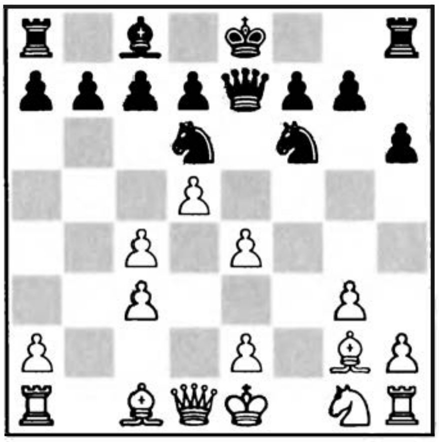
Black is OK. Minasian-Bologan, Ohrid 2001. So modest pawn moves will not bring much. What if White pushes a central pawn two squares ahead?

Variation C

4.d4 e4 5.♘c3 ♗b4

Again this move makes sense.

6.♕b3 ♘c6! 7.d5 ♘d4 8.♕d1 ♗xc3+ 9.bxc3 ♘f5 10.f3 ♕e7 11.fxe4 ♘d6!



12.♗a3 ♕e5 13.♕d3 ♘dxe4 14.♖c1 d6 15.♘f3 ♕e7 16.0-0 0-0 17.♘d2 ♘xd2 18.♕xd2 ♖e8 19.e4 ♘g4

And Black was better in T. Christensen-Glek, Rethymnon 2003

Variation D

4.e4!? ♗c5 5.♘e2 ♘c6 6.h3 d6 7.d3 a6 8.♘bc3 ♖b8

This looks like a good method to fight against the 'Botvinnik Wall'.

9.0-0 b5 10.♘d5 ♘d4

Or simply 10...0-0.

11.♗e3 0-0

Here 11...c6 12.♘xf6+ ♕xf6 13.cxb5 ♖xb5!? or 13...cxb5 is also playable.

12.♗xd4 exd4 13.b4 ♗a7

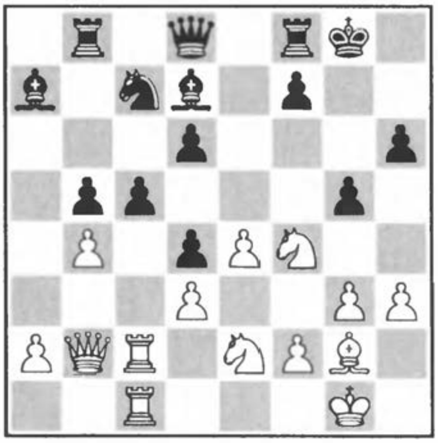
And here the alternative is 13...♘xd5 14.bxc5 ♘c3 15.♘xc3 dxc3.

14.♖c1 ♘e8 15.cxb5 axb5 16.♕b3 ♗d7 17.♕b2 c6 18.♘df4 ♘c7 19.♖c2

White cannot take the pawn of course: 19.♘xd4 ♕f6 20.♘fe2 ♘e6.

19...c5 20.♖fc1 g5!?

Play is also unclear after 20...♘e6.



21.♘h5 ♘e6 22.g4

The alternatives are: 22.e5 dxe5 23.bxc5 ♕e7 24.c6 ♗e8 25.g4, and 22.bxc5 dxc5 23.e5.

22...f6 23.♘eg3 ♗e8 24.♕a3 ♗b6 25.bxc5 ♗xc5 26.♕b2 ♔h8 27.♖f1 ♕a5 28.f4 ♕c3! 29.f5 ♕xb2 30.♖xb2 ♘d8 and Black won the ending in Romero Holmes-Morozevich, Plovdiv Ech-tt 2003.

Variation E

4.♘f3 e4 5.♘d4 ♘c6

This is stronger than 5...d5, when White has two good options:

- 6.d3 dxc4 7.dxe4 ♗b4+ 8.♘c3 0-0 9.0-0 c6 10.♘c2 ♗c5 11.♕xd8 ♖xd8 12.♗e3 and the ending is preferable for White, Stefansson-Mitkov, Lisbon 2000.
- 6.cxd5 ♕xd5 7.♘b3 ♕d8 8.♘c3 ♗f5 9.0-0 ♗g6 10.d3 exd3 11.♗xb7 ♘bd7 12.exd3 ♗e7 13.♘a5 ♘c5 14.♘c6 and White won in Paunovic-Ramiro Ovejero, Ortigueira 2004.

6.♘c2 ♘e5

Conveniently attacking the c4-pawn.

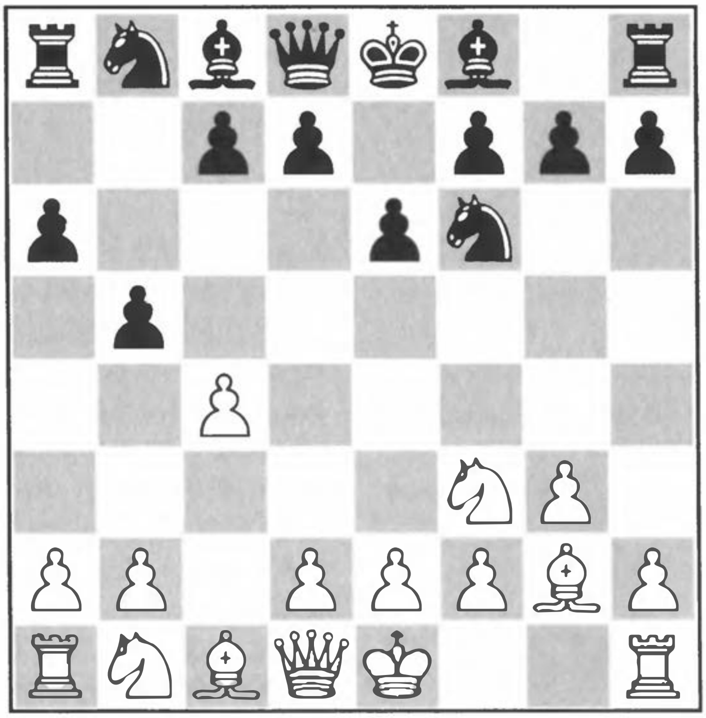
7.d3 exd3 8.exd3 ♗e7 9.♘e3 d6 10.d4 ♘eg4 11.♘c2 ♘h7 12.h3 ♘gf6 13.♘c3 0-0 14.♘e3 ♖e8 15.0-0 ♗f8

Ghaem Maghami-Komliakov, Moscow 2000.

CHAPTER 6

Adrian Mikhalchishin

The Romanishin Gambit



1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 a6 4.♗g2 b5!

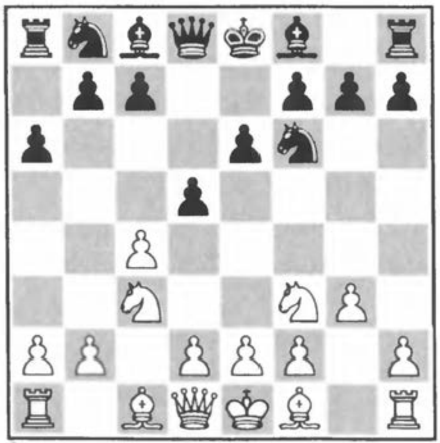
This line was devised in the 1970s, when the Lvov Chess School – founded by Leonid Stein – became one of the leading schools in the USSR. The best-known exponents of this school (after Stein's death at the age of 38) Alexander Beliavsky and Oleg Romanishin won various medals in USSR Championships.

It was Oleg Romanishin who introduced a new strategy (in fact a modernised version of an Alekhine strategy, one that later was further developed by Kasparov) – a positional pawn sacrifice in the opening (not a traditional gambit for quick development). One of Romanishin's inventions is:

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 a6 4.♗g2 b5

However, 4.♘c3 is a serious alternative, so I will first show you how Black gains satisfactory play after 4...d5.

4.♘c3 d5



5.cxd5

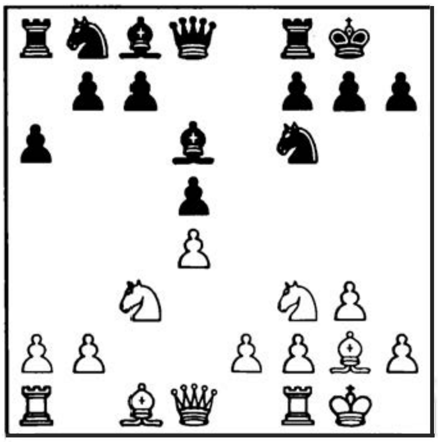
Here transposing into a Catalan Opening with 5.d4 is not very good for White. After 5...dxc4 White has trouble regaining the pawn:

- 6.♘e5 b5 7.♗g2 ♖a7 8.a4 b4 9.♘a2 ♗b7 10.0-0 ♗xg2 11.♔xg2 ♘c6 with an excellent game, Loginov-Aseev, Berlin 1992.
- 6.♗g2 b5 7.a4 b4 8.♘b1 ♗b7 9.0-0 c5 10.♕c2 ♗d5 11.♖d1 ♘c6 and White has no compensation for the pawn. I.Sokolov-Nikolic, Sarajevo 1987.

5...exd5 6.d4

Possible here is 6.♗g2 ♗e7 (not the blunder 6...d4?? which loses after 7.♕a4+ ♘c6 8.♘xd4) 7.0-0 0-0 8.d4 c6 9.♘e5 ♘bd7 10.♘xd7 ♗xd7 11.♕b3 b5 12.♗g5 a5 13.♕c2 ♖c8 and Black has excellent chances, Spiridonov-Romanishin, Yerevan 1989.

6...♗d6 7.♗g2 0-0 8.0-0



8...♘bd7

Quite good is also 8...♖e8 9.♗g5 c6 10.♕d3 ♘bd7 11.e4 dxe4 12.♘xe4 ♗e7 13.♖fe1 h6 14.♗xf6 ♘xf6 15.♘xf6+ ♗xf6 16.♖xe8+ ♕xe8 17.♖e1 ♕d8 and White had nothing in the game Villamayor-Zelcic, Elista Olympiad 1998.

9.♗f4

White gains nothing either after 9.♗g5 c6 10.♕c2 ♖e8 11.♖fe1 h6 12.♗f4 ♗xf4 13.gxf4 ♘f8 14.♘e5 ♘g4! 15.e3 ♕h4 16.♘f3 ♕h5 17.♘e2 ♕g6!, Espig-Luther, Glauchau ch-DDR 1987.

9...♗xf4 10.gxf4 ♘b6 11.♘e5 ♗f5 12.♖c1 ♘e4 13.e3 ♘xc3 14.♖xc3 c6 15.♔h1 f6 16.♘f3 ♘c4 17.♘h4 ♘d6

And Black was fine in Nogueiras-Nikolic, Havana 1987.

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 a6 4.♗g2 b5!

Now I called this line the Romanishin Gambit, but this needs some explanation perhaps. Black's 3...a6 and 4...b5 really do constitute a gambit after 5.♘d4 – when Black will lose a pawn on the queenside. Black gets a lot of compensation though. In the Volga Gambit Black is satisfied with the open a- and b-files. In the Romanishin Gambit Black will on top of that get a dominant central position. Black's position in the centre is so strong that accepting the gambit is in fact by no means White's most popular response. In the course of this article we will investigate:

A) 5.0-0
B) 5.b3
C) 5.♘d4

Variation A

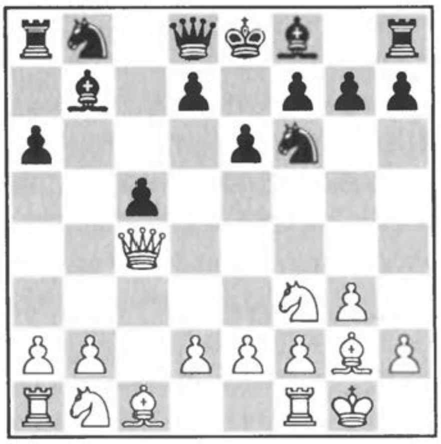
5.0-0 bxc4

Also interesting is Murey-Van der Wiel, Lyon 1988, which went instead: 5...♗b7 6.♕b3 ♘c6 (6...b4!?) 7.d3 bxc4 8.dxc4 ♖b8 9.♖d1 ♗c5 10.♘c3 ♘d4 11.♘xd4 ♗xg2 12.♕a4 ♖b4 13.♕a5 ♖xc4 14.♔xg2 ♗xd4 15.♕xa6 ♖c6.

6.♕a4 ♗b7 7.♕xc4

Weaker is 7.♘e5?! ♗xg2 8.♔xg2 c5 9.♘a3 ♗e7 10.♘axc4 0-0 11.d3 ♕c7 12.♗d2 a5! 13.f4 d6 14.♘f3 ♘c6 with an excellent game for Black, Webb-Romanishin, Hastings 1976/77.

7...c5



Black has succeeded in exchanging his b-pawn for White's c-pawn – thus gaining influence in the centre. Moreover, unlike in so many Catalan positions he has managed to oppose his bishop on the main diagonal. Clearly, Black is OK, a verdict that was borne out in practice:

– 8.b3 ♗e7 9.♗b2 0-0 10.d4 d5 (also playable are 10...♗xf3!? 11.♗xf3 d5 12.♕d3 ♘c6 and 10...cxd4 11.♕xd4 ♘c6) 11.♕d3 ♘bd7 12.♘c3 a5 13.♖ac1 ♘e4 and Black has an excellent game, Fioramonti-Pelletier, Switzerland 1999.

– 8.♘c3 ♗e7 (8...d5!? 9.♕b3 ♕c8) 9.e4 0-0 10.d3. Now, 10...♘c6 11.e5 ♘d5 12.♘xd5 exd5 13.♕g4! was played in Gofstein-Mikhalchishin, Leningrad 1976, when 13...f5! 14.exf6 ♗xf6 would have given Black a good game. Instead of 10...♘c6 Black can also continue 10...d5 11.exd5 exd5 12.♕b3 ♘c6, and 13.♕xb7? is not possible on account of 13...♘a5 trapping the queen.

Variation B

5.b3

Strangely enough, this modest continuation has set Black practical problems. We will investigate two lines:

B1) 5...c5
B2) 5...♗b7

Variation B1

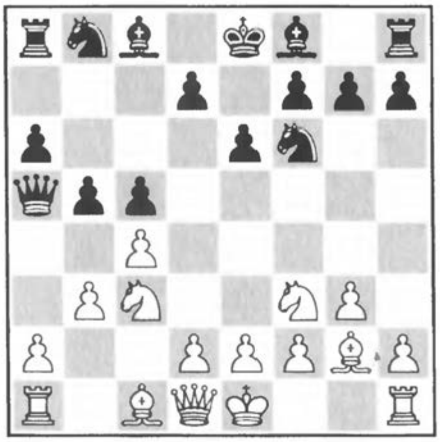
5...c5 6.♘c3 ♕a5

Also playable is 6...♕b6 with the following examples:

– 7.e3 ♗b7 8.♕e2 ♗c6 9.0-0 ♗e7 10.d4 0-0 11.♗b2 b4 12.♘a4 ♗xa4 13.bxa4 ♘c6 14.♘d2 ♖ac8 15.d5 exd5 16.cxd5 ♘a5 17.♖ac1 ♘e8! with a satisfactory game for Black, Filippov-G.Giorgadze, Bugojno 1999.

– 7.e4 ♗b7 8.♕e2 ♘c6 9.0-0 ♘d4! 10.♘xd4 cxd4 11.♘d1 d6 and Black is slightly better, Tratar-Zelcic, Pula 2001.

– 7.e4 ♘c6 8.e5 ♘g4 9.0-0 ♗b7 10.♕e2 h5 11.h3 ♘h6 12.cxb5 axb5 13.♕xb5 ♕c7 14.♕e2 ♘f5 15.♘b5 ♕b6 16.♗b2 ♗a6 with compensation, Stohl-Wells, Austria 2000/01.



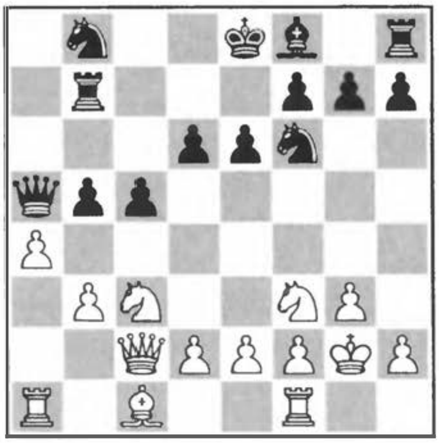
7.♘e5

White cannot expect any advantage with castling. For example, 7.0-0 ♗b7 8.♗b2 ♗e7 9.♕c2 (after 9.d3 0-0 10.♕d2, Damljanovic-Romanishin, Vrsac 1989, 10...♘c6 would have led to an equal game) 9...♘c6 10.a3 bxc4! 11.bxc4 ♖b8 12.e3 0-0 13.♘e2 h6 14.h3 ♕c7 15.♘f4 d6 16.♖ab1 (Ribli-Romanishin, Altensteig 1992) and now 16...♗a8 would have equalised.

7...♖a7 8.cxb5 axb5 9.a4 ♗b7 10.0-0 ♗xg2 11.♔xg2 d6 12.♘f3 ♖b7

Completing a remarkable manoeuvre.

13.♕c2



13...♗e7

Also possible is 13...bxa4 14.bxa4 ♗e7 15.♗b2 0-0 16.♘b5 ♘bd7 17.d4 ♖c8 with a good game for Black, Vaganian-Nikolic, Reggio Emilia 1987/88.

14.♗b2 bxa4 15.bxa4 0-0 16.♘b5 d5!?

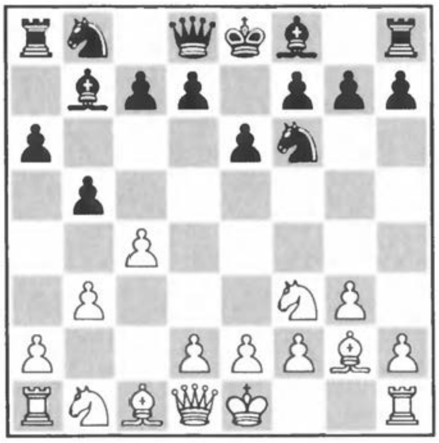
An improvement over a previous game.

17.♘e5 ♕a6 18.♖fb1 ♘bd7 19.d3 ♖c8

And Black had no problems in Stangl-Romanishin, Dortmund 1991.

Variation B2

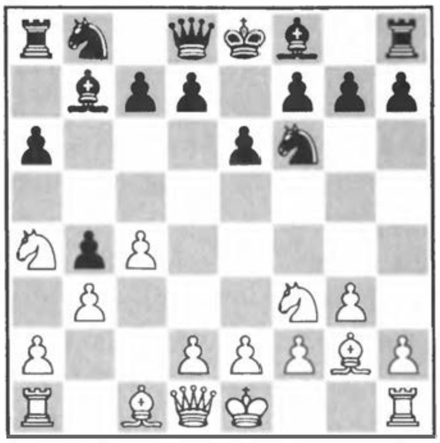
5...♗b7



6.0-0

● White gets no advantage after 6.♘a3 b4 7.♘c2 c5 8.a3 a5 9.0-0 ♗e7 10.♗b2 0-0 11.d3 (Hjartarson-Kuligowski, Lone Pine 1984) and here 11...♘c6 would have given Black a good game.

● A serious alternative for 6.0-0 is 6.♘c3. Now Black is slightly worse after 6...bxc4 7.bxc4 c5 8.♖b1 ♗c6 9.0-0 ♗e7 10.♖e1 0-0 11.e4, Dizdarevic-Cebalo, Budva 1986. While 6...c6 is interesting. The game Gabriel-Aronian, Batumi Ech-tt 1999, went: 7.0-0 ♗e7 8.d4 0-0 9.c5 d6 10.cxd6 ♗xd6 11.♘e5 ♕b6. Black's main move is 6...b4 when the lines fork after 7.♘a4:



– 7...d6 8.0-0 ♘bd7 9.d4 ♗e7 10.♘b2 (or 10.♘e1 ♗xg2 11.♘xg2 0-0 12.d5 exd5 13.cxd5 ♘e4 14.♗e3 ♗f6 15.♖c1 ♘b6 16.♘xb6 cxb6 17.♖c6 b5∓, Granda-Romanishin, Moscow 2003) 10...0-0 11.♘d3 a5 12.♗b2 c5 13.e3 ♕b6 14.a4 ♖fd8, Kasparov-Korchnoi, Brussels blitz 1987.

– 7...d5!? 8.cxd5 ♗xd5! 9.0-0 ♗e7 10.d3 0-0 11.♕c2 ♘bd7 12.e4 ♗b7 13.h3 c5 14.♗e3 ♖c8 15.♖ac1 ♘b6 16.♘xb6 ♕xb6 17.♘e5 ♖fd8 18.f4 a5 19.g4! with somewhat the better game for White, Pigusov-Romanishin, Irkutsk 1986.

6...c5

Here 6...♗e7 7.♘c3 b4 transposes into previous variations.

7.♘c3

The placid 7.d3 ♗e7 8.e3 0-0 9.♕e2 ♘c6 10.♗b2 d5 11.♘bd2 ♕b6 12.♖ab1 ♖fd8 13.a3 dxc4 14.bxc4 b4! 15.axb4 ♘xb4 16.d4 a5 is not dangerous for Black, Alburt-Romanishin, New York 1989.

Much more serious is 7.♗b2. After 7...♗e7 8.♘a3 gains nothing. Bagirov-Romanishin, Manila Olympiad 1992, continued: 8...bxc4 9.♘xc4 d5 10.♘ce5 0-0 11.d4 ♘bd7 12.dxc5 ♘xc5 13.♕d4 ♘ce4 14.♕a4 ♕e8! Black has an excellent game.

So after 7.♗b2 ♗e7 White should continue with the logical 8.♘c3. After 8...bxc4 (here 8...♕b6 transposes into previous variations, while 8...d5!? 9.d4 dxc4 10.bxc4 cxd4 11.♘xd4 ♗xg2 12.♔xg2 b4 is very interesting) 9.bxc4 ♘c6 practice has vindicated Black's opening concept:

– 10.d3 0-0 11.♘e5? ♘xe5 12.♗xb7 ♖b8 13.♘a4 ♘xc4∓, Adamski-Romanishin, Kiev 1978.

– 10.♖b1 ♖b8 11.♘a4 0-0 12.d3 (after 12.♗xf6?! gxf6 13.♖b6 ♕c7 14.♕b3 ♘a5 15.♕c2 f5 16.♖fb1 ♗c6 Black is better, Zaichik-Ivanov, Vilnius 1978) 12...♗a8 13.♗c3 ♕c7 14.♕d2 d6 15.e3 h6 with equality, Akopian-Romanishin, Groningen 1991.

7...♕b6

Also not bad is 7...♕a5 8.e3 ♗e7 9.♕e2 bxc4 10.bxc4 0-0 11.♖b1 ♗c6 12.e4 d6 13.♖b3! ♖a7 14.d4 cxd4 15.♘xd4 ♗a8 16.♗e3, Akopian-Svidler, Yerevan Wch-tt 2001, and here 16...♖d7 followed by 17...♘c6 would have equalised. In my opinion, 7...b4 is also good.

8.e3 ♗e7 9.d4

Here 9.♕e2 allows a typical manoeuvre: 9...♘e4! 10.♘xe4 ♗xe4 11.♗b2 (or 11.d3 ♗b7 12.♗b2 0-0 13.d4 d6 14.dxc5 ♕xc5 15.cxb5 ♕xb5!=, Andersson-Van Wely, France 2002) 11...bxc4 12.♕xc4 ♕b7 13.♘e1 ♗xg2 14.♘xg2 0-0 15.♕g4 f6 and Black stands well, Schlosser-Aseev, Brno 1991.

9...0-0

Also interesting is 9...d6!?. Play is equal after 9...♘e4 10.♗b2 0-0 11.dxc5 ♕xc5 12.♘xe4 ♗xe4.

10.d5

After 10.♕e2 good is 10...d5! 11.cxd5 exd5 12.dxc5 ♗xc5 13.♖d1 ♖e8 14.♕f1 ♘bd7 with equality, Bischoff-Boudre, Pau 1988.

10...exd5 11.cxd5 d6 12.e4 ♘bd7 13.♖e1 ♖fe8 14.♕c2 ♗f8 15.h3 g6 16.♗e3 a5!

with an excellent game for Black, Panchenko-Lugovoi, Pardubice 1997.

Variation C

5.♘d4

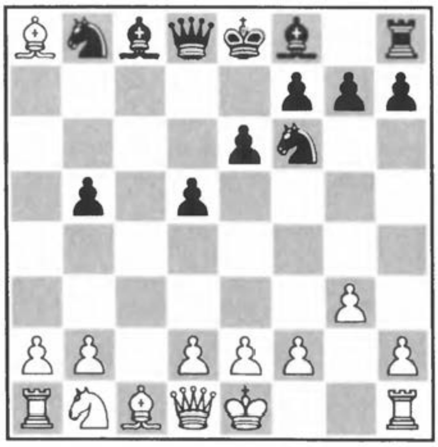
The old adage that one can only refute a gambit by accepting it, does not hold true for the Romanishin Gambit as I hope to demonstrate below. Black now has a sound positional approach in the form of 5...d5, and a more daring tactical variation starting with 5...c6.

C1) 5...c6
C2) 5...d5

Variation C1

5...c6 6.cxb5 axb5 7.♘xb5 cxb5! 8.♗xa8 d5

Trapping the bishop is the point of Black's play.



9.♕c2

Gaining a sort of tempo. After 9.a4 ♕a5 10.♕c2 ♗d7 11.♗b7 b4 12.0-0 ♗d6 13.d3

♕a7 14.♗c8 ♗c6 15.♗e3 d4 White has terrible problems with his bishop at c8, Reis-Damaso, Lisbon 1999.

If instead 9.♕b3 ♗d7 (not 9...♕a5? 10.♕c3) 10.♘c3 ♕a5 11.♘xd5 exd5 12.♗xd5 ♘xd5 13.♕xd5 ♕c7 14.0-0 ♗e7 15.d3 0-0 16.♗f4 ♕c6 Black has an excellent game, although White has a rook and three pawns for two pieces, Komljenovic-Zelcic, Royan 1988.

9...♗d7 10.0-0

Bad is 10.♗b7? ♘e4 11.d4 ♘d6∓, Kohnert-Davidovic, Dortmund 1989. In Ehrenfeucht-Adamski, Warsaw 1990, Black held a strong initiative after 10.b3 ♕a5 11.♗b7 ♗e7 12.♗b2 0-0 13.♗d4 b4 14.0-0 ♕b5 15.♕c7 ♕xe2.

10...♗e7 11.d3 0-0 12.♗e3 ♘g4 13.♗f4 ♕b6 14.h3 ♘f6 15.♗e3 ♕a6

With advantage to Black, Mukhtarov-Panchenko, Katowice 1993.

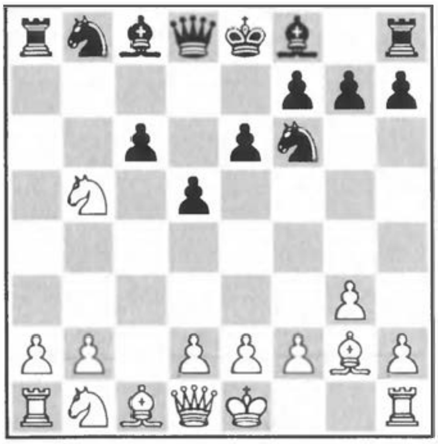
Variation C2

5...d5 6.cxb5 axb5

6...e5 is an interesting attempt: 7.♘c6 ♘xc6 8.bxc6 ♗c5 and now:

- 9.e3 ♗g4 10.f3 ♗h5 11.d4 ♗d6 12.dxe5 ♗xe5 13.0-0 ♖b8 with quite good counterplay, Espig-Tischbierek, East-German Championship, Eilenburg 1984.
- 9.0-0 h5! 10.e3 d4 with active play in the centre, Manakova-Bogdanovski, Nis 1995.

7.♘xb5 c6



8.♘5c3 c5

8...e5 is a different strategy: 9.d4 e4 10.♘d2 h5! 11.f3 exf3 12.♘xf3 ♗d6 13.♗g5 ♘bd7 14.0-0 ♕b6 15.♕d2 0-0 with compensation for the pawn, Lagunov-Murdzia, Germany Bundesliga 1997/98.

9.0-0

After 9.d4 cxd4 10.♕xd4 ♘c6 11.♕d1 ♗e7 12.0-0 0-0 13.a3 ♗b7 14.♘d2 e5 15.♖b1 e4 16.♘b3 ♘e5 17.♕d4 ♘c6 18.♕d1 ♘e5 19.♕d4 Black could have taken the draw, but decided to play for a win:

19...♘c4 20.♖d1 ♕c8 21.♗g5 ♖d8 22.♖dc1 ♕f5 23.♗e3 ♘xe3 24.♕xe3 d4 25.♘xd4 ♖xd4 26.♕xd4 ♗c5 and in this position 27.♘d5!! would have been decisive, Bellon-Romanishin, Olot 1975.

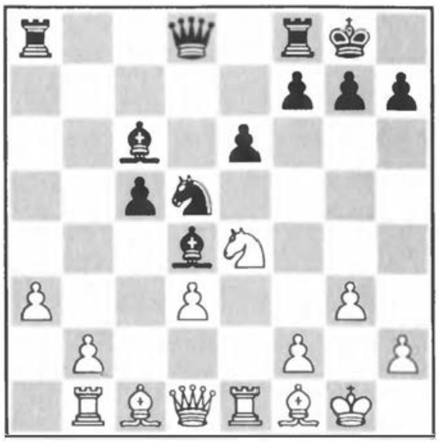
9...♘c6 10.d3

Or 10.b3 ♗e7 11.♗b2 0-0 12.d3 ♗a6 13.♘d2 ♖b8 14.♖b1 ♕a5 15.♘a4 ♖fc8 16.♖c1 ♘d7 17.♖e1 ♗b5 and Black has compensation for the pawn, Schmidt-Bielczyk, Augustow 1975.

10...♗e7 11.e4 0-0 12.♖e1 ♘b4! 13.a3 ♗b7 14.exd5 ♘fxd5 15.♘xd5 ♗xd5 16.♗f1 ♗c6 17.♘c3 ♗f6 18.♖b1

Bad is 18.♗e3? ♗xc3! 19.bxc3 ♕d5.

18...♘d5 19.♘e4 ♗d4

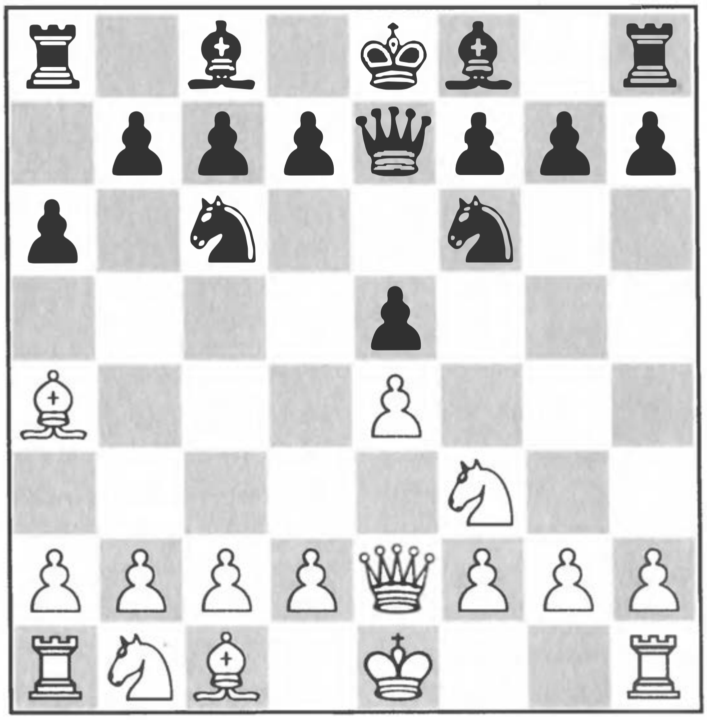


With enough compensation for the pawn in Alburt-Romanishin, Leningrad ch-URS 1974.

CHAPTER 7

Dorian Rogozenko

A Spanish Surprise from Romanishin



Facing 5.♕e2 with 5...♕e7!?

Usually a surprise in the opening means that one of the players chooses an unexpected opening variation for his opponent. Everyone experiences such a surprise every now and then. When you are an active player, you develop some sort of reaction to cope with such a unpleasant situation. However, it is quite rare that such a surprise turns out to be a real shocker.

I consider myself to be an experienced chess player and I thought it would be impossible to surprise me in the opening to such an extent, that, for some time during the game, I wouldn't have a clue about what is going on. Of course, a move like 1...f5 in reply to 1.e4 can certainly be a big surprise, but I am talking here about surprises that would turn out to be objectively good moves. It happens rarely indeed that a strong move in the opening comes as a real surprise for a grandmaster. In fact, this never happened to me until two years ago, when my opponent after 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.♕e2 suddenly played 5...♕e7.

Now, I am talking about an Internet rapid game, but it wasn't bullet or blitz, it was a 25-minutes rapid game with an increment after each move. Moreover, my opponent was a GM as well, we had a large audience to whom we had to explain our moves, and, so the setting of the game was very serious. After the first quick shock – when I saw 5...♕e7 on my monitor – I told myself: 'mouse slip', and I thought 'poor guy (meaning my opponent), he spoils the game because of a stupid mouse slip.' However, already after two moves I felt that something was wrong with my position and after another three moves I realized that Black had the advantage! My opponent convincingly outplayed me and after the game he said that 5...♕e7 was not a mouse slip at all (although by that time I had worked this out for myself of course), and that he had used it several times before in his tournament practice. Let's take it step by step.

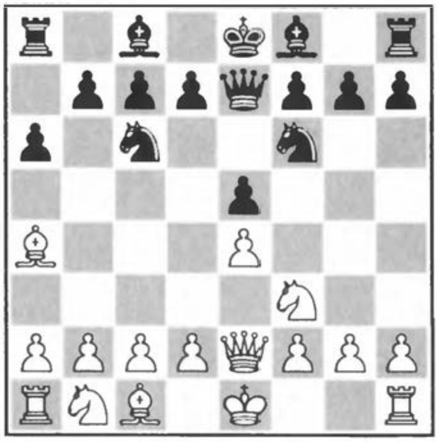
1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.♕e2

By playing 5.♕e2 White avoids lots of theoretical variations. It is often quite unpleasant for Black to face 5.♕e2 first of all due to the fact that it deprives the second player from the choice of the resulting type of positions (in the Ruy Lopez Black is usually the side that determines what variation to play). For instance, the Open Spanish is no longer possible.

With 5.♕e2 White protects pawn e4 and creates at some point the threat to take on c6 followed by ♘xe5. At the same time 5.♕e2 prepares a positional plan: 0-0, ♖f1-d1, c2-c3 and d2-d4. In order to decrease White's influence in the centre sooner or later Black plays b7-b5 (usually at once – 5...b5), which gives White the additional possibility to play on the queenside with a2-a4 (the queen on e2 is well placed for that purpose as well). 5.♕e2 is a common guest in practice. There have been thousands of games played with it. Many strong players have employed it, such as, for instance, Anand, Kamsky, J.Polgar and Smirin. At present, the main advocate of this move on the highest level is Tiviakov.

After 5.♕e2 White expects to get a certain type of open position, where he would have a slight initiative. But, as I explained above, you can surprise White with the answer

5...♕e7



This strange-looking move (Black places the queen in front of the only available diagonal for the undeveloped bishop!) was played for the first time by Oleg Romanishin in 1970. Later it was employed a few times by Mikhalchishin and nowadays by Mikhalevski. In ECO there is just a single line mentioning this move.

Actually, 5...♕e7 contains a lot of arguments in its favour. First of all, Black protects pawn e5. Secondly, with 5...♕e7 Black prepares himself for White's main idea – d2-d4 – since after ...e5xd4 the queen will attack pawn e4. Moreover, since the queen left the d-file White's plan of placing the rook on d1 loses much of its attraction. Thirdly, for the moment Black refrains from the advance ...b7-b5, thus not offering White the plan with a2-a4. One apparent drawback is the dark squared bishop on f8. However, the solution is simple: Black is going to fianchetto it, since on the long diagonal it will exert a lot of influence on White's pawn centre (in case of d2-d4, of course). Surely, White can refrain from the plan with d2-d4 and play d2-d3 instead, but, in that case, the move 5.♕e2 loses its sense. Moreover, in general, White can forget about the opening advantage when playing set-ups involving d2-d3.

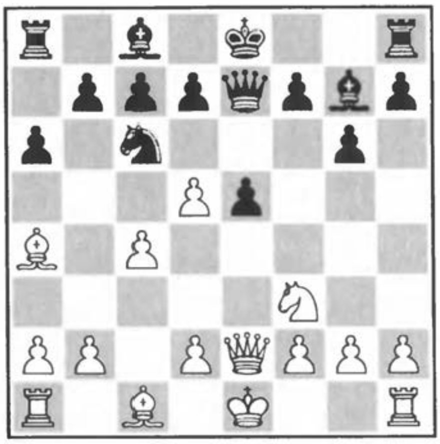
Black will also quietly complete his development, with an equal position.

6.0-0

Without kingside castling White cannot start active play. The immediate 6.d4? is bad of course: 6...♕b4+ 7.♘c3 exd4 and Black is winning. Other moves:

● In answer to 6.c4 Black may try 6...♘d4 7.♘xd4 exd4 8.♗c2 with unclear play. In this line 8.d3?? loses a piece to 8...♕b4+, while 8.e5 d3 9.♕xd3 ♕xe5+ is equal.

Instead of 6...♘d4 Black can also continue his development with 6...g6. After 7.♘c3 ♗g7 8.♘d5 ♘xd5 9.exd5



Black has two options:

– In the game Ciric-Mikhalchishin, Copenhagen 1991, Black obtained even chances after 9...b5 10.♗d1 ♘a7 11.d3 0-0 12.0-0 c6 13.a4 bxc4 14.dxc4 cxd5 15.cxd5 ♗b7 16.♗b3 ♘c8.

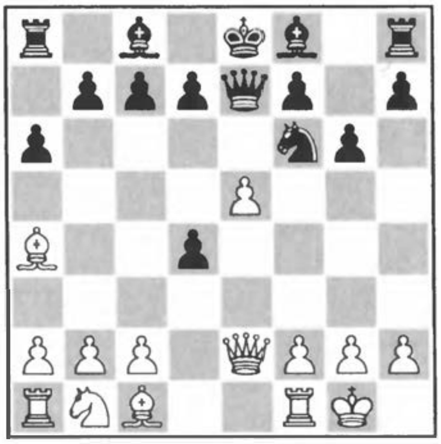
– Black would get fair compensation for the pawn after 9...e4! 10.dxc6 exf3 11.cxd7+ ♗xd7 12.♗xd7+ ♔xd7 13.♕xe7+ ♔xe7 14.gxf3 ♖ad8.

● Nothing is achieved by a delayed exchange on c6. After 6.♗xc6 bxc6 (6...dxc6=) 7.d3 g6 8.♘bd2 ♗g7 9.♘c4 ♘h5 10.0-0 0-0 11.♗g5 ♕e6 12.b4 d6 13.♘a5 ♗d7 14.♘d2 f5 15.f3 ♘f4! Black's game was preferable in Bischoff-Mikhalevski, Bad Endbach 1995.

Finally, 6.c3 g6 (or 6...d6 7.0-0 g6 8.d4 ♗d7) 7.0-0 (7.d4 exd4 8.0-0 ♗g7) 7...♗g7 transposes to the main line.

6...g6 7.c3

● Let's investigate the straightforward 7.d4 ♘xd4 8.♘xd4 exd4 9.e5



– Now, according to Mikhalchishin, bad is 9...♗g7 in view of 10.♗g5 h6 11.♖e1 hxg5 12.exf6 ♗xf6 13.♕f1 ♗e5 14.f4 and the Slovenian GM assesses this position in Chess Informant 31 as winning for White. However, there must be some confusion, since after the obvious 14...gxf4 Black is three pawns up. His next moves are most likely ...♔f8 and ...d6, after which it is White who should resign, since Black consolidates the position and remains with extra material: 15.♘d2 ♔f8 16.♘f3 d6 17.♗b3 ♗g4 18.♖ad1 ♖e8–+. Therefore, given the fact that after 9...♘d5 White has a possibility to improve – see 11.♕f3 – I think that 9...♗g7 is in fact a better move than 9...♘d5 which we will examine now.

– 9...♘d5 10.♗b3 ♘b6 11.c3 (I believe that in order to fight for an advantage White must use his lead in development. For that purpose he should play 11.♕f3, creating the threat 12.♗g5. Black must answer 11...h6, but such a move is an achievement for White. Only practice will show if White is able to use his lead in development and achieve an advantage here) 11...d6 (11...dxc3 12.♘xc3 ♗g7 13.a4 a5 14.♗e3 0-0 15.♘b5 gave White very good compensation for the pawn in Vouldis-Frendzas, Chania 1995).

In practice, Black has been doing well from this position. In Strikovic-Flear, Elgoibar 1994, Black took over after 12.♖e1 dxe5 13.cxd4 ♗g7 14.dxe5 0-0 15.♘c3 ♗e6= 16.♕f3?! ♗xb3 17.axb3 c6 18.♗e3?! ♘d7 19.♕h3 ♘xe5 20.♗h6 ♕d7∓.

While something similar occurred in Gurgenidze-Mikhalchishin, Tbilisi 1980, after: 12.cxd4 ♗g7 (or 12...dxe5 13.♕xe5! ♕xe5 14.dxe5 ♗g7 15.f4 ♗e6=) 13.♘c3 dxe5 14.dxe5 ♗e6 15.♗e3 (play is equal after 15.f4 0-0 16.♗e3 ♗xb3 17.axb3 f6 18.♗xb6 cxb6 19.e6 f5 Mikhalchishin) 15...♗xb3 16.axb3 ♕xe5! (better than 16...0-0=) 17.♕f3 0-0-0 Black took over the initiative and won later on.

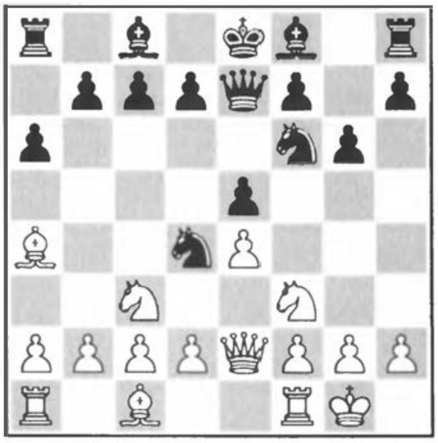
The alternatives for 7.c3 and 7.d4 really will not hurt Black. I will cite a few examples:

● 7.♗xc6 bxc6 8.d4 exd4 9.♖e1 ♗g7 10.♗g5 ♕b4 11.e5 ♘d5 12.♘bd2 0-0 13.♘b3 ♖e8 14.a3 ♕f8 15.♕c4 h6 16.♗d2 ♘b6 17.♕xd4 d6 Black has a slight edge already, which increased after 18.♕b4? dxe5 19.♕a5 ♕d6 20.♗b4 ♕d5 Beulen-Flear, Antwerp 1994.

● 7.d3 ♗g7 8.♘c3 ♘d4 9.♘xd4 exd4 10.♘d1 0-0 11.♗g5 d5 12.e5 ♕e6 13.♗xf6 ♗xf6 14.f4 ♗g7 15.c3 dxc3 16.bxc3 d4 (16...f6 17.d4 fxe5 18.fxe5 – 18.dxe5? g5∓ – 18...♖xf1+ 19.♕xf1 b5 20.♗b3 ♗d7 equal) 17.♗b3 ♕b6 18.c4 c5 19.♘f2 ♗d7 with even chances in Schula-Mikhalevski, Pardubice 1996.

● 7.♖e1 ♗g7 8.♘c3 0-0 9.♘d5 ♘xd5 10.exd5 ♕b4! 11.♗xc6 bxc6 12.dxc6 d5 13.c3 ♕d6 14.d4 e4 15.♘e5 f6 16.♘d7 ♗xd7 17.cxd7 ♕xd7 18.c4 f5 Black's game is slightly preferable. Jovanovic-Blehm, Patras 1999.

● In the above-mentioned game of mine I played 7.♘c3 and after 7...♘d4



Black had at least equal prospects. Black's queen is well placed on e7, while White's queen is misplaced on e2! The game continued: 8.♕e3 c5! 9.d3 b5 10.♗b3 ♗b7 11.♘e1 ♘xb3 12.axb3 ♗g7 13.f4 exf4 14.♕xf4 d5 with a clear edge for Black. Rogozenko-Mikhalevski, worldchessnetwork.com 2004.

7...♗g7

A reasonable alternative is 7...d6. Now the quiet 8.d3 gives nothing after 8...♗g7 9.♘bd2 ♗d7 10.♖e1 0-0. In Masyagutova-Bezgodova, Serpukhov 2004, Black gained a pleasant edge after 11.♘f1? ♘d4! 12.♘xd4 ♗xa4 13.♘f3 ♗d7.

After 8.d4 ♗d7 practice has seen:

– 9.♗g5 ♗g7 10.♘bd2 h6 11.♗h4 exd4 12.♗xc6 (not 12.cxd4? g5 13.♗g3 b5 14.♗b3 g4–+) 12...bxc6 13.cxd4 g5 14.♗g3 ♘h5 15.♕d3 0-0 Black was preferable in Amin-Sarwat, Cairo 2003.

– 9.d5 ♘b8 10.♗c2 ♗g7 11.c4 a5 12.♘c3 ♘a6 (the position is equal) 13.♘e1 0-0 14.a3 ♘c5 15.♖b1 a4 16.♘d3 ♘xd3 17.♕xd3 ♘h5 18.♕d1 ♕e8 19.♗e3 f5 20.f3 b6 21.♕e2 and the draw was agreed in this King's Indian type of position. Dovliatov-Zulfugarli, Azerbaijan ch 1999.

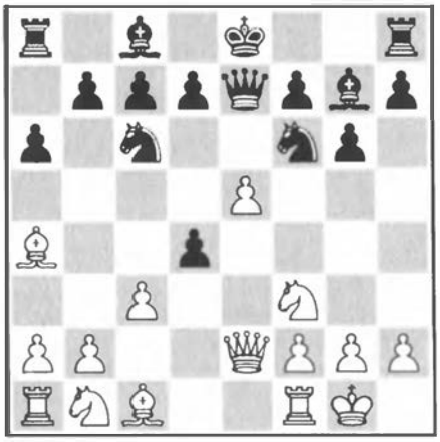
8.d4

The best continuation. If 8.♖e1, then perfectly justified is the plan 8...d6 9.d4 ♗d7, with approximate equality.

In the game Kruppa-Mikhalevski, Yerevan 1997, Black went for the sharper 8...0-0 9.d4 exd4 10.cxd4 ♕b4 11.♕d1 d5 and after complications an approximately equal endgame arose: 12.e5 ♘e4 13.a3 ♕a5 14.♘bd2 ♘xd2 15.♗xd2 ♕b6 16.h3 ♘xd4 17.♘xd4 ♕xd4 18.♗b4 ♕xd1 19.♖axd1 ♖d8 20.♗e7 ♗e6 21.♗xd8 ♖xd8 with compensation for the exchange.

8...exd4 9.e5

Black is better after 9.cxd4 ♕xe4 10.♕xe4+ ♘xe4 11.♖e1 d5 12.♘c3 ♗e6 13.♘xe4 dxe4 14.♖xe4 0-0-0.



9...d3!

Black has to play this timely advance.

– 9...b5?! 10.♗c2 (White also develops an initiative after 10.♗b3 d3 11.♕d1 ♘g4 12.♗g5 ♕c5 13.♘bd2) 10...d6 11.exf6!? ♕xe2 12.fxg7 ♖g8 13.♖e1 ♕xe1+ 14.♘xe1 and White is better.

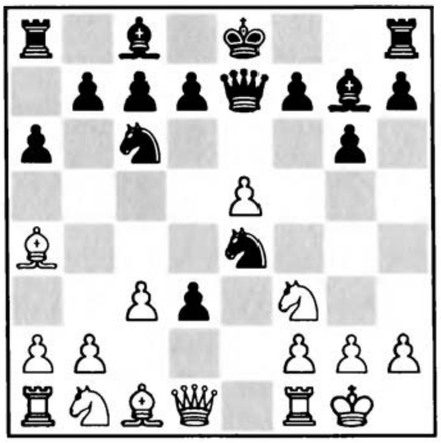
– 9...♘d5 is also not enough. In the game Stepovaia Dianchenko-Demina, Sochi 1987, Black was victorious in the end, but White's play can be improved more than once: 10.♗b3 ♘b6 11.♗g5 ♕c5 12.cxd4 ♘xd4 13.♘xd4 ♕xd4 14.♖d1 ♕c5 15.♘d2 (Here 15.♖c1 ♕a5 16.♕f3 0-0 17.♗e7 just as 15.♘c3 0-0 16.♘d5 ♘xd5 17.♖xd5 ♕b6 18.♖c1 promise White a better game) 15...0-0 16.♘f3 ♕b5 17.♖d3? (17.♕c2 ♕c6 18.♖ac1 with compensation) 17...d5 18.exd6 ♗f5! 19.♖e3 ♕xe2 20.♖xe2 cxd6 21.♖d1 d5 and Black had superior chances.

10.♕d1

After 10.♕xd3? Black simply takes the pawn: 10...♘xe5 11.♘xe5 ♕xe5 with a clear edge.

10...♘e4

Dangerous is 10...♘g4: 11.h3 (11.♗xc6 dxc6 12.h3 ♘xe5 – 12...♘h6 13.♕xd3± – is the same as 11.h3; interesting is 11.♗g5) 11...♘gxe5 (11...♘h6 12.♗g5 ♕e6 13.♗b3+–) 12.♗xc6 dxc6 13.♘xe5 ♗xe5 14.♖e1 ♗xh3 15.gxh3 0-0-0. Here Black might have sufficient play for the knight, but it is clear that White's position contains a lot of resources after 10...♘g4.

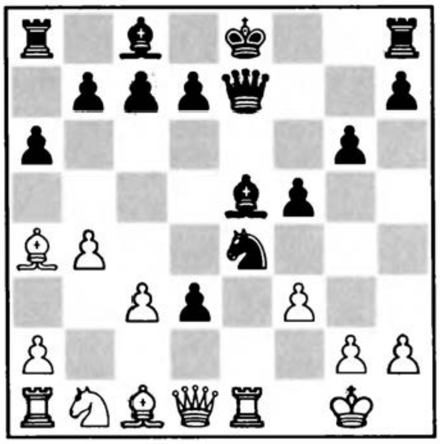


11.b4?

Ubilava wants to take away the c5 square, but in this sharp position this is too slow. Correct is 11.♖e1! ♘c5 12.♗g5! ♕e6 (perhaps 12...♕f8 with unclear play) 13.♗f6! (or 13.♗xc6 first) 13...0-0 (not 13...♘xa4 14.♗xg7 ♘xb2 15.♕d2 ♖g8 16.♗f6±) 14.♗xg7 ♔xg7 15.♗xc6 ♕xc6 (better than 15...dxc6 16.b4 ♘d7 17.♕xd3 with a nice initiative) 16.b4 ♘e6 17.♕xd3 Black must still complete his queenside development, therefore White's prospects look slightly preferable. However, with accurate play Black is able to equalize: 17...♖d8! (White holds the initiative after 17...f6 18.exf6+ ♖xf6 19.♘bd2 d6 20.c4) 18.♘bd2 (18.♘d4 ♕xg2+! 19.♔xg2 ♘f4+ 20.♔g3 ♘xd3 21.♖e3 ♘b2 and the knight escapes) 18...d6 19.♕e3 (19.exd6 ♕xd6 20.♕xd6 ♖xd6 is equal) 19...dxe5 20.♘xe5 ♕d5 21.♘b3 f6 22.♘f3 (22.♘g4 ♕g5) 22...♕d3 23.♘fd4 ♕xe3 24.♖xe3 ♘xd4 25.♘xd4 ♔f8 26.♖ae1 ♗d7 with equal chances in the ending.

11...♘xe5 12.♖e1 f5 13.♗f4

Alternatively, 13.♘xe5 ♗xe5 14.f3 is insufficient because of

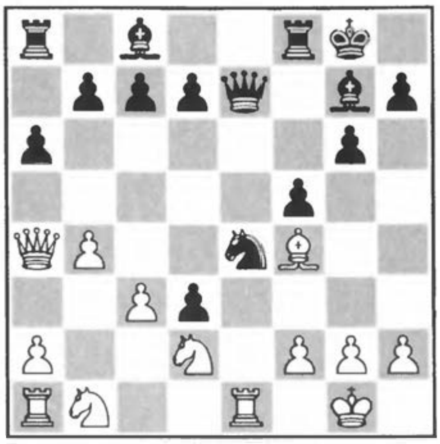


14...♕h4 (also good is 14...c6 15.fxe4 fxe4 followed by 16...d5) 15.g3 ♗xg3 16.hxg3 ♕xg3+ 17.♔h1 when Black has at least perpetual, but he can play for more with 17...b5!.

13...♘c4 14.♘fd2

White had more chances to escape after 14.♕xd3 ♘b2 15.♕c2 ♘xa4 16.♕xa4, although his compensation for the pawn is not enough.

14...♘b2 15.♕b3 ♘xa4 16.♕xa4 0-0



The tactics work out well for Black. His advantage is huge. The game Ubilava-Romanishin, Sukhumi 1970, continued:

17.f3 ♘c5! 18.♕d1 ♘e6 19.♗xc7 d6 20.♗b6 ♗d7 21.♘c4 ♖ae8

Black has completed his development, while White's forces on the queenside remain out of play.

22.♗c7 ♕h4 23.♘xd6 ♘xc7 24.♘xe8 ♖xe8 25.♖xe8+ ♗xe8 26.♕xd3 ♕e1+ 27.♕f1 ♕e3+ 28.♔h1

Losing is 28.♕f2? ♕c1+ 29.♕f1 ♕b2.

28...♗b5 29.♕d1 ♘e6

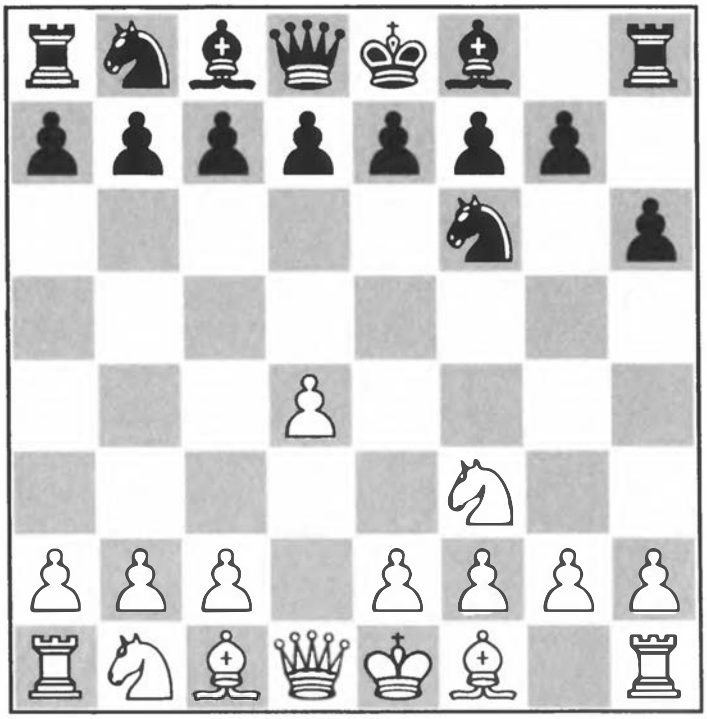
Black is winning.

30.♘a3 ♕xc3 31.♘c2 ♕d3 32.♖c1 ♕xd1+ 33.♖xd1 ♗a4 34.♖d2 ♗c3 35.♖f2 ♔f7 36.a3 h5 37.♘e3 ♗d4 38.♖e2 ♗b5 39.♖e1 ♗b2 40.♖b1 ♗d4 41.♘d5 ♗c4 42.♘c3 ♘f4 43.♘a4 ♘d3 44.♘c5 ♗a2 45.♖f1 ♘xc5 46.bxc5 ♗xc5 0-1

CHAPTER 8

Tibor Karolyi

The Nadanian Attack



Preparing ...g5

What should we do if our opponent aims to play the Torre Attack (1.d4, 2.♘f3 and 3.♗g5), or the London System (1.d4, 2.♘f3 and 3.♗f4)? Do we allow him to play his next moves almost without thinking (e3, c3, ♗d3, ♘bd2, 0-0 and so on)? Such positions are really solid and very hard to shake. (Think of the solid Slav – here White has a tempo more.) Moreover, these players often play nothing but the London System with White, and, consequently, they have great experience playing against Black's main set-ups. In this chapter I would like to turn your attention to a new idea for Black on the second move. One that sprang from the fertile mind of that original thinker Ashot Nadanian.

In Singapore the company Intchess Asia organizes chess training sessions, but sometimes pupils are given the opportunity to play a round robin tournament against some of the trainers. In one of these tournaments my trainer colleague Ashot Nadanian introduced a new opening in his game against one of the other title holders. Now, we all know Nadanian from his fantastic 5.♘a4 against the Grünfeld (see also SOS-2, Chapter 17, where Jonathan Rowson explains the ins and outs of the improved Nadanian). This time the novelty comes as early as the second move!

After 1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 Nadanian plays 2...h6!?. The move has been played, but

Ashot is the first one who constantly follows it up with ...g5 whenever this is reasonable. Should his line be called a defence or an attack? I would opt for the latter. Think of the numerous lines where White plays an early g4 these days. Surely, such a bayonet move is made to attack.

By the way, Nadanian is a pupil of Shakarov just like Garry Kasparov was. Naturally, Nadanian's novelties are not so deeply analysed as Kasparov's, and they are also made in a completely different spirit. Still, the trainer from Baku deserves praise for letting both players develop in their own way. Ashot has enormous respect for Shakarov, not only as a trainer, but as a kind person as well.

But let's see the games! I will present three games with the logical continuation 3.c4. In Mascarinas-Nadanian White played 3.b3. It is in the notes to this game that I have analysed all 3rd move alternatives for 3.c4. Please note that I have used some of Nadanian's blitz games on the ICC (Internet Chess Club) – his handle is Sergirina.

☐ **Rico Mascarinas**
■ **Ashot Nadanian**
Singapore 2005

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 h6!? 3.b3!?

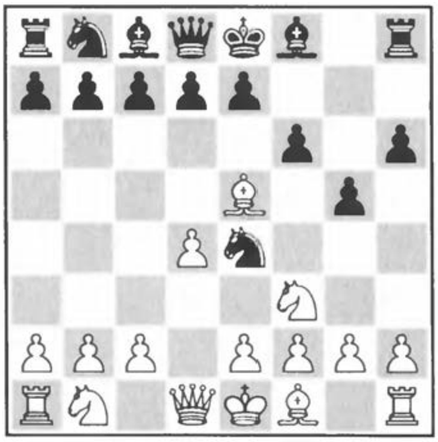
The experienced Filipino international master makes an interesting decision. He doesn't want to refute the opening, he just wants to get a playable position. Black's second move shows that his dark-squared bishop will almost certainly be developed to g7. So White starts opposing it on the long diagonal. Most probably Mascarinas had in mind that in a King's Indian-like position Black is likely to play for ...e5 or for ...c5. In case of the latter the bishop stands well on b2. While in the first case the bishop may well succeed in stopping ...e5 completely.

We will deal with 3.c4 in the next games. However, since there are virtually no serious games with 2...h6, I should like to demonstrate the reader the rich possibilities after some of the 3rd move alternatives:

● 3.♗f4 White plays the London System all the same. Black has two reasonable responses:

– 3...d6 4.e3 (4.h3 g5 5.♗h2 ♗g7 6.e3 ♗f5 7.♗d3 ♕d7 and Black achieved what he was aiming for: a double-edged playable middlegame) 4...g5 5.♗g3 ♘e4 6.♗d3 ♘xg3 7.hxg3 ♗g7 8.♘bd2 ♘c6 9.♕e2 e5 10.dxe5 ♘xe5 Black is very much in the game because of his strong dark-squared bishop.

– 3...g5 4.♗g3 ♘e4 5.♗e5 (after 5.♘bd2 ♘xg3 6.hxg3 ♗g7 7.e4 d6 8.♗d3 e6 9.c3 ♕e7 10.♕e2 ♘d7 11.0-0-0 b6 Black's position is very flexible) 5...f6



6.♕d3 (or 6.♗g3 ♗g7 7.e3 d5 8.♗d3 e5 9.dxe5 ♘xg3 10.♗g6+ ♔e7 11.hxg3 fxe5 and Black is not worse) 6...d5 7.♗g3 and now Black can go after the bishop at once with 7... h5. In case of 7...c5 8.dxc5 ♘a6 9.♘c3 ♕a5 10.♘d4 ♘b4 the position is highly complicated.

● 3.♘c3 d5 (with 3...g5 Black can try a Pirc like Nadanian: 4.e4 d6 5.♗e3 ♗g7 6.♗e2, but I prefer White here) 4.♗f4 and now:

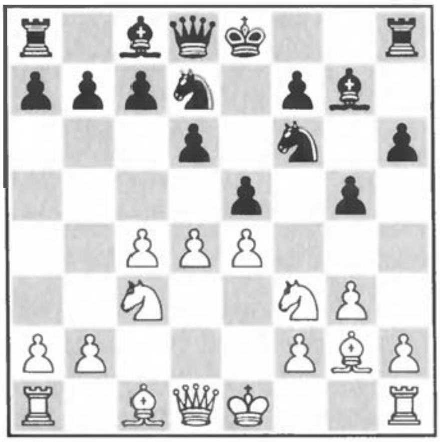
– 4...g5 5.♗e5 ♘c6 (or 5...♗g7 6.e4 dxe4

7.♘xe4 ♘bd7 8.♘xf6+ exf6 9.♗g3 0-0 and Black will soon play f5) 6.e3 ♗f5 7.♗b5 ♗g7 Black is again in the game.

– 4...e6 5.♕d3 ♗d6 6.♗xd6 cxd6 and Black is not worse.

– 4...♗f5 5.e3 e6 6.♗d3 ♗xd3 7.♕xd3 c6 8.e4 ♗b4 9.e5 ♘e4 and Black's position is safe.

● 3.g3 g5 (Black can stick to Nadanian's idea. However, with the natural 3...d5!? Black can transpose to a well-known Réti. In this particular set-up many prefer to play an early ...h6, making room for the light-squared bishop, as in the variation 4.♗g2 c6 5.0-0 ♗f5) 4.♗g2 ♗g7 5.c4 (or 5.h4 g4 6.♘e5 d6 7.♘d3 ♘c6 8.d5 ♘e5 9.♘xe5 dxe5 10.♕d3 with a very unusual position) 5...d6 (not 5...g4 6.♘h4 d5 when the d4-pawn is more vulnerable than usual, yet I still prefer White here) 6.♘c3 ♘bd7 (6...g4 7.♘h4 ♘c6 deserves to be tested in practice) 7.e4 e5 and now:



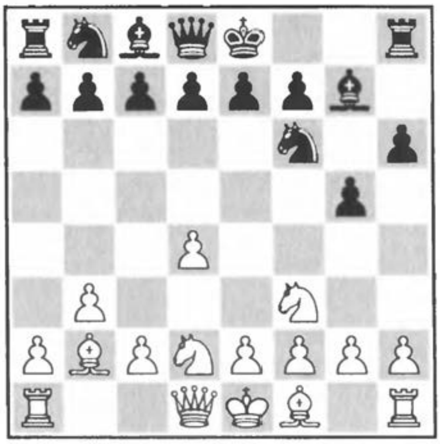
– 8.0-0 g4 (8...0-0 9.♗e3 ♘g4) 9.♘h4 exd4 10.♘f5 dxc3 11.♘xg7+ ♔f8 12.♘f5 ♘e5 when the position is messy.

– 8.d5 ♘c5 9.♕e2 a5. It is hard to compare this with a normal King's Indian. Black should be in the game, since White is far away from the f5-square.

● 3.h4. White can stop g5 but giving up the g4-square is obviously worth more than stopping g5. For example, 3...d6 (or 3...d5 4.♗f4 ♗f5 5.e3 e6 6.♘bd2 c5 and Black has a nice position) 4.♗f4 g6 5.♘bd2 ♗g7 6.e4 ♘g4 7.♗d3 e5 8.dxe5 dxe5 9.♗g3 ♕e7 Black has obtained a fighting game.

Of course all the above lines are speculation on my part; it will be interesting to see in which way theory will develop.

3...g5 4.♗b2 ♗g7 5.♘bd2



5...g4

Black can try to handle this opening in the Grünfeld spirit with 5...d5. After 6.e3 ♗f5 7.♘e5 ♘bd7 8.c4 e6 White's advantage (if it exists at all) is barely visible. However, Nadanian likes to stick to his own plan – the bayonet attack with the g-pawn.

6.♘e5

White can also move the knight to the rim. After 6.♘h4 Black again can opt for the Grünfeld or the King's Indian set-up:

– 6...d5 7.e3 e5 (not 7...e6 8.♗d3 c5 (8...b6) 9.0-0 ♘bd7 10.c4 when White seems to have the better chances) 8.dxe5 (8.♗e2 exd4 9.♗xd4 ♘c6) 8...♘h7 9.g3 ♕e7 10.h3 ♗xe5 11.♗xe5 ♕xe5 and Black is not worse.

– 6...d6 7.e4 ♗d7 8.♗d3 ♘c6 9.g3 (9.0-0 e5 10.d5 ♘b4 11.♗e2 ♘fxd5 Black does all right here) 9...e5 10.d5 (or 10.c3 exd4 11.cxd4 ♘h5 (it is quite unusual to play on the long diagonal so early) 12.h3 ♘f4 (again this motif occurs unusually early) 13.gxf4

♕xh4 14.e5 dxe5 15.dxe5 0-0-0 Black is having a dangerously developed position) 10...♘e7 11.c4 when both sides have to adjust to the unconventional piece placement.

6...d6 7.♘d3 ♗f5

Black naturally wants to stop e4, but more to the point would have been 7...d5 with equal chances.

8.g3

With this double fianchetto White is looking for a small but lasting advantage. More ambitious is 8.f3, however this gives Black a lot of chances too. Bad is 8...d5 9.e4 dxe4 10.fxe4 ♘xe4 11.♘xe4 ♗xe4 12.♕xg4 ♗g6 13.0-0-0 when White has an advantage, as he is better developed and his structure is preferable. However, after 8...gxf3 9.exf3 (9.gxf3 ♗xd3 10.cxd3 ♘d5 11.♘c4 e6) 9...♘d5 10.♕e2 ♘c6 11.c3 ♕d7 12.g4 ♗g6 13.♘e4 0-0-0 14.0-0-0 f5 Black has nice play.

Best, however, is Nadanian's own suggestion of 8.e4! ♘xe4 9.♘xe4 ♗xe4 10.♕xg4 ♗g6 11.♘f4 with a huge positional advantage.

8...h5 9.♗g2 d5 10.h3!?

This stops h4. If 10.c4 then 10...h4 when the h-pawn is annoying White.

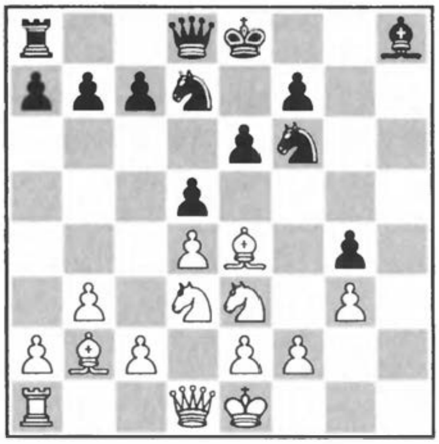
10...♘bd7 11.hxg4

Or 11.♘f1 e6 12.♘e3 ♗e4 and just like in the game Black can sacrifice the pawn.

11...hxg4 12.♖xh8+ ♗xh8 13.♘f1 e6 14.♘e3 ♗e4

Ashot keeps playing imaginatively. There are several alternatives in this position. With 14...♕e7 Black allows the exchange on f5, his position is resilient, but White keeps a small edge. For example, 15.♘xf5 exf5 16.c4 c6 17.♕c2 and White is a bit better. After 14...c6 15.♘xf5 exf5 16.c4 ♘e4 17.cxd5 cxd5 White's edge is small too. Quite playable is 14...♗h7 15.c4 c6 16.♘e5 ♘xe5 17.dxe5 ♘e4 and Black has a good game.

15.♗xe4



15...♘xe4!?

Nadanian voluntarily sacrifices a pawn for fluent play. Naturally, 15...dxe4 was all right as well. After 16.♘f4 ♕e7 17.♕d2 0-0-0 Black has a playable game.

16.♘xg4 ♕g5

Here 16...c5 17.c3 ♕c7 also gives Black compensation for the pawn.

17.e3

Black is OK after 17.♘h2. He can play 17...♕h5 18.♘f1 0-0-0 19.e3 ♕h1 20.♕g4 ♘df6 21.♕f4 ♗g7 when his pieces have a strong grip on the position. Also fine is 17...0-0-0 18.e3 ♗g7 19.♕f3 ♖h8 20.♘f1 ♕g6 21.0-0-0 and the Black pieces have good control over the centre. It would be very hard for White to do something with his extra pawn.

17...c5 18.♕f3

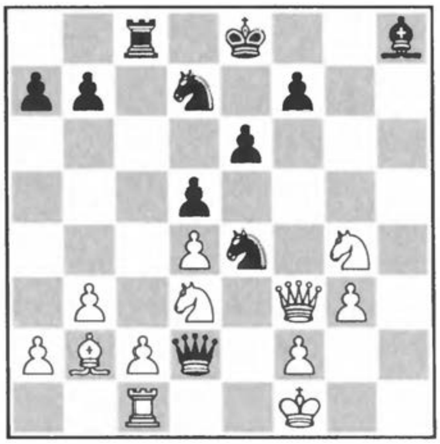
Or 18.♘ge5 ♘xe5 19.♘xe5 ♗xe5 20.dxe5 ♔e7 21.♕f3 ♖h8 22.0-0-0 ♖h2 Black's counterplay is at least sufficient. Likewise, 18.a3 0-0-0 19.c4 dxc4 20.bxc4 ♗g7 21.♕e2 ♖h8 gives Black compensation.

18...cxd4 19.exd4 ♕d2+ 20.♔f1 ♖c8

Black is craving for creativity. After 20...♕xc2 21.♕e2 ♖c8 22.♕e3 (or 22.♘e3 ♕xe2+ 23.♔xe2 White can keep his position together) 22...♘df6 23.♘ge5 the position is balanced.

21.♖c1?

White picks up the glove to keep the fight exciting, but keeping things ‘dry’ was stronger. With 21.♘e3! White can reach a slightly worse but tenable ending. 21...♕xd3+ (21...♕xc2 22.♘xc2 ♘d2+ 23.♔e2 ♘xf3 24.♔xf3 ♖xc2 25.♖c1 ♖xc1 26.♘xc1 and the game will end in a draw) 22.cxd3 ♘d2+ 23.♔e2 ♘xf3 24.♔xf3 ♘b8 25.♖h1 White can keep his position together regardless of the doubled pawns.



21...♗xd4?

Here Nadanian is overdoing his imaginative play. The prosaic 21...♖xc2! was much better. White drops a pawn after 22.♖xc2 ♕xc2 23.♔g2 (23.♕e2 ♕b1+ 24.♘c1 ♗xd4 wins) 23...♕b1.

22.♗xd4 ♕xc1+

The pretty point of his previous move.

23.♘xc1 ♘d2+ 24.♔e2 ♘xf3 25.♔xf3 ♖xc2

It this endgame Black has a rook and two pawns versus a bishop and a knight. It gives an edge, however Black can’t activate his king.

26.♘d3 ♖xa2 27.♘f6+ ♘xf6 28.♗xf6 ♖a3?!

I do not like how Black plays the next few moves with his rook. Correct is 28...a5!. I think Black should try to create a passed pawn as quickly as possible, with the White king far away from the queenside. 29.♔e3 (29.♗c3 b5 30.♔e3 a4 31.bxa4 bxa4 32.♔d4 a3 33.g4 ♖c2 34.f4 a2 35.♗a1 ♖d2 Black wins) 29...b5 30.♔d4 (30.g4 a4 31.bxa4 bxa4 32.g5 a3 – the a-pawn is really dangerous) 30...a4 31.bxa4 bxa4 32.♔c3 a3 33.♔b3 ♖d2 34.♔c3 ♖e2 (34...♖b2) 35.♔b3 a2 36.♗b2 ♖d2 and Black has decent winning chances.

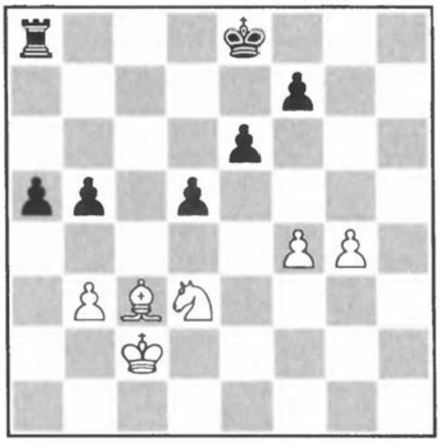
29.♘c1 ♔d7 30.♔e3!

White releases the burden of his light pieces.

30...♖a6 31.g4 ♖c6 32.♔d2 a5 33.♘d3 ♖c8 34.♗c3 ♖a8

Usually a rook is well-placed behind the pawn, but that holds for rook endings. Here it took far too many moves, which gave White the time to organise his defences.

35.♔c2 ♔e8 36.f4 b5



37.g5!

White already stopped Black from creating a dangerous passed pawn. Now he even fixes a weakness on f7.

37...♖a7 38.♔b2 ♔d7 39.♗d4 ♖a8 40.♘e5+ ♔e8 41.♘d3 a4 42.b4

Black cannot penetrate with his rook. Actually, with only one extra pawn he would suffer.

42...♖c8 43.♗c5 ♖c7 44.♘e5 ♖b7 45.♘f3 ♔d7 46.♘e5+ ♔c8 47.♔a2 ♖c7 48.♔b2

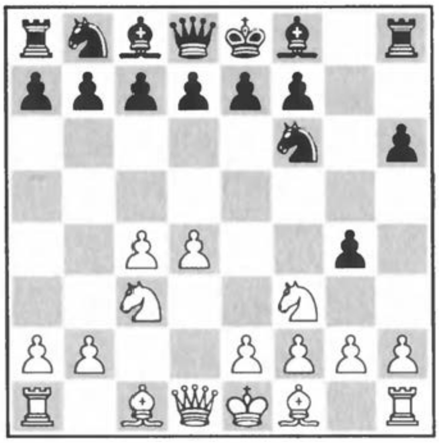
There is nothing left to fight for. The battle was great right from the second move. It was an exciting draw.

☐ **Sadkin Irwanto**
■ **Ashot Nadanian**
Singapore 2005

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 h6 3.c4 g5

So Black gains space against the most natural continuation as well. Nadanian is playing an 'extended' King's Indian.

4.♘c3 g4



Black is rather ambitious, he is not just satisfied with his space advantage he tries to confuse White's development as well.

Black can also continue in King's Indian fashion with 4...♗g7 5.e4 d6 and now:

- 6.h3 c5 7.♗e2 (or 7.d5!?) 7...cxd4 8.♘xd4 ♘c6 9.♞c2 (9.♗e3 is also playable) 9...♘d7 10.0-0? ♗xc3 11.bxc3 ♘c5 and Black is already better. Fabsid (GM)-Sergirina (IM), ICC 5 minutes, went 12.♘d4 ♘e5 13.♕c2 ♗e6 14.f4 gxf4 15.♗xf4 ♖g8 16.♔h2 ♕d7 17.♖ad1 ♘xc4 with a clear edge for Black.
- 6.e5 (White wants to get an advantage in an aggressive way) 6...dxe5 7.♘xe5 ♘bd7 (7...♘fd7!?) 8.♗d3? (if 8.f4 then 8...c5!? and Black can undermine the centre at once. After 8.♘xd7 ♗xd7 9.♗d3 e5!? 10.♕e2 (10.dxe5 ♘g4) 10...0-0 11.dxe5 ♘g4 12.♕e4 ♖e8 (or 12...f5 13.♕xb7 ♘xe5 Black has nice compensation for the pawn) 13.f4 gxf4 14.♗xf4 f5 (the position is very messy. Black's prospects are not bad) 8...♘xe5 9.dxe5 ♘g4! 10.f4 ♕d4! (Black is almost winning at move 10. Would you believe it?) 11.♕e2 gxf4 12.♘d5 and here 12...♘xe5! would have been even stronger than the game continuation 12...♗xe5. Mattenkattze (IM)-Sergirina (IM), ICC 5 minutes.

5.♘g1?!

I do not like this knight retreat. It seems to me that 5.♘h4 is the principled move (see Chiong-Nadanian); when the knight is at least in the game. For, 5.♘d2 see the game Chuong-Nadanian.

The situation reminds me a bit of the English Attack in the Scheveningen, when in one of the main lines Black plays an early ...b4. First, they all started to move the knight to e2. Then they played ♘b1 (just like in this game). Finally they settled on ♘a4 and that seems to cause the biggest problems for Black.

The blitz game PalaciosLl (IM)-Sergirina (IM), ICC 5 minutes, went: 5.♘e5 d6 6.♘d3 ♗g7 7.e4 ♘c6 8.♗e3 e5 9.dxe5 (9.d5 ♘d4 10.c5 is unclear) 9...dxe5 10.♗e2 (10.♕a4 ♗d7 11.0-0-0!?) 10...♗e6 (10...h5!?) 11.b3?! (11.♘c5!) 11...♘d4 and now Black could be content with the result of his opening play.

5...♗g7 6.e4 d6 7.♘ge2

White can go for a Four Pawns Attack with 7.f4. After 7...gxf3 8.♘xf3 c5 9.d5 ♘g4 10.♗f4 ♘d7 Black is in the game. However, 8.gxf3!? is interesting when the missing g-pawns seem to favour White.

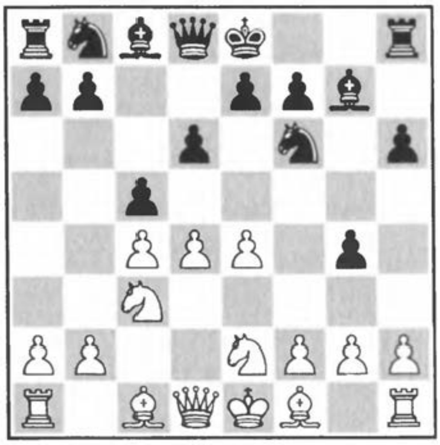
Therefore, Black should continue with 7...e5 8.fxe5 (after 8.dxe5 dxe5 9.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 10.f5 the queenless middlegame is unusual, but OK for Black) 8...dxe5 9.d5 and now:

– 9...♘a6 10.b4! ♗d7 11.a3 when White is a bit better.

– 9...a5 10.c5 ♘a6 11.♗e3 White has an edge.

– 9...♗f8!? is somewhat unusual, but it stops White's play on the queenside. After 10.♗e3 ♘a6 11.♗d3 ♗c5 12.♕d2 ♕d6 the position is rather unclear.

7...c5



8.d5

After the natural 8.♗e3!? Black has some options:

– 8...cxd4 9.♘xd4 ♘c6 10.♗e2 and I think having the pawn on g4 instead of the usual g6 now favours White as Black will have problems where to castle safely.

– 8...♘a6!? (Black can develop slowly, as White's development on the kingside does not come easy) 9.♕d2 ♗d7 10.♖d1 ♕a5 or 10...♖c8 and the position is complex.

– 8...♘bd7!? 9.♘g3 cxd4 10.♗xd4 ♘e5 Black may well have a good position.

– 8...b6 9.dxc5 dxc5 (9...bxc5 10.e5 ♘fd7 11.exd6 ♘c6 Black is short of full play for the pawn) 10.♕xd8+ (10.e5 ♕xd1+ 11.♖xd1 ♘h7 Black avoids being in trouble early on, and can probably catch up in development) 10...♔xd8 11.0-0-0+ ♔c7 12.♗f4+ ♔b7 13.♘g3 ♘c6 is not convincing for White.

Unfortunately the players agreed a draw at this early stage.

A pity because they probably would have paved the way for future theory.

I should like to present you with some notes as to how play might continue.

I believe Ashot was going to disturb White's play on the kingside with

8...h5!?

Probably he would not have played on the queenside with 8...♘a6. After 9.♘g3 ♘c7 10.♗d3 a6 11.a4 b6 12.0-0 White is better. It is hard to speculate how Nadanian was going to develop his pieces. All lines lead to an original position. For example 8...♘bd7 9.♘g3 ♘e5 10.f4 gxf3 11.gxf3 ♖g8 12.f4 ♘g6 13.♗d3. Finally, White answers 8...e6 with 9.♘g3.

9.♘g3 h4

Or 9...e6 10.dxe6 fxe6 11.♘b5 ♔e7 12.♗f4 ♘e8 and Black's king is too airy.

10.♘f5 ♗xf5 11.exf5 ♕c8

Also playable is 11...♕d7 12.♗d3 ♘a6 (12...h3 13.g3 ♘a6 14.♘e4 ♖g8 15.♘xf6+ ♗xf6 16.f3 gxf3 17.♕xf3 ♘c7) 13.♘e4 ♖g8. Interesting is 11...♖h5!?. Weak is 11...h3 12.gxh3! (12.g3 ♘bd7 13.f3 gxf3 14.♕xf3 ♘e5 Black is kicking) 12...gxh3 13.♖g1 ♗h6 14.f4 ♘bd7 15.♗xh3 ♕a5 16.♕d3 0-0-0 17.♗d2 White is a pawn up.

12.♗d3 ♘bd7

12...h3 13.g3 ♘bd7 14.♗f4 ♗h6 is unclear.

13.h3 ♘e5 14.hxg4 ♘xd3+ 15.♕xd3 ♘xg4 16.♗g5 ♖h5 17.♗xe7 ♔xe7 18.♕e2+ ♔f8 19.♕xg4 ♕xf5 20.♕xf5 ♖xf5 21.♖xh4 ♖e8+

and Black has reasonable compensation for the pawn.

☐ **Pham Chuong**
■ **Ashot Nadanian**
Singapore rapid 2005

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 h6 3.c4 g5 4.♘c3 g4 5.♘d2!?

White sticks to the centre, on the other hand it has a price: pawn d4 lacks protection.

5...h5

Or 5...d6 6.e4 ♗g7 7.e5 dxe5 8.dxe5 ♘fd7 9.e6 ♘e5 10.exf7+ ♔xf7 11.♘d5 ♗f5 and Black has good piece play, tooeasy (GM)-Sergirina (IM), ICC 5-minutes 2005.

6.e4

It would be interesting to see how Black reacts to the attempt to undermine the g4-pawn: 6.h3. Let me illustrate some of his possible reactions.

– 6...♗h6 7.e4 d6 8.hxg4 hxg4 9.♗d3 is quite an original way to defend the h1 rook, but White should be better here.

– 6...♖g8 7.hxg4 hxg4 8.e4 d6 is hard to judge.

– 6...gxh3 7.♖xh3 (7.gxh3!?) 7...d5 8.♖h4 ♘c6 9.g3 ♗g4 is another unusual position. Can Black compensate for his weak h-pawn with his active piece play?

– 6...♗g7 7.hxg4 hxg4 8.♖xh8+ ♗xh8 9.e4 d6 10.♘b3 ♘c6 11.♗e3 Black probably has a playable position.

6...d6 7.♗e2

Or 7.♘b3!? e5 (7...♘c6 8.d5 ♘e5 9.c5 is a bit better for White; 7...b6!? 8.♗d3 ♘bd7 9.♗e3 c5) 8.d5 b6 (8...a5!?) 9.♗g5 ♗e7 is again quite an unorthodox position.

7...♘c6 8.♘b3 ♗g7 9.♗e3 e5

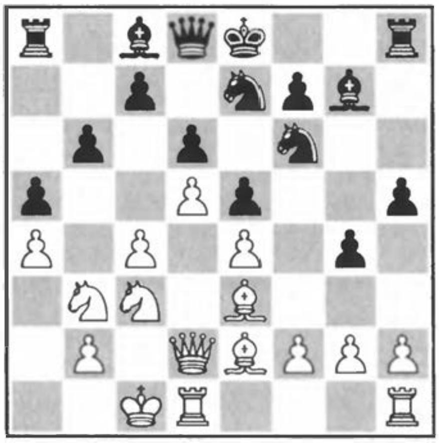
Nadanian suggests 9...h4!?.

10.d5 ♘e7 11.♕d2

Here 11.c5 ♗h6!? (11...♘g6 12.♕d2) 12.♕d2 ♗xe3 13.♕xe3 ♘g6 14.g3 h4 15.0-0-0 ♕e7 16.♔b1 ♗d7 is playable for Black.

11...a5 12.a4 b6 13.0-0-0

Possible is 13.f3 which gives an unclear fighting position. 13...♗d7 (after 13...♘g6 14.♗g5 the pin is unpleasant; 13...h4 14.0-0-0 h3 15.♖dg1 ♘g6 16.gxh3 gxh3 17.♗g5 ♗d7 is roughly equal) 14.♘c1 h4 (14...gxf3 15.gxf3; 14...♘g6 15.♗g5 ♕e7 16.♘d3 Black is somewhat passive here) 15.fxg4 (15.h3 gxh3 16.gxh3 ♘h5 Black is active) 15...♘xg4 16.♗xg4 ♗xg4 17.♘d3 and it is largely a matter of taste which side you prefer.



13...♘xe4!?

Going for the imaginative solution as always. Black could just develop here with 13...♗d7! which is objectively the better solution. The position gives chances for both sides after 14.h3 gxh3 15.gxh3 ♘g6 16.♖dg1 ♕e7.

14.♘xe4 f5 15.♘g5!

Best. The alternatives are fine for Black: 15.♘c3 f4, 15.♗d3 fxe4 16.♗xe4 ♗d7!, and 15.f3 fxe4 16.fxe4 ♗d7! – without the pressure on a4 Black would be rather passive.

15...f4 16.♗xf4 exf4 17.♘d4

After 17.♕xf4 ♖f8 18.♕e3 ♗e5 19.g3 ♘f5 20.♕d2 ♕d7 (20...♗d7 21.♘e6) 21.♘e6 ♖f7 Black keeps his position together.

17...♗h6

17...♗xd4 18.♕xd4 0-0 19.♗d3 ♘f5 20.♕xf4 ♘h4 21.♕d2 ♞xg2 Black is living dangerously here.

18.h4

Or 18.♕xf4 ♘f5! (18...♖f8 19.♕e3 Black is in serious trouble) 19.h4 0-0 and Black's pieces came alive very quickly.

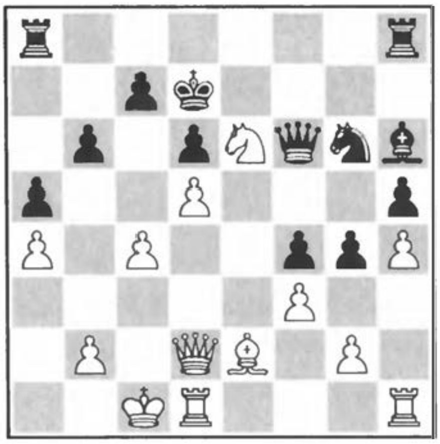
18...♘g6 19.f3

After 19.♖de1 Black has 19...0-0! (not 19...♘e5 20.♕xf4 ♕e7 21.♕e3 White is better). Just like the greatest Armenian chess player Tigran Petrosian Black can sacrifice an exchange for long-term positional pluses. 20.♘de6 ♗xe6 21.♘xe6 ♕d7 22.♘xf8 ♖xf8 23.♗d1 ♘e5 and Black is in the game.

19...♕f6 20.♘ge6

White acts at once. Maybe a preparatory move would have caused more problems. For instance, 20.♗d3!? ♘e5 21.♖de1 or 20.♖de1!? at once.

20...♗xe6 21.♘xe6 ♔d7!



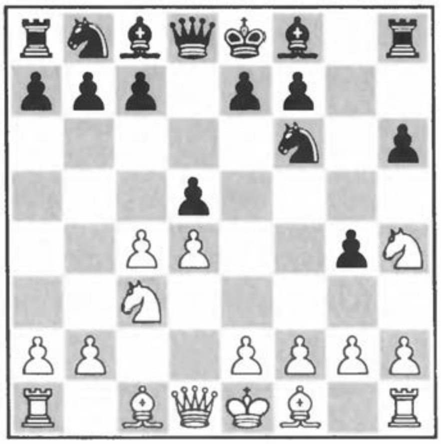
Black imaginatively solves the problem of his king. Petrosian won a great game against Kasparov with his extraordinary use of his king.

22.♕c2 22.fxg4 ♘xh4 **22...♘e5 23.♕b3 ♖ac8 24.♖de1** 24.♕b5+ c6 **24...♗g7 25.♗d3!?** Finally White decides to go after Black's king. The endgame is equal after 25.fxg4 hxg4 26.♗xg4 ♘xg4 27.♕b5+ c6 28.♕xb6 ♕xb2+ 29.♕xb2 ♗xb2+ 30.♔xb2 cxd5. **25...♘xd3+ 26.♕xd3 ♕xb2+ 27.♔d1 ♗e5 28.♕f5 ♕b3+ 29.♔e2 ♕xc4+ 30.♔f2 g3+ 31.♔g1 ♔e7 32.♕g5+ ♔d7 33.♕f5 ♔e7 34.♕g5+ ♔d7 35.♕f5 ½-½**

The dust has settled and White holds with a repetition. The Vietnamese boy is based in Singapore and is trained by Nadanian, they produced an interesting fight. This battle is an example of imaginative play right from the opening. The line stood the test once again.

☐ **Luiz Chiong**
■ **Ashot Nadanian**
Singapore Masters 2005

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 h6 3.c4 g5 4.♘c3 g4 5.♘h4 d5



So Nadanian decides to play a Grünfeld with a white knight on h4 (rather than on a4).

6.g3

The IM from the Philippines goes for a fianchetto line. By analogy we can think of other set-ups:

– 6.cxd5 ♘xd5 7.e4 ♘xc3 8.bxc3 e5 9.g3 exd4 10.cxd4 ♗g7 with excellent counterplay against White's centre.

– 6.♗f4!? ♗g7 7.e3 c5 8.dxc5 ♕a5 9.♕b3 and now White wins after 9...dxc4? 10.♗xc4 0-0 11.♘g6. So Black should play 9...♘c6 10.♖d1 ♘e4 with unclear play.

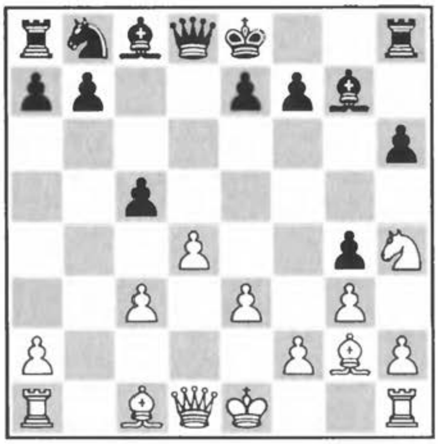
– Unclear could also be the verdict after 6.♕b3 dxc4 7.♕xc4 ♗e6 8.♕b5+ ♘c6 9.e3 ♖b8.

6...c5 7.cxd5 ♘xd5 8.♗g2 ♘xc3 9.bxc3 ♗g7 10.e3

Nadanian analyses 10.♕a4!? ♗d7 11.♕a3 cxd4! 12.♗xb7 and now:

– 12...♘c6 13.♗xa8 ♕xa8 14.0-0 dxc3 with compensation for the exchange.

– 12...♗c6 13.♗xa8 ♕xa8 14.♘f5 ♗f6 15.0-0 ♕d5 16.f3 gxf3 17.♖xf3 dxc3 18.♕a7 ♘d7 with unclear play.



10...♕a5

Starting a manoeuvre to prevent White from castling, but best would have been 10...♘c6 with equality.

11.♗d2 ♕a6 12.♕e2 ♕xe2+ 13.♔xe2 ♘c6 14.h3 h5 15.hxg4

Perhaps 15.♖ab1 e5 16.d5 is stronger.

15...hxg4 16.♗e4

Here, as in the game, 16.♖ab1!? can be answered by 16...♖h5!?.

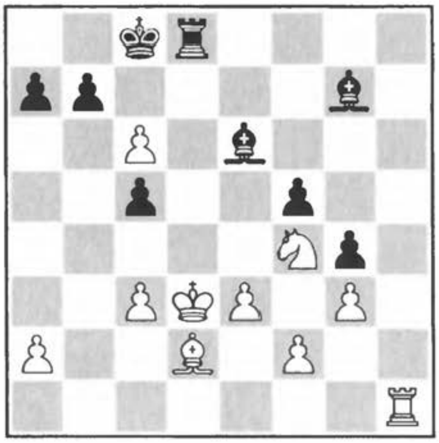
16...♖h5 17.♘g2 ♖xh1 18.♖xh1 f5 19.♗d3 e5 20.d5

Now if Black moves his knight he would be in grave trouble. Nadanian reacts well with a positional pawn sacrifice in the ending.

20...e4! 21.dxc6 exd3+ 22.♔xd3 ♗e6 23.♘f4

Black also has clear compensation after 23.cxb7 ♖d8+ 24.♔c2 ♗d5 25.♖h7 ♗xb7 26.♖xg7 ♗xg2 27.♖xa7 ♗e4+ 28.♔d1 ♖b8.

23...0-0-0+



24.♔c2 ♗g8 25.cxb7+ ♔xb7 26.♖h5

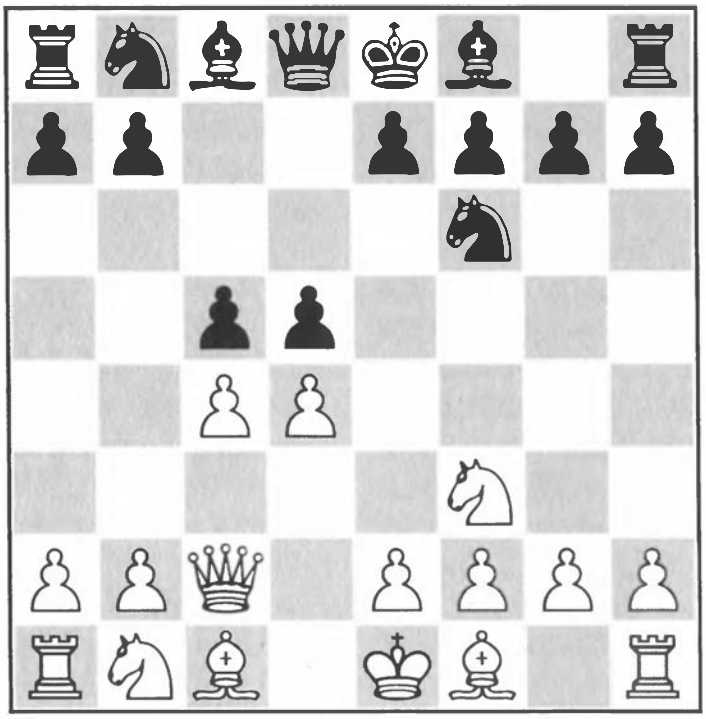
And here the players agreed a draw. Stronger would have been 26.c4 and White still has a slight endgame advantage.

So we have seen that there is no clear way to find an advantage for White after the amazing 2...h6. Of course playing this line entails some risks. Playing such aggressive chess leaves no room for errors, but that holds true for White as well. One can use 2...h6 at the right moment against the right opponent. We shall see how this line will develop.

CHAPTER 9

Stefan Löffler

Sacrificing a Tempo in the Slav



First 2...c6, then 4...c5

Competing in an open tournament in Malaysia I had brought neither my notebook, nor even a pocket chess-set. My only preparation consisted of a visit to an internet café to connect to an online database. Here I mouse clicked through a few games of the other three titleholders in the open to check their opening repertoires. One grandmaster from the Philippines usually employed 4.♕c2 against the Slav. When I was actually paired against him with Black, I wondered if I ought to risk the Slav. For, I had never concerned myself with 4.♕c2. I am not sure whether I got the idea in the evening – whilst eating the incomparable Laksa noodle soup, of which they are rightly proud in Penang – or in the morning, during my daily exercise in the hotel swimming pool. Anyway, I decided to risk the Slav, and in case of 4.♕c2, I was going to improvise with 4...c5. As it turned out the grandmaster disregarded his favourite 4.♕c2 that day, and played 4.e3 instead.

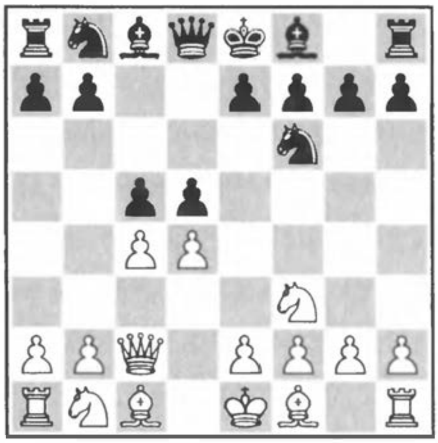
Seven weeks later, only one day after my return from Asia, I had to play in a second Bundesliga match in Berlin. My opponent was Igors Rausis. The Latvian grandmaster hadn't played a single game that season, so I didn't have a clue what was in store for me. When he played 4.♕c2, I had the chance to consider my idea from Penang whilst sitting in front of some actual chess pieces. I told myself, that that which had been true in Malaysia could not be wrong now, and I decided to leave the thinking to my opponent.

The experiment was a success. Soon I had gained forty minutes on the clock and the game ended in a draw. What more could I want with Black against a grandmaster? The real surprise occurred when I entered the position in my database at home. In the only two games that I found it wasn't white's, but Black's move. I could hardly believe it, and called up a friend with a bigger database to double-check. Need I mention that he found no previous games either? Wow, I had played a novelty on move 4, not in some obscure opening, but in a position that has occurred in hundreds and hundreds of games. Now we need to see if the idea holds up against a more rigorous analysis.

☐ **Igors Rausis**
■ **Stefan Löffler**
Germany Bundesliga B 2005/06

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♕c2
The moves 4.♘c3, 4.e3 and 4.cxd5 are more popular, but White gets a better deal with 4.♕c2. You don't need to know an awful lot of theory to play this move, and White obtains a slight plus in nearly every game. Black usually responds with 4...g6, 4...e6 or 4...dxc4. Against the latter, Rausis has favoured 5.e4!? b5 6.b3 cxb3 7.axb3 on a number of occasions.

4...c5
What on earth is going on? Didn't Black just play 2...c6? Why would you strengthen the d5-pawn, if you light-heartedly weaken it two moves later? True, there are some other lines in the Slav where Black sacrifices a tempo (first ...c6, then ...c5) in similar fashion. For instance, after 4.♘bd2 e6 5.e3, the move 5...c5 is popular. Indeed, in SOS-4 Mikhail Gurevich has written about 4.♘c3 e6 5.e3 a6, and if 6.♕c2 then 6...c5!?. In the Queen's Gambit Declined when White has played his queen to c2 without taking on d5 first, Black is often well-advised to play ...c5. For, as long as the knight is still on b8, it can be actively developed to c6. From this square it can either attack the queen from b4, or simply put pressure on d4. However, let's not rush things.

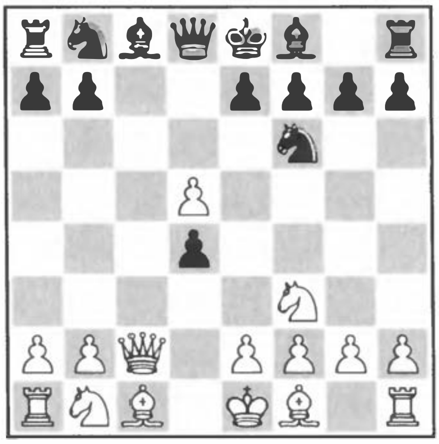


5.cxd5
White has a number of possibilities of course. Concerning 5.♗f4, 5.♗g5, 5.g3 and 5.♘c3, I believe that it shouldn't be too difficult to find a satisfactory answer behind the board.
Two serious alternatives remain:
– 5.dxc5 ♘c6 (but not 5...♕a5+ 6.♕c3 ♕xc5 7.cxd5 and the pawn is lost. In case of 5...d4 White need not play 6.b4 a5 7.♕a4+ ♗d7 8.b5 ♗f5 9.♗b2 (9.c6!?) 9...e5 10.♘xe5 ♗xc5, but should prefer the simple 6.e3 ♘c6 7.exd4 ♘xd4 8.♘xd4 ♕xd4 9.♗e3, when, at the very least, regaining the pawn will cost Black valuable time) 6.cxd5 ♕xd5 7.♘c3 ♕xc5 8.e4 g6 (I prefer this to 8...♗g4, when White can effectively regroup his pieces with 9.♗e3 ♕a5 10.♘d2) 9.♗e3 (here 9.a3!? ♗g7 10.b4 ♕h5 11.♗b2 is in-

teresting) 9...♕a5 (9...♕h5 10.♘b5) 10.h3 ♗g7 and Black is solid.

– 5.e3 cxd4 (it is possible to keep the tension with 5...e6, but transposing to a promising line from the Panov Variation may be considered, from a theoretical point of view, a success for Black) 6.exd4 g6 (the other transposition to the Panov with 6...♘c6 7.♘c3 ♗g4 is unfavourable here. White need not go in for 8.cxd5 ♘xd5 9.♕b3, but can play more strongly with 8.♘e5 ♘xd4 9.♕a4+ ♗d7 10.♕d1 ♘c6 11.♘xd7 followed by 12.cxd5. Finally, after 6...e6 the position of the queen on c2 may become an asset) 7.♘c3 ♗g7 8.cxd5 (after 8.♗g5 0-0 9.♗xf6 ♗xf6 10.♘xd5 ♗g7 Black effortlessly regains the pawn) 8...0-0 9.♕b3 (if 9.♗c4 ♘bd7 10.♗g5 ♘b6 11.♗xf6 then Black gains a nice initiative for the pawn with 11...exf6 12.♗b3 ♖e8+) 9...♘bd7 10.♗g5 ♘b6 11.♗xf6 ♗xf6 12.♗e2e6 13.dxe6 ♗xe6 14.♕d1 ♘c4 15.b3, Drolet-Leveille, Québec 1991, and now Black can regain the pawn with 15...♘d6 16.♕d2 ♘f5 17.♖d1 ♖c8 18.0-0 ♘xd4 19.♘xd4 ♗xd4 20.♕xd4 ♕xd4 21.♖xd4 ♖xc3.

5...cxd4



With his fourth move Black presupposes that, after he has increased the tension in the centre, White's queen would be better-off on d1. This is best-illustrated by looking at the Austrian Defence. After 1.d4 d5 2.c4 c5 3.cxd5 ♘f6 4.♘f3 (here White also has two other good options in 4.e4 and 4.dxc5) 4...cxd4 White has an agreeable choice between 5.♘xd4 ♘xd5 6.e4, and 5.♕xd4 ♕xd5 6.♘c3 ♕xd4 7.♘xd4. Both lines promise White a small edge. With the queen on c2, instead of on d1, things are a little different. Her majesty cannot take back directly on d4. And, what is more, after the knight takes on d4 it is not defended by the queen.

6.♕a4+

The alternative is 6.♘xd4 ♘xd5 7.e4 (what else? After 7.g3 e5 8.♘b5 ♘c6 Black has no problems. Please note that in this line the materialistic 8.♕e4? ♗b4+ 9.♗d2 0-0 10.♕xe5 loses a piece after 10...♖e8 11.♕h5 ♘f6 12.♕h4 ♖e4) 7...♘b4. Now, with the queen on d1, White has options like ♗e3 or ♗b5+, here there only remains: 8.♕a4+ ♘8c6 9.♘xc6 ♘xc6 10.♘c3.

This position has occurred several times in practice (via the Austrian Defence – so without one pair of moves). Black is at crossroads:

– 10...g6 11.♗e3 ♗g7 12.♗b5 0-0 13.♗xc6 bxc6 14.0-0 (14.♕xc6? ♖b8 15.♖b1 ♕d3) 14...♕c7 and now in Bachmayr-Ter Minasjan, Munich 2000, White could have gained a slight but enduring plus with 15.♗d4.

– 10...e6 11.♗e3 ♗e7 (with 11...♗b4 12.♗b5 ♗d7 13.0-0 ♕a5 14.♖ac1 a6 15.♕xa5 ♗xa5 16.♗e2 Black does not solve all his problems – ♖fd1 and ♘a4-c5 and White keeps some pressure, Illescas-Salmensuu, Elista Olympiad 1998) 12.♗e2 0-0 13.0-0 ♗d7 14.♖fd1 a6 15.♖d2 ♕c7 16.♕d1 ♖fd8 and White's initiative has gone up in air, Renet-Dlugy, Paris 1986.

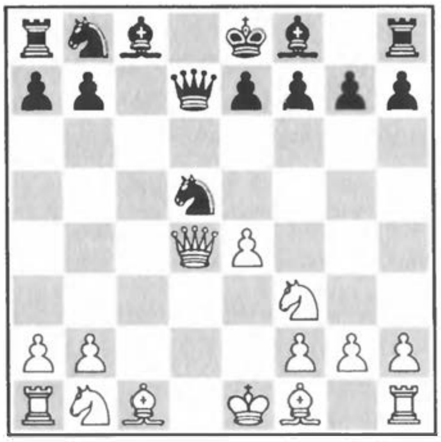
6...♕d7 7.♕xd4

In my database I found some two dozen examples with this position. Most of them arose after the move order 1.d4 d5 2.♘f3

♘f6 3.c4 c5 4.cxd5 cxd4 5.♕a4+ ♕d7 6.♕xd4. In all games, but one, Black transposed into his repertoire with 6...♕xd5 (a position that White could have forced anyway with 5.♕xd4 instead of 5.♕a4+). Important for the evaluation of this position is 7.♘c3 ♕xd4 8.♘xd4 ♗d7 9.♘db5 ♘a6 10.e4 e5 (Stohl-Votava, Portoroz 1998), or 8...a6 9.g3 ♗d7 10.♗g2 ♗c6 (among other practical examples this is Portisch-Sosonko, Wijk aan Zee 1978). The results in practice were in White's favour. So, why, as long as you get this position with the queen on d7 instead of on d8, not use the opportunity to take back on d5 with the knight?

7...♘xd5 8.♘c3

Rausis told me after the game that he had not considered my reply to the text. If he had, he would have preferred 8.e4.



However, is that really so favourable? Black has three squares to draw back his knight to:

– 8...♘f6 was Frank Marshall's choice versus Roy Turnbull (in New York 1911). He had no problems after 9.♘c3 ♘c6 10.♗b5?! ♘xd4 11.♘xd4 e5 12.♘f3 ♗b4. White could have developed a strong initiative with 10.♕a4, for example: 10...e6 11.♗f4 ♗b4 12.♗b5! ♘xe4 13.0-0 ♗xc3 14.♖ad1.

– 8...♘b6 9.♘c3 ♘c6 10.♕xd7+ ♗xd7 11.♗e3 e6 12.0-0-0! (Black holds his own after 12.♗e2 ♗b4 13.0-0 ♗xc3 14.bxc3 ♘a4 or 12.a3 ♖c8 13.♘b5 ♘a4) 12...♖c8 13.♔b1 and now the threat of winning a pawn with 14.♘b5 forces Black to play the ugly 13...♘a8 (13...♘a5? 14.♘e5).

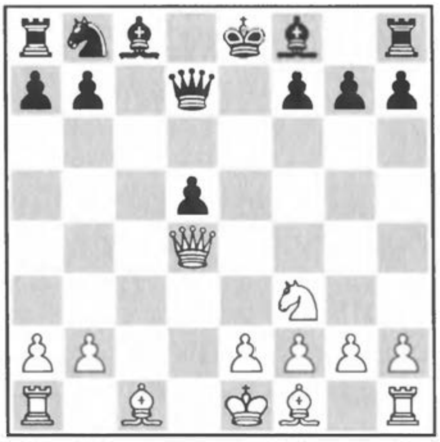
– 8...♘c7 is the solid option. 9.♘c3 ♕xd4 (after 9...♘c6 10.♕a4 e5 11.♗e3 ♗b4 12.♖c1 or 10...a6 11.♗e3 b5 12.♕b3 e6 13.♗e2 ♗b7 14.0-0 White keeps the pressure) 10.♘xd4 e5 11.♘db5 ♘xb5 12.♗xb5+ ♗d7 13.0-0 ♗b4 14.♗xd7+ ♔xd7 15.♖d1+ ♔e6 16.♘d5 ♗d6 and if 17.f4 then 17...g6 – Black has no problems.

8...e6

After 8...♘xc3? 9.♕xc3 ♘c6 10.e4 e6 11.a3 Black, for better or for worse, has to resort to 11...f6 to finish his development – White's advantage is not in doubt. No, it is better not to allow White's queen on the c3-g7 diagonal. Black could have tried to reach the final example from the previous note, though, with 8...♘c7.

9.♘xd5 exd5

Black has not enough for the pawn after 9...♘c6? 10.♘f6+ gxf6 11.♕xf6 ♘b4 12.♕c3 or 11...♖g8 12.a3. Playable is 9...♕xd5 10.♕xd5 exd5, when White has only a marginal edge because of the isolated pawn.



10.e4!

This is stronger than 10.♕e5+ ♕e6, or 10.a3 ♘c6 11.♕d3, when Black can activate his pieces and may hope to gain counterplay.

10...dxe4 11.♕xe4+

After 11...♗e7 12.♗d3 Black has nothing better than 12...♕e6, so the queen move is best played now:

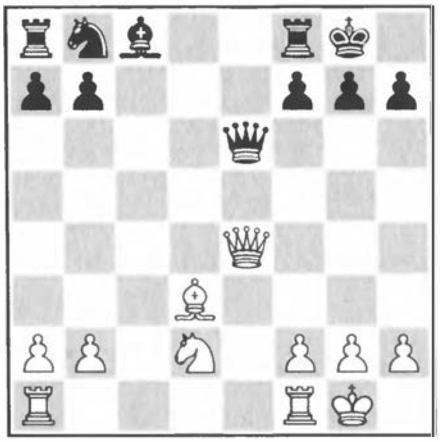
11...♕e6 12.♗d3

Black has more difficulties reaching equality after 12.♗b5+ ♘c6 13.♕xe6+ ♗xe6 14.0-0. Thus, 14...♗c5 15.♗d2 0-0 16.♖fc1 would lose a pawn. The best option is 14...a6 15.♗xc6+ bxc6, to gain at least the bishop pair and a stronghold on d5. For example, 16.♗f4 f6 17.♘d4 ♗d5 18.♖ac1 ♖c8 19.♖fd1 ♔f7 with about equal chances.

12...♗b4+ 13.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 14.♘xd2

If 14.♔xd2, then 14...♕xe4 15.♗xe4 ♘d7 16.♖ac1 ♘f6 17.♖he1 0-0 and Black holds the balance.

14...0-0 15.0-0



Time to take stock: three central pawns have been exchanged. Black has no weaknesses. All that White has obtained is a passing lead in development. If Black keeps the queens on he has little to fear. After 15...♕h6 16.♖fe1 ♘d7 17.♘b3 ♘f6 18.♕f3 ♖b8 White's initiative starts to evaporate.

15...♕xe4? 16.♗xe4

Of course! The bishop controls b7 and the knight will add pressure on the queenside. After Rausis took on d2 with the knight, I only expected 16.♘xe4, when 16...♘c6 fully equalizes.

16...♘d7 17.♖fc1

17.♖ac1 is only optically stronger. After 17...♖d8 18.♖fd1 ♘f6 19.♘b3 ♖xd1+ 20.♖xd1 ♔f8 21.♗f3 ♗e6 22.♗xb7 ♗xb3 23.axb3 ♖b8 the peace treaty may be signed.

17...♖d8 18.♘b3 ♘f6 19.♗f3 ♖b8 20.♘a5

Black can defend after 20.♖c7 ♘d5, and 20.♖d1 ♖xd1+ 21.♖xd1 ♗e6, for, if 22.♗xb7, then 22...♗xb3 23.axb3 ♔f8 transposes to the previous remark.

20...♘d5 21.a3?

Now Black may start to breathe freely. He would have to sweat for his half of the point after 21.♖d1 ♗e6 22.♖d4.

21...♗e6 22.b4 ♖d7 23.h4 ♘e7 24.♖d1 ♖xd1+ 25.♖xd1

With a draw offer, that I turned down. The match was going badly for my team, so I pretended that I could squeeze something from this position.

25...b6 26.♘c6 ♘xc6 27.♗xc6 ♔f8 28.f4 ♔e7 29.♔f2 ♖c8 30.b5

White now has to take care of this pawn, but that is all that Black can achieve.

30...♖d8 31.♖xd8 ♔xd8 32.♔e3 ♔e7 33.♔d4 ♔d6 34.♗f3 h6 35.g3 ♗b3 36.♗e2 f6

Draw.

More food for thought

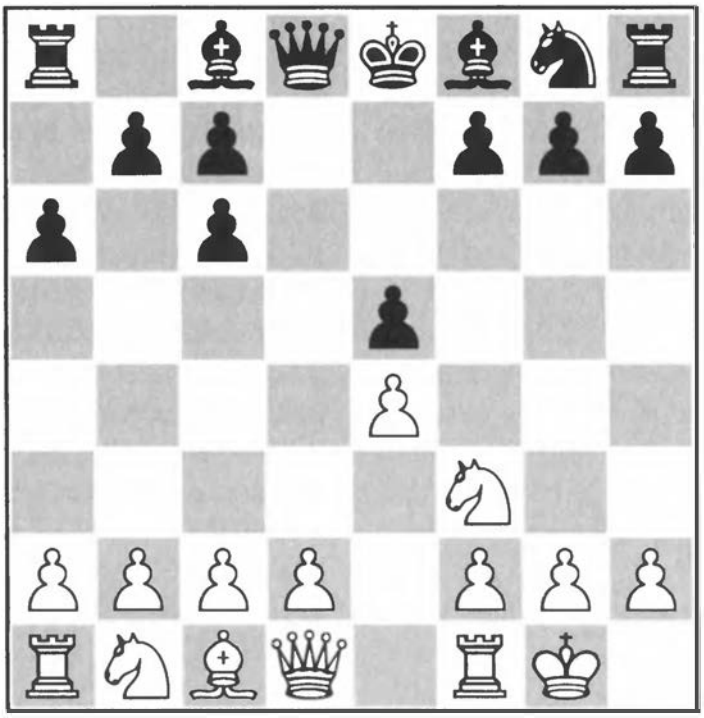
The second-best move for White against the Slav – not according to theory, but according to the statistics in the database – is by the way 4.♕b3. Against that move 4...c5 also looks playable, although, also after 4.♕b3 nobody has dared to sacrifice a tempo. Now, 5.cxd5 cxd4 6.♕a4+ would lead to the game Rausis-Löffler. White has a few alternatives though.

Suggestions for further analysis are: 6.e3!? dxe3 7.♗b5+, the immediate 5.e3, and the materialistic 5.♕b5+ (when 5...♘bd7 should be the best try for equality).

CHAPTER 10

Jeroen Bosch

SOS in the Ruy Lopez Exchange



Your weapons: 5...♕e7 and 5...♗e6

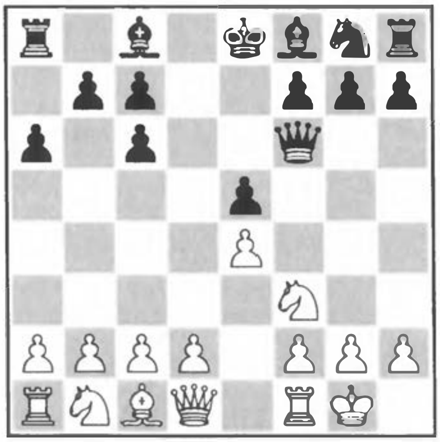
1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗xc6 dxc6 5.0-0

White's general strategy in the Ruy Lopez Exchange can be described in a few sentences: play d4 to trade the d-pawn for the black e-pawn, next exchange all pieces and win the ensuing pawn ending because of the kingside pawn majority. Of course chess is never that simple, and before the ending God created the middlegame. In the history of the Ruy Lopez Exchange it soon became clear that putting all your money on this one horse (with the immediate 5.d4 exd4 6.♕xd4 ♕xd4 7.♘xd4) is not sufficient. Black gets a perfectly playable ending because of his bishop pair. Enter the 11th world champion, Bobby Fischer, who adopted 5.0-0 and transformed it into a subtle weapon. Nowadays, the Exchange Variation again has a fairly innocent reputation. Black has indeed several reliable lines to choose from. Still, there is little chance of surprising your opponent. Perhaps, some of the attraction of 4.♗xc6 even lies in the fact that there are fewer lines to learn, and that White's basic strategy is fairly straightforward.

The aim of this chapter is to present the reader with some possible surprise weapons versus the Spanish Exchange. It is good to realize that after 5.0-0 Black faces a direct, and a strategical, threat. First, having moved the king from the e-file, White now threatens to take on e5. Second, White is ready to push d2-d4 and create that kingside majority. Protection of the e5-pawn is what Black will have to concentrate on, while, nevertheless, keeping in mind how to react to 6.d4. With the exception of 5...♗g4 (pinning the knight), Black will have to do one of two things: (1) directly cover e5; (2) indirectly protect e5 by blocking the e-file. Examples of type I include: 5...f6, 5...♕d6, 5...♗d6, 5...♕f6 and, our first SOS line, 5...♕e7. Examples of the second type are: 5...♘e7, 5...♗e7 and, the second subject of this article, 5...♗e6!?.

A brief survey of Black's 5th move alternatives will be useful for our understanding of the merits of 5...♕e7 and 5...♗e6. I will give the lines in more or less ascending SOS order.

- 5...♗g4 6.h3 h5! 7.d3 ♕f6 (Black's direct play has prevented d4 for the moment. Still in the main line Black ends up in a slightly inferior ending) 8.♘bd2 ♘e7 9.♖e1 ♘g6 10.d4 ♗d6 11.hxg4 (finally White can take bishop) 11...hxg4 12.♘h2 ♖xh2! 13.♕xg4 ♕h4 14.♕xh4 ♖xh4 15.♘f3 with slightly better chances in the endgame.
- 5...f6. This may be called the main line. Black gets a reliable position after both 6.d4 exd4 7.♘xd4 c5 8.♘b3 ♕xd1 9.♖xd1 ♗g4 10.f3 ♗e6 and 6...♗g4 7.dxe5 (7.c3) 7...♕xd1 8.♖xd1 fxe5. Still while clearly protecting pawn e5, the move f6 is slightly weakening. Moreover, Black might like to use the square f6 for a piece.
- 5...♕d6. Another important move. Black protects e5, and is one move closer to queenside castling, which is often a sensible idea in the Exchange Variation. 6.♘a3 (6.d4 exd4 7.♕xd4 ♕xd4 8.♘xd4. Note that Black should not be afraid of this type of ending. Even when it is a move down compared to 5.exd4 exd4 6.♕xd4 ♕xd4 7.♘xd4). Here both 6...b5 7.c3 c5 and 6...♗e6 7.♕e2 f6 8.♖d1 ♗g4 are OK for Black.
- 5...♘e7. This clever move of Paul Keres' indirectly covers e5, although there is a tactical snag. 6.♘xe5 ♕d4 7.♕h5! (this is it!) 7...g6 8.♕g5 ♗g7 9.♘d3 f5 10.e5 c5 11.b3!? leads to brutal complications.
- 5...♗d6 6.d4 exd4 7.♕xd4 f6 8.♗e3 ♘e7 9.♘bd2 ♗e6 gives White a normal opening advantage.
- 5...♗e7. An interesting move, that shares certain similarities with 5...♗e6. Black plans ♗f6, ♘e7-g6 and kingside castling. 6.♘xe5 (6.♘c3 ♗f6 7.♕e2 ♗e6 8.b3 ♘e7 9.♗a3 g5 10.d4 g4 11.♖ad1! with a completely unclear position as in Zhang Zhong-De Vreugt, Wijk aan Zee 2003) 6...♕d4 7.♕h5 (7.♘f3 ♕xe4 8.♖e1 ♕g6 9.♘e5 ♕f5 is perfectly playable for Black) 7...♗e6! 8.d3 ♘f6 9.♘f3 (9.♕g5 ♕c5!) 9...♕xe4! 10.♕xf7+ ♗xf7 11.dxe4 ♘xe4 with equality in Brynell-Hector, Linköping 2001.
- 5...♕f6.



This move also has a certain SOS flavour about it. The early queen move looks a little odd compared to 5...♕d6, but Black is ready for 6...♗g4 and castling. A 19th century game went 6.d4 exd4 7.e5?! ♕g6 8.♘xd4 ♗h3 9.♕f3 ♗g4 10.♕g3 0-0-0, with the initiative in Schallopp-Harmonist, Frankfurt

1887. Instead of 7.e5?! correct is 7.♗g5 leaving Black with two options:

– 7...♕g6 (the old move) 8.♕xd4 ♗d6 (8...♗e7 9.♗xe7 ♘xe7 10.♘e5±) 9.♘bd2 (alternatives are 9.♕e3 and 9.♖d1) and now 9...♗e6 10.♘c4 gives White a slight edge. Interested readers may investigate 9...c5. For example: 10.♕e3 ♗e6 11.♖fd1 (11.♘h4 ♕h5 12.e5 h6! or 11.e5 ♗f8) 11...♘f6 12.e5 ♘d5 13.♕e4 ♕xe4 14.♘xe4 ♗f8 15.♖d2 h6 16.♗h4 b6 17.♖ad1 ♘e7 (Black plays, quite successfully, in the style of the Berlin Wall) 18.h3 ♘c6 19.♘c3 ♗e7 20.♘d5 ♖c8 21.c3 ♗xd5 22.♖xd5 ♖d8 23.♔f1 ♖xd5 24.♖xd5 ♗xh4 25.♘xh4 ♔e7! 26.f4 g5! 27.fxg5 ♔e6 28.♖d3 ♘xe5 29.♖e3 hxg5 30.♘f3 f6 and Black was better in Glek-Efimov, Porto San Giorgio 1999.

However, an improvement is needed over 10.♕c3! ♗g4 11.♗h4 ♘h6 12.♖fe1 b6 13.e5 ♗f8 14.e6 ♗xe6 15.♘d4 ♗d6 16.♘xe6 fxe6 17.♕f3 with a dangerous initiative in Wiersma-I.Sokolov, Amsterdam 2000.

– 7...♕d6, as played by Adams and Morozevich, is the other move. 8.♘xd4 (8.♕xd4 ♕xd4 9.♘xd4 promises even here – two tempi up compared to 5.d4 – very little) 8...♗e7 (8...♗d7 9.♘c3 ♗e7 10.♗xe7 ♘xe7 11.♘b3 0-0-0 12.♕e2 g5?! 13.♕e3 b6 14.♕xg5± Magem Badals-Morozevich, Pamplona 1995) 9.♗xe7 ♘xe7 10.♘c3 0-0 (better is perhaps 10...♗d7 11.♘b3 ♕xd1 12.♖axd1 0-0-0 13.♘d2 b6 14.♘c4 ♗e6 15.♘e3 c5 16.f4 f6 17.♔f2 ♖d4 equal, Fressinet-Adams, Bordeaux rapid 2000) 11.♘de2 ♖d8 12.♕c1 ♗g4 13.♘f4 ♘g6 14.♘xg6 hxg6 15.♕g5 ♗e6 16.♖ad1 ♕f8 17.a3 c5 18.♕e5 and White was slightly better in Magem Badals-Adams, Pula 1997.

Finally I should like to point out that 7.♕xd4 ♕xd4 8.♘xd4 ♗d7 is identical to 5...♗e6 6.d4 exd4 7.♕xd4 ♕xd4 8.♘xd4 ♗d7 (see below).

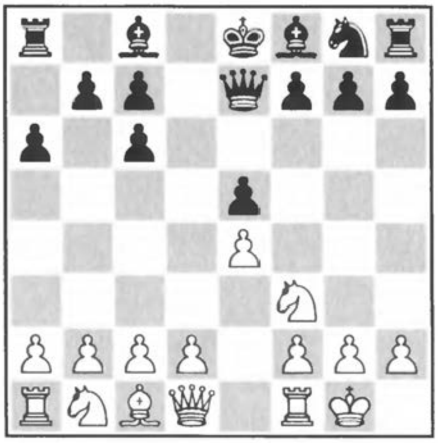
We will discuss two lines in more detail:

A) 5...♕e7

B) 5...♗e6

Variation A

5...♕e7



This is a Smyslov favourite that deserves serious SOS attention. Given the chance Black will continue with ♗g4 and 0-0-0, often starting an attack with f6 and g5.

6.d4

It is necessary for White to play actively in the centre. Otherwise, Black continues in the above-mentioned manner:

– 6.b3?! ♗g4 7.h3 ♗h5 8.♗b2 f6 9.d3 ♘h6 10.♘bd2 g5! 11.g4 ♗g6 12.d4 (12.♘c4) 12...♘f7 13.dxe5 fxe5 14.♘c4 ♗g7 15.♘fd2 0-0-0 16.♕e2 h5 17.♘e3 hxg4 18.hxg4 ♕f6 19.f3 ♖h3 20.♘g2 ♗f8! 21.♔f2 ♖xd2!, with a winning position, Gheorghiu-Smyslov, Petropolis Interzonal 1973.

– 6.d3 ♗g4 7.h3 ♗h5 8.♗e3 0-0-0 9.♘bd2 f6 equal, Lenk-Möhring, Stralsund 1975.

6...exd4 7.♕xd4

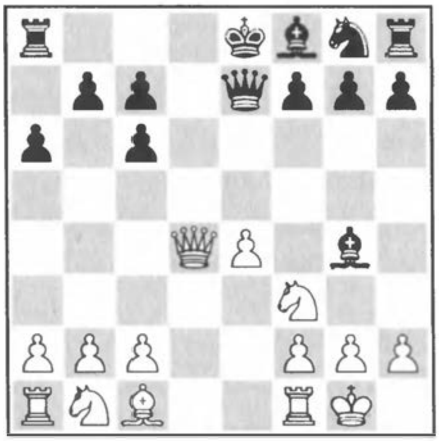
The alternative is of course 7.♘xd4. After 7...♗d7 White sacrificed a pawn in Filipovic-Teofilovic, Bosnjaci 2004, with 8.♗e3. The game continued 8...♕xe4 9.♖e1 ♘e7 10.♘d2 ♕g6 11.♘c4 f6 12.♗f4 0-0-0. White should now have played 13.♗xc7!. Black is mated after 13...♔xc7? 14.♘b5+

axb5 15.♕d6+ ♔c8 16.♘b6 mate! Instead of 13...♔xc7? correct is 13...♖e8 with just an edge for White. In the game White went crazy with 13.♘b6+ cxb6 14.♘b5 cxb5 15.♕d6, having missed the only winning defence 15...♕xg2+! 16.♔xg2 ♗c6+.

More mundane is 8.♘c3 0-0-0 9.♘b3 (9.♕f3 g6 10.♗e3 ♗g7 11.♘b3 ♘h6 12.♕g3 ♘g4 13.♗c5 ♕e6 14.♗d4 ♗xd4 15.♘xd4 ♕d6 16.♖ad1 ♕xg3 17.hxg3 c5, when Black had an equal ending in Zhang Zhong-Kakageldiev, Jodhpur tt 2003) 9...♘f6 10.♕e2 g6 11.f3 ♘h5 12.♗e3 f5 13.♖ad1 ♗g7 14.♘c5 ♘f4 15.♕c4 ♗e5 16.♘xd7 ♖xd7 17.♖xd7 ♕xd7 18.♕c5 ♝.xc3 19.bxc3 b6 20.♕c4 ♘e6 21.♕xa6+ ♔b8 22.♖b1 with a slight edge in Barreras Garcia-Smyslov, Cienfuegos 1973.

Variation A1

7...♗g4

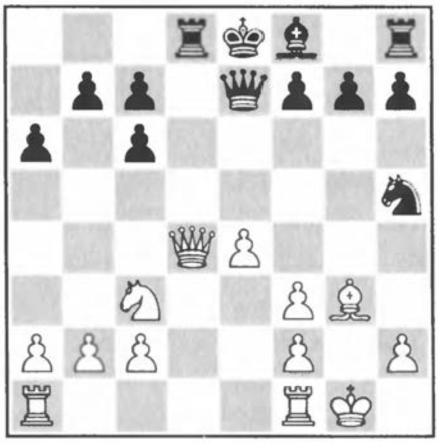


8.♗f4

Clearly the best move.

- 8.♘bd2 ♖d8 (8...♕c5 9.♕e5+ ♕xe5 10.♘xe5 ♗e6=) 9.♕a7 ♕b4 10.♘b3 ♗xf3 11.gxf3 ♘e7 12.♗f4 ♘c8 13.♕e3 ♗d6 with equality, Garcia Palermo-Smyslov, Buenos Aires 1978.
- 8.♞e5 deserves an exclam according to Suetin. Nobody has tried it out in practice though. In my opinion, 8...♖d8 9.♕c3 ♗e6 or 9...♗c8 followed by ♕b4 or ♕c5 looks rather pleasant for Black.

8...♗xf3 9.gxf3 ♘f6 10.♘c3 ♘h5 11.♗g3 ♖d8



A popular position in practice.

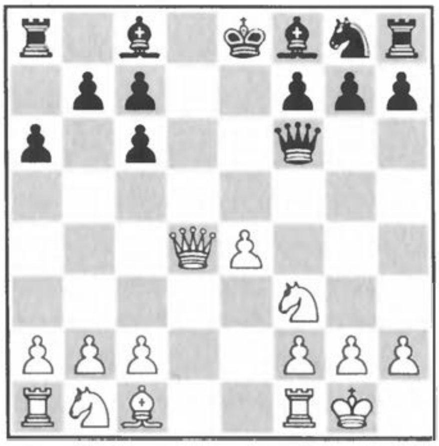
12.♕e3

This is stronger than 12.♕a4♘xg3 13.hxg3 ♕b4 equal, Bednarski-Smyslov, Skopje Olympiad 1972.

12...♘xg3 13.hxg3 ♕c5 14.♖ad1 ♕xe3 15.♖xd8+ ♔xd8 16.♖d1+ White has the slightly better ending (Brynell-Hector, Gothenburg 1996, and Dvoretsky-Smyslov, Odessa 1974).

Variation A2

7...♕f6



Moving the queen out early in the game? Moving the same piece twice? Sometimes the rules of healthy opening play just don't seem to apply.

8.♘c3

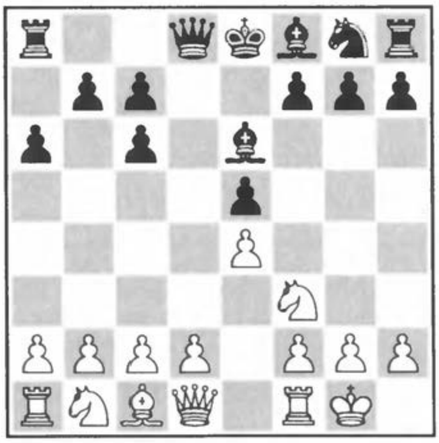
– 8.♕a4 ♗g4 9.♗g5?! (9.e5 ♕g6 10.♘g5 ♗f5 11.♕b3 and White has the initiative according to Keres. 9...♕f5!? is a likely improvement in this line) 9...♕xb2 10.♘bd2 ♕b4 11.♕xb4 ♗xb4 12.♖ab1 ♗xd2 13.♘xd2 f6 14.♗e3 0-0-0∓ Vasiukov-Zaitsev, Rostov on Don 1971.

– 8.♕xf6 ♘xf6 9.♗f4± Suetin. However, 9...♗e6! 10.♗xc7 ♘xe4 11.♖e1 ♗d6! looks equal to me.

8...♕xd4 9.♘xd4 ♗d7 10.♗f4 0-0-0 11.♖ad1 ♘e7 12.♖d2 ♘g6 13.♗g3 ♗b4 14.♘de2 f5! 15.f3 fxe4 16.fxe4 ♗g4 17.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 18.♖f7 ♖d7 19.♖xd7 ♔xd7 Marholev-Radulski, Bulgarian Championship, Plovdiv 1999. The bishop pair and an active king give Black superior chances in this ending.

Variation B

5...♗e6



The good points of 5...♗e6 are: (1) indirect protection of e5; (2) developing a piece and preparing queenside castling; (3) ready to meet a future d4 with exd4 and ♗c4 attacking the rook. Possible disadvantages are: a future ♗g4 (often a good move at some stage) will cost a tempo, and a possible ♘g5 or ♘d4 will attack the bishop.

We will examine:

B1) 6.♘xe5
B2) 6.♘c3
B3) 6.d4

Other moves do not look very dangerous:

– 6.♕e2 planning ♖d1 and d4 is an idea, but 6...♕f6!? looks like a good reply, as it prevents d4. 7.d4 exd4 8.♗g5 ♕g6 and there is no ♕xd4 as in the 5...♕f6 line.

– 6.b3 c5 (or 6...♗d6 7.♗b2 – 7.d4 ♗g4 – 7...♘f6 8.♖e1 ♘d7=) 7.♘xe5 (7.♗b2 f6) 7...♕d4 8.♘c4 ♕xe4 with equal play. Instead, 8...♕xa1 9.♗b2 ♕xa2 10.♘c3 ♗xc4 11.♘xa2 ♗xf1 12.♔xf1 is a weird line, but probably slightly better for White. It will take a lot of time before the Black pieces are starting to cooperate.

– 6.♖e1 ♕d6 and this compares favourably to the 5...♕d6 line. White does not have 7.d4 exd4 8.♘xd4?? because of 8...0-0-0 winning. Instead 8.♕xd4 is strongly answered by 8...c5! rather than 8...♕xd4 9.♘xd4 ♗d7= or 8...0-0-0? 9.♕a7!.

– 6.c3 ♕d3! (6...♘f6 7.♕e2 ♗g4) 7.♖e1 f6 8.♖e3 ♕d7 planning 9.d4 0-0-0. In the game Monroy-Verat, Breizh 2005, White played 7.♘xe5 ♕xe4 8.d4 0-0-0 9.♘d2 ♕d5 10.♘d3 c5 11.♘f4 ♕f5 12.♘xe6 ♕xe6 13.♘f3 with equal chances.

Variation B1

6.♘xe5 ♕d4 7.♘f3 ♕xe4

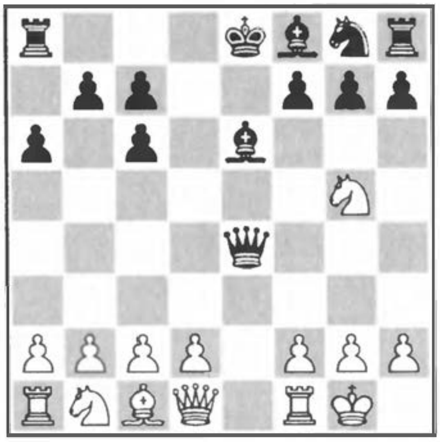
White may win some tempi now, but Black's position looks very healthy.

8.♘g5

The alternative is 8.♖e1 ♕g6 9.♘d4 0-0-0 10.♘xe6 fxe6 11.d3 ♘f6!? 12.♖xe6 ♗c5 13.♗e3? ♕f5 14.♖xf6 gxf6 15.♗xc5 ♕xc5 16.♘c3 ♕b4 when Black was better in Sanchez-Garcia, Mondariz Balneario 2002. White should have played 13.♖e2 when after 13...♖he8 the lines fork:

– 14.♗e3 ♘d5! when 15.♗xc5?? loses to 15...♘f4.

– 14.♖xe8 ♖xe8 15.♘d2 ♘g4 16.♘e4 ♖xe4 17.dxe4 ♗xf2+ 18.♔h1 ♘xh2∓.



8...♕f5 9.♘xe6 fxe6 10.d3 0-0-0 11.♘c3 ♘f6 12.♕e2 ♗c5 13.♗d2 13.♗e3± Estrada. **13...♖he8 14.♖ae1 ♗d4 15.♘d1 e5 16.♘c3** 16.♘e3 ♕e6=. **16...♘d5 17.♕e4 g6** with an equal position. Estrada-Radulski, Dos Hermanas 2002.

Variation B2

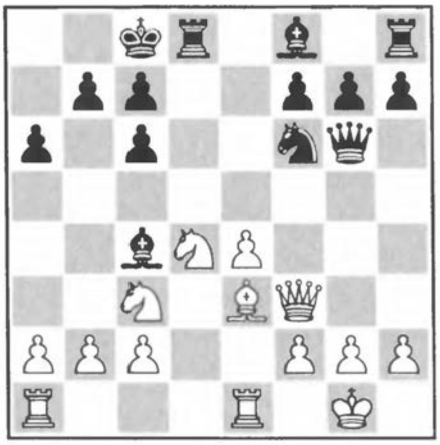
6.♘c3

White makes a useful move preparing further action.

6...♕d6 7.d4 exd4 8.♘xd4 ♗c4!

This useful time-saver is one of the points of 5...♗e6.

9.♖e1 0-0-0 10.♗e3 ♕g6 11.♕f3 ♘f6



This diagram should clearly demonstrate one of the attractions of this SOS. With simple play Black has gained an edge.

12.a3

Neither 12.b3? ♗b4!, nor 12.♖ad1 ♗b4!.

12...♘g4 13.b3 ♗e6

Or 13...♘xe3 14.♕xe3 ♗c5 15.♘f5 ♗xe3 16.♘e7+ ♔b8 17.♘xg6 hxg6 18.♖xe3 ♗e6 with equality.

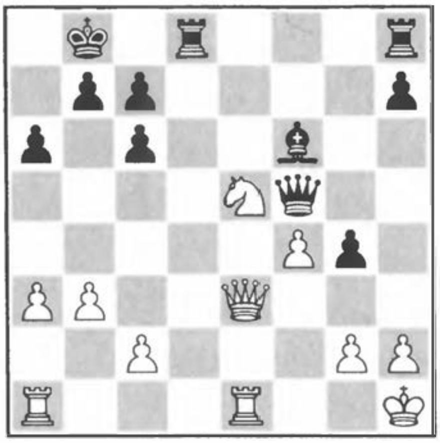
14.♘xe6 ♕xe6 15.♘e2 ♘xe3

Here 15...♗d6!? looks like a good alternative.

16.♕xe3 ♔b8 17.f4 ♗e7

Quite possible is 17...g5!? planning 18.fxg5 h6.

18.♘d4 ♕d7 19.♘f3 f6 20.e5 g5 21.♔h1 21.fxg5 fxg5 22.♘xg5 ♕f5 23.♘f3 ♕xc2∓. **21...g4 22.exf6 ♗xf6 23.♘e5 ♕f5**



Black's chances are to be preferred, Navarro-Radulski, Andorra la Vella 2002.

Variation B3

6.d4

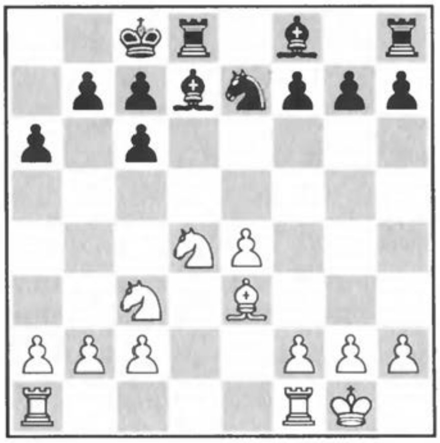
White's most direct move.

6...exd4 7.♕xd4

As usual this type of ending gives White no advantage. However, 7.♘xd4 ♗c4 8.♖e1 c5 9.♘b3 b6 is also OK for Black. The game I.Rogers-Webb, British Team Championship 2003/04, went 9...♕xd1?! 10.♖xd1 ♗xb3?! 11.axb3 ♗d6 12.♘c3 ♘e7 13.♗e3 with a typical plus for White.

7...♕xd4 8.♘xd4 ♗c4!?

Getting the maximum out of 5...♗e6. However, 8...♗d7 is completely healthy, and indeed identical to both 5...♕d6 or 5...♕f6 6.d4 exd4 7.♕xd4 ♕xd4 8.♘xd4 ♗d7. 9.♗e3 0-0-0 10.♘c3 ♘e7



Black is already better as was borne out in practice:

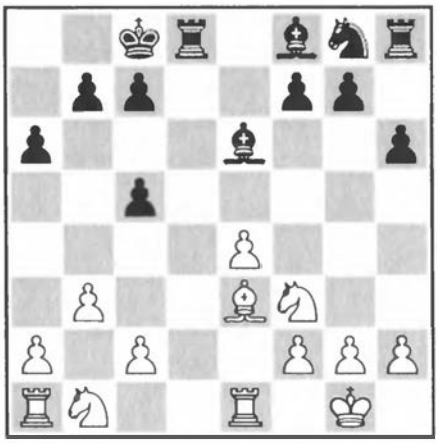
- 11.♖fd1 ♘g6 12.♘b3 ♘e5 13.♗c5 b6 14.♗xf8 ♖hxf8 15.♘d4 c5 16.♘de2 ♘c4∓ Nakamori-Pesantes, Skopje Olympiad 1972.
- 11.♘b3 b6 12.a4 a5 13.♘d4 g6 14.♖ad1 ♗g7 15.b3 h6 16.♖d3 f5 17.f3 ♖hf8 18.♖fd1 fxe4 19.♘xe4 ♘d5 20.♗f2 ♘b4 21.♖3d2 c5 22.♘e2 ♗e6∓ Blaskowski-Timman, Essen 1994. Please note that this was a game from a clock simultaneous.

9.♖e1 0-0-0 10.♗e3 c5

Play was equal in Minet-Dobrev, La Fère 2004, after 10...♗b4!? 11.c3 ♗f8 12.f3 c5 13.♘b3 b6 14.♘1d2 ♗e6 15.f4 ♘f6 16.h3 ♗e7.

11.♘f3 h6 12.b3 ♗e6

Black has a very nice ending here. A healthy bishop pair guarantees good chances to play for a win.



13.c4?!

This weakens the dark squares.

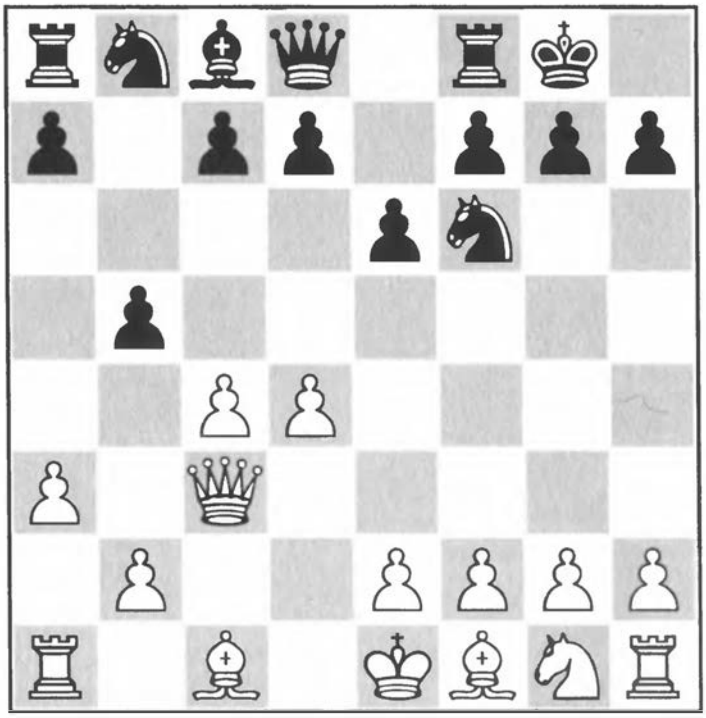
13...♘f6 14.♘c3 ♘g4 15.♗c1 15.♗f4 g5. **15...f6 16.♗b2** 16.h3 ♘e5 17.♘xe5 fxe5 18.♗e3 favours Black, but this was nevertheless the best chance for White. **16...♗d6 17.♖ad1 ♘e5 18.♘xe5 ♗xe5** This ending (with the bishop on e5) is much worse. Black is ready to roll on the queenside. White's pawn majority, on the other hand, is rendered impotent. **19.h3** 19.♗a1. **19...b5 20.♗a1 bxc4 21.bxc4 ♗xc4 22.♘d5** 22.♘a4. **22...♗xd5 23.♗xe5** 23.♖xd5 ♖xd5 24.exd5 ♗xa1 25.♖xa1 ♔d7 is just as lost. **23...♗xe4 24.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 25.♗xf6** 25.♖xe4 ♖d1+ 26.♔h2 fxe5 27.♖xe5 c4 wins. **25...gxf6 26.♖xe4 ♖d1+ 27.♔h2 ♖d4 28.♖e2 ♔d7 29.g4 c4 30.♖c2 ♔d6** White's passive pieces are no match for the well-coordinated Black king, rook and c-pawn. So White resigned, Zamarbide Ibarrea-Radulski, Andorra la Vella 2002.

I hope you will enjoy playing 5...♕e7 or 5...♗e6 in your next game!

CHAPTER 11

Adrian Mikhalchishin & Jeroen Bosch

Nimzo-Indian Vitolinsh Gambit



Let's play ...b5!

One of the most reliable openings for Black is the Nimzo-Indian. Nimzowitsch's concept has a strong positional basis – with Black concentrating on the central squares (e4 and d5). He is ready to give up his bishop for a knight to achieve his aim (and double White's pawns in the process).

What happens if an aggressive tactical player like Alvis Vitolinsh plays the Nimzo-Indian? Does he play like other chess players? Or is he able to make his mark on this solid opening? Clearly, as this is a chapter in an SOS-book, the last question may be answered in the affirmative.

Alvis Vitolinsh was in the habit of playing an early ...b5 in several lines of the Nimzo. In one particular line (4.♕c2 0-0 5.a3 ♗xc3+ 6.♕xc3 b5!?) his idea has stood up to the test.

While this is not the absolute main line against 4.♕c2, his line has been played by such players as: Adams, Nikolic, Adorjan, Iordachescu, and Anand, to name but a few of the grandmasters involved.

This article will provide a theoretical survey of 6...b5, but we will start with a few games from Vitolinsh in other Nimzo-Indian's:

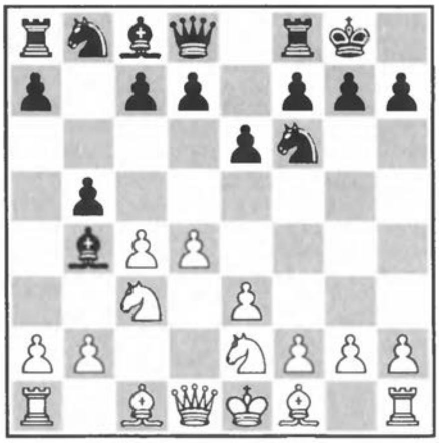
- Agafonov-Vitolinsh, Riga 1980
- Romanishin-Vitolinsh, Riga 1981
- Zagorskis-Vitolinsh, Frunze 1989
- Gavrikov-Vitolinsh, Severodonetsk 1982

☐ **Nikolay Agafonov**
■ **Alvis Vitolinsh**
Riga 1980

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.e3 0-0 5.♘e2

Reshevsky's line which has a solid reputation. Vitolinsh stirs things up by playing 5...b5 – a move that he had also played two years previously against the same opponent (with success).

5...b5!?



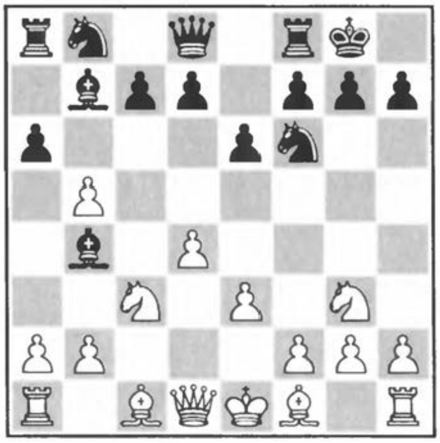
6.cxb5 a6

Mind you, Vitolinsh's ...b5 plan increases Black's control over the e4- and d5-squares albeit at the cost of a pawn.

7.bxa6

Just like in the Volga gambit, White should wonder whether he wants to go all the way – developing Black's bishop in the process. Two years before Agafonov had tried 7.♗d2 ♗b7 8.a3 (8.bxa6 ♘xa6) 8...♗xc3 9.♘xc3 axb5 10.♘xb5 ♘e4 11.♘c3 ♘xd2 12.♕xd2 ♕h4!? (White has lost time, and has difficulty developing his kingside. Vitolinsh has fair compensation for the pawn) 13.h3 d6 14.♖g1!? c5 15.g3 ♕f6 16.♗g2 ♗xg2 17.♖xg2 ♘c6 (clearly, White has problems with his king) 18.dxc5 ♘e5 19.♕e2 ♘f3+ 20.♔f1 dxc5 21.g4 ♘h4 22.g5 ♕e7 23.♖g4 ♘g6 24.♘e4 ♖ab8 25.♖c1 c4 26.f4 ♖fc8 27.♖g2 ♕c7 and now White blundered with 28.b4? ♘xf4! and Black won in Agafonov-Vitolinsh, Riga 1978.

Strongest is 7.♘g3 when after 7...♗b7 (a later try by Vitolinsh was 7...d5 but White has a pleasant and safe edge after 8.♗d2 ♘bd7 9.♗e2 ♗e7 10.a4! axb5 11.axb5 ♗b7 12.0-0 M.Gurevich-Vitolinsh, Jurmala 1985)



practice has seen:

– 8.f3 d5! 9.bxa6 ♗xa6 10.♗xa6 ♖xa6! 11.0-0 c5 (Black has sufficient compensation owing to his superior structure) 12.a3 cxd4! 13.exd4 ♗xc3 14.bxc3 ♘c6 15.f4?! g6 16.f5 exf5 17.♗h6?! ♖e8 18.♕d3 ♕c8 19.c4 dxc4 20.♕xc4 ♘a5 21.♕xc8 ♖xc8 22.♖ac1 ♘c4 23.♖fe1 ♖xa3 and Black converted his extra pawn in V.Sherbakov-Vitolinsh, Beltsy 1979.

– 8.♗d3!? ♗xg2 9.♖g1 ♗b7 10.e4 ♘e8 11.h4 g6!? (Vitolinsh decides to give an exchange) 12.♗h6 ♕xh4 13.♕d2 (13.♖h1) 13...♕f6 14.e5 ♕h4 15.♗xf8 ♗xf8 16.♗e4 d5 17.exd6 ♗xe4 18.♘cxe4 cxd6 19.♖h1 ♕d8 20.bxa6 ♘xa6 21.♔f1 d5 Black has good compensation for the exchange. Vitolinsh later missed a win before the game ended in a draw. Utasi-Vitolinsh, Jurmala 1985.

– 8.♗d2 axb5 (Earlier Vitolinsh had tried 8...♗xc3 9.♗xc3 axb5 10.♗xb5 ♗xg2 11.♖g1 ♗c6 12.♘h5 ♘xh5 13.♕xh5±

Gutman-Vitolinsh, USSR 1979) 9.♘xb5 (9.♗xb5 ♗xg2 10.♖g1 ♗b7) 9...♗e7 10.♘c3 c5 11.dxc5 ♗xc5 12.♖c1 ♘a6 (to keep some play along the diagonal. The alternative is 12...d5) 13.a3 ♗e7 14.b4 ♘c7 15.♕b3 (White is probably a little better. Vitolinsh now uses his h-pawn to good effect) 15...h5! 16.h3 h4 17.♘ge2 e5 18.♘g1 d5 (Black's position is preferable now) 19.♘f3 d4 20.♘b5 and now, instead of 20...dxe3 (Petkevich-Vitolinsh, Riga 1985) 20...♘xb5 21.♗xb5 ♘e4 was stronger, since 22.0-0 fails to 22...♘xd2 23.♘xd2 dxe3 24.♕xe3 ♕d5 with a double attack.

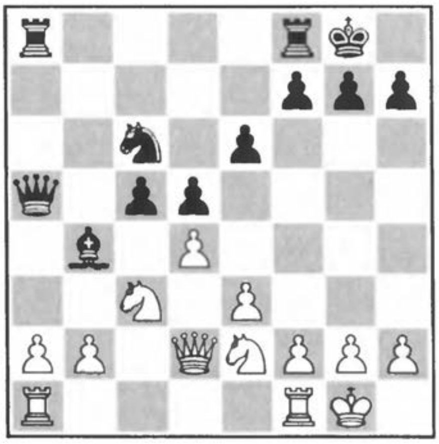
7...♗xa6 8.♘g3

8.♗d2 c5 9.a3 ♗xc3 10.♗xc3 ♘e4 11.dxc5 ♗xe2 12.♗xe2 ♘xc3 13.bxc3 ♕a5 14.0-0 ♕xc5 15.♕d4 ♖c8 16.a4 d5 17.♗b5 is better for White, as Black cannot take on c3 due to his weak back rank. Tverdokhlebov-Vitolinsh, Kaluga 1981.

8...♗xf1 9.♘xf1

White has got rid of the pressure along the diagonal, but this plan takes up a lot of time – see the upcoming manoeuvre ♘g3-e2.

9...c5 10.♘g3 ♕a5 11.♘e2 ♘e4 12.♗d2 ♘xd2 13.♕xd2 d5 14.0-0 ♘c6



15.b3?!

Or 15.a3 cxd4.

15...♖fc8 16.♖fc1 ♖c7?!

Stronger was 16...cxd4 17.exd4 ♗a3.

17.♕d3 17.a3!. **17...♗a3! 18.♖d1 ♗b2 19.♖ab1 ♘b4**

With his active counterplay Black preserves the balance.

20.♕b5 cxd4 21.♖xd4 ♕xb5 22.♘xb5 ♖c2 23.♖xb4 ♖xe2 24.a4 g5?! 25.♘d4

25.h4! was stronger.

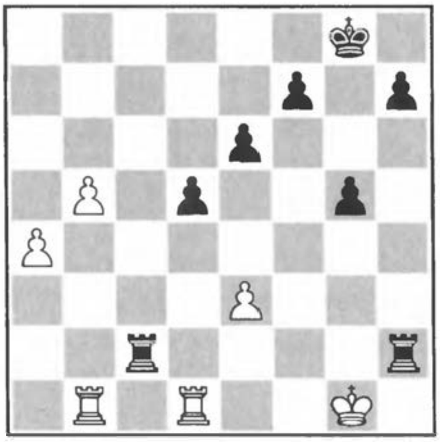
25...♗xd4 26.♖xd4 ♖c8

White has two connected passed pawns, but Black gets active play along the second rank. Good ingredients for an exciting finish in this double rook ending!

27.♖dd1 ♖cc2 28.b4?

This is a (losing) mistake. White must protect f2 with the passive 28.♖f1.

28...♖xf2 29.b5 ♖xg2+ 30.♔h1 ♖xh2+ 31.♔g1



31...♖cg2+

The players – presumably in time trouble – start repeating the moves. Vitolinsh misses the win with the typical method 31...h5! 32.b6 ♔g7 33.b7 and now the pawn drops after (33.a5 is too slow, as 33...♖cg2+ 34.♔f1 h4 mates) 33...♖cg2+ 34.♔f1 ♖d2! 35.♖xd2 ♖h1+ 36.♔e2 ♖xb1–+.

32.♔f1 ♖a2 33.♔g1 ♖hg2+ 34.♔f1?

34.♔h1! and Black must find the win with 34...h5 as indicated above.

34...♖h2

34...♖af2+! 35.♔e1 ♖h2 36.b6 ♖a2 wins on the spot.

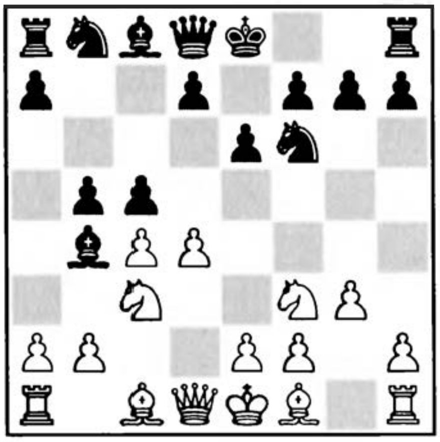
35.♔g1 ♖hg2+ 36.♔h1 ♖h2+ 37.♔g1 ½–½

☐ **Oleg Romanishin**
■ **Alvis Vitolinsh**
Riga 1981

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.g3

Romanishin's own line, which was later developed – with impressive results – by Garry Kasparov.

4...c5 5.♘f3 b5

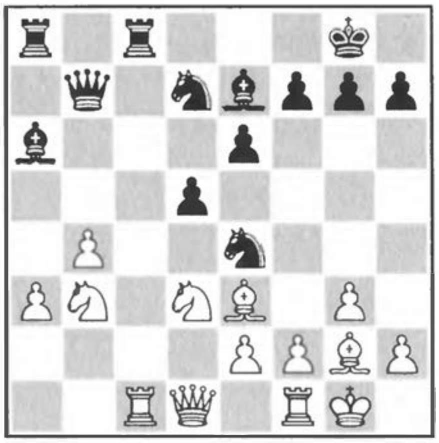


Objectively this cannot be recommended, but it demonstrates Vitolinsh's perseverance in playing this Volga-like plan.

6.cxb5 a6 7.♗g2

Most natural. Surprisingly, Vitolinsh was not deterred by the result of this game. Five years later he repeated his ...b5 experiment in this line. His daring play was rewarded this time, but the final result had nothing to do with the outcome of the opening:

7.dxc5 axb5 8.♗g2 ♗xc5 9.♘e5 d5 10.♞d3 ♗e7 11.♞xb5 ♘e4 (Black has certain compensation for the pawn in the form of his strong centre which restricts the fianchetto bishop) 12.0-0 ♗a6 13.♘d4 0-0 14.♗e3 ♕d7 15.♖c1 ♕b7 16.a3 ♘d7 17.b4 ♖fc8 (with Volga-like compensation for the pawn) 18.♘b3



18...♖xc1?! (18...♘c3! 19.♕d2 ♗f6 gives Black decent play) 19.♕xc1 ♗xd3 20.exd3 ♘d6 21.♘a5 ♕b5 22.♕c7 ♖c8 23.♕a7 ♘f5 24.♖c1! ♖xc1+ 25.♗xc1 ♕xd3 26.♕xd7 ♕d1+ 27.♗f1 ♕xc1 28.♘c6 ♗f8 and now White started to drift with 29.♘e5?! (instead 29.a4 was logical and strong. Black cannot create enough counterplay to stop White from pushing his a-pawn) 29...♘d6 30.♕d8 ♕c8 31.♕xc8 ♘xc8 White's endgame advantage – if it exists at all – is not too impressive. Vitolinsh later won an opposite-coloured bishop ending! Piskov-Vitolinsh, Lvov 1986.

7...0-0 8.0-0 d5 9.bxa6 ♗xa6 10.dxc5 ♗xc3

10...♗xc5 11.a3 and Black has not enough for the pawn.

11.bxc3 ♘e4

Here 11...♕c7 followed by 12...♘bd7 looks better.

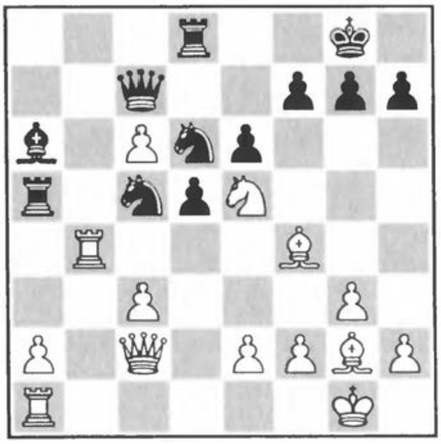
12.♕c2 ♘d7?!

Stronger was 12...♕c7, now White has the annoying:

13.c6! ♘dc5 14.♗e3 ♕c7 15.♘d4 ♗c4

15...e5? 16.♘f5 wins material in view of the threat 17.f3.

16.♖fb1 ♖a6 17.♖b4 ♘d6 18.♘f3 ♖a5 19.♘e5 ♖d8 20.♗f4 ♗a6



21.♖ab1

A pity! Romanishin could have won spectacularly with 21.♘xf7! ♔xf7 (21...♕xf7 22.♗xd6 ♖xd6 23.♖b8++−) 22.♕xh7 and Black has no adequate defence against the threat of 23.♗e5 followed by a switch across the fourth rank. 22...♘ce4 (22...♕xc6 23.♗xd6 ♕xd6 24.♖f4+ ♔e8 25.♕xg7 ♖c8 26.♗f3+−) 23.♗e5 ♖g8 24.♗xe4 dxe4 25.♕h5+ ♔e7 26.♖ab1 planning 27.♖b7. Instead of 21.♘xf7! the move 21.c4 is also strong.

21...f6 22.♘d3 ♘ce4 23.♗e3

The threat of 24.♗b6 forces Black into passivity.

23...♘c8 24.♗xe4 dxe4 25.♘c5 ♕xc6 26.♕xe4 ♕xe4 27.♖xe4 ♖xa2 28.♘xa6

Less clear is 28.♘xe6 ♖e8 29.♘c5 ♖xe4 30.♘xe4 ♗xe2! in view of 31.♖b8?! ♗f3! 32.♖xc8+ ♔f7 33.♖c7+ ♔g6 34.♘d2 ♖a1+ 35.♘f1 ♗e2 and Black regains the piece with clear drawing chances.

28...♖xa6 29.♖b8 ♖c6 30.c4 ♔f7 31.♖b7+ ♘e7 32.c5 e5 33.f4 ♔e6 34.fxe5 ♖d1+ 35.♔g2 fxe5 36.♖a4

White is better, but the win is not elementary. Vitolinsh's next is a blunder.

36...h5? 37.♗g5 ♘c8 38.♖xg7 ♖xc5 39.e4!

Suddenly Black's king is under attack.

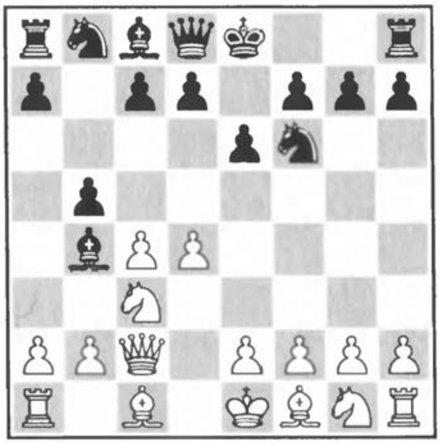
39...♖c2+ 40.♔h3 ♖d6? 41.♖aa7! 1-0

☐ **A. Zagorskis**
■ **Alvis Vitolinsh**
Frunze 1989

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♕c2

The classical variation. You know by now what recipe Vitolinsh has in store:

4...b5!?



It is interesting that this is how Vitolinsh met 4.♕c2 in later years. In 1982 he 'invented' 4...0-0 5.a3 ♗xc3+ 6.♕xc3 b5 (and played it with success against Gavrikov, see the next game) which is by far the most healthy of his ...b5 concepts. Perhaps he simply did not want to play as other people did?

In Mikhalchishin-Vitolinsh, Riga 1975, there followed 4...0-0 5.♘f3 (less popular than 5.a3) 5...b5 6.cxb5 a6 7.e3 ♗b7 8.bxa6 (8.♗d2± I.Sokolov) 8...♘xa6 9.♗e2 c5 10.0-0 cxd4 11.exd4 ♕a5 12.♗d2 ♖fc8 13.a3 ♗xc3 14.bxc3 (14.♗xc3 was not bad at all) 14...♗e4 15.♗d3 ♗xf3 16.gxf3 ♕h5 17.♕d1 e5 18.♖e1 exd4 19.cxd4 ♕d5 20.♗f4 d6 21.♗e4 and White retained the advantage, although the game later ended in a draw.

5.cxb5 a6 6.bxa6

Matsukevich has recommended 6.e3 axb5 (6...♗b7!?) 7.♗xb5 ♗b7 8.♞f3 as slightly better for White. Practice also saw 6.♗d2 ♗b7 7.e3 0-0 8.♘f3 (± according to Ivan

Sokolov) 8...axb5 9.♘xb5 ♘a6 10.♗e2 ♗e4 11.♕d1 c5 12.0-0 cxd4 13.♘fxd4 and there is no compensation for the pawn. Dydyshko-Vitolinsh, Minsk 1988.

6...♗xa6 7.♘f3 0-0 8.g3

More interesting is 8.e4.

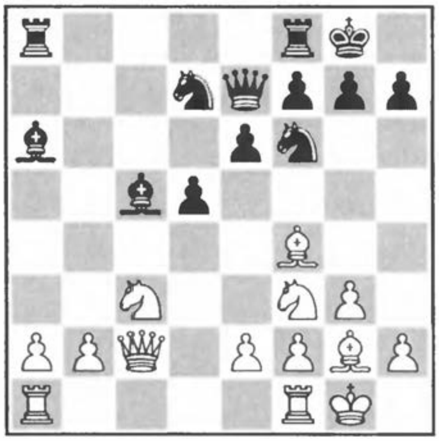
8...d5 9.♗g2

9.e3 should have been considered.

9...♘bd7 10.0-0 c5

Stronger than the earlier effort: 10...♗xc3 11.bxc3 c5 12.♖e1 ♕a5 13.♗d2 ♘e4 14.c4!? ♘xd2 15.♘xd2 cxd4 16.cxd5 ♖fc8 17.♕d1 e5 18.♘b3 ♕c7 19.f4!? with the better game for White. Kakageldiev-Vitolinsh, Kaluga 1981. The actual move order in this game was 4.♕c2 0-0 5.♘f3 b5 6.cxb5 a6 7.bxa6 ♗xa6 and so on.

11.dxc5 ♗xc5 12.♗f4 ♕e7



Black has definite compensation for the pawn.

13.♖ad1 ♖fc8 14.♘e5 ♘b6 15.♘d3 ♗d4

Black has very strong pressure. His game is already preferable.

16.♗d2 ♘e4 17.♗e1 ♘a4?

This gives White a (tactical) chance to come back into the game. Correct was 17...♘xc3 18.♗xc3 (18.bxc3 ♗f6 is also better for Black) 18...♗xc3 19.bxc3 ♕f6 and only Black can win. Or even 19...♘a4 20.♕xa4 ♗xd3 21.♕g4 ♗c2.

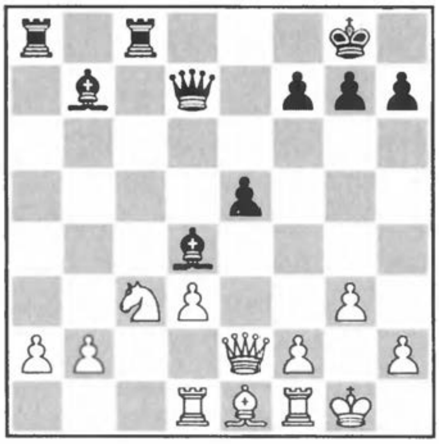
18.♗xe4

Much better was 18.♘xd5 exd5 19.♕xa4 ♗xd3 20.♕xd4 ♗xe2 21.♗b4.

18...dxe4 19.♕xa4? 19.♘f4! **19...exd3 20.exd3**

The alternatives are 20.♕xd4 dxe2 21.♘xe2 ♗xe2 22.♗c3 ♕g5 and 20.♖xd3 ♗c4! 21.♕d1 ♗xd3 22.♕xd3 ♖d8.

20...e5 21.♕c2 ♗b7 22.♕e2 ♕d7



White will be killed along the main diagonal.

23.♘e4 f5

and White resigned.

☐ **Viktor Gavrikov**
■ **Alvis Vitolinsh**
Severodonetsk 1982

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♕c2 0-0 5.a3 ♗xc3+ 6.♕xc3 b5!?

Objectively the best application of any of the ...b5 ideas by the Latvian genius. Black's main concept is the break-up of White's centre, control of the light squares d5 and c4, plus the acceleration of his own development. Perhaps the pawn sacrifice looks less convincing than, say, in the Volga/Benko Gambit. However, of primary importance here is the change in the course of the play, which is rather uncomfortable for White.

7.cxb5

It is also possible to decline the gambit, but usually the exchange of the b-pawn for the more central c4-pawn is theoretically more advantageous to Black.

Here are some examples.

– 7.e3 bxc4 8.♗xc4 a5 9.♘e2 ♗a6! 10.♕xa5 c5! 11.♕xd8 ♖xd8 12.♗xa6 ♘xa6 13.♖b1 ♖db8 with pressure for the pawn, Barsov-Moreno, Calvia Olympiad 2004.

– 7.♕f3 ♘c6! 8.cxb5 ♘xd4 9.♕d3 c5 10.e3 ♘f5 11.e4 ♘d4 12.e5 ♘d5 13.♘f3 ♘xf3+ 14.♕xf3 ♗b7 15.♕g3 f5! with an excellent game, Forintos-Zsinka, Budapest 1993.

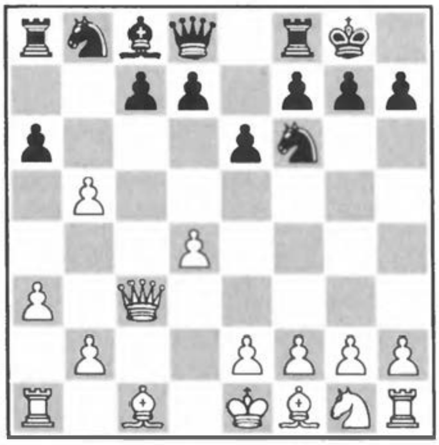
– 7.c5 ♘d5 (7...♗b7 is also possible) 8.♕c2 ♗b7 (8...f5!?) 9.♘h3 (9.e4 is nevertheless stronger) 9...f5 10.f3 ♕h4+ 11.g3 ♕e7 12.♗g2 ♘f6 13.0-0♘c6 14.e3d6 15.♕b3a6 16.cxd6 cxd6 17.♘f4 ♘d8 18.♗d2 g5 with a complicated game, Schandorff-Sammalvuo, Copenhagen 1998.

7...a6

This is Vitolinsh's favourite method.

Less good is 7...♘d5 8.♕c2 f5 9.♘f3 c6 10.a4 ♗b7 11.e3 cxb5 12.♗xb5 ♖f6 13.0-0 ♖g6 14.♗e2 ♘c6 15.♗d2 ♕f6 16.♖fc1 ♖f8 17.♕b3 ♗a8 18.♕a3! ♕f7 19.b4 and Black's attack has not got going, whereas White is still a pawn up, Gelfand-Adams, Palma de Mallorca 1989.

The main line nowadays is 7...c6, which we will investigate in a theoretical survey below.



8.e3

It also makes sense to develop the bishop outside the pawn chain with 8.♗g5.

8...d6!?

As we have seen Vitolinsh usually played 8...axb5 in such positions.

9.♘f3 ♗b7 10.bxa6

White takes on a6 now that Black has developed his bishop to b7.

10...♘xa6 11.♗e2 c5

As in all these ...b5 lines one of the main arguments in favour for Black is his dominance in the centre.

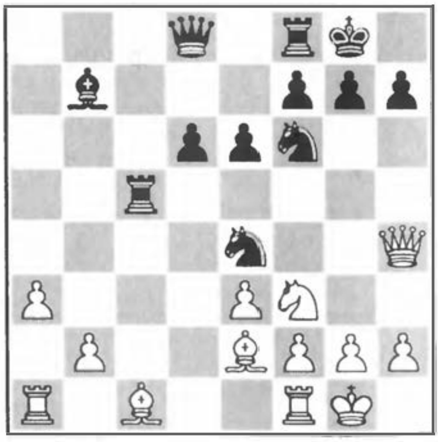
12.0-0 ♖c8

Black has completed his development, and is not doing so badly.

13.♗d2 cxd4 14.♕xd4 ♘c5 15.♕h4?!

The queen is misplaced here, but is takes a wonderfully creative manoeuvre to demonstrate this. Stronger is 15.♖ad1.

15...♘ce4 16.♗c1?! ♖c5!



A fantastic move – preparing (out of nothing) the attack that follows in the game.

17.♘d4 g5! 18.♕h3 g4

Absolutely forcing White to open the g-file.

19.♗xg4 ♘xg4 20.♕xg4+ ♖g5 21.♕h3 ♔h8

To double rooks after which all of Black's pieces will contribute to the kingside attack. Note that the balance has not yet been upset.

22.f3 ♖fg8 23.g4?

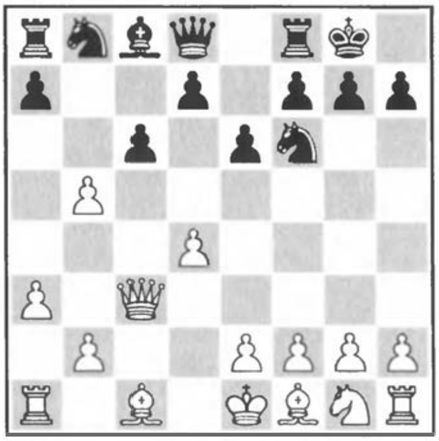
White should have resigned himself to 23.fxe4 ♖xg2+ 24.♕xg2 ♖xg2+ 25.♔xg2 ♕g5+ 26.♔f2 ♕h4+ and since White cannot flee with 27.♔e2 the game ends in a perpetual.

23...♖5g6! 24.♕h5 ♘f6 25.♕b5 ♘xg4! 26.fxg4 ♕h4

White resigned, mate cannot be avoided. A wonderful game by Vitolinsh.

By now you should be fully inspired by Vitolinsh's play. We will now investigate the theoretical consequences of his 6...b5!? against the Classical Variation of the Nimzo-Indian.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♕c2 0-0 5.a3 ♗xc3+ 6.♕xc3 b5 7.cxb5 c6



The lines now fork:

A) 8.e3
B) 8.a4
C) 8.bxc6
D) 8.♗g5
E) 8.f3

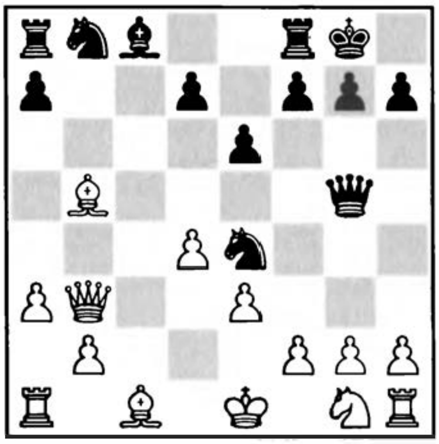
Variation A

8.e3 cxb5 9.♗xb5 ♘e4 10.♕b3

After 10.♕d3 ♘d6 11.♘e2 ♗b7 12.♘c3 ♕g5 13.♖g1 ♖c8 14.♗a4 ♕h4 15.h3 a5! 16.♕e2 ♘c6 17.♕g4 ♕e7 the game is unclear, Shipov-Rashkovsky, Moscow 2002.

10...♕g5

Another possibility is 10...♗a6 11.♕a4 ♕g5 12.♗f1 ♗xf1 13.♔xf1 ♘c6 14.f3 ♘d6 15.♘e2 ♖ab8 16.e4 ♕e7 17.h4 f5 and the weakening of White's king position gives Black good chances, Vladimirov-Dizdar, Abu Dhabi 2001.



11.♗f1 ♘c6 12.♕c2

Or 12.♘f3 ♕g6 13.g3 ♖b8 14.♕d3 ♕f5! 15.♗e2 ♖b6! 16.0-0 ♗a6 17.♕d1 ♗xe2 18.♕xe2 ♖c8 19.♘e1 ♘a5 and Black has excellent compensation for the pawn, Baburin-Adams, Kilkenny 1999.

12...f5 13.♘h3 ♕d8 14.b4 ♗b7 15.f3 ♖c8! 16.♕b2 ♘f6 17.♗d3 ♕b6 18.0-0 ♗a6

and Black has gained compensation for the pawn, Van Wely-Nikolic, Wijk aan Zee 2000.

Variation B

8.a4 a6

Interesting is 8...♗b7!?.

9.bxa6

After 9.♗g5 axb5 10.a5 ♞a6 11.♘f3 c5! 12.dxc5 ♘e4 13.♗xd8 ♞xc3 14.♗b6 ♘a4 15.e3 ♘6xc5 16.♗xc5 ♘xc5 17.b4 ♘a6 18.♖b1 ♗b7 the game is equal, Anastasian-Dizdar, Gothenburg 2005.

9...♘e4

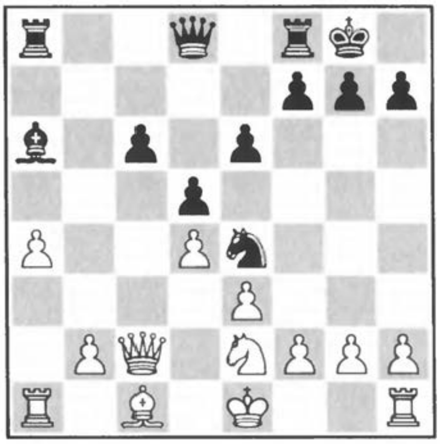
9...♘xa6 10.♗g5 h6 11.♗xf6 ♕xf6 12.♘f3

c5 13.e3 ♗b7 with compensation, Granda-A.Rodriguez, Villa Martelli 2005.

10.♕c2 d5 11.e3 ♘xa6 12.♗xa6

If 12.♗d2, then 12...c5! is strong.

12...♗xa6 13.♘e2



13...c5! 14.dxc5 ♕a5+ 15.♗d2 ♘xd2 16.♕xd2 ♕xc5 17.0-0

and here in the game Van Wely-Iordachescu, Silivri 2003, Black would have done best to fight for a draw by 17...♗xe2 18.♕xe2 ♕b4.

Variation C

8.bxc6 ♘xc6 9.b4!?

Practice has also seen:

– 9.♗g5 ♗b7 10.♘f3 ♖c8 11.♕d3 ♕b6! 12.♗xf6 gxf6 13.e3 ♕xb2! 14.♖b1 ♕a2 15.♘d2 (15.♖xb7 ♘b4! intending 16...♖c1) 15...♘a5 16.♕b5 Forintos-Dizdar, London 1983, and now strongest is 16...♖c2 17.♗d3 ♖xd2 18.♗xh7+ ♔g7.

– 9.♘f3 ♗a6!? 10.♗g5 h6 11.♗xf6 ♕xf6 12.e3 ♗xf1 13.♔xf1 ♖fc8 14.♕d2 e5 15.d5 ♘e7 16.e4 ♖c4 17.♕e2 ♖ac8 with quite good compensation, M.Bensdorp-Van Eijk, Dieren 2003.

– 9.e3 ♗b7 10.b3 ♖c8 11.♕b2 ♕b6 12.♘f3 ♘a5 13.♘d2 ♞e4 14.♘c4 ♖xc4! 15.♗xc4 d5 16.♗d3 ♘xb3!, Elbilia-Ashley, Bermuda 1999, and now if 17.♖b1 there is 17...♕a5+ 18.♔f1 ♘xc1 19.♕xc1.

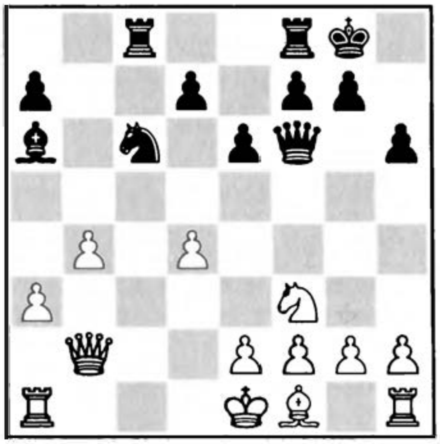
9...♗a6!

Weaker is 9...♗b7 10.♘f3 ♖c8 11.♕b2 ♘e7 12.e3 ♗e4 13.♗d2 ♕b6 14.♘e5 ♖c2 15.♕b3 ♖fc8, Kouatly-Stangl, Augsburg 1988, and here 16.♘c4! gives White an advantage.

10.♗g5

After 10.e3 ♗xf1 11.♔xf1 ♖c8 Black has a lead in development.

10...h6 11.♗xf6 ♕xf6 12.♘f3 ♖ac8 13.♕b2



13...♖c7! 14.e3

After 14.b5 ♗xb5 15.♕xb5 ♘xd4 Black has a strong attack.

14...♗xf1 15.♔xf1 ♖fc8 16.♔e2

If 16.♖c1 there is 16...♕g6!.

16...♘a5 17.♖hc1 ♘c4 18.♕c3

If 18.♕b3, then 18... e5! is strong.

18...e5 19.♕d3

After 19.dxe5 ♘xe5 20.♕b2! the game is equal.

19...d6 20.♘d2

After 20.d5 ♘b2 21.♖xc7 ♖xc7 22.♕d2 ♕g6! Black has threats.

20...♘xd2 21.♕xd2 exd4 22.exd4 ♖xc1 23.♖xc1 ♖xc1 24.♕xc1 ♕xd4 25.♕c8+ ♔h7 26.♕f5+ ♔g8

Draw, Polugaevsky-Dzindzichashvili, Reykjavik 1990.

Variation D

8.♗g5 cxb5 9.e3 ♗b7 10.f3

This gives slightly more chances than

10.♘f3, after which Black can attack either bishop with satisfactory play:

– 10...h6 11.♗h4 (or 11.♗xf6 ♕xf6 12.♖c1 ♘a6! 13.♗xb5 ♖ac8 14.♕d2 ♕g6 15.♗e2 ♖xc1+ 16.♕xc1 ♖c8 with an excellent game, Olafsson-Seirawan, Reykjavik 1990) 11...g5 12.♗g3 ♘e4 13.♕c7 ♕xc7 14.♗xc7 ♖c8 15.♗xb8 ♖axb8 and Black has a quite splendid endgame, Zaiats-N.Kosintseva, Samara 2005.

– 10...a6 11.♗e2 ♘c6 12.0-0 ♘e4 13.♕xc6 ♗xc6 14.♗xd8 ♖fxd8 and White has altogether no chance of an advantage, Bareev-Anand, Monaco blindfold 2005.

10...a6

Also good is 10...h6 11.♗xf6 ♕xf6 12.♘h3 ♖c8 13.♕d2 a6 14.♗d3 d6 15.0-0 ♘d7 16.♖ad1, Kramnik-Adams, Dortmund 1998, and after 16...♕e7 or 16...♘b6 Black has nothing to fear.

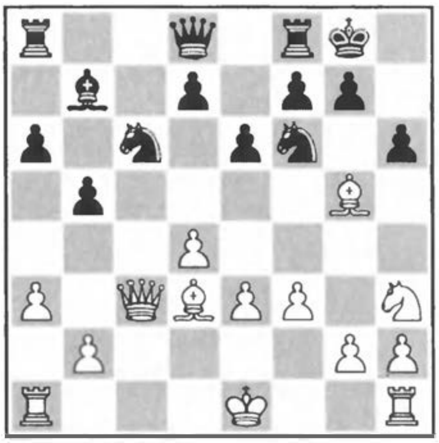
11.♗d3

But not 11.♗xf6 ♕xf6 12.♕c7 ♕d8! 13.♕xb7 ♘c6 14.♗xb5 ♕a5+ 15.♔f1 ♖a7 16.b4 ♕xb5+ and Black is better.

11...♘c6 12.♘h3

The other knight route 12.♘e2 h6 13.♗h4 ♖c8 14.0-0! ♘e5 15.♕d2 ♘c4 also gives White nothing.

12...h6



13.♗xf6

After 13.♗h4 ♘d5! 14.♗xd8 ♘xc3 15.♗h4 ♘d5 16.e4 ♘b6 17.♗f2 d5! 18.e5 b4! Black has an excellent game.

13...♕xf6 14.0-0 ♖ac8 15.♕d2 e5! 16.d5

16.dxe5 ♘xe5 17.♘f4 d5! 18.♖ac1 ♘c4 19.♗xc4 dxc4 is somewhat better for Black.

16...♘e7

16...♘b8!?.

17.e4

Or 17.d6 ♘g6 18.♗e4 ♗xe4 19.fxe4 ♕e6!.

17...♕b6+ 18.♕f2

If 18.♔h1, then 18... f5! is strong.

18...♕d6!

The endgame would favour White.

19.♖ac1 f5 20.♕e3

Or 20.♕a7 ♖c7!.

20...♖xc1 21.♖xc1 fxe4 22.fxe4 ♖c8 23.♘f2 b4?!

23...♖xc1+!? 24.♕xc1 ♕b6! with equal play was somewhat more accurate.

24.♖xc8+

24.♗e2!.

24...♘xc8 25.♗f1 bxa3 26.bxa3 ♕b6 27.♕xb6 ♘xb6 28.♘d3 d6 29.♘b2

Unclear is 29.♘b4 a5 30.♘c6 ♗xc6 31.dxc6 ♔f7.

29...♔f7 30.♔f2 ♔e7 31.♔e3 ♔d8 32.♔d2 ♔c7 33.♔e3

Draw, Morovic-Iordachescu, Tripoli 2004.

Variation E

8.f3!

Obviously best – White tries to set up a strong centre and is not interested in material. In the event of 8...cxb5 9.e4 a6 10.♗d3 (or 10.♗e3!?) 10...♘c6 11.♘e2 ♗b7 12.♗c2!? (also good is 12.b3 ♖c8 13.♕b2 with advantage to White) 12...d6. Golod now recommends 13.♗e3 which retains an advantage.

8...♘d5

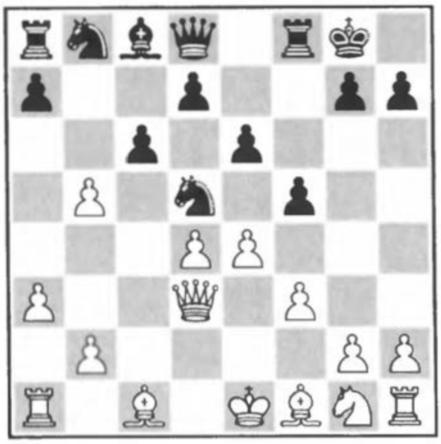
Evidently the right continuation. Black does not have to fear 9.♕d2 f5 10.♘h3 (or 10.e3 cxb5 11.♗xb5 ♘xe3!∓) 10...cxb5 11.e3 (11.e4 fxe4 12.fxe4 ♘f6 13.♗d3 ♗b7 with counterplay) 11...♘c6! 12.♗xb5 ♘a5 13.♕d3 ♖b8 14.b4 ♖xb5! 15.bxa5 ♗a6 with an excellent game for Black – or 15.♕xb5 ♘b3 16.♖b1 ♕h4+ 17.♘f2 ♘xc1 18.♖xc1 ♘xe3.

9.♕d3 f5!?

Play is very sharp after 9...cxb5 10.e4 ♘e7 (weaker is 10...♘b6 11.♘h3±, or 10...♘c7 11.♘h3±) 11.♘h3 ♘bc6 12.♗e3 d5 13.♖d1 e5!.

10.e4

First 10.♘h3 cxb5 11.e4 is also interesting.



10...♘b6

Interesting is 10...♘c7 11.♘h3 ♘xb5 12.♗e3 ♗a6 13.♕c2 Kiriakov-Wells, Hastings 2001/02, and here 13...♕a5+ 14.♕d2 ♕xd2+ 15.♔xd2 fxe4 16.fxe4 ♘d6 17.♗d3 when White is slightly better.

11.exf5

Black was all right after 11.♘h3 cxb5 12.♗g5 ♕e8 13.♗f4! d5! 14.exf5 ♘c6! 15.♕e3 e5! Bu-Motylev, Moscow 2004. Or 15...♘c4! 16.♗xc4 bxc4 with equality.

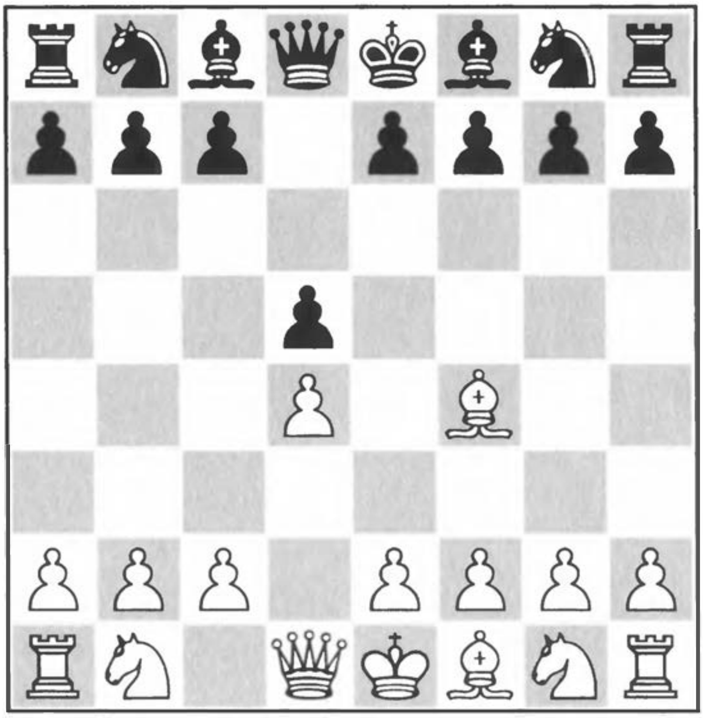
11...♖xf5 12.♕e4 cxb5 13.♗d3 ♘d5 14.♕g4 ♖f8 15.♗h6 ♖f7 16.♗g5 ♕a5+ 17.♗d2 ♕b6 18.♕h4 h6 19.♘e2

With somewhat the better game, Miles-D.Gurevich, New York 1989.

CHAPTER 12

Mark van der Werf

Bishop First: 1.d4 d5 2.♗f4



The Improved London System

The London System, characterized by the moves d4. ♘f3 and ♗f4 is generally known as a solid choice for White. It is possible against virtually every Black set-up. It is therefore popular among players who do not want to spend much time on opening preparation.

Recently an aggressive variation of the London System has come into focus against 1...d5. In this variation White delays the development of the king's knight and plays 2.♗f4, which has some advantages compared to 2.♘f3.

1. White can move his queen into an attacking position on the kingside more easily.
2. After swapping the dark-squared bishops White can gain space with f4 directly.
3. White can react more adequately to an early queenside initiative by Black, which involves ...♕b6 in combination with ...c6 or ...c5.

In the past the Croatian grandmaster Vlatko Kovacevic has played the London System consistently with lots of success. In 2005 he wrote a comprehensive book about the London System together with Norwegian Sverre Johnsen. Grandmasters Luc Winants and Jonathan Rowson are currently making many interesting contributions to the theory of 2.♗f4. Their games show that the London System often leads to adventurous positions in which both White and Black can have their share of fun.

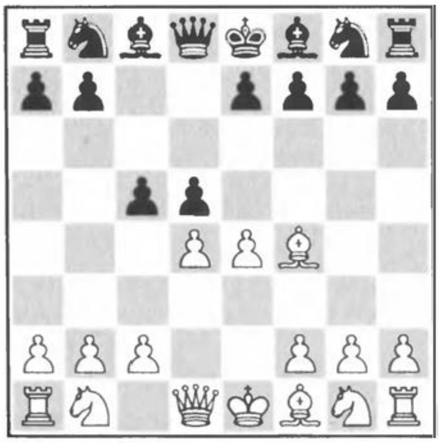
This chapter is divided into three sections which contain one or more illustrative games. In Section I Black reacts with ...c5 and tries to attack White's queenside, which is deserted by the bishop. Section II deals with the Slav set-up by Black with ...c6. Finally, in Section III Black plays an early ...e6 leading to a classical Queen's Gambit set-up.

I. Black plays ...c5

An early 2...c5 is the most critical reply by Black. White can react with the solid 3.e3 or sacrifice a pawn with 3.e4 to go into an Albin Counter-Gambit with an extra tempo. We will start with the latter and see some wild and unusual positions.

☐ **Luke McShane**
■ **Miguel Illescas Cordoba**
Gothenburg 2005

1.d4 d5 2.♗f4 c5 3.e4



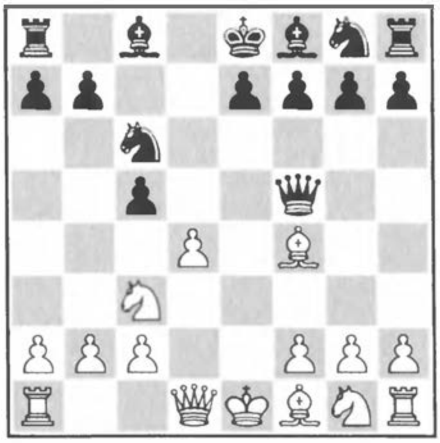
3...dxe4

If Black does not want to get involved in an Albin Counter-Gambit with a tempo less, he has some alternatives:

– 3...cxd4 4.♕xd4 ♘c6 5.♕xd5 ♕xd5 6.exd5 ♘b4 is not an equalizer after 7.♘a3 ♘xd5 8.0-0-0! e6 9.♗b5+ ♔e7 10.♗g3.

– With 3...♘f6 Black can get a solid position as long as he answers 4.e5 with 4...♘fd7 (but not 4...♘g8 5.dxc5 e6 6.♘d2 ♗xc5 7.♘b3 ♗b6 8.♕g4 which gave White a pleasant advantage in the game Laurent-Savchenko, Metz 2005). White's only try for the initiative would be 5.e6 fxe6 6.♘f3 but I don't think he will have enough compensation. Instead of 4.e5 White can also play 4.♘c3 which is more in the spirit of the variation. After 4...♘xe4 5.♘xe4 dxe4 6.dxc5 a sharp position arises with chances for both sides.

– Another way to meet 3.e4 is 3...♘c6. The classic example is the correspondence game Bischoff-Estes from 1945 which continued with 4.♘c3 cxd4 5.exd5 dxc3 6.dxc6 ♕a5? (much better is 6...♕xd1+ 7.♖xd1 bxc6 and Black is in good shape. He can counter the naive looking 8.♗c7 with 8...e6 9.bxc3 ♗e7 and after completing his development, Black has a superior pawn structure) 7.b4 ♕xb4 8.♕d5 ♗e6 9.♕f3 0-0-0 10.cxb7+ and Black resigned because of 10...♕xb7 11.♗a6. Because 4.♘c3 does not lead to advantage, White tried 4.exd5 ♕xd5 5.♘c3 in the game Rowson-Stojanovic, Verona 2006, when 5...♕f5



– 6.♕d2? led to trouble after 6...cxd4 7.♘b5 e5 8.♘c7+ ♔d8 9.♘xa8 exf4 10.0-0-0 ♗e6 because ♘a8 is doomed.

– The game Winants-Van der Werf, Netherlands tt 2005/06, featured the better try 6.♗e3 cxd4 7.♘b5 ♗d7 8.♘xd4 but Black should have gotten an equal position with 8...♕a5+ instead of 8...♘xd4.

– White's best move is probably 6.♗g3!. He has enough compensation after 6...♘xd4 (or 6...♕e6+ 7.♘ge2 ♘xd4 8.♕d2 g6 9.0-0-0 ♗h6 10.♗f4) 7.♗d3 ♕e6+ 8.♘ge2.

4.d5 ♘f6

4...♕b6 is a forcing alternative, but it is risky and probably unwise to go after b2 if you are already a centre pawn up. After 5.♘c3 ♕xb2 6.♗b5+ ♗d7 7.♗xd7+ ♘xd7 8.♘ge2 ♕b6 9.0-0 White's compensation is obvious.

5.♘c3 a6

This move is popular among grandmasters, probably because they don't want to be disturbed by ♘b5. However, the alternative 5...g6 looks healthy enough. After 6.♕d2 (6.♘b5!? ♘a6 7.d6 ♗g4 8.f3 exf3 9.gxf3 led to victory in an antique simultaneous exhibition game by Spielmann, but should be unsuccessful after 9...♗e6 10.♕d2 ♗g7. Instead of 8.f3 White can improve with 8.♗e2 after which he has compensation) 6...♗g7 7.0-0-00-0 8.♗h6 and White has some typical 'Albin' compensation for the pawn. Also 8.f3 exf3 9.♘xf3 gives White compensation.

6.♕e2

Again the most popular move. The natural alternative to prevent b5 is 6.a4 which leads to positions where White can claim compensation, for instance: 6...g6 7.♗c4 ♗g7 8.♘ge2 (better than 8.f3 ♕b6! 9.♖b1 ♕b4 and Black has a pawn plus the initiative) 8...0-0 9.0-0 ♘bd7 10.♘g3 ♘b6 11.♗a2 c4 12.d6. Note that square a2 is available for the bishop because of the a6-a4-intermezzo.

6...g6

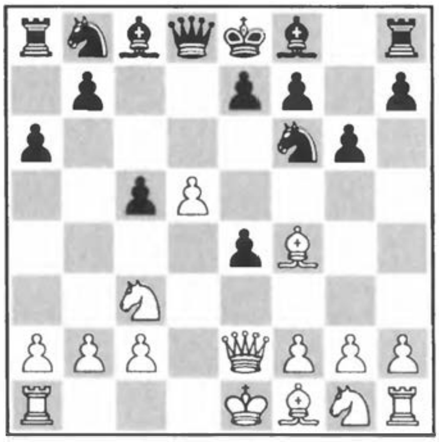
In this game Black uses a logical developing scheme. Inferior alternatives are:

– 6...♗f5 7.0-0-0 ♘bd7 8.h3 ♕b6 9.g4 ♗g6 10.f3 e5 11.dxe6 fxe6 12.fxe4 e5 13.♗h2 and White won quite easily in Winants-Korneev, Warsaw Ech 2005.

– 6...e6 7.0-0-0 ♕a5 which was played a few days later by Tregubov against Winants and Black gained a slight advantage after 8.d6?! (better is 8.f3 ♗e7 9.fxe4 0-0 10.♘f3 with some advantage for White) 8...♘c6 9.♔b1 e5 10.♗d2 ♘d4 11.♕e1 ♕b6 12.♗g5 ♗e6 13.♗xf6 gxf6 14.♘xe4.

– 6...♗g4, a strange move which was played in Goossens-Purnama, Barcelona 2005. White should have reacted with 7.f3 exf3 8.gxf3 ♗f5 9.0-0-0 g6 10.♘e4! with advantage for White.

– 6...♘xd5 7.0-0-0 e6 8.♕xe4, which is probably the worst possibility. After for example 8...♗e7 9.♘xd5 exd5 10.♖xd5 ♕a5 11.♗c4 ♗e6 12.♖e5 ♘c6 13.♖xe6 fxe6 14.♕xe6 White has a more than pleasant initiative.



7.0-0-0 ♗g7 8.♘xe4 ♘xe4 9.♕xe4 0-0 10.♗c4?!

White is forced to take this one back soon.

10...♗f5

The immediate 10...b5 11.d6 ♖a7 12.♗g5 gives White some advantage.

11.♕f3 b5 12.♗f1

Now 12.d6 is no good, because after 12...bxc4 13.♕xa8 ♕b6 14.c3 ♘c6 Black wins the White queen. White seems to be in trouble. After 12.♗d3 ♗xd3 13.♕xd3 ♕a5

14.a3 ♘d7 Black has attacking chances, but it might be better than the game.

12...♕a5 13.g4

Forced, because 13.♚b1 ♕b4 14.b3 c4 give Black a strong attack.

13...♕xa2

Spectacular but unnecessary. 13...♗c8! is a nice echo of 12.♗f1 and looks powerful after 14.a3 ♗b7 15.♗g2 ♘d7 followed by ♘b6-c4.

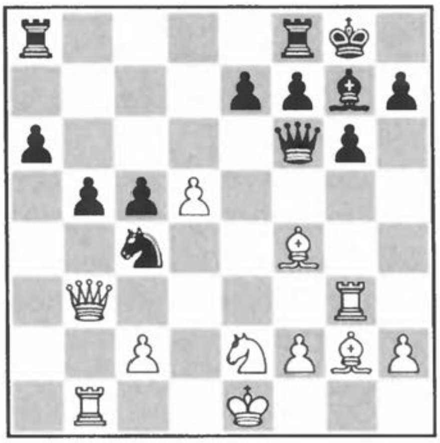
14.gxf5 ♕xb2+ 15.♔d2 ♘d7

After 15...♕b4+ 16.♔e2 Black can force a draw with ♕c4+ or play for a win with 16...a5.

16.♘e2 ♘b6 17.♕b3 ♕f6

17...♘xd5 18.♕xb2 ♗xb2 19.fxg6 hxg6 looks like a better option. Now White gradually improves his position.

18.♔e1 ♕xf5 19.♗h3 ♕f6 20.♖g1 ♘c4 21.♖g3 ♘b2 22.♖b1 ♘c4 23.♖d1 ♘b2 24.♖b1 ♘c4 25.♗g2



That is a bold decision. White refuses a draw by repetition and is soon rewarded for his courage.

25...♖ad8 26.h4 h6 27.h5 g5?

Necessary was 27...e6 to create some space for the queen. Now Black loses the exchange by force.

28.♝c7 ♖d6

28...♖de8 29.♖f3 traps the queen!

29.♗xd6 exd6 30.♕f3 ♕d8 31.♕f5 ♖e8 32.♗e4 ♔f8 33.♖f3 ♕a5+ 34.c3 ♘e5 35.♖e3 ♘c4 36.♖f3 ♘e5 37.♖g3 ♕a2 38.f4

The decisive breakthrough.

38...gxf4 39.♕xf4 ♕c4 40.♔f2 ♘d7 41.♖xg7 ♔xg7 42.♖g1+

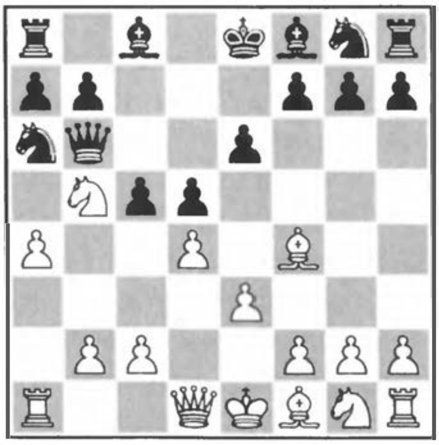
Black gets mated.

As mentioned earlier, White does not have to go into these kinds of complications. Instead he can play 3.e3, after which Black's main reactions are 3...♕b6, 3...♘c6 and 3...♘f6. The next game features ...♘c6 and is another example of the sharp positions that the Improved London System can produce.

☐ **Anthony Miles**
■ **Ara Minasian**
Ohrid 2001

1.d4 d5 2.♗f4 c5 3.e3 ♘c6

3...♕b6 is the most aggressive approach, because White does not have ♕b3 at his disposal. But he has an interesting option, which is also possible in other variations, if White does not play an early c3. 4.♘c3 e6 5.♘b5 ♘a6 6.a4.



It will be difficult for Black to activate his queenside from this position. In the game Polyakova-Kachkina, Protvino 2001, Black used the most direct method, but was unsuccessful: 6...c4 7.c3 ♗d7 (temporarily winning a pawn, but White will regain it easily) 8.b3 ♗xb5 9.axb5 ♕xb5 10.bxc4 dxc4 11.♕a4 ♕xa4 12.♖xa4 ♘f6 13.♗xc4 ♘d5 14.♗xd5 exd5 15.♘f3 and White kept the queenside under pressure with ♔d2 and ♖b1.

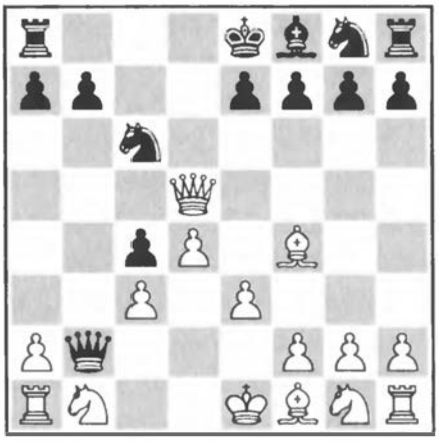
4.c3 ♕b6 5.♕b3 c4 6.♕c2 ♗f5

With knights on f3 and f6 this is a strong move, but now it is dubious, because pawn d5 drops off.

7.♕xf5!

7.♕c1 ♘f6 8.♘d2 e6 9.♘gf3 is not the way to get an opening advantage.

7...♕xb2 8.♕xd5



8...♕c1+

Critical is 8...♕xa1 because White's king is much worse on e1. After 9.♕b5 a6 (after 9...0-0-0 10.♗xc4 e5 11.♘e2 exf4 12.0-0 Black's queen will drop off) 10.♕xb7 ♘d8 11.♕e4! (11.♕xa8 ♕xb1+ 12.♔e2 e5 13.♗xe5 ♕d3+ 14.♔f3 ♕xf1 15.♗c7 ♗e7 16.♗xd8 ♗xd8 17.♕c6+ is only a draw) 11...♖c8 (11...♕b2 12.♗xc4 ♕c1+ 13.♔e2 also favours White) 12.♕c2 ♘f6 13.♘f3 ♘d5 14.♘d2 followed by ♗xc4 and 0-0, after which White has an overwhelming advantage. He already has two pawns for the exchange and Black's queen is still in trouble.

9.♔e2 ♕b2+ 10.♔f3 ♘f6

10...♕xa1 11.♗xc4 e6 12.♕b5 0-0-0 13.♘e2 does not help either.

11.♕xc4 ♕xa1 12.♕b3 0-0-0 13.♗b5

White is going to play ♘e2, ♖c1 and ♘d2. Therefore Black tries to confuse matters, but Miles decides the game quickly.

13...♘a5 14.♕c2 a6 15.♗d3 e5 16.♗xe5 ♘d7 17.♗f4 ♗e7 18.♘h3 g5 19.♘xg5 1-0

In the following game Black combines ...c5 with ...♘f6 and ...♘c6. It results in a much quieter game and may be Black's safest method.

☐ **Witalis Sapis**
■ **Oleg Korneev**
Cappelle la Grande 2004

1.d4 d5 2.♗f4 c5

Note that 2...♘f6 3.e3 c5 4.c3 ♘c6 is a more forcing move order which rules out 3.e4

3.e3 ♘c6 4.c3

The alternative 4.♘f3 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♗g4 6.♗e2 e6 7.0-0 ♗e7 8.h3 ♗h5 9.♘e5 ♗xe2 10.♕xe2 gave equal play in the game V. Kovacevic-Doric, Rabac 2004.

Note that in this chapter I will concentrate on postponing ♘f3 for as long as possible for the reasons outlined above.

4...♘f6 5.♘d2

After 5.♘f3 ♕b6 6.♕b3 c4 7.♕c2 ♗f5 Black already is slightly better due to his space advantage.

5...♗f5

Black immediately occupies the important b1–h7 diagonal. The text move looks better than the alternatives 5...♕b6 6.♕b3 c4 7.♕c2 g6 8.e4 and 5...cxd4 6.exd4 ♗f5 7.♕b3 ♕c8 8.♘gf3 e6 9.♗e2. In both cases the game is fairly equal but somehow White's position seems easier to play.

6.♘gf3

6.♕b3 invites Black to play on the queenside. The position after 6...♕c8 7.♘gf3 c4 8.♕d1 h6 is still equal however.

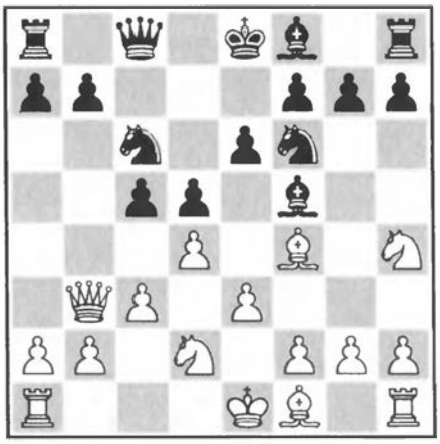
6...e6

Perhaps White can claim a small advantage after 6...♕b6 7.♘h4 ♗d7 8.♕b3 intending 8...c4 9.♕c2.

7.♕b3 ♕c8

7...♕b6 8.♕xb6 axb6 9.♗b5 ♘d7 10.0-0 is a little better for White, because Black's queenside pawns are potential weaknesses.

8.♘h4



8...♗e4 9.f3 ♗g6 10.♘xg6 hxg6 11.g4 ♗e7 12.♗g2 a6 13.♗g3

After a sequence, which is common to the Slav, White should have tried to castle to the queenside. The situation after 13.dxc5 ♘d7 14.0-0-0 ♘xc5 15.♕c2 e5 16.♗g3 is unclear.

13...b5 14.a3

Here 14.♔f2 looks better. Now Black completely outplays his opponent on both wings.

14...♘a5 15.♕d1 cxd4 16.exd4 ♘c4 17.♘xc4 ♕xc4 18.♗f1 ♕c6 19.♗d3 ♗d6 20.♔f2 ♔e7 21.♕e2 ♖h3 22.♖ag1 ♖ah8 23.♖g2 ♘e8

After some excellent preparation Black refuses to harvest. Simply 23...♗xg3+ 24.♖xg3 ♖xh2+ 25.♖xh2 ♖xh2+ wins a pawn and gives good winning chances.

24.♖e1 ♘c7 25.f4 a5 26.f5

Now White is back in the race.

26...♗xg3+ 27.hxg3 b4 28.axb4 axb4 29.fxg6 f6 30.g5 bxc3 31.gxf6+ gxf6 32.♕c2 ♖3h5 33.♕xc3 ♕xc3 34.bxc3

White is a pawn up, but Black's position is solid enough.

34...♖g5 35.g4 ♔d6 36.♖e3 e5 37.dxe5+

37.♖f3 ♘e8 38.♗f5 e4 39.♖e3 ♔c6 does not bring White more than a draw either.

37...fxe5 38.♗f5 ♘e6 39.♔g3 ♘f4 40.♖h2 ♖xh2 41.♔xh2 ♘xg6 42.♗xg6 ♖xg6 43.♔g3 ♖g8 44.♔h4 ♖h8+ 45.♔g5 e4 46.c4 ♔e5 47.cxd5 ♖g8+ 48.♔h5 ♔f4 49.♖e1 ♖g5+ 50.♔h6 ♖xg4 51.d6 ♖g8 52.♖f1+ ♔e3 53.d7 ♔e2 54.♖f7 e3 55.♖e7 ♖d8 56.♔g6 ♔d2 ½-½

II. Black plays ...c6

This is Black's most solid and popular reply, when the nature of play is largely strategical. The next game is an excellent example of some positional themes.

☐ **Luc Winants**
■ **Kivanc Haznedaroglu**
Warsaw 2005

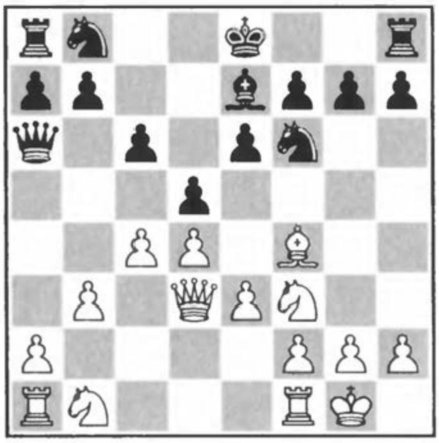
1.d4 d5 2.♗f4 c6 3.e3 ♕b6

Otherwise White can play 4.c4, resulting in a Slav where White's dark-squared bishop is well placed on f4. For example, after 3...♗f5 4.c4 ♗xb1 (the alternative 4...♘f6 5.♕b3 ♕b6 6.c5 ♕xb3 7.axb3 gives White a clear advantage, because he will attack on the queenside with b4 and b5) 5.♕xb1 (in order to meet 5...♕a5+ with 6.b4) 5...e6 6.♗d3 ♗b4+ 7.♔e2 ♘f6 8.c5 ♘bd7 9.a3 ♗a5 10.b4 ♗c7 11.♗xc7 ♕xc7 12.f4 White had a huge space advantage in the game Sergeev-Belikov, Alushta 2005.

4.b3

4.♕c1 is a good alternative.

4...♗f5 5.♗d3 ♗xd3 6.♕xd3 ♘f6 7.♘f3 e6 8.0-0 ♗e7 9.c4 ♕a6



Pinning the c-pawn. Instead after 9...♘bd7 10.♘c3 0-0 11.c5 ♕d8 12.h3 White is better because he will advance his queenside pawns and Black has no counterplay in the centre.

10.♘bd2 0-0 11.e4 dxe4 12.♘xe4 ♘xe4 13.♕xe4 ♘d7 14.♕e2

A multi-purpose move defending a2 and introducing a pin along the e-file.

14...♖fe8 15.♖ad1

On a later occasion, Winants put his rook on c1. The position was equal after 15.♖ac1 ♕a5 16.♖fd1 ♕f5 17.♗g3 ♘f6 18.♘e5 ♕e4 19.♕b2 in the game Winants-Lemmers, Enschede 2005.

15...♖ad8 16.h4

White opens a new front as Black is OK in the centre.

16...b5

Black starts a counterattack to gain control over d5.

17.♖c1 ♘b6 18.♗g5 ♗xg5 19.hxg5 bxc4 20.bxc4 c5 21.dxc5 ♘d7 22.♖fd1 ♘xc5 23.♘e5

White is still slightly better with his passed pawn and active knight on e5 which has the support of pawn g5.

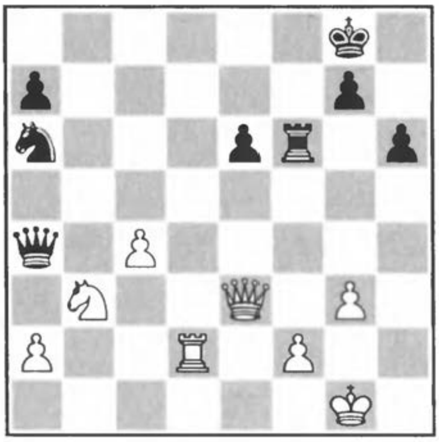
23...♕b7 24.♖xd8 ♖xd8 25.♖d1 ♖f8

This looks odd. When under pressure, swapping pieces usually gives relief. The logical 25...♖xd1+ 26.♕xd1 ♕c7 27.♕f3 h6 28.g6 fxg6 29.♘xg6 ♔h7 seems equal.

26.♕e3 ♕c7 27.g3 f6?! 28.gxf6 ♖xf6 29.♘f3

It seems strange to remove the knight from its ideal square, but White wants it on b3 to chase the Black knight from its ideal square.

29...h6 30.♘d4 ♕d7 31.♖d2 ♕a4?! 32.♘b3 ♘a6?



Black's f6 has put him into trouble, but this is the decisive mistake. Black should swap, although White is better after 32...♘xb3 33.axb3. The game continuation 33.♖d8+ ♔h7 34.♕e4+ ♖g6 35.♕a8 ♖f6 36.♖h8+ ♔g6 37.♕e4+ ♔f7 38.♕b7+ ♔g6 is not decisive here.

33.♖d8+ ♔h7 34.♕e4+ ♖g6 35.♕a8 ♖g5?!

35...♖f6 is more tenacious.

36.♖h8+ ♔g6 37.♕e4+ ♔f7 38.♘d4 ♘c5 39.♕f4+ ♔g6 40.♘f3 ♕d1+ 41.♔g2 ♘d3 42.♕e4+ ♔f6 43.♖f8+ ♔e7 44.♕a8 ♔d6 45.♖d8+

45.♕b8+ mates even quicker.

45...♔e7 46.♖e8+ ♔d6 47.♕d8+ ♔c6 48.♖xe6+ ♔c5 49.♕a5+ 1-0

III. Black plays ...e6

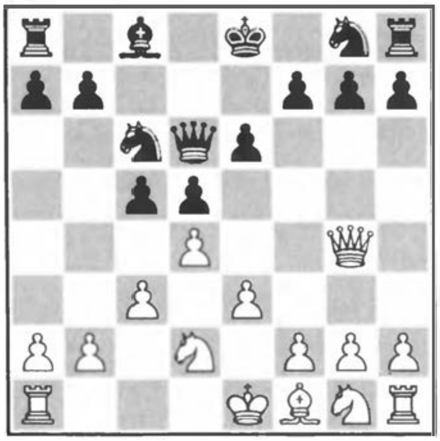
An early ...e6 implies that Black temporarily keeps his bishop inside the pawn chain. It is a little bit passive and may invite White to attack. In the first game Black plays ...♗d6, but swapping the dark square bishops does not solve his problems.

☐ **Jonathan Rowson**
■ **Stewart Haslinger**
Scarborough ch-GBR 2004

1.d4 d5 2.♗f4 e6 3.e3 c5 4.c3 ♘c6 5.♘d2 ♗d6

If Black wants to play ...♗d6, he should do it on his third move. With his c-pawn already on c5, more dark squares get weak.

6.♗xd6 ♕xd6 7.♕g4!



The delay of ♘f3 enables this strong move.

7...g6 8.♘gf3 ♕e7

8...e5 9.♕g3 is not nice for Black, but now he threatens e5 again.

9.♕f4 cxd4

It is surprising that Black already has problems with his development. For example, 9...♘f6 drops a pawn after 10.dxc5.

10.exd4 ♕f6 11.♕e3

Of course White keeps the queens on the board.

11...h5

11...♘ge7 looks more natural, but White has a clear advantage anyway. Black's main problem is that he has a bad bishop and has to wait passively.

12.♗b5 ♗d7 13.♘e5 ♘xe5 14.dxe5 ♕e7 15.♗d3

Now White preserves his excellent bishop.

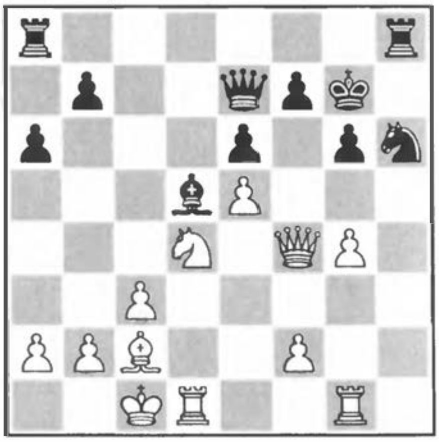
15...♘h6 16.♘f3 ♔f8

White's preferred plan is to castle in the opposite direction of Black's king and now he can, because Black has finally committed his king. Within a few moves Black will be under attack.

17.h3 ♔g7 18.♕f4 a6 19.g4 ♗b5 20.♗c2

Still keeping the bishop.

20...d4 21.♘xd4 ♗c6 22.♖g1 hxg4 23.hxg4 ♗d5 24.0-0-0



A nice moment to castle with pawn a2 hanging. Black cannot take because of 24...♗xa2 25.♕f6+ ♕xf6 26.exf6+ ♔f8 27.b3.

24...♕h4 25.♗b3

Now it is time to swap bishops because ♗d5 is a good defender.

25...♗xb3 26.axb3 ♘g8 27.♘f3

White directs his whole army to the kingside and leaves Black defenceless.

27...♕e7 28.♘g5 ♖f8 29.♖h1 ♖h6 30.♘e4 ♖d8 31.♖de1 ♖d3 32.♖xh6 ♘xh6 33.♖h1 ♘g8 34.♘f6 ♕c5 35.♖h7+ 1-0

If you think that was a crushing victory, you really should take a look at the following 'classical' game. It sees Black developing traditionally and soon White is on the attack.

☐ **Dragutin Sahovic**
■ **Giancarlo Franzoni**
Biel 1980

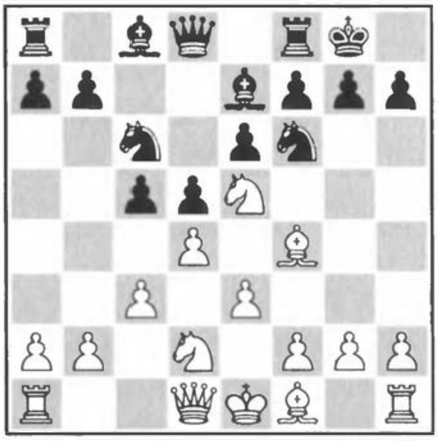
1.d4 d5 2.♘f3

If White had played 2.♗f4 here, then the game would have been perfect, but developing the bishop first is a modern subtlety.

2...e6 3.♗f4 c5 4.e3 ♘c6 5.c3 ♘f6 6.♘bd2 ♗e7

With a slightly different move order we have reached a position which will occur often from the London set-up. With his last move Black threatens to remove ♗f4 from play with ♘h5. White prevents this and plays a better move than the standard ♗d3.

7.♘e5 0-0?



It is too early to castle. For the rest of the game White will aim all of his pieces at the poor king on g8. Better is 7...♘xe5 8.♗xe5 ♗d7 9.♗d3 ♕b6 10.♕c2 ♗b5 as in the game Suskovic-Dumitrache, Zagreb 1997, and now White's only try for an advantage is 11.c4 dxc4 12.♘xc4 ♗xc4 13.♕xc4.

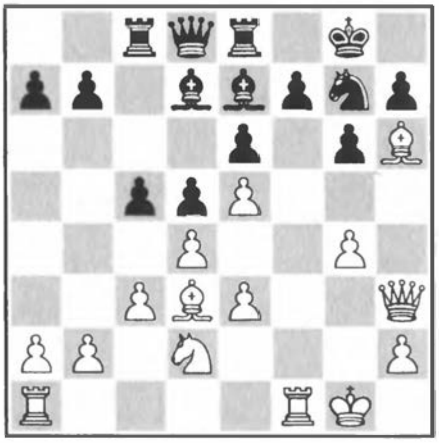
8.♗d3 ♗d7

Black could try to get his f-pawn in between, but White has a powerful attack after 8...♘d7 9.♕h5 f5 10.g4.

9.♕f3 ♖c8 10.♕h3 g6 11.♗h6 ♖e8 12.f4 ♘xe5?

Very cooperative. White now gets an half open f-file for free and the black knight is forced to an awkward square.

13.fxe5 ♘h5 14.g4 ♘g7 15.0-0



White often castles on the opposite side in order to launch an attack, but here castling kingside puts the king safe and a rook on the attractive f-file.

15...♖f8 16.♘f3 b5 17.♗f4 h5

White threatened ♕h6, ♘g5, ♗xg5, ♗f6 with a decisive mating attack, but the text move causes similar problems.

18.gxh5 ♘xh5 19.♗h6 ♘g7

19...♖e8 does not save the game after 20.♕g4 followed by ♗xg6.

20.♔h1 b4 21.♖g1 ♘f5 22.♘g5 bxc3 23.♗g7 1-0

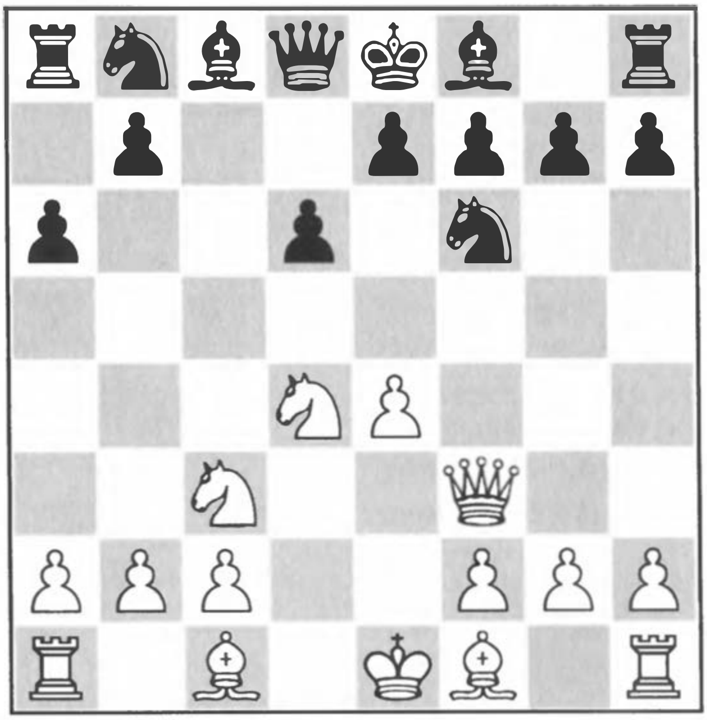
A good example of how a quiet set-up can turn into a irresistible attacking position.

Hopefully this chapter has inspired you to play some entertaining games with the Improved London System. And remember: bishop first!

CHAPTER 13

Jeroen Bosch

Surprise in the Najdorf



6.♕f3: Just another legal move?

One of Black's most successful 'defences' is surely the Najdorf. What is White to do? The former main line 6.♗g5 has been analysed down to the draw. The most popular choice 6.♗e3 makes for exciting chess, but also for a lot of theory. Solid but nothing special is 6.♗e2, nor do 6.♗c4 or 6.f4 promise much in the way of an opening advantage. Apart from these five most frequently played lines, five other legal moves were also tried in the past (6.a4, 6.g3, 6.h3, 6.♗d3 and 6.f3). In the 1990s 6.♖g1 became popular even at the highest level. This move could very well be the subject of an SOS-issue if it were not for the fact that black players are hardly surprised anymore when faced with this rook move. So what move is it that this SOS has in store for you? Fear not, dear reader, it is not 6.♖b1(!), but the perhaps slightly less shocking 6.♕f3.

The point of the early queen move is to prevent some typical Najdorf manoeuvres and to follow a development plan along the lines of ♗e3, 0-0-0, and g4-g5 (sometimes prepared by h3). There is no existing theory: ECO, NCO, and Nunn/Gallagher's *The Complete Najdorf* do not mention 6.♕f3. So, a lot of points for surprise value! The absence of analytical source material, of course, also means that there is a lot of room for your own analysis and creative ideas. Now what about points for soundness?

While I certainly would not say that 6.♕f3 refutes the Najdorf (but then again what six-move alternative does?), it is only fair to stress that so far White's practical results have been excellent. Admittedly, making large statistical claims on the basis of so few games would be ludicrous, so I am going to avoid that.

The five selected games in this chapter speak in favour of 6.♕f3. They are fun to play through and to analyse. And while you are in the mood, why not try 6.♕f3 in your next Najdorf!

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♞f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♕f3

Now why develop your queen so early? Let us first see what set-ups White is preventing. First of all, there is 6...e5 (the real Najdorf move). After 7.♘f5 White is a little better. Also unsatisfactory is 6...♘c6, as after 7.♘xc6 bxc6 8.e5! dxe5 9.♕xc6+ ♗d7 10.♕b7 White is again at least ±. Far worse is 6...b5? 7.e5 dxe5 8.♕xa8 exd4 9.♘xb5!, winning.

What are playable moves for Black? Najdorf players will probably choose from the following three: 6...♘bd7, 6...♕b6, or 6...e6. Another possibility is the Dragon option with 6...g6!?.

☐ **David Tebb**
■ **Adam Musson**
England tt 1996/97 (7)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♕f3 ♕c7?!

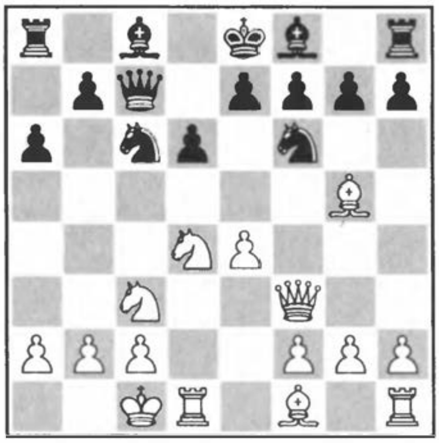
Two other tries that will not frighten the 6.♕f3 player are:

- 6...e5?! 7.♘f5 ♗xf5 8.♕xf5 ♘c6 9.♗e3 ♕a5 10.0-0-0 ♖d8 11.♗c4 ♗e7 12.g4 h6 13.h4 and White was well on his way to win in Karklins-Policarpio, Philadelphia 2001.
- 6...♘c6 7.♗e3 (7.♘xc6 bxc6 8.e5 dxe5 9.♕xc6+ ♗d7 10.♕b7) 7...♘g4 8.♘xc6 bxc6 9.♗c4 ♘e5 10.♕e2 ♘xc4 11.♕xc4 ♗d7 12.0-0 e6 13.♖ad1 d5? 14.exd5 cxd5 15.♘xd5! exd5 16.♖xd5 and White wins back the piece with interest. Abergel-Sutovsky, Internet 2003.

7.♗g5

Worth considering too is 7.♘d5.

7...♘c6 8.0-0-0



8...e6

White gets decent compensation after 8...♗g4 9.♘d5 ♕c8 10.♕e3, and now:

● 10...♘xd5 11.exd5 ♗xd1 12.dxc6 ♗h5 (12...♗g4 13.h3) 13.g4!? ♗xg4 14.♗g2, with good compensation for the sacrificed material.

● 10...♗xd1 11.♘b6, when the lines fork:

- 11...♘g4 12.♕d2 ♕d8 13.♘xa8, and White stands better.
- 11...♕d8 12.♘xc6 bxc6 13.♘xa8 ♗xc2 (13...♕xa8 14.♔xd1), and now 14.♕a7!, when 14...♗xe4 15.♘c7+ ♔d7 16.♘xa6+ ♔e8 (16...♔e6 17.♕e3+–) 17.f3 ♗f5 18.g4 ♗c8? leads to mate after 19.♘c7+ ♔d7 20.♘e6+! ♔xe6 21.♗c4+ d5 22.♖e1+ ♔d6 23.♗f4+ e5 24.♗xe5+ ♔e6 25.♗d4+ ♘e4 26.♖xe4+ ♔d6 27.♗c5 mate!
- Best is 11...♕b8 which denies White's queen access to the a7-square as in the previous line.

9.h3 ♗e7 10.g4 h6 11.♗e3 ♘e5

12.♕g3 ♗d7

The alternative is 12...g5, but 13.f4 gxf4 14.♗xf4 looks slightly better for White.

13.f4 ♘c4 14.♗xc4 ♕xc4 15.g5 ♘h5 16.♕f3 hxg5 17.fxg5 f6

Perhaps 17...g6 was a stronger option, but White is better anyway. The remainder of the game is less interesting for our purposes. White can avoid the complications after 6...♕c7 with 7.♘d5.

18.♖d3 fxg5 19.e5 d5 20.♖hd1 ♘f4 21.♗xf4 0-0 22.b3 ♕c5 23.♘ce2 gxf4 24.♕g4 ♖ac8 25.♘xf4 ♖f5 26.h4 g5 27.♘g6 ♗d8 28.♕h5 ♔g7 29.♘xf5+ exf5 30.c4 ♗e6 31.hxg5 ♗g8 32.♕h6+ ♔f7 33.♖xd5 ♕e3+ 34.♔b1 ♕e4+ 35.♔a1 1-0

☐ **Charles Kennaugh**
■ **Alan Hanreck**
England tt 1996/97 (11)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♕f3 ♘bd7 7.h3

The good point of 6...♘bd7 is the need for this preparatory move; the bad thing is that the f6-knight cannot retreat to d7 now, after a subsequent g4-g5.

In Kennaugh-Collier, England tt 1998/99, White played 7.♗e3, when Black should have played 7...e6 8.0-0-0 or 8.h3, with similar play as in the main game. Instead the game went: 7...♘c5 8.♘b3! ♘xb3 9.axb3 ♗d7? (another mistake. 9...e6±) 10.♘d5! ♘xd5 11.exd5 g6 12.♗d4 f6 White had a huge positional advantage and won.

7...e6

The game Fontaine-Gormally, France tt 2002, went 7...g6 8.g4 ♗g7 9.♗e3 ♘e5 10.♕g2 h5. Unfortunately, the players now called it a day by agreeing to an early draw.

8.g4

After 8.♗e3 ♕c7 9.g4 h6 10.0-0-0 b5 11.♗g2 ♗b7 12.a3 ♘c5 13.♕e2 ♘cxe4 Black was clearly better in Tebb-Hanreck, England 1996/97 (2), although he only drew.

It is more logical to play g4 as soon as possible, since the threat of g5 is annoying for Black, who needs to think of a square to withdraw his knight to. In the game Black decides to prevent g5 with

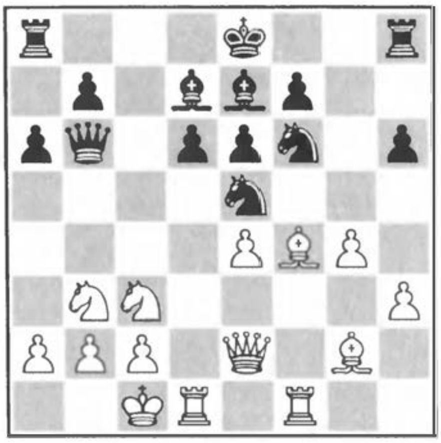
8...h6 9.♗g2 ♕b6

A familiar move to force the knight to b3. If 9...♗e7, then 10.♕g3!? planning 11.f4 or simply 11.♗e3.

10.♘b3 ♘e5 11.♕e2 g5!?

Black attempts to control the dark squares, a risky strategy as White is able to open files now.

12.f4 gxf4 13.♗xf4 ♗d7 14.♖f1 ♗e7 15.0-0-0



White has a pleasant edge. The h6 pawn is weak and White has play along the f-file. In the game Black decides to alter the course of the game drastically.

15...♗b5? 16.♘xb5 axb5 17.♗xe5 dxe5 18.♔b1 0-0 19.h4

White's attack plays itself.

19...♘h7 20.♖h1 ♖fd8 21.♖df1 ♖d7 22.g5 ♗f8 23.♕h5 ♖c8 24.♗h3 ♕c6 25.g6! fxg6 26.♕xg6+ ♔h8 27.♕xe6 ♕xc2+ 28.♔a1 ♖cd8 29.♖xf8+! ♖xf8

29...♘xf8 30.♕f6+.

30.♕xd7 1-0

☐ **Corina Peptan**
■ **Nana Dzagnidze**
Calvia Olympiad 2004

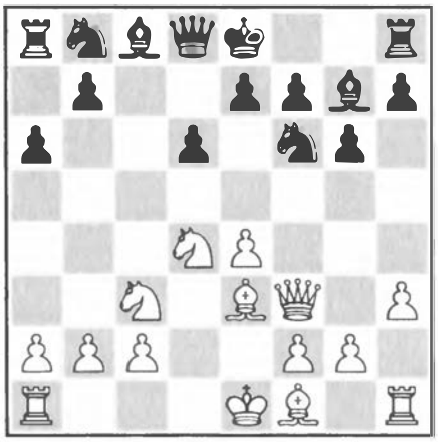
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♕f3 g6

Black opts for the Dragon, asking White to justify his previous move. On the other hand, an early ...a6 is not so useful in the Dragon either.

7.h3

Not a good idea is 7.♕g3 ♗g7 8.♘f5 a creative set-up that Kogan tried in a rapid game. After 8...♗xf5 9.exf5 ♘c6 10.♗c4 ♖c8 11.0-0 ♘d4 12.♗d3 ♕d7 13.fxg6 hxg6 14.♖e1 ♖c5! 15.h3 ♘h5 16.♕e3 ♖e5 17.♕d2 ♘f4 18.♖xe5 ♘xh3+! Black won in Kogan-S.Savchenko, Cannes rapid 2000. Immediate resignation could have been forced with 18...♘f3+!.

7...♗g7 8.♗e3



8...0-0

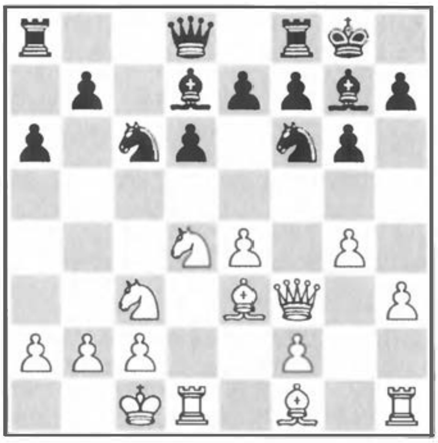
Black does not have to castle immediately. Practice has seen:

– 8...♕c7 9.g4 ♘c6 10.0-0-0 h6 (the threat was 11.g5 and 12.♘d5 – a distinct disadvantage of Black's 8th move) 11.♔b1 0-0 12.♕e2 (handing Black a tempo to make room for the f-pawn. Note that compared with a normal Dragon ...a6, ...h6 and ...♕c7 are questionable extra moves. Kosteniuk would be better off without especially these last two moves) 12...♘a5 13.f4 (13.g5! hxg5 14.♗xg5±) 13...b5 14.f5 ♘c4 15.♗c1?! (15.g5) 15...♘e5? (15...♘a3+! 16.♔a1 b4) 16.♘d5 ♘xd5 17.exd5 ♗b7 18.♗g2 ♕c4 19.♕xc4 ♘xc4 20.♖he1 ♘e5 21.fxg6 fxg6 22.♖e2 ♖f7 23.♘e6 with a big advantage in Peptan-Kosteniuk, Gothenburg 2005.

– 8...♘bd7 9.0-0-0 ♕c7 10.g4 h6 11.♔b1 b5 12.♗g2 ♗b7 13.♕e2 ♖c8 14.f4 ♘b6? 15.e5 dxe5 16.♘dxb5! axb5? (16...♕b8) 17.♕xb5+ ♘fd7?? 18.♗xb6 and White won in a few moves Peptan-Zivkovic, Vrnjacka Banja 2005.

– 8...♘c6 (this is a healthy alternative to 8...0-0) 9.0-0-0 (9.♘xc6?! bxc6 10.e5 ♘d5 11.♘xd5 cxd5 12.♕xd5 ♗e6 is fine for Black: 13.♕c6+ ♗d7) 9...♗d7 10.♘xc6 (10.g4 ♖c8 11.g5 ♘h5 12.♘xc6 bxc6 13.♗d4 e5 14.♗e3 ♗e6 15.♕e2 ♕c7 and Black had enough for the pawn after 16.♕xa6 0-0 17.♕a7 ♕d8 in Fontaine-Bistric, Kastav 2002) 10...♗xc6 (10...bxc6) 11.♘d5 ♗xd5 12.exd5 0-0 13.♔b1 ♕c7 14.g4 ♖fc8 15.c3 b5 16.h4 ♘d7 17.h5 ♘e5 18.♕e4 ♖ab8 19.hxg6 hxg6 20.♖d4! ♘c4 21.♗xc4 bxc4 22.f4! with the better position in Kogan-Ortega, Lido Estensi 2003.

9.0-0-0 ♗d7 10.g4 ♘c6



11.♘b3

The alternatives are:

– 11.♕g3 ♘xd4? 12.♗xd4 ♕a5 13.♕e3 ♗c6 14.f4 ♘d7 15.♗xg7 ♔xg7 16.g5 ♕c5 17.♕d2 b5 18.h4 b4 19.♘d5 ♗xd5 20.exd5 a5 21.h5 gave White all the chances in Birk-Fröhlich, Germany Bundesliga B 2000/01.

– 11.♘f5!? ♘e5 12.♕g3 ♗xf5!? 13.exf5 ♖c8 14.f4 ♘c4 15.♗xc4 ♖xc4 16.♕g2? (16.♗d4 ♘e4 17.♘xe4 ♖xd4 18.♖xd4 ♗xd4) 16...♖xc3 17.bxc3 ♕a5 with more than enough compensation in Holzer-Danner, Vienna 2003.

11...h6

Again, weakening the kingside with this move does not look good.

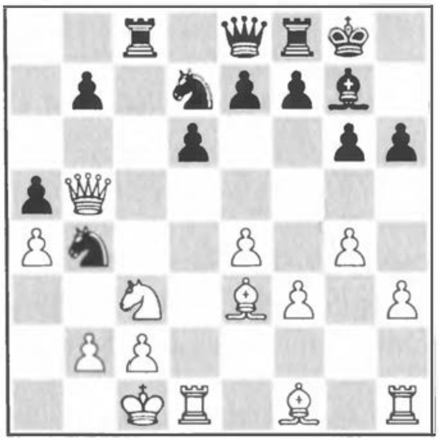
12.♕e2 a5 13.a4! ♘b4 14.f3

Rightly opting for solid protection of e4, and trying to make use of her positional plusses (the strong squares d5, b5 and b6 plus the weak black kingside). Black gets excellent counterplay after 14.f4 ♖c8.

14...♖c8

Or 14...♕e8 15.♘b5 ♖c8 16.c3 and the direct threats have been averted.

15.♘d4 ♕e8 16.♘db5 ♗xb5 17.♕xb5 ♘d7



It is clear that Black has enough counterplay anyway, play is about equal.

18.♗d4 ♘e5 19.♕xe8 ♖fxe8 20.♗b5 20.♗e2 ♘ed3+. **20...♖f8 21.f4 ♘c4?** Now White will be better. Correct was 21...♘ed3+. **22.♗xg7 ♔xg7 23.♖d4 ♘e3 24.♖d2 g5 25.fxg5 hxg5 26.♖e1 ♘c4** Perhaps 26...♘exc2!? 27.♖xc2 ♘xc2 28.♔xc2 ♖h8 29.♖e3 ♖h6. **27.♗xc4 ♖xc4 28.e5** Creating a weakness. **28...♖h8 29.exd6 exd6 30.♖e3 ♖h6 31.♘b5** The ending is very unpleasant for Black. White has only one weak pawn (h3), while Black's position is littered with them. **31...♖f4 32.b3 d5 33.c3 ♘c6 34.♖xd5** Peptan is winning easily now. **34...♖f1+ 35.♔c2 ♖f2+ 36.♖d2 ♖hf6 37.♖xf2 ♖xf2+ 38.♔d3 f6 39.♘d6 ♘e5+ 40.♔e4 b6 41.♔d5 ♔g6 42.♘c4 ♘d7 43.♔c6 ♘c5 44.♔xb6 ♘xb3 45.♘xa5 ♘d2 46.♔b5 f5 47.gxf5+ ♔xf5 48.♘c6 ♔f4 49.♖d3 ♘e4 50.a5 ♖b2+ 51.♘b4 ♔e5 52.a6 ♘d6+ 53.♖xd6 1-0**

☐ **Aleksandar Wohl**
■ **Neuris Delgado**
Bled Olympiad 2002

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♕f3 e6 7.g4 ♘c6!?

Or 7...♗e7 8.g5 ♘fd7 9.h4 ♘c6 10.♗e3 0-0 11.♕g3 ♘de5 12.f4 ♘xd4 13.♗xd4 ♘c6 14.♗e3 b5 15.♗g2 ♗b7 16.0-0 and Black came under attack after a quick f4-f5 in the game Budimir-Licina, Bosnjaci 2001. For 7...♕b6 see the next game Kogan-Jakovljevic.

8.♘xc6

Not 8.♗e3? ♘e5.

8...bxc6 9.g5 ♘d7 10.h4 ♗e7 11.b3

With an open b-file the fianchetto is quite sensible. White protects his queenside and hopes to attack along the main diagonal.

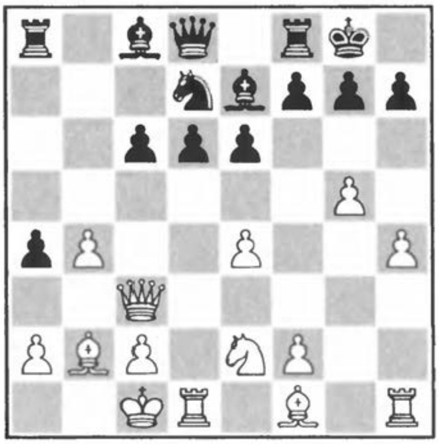
11...a5!? 12.♗b2 0-0 13.0-0-0

Less logical is 13.a4 e5 14.0-0-0 ♘c5 15.♗c4 ♗e6 16.♗xe6 fxe6 and Black was better in Afek-Shanava, Moscow 2004.

13...♘c5 14.♘e2 a4 15.b4 ♘d7

16.♕c3

With the kings on opposite wings, both sides play bluntly for the attack. The position is extremely complicated, and it is easy to go wrong.



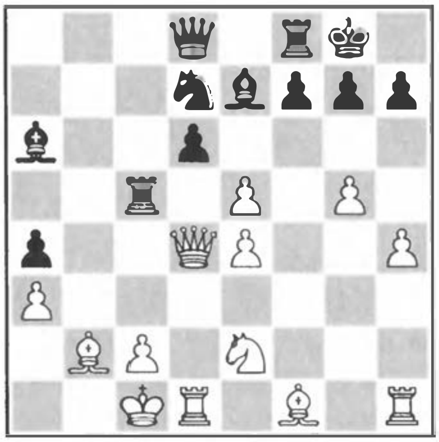
16...e5 17.a3

Defending against ...a4-a3 rather than going for 17.♕xc6 ♘b6 with dangerous compensation.

17...♗a6 18.f4 c5! 19.bxc5 ♖c8 20.fxe5 ♖xc5

Stronger is 20...♘xc5! when White's queen has to leave the diagonal.

21.♕d4



21...♖xe5

Bad is 21...♘xe5? 22.♕xc5. Best was 21...♗xe2 22.♗xe2 (unclear is 22.exd6 ♗xg5+ 23.hxg5 ♕xg5+ 24.♖d2 ♗g4) 22...♕c7! to sacrifice an exchange after 23.exd6 ♖xc2+ 24.♔b1 ♖xb2+ 25.♕xb2 ♗xd6.

22.♘f4 ♗xf1 23.♖hxf1 ♘c5 24.♖fe1

24.♘d5! ♘xe4? 25.♖f5 is nearly winning for White. **24...♕c8 25.♔b1 ♕g4?! 26.♘d5 ♗d8 27.♘e3! ♕c8** 27...♕xe4? 28.♕xd6+–. **28.♘c4 ♘e6 29.♕d3**

White should have gone for the endgame after 29.♘xd6 ♘xd4 30.♘xc8 ♗a5 31.♖f1 ♖xc8 32.♖xd4. **29...♖c5 30.♘xd6 ♕b8 31.♕a6?! ♗a5! 32.♖e3 ♗c3 33.♖xc3 ♖xc3 34.♘xf7! ♕c8 35.♕xc8 ♖cxc8 36.♘d6 ♖cd8 37.e5 ♖f4 38.h5 ♘xg5 39.h6 gxh6 40.♖h1 ♘f7 41.♘xf7 ♔xf7 42.♖xh6 ♔g7 43.♖b6 ♖d1+ 44.♔a2 ♖e4 45.e6+ ♔g6 46.e7+ ♔f7 47.♖f6+ ♔xe7?** 47...♔e8!–+. **48.♖h6 ♖d2 49.♖xh7+ ♔d6 50.♖h6+ ♔d5 51.♖h5+ ♔c4 52.♖a5 ½-½**

☐ **Artur Kogan**
■ **Vlado Jakovljevic**
Ljubljana 1999

I've saved a particularly fine game for last. If the previous games did not whet your appetite, don't worry, this one certainly will.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.d4 cxd4 5.♘xd4 a6 6.♕f3 e6 7.g4

The American Andrew Karklins (who regularly employs 6.♕f3) has a strong predilection for 7.b3 here. While he defeated a young Peter Svidler with the finachetto I prefer Kogan's set-up.

7...♕b6 8.♘b3 ♕c7

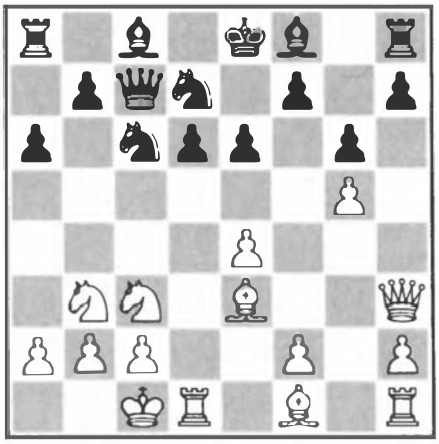
Velcheva-S.Vajda, Batumi Ech-tt 1999, went: 8...♘c6 9.g5 ♘d7 10.♗e3 ♕c7 11.♕h3 ♘c5!? 12.♘xc5 dxc5 13.f4 ♗d7 14.♗g2 0-0-0 15.0-0-0.

9.g5 ♘fd7 10.♕h3! g6

The previous ten moves should be familiar by now. White has started his blitzkrieg on the kingside. Black has forced the d4-knight back and is trying to develop his pieces in typical Sicilian fashion.

If 10...♘c6, then 11.g6 ♘f6 12.gxf7+, or simply 11.♗e3.

11.♗e3 ♘c6 12.0-0-0



12...♗g7

In the game Kogan-Yudasin, Jerusalem ch-ISR 1996, Black preferred 12...b5 13.f4 ♘c5 (13...♗b7 14.f5! is too good for White: 14...gxf5 15.exf5 ♘e7 16.fxe6 fxe6, and certainly not 16...♗xh1? 17.exd7+ ♕xd7? 18.♕xd7+ ♔xd7 19.♗h3+) 14.♘xc5 dxc5 15.e5! ♗b7 16.♘e4 ♗e7 (16...♘xe5? 17.♘f6+ ♔e7 18.fxe5 ♗xh1? 19.♗xc5+ mates) 17.♗g2 ♘d4 18.♗xd4 cxd4 19.♘d6+! (stronger than 19.♖xd4 ♖c8 20.♖d2 ♗xe4 21.♗xe4 0-0) 19...♗xd6 20.exd6 ♕b6 21.♗xb7 ♕xb7 22.♕d3 ♕d5 23.♕xd4 ♕xd4 24.♖xd4 and White was a healthy pawn up in the double rook ending, an advantage he was unable to convert, however (draw after 65 moves).

Note that the actual move order in Kogan-Yudasin was 6...♕b6 7.♘b3 e6 8.g4 ♘c6 9.g5 ♘d7 10.♗e3 ♕c7 11.♕h3 g6 12.0-0-0.

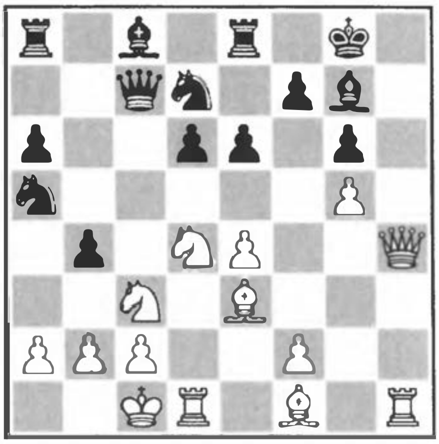
13.♘d4 0-0 14.♕g3

Freeing the way for the battering ram h2-h4-h5.

14...♘a5 15.h4 b5 16.h5 b4 17.hxg6 hxg6

Taking the piece is forbidden: 17...bxc3? 18.♕h3 ♖e8 (18...fxg6? 19.♕xh7+ or 19.♘xe6) 19.♕xh7+ ♔f8 20.gxf7 ♔xf7, and now White wins after both 21.g6+ ♔f8 22.♗h6 and 21.♖h4.

18.♕h4 ♖e8



19.♘f5!

A typical knight sacrifice, especially familiar from the Velimirovic Attack. White obtains the d5 square for his other knight.

19...gxf5 20.exf5 exf5

Just bad is 20...bxc3 21.f6. The alternative 20...♗b7 is refuted by 21.f6 ♗xh1 22.fxg7 ♔xg7 23.♕h6+ ♔g8 24.♗d3.

21.♘d5 ♕d8

White also wins after 21...♕b7 22.♗d4 ♘e5 (22...♕xd5? 23.♕h8+ mates) 23.♘f6+ ♔f8 24.♗xe5! dxe5 25.♗g2! e4 26.♕h7 ♗e6 27.♕g8+ ♔e7 28.♕xg7 ♖ed8 29.♘d7!.

22.♗d4 ♖e5

Not too difficult is 22...♘e5 23.♗b6 ♕d7 24.♘f6+.

23.♗xe5 dxe5 24.♘f6+

24.♕h7+ ♔f8 25.♕h8+ would also have been sufficient.

24...♔f8

24...♗xf6 25.gxf6 ♕xf6 26.♖g1+ ♔f8 drops the queen after 27.♕xb4+ ♕e7 28.♖g8+.

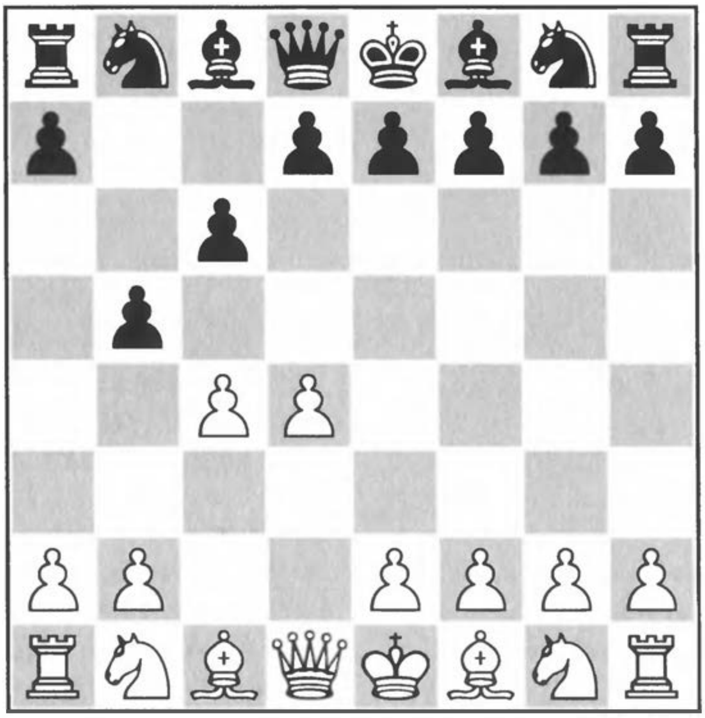
25.♕h8+ ♗xh8 26.♖xh8+ ♔g7 27.♖xd8 ♘xf6 28.gxf6+ ♔xf6 29.♖e8

1-0

CHAPTER 14

Ian Rogers

Thinking Sideways: 1.d4 c6 2.c4 b5



The Malinoise Defence

Very few players even know of the existence of the Malinoise Defence – 1.d4 c6 2.c4 b5!? – and the line therefore usually comes as more of a shock than a mere surprise!

The opening was invented by the Belgian IM Michel Jadoul and although many of Jadoul's games with the line have been lost, his original analyses were made available to this author and form the backbone of this article.

Jadoul, who undoubtedly deserves naming rights to the line, has chosen to call the opening after the Belgian town of Malines where he first played 2...b5!?.

ECO devotes a single line to 2...b5, ending with '±' based on an old Van der Sterren-Rogers game played weakly by Black.

However matters are not so simple for White and a clear path to advantage for White against best play by Black has yet to be established.

Once you become known as a Malinoise player, some pleasant surprise may await. For example, at a 1991 tournament I played 1...c6 against Rustem Dautov, who then invested five minutes deciding that it would be too risky to allow 2.c4 b5 and played 2.♘f3. I replied 2...♘f6 after which Dautov again fell into thought, aware that on 3.c4, b5 was again playable. Finally Dautov decided upon 3.♗f4 and Black equalised easily after 3...d5 4.e3 ♗g4.

Transpositions

As indicated from the previous paragraph, the Malinoise can be played with or without the insertion of ♘f3 and ...♘f6. For the purposes of this article I will deal with only the 'pure' 1.d4 c6 2.c4 b5 move order. As will be seen, the inclusion of ♘f3 and ...♘f6 will usually favour Black, avoiding White's sharpest lines which generally involve a quick e4 advance.

Themes

The Malinoise is most effective when Black is allowed to exchange his b pawn for the White c pawn. After playing ...bxc4 Black most often follows with ...d5 and achieves easy equality. Black can also try to exchange light-squared bishops with ...♗a6, positionally advisable even though a recapture on a6 with a knight can leave the knight badly placed.

White's two critical options involve avoiding the exchange on c4, either by playing 3.c5 or 3.cxb5.

After 3.c5 Black must break up the queenside bind with a timely ...d6 (...e5 gambits seem to lead nowhere) after which the b5 pawn looks strange but is difficult to exploit.

3.cxb5 is the most popular choice, leading to a St George (1...a6 and 2...b5) type of position where Black has not wasted a move with ...a6.

This 'advantage' of the Malinoise over the St George can be misleading – very often Black tries to protect the b pawn with ...♕b6 rather than ...a6 only to find that the queen is subject to attack by the White minor pieces (♗e3 or ♘bd2-c4 after a4).

White's d4 and e4 pawn centre is not scary by itself but Black must react accurately when White tries to undermine the b5 pawn with a4. Circumstances alter cases but most often Black should choose to play ...bxa4 (rather than ...b4), following with ...a5 if necessary, to keep square b4 for his pieces.

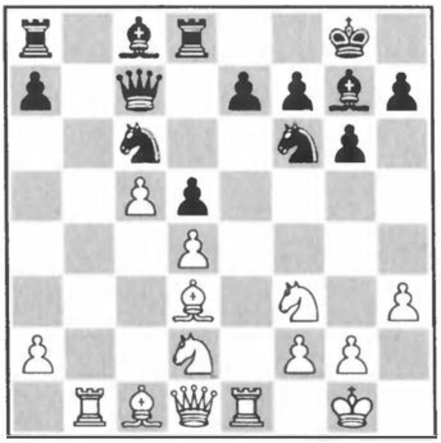
1.d4 c6 2.c4 b5 3.cxb5

White's most common choice but there are plenty of alternatives:

● **3.b3** ♘f6 (3...d5!? has been played a few times, leading to a strange type of Slav Defence)

– On 4.e3 Black should just return to the main line with 4...g6 since 4...e6?! 5.♘f3 leaves Black struggling for a good move: 5...bxc4 (5...a6 6.♗d3 d5 7.0-0 is just a bad version of the 4...a6 Slav for Black, while; 5...♗a6 6.c5± was even worse in Anelli-Bulcourf, Buenos Aires 1993) 6.bxc4 and White has at least a slight edge.

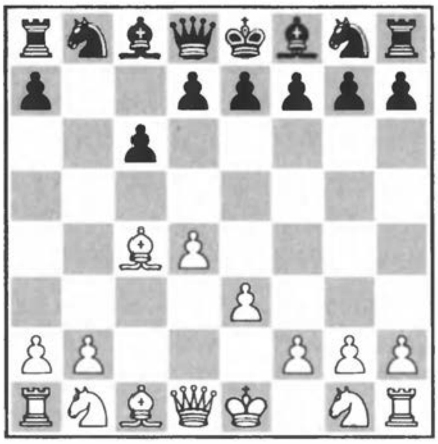
– 4.♘f3 g6! (4...bxc4 5.bxc4 d5 6.e3 ♗f5 7.♗d3 ♗xd3 8.♕xd3 ♕a5+?! 9.♘bd2 e6 10.0-0 ♘bd7 11.e4 dxe4 12.♘xe4 ♘xe4 13.♕xe4 is the sort of position Black should avoid – White won quickly in Mohandesi-Vandevoort, Clichy 1993) 5.e3 ♗g7 6.♗d3 0-0 7.0-0 bxc4 8.bxc4 c5! 9.♘bd2 (9.♘c3) 9...♘c6 10.♖b1 cxd4 11.exd4 d5 and Black already has an excellent game. In Clausen-Jadoul, Copenhagen 1988, Black went on to win a thematic game (which deserves to be mentioned in full) by pressuring the d pawn as follows: 12.c5 ♕c7 13.♖e1 ♖d8 14.h3



14...♘h5! 15.♘b3 ♖b8 16.♗f1 ♗f5 17.♖b2 ♘f4 18.g3 ♘e6 19.♖d2 a5 20.a4 ♖b4

(20...♗e4! 21.♖xe4 dxe4 22.d5 ♖xb3 23.♕xb3 ♘xc5–+) 21.♗b5 ♗e4! 22.♗xc6 ♕xc6 23.♖xe4 dxe4 24.d5 ♖xd5 25.♖xd5 exf3 26.♖d8+ ♘f8 27.♗d2 ♖xa4 28.♘xa5 ♕b5 29.c6 ♖a1 30.♕xa1 ♗xa1 31.c7 ♕b1+ 32.♔h2 ♕f1 33.♖xf8+ 0-1.

● **3.e3** looks and is innocuous **3...bxc4 4.♗xc4**



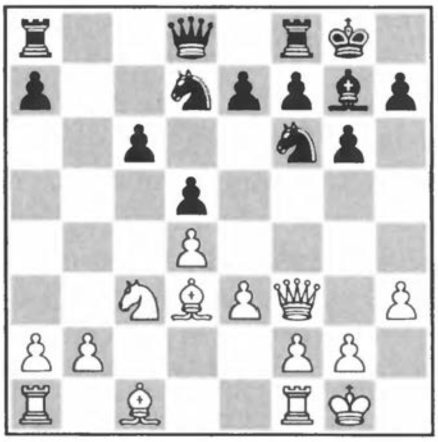
– **4...♘f6 5.♘f3**

Jadoul analysed **5...e6** 6.0-0 (6.♘c3 ♗e7 7.0-0 0-0 8.♕e2 d5 9.♗d3 c5 10.dxc5 ♗xc5 11.e4 dxe4 12.♘xe4 ♘bd7 13.♗g5 worked out well for White in Lacrosse-J.Claesen, Ghent 1989) 6...d5 (Jadoul dismissed 6...♗a6?! in view of 7.♗xa6 ♘xa6 8.e4±) 7.♗d3 c5 8.♘bd2 and now Black should exchange on d4 since 8...♗d6 9.e4 is somewhat better for White.

5...d5 is obvious and healthy: 6.♗e2 e6 (6...♗a6!?) 7.0-0 ♗d6 8.♘c3 ♘bd7 and Black, who has the option of both ...c5 and ...e5, should have nothing to worry about. Ohlzon-J.Claesen, Hallsberg 1991 continued 9.♗d2 e5!? (9...0-0) 10.dxe5 ♘xe5 11.♘xe5 ♗xe5 12.♖c1 0-0 13.♘a4 ♘e4 when Black was already better and went on to win in 27 moves.

5...♗a6 is not as easy for Black as it looks after 6.♘bd2 d5 (6...♗xc4 7.♘xc4 is similar to positions analysed earlier) 7.♗xa6 ♘xa6 8.♘e5 (8.♕a4?! ♕b6 9.a3 e6 10.♘e5 ♖c8 11.0-0 ♕b5! when Black is already equal and went on to win in Krasevec-Chernikov, Lignano Sabbiadoro World Seniors Championshiop 2005) 8...♕b6 9.a3 e6 10.b4 ♗d6 11.♘d3 and White had a small but enduring edge in Zarubin-Sobolev, Cherepovets 1993.

5...g6 Jadoul favoured the fianchetto as a method of keeping complications, although there are other good alternatives: 6.0-0 ♗g7 7.♘c3 0-0 8.♕e2 (an attempt to delay ...♗a6 which was condemned by Jadoul. However 8.d5 cxd5 9.♘xd5 ♘c6 offers no worries at all for Black, e.g. 10.♖b1 d6 11.b4 ♗f5 12.♖b3 ♘d7 13.♗b2 ♘ce5 14.♘xe5 ♘xe5 15.♗e2 ♖c8 when Black was already better in De Coninck-Claesen, Huy 1991) 8...d5 9.♗d3 ♗g4 10.h3 ♗xf3 11.♕xf3 ♘bd7



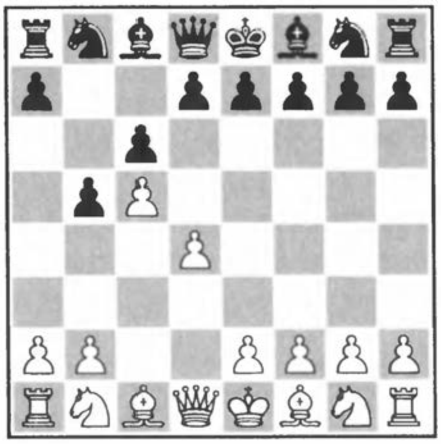
and White cannot reasonably prevent 12...e5 when Black is at least equal.

– There is nothing wrong with **4...d5** 5.♗d3 ♗a6 6.♘f3 ♘d7 7.♗xa6 ♕a5+ 8.♘c3 ♕xa6 9.♕e2 ♕xe2+ 10.♔xe2 e6 11.♗d2 ♗d6 12.♖hc1 ♘e7 and the endgame is equal, although not boring. Harasta-Jadoul, Cappelle la Grande 1989, was drawn 11 moves later.

– **4...♗a6!?** 5.♘d2 ♗xc4 6.♘xc4 should be slightly better for White since ...d5 will always be answered by ♘e5. Kantsler-

Kudischewitsch, Ramat Aviv 2000, continued 6...♘f6 7.♘f3 e6 (7...g6 8.♕b3 d5 9.♘ce5 ♕b6 was I.Porat-Knol, Hoogeveen Open 2004, and now 10.♕c2 instead of 10.♕xb6?! would have kept a slight edge) 8.0-0 ♗e7 9.♗d2 0-0 10.♗a5 ♕c8 11.b4!? ♕a6 12.♕c2 and White's bind is hard to shake.

● **3.c5**



One of White's most successful weapons against the Malinoise but with accurate play Black should be able to equalise.

– **3...♘f6!** 4.g3 d6 (despite the imminent long diagonal pressure, Black must undermine the c5 pawn since the more violent 4...e5?! 5.dxe5 ♘e4 6.♗g2 ♘xc5 7.♘f3 ♘ba6 8.♘d4 ♕b6 9.♗e3 ♕b8 10.♘d2 looks and was extremely ugly for Black in Bogdanovski-Jacimovic, Star Dojran 1996) 5.cxd6 exd6 6.♗g2 ♗e7 7.e4 0-0 8.♘e2 ♗b7 9.0-0 ♘bd7. Here Jadoul judges the position as unclear, an assessment which seems to be justified since the aggressive 10.f4 can be well met by 10...♕b6! with the idea 11.♘bc3 (11.♘d2?! c5! works out well for Black, e.g. 12.d5?! c4+ 13.♔h1 ♘g4) 11...b4 12.♘a4 ♕b5 when Black's activity more than counterbalances White's pawn centre.

– **3...d6** 4.cxd6 exd6 5.e4 leaves White with a clear advantage – the b5 pawn looks peculiarly misplaced. After 5...♘f6 6.♗d3 ♕b6 7.♘f3 ♗g4 8.♗e3 d5 9.exd5 ♘xd5 10.0-0 ♗e7 11.♘c3 ♘xe3 12.fxe3 Black's bishop pair could not compensate for his disjointed queenside and White won in Moskalenko-Laketic, Belgorod 1990.

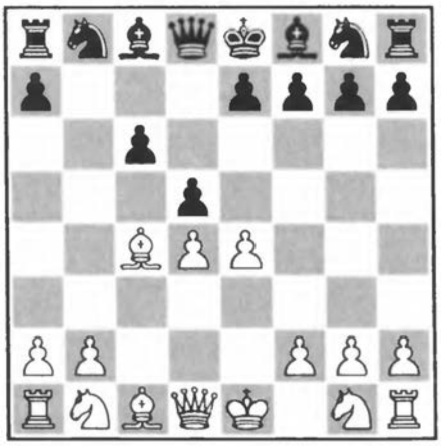
– **3...e5!?** looks exciting but after 4.dxe5! ♗xc5 5.♘c3 d5 6.exd6 ♕xd6 7.♕xd6 ♗xd6 Black's disjointed queenside gives White all the chances in this endgame.

Another Jadoul idea is 4...f6!? – a creative way of trying to make this line playable – but although 5.♘c3 ♘a6 (5...fxe5? 6.♘e4 ♘f6 7.♘d6+ ♗xd6 8.♕xd6 ♕e7 9.♕xe7+ ♔xe7 10.♘f3± Jadoul) 6.♘e4 ♘xc5 7.♘d6+ ♗xd6 8.♕xd6 ♕e7 9.♗e3 ♕xd6 10.exd6 ♘e6 is unclear according to Jadoul, White should prefer 8.exd6! with serious pressure.

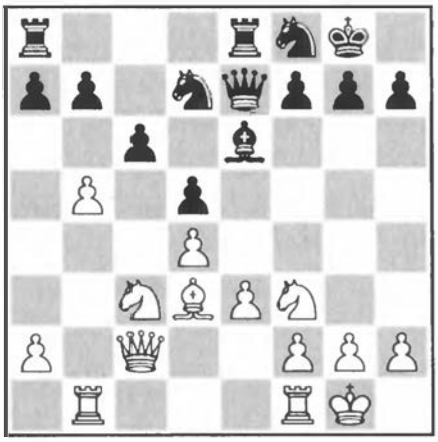
● **3.e4** allows one of the main points behind Black's opening – an exchange on c4 followed by d5. **3...bxc4**:

– **4.♕a4!?** was Jadoul's creative method of trying to revive 3.e4 but after 4...♘f6 5.♘c3 d5 (Jadoul claims a refutation of 5...e5!? with 6.dxe5 ♘g4 7.♗xc4 ♕b6 8.♘h3 but after 8...♘xe5 9.♗e2 ♗e7 10.0-0 0-0 White's advantage may not be too serious) 6.exd5 ♘xd5 7.♘xd5 ♕xd5 8.♘f3 ♗a6 9.♗e3 ♗b5 10.♕c2 ♘d7 11.♖c1 ♘b6, Black has hung onto the pawn and is ready to begin developing his kingside.

– **4.♗xc4 d5**



5.exd5 cxd5 is fine for Black, whose slightly superior pawn structure is a long term asset. 6.♗b5+ (6.♗d3 ♘f6 7.♘f3 e6 8.0-0 ♗d6 is probably only equal but led to a quick victory for Black in Maggiolo-Bulcourf, Brasil 1997, while 6.♕f3 ♘f6 7.♘c3 e6 8.♗b5+ ♗d7 9.♗d3 ♘c6 10.♘ge2 ♗e7 is another equal position which turned in Black's favour in Burnier-A.Frank, Geneva 1997) 6...♗d7 7.♕a4 e6 8.♘f3 ♗d6 and the position is only equal although this time White eventually prevailed in Martin y Herrera-Bulcourf, San Isidoro 1993. Again it should be noted that if the postion stabilises, Black's pawn structure is an asset. It is worth comparing with a standard Queen's Gambit Declined Exchange Variation minority attack position such as the following: 1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗g5 ♗e7 5.cxd5 exd5 6.e3 c6 7.♗d3 ♘bd7 8.♘f3 0-0 9.♕c2 ♖e8 10.0-0 ♘f8 11.♖ab1 ♗e6 12.b4 ♘6d7 13.♗xe7 ♕xe7 14.b5

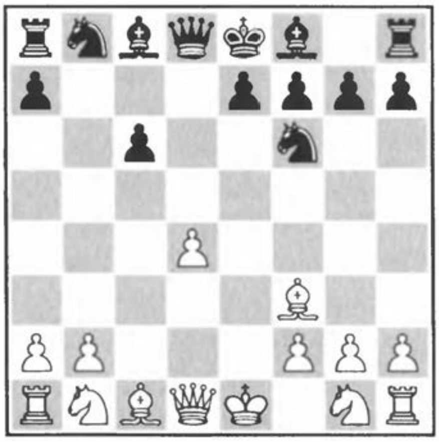


In similar positions, Black will try ...c5 or allow the exchange on c6 but only very rarely capture on b5 because the resulting pawn structure – with isolated d5 pawn and second potential weakness along the b file – is considered too unpleasant for Black. In the position after 5.exd5 cxd5, Black has already created the pawn structure for which White works so hard in the Queen's Gambit Exchange Variation so if Black can neutralise White's temporary development advantage, the long term chances should be all his.

5.♗b3 e6 6.♘c3 ♘f6 7.♘ge2 ♗e7 8.0-0 0-0 9.♘g3 dxe4 10.♘cxe4 ♘bd7 11.♗c2 would have been nothing for White until Black became panicky and played 11...g6?! 12.♗h6 ♖e8 13.♗a4 ♗a6 14.♖e1 ♗c4? 15.♗xc6 ♘xe4 16.♘xe4 ♖c8 17.d5! exd5 18.♕d4 with a decisive edge for White in Paglilla-Bulcourf, Florida Valle 1993.

5.♗d3

Now I rather like Jadoul's simple solution of 5...dxe4!, the point of which is seen on move seven. After 6.♗xe4 ♘f6 7.♗f3



7...♗e6! 8.♘c3 ♗d5 with the follow-up ...e6 after which Black has nothing to fear. However Black has also suffered no problems after 5...e6 6.♘f3 (6.♘c3 ♘f6 7.♘ge2 ♗e7 8.♕c2 ♗a6 9.0-0 0-0 was equal in Julia-Bulcourf, Villa Martelli 2004) 6...dxe4 7.♗xe4 ♘f6 8.♗d3 ♗a6 9.0-0 ♗d6 10.♗g5 ♕b6 11.♗xa6 ♕xa6 12.♘c3 ♘bd7 Recoulat-Bulcourf, Acasusso 1994.

White's remaining third move options are less testing for Black but are included for completeness and also to demonstrate other themes which Jadoul introduced.

● **3.♘f3** bxc4 4.d5 ♘f6 5.e4 proved to be a far too overambitious gambit in view of 5...♘xe4 6.♗xc4 ♕a5+ 7.♔e2?! ♗a6 8.♗xa6 ♕xa6+ 9.♔e3 ♘f6 and White's well developed king was soon hunted down in Pechisker-Welling, Richmond Western Canadian Open 2004.

● **3.d5** bxc4 4.e4 cxd5 5.exd5 (5.♕xd5 ♘c6=) 5...♕c7!? (Jadoul's original plan but there is nothing wrong with simple development for Black either) 6.♕d4 (Jadoul dismissed 6.d6!? because of 6...♕a5+ 7.♘c3 ♕e5+ 8.♗e2 e6 'with advantage to Black' but after 9.♘f3! ♕xd6 10.♕xd6 ♗xd6 11.♘b5 ♗b4+ 12.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 13.♘xd2 it may be White who holds the edge. Therefore Black should prefer 8...♗b7 with chances for both sides)

– 6...♘f6 7.♗xc4 (7.♗f4 ♕b6!) 7...♗a6 8.♘d2 e6 is also good for Black.

– 6...e6 7.♗f4 ♗c5 8.♕xc4 ♕b6 9.♗e3 d6 10.♗xc5 dxc5 and Black is fine.

● After **3.♕c2** bxc4 4.♕xc4 e6 5.♘c3 ♘f6 6.♗g5 d5 7.♕b3 c5 is Jadoul's simple equalising line.

● **3.♘d2** ♘f6 4.e4 (4.♘gf3 bxc4 5.♘xc4 g6 6.g3 ♗g7 7.♗g2 0-0 8.0-0 d6 is a perfectly healthy King's Indian position for Black, e.g. 9.♗d2 ♗e6 10.♕c2 ♗d5 11.♖fe1 ♘bd7 12.♗a5 ♕c8 13.♘cd2 ♕a6 14.♗c3 c5 15.e4 cxd4 16.♘xd4 ♗b7 when Black had equalised in Lerner-Kudischewitsch, Tel Aviv 2001) 4...bxc4 5.♗xc4 d5 6.♗d3 and now, instead of Jadoul's 6...♕b6 7.♘e2 ♗a6, which gives White a nasty initiative after 8.♗xa6 ♕xa6 9.e5 ♘fd7 10.e6! fxe6 11.0-0, Black should be content with another of Jadoul's old themes – 6...dxe4 7.♘xe4 ♘xe4 8.♗xe4 ♗e6! followed by 9...♗d5.

● **3.♘a3** is perhaps the best of White's irregular replies to the Malinoise. After 3...bxc4 4.♘xc4 e6 5.♘f3 ♘f6

– 6.g3 is a little too slow in view of 6...♗a6 (as Jadoul pointed out, 6...d5 7.♘ce5 c5?? walks into 8.♘g5+–) 7.♕a4 ♗xc4 8.♕xc4 ♕b6 9.a3 d5 10.♕a4 ♘bd7 11.♗g2 ♗d6 and Black has nothing to fear.

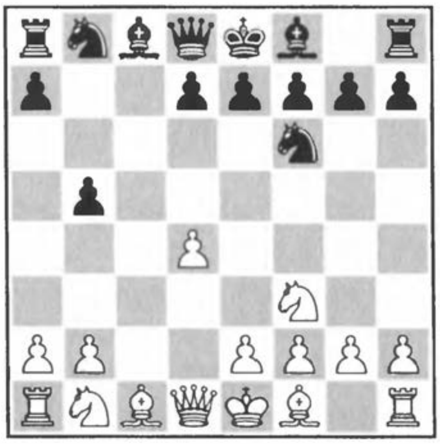
– 6.♗f4 d5 7.♘ce5 ♘e4 (!, according to Jadoul) 8.a3 f6 9.♘d3 ♘d7 when Jadoul's idea was ...c5, ...♕b6, followed by ...♗a6-c4-b3 – ambitious but possibly achievable. In any case Black has active play while White's plan is harder to establish.

3...cxb5 4.e4

● **4.e3** should not be a problem for Black after 4...a6 5.a4 bxa4 6.♕xa4 ♘f6 7.♗d2 ♗b7 8.♗a5 ♕c8 9.♘d2 ♗c6 10.♕c2 g6 11.♘gf3 d6 12.♖c1 ♕b7 13.♗c4 ♗g7 and Black was OK in Andrews-Lehotzky, Lansing 1989.

Less good is 4...♗b7?!, which walks into 5.♕b3 when Black must sacrifice a pawn for nebulous compensation, e.g. 5...e6 (5...a6 6.a4) 6.♕xb5 ♗a6 7.♕a4 ♗xf1 8.♔xf1 ♘f6 9.f3 ♗e7 10.♘c3 0-0 11.♘ge2 ♘c6 when a draw was agreed due to mutual fear (more justified on Black's behalf) in Lapcevic-D.Maric, Belgrade 2003.

● **4.♘f3 ♘f6**



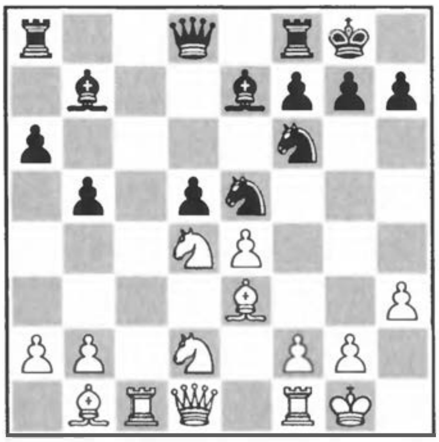
This is an important position since it arises frequently from a move order such as 1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 c6 3.d4 b5 4.cxb5 cxb5. In theory

Black should have fewer problems than in the main line but in practice White has scored well. Samples of practical play:

– **5.♕b3** a6 6.♘c3 e6 7.♗g5 ♗b7 8.e4!? h6 9.♗xf6 ♕xf6 10.d5 exd5 11.♘xd5 ♗xd5 12.exd5 ♗c5 13.♗d3 ♕e7+ 14.♔f1 0-0 15.g3 d6 was dead equal in Adler-P.Claesen, Odessa 1990 (although White won a tough fight).

– **5.♗g5!?** ♕b6 6.e3 ♘e4 7.♗f4 ♗b7 8.♗d3 e6 9.0-0 f5 10.♘e5 ♘f6 11.♕e2 a6 12.♘d2 d6 13.♘ef3 ♘c6 14.a4 worked out well for White in Aasma-Bossuyt, Huy 1991, so Black should investigate 5...♗b7, 5...e6 or perhaps even 5...♘e4.

– **5.♗f4** e6 6.e3 a6 7.♗d3 ♗b7 8.♘bd2 (8.0-0 ♗e7 9.♘bd2 ♘h5!? 10.♗g3 d6 11.a4 b4 12.a5 is not at all clear, Bali-Biro, Eger 1996) 8...♘c6 9.h3 ♗e7 10.♖c1 0-0 11.0-0 d6 12.e4 e5! 13.♗e3 exd4 14.♘xd4 ♘e5 15.♗b1 d5



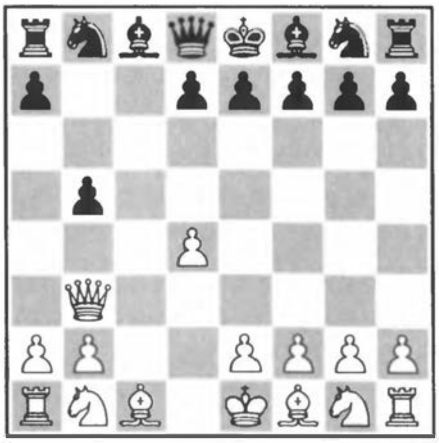
with a striking resemblance to a Spanish Opening gone right for Black, who won in the game Kreizberg-Kudischewitsch, Tel Aviv 2002.

Instead of 5...e6, 5...♗b7 will probably lead to the same positions, although Black should avoid 6.e3 ♕a5+?! As usual, trying to save time by omitting 6...a6 turns out to be an error: 7.♘bd2 e6 8.♗d3 ♗e4 9.♗xe4 ♘xe4 10.0-0 ♘f6 11.e4 ♗e7 12.d5! with a very strong position for White in Mikhalchishin-Tonoli, Sas van Gent 1990.

– **5.g3** takes the pressure off b5 and leads to the type of position most often arising from 1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 e6 3.g3 b5. 5...♗b7 6.♗g2 g6 (if Black wishes to avoid standard positions with 6...e6(!) then this is slightly more accurate than 6...d6 7.♕b3 ♕b6 8.♘c3 b4 9.♘a4 ♕b5 10.a3 a5 11.axb4 axb4 12.♘c3 ♕b6 13.♖xa8 ♗xa8 Kulcsar-Lobermayer, Hungary 1995, when 14.0-0 should be slightly better for White) 7.0-0 ♗g7 8.♕b3 ♕b6 9.♘e5?! 0-0 10.♗xb7 ♕xb7 11.♘c3 d6 12.♘f3 a6 13.a4?! b4 14.a5 ♖a7 15.♘d1 ♕b5 16.♗d2 ♘c6 and Black was already well on top in Wismeijer-Bettman, Haarlem 2000.

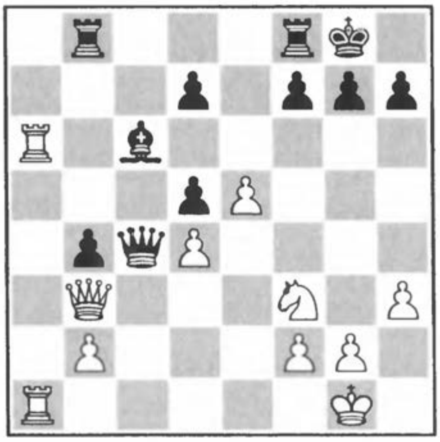
– **5.e3** Alternatives are plentiful, usually involving preceding e3 by moving White's dark-squared bishop outside the pawn chain. 5...a6 6.♗d3 ♗b7 7.0-0 e6 8.a4 b4 (not bad here but as usual 8...bxa4 would have been safer) 9.♘bd2 ♗e7 10.e4 a5 11.♖e1 d6 12.♘b3 0-0 13.♗g5 ♘bd7 14.♕e2 h6 15.♗d2 ♘b6 16.e5 ♘fd7! 17.♗b1 ♖e8 18.♕d3 ♘f8 when Black's king was safe and Black soon took over the initiative in Byway-Rogers, London Lloyds Bank 1992.

● **4.♕b3**



is a typical attempt to resolve the queenside issues quickly but after 4...a6 5.a4 (5.e4 e6 6.♘f3 ♘f6 7.♗d3 ♗b7 8.♘c3 b4 9.e5 ♗xf3

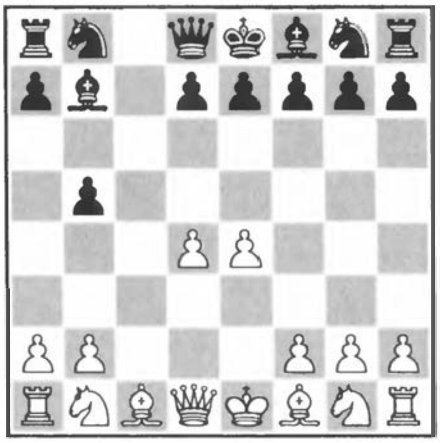
10.exf6 bxc3 11.gxf3 Glavina Rossi-Rivas Pastor, Ceuta 1994, was exciting, but Black should have been fine after 11...cxb2 12.♗xb2 ♘c6) 5...bxa4 6.♖xa4 e6 7.e4 a5! (although Black has made six moves with his queenside pawns in his first seven, with the b4 square secure and White's queen and rook in need of repositioning later, Black is already close to equality) 8.♘c3 ♘c6 9.♘f3 ♖b8 10.♕d1 ♘f6 11.e5 (11.d5 ♘b4 12.d6 ♗b7 13.e5 ♘g4 14.♗f4 ♕b6 15.♕d2 f6 is also very messy) 11...♘d5 12.♘xd5 exd5 13.♗d3 ♘b4 14.0-0 ♘xd3 15.♕xd3 ♕b6 16.♖e1 ♗b4 17.♗d2 ♗a6 18.♕e3 0-0 19.♗xb4 axb4 20.♖ea1 ♗b7 21.♕b3 ♗c6 22.♖a6 ♕b5 23.h3 ♕c4



and Black was fine in Kakageldiev-Rogers, Manila Olympiad 1992.

- **4.♗g5** has been tried by some strong players but 4...h6 5.♗h4 ♗b7 6.♘f3 ♘f6 should not be a problem for Black.
- **4.a4** bxa4 5.♘c3 is another try at resolving the queenside. After 5...e6 6.e4 ♗b4 7.♗d3 (7.♖xa4 a5 8.♘f3 ♘e7 9.♗d3 ♗a6 is fine for Black according to Jadoul) 7...♘e7 8.♘f3 a3! 9.0-0 axb2 10.♗xb2 ♘g6 11.♘b5 Black should have hung on to his extra pawn with 11...a5 instead of playing 11...0-0?! 12.♘xa7 ♗a6 13.♗xa6 ♖xa7 14.d5! ♖xa6 15.♕d4 e5 16.♕xb4 when White had strong pressure on the queenside, Babula-Drazic, Saint Vincent Open 2002.
- Trying to play a London set-up with **4.♗f4** ♗b7 5.♘d2 e6 6.e3 ♘f6 7.♘gf3 should not be threatening for Black, e.g. 7...a6 (7...♕b6?! again works out badly after 8.a4 bxa4 9.♗e2 ♗b4 10.0-0 ♗d5 11.♘c4 ♕b7 12.♘d6+ ♗xd6 13.♗xd6 ♘e4 14.♗a3 ♗b3 15.♕d3 f6 16.♘d2 ♘xd2 17.♕xd2 ♔f7 18.♖ac1 ♘c6 19.e4 and White had tremendous compensation for the pawn in Allacher-Schwab, Austrian Team Championship 2002/03) 8.♗e2 ♗e7 9.h3 0-0 10.0-0 d6 11.a4 bxa4 12.♕xa4 ♘bd7 13.♖fc1 ♘b6 14.♕a5 ♘bd5 15.♗g5 h6 16.♗h4 and now instead of 16...♖c8 17.♘c4 ♕xa5 18.♘xa5 ♖xc1+ 19.♖xc1 which gave White an edge in Van Herck-Claesen, Ghent 1989, Black could have equalised with 16...♕xa5 17.♖xa5 ♖fc8.

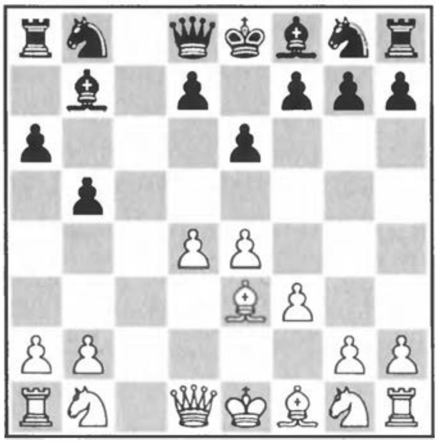
4...♗b7



4...♘f6 will almost invariably transpose to the main lines, but the careless 4...e6?! allows 5.♗xb5! ♕a5+ 6.♘c3 ♗b4 7.♕d3 when Black did not have enough for the pawn in Sorokin-Bulcourf, Villa Ballester 1996.

5.♗d3

- If White wishes to play a set-up with **5.f3** then this is the moment to do so. After **5...a6** (5...b4, as usual, weakens the c4 square too much. After 6.♗e3 e6 7.♘d2 ♘f6 8.♗d3 ♗e7 9.♘h3 a5 10.0-0 ♗a6 11.♗xa6 ♖xa6 12.d5 0-0 13.♘c4 exd5 14.exd5 d6 15.♕d2 ♘bd7 16.♖ac1 Black was without an active plan in Bernal Moro-Rivas Pastor, Spain 1993) **6.♗e3 e6** (6...g6 7.♘d2 ♗h6 looks a little too original – after 8.♕b3 ♗xe3 9.♕xe3 ♕b6 10.♗d3 ♘c6 11.♘e2 e5 12.0-0 ♘ge7 13.♘b3 ♖c8 14.♖ac1 0-0 15.♕f2 d6 16.d5 ♕xf2+ 17.♔xf2 ♘a7 18.♘a5 Black had to defend a very ugly ending in Remlinger-J.Frank, St Martin 1991)



White has a choice of three healthy moves:

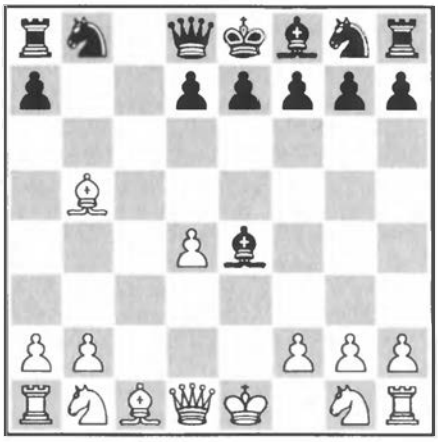
– **7.♘d2** ♘h6!?. Another tricky Jadoul idea. After 8.♗d3 f5 9.♘e2? (9.♘h3!) 9...fxe4 10.♘xe4 (on 10.fxe4 ♘g4 is awkward) 10...♘f5 Black was already fine in Santa Torres-Jadoul, Thessaloniki Olympiad 1988, and Black went on to win a fine game after 11.♗f2 ♗b4+ 12.♘2c3 0-0 13.0-0 ♘c6 14.a3 ♗e7 15.♗c2 ♗h4 16.♘g3 ♘ce7∓ 17.♕d3 ♘g6 18.♘ce4 ♘f4 19.♕d2 ♗g5 20.♔h1 ♘h4 21.♘xg5 ♕xg5 22.♗e3 ♖f7 23.♗xf4 ♖xf4 24.♗e4 d5 25.♗c2 ♖af8 26.♖ad1 ♖8f6 27.♖de1 ♖h6 28.♖e5 ♕xg3! 0-1.

– **7.♘h3** ♘f6 8.♗e2 ♗e7 9.0-0 d5 10.e5 ♘fd7 11.f4 g6 12.♘d2 h5 13.♘f3 ♘c6 14.♘fg5 ♘f8 15.♔h1 ♕b6 16.♖c1 ♘a5 17.b3 was a little better for White in B.Jones-Rogers, Sydney Interclub 1996.

– **7.♗d3** ♘f6 8.♘e2 ♘c6 9.♘bc3 d5 10.e5 ♘d7 11.0-0 ♗e7 12.f4 g6 should also have been a little better for White until he mistimed his kingside pawn advance and played 13.g4?! ♕b6! 14.♕d2 h5 and now White was forced to block the kingside and concede equality with 15.g5 in Boichev-Badev, Velingrad 2004, since the logical break 15.f5 fails to 15...gxf5 16.gxf5 ♖g8+ 17.♔h1 ♘cxe5!.

● **5.d5** ♘f6 6.♘d2 looks very odd, yet 6...a6 7.a4 b4? 8.♘gf3 e6 9.♗c4 exd5 10.exd5 ♕e7+ 11.♔f1 ♗xd5 12.♗xd5 ♘xd5 13.♘c4 ♕e4 14.♕b3 ♗e7 15.♗g5 worked out well for White in Panczyk-Wielecki, Bielsko Biala 1990. However instead of 7...b4?, 7...e6!? 8.axb5 ♗b4 looks to be a very promising gambit.

● **5.♗xb5?!** sets up White for one of the biggest traps in this opening – 5...♗xe4



6.♘f3?? (6.♔f1) 6...♗xb1 7.0-0 (7.♖xb1 ♕a5+) 7...♗g6 and Black was a piece up for nothing in Liardet-Frank, Geneva 1995.

5...♘f6 6.♘d2

● **6.♕e2** is well met by 6...♘c6! 7.♘f3 ♘b4 8.e5 ♘xd3+ 9.♕xd3 ♘d5 when taking the pawn is risky after 10...♕c8. The game Teo-Jadoul, Thessaloniki Olympiad 1988 was a model game for Black and continued 10.0-0 ♕b6 11.♘c3 ♘xc3 12.bxc3 ♕g6! 13.♕xg6 hxg6 14.♗a3 ♖c8 15.♖ac1 ♖c4 16.♗b4 ♗xf3 17.gxf3 e6 18.♖b1 ♗xb4 19.♖xb4 ♖xb4 20.cxb4 ♖h4 21.♖d1 ♔e7 22.a3 d6 23.♔g2 and now, instead of 23...a6! with a huge advantage for Black in the endgame, Black carelessly played 23...g5 and allowed White to break free with 24.♖c1! ♖xd4 (24...♔d7 25.exd6 ♔xd6 26.♖c5) 25.♖c7+ ♔e8 26.exd6 ♖xd6 27.♖xa7 and the game was drawn 20 moves later.

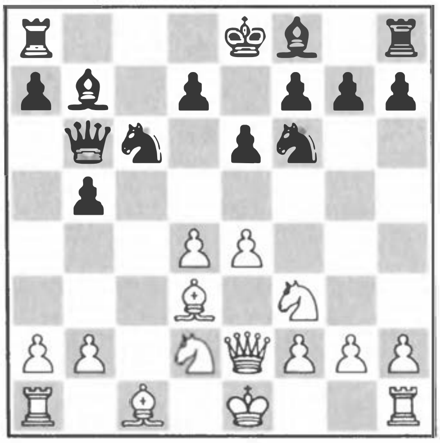
● **6.f3** looks harmless but after 6...♕b6 7.♘e2 ♘c6 8.♘bc3!? Black must avoid 8...♘xd4 9.♘xd4 ♕xd4 10.♘xb5 ♕b6 11.♗f4! e5!? (11...d6 12.♕a4 ♘d7 13.♖c1±) 12.♗xe5 ♗b4+ 13.♔e2 0-0 14.♕b3 when Black had insufficient compensation for the pawn in Sutter-Boog, Bern 1993.

Instead of 6...♕b6, Black should simply play 6...a6.

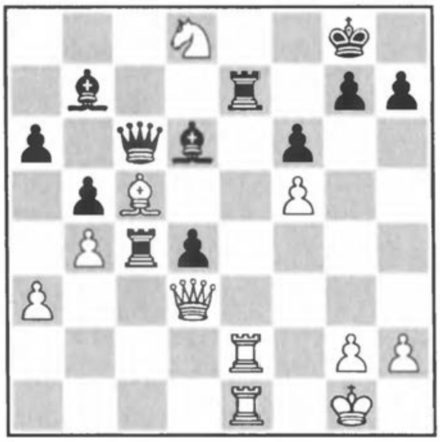
6...e6

6...♕b6?! seems to exert a fatal attraction for many players with Black in this line. Some examples after **7.♘gf3 e6** (here 7...♘c6?! is even worse in view of 8.d5 ♘b4 9.♗b1 e6 10.a3 ♘a6 11.0-0! exd5 12.exd5 – 12.e5!? is thematic and strong as well – 12...♗xd5 13.♖e1+ ♗e6 14.♘e4 ♘xe4 15.♗xe4 ♖d8 16.b4! ♗e7 17.♗e3 ♕b8 18.♘d4 0-0 19.♕h5 g6 20.♕xb5 and White won in Soppe-Giardelli, Buenos Aires 1983)

● **8.♕e2** ♘c6



9.d5! (even 9.♘b3 ♘b4 10.♗b1 a5 11.a3 ♘a6 12.♗g5 looks very healthy for White, e.g. 12...d5 13.♗xf6 gxf6 14.0-0 a4 15.♘bd2 ♘c7 16.♗d3 ♗h6 17.e5 f5 18.b4 ♗c6 19.♖ac1 ♗d7 20.♖c3 ♘a6 21.♖fc1 and White controlled the board in Leitao-Lima, Rio de Janeiro 1998. If White wants to be a little extravagant there is also 9.0-0!? ♘xd4 10.♘xd4 ♕xd4 11.♘b3! with a strong initiative for the pawn) 9...♘b4 10.♗b1 exd5 11.a3 ♖c8 12.0-0 ♘c2 13.♗xc2 ♖xc2 14.♕d3 ♖c8 15.e5 ♘e4 16.♘b3 ♘c5 17.♘xc5 ♗xc5 18.b4 ♗e7 19.♗e3 ♕a6 20.♘d4 ♖c4 21.f4?! (after 21.♘f5! White would have been well on top) 21...0-0 22.f5 f6! 23.e6 dxe6 24.♘xe6 ♖f7 25.♗d4 ♗d6 26.♖ae1 ♖e7 27.♖e2 ♕c6 (27...♗c8!∓) 28.♖fe1 a6 29.♗c5 d4!? (29...♖xe6 30.♖xe6 ♗xc5+ 31.bxc5 ♕xc5+ 32.♔h1 ♖c1 ∞) 30.♘d8

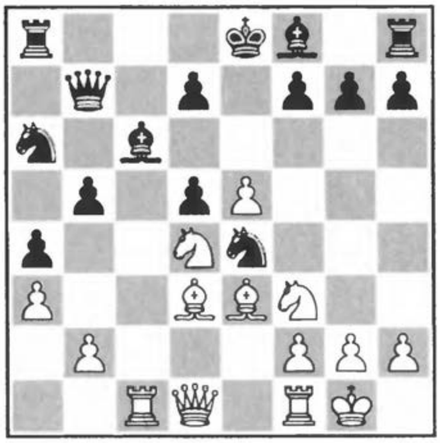


30...♖e3??, missing 30...♕xg2+! 31.♖xg2 ♖xe1+ 32.♔f2 ♖e3 and Black has enough counterplay to draw. After 30...♖e3 a draw was agreed in Groszpeter-Rogers, Biel Open 1991, a time troubled White forgetting that after 31.♘xc6 ♖xd3 32.♖e8+ ♔f7 33.♘d8 is checkmate.

● **8.0-0** (this is the main line in ECO) 8...♘c6 9.d5! ♘b4 10.♗b1 exd5 11.e5! ♘e4

– 12.a3!? ♘xd2 13.♕xd2 ♘a6 14.♕f4 h6 15.b4 ♘c7 16.♗e3 ♘e6 17.♗xb6? (17.♕g4!) 17...♘xf4 and Black had survived the worst in Molzahn-Schwab, St Veit 2002.

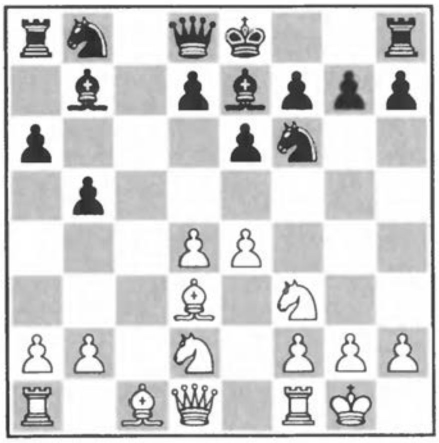
– 12.♘b3 a5 13.♗e3 (soon all the downsides in Black's position will become clear: the queen is misplaced on b6, the Black knights can be forced back and the b5 pawn will be a target) 13...♕c7 14.a3 ♘a6 15.♗d3 ♗c6 16.♖c1 a4 17.♘bd4 ♕b7



18.e6!! f6 19.♘xc6 (19.♘e5! fxe5 20.♕h5+ ♔d8 – 20...g6 21.♕xe5 – 21.♘xc6+ dxc6 22.♗xe4 was even more devastating) 19...dxc6 20.♘d4 ♘ec5 21.♕h5+ ♔d8 22.♖fd1 ♖c8 23.♗f5 ♖c7 24.♗f4 ♖e7 25.♗g3 ♕b6 26.♘xc6+! ♕xc6 27.♖xd5+! ♕xd5 28.♖d1 and soon 1-0 in Van der Sterren-Rogers, Wijk aan Zee II 1989.

This was a game which gave 2...b5 a poor reputation, but the real culprit should have been 6...♕b6.

7.♘gf3 a6 8.0-0 ♗e7



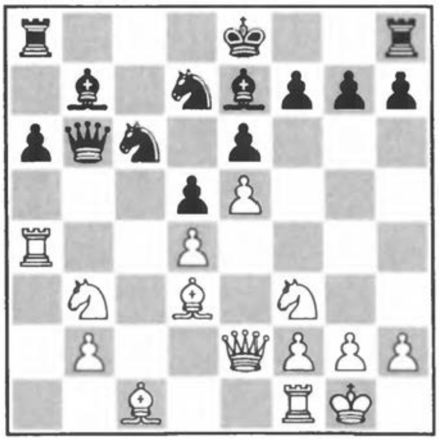
9.a4

The recommended recipe for White but the more modest 9.♕e2! should be preferred. Then 9...d5 10.e5 ♘fd7 11.b3 leads to a far better version of the game for White – the b7 bishop will have real trouble entering the game. Nonetheless, this may be better for Black than 9.♕e2 d6 which could lead to the Crouch-Rogers game given in the next note.

9...bxa4

9...b4 is not (quite) as bad as its reputation. After 10.♕e2 d6 (10...d5 11.e5 ♘fd7 12.a5 leaves Black's queenside paralysed) 11.e5! dxe5 12.dxe5 ♘fd7? (12...♘d5 is far more natural, although Black has not yet solved the problem of what to do with his king) 13.♘e4 ♗d5 14.♖d1 ♘c6 15.♗f4 h6 (15...0-0 16.♗c4!) 16.♖ac1 ♕a5 17.♗c4! ♘b6 18.♘d6+ ♗xd6 19.♗xd5 ♘xd5 20.exd6 ♘xf4 21.d7+! ♔e7 22.♕e4 ♘d5 (22...♕f5 23.♕xc6 ♘e2+ 24.♔f1 ♘xc1 25.♕d6+ ♔f6 26.♕d4+!+–) 23.♖xc6 ♕xa4 (23...♔xd7 24.♘e5+ ♔e7 25.♘xf7!) 24.♖dc1 and White had a winning attack in Crouch-Rogers, London Lloyds Bank Open 1992.

10.♕e2 d5! 11.e5 ♘fd7 12.♖xa4 ♘c6 13.♘b3 ♕b6

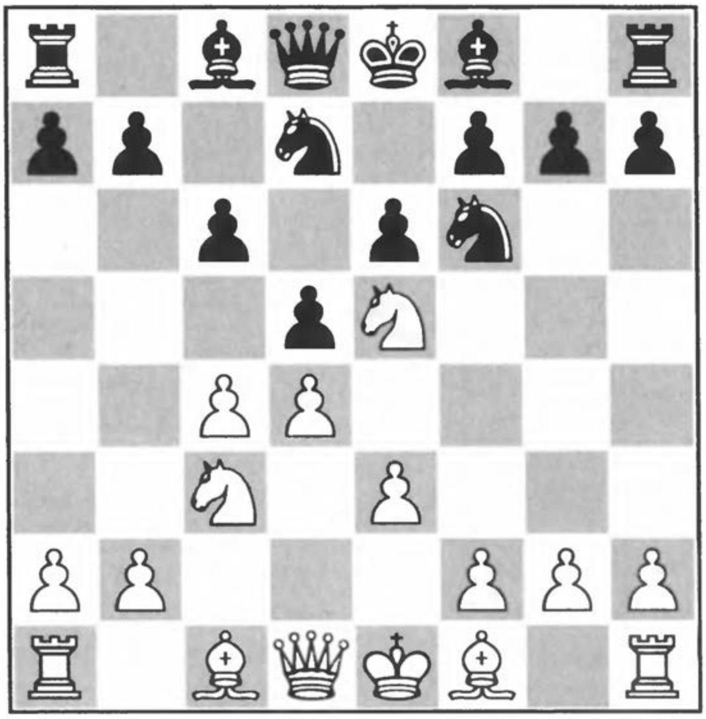


The sort of French-style position Black can happily play in this line. The weakness of the b4 square counterbalances any problems on a6 and chances are equal. The only game to have reached this position – Kozul-Laketic, Kladovo 1990 – saw the lower rated player draw.

CHAPTER 15

Jeroen Bosch

Rubinstein's Anti-Meran Variation



Let's play 6.♘e5

Akiba Rubinstein's name is attached to numerous opening variations. With no attempt at completeness, how about the following, incredible, list: there is a Rubinstein Variation in the Nimzo-Indian, a Rubinstein Variation in the French, a Rubinstein Variation in the Four Knights Game, the strongest set-up for White against the Tarrasch Defence is Rubinstein's line, and not bad either is his a4-line in the Queen's Gambit Accepted.

Furthermore, there have been major contributions in the Queen's Gambit, and as a curiosum we could add 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 (the Rubinstein-Nimzowitsch Variation). Then there are systems which do not bear his name, but owe much to his unusual creative talent. How about 4.g3 in the Queen's Indian, and the subject of this article, the Meran Variation in the Slav?

It was Rubinstein who devised the Meran set-up in his games versus Teichmann (Carlsbad 1923) and Grünfeld (Merano 1924). The latter game gained prominence in the nomenclature of chess openings. The Meran is of course a tough theoretical nut to crack.

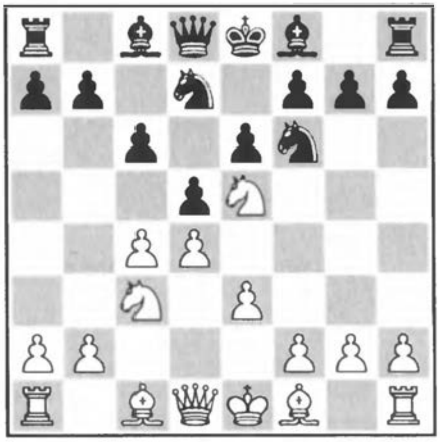
However, if we accept the opening genius of Rubinstein (and who wouldn't after the above list), then we have our SOS answer. For Rubinstein himself opted for 6.♘e5 when facing the Meran as White!

☐ **Luc Winants**
■ **Sipke Ernst**
Dutch team championship 2005/06

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 d5 4.e3 e6 5.♘f3 ♘bd7

The starting position of the Meran Variation. The normal move order is 1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.e3 ♘bd7.

6.♘e5



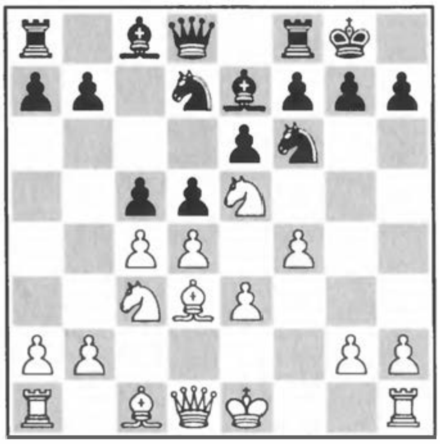
As mentioned above, Rubinstein was fond of this move. White prepares a set-up with f4, ♗d3 and 0-0.

6...♘xe5

This is the main line. Black exchanges the knight before White gets a chance to play f4 (when fxe5 would be possible). White's pawn structure is fractured, but he gains space in the centre and on the kingside.

Black has several other defensive options at his disposal:

- 6...♗d6 7.f4 0-0 8.♗d3 dxc4 9.♘xc4 ♗b4 10.a3 ♗xc3+ 11.bxc3 c5 12.0-0 b5 13.♘d6 c4 14.♗c2 ♕b6 15.♘xc8 ♖fxc8 16.♕f3 ♕c6 17.e4 ♘b6 18.g4, Black has mistreated the opening and was fighting a losing battle in Rubinstein-Lafora, Hamburg Olympiad 1930.
- 6...♗e7 7.♗d3 0-0 8.f4 (here we see the basic idea of Rubinstein's 6.♘e5. This set-up is reminiscent of Pillsbury's plan in the Orthodox Queen's Gambit) 8...c5 (8...dxc4 9.♗xc4 c5 10.0-0 ♘b6 11.♗b3 ♗d7 12.dxc5 ♗xc5 13.♕f3 ♖b8 14.♔h1 ♕e7 15.♘xd7, and White is better, Ilinsky-Piesina, Barnaul 1984)



Now White is at a crossroads:

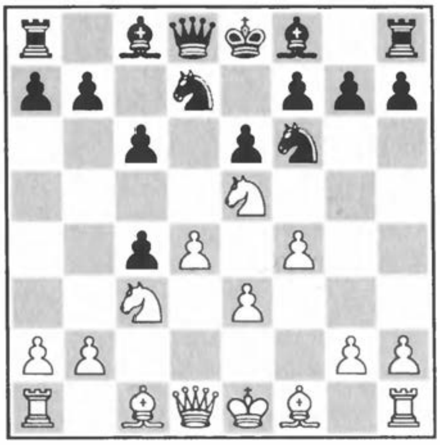
– 9.cxd5 cxd4 (or 9...♘xd5 10.♘xd5 exd5 11.0-0 ♘f6 12.♗d2 cxd4 13.exd4 ♘e4! 14.♗e3 ♕b6, and now instead of the dubious pawn sacrifice 15.f5 the modest 15.♕e2, Spielmann-Euwe, Amsterdam 1932) 10.exd4 ♘b6 11.0-0 (11.dxe6!? ♗xe6 12.♗c2) 11...♘bxd5 12.♖f3 b6 13.♘c6 ♕d6 14.♘xd5 exd5 15.♘xe7+ ♕xe7 16.f5 ♕b4 17.♖f4 ♖e8 18.♗d2 ♕xb2 19.♖b1 ♕xa2 20.♖a1 ♕b2 21.♖b1 ♕a2 22.♖a1 ½-½, Canal-Medina Garcia, Madrid 1951.

– If White does not release the tension with 9.0-0, then Black should play 9...♘b6 rather than 9...♕c7?! 10.cxd5 exd5 11.♕f3 cxd4 12.exd4 ♕b6 13.♗e3 ♕xb2 14.♖fc1 ♕a3 15.♖ab1 ♗d8 (15...a6 Gligoric) 16.♗f2 ♕d6 17.♘b5 ♕b8 18.♗g3, with ample compensation, Spielmann-Müller, Ebensee 1933.

- 6...dxc4. Now there are two approaches. White can play a kind of Queen's Gambit Accepted with 7.♘xd7 ♗xd7 8.♗xc4 c5 (8...♗e7?! 9.0-0 0-0 10.e4± Conquest-M.Piket, Embalse 1981) 9.0-0 (9.d5 exd5 10.♘xd5 ♗c6 is, if anything, better for

Black, Spielmann-Bogoljubow, Zandvoort 1936) 9...♗c6 (9...cxd4 10.exd4 ♗c6, and now perhaps 11.♗g5 ♗e7 12.♗xf6!? ♗xf6 13.d5) 10.dxc5 ♗xc5 11.a3 0-0 12.b4 ♗e7 13.♗b2 ♖c8 equal, Bezman-Fish, Moscow 1995.

Or he can continue in the style of Rubinstein with 7.f4



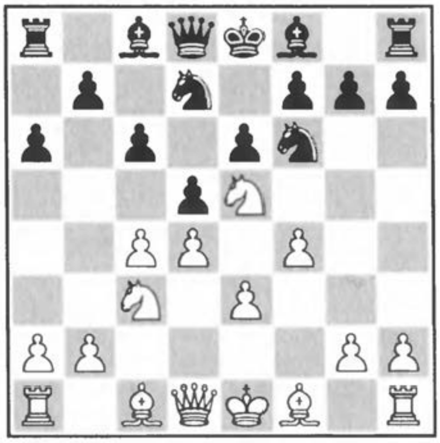
– 7...♘xe5?! 8.fxe5 ♘d5 (if 8...♘d7 then Barden's 9.♗e2, and not 9.♗xc4 ♘xe5!) 9.♗xc4 f5 10.0-0 b5 11.♗d3 g6 12.e4 and White had a clear edge in the game Schuurman-Timmermans, Hoogeveen 2002.

– 7...♗b4 8.♕c2 c5 9.♗xc4 ♕b6? (9...cxd4 10.exd4 0-0) 10.a3 cxd4 11.exd4 ♗d6 12.♕e2 a6? (12...0-0 13.♗e3±) 13.♘xf7, and White won in a few moves, Conquest-Moser, Embalse 1981.

As readers of New In Chess Magazine have pointed out, 8.♗xc4 is also good, for, after 8...♘e4, White can favourably sac a pawn with 9.0-0.

– 7...c5 8.♗xc4 ♗e7 9.0-00-0 10.♔h1 cxd4 11.exd4 ♘b6 12.♗b3 ♘bd5 13.♕f3 (White's isolated pawn set-up, although uncommon, is not so bad – remember Botvinnik-Vidmar, Nottingham 1936?) 13...♗d7 14.f5 ♗c6 15.fxe6 fxe6 16.♕e2 and White is better, Ross-Delgado Crespo, Cienfuegos 1997.

● 6...a6. This position usually arises in practice via a different move order (either via the Chebanenko Variation or via the Meran with 5...a6 instead of 5...♘bd7). 7.f4, and now:

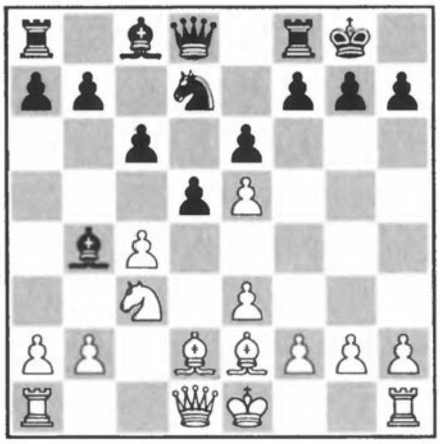


– 7...c5 8.cxd5 exd5 9.♗e2 (9.♗d3) 9...cxd4 10.exd4 b5 11.0-0 ♗b7, and here 12.♗f3 would have been stronger than the game continuation 12.a4?! b4 13.♘b1 ♗d6, Schmaus-Unzicker, Riedenburg 1947.

– 7...♗b4 8.♗d3 dxc4 9.♘xc4 b5 10.♘e5 ♗b7 11.a3 ♗xc3+ 12.bxc3 c5 13.0-0 c4?! 14.♗c2 ♘xe5 15.fxe5 ♕d5 16.♕e2 and White dominates, Ward-Vea, Caleta 2005.

– 7...dxc4 8.♗xc4 b5 9.♗b3 ♕c7 10.♕f3 ♗b7 11.♕h3. The opening has been a big success. Rubinstein won after 11...♘xe5 12.fxe5 ♘d5 13.♘xd5 cxd5 14.♗d2 ♗e7 15.0-0 0-0 16.♖ac1 ♕b6 17.♗c2 g6 18.♗d3 a5? 19.♖f3 b4 20.♖cf1 ♔g7 (20...♗a6 21.♗xa6 ♕xa6 22.♕h6 ♕d3 23.♖h3 g5 24.e4!) 21.♗e1 f5 22.exf6+ ♗xf6 23.♖xf6!, 1-0 Rubinstein-Vajda, Budapest 1926.

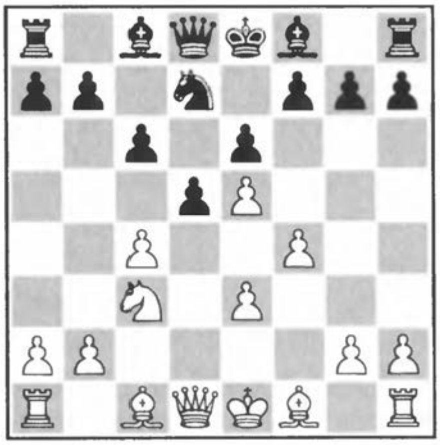
● 6...♗b4 7.♗d2 (now 7.f4? ♘xe5 8.fxe5 ♘e4 is just bad for White) 7...0-0 (7...♘xe5 8.dxe5 ♘d7 9.f4 transposes, while 9.♕g4 0-0 10.cxd5 ♗xc3 11.♗xc3 exd5 12.♕d4!? is an extra option) 8.♗e2 (8.♗d3 is inaccurate after 8...♘xe5 9.dxe5 ♘d7 10.cxd5 ♘xe5 11.♗xh7+ ♔xh7 12.♕h5+ ♔g8 13.♕xe5 exd5, and Black is better, Schoonmaker-Stripunsky, Oklahoma 2004; 8.f4 c5 9.cxd5 cxd4 10.exd4 ♘b6 11.♗d3 ♘bxd5 12.0-0 ♕b6, and Black was doing fine, Taylor-Shulman, Los Angeles 2002) 8...♘xe5 9.dxe5 ♘d7



– 10.cxd5 exd5 11.f4 a5 12.0-0 ♕e7 13.a3 ♗c5 14.♗d3 f6 15.♕c2 was approximately equal in Dzagnidze-Ovod, Dresden 2004.

– 10.f4 ♘c5 11.0-0 ♗xc3 12.♗xc3 ♘e4 13.♕c2 ♕b6 14.♗d3 g6 and here Bezman-Berezin, Alushta 1999, ended in a premature draw. It would appear that White has a pleasant edge in the final position. Note that 14...♕xe3+ 15.♔h1 is better for White, who obtains attacking possibilities with 16.♖ae1 or 16.♖f3, while 14...♘xc3? 15.♗xh7+♔h8 16.♖f3 ♘e4 17.♖h3 f5 18.♗g6+ ♔g8 19.♕e2 just wins.

7.dxe5 ♘d7 8.f4



The endgame after 8.cxd5 ♘xe5?! 9.f4 ♘g6 10.dxc6 ♕xd1+ 11.♘xd1 is more pleasant for White. 11...bxc6 12.♗d2e5 13.♖c1 exf4 14.exf4 ♗d6 15.g3 ♗e6 16.♗c4, and Rubinstein won after a long struggle (against Mikenas in Prague 1931). However, Black should play 8...exd5 9.f4 ♗b4.

8...a6?!

This is a useful move in principle, and if Chebanenko's 4...a6 is playable, then why not 8...a6 here? However, with this slow move Ernst just allows White to play his ideal set-up (cxd5, ♗d3 and 0-0). Some minor alternatives:

– 8...f6?! 9.cxd5 cxd5 10.♗d3 f5 11.0-0 ♘c5 12.♗c2 with a small advantage for White, Liascovich-Hungaski, Buenos Aires 2003.

– 8...f5 9.♗e2 a6 10.0-0 b5 11.cxd5 cxd5 12.a4 b4 13.♘xd5! exd5 14.♕xd5 ♘b6 15.♕c6+ ♗d7 16.♗h5+ g6 17.♗xg6+ hxg6 18.♕xg6+ ♔e7 19.♕f6+ ♔e8 20.♕xh8, and White should, but didn't, win in Kraus-Heinrich, Kirchheim 1947.

– 8...dxc4 9.♗xc4 b5 10.♗e2 ♗b7 11.0-0 ♕b6 12.♕c2 a6 13.a4 ♗e7 14.♖f3 g6 15.♖h3 ♖c8 16.♗d2 b4 17.♘e4 c5 18.b3 ♗d5 19.♗e1 ♕b7 20.♘d2 ♗xg2 21.♗xa6! ♕xa6 22.♔xg2 ♕e2+ 23.♗f2 ♘b6 24.♖e1 ♕a6 25.♖c1 ♕e2?! 26.♘c4 ♕xc2 27.♖xc2, White has an endgame edge and won after a long game in Rubinstein-Rosselli del Turco, Prague Olympiad 1931.

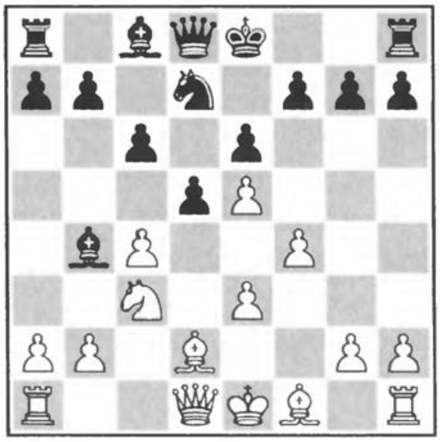
– 8...♘b6 9.♕b3 (9.cxd5 exd5 10.♗e2 ♕h4+ 11.g3 ♕h3 12.♗f1 ♕g4 13.♕xg4 ♗xg4 ½-½, Bezman-Popovich, Alushta 1999) 9...♕e7 10.♗d2 f6 11.exf6 gxf6 12.0-0-0dxc4 13.♗xc4 ♘xc4 14.♕xc4 ♗d7 15.♘e4 b5 16.♕d3 f5 17.♘f6+!, and White won quickly in Nimzowitsch-Mieses, Frankfurt 1930.

– 8...♗c5 9.♗d2 a6 10.cxd5 cxd5 11.♗d3 ♗a7 12.0-0 ♘c5 13.♗c2 d4 14.exd4 ♕xd4+ 15.♔h1 ♗d7 16.♕e2 ♗c6 17.♗e3 ♕d7

18.b4 ♘a4 19.♗xa4! ♗xa4 20.♗xa7 ♖xa7 21.f5 ♗c6 (21...exf5 22.e6 fxe6 23.♘xa4 ♕xa4 24.♕xe6+) 22.♖ad1 ♕e7 23.b5 ♗d7 24.♕e3 ♖a8 25.f6 gxf6 26.♘e4 1-0, Garcia Palermo-Huerta, Bayamo 1985.

The two main replies are:

● 8...♗b4 9.♗d2 (clearly stronger than 9.cxd5, as proven by Botvinnik in his game against Makogonov: 9.cxd5 exd5 10.♗d3 ♘c5! 11.♗c2 – now Black has an annoying check, instead 11.0-0 would have been preferable, according to Botvinnik – 11...♕h4+ 12.g3 – 12.♔f1 Botvinnik – 12...♕h3, and Black had the edge in the well-known game Makogonov-Botvinnik, Sverdlovsk 1943).



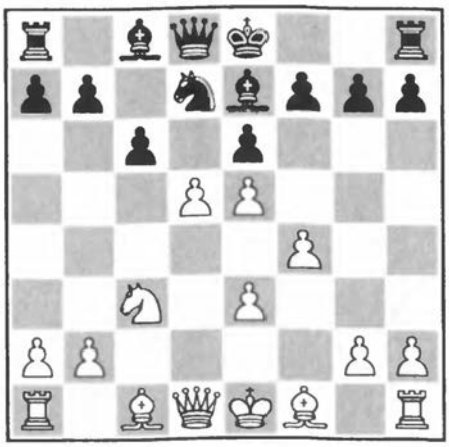
Here Black should not play 9...dxc4 because of 10.♘e4.

– 9...f5 10.a3 ♗c5 11.b4 d4 12.♘a2!? dxe3 13.♗c1 ♗e7 14.♗xe3 with a space advantage in the game Spielmann-Pokorny, Sliac 1932.

– 9...0-0 10.a3 ♗a5 11.♕c2 a6 12.♗d3 ♕h4+ (our familiar manoeuvre again) 13.g3 ♕h3 14.♗f1 ♕h6 (14...♕h5 15.♗e2 ♕h3 16.0-0-0) 15.cxd5 cxd5 16.♗g2 b5 17.0-0 ♗b6, with near-equality, Boleslavsky-Sakharov, Kiev 1958.

– 9...♕b6 10.♗e2 0-0 11.0-0 ♗xc3 12.bxc3 dxc4 13.♗xc4 ♖d8 14.♕c2 ♕c5 15.♗e2 b6 16.♖ad1 ♘f8 17.♗c1 ♗b7 18.♖d4 ♕e7 19.♖fd1 c5 20.♖d6, White is superior, Rubinstein-Vidmar, San Remo 1930.

● 8...♗e7 9.cxd5. Now is the right moment to clarify the situation in the centre. How should Black recapture?



– 9...exd5 10.♗d3 ♘c5 11.♗c2 Compared to Makogonov-Botvinnik above the bishop is not on b4 but on e7, so Black cannot play 11...♕h4+ (as Botvinnik could). 11...f5 12.0-0 0-0 13.b3 g6 14.♗b2 ♘e4 (or 14...b6 15.b4 ♘e4 16.♗xe4 dxe4 17.♕b3+ ♖f7 18.♖fd1 Makogonov-Yudovich, Leningrad 1939) 15.♘xe4 dxe4 16.♕e2 ♗e6 17.g4 Bondarevsky-Belavenets, Leningrad 1939.

– 9...cxd5 10.♗d3 ♘c5 (10...0-0 11.0-0 f5 12.exf6 ♘xf6 13.♕e2 a6 14.e4 d4 15.♘d1 b6 16.e5 ♘d5 17.♕h5 g6 18.♗xg6!, Welling-Michalczak, Zwolle 1993) 11.♗c2 a5 12.0-0 g6 13.e4 (13.b3 looks like an improvement) 13...d4 14.♘a4 b6 (Black has 14...d3!) 15.♘xc5 bxc5 16.♗d3 a4 17.f5, with unclear play in Tartakower-Maroczy, Nice 1930.

9.cxd5

For curiosity's sake, in the game Meszaros-Tokos, Slovakia 1998, there followed: 9.♕f3, provoking the following combination: 9...dxc4 10.♗xc4 ♘xe5 11.fxe5 ♕h4+ 12.g3 ♕xc4 13.♖f1 (White is virtually winning!) 13...♗d7 14.♕xf7+ ♔d8, and now instead of the game continuation 15.♕xf8+?, White wins with 15.e4 ♗b4 16.♗g5+ ♔c7 17.0-0-0.

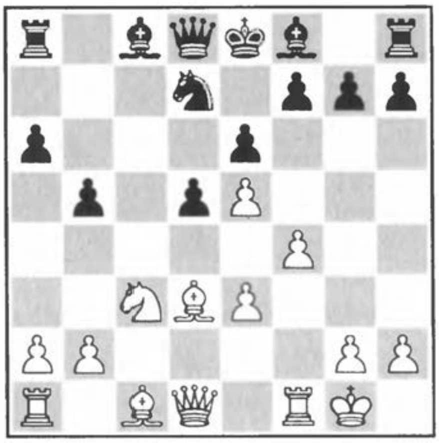
9...cxd5

After 9...exd5 White does not play 10.♗d3?! ♘c5 11.♗c2?! ♕h4+ 12.g3 ♕h3, but 10.e4 or 10.♗e2!? ♗c5 11.0-0 0-0 12.♔h1.

10.♗d3 b5

Perhaps the modest 10...♗e7 11.0-0 0-0 12.b3 f5.

11.0-0



11...g6

So as to nip in the bud White's attack along the b1-h7 diagonal.

12.b3 ♗g7 13.♗b2 ♘c5 14.♗c2 b4

White is better after 14...♗b7 15.b4 ♘d7 (15...♘e4 16.♘xe4 dxe4 17.♗d4) 16.a4 bxa4 17.♘xa4.

15.♘e2 ♘e4 16.♗d4

White preserves all the positional pluses of his position. He will chase the knight from e4 with ♘g3 and if necessary ♕f3. However, very attractive was also 16.♗xe4 dxe4 17.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 18.♖fd1+, which yields White an appreciable endgame advantage.

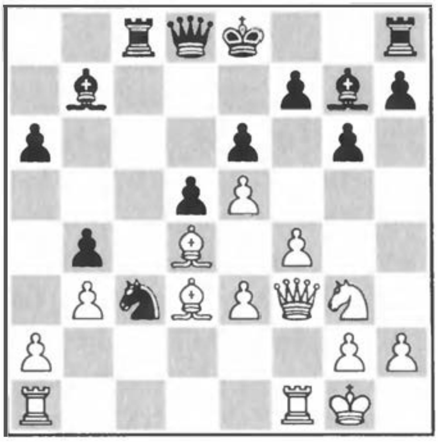
16...♗b7 17.♘g3 ♖c8

Better was 17...♘xg3 18.hxg3 h5, restraining White on the kingside and aiming for the march of the h-pawn.

18.♗d3 ♘c3?

Again 18...♘xg3 19.hxg3 h5. Castling 18...0-0 is met by 19.♘xe4 dxe4 20.♗c4.

19.♕f3



19...f5?

This aggravates Black's problems.

20.exf6 ♗xf6 21.♕g4

With the double threat of 22.♕xe6+ and 22.♗xg6+.

21...♔d7

This defends against both threats, but still allows Winants to finish in style:

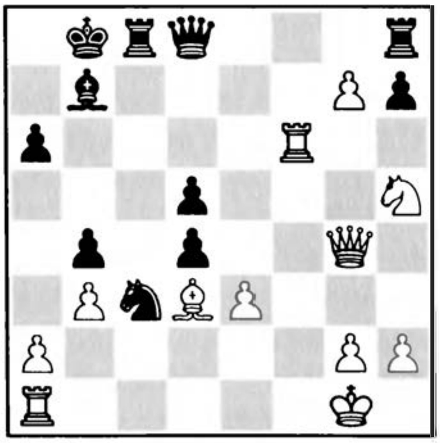
22.f5! e5

Black is beyond survival: 22...exf5? 23.♗xf5+, and 22...gxf5 23.♗xf5.

23.fxg6+ ♔c7 24.♘h5 exd4 25.♖xf6 ♔b8

Or 25...hxg6 26.♕f4+ ♔d7 27.♕d6+ ♔e8 28.♘g7 mate.

26.g7

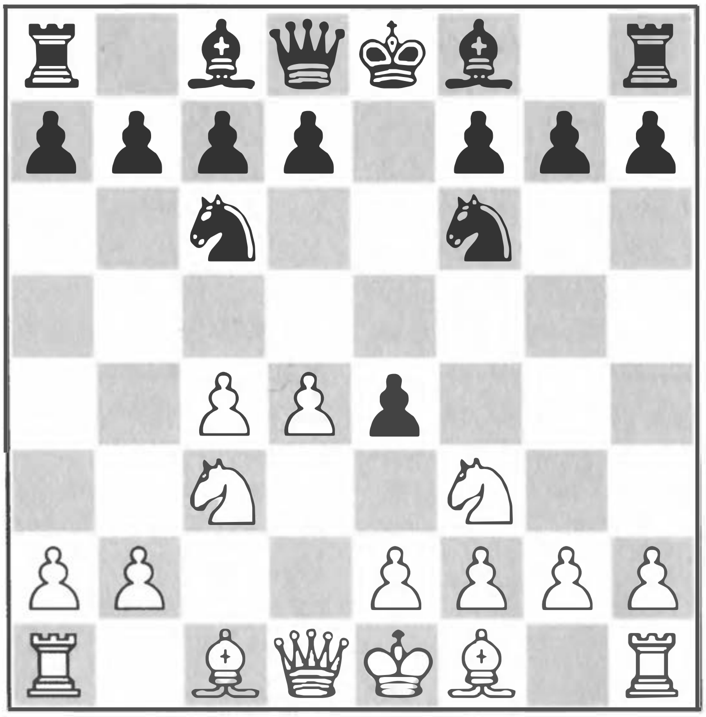


Black resigned, since there is nothing to play for after either 26...♖g8 27.♗xh7 or 26...♖e8 27.♖f7 dxe3 28.♘f6.

CHAPTER 16

Sergey Tiviakov

English Four Knights – 4.d4 e4!?

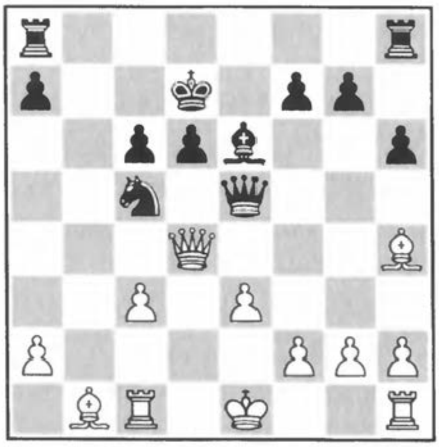


1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.d4 e4

With Black it is important to know what to do in the English Four Knights after 1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.d4. I speak from experience. When I encountered this move for the first time in 1993 against Ilya Smirin (Rostov-on-Don) I had no special recipe and went for the traditional 4...exd4 5.♘xd4 ♗b4 and after 6.♗g5 received a worse position. I had to suffer a lot to make a draw.

☐ **Ilya Smirin**
■ **Sergey Tiviakov**
Rostov on Don 1993

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.♘f3 ♘c6 4.d4 exd4 5.♘xd4 ♗b4 6.♗g5 h6 7.♗h4 ♗xc3+ 8.bxc3 d6 9.♘xc6 bxc6 10.c5 ♕e7 11.e3 ♕e5 12.♕d4 ♘e4 13.cxd6 cxd6 14.♖c1 ♗e6 15.♗d3 ♘c5 16.♗b1 ♔d7



17.♖d1 ♕xd4 18.♖xd4 ♖ab8 19.0-0 ♖b2 20.♗g3 ♘b7 21.♖fd1 ♔e7 22.h4 a5 23.a4 ♖d8 24.♗e4 c5 25.♖4d2 ♖xd2 26.♖xd2 d5 27.♗f3 ♘d6 28.♖b2 ♖c8 29.♖b6 ♘f5 30.♖b7+ ♔f6 31.♗c7 d4 32.cxd4 cxd4 33.e4 ♘xh4 34.♗e2 g5 35.g3 ♘g6 36.f4 gxf4 37.gxf4 ♖xc7 38.♖xc7 ♘xf4 39.♔f2 ♘xe2 40.♔xe2 ♗b3 41.♖c6+ ♔g7 42.♔d3 ♗xa4 43.♖c5 ♗d7 44.♖xa5 ♔g6 45.♔xd4 h5 46.♔e3 h4 47.♔f4 h3 48.♖g5+ ♔f6 ½-½

After that game I spent some time to find the most convincing way to equalize. And it is 4...e4 which I can wholeheartedly recommend to the readers of this book. A note of warning: some of the lines arising after 4...e4 are sharp, and in one line Black is required to sacrifice the material. So study everything carefully!

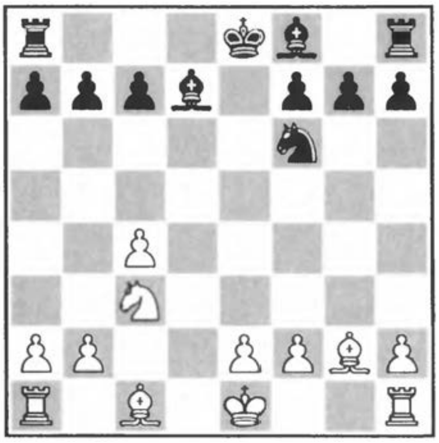
After 4...e4 White has four different possibilities:

A) 5.d5?!
B) 5.♘e5
C) 5.♘d2
D) 5.♘g5

Variation A

☐ **Fricis Apscheneek**
■ **Savielly Tartakower**
Folkestone Olympiad 1933

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.d4 e4 5.d5?!
This is an innocuous line. Simply taking with the pawn on f3 leads to the better ending for Black.
5...exf3 6.dxc6 fxg2 7.cxd7+ ♕xd7 8.♕xd7+ ♗xd7
The ending favours Black since White has more groups of pawns.
9.♗xg2



9...c6
After simply 9...0-0-0!? Black is just better.
10.♗g5 ♗e6 11.b3 ♗b4 12.♖c1 h6
Black could have refrained from this move and castled immediately with 12...0-0-0 with the better chances.
13.♗d2 0-0-0 14.♘b1 ♖xd2!?
Of course, it was not necessary to sacrifice the exchange. Black could have just taken with the bishop on d2, keeping the better chances.
15.♘xd2 ♖d8
Black has sufficient compensation. Unfortunately this game is not complete in my database. Eventually Black won, Tartakower was much stronger than his opponent.

Variation B

☐ **Bogdan Lalic**
■ **Larry Christiansen**
Frankfurt Chess Classic 1995

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.♘f3 ♘c6 4.d4 e4 5.♘e5
This poses no real problems for Black either, after
5...♗b4!
This diminishes the pressure on the e4-pawn. Please note that 5...♘e7?! looks

tempting (trying to win the knight e5). However, after 6.♗g5! Black can't win the knight on e5 and has to spend some time to protect the pawn on e4.

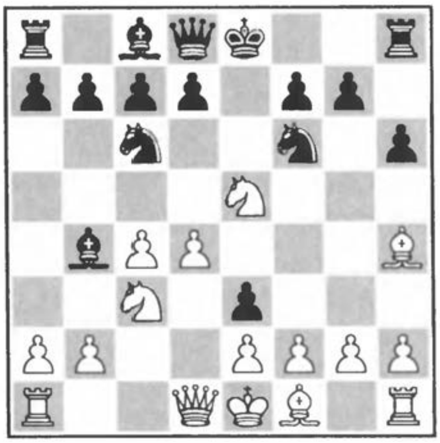
6.♗g5

Other moves don't promise any advantage either: 6.♘xc6 dxc6 is equal, and after 6.♗d2 ♗xc3 7.♗xc3 e3!? Black can even fight for the initiative, sacrificing a pawn. Note that Black can also simply equalize with 7...0-0. The text move 6.♗g5 is logical, pinning the opponent, and increasing the pressure on the e4-pawn.

6...h6 7.♗h4

Play is equal after 7.♘xc6 dxc6 8.♗xf6 ♕xf6. After 7.♗xf6 ♕xf6 8.♘xc6 Black has the additional option of 8...e3!?.

7...e3!?



This is an incredibly interesting move. As we will see, this sacrifice is typical for this variation, slowing the development of the White pieces, Black also gains the control over the e4-square. Other moves such as 7...0-0 and 7...♕e7 8.♘xc6 dxc6 are enough for equality.

8.fxe3 g5 9.♗g3 ♘e4 10.♕c2

Or 10.♕d3 f5 with compensation.

10...♘xg3

I can't understand why Black exchanges his strong knight on e4 which paralyses White's position. Much stronger is 10...f5!?.

11.♘xc6?!

White returns the favours and commits a mistake. After 11.hxg3! ♘xe5 12.dxe5 ♕e7 13.a3 ♗xc3+ 14.♕xc3 White is better. He is one pawn up, although the game is far from clear considering White's fractured pawn structure.

11...dxc6 12.hxg3 ♕e7

Here 12...♗e6!? is interesting.

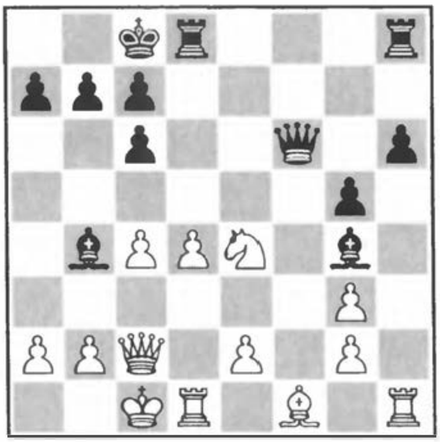
13.e4

After 13.a3 ♗xc3+ 14.♕xc3 ♗d7 Black finishes his development first.

13...♗g4 14.0-0-0?!

Instead 14.a3 ♗xc3+ 15.bxc3 0-0-0 with compensation for Black should have been preferred, since after the text Black is better. White's centre is too weak, and he is also behind in development.

14...0-0-0 15.e5 f6 16.exf6 ♕xf6 17.♘e4



Black is better after 17.♕a4 ♗xc3 18.bxc3 ♔b8.

17...♕g7?

A serious mistake allowing White to free his pieces. After the correct 17...♕e6 Black has the upper hand.

18.a3 ♗e7 19.♘f2 ♗e6 20.e3

White is slightly better now.

20...♔b8

Probably disappointed by his mistake on move 17, Black allows the blockade on the kingside and in the centre. After the correct 20...h5 the game would not have been all that clear.

21.g4!

Now Black can't prevent the transfer ♗d3-f5.

21...♖hf8 22.♗d3 ♗g8 23.♗f5

White is much better now. The rest of the game is hardly interesting for our purpose anymore. White eventually won after a long struggle.

23...♖fe8 24.♘e4 ♗f8 25.♔b1 a6 26.♖c1 c5 27.dxc5 ♖e5 28.♖hd1 ♖de8 29.♖d7 ♖5e7 30.♖cd1 ♕e5 31.c6 b6 32.♕a4 ♗g7 33.♖1d2 ♔a7 34.♘c3 ♖xd7 35.cxd7 ♖d8 36.♕c6 ♕c5 37.♕xc5 bxc5 38.♘e4 ♔b6 39.b3 ♗e5 40.♔c2 ♔c6 41.♖d1 ♗d6 42.♖h1 ♗f8 43.♖d1 ♗f7 44.♘c3 ♗g7 45.♗e4+ ♔b6 46.♘d5+ ♗xd5 47.♖xd5 ♗f6 48.♗f5 ♖f8 49.e4 c6 50.♖d6 ♔c7 51.♖e6 ♗d8 52.♖xh6 ♖f6 53.♖h7 ♔d6 54.♖h8 ♔c7 55.e5 ♖f7 56.♔d3 a5 57.♔e4 ♖e7 58.e6 ♖g7 59.♔e5 ♖e7 60.♖xd8 ♔xd8 61.♔f6 ♖xd7 62.exd7 ♔c7 63.♔e7 ♔b7 64.d8♕ ♔a6 65.♗c8+ 1-0

Variation C

☐ **Mikhail Botvinnik**
■ **Salo Flohr**
Moscow (5th match game) 1933

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.♘f3 ♘c6 4.d4 e4 5.♘d2

This allows Black to exchange the central pawns.

5...♘xd4

Black does not need to play 5...♗b4 6.e3 with a slight plus for White.

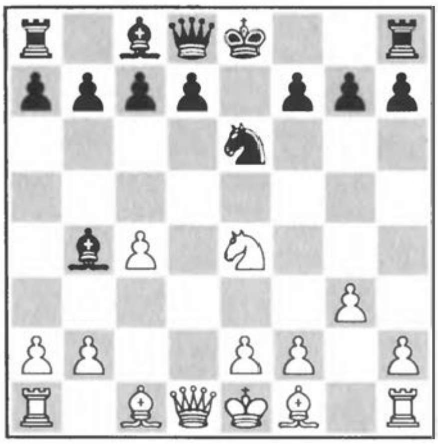
6.♘dxe4 ♘e6

In the game White gets an extra possibility to complicate a game. If you like simple and easy play go for 6...♘xe4! After 7.♘xe4 (or 7.♕xd4 ♘xc3 8.♕xc3 d5! with equal chances) 7...♗b4+! 8.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 9.♕xd2 ♘e6 10.g3 the same position is reached as in the game.

7.g3

After 7.♘xf6+ ♕xf6 8.♘d5 ♕g6, followed by ...c6, the position is unclear.

7...♘xe4 8.♘xe4 ♗b4+!



It is important to exchange the dark-squared bishops, after which Black will have a slightly passive position but without any weaknesses. His bishop c8 will be better than the bishop g2. Thus, the position is equal!

9.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 10.♕xd2 0-0 11.♗g2 d6 12.0-0

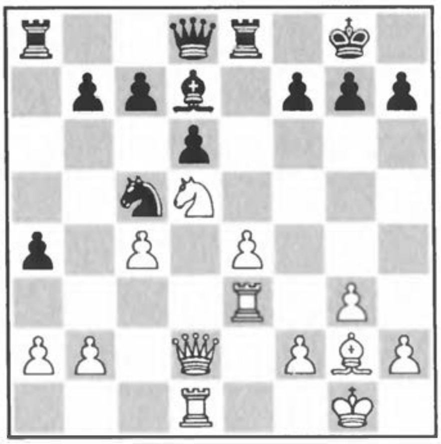
According to Botvinnik 12.♖d1 ♗d7 13.c5 f5 14.cxd6 fxe4 15.dxc7 can be met by 15...♕f6!.

12...♗d7 13.♘c3 ♗c6 14.♘d5 a5 15.e4 ♘c5 16.♖fe1 ♖e8 17.♖ad1 a4

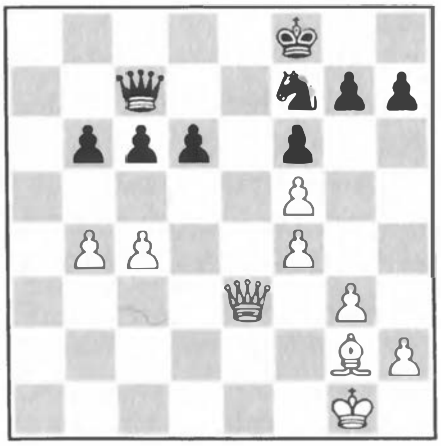
Botvinnik remarks that 17...♗xd5 18.♕xd5 ♕f6 is not good for Black after 19.e5! ♖xe5 20.♖xe5 ♕xe5 21.♕xe5 dxe5 22.♖d5 and White is slightly better.

18.♖e3 ♗d7!

A strong move according to Botvinnik! The bishop stands better on e6, where it will pressurize the c4-pawn.



19.♘c3 ♗e6 20.♕d4 f6 21.♗f1 ♕e7 22.♘d5 ♕f7 23.♖de1 c6 24.♘f4
Or 24.♘b6 ♖a6 25.♕xd6, and now:
– 25...♕e7 26.♕xe7 ♖xe7 27.♘d5!
– 25...♕f8 26.♕xf8+ (26.♕c7 ♖e7 27.♕d6 ♖f7 (Botvinnik) 28.♕xf8+ ♖xf8 29.♘d5±) 26...♔xf8 27.♘d5 cxd5 28.cxd5±.
– 25...♖xb6! (stronger than the above moves that Botvinnik gave) 26.♕xc5 ♖xb2 with equal chances.
24...♕c7 25.♘d3 b6 26.♘b4 ♗f7 27.♕c3 ♖ad8 28.♘c2 ♖e7 29.♘d4 ♗g6 The position is equal. **30.f3** Or 30.♗g2 ♖de8 31.e5! dxe5 (31...♖xe5 32.♘xc6 ♖xe3 33.♖xe3 ♖xe3 34.♕xe3 ♔f8) 32.♘xc6 ♖d7 33.♗d5+ Botvinnik. **30...♖de8 31.b4 axb3 32.axb3 ♘e6 33.♘f5 ♗xf5 34.exf5 ♘g5 35.♗g2 ♖xe3 36.♖xe3 ♖xe3 37.♕xe3 ♔f8 38.f4 ♘f7 39.b4**



39...d5! 40.cxd5 c5! 41.bxc5 bxc5 42.♕a3 ♘d6 43.♗f1 ♔f7 44.♗d3 c4 45.♗c2 c3 46.♕b4! ♘c4 47.♕xc3 ♕c5+ 48.♔h1 ♕xd5+ ½-½

Variation D

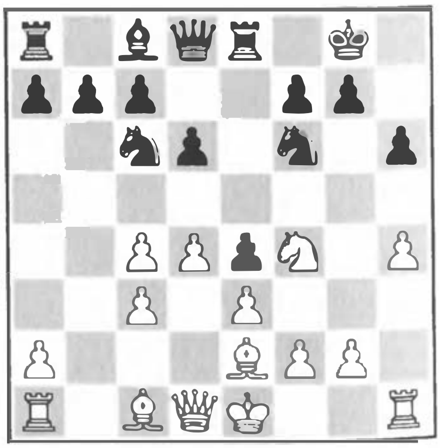
5.♘g5 is the most natural move in the position. And here comes the moment when knowledge is essential. Black should not be afraid to sacrifice a pawn. After **5...h6!** White has three possible moves:

D1) 6.♘h3
D2) 6.♘gxe4
D3) 6.d5

Variation D1

□ **Suat Atalik**
■ **Sergey Tiviakov**
Beijing 1997

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.♘f3 ♘c6 4.d4 e4 5.♘g5 h6 6.♘h3?!
With such a passive move White cannot hope for any advantage.
6...♗b4 7.e3
Not good is 7.d5?!. After 7...♗xc3+ 8.bxc3 ♘e5 9.♕d4 d6 his pawns are weak, and the knight on h3 is out of play.
7...♗xc3+ 8.bxc3 d6 9.♘f4
Dubious is 9.g3?! ♗g4.
9...0-0 10.♗e2 ♖e8 11.h4



I would prefer 11.0-0, when Black should play b7-b6 and try to attack the weak pawn on c4 by ♗a6, ♘a5 with slightly better chances. After the text White is threatening to push the pawns on the kingside, so I have no time to attack the c4-pawn.

11...♘e7 12.a4 ♘g6 13.h5!?

After 13.♘xg6 fxg6 Black obtains play along the f-file, targeting the pawn on f2. But after 13.h5 there is no longer any danger of the advance of White's pawns on the kingside.

13...♘f8

Worse is 13...♘xf4?! 14.exf4±.

14.a5 ♘e6

The knight aims for g5 where it will block any White play on the kingside.

15.♘xe6 ♗xe6 16.f4

White does not castle since after 16.0-0 ♕d7 he cannot prevent the exchange of the white-squared bishops, when the h5-pawn will become very weak.

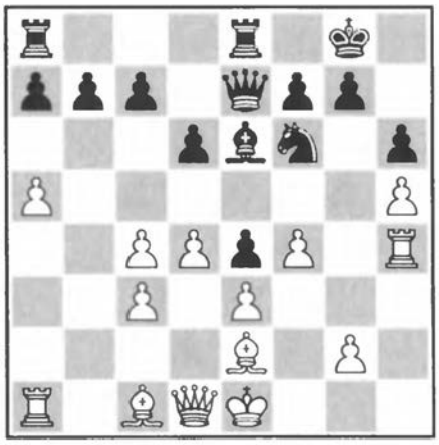
16...♕d7

Here 16...exf3 17.gxf3 was possible, but the arising position is unclear – White gets a very strong centre.

17.♖h4

White has to prevent the exchange of the bishops, otherwise he is simply worse.

17...♕e7 18.♖h2 ♕d7 19.♖h4 ♕e7



20.♗d2?

A serious mistake. White underestimates Black's play. He should have repeated the moves. Now his position goes downhill.

20...♘h7 21.♖h1 f5 22.♕b3 ♖ab8 23.♗c1 ♘f6 24.♗a3 b6 25.axb6 axb6

Threatening ...b5.

26.d5

But now the pawns c3 and c4 are fixed.

26...♗f7 27.♔f2 ♖a8 28.c5

With so many weakness in his camp, White decides to sacrifice a pawn to get some counterplay along the a1-h8 diagonal.

28...bxc5 29.c4 ♖eb8 30.♕c3 ♖a6 31.♗b2 ♖ab6 32.♖a2

After 32.♖ab1 the pin is very unpleasant.

32...♖b3 33.♕c1 ♗e8 34.♕a1 ♗d7 35.♗c3?!

Here 35.♗xf6 ♕xf6 36.♕xf6 gxf6 37.♖a7 was much more stubborn, Black still has to work hard to win.

35...♘e8 36.♖a7 ♕d8 37.♕a5 ♖b1

Creating an attack against the white king. Black wins without too much problems.

38.♖h3

Or 38.♖xb1 ♖xb1 39.♖a8 ♕h4+ mating.

38...♖c1 39.♕a3 ♖c2 40.♕a1? This loses by force. 40.♖h1 was necessary. **40...♖b3** The rest is easy and not so interesting. **41.♗xg7** 41.♗a5 ♖bb2 winning. **41...♘xg7 42.♖a8 ♗c8 43.♖g3 ♖bb2 44.♖b8 ♖xe2+ 45.♔f1 ♕h4 46.♖xc8+ ♔h7** **0-1**

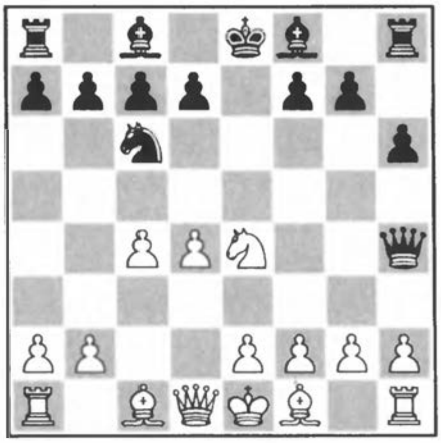
Variation D2

☐ **Eduard Gerstenfeld**
■ **Andor Lilienthal**
Moscow ch-URS 1940

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.♘f3 ♘c6 4.d4 e4 5.♘g5 h6 6.♘gxe4

This leads to an equal ending more or less by force.

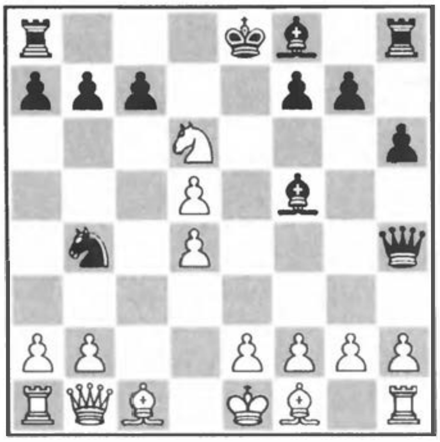
6...♘xe4 7.♘xe4 ♕h4



The point of the whole line, Black regains the pawn. Worse is 7...d5 8.♘c3, which is better for White.

8.♘c3

8.♕d3?! is very dangerous for White after 8...d5! 9.cxd5 ♘b4 10.♕b1 ♗f5 11.♘d6+



– Now after 11...cxd6 12.♕xf5 g6 13.♕f4! ♘c2+ 14.♔d1 ♕xf4 15.♗xf4 ♘xa1 16.e3 a6 17.♗d3 ♔d7 18.♔d2 White had two pawns for the exchange: his chances are to be preferred. Smirin-Johannessen, Istanbul 2000.

– Therefore stronger is: 11...♗xd6! 12.♕xf5 g6! 13.♕b1 ♕xd4, when my analysis reveals that play is equal after 14.e4!? ♕c5 15.♔d1 ♕xf2 16.a3 ♕d4+ (or 16...♘a6 Tiviakov) 17.♔e1 ♘a6.

Instead the game B.Kovacevic-Zelcic, Bizovac 2001, went 14.a3 0-0-0 15.♗d2 ♘xd5 16.e3 ♕f6 17.♕c2 ♖he8 18.♗e2 ♔b8 19.0-0 ♘f4 Black is already slightly better, and won after 20.♗f3 ♘h3+ 21.♔h1 ♘g5 22.♗c3 ♕e7 23.♗e2 ♘e4 24.♔g1 f5 25.♖ae1 h5 26.♗d3? ♗xh2+ 27.♔xh2 ♕d6+ 0-1.

8...♕xd4 9.e3 9.♕xd4 ♘xd4 is about equal too. **9...♕xd1+ 10.♔xd1 ♗e7 11.♘d5 ♗d8** The ending is equal. **12.♗d2** In Zapata-Morovic Fernandez, Tunis izt 1985, the players called it a day after 12.b3 d6 13.♗b2 0-0 14.♗d3 a5 ½-½. **12...d6 13.♗c3 0-0 14.♗e2 ♘e5 15.♔d2 c6 16.♘f4 ♖e8 17.♖hd1 ♗g4 18.b3 a5 19.h3 ♗f5 20.♔e1 ♗c7**

And after a long game (86 moves) and a fine exchange sacrifice by Lilienthal the game ended peacefully.

Variation D3

☐ **Zahar Efimenko**
■ **Julen Arizmendi**
Gibraltar 2006

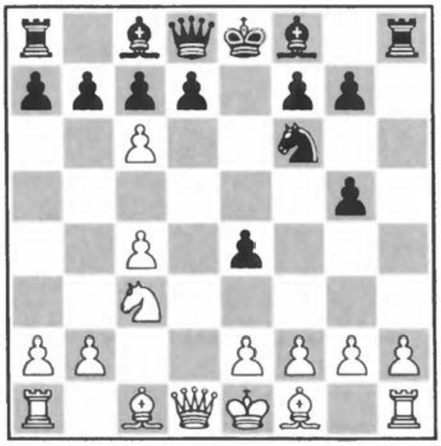
1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.♘f3 ♘c6 4.d4 e4 5.♘g5 h6 6.d5

The latest try by White to find an advantage in this variation.

6...hxg5

This is forced as 6...♘a5?! is bad. After 7.♘gxe4 ♘xe4 (7...♘xc4 8.♕d4±) 8.♘xe4 ♘xc4 9.♕d4 White has a huge advantage.

7.dxc6



7...g4

After 7...bxc6 8.♗xg5 White is slightly better, the pawn on e4 is weak and it is not easy to get rid off the pin.

In my opinion, 7...♗c5! is the strongest move in the position: 8.cxb7 (8.♘a4 ♗b4+ 9.♘c3 ♗c5 is a repetition, but Black may try 9...bxc6!?) 8...♗xb7. Now nothing is gained by 9.♘a4 ♗b4+ 10.♘c3 ♘g4∓ (10...♗c5 is again a repetition). After 9.e3 the old game Kostic-Opocensky, Prague 1931, continued with 9...♕e7. Black should prefer 9...♗d6!?, followed by ...♗e5, with a strong initiative. The plan chosen by Arizmendi Martinez, although very spectacular, is less strong. Luckily for him his opponent was absolutely out of form on that day (or, maybe, he strongly underestimated his opponent).

8.cxb7 ♗xb7 9.♗f4 e3!?

Instead 9...♘h5 10.♗e3 ♘f6 11.♗f4 (11.♗d4 c5∞) is at least equal for Black, while 9...♖b8!? also deserves serious attention.

10.♗xe3 g3 11.fxg3 ♘g4

Black has a certain amount of compensation for his two pawns.

12.♕d4 ♘xe3 13.♕xe3+ ♗e7 14.♕d3

I would have castled immediately: 14.0-0-0 0-0 15.♕d3 and if White is not slightly better, then he should at least be able to defend successfully finishing his development and returning his extra material. A sample line is 15...♗c6 16.♘d5♗xd5 17.♕xd5 etc.

14...♖b8 15.e4

Again 15.0-0-0 was better.

15...♗c6 16.♗e2?!

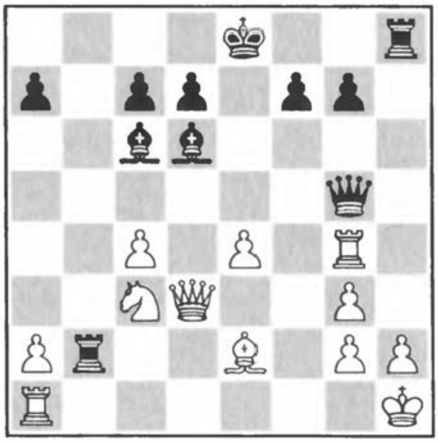
For me it is a mystery why White gave up the pawn and didn't castle. Yet again queenside castling was correct.

16...♖xb2 17.0-0 ♗c5+ 18.♔h1 ♕g5 19.♖f4?

Here 19.♖f5 was necessary, Black has compensation after 19...♕e3.

19...♗d6 20.♖g4??

A blunder. But after the correct 20.♖f3 ♗e5 Black is already much better.



20...♖xh2+ 21.♔g1

21.♔xh2 ♕h6+ 22.♖h4 ♕xh4+ 23.♔g1 ♗c5+ 24.♔f1 ♕h1 mate.

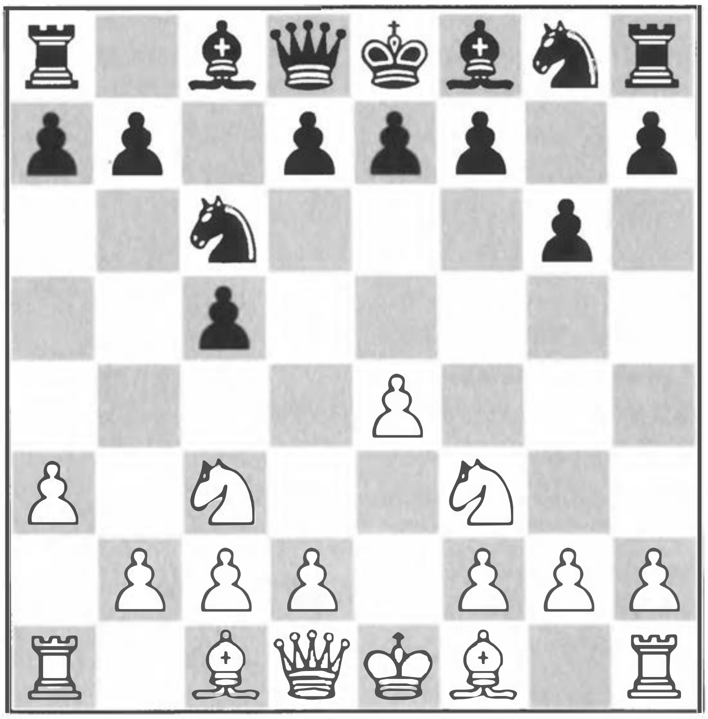
21...♕c5+

And White is mated.

CHAPTER 17

Hikaru Nakamura

Attacking the Sicilian Centre



1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 g6 4.a3!?

Statistically, the Sicilian is Black's best bet against 1.e4. Positionally, this should not come as a surprise. After all, Black's main idea is to exchange his c-pawn for White's d-pawn to obtain a healthy centre. From a strategical point of view, White would do much better to throw his b-pawn at Black's c-pawn. The Sicilian Wing Gambit is not quite sound though.

Recently, when confronted by an Accelerated Dragon, Hikaru Nakamura prepared the b4-thrust by playing 4.a3 and 5.♖b1. Typical of the young American showing his customary disrespect for classical chess you might say. However, Nakamura was following in the footsteps of Ljubomir Ljubojevic who played these moves more than twenty years ago versus Tony Miles.

☐ **Hikaru Nakamura**
■ **Ruben Felgaer**
Cuernavaca Young Masters 2006

1.e4 c5

As I learned from my game against GM Volokitin at the Lausannne Young Masters, my experiment with 2.♕h5 against the Sicilian should not be repeated any time soon. Although it is not effective against the Sicilian, I still feel that it is quite playable against 1...e5.

2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 g6 4.a3 ♗g7 5.♖b1

Chess is becoming quite predictable these days as most openings have been thoroughly analyzed. One way to avoid this is to experiment with less familiar structures that force both players to think for themselves. The idea behind this move is simply to play b4 and expand on the queenside immediately. This plan is more commonly used in the English Opening, when White already has a pawn on c4. Without the c4-pawn, this appears to be less logical, but as with all experiments, nothing can be determined without being tested.

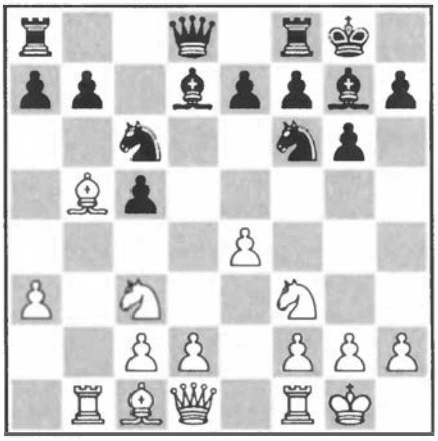
5...♘f6

Surprisingly on move 5, we have already found our way out of theory! The best known and only other example in this line is: 5...e6 6.b4 b6 7.♗b2 d6 8.♗b5 ♘e7 9.♘d5 and so on, Ljubojevic-Miles, Tilburg 1985. See the next game.

6.b4 d6

Black could also try: 6...cxb4 7.axb4 d5 8.b5 ♘a5 9.exd5 ♘xd5 10.♘xd5 ♕xd5 11.♗d3 0-0 12.0-0, or 6...b6 7.bxc5 bxc5 8.♗c4 0-0 9.0-0 d6 10.h3 ♗d7 11.♗b2. In both cases play is about equal.

7.bxc5 dxc5 8.♗b5 ♗d7 9.0-0 0-0



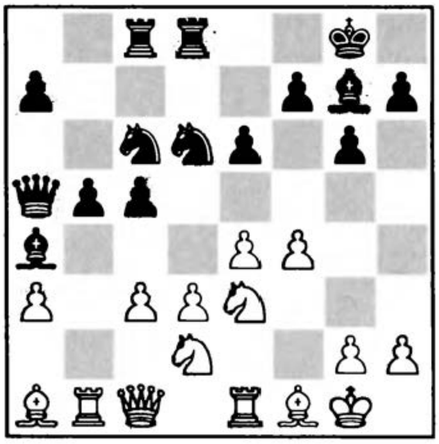
10.♖e1 ♘e8 11.♘d5 ♘d6 12.♗f1 e6 13.♘e3 ♘d4 14.d3 ♗a4

It appears that Black has seized the initiative by posting his pieces more aggressively. He should now plan on playing ...f5 at the appropriate time to restrict White further.

15.♗b2 ♕a5 16.♘d2 ♖fd8 17.♕c1

No good is 17.e5?! ♗xe5 (17...♘6f5?! 18.♘xf5 exf5 19.♗xd4 cxd4 20.♖xb7 ♗xe5 21.♖b4 ♗f6 22.♘c4 ♕a6 23.g3 and White is perfectly fine in this position despite computer evaluations) 18.♘dc4 ♘xc4 19.♘xc4 ♗xh2+ 20.♔xh2 ♕c7+ 21.♔g1 ♗xc2 22.♕d2 ♗xb1 23.♖xb1 and Black is better.

17...♖ac8 18.c3 b5 19.♗a1 ♘c6 20.f4



20...♖d7?

This is a terrible move as it lets White acquire even more space with e5 and in particular, the e4 square.

20...f5 is definitely the best move as it denies White the use of e4.

21.e5 ♘f5 22.♘e4 ♕b6 23.♘g4 ♔h8 24.♔h1 ♖cd8 25.♕b2!?

25.♕d2 is probably a little bit better, but I figured that even after the exchange sac on d3, I would retain a huge advantage.

25...♖xd3 26.♗xd3 ♖xd3 27.♘gf2 ♖d7 28.♕e2 c4 29.♕f3 ♗c2 30.♖b2 ♗xe4 31.♕xe4 ♕c5 32.♕b1 a6 33.♘e4 ♕a7 34.a4

From here on, White is in control. During the course of the next seven moves Felgaer proceeds to fall apart completely in bad time pressure.

34...h6 35.axb5 axb5 36.♖xb5 g5

37.fxg5 ♗xe5 38.♖c5 ♕c7 39.♕b5 ♘fe7 40.h3 ♗g3 41.♖f1 hxg5 42.♖xg5 ♗e5 43.♕xc4 ♘g6 44.♕e2 ♗f4

Black resigned.

Note that our next high-profile clash was played in the famous Tilburg tournament which Miles won (shared with Hübner and Kortchnoi) despite suffering from severe back problems.

☐ **Ljubomir Ljubojevic**
■ **Tony Miles**
Tilburg 1985

(*notes by Tony Miles in New In Chess 1985/11*)

1.e4 c5 2.♘c3

Ljubo has been ducking main line Dragons against me since the Malta Olympiad 1980. He has twice tried the Closed Sicilian (London 1982 and Plovdiv 1983), but was fortunate to emerge with a single half point. I was intrigued to see what he had in mind this time.

2...♘c6 3.♘f3

A main line after all?

3...g6 4.a3!?

No! Of course a3 followed by b4 is quite a natural positional method of attacking a 'Sicilian centre'. I had considered it myself. The usual problem is that White cannot exert enough influence over b4 itself to get the advance in. But with the black bishop committed to g7 it becomes possible.

4...♗g7 5.♖b1 e6

Black can try to make White look silly with 5...a5, when it's hard to believe that the weakness of b5 is important. I preferred to develop quietly though.

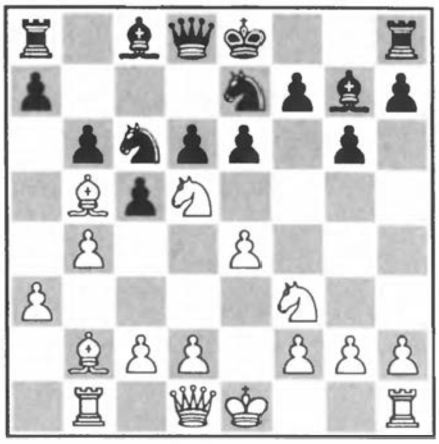
6.b4 b6

Calmly maintaining control of d4.

7.♗b2 d6

Avoiding 7...♘ge7 8.♘b5.

8.♗b5 ♘e7 9.♘d5



Bashed out quickly by Ljubojevic. Contrary to popular opinion at the time I hadn't missed it. I had merely dismissed it as harmless. The only critical line I could see was 9...0-0 10.♘f6+ ♔h8 11.♘g5, which, purely on general grounds and positional instinct, I just didn't believe. Now, though, it was necessary to analyse thoroughly (I could always bail out with 9...♔f8). I thought for forty minutes. In the demo-hall my obituaries were being written.

9...0-0 10.♘f6+?!

On 10.♗f6 ♗xf6 is quite acceptable, but 10...exd5 11.♗xc6 ♗xf6 12.♗xa8 ♗a6 13.b5 (only move) 13...♕xa8 14.bxa6 dxe4 blows White off the board. Best, though, is the simple 10.♗xg7.

10...♔h8 11.♘g5 h6

The only move. White is quite welcome to take the rook on f8, but how he can save his knights is quite another matter.

12.h4

A slight surprise. I expected 12.♕f3 when 12...a6 13.♗xc6 ♘xc6 14.♘gh7 e5 is winning for Black. 14.e5 is another try, but on, say 14...♗b7 15.♘gh7 ♖b8 White might pick up an exchange or two, but whatever is left of his position will be a total disaster. Alternatively 12.♘gh7 a6! (always the key move; it indirectly attacks f6) and now

13.♗xc6 ♘xc6 is familiar, while 13.♗c4, say, allows 13...♘g8 followed by taking the appropriate knight. Essentially a combination of ...a6 and ...e5 played at the right time refutes all White's rather speculative tries.

12...a6! 13.♗xc6 ♘xc6 14.♕f3 e5!

Closing both the long diagonals.

15.♘fh7 ♔g8

Remarkably Ljubo had overlooked this simple move. After 15...hxg5 16.hxg5 Black must be very careful. Now though he simply wins two pieces for the rook. I guess my obituaries were being torn up.

16.♘xf8 hxg5 17.♘xg6 g4

The knight won't run away. If 18.♕d3 ♗e6.

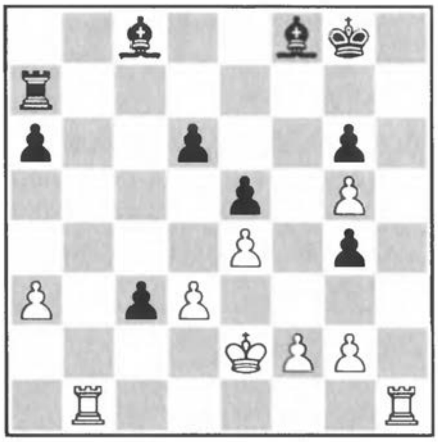
18.♕e3 ♘d4 19.♕g5

Hoping to find salvation in the endgame, but it's not very likely.

19...♕xg5 20.hxg5 fxg6 21.bxc5 bxc5 22.♗xd4 cxd4 23.d3

23.♖b6 ♗f8 gets nowhere.

23...♗f8 24.♔e2 ♖a7 25.c4 dxc3



This move was widely criticised, and perhaps rightly. Black should win much more easily with rooks on and the c-file closed.

26.♖hc1 ♖c7 27.♖b3 ♔f7 28.♖cxc3 ♖xc3 29.♖xc3 ♗d7 30.♖c7 ♔e6 31.♖a7 ♗b5 32.a4

It must be correct to eliminate the a-pawns.

32...♗xa4 33.♖xa6 ♗d7 34.g3 ♗e7 35.♖a8 ♗xg5 36.♖b8 ♗c1 37.♖b3 ♔f6 38.♖b7 ♗e6 39.♖c7 ♗a3 40.♖a7 ♗c5 41.♖c7 ♗d4 42.♔f1

If 42.♖c6 ♔e7. In the long run White cannot prevent ...d5.

42...d5 43.exd5

Avoiding this capture makes little difference. For example 43.♖c6 dxe4 44.dxe4 ♔f7 45.♖c7+ ♔g8 followed by ♗f7, ♔g7-f6/h6-g5 and then penetration with the light-squared bishop to, say, a2 threatening ♗b1 and if then ♖b7 ♗c4 followed by ♗d3 wins.

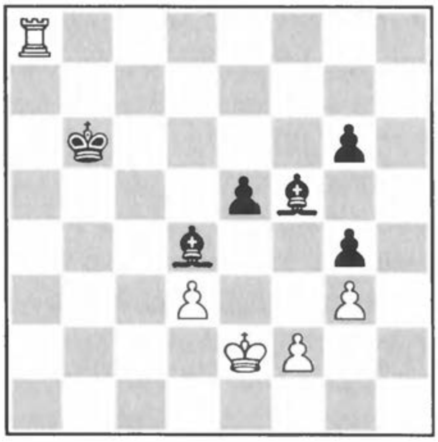
43...♗xd5 44.♔e2 ♗e6 45.♖c6 ♔e7 46.♔e1 ♔d7 47.♖a6 ♗f5 48.♔e2 ♔c7

Black's pieces stand superbly. White can only move his rook back and forth.

49.♖a8

49.♖f6 is impossible owing to 49...e4.

49...♔b6



Here the game was adjourned. After the resumption the game was quickly concluded:

50.♖b8+ ♔a5 51.♖b7 ♔a4 52.♖b8 ♔a3 53.♖b7 ♗e6! 54.♖g7 ♗d5 55.♖xg6 ♗f3+ 56.♔f1 ♔b2 57.♖a6 ♔c2 58.♖e6 ♔d2 59.♖e8 ♗e2+ 60.♔g2 ♔e1 61.♖f8 ♗f1+ 62.♔g1 ♗xd3 63.♖f7 ♗e4 64.♔h2 ♔f1! 65.♖f8 ♗f3

White resigned.

CHAPTER 18

Who is Who

Former Czech, now American, grandmaster **Lubos Kavalek** goes back in time to the 'vineyards' of his junior days. The columnist of the Washington Post tells the story behind the 'Czech Double-Punch' to spice up your Closed Sicilian with 3.g4.

Players of the Dutch Defence who think that 1...e6 avoids the Staunton Gambit are in for a real surprise. **Nigel Povah** explains the ins and outs of the Deferred Staunton Gambit.

Superior waiting tactics have been advocated before in the SOS-series. **Igor Glek** presents a strong case for 3...h6 in the English Opening. Our Russian author relates how it may be worth your while to lose some time to transfer a 1.c4-position into a Rossolimo Sicilian with colours reversed.

Are those Réti set-ups bothering you? Black can alter the course of play with ...a6 and ...b5. **Adrian Mikhalchishin** shows that this gambit, invented by Oleg Romanishin, gives Black sufficient counterplay.
Inspired by Alvis Vitolinsh, our man from Lvov feels that early ...b5 aggression is also playable in the Nimzo-Indian.

Meeting 5.♕e2 in the Ruy Lopez with 5...♕e7 is the umpteenth invention of Oleg Romanishin. **Dorian Rogozenko** relates how shocked he was when he faced the early queen move. He candidly reveals that his first thought was that Black had made a mouse slip. Rogozenko found out the hard way, and shares his thoughts.

Talking of creative chess players we might as well mention Ashot Nadanian's latest quirk: 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 h6. Hungarian trainer **Tibor Karolyi** analyses the extended king's fianchetto that Nadanian favours these days.

If you play the Slav you might find it hard to meet the solid 4.♕c2. **Stefan Löffler** has the perfect SOS-solution for you. Just lose a tempo with 4...c5.

Dutch IM **Mark van der Werf** has co-authored a book on the Noteboom Variation in the past. This time he delves less deeply in favour of 1.d4 d5 2.♗f4: the 'Improved London System'. You will find out why experts like Luc Winants and Jonathan Rowson prefer to develop their bishop first.

Not satisfied with a mere opening surprise? Then you might be in for the shocking 1.d4 c6 2.c4 b5. Belgian IM Michel Jadoul first played his brainchild in the Belgian city of Malines and called it the Malinoise Defence. His most notable follower is **Ian Rogers**. The Australian GM is your analytical guide in the complications that follow.

Botvinnik liked to play 4.d4 in the English Four Knights. The most common reply is 4...exd4 5.♘xd4 ♗b4, but according to **Sergey Tiviakov** you will not equalize easily by following the herd. The Dutch GM strongly recommends you to push the e-pawn to e4.

Hikaru Nakamura is one of the most original and daring young players around. The American has even played 2.♕h5 against the Sicilian. In comparison, his Sicilian win against Felgaer was accomplished in more sedate fashion. Check out 4.a3.

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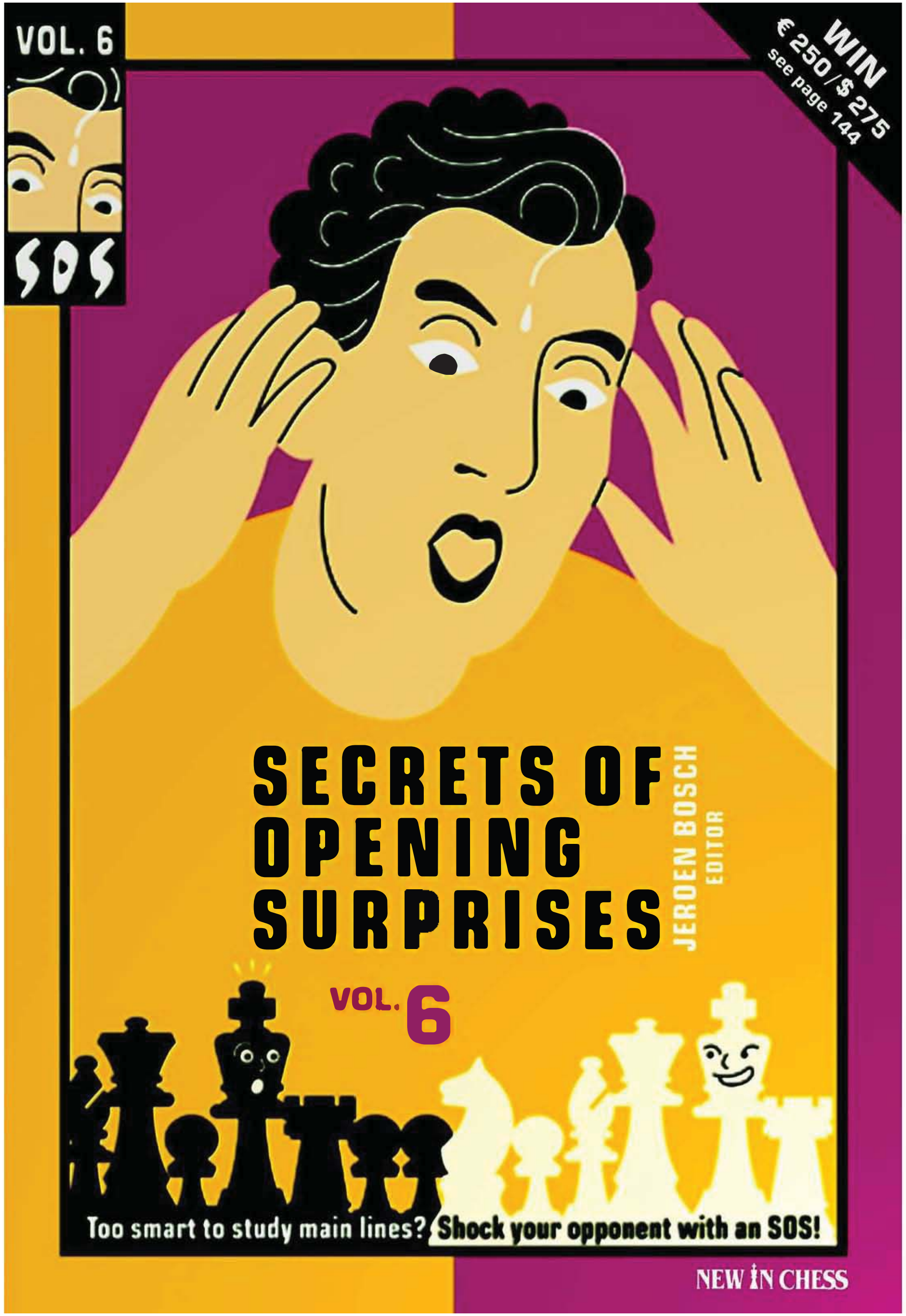

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EDITOR

VOL. 6

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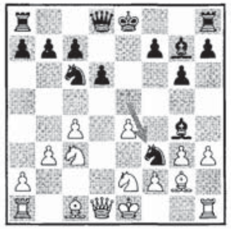
Jeroen Bosch

The SOS Files

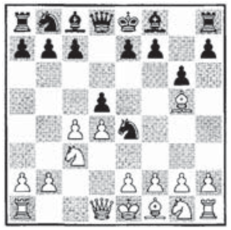


Ippolito-Ivanov, after 11...♘f3+

CHAPTER 2 - page 16

Ian Rogers

Triple Trouble for the Grünfeld



Take my Bishop after 5.h4, 5.cxd5 and 5.♕c1

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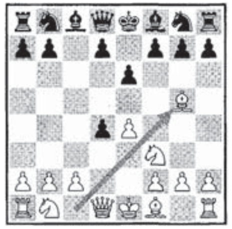
Jeroen Bosch

Sicilian: the Aussie Attack

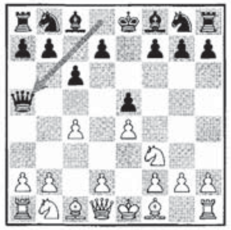


1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗g5

CHAPTER 4 - page 31

Erwin l'Ami

No Panov – Play an Early Queen Move



1.c4 c6 2.e4 e5 3.♘f3 ♕a5

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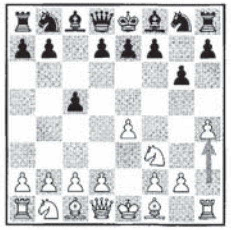
John Donaldson and Jeremy Silman

3.h4 in the Hyper-Accelerated Dragon

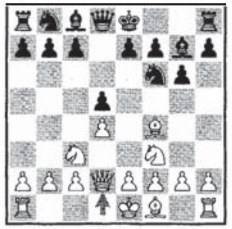


1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.h4

CHAPTER 6 - page 51

Arthur Kogan

The Tarzan Attack

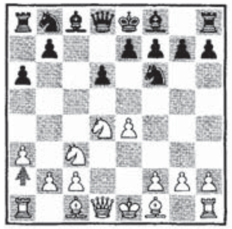


1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.♗f4 ♗g7 5.♕d2

CHAPTER 7 - page 59

Jeroen Bosch

Making Short Work of the Najdorf

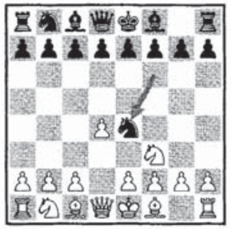


6.a3 – cheekily echoing 5...a6

CHAPTER 8 - page 68

Adrian Mikhalchishin

The Döry Defence



1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 ♘e4

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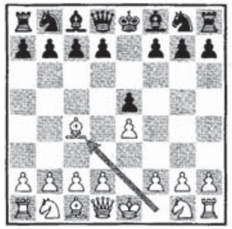
Glenn Flear

Bishops First Please!



Early queen moves after 1.e4 e5 2.♗c4

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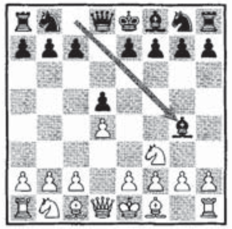
Jeroen Bosch

The Chigorin Attack

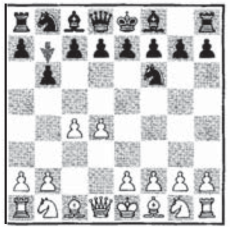


1.d4 d5 2.♘f3 ♗g4!?

CHAPTER 11 - page 88

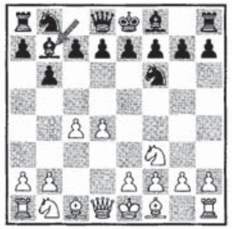
Arthur Kogan

The Queen's Grünfeld Line (Part I)



1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 b6

CHAPTER 12 - page 97
Arthur Kogan
The Queen's Grünfeld Line (Part II)



1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 b6 3.♘f3 ♗b7

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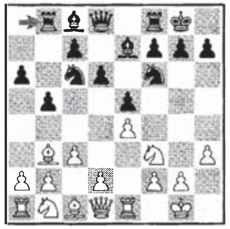
Adrian Mikhalchishin
A Spanish SOS



Gajewski's 9...♖b8!?

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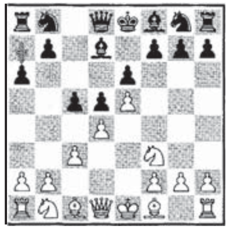
The French Advance with 5...a6



Exchanging the French Bishop

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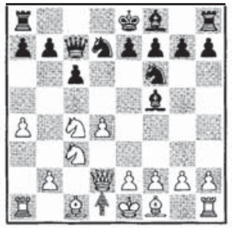
Dorian Rogozenko
A Slav Surprise



Facing 7...♕c7 with 8.♕d2

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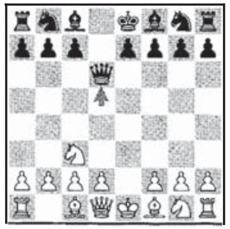
Sergey Tiviakov
Scandinavian with 3...♕d6



A slip of the hand?

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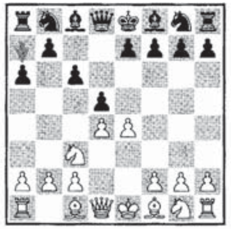
John van der Wiel
Caro-Kann with a Slav Touch



1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 a6

CHAPTER 1

Jeroen Bosch

The SOS Files

Best by Test

SOS-1, Chapter 15, p.121

In SOS-1 I recommended 3...c5 versus the Trompowsky. Recently I had the good fortune to be able to test this line in practice. The result of the opening was beyond my – already high – expectations.

☐ **Juan Manuel Bellon Lopez**
■ **Jeroen Bosch**
Germany Bundesliga 2005/06

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗g5 e6 3.e4 c5 4.e5

An alternative is 4.d5 when 4...d6 5.♘c3 ♗e7 is safest. Instead, 4...h6!? 5.♗xf6 ♕xf6 6.♘c3 is somewhat better for White, as I mentioned in SOS-1. Yet, the game Rodriguez-Panno, Villa Martelli 2006, was quickly drawn after: 6...a6 7.♘f3 d6 8.dxe6 ♗xe6 9.♗e2 ♘c6 10.0-0 ♗e7 11.♘d5 ♗xd5 12.exd5 ♘d4 13.♘xd4 ♕xd4 14.♕xd4 cxd4 15.♖fe1 ♔d8.

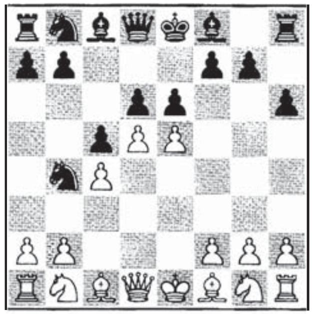
Risky for Black is 4...♕b6 5.♘c3 ♕xb2 6.♗d2 (again quoting from SOS-1). This verdict was borne out in practice: 6...♕b6 7.f4 and now 7...d6 8.♖b1 ♕c7 9.♗b5+ ♗d7 10.♕e2 gives White dangerous compensation, Karttunen-Vocaturo, Turin ol 2006.

Interestingly, 4.♘f3 cxd4 5.e5 transposes to Chapter 3 in this volume, the Aussie Attack!

4...h6 5.♗c1 ♘d5

The odd 5...♘h7!? remains a popular alternative. Black was fine in Szymanski-Bologan, Warsaw rapid 2005, after 6.d5 (in my opinion Trompowsky players should investigate 6.dxc5) 6...d6 7.♘c3 exd5 8.♕xd5 ♘c6 9.♗b5 ♕c7 (this is stronger than 9...dxe5?! 10.♕xe5+ ♗e6 11.♗xh6! ♘f6 12.♗g5± Reddmann-Kekelidze, Hamburg 2006) 10.♗f4 ♗e6 11.♕e4 d5 12.♕e2 a6 13.♗xc6+ ♕xc6 14.♘f3 ♗e7∓.

6.c4 ♘b4 7.d5 Ambitious. 7.dxc5 is the alternative. **7...d6**



Making full contact with the enemy. White runs the risk that the centre will be fully liquidated, when Black will have an edge in development.

8.a3 ♘4a6 9.♘f3?!

This does not work out well for White. If White hopes to gain anything he should try 9.♗f4 dxe5 10.♗xe5 ♘d7 11.♕a4 ♕g5 12.f4 ♕g6 13.♘f3 ♗e7 14.♘c3 0-0 15.d6 ♗d8 16.0-0-0 f6 17.f5 exf5 18.♗g3=∞ Karttunen-Sepp, Finland 2003/04.

The stem game went 9.exd6 ♗xd6 10.♘c3

0-0 11.♗d3 ♘c7 12.♘ge2 exd5 13.cxd5 ♘d7 14.0-0 ♘f6. Clearly White's strategy has failed. Pawn d5 is weak and Black has the much easier game, Nakamura-Yudasin, New York 2001, see SOS-1.

9...dxe5 10.♘xe5 ♗d6

This simple move is best. The ambitious 10...♘d7 can be met by the piece sacrifice 11.♘xf7!? ♔xf7 12.dxe6+ ♔xe6. White has a forced draw with 13.♕d5+ ♔f6 14.♕f3+ ♔e7 15.♕e4+ ♔f7 16.♕d5+ ♔f6. However, it makes sense to continue with 13.♘c3 or 13.♗e2 with decent compensation in view of the 'central' position of Black's king!

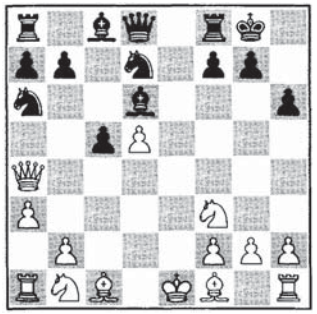
11.♕a4+?!

This check merely helps Black. The ignominious retreat 11.♘f3 was comparatively best. White is also in trouble after 11.♗f4 0-0 12.dxe6 ♗xe6, as 13.♘xf7? fails to 13...♖xf7 14.♕xd6 (14.♗xd6 ♖d7) 14...♕f6! and Black is winning.

11...♘d7 12.♘f3

Admitting the failure of his opening strategy. If 12.dxe6, then 12...♗xe5 13.exd7+ ♗xd7∓.

12...exd5 13.cxd5 0-0



Black has a clear edge in development, while pawn d5 is weak and White's queen badly positioned on a4. This is enough for a distinct advantage.

14.♘c3

White should perhaps have settled for 14.♗xa6 ♘b6 15.♕c2 bxa6 16.0-0.

14...♘c7 15.♗e3

White more or less loses a pawn after the natural 15.♗e2 ♘b6 (15...♘f6) 16.♕d1 ♖e8 17.0-0 (what else?) 17...♘cxd5 18.♘xd5 ♘xd5, when White cannot take back: 19.♕xd5?? ♗xh2+.

15...♘f6 16.♖d1

Also unattractive is 16.0-0-0 a6 (16...♘g4 17.♘e4 ♘xe3 18.fxe3∓) 17.♕c2 b5∓.

16...♖e8

Black's position plays itself. It is sufficient to complete development to show up the defects in White's game.

17.♕h4

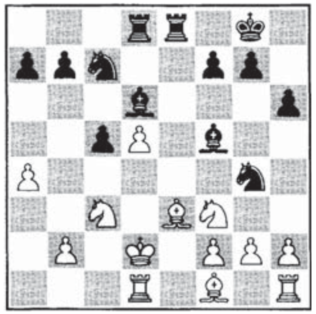
17.♗e2 is strongly met by 17...♘g4.

17...♗f5 18.a4?

White should have tried 18.♗d3, when he is worse after 18...♕d7 19.0-0 ♘fxd5. The natural 18.♗e2 loses after 18...b5! (this explains White's 18th move in the game) 19.0-0 (19.♗xb5 ♘xb5 20.♘xb5 ♖e4–+; 19.♘xb5 ♘xb5 20.♗xb5 ♖e4–+) 19...b4 20.axb4 cxb4 21.♘b5 ♘xb5 22.♗xb5 ♖e4.

18...♘g4! 19.♕xd8 ♖axd8 20.♔d2?

20.♗e2 ♘xe3 21.fxe3 ♖xe3 also loses.



20...♘xf2! A neat tactic that wins on the spot. **21.♗c4** Not 21.♗xf2 ♗f4+. **21...♘g4!** Even stronger than 21...♘xh1. Black wins the exchange on his own terms following 22.♖d(h)e1 ♘xe3 23.♖xe3 ♗f4. White therefore resigned.

A Boring Draw?

SOS-3, Chapter 3, p.28.

Confronted with the blunt 4.h4, Bolzoni replies in Grünfeld style to score a ... draw!

☐ **Pavel Govciyan**
■ **Victor-Angel Bolzoni**
Nancy 2006

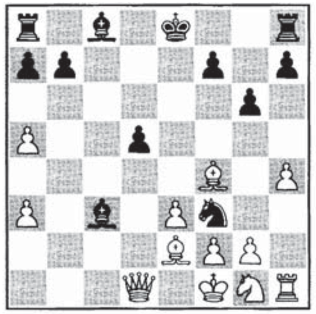
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.h4 c6 5.cxd5 cxd5 6.♗f4 ♘c6 7.e3 ♗g7 8.♗e2

This was my recommendation in SOS-3. The game Bosboom-Sokolov, Leeuwarden 1997, went instead 8.h5 0-0 (8...♘xh5) 9.hxg6 hxg6 10.♘f3 ♕b6.

8...♕a5 9.a3

Now Black has an excellent reply to keep equal chances. In case of 9.♘f3 White would no longer threaten h5.

9...♘e4 10.♖c1 e5! 11.dxe5 ♘xc3 12.♖xc3 ♘xe5 13.b4 ♘f3+! 14.♔f1 ♗xc3 15.bxa5



15...♘d2+ 16.♔e1 ½-½

Weekend Short Circuit

SOS-1, Chapter 1, p.10

Gunsberg's Four Knights can be tricky. In the following game Black quickly lost his way.

☐ **David Smerdon**
■ **Robert Ris**
Tilburg 2006

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.a3 ♗d6?!

Original, but not very logical. White can now deploy his bishop on c4 in one go. In case of 4.♗b5 ♗d6, 5.a3 is a useful waiting move when White will retreat his bishop to c4 if he can.

5.♗c4 0-0 6.d3 h6?

This is similar (but worse) to our 4.♗b5 ♗d6 SOS line. Not only is White's bishop better placed on c4, Black has also made the mistake of playing both ...0-0 and ...h6 while White has not yet castled. He is simply asking for:

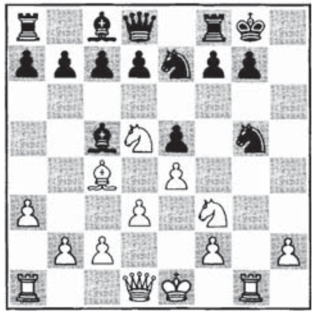
7.g4! ♘h7 8.g5! hxg5

White is also better after 8...♘xg5 9.♘xg5 hxg5 and now either 10.♖g1 ♗e7 11.♘d5, or 10.h4 gxh4 11.♕h5 ♘d4 12.♔f1 ♗e7 13.♘d5 ♘e6 14.♘xe7+ ♕xe7 15.♖xh4 f6 16.f4 exf4 17.♗xf4.

9.♖g1 ♗c5

If 9...♗e7 then 10.♘d5.

10.♘d5 ♘e7 11.♗xg5 ♘xg5?!



The game, played in a weekend congress, now had a curious finish.

12.♘xg5?

Immediately over was 12.♘f6+! gxf6

(12...♔h8 13.♘xg5+–) 13.♘xg5 winning!

12...♘xd5 13.♕h5

And Black resigned – a little too soon. In case of 13...♘f6 White has to find 14.♗xf7+ ♖xf7 15.♕xf7+ ♔h8 16.♖g3 d6 17.♘e6 ♕g8 18.♖h3+ ♘h7 19.♖xh7+! ♕xh7 20.♘g5 ♗e6! 21.♘xe6, when he should indeed win.

Shereshevsky's Albin

SOS-2, Chapter 5, p.38

In the SOS series we have mainly looked at Morozevich's 4.♘f3 ♘c6 5.g3 ♘ge7!?, but Shereshevsky's old suggestion of 4.a3 can be annoying to meet in practice and deserves some attention.

☐ **Jonathan Parker**
■ **Nick Pert**
Swansea ch-GBR 2006

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e5 3.dxe5 d4 4.a3

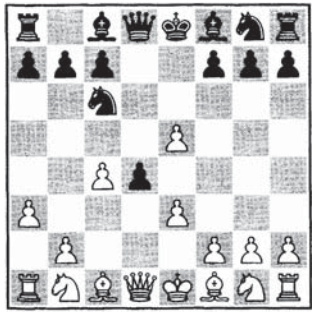
An insipid little move, or is it? White does not develop a piece, but controls the b4-square. The real idea is the follow-up with 5.e3 to return the gambit pawn for a slightly better ending. A clever psychological approach, for we don't play the Albin to defend a slightly inferior ending now, do we?

4...♘c6

In his *Chess for Zebras*, Jonathan Rowson mentions that 4...c5 is probably best met by 5.e3 (5.e4 was Shereshevsky's suggestion, when Rowson likes 5...♘c6 6.f4 g5 with unclear play) 5...♘c6 6.♘f3 ♗g4 7.♗e2.

5.e3

The main idea. White does not defend the e5-pawn. He will exchange queens after a future ...dxe3, when Black's king will be exposed in the centre.



5...♘ge7

Let's continue in the spirit of Morozevich! Please carefully study 5...dxe3 to convince yourself that the ending really is troublesome for Black – this may be counterintuitive. Other possibilities are 5...♗e6 and 5...a5.

- ● Very sensible looks 5...dxe3 6.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 7.♗xe3 ♘xe5, for, with the queens off, is it really so dangerous for the king on d8? Shereshevsky is adamant and gives the astonishing: 8.♘f3! (I am not too convinced that 8.♘c3 ♗e6 gives Black sufficient counterplay, as Shereshevsky argues. At least in the game Ljubojevic-Martens, Enschede 2006, White always looked better: 9.0-0-0+ ♔c8 10.♘d5 c6 11.♘f4 ♗g4 – 11...♗xc4 12.♘f3 ♘xf3 13.♗xc4 ♘e5 14.♗b3 with a big lead in development in an open position – 12.f3 ♗d7 13.♘gh3 ♘h6 14.♘g5 ♘f5 15.♗f2 ♗e7 16.♘e4 ♔c7 17.♘h5! ♖hg8 18.♗e2 b6?? – overlooking White's threat – 19.f4 ♘g6 20.♖xd7+! ♔xd7 21.♗g4♔c7 22.♗xf5 and White is winning) 8...♘xf3+ 9.gxf3. In *Chess for Zebras* Rowson develops this line with 9...♗e6 10.♘c3 ♔c8 11.0-0-0 ♘f6 12.♘e4 ♘d7?! 13.♘g5 when he concludes that White's advantage is becoming tangible.
- ● 5...♗e6 6.♘f3 (not 6.exd4? ♕xd4 7.♕xd4 ♘xd4 with great problems for White due to the weakness of square b3) 6...dxe3 7.♕xd8+ ♖xd8 8.♗xe3 ♘ge7 and now:
  - – 9.♘c3 a6 10.♘g5 ♘xe5 11.♘xe6 fxe6 12.♖d1 ♖xd1+ 13.♘xd1 ♘7c6 (stronger is 13...♘f5!?, Ward) 14.f4 ♘g4 15.♗g1 e5 16.♗e2 ♘f6 17.fxe5 ♘xe5 18.♗d4 ♘c6 19.♗e3 ♗d6 20.♗f3 ♔d7 with approximate equality in Agrest-Glenne, Bergen 2001.
  - – 9.♘c3 ♘g6 10.♘b5 ♖d7 11.♘bd4 ♘gxe5 12.♘xe5 ♘xe5 13.♘xe6 fxe6 14.♗e2 ♘d3+ 15.♗xd3 ♖xd3 16.♔e2 ♖d8± Farago-Mestel, Belgrade 1982.
  - – 9.♘g5 ♘f5 10.♘xe6 fxe6 11.♗g5 ♗e7 12.♗xe7 ♔xe7 and Black's chances were already preferable in Sbarra-Marchio, Corsico 1996.
  - – 9.♘bd2 ♘g6 10.♘g5 ♘gxe5 11.♘xe6 fxe6 12.h3 ♘d3+ 13.♗xd3 ♖xd3 (compare this ending to the one in Farago-Mestel. White is always better because of Black's fractured pawn structure, but it may not be all that much. So 5...♗e6 is a safe escape route, albeit one which may not be that attractive for Black) 14.♔e2♖ d7 15.b4 ♘d4+ 16.♗xd4 ♖xd4 17.♖ac1 ♗e7 18.♘f3 ♖d8 19.♖hd1 ♖xd1 20.♖xd1 ♗f6 and Black managed to draw in Leitao-Mekhitarian, Santos 2006.
- ● 5...a5 6.♘f3 ♗c5 7.exd4 and now Black should analyse Rowson's 7...♗xd4!? rather than 7...♘xd4 8.♗e3 ♗g4 9.♗e2 which is just a pawn down.

6.♘f3

6.exd4 ♕xd4∓ is the point, when after 7.♕xd4 ♘xd4 the weakening of the b3-square means that White is already lost.

6...♗g4 7.♗e2

Now Black must act, since 8.♘xd4 is a threat.

7...dxe3

Finally allowing the ending. This is stronger than Polugaevsky's old recommendation of 7...♘f5, when 8.exd4 ♗xf3 9.♗xf3 ♘fxd4 10.0-0 clearly favours White.

8.♕xd8+ ♖xd8 9.♗xe3

Now Black must make up his mind between 9...♘f5 and retrieving the pawn with:

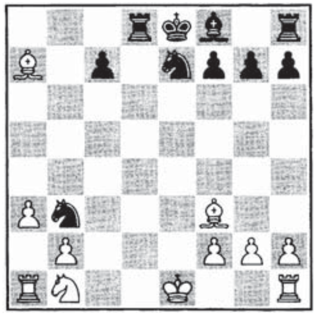
9...♗xf3

Pert must have calculated the game continuation until the repetition. 9...♘f5 10.♗g5 ♗e7 11.♗xe7 ♔xe7 12.♘bd2 ♗xf3 13.♘xf3 ♘fd4 is fine too.

10.♗xf3 ♘xe5 11.♗xb7

11.♗e2 ♘f5 is somewhat better for Black.

11...♘xc4 12.♗xa7 ♘a5! 13.♗f3 ♘b3



Ironically Black keeps the balance, due to the weakness of b3 – the culprit is 4.a3!

14.♖a2 ♘c1 15.♖a1 ♘b3 16.♖a2 ♘c1 17.♖a1 **½-½**

Ivanov wins with Indian SOS

SOS-4, Chapter 12, p.96

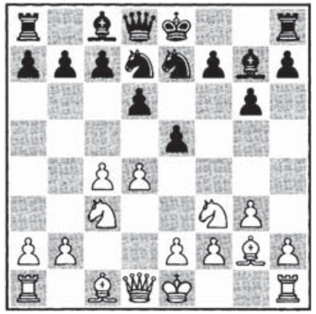
The winner of the SOS Prize is Alexander Ivanov, for the following win over Dean Ippolito at the 2006 World Open.

☐ **Dean Ippolito**
■ **Alexander Ivanov**
Philadelphia 2006

1.d4 g6 2.♘f3 ♗g7 3.c4 d6 4.g3 ♘d7 5.♗g2 e5 6.♘c3 ♘e7

This system, favoured by Zurab Azmaiparashvili (among others), was dubbed an

'Indian SOS' by Dorian Rogozenko. Black is playing a kind of King's Indian, but with his knight on e7 rather than on f6. This increases Black's control over the dark squares. Not only does the knight not block the a1-h8 diagonal, but it can also be moved to c6 (after ...exd4), to attack the d4-square.



7.e4?!

It is telling that this seemingly logical move is already a serious inaccuracy. White must castle first, before playing e4. After 7.0-0 0-0 8.e4 Black continues with 8...exd4 9.♘xd4 ♘c6 when Rogozenko's main line went 10.♘de2 a5. As Rogozenko points out, it is more subtle to preserve the option of playing ...♘c5 or ...♘de5 for the moment. White's best move is 11.h3 when 11...♘c5 12.♗e3 leads to a position where SOS-4 considers two moves: 12...♖e8 and 12...♗e6. In Murshed-Rahman, Dhaka 2006, the latter was tested. Black had good compensation after 12...♗e6 13.b3 ♕c8 (for 13...a4 14.♖b1 axb3 15.axb3 f5 see SOS-4) 14.♔h2 f5 15.exf5 ♗xf5 16.♗xc5!? dxc5 17.♕d5+ ♔h8 18.♕xc5 ♘b4, with excellent counterplay.

7...exd4!

Ivanov takes advantage of Ippolito's mistake with an energetic sequence. He will only castle when all other useful moves are exhausted.

8.♘xd4 ♘c6 9.♘de2

So, now 9...0-0 10.0-0 would transpose to the main line mentioned above. However, the tactical dangers that White is facing in this line are illustrated by the fact that Black can now grasp the initiative with

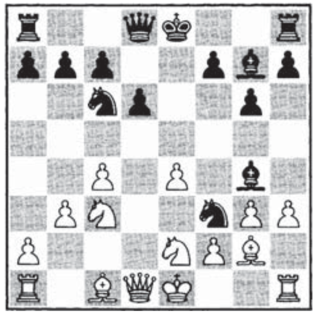
9...♘de5!

If both sides have castled, this knight sortie gains nothing, because of b3 followed by f3 (in reply to ...♗g4).

10.b3 ♗g4 11.h3

In case of 11.0-0 ♘f3+ White has to give up his fianchetto bishop with 12.♗xf3, since 12.♔h1? loses material to 12...♗xc3 13.♘xc3 ♘xh2.

11...♘f3+



12.♔f1 ♗xc3 13.♖b1

White has no choice. He will win back the piece, but his position is in disarray. Of course, he loses the queen after 13.♘xc3? ♘h2+, and an exchange after 13.hxg4? ♗xa1 14.♗xf3.

13...♘h2+!

Creating further disharmony in White's camp.

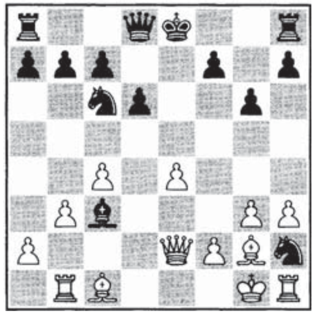
14.♔g1

14.♖xh2 ♗xe2+ 15.♕xe2 0-0 is better for Black due to the unfortunate position of the rook on h2, and the king on f1.

14...♗xe2

Naturally, Ivanov is not satisfied with a mere repetition after 14...♘f3+ 15.♔f1.

15.♕xe2



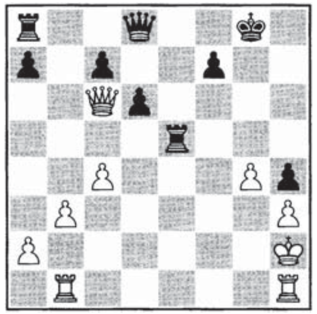
15...h5!

Touching up the dark squares. White cannot block the h-pawn as the intrepid knight would escape to g4.

16.♔xh2 h4 17.g4 g5!

Preparing a dark-square blockade with ...♗e5+ and ...♕f6. Ippolito now gives up a pawn to avoid that dismal prospect.

18.e5?! ♗xe5+ 19.f4 This was White's idea. **19...gxf4 20.♗xc6+** Better was 20.♗xf4. **20...bxc6 21.♗xf4 0-0** Ivanov has finally found the time to castle. **22.♗xe5 ♖e8** Black remains a pawn ahead for the moment due to this pin. **23.♕f3 ♖xe5 24.♕xc6**



White has regained the pawn, but at the cost of his coordination. Ivanov now transfers the game into a winning double rook ending.

24...♖e2+ 25.♔g1 ♕e8!

This is stronger than taking on a2.

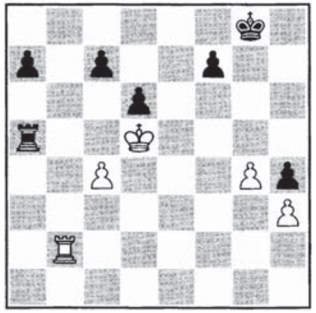
26.♕xe8+ ♖axe8

With his absolute control over the second (and third) rank Black should win.

27.a4 ♖8e3 28.♖h2 ♖e1+

Even stronger was 28...♖g3+! 29.♔h1 ♖ee3.

29.♖xe1 ♖xe1+ 30.♔f2 ♖b1 31.♔e3 ♖xb3+ 32.♔e4 ♖b4 33.♔d5 ♖xa4 34.♖b2 ♖a5+



This forces the king back, or transposes into a winning pawn ending as in the game.

35.♖b5 ♖xb5+

35...♖a3 also wins, but the text is simpler.

36.cxb5 ♔g7 37.♔c6 ♔f6 38.♔xc7 d5 39.♔b7 d4 40.♔xa7 d3 41.b6 d2 42.b7 d1♕ 43.b8♕

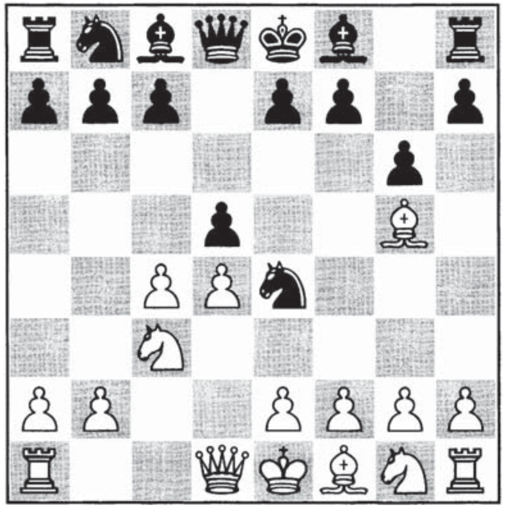
After the pawn race both sides have queened, but Ivanov has of course foreseen that the queens will come off again.

43...♕a4+ 44.♔b7 ♕b4+ 45.♔c8 ♕xb8+ 46.♔xb8 ♔g5 47.♔c7 ♔f4 48.♔d6 ♔g3 49.♔e5 ♔xh3 50.g5 ♔g4 0-1

CHAPTER 2

Ian Rogers

Triple Trouble for the Grünfeld

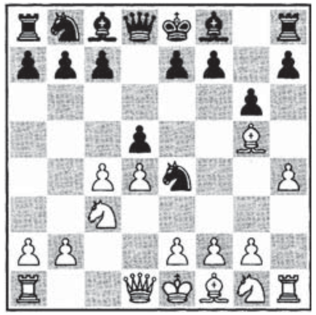


Take my Bishop after 5.h4, 5.cxd5 or 5.♕c1

The 4.♗g5 system against the Grünfeld has a reputation as a safe, even boring, variation, especially when White replies to 4...♘e4 with 5.♗h4. The curious 5.♗f4 also became popular in the 1990s thanks to advocacy by original thinkers such as Vadim Zviagintsev and others. However both 5.♗h4 and 5.♗f4 have the less-than-original idea of preserving the g5 bishop; truly radical thinkers such as Alan Goldsmith don't worry about the bishop. 'Who is Alan Goldsmith?', I hear you cry. Goldsmith is almost unknown outside Australia yet at least one of the many opening ideas he has invented – 1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗g5 ♘e4 3.h4 – is now played around the world. When developing his 3.h4 Trompowsky system Goldsmith also analysed related ideas in the 4.♗g5 Grünfeld, both 4...♘e4 5. h4!? and 5.cxd5!? – the latter plan giving Goldsmith a number of spectacular wins. This article will examine these two plans, as well as the even more sophisticated 5.♕c1. All three moves give Black the chance to eliminate White's dark-squared bishop, but there is also the temptation to simply exchange on c3 and return to a more normal position from the 4.♗g5 lines. In these cases White has saved a tempo by not moving the g5 bishop, though the usefulness of 5.h4 and 5.♕c1 can be debated. In any case, all three systems set new and challenging problems for Black – all that can be asked of an SOS system.

I Grünfeld 5.h4

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.♗g5 ♘e4 5.h4!?



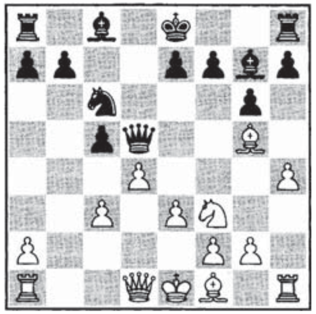
5...♘xc3

By exchanging on c3, Black hopes to show that 5.h4 is just a waste of time.

- 5...♘xg5 is very rarely seen, probably because after 6.hxg5 e6 7.♘f3 ♗g7 8.e3 b6 9.♕b3 ♗b7 10.cxd5 exd5 11.♖c1 c6 12.♗d3 the position looks more like a Queen's Gambit than a Grünfeld. Objectively Black should be fine here but the probability that both kings will stay in the centre complicates matters. The game Solis-Carrera, Peru 2002, continued 12...♘d7 13.a4!? ♕e7 (13...♘f8 14.e4!) 14.♘e2 h6 15.gxh6 ♖xh6 16.♔d2 ♖xh1 17.♖xh1 f5?! 18.♘f4 ♕f6 19.g4! 0-0-0 20.gxf5 gxf5 21.♕c2 ♗h6 and now instead of 22.♘xd5 which gave Black counterplay after 22...♕d6 23.♘e7+ ♕xe7 24.♖xh6 ♕g7 with ideas such as 25...♕g2 and 25...c5 in the air, White could have secured a safe advantage with the simple 22.♖h4.
- 5...c6 is a solid response, but soon enough Black will find himself choosing between the capture on g5 and c3, e.g. 6.♘f3 ♗g7 7.e3 ♘xc3 8.bxc3 ♘d7 9.♕b3 ♕a5 10.h5 ♘c5!? 11.♕b4 ♕xb4 12.cxb4 ♘e4, Gordon-Seidman, Pittsburgh 1946, and now the simple 13.♗f4 should keep an edge for White.

6.bxc3 dxc4

- Black can also try the other standard developing plan – 6...♗g7 7.e3 c5 8.♘f3 ♘c6 (8...♕a5?! 9.♕b3 cxd4 10.exd4± ♘c6? 11.cxd5 ♗xd4 12.♗d2! 1-0 was the disastrous finish to Haak-Montenegro, Vlissingen 1999) 9.cxd5 ♕xd5



and now a plan such as 10.♗e2 and 11.0-0 does not make much sense with h4 thrown in, so White should prefer 10.♕b3 ♕xb3 11.axb3 0-0 12.♗b5 with a slight endgame advantage. For those wishing to understand how to play these endgames for White, an examination of the 4.♗g5 ♘e4 5.♗h4 variation could be in order. In many of the 5.♗h4 lines Black delays playing ...♗g7 in order to have an option of ...e6 and ...♗e7 when the queens have come off the board. The penalty for not doing so has been known since Taimanov-Uhlmann, Belgrade 1970, and it still causes problems – see Korchnoi-Swinkels, Banyoles 2006.

- 6...h6 has been played quite often but certainly does not help Black, e.g. 7.♗f4 ♗g7 (7...c6 8.e3 ♕a5 9.♕b3 ♘d7 10.♘f3 ♗g7 11.cxd5 cxd5 12.♕b4 ♕xb4 13.cxb4 is a typical position where the g7 bishop does not participate in the game. After 13...♘b6

14.♗e5 0-0 15.a4 ♗d7 16.a5 ♘c4 17.♗xg7 ♔xg7 18.♗xc4 dxc4 19.♔d2 White was well on top in Muranyi-Fessler, Untergrombach 2003) 8.e3 c5 9.cxd5 ♕xd5 10.♕b3 ♕xb3 11.axb3 ♘c6, Petersen-Sirch, Leopoldsburg ch-NATO 2000, and now White should have proceeded as in the 6...♗g7 line with 12.♗b5 ♗d7 13.♘f3, when White is more comfortable.

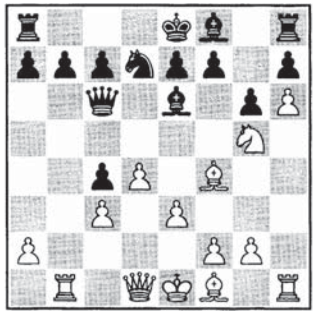
7.e3

Of course it is possible to regain the pawn with 7.♕a4+ c6 8.♕xc4 but after 8...♗e6 9.♕d3 ♗g7 10.h5 h6 11.♗d2 g5 12.♘f3 ♘d7 13.e4 White's big pawn centre has little support and chances were about equal in Belakovskaia-Tarasova, Gornji Milanovac 1991.

7...♗e6 8.h5!

Of course! Quiet development may also work, but this keeps the most pressure on Black – and shows that 5.h4 can prove useful later.

8...♗g7!? 9.h6 ♗f8 10.♖b1 ♕d5 11.♗f4 ♕c6 12.♘f3 ♘d7 13.♘g5



13...0-0-0?!

Having allowed the white knight to get to g5 – 12...f6 was possible – Black should take his life in his hands and play 13...♗d5! 14.f3 f5 when 15.♕e2 can be met by 15...♕f6!, with 16...e5 to follow. The position remains highly unclear but White can force Black to repeat moves with 16.♕d2 ♕c6 and then decide how to proceed.

14.♘xe6 fxe6

On 14...♕xe6 15.♕a4 wins back the pawn with a continuing attack.

15.♖b4 ♘b6 16.♗e5 ♖g8

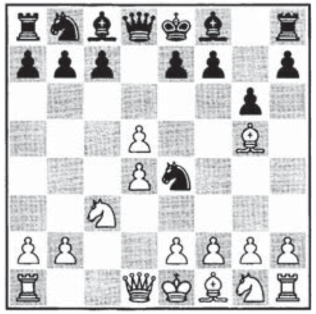
So far we have been following Doyle-Stevenson, Clarkston 1998, where White played

17.♕b1

and eventually won. However, a simple move like 17.♕f3 would have won the pawn back with a dominating position, while 17.♗e2!?, intending 18.♗f3, might be even stronger.

II Grünfeld 5.cxd5

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.♗g5 ♘e4 5.cxd5!?



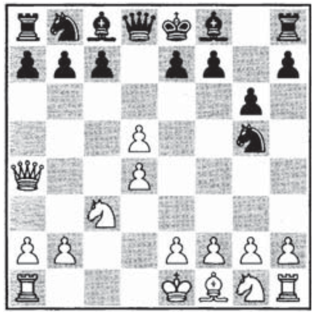
To leave the bishop on g5 undefended is such an unexpected idea that even a GM who has been playing the Grünfeld all his life, Lubomir Ftacnik, admitted to having never considered the move. Of the three lines in this SOS article, this is probably also the riskiest, but bear in mind that White has a 'bale out' option on move 8.

5...♘xg5

The obvious reply, but plenty of players have tried 5...♘xc3 6.bxc3 ♕xd5 despite the fact that after 7.♘f3 White is simply a tempo up on a main line, having saved the move ♗h4 or ♗f4. Of course matters are not 100% clear since a later ...♗g4 by Black may force White to move the bishop away, but at least White has more options than in the main lines and can choose f4 or h4 for the bishop depending on circumstances.

6.h4

For those wanting to completely confuse their opponent, 6.♕a4+!?



turns out be be playable.

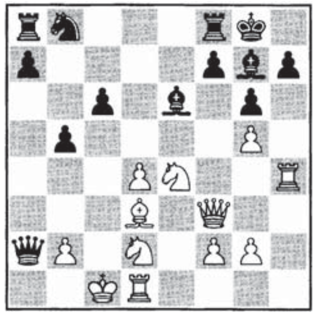
– After 6...c6 7.h4 ♘e6 8.dxe6 ♗xe6 9.♘f3 ♗g7 10.e3 White stands well and in the game Meulders-Campanella, Gent 1989, White won very quickly after 10...♘d7?! 11.♘g5 ♘f8 12.♗e2 ♗d7? 13.♕b3 e6 14.♕xb7 c5 15.♘b5 ♖b8 16.♘c7+ ♔e7 17.♕xa7.

– 6...♗d7 7.♕b3 ♗f5 (since this does not save the piece, Black could also consider 7...c5!? 8.dxc5 ♘a6 with the idea 9.h4 – 9.♕c4!? – 9...♘xc5 10.♕c4 ♕b6! 11.hxg5 ♕xb2 12.♖b1 ♕c2! when White is in trouble) 8.g4! ♗xg4 9.h4. This position is hardly clear but, having regained the piece, it certainly looks more fun to play White.

6...♘e4

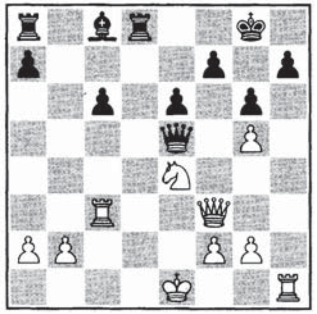
Black has many reasonable alternatives but they have often resulted in crushing defeats. Some examples:

- 6...e6 7.hxg5 exd5 8.♕b3 (8.♘f3 transposes to some 5.h4 lines but White's intentions with 8.♕b3 are far more aggressive) 8...c6 9.e4 ♗g7 10.♘f3 0-0 11.♖h4!? dxe4 12.♘xe4 ♕a5+ 13.♘fd2 b5? 14.0-0-0! ♗e6 15.♕f3 ♕xa2 16.♗d3!



16...c5 (trying to tempt White with the rook on a8 but White's ambitions lie entirely on the other flank. However, 16...♗xd4 also loses: 17.♘f6+ ♗xf6 18.gxf6 ♘d7 19.♖dh1 with a winning attack) 17.♖xh7!! (completely decisive and not difficult to calculate: 17...♔xh7 18.♘f6+ ♗xf6 19.♖h1+ wins) 17...♘d7 18.♘f6+ ♗xf6 (if 18...♘xf6 then 19.♖xg7+! wins) 19.gxf6 ♖fc8 20.d5! ♕xd5 21.♖dh1 1-0, Goldsmith-Drummond, Melbourne ch-AUS 1991.

- If the previous game was not enough of an advertisement for 5.cxd5, then Goldsmith produced a similar finish against the apparently more solid 6...c6 7.hxg5 cxd5 8.♖c1 (once again White has a less violent option in 8.e3 ♘c6 9.♕b3 e6 10.f4 which led to a safe advantage for White after 10...♗g7 11.♗b5 ♗d7 12.♗xc6 bxc6 13.♘a4 ♕a5+ 14.♔f2 0-0 15.♘c5 ♕d2+ 16.♘e2 ♖ab8 17.♕d1 ♕xd1 18.♖axd1 ♗c8 19.b3 in Chernyh-Simagin, Moscow 1966) 8...♘c6 9.e4 e6 (trying to stay solid, since 9...dxe4 10.d5 looks good for White) 10.♘f3 dxe4 11.♘xe4 ♗g7 12.♗b5 0-0 13.♗xc6 bxc6 14.♘e5! ♕a5+ 15.♖c3 ♗xe5 16.dxe5 ♖d8 17.♕f3 ♕xe5



18.♖xh7!! f5! 19.♖e3! ♕a5+ 20.♔f1 ♔xh7?(it was crucial to cover the d3 square with 20...♗a6+! 21.♔g1 before taking the rook. Then after 21...♔xh7 22.♕h3+ ♔g8! 23.♘f6+ ♔f8 24.♕h7 White's attack is good enough for a draw but probably not more) 21.♕h3+ ♔g7 (now 21...♔g8 22.♘f6+ ♔f8 loses to 23.♕h8+ ♔e7 24.♕g7+♔d6 25.♖d3+ ♔c5 26.♕e7+♔c4 27.♖xd8) 22.♕h6+ ♔f7 23.♕h7+ ♔f8 24.♕h8+ ♔f7 25.♕f6+ ♔g8 26.♕xg6+ ♔f8 27.♕h6+ ♔e8 28.♕h8+ ♔f7 29.g6+! 1-0, Goldsmith-Curtis, Sydney ch-AUS 1990.

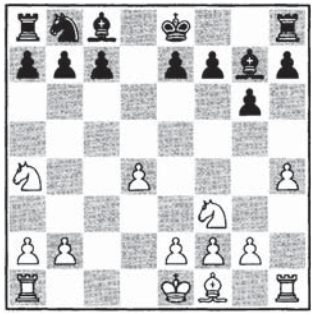
- Ftacnik has suggested 6...♘e6!? 7.dxe6 ♗xe6 with the idea that 8.e4 ♗g7 leaves White's centre somewhat exposed. White should therefore prefer 8.e3 ♗g7 9.♘ge2! with good chances, e.g. 9...♗d7 10.♕b3 ♕c8 11.h5 c5 12.d5 0-0 13.hxg6 hxg6 14.♘f4 with good attacking chances for White in Jurcik-Ates, Budva ch-EUR-U16 2003.

7.♘xe4 ♕xd5 8.f3!?

This is Goldsmith's idea to keep the knight on e4, controlling c5, for as long as possible. It looks – and is – extremely risky to play this way without a dark-squared bishop, so most players prefer the more modest 8.♘c3. Now

– Black usually plays 8...♕a5

Here the temptation for White is to take control of the centre with e3 or e4, attack with h5 and hope for the best. Unfortunately this plan very rarely succeeds – the most notable exception being Struglach-Bell, Detroit 1994 which concluded 9.♘f3 ♗g7 10.h5 gxh5?! 11.e3 ♗f5?? 12.♖xh5 1-0! However with the simple and thematic pawn break ...c5, Black can almost always disrupt White's attack. and launch a successful counter-attack. So perhaps the only responsible plan for White here is the modest 9.♘f3 (9.e3 will be similar) 9...♗g7 10.♕a4+ ♕xa4 11.♘xa4



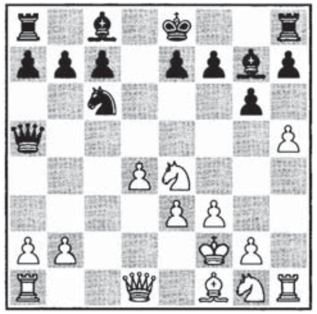
with an endgame which IM Voloshin has played with some success. Of course the bishop pair should be good insurance for Black but without the ...c5 break Black must certainly be careful. 11...♗g4 (11...c6 12.♖c1 0-0 13.e3 ♘d7 14.♘c5 ♘xc5 15.♖xc5 ♗e6 16.b3 a5 17.♗c4 ♗xc4 18.♖xc4 ♖fd8 19.♔e2 e6 20.g4 was already very good for White in Voloshin-Spesny, Czech Republic 1999) 12.e3 ♘d7 13.♖c1 c6 14.♘c5 ♘xc5 (14...♖b8 15.♗e2 ♗xf3 16.gxf3 e5 17.dxe5 ♗xe5 18.♘d3 ♗f6 19.f4 h5 20.b3 should not have been much for White, yet White again won comfortably in Voloshin-Wendt, Pardubice 1996) 15.♖xc5 ♗xf3 16.gxf3 h5 17.f4 e6 18.♗g2 ♔d7 19.♔e2 ♖ac8 20.♔f3 ♖c7 21.♔g3 ♖hc8 22.♖d1 ♔e7 23.b4 a6 24.a4 ♗f8 25.♖b1 ♔d7 26.♖a5 ♖b8 27.b5 and Black had to work very hard to draw in Voloshin-Smejkal, Mlada Boleslav 1994. However if boring endgames with a minimal edge are not to your liking – and they probably are not if you are thinking of playing 5.cxd5!? instead of the staid 5.♗h4 – then Goldsmith's risky plan may be necessary.

– 8...♕d8 is not so bad, e.g. 9.e3 ♗g7 10.h5 (10.♗b5+!? ♘d7 11.h5 worked out well for White in Bönsch-Pribyl, Berlin 1989) 10...c5 11.h6 ♗f6 12.♘e4 ♕a5+ 13.♕d2 ♕xd2+ 14.♔xd2 cxd4 15.♘xf6+ exf6 16.exd4 0-0 17.♗c4 ♗e6 when any White advantage is miniscule – in fact a draw was agreed here in Forintos-Navarovszky, Budapest 1965.

8...♗g7

8...♘c6 9.e3 ♗f5 was tried in Harrison-Lutley, Adelaide 2004, and now 10.♘e2! (instead of 10.♗d3?! ♗h6!) would have enabled White to maintain the knight on e4.

9.e3 ♕a5+ 10.♔f2 ♘c6 11.h5?!



11...♗f5?!

Both players missed that White's last move allowed the powerful (if anti-positional) tactical response 11...f5! followed by 12...f4. Of course White should have played 11.♘e2, keeping the f4 square under control.

12.h6 ♗f6 13.♘xf6+ exf6 14.♖c1?

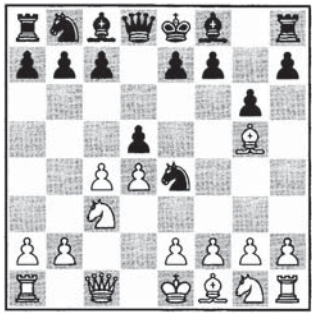
Far too enthusaistic. After 14.♘e2 White can claim a slight edge whereas now after

14...♕xa2 15.♗c4 ♕xb2+ 16.♘e2 ♕b4

White had insufficient compensation for the two pawns and eventually lost in Goldsmith-Kagan, Melbourne 1993.

III Grünfeld 5.♕c1

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.♗g5 ♘e4 5.♕c1!?

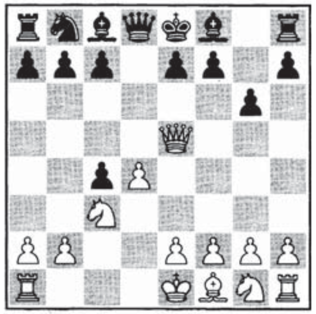


Of the three SOS lines in this article, 5.♕c1 looks the most artificial yet it turns out to be surprisingly dangerous for Black. It also has a number of strong advocates, most notably the Czech GM Marek Vokac.

5...♗g7

The most sensible reply.

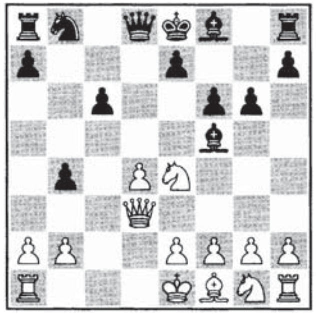
- However, many players are tempted by 5...♘xg5, only to find that after 6.♕xg5 Black is struggling for a good move. To save the d-pawn Black must play 6...dxc4 (on 6...♗g7 7.♕xd5! is strong) but then White inserts the annoying 7.♕e5!



and Black must make a concession:

– 7...f6 8.♕b5+ c6 9.♕xc4 and White

stands well, e.g. 9...b5!? (9...e6 10.h4!? worked out well for White in Meszaros-Soukal, CZE 1996 but of course quiet development also leaves Black's position rather disjointed) 10.♕d3 b4 11.♘e4 ♗f5



and now instead of 12.g4!? which gave Black counterplay after 12...♗xg4 13.♘xf6+ exf6 14.♕e4+ ♔f7 15.♕xg4 b3! in Meszaros-Tomescu, Ceske Budejovice 1997, White should be quite content with 12.e3 ♕d5 13.f3, intending ♘e2-g3.

– Instead of 7...f6, 7...♖g8 is not often seen, perhaps because White has the immediate 8.♘d5 which, fortunately for Black, does not win immediately. In practice, White has always chosen something quieter, such as 8.e3 ♕d6 (8...♗g7 9.♕b5+ c6 10.♕xc4 ♗e6 11.♕b4!? was Landau-Schwarz, Troisdorf 2003, and now 11...♕b6 looks fine for Black) 9.♕xd6 cxd6 10.♘d5 ♘a6 11.♗xc4 ♗e6, Meszaros-Smistik, Brno 2005, which might give White a very small edge after 12.♗b3) 8...♗g7 9.♕xc7 ♘c6 10.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 11.e3 b5. This looks rather suspicious for Black but White does not seem well enough developed to exploit the strange positioning of Black's pieces, e.g. 12.a4?! ♗b7! 13.axb5? ♘xd4!.

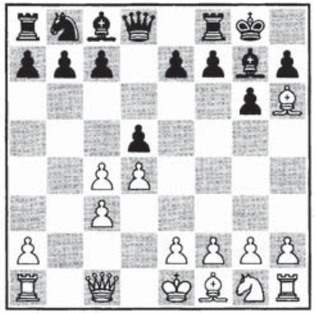
● Note that Black cannot try to avoid ♗h6 and try to return to a main line with 5...h6 6.♗f4 ♘xc3 7.bxc3 dxc4 because after 8.e4 b5 9.a4 c6 10.♘f3 ♗g7 11.♗e2 ♘d7 12.0-0 ♘f6 13.♘e5 and White has great compensation for the pawn and went on to win in Vokac-Walek, Czech Republic 2005.

● 5...c5 fails tactically to 6.cxd5! ♘xg5 (6...♘xc3 7.♕xc3!) 7.♕xg5 cxd4 8.♕e5 ♕b6!? 9.♖d1! ♕xb2 10.♕xd4 with a large advantage for White.

● 5...♘xc3 6.bxc3 (6.♕xc3 makes life too easy for Black after 6...♗g7 7.e3 c5 8.♘f3 ♘c6 9.♖d1 ♗g4 when no Grünfeld player could complain about Black's central pressure, even if chances are no more than equal)

– 6...dxc4 wins a pawn but once again Vokac has shown that White's compensation is considerable, e.g. 7.e4 h6 8.♗e3 b5 9.a4 c6 10.♘f3 ♗g7 11.♗e2 ♘d7 12.0-0 a6 13.♖d1 ♘f6 14.♘e5 ♘xe4 15.♘xc6 ♕d5 16.axb5 ♗b7 17.♕a3 ♗xc6 18.bxc6 ♕xc6 19.♗f3 and White won in Vokac-David, Czech tt 2004/05.

– 6...♗g7 walks into one of the main ideas behind 5.♕c1: 7.♗h6 0-0



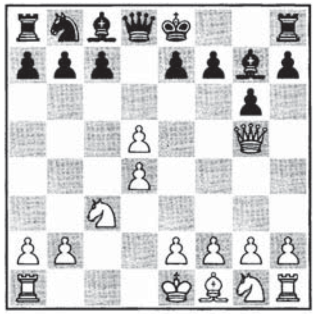
8.h4! and, although Black can stop the mating attack by playing ...♗f5 and recapturing on g6 with the bishop, White has all the chances.

– 6...c5 7.♘f3 ♗g7 8.♗h6 0-0 9.h4 f6 10.♗xg7 ♔xg7 Eniashin-Dvoretska, Kharkov 2004, and now the simple 11.e3 leaves White comfortably placed.

6.cxd5 ♘xg5

6...♘xc3 7.bxc3 ♕xd5 is another attempt to try to return to main lines but once again White can try 8.♗h6 (8.♘f3 ♗g4!? 9.♗h6 ♗xh6! 10.♕xh6 ♘c6 11.♕f4 ♗xf3 12.gxf3 ♕a5 13.♕d2 0-0-0 14.e3 e5 15.♖d1 was unclear in Kümin-Salokangas, Tampere 2003) 8...0-0 9.♗xg7 (the aggressive 9.♘f3 c5 10.h4!? cxd4 11.h5 worked out well for White after 11...gxh5?! 12.cxd4 ♘c6 13.♗xg7 ♔xg7 14.e3 in Vokac-Votava, Czech tt 2002/03, but 11...g5! 12.cxd4 f6 would have been more testing for White) 9...♔xg7 10.♘f3 c5 11.e3 b6 12.♗e2 cxd4 13.cxd4 ♗a6 14.♗xa6 ♕a5+! 15.♕d2 ♕xa6 16.♘e5 ♖c8 17.d5 ♖c5 18.♘d3! ♖c4 19.0-0 ♘d7 and now instead of 20.♘b4?! ♕a5 21.♕b2+ ♘f6 22.a3?! which led to trouble after 22...♕b5! 23.♖ac1 ♖xc1 24.♕xc1 ♘xd5 in Vokac-Navara, Ostrava 2002, White should have contented himself with 20.♖fd1, with a very slight advantage.

7.♕xg5



7...♗xd4

A typical Grünfeld-style gambit with 7...0-0 8.♘f3 c6 does not work out well here because after 9.dxc6 ♘xc6 10.e3 the pawn break 10...e5 allows White to exchange queens, i.e. 11.♕xd8 ♖xd8 12.dxe5 ♘xe5 13.♘d4 ♘c6 14.♘xc6 bxc6 15.♖c1 ♗e6 16.b3, Kümin-Deschenaux, Biel 2003, when Black's drawing chances are slim because an attempt to liquidate the queenside pawns with 16...♗xc3+ 17.♖xc3 a5 fails to 18.♗c4! (and not 18.♖xc6? a4 leading to a drawn 4v3 endgame).

8.♘f3 ♗g7 9.e4 0-0 10.♗c4 a6

10...c6 may be Black's best try, because the endgame after 11.0-0 cxd5 12.♘xd5 (12.exd5!?) 12...♘c6 13.♖fd1 e6! 14.♕xd8 ♖xd8 15.♘e7+ ♔f8 16.♘xc6 ♖xd1+ 17.♖xd1 bxc6 Adler-Papa, Switzerland 2003, should be tenable for Black.

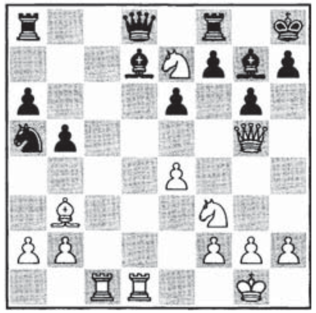
11.0-0 b5 12.♗b3 c5 13.dxc6 ♘xc6 14.♖fd1 ♗d7

So far we have been following Vokac-Sasikiran, Pardubice 2002, where White tried 15.♕d5 but could do no more than draw after 15...♖a7. However, if White had played the simple

15.♖ac1

then Black's task remains very difficult, e.g.

15...♘a5?! 16.♘d5 e6 17.♘e7+ ♔h8



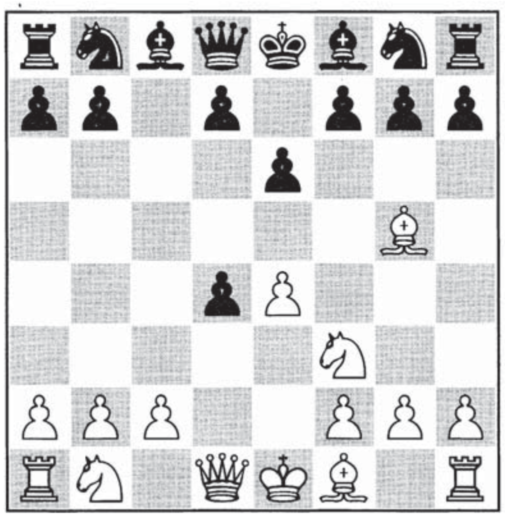
18.♗xe6!! fxe6 19.♘e5!

with a winning attack for White.

CHAPTER 3

Jeroen Bosch

Sicilian: the Aussie Attack



1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗g5

In chess we are not obliged to capture, as for example in the game of checkers, and in the diagrammed position White takes advantage of this by means of 4.♗g5!?. Clearly, this SOS earns full points for shock effect, but the fact that it is legal (and surprising) says nothing about its objective merits. After all, scores and scores of games are played with the mundane 4.♘xd4. Can millions of chess players be wrong? would be a natural question. Well, they are not of course. The proper open Sicilian response is correct but it also stands for loads and loads of theory. The good thing about our present subject is that it gives the game a surprising twist from the start, while it isn't all that bad. In all objectivity, it shouldn't promise you an opening advantage against best play. However, how many of your opponents will be prepared for 4.♗g5?

The whole concept has been invented by a bunch of Australian players which is why the Aussie Attack is a proper epithet. I have taken the name from an article by Gary Lane in the magazine Chess Horizons. Lane mentions the Australians Nick Speck and Mark Chapman as the originators. While Alan Goldsmith and Chris Depasquale also seem involved somehow. Indeed, regular SOS-contributor Ian Rogers confirms that there exists something like an 'Adelaide Opening Mafia'. To top it off, Aleksandar Wohl played it in the 2002 Bled Olympiad against GM Kveinis, and (with more success) in the game presented below. We will investigate all the byways in Wohl-Wanderer, while the GM duel Ivanisevic-Fedorchuk features the main response 4...♘f6 when we arrive at a position most commonly reached via the Torre Attack or the Trompowsky (but more about that later)!

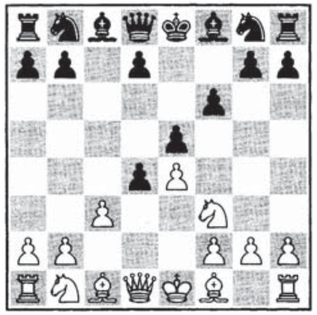
☐ **Aleksandar Wohl**
■ **Thomas Wanderer**
Graz 2005

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗g5 ♗e7

Let's investigate the other 4th move alternatives apart from 4...♘f6:

● 4...f6. This parries the attack on the queen at the cost of taking away the f6 square from the knight. As 5...e5 to hang on to the d-pawn will be too dangerous anyway, this is not such a good idea.

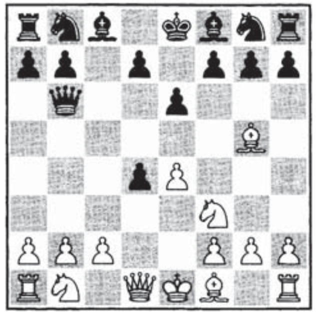
– Lane now mentions 5.♗c1!? as a suggestion of Nick Speck's. He continues with 5...e5 6.c3!



6...d5 (best, considering the circumstances. The problem for Black is that 6...dxc3 7.♘xc3 leads to a superior Smith-Morra Gambit. With the pawn on f6 the diagonal a2-g8 is – fatally – weakened) 7.exd5 ♕xd5 8.cxd4 ♘c6 (8...e4!?) 9.♘c3 ♗b4 10.♗d2 ♗xc3 11.♗xc3 and this is similar to a 2.c3 Sicilian with the f-pawn on f6 rather than on f7. Lane is clearly right in preferring White.

– 5.♗h4 d5 (5...e5?! is of course again met by the Smith-Morra response 6.c3 dxc3 7.♘xc3 – Lane) 6.exd5 ♕xd5 7.♕xd4 (this is the safe move – White can also play for compensation with 7.♘bd2) 7...♕xd4 8.♘xd4 a6 9.♗c4 e5 10.♘e6 ♗xe6 11.♗xe6 ♘c6 12.c3 and White had an endgame plus in Herrmann-Berger, Greifswald 2003.

● 4...♕b6.



This should not be met by 5.♘xd4 ♗c5 6.c3 ♘c6 7.♘d2 d5 (7...♘xd4 8.cxd4 ♗xd4 9.♘c4 ♗xf2+ 10.♔e2 ♕b5 11.♔xf2 ♕xg5 and White does not have enough for two pawns) 8.exd5 exd5 9.♗b5?! (9.♘2b3) 9...♗xd4 10.♕e2+ ♗e6 11.cxd4 h6 12.♗f4 ♘e7 13.♖d1 0-0 and Black was fine in Goldsmith-Zaric, Adelaide Interclub A 2005.

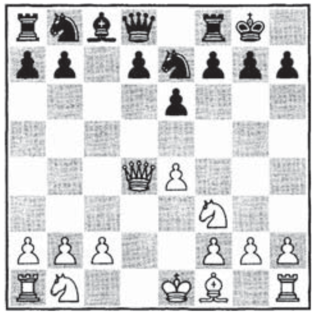
White has two very decent alternatives in my opinion:

– 5.♕xd4 ♕xd4 6.♘xd4 a6 7.♘d2 is a safe plus according to Lane.

– I think 5.♘bd2 deserves serious consideration (especially if you were frivolous enough to play 4.♗g5 anyway). White has a big lead in development after 5...♕xb2 6.♗d3.

- Both 4...♕a5+ and 4...♗b4+ are best met by the Smith-Morra with 5.c3.
- 4...♕c7 can be met by 5.c3 (5.♘xd4 with an Open Sicilian is playable – not fearing 5...♕e5 as 6.♗e3 is possible. Bad now is 6...♕xe4 7.♘c3 with an edge in development that more than compensates the pawn. For example 7...♗b4?! 8.♘b5) 5...dxc3 (Miezis preferred 5...♘f6 and after 6.♗d3 ♘c6 7.cxd4 h6 8.♗xf6 gxf6 9.0-0 a6 10.♘c3 White was better in this double-edged position, T.Hansen-Miezis, Sandefjord 2003) 6.♘xc3 ♘c6 is a regular Smith-Morra Gambit where White has placed his bishop on g5. Food for thought.
- Finally, in reply to 4...♘e7 White has both 5.♘xd4 and 5.♕xd4 ♘bc6 6.♕d2.

5.♗xe7 ♘xe7 6.♕xd4 0-0



7.♘c3

Here 7.♕d6!? deserves serious consideration. The idea is to block the d-pawn. White controls the dark squares, and Black will have difficulty developing. Wohl's plan is more double-edged. He castles queenside and plays for a kingside attack.

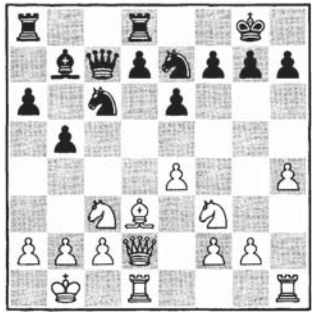
7...♘bc6 8.♕d2 a6

This is a very Sicilian move, but Black should perhaps have preferred to get 8...d5 in. White has nothing special after 9.exd5 ♘xd5 10.♘xd5 exd5. While in case of 9.0-0-0 Black has 9...♕b6 to prevent White from taking the pawn. 10.exd5 ♘xd5 11.♘xd5 exd5 12.♕xd5 ♗e6 13.♕b5 ♕xf2 or the immediate 12...♕xf2.

9.0-0-0 b5 10.♔b1 ♕c7

Worthy alternatives are 10...b4 and 10...♕a5.

11.h4 ♖d8 12.♗d3 ♗b7



13.♕g5

Wohl is attacking with pieces rather than with pawns. Positions with opposite castling are always tense of course. At this stage it is hard to believe that Black is worse.

13...h6 14.♕g4 ♖ac8

Again this is a natural Sicilian move, but perhaps it is a little slow. The immediate 14...b4 came in consideration. Wohl directs another heavy piece to the kingside in a blunt but efficient manner.

15.♖h3 ♘e5?

This mistake hands White a serious edge. Stronger was 15...♘g6 16.♖g3 (16.h5 ♘ge5 is better for Black) 16...♘ce5 (also good is 16...♕f4!?) 17.♘xe5 ♕xe5.

16.♘xe5 ♕xe5 17.f4 f5

A creative response.

18.♕f3

Black defends after 18.exf5 exf5 19.fxe5 (19.♕g3 ♕f6 and White's pieces do not coordinate) 19...fxg4 20.♖g3 h5.

18...♕c5 19.g4 ♕b4?

Going for a one-move threat. Correct was 19...b4, when all results are still possible.

20.a3

Also possible is 20.gxf5 due to 20...♖xc3 21.f6! gxf6 (21...♘f5 22.♕g4) 22.♕h5 and White just wins.

20...♕c5?!

Preferable was 20...fxe4.

21.gxf5 ♘xf5

White has a great position after 21...exf5 22.♖g3.

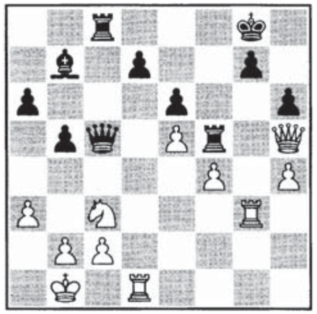
22.♕h5

Or 22.♕g4.

22...♘e7 23.e5 ♖f8?!

23...♕f2 preventing 24.♖g3 does not save Black, as White has 24.♘e2 when 25.♖g3 is again on the cards.

24.♖g3 ♘f5 25.♗xf5 ♖xf5



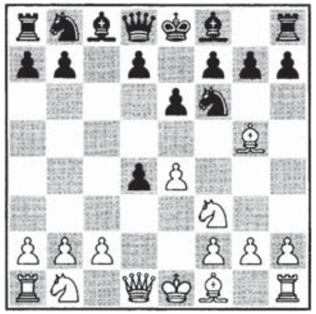
White plays and wins:

26.♖xg7+! ♔xg7 27.♖xd7+ ♔f8 28.♕xh6+ 1-0

☐ **Ivan Ivanisevic**
■ **Sergey Fedorchuk**
Bar 2005

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗g5 ♘f6

The actual move order of this game was 1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗g5 e6 3.♘f3 c5 4.e4 cxd4. Yet another common move order is 1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 e6 3.♗g5 c5 4.e4 (4.e3) 4...cxd4, the so called Wagner Gambit. While most interestingly it is via the Trompowsky that two SOS lines meet. Our SOS response (with black) after 1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗g5 is 2...e6 3.e4 c5 but now 4.♘f3 cxd4 (rather than the much more common 4.e5 h6 5.♗c1 see Bellon Lopez-Bosch in the SOS Files of this issue) transposes to the present SOS (with white). This is a common problem for repertoire books, but not one I had encountered before in the SOS series. I am not going to cheat you into believing that one line can be both good for Black (at least equal) and good for White (a plus). In my opinion Black is objectively OK in the diagrammed position, But I do believe that it is possible to obtain interesting and playable positions after 4...♘f6 that will set your opponents plenty of practical problems to solve over the board.



5.e5

In several games White has preferred 5.♘bd2 over this natural move. The idea is to play the somewhat unclear position after 5...♘c6 6.e5 h6 7.♗h4 g5 8.♗g3 ♘h5 9.♗b5. See the comments below (7.♗g3 instead of 7.exf6 in the text). However, in my opinion Black has an excellent Open Sicilian following 5...d6!, when White has developed his knight to the passive d2-square.

5...h6

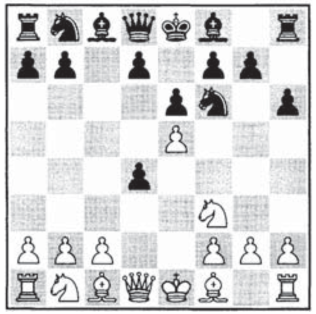
Another Ozzie, IM David Smerdon, has

opined that Black is better after 5...♕a5+ 6.♗d2 ♕b6! (Ian Rogers – personal communication). This is certainly true, but White should settle for 6.♕d2, when 6...♕xd2+ 7.♘bxd2 ♘d5 8.♘xd4 is a somewhat better ending for White. This is similar to 5...h6 6.♗h4 ♕a5+ 7.♕d2 below.

6.♗h4

It is most natural to keep the pin, although you must have made up your mind how to respond to 6...g5. There are two other bishop moves:

- All the way back with 6.♗c1!?.

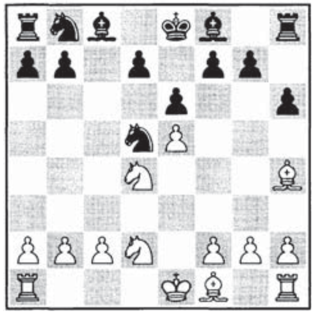


now in line with our Trompowsky SOS Black has two replies:

- The natural 6...♘d5 sort of equalizes after 7.♕xd4 ♘c6 8.♕e4 d6. This position is rather similar to 1.e4 c5 2.c3 ♘f6 3.e5 ♘d5 4.d4 cxd4 5.♕xd4 e6 6.♘f3 ♘c6 7.♕e4 d6. Here, White has no pawn on c3, and Black's h-pawn has moved to h6. All this means that Black has no problems.
- I quite like 6...♘h7!? 7.♕xd4 ♘c6 8.♕e4 ♘g5!? (8...d5 9.exd6 ♗xd6 10.♗d3 ♘f6 11.♕e2 0-0 12.0-0 ♘b4 was also easy for Black in Teske-Bologan, Frankfurt rapid 2000) 9.♗xg5 hxg5 10.♘bd2. White has a slight lead in development, and the g5-pawn looks a little odd, but Black has a potential monster in the form of the dark-squared bishop. The position is perhaps still unclear, but Black won in Okhotnik-Tregubov, Köbanya 1992, and in Marzano-Mantovani, Bratto 2003.

- 6.♗d2 looks odd, but it was Wohl's choice against Kveinis at the Bled Olympiad. The game went 6...♘e4 (6...♕b6!?) 7.♕e2!? (7.♗d3 ♘xd2 8.♘bxd2 ♘c6) 7...♘xd2 8.♘bxd2 ♘c6 9.0-0-0 d6 and Black had nothing to worry about in Wohl-Kveinis, Bled 2002.

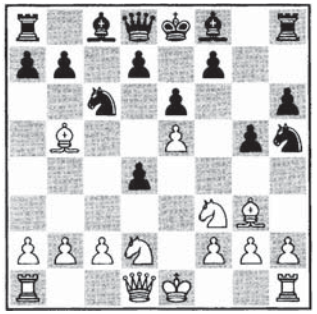
6...g5



This is the sharpest option. Quite popular in practice is 6...♕a5+. However, the ending after 7.♕d2 ♕xd2+ 8.♘bxd2 ♘d5 9.♘xd4 is more pleasant for White: 9...♘c6 (9...a6 10.♗g3 ♗c5 11.♘4b3 ♗e7 12.♗e2 ♘c6 13.c4 ♘c7 14.♘e4 0-0 15.0-0 with a positional plus for the machine in Chessica-Ligterink, The Hague 1997; 9...d6 10.exd6 ♗xd6 11.0-0-0 ♗d7 is perhaps Black's best way of playing – White is only slightly better, Hernando-Hernandez, Sitges 2006; 9...♗e7 10.♗xe7 ♔xe7 11.a3 f6? 12.c4 fxe5 13.♘4f3 ♘f4 14.g3 ♘g6 15.♗d3! ♘f8 16.♘xe5 was excellent for White in Stefanova-Rodriguez Lopez, Las Palmas 1996) 10.♘xc6 bxc6 (10...dxc6 11.0-0-0 g5 12.♗g3 ♗g7 13.c4 ♘f4 14.♗xf4 gxf4 15.♘f3 ♗d7±, Marzano-Scagliarini, Italy 1998) 11.0-0-0 g5 (11...♖b8 12.c4 ♘f4 13.♗g3 g5 14.h4 ♗g7 15.♘f3 ♘h5 16.♗h2 g4 17.♗e2! gxf3 18.♗xf3 ♖b4 19.b3 ♘f6 20.exf6 ♗xf6 21.♗d6±, Depasquale-Jovanovic, Adelaide 2004) 12.♗g3 h5 13.h4 g4 14.c4 ♘e7 15.♘e4 ♘f5 16.♗f4 ♗e7 17.♗g5 ♗a6 18.♗f6 ♖h6 19.♗xe7 ♔xe7 20.g3 ♖d8 21.c5 with a huge plus in Wagner-Becker, Hamburg 1924(!).

7.exf6

7.♗g3 ♘h5 (7...♘e4) 8.♘bd2 (of mainly historical interest is 8.♕xd4 ♘c6 9.♕e4 ♗g7 10.♗b5 ♕c7 11.♗xc6 ♕xc6 12.♕e2 ♕c5 13.0-0 ♘xg3 14.hxg3 g4 15.♘fd2 ♕xe5 16.♕xg4 ♕xb2 and Black was winning in Marshall-Nimzowitsch, Berlin 1928) 8...♘c6 9.♗b5. The move order via 5.♘bd2 has been mentioned above.

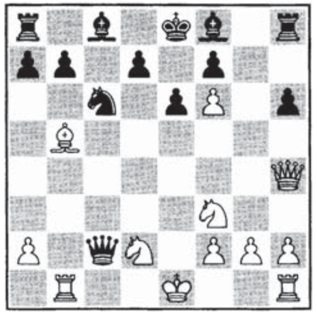


Now 9...♘xg3 10.hxg3 g4 11.♗xc6! dxc6 12.♘h2! has occurred in practice (first in Mohrlok-Zuidema, Vrnjacka Banja 1967). White wins back the pawn and is somewhat better despite his opponent's bishop pair. The weaknesses in Black's camp are more important here.

The problem, however, is 9...g4! and White has no good way to continue the game: 10.♗h4?! (10.♗xc6 dxc6 11.♘h4 ♘xg3 12.hxg3 ♕d5 and here we see why Black should play 9...g4 rather than 9...♘xg3. The knight does nothing on h4, whereas on h2 it is excellently placed attacking g4) 10...♕b6 (or 10...♕c7, Bousios-Lyrintzakis, Athens 1987) 11.♗xc6 ♕xc6 12.♘xd4 ♕xg2 13.♖f1 ♕xh2 14.♕xg4 ♕xe5+ 15.♔d1 ♘f6 16.♕f3 ♗e7 and Black eventually won in Malich-Adamski, Leipzig 1977.

7...gxh4 8.♕xd4 h3!?

More natural is the pawn sac 8...♘c6 9.♕xh4, with the point that 9...♕b6 forces White in turn to sacrifice b2, as 10.b3 is insipid. 10.♘bd2 ♕xb2 11.♖b1 ♕xc2 12.♗b5



This position was tested twice in China:

- 12...a6 13.♗xc6 ♕xc6 14.0-0 b5 15.♘e5 ♕d5 16.♕h5 ♖h7 and Black had everything defended for the moment in Liu Pei-Qi Jingxuan, Suzhou 2006. White should now perhaps have played 17.♖fd1 (rather than 17.♘df3) and if you love to attack then here's your chance. White may well be better!
- 12...♖g8 13.h3!? (to avoid 13.0-0 ♕g6 followed by ...♕g4) 13...a6 (13...♖xg2) 14.♗xc6 ♕xc6 15.0-0 b6 (15...b5) 16.♖fc1 ♗c5 17.♕xh6 ♗b7 18.♕h7 0-0-0 19.♕xf7 and now White was a pawn up, but the little guys hardly count in this position. White transferred the game into a winning ending after 19...♖df8 20.♕h7 ♖h8 21.♕d3 e5? 22.♘c4! e4 23.♘xb6+! ♔d8 24.♕xd7+!, Zhang Ziyang-Wu Shaobin, Wuxi 2005.

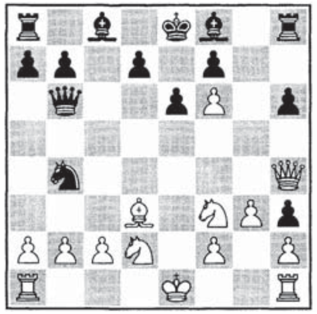
9.g3 ♘c6 10.♕h4 ♕b6

Similar play as after 8...♘c6 9.♕xh4.

11.♘bd2! ♘b4

Or 11...♕xb2 12.♖b1 ♕xc2 13.♗b5. The interpolation of 8...h3 9.g3 probably favours White. A future ...♖g8 will not attack g2.

12.♗d3



12...♘xd3+?!

Possibly 12...♘xc2+ 13.♗xc2 ♕xb2 14.0-0 ♕xc2. But White has the same big lead in development as in all these lines. You should see for yourself whether you enjoy playing such positions.

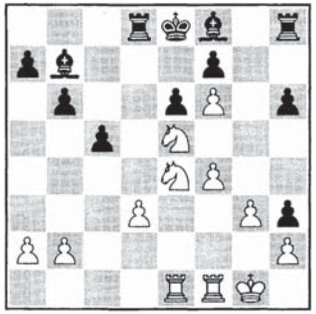
13.cxd3 ♕b5 14.0-0 b6

Black has not been materialistic and counts on his pair of bishops. White now, somewhat unexpectedly, transfers the game into a favourable ending.

15.♕e4 ♕c6

15...d5 16.♕f4 is better for White too. For 16...♕xd3?? loses to 17.♕c7.

16.♕xc6!? dxc6 17.♘e4 ♗b7 18.♘e5 ♖d8 19.f4 c5 20.♖ae1



White is better due to his central knights (and rooks). Black has difficulties untangling his kingside.

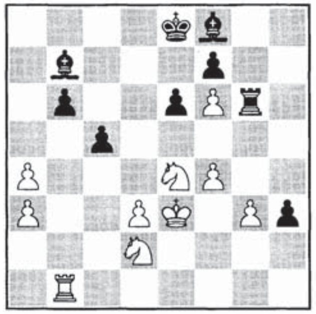
20...♖d4 21.b3 a5?! 22.♔f2

22.f5!?.

22...h5 23.♔e3 ♖h6 24.♘c4 a4 25.♘cd2!?

White is slightly better after 25.♘xb6 ♗xe4 26.dxe4 axb3 27.axb3 ♖b4 28.♘c4 ♖xb3+ 29.♔e2 ♖xf6 30.♖a1.

25...♖g6 26.bxa4! h4 27.♖b1 hxg3 28.hxg3 ♖b4 29.a3! ♖xb1 30.♖xb1



30...e5?

30...♖h6 31.♘f3.

31.f5!

Avoiding 31.fxe5 ♗h6+! 32.♔e2 ♗xd2 33.♘d6+ ♔d7 34.♘xb7 ♗c3 and Black has enough counterplay.

31...♖g8

31...♖h6 and the rook is behind the passed pawn, but Black again loses out on the ...♗h6 idea. 32.♖h1 followed by 33.♘c4 or 33.♘f3 is better for White.

32.♔f3

32.♔f2! avoids the pin along the diagonal.

32...♗d5 33.a5 ♗h6?

This is a blunder. 33...bxa5 34.♖h1 (not 34.♖b8+ ♔d7 35.♘c4 ♖h8) 34...♖h8 35.♘c4 and White is superior.

34.♘c4

34.axb6 ♗xd2 35.b7 was possible too.

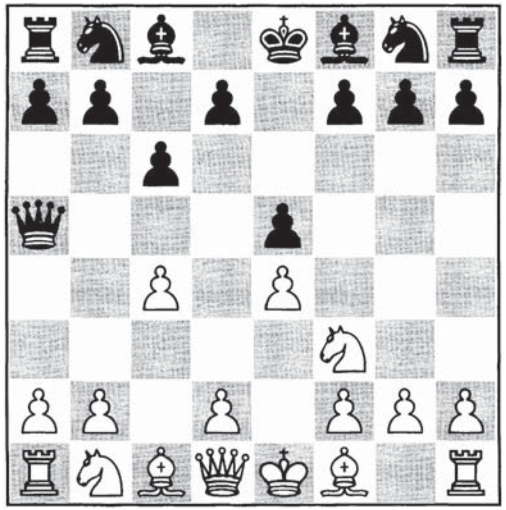
34...h2 35.♖h1 b5 36.♘d6+

And Black resigned. After 37.♖xh2 his position holds no prospects.

CHAPTER 4

Erwin l'Ami

No Panov – Play an Early Queen Move



1.c4 c6 2.e4 e5 3.♘f3 ♕a5

Suppose you are an 1.e4-player who, against the Caro-Kann Defence, loves to employ the Panov Attack (1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.c4). You have studied the Panov carefully by playing through the games of the experts, and by analysing the typical isolated-pawn type of positions.

Then you are going to a tournament and you're facing a guy who – as you can see in your database – plays only Sicilians as Black. Pity, no Panov today you think, but not so fast! What is he playing after 1.d4? He is going 1...d5. After 1.c4? He goes 1...c6 to reply 2.d4 with 2...d5 transposing into his 1.d4-repertoire. You're still there?

We just caught our opponent! By playing 1.c4 c6 2.e4! he faces a difficult choice. 2...d5 is the obvious move, but after 3.exd5 cxd5 4.d4 we transpose to the Panov Attack, and wasn't our opponent only playing Sicilians? This move-order trick is often used in tournament practice. Now we are going to place ourselves in the shoes of our opponent. He is sitting behind the board and after 1.c4 c6 2.e4 he realizes he is being lured into a Caro-Kann.

Not knowing anything about the Panov, our opponent searches for an alternative. Unfortunately, this game happened to be played just a week after this book was published and our opponent was therefore ready to surprise us with 2...e5!?.

This is the line I would like to examine in this survey. First of all I should note that the position after 2...e5 can be reached through various move-orders. The most common is 1.e4 c6 2.c4 but the above-mentioned 1.c4 c6 2.e4 is of course just as viable. White's best way to fight for an advantage is to immediately question the black centre with 3.♘f3. Before we will go deeper into this and into the SOS-reply 3...♕a5, let's check two other replies first.

I 3.d4
II 3.♘c3
III 3.♘f3

Variation I

3.d4

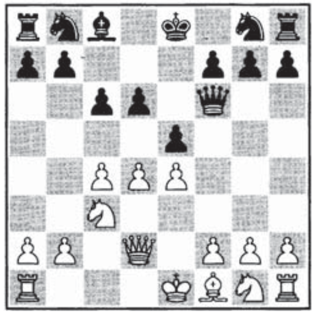
This is less harmless than it looks. Logical would seem

3...♗b4+ 4.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 5.♕xd2 d6

when Black got rid of his bad bishop and has a decent structure. This assessment is a bit too easy though. White also has his trumps with more space and a big centre. Indeed, although English grandmaster Tony Miles – a great expert of 2...e5 – used to play this line with great success I would not recommend it. One of his games went 6.♘c3 ♕f6 7.♘ge2 ♘e7 8.0-0-0 0-0 9.f4 ♗g4 10.f5 ♘d7 11.h3 ♗xe2 12.♗xe2, Sax-Miles, Lugano 1989, when White was ready to push his g-pawn forward with a nice advantage. I'll show you this game now, before continuing our discussion of 3.d4.

☐ **Gyula Sax**
■ **Tony Miles**
Lugano 1989

1.e4 c6 2.c4 e5 3.d4 ♗b4+ 4.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 5.♕xd2 d6 6.♘c3 ♕f6!?



An interesting decision, Black threatens to take on d4 while after 7.0-0-0 the queen exchange 7...♕h6! equalizes.

7.♘ge2 ♘e7 8.0-0-0 0-0 9.f4!

Firmly seizing the initiative!

9...♗g4 10.f5

Preparing to push the g- and h-pawns. Black is obliged to find quick counterplay.

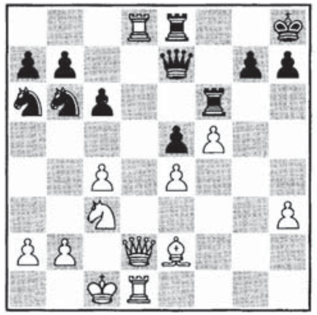
10...♘c8 11.dxe5 dxe5 12.h3 ♗xe2 13.♗xe2

Black is clearly in trouble.

13...♘a6 14.g4 ♕e7 15.g5 f6 16.♖hg1 ♘b6 17.gxf6 ♖xf6 18.♖g3 ♔h8 19.♖d3

The rook is heading in the wrong direction! Better is to continue the attack on the kingside: 19.h4 ♖ff8 (preparing to exchange rooks) 20.♕g5!? ♖ae8 21.♖dg1 and Black is under pressure.

19...♖e8 20.♖d8 ♖ff8 21.♖d6 ♖f6 22.♖d8



Realizing that Black has equalized White decides to repeat moves...

22...♖ef8

...but Miles has other ideas!

23.♖xf8+ ♖xf8 24.♕d6 ♕xd6 25.♖xd6 ♔g8 26.♖e6?! ♘d7 27.♖e7 ♖d8

The rook on e7 finds itself almost trapped!

28.c5?

The decisive mistake. White should still be able to hold after 28.f6! gxf6 (28...♘xf6 29.♖xb7 ♖d7 30.♖xd7 ♘xd7 31.a3 is better for White, due to the queenside majority) 29.a3 ♘ac5 30.♔c2 ♘f8 31.♗g4 with active play for the pawn.

28...♔f8 29.f6 ♘axc5 30.♗c4 ♘xf6 31.♖f7+ ♔e8 32.♖xg7 ♖d4 33.♗e2 ♖d7

Miles was known for his excellent technique. This game is another case in point. Black won after:

34.♖g5 ♖e7 35.♗f3 ♘d3+ 36.♔b1 ♘f4 37.h4 h6 38.♖f5 ♔f7 39.♘e2 ♘xe2 40.♗xe2 ♔g7 41.♗d3 ♘d7 42.♖f1 ♘c5 43.♗c2 a5 44.a3 ♖f7 45.♖g1+ ♔h7 46.b4 axb4 47.axb4 ♘a6 48.b5 ♘c5 49.h5 cxb5 50.♖g6 ♖c7 51.♖b6 ♖c6 52.♖xb5 ♔g7 53.♗b3 ♔f6 54.♗d5 ♖c7 55.♖b2 ♔g5 56.♖f2 ♘d3 57.♖f5+ ♔h4 58.♔a2 b5 59.♔b3 ♖c1 60.♖f6 ♔xh5 61.♗f7+ ♔g5 62.♖g6+ ♔f4 63.♖xh6 b4 64.♗d5 ♖c3+ 65.♔a2 ♔e3 66.♖d6 ♔d2 67.♗b3 ♖c7 68.♔b1 ♔c3 69.♗c2 ♘c5 70.♖d5 b3 71.♔c1 ♔b4 72.♗d1 ♘xe4+ 73.♔b2 ♘c3 74.♖d3 ♘xd1+ 0-1

Another option after 1.c4 c6 2.e4 e5 3.d4, is 3...d6 which was employed by one of the leading players in the previous century, Salo Flohr. It transposes to the line 3.♘f3 d6 which is given below.

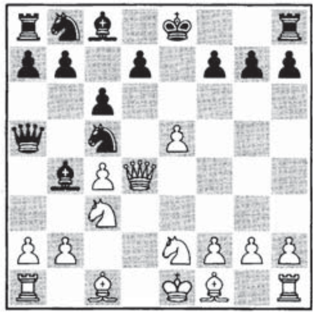
A much less explored move is **3...♘f6!** which I believe is equalizing immediately. Let's first look at **4.♘c3** by means of the game Wall-Lakdawala:

☐ **Bill Wall**
■ **Cyrus Lakdawala**
Kissimmee 1997

1.c4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 c6 3.e4 e5 4.d4 ♗b4 5.dxe5 ♘xe4 6.♕d4 ♕a5!

Very risky is 6...d5?!. Let's follow the game Tal-Garcia Gonzales, Sochi 1986: 7.cxd5 (7.exd6 0-0! gives Black a great initiative) 7...♕a5 8.♕xe4 ♗xc3+ 9.♔d1 cxd5?! (a better chance is 9...♗b4 although 10.d6 ♗e6 11.♗c4! isn't much fun for Black) 10.♕c2! (winning one of the bishops – and the game) 10...d4 11.bxc3 dxc3 12.♘e2 0-0 13.♕xc3 ♕a4+ 14.♔e1 ♗e6 15.♘d4 ♖c8 16.♗b5! 1-0.

7.♘e2 ♘c5



Now White faces serious problems. 8...♘b3 is threatened, but the knight may chose to go to e6 as well.

8.g3?! ♘ba6?!

There was nothing wrong with 8...♘b3 9.axb3 ♕xa1 10.♗g2 d6! 11.exd6 0-0 12.0-0 ♕a5 and by proceeding with ...♗e6 and ...♘d7 Black has a big advantage.

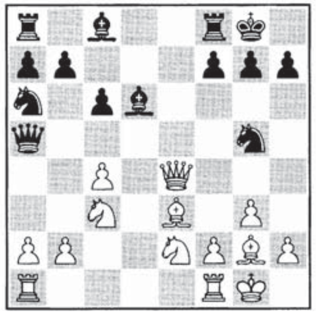
9.♗g2 ♘e6

Now 9...♘b3 is less clear 10.axb3 ♕xa1 11.0-0 0-0 12.♘e4 with an initiative for the exchange. The game promises Black an easy game.

10.♕e3 ♗c5 11.♕e4 d6!

It's important to get rid of the e5-pawn that's hampering Black's development.

12.exd6 ♗xd6 13.0-0 0-0 14.♗e3 ♘g5!



15.♗xg5 ♕xg5 16.♖ad1 ♗c7

The bishop pair in combination with the better structure (c4 vs c6) secures a serious edge for Black.

17.♕c2 ♗g4 18.♕c1 ♕xc1 19.♖xc1 ♖ad8 20.♖fd1 ♗e5 21.f3 ♗e6 22.b3 ♘c5 23.♘e4?!

Black's advantage is growing fast.

23...♘xe4 24.fxe4 g5 25.♔f2 f6 26.♔e3 ♗d6 27.♔f2 ♖d7 28.♘c3 ♖fd8 29.♔f1 ♗g4 30.♖d3 ♗e5 31.♖xd7 ♖xd7 32.♖c2 ♖d3 33.♘e2 ♔f7 34.♔e1 ♗c7 35.♔f2 ♔e7 36.♘c1 ♖d8 37.♘e2 ♖d1 38.♘c3?

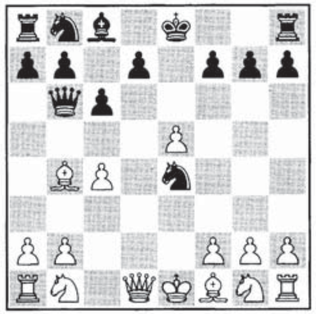
Allowing a sudden mate! White is of course much worse but with 38.♗f3 he could have prolonged the fight.

38...♗b6+ **0-1**

Instead of 4.♘c3 White may also try **4.dxe5**

Black is fine though after: **4...♗b4+!**

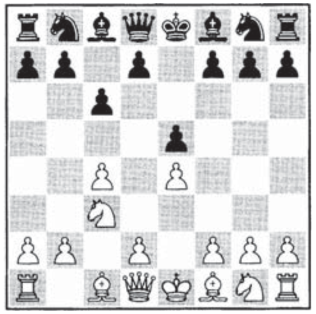
I like this new move very much. Black is also OK after 4...♘xe4 but he should avoid going in for 5.♗d3 ♕a5+?! 6.♘d2 ♘xd2 7.♗xd2 ♕xe5+ 8.♘e2, when White is a pawn down but has almost finished his development and is ready to start an attack. Better is 5...d5 with equality. **5.♗d2 ♘xe4! 6.♗xb4 ♕b6**



With the double threat of mating on f2 and taking back the piece on b4. **7.♕c2 ♕xb4+ 8.♘c3 ♘xc3 9.♕xc3 ♕xc3+ 10.bxc3 ♘a6!** With ...♘c5 coming, and White's structure damaged, Black should be fine in this ending.

Variation II

3.♘c3?!



This doesn't make much sense as the knight is not attacking Black's centre. Black is therefore given more options than in our main line (3.♘f3). Black could simply transpose to that main line with 3...♘f6 4.♘f3 but he could also choose to develop his bishop to c5 or b4.

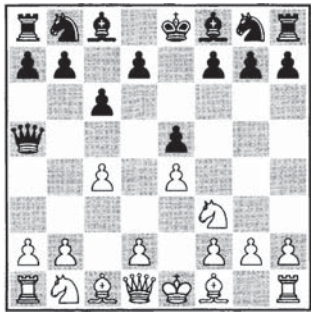
Variation III

So it seems 3.♘f3 is the only way of fighting for an advantage.

3.♘f3

Black has various set-ups at his disposal.

3...♕a5



This is the SOS-reply, but in order to understand the merits of this early queen move I would like to give you my views on 3...d6 and 3...♘f6 first.

- After the passive 3...d6 White continues 4.d4 ♘d7 (if 4...♗g4 the ending 5.dxe5 ♗xf3 6.gxf3 – 6.♕xf3 dxe5 is pleasant for Black, due to square d4 – 6...dxe5 7.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 8.f4 f6! is not so much for White, as was seen in Seirawan-Nikolic, Tilburg 1990. But Rumanian grandmaster Mihai Suba showed the right plan for White. He played 5.d5! when the bishop on g4 is rather misplaced. After 5...♗e7 6.♘c3 ♗xf3 7.♕xf3 ♗g5 8.♕g3 ♗xc1 9.♖xc1 ♕f6 – 9...♔f8 would also run into 10.c5! – 10.c5! dxc5 11.dxc6 bxc6 12.♘a4 followed by ♘xc5, White had a big advantage in Suba-Ceteras, Sovata 1999) 5.♘c3 ♘gf6 6.♗e2 ♗e7 which is in fact the main line of the so called Old-Indian Defence. This defence is currently completely out of use. White has a lot of space, a big centre and therefore much reason for happiness. I would not like to recommend 3...d6.
- 3...♘f6 is more natural, as Black is challenging White's centre. White nevertheless managed to prove an advantage by playing 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.♘xe5 0-0 (an old game Van den Hoek-Euwe, The Hague 1942, saw Black comfortably equalizing with 5...♕e7 6.♘f3 ♘xe4 7.♗e2 0-0 8.0-0 d6 9.♕c2 ♘f6 10.d4 ♗g4. 53 Years later the right way of meeting 5...♕e7 was found: 6.♘d3! ♘xe4 7.♕e2 ♘xc3 8.dxc3 ♕xe2+ 9.♗xe2 ♗e7 10.♗f4! d6 11.0-0-0 ♗e6? 12.♘b4! and White went on to consume the d6-pawn in Votava-Meduna, Lazne Bohdanec 1995) 6.♘d3! ♗xc3 7.dxc3 ♘xe4 8.♗e2. An instructive game of Evgeny Bareev proceeded: 8...d6 (8...d5 9.cxd5 ♕xd5 10.0-0 is better for White because of the bishop pair) 9.0-0 ♘d7 10.♖e1 ♕f6 11.f3 ♘ec5 12.♘f2! (not exchanging on c5 which would 'awake' the sleepy knight on d7) 12...a5 13.♗e3 ♖e8 14.♕d2 a4 15.♖ad1 with a huge advantage. Bareev-Volkov, Elista Olympiad 1998.

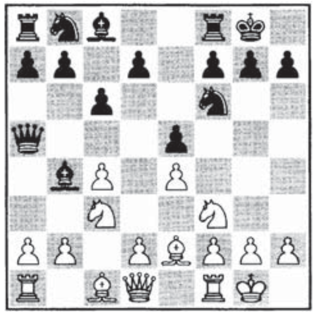
Our text move – 3...♕a5!? – is the move I would like to recommend to you. It looks quite odd at first sight but a closer look reveals its point. First of all, Black is defending his e-pawn and second, the advance d2-d4 is stopped. Last but not least, after ♘c3 Black will always plays ...♗b4, again indirectly pressuring White's centre. White has to continue his development with

4.♗e2 ♘f6 5.♘c3

Or 4.♘c3 ♘f6 5.♗e2.

5...♗b4 6.0-0 0-0

which leads to the key position. By the way, we can quickly vote off 6...♗xc3?! 7.dxc3 ♘xe4, as it runs into 8.♗d3 ♘f6 9.♘xe5!.



The game Kortchnoi-Gurevich, Barcelona 1992, now continued with **7.d3**, and we will see how Black reaches an acceptable position after this.

☐ **Viktor Kortchnoi**
■ **Mikhail Gurevich**
Barcelona 1992

1.c4 c6 2.e4 e5 3.♘f3 ♕a5 4.♘c3 ♘f6 5.♗e2 ♗b4 6.0-0 0-0 7.d3

We will examine 7.♕c2! in the next game.

7...d5! 8.exd5

Or 8.cxd5 ♗xc3 9.bxc3 cxd5 10.♘xe5 dxe4 11.♘c4 ♕c7 12.♗g5 ♘d5 13.♖c1 exd3 14.♕xd3 ♘f4 15.♗xf4 ♕xf4 (Nijboer-Miles, Groningen 1992) and now 16.♘d6 gives White some initiative. However, Black can improve with 14...♗e6 15.♗f3 ♘f4! (only now!) 16.♗xf4 ♕xf4 17.♘d6 ♘c6 18.♘xb7?! ♘e5 19.♕e4 ♘xf3+ 20.♕xf3 ♕xf3 21.gxf3 ♗xa2!.

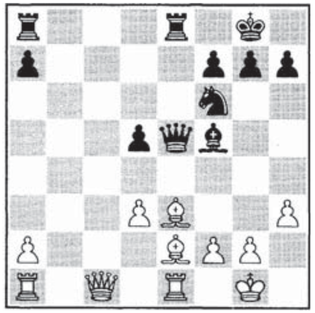
8...cxd5 9.♘xe5 ♗xc3

Not 9...d4 10.♘d5 ♘xd5 11.cxd5 ♕xd5 12.♗f4 followed by ♗f3 with pressure.

10.bxc3 ♕xc3 11.♗f4 ♘c6

11...♖e8 12.d4 ♘c6 13.♘xc6 bxc6 14.cxd5 ♘xd5 is perhaps an easier way to equalize.

12.♘xc6 bxc6 13.♕c1 ♕d4 14.♗e3 ♕e5 15.♖e1 ♖e8 16.cxd5 cxd5 17.h3 ♗f5



Although White has the two bishops Black doesn't experience any problems at all. The bishops are rather restrained and Black has no weaknesses.

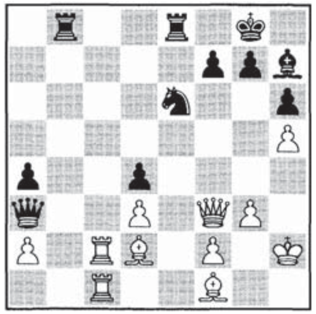
18.♕c5 ♘d7!

The knight is on it's way to e6!

19.♕b4 a5 20.♕h4 ♘f8 21.♖ac1 ♘e6 22.♗f1 d4 23.♗d2 ♕d6 24.♕h5 ♗g6 25.♕f3 h6

White already has to be careful. Black starts attacking the weaknesses on a2 and d3.

26.h4 ♕a3 27.♖c2 ♖ac8 28.♖ec1 ♖b8 29.h5 ♗h7 30.g3 a4 31.♔h2



31...♕e7

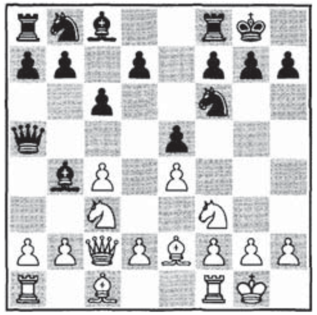
A more active alternative is 31...♖b2 32.♖xb2 ♕xb2 33.♕c6 ♖b8 34.♖c2 ♕b1 followed by a future ...a3 and ...♖b2.

32.♗h3 ♘g5?!

Now White gets the opportunity to take over.

33.♗xg5 ♕xg5 34.♖c4 Most probably the players were in time-trouble here. White could have won a pawn with 34.♗d7! ♖ed8 35.♗xa4. **34...a3 35.♖1c2 ♕e5 36.♖c7 ♖e7 37.♖c8+ ♖e8 38.♖2c5 ♕f6 39.♕xf6 gxf6 40.♖xe8+ ♖xe8** Now the draw becomes obvious. **41.♖a5 ♖e2 42.♖xa3 ♖xf2+ 43.♔g1 ♖d2 44.♗f1 ♗f5 45.♖a4 ♖d1 46.♖xd4 ♗h3 47.♖f4** And because of 47...♗xf1 48.♖xf1 ♖xd3 49.♔g2 ♖a3 50.♖f2 f5 the players agreed to a draw.

After 6...0-0 White's best is
7.♕c2!



Before I will tell you how Black should respond it is important to investigate the game Ivanchuk-Miles first:

☐ **Vasily Ivanchuk**
■ **Anthony Miles**
Biel 1989

1.e4 c6 2.c4 e5 3.♘f3 ♕a5 4.♗e2 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♗b4 6.0-0 0-0 7.♕c2!

This is the most critical reply, stopping d7-d5.

7...♖e8

In practice this is the most popular response. The point of 7.♕c2! becomes clear in the line 7...d5 8.cxd5 cxd5 9.♘xd5 ♘xd5 10.exd5 ♕xd5 11.♗c4 ♕d6 12.♘g5! g6 13.♘xf7! ♖xf7 14.♗xf7+ ♔xf7 15.♕xc8 winning. So Black is unable to free itself immediately with ...d5.

Your author also didn't find the right way of playing: 7...d6 8.a3 ♗xc3 9.dxc3 ♗g4 10.♘h4! ♗xe2 11.♕xe2 and with the knight heading for f5 White had a great position in Postny-l'Ami, Hoogeveen 2006.

However the best move is 7...♘a6. I will come back to this at the end of the chapter.

8.a3

Now Black faces another choice, retreating the bishop to f8 or taking on c3 followed by d7-d5.

Please note that 8...d5 is not possible on account of 9.axb4! ♕xa1 10.d4! when the queen on a1 is almost trapped and White is very active as well.

I don't like 8...♗xc3 9.dxc3 d5 10.cxd5 cxd5 11.exd5 e4! 12.♘d4 ♕xd5 which is all rather forced and was played a number of times. White usually goes 13.♗f4 and it's surprisingly hard to find a move for Black. 13...♗g4 is met by 14.♗xg4! ♘xg4 15.♕e2! ♘e5 16.♕b5 ♕xb5 17.♘xb5 with problems for Black, while 13...♘c6 14.♘b5 is no picnic either.

8...♗f8

The move 8...♗f8 was played various times by Tony Miles but in the present game he faced serious difficulties.

9.d4 d6

Black's position is passive but quite solid. It is interesting to see how Ivanchuk shows the drawbacks of Black's strategy.

A new way of attempting to equalize was seen in the game Murariu-Kallio, Budapest 2005: (after 9.d4) 9...exd4 10.♘xd4 d6 11.♗f4 ♘bd7 which resembles a King's Indian Defence with ...exd4. White is slightly better, a possible way of playing is ♖ad1, h3, ♗h2 with pressure. It seems that if we follow the well-trodden path Black faces some difficulties.

10.h3 ♘bd7 11.♗e3 a6 12.dxe5! ♘xe5

12...dxe5 13.b4 ♕c7 14.c5 followed by ♘d2-c4, gives White a clear edge.

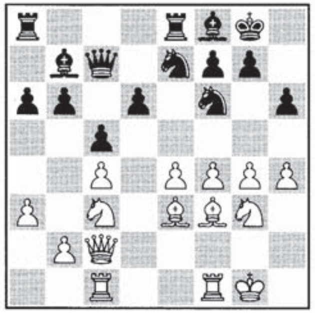
13.♘d4 ♕c7 14.♖ac1 b6 15.f4 ♘g6 16.g4!

If this is possible, then something went wrong.

16...♗b7 17.♘f5 c5 18.♗f3 h6 19.h4?!

The prophylactic 19.♖ce1 (defending the bishop on e3) deserves attention, before starting actions on the kingside.

19...♘e7 20.♘g3



20...g6?!

Instead 20...d5! 21.e5 (21.exd5 ♘exd5 hands the initiative to Black) 21...♘xg4! 22.♗xg4 d4 23.♘ce4 dxe3 24.♘d6 ♖ed8 and ...♘c6 next looks at least no worse for Black.

21.g5 ♘d7 22.♕d2 ♖ad8 23.♖cd1 b5 24.cxb5 ♘b6 25.♗e2

And Ivanchuk offered a draw. He was probably afraid of 25.♗e2 d5!? but I would still prefer White after 26.bxa6 ♗c6 27.♘b5 ♕b8 28.a7 ♕b7 29.♗xc5 ♘f5!? 30.exf5 ♗xc5+ 31.♔h2.

Now let's return to the position after

1.c4 c6 2.e4 e5 3.♘f3 ♕a5 4.♗e2 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♗b4 6.0-0 0-0 7.♕c2!

As I mentioned Black should play

7...♘a6!?

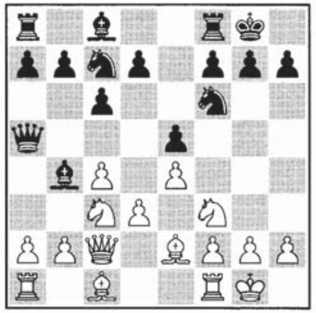
This move was only seen twice in practice, but it deserves more practical tests.

8.d3

White can also try 8.a3 ♗xc3 9.dxc3 ♘c5! and now 10.b4 allows 10...♕a4, while 10.♘xe5 ♘cxe4 followed by d7-d5 should be OK for Black as well.

8...♘c7!?

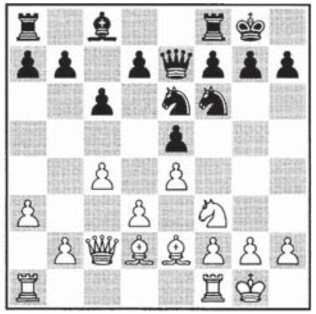
After 8...♗xc3 9.bxc3 h6 (Polak-Jirka, Czech tt 2002/03), the move 10.d4! secures a solid advantage for White. I would therefore prefer to postpone taking on c3 with the text.



9.♗d2

With the idea to take back on c3 with the bishop. Instead 9.♗g5 ♘e6 10.♗xf6 gxf6 looks better for Black. Also harmless is 9.a3 ♗xc3 10.♕xc3 ♕xc3 11.bxc3 d6 with an equal position (12.c5 d5!). Black should play

9...♘e6 10.a3 ♗e7! 11.♘d5 ♕d8 12.♘xe7+ ♕xe7



and because of 13.♘xe5? ♘d4 Black faces no problems at all.

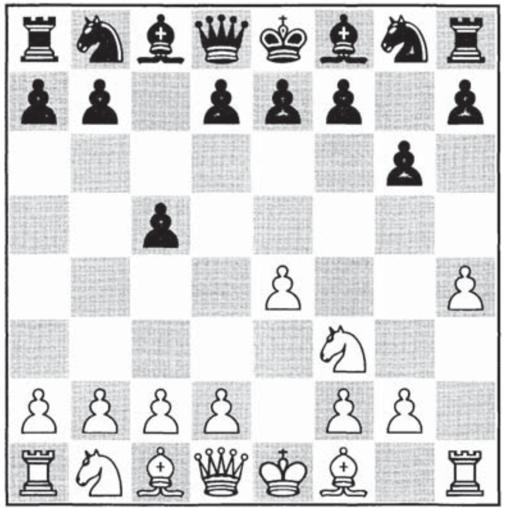
We can draw some conclusions:

- After 2...e5 3.d4, 3...♘f6! is the way to equalize.
- 3.♘c3 has little independent meaning.
- Black – after 3.♘f3 – should continue 3...♕a5 and I believe Black is OK in the line 4.♘c3 ♘f6 5.♗e2 ♗b4 6.0-0 0-0 7.♕c2 ♘a6!?.
- The whole system is perfectly playable!

CHAPTER 5

John Donaldson and Jeremy Silman

3.h4 in the Hyper-Accelerated Dragon



1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.h4

The Dragon Sicilian has always enjoyed popularity but the fierce attack that Black's King is often subjected to in the Yugoslav Attack (1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 g6 6.♗e3 ♗g7 7.f3) is not to everyone's taste. This helps to explain the following for its little cousin the Accelerated Dragon (1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 g6). By leaving the d-pawn on its original square Black in many cases hopes to play ...d7-d5 in one jump.

This strategy can be seen in variations like 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 g6 5.♘c3 ♗g7 6.♗e3 ♘f6 7.♗c4 0-0 8.♗b3 a5 9.f3 d5 and 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 g6 5.♘c3 ♗g7 6.♗e3 ♘f6 7.♗c4 0-0 8.♗b3 e6 with ...d7-d5 to follow.

Because 8.♗b3 is necessary in this move order (8.f3 running into 8...♕b6) Black also has the possibility of transposing into a Dragon where White might have preferred to have castled queenside or played h4 in lieu of placing the bishop on b3 so early. One example is 8.♗b3 d6 9.f3 ♗d7 10.♕d2 ♘xd4 11.♗xd4 b5 – a Dragon variation that arises almost exclusively from an Accelerated Dragon move order.

Yet one other way of sidestepping the Yugoslav Attack in the Dragon is via 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 g6 5.♘c3 ♗g7 6.♗e3 ♘f6 7.♗c4 ♕a5 which forces White

to castle short due to the threats of ...♘xe4 and ...♕b4.
Finally, it should also be added that sometimes Dragon players who are not afraid of the Yugoslav Attack adopt the Accelerated move order to sidestep 9.0-0-0 in the regular Dragon.

We have seen that by the move order 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 Black has several ways to dampen White's attacking chances compared to the normal Dragon move order, but what does he give up in return?
The answer is clearly the Maroczy Bind with 5.c4. Once avoided at almost all cost the Bind now exists in a state of flux. Many modern grandmasters prefer to avoid conceding their opponent a clear space advantage so early in the game. But others, most notably Ivanchuk, Malakhov, and Tiviakov, find the trade-off between king safety and a space disadvantage a fair exchange. Particularly in the Gurgenidze line (5.c4 ♘f6 6.♘c3 d6 7.♗e2 ♘xd4 8.♕xd4 ♗g7 9.♗e3 0-0 followed by ...♗e6, ...a6, ...♕a5 and ...♖fc8) Black has concrete play yielding good chances to equalize. What he doesn't have are opportunities to play for more unless White really overextends. Many lines where White plays ♘d5 and trades all the pieces make this an unacceptable way to play for a win for Black. There are other ways to combat the Maroczy, for example ...♘h6 and ...f5 or the double fianchetto with ...b6, but these require Black to take some strategic risks that are not to everyone's taste.

What to do then if you want to avoid the Yugoslav Attack and not have to face the Maroczy Bind? The answer is the Hyper-Accelerated Dragon (1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6). One idea behind the delayed development of the knight to c6 is that it allows Black to avoid the Rossolimo Attack (2...♘c6 3.♗b5). This explains the move order 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 whereby 4.♘xd4 ♘c6 transposes back into the Accelerated and 4.♕xd4 is a world onto its own. What it does not do is avoid the Maroczy.

Black accomplishes this goal by delaying exchanging on d4 with 3...♗g7. Then 4.c4 can be met by 4...♕b6, 4...♕a5+ and 4...d6 with the idea 5.♘c3 ♕a5. All three lines have their followers; in particular the first has been played by many 2600+ grandmasters. Each one produces positions that are much more unbalanced than those typically arising from the Maroczy Bind.

So what is a white player to do who wants to take the fight to Black? There are lines like 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.d4 ♗g7 4.dxc5 ♕a5+ and now 5.c3 ♕xc5 6.♘a3 or 5.♘c3 sacrificing a pawn for attacking chances. But why not be particularly direct? How about 3.h4!?. There are only 39 games with this move in Mega Database 2006. World Champion Boris Spassky has given it his blessing, as have fellow grandmasters Akopian, Golod, Hector, Ivanovic and Velimirovic. It seems to have been first used in Spassky-Stein, Spartakiad 1965 and Velimirovic-Ostojic, Belgrade (October) 1965, but it is IM Almira Skripchenko who has played it the most.

If you look for material on 3.h4 you will be disappointed. Raymond Keene gave it a paragraph in his booklet on the Hyper-Accelerated Dragon for Chessman Quarterly more than thirty years ago and similar space was allocated to the move in Schwarz's *Sizilianisch I* (1975), Donaldson and Silman's *Accelerated Dragons* (1998) and Nielsen and Hansen's *The Sicilian Accelerated Dragon* (1998). As one might expect with such limited practical examples and theoretical material there is no real theory. In this article we will make an attempt to organize the existing material, evaluate Black's main tries and suggest new ideas.

In answer to 3.h4, which Nielsen and Hansen characterize as 'a good, provocative idea based on sound principles', Black has seven replies which can be characterized into four groups:

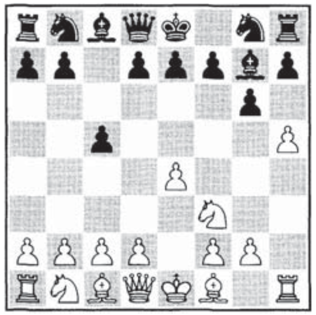
I 3...♘c6 and 3...♗g7
II 3...h5 and 3...h6
III 3...d5 and 3...♘f6
IV 3.... ♗h6?!

I Ignoring the threat of h5 – 3...♘c6 and 3...♗g7

Game 1

☐ **Boris Spassky**
■ **Leonid Stein**
Soviet Union 1965

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.h4 ♗g7
This move and 3...♘c6 – which can often transpose, both give White a free hand to continue his plan unimpeded. Allowing h4-h5-h6 does not look like a good idea.
4.h5



4...♘c6
4...d6 was tried by the late Alex Wojtkiewicz, a true fan of the Hyper-Accelerated, against Almira Skripchenko in one of the Marshall Masters tournaments in New York. After 5.♗c4 ♘c6 6.d3 ♘f6 7.h6 ♗f8 8.♗g5 e6 9.e5!? dxe5 (9...♘xe5? 10.♘xe5 dxe5 11.♗b5+ ♗d7 12.♗xd7+ ♔xd7 13.♕f3±) 10.♗b5 ♕a5+ 11.♘c3 ♘d7 12.♗xc6 (12.♘xe5 ♘dxe5 13.♗f6 ♖g8 14.♗xe5 ♗d7 15.♗f6 g5 16.♕h5 – 16.♕f3 ♖g6 – 16...a6 17.♗a4 ♖g6 equal) 12...bxc6 13.♘xe5 White was slightly better.
5.♘c3
5.♗c4 was seen in the David vs Goliath encounter Saldano-Malakhov, Porto San Giorgio 1996, where the future world class GM – already rated over 2500 – faced an inspired amateur. The result was not typical: 5...e6 6.♘c3 a6 (6...♘ge7) 7.a3 b5 8.♗a2 ♗b7 9.d3 ♘ge7 10.♗g5 ♕a5 11.h6 ♗xc3+ 12.bxc3 ♕xc3+ 13.♗d2 ♕f6 14.♗g5 ♕c3+ 15.♗d2 ♕f6 16.♗g5 (draw) 16...♕b2 (no draw) 17.0-0 f6 18.♖b1 ♕xa3 (18...♕xa2 is too risky – 19.♗xf6 0-0 (19...♖f8 20.♖a1) 20.♖a1) 19.♗xf6 0-0 20.♖a1 ♕b4 21.c3 ♕b2 22.♗g7 ♖f7 23.♗xe6! (draw!!) 23...dxe6 24.♖b1 ♕a3 25.♖a1 ♕b2 26.♖b1 ½-½.
5...e6
Here 5...d6 6.♗c4 ♘f6 7.h6 ♗f8 8.d4 cxd4 9.♘xd4 ♕b6 10.♘b3 ♘g4 11.♕e2 ♘ge5 12.♗e3 ♕d8 13.♗d5 e6 14.♗xc6+ bxc6 15.0-0-0±, Arancibia-Andres, Buenos Aires 1996, is another example that suggests that allowing h6 is not a good idea.
6.d3
Bozidar Ivanovic tried an interesting idea against Matthiesen at Saint Vincent in 2005. The Montenegrin GM played 6.♗b5 to get rid of his king bishop, which would be a target on c4 and locked in on e2. After 6...♘ge7 7.♗xc6 ♘xc6 8.d3 d6 9.♗g5 ♕a5 10.♔f1 ♖g8 (10...gxh5 11.♗d2 ♕c7 12.♖xh5 a6 is one possible improvement) 11.hxg6 hxg6 12.e5 d5 (12...♘xe5 13.♘e4 ♕c7 14.♘f6+ ♗xf6 15.♗xf6 ♘g4 16.♗c3 f5 is another try)

13.♕e2 b5 14.♖h7 b4 15.♘d1 ♕c7 16.♘e3 ♘d4 17.♘xd4 cxd4 18.♘g4 ♖h8 19.♖xh8+ ♗xh8 the game was definitely in White's favour.

6...d5 7.♗g5 ♕b6

Not pretty is 7...♘ge7 8.h6 ♗f8 9.♗f6.

8.♗d2! ♘ge7 9.♘a4 ♕c7 10.♘xc5 ♗xb2 11.♖b1 ♗g7 12.♗e2

12.h6 ♗f6 13.♗e2 was a major alternative.

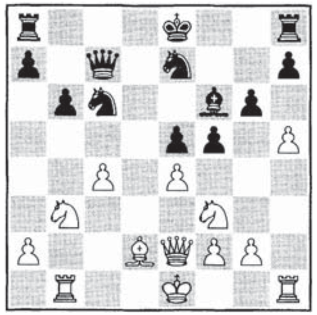
12...b6 13.♘b3 e5

Here 13...dxe4 14.dxe4 gxh5 15.♖xh5 ♘g6 looks very pleasant for Black who has an excellent grip on e5.

14.c4 dxe4 15.dxe4 ♗g4

Again 15...gxh5 16.♖xh5 ♘g6 was a viable alternative.

16.♘h2 ♗xe2 17.♕xe2 f5 18.♘f3 ♗f6



19.hxg6

Keene suggests that 19.c5 would have given White the slightly better chances. After the text the game eventually ended in a draw.

II Blocking the h-pawn's advance 3...h5 and 3...h6

Game 2

☐ **Dragoljub Velimirovic**
■ **Predrag Ostojic**
Belgrade 1965

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.h4 h5

This is a much more solid response by Black. Now the question is who has been helped or weakened more by the advance of the h-pawns?

4.d4

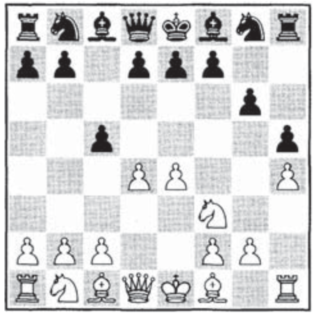
Besides 4.d4 White can try development schemes based on ♗c4 and d3, or ♗c4 with c3 aiming for d4. They shouldn't frighten Black.

● 4.♗c4, and now:

– 4...e6?! (the right idea but the timing is wrong) 5.d4! cxd4 6.♕xd4 with an advantage for White.

– 4...♗g7 (this is the most precise) 5.c3 e6! 6.d4 cxd4 7.cxd4 d5 8.exd5 exd5 9.♗b5+ ♘c6 (9...♗d7 10.♗xd7+ ♘xd7 11.0-0 ♘e7 12.♕b3±) 10.0-0 ♘e7 with equal chances. Remember this plan with ...e6 and ...d5 – it will come up again.

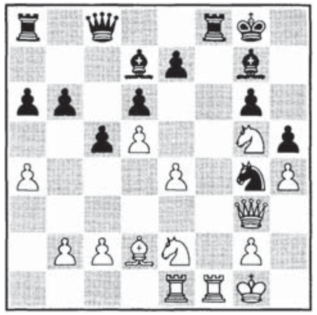
● 4.♘c3 ♗g7 5.a3 ♘f6 6.♗c4 ♘c6 7.d3 d6 8.♘g5 0-0 9.f4 e6 (9...♗g4!?) 10.♗a2 d5 11.0-0 d4 (another option was opening the position with 11...dxe4 when both 12.dxe4 ♕xd1 13.♖xd1 ♘d4 and 12.♘cxe4 ♘xe4 13.♘xe4 ♘d4 look fine for Black) 12.♘b1 ♘h7 13.♘d2 e5 14.♘xh7 ♔xh7 15.♗b3 ♕e7 ½-½ Kurajica-Sosonko, Wijk aan Zee 1977.



4...♗g7 5.d5

Going for a Benoni type of position. See the next game for 5.♘c3.

5...d6 6.♘c3 ♗g4 7.♕d3 a6 8.a4 ♘d7 9.♘g5 ♘e5 10.♕g3 ♗d7 11.♗e2 ♘h6 12.0-0 b6 13.♗d2 0-0 14.♖ae1 ♕b8 15.f4 ♘eg4 16.♗xg4 ♘xg4 17.f5 ♕c8 18.fxg6 fxg6 19.♘e2

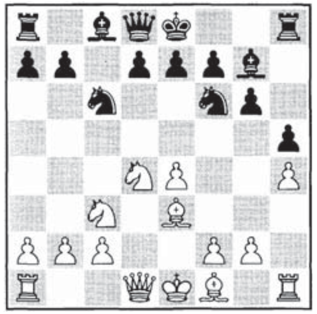


Keene felt White had a positional advantage in 1969; today Fritz thinks Black is slightly better! Black won in the end (57 moves).

Game 3

☐ **Andrzej Sydor**
■ **Bogdan Pietrusiak**
Rzeszow ch-POL 1966

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.h4 h5 4.d4 ♗g7 5.♘c3 cxd4 6.♘xd4 ♘c6 7.♗e3 ♘f6



Again the question is who is favoured by the inclusion of h4 and ...h5?

8.f3

After 8.♗c4 Black has several options:

● 8...♘g4 This move is possible but better held in reserve. 9.♘xc6 bxc6 (9...♘xe3? 10.♗xf7+!) 10.♗d4 0-0 11.♗xg7 ♔xg7 12.f3 ♘e5 looks a little better for White.

● 8...d6 9.f3 ♕b6 10.♘f5 ♕xb2 11.♘xg7+ ♔f8 12.♘d5 ♘xd5 13.♗xd5 ♔xg7. The extra moves h4 and ...h5 are definitely helping Black here as ...h5 is a typical move for the second player in this setup while h4 does nothing for White.

● 8...0-0 and now White has three different tries but none seem particularly promising:

– 9.♘xc6 bxc6 10.♗b3 ♕a5 (10...d5! looks the cleanest and most direct plan for Black – 11.exd5 ♘xd5 12.♘xd5 cxd5 13.♗xd5 ♖b8 14.0-0 ♖xb2 with a slight edge to Black due to his better pawn structure) 11.♕d2 ♗a6 12.f3 ♖ab8 13.0-0-0 d6 14.♘a4 ♕xd2+ 15.♖xd2 c5 16.e5 dxe5 17.♘xc5± Grabarczyk-Pedzich, Poraj 1997.

– 9.f3 ♕b6 10.♗b3 ♘xe4 11.♘d5 ♕a5+ 12.c3 ♘g3 (thanks to h4!) 13.♖h3 ♗xd4 14.♗xd4 ♘f5 15.♗f2 e6 16.♘f6+ ♔g7 17.♘e4 d5 18.♘g3 ♘fe7 with a near decisive position for Black.

– 9.♗b3 ♘g4 (thanks to ...h5) 10.♘xc6 ♘xe3 11.♘xd8 ♘xd1 12.♖xd1 ♖xd8 equal.

● 8...♕a5! 9.0-0 (unfortunately necessary as 9.f3?! ♕b4 10.♗b3 ♘xe4 11.♘xc6 ♗xc3+ 12.bxc3 ♕xc3+ 13.♔e2 dxc6 and 9.♕d2?! ♕b4 10.♗b3 ♘xe4 both hand the point to Black just as surely as they do without h4 and ...h5 thrown in) 9...0-0 and now the two mains lines with ♘b3 and ♗b3 look a little odd with the irrelevant and possibly weakening h4 thrown in.

Note that 8.♘xc6 is not an option as after 8...bxc6 9.e5 Black has 9...♘g4.

8...♕b6

It looks very odd to play ...♕b6 before ...d6 and ♗c4, and we don't recommend it, but maybe it's playable. If 9.♘f5 ♕xb2 10.♘xg7+♔f8 and ...h5 prevents ♗h6 so the knight is trapped.

8...0-0 9.♘b3 (9.♕d2 d5) 9...a5 10.♗b5 (10.a4 ♘b4 11.e5 ♘h7! – another benefit of ...h5!: the knight doesn't have to go back to e8 – 12.f4 d6 and White's centre is crumbling) 10...d5 11.♗xc6 (11.exd5 ♘b4 12.♗c4 ♕c7) 11...bxc6 12.e5 ♘d7 13.f4 ♘b6 14.♗xb6 ♕xb6 was fine for Black in Perciun-Slovineanu, Predeal 2006.

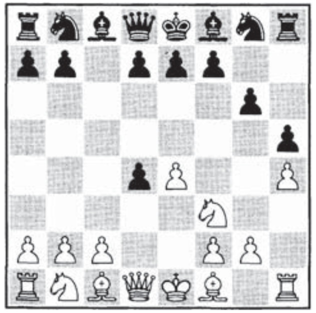
9.♘cb5 ♕a5+ 10.c3 a6 11.♘b3 ♕d8 12.♘5d4 d6

Black has reached an acceptable Dragon position where the knight on b3 looks out of place.

Game 4

☐ **Andres Rodriguez**
■ **Bent Larsen**
San Martin 1994

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.h4 h5 4.d4 cxd4



As usual Black has a choice between this move and 4...♗g7 – play can easily transpose.

After 4...♗g7 5.c3!? cxd4 6.cxd4 d5 White should play 7.exd5, as after 7.e5 the inclusion of h4/...h5 helps Black. For example: 7...♗g4 8.♗e2 ♘c6 9.0-0 ♗xf3 (9...♘h6 is the other way of completing development) 10.♗xf3 e6 11.♘c3 a6 12.g3 ♘ge7 13.♗g5?! ♕b6 14.♗e3 ♘f5 15.♘a4 ♕c7 16.♖c1 0-0 with somewhat better chances for Black in Dimitrijevic-Kaposztas, Budapest 2004.

5.♗c4

5.♕xd4 along the lines of 2...g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♕xd4 doesn't look dangerous: 5...♘f6 6.♘c3 ♘c6 7.♕d3 (7.♕a4 is simply met by 7...♗g7 as g4 is available to Black's knight) 7...♗g7 8.♗g5 d6 9.♗e2 0-0 10.0-0 ♗g4 11.a3 ♘d7 12.♕d2 ♔h7 (12...♘c5 13.♗h6 ♗xh6 14.♕xh6 ♗xf3 15.♗xf3 ♘d4 16.♗d1 e5 was sharp but seemingly possible: 17.f4 ♕xh4 18.f5 ♘xe4 19.♘xe4 ♕xe4 20.f6 ♘e6 21.c3 ♕h4) 13.♗e3 ♗xf3 14.♗xf3 ♘ce5 15.♗e2 ♘b6 Galego-Silva, Lisbon 1997. By the way, 15...♖c8 was another way to eye the c4 square. In both this line and the game continuation chances are equal.

5...♘c6

5...♗g7 looks more exact: 6.c3 e6 (6...d3 7.♕xd3 ♘f6 8.♘g5 e6 9.e5 ♘g4 10.f4 ♕b6 11.♘e4 0-0 12.♕d4 d5!, 0-1 Paredes-Estrada, Madrid 2002, is a pretty miniature, but we don't trust 6...d3 and consider 6...e6 a reliable equalizer) 7.cxd4 d5 8.exd5 exd5 9.♗b5+ (it's quite nice to win a tempo like this) 9...♘c6 (9...♗d7 10.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 11.♘e5 looks annoying) 10.0-0 ♘e7 with even chances. The inclusion of h4/...h5 looks odd here.

6.c3 dxc3?

Too greedy! Instead, 6...e6 7.cxd4 d5 8.exd5 exd5 9.♗b5 ♘e7 10.♗g5 ♗g7 11.♕e2 ♗e6 looks fine for Black. Accepting the pawn gives White a vastly improved Smith-Morra Gambit.

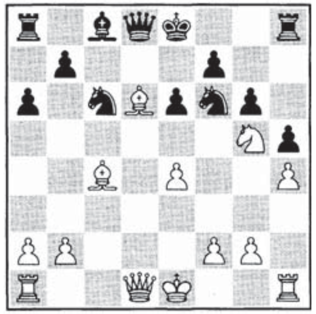
7.♘xc3 ♘f6 8.♗f4 d6?

Larsen had to play 8...♗g7.

9.♘g5 e6 10.♘b5

White is already winning!

10...a6 11.♘xd6+ ♗xd6 12.♗xd6



12...♕a5+

Or 12...♘e7 13.♗e5 ♕xd1+ 14.♖xd1 ♘eg8 15.♖d8+! ♔e7 16.♔e2 and ♖hd1 will end things shortly.

13.b4! ♕d8

If 13...♘xb4 White simply castles leaving Black helpless with his king stuck in the centre. In the game Larsen was helpless too.

14.♖h3 ♘g4 15.♗b3 a5 16.♕d2 a4 17.♗c4 ♕b6 18.♖d1 f6 19.♗c5 ♕c7 20.♘xe6 ♗xe6 21.♗xe6 ♖d8 22.♖d3 ♖xd3 23.♕xd3 ♘ge5 24.♕b5 ♖h7 25.♗d6 ♕g7 26.♕xa4 1-0

Game 5

☐ **Vitali Golod**
■ **Mark Berkovich**
Rishon-Le-Zion ch-ISR 2002 (rapid)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.h4!? h6!?

This is the only game we have been able to find with this modest move, but the idea of meeting h5 with ...g5 makes good positional sense. Black eyes the white h-pawn but does not give up the g5 square as he does after 3...h5.

4.♗c4 ♗g7 5.c3

Golod has suggested 5.h5 with the follow-up 5...g5 6.d4, which he evaluates as unclear. One point is 6...cxd4 7.♘xd4 ♘c6 8.♘f5!. In view of the lack of promising continuations in the game White might want to examine this possibility more closely.

5...e6 6.♕e2

6.d4 cxd4 7.cxd4 d5 8.exd5 exd5 leads to positions often reached with the black pawn on h5 instead of h6. Those positions are usually satisfactory for Black and with the pawn on h6, retaining control of g5, they should be even better.

6...♘e7 7.d3 ♘bc6 8.♗b3 ♕c7

8...d5 9.e5 was White's intention.

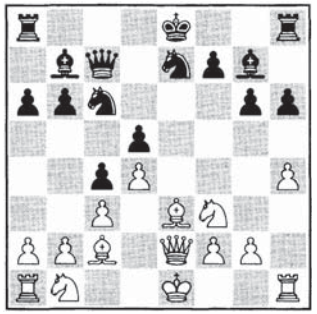
9.♗e3 b6 10.♘a3

10.d4 was a better move according to Golod. Now Black gets the better of it with some clever play.

10...♗a6! 11.♗c4 ♗b7

Black's tricky play has brought the bishop to c4, where it is a perfect target for ...d5.

12.d4 d5 13.exd5 exd5 14.♗d3 c4 15.♗c2 a6 16.♘b1



16...0-0-0!?

After 16...0-0 17.♕d2 ♖ae8 18.♔f1 h5 19.♗h6 ♗c8 Black would have a clear advantage.

17.b3 ♖he8 18.♘bd2 b5 19.a4 b4 20.bxc4 bxc3

Golod has suggested 20...f5 21.g3 dxc4 as best but the text should also be fine.

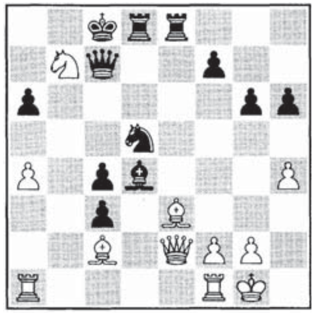
21.♘b3 dxc4 22.♘c5 ♘xd4

22...♘d5 was also good but there is no reason to fault the text.

23.♘xd4 ♗xd4 24.♘xb7 ♘d5

24...♔xb7 25.♖b1+ ♔a7 26.0-0 ♘f5 27.♗xf5 ♗xe3 28.fxe3 ♖d2 was at least better for Black.

25.0-0



25...♘xe3?

25...♔xb7 was winning for Black, but Berkovich has something prettier but not necessarily stronger in mind.

26.♘xd8 ♕g3! 27.fxg3??

Necessary was 27.fxe3 ♗xe3+ (27...♖xe3?? 28.♕xc4+) 28.♖f2 (28.♔h1 ♕xh4 mate) 28...♗c5! 29.♗e4 (29.♕xe8?? ♕xf2+ 30.♔h2 ♕xh4 mate) 29...♕xh4 with advantage to Black in all variations – Golod. But after 30.♗b7+ ♔b8 31.♕f3 ♕xf2+ 32.♕xf2 ♗xf2+ 33.♔xf2 ♖xd8 34.♗xa6 it would seem White is not worse and in fact has the better chances.

27...♘g4+??

Black misses an easy win with: 27...♘xc2+ 28.♕f2 ♗xf2+ 29.♔xf2 (worse is 29.♖xf2 ♘xa1 30.♘xf7 ♖e1+) 29...♘xa1 30.♖xa1 ♖xd8 31.♖c1 ♖d3.

28.♕f2 ♘xf2 29.♘xf7! ♖e2 30.♗xg6 c2 31.♖ac1 ♘d3+ 32.♔h2 ♗b2? 33.♘d6+ ♔d7 34.♘xc4 ♘xc1 35.♘xb2 ♘b3 36.♘d3 ♖d2 37.♘c1 ♖d1 38.♖f7+ 1-0

Clearly, rapid chess can be exciting!

III Counter-attack
3...d5 and 3...♘f6

Game 6

☐ **Dmitry Posokhov**
■ **Anatoly Demkovich**
Kharkov 2004

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.h4 d5

If there were a way to punish 3.h4 it would seem like 3...d5 and 3...♘f6 would be the first moves to examine. After all what can be more logical than meeting a flank attack with play in the centre. And yet, 3...d5 might be one of Black's worst possibilities after 3.h4.

4.exd5 ♘f6

4...♕xd5 has the virtue of not dropping a pawn but the loss of time incurred by capturing with the queen is soon felt. One doesn't often see a Scandinavian Defence with ...c5 thrown in. 5.♘c3 ♕d8 6.♗c4 (the immediate 6.h5 also makes sense) 6...♗g7 7.h5 ♘h6 8.d3 ♘c6 9.♗f4 ♗g4 (9...f6 10.hxg6 hxg6 11.♕d2 ♘f5 12.♖xh8+ ♗xh8 13.0-0-0 e5 14.♗e3 ♘cd4 15.♖h1 ♗g7 16.♘h4± Skripchenko-Hagarova, Istanbul Olympiad 2000) 10.hxg6 hxg6 11.♕d2 ♗xf3 12.gxf3 ♘f5 13.0-0-0 with a nice advantage in Vulevic-Boskovic, Yugoslavia 2000.

5.c4

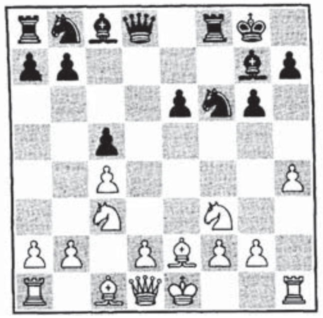
A worthwhile alternative is 5.♗b5+ ♘bd7 6.♘c3 (6.c4 ♗g7 7.0-0 0-0 8.d4 a6 9.♗xd7 ♘xd7 10.♖e1 was also very strong) 6...♗g7 7.h5 ♘xh5 8.♘g5 0-0 9.♘xh7 ♔xh7 10.g4± Treger-P.Ross, New York 1999.

5...♗g7 6.♗e2

The immediate 6.d4 might be better: 6...cxd4 (6...♘a6 7.♗e2 0-0 8.0-0) 7.♘xd4 0-0 8.♗e2 e6 9.dxe6 fxe6 10.♘c3 and Black does not have enough for the pawn.

6...0-0 7.♘c3 e6 8.dxe6 fxe6

The more natural 8...♗xe6 is met by 9.d4 ♘fd7 10.dxc5 ♖e8 11.0-0±.



9.d4

This is more to the point than 9.d3 ♘c6 10.♘e4 ♘xe4 11.dxe4 ♘d4 12.e5 ♘xf3+ 13.♗xf3 ♕xd1+ 14.♔xd1 ♗xe5 15.h5 ♗d7 16.♖b1 ♗d4 17.hxg6 hxg6 18.♗e3 ♗xe3 19.fxe3 ♖ad8 ½-½ Posokho-Demkovich, Kiev 2004 – played one month later!

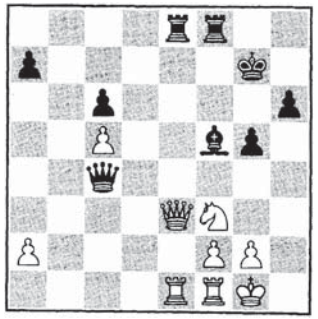
9...cxd4 10.♕xd4 ♘d5 11.♕d2 ♘xc3 12.bxc3 ♕f6 13.♗b2 e5

13...♘c6 14.0-0 ♖d8 15.♕g5 also leaves White with an edge.

14.0-0 ♘c6 15.c5 h6 16.♗c4+ ♔h8 17.♖ae1 ♗g4 18.♘h2 ♗f5 19.♗d5 ♕xh4 20.♘f3 ♕f4 21.♕e3 ♖ae8 22.c4 g5

22...♕xe3 23.♖xe3 e4 24.♗xg7+ ♔xg7 25.♘d2 leaves White with some advantage in the ending.

23.♗xc6 bxc6 24.♗xe5 ♕xc4 25.♗xg7+ ♔xg7



26.♕a3

If 26.♘e5 then 26...♕d5 is the right reply and not 26...♕xa2? 27.♕c3 ♕c2 (27...♔h7 28.♖a1) 28.♕d4 ♔g8 29.♘xc6 which wins for White.

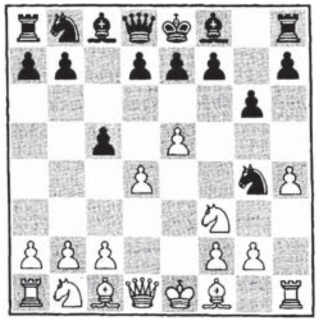
After the text White has a slight pull. He won after 53 moves.

Game 7

☐ **Jonny Hector**
■ **Kjetil Lie**
Karlstad 2005

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.h4 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘g4 5.d4

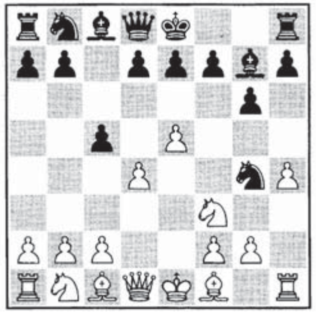
5.c3 d6 and 5.h5 ♗g7 both look fine for Black.



5...cxd4

This leads to wild positions. If Black wants something a little more orthodox we suggest not to play 5...♘c6?, which led to a speedy disaster in Akopian-Paschall, CCA International 1999, after 6.d5! ♘cxe5?! (6...♘b8 looks necessary) 7.♘xe5 ♘xe5 8.f4 ♕c7 9.d6 ♕xd6 10.♕xd6 exd6 11.fxe5 dxe5 12.♘c3 ♗e7 13.♗h6 d6 14.0-0-0 ♗g4 15.♖d2 a6 16.♘d5 ♖c8 17.♗g7 ♖g8 18.♗f6 1-0.

Instead, 5...♗g7 is critical when White can choose between:



● 6.c3 ♘c6?! (once again an error – correct is 6...cxd4 7.cxd4 d6 and Black is doing fine) 7.d5! ♘cxe5? (7...♘a5?! 8.♕e2 isn't very nice for Black. Like it or not, the retrograde 7...♘b8 has to be tried) 8.♘xe5 ♘xe5 9.f4 ♕c7 10.♘a3 a6 11.♗e2 b5 12.fxe5 ♗xe5 13.0-0 ♗b7 14.♗e3 f5 15.♕d2 e6 16.♗f3 0-0-0 17.♖ad1 and White was winning, Bednarski-Moe, Copenhagen 1983.

● 6.♗c4 is more testing when Black has two interesting choices:

– 6...♘c6!? 7.♘g5 (7.♗xf7+ looks like a shot, but the position after 7...♔xf7 8.♘g5+ ♔g8 9.♕xg4 ♘xd4 is far from clear) 7...♘h6 8.dxc5 (8.c3 cxd4 9.cxd4 ♕b6) 8...♘xe5 is okay for Black.

– 6...0-0 7.h5. The plan of 6.♗c4 and 7.h5 has yet to be tested but it is the most direct approach. Here is one possible line: 7...d5 8.exd6 exd6 9.hxg6 hxg6 10.♗g5 ♖e8+ 11.♔f1 ♕b6 12.♘c3 cxd4 13.♘d5 ♕c5 14.♗b3 d3 15.♗h4 ♗e6 (15...♖e2 is flashy but untrustworthy, Black should just get his remaining pieces developed – 16.♕xd3 ♖xf2+ 17.♔e1 ♔f8 18.♗xf2 ♘xf2 19.♕e2 ♗xb2 20.♕xf2 ♗xa1 21.♕xc5 dxc5 22.♘c7 and White wins) 16.♕xd3 ♘c6 17.♘c7 ♘b4 18.♘xe6 ♘xd3 19.♘xc5 ♘xc5 20.c3 which, after all the complications, is about equal.

● 6.♘g5 h5 7.♗c4 0-0 8.c3 d5 9.♗e2 ♘c6 (this leads to big complications which are not necessarily bad for Black. Simpler was 9...f6 10.exf6 – 10.♘f3 fxe5; 10.♘h3?! cxd4 11.cxd4 fxe5 12.f3 ♘h6 13.dxe5 ♘f5 is huge for Black – 10...exf6 11.♘f3 cxd4 12.cxd4 – 12.♘xd4 ♘c6= – 12...♘c6 equal) 10.e6 f5 (10...fxe6 11.♗xg4 hxg4 might be worth checking out. It's not easy to determine which is more important – White's attack or Black's centre) 11.dxc5 d4 12.0-0 ♕d5 unclear, A.Horvath-Chatalbashev, Balatonlelle 2003. Note 5...d6 6.h5 cxd4 7.hxg6 fxg6 8.exd6 e5 9.♗c4 ♗xd6 10.♘g5 ♕c7 (10...♘e3!?) 11.♕e2 ♘c6 12.♗f7+ ♔d8 13.♗xg6 was tremendous for the first player in J.Whitehead-Radke, San Francisco 1979.

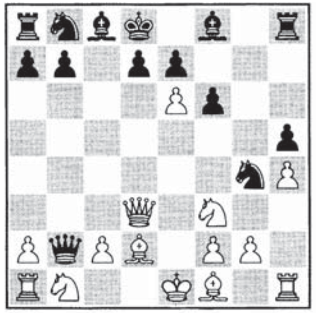
6.♕xd4 h5 7.e6 f6 8.♕e4

8.♗d3 ♖g8 is not very clear – Hansen and Nielsen. We will try to add to this: 9.exd7+ ♗xd7 10.♕d5 e6 11.♕xb7 ♘c6 12.0-0 (12.♗f4 e5 13.♗d2 ♗c5 14.0-0 ♖b8 15.♕a6 ♔f8 16.b3 ♔g7 gives Black reasonable compensation) 12...♖b8 13.♕a6 ♖b6 14.♕a4 (14.♕c4!?) 14...♖b4 15.♕a3 ♕b8 with excellent compensation.

8...♕b6 9.♕xg6+ ♔d8 10.♗d2 ♕xb2

10...d5 11.♘c3 ♕xf2+ 12.♔d1 ♗xe6 was another good possibility.

11.♕d3



11...♘e5

Can Black capture the rook and survive? We believe the answer is no. 11...♕xa1 12.♕b3 d6 13.c4! and there is no good answer to the threat of 14.♗c3.

11...♗g7!? is a possible improvement.

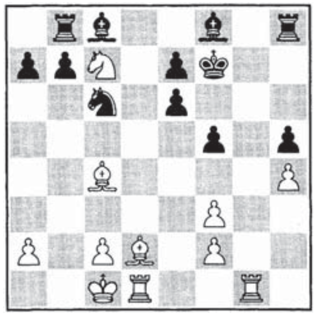
12.♕c3 ♘xf3+ 13.gxf3 ♕xc3 14.♘xc3 dxe6 15.0-0-0 ♔e8

15...♘c6!? might be better.

16.♗d3

This is not an easy position for Black. White's development offers definite compensation for the pawn and probably more.

16...♔f7 17.♖hg1 f5 18.♘b5 ♘c6 19.♘c7 ♖b8 20.♗c4



20...b5!

Lie gives the pawn back in an attempt to get his pieces out. Clinging to the extra material was asking for trouble: 20...♘e5 21.♗b5 ♗h6 (21...♘xf3?? 22.♗e8+ ♔f6 23.♗c3+ e5 24.♖g6 mate) 22.♗xh6 ♖xh6 23.♖d8 with a big advantage for White.

21.♗xb5 ♖b7 22.♗xc6 ♖xc7 23.♗a4 ♗b7 24.♗e3 ♗h6 25.f4 ♖hc8 26.♖d2 ♗d5 27.♗b3 ♗xb3 28.axb3 a5 29.♔b1?

This looks like the wrong direction for the king. Safer was 29.♔d1, meeting 29...a4 with 30.bxa4.

29...a4 30.♖gd1 axb3

30...♖b8 31.♖d3 ♖c4 was another good possibility.

31.cxb3 ♖b8 32.♖d3 ♖c4 33.♔a2 ♖cb4 34.♗d2 ♖a8+ 35.♔b1 ♖b7 36.♖c1 ♗g7 37.♔c2 ♗f6 38.♖h3 ♖d7 39.♔d1 ♗d4

39...♖ad8 40.♖c2 ♖d3 41.♖xd3 ♖xd3 42.b4 ♗xh4 43.♖b2 ♗xf2 44.♔e2 ♗d4 45.♔xd3 ♗xb2 46.b5 ♔e8 looks similar to what could have occurred later in the game. Black looks to be winning.

40.♖f3 ♗f6 41.♖h3 ♖ad8 42.♖c2 ♖d3 43.♖xd3 ♖xd3 44.b4 ♗xh4 45.♖b2 ♗f6

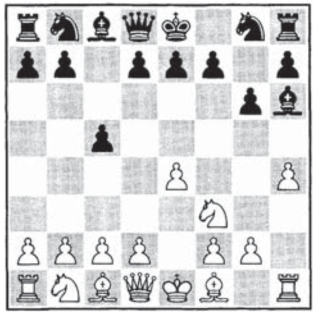
Why not 45...♗xf2 46.♔e2 ♗d4 47.♔xd3 ♗xb2 48.b5 ♔e8 which looks like it should win.

46.♖b1 ♖d5 47.♔e2 ♖b5 48.♔d3 ♖d5+ 49.♔e2 ♖b5 50.♔d3 ♔e8 51.♖h1 h4 52.♗c3 ♖d5+ 53.♔c4 ♔d7 54.♗xf6 exf6 55.♔c3 ♔d6 56.♖xh4 ♖d1 57.♖h8 ♖c1+ 58.♔d3 ♖d1+ 59.♔e3 ♖b1 ½-½

IV Keene's suggestion
The outlandish 3.... ♗h6?!

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.h4 ♗h6

This is Keene's outlandish idea proposed more than 30 years ago but still untested. The ideas are to meet 4.h5 d6 5.hxg6 hxg6 6.♘c3?? with 6...♗xd2+ and to try to force some lack of coordination in the white forces. These are excellent thoughts but they don't seem to work against concrete play.



4.h5

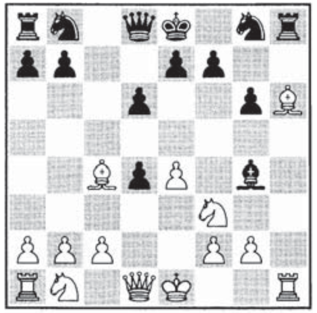
4.d4 ♗xc1 5.♕xc1 cxd4 6.♘xd4 ♘c6 7.♕d2 ♘f6 8.♘c3 ♕b6?! 9.♘b3 a5 10.♘d5 ♘xd5 11.exd5 ♘e5 12.♕c3 ♕b4 13.♕xb4 axb4 14.d6! with a big pull is one problem.

4...d6 5.♗c4

Another strong continuation is 5.d4 ♗xc1 6.♕xc1 gxh5 7.dxc5 ♕a5+ 8.♘c3 ♕xc5 9.♘d5 ♗e6 10.b4 ♕c8 11.♗b5+ ♗d7 12.c4 e6 13.♕b2 with a winning position.

5.hxg6 hxg6 6.♘c3?? ♗xd2+ seems to be the only real justification for 3...♗h6.

5...♗g4 6.hxg6 hxg6 7.d4 cxd4 Interesting is 7...♗d2+ and 8...♖xh1 – Stefan Löffler. **8.♗xh6**



8...♘xh6

8...♕a5+?! 9.c3 dxc3 (9...♖xh6 is better but after 10.♖xh6 ♘xh6 11.♕xd4 f6 12.♕e3 ♗xf3 13.gxf3 ♘f7 14.f4 White's position is still preferable) 10.♘xc3 ♖xh6 11.♖xh6 ♘xh6 12.♕d2 with a considerable advantage.

9.♕xd4 f6 10.♕d2 ♗xf3 11.gxf3 g5 12.♘c3

White is much better as Black's position is full of 'light' holes.

Conclusion

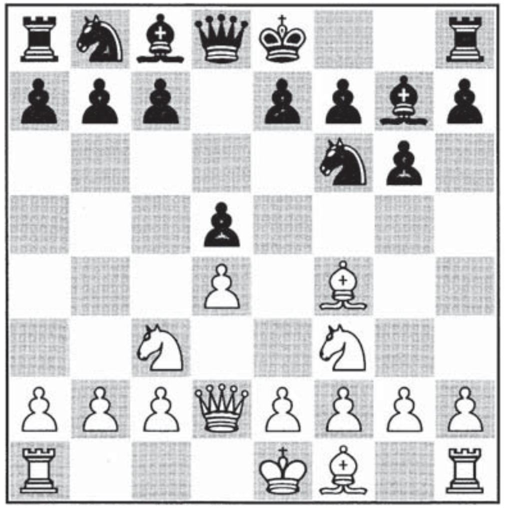
The move 3.h4 is fully playable and has the virtues of being aggressive and little analyzed. Of the seven plausible moves one might try in reply we believe that only 3...♘f6, 3...h5 and 3...h6 really merit a closer examination. The fate of the latter is very much tied up with the assessment of the position after 4.h5 g5 5.d4 ♗g7 6.dxc5. The choice between the other two moves is a question of taste. The more dynamic alternative is 3...♘f6 and there in particular we draw your attention to 4.e5 ♘g4 5.d4 ♗g7 which deserves more tests. Those who prefer more traditional approaches will have a preference for the solid 3...h5. In this line Black needs to be able to meet gambit approaches where d4 ...cxd4 is met by c3 with ...e6 and ...d5. In this case he should be able to obtain a playable game.

Those who like attacking play without having to know lots of theory will like 3.h4. It may also serve a useful place in the repertoire of players who routinely meet the Sicilian with 3.♗b5 or 3.♗b5+ and don't have the option of transposing into the Dragon or Accelerated Dragon.

CHAPTER 6

Arthur Kogan

The Tarzan Attack



1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.♗f4 ♗g7 5.♕d2

5.♕d2! starts the line I call the 'Tarzan Attack'. Before we will delve into this, I should like to guide you towards the starting position. presenting you some attacking ideas for your repertoire along the way:

1.d4 ♘f6

You can use similar attacking ideas as in our main line against a different move order, such as 1.d4 g6 2.♘c3!? and now:

– 2....♗g7 3.♗f4 d6 4.♕d2!. I tried this already in few rapid games with success, for example: 4...♘d7 5.0-0-0 (5.e4) 5...c5 5...e5 6.♗g5 f6 7.♗h4 or 7.♗e3!?) 6.♘f3 cxd4 7.♘xd4 with a nice Dragon type of position. Note that 7...e5? is wrong now due to 6.♗g5!.

– 2...♘f6 3.♗f4. Recently, I had a interesting game against a Rumanian WGM: 3...d6 (3...d5 4.♕d2!) 4.♕d2 ♘bd7 5.0-0-0 (5.♘f3 c5 6.e3) 5...c5 6.e3 (also interesting is 6.dxc5 ♘xc5 7.e4!) 6...♗g7 7.h4! a6 8.♗e2 h5 9.♘h3! ♖b8 (on 9...b5 my idea was 10.♗f3 ♖b8 11.♘g5) 10.♘g5 b5 Kogan-Bogza, Tarragona 2006. And now, maybe even stronger than the game continuation 11.♔b1 was 11.♘ce4! c4 12.♘xf6+ ♘xf6 13.e4 with possible e5, or f3 and g4 ideas – White looks better. The same goes for 11...♗b7 12.♘xf6+ ♗xf6 13.♖hg1.

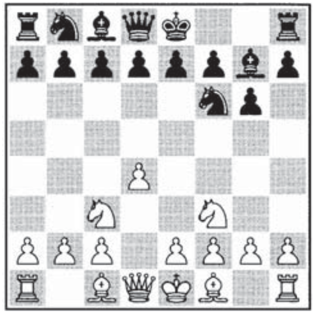
2.♘f3 g6 3.♘c3

This 'SOS kind of move' is less positional than the common 3.c4, but still it fights for e4, so the only principal way for Black to prevent e4 is 3...d5!

3...d5

But just imagine how a KI player would feel now. Usually he moves this pawn to d6, but not every KI player is playing the Pirc!

If 3...♗g7:



● 4.♗f4 d6 5.♕d2 0-0 6.♗h6 c5 7.♗xg7 ♔xg7 8.0-0-0 (alternatives are 8.e4 and 8.dxc5) 8...cxd4 (8...♕a5 9.e4 a6 10.e5 dxe5 11.dxe5 ♘e8 12.h4! Crouch-Röllig, Berlin 1995) 9.♘xd4 ♘c6 10.e4!. So, we obtain an interesting Sicilian with a Dragon structure but without the dangerous dark-squared bishop on g7! Surely a good reason for White to be optimistic about his future attacking chances!

● By the way, I can't avoid to mention a nice quick win against a creative Dutch GM: 4.e4 d6 5.♗e3 (now it's one of main lines of the Pirc, but you will see that attacking ideas are similar to the 'Tarzan Attack'!) 5...0-0 6.♕d2 ♗g4 7.♘g5! a6 8.f3 ♗c8 9.h4 e6 10.h5! h6 (10...♘xh5 11.g4 – 11.♘xh7!? – 11...♘f6 – 11...♘g3 12.♕h2 – 12.0-0-0) 11.♘h3 g5 12.♘xg5! hxg5 13.h6 ♗h8 14.♗xg5 ♕d7 (14...♖e8 15.h7+ ♔f8 16.0-0-0+–) 15.♕f4! ♘h7 16.♕g3! f5 17.♗f6+ ♔f7 18.♗xh8 1-0 Kogan-Reinderman, Antwerp 1998.

4.♗f4

Now the bishop is ideally placed on f4 controlling e5 and preparing our main plan.

4...♗g7

Black can also try to delay ♗g7 with 4...c6

● Now I won a positional game after 5.e3 ♕b6 6.♖b1 ♗f5 7.♗d3 ♗xd3 8.cxd3 ♗g7 9.0-0 ♘bd7 10.h3 0-0 11.b4! (a minority attack! Yes we still need to know ideas from all openings after all...) 11...♖fc8 12.♕b3 ♕d8 13.♖fc1± Kogan-Hausner, Zlin 1995.

● 5.♕d2 b5?! (this move is preparing against White's long castle, but in fact creating serious weaknesses) 6.♘e5! (if Black plays on the flank, let's react in the centre!) 6...♗e6!? 7.f3! (I was waiting for...♗g7 before playing ♗h6, and f3 is a useful move to control the centre and help to build a possible future attack with g4!) 7...♗g7 8.♗h6 ♗xh6 9.♕xh6 ♘bd7 10.♘d3!± (the knight is well placed here, keeping c6 under control and preparing a future ♘f4) 10...♕b6 11.e3 ♗f5 12.♗e2 a6 13.0-0! (all Black's play was geared towards White castling queenside, so changing my plan was a really unpleasant surprise for my opponent) 13...c5 14.♘f4 e6 15.♖ad1! (now ♗f5 is in trouble) 15...♗xc2 16.♖d2 cxd4 17.exd4 g5 18.♕xg5 ♗g6 19.♖c1 ♖c8 20.♖dd1 ♖d8 21.♗f1 ♖g8 22.♕h6 ♖b8 23.♔h1 ♕d6 24.♖e1 ♗f5 25.♘ce2! ♔d8 26.g4 ♗xg4 27.fxg4 ♘xg4 28.♕h4+ ♕e7 29.♕g3 ♘gf6 30.♕c3 and White was winning in Kogan-Szekely, Merida 2002.

5.♕d2!

This move was played a couple of times by original players as Gurgenidze in the seventies, and Vorotnikov in the eighties, but rarely in GM games. Somehow it was forgotten, especially after White lost in a game between Yusupov and Kasparov.

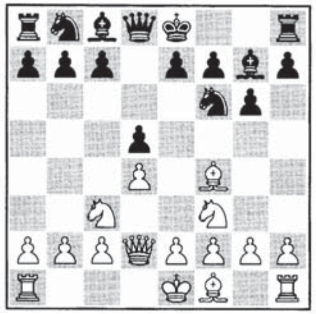
For a few years I used to play the 'tricky' 5.e3 line from time to time. This gave me good results, owing to my hidden intentions to attack. For, after ♗e2 and ♘e5, I would suddenly lash out with h4, or play ♕d2 followed by 0-0-0 and an attack on the kingside.

I can't avoid mentioning Kogan-Kobese, Almassora 2000, which went: 5.e3 0-0 6.♗e2 b6 7.♘e5 ♗b7 8.h4 ♘bd7 9.h5 a6 10.hxg6 hxg6 11.♗g4 ♘xe5 12.dxe5 ♘e4 13.♕f3 f5 14.exf6ep ♖xf6 15.♘xe4 dxe4 16.♕h3 ♕d5 17.♖d1 ♕b5 18.♗h6 1-0.

Indeed, the title of this chapter was suggested to me after this game by my likeable opponent, the ex African champion IM Watu Kobese. He started joking and called my way of playing 'Tarzan' style. This only proves that Watu is a rare example of a person who accepts losses in a sportive way! So that's why since that game I usually call any direct attack a 'primitive' or 'Tarzan style' one!

Meanwhile my opponents started to prepare for 5.e3, so it stopped to be a real surprise. So. I was looking for another way to surprise my opponents, especially the guys who usually play the King's Indian or the Grünfeld (choosing these lines is normally a sign that they must have a good memory and have prepared long theoretical lines in advance). The story of this line started in the summer of 2000, during a nice sunny vacation in Cannes, when I decided to check 5.♕d2. I knew the Yusupov-Kasparov encounter, but I couldn't believe that this idea could be so bad since ♕d2 followed by ♗h6 was such a natural idea – especially for an attacking player like me (at least in my young days).

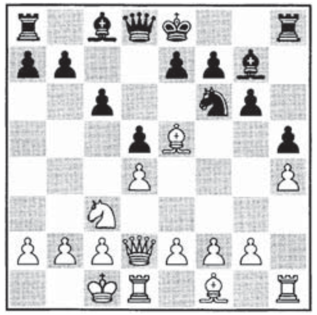
After a few hours of analysis I understood that the whole line is much better than its reputation and with a few new ideas in mind I started to play it with success. Now I am ready to share with you some of my secret analysis. In this article I will help you to understand the main ideas of White's strategy, and I hope to inspire you to adopt this 'SOS killer'!



Section I: 5...c6
Section II: 5...0-0
Section III: 5...♘e4

Section I

GM Cvitan, a big KI expert, once tried **5...c6** but didn't manage to survive White's attack after **6.♘e5** The young Leko once faced a disaster after 6.♗h6 ♗xh6 7.♕xh6 e6?! 8.e4 dxe4 9.♘g5 ♕e7 10.♘gxe4 ♘bd7 11.♗d3 b6 12.a4 a5 13.0-0 ♗b7 14.♖fe1±, A.Herzog-Leko, Austrian Staatsliga 1991. **6...♘bd7 7.h4 ♘xe5 8.♗xe5 h5 9.0-0-0**



and White, who was much lower rated, managed to get the better position and to crush a respectable GM:

9...b5 10.f3 ♕a5 11.a3 ♗h6

The point was 11...b4? 12.♘a2±.

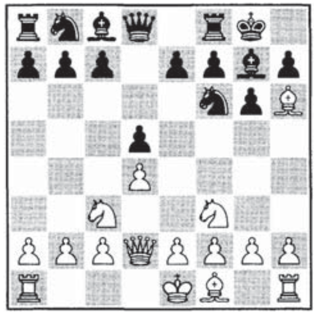
12.e3 0-0 13.♔b1 ♕b6 14.g4!

An important pawn break, confirming that any player to play this line must be ready to sac at least one pawn for the attack!

14...hxg4 15.h5 g5 16.f4 b4 17.axb4 ♕xb4 Here it is important to mention that ♗e5 not only supports the attack, but also helps in the defence against ...♖b8 ideas! **18.fxg5 ♗xg5 19.h6 ♗f5 20.♗d3 ♗h7 21.♖dg1** Now it is clear that White's attack is first! **21...a5 22.♗xh7+ ♘xh7 23.♕d3! ♕c4 24.♕f5** and Black is totally lost, so he resigned! Rakic-Cvitan, Yugoslav Championship, Kladovo 1991.

Section II

5...0-0 6.♗h6



Variation A

A very tricky order was used by the famous GM Azmai after **6...♗xh6 7.♕xh6 c5!?** White won in Vorotnikov-Iskusnikh, Moscow 1996, after 7...c6 8.♘g5 ♖e8 9.e4 ♘bd7 10.e5 ♘f8 11.♗e2 ♘6d7 12.e6 fxe6 13.h4 ♕b6 14.0-0-0 ♕c7 15.g3 e5 16.h5 ♕d6 17.♘ce4 dxe4 18.♗c4+ e6 19.hxg6 ♖e7 20.gxh7+ ♔h8 21.♕h5 ♘f6 22.♘f7+ ♖xf7 23.♕xf7 ♘8d7 24.♗xe6 1-0.

8.0-0-0?

8.dxc5! ♕a5 9.0-0-0 ♕xc5? (9...♗e6 10.e4! dxe4 11.♘g5) 10.♖xd5!! ♘xd5 11.♘g5 ♘f6 12.♘ce4! was my secret preparation! Now you know it too!

8...♘g4 9.♕h4 e5!

This is the point! An incredible trap that is easy to miss.

10.♕xd8 ♖xd8 11.dxe5 ♗e6 12.♘e4? ♘d7 0-1

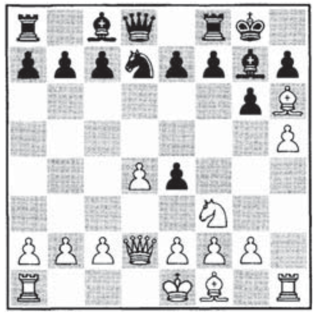
Gurgenidze-Azmaiparashvili, Tbilisi 1986.

Variation B

6...♘bd7!? 7.h4!

Direct attack! No reason to be shy on the board. Less active looks 7.♗xg7 ♔xg7 8.♘e5 c6 9.f4 ♕c7 10.e3 ♘e8 11.♗d3 f6 12.♘xd7 ♗xd7 13.e4 e5 14.dxe5 fxe5 with equal chances. Vorotnikov-Heinig, Leipzig 1982.

7...♘e4 8.♘xe4 dxe4 9.h5



Played à la Tarzan! This is the principled way to continue the attack!

9...exf3 10.hxg6 fxg6

10...hxg6 11.♗xg7 ♔xg7 12.♕h6+ ♔f6 13.0-0-0! (this was my main idea, the compensation for the piece looks more than enough! The black king seems to be in trouble. For example: 13.e4 e5) 13...fxe2 (13...e6 14.exf3 or 14.gxf3 – it's at least a draw with 14.♕h4+ ♔g7 15.♕h7+) 14.♗xe2 e6 15.d5 e5 16.d6!±.

11.♗xg7 ♖f7 12.♗h6 fxe2 13.♗xe2 ♘f6 14.♗c4!

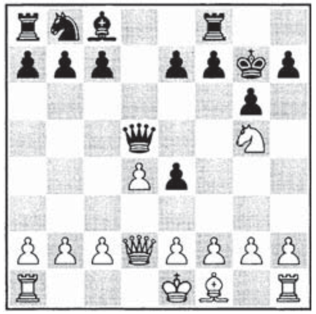
and in Kogan-Hebert, Salou 2001, I won in few more moves against the solid Canadian IM. The surprise worked very well!

Variation C

6...♘e4!? 7.♘xe4 dxe4 8.♗xg7 ♔xg7 9.♘g5

It seems that White can also fight for the advantage with 9.♘e5 c5 10.e3 ♕c7 and now the improvement 11.♕c3 (11.0-0-0 is risky since Black is the first to start an action on the queenside. 11...♖d8 gave Black good counterplay in Kogan-Zapata, Havana 2002) 11...f6 12.♘c4 cxd4 13.exd4± (rather than 13.♕xd4 ♗f5 14.♗e2 ♘c6).

9...♕d5



10.c4!

This is stronger than 10.h4 h6 11.♘h3 (11.c4 e3 12.♕c3 exf2+ 13.♔xf2 ♕f5+ 14.♘f3 ♘d7 15.e4 ♕xe4 16.♖e1 ♘f6 17.♗d3 ♕f4∓ Lüders-Schrüfer, Germany Bundesliga 1983) 11...e5 12.e3 ♖d8 13.c4 ♕d6 14.0-0-0 ♘c6 15.d5 ♘e7 16.f3 exf3 17.gxf3 b5 Alexandria-Chiburdanidze, Tbilisi 1977 m-8.

10...♕xc4 10...♕f5 11.f3! exf3 12.gxf3 looks nice for White. **11.♘xe4** as in Prié-Bernard, Cap d' Agde 2006.

So, 10.c4 is an important improvement which gives White a better position.

Variation D

6...b6?! 7.♗xg7

An improvement might be 7.h4! or 7.♘e5!?.

7...♔xg7 8.0-0-0 ♗b7 9.h4 h5 10.♘g5 10.♘e5! ♘bd7 11.♕f4 looks like a better plan to me. **10...♘bd7 11.f4 e6 12.e3 c5** And Black had counterplay in Rakic-Janosevic, Belgrade 1968.

Variation E

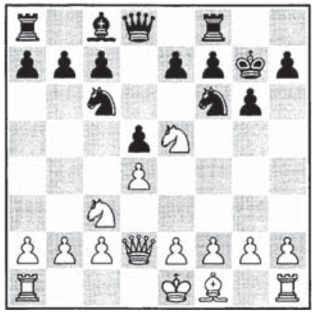
6...c5 7.♗xg7 ♔xg7 8.dxc5 ♘c6 9.♖d1

White had a slight edge in Gurgenidze-Geller, Moscow 1979, after 9.e3 ♗g4 10.♘d4 e5 11.♘xc6 bxc6 12.f3 ♗e6 13.♘a4 ♕c7 14.♗a6 ♖ad8 15.b3 d4 16.e4 ♕e7 17.0-0-0. **9...e6 10.e4 dxe4 11.♘g5 ♕xd2+ 12.♖xd2 ♘d7 13.♗b5 h6 14.♘gxe4 f5 15.♘d6 ♘xc5 16.0-0 e5 17.♖d5** With a distinct edge for White. Rakic-Petursson, Ljubljana 1981.

Variation F

6...♘c6!? 7.♗xg7 ♔xg7 8.♘e5!?

Also logical is 8.0-0-0 ♘e4 (8...♗f5 9.♘h4!) 9.♘xe4 dxe4 10.d5! exf3 11.dxc6 ♕xd2+ 12.♖xd2 with a better endgame for White.



Variation F1

8...♕d6

This natural move seems to equalize, but I still manage to keep some pressure.

9.f4!

This gains space.

9...♗f5 10.e3 ♘e4 11.♘xe4 ♗xe4 12.♗d3

White is only slightly better, but in Kogan-Santos, Lisbon 2001, I managed to convert this into a win after

12...♘xe5

Here Black could have kept his disadvantage at a minimum with 12...f6! 13.♘xc6 ♕xc6 14.♗xe4 dxe4 15.0-0.

13.fxe5 ♕b6 14.♗xe4! ♕xb2 15.0-0 dxe4 16.♖fb1 ♕a3 17.♖xb7 ♖ab8 18.♖b3! ♖xb3 19.cxb3 c5 20.d5

Now White's positional edge is evident.

20...♖d8 21.♖d1 ♕a6 22.♕c2 ♕a5 23.h3 ♕b4 24.♕f2 ♕c3 25.♕f4 ♕c2 26.♖f1 ♖f8 27.d6 e6 28.♔h1

No reason to hurry. The d-pawn is too strong, so no need to protect pawns!

28...♕xa2 29.♕f6+ ♔g8 30.d7 ♕a5 31.♕e7!

Now Black is almost in zugzwang!

31...h5

31...♕d8 doesn't help: 32.♖xf7! wins.

32.h4 a6 33.♖xf7! ♕a1+ 34.♔h2 ♕xe5+ 35.♔h3 1-0

Variation F2

One of the world strongest chess players played **8...♗f5!?** against me. I continued with the dubious move **9.e3?!** The only excuse is that it was the last round of a rapid chess tournament and I had one point more than Vishy(!), so even though I played for win, I didn't want to risk too much – a typical mistake! Otherwise I would surely have played the more natural 9.f3! ♕d6 10.g4 with a nice initiative. **9...♕d6** I lost after **10.♘b5?** White could have kept equal chances with 10.f4 or 10.♘xc6 bxc6 11.♗d3. **10...♕b4!** A nice trap! Now Black has the initiative! **11.c3 ♕a5 12.♗d3 ♘e4** Kogan-Anand, Venaco 2005.

Variation F3

8...♘xe5 9.dxe5 ♘e4 10.♘xe4 dxe4 11.♕c3 c6 12.e3

Not 12.g3?! ♕b6 13.♖d1 ♗f5 14.♗g2 ♖fd8 and Black was slightly better in Bosboom Lanchava-l'Ami, Wijk aan Zee 2005.

12...♗e6 13.♗e2 ♕b6 14.0-0-0!

14.0-0 ♖fd8 15.♖ad1 ♖d5! was equal, Messing-Vukic, Novi Travnik 1969.

14...♖ad8 15.h4

This seems slightly better for White.

Section III

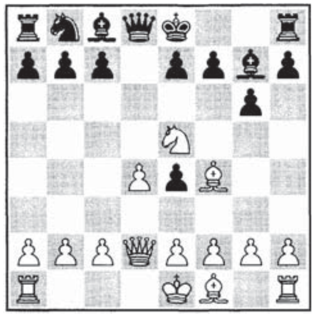
5...♘e4

Theory considers this as the main move following the examples of Kasparov and Sutovsky. However, please note that Black is exchanging White's badly-placed knight, and is doubling his e-pawn, so White has some positional advantages from now on. Black must try to compensate for them with active play, keeping control of the key-square (and pawn) e4.

6.♘xe4

Lajos Portisch tried the original 6.♕e3!? and even got the better position after 6...♘xc3 (6...0-0 might be a try to improve: 7.0-0-0 – 7.♘xe4 dxe4 8.♕xe4 ♘c6!=∞ – 7...♘c6!? 8.♘xe4 dxe4 9.♕xe4 ♗f5 10.♕e3 ♘b4 11.♕b3! a5! where Black has a strong initiative for a small pawn. But there is still a lot of room for improvements) 7.♕xc3 ♘c6 8.0-0-0 ♗g4 9.♘e5 ♘xe5 10.♗xe5 ♗xe5 11.dxe5 ♗e6 12.e4!, Portisch-Jimenez Zerquera, Varna Olympiad 1962.

6...dxe4 7.♘e5



Variation A

7...c5

A good game was played by one of my talented chess students IM Thal Abergel after the too original 7...b5?!: 8.e3 a6 9.♕c3! 0-0 10.♘c6 ♘xc6 11.♕xc6 ♗e6 12.♗e2 ♗d5 13.♕c5 ♕d7 14.b3 ♖fc8 15.c4 ♗c6 16.0-0 e6 17.♖fd1 ♗f8 18.♕g5± Abergel-Spielmann, France 2004.

Another talented player I trained is WGM Tea Bosboom Lanchava. She also used my surprise weapon with success.

8.e3 0-0 9.c3

Also possible is 9.0-0-0 but Tea wanted to keep the possibility of 0-0, depending on Black's plan.

9...cxd4?!

9...♗e6 looks better.

10.cxd4 b6 11.♗c4 ♗b7 12.0-0 ♘d7 13.♘g4 ♖c8 14.♕e2 ♔h8 15.♖fd1 f6 16.h4 f5 17.♘e5 ♘xe5 18.dxe5 ♕e8 19.e6 ♖c5 20.♖d7

With a clear edge in Bosboom Lanchava-Zaksaite, Gothenburg 2005.

Variation B

7...♘d7

This was Sutovsky's choice, and it is a logical move that I faced a few times.

8.♘xd7!

After some experience I believe that this is the safest way for an advantage.

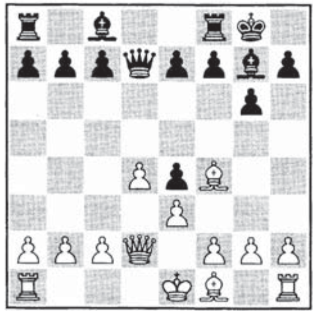
● But you can also check 8.♗h6. This move was considered the main one until a talented Norwegian player found a refutation at the board. 8...♗xh6! (less accurate, but played by Sutovsky, was 8...0-0. After the logical improvement 9.♗xg7 – Finkel-Sutovsky, Rishon-le-Zion 1995, went 9.♘xd7 ♕xd7 10.0-0-0?! ♕d5 11.♗xg7 ♔xg7 12.♔b1 ♗e6 13.b3 a5, and Black's dangerous attack brought him the win in a few moves – 9...♔xg7 10.♘xd7! ♕xd7 11.e3 White can get a nice edge thanks to a better pawn structure and a safer king! Kogan-Blot, France 2002/03) 9.♕xh6 ♘xe5 10.♕g7! (10.dxe5? ♕d5 is better for Black) 10...♖f8 11.♕xe5 ♕d6! and suddenly White can't take on e4 because of ♕b4 check, but otherwise the endgame is only about equal. Kogan-Trygstad, Oslo 2002.

● It seems that Black has enough counterplay after 8.0-0-0 0-0 (8...♘xe5 9.♗xe5 ♗xe5 10.dxe5 ♕xd2+ 11.♔xd2!± – but not 11.♖xd2 e3!) 9.♕e3!? ♘f6 10.c4 c5! 11.dxc5 ♕a5 12.♔b1 ♘h5! 13.g3 g5!.

8...♕xd7 9.e3 0-0

An interesting line is 9...c5 10.dxc5! ♕xd2+ 11.♔xd2 ♗xb2 – 11...♗g4 12.c3± – 12.♗b5+! ♔d8? – 12...♔f8 13.♖ab1 ♗g7 14.c6! – 13.c6! threatening mate in one, and this gives White a clear edge.

And here I had prepared an improvement I could use against the Grünfeld expert Krasenkow, but unfortunately after getting the better position I went wrong later on and even lost. Anyway, it was not because of the opening(!):



10.♕c3!

With this strange move White activates his queen, prevents counterplay with ...c5 for some time, and attacks c7. So White wins time to finish his development and owing to his better pawn structure gets a nice edge.

– 10.♖d1 b6?! (10...c5! 11.c3 ♕d5! was what I was worried about) 11.♗e2 ♗b7 12.0-0 ♖ad8 13.♕b4 was a game that proved White's edge in this pawn structure Salguero-Caputo, San Rafael 1992.

– 10.0-0-0?! ♕a4 11.♔b1 c5! was Black's idea.

10...c6 11.♗e2 Also interesting seems 11.0-0-0, or even 'à la Tarzan' 11.h4!?. **11...b6 12.♕b3?!** There where more attractive ways for White, make your own choice: 12.♗e5!?±; 12.0-0-0 c5 13.h4 or 13.♗e5±; 12.a4!? c5 13.♗e5!; or even 12.♕a3!?. **12...♕f5!** If 12...♗b7 then 13.c3. **13.c3** 13.0-0-0 ♗e6 14.c4 b5! and Black has counterplay. **13...c5** Kogan-Krasenkow, Sanxenxo 2003, and thanks to the threat of taking twice on d4, Black gains the time to create serious counterplay.

Variation C

7...♗e6!?

By developing his bishop Black threatens ...f6 trapping the knight in the centre!

8.e3

Never tried but deserving of serious attention is 8.0-0-0!? f6 (8...c6 9.e3) 9.d5!.

8...♘d7

8...0-0 9.c3!? (also interesting was 9.0-0-0, for example 9...♘d7 10.d5!?) 9...f6 10.♘c4 ♗d5 (10...♘d7 11.♗e2) 11.♘a5! b6 12.c4! ♗f7 13.♘b3 f5 14.g4! (14.h4! was maybe better) 14...fxg4 15.♕c2 ♘d7 16.♕xe4? (16.0-0-0!=∞) 16...e5! gave Black strong counterplay in the game Kogan-Damljanovic, Zaragoza 2003.

9.♘c4

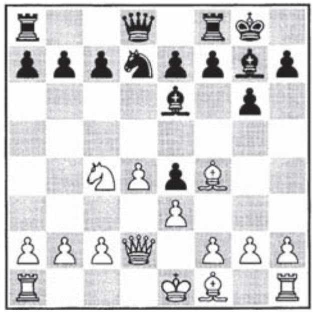
Too risky is 9.♕b4!? c5 10.♕xb7 ♘xe5 11.♗xe5 ♗xe5 12.dxe5 0-0 13.♕xe4 ♖b8! with nice compensation. White develops too slowly.

Another one of my ideas to improve on White's play was 9.♘xd7 ♕xd7 10.♕b4! when White's ideas consist of preventing ...c5, attacking b7, and keeping a better pawn structure. A logical plan would be ♗e2, 0-0 and c4.

9...0-0

This was played by Kasparov, and although he 'only' got equal chances he managed to outplay his solid opponent and win to influence the history and the bad reputation of this line, at least till now!

On 9...♘b6 10.♘a5! ♖b8 11.c4! looks better for White. Here I also thought about another secret improvement...



10.d5!?

The famous Kasparov game went 10.♗e2 ♗xc4 11.♗xc4 e5 12.dxe5 ♘xe5 when Black had solved all opening problems and went on to win: 13.♗b3 a5! 14.a4 ♘d7!? 15.0-0-0 ♘c5, Jussupow-Kasparov, Belfort 1988.

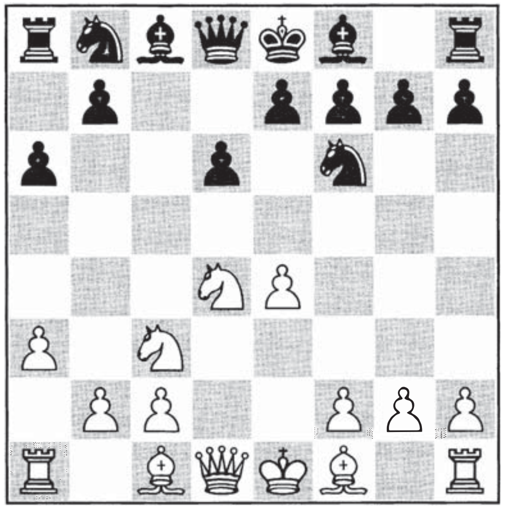
10...♗f5 11.0-0-0 ♘b6 12.h3!

With the idea of g4, or even 12.f3!? and pressing e4. This was one of my ideas to improve for White, but I can't show you all my secret cards yet, right? Anyway it made me to feel that the line is playable after all, what about you?

CHAPTER 7

Jeroen Bosch

Making Short Work of the Najdorf



6.a3 – cheekily echoing 5...a6

The 1.e4-player's greatest challenge remains the Sicilian, and within the Sicilian labyrinth the Najdorf still heads the charts. Preparation is essential in Fischer's, Kasparov's and Topalov's favourite opening, but the task facing White in the Najdorf is nothing short of tremendous. And, even when you have managed to learn all necessary lines by heart (and have kept up with the latest developments as well) there is little chance of an opening advantage. In SOS-5 I have advocated 6.♕f3!?. This early queen move is a good surprise weapon, but against the Najdorf it makes sense to have something else up your sleeve as well.

My suggestion this time is 6.a3, cheekily echoing 5...a6. However, there is more to 6.a3 than a provocative copying of Black's previous move. First of all the little pawn move has been played by Nigel Short, and by Najdorf-expert Semen Dvoiris. Secondly, if you think about it, why is 5...a6 such a great move? It does not develop a piece, nor does it, at first sight, increase the second player's influence in the centre. Now, 5...a6 is a useful move because it covers the b5-square. Thereby Black prepares to play in the centre with ...e5 (the immediate 5...e5 is well-met by 6.♗b5+), and he also prepares typical Sicilian queenside play with ...b5 and ...♕c7. White's 6.a3 is equally prophylactic in nature. White covers the b4-square (but usually does not intend to play b4!) thus preventing a future ...b5-b4. Most importantly, White allows Black to play his Najdorf move 6...e5 aiming to prove that the d5-square is weak by playing the bishop moves ♗f1-c4 and ♗c1-g5 in one go (compare this to 6.♗e2 e5 and 6.♗e3 e5). In this way 6.a3 could turn out to be an useful extra move in a familiar position.

Clearly, 6.a3 should not be compared to Fischer's 6.h3 but to 6.a4 which is a credible sub-variation against the Najdorf. Our present subject is modest, but leaves no weaknesses, while 6.a4 gains more space but the b4-square may become a problem. Enough words for now, the proof of the pudding is in the eating!

☐ **Semen Dvoiris**
■ **Alexander Vaulin**
St Petersburg 1999

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.a3 e5

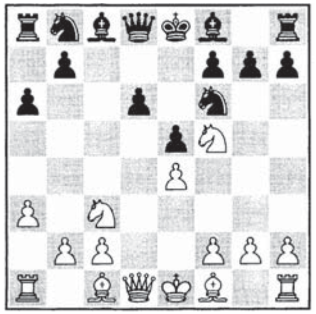
Accepting the challenge and Black's most popular answer in (the limited) practice. Another Dvoiris outing saw Black continuing with: 6...b5 (ambitious, because if White now continues with 7.♗g5, 7.♗e3, 7.♗e2, 7.f4 or 7.g3 than Black's sixth move may well turn out to be more useful than White's. Dvoiris finds the weak spot in Black's strategy though) 7.♗d3 e5 (7...e6) 8.♘de2 (intending ♘g3 when Black must keep her light-squared bishop on the c8-h3 diagonal which is slightly inconsistent with 6...b5) 8...♘bd7 9.♘g3 ♘b6 (to cover both f5 and d5) 10.0-0 ♗e7 11.f4! 0-0 12.♔h1 ♗e6 13.fxe5 dxe5 14.♘f5

White has a pleasant edge, and we could end the game fragment here were it not for Dvoiris's 17th move which demonstrates how flexible the mind of a grandmaster is. 14...♗xf5 15.♖xf5 ♕d6 16.♕f1 ♖ac8 17.a4! b4 18.♘d1 a5 19.b3 (White has gained control over the c4 and b5-squares) 19...♘fd7 20.♗b2 g6 21.♖f3 ♘c5 22.♘f2 ♘e6 23.♘g4 and White had play in the centre, on the kingside, and on the queenside in Dvoiris-E.Pähtz, Cappelle la Grande 2001.

7.♘f3

The most natural move. Ideally White will continue with ♗g5 (xf6), ♗c4, and ♘d2-f1-e3 when all his minor pieces cooperate in controlling d5. That does not mean to say that there are no alternatives for the text. White can also play:

- 7.♘de2 when Aleksic-Isonzo, Catania 1999, continued 7...b5?! (7...♗e6) 8.♗g5 ♘bd7 9.♘d5 ♗e7 10.♘ec3 (10.♘xe7! ♕xe7 11.♘c3 or 11.♘g3) 10...♗b7 (10...♘xd5! 11.♕xd5 ♘b6) 11.♗xf6 ♘xf6 12.a4!? with a very slight edge.
- Aggressive, and worthy of further analysis, is 7.♘f5!?



Now the lines fork:

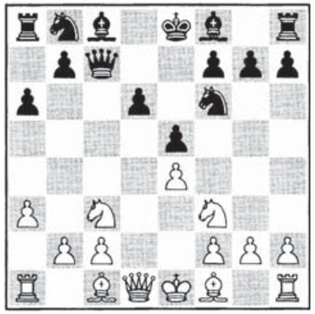
– 7...♗e6?! 8.♗g5 ♕b6 and now instead of 9.b4 (Nisiotis-Katsimihas, Glifada 1999) White has the simple 9.♗xf6 gxf6 (9...♗xf5 10.♘d5) 10.♘e3 with a positional advantage in this Sveshnikov type of structure. Note that 10...♕xb2? is wrong because of 11.♘ed5.

– 7...♘xe4?! sharp, but insufficient 8.♘xg7+ ♗xg7 9.♘xe4 d5 (9...0-0!?) 10.♗g5! ♕a5+ (10...f6 11.♕h5+ ♔f8 12.♗e3) 11.b4 ♕c7 12.♕xd5 and Black does not have enough for his pawn.

– 7...♗xf5 8.exf5 d5 (8...h6 9.♗c4) 9.♗g5 with interesting play. Here it is important that Black cannot play ...♗b4.

– Best is 7...d5 8.♗g5 (8.♕f3) 8...d4 (this is more accurate than 8...♗xf5 9.♗xf6! – 9.exf5 d4 – 9...gxf6 10.exf5 d4 11.♘e4 when the knight is well-placed on e4, compare below) 9.♗xf6 gxf6! (9...♕xf6 10.♘d5 ♕c6 and now 11.♕f3 or 11.♕g4) 10.♘e2 ♘c6 (10...♗xf5 11.exf5 and Black is OK) 11.♘eg3 ♘e7! 12.♘xe7 ♗xe7 13.♗e2 ♕a5+ 14.b4 ♕c7 15.0-0 ♖g8 with about equal chances in a complex position, Ramesh-Arun Prasad, Hyderabad 2006.

7...♕c7



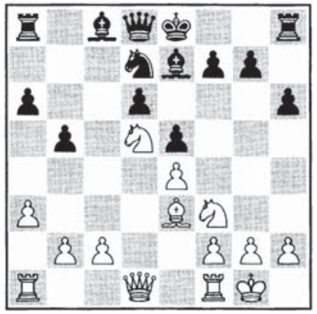
This is more than just a characteristic Sicilian move. Black prevents ♗c4, and already steps out of a future pin with ♗g5.

Black can also prevent the other bishop move with 7...h6 8.♗c4 and now:

– 8...♕c7 9.♗b3 ♗e6 10.0-0 ♘bd7 11.♘h4! by analogy to the great game Balashov-Sunye, Wijk aan Zee 1982, which started with 6.a4.

– 8...♗e6 is met by 9.♗xe6 fxe6 10.0-0 ♗e7 11.♘h4! all such lines can be compared to the existing theory on 6.a4. White is better after both 11...♔f7 12.f4 exf4 13.♗xf4 g5?! 14.e5! and 11...0-0 12.♘g6 ♖f7 13.f4 exf4 14.♗xf4.

– 8...♗e7 9.♗e3 (this is perhaps not the strongest option – 9.0-0 0-0 10.♘h4!?) 9...♘bd7 10.0-0 b5 11.♗d5 ♘xd5 12.♘xd5



(play is about equal) 12...♗b7 13.c3 0-0 14.a4!? ♘f6 15.♗b6 ♕d7 and now White started a combination which changed the character of the position but not its evaluation. 16.♘xe5!? ♕e6 (16...dxe5?? 17.♘xf6+) 17.♘xe7+ ♕xe7 18.♘f3 ♘xe4 with equal chances, Djurasevic-Milic, Belgrade 1954.

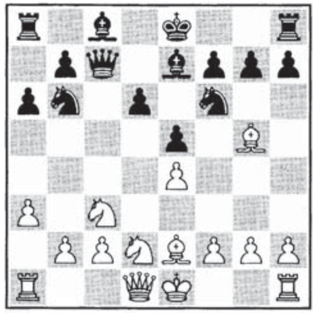
Note that 7...♗e7 should be met with 8.♗g5 ♗e6 9.♗xf6 ♗xf6 10.♘d5 ♘d7 11.♗c4 rather than with 8.♗c4 ♗e6 9.♗xe6 fxe6 10.0-0 0-0 11.♘g5 ♕d7.

8.♗d3

This is not the most natural move, but Dvoiris has his own interpretation of such positions. Not wishing to exchange his c1-bishop he prepares ♘d2-f1-e3. Clearly, 8.♗g5 is worthy of our attention too. Let us investigate 8.♗g5 ♘bd7 (not 8...♗e7 9.♗xf6 ♗xf6 10.♘d5 ♕d8 11.♗c4). Now, in the 'main' line of 6.a4 White always plays 9.♘d2 – planning ♗c4 – and this is interesting here too. In the limited practice of 6.a3 only 9.♗e2 and 9.♗d3 have been tested:

– 9.♗e2 ♗e7 10.♘d2 ♘b6 (probably not

the best move, but Gligoric may be forgiven for overlooking White's next. If 10...b5, then 11.♘f1 ♗b7 12.♘e3!, perhaps simply 10...h6!?)



11.a4! (well done! After 6.a3, Djurasevic shows no inhibitions about pushing the a-pawn only five moves later. White gains a marked space advantage on the queenside with tempo) 11...♗e6 12.a5 ♘bd7 (12...♘c4?! 13.♘xc4 ♗xc4 14.♗xc4 ♕xc4 15.♖a4 ♕c6 16.♗xf6 ♗xf6 17.0-0 gives White a tremendous position – good knight versus bad bishop, a weak d5-square and space on the queenside) 13.♘f1 0-0 (13...♘c5 14.♗xf6 ♗xf6 15.♘e3) 14.♘e3 b5?! 15.axb6 ♕xb6 16.♖b1 ♖fb8 17.0-0 and White eventually converted his positional edge in Djurasevic-Gligoric, Belgrade 1954.

– 9.♗d3 ♗e7 (a complex position arises after 9...h6 10.♗h4 g5!? 11.♗g3 ♗e7) 10.♘d2 h6 11.♗h4 (there is something to be said for 11.♗xf6 ♘xf6 12.♘c4 ♗e6 13.♘e3) 11...b5 12.♘f1 ♘b6 13.♘e3 ♗e6 14.♕f3 (14.0-0) 14...0-0 15.♘f5 ♗xf5 16.♕xf5 g6 17.♕f3 ♔g7 18.♗g3 ♘h5 19.0-0.

The position is about equal, but Black slowly started to turn things in his favour with: 19...d5!? 20.♖fe1 (20.♘xd5 ♘xd5 21.exd5 f5; 20.exd5 f5) 20...♘xg3 21.♕xg3 dxe4 22.♗xe4 ♖ad8 23.♗d3 (23.a4!) 23...♗d6 24.♘e4 ♖fe8 25.h4 h5 26.♖ad1 ♗f8 27.♗e2 ♗e7! 28.♘g5 ♖xd1 29.♗xd1 ♗xg5! 30.♕xg5 ♕d8 31.♕g3 ♕d2 32.♕e3 ♕xe3 33.♖xe3 ♘c4 34.♖b3 ♖c8 and Black won this favourable ending. A.Zhigalko-Kuzubov, Groningen 2004.

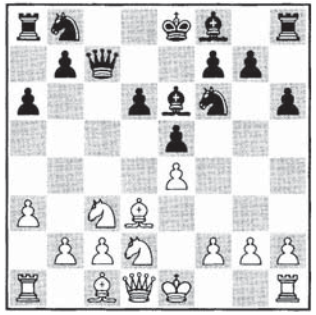
By the way, this game was played 8 days after Andrey Zhigalko (a Najdorf player himself) had suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of Nigel Short – see the next game. So, obviously impressed he decided it to try it out and found himself again at the receiving end. Despite the result in this game it is clear that 8.♗g5 is a serious alternative for Dvoiris's 8.♗d3.

8...h6

Now that White has refrained from 8.♗g5, Vaulin decides to prevent this move once and for all. Of course Black can also go for moves like 8...♗e7, 8...♗e6, or 8...♘bd7 when it would be interesting to know whether Dvoiris would have gone for 9.♗g5, or would have stuck to his plan in the game with 9.♘d2.

9.♘d2 ♗e6

Preventing 10.♘c4, but this has little consequence since White might just as well go to f1.



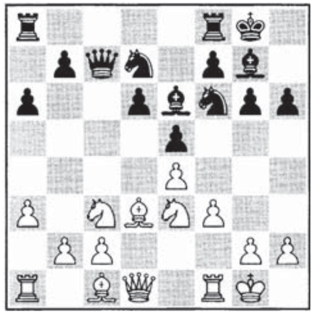
10.♘f1 g6?!

I don't like this fianchetto, but maybe White is somewhat better in all cases. The freeing advance 10...d5 gives White a slight edge after 11.exd5 ♘xd5 12.♘xd5 ♗xd5 13.♘e3 followed by castling after either 13...♗e6 or 13...♗c6. Likewise, 10...♗e7 11.♘e3 ♘bd7 12.0-0 0-0 13.♘ed5!? (13.♕f3) 13...♗xd5 (13...♘xd5?? 14.exd5+–) 14.exd5 appears to be better for White. In this last line White should not play 14.♘xd5 ♘xd5 15.exd5 f5 though.

11.♘e3 ♗g7 12.0-0 ♘bd7

Black's position looks fairly harmonious, but it is difficult to improve his position. In the coming middlegame Dvoiris is happy to prevent his opponent from freeing himself (...d6-d5) and slowly outmanoeuvres him. Note that compared to the positions after 8.♗g5 when often a pair of minor pieces will be exchanged, here all minor pieces remain on the board for some time. White's bishop may look passive on c1, but in principle this is a good piece and his future will come (think of the closed Ruy Lopez). Black on the other hand is stuck with a fianchetto-bishop that is inhibited by his own structure, although, admittedly, this means that f4 is never a plan for White since it would free the 'monster' on g7.

13.f3 0-0



Understandably Black refrains from 13...b5 as 14.a4 b4 15.♘cd5 ♗xd5 16.exd5 fixes some light-squared weaknesses in his camp. Still, the position would have remained complex, and in the game Black drifts into passivity.

14.a4!

Again we see that after playing 6.a3 White is not obliged to leave the pawn there for the rest of the game.

14...♖ac8 15.♖f2

Slowly regrouping his pieces with ♗f1 and ♖d2.

15...♖fd8 16.♗f1 ♕c5

Black's position is not all that much worse, but it is difficult for a human being to play such positions without any prospects of active counterplay. One of the problems is that ...f5 will never be on the cards since moving the f6-knight means relinquishing the already weak control of d5 (♘d5 would immediately follow).

Instead of the text, 16...♕a5 was a better move. Obviously, White cannot take on d6 (17.♕xd6?? ♘c5 18.♕xe5 ♘h5). Meanwhile, a5 is mechanically prevented, and an exchange sacrifice is threatened. In case of 17.♕e1 Black has 17...d5. After 17.♖a3 ♘b6?! 18.♗d2 ♕c5 19.a5 ♘bd7 Black has gained nothing, but stronger is 17...♗f8! when active possibilities are in sight.

17.a5 ♔h7 18.♕e1 ♕a7

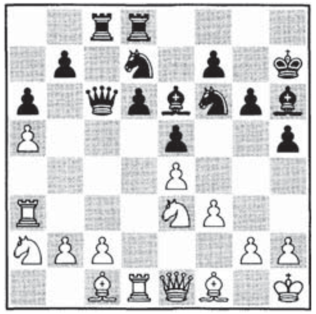
Black cannot free himself with 18...d5 as the resulting position after the forced 19.♘exd5 ♘xd5 (19...♗xd5 20.♗e3 ♕c6 21.♘xd5 is identical) 20.exd5 ♗xd5 21.♗e3 ♕c6 22.♘xd5 ♕xd5 23.♖d2 is clearly advantageous for White. The immediate 18...h5 makes sense though.

19.♔h1 h5 20.♖d2 ♕c5 21.♖d1 ♕c6 22.♖a3 ♗h6

Dvoiris, in true Karpovian style, has manoeuvred better than his opponent, and has preserved a pleasant edge.

23.♘a2

Ready to gain more space with c4 and b4. Sometimes ♘b4 or ♖c3 are strong moves too. At the same time this is an interesting psychological moment: White is relaxing his control over d5, giving Black the opportunity to finally break free.

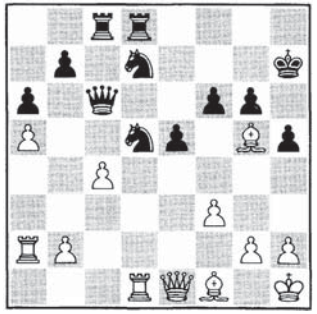


23...♗xa2!?
Understandably, Black no longer sticks to his (passive) guns. Instead, 23...♗xe3? fails to the intermediate 24.♘b4! (24.♗xe3 ♕xc2 was the idea) 24...♕c7 25.♗xe3.

24.♖xa2 ♗xe3 25.♗xe3 d5
This was Black's intention when he traded his two bishops for the White knights which had been controlling d5 for so long. Just bad is 25...♕xc2 26.♖xd6.

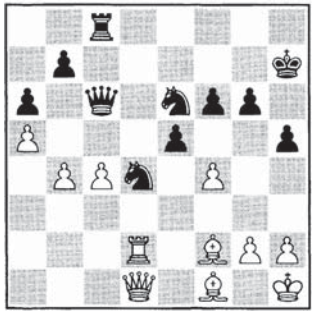
26.exd5 ♘xd5 27.♗g5?!
Stronger is 27.♗g1.

27...f6 28.c4!



28...♘e7 29.♗e3 ♘f5 30.♗f2 ♘c5 31.b4
With two bishops and a queenside majority it is now clear why Dvoiris has allowed Black to free himself. Still, Black has counterplay and can be happy with his decision to take on a2.

31...♖xd1 32.♕xd1 ♘e6 33.♖d2 ♘fd4 34.f4



34...♖f8
White wins after 34...♘xf4 35.♗xd4 exd4 36.♖xd4 ♘e6 37.♖d6 ♕e8 38.♖d7+.

35.♔g1 ♖f7 36.♕e1 ♕d6 37.c5 ♕d5 38.fxe5 fxe5 39.♗e3?! ♕e4 40.♗d3 ♕g4 41.♔h1 ♘c6
41...♘f5! 42.♖e2 h4 with counterplay and only a slight edge for White.

42.♖b2 ♘ed4 43.h3 ♕e6 44.♗e4 ♕c4 45.♔h2 ♔g7
45...♖f1 46.♕d2 gains nothing.

46.♗f2 ♔h7 47.♗b1!? ♖d7 48.♕e4 ♕e6 49.♗e3 ♘f5 50.b5!
Making progress on the queenside.

50...axb5 51.♖xb5 ♕f7 52.♗g5 ♖d4 53.♕f3 ♖d7 54.♖b6
White is winning now.

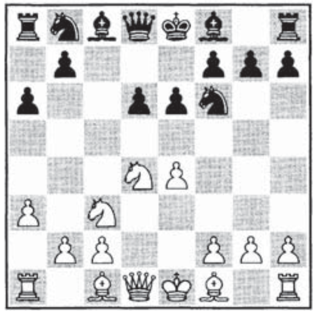
54...♘cd4 55.♕e4 ♘e6 56.♗a2! ♘fd4 57.♗e3 ♕e7 58.♕xe5 ♕xc5 59.♖xe6 ♘f3+ 60.gxf3 ♖d2+ 61.♔g3 1-0

Despite the inaccuracies an impressive game by Dvoiris.

In the following (rapid) game we see how Nigel Short makes short work of Andrey Zhigalko's Najdorf. In the notes you will find an internet blitz game by the same Short against Peter Heine Nielsen, and a serious tournament game against Indian GM Sandipan.

☐ **Nigel Short**
■ **Andrey Zhigalko**
Warsaw rapid 2004

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.a3 e6

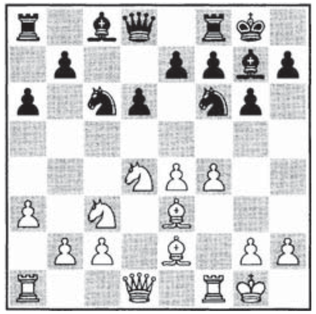


Black avoids the true Najdorf thrust and prefers a 'Scheveningen' reasoning that ...a6 will be more useful than a3. Indeed, ...a6 is nearly always played, while some players prefer set-ups with a4 (to prevent ...b5 for the time being) to those with a3 (to prevent ...b4, and ...♘b4).

The classical 6...♘c6 is unpopular with Najdorf players. White can go for the Sozin with 7.♗c4 when a3 is moderately useful. Also possible is 7.♗e2 but I would not really recommend it since apart from 7...e6, Black can also play 7...e5 and 7...g6.

An important option is 7.f4 when Black can go for 7...♗g4!? (7...e6 and now 8.♗e2 or 8.♘f3 followed by ♗d3; alternatively there is 7...e5 8.♘f3 ♗g4 9.♗e2 ♗e7 with interesting play) 8.♘f3 g6 9.h3 ♗xf3 10.♕xf3 ♗g7 11.♗d3 0-0 12.0-0 when both sides have their chances. Note that a3 is a very useful move in this type of position.

However, the most important alternative for 6...e5 and 6...e6 is the Dragon-like 6...g6 since White has played a3 it makes less sense to go for queenside castling, hence play continues with 7.♗e2 ♗g7 8.0-0 0-0 9.♗e3 (Also playable is 9.♗g5 ♘c6 10.♘b3 ♗e6 11.f4 b5 12.♗f3 ♖c8 13.♘d5 ♘d7 14.c3 J.Littlewood-King, British Team Championship 2004/05) 9...♘c6 10.f4



10...♗g4 (this is considered best in the corresponding position with 6.a4) 11.♘xc6 ♗xe2.

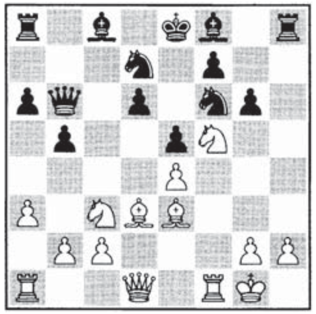
Now Short-Nielsen, playchess.com Internet 2004, went 12.♘xd8 ♗xd1 13.♖axd1 ♖fxd8 ½-½. If White wants to play he should try 12.♘xe7+ ♕xe7 13.♕xe2 when Black must play 13...♖ae8! – 13...♘xe4 14.♘d5 is better for White – when 6.a4 Najdorf theory gives 14.♗d4 ♘xe4 as equal. My recommendation is 14.e5! dxe5 15.f5, something I have played in the position with the a-pawn on a4, when my opponent (German IM Michael Hoffmann) played 15...♕b4!?. Need I say more?

7.f4
Short deliberately plays this active move

rather than the Scheveningen with 7.♗e2. His idea is to play ♗d3, when White may well find himself a tempo up on traditional Scheveningen lines where he plays ♗e2-d3 at some point. Thus, White would gain the useful a3 in the process!

7...♗e7

In Gibraltar 2006, Short had to face 7...b5. He went for immense tactical complications with 8.♗d3 ♘bd7 9.0-0 g6 10.f5!? ♕b6 11.♗e3 e5 12.fxg6! hxg6 (12...exd4 13.gxf7+ gives White a winning attack) 13.♘f5



13...♘c5 14.b4 (a less violent attempt to refute Black's risky play is 14.♘g3 ♘g4 – 14...♗h6!? 15.♗f2; 14...♕d8 15.♕f3+– – 15.♘d5 ♕a7 16.♗f2) 14...gxf5 15.bxc5 dxc5 16.♘d5 (16.exf5 ♗b7 is fine for Black) 16...♘xd5 17.♗xb5+ (the point of Short's play) 17...axb5 18.♕xd5 f4 (Sandipan returns material to fend off the attack, meanwhile he could have gone for 18...♕b8! 19.♖ad1 and now not 19...♗e7 20.♕c6+ ♔f8 21.♗h6+ but 19...f6! a heroic non-human defence) 19.♕xa8 ♕b7 20.♕xb7 ♗xb7 21.♗d2 ♗xe4 (Black has more or less sufficient compensation) 22.♖ab1 ♗xc2 23.♖xb5 ♗d6 24.♖c1 ♗f5?! (24...♗g6) 25.♖bxc5 (returning the exchange for a better ending) 25...♗xc5+ 26.♖xc5 f6 27.♗xf4! ♔f7 28.♗d2 Short eventually managed to convert his slight endgame advantage into the notorious rook and bishop versus rook ending.

Nevertheless, a draw was the final result after 124 moves, Short-Sandipan, Gibraltar 2006.

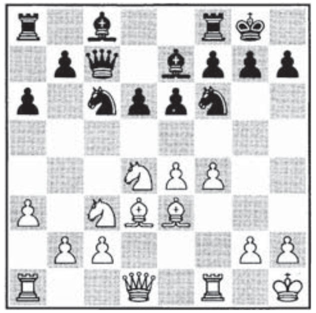
8.♗e3 ♘c6 9.♗d3 0-0

Of course not 9...♕b6?? since 10.♘f5 ♕xb2? 11.♘a4 traps her majesty. 9...e5 now or on the next move is possible though somewhat better for White.

10.0-0 ♕c7

Since this is a rapid game we should not criticize Zhigalko's play too severely. In the end he loses because he plays too many 'natural' (superficial) moves. One way to take advantage of the bishop on d3 was 10...♘xd4!? 11.♗xd4 e5 when 12.fxe5 dxe5 13.♗xe5? is bad due to 13...♘g4.

11.♔h1



11...b5 12.♕f3 ♗b7 13.♖ae1

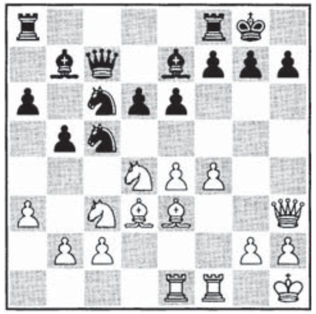
Short does not hide his intentions and has developed his pieces in the most aggressive way. A kingside attack will follow, and therefore Black's next move is out of place.

13...♘d7? 14.♕h3

Eying h7 (the threat is 15.e5), but also e6 (thus preparing 15.f5). It is hard for Black to prevent both.

14...♘c5

To prevent 15.e5 because of 15...♘xd3. Instead 14...♘xd4 15.♗xd4 ♘c5 (15...e5 16.♘d5!) 16.f5 transposes.



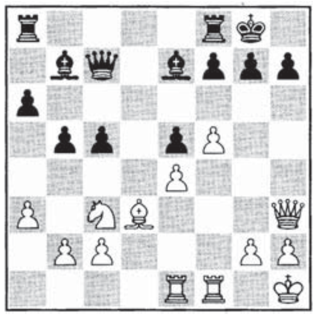
15.f5! ♘xd4

White is also better after 15...♘xd3 16.cxd3 ♘xd4 17.♗xd4 e5 18.♗e3.

16.♗xd4 e5

Closing one diagonal, but with his subsequent moves Short deftly demonstrated that the b1-h7 diagonal can be opened.

17.♗xc5! dxc5



Disaster also strikes after 17...♕xc5 18.f6! ♗xf6 19.♖xf6 gxf6 20.♕h6! with a winning attack (Black is still alive after 20.♘d5 ♗xd5 21.exd5 ♖fe8!).

18.f6! ♗xf6 19.♘d5 ♕d6

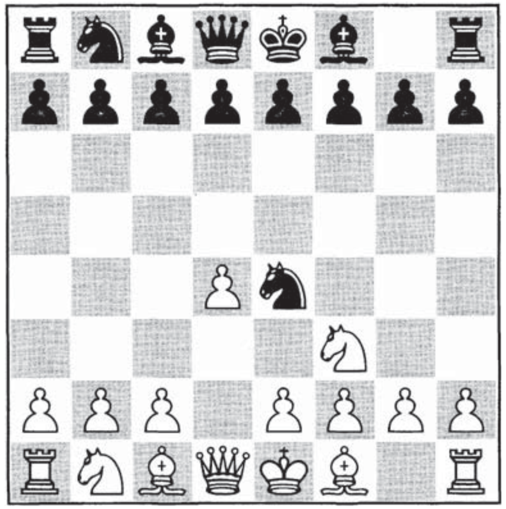
White also wins after 19...♗xd5 20.exd5 h6 (20...h5 21.♖xf6 gxf6 22.♕xh5 ♖fe8 – or 22...♖fd8 23.♕h6 – 23.♗e4+–) 21.♖xf6.

20.♖xf6! gxf6 21.♕h6 1-0

CHAPTER 8

Adrian Mikhalchishin

The Döry Defence



1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 ♘e4

From chess history it is well known that wealthy patrons sometimes had as their hobby the playing and studying of a favourite variation, and they were very happy to sponsor theme tournaments with the participation of great players. We might think of the tournaments of Isaac Rice, where the gambit named after him was tested.

With the opening of Baron Ladislaus Döry the situation was slightly different – the Baron was a remarkable chess enthusiast, who helped to organise many tournaments in Vienna. Both during his lifetime, and after his death tournaments were arranged in his name. In one of them – Vienna 1937 – the Döry Defence 1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 ♘e4?! was tested. The point of the second move lies in the subsequent exchanges after a future ...♗b4. The Baron played his 2...♘e4 for the first time in an official game in 1923.

In modern chess hardly anyone plays this, but the idea of the defence is not altogether stupid. It is surprising that in this tournament the winner was none other than the great Paul Keres, who was already among the top five players in the world. It is interesting to see how the great Estonian played this opening for both one side and the other.

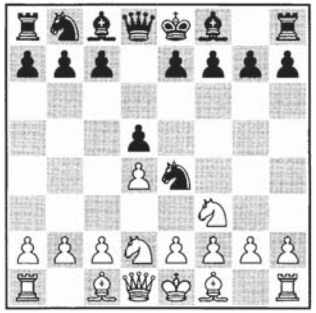
Wiener Schachzeitung reports some interesting details – the tournament was visited by Emanuel Lasker and his wife. Interestingly, Lasker had been deprived of his German citizenship, he had left the USSR, and he was probably on his way to the USA. How did all this happen? Lasker was not very fond of Austria, because Rothschild (a sponsor of Austrian tournaments before the First World War) had refused to be a patron of his match with Schlechter.

Other guests of the tournament were the Yugoslav grandmasters Milan Vidmar and Vasja Pirc.

☐ **Paul Keres**
■ **Wolfgang Weil**
Vienna 1937

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 ♘e4 3.♘fd2

● It looks much more logical to play 3.♘bd2 d5:

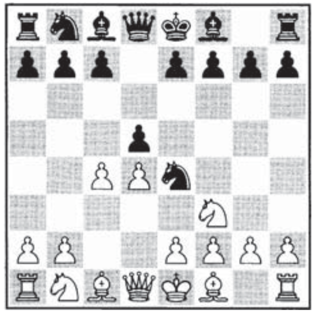


– 4.♘xe4 dxe4 5.♘g5 f5 6.e3 e6 7.h4 ♗e7 (I think that the plan of 7...♗d6 8.♗c4 ♕f6 was better, when Black may even castle queenside) 8.♗c4 ♗xg5 9.♕h5+ g6 10.♕xg5 ♕xg5 11.hxg5 with an obvious advantage in the ending, Keres-Podhorzer, Vienna 1937.

– If White plays more modestly: 4.g3 c5 5.dxc5 ♘xc5 6.♗g2 ♘c6 7.0-0 e5 8.c4 d4?! (8...♗e6! is stronger) 9.b4! ♘d7 10.b5 ♘a5 11.♘e1!? ♗e7 12.f4 (12.♘d3!? and then 13.f4 is more interesting) 12...exf4 13.♖xf4 0-0 14.♖f1 ♘e5 15.♗b2, Podhorzer-Keres, Vienna 1937, and here 15...♗e6 or 15...♕b6 was correct, with the better game.

● 3.♗f4 d5 is very quiet (also possible is 3...c5 4.d5 ♕b6 5.♕c1 e6 6.c4 ♗e7 7.♘bd2 ♘xd2 8.♕xd2 d6 9.e4 e5 10.♗e3 f5 11.exf5 ♗xf5 and Black has no problems, Podhorzer-Weil, Vienna 1937) 4.e3 ♗g4 5.c4? (5.h3! should be included) 5...e5! 6.♗xe5 ♗b4+ 7.♘c3 ♘xc3 8.♕b3 ♘xa2+ 9.♔d1 dxc4, with advantage to Black, Becker-Keres, Vienna 1937.

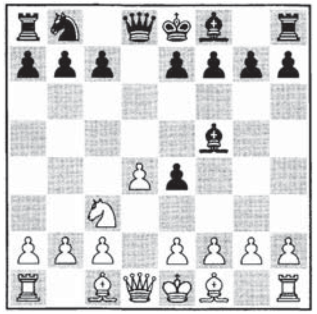
● Of course, 3.c4 is very logical, and now Black can play 3...e6, which is considered later, or continue in the spirit of the Döry Defence with 3...d5!?, as the German player Berthold Bartsch played several times. And now there are the following possibilities:



– 4.♘c3 ♘xc3 5.bxc3 e6 (the immediate 5...c5!? is also possible) 6.g3 c5 7.cxd5 ♕xd5?! (after 7...exd5!? Black has no problems) 8.♗g2 cxd4 9.cxd4 ♗b4+ 10.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 11.♕xd2 ♘c6 12.0-0 ♕a5 13.♕b2 with a serious advantage for White, Aseev-Bartsch, Neu-Isenburg 1992.

– 4.♗f4 e6 5.e3 c6?! (5...c5!? is obviously better, or even 5...♗b4+ 6.♘bd2 g5!) 6.♗d3 ♕a5+ 7.♘fd2 ♘xd2 8.♘xd2 dxc4 9.♗xc4 ♗b4 10.e4 0-0 11.0-0 ♘d7 12.e5! ♗xd2 13.♗xd2 ♕b6 14.♕g4! with a strong attack for White, Klinger-Bartsch, Zürich 1990.

3...d5 4.♘xe4 dxe4 5.♘c3 ♗f5



6.g4!

In the style of the young Keres, although in that tournament everyone played this! More restrained is 6.g3 e6 7.♗g2 ♗b4 with a normal game.

6...♗xg4 7.♗g2

Against Becker Keres played 7.♘xe4, but after 7...e5! 8.dxe5 ♕xd1+ 9.♔xd1 ♘c6 10.f4 0-0-0+ Black had an excellent game.

7...e6

Black played simply in the following game: 7...f5 8.♗f4 e6 9.f3 exf3 10.exf3 ♗h5, Becker-Podhorzer, Vienna 1937, and here after the correct 11.♕e2 the play is very obscure, but it is clear that White has the initiative.

8.♘xe4 ♘c6 9.c3 ♗h5?

Keres recommended 9...♗f5, but 9...♕d7 was also interesting.

10.♕b3 ♖b8 11.♗g5! ♕c8

If 11...♗e7 Keres had prepared 12.♗xe7 ♕xe7 13.♘g3! – a double attack.

12.♖d1 ♗g6 13.c4

White had another way of strengthening his position: 13.d5 exd5 14.♕xd5 and now Black should not fall for 14...♗xe4? 15.♕xe4+ ♕e6 16.♗h3! – a nice trick! – but play 14...♕e6.

13...♗xe4 14.♗xe4 ♗e7 15.♖g1 ♗xg5 16.♖xg5 g6

If 16...0-0 Keres was ready to 'kill' his opponent by 17.♗xh7+! ♔xh7 18.♕h3+ ♔g8 19.♕h6 g6 20.♖d3 with a mating attack.

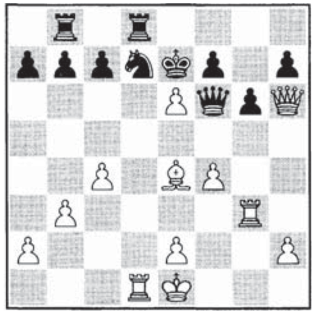
17.♕h3

17.d5! was even better.

17...♕d8!

It is time to return the queen to the defence.

18.♖g3 ♕f6 19.d5 ♘e5 20.♕h6 ♔e7 21.b3 ♖hd8 22.f4 ♘d7 23.dxe6



23...♘c5!

Interesting counterplay. Now Keres gets himself lured into sacrificing a piece.

24.♗d5 c6 25.exf7 cxd5 26.♖e3+ ♔xf7 27.♕xh7+ ♔f8 28.cxd5 ♖e8 29.♖g3 ♕xf4!

Black is quite right to fearlessly open the f-file.

30.♖d2 ♕f7

30...♘e4? 31.♖f3 ♕xf3 did not work, as White would interpose 32.♕h6+!.

31.♕h8+ ♔e7 32.♕d4 b6?

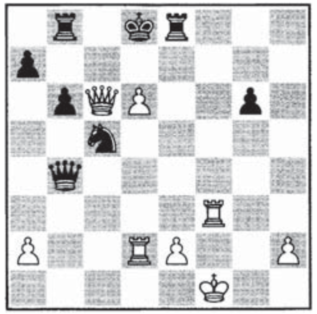
After 32...♔d6! Black has a very solid position.

33.♖f3 ♕h7 34.♕f6+ ♔d7 35.♕c6+ ♔d8 36.♕d6+ ♔c8

In the event of 36...♘d7 the black king would have been detained in the centre.

37.b4 ♕h4+ 38.♔f1 ♕xb4 39.♕c6+ ♔d8 40.d6?

Bravely but foolishly avoiding the draw by perpetual check with 40.♕d6+.



40...♖b7?

After 40...♖c8! White would have been unable to save the game.

41.d7 ♘xd7! 42.♖xd7+ ♖xd7 43.♕a8+ ♔e7?!

The alternative 43...♔c7 would have ensured a draw.

44.♖e3+ ♔f6?

This time it was imperative to go in the other direction – 44...♔d6!?.

45.♕xe8 ♕d4 46.♖e6+ ♔g5 47.♕xg6+

Black resigned.

Similar to the line 1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 ♘e4 is 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 ♘e4. None other than the fourth World Champion, Alexander Alekhine, played like this.

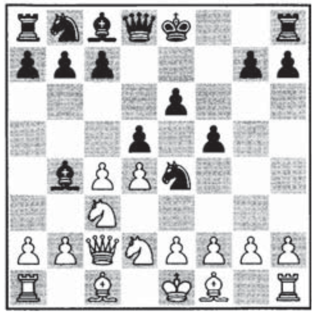
☐ **Ernesto Rotunno**
■ **Alexander Alekhine**
Carasco 1938

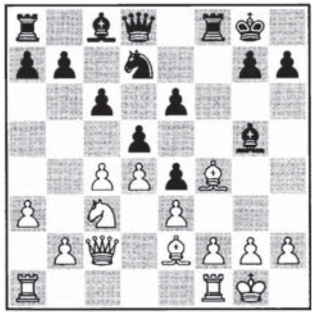
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 ♘e4!?

It is interesting that Alekhine first made this move back in 1922.

4.♘bd2

Against Marshall in New York in 1927 Alekhine himself played more cunningly: 4.♘fd2 ♗b4 5.♕c2 d5 6.♘c3 f5 (it was better to play 6...♘xc3 7.bxc3 ♗e7) 7.♘dxe4 fxe4?! (to me it seems more sensible to capture with the other pawn – 7...dxe4!?) 8.♗f4 0-0 9.e3 c6 (too passive – clearly better was 9...c5!? 10.dxc5 d4 11.0-0-0 d3 with a complicated game) 10.♗e2 ♘d7 11.a3 ♗e7 12.0-0 ♗g5 (Black must try to exchange bishops, but all the same White has an appreciable advantage)



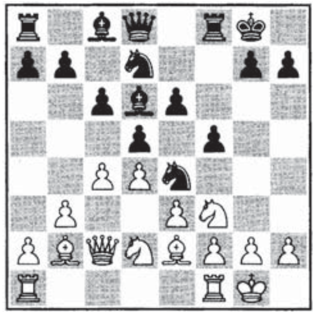


13.f3! (a good temporary pawn sacrifice) 13...♗xf4 14.exf4 ♖xf4 15.fxe4 ♖xf1+ 16.♖xf1 e5!? (how else can he complete the development of his pieces?) 17.♕d2! c5 (another tactical stroke, but it does not help greatly) 18.dxe5 d4 19.♕f4! dxc3 20.♕f7+ ♔h8 21.bxc3 ♕g8 22.♕e7 h6 (Black simply has no moves) 23.♗h5 a5 24.e6 g6 (24...♘f6 25.♗f7! ♕h7 26.♖xf6! gxf6 27.♕f8+ also does not help) 25.exd7 ♗xd7 26.♖f7, 1-0.

4...f5 5.♕c2

Vukovic-Alekhine, Vienna 1922, went 5.e3 ♗b4 6.♗d3 b6 7.a3 ♗xd2+ 8.♘xd2 ♗b7 9.♗xe4 fxe4 10.♕g4!.

5...d5 6.e3 ♘d7 7.♗e2 c6 8.0-0 ♗d6 9.b3 0-0 10.♗b2



10...♕f6!

Black defends his e5-point and prepares an attack on the kingside. He has obtained an excellent Stonewall.

11.g3

The knight at e4 must somehow be tackled, but the immediate 11.♘e1 with the idea of 12.f3 seemed too passive to White.

11...g5 12.♘e1 ♕h6! 13.♘g2 ♘df6 14.f4

Radically forestalling the opponent's play on the kingside.

14...♗d7 15.♘xe4 ♘xe4 16.♗f3 ♘f6 17.♘e1 ♗e8 18.♘d3 ♗h5

Both sides improve the placing of their pieces.

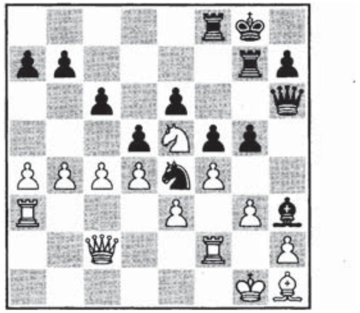
19.♗h1?

White does not want to exchange bishops, but now the black bishop becomes strong. 19.♕e2!? was better.

19...♗g4 20.♘e5 ♗h3 21.♖f2 ♖ae8 22.a4 ♖e7 23.♗a3!

The correct idea – the exchange of the dark-squared bishops.

23...♗xa3 24.♖xa3 ♖g7 25.b4 ♘e4



26.♗xe4 fxe4 27.♔h1 gxf4 28.exf4 ♗f5 29.♕e2 a5 30.b5 c5 31.♕e3 ♕h5 32.♖a1?

A mistake – the g3-pawn should have been defended. Correct was 32.♖d2 with equality.

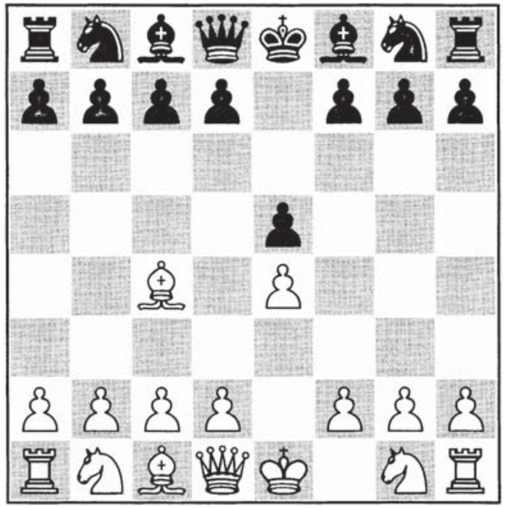
32...cxd4 33.♕xd4 ♖xg3 34.♖g1 ♖xg1+ 35.♔xg1 ♗h3 36.c5 ♖xf4 37.c6 ♕e2!

White resigned.

CHAPTER 9

Glenn Flear

Bishops First Please!



Early queen moves after 1.e4 e5 2.♗c4

After 1.e4 the reply 1...e5 gives White a few headaches. Which line of the Spanish is Black intending to play, or, is he intending to play the solid Petroff?

Not everyone wants to get involved in a big theoretical battle, especially if it's in their opponent's pet-line. For SOS readers a straightforward easy-to-learn repertoire that sets a few problems without much risk might be the order of the day. If it is, then read on!

The old adage 'knights before bishops' has many exceptions. Here White brings out his king's bishop and indeed often his queen before his king's knight, unusual but logical. White confirms his presence in the centre and in particular renders the freeing ...d5-break less than evident. If the central arena stays quiet then White takes the opportunity to ensure that his queen is more active than Black's.

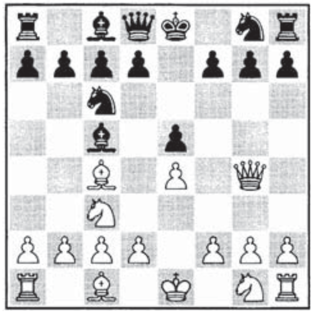
The repertoire that I am suggesting here contains lines from the Bishop's Opening and the Vienna. Some of these ideas have even been employed at the top level and may not be the usual SOS fare. However, with this practical mini-repertoire using a move order to reduce Black's options, you'll steer the game away from your opponent's main lines.

You won't need to learn too much theory, but you'll need to know that the bishop comes first!

I Meeting 2...♗c5

1.e4 e5 2.♗c4 ♗c5

After 2...♘c6 3.♘c3 ♗c5 White has 4.♕g4! which doesn't give Black an easy time.



Now 4...♕f6 just provokes White to generate a strong attack: 5.♘d5! ♕xf2+ 6.♔d1 ♔f8 7.♘h3 ♕d4 8.d3 ♗b6 9.♖f1 ♘d8 10.c3 ♕c5 11.♘g5 and Black is on the ropes: Alekhine-Lugowski, Belgrade simul 1931.

If 4...g6 then 5.♕f3 and now:

– 5...♕f6 6.♘d5 ♕xf3 7.♘xf3 ♗d6 and White has the slightly easier game after both 8.d3 and 8.c3.

– 5...♘f6 6.♘ge2 d6 7.d3 ♗g4 8.♕g3 ♗e6 9.♗g5 ♘h5 10.♕h4 ♕d7 11.♘g3 and White has won the opening battle due to Black's weak squares and passive position, Watson-Murshed, London Lloyds Bank 1992.

3.♕h5!?

Not quite as daring as the 'Nakamura Attack' (1.e4 e5 2.♕h5) but sufficiently annoying for Black all the same.

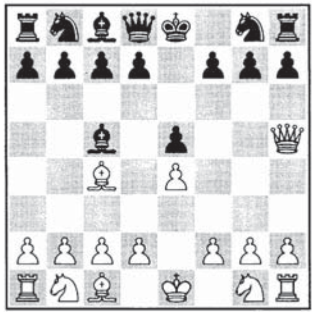
I'm not keen however on the sister-variation starting with 3.♕g4?! (although see above for the analogous position with the extra moves ♘c3 and ...♘c6 when this move is considerably stronger). Not good is the gambit try 3...d5?, when after 4.♕xg7 ♕f6 5.♕xf6 ♘xf6 6.exd5 ♖g8, White has 7.♔f1! ♘e4 8.♘f3 with the point that 8...♘xf2 is well met by 9.d4!.

Stronger is 3...♕f6, when:

– 4.♘c3 ♘e7 seems fine for Black as here White must move his queen a second time and thus lose time. (In some books 4...♕xf2+ is given as a mistake but Black is actually better after 5.♔d1 ♘e7 e.g. 6.♘h3 ♕f6 7.♖f1 d5!.)

– 4.♕g3!? is certainly playable.

3.b4 is for die-hard romantics! Otherwise 3.♘c3 could transpose to some of the lines considered lower down. The most 'normal' move is 3.♘f3 but the text move will raise a few eyebrows and so is more fitting for an SOS column!



3...♕e7

The other main option is 3...♕f6, which is not a bad move, but f6 tends to be the best square for a knight! White should now develop in classical style with the knowledge that his pieces will be more harmoniously placed than Black's. 4.♘f3 d6 (4...♘c6 5.♘c3 ♘ge7 6.0-0 looks more comfortable for White) 5.♘c3 c6 6.d3 ♕g6 7.♕xg6 hxg6:

– Now I prefer 8.♗e3!, e.g. 8...♗xe3 (8...♘d7 9.0-0 b5 10.♗b3 ♘gf6 is the most solid keeping White down to a slight pull) 9.fxe3 ♘h6 10.0-0 and White has a promising lead in development.

– 8.♘g5!? ♘h6 9.f3 ♔e7 10.h4 f6 11.♘h3 a5 12.a4 ♘f7 13.♘f2 with balanced chances, Flachsbart-Rabl, Germany 1999/2000.

4.♘f3 d6

After 4...♘f6!? capturing on e5 doesn't lead to any advantage: 5.♕xe5 (5.♕h4 keeps more tension) 5...♗xf2+ 6.♔e2 ♕xe5 7.♘xe5 ♗b6 8.♗xf7+ ♔e7 9.♗b3 d6 10.♘f3 ♘xe4 as in Mohr-Gostisa, Nova Gorica 1994, which was equal.

The flashy 4...♗xf2+?! loses time: 5.♔xf2 ♕c5+ 6.d4 ♕xc4 7.♕xe5+ ♔f8 8.♘a3 and White had a clear advantage in Flohr-Nieuwenhuis, Zwolle 1998.

4...♘c6 5.d3 d6 6.♘c3 ♗b4?! (a concession – after the superior 6...♘f6 7.♕h4 White has nothing significant, but Black might get irritated by White's more active queen) 7.0-0 ♗xc3 8.bxc3 ♘f6 9.♕h4, Staunton-Cochrane, London 1842, and White had an edge.

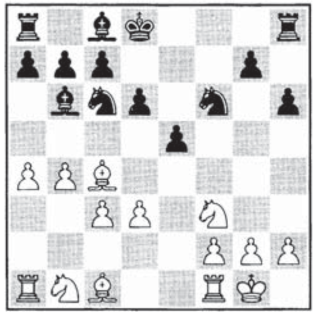
5.♘g5 ♘f6 6.♕xf7+ ♕xf7 7.♗xf7+ ♔e7 8.♗c4 h6 9.♘f3 ♘xe4 10.0-0

Given as equal by the ancient Bilguer, but even without queens Black's centralized king isn't ideally placed.

10...♔d8

According to Lane the position is now equal. I like:

11.c3! ♘c6 12.d3 ♘f6 13.b4 ♗b6 14.a4



With a pull for White, as his position is easier to handle, whereas in contrast Black's king rather gets in the way.

II Playing for ...d5

1.e4 e5 2.♗c4 ♘f6 3.d3 c6

It's tempting to 'punish' White by claiming a lion's share of the centre, but recent experience suggests that Black has then to be very careful not to succumb to the inevitable White pressure.

4.♘f3 d5

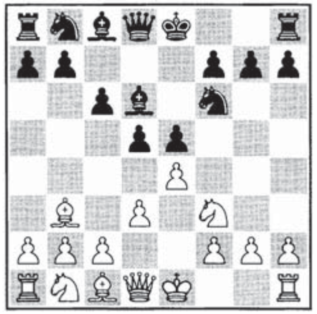
After 4...♗e7 5.0-0 (the blunder 5.♘xe5?? should be avoided in view of 5...♕a5+) 5...d6 play can continue as in a closed Spanish or Italian game. White's king bishop is slightly more active than Black's and the early ...c6 leaves Black without the natural square for his knight and thus he may find himself slightly cramped. Here are a couple of examples, where Black aims to exchange his queen's bishop either via ...♗e6 or ...♗g4. In both cases he achieves near-equality) 6.c3 0-0 7.♗b3 ♗g4 (7...♘bd7 8.♖e1 ♘b6 9.♘bd2 ♗e6 10.♘f1 ♘fd7 11.♘g3 ♕c7 12.d4 ♗xb3 13.axb3 as in I.Rogers-J.Rogers, British league 2001/02) 8.h3 ♗h5 9.♖e1 ♘bd7 10.♘bd2 ♘c5 11.♗c2 ♘e6 12.♘f1 ♘d7 13.♘g3 ♗xf3 14.♕xf3 g6 Gelfand-Yusupov, Munich 1994, with the solid ...♗g5 in the air.

5.♗b3 ♗d6

After 5...♗b4+ there is a safe option available with 6.♗d2, but 6.c3 keeps the tension and is probably slightly favourable, e.g. 6...♗d6 7.♗g5 ♗e6 8.♘bd2 ♘bd7 9.d4 exd4 10.exd5 ♗xd5 11.♗xd5 cxd5 12.♘xd4 with a small edge, Yudasin-Alterman, Israeli Championship, Tel-Aviv 1994.

After 5...a5 White can react aggressively with 6.♘c3!? ♗b4 (after 6...d4 7.♘xe5 dxc3 8.♘xf7 ♗b4 9.0-0 the complications favour White) 7.a3 ♗xc3+ 8.bxc3 ♘bd7 9.exd5 ♘xd5 10.0-0 0-0 11.♖e1 ♖e8 12.c4 ♘e7 13.♘g5 h6 14.♘e4 a4 15.♗a2 c5 16.♘d6

♖f8 17.c3 ♘g6 18.♗b1 with an interesting struggle where White's threat of a timely d3-d4 gives him the edge, Kasparov-Bareev, Linares 1993.



6.exd5!

I consider this to be more of a challenge than the traditional 6.♘c3 dxe4! 7.♘g5 0-0 8.♘cxe4 ♘xe4 9.♘xe4 ♗f5! 10.♕f3 ♗xe4 11.dxe4 ♘d7 12.c3 a5 13.a4 ♘c5 14.♗c2 b5 with easy equality, Adams-Kramnik, Tilburg 1998.

6...cxd5

The alternative is to capture with the knight – 6...♘xd5 – but White then has access to c4 or e4 for use by a knight: 7.0-0 0-0 8.♖e1 ♖e8 (otherwise after 8...♘d7 9.♘bd2 ♗c7 10.♘e4 a5 11.a3 ♔h8 12.♗g5 f6 13.♗d2 White also has a pull: 13...♘7b6 14.h3 ♘e7 15.♕e2 ♘f5 16.♖ad1 ♕e7 17.d4!? – a radical way to open up lines for his pieces! – 17...♘xd4 18.♘xd4 exd4 19.♕f3 with compensation, Izoria-Erenburg, Khanty-Mansiysk 2005) 9.♘bd2 ♗c7 10.♘e4 ♗f5 11.♗g5 f6 12.♗d2 ♘d7 13.♘h4 ♗e6 14.♕h5 a5 15.a3 ♘f4 16.♗xe6+ ♘xe6 17.♖e3 ♘f4 18.♕g4 with continuing pressure, Efimenko-Khuzman, Moscow 2006.

7.♗g5

Black now has to decide how best to retain his centre.

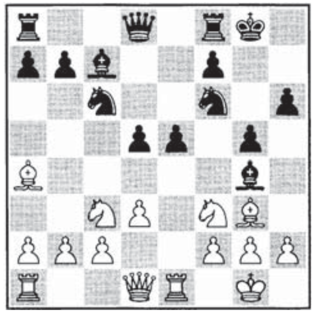
7...♗e6

7...d4 8.♘bd2 0-0 9.0-0 ♘c6 10.♖e1 a6 11.h3 h6 12.♗h4 ♖e8 13.♘c4 ♗c7 14.♗g3 ♘d7 15.a4 ♕f6 16.c3 Benjamin-P.H.Nielsen, Las Vegas 1999, and White kept some initiative.

8.♘c3 ♗c7

After 8...♕a5 Black soon has problems: 9.0-0 ♘bd7 10.♕e1! e.g. 10...♖c8 (or 10...♕c5 11.♗xf6 gxf6 12.d4 exd4 13.♘xd5 0-0-0 14.♕e4 ♗e5 15.♘f4 f5 16.♘xe6 fxe4 17.♘xc5 exf3 18.♘d3 fxg2 19.♖fe1 Tiviakov-Swinkels, Vlissingen 2004) 11.d4 ♗b4 12.♗d2 ♗xc3 13.♗xc3 ♖xc3 14.bxc3 e4 15.♘g5 0-0 16.c4, Delchev-Jovanic, Zadar 2004.

9.0-0 ♘c6 10.♖e1 0-0 11.♗a4! h6 12.♗h4 g5 13.♗g3 ♗g4



14.♗xc6

14.h3 ♗xf3 15.♕xf3 ♘d4 16.♕d1 ♕b8 17.♘b5 Drabke-Przedmojski, Kolobrzeg 2005, only gave White a minimal pull.

14...bxc6 15.h3!

15.♗xe5 ♗xe5 16.♖xe5 ♕b8 17.d4 ♕xb2 and Black seems to have equalized.

15...♗xf3 16.♕xf3

It's not much but Black has to be careful about various potential weaknesses.

III 2...♘f6 and 3...♘c6

1.e4 e5 2.♗c4 ♘f6 3.d3 ♘c6 4.♘c3

A 'quiet' Vienna Game is in prospect, but via the Bishop's Opening. Playing the Vienna move order gives Black extra options, for example 1.e4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.♗c4 permits the wild and deeply analysed 3...♘xe4!?.

4...♘a5

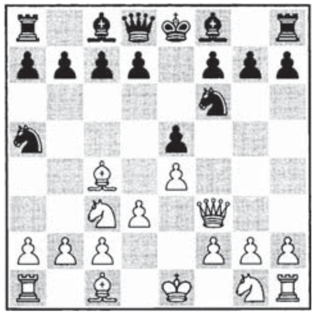
Black's most solid defence.

Black often develops his king's bishop either to c5 or b4. Although these moves aren't bad they tend to give White more chances of emerging with something tangible out of the opening.

– 4...♗c5 5.♗g5 (the other main move is 5.f4 transposing into a fairly well-known variation of the King's Gambit Declined) 5...h6 (5...♘a5 6.♗b3 ♘xb3 7.axb3 c6 8.♘f3 d6 9.0-0 h6 10.♗e3 ♗g4 11.♗xc5 dxc5 12.h3 ♗xf3 13.♕xf3 0-0 14.♘e2 Larsen-Smyslov, Biel izt 1976; 5...d6 6.♘d5 ♗e6 7.c3 ♗xd5 8.♗xd5 ♕d7 9.♗xf6 gxf6 10.♕f3 ♖g8 11.♘e2 ♖g6 12.♘g3 when White's grip gives him the better chances, J.Hansen-A.Karlsson, Copenhagen 1995) 6.♗h4 d6 (after 6...a6 7.♘d5 g5 8.♗g3 d6 White can keep a pull by 9.h4! g4 10.h5! ♘xd5 11.♗xd5 ♕g5 12.♘e2 ♗e6 13.c3 ♗xd5 14.exd5 ♘e7 15.♕b3 I.Rogers-Rogulj, Mendrisio 1985) 7.♘a4 ♗b6 8.♘xb6 axb6 9.f3 (supporting the centre and retaining the dark-squared bishop) 9...♗e6 10.♘e2 g5 11.♗f2 d5 12.♗b3 ♕e7 13.c3 0-0-0 14.♕c2 h5 15.h4! (this counterthrust helps demonstrate the downside of Black's early pawn advances) 15...g4 16.♗e3 (or 16.0-0-0 first) 16...gxf3 17.gxf3 dxe4 18.dxe4 ♘d7 19.0-0-0 ♗xb3 20.axb3 ♘c5 21.b4 ♘e6 22.♘g3 with a small pull, I.Rogers-Teichmann, Edinburgh ch-GBR 1985.

– 4...♗b4 5.♗g5 h6 (5...d6 6.♘e2 ♗e6 7.0-0 h6 8.♗xf6 ♕xf6 9.♘d5 ♗xd5 10.♗xd5 yields a pleasant edge for White who has the slightly more active position. He can rapidly expand with d3-d4 or f2-f4 e.g. 10...♗c5 11.c3 0-0 12.♔h1 ♘e7 13.♗b3 g5 14.d4 ♗b6 15.♕d3 ♔h8 and now in Spielmann-Yates, Baden-Baden 1925, White played 16.f4! anyway and after 16...gxf4 17.g3 had a clear advantage) 6.♗xf6 ♗xc3+ 7.bxc3 ♕xf6 8.♘e2 d6 (otherwise 8...♘a5 9.♗b3 ♘xb3 10.axb3 d6 11.0-0 0-0 12.♕d2 ♕g5 13.f4 exf4 14.♖xf4 gives White the shade of an edge, Nicevski-Gligoric, Kladovo ch-YUG 1991) 9.0-0 g5 (rather than facing a pleasant white initiative after 9...0-0 10.f4) 10.d4 h5 11.f3 h4 12.♕d3 ♗d7 13.♖ab1 (where does Black go with his king? Can he really do anything positive whilst White just probes away?) 13...♖b8, Spielmann-J.Möller, Copenhagen 1923, and now Konstantinopolsky suggests 14.♗b5 with ideas such as ♕c4 and d4-d5. White's position is the easier to play.

5.♕f3!?



Queen before knight! This move, a favourite of Australian GM Ian Rogers, doesn't give any objective advantage to White. However, as Black finds it hard to break out of White's grip, there is the psychological plus of having imposed the type of position on the opponent.

Better known is 5.♘ge2, with similar pawn structures and play, except that it's not easy to find a positive role for the queen early on. The reasoning behind the main move is that the queen isn't badly placed on f3 and White clears the d1-square for a rook.

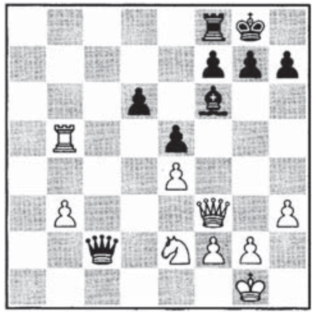
5...♘xc4

The other principal move 5...c6 often transposes and in any case is very similar. Here are some typical examples: 6.♘ge2 ♘xc4 (for 6...b5 see Bricard-Flear at the end of this chapter) 7.dxc4 d6 8.h3 ♗e6 9.b3 ♗e7 10.0-0 h5!? (otherwise 10...♕a5 11.♖d1 ♖d8 12.♗b2 0-0 13.♘g3 g6 14.a4 ♘e8 was about equal in I.Rogers-Del Rey, Zaragoza 2002) 11.♖d1 ♘d7 12.♘g3 g6 13.♘f5 ♘c5 14.♗a3 with unclear play, I.Rogers-D.Howell, British league 2004/05.

6.dxc4 d6 7.h3 ♗e6 8.b3 c6

Trying to do without this move at some point isn't easy, e.g. 8...♘d7 9.♘ge2 ♕f6 10.♘d5 ♕xf3?! (10...♗xd5 11.cxd5 ♕xf3 12.gxf3 just gives White a space advantage and probably the better bishop) 11.♘xc7+ ♔d8 12.♘xe6+ fxe6 13.gxf3 and White had won a pawn in I.Rogers-Laird, Gold Coast 1995.

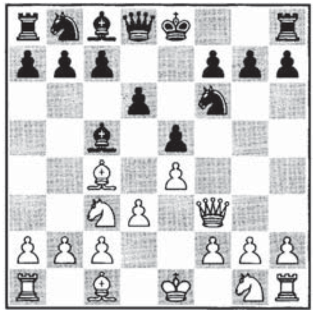
9.♘ge2 a6 10.a4 ♗e7 11.0-0 0-0 12.♖d1 b5!? 13.axb5 axb5 14.♖xa8 ♕xa8 15.cxb5 cxb5 16.♗g5 ♕c6 17.♗xf6 ♗xf6 18.♘d5 ♗xd5 19.♖xd5 ♕xc2 20.♖xb5



With balanced chances, I.Rogers-Hector, Wijk aan Zee B 2003.

IV 3...♗c5

1.e4 e5 2.♗c4 ♘f6 3.d3 ♗c5 4.♘c3 d6 5.♕f3!?



Another little surprise!

Your opponent will probably be prepared for the conventional moves 5.f4 and 5.♗g5 but not for this!

5...♘c6 6.♘ge2 h6

After 6...♗g4 7.♕g3 h5 Black soon regretted giving away the g5-square in I.Rogers-Martinovsky, Hawaii 1998, as after 8.♗g5 ♘a5 9.♗b3 ♘xb3 10.axb3 c6 11.♕h4 ♕e7 12.h3 ♗d7 13.f4 0-0-0 14.♖f1 ♖de8 15.0-0-0 exf4 16.d4 ♗b6 17.♘xf4 ♗d8 18.♖de1 ♕f8 19.e5 Black had serious problems.

7.♗e3

7.h3!? comes into consideration, stopping Black from using g4.

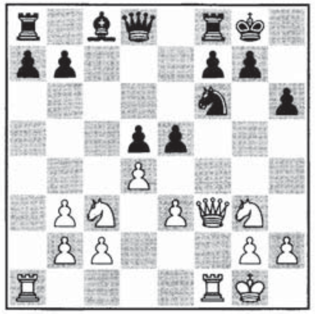
7...♗xe3

7...♘d4?! 8.♗xd4 exd4 9.♘d5 ♘xd5 10.♗xd5 0-0 11.0-0 should favour White who has the more active pieces. Bent Larsen suggests 7...♗g4 8.♕g3 ♗xe3 9.fxe3 ♘a5 as an improvement. Black can then exchange an extra pair of minor pieces and it will take longer for a white knight to come to the g3-square.

8.fxe3 ♘a5 9.♗b3 ♘xb3 10.axb3 c6 11.0-0 0-0 12.♘g3

White doesn't have much, but Black has no counterplay and White's pieces are more dynamic. White's two sets of doubled pawns enable his rooks to have open lines.

12...d5!? 13.exd5 cxd5 14.d4



Fixing the d5-pawn on a light-square and thus restricting Black's chances.

14...exd4 15.exd4 ♗e6 16.♖ae1 ♖c8 17.♖e5 b5 18.♕d3 a6 19.♘f5 ♖c6 20.h3 ♔h8 21.b4

With continuing pressure, Larsen-F. Petersen, Holstebro ch-DEN 1964.

☐ **Emmanuel Bricard**
■ **Glenn Flear**
Narbonne-plage 2003

I've had to face 5.♕f3 a couple of times in recent years.

1.e4 e5 2.♗c4 ♘f6 3.d3 ♘c6 4.♘c3 ♘a5 5.♕f3 c6 6.♘ge2 b5!?

Although the following was solid: 6...♘xc4 7.dxc4 d6 8.0-0 ♕c7 9.h3 ♗e6 10.b3 ♗e7 11.♖d1 h6 12.♘g3 g6 13.a4 a5 14.♗a3 ♖d8 15.♕e3, it gave Black the sort of position where it was hard 'to play for a win' against a much lower-ranked player, Fillon-Flear, Saint-Chély-d'Aubrac 2002.

7.♗b3 b4?!

Although Black wins a tempo the weakness of c4 is a potential problem.

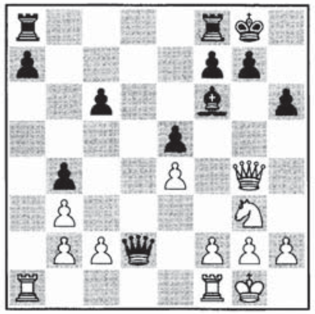
8.♘d1 ♘xb3 9.axb3 d5 10.♗g5 ♗e7 11.♘e3 dxe4 12.dxe4 0-0 13.0-0

Simpler is 13.♘f5!? ♗xf5 14.♕xf5 with a slight plus.

13...h6 14.♗xf6 ♗xf6 15.♘g4

Black would equalize after 15.♖fd1 ♕c7 16.♘f5 ♗xf5 17.♕xf5 ♖fd8.

15...♗xg4 16.♕xg4 ♕d2 17.♘g3!



17...♖fd8

Not 17...♕xc2? 18.♘h5 ♗g5 19.h4 f5 20.exf5±.

18.♘h5 ♕g5 19.♕e2 ♗e7 20.♖fd1 ♗c5 21.♘g3 ♗d4 22.♖ab1

Black seems to be happy enough, but due to the weakness of c4 and the less flexible minor piece he has to be careful.

22...g6 23.♘f1 a5 24.♘d2 a4 25.♘f3 ♕e7 26.bxa4 ♖xa4 27.h4

Not 27.♕c4? due to the sneaky 27...♗xb2!.

27...♖a7?!

Better was 27...♖a2! to commit White to moving his b-pawn.

28.♕c4 ♖ad7 29.♖d3 ♗c5

I didn't like 29...c5 as White may eventually be able to play c2-c3.

30.♖xd7 ♖xd7 31.g3 h5 32.♖a1 ♕d6 33.♔g2 ♔g7 34.♖a5 ♗d4 35.♖a6?!

Both of us missed 35.c3! bxc3 36.bxc3 ♖a7 37.♘xe5! ♕f6 38.cxd4 ♖xa5 39.♘xc6 with advantage.

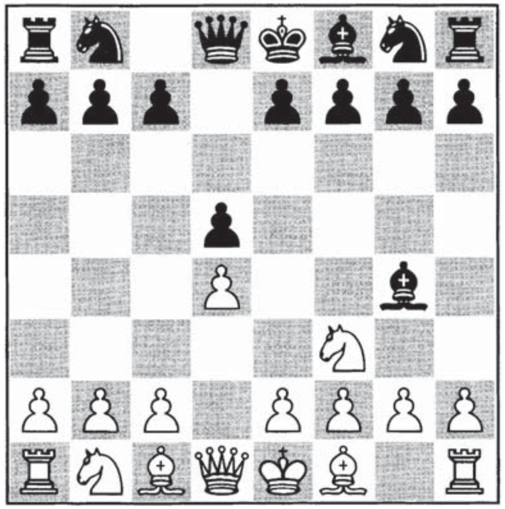
35...♗xb2 36.♖xc6 ♕e7 37.♖c8 ♗c3 38.♕c6 ♖a7

And the game was eventually drawn.

CHAPTER 10

Jeroen Bosch

The Chigorin Attack



1.d4 d5 2.♘f3 ♗g4!?

1.d4 d5 2.♘f3 ♗g4

Chigorin was fond of this move. Indeed play resembles (and sometimes transposes to) the Chigorin Defence: 1.d4 d5 2.c4 ♘c6. One could also compare this line to 1.d4 d5 2.♗g5 when White aims to prevent 2...♘f6 because of 3.♗xf6. In the SOS line under investigation here the bishop does not hit thin air but attacks the knight on f3. Thus, I would like to call it the Chigorin Attack. Black's second move is provocative. White cannot react too meekly (3.♘bd2, 3.e3, 3.g3, 3.♗f4 etc), for in that case Black would have solved the problem of his queenside bishop. This means that only 3.c4 and especially 3.♘e5 are critical. Chigorin's attack is fully playable and may give rise to exciting complications. It has been played by numerous strong players after Chigorin. Most notably by Nigel Short who used it to good effect beating Garry Kasparov in a rapid game.

☐ **Mark Orr**
■ **Keith Arkell**
Largs 1997

1.♘f3 d5 2.d4 ♗g4 3.c4

Other moves, apart from 3.♘e5, are not dangerous. For instance:

– 3.e3 ♘d7 4.♗e2 e6 5.h3 (Black was fine in Von Bardeleben-Chigorin, Hastings 1895, after 5.b3 ♘gf6 6.♗b2 ♗d6 7.♘bd2 c6 8.♘e5 ♗xe2 9.♕xe2 0-0 10.f4 ♖c8 11.0-0 c5) 5...♗h5 6.0-0 ♗d6 7.c4 c6 8.♘c3 f5!? (the Dutch Stonewall with the light-squared bishop outside the pawn chain is an attractive choice. Black is also OK after 8...♘gf6) 9.cxd5 exd5 10.♕c2 ♘h6 11.♘e1 ♗xe2 12.♘xe2 0-0 13.♘d3 ♕e7, Kozlovskaya-Gaprindashvili, Moscow 1983.

– 3.♗g5 h6 4.♗h4 c6 5.c3 ♘d7 6.♘bd2 ♘gf6 7.e3 e5 8.♕b3 exd4 9.cxd4 ♕b6 and if anything then Black is better, Iotov-Drenchev, Sunny Beach 2005.

– 3.♗f4 ♗xf3 (3...e6 4.e3 ♗d6 5.♗g3 ♘f6 6.c4 ♘bd7 7.♘c3 ♗xg3 8.hxg3 c6, Von Scheve-Chigorin, Monte Carlo 1901) 4.exf3 e6 5.c3 ♗d6 6.♗g3 ♘c6 7.♗b5 ♘e7 8.♘d2 0-0 9.0-0 e5 with an easy game in Wirthensohn-Miralles, Switzerland 1998.

– 3.♘bd2 ♘d7 (3...♘f6) 4.e4 e6 5.♗e2 dxe4 6.♘xe4 ♘gf6 7.♕d3 c6, 4th match game, Zukertort-Blackburne, London 1887.

3...♗xf3

Here 3...♘c6 transposes to a line from the Chigorin Defence. This already proves that 3.c4 is not the most critical move. I refer interested readers to the New In Chess publication on the Chigorin Defence by Morozevich. Here we will only investigate an independent set-up for Black.

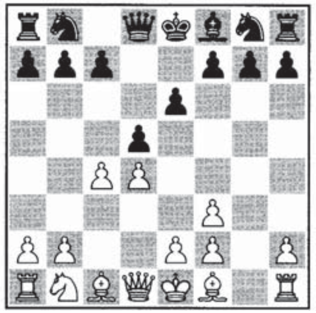
4.gxf3

Unnatural is 4.exf3 when Black has no problems:

– 4...dxc4 5.♗xc4 e6 6.0-0 (6.♕b3 ♘c6 7.♕xb7 ♗b4+ 8.♘c3 ♘ge7 with compensation) 6...♘f6 (6...c6) 7.♘c3 (7.♕b3) 7...c6 8.♘e4 ♗e7 9.♗f4 0-0 10.♕d3 ♘d5 11.♗g3 a5 12.a3 f5 with a clear edge in Yakushev-Kaurdakov, Novosibirsk 2001.

– 4...e6 5.cxd5 (5.♕b3 ♘c6!) 5...exd5 6.♕b3 ♕e7+! 7.♗e3 ♕b4+ 8.♘c3 ♕xb3 9.axb3 c6 10.♗f4 ♘d7 11.♔d2 ♗b4 12.♔c2 ♘e7 and Black was already better in Alawieh-Amura, France 2002/03.

4...e6



4...♘c6 is again a 'regular' Chigorin Defence.

The 6th match game Steinitz-Chigorin, World Championship Havana 1889, saw 4...dxc4 5.e4?! e5! 6.dxe5 ♕xd1+ 7.♔xd1 ♘c6 8.f4 ♖d8+! 9.♗d2 ♗c5 and Black was fine. However, White should play 5.e3!.

A reasonable alternative for the text is 4...c6 and now:

– 5.♕b3 ♕d7 6.♘c3 e6 7.e4 ♘f6 8.cxd5 cxd5 9.e5 ♘h5 10.f4 g6 11.♗e3 ♘g7! 12.♗d3 ♘c6 13.♖c1 ♗e7 14.♘a4 ♘f5 15.♗xf5 gxf5 16.♖g1 0-0-0 17.♘c5 ♗xc5 18.♖xc5 ♖hg8 gave Black a comfortable game in A.Friedman-Rubenchik, Somerset 1992.

– 5.e4 dxc4 (5...dxe4 6.fxe4 e5) 6.♗xc4 e6 7.♘c3 ♘d7 8.♗e3 ♘gf6 9.a4 ♕a5 10.♖g1 g6 11.♖g5 ♕c7 12.♔e2 ♕xh2 13.♖g1 ♕c7 14.♖c1 ♗e7 15.♕b3 ♘h5 and White did not have enough for the pawn in Pakleza-Stryjecki, Cracow 2003.

– 5.e3 e6 6.♘c3 ♘f6 7.♕b3 ♕b6 8.c5 ♕c7 (8...♕xb3 9.axb3 with b4-b5 to follow) 9.f4 ♘bd7 10.♗g2 g6 11.♗d2 ♗g7 12.0-0 0-0 13.♕c2 and draw agreed in Schinzel-Skrobek, Lodz ch-POL 1980.

5.♘c3

5.cxd5 ♕xd5?! was played in the fourth game of the World Championship's match Steinitz-Chigorin, Havana 1889. I would prefer 5...exd5 not fearing 6.♕b3 when, according to Euwe, White is better, but it seems to me that 6...♘c6 is an adequate response.

5...♘f6

Again Black can simply play 5...c6. White gains nothing after 6.♕b3 ♕b6 7.c5 ♕xb3 (but not 7...♕c7 8.♗f4 ♕xf4? – 8...♕c8 – 9.♕xb7 ♕xd4 10.♕xa8 ♕b4 11.e3! and now 11...♗xc5 12.♗b5! or 11...♕xb2? 12.♖b1 ♕xc3+ 13.♔d1 winning) 8.axb3 ♘a6! 9.e3 ♘c7 10.♗d2 (10.b4 a6) 10...f5 11.♗d3 ♘f6 12.♔e2 g6 13.b4 a6 14.f4 ♗e7 ½-½, A.Gonzalez-J.Rodriguez, Spain 1999.

6.cxd5 exd5 7.♗g5

Here 7.♕b3 is again met by 7...♘c6.

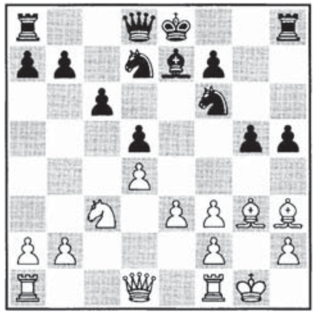
7...c6 8.e3 ♘bd7

The structure resembles the Queen's Gambit Exchange Variation. Obviously, Black is fine having succeeded in playing ...♗g4xf3.

9.♗h3 ♗e7 10.0-0

Now Black may simply castle with a satisfactory game, but Arkell embarks on a more ambitious plan.

10...h6 11.♗h4 g5!? 12.♗g3 h5



13.e4

In case of 13.♗f5 Black should not play 13...h4 14.♗e5, but simply 13...♖g8.

13...dxe4

Also interesting is 13...g4.

14.fxe4 h4 15.♗e5 ♘xe5 16.dxe5 ♘h5 17.♕g4 ♕c7 18.♘e2 ♕xe5

Black is safe pawn up and positionally better since White cannot play 19.♕d7+ ♔f8 20.♕xb7? ♗d6 21.f4 ♗c5+ 22.♔h1 ♕xe4+ 23.♗g2 ♕xe2 24.♕xa8+ ♔g7 winning.

19.f4 gxf4

19...♕xe4! threatening 20...♗c5+ was much stronger. Black should win easily.

20.♘xf4 ♘xf4

Again not the best move. 20...♘f6 to play ...♖g8 and to take on e4 was excellent.

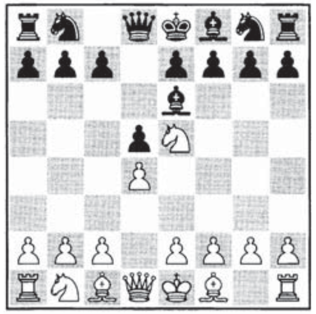
21.♖xf4 ♕g5 22.♖af1 ♖g8 23.♔h1 ♕xg4 24.♗xg4 ♖g5 25.h3 f6

Black has a safe but small edge. The game eventually ended in a draw on move 44.

Now we move on to 3.♘e5 when Black's most natural responses are 3...♗h5 and 3...♗f5. However, completely in the SOS spirit is Gurgenidze's and Tseitlin's 3...♗e6!?. So let's have a quick look at this first.

☐ **Arshak Petrosian**
■ **Mikhail Tseitlin**
Telavi 1982

1.♘f3 d5 2.d4 ♗g4 3.♘e5 ♗e6



Ultimate provocation or tongue-in-cheek? Well, admittedly Black plays for a shock effect, but there are some technical points connected to his last move as well. The bishop presents no target on e6, while the white knight has been lured forward (and may be

exchanged after a future ...♘d7).

4.c4 ♘d7

The point of Black's set-up.

5.cxd5

In the previous round Yermolinsky played 5.♗f4 and after 5...♘xe5 6.♗xe5 dxc4 7.♘c3 c6 8.e4 f6 9.♗f4 ♗f7 10.d5 e5! 11.♗e3 (11.dxe6 ♕xd1+ 12.♖xd1 ♗xe6 with an extra pawn) 11...♗b4 12.♗xc4 ♘e7 Black was fully equal. There followed: 13.♕b3 ♗xc3+ 14.bxc3 b5 15.♗e2 a6 16.♖d1 0-0 17.♗c5 ♖e8 18.0-0 cxd5 19.♗xe7 ♖xe7 20.exd5 and now instead of 20...♕d6 (when 21.a4! was strong) Black should have played 20...♖c7 when 21.a4 can be met by 21...♖ac8, Yermolinsky-Gurgenidze, Telavi 1982.

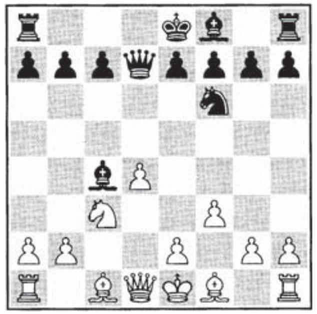
5...♗xd5 6.♘xd7

Gurgenidze repeated the whole line in the 21st century. He was run over after 6.♕a4!? c6 7.♘c3 ♘gf6 (7...♘xe5 8.dxe5 ♗e6; 7...♘b6 8.♕c2 f6 9.♘xd5 cxd5) 8.♕c2!? g6 9.e4 ♗e6 10.♗e2 ♘xe5 11.dxe5 ♘d7 12.f4 f5?? 13.exf5 and only here did Black realize that he had overlooked 13...♗xf5 14.♕xf5! gxf5 15.♗h5 mate! Kacheishvili-Gurgenidze, Georgian Championship, Tbilisi 2000.

6...♕xd7 7.♘c3 ♘f6 8.f3

White has nothing after 8.♘xd5 ♕xd5.

8...♗c4!?



9.e4 ♗xf1 10.♖xf1 e6 11.♗e3 ♗e7 12.♕b3 0-0

Black has a normal position and can be satisfied with the outcome of his experiment.

13.0-0-0 a5

Sending the pawn forward, which is normal considering that both sides have castled on opposite wings.

14.d5 exd5 15.♘xd5 ♘xd5 16.♕xb7

Gaining a pawn but opening a file for the opponent. 16.♕xd5 with a slight edge was safer.

16...♖ab8 17.♕xd5 ♗d6 18.♖f2

Not 18.e5 ♖b5.

18...♖b5 19.♕d3 ♖fb8 20.♔b1 ♕e6

In return for the pawn, Black has the initiative and attacking chances.

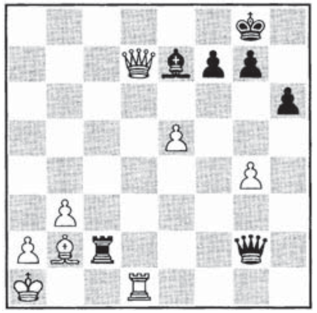
21.f4 ♖b4 22.e5 ♗f8 23.♕d7 ♕h6 24.♕xc7 ♕xh2 25.♗c1 ♕h5 26.♖fd2 ♕f5+ 27.♔a1 ♖4b7

Stronger is 27...♖c8!? when 28.♕xa5?? (28.♕d7 ♖xf4) 28...♖bc4 would win on the spot!

28.♕xa5 ♕xf4 29.♖d5 ♕e4 30.♖d8 ♕c6 31.♖xb8 ♖xb8 32.♕d5 ♕g6 33.b3 h6 34.♗b2 ♗e7 35.♕f3 ♖c8 36.g4 ♖c2 37.♕f5 ♕c6 38.♕d7

Or 38.♖f1 ♕g2 39.♕xf7+ ♔h8 40.♖c1! ♖xc1+ 41.♗xc1 ♕h1 42.♕c4 ♗a3 43.♔b1 ♕e1 with a curious bind.

38...♕g2



39.♕xe7

White can draw with 39.♕e8+ ♔h7

(39...♗f8 40.e6=) 40.♕xf7 ♖xb2 41.♕f5+ with a perpetual.

In case of 39.♖c1 Black again has 39...♖xc1+ (39...♖xb2 40.♖c8+ ♗f8 41.♖xf8+!) 40.♗xc1 ♕g1 41.♔b1 ♗a3 when White still has to untangle himself, but how?

39...♖xb2 40.♕d8+ ♔h7 41.♕d3+ g6 42.♕a6 ♖f2

Black is much better due to the unsafe position of White's king. The next move is a blunder that decides the game.

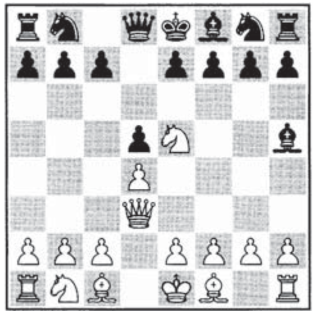
43.b4? ♕g3! 44.♔b1 ♕c3 0-1

Let us investigate 3...♗f5 (and 3...♗h5) by means of the following spectacular game.

☐ **Christian Seel**
■ **Dirk Topolewski**
Germany Bundesliga B 2002/03

1.♘f3 d5 2.d4 ♗g4 3.♘e5 ♗f5

Here 3...♗h5 4.♕d3



is a double attack known from the second World Championship's match game Steinitz-Chigorin, Havana 1889. Natural moves now fail: 4...♘d7 5.♕b5!; and 4...c6 5.♕h3! ♘f6 6.g4 ♗g6 7.♘xg6 fxg6±.

However, Black can defend with 4...♕c8 as played by Chigorin. After 5.c4 f6 6.♘f3 (6.g4!? fxe5 7.gxh5 e4? – 7...dxc4 – 8.♕b3 c6 9.♗h3! and White was already winning in Solozhenkin-Rodkin, Chigorin(!) Memorial 2004) 6...e6 7.♘c3 ♗g6 8.♕d1 c6 White had nothing special.

Perhaps White should therefore just prefer 4.c4 f6 5.g4!? fxe5 6.gxh5 exd4 (6...dxc4) 7.♗g2 ♘f6 8.cxd5, Andersson-Van Riemsdijk, Rio de Janeiro 1985.

4.c4

This natural move is best.

– White merely weakens his position with 4.g4, when Black should play 4...♗c8! (4...♗e4 5.f3 f6 6.fxe4 fxe5 7.dxe5 is interesting from a historical point of view. Owen-Blackburne, Bradford 1888) 5.g5 ♗f5 6.c4 e6 7.♘c3 (7.♕b3 ♘c6) 7...♘e7 8.♗g2 ♘d7 9.cxd5 ♘xd5 10.♘xd7 ♕xd7 11.e4 ♘xc3 12.bxc3 ♗g6 with an interesting game in Lobron-Hodgson, Haifa 1989. White centre and space is balanced by Black's solid set-up who will aim to demonstrate that White has weakened his position with g4-g5.

– 4.g3 ♘d7 5.♘d3 e6 6.♗g2 ♘gf6 7.♘d2 c6 8.c3 ♗d6 9.♘f3 h6 10.0-0 a5 is rock-solid. Alonso-Hergott, Cienfuegos 1996.

– 4.♗f4 e6 5.e3 ♘d7 6.♗d3 ♗xd3 7.♕xd3 c6 8.♘xd7 ♕xd7 9.♘d2 ♘f6 10.h3 ♗d6 11.♗xd6 ♕xd6 12.0-0 e5 13.dxe5 ♕xe5 14.♕d4 ♕xd4 15.exd4 and domestic peace was guaranteed in this game between husband and wife. Botsari-Miladinovic, Montecatini Terme 1998.

4...f6

Likely to transpose is 4...c6 5.♘c3 f6 (not 5...e6? 6.cxd5! exd5 7.e4 dxe4 8.♕b3, or 6...cxd5 7.e4) 6.♘f3 e6. For example: 7.cxd5 (7.♕b3 ♕b6) 7...exd5 8.e3 ♗d6 9.♗d3 ♗xd3 10.♕xd3 and now Black should play 10...♘e7 rather than 10...♘h6? 11.e4! dxe4 12.♕xe4+ ♔d7 (12...♕e7 13.♗xh6) 13.0-0 ♕e7 14.♗xh6 Medic-Mravunac, Velika Gorica 2006.

5.♘f3 c6

Here 5...e6 keeps the option of playing ...♘c6. After 6.♘c3, 6...c6 transposes to Kasparov-Short below. Instead Black can also try 6...♘c6 when Black has done well in practice:

– 7.♘h4 ♗g4 8.h3 ♗h5 9.cxd5 exd5 10.g4 ♗f7 11.♗g2 ♕d7 12.♘f5 ♘ge7 13.♘xe7 ♗xe7 14.♗f4 g5 15.♗g3 h5 16.e3 0-0-0 17.♖c1 hxg4 18.hxg4 ♖xh1+ 19.♗xh1 ♖h8 20.♗f3 ♗d6 with an edge in Cuartas-Gild. Garcia, Cali 2001.

– 7.cxd5 exd5 8.♗f4 and now Black should go all-out with 8...g5 9.♗g3 h5 10.h3 h4 (10...♗d6 11.♗xd6 ♕xd6 12.e3 ♘ge7 ½-½ Sonntag-Wengenroth, Germany 2003/04) 11.♗h2 ♗d6 12.e3 ♘ge7 13.♗e2 ♗xh2 14.♘xh2 ♕d6 15.a3 0-0-0 16.♕a4 ♔b8 17.b4 ♘c8 18.0-0 ♘b6 19.♕b3 ♖dg8 20.♖fc1 ♗e6 21.♘b5 ♕e7 22.♖c5 f5 23.♕d1 g4 and Black's attack was a lot quicker in Drasko-Karner, Tallinn 1985.

6.cxd5?!

For 6.♘c3 see the next game.

6...cxd5 7.♕b3

White misplayed the opening in F.Lee-Blackburne, Bradford 1890, with 7.♘c3 e6 8.♕b3 ♕d7 9.♘h4 ♗g4 10.e3 ♘c6 11.a3 ♖c8 12.♗d2 ♗d6 13.♘a4 ♘ge7 14.h3 ♗h5 15.g4 ♗f7 16.♘f3 0-0 17.♘c5 ♗xc5 18.dxc5 e5 and Black(burne) was much better.

7...♘c6!?

The safe move is 7...♕d7.

8.♘c3

Or 8.♕xb7 ♕c8!? 9.♕xc8+ (9.♕b3 ♘xd4!; 9.♕b5 ♖b8 10.♕a4 ♖b4 11.♕d1 ♘xd4 12.♘xd4 ♖xd4 13.♕xd4 ♕xc1+ 14.♕d1 ♕xb2 15.♘d2 e5) 9...♖xc8 10.♗d2 e6 with a certain amount of compensation.

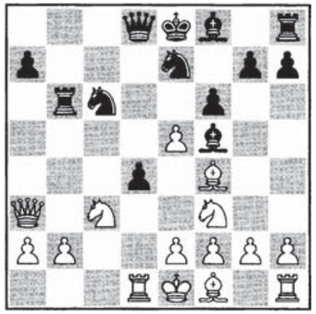
8...e6 9.♕xb7?! ♘ge7 10.♗f4

If 10.♕b3 then 10...♖b8 with full compensation.

10...e5! 11.dxe5 ♖b8 12.♕a6 ♖b6 13.♕a3

Not 13.♕a4? ♖b4.

13...d4 14.♖d1



14...♗c2

Black could win immediately with 14...♘d5! 15.♕a4 dxc3 16.bxc3 (16.e4 ♗b4!) 16...♘xc3! 17.♖xd8+ ♔xd8 and White's queen is trapped!

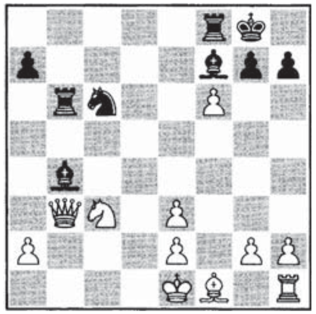
15.♘xd4!? ♘xd4 16.♖xd4 ♕xd4 17.♗e3

This was the point of White's 15th move. Black has prepared a stunning reply.

17...♕xe3!? 18.fxe3 ♘c6

White's next moves are forced.

19.b4 ♗xb4 20.♕b2 ♗g6 21.exf6 0-0 22.♕b3+ ♗f7



23.♕c2

And now moves were repeated after

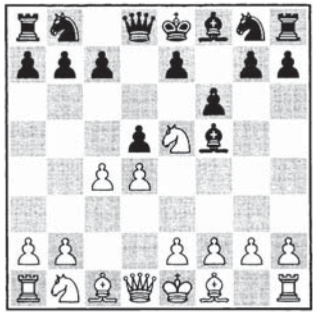
23...♗g6 24.♕b3+ ♗f7 25.♕c2 ♗g6 ½-½

However, your silicon friend will point out that Black wins on points following 23...♘e5 when the pin along the c-file (...♖c8) is one of the deciding factors.

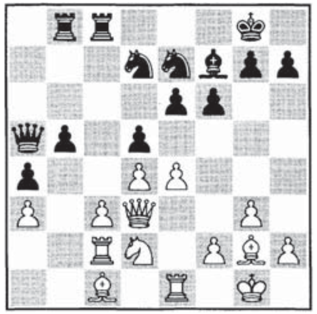
Let us end this chapter with Nigel Short beating Garry Kasparov nearly twenty years ago in a London discotheque. No, they did not dance their legs down to their knees; they played an exhibition match of six rapid games (25 minutes per person).
Overall victory (4-2) was for Kasparov, but the third game was a sweet success for Short.

☐ **Garry Kasparov**
■ **Nigel Short**
London m-3 1987

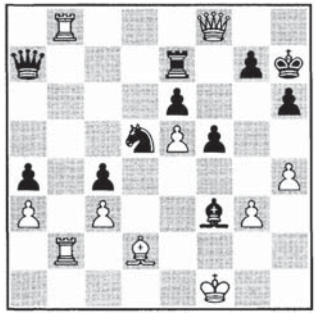
1.♘f3 d5 2.d4 ♗g4
Short has often left the well-trodden paths against Kasparov to avoid his phenomenal preparation.
3.♘e5 ♗f5 4.c4 f6



5.♘f3 c6 6.♘c3
White can also attack b7 with 6.♕b3 a theme that is quite common in all 1.d4 openings where Black develops his light-squared bishop early-on in the game (think of the Slav for instance): 6...♕d7 7.♘c3 e6 8.e3 ♗g4 9.♗e2. Hodgson now comes up with a remarkable idea. He first exchanges the bishop for the knight before opting for a Stonewall (where knights are often stronger than bishops): 9...♗xf3!? 10.♗xf3 f5 11.♗h5+!? g6 12.♗e2 ♘f6 13.f3 ♗g7 14.♗d2 0-0 15.0-0 ♘e8 16.♖ad1 ♘d6 17.c5 ♘f7 (the knight is well-placed here supporting either ...e6-e5 or ...g6-g5) 18.♔h1 ♕c7 (the immediate 18...e5 is met by 19.dxe5 ♗xe5 20.e4. Now Black is ready for the central push) 19.f4 b6 20.♘a4 ♘d7 21.♕c2 b5 22.♘c3 ♘f6 (22...a5) 23.b4 a5 24.bxa5 ♖xa5 25.a4 b4 26.♘a2 ♖fa8 27.♘xb4 ♖xa4 28.♖b1 ♘e4 and Black is slightly better. The game ended in a draw after a long fight. Gurevich-Hodgson, Moscow 1987.
6...e6 7.g3!?
Kasparov opts for a fianchetto, more common is 7.e3. Nothing is gained by 7.♘h4 ♗g4 8.h3 ♗h5 9.g4 ♗f7.
7...♗b4 8.♗g2 ♘e7 9.0-0 0-0
White has sufficient compensation after 9...dxc4 10.e4 ♗g4.
10.♕b3 a5 11.a3 ♗xc3 12.bxc3
If 12.♕xc3 then 12...a4 or 12...♗e4 13.♗h3 (13.b3 a4) 13...♗f5 and Black is not afraid of 14.g4 ♗e4 15.g5 ♗f5. Nothing is gained by taking on b7: 12.♕xb7 ♘d7 13.bxc3 ♖b8 14.♕a6 ♖a8 15.♕b7 ♖b8.
12...♘d7 13.♘d2 a4 14.♕a2
A little better looks 14.♕b4.
14...♗g6 15.e4 ♗f7
Black's position may look passive, but it actually holds a lot of potential. He is playing for a full blockade on the light squares.
16.♖b1 ♖b8 17.♕c2 b5! 18.cxd5
18.c5 e5 and Black is not worse.
18...cxd5 19.♕d3 ♕a5
Pawn c3 is a target, as well as the c4-square.
20.♖e1 ♖fc8 21.♖b4 ♘c6 22.♖b2 ♘e7
Inviting a repetition, but Kasparov decides to play (he was 2-0 up in the match at this stage).
23.♖c2?!
This allows Short to manoeuvre his knight to c4 via b6.



23...♘b6 24.h4 ♖b7 25.♗h3 ♖c6 26.♖b2!? ♘c4
It is not in Black's favour to open the position with 26...♖xc3 27.♕xb5 ♕xb5 28.♖xb5.
27.♖b4 ♕c7
Threatening 28...♘xa3.
28.♘xc4 ♖xc4 29.♗d2 ♕c6 30.e5 f5 31.♗f1 ♗h5 32.♕e3 h6! 33.♖eb1
Accepting the exchange sacrifice with 33.♗xc4 dxc4 favours Black. The prospects of Black's bishop are rather better than those of its opposite counterpart, not to mention the knight which will hop to d5 with pleasure.
33...♔f7 34.♖1b2 ♔g8 35.f3
Kasparov keeps on wisely neglecting the rook on offer, and slowly improves his position.
35...♕a6 36.♖b1 ♘c6 37.♗xc4 dxc4
37...♘xb4 38.♗xb5 ♕xb5 is very slightly better for White.
38.♖4b2 ♘e7 39.d5!
This was Kasparov's idea when accepting the exchange at last.
39...♘xd5 40.♕c5 ♗xf3 41.♖xb5 ♖c7
42.♖b8+ ♔h7 43.♕f8
43.♕f2 was indicated at the time as an improvement.
43...♕a7+ 44.♔f1 ♖e7! 45.♖1b2?
Kasparov makes a mistake. He demonstrated some impressive lines after the game following 45.♖1b7. For instance: 45...♖xb7 46.♕g8+ ♔g6 47.♕xe6+ ♘f6! 48.♖xb7 ♕xb7 (48...♗g2+ 49.♔e2 ♗f3+ is a draw) 49.exf6 ♕e4 draws.
However, Black wins after 45...♘e3+! 46.♗xe3 (46.♔e1 ♖xb7 47.♕g8+ ♔g6 48.♕xe6+ ♔h5–+) 46...♕xe3 47.♖b2 ♕d3+! 48.♔g1 ♕xc3 and wins.
The correct defence was 45.♖e1!.

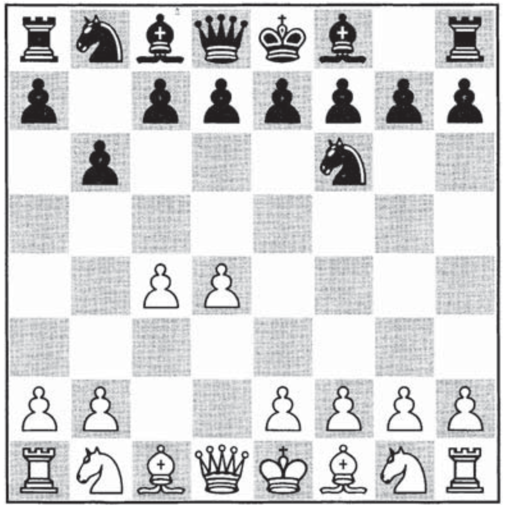


Now think of the famous Short-Timman game (Tilburg 1991) where Short played the remarkable manoeuvre ♔h2-g3-h4-g5-h6. Yes, here he played:
45...♔g6! 46.♗c1
Stronger was 46.♖e8.
46...♔h5
Simply planning to invade via g4.
47.♖a8
Again 47.♖e8, but 47.♕c8 ♘xc3 48.♕xc4 ♘e4 49.♗f4 ♖d7 just loses.
47...♕c5 48.♖c8? ♕xa3! 49.g4+ ♗xg4 50.♖xc4 ♕a1
And Kasparov resigned.

CHAPTER 11

Arthur Kogan

The Queen's Grünfeld Line (Part I)



1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 b6

I started to play this line in 1996. And, although I 'invented' it all by myself, honesty compels me to say that it has quite a pedigree. World Champions Alekhine and Fischer have played it occasionally, just like creative GMs such as Grünfeld, Nimzowitsch, Bronstein, Tolush and Larsen!

I would call this line 'the Queen's Grünfeld line'. The point is to play a kind of Queen's Indian, but trying to do without the move ...e6. This allows Black some extra options: for example, a double fianchetto, sometimes even transposing to a type of Grünfeld position, or even playing a direct central pawn break with ...e5 in some lines.

It's true that often Black can transpose to Queen's Indian main lines, but I will mainly consider the plans that are based on a quick ...d5 (similar to the Grünfeld).

While it is hard to point out a clear way for White to get an easy and safe advantage, I should like to note that Black should never forget about the fight for the centre (as even a few GMs did).

Considering that 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 b6 is a full-size repertoire for Black we will divide the material in two parts:

Part I: 3.♘c3 (and other moves)
Part II: 3.♘f3

So, for the latter knight move see the next chapter.

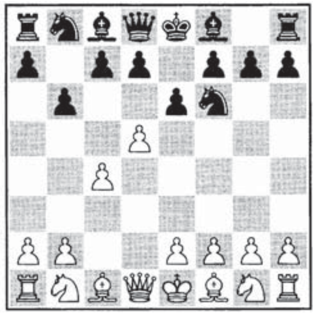
☐ **Aaron Nimzowitsch**
■ **Frank Marshall**
Bad Kissingen 1928

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 b6 3.♘c3

This seems to be the most logical move, fighting for the centre.

● 3.d5?! is also critical, trying to punish Black for not playing ...e6. Now the Grünfeld inventor played a creative game against another very famous GM: 3...♗b7 4.g3 e5 5.♗g2 ♗b4+ 6.♘d2 0-0 7.e4 ♘a6 8.a3 ♗d6 9.b4 c6 unclear, Rubinstein-Grünfeld, Breslau 1925.

However, I think Black has good chances to break the centre and get a quick initiative with 3...e6!



Now 4.♘c3 ♗b4 is a nice Nimzo-Indian, where White is already under pressure!

If 4.f3 then 4...exd5 (not 4...c6 5.d6 ♘a6 6.♕d4; but 4...exd5 5.cxd5 ♗c5 6.e3 ♕e7 is possible) 5.cxd5 ♗b4+ 6.♘c3 0-0 7.e4 ♘h5!? seems risky for White. 8...♕h4 is the threat exploiting White's lack of development. His centre might be counter-attacked very soon by the ...f5 or ...c6 breaks.

The main move is perhaps 4.a3!? preventing ...♗b4, when Black has two options:

– 4...♗a6!? 5.e3 exd5 6.cxd5 ♗xf1 7.♔xf1 ♗d6 is very OK for Black. He will probably develop his knight from b8 to c5 (pushing a5 might help to fix it there), and while White is solving his development and ♔f1 problems, Black will surely get at least enough counterplay against the d5 pawn.

– 4...exd5 5.cxd5 ♗c5!? is fascinating too. Play might continue 6.b4 (6.♘c3 0-0 7.b4 ♗d6 8.♘f3 ♗b7⇄) and now 6...♘e4 7.e3 ♗d6 (not 7...♕f6?! 8.♕c2! ♘xf2 9.♗b2 which seems better for White), or the adventurous 6...♗xf2+!? 7.♔xf2 ♘e4+ 8.♔f3! (8.♔e3 f5!) 8...♕f6+ 9.♔xe4 ♕xa1 10.♗f4.

● On 3.f3!? I would recommend the interesting 3...♘c6! (3...e5!? 4.dxe5 ♘h5 5.♘h3!±, Novikov-Kogan Antwerp 1996) with ...e5 coming. It seems like a good idea to complicate matters for White! 4.d5 (4.e4 e5 5.d5 ♘d4 6.♘e2 ♗c5) 4...♘e5 5.e4 e6 and White's king might be in danger soon. In any case it looks unpleasant for White!

● On 3.e3 the best reaction is 3...♗b7 4.♘f3 e6 (or 4...d5!? 5.cxd5 ♘xd5 6.♘e5 e6), since the e3 Queen's Indian line is really not so dangerous.

3...♗b7 4.♗g5

This is a logical approach.

On 4.a3 I would recommend 4...d5!? (4...e6 5.♘f3 is a famous Queen's Indian line).

In case of 4.♘f3 it is positionally wrong to play 4...c5?!, but it was played by such a strong GM as Tartakower and even with success! (4...d5!? is my recommendation, and it transposes to the next chapter the game Mohandesi-Kogan) 5.d5 d6 6.e4 ♘bd7 7.♗d3 (the problem is that ♗b7 is really a 'sad piece' restricted by d5, a well defended pawn) 7...g6 8.b3?! ♗g7 9.♗b2 0-0 10.0-0 e6 11.dxe6? (11.♕d2±) 11...fxe6 12.♕c2 ♘h5 13.♖fe1 ♖xf3! 14.gxf3 ♘f4∓ 15.♗f1 ♕g5+ 16.♔h1 ♕h5 17.♖e3 ♗d4 18.♖ae1 ♘e5 (now you can see why I couldn't avoid showing you this game) 19.♕d1 ♖f8 20.♗c1 d5 21.cxd5 exd5 22.♘b1 ♗xe3 23.fxe3 ♘xf3 24.♖e2 ♘xe2 25.♕xe2 ♘xh2, 0-1 Matisons-Tartakower, Debrecen 1925.

4...e6 5.♕c2

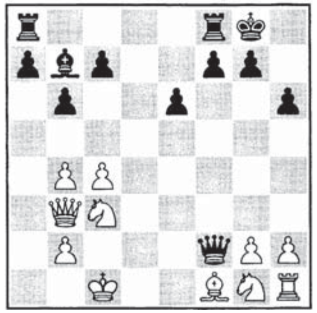
Another option is: 5.e4 h6 6.♗xf6 ♕xf6 7.♘f3 ♗b4 – Black's piece activity compensates White's central control – 8.♗d3 c5!? 9.0-0 cxd4 10.♘b5 ♘a6 11.a3 ♗e7 12.♘fxd4 ♘c5! 13.♗c2 0-0 14.♘c3 d6 with decent play in Stahlberg-Tartakower, Kemeri 1937.

Note that 5.♘f3 is a Queen's Indian or Nimzo line.

5...h6 6.♗h4 ♗e7 7.e4 0-0 8.e5

On 8.0-0-0, 8...c5! is well-timed, since if 9.d5? (9.♘f3 cxd4 10.♘xd4 ♘c6) then 9...♘xd5! is strong.

8...♘d5! 9.♗g3 ♘b4 10.♕b3 d5 11.exd6 ♗xd6 12.0-0-0 ♘8c6 13.♗xd6 ♕xd6 14.a3 ♘xd4! 15.♖xd4 ♕xd4 16.axb4 ♕xf2



A real masterpiece by Marshall who is winning by now. He finishes the game in an elegant way!

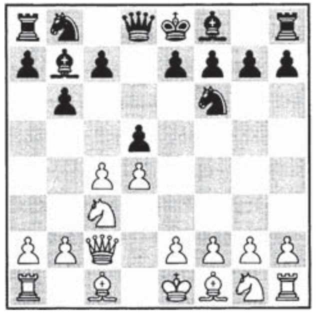
17.♕d1 ♖fd8 18.♕e2 ♕f4+ 19.♔c2 a5! 20.bxa5 ♖xa5 21.♘f3 ♖a1 22.♔b3 b5! 23.♕e5 bxc4+ 24.♔b4 ♕c1 25.♘b5 c5+! 0-1

☐ **Max Euwe**
■ **Alexander Alekhine**
Budapest 1921

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 b6 3.♘c3 ♗b7 4.♕c2

With this move White is fighting for control over the e4-square.

4...d5



In the past many strong players liked the anti-positional, provocative move 4...♘c6?! 5.♘f3 (5.d5 ♘b4 6.♕d1 a5 7.e4 e5 8.g3 g6 9.♗g2 ♗g7 10.♘ge2 0-0 11.0-0 d6 12.f4±, Sämisch-Nimzowitsch, Karlsbad 1923) 5...e6 6.e4 e5 7.dxe5 ♘g4 8.♗g5 ♗e7 9.♗f4 ♗c5 10.♗g3±, Teichmann-Alekhine, Berlin 1921.

5.cxd5

White was slightly better in Grünfeld-Réti, Moscow 1925, after 5.♘f3 g6 6.♗f4 ♗g7 7.e3 0-0 8.h3 ♘bd7 9.♖d1 c5 10.dxc5 ♘xc5 11.♗e2 ♖c8 12.0-0. However, Black could also have gone for 5...e6.

5...♘xd5 6.e4

Nothing brings 6.♘xd5 ♗xd5 7.e4 ♗b7 8.♘f3 e6 9.♗b5+ c6 10.♗d3 ♗b4+ 11.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 12.♕xd2 ♘d7 13.e5?! c5, Varga-Izsak, Budapest 1995.

6...♘xc3 7.bxc3

Here Black can again take a risk and play

7...e5!?

Safer is 7...e6 or 7...g6.

8.dxe5

Here are some alternatives:

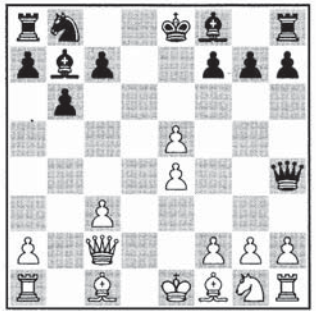
– 8.♘f3 exd4 9.♗c4 (9.♗c5+!?) 9...♘c6 (9...♕e7!?) 10.0-0 d3 11.♗xd3 ♗c5 12.e5 and White has the initiative, Zilberstein-Bronstein, Russian Championship, Baku 1972.

– 8.d5 a6 (8...c6!?) 9.♘f3 ♘d7 10.♕a4 ♗d6 11.♗g5 f6 12.♗e3 0-0 and Black was fine, Labarthe-Horn, Geneva 1990.

– 8.♗b5+!? c6 9.♗c4 exd4 10.♘f3 with compensation.

8...♕h4!

After this powerful queen move Black obtains enough compensation.



9.♗b5+

Returning the pawn with 9.♘f3 brings nothing after 9...♕xe4+ 10.♕xe4 ♗xe4 11.♗c4 ♘c6 12.0-0 0-0-0 13.♖e1 ♗d5 14.♗a6+ ♔b8 15.♗g5 ♗e7 with equality.

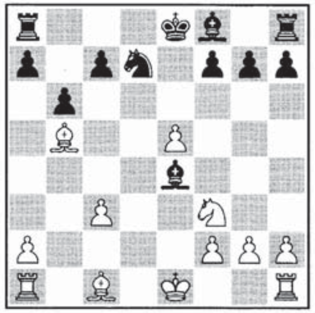
Protecting the pawn does not lead to an advantage either:

9.♗d3 ♘d7 (in case of 9...♗c5 10.♘f3 ♕g4 11.0-0 0-0, it seems that Black has got compensation for White's extra doubled pawn) 10.♘f3 ♕h5 11.♗g5!? (11.♗f4 0-0-0 with compensation; 11.0-0 ♘xe5 12.♘xe5 ♕xe5 13.♗e3 0-0-0 is unclear) 11...h6 12.e6! ♘c5 (12...fxe6 13.e5 ♔f7 14.♗e4±) 13.exf7+ ♕xf7 and Black has enough compensation with ...0-0-0 coming and nice play on the open files.

9...♘d7 10.♘f3

Black was somewhat better after 10.♗xd7+ ♔xd7 11.♕d3+ ♔c8 12.♕h3+ ♕xh3 13.♘xh3 ♗xe4 14.0-0 h6!, M.Makogonov-Freiman, Semi-final Russian Championship, Odessa 1929.

10...♕xe4+ 11.♕xe4 ♗xe4



12.♘g5

This move backfires after Alekhine's accurate 13th move. After 12.0-0 Black should play 12...c6 (12...0-0-0 13.♘g5 ♗g6 14.e6 was better for White in Danner-Horn, Biel 1990; White holds the initiative in the ending after 12...a6 13.♗c4 b5 14.♗xf7+ ♔xf7 15.♘g5+ ♔g6 16.♘xe4 ♘xe5 17.f4) 13.♗c4 (13.♗e2 ♘c5 14.♗e3 ♘a4) 13...♖d8 14.♖d1 ♗e7 15.♗f4 ♘c5 16.♘d4 ♘a4! when he has sufficient counterplay.

12...♗xg2 13.♖g1 c6! 14.♖xg2?

White had to try 14.e6! when 14...fxe6 15.♗e2 ♗d5 16.c4 spells trouble for Black, who should have gone for the unclear 14...♘e5.

14...cxb5 15.e6 fxe6 16.♘xe6 ♔f7

Black is just better. The rest is not interesting for our purpose. **17.♘c7 ♖c8 18.♘xb5 a6 19.♘d4 ♖xc3 20.♗b2 ♖c5 21.♖d1 ♖d5 22.♖d3 ♘e5 23.♖b3 ♗b4+ 24.♔f1 ♗c5 25.♘f5 ♖hd8 26.♖xg7+ ♔f6 27.♖f3 ♖d2 28.♘d6+ ♔e6 29.♗xe5 ♗xd6 30.♗xd6 ♖8xd6 31.♖a3 ♖b2 0-1**

☐ **Per Andreasen**
■ **Erik Pedersen**
Denmark 1988

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 b6 3.♘c3 ♗b7 4.d5!?

White is staking a claim for more space and blocking the diagonal for the bishop.

4...e6

So, Black is forced to fight for the centre and to free the way for his bishop on b7!

5.a3!?

A prophylactic move directed against ♗b4, similar to the Queen's Indian. White can also allow the pin with the direct 5.e4 ♗b4 6.♗d3. Now Black needs to improve upon 6...exd5 7.cxd5 (7.exd5 ♗xc3+ 8.bxc3 0-0 9.♘e2 ♘a6) 7...0-0 8.♘f3 ♖e8 9.0-0 ♗xc3 10.bxc3 d6 (10...♘xe4 11.♗xe4 ♖xe4 12.♕d3 ♕e7 13.♘g5 ♖h4 14.♗f4!) 11.♖e1±, as in L.Gomez-Jerez Perez, Barcelona 1996.

I would recommend the interesting gambit 6...b5!?. For example: 7.cxb5 (after 7.♘e2 bxc4 8.♗xc4 ♘xe4 9.♕d4 ♘f6 10.0-0 0-0 11.♗g5 ♗e7 White's compensation might be not enough) 7...exd5 8.e5 d4! 9.exf6 ♕xf6! 10.♕e2+ ♔f8 11.♘f3 ♗xf3 12.gxf3 dxc3 13.0-0 a6!. In this very complex position Black seems to have good chances.

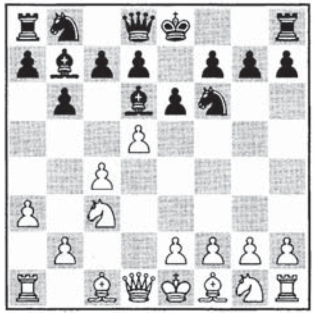
5...♗d6

I like this move. The bishop intends to go to e5 at some stage, increasing the pressure on d5 by attacking the c3-knight.

5...♗e7 leads to a very sharp fight: 6.g3 (better seems 6.e4) 6...b5! 7.♘xb5 exd5 8.♗f4 d6 9.c5! 0-0 10.cxd6 cxd6 11.♘d4 ♘c6 12.♘gf3 ♘e4 13.♗e3 ♘e5, Petrosian-Keene, Bath 1973.

An important alternative is 5...exd5 6.cxd5, and now White is somewhat better after 6...g6 7.e4 (7.g3!? Kindermann-Sahovic, Reykjavik 1982) 7...♗g7 8.♗d3 0-0 9.♘ge2, Plachetka-Sahovic, Vrnjacka Banja 1985.

However, Black may consider 6...♕e7!?. The point is to prevent e4 and to press on d5 but still it is a dubious early queen move I must admit: 7.♗f4! (7.♗g5?! h6 8.♗xf6 ♕xf6 9.♘f3 ♘a6 10.g3 ♘c5 11.♗g2 a5 12.0-0 ♗d6 13.♘d2 0-0 14.♕c2 ♗e5∓, Tyomkin-Kogan, Tel Aviv 1997) 7...♘e4! 8.♖c1 ♕f6 (8...g5? 9.♕d4) 9.g3 (9.♘h3) 9...♘xc3 10.♖xc3 ♗d6 11.♖e3+ ♔f8 12.♗xd6+ ♕xd6 13.♗g2 and White was slightly better in Schroer-Kreuzer. New York 1983.



6.♘f3

Black quickly gains an advantage after 6.e4 ♗e5! (6...0-0 7.f4 exd5 8.e5 ♖e8 9.cxd5∞ was Löffler-Horn, Königsfeld 1985) 7.♕c2 ♕e7 8.♗e2 ♘a6 9.f3 c6, Arlandi-Horn, Geneva 1988.

6...0-0

Black should just castle and not interpolate 6...exd5 7.cxd5 0-0 as after 8.♗g5 ♖e8 9.e3 ♘a6 (9...♗e7 10.♗c4 h6 11.♗f4 ♗a6 12.♕d3 ♕c8 13.0-0±, Petrosian-Planinc, Ohrid 1972) 10.♗c4 h6 11.♗h4 c6 12.0-0 b5 13.♗a2 White is just better. Quinteros-Larsen, San Martin 1995.

7.e4

Or 7.♗g5 ♗e7 8.♗f4 ♘h5 9.♗g3 ♘xg3 – Sloth-E.Pedersen, Denmark 1987 – and now if 10.hxg3 then 10...f5 is interesting.

7...exd5 8.exd5 c6 9.♗e2

Black was slightly better in Bertok-Planinc, Zagreb 1972, after 9.dxc6 dxc6 10.♗e2 ♕c7 11.0-0 ♘bd7.

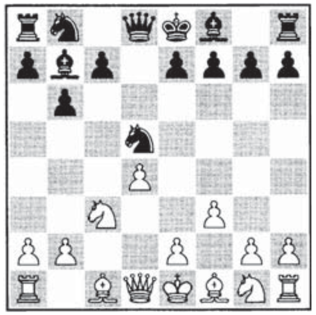
9...cxd5 10.cxd5 ♘a6 11.0-0 ♖e8 12.♗g5 ♘c5 13.♘d4 ♗e5 The point of 5...♗d6, Black has grasped the initiative and won after **14.♖a2 ♕b8 15.f4 ♗xd4+ 16.♕xd4 ♘xd5 17.♘xd5 ♖xe2 18.♖f3 ♕e8 19.♗h6 ♖e1+ 20.♔f2 ♕e2+ 21.♔g3 ♘e4+ 22.♔h3 f6 23.♘e7+ ♔h8 24.♕xd7 ♘f2+ 25.♖xf2 ♕xe7 0-1**

☐ **Efim Bogoljubow**
■ **Alexander Alekhine**
Germany/Netherlands Wch-m 1929 (8)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 b6 3.♘c3 ♗b7 4.f3

White fights for central control but misses out on his development – this usually leads to very original and sharp play.

4...d5 5.cxd5 ♘xd5



6.e4

In case of 6.♘xd5 Black has to make up his mind to take back with the queen or the bishop.

● 6...♕xd5 7.e4 ♕d7 (or 7...♕d6 8.a3 e5 9.♘e2 ♗e7 10.♗e3 0-0 11.♕c2 ♘d7 12.♖d1 ♖ad8 13.♘c3 exd4 14.♗xd4 ♕h6 15.♕f2 ♗g5∓, Bern-Pedersen, Aarhus 1989) 8.♗c4 g6!? (this was the way the great Bobby played in his best years. Tartakower managed to hold the ex world champion with 8...e6 9.♘e2 ♗b4+ 10.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 11.♕xd2 0-0 12.0-0 c5 13.♖fd1±, ½-½ Euwe-Tartakower, Stockholm ol 1937) 9.♕b3!? (9.♘e2 ♗g7 10.0-0 0-0 11.♗e3 ♘c6 12.♖c1 ♘a5 gave Black counterplay in Chabanon-Haik, Montpellier 1991) 9...e6 10.♘e2 ♗g7 11.♗e3 ♘c6 12.♖d1 ♘a5 13.♕c2 ♕c6 14.♗d3 ♕xc2 15.♗xc2 0-0-0 16.♔f2 ♖d6 17.b3 ♘c6 18.♖d2 ♖hd8 19.♖hd1 ♘b4 20.♗b1 ♗a6 21.a3 ♘c6 22.♗d3 ♗xd3 23.♖xd3 f5!, Black got some pressure on White's centre and went on to win, Agdamus-Fischer, Buenos Aires 1970.

● Another interesting game saw 6...♗xd5 7.e4 ♗b7 8.♗b5+!? (8.♗e3 e6) 8...c6 9.♗c4 e6 10.♘e2 ♗b4+ 11.♗d2 ♕h4+! (weakening White's pawn structure) 12.g3 ♕e7 13.a3 ♗xd2+ 14.♕xd2 ♘d7 15.0-0-0?! (safer is 15.0-0 0-0 16.♖ac1 c5 with equality) 15...0-0 16.♔b1 (Black is also doing very well after 16.♕f4 e5!) 16...c5! 17.dxc5 ♘e5! (now White is in trouble) 18.♕c3 ♕xc5 19.♖d4 19...♖ac8∓ 20.♖c1 ♘xc4 21.♖xc4 ♕xc4 22.♕xc4 ♖xc4 23.♖xc4 ♗a6 with a winning edge in Duchamp-Frydman, Prague Olympiad 1931.

6...♘xc3 7.bxc3 e6

This 'solid' move was played in many games. Also playable is 7...g6, for those who like Grünfeld-type structures 8.♗c4 (8.♗e3 ♗g7 9.♗c4 0-0 10.♘e2 c5 11.h4 h5 12.♕d2 ♕c7 13.♖c1 ♘c6 14.0-0 ♖fd8, P.Varga-Medvegy, Budapest 1995) 8...♗g7 9.♘e2 0-0 10.0-0 c5 11.♗e3 ♕c7 12.♖c1 ♘c6 13.♕d2 ♖fd8 14.♖fd1 ♖ac8, Black looks OK and went on to win in Ruiz Garcia-Jerez Perez, Spain 1992.

See the next game for 7...e5!?.

8.♗b5+

Black need not fear the alternatives:

– 8.♕a4+ c6 9.♗f4 ♘d7 10.♘h3 ♗e7 11.♗e2 0-0 12.0-0 ♔h8 13.♖ad1 b5 14.♕b3 a6 15.♗e3 ♕c7 16.f4 c5, Van Doesburgh-Bogoljubow, Zandvoort 1936

– 8.♗e3 ♗e7 9.♗b5+ c6 10.♗d3 0-0 11.♘e2 c5 12.dxc5 ♗xc5 13.♗xc5 bxc5 14.♖b1 ♕c7 15.♕b3 ♗c6 16.0-0 ♘d7 17.♕a3 ½-½ L.Popov-Keene, Dortmund 1973.

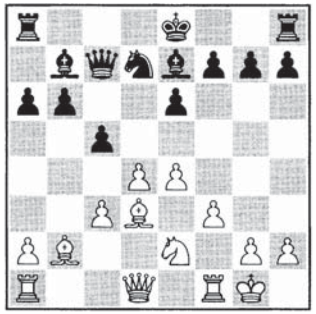
8...♘d7 9.♘e2 ♗e7 10.0-0 a6 11.♗d3 c5

Black also gained good counterplay after 11...0-0 12.♗e3 c5 13.♕d2 ♕c7 14.♖fd1 ♖fd8 15.♖ac1 b5, Dufrenoy-Haik, France 1991.

12.♗b2!?

This is not the best move. White should prefer any of the following moves: 12.♗e3, 12.♗f4, or 12.a4.

12...♕c7



13.f4?!

And here 13.e5 was stronger.

13...♘f6 14.♘g3 h5! 15.♕e2 h4 16.♘h1 ♘h5 17.♕g4?

This is a mistake – 17.♗c1! ♗d6!?.

17...0-0-0 18.♖ae1

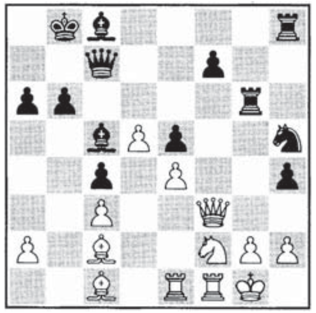
Or 18.f5 ♘f6 (planning ...e5) 19.♕xg7? ♖h7.

18...♔b8

With a strategically lost position for White.

19.f5 e5 20.d5 c4! 21.♗c2 ♗c5+ 22.♘f2 g6! 23.fxg6 ♖dg8 24.♗c1 ♗c8 25.♕f3 ♖xg6

With the annoying threat of ...♗g4.



26.♔h1

White's position is beyond saving: 26.♗e3 ♗xe3 27.♖xe3 ♘f4 28.g3 hxg3 29.hxg3 f5! (29...♗b7!?−+) with the idea of 30...♕h7.

26...♘g3+! 27.hxg3

Black wins after 27.♔g1 ♗g4.

27...hxg3+ 28.♘h3

Or 28.♔g1 gxf2+ 29.♖xf2 ♗g4 30.♕g3 ♗e2, and now:

– 31.♕xg6 fxg6 32.♖xe2 ♕h7−+.

– Better is 31.♗g5 f5 32.d6 (32.exf5 ♖xg5 33.♕xg5 ♕h7−+) 32...♕g7 33.♖xe2 ♖xg5, but Black is still winning.

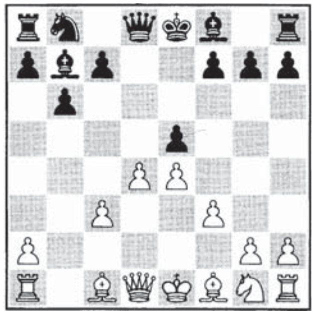
28...♗xh3 29.gxh3 ♖xh3+ 30.♔g2 ♖h2

Mate.

☐ **Erik Dignum**
■ **Arthur Kogan**
Utrecht 1999

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 b6 3.♘c3 ♗b7 4.f3 d5 5.cxd5 ♘xd5 6.e4 ♘xc3 7.bxc3 e5!

An aggressive and interesting gambit. It was this idea that I had in mind when I first started analysing the line. In fact I could implement it in the first game in which I tried the 2...b6 line!



8.♗c4

● Here 8.♕a4+ led to no advantage in Lutikov-Van Geet, Amsterdam B 1968, after 8...♕d7 9.♕xd7+ ♘xd7 10.♖b1 ♗e7 11.♗e3 0-0.

● Black also got a good position after 8.♘e2 exd4 9.cxd4 ♗e7 (9...♗d6!?) 10.♗e3 0-0 11.♕b3 ♗g5 12.♗f2 ♗a6!?, Beliavsky-Panchenko, Grozny 1969.

● 8.dxe5 is the critical line, where I would recommend 8...♘d7! (8...♕h4+ 9.g3 ♕h5 10.e6! fxe6 11.♕b3, J.Graf-Horn, Geneva B 1990; 8...♕xd1+ 9.♔xd1 ♘c6 10.♗f4±) 9.♗f4 ♗c5 (it seems that Black has more than enough compensation for the pawn) 10.♗c4 ♕h4+ (10...♕e7) 11.♗g3 ♕e7 12.e6 fxe6 13.♘e2 e5! with ...0-0-0 coming up and a nice position. But not the immediate 13...0-0-0? 14.♘d4!.

● 8.♗b5+ c6 9.♗c4 ♘d7 10.♕b3 ♕h4+ 11.♔f1 ♕f6 12.♘h3 h6 13.♘f2 ♗d6 was unclear in Levitas-Tolush, Leningrad 1938.

8...exd4 9.♘e2!

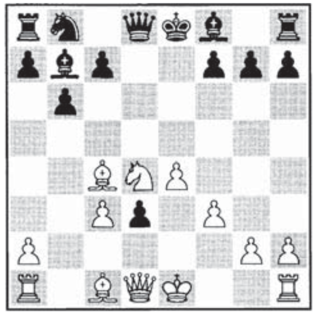
Here 9.cxd4 ♗b4+ will force the king to move to avoid losing the d4 pawn: 10.♔f2 0-0 gives Black the initiative.

9...d3!

Destroying White's pawn structure.

10.♘d4!?

10.♕xd3 ♕xd3 11.♗xd3 ♘d7 and with such a square as c5 for the knight, Black must be OK!



10...♗c5

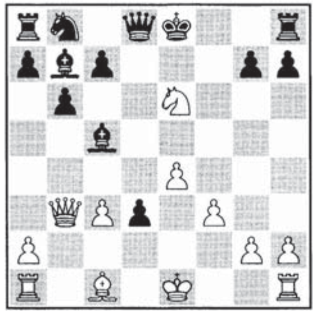
This is stronger than 10...c5, which weakens the d5 square: 11.♘e2! (11.♘f5 g6) 11...♘c6 (11...dxe2?? 12.♗xf7+!+−) 12.♕xd3 unclear (12.♘f4 ♗d6).

11.♗xf7+?!

White got too emotional, but in fact he really made me sweat for a while. The normal 11.♕xd3 would be answered by 11...♘c6.

11...♔xf7 12.♕b3+ ♔e8 13.♘e6

This is a position that is really hard to play as Black.



13...d2+!

This was part of my calculation. However, maybe even better, but still harder to calculate was 13...♕f6!, for example 14.♗g5 (14.♘xc5 bxc5 15.♕xb7 ♕xc3+ 16.♔f2 ♕xa1 17.♕xa8 ♕xa2+∓) 14...♕g6 15.♘xc5 ♕xg5! 16.♘xb7 (16.♕e6+ ♕e7−+) 16...♔d7! and ♘b7 is in trouble! If 17.0-0 then 17...♔c6!∓.

14.♗xd2 ♗f2+!

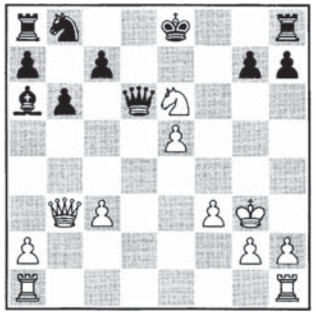
This was the point! Black should calculate carefully of course.

15.♔e2

15.♔xf2 ♕xd2+ 16.♔g3 would have forced me to find a hard move such as 16...♔e7!! (wrong is 16...♕d6+ 17.e5! ♕xe5+ – 17...♕e7 18.♕c4!? – 18.♔f2 and with ♖he1 coming, Black is danger) 17.♖hd1 (17.♘xc7 ♕d6+) 17...♕h6 18.♘d4 ♕g6+ 19.♔f2 ♖e8 20.♘f5+ ♔f8 21.♕a3+ ♔f7 22.♖d8 ♕e6

23.♖ad1 ♖xd8 24.♖xd8 ♘d7 25.♖xa8 ♗xa8 26.♕xa7 ♕c6 and Black has an edge.

15...♗a6+! 16.♔xf2 ♕xd2+ 17.♔g3 ♕d6+ 18.e5



18...♕e7?!

Better was 18...♕xe5+ 19.f4 (19.♔f2 ♕e2+ 20.♔g3 ♗c4 winning) 19...♕e3+ 20.♔h4, but I 'missed' 20...♔d7!∓ and my king escapes from the danger zone, leaving Black with a material advantage and the white king on h4.

19.♕d5! c6 20.♕d6 ♔f7!?

Correct was 20...♕xd6! 21.exd6 ♗c4 22.♘c7+ ♔d7 23.♘xa8 ♔xd6 and Black will win the knight on a8 and will retain the better chances.

21.♕xe7+

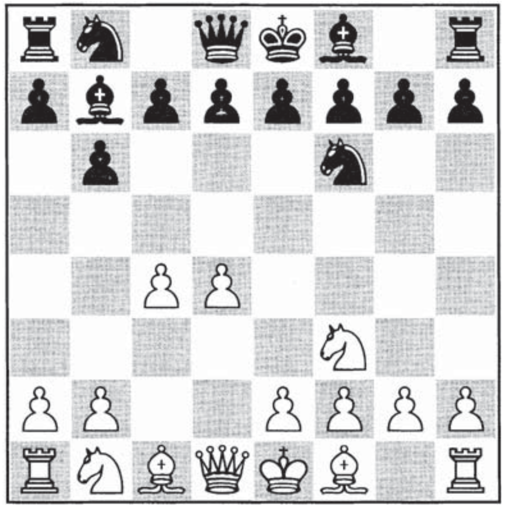
The best chance for White was 21.♘c7! ♗b7 (21...♖d8 22.♕xe7+ ♔xe7 23.♘xa8 ♗b7 24.♘xb6 axb6∞) 22.♖ad1 ♖c8 with unclear play.

21...♔xe7 22.♘c7 ♗b7 23.♖ad1 ♘d7 24.♘xa8 ♖xa8 25.f4 ♖f8 26.a4 ♘c5 27.♖d4 ♘b3 **0-1**

CHAPTER 12

Arthur Kogan

The Queen's Grünfeld Line (Part II)



1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 b6 3.♘f3 ♗b7

☐ **Shahin Mohandesi**
■ **Arthur Kogan**
Antwerp Open 1996

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 b6 3.♘f3 ♗b7

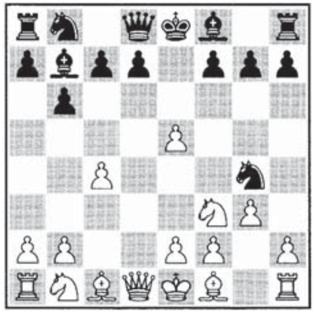
3...e6 is the 'normal' Queen's Indian!

4.♘c3

- Against the passive 4.e3 it should be good enough to transpose to a 'healthy' Queen's Indian with 4...e6 (4...d5!?) 5.♗d3 d5 6.0-0 ♗d6 where Black usually obtains comfortable play: 7.b3 0-0 8.♗b2 ♘bd7 9.♘c3 a6 with the idea of ...♘e4 or ...c5. The chances are about equal.
- 4.g3. Now White is hoping for a normal Queen's Indian where the bishop on g2 is well placed, keeping an eye on d5 and having in mind a future e4. Here I would recommend 4...e5!?. Wow! What a surprise! By the way, this move was already played by Alekhine in 1921! Black of course has other more solid moves at his disposal (mainly 4...e6 transposing to the Queen's Indian) but I think that 4...e5 is more in the spirit of SOS. Before we investigate 4...e5 more fully I would like to point out another more positional way to 'unbalance' the position. Namely, to give up the light-squared bishop for the knight, and destroying White's pawn structure with 4...♗xf3!? 5.exf3 e6 6.♗g2 c6. After this sequence Black should take care about the 'white holes' in his queenside:

7.0-0 d5 8.cxd5 cxd5 9.f4 (the f5 break is in the air) 9...g6! (logical to keep position closed, preventing White's bishops from entering the game!) 10.b3 ♗e7 11.♘d2 0-0 12.♗b2 ♘c6 13.♕e2 ♖c8 14.♖ac1 ♕d6, Mishra-Ravisekhar, India 1988, where Black seems to be at least OK, since he managed to keep the position closed. His knights are better than White's two bishops.

Now let's analyse 4...e5 5.dxe5 (5.d5 ♗b4+ 6.♗d2 ♕e7 and with ...c6 coming, the future looks bright for Black) 5...♘g4 – a familiar manoeuvre from the Budapest Gambit.



And here White has a choice:

– 6.♗g2 ♘xe5 (6...♗b4+ 7.♗d2 ♗xd2+ – or 7...♕e7 – 8.♘bxd2 ♘xe5 seems OK for Black as well) 7.♘bd2 ♘xf3+ 8.♘xf3 ♗b4+ 9.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 10.♕xd2 0-0 11.0-0 d6 12.♘d4 ♗xg2 13.♔xg2 ♘d7 14.e4 ♖e8 15.♖ae1 ♘c5 and Black had easy play in Teichmann-Alekhine, Berlin m-3 1921.

– 6.♗g5!? ♗e7 7.♗xe7 ♕xe7 8.♗g2 ♘xe5 9.0-0 ♘xf3+ (9...♘xc4? 10.♕d4±; 9...0-0 10.♘xe5 ♗xg2 11.♔xg2 ♕xe5 12.♘c3 seems only slightly more pleasant for White) 10.♗xf3 ♗xf3 11.exf3 0-0 12.♘c3 ♘c6 (12...♕b4 13.♘d5) 13.♖e1 ♕c5 14.♘d5 (not 14.♕xd7 ♘d4), and now 14...♘d4?! was inaccurate, not because of 15.♖e4 ♘e6, J.Horvath-Welling, Miskolc 1989, but because of 15.♖e5!±. I would recommend instead 14...♕xc4! 15.♘xc7 ♖ac8 with counterplay for Black.

– Interesting is 6.♗h3!? ♘xe5 7.0-0!? (but not 7.♘xe5 ♗xh1 8.f3 ♕e7!) 7...♘xc4 8.♕d3 (8.b3 ♕f6) 8...♘d6 9.♘c3 and now White would have nice compensation after 9...♗e7 10.♘d5. Therefore Black should play 9...♘a6! with unclear play.

4...d5!?

Again 4...e6 is just the Queen's Indian.

5.♗g5

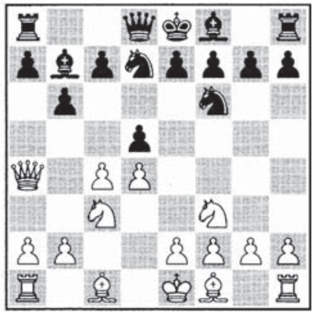
This aggressive move is also reminiscent of the Grünfeld!

There is an important alternative in the form of 5.♕a4+.

Now bad is 5...♕d7? 6.♕xd7+ ♔xd7 (or 6...♘bxd7 7.♘b5!) 7.♘e5+ ♔e8 8.♘b5! (too slow is 8.e3 e6 9.cxd5 exd5 10.♗d2 a6±, Farago-Winants, Wijk aan Zee B 1987) 8...♘a6 9.cxd5 ♘xd5 10.a3! with a serious positional advantage.

Interesting is 5...♗c6!? since 6.♕b3 dxc4 (6...e6 7.♗g5 ♗e7 8.e3±) 7.♕xc4 e6 8.♗g5 ♗e7 9.e3 0-0 seems playable. Black plans ...♗b7 and ...c5. However, White does retain the better chances thanks to his strong centre.

That is why we will analyse 5...♘bd7 now, when White has three options.



● The straightforward 6.cxd5 ♘xd5 7.♘xd5 ♗xd5 8.♘e5 leads to unclear play following 8...a6!.

● In case of 6.♗g5, Black should not play 6...♘e4 because of 7.cxd5 (7.♘xd5 ♘xg5 8.♘xg5 e6) 7...♘xc3 8.bxc3 ♗xd5 9.♘d2 and White is better.

Stronger is 6...dxc4, when the lines fork:

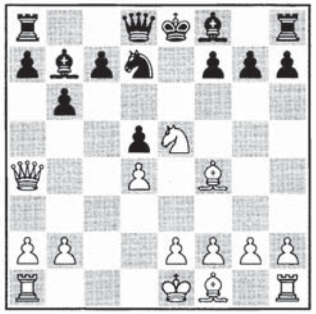
– 7.♕xc4 e6 8.e4 h6 9.♗h4 g5 10.♗g3 ♘xe4 11.♗xc7 ♘d6! is slightly better for Black.

– After 7.♗xf6 exf6 8.e4 a6! Black is fine, while 8...♗d6 9.♗xc4 a6 is also possible.

● 6.♘e5 e6 is strange:

In case of the annoying 7.♘c6 things are far from clear after 7...♕c8! 8.g3 a6! 9.♗g2 b5! (but not 9...dxc4 10.♕xc4 b5 11.♕b3 ♘b8 12.d5! exd5 13.♘a5) 10.cxb5 axb5 11.♕xb5 ♗d6! 12.0-0 ♗a6 13.♕b3 ♗c4 14.♕c2 ♕b7 15.b3 ♕xc6 16.bxc4 ♕xc4 and Black is slightly better.

Therefore White should continue with 7.cxd5 ♘xd5 (but not 7...exd5 8.e4!) 8.♘xd5 (8.♗d2 a6 is fine) 8...exd5 (if 8...♗xd5 then 9.e4! ♗xe4 10.♗b5 c6 11.♘xc6 ♗xc6 12.♗xc6±) 9.♗f4



Now Black has several interesting possibilities at his disposal:

– 9...c6?! 10.♘xc6 ♗xc6 11.♕xc6 ♗b4+ 12.♔d1. In this funny position, the compensation seems insufficient.

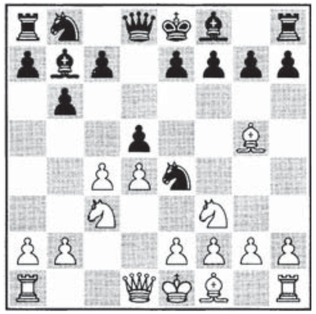
– 9...♗d6 10.e3 (Black is OK after 10.♖c1 0-0! 11.♕xd7 ♕xd7 12.♘xd7 ♗xf4 13.e3 ♖fe8 14.♔d2 ♗d6) 10...♗xe5, Burgess-E.Pedersen, Aarhus 1990, led to an immediate draw, but probably White has the better chances: 11.♗xe5 0-0 12.♗g3± c5 13.♗d3 ♘f6 14.0-0 ♘e4 15.♗f4.

– I would suggest 9...a6!? for further analysis. This move takes control of the b5 square and prepares ...b5 and ...c5 ideas.

– However, my personal favourite is the surprising 9...a5!? ('threatening' ♗b4+) 10.a3 (10.0-0-0 ♗d6 11.e3 ♗xe5 12.♗xe5 0-0 13.♗f4 c5 with unclear play) 10...♗d6 11.e3 ♗xe5! 12.♗xe5 0-0 (now with the black pawn on a5, the white queen looks misplaced) 13.♗g3 c5 14.♗d3 (14.♗b5 ♘f6 with ...♘e4 and enough counterplay) 14...♘f6 (14...♗a6!? 15.♗xa6 ♖xa6 16.0-0 is still somewhat better for White) with nice counterplay for Black.

5...♘e4!

If White's previous move 5.♗g5 was taken from the Grünfeld then let's use a familiar antidote from that opening!



6.♗f4

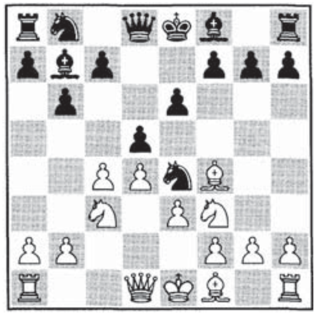
A very impressive game was played by Nikolic: 6.cxd5 ♘xg5 (I would recommend the safer 6...♘xc3 7.bxc3 ♕xd5 with interesting play, Gelfand-Djuric, Ulcinj 1997) 7.♘xg5 (7.♕a4+!? c6 8.♘xg5 e6! with counterplay) 7...e6 8.♘xf7! (White gets two pawns and an attack for the knight. Possible is 8.♕a4+ c6 9.♘f3 exd5 and 8.♘h3!? exd5 followed by a rapid c7-c5) 8...♔xf7 9.dxe6+ ♔xe6 (9...♔g8 10.e4±) 10.e4 g6 11.♗c4+ ♔e7 12.♕f3! ♕e8 13.0-0 ♗g7 14.♕g3 ♔d8 15.♖ac1 ♖f8 16.e5 ♘c6 17.♗d5 a6 18.♕h4+ ♔c8 19.♕xh7 with a winning edge in Nikolic-Djuric, Bled 1991.

There is room for creativity with 6.e3 ♘xg5 7.♘xg5 e6 8.♕g4 ♗e7 9.h4!? with an interesting game.

6.♗h4 is best met by 6...dxc4! 7.♕a4+ (7.e3 ♘xc3 8.bxc3 ♕d5 9.♘e5 b5 looks at least OK for Black) 7...♕d7 8.♕xc4 ♘d6 (with a future ...♘f5 or even ...♕f5 coming and enough counterplay) 9.♕d3 ♘f5 (better is 9...♕f5) 10.♘e5! ♕e6 (10...♕xd4?? 11.♕xf5) 11.♗g3 ♘xg3 12.hxg3 with attacking chances.

6...e6 7.e3

And here I made the 'brave decision' to play



7...g5!

This looks overly optimistic but is in fact based on concrete calculation and assessment!

With 7...♗d6 Black would be fighting to equalize the game (and nothing more). This is not my style!

8.♗e5 f6 9.♗g3

Even after 9.cxd5!? exd5 10.♗g3 h5! 11.♕c2 (White loses in the line 11.♕b3 h4 12.♘xe4 – 12.♗b5+ c6 13.♗xb8 cxb5∓ – 12...dxe4 13.♕e6+ ♕e7) 11...♗b4! White still has problems to solve, for example 12.♕a4+ ♘c6 13.♗b5 ♕d7!∓ 14.♕xb4 ♘xb4 15.♗xd7+ ♔xd7 and White can't avoid losing material!

9...h5!

And White is already under attack!

10.h4 ♘xg3 11.fxg3 g4

Also good looks 11...♕d6 12.♔f2 gxh4 13.gxh4 ♖g8 with an attack.

12.♘d2 ♕d6!

Black's moves must be energetic to attack White's weaknesses and at the same time to develop his pieces as fast as possible to attacking places!

13.♔f2 ♗h6!

Now the ...♗xe3+ idea is in the air!

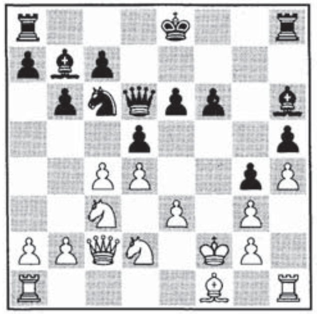
14.♕c2

White threatens 15.♕g6+, but...

14...♘c6!?

Incredibly enough, I just ignored his threat! Again I chose the aggressive way: now I am threatening ...♗xe3 since the d4 pawn will be hanging as well. At the same time I am preparing a safe place for the black king with ...0-0-0 after which even a pawn break like ...e5 will be a nice idea!

Maybe even better than the text-move was the more positional 14...f5!?, fixing White's kingside weaknesses, preventing ♕g6+ and in fact preparing a possible ...0-0 for Black!



15.♖e1?!

White got very nervous about the sac on e3 and decided to prevent it!

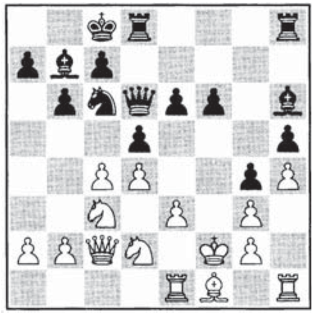
What did I have in mind against the attractive looking 15.♕g6+ ? My idea was that after 15...♔d7! I get my ♖a8 into play quickly and the ...♗xe3 idea is still in the air!

– 16.♘b5 ♗xe3+! 17.♔xe3 ♕xg3+ 18.♔e2 a6 19.cxd5 (or 19.♕f7+ ♘e7 20.♘c3 ♖af8) 19...♘e7 20.dxe6+ ♔xe6! (Black wins back his piece, retaining the safer king!) 21.♘xc7+ (21.♘c3 ♕xc3) 21...♕xc7 22.♕d3 ♖ad8.

– 16.cxd5 ♘e7! 17.dxe6+ (17.♕xf6?? ♖af8–+) 17...♕xe6 18.♕d3 ♖ae8 with a nice initiative and at least enough compensation for the pawn! For example: 19.e4 f5! 20.d5 ♕d6 21.♔g1 ♔c8! and White's centre will soon fall.

15...0-0-0

Now Black's advantage is more than evident. Just compare the safety factor of the kings!



16.c5!?

This is an attack out of despair, but anyway the coming ...e5 pawn break idea was really too annoying for White, so at least he tries 'to die' as a hero!

Also bad are 16.♗d3 ♘b4, and 16.♘b5 ♕d7 17.cxd5 ♕xd5 18.♗c4 ♘xd4!.

In case of 16.a3 Black has 16...e5! 17.cxd5 exd4! 18.♘c4 dxe3+ 19.♘xe3 ♖he8!? (19...♘e5) 20.dxc6 ♕d2+ 21.♕xd2 ♖xd2+ 22.♔g1 ♗xe3+ 23.♖xe3 ♖xe3 24.cxb7+ ♔xb7 and White is in trouble.

16...bxc5 17.♘b5 ♕e7 18.♘b3

18.dxc5 will be very sad for White after 18...e5.

18...a6 19.♘c3

Not enough either was 19.♘xc5 axb5 20.♗xb5 ♕d6 21.♕a4 ♘e7 22.♕a7 (22.♕b4 ♔b8 23.♗a6 ♕b6!∓) 22...♕b6.

19...♗xe3+!

Now it's party time!

20.♖xe3 cxd4

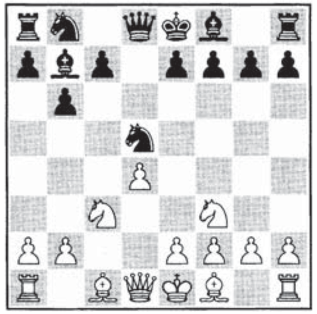
Black is winning of course.

21.♖e1 dxc3 22.♕xc3 d4 23.♕c5 ♕d6 24.♖c1 d3 25.♖d1 ♘e5 26.♔e3 ♕d7 27.♕b4 ♕d5 28.♘c5 ♘c4+ 29.♔f2 ♕d4+ 0-1

After this game GM Piket asked me 'politely', half joking, half serious, if I always play in 'such old classical style'.

☐ **Bela Toth**
■ **Pascal Horn**
Biel 1986

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 b6 3.♘f3 ♗b7 4.♘c3 d5 5.cxd5 ♘xd5

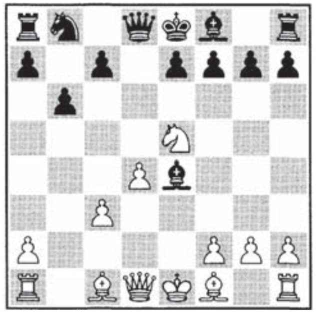


6.♕c2

This move is logical in the sense that it prepares e4. White has other plans at his disposal too. Let's see what happens if the e-pawn moves.

The natural but modest 6.e3 can be met by 6...g6!? (6...e6 is again a Queen's Indian type of position if this is to your taste!) 7.♗b5+!? c6 8.♗d3 ♗g7 9.0-0 0-0 10.e4 ♘xc3 11.bxc3 c5 12.♗e3 cxd4 13.cxd4 ♘c6 with unclear play in Jelling-E.Pedersen, Danish Championship 1987.

An interesting gambit is 6.e4!? ♘xc3 7.bxc3 ♗xe4 8.♘e5!



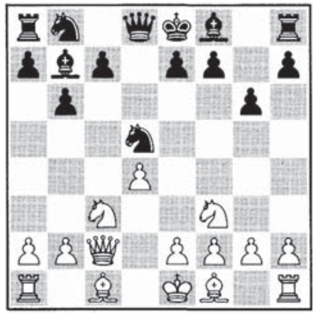
Now the game Adla-J.Rodriguez, Argentina Championship 1989, went 8...♗b7? when White missed the strong shot 9.♘xf7! ♔xf7 10.♕h5+ g6 11.♕e5 with a killing attack or winning material.

I would recommend instead 8...♗d5!. Now after 9.c4 ♗b7 10.♕a4+ c6 11.♗e3 e6 White's compensation might not be enough. While in case of 9.♕g4 Black has 9...g6! (9...h5!?), and with ...♗g7 coming Black seems to be happy about his extra pawn. If 10.♗c4 then 10...c6!.

Also playable is 8...e6!? 9.♕g4 ♗d5 10.♗d3 h5 11.♗g6!? hxg4 12.♗xf7+ ♔e7 13.♗g5+ ♔d6 14.♗xd8 ♘d7. This would be a funny adventure, but probably not so bad for Black!

6...g6

And now we have a real kind of Grünfeld! Black may also consider 6...♘xc3 7.bxc3 (7.♕xc3 e6) and only now 7...g6. However, not 7...♕d5?! 8.e3 g6 9.♗d3 when White is better.



7.e4

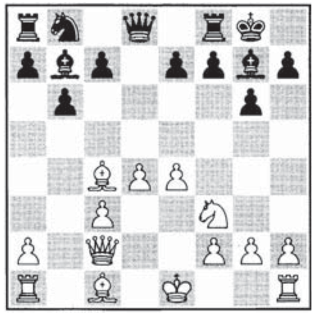
This is most natural, but practice has also seen:

- 7.♘xd5!? ♕xd5 8.e3 (not 8.♕xc7?! ♘d7 with ...♖c8 coming and a nice initiative for only one pawn) 8...♘c6 (also playable was 8...♘d7 for example 9.♗c4 ♕f5 10.♕xf5 gxf5) 9.♗c4 ♕d6 10.♗d2 ♗g7 11.♖c1 a6! 12.a3 0-0 13.♗d3! (Loek didn't really want to let me relax...) 13...♖ac8 14.♗e4 ♘d8 15.♗xb7 ♘xb7 16.♕e4 c6 17.♗b4 ♕d5! 18.♕xd5 cxd5 19.♔d2 ♗f6 and White looks a bit better even though Black's position is solid enough, Van Wely-Kogan, Antwerp 1996.
- 7.♗d2 (again in the spirit of the Grünfeld!) 7...♗g7 8.e4 ♘f6 9.0-0-0 0-0 10.h4 ♘g4! 11.♗f4 ♘c6! 12.d5 ♘b4 13.♕d2 c6! (after a very nice knight's dance, Adorjan also invited his pawns to the 'party'!) 14.a3 a5!? 15.dxc6 ♘xc6 16.♗b5 e5! 17.♕e2 ♕c8 18.♗e3 ♘xe3 19.fxe3 ♘a7 20.♔b1 ♘xb5 21.♕xb5 ♕g4 22.♘xe5 ♕xg2 23.♖hg1 ♕h2 24.♘f3 ♕f2, 0-1 Wells-Adorjan, Hungary 1995. A true masterpiece!

7...♘xc3 8.bxc3 ♗g7 9.♗c4

Black also looks OK in 9.♗e2 0-0 10.0-0 ♘d7 (10...c5 is the other logical way) 11.a4 e5 12.♗b2 ♖e8 13.♗d3 exd4 14.cxd4 c5! 15.d5 c4! 16.♗xc4 ♗xb2 17.♕xb2 ♖xe4 with fine counterplay, Bukic-Planinc, Skopje 1971.

9...0-0



10.h4!?

This aggressive idea which tries to punish Black's solid set-up, was played in two games!

More 'normal' is 10.0-0 c5 (10...♘d7!?) 11.♖d1 but Black has good play following 11...♕c7 or 11...cxd4 12.cxd4 ♘d7.

10...♕d7!

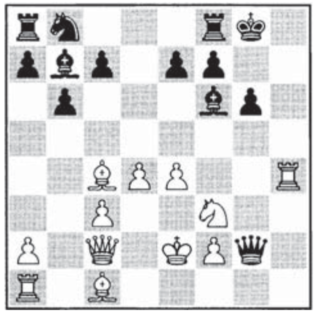
This introduces the ...♕g4 idea which gives White a real headache.

11.h5

Black is fine after 11.♗e3 ♕g4 12.♘g5 ♗a6!. The game Barle-Panchenko, Sukhumi 1970, went 13.♗b3 h6 (13...c5!?) 14.f3 ♕d7 15.e5 hxg5 16.♕xg6 ♕b5! 17.♕c2 ♕d3 unclear.

The safest option was 13.♗xa6 ♘xa6 14.♕e2 ♕xe2+ (but not 14...♕xg2? 15.0-0-0 winning) 15.♔xe2 c5 with typical counterplay in the centre.

11...♕g4 12.hxg6 hxg6 13.♖h4 ♕xg2 14.♔e2! ♗f6



15.♘e1

Here 15.♗e3!? ♗xh4 16.♖g1 ♕xg1 17.♘xg1 e6! (17...♗a6?! 18.♗xa6 ♘xa6 19.e5!±) 18.♘f3 ♗e7 looks OK for Black!

15...♕g1 16.♘f3 ♕g2 17.♖h2?

Of course 17.♘e1! will be a draw!

17...♕g4 18.♗d3 c5!

Now 19...c4 is a major threat and suddenly White is just lost!

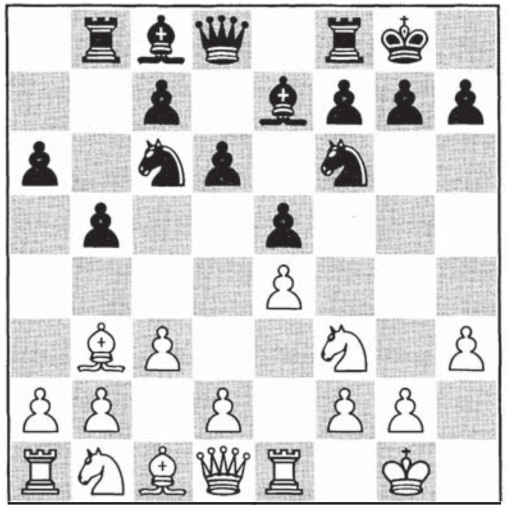
19.♗h6 c4! 20.♗xc4 ♗xe4 21.♕d2 ♕xf3+ 22.♔f1 ♖c8 23.♖e1 ♖xc4 24.♖e3 ♕f5 25.♖eh3 ♗f3 26.♕e1 ♕d3+ 27.♔g1 ♕e2 28.♕xe2 ♗xe2 29.♗f4 ♘d7 0-1

A really impressive win with black against a stronger opponent by the expert Pascal Horn. He used 2...b6! as his main weapon for years!

CHAPTER 13

Adrian Mikhalchishin

A Spanish SOS



Gajewski's 9...♖b8!?

Usually SOS lines start well before move 10. Indeed, we want to take our opponent by surprise as early as possible. However, when we can present a surprise in one of the most well-known tabiya positions known to mankind then it makes sense to make an exception.

What, it would seem, can possibly be devised in the main line of the Ruy Lopez on the 9th move? Millions of players have looked at the classical Spanish after 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♗e7 6.♖e1 b5 7.♗b3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.h3, and no one has thought about playing 9...♖b8!?.

True, in the game Ziska-Pickering, Nice 1974, this was played, but most probably by accident, since the idea in the subsequent play was completely different.

Then in 2003 the talented young Polish IM Grzegorz Gajewski began employing this continuation. His idea was to improve on the variation 9...a5 10.d4 exd4 11.cxd4 d5, when 12.♘e5! ♘xe5 13.dxe5 ♘xe4 14.♗xd5 is very strong. With the rook on b8 this variation is not to be feared at all!

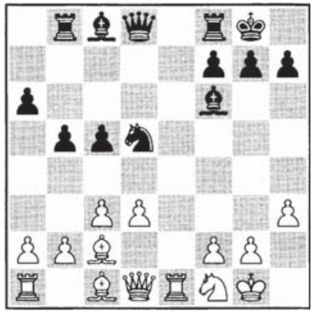
Next this idea was included in the repertoire of Ruy Lopez expert Vladimir Malaniuk.

I have already mentioned the main idea – to remove the rook from a8. But the second idea is a strengthening of Black's role in the centre and, naturally, a reduction in the danger of an attack by White on the kingside.

□ **Sergey Fedorchuk**
■ **Grzegorz Gajewski**
Warsaw 2005

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♗e7 6.♖e1 b5 7.♗b3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.h3 ♖b8!? 10.d4

It is hard to devise anything more sensible. After the modest 10.d3 ♘a5 11.♗c2 c5 12.♘bd2 ♘c6 13.♘f1 d5! (transposing into an interesting version of the Marshall!) 14.exd5 ♘xd5 15.♘xe5 ♘xe5 16.♖xe5 ♗f6 17.♖e1



17...b4! Black has excellent development and play against White's weaknesses on the queenside.

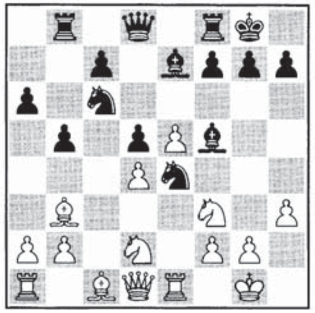
In the game Zhigalko-Gajewski, Pardubice 2005, after the continuation 18.d4 bxc3 19.bxc3 g6, White was able to escape from his difficulties by offering a draw with 20.♕f3.

10...exd4 11.cxd4 d5 12.e5

The point of Gajewski's line is apparent after 12.♘e5 ♘xe5 13.dxe5 ♘xe4 14.♗xd5 when the rook is not hanging on a8. This allows Black to equalize without difficulties following 14...♘c5 15.♕f3 c6! 16.♗xc6 ♘d3 17.♖d1 ♘xe5 18.♕e2 ♕c7 19.♗e4 ♘g6, Stehno-Malaniuk, Marianske Lazne 2006.

12...♘e4 13.♘bd2 ♗f5

The bishop is well-placed on this diagonal.



14.♗c2

After 14.♘f1 ♗e6 15.♘g3 ♘xg3 16.fxg3 ♗f5 17.♗c2 ♕d7 18.♗d2 ♗xc2 19.♕xc2 ♘d8 20.♖ac1 ♘e6 21.♕c6 White has slightly the better ending, Warakowski-Gajewski, Poland 2003. It was dangerous to play 14...♘a5 15.♗xd5! ♕xd5 16.♘e3 ♕d7 17.♘xf5 ♕xf5 18.♕e2, but 14...♗b4 15.♖e2 ♘e7 would have been correct.

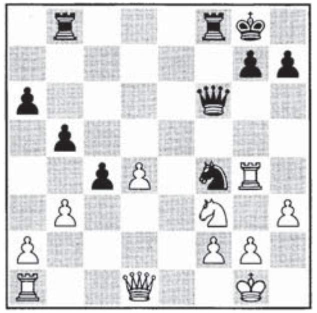
14...♘b4! 15.♗b1

The acceptance of the pawn sacrifice by 15.♗xe4 dxe4 16.♘xe4 ♗xe4 17.♖xe4 was very dangerous on account of 17...♕d5.

15...c5! 16.♘xe4 dxe4 17.♗xe4 ♗xe4 18.♖xe4 c4 19.♖g4 f5! 20.exf6

It is clear that after 20.♖g3 White's extra pawn does not compensate for the position of his rook on g3.

20...♗xf6 21.♗g5 ♘d3 22.♗xf6 ♕xf6 23.b3 ♘f4



24.♘e5 ♖bd8 25.♔h2 c3!

This pawn will become very unpleasant.

26.b4 ♘d5! 27.a4 ♕xf2 28.♘d3 ♕d2 29.♖g3 ♕xd1 30.♖xd1 bxa4 31.♖c1 a3 32.♖g5 ♖fe8 33.♘c5 ♘xb4

It was not essential to give up the c3-pawn. 33...♖e2 and 33...a2 were both good.

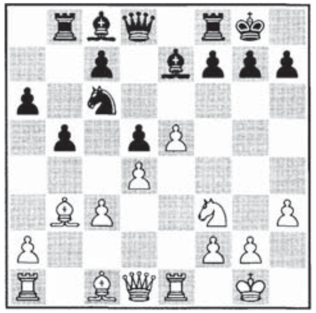
34.♖xc3 a2 35.♖a3 ♖xd4 36.♘xa6 ♖d1 37.♘xb4 a1♕ 38.♖xa1 ♖xa1 39.♘d5 ♖ee1 40.♖f5 h6 41.♖f2 ♖ad1 42.♘b4 ♖e3 43.♘c2 ♖ed3 44.♖f4 ♖c3 45.♘b4 ♖d2 46.♖f5 ♖b3 47.♘d5 ♖bb2 0-1

☐ **Zoltan Almasi**
■ **Dusko Pavasovic**
Sibenik 2006

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♗e7 6.♖e1 b5 7.♗b3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.h3 ♖b8 10.d4 exd4 11.cxd4 d5 12.e5 ♘e4 13.♘c3

A clearly more active continuation than the development of the knight at d2. Black is practically forced to exchange on c3, after which the structure becomes very double-edged – i.e. one demanding determined and forceful action by both sides.

13...♘xc3 14.bxc3



14...♗f5

Black can also try immediately attacking the centre by 14...♘a5 15.♗c2 c5, although the exchange of the light-square bishops should be to his advantage.

15.♗c2 ♕d7

Logical development, although again 15...♗xc2 16.♕xc2 ♘a5 followed by c7-c5 was possible.

16.♗g5 ♗xc2?

Exchanges are to Black's advantage – after 16...♗xg5 17.♘xg5 h6 18.♘f3 ♘e7 and 19...c5 he would not have the slightest problems.

17.♕xc2 ♘d8

Correctly switching the knight to the powerful blockading square e6. Now after 17...♗xg5 18.♘xg5 mate is threatened which explains why Black should have traded the dark-squared bishops on the previous move.

18.♗e3!

Now White can and should avoid the exchange.

18...♘e6 19.♘h2 c5?

Black should have maintained the blockading policy to the end by 19...f5 20.exf6ep ♗xf6 21.♘g4 c5 with reasonable counterplay. Now his play comes too late against White's energetic attack on the kingside.

20.f4 ♖fc8

Here too 20...f5 should have been played. Black is playing on the wrong part of the board.

21.♕d3 c4 22.♕c2 b4 23.cxb4 ♖xb4

No better was 23...♗xb4 24.♖f1, after which the advance of the f4-pawn will break up the position of black's king.

24.f5 ♘g5

Other knight moves do not improve matters.

25.f6! gxf6 26.exf6 ♗xf6 27.♘g4 ♘e4?

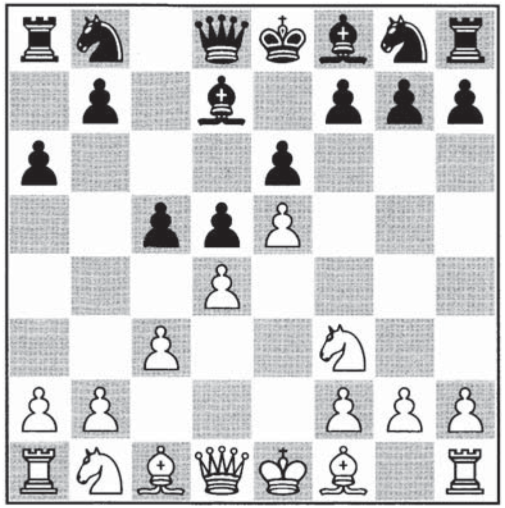
This signifies immediate capitulation. After 27...♗d8 Black has a difficult position, but it is still possible to resist.

28.♕xe4! 1-0

CHAPTER 14

Jeroen Bosch

The French Advance with 5...a6



Exchanging the French Bishop

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 ♗d7 5.♘f3 a6

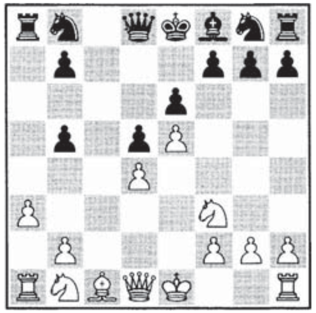
An interesting little pawn move. Black aims for the exchange of his so-called bad bishop via ...♗b5. This manoeuvre is often executed by means of 4...♕b6, 5...♗d7 and 6...♗b5. There are some drawbacks attached to that method though. Many white players happily go for 6.a3 ♗b5 7.c4 or 6.♗e2 ♗b5 7.c4 and, after 7...dxc4 or 7...♗xc4 8.♗xc4 dxc4 (in either case both retorts are possible) there is the advance d4-d5. Keeping the queen on d8 definitely prevents this. Moreover, it may not be so bad to have to take back on b5 with the a-pawn. Black will be saddled with doubled b-pawns, but the a-file is opened for the rook, the pawn on b5 controls some light squares, and it may be pushed to b4 to gain more space. Please note that Black will often take on d4 before executing his .....♗b5 idea. We will illustrate the main ideas by means of five games.

☐ **Maximilian Meinhardt**
■ **Rainer Knaak**
Germany Bundesliga 2006/07

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 ♗d7 5.♘f3 a6 6.h4

White gains space on the kingside and leaves the bishop on f1 for the moment. In that way he loses no time with ♗xb5 (as he would after 6.♗e2 or 6.♗d3, which are nevertheless the most popular replies). Let's have a look at some alternatives:

- 6.♘a3. I don't like this move. In Lanzani-Sulava, Turin 1998, Black got an excellent position by means of some simple and typically 'French' manoeuvres: 6...cxd4 7.cxd4 ♗xa3! 8.bxa3 ♘e7 9.♗d3 ♗b5! 10.0-0 ♗xd3 11.♕xd3 ♘bc6 12.♖b1 ♕d7 13.♗d2 h6! 14.h4 0-0 15.h5 f6!.
- 6.dxc5 ♗xc5 7.♗d3 leads to about equal play. Black was better in the old game Nun-Spiridonov, Decin 1975, following 7...♘e7 8.♗f4 ♘g6 9.♗g3 ♗b5!? (9...♘c6) 10.♗xb5+ axb5 11.b4 ♗b6 12.0-0 h5! 13.h4 ♕d7 14.♘bd2 ♘e7! (manoeuvring the knight to f5, from where it controls d4) 15.♘b3 ♘f5 16.♗f4 ♕c6 17.♘fd4 ♗xd4 18.cxd4 ♕b6 19.g3 ♘c6 and Black wins material.
- 6.a3. Another waiting move that is characteristic of the French Advance Variation. Black should now execute his positional idea with 6...cxd4 7.cxd4 ♗b5 8.♗xb5+ axb5



9.0-0 (Black is fine after 9.♗g5 ♕a5+ 10.♘bd2 h6 11.♗e3 b4 12.0-0 bxa3 13.bxa3 ♘e7 14.♕b3 ♖a7 15.♘b1 ♕a4 16.♕b2 ♕d7 17.♘c3 ♘ec6 Rogulj-Drazic, Jesolo 1999). Now the immediate 9...b4!? is quite playable (while 9...♘c6 is a natural alternative):

– 10.♘bd2 ♘h6 11.♘b3 ♘f5 12.axb4 ♖xa1 13.♘xa1 ♗xb4 14.♕b3 ♘c6 15.♘c2 ♕b6 with even chances in Ristic-Nestorovic, Belgrade 2005.

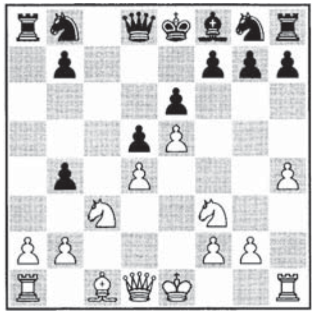
– 10.♗g5 ♘e7 11.♘bd2 h6 12.♗xe7 ♗xe7 13.axb4 ♖xa1 14.♕xa1 ♗xb4 15.♕a4+ ♘c6 16.♘b3 0-0 with equality, Delchev-Drazic, Saint Vincent 2003.

6...cxd4

6...h5?! 7.♗e2 cxd4 8.cxd4 ♗b5 9.♘c3 ♗xe2 10.♘xe2 ♘c6 11.0-0 ♗e7 12.♗g5 ♘h6 13.♘g3 g6 14.♕d2 ♗xg5 15.♘xg5 ♕b6 16.♖fd1 is a typical slight edge for White, Stehno-Jurek, Olomouc 2006.

6...♗b5?! 7.♗xb5+ axb5 8.dxc5 ♗xc5 9.b4 ♗b6 10.♘a3 is best avoided. Black loses his b5-pawn. That is why Black should take on d4 before playing ...♗b5.

7.cxd4 ♗b5 8.♗xb5+ axb5 9.♘c3 b4



Chasing the knight away and gaining some useful space on the queenside.

10.♘e2 ♘e7 11.♘f4 ♕b6 12.0-0 ♘d7!?

Also playable was 12...♘bc6.

13.♗e3 ♘f5 14.♘g5 ♗e7 15.♕g4

This looks aggressive but it invites Knaak's next move.

15...h5 16.♕h3 g6

White's queen looks a little off-side now.

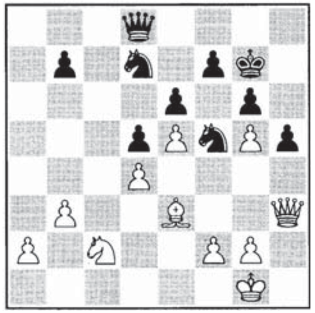
17.b3 ♔f8 18.♖ac1

Interesting was 18.♘gxe6+ fxe6 19.♘xg6+ ♔g7 20.♘xh8 ♖xh8 and Black is all right with his two knights, but it looks like a better fighting opportunity than the game.

18...♗xg5! 19.hxg5 ♔g7 20.♖c2 ♖hc8 21.♖fc1 ♖xc2 22.♖xc2 ♕d8

Preparing to counter on the c-file, and correctly foreseeing the consequences of the forthcoming pawn sacrifice.

23.♘d3 ♖c8! 24.♘xb4 ♖xc2 25.♘xc2



25...♕c7! 26.♘e1 ♕a5

Black not only regains his pawn, but gains another in the process. Note the vast difference in activity between both queens. Also strong, by the way, was 26...♕c3.

27.♘f3 ♕xa2 28.♘d2 ♘xd4

Or 28...♕a1+ 29.♔h2 ♘xd4.

29.♗xd4 ♕xd2 30.♕e3 ♕d1+ Keeping the queens on is easiest. Black won after **31.♔h2 ♘b8 32.♗c5 ♘c6 33.♕f4 ♕xb3 34.♕f6+ ♔g8 35.♗d6 ♕c4 36.f4 b5 37.f5 ♕f4+ 0-1**

☐ **Adnan Avdic**
■ **Sinisa Drazic**
Djakovo 2005

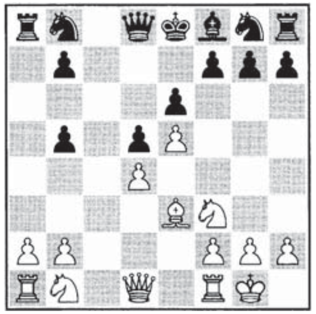
1.e4 e6 2.d4 c5 3.c3 d5 4.e5 ♗d7 5.♘f3 a6 6.♗e3 cxd4

Again Black should first exchange on d4.

7.cxd4

Another option is 7.♘xd4 (taking with a piece on d4 has become more attractive after Black has 'wasted' a tempo on ...a6) 7...♘e7 (7...♘c6 8.♘xc6 bxc6 – 8...♗xc6 – 9.♗d3 ♕b8!? 10.♕e2 ♕xe5 11.♗xa6 ♘f6 12.♘d2 ♕b8 13.♘b3 ♗d6 was excellent for Black – who later lost! – Collutiis-Drazic, Cesenatico 1998) 8.♗d3 ♘ec6!? (8...♘bc6) 9.f4 ♘xd4 10.cxd4 ♗b4+ 11.♘d2 ♗b5 12.♗xb5+ axb5 13.0-0 0-0 14.f5 exf5 15.♖xf5 ♕d7, Mukhametov-Eingorn, Berlin 1994. White is somewhat better at this stage (but he later lost).

7...♗b5 8.♗xb5+ axb5 9.0-0



9...b4

Note how reluctant Drazic is to develop his pieces. He makes sure he is getting all his useful positional moves in first.

– White gained a huge positional edge in Keitlinghaus-Bunzmann, Budapest 1997, after 9...♕d7?! 10.♕d3 b4 11.♘bd2 ♘e7 12.♘b3 ♘f5 13.♗d2 ♘c6 14.g4! ♘h6?! (14...♘fe7 15.♘c5 was the lesser evil) 15.♗xh6 gxh6 16.♔h1 ♖g8 17.h3 ♖g6 18.♘h4! ♖g7 19.♘g2 h5? 20.♘f4! hxg4 21.♘h5 winning.

– 9...♘c6 10.♘c3 b4 11.♘e2 ♘ge7 12.♘g3 (this prevents ...♘f5 so Black must change his plans) 12...♘g6 13.♘h5 f6!? 14.exf6 gxf6 15.♕d2 ♕e7!? 16.♗h6 ♖g8 17.♖fe1 ♗xh6 18.♕xh6 0-0-0 19.a3 b3! 20.♕e3 e5 21.♖ac1 ♔b8 22.♕xb3 (22.dxe5) 22...♕d6 23.♕b6 e4 24.♘d2 ♘h4 25.♘g3 f5 and Black was better in Scavo-Drazic, Bratto 1999.

10.♕d3 ♘c6 11.♘bd2 ♘ge7 12.a3

An earlier Drazic effort saw 12.♘b3 ♘f5 13.♗d2 h5 14.♗g5 ♗e7 15.♗xe7 ♕xe7 16.♘e1 0-0 with about even chances in Van Haastert-Drazic, Wijk aan Zee Sonnevanck 1998.

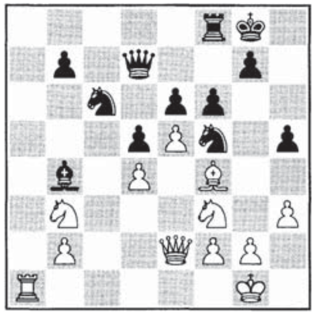
12...♘f5 13.axb4 ♗xb4 14.♕b5 0-0 15.♘b3

Nothing much is gained by 15.♕xb7 ♗xd2 16.♗xd2 ♘cxd4 17.♘xd4 ♘xd4.

15...♕d7 16.♗f4 h5!? 17.h3 f6!? 18.♕e2

Now Black gains the initiative. 18.exf6 leads to unclear play.

18...♖xa1 19.♖xa1



19...g5! 20.♗c1 g4 21.hxg4 hxg4 22.♘h2

A better chance was 22.♘h4 fxe5! 23.♘g6 ♕g7!? 24.♘xf8 ♘fxd4 25.♘xd4 ♘xd4 followed by 26...♗xf8.

22...g3! 23.♘f3

Stronger was 23.♕g4+ but Black is still clearly better in the ending after 23...♕g7 24.♕xg7+ (or 24.fxg3 ♕xg4 25.♘xg4 fxe5 26.dxe5 ♘xg3) 24...♘xg7 25.fxg3 fxe5 26.dxe5 ♘xe5.

23...♕h7! 24.♕c2

White loses immediately after 24.fxg3?? ♘xg3 25.♕e3 ♕h1+ 26.♔f2 ♘e4+.

24...fxe5 25.fxg3 25.dxe5 ♗e1! is very artistic: 26.♘xe1? (26.fxg3 ♗xg3 followed by 27...♘xe5 wins) 26...♕h2+ 27.♔f1 gxf2, winning the house. **25...♘fxd4 26.♘bxd4 ♘xd4 27.♕xh7+ ♔xh7 28.♘xe5** Material is still equal, but Black has a winning attack in this ending. **28...♘e2+ 29.♔h2 ♖f5 30.♘f3 ♖h5+ 31.♘h4 ♗d6!** The point. **32.♔h3 ♗xg3**

0-1

☐ **Evgeny Vorobiov**
■ **Dmitry Chuprov**
Voronezh 2005

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 a6

Note the move order via the Sicilian O'Kelly Variation. We will return to this transposition in a future SOS volume.

3.c3 e6 4.d4 d5 5.e5 ♗d7 6.♘bd2

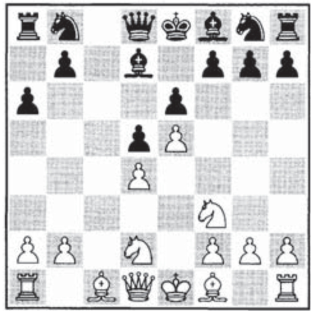
White develops a piece, but still manages to leave the bishop on f1 just as in the previous game with 6.♗e3. The knight is passively placed on this square in structures without both c-pawns – the knight would belong on c3 then – hence, after

6...cxd4

it makes sense to take back with the knight on d4, to follow up with ♘2f3 to overprotect the central squares d4 and e5. Yes, Nimzowitsch still makes a lot of sense!

7.♘xd4

Black is happy after 7.cxd4



Two practical examples:

– 7...♘e7 (waiting for White to move his light-squared bishop) 8.♗e2 ♗b5 9.♗xb5+ axb5 10.♘f1 ♘f5 11.♕d3 ♘c6 12.♘g3 (12.♕xb5 ♕d7 13.♕d3 (13.♗e3 ♘xe5) 13...♘b4 14.♕b3 ♕b5∓) 12...♘h4! 13.♘xh4 ♕xh4 14.♗e3 ♗b4+ 15.♔f1 ♖a5 with an edge in Mukhametov-Drazic, Sofia 1994.

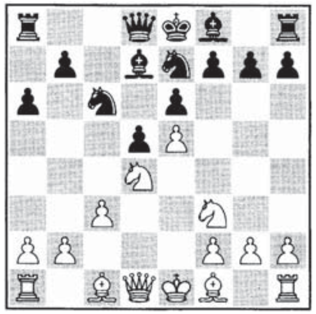
– 7...♕b6 8.♕b3 ♕xb3 9.♘xb3 ♗b5 (Black is not afraid of doubled b-pawns, not even in the ending) 10.♗d2 (10.♗xb5+ axb5 11.♔e2 was nevertheless a better try) 10...♘c6 11.a3 (11.♗xb5) 11...♗c4 12.♘a5 (12.♗xc4 dxc4 13.♘a5 ♘xa5 14.♗xa5 ♘e7∓) 12...♘xa5 13.♗xa5 ♖c8 14.♖c1 ♘e7 15.♔d2 g6! 16.♖c3 ♔d7 17.♔c2 ♗g7 18.b3 ♗xf1 19.♖xf1 ♘c6 20.♗b6 f6! 21.exf6 ♗xf6 22.♔d3 ♖hf8 23.♖c2 g5 and Black's chances are to be preferred. Benev-Donchev, Elenite 1987.

7...♘c6

This is more natural than 7...♘e7 8.f4 ♘bc6 9.♘4f3! (9.♘2f3 ♘xd4 10.♘xd4 ♘c6) 9...♘f5 10.♗d3. White is now ready to take control over the central squares with ♘b3 and ♗xf5. Eingorn therefore decides to mix it with 10...d4!? 11.♘e4 dxc3 12.bxc3 ♘a5 13.0-0 ♗c6, but objectively White was better after 14.♕e2 h5 15.♗e3 ♘xe3 16.♕xe3 ♗xe4 17.♗xe4 g6 18.♔h1 ♕c7 19.♘g5 ♗e7 20.♘xe6! fxe6 21.♗xg6+ ♔d8 22.♖ad1+ ♔c8 23.♕h3, although Black won in the game Abreu-Eingorn, World Team Championship, Yerevan 2001.

8.♘2f3 ♘ge7

In D.Schneider-Nestorovic, Bar 2005, Black immediately took on d4: 8...♘xd4 9.♕xd4 ♘e7 10.♗d3 ♘c6 11.♕g4 (White's queen is well-placed here. A clear disadvantage of Black's 8th move) 11...f5 12.♕g3 (12.exf6 ♕xf6 13.♗g5 ♕f7 14.♕g3 should be better for White) 12...♕c7 13.h4 (13.0-0) 13...0-0-0 14.♗g5 ♗e7 15.♗xe7 ♘xe7 16.♘d4?! ♘c6 17.♘xc6 ♗xc6 18.0-0 g5! 19.hxg5 ♖dg8 20.♗e2 h6 21.g6 h5 with excellent counterplay.



9.♗f4

Nothing is gained by 9.♗d3 ♘xd4 10.cxd4 (10.♘xd4 ♘c6) 10...♗b5! 11.0-0 ♗xd3 12.♕xd3 ♘c6 13.h4 ♗e7 14.h5 h6 15.♗e3 ♕b6 16.♖fc1 ♕b5 17.♕d2 ♕b4 18.♕c2 0–0 ½–½ Baumegger-Sommerbauer, Austrian Championship, Vienna 1999.

9...♘xd4

This looks more accurate than 9...♘g6 10.♗g3 ♘xd4 11.♕xd4 h5 12.h3 ♗b5 13.♗xb5+ axb5 14.0–0 with a slight edge in Sveshnikov-Drazic, Ljubljana 1997.

10.♕xd4

Once more 10.♘xd4 is simply met by 10...♘c6.

10...♕a5!? 11.♕d2 ♗b5

Again Black manages to exchange off his French bishop to obtain (at least) equal chances.

12.♗xb5+ ♕xb5 13.♘d4 ♕d7 14.h4 ♘c6 15.h5 ♘xd4 16.cxd4 ♕b5

Now her majesty returns to this square to prevent kingside castling.

17.0-0-0 ♗b4 18.♕d3 0-0 19.♕xb5 axb5

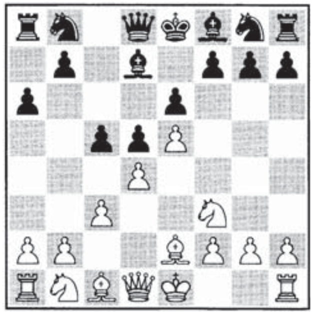
The ending is equal. The game was drawn after

20.♔b1 ♖fc8 21.♖c1 ♖c4 22.♗e3

♖ac8 23.b3 ♖xc1+ 24.♖xc1 ♖xc1+ 25.♔xc1 g6 26.hxg6 fxg6 27.♔d1 ♔f7 28.♔e2 ♗e7 29.f4 h5 30.♔f3 g5 31.fxg5 ♔g6 32.♗f2 ♔xg5 33.♗e3+ ♔f5 34.♗f2 ½-½

☐ **Reinhard Schischke**
■ **Vereslav Eingorn**
Berlin 1995

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 a6 3.c3 e6 4.d4 d5 5.e5 ♗d7 6.♗e2



White develops his light-squared bishop and does not worry about the tempo he might lose following an eventual ♗xb5. Note that both 6.♗e2 and 6.♗d3 (the next game) may lead to the same positions when White takes the black bishop once it arrives on b5.

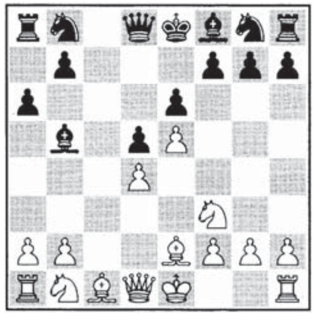
6...cxd4

Taking on d4 is essential before executing our strategical plan. Even fairly strong players have made the mistake to play the immediate 6...♗b5.

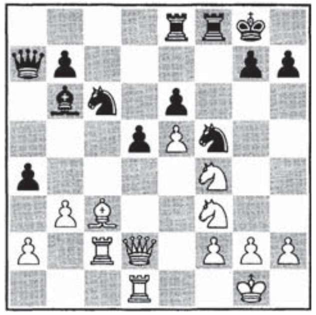
And, indeed, not all White players found 7.♗xb5+! axb5 8.dxc5! ♗xc5 9.b4! ♗b6 10.♘a3 and Black cannot keep his b5-pawn – White can attack b5 once more with ♕e2 or ♕d3, while Black has only one defender: the queen, which can be moved to d7.

7.♘xd4

More popular is 7.cxd4 – after 7...♗b5



White must decide whether to take on b5, or not. We will examine 8.♗xb5+ in the next game (via the move order with 6.♗d3). After 8.0-0 (or 8.♘c3 ♗xe2 9.♘xe2 ♘c6 10.0-0 ♘ge7 11.♘g3 g6!? 12.♗g5 ♗g7 13.♕d2 h6 14.♗e3 ♕a5 with equality in Barria-Paunovic, Seville 2004) 8...♗xe2 9.♕xe2 ♘e7 Black is fine. Best is something like 10.♘c3 ♘bc6 11.♗e3 ♘f5 12.♖ac1 ♗e7, and Black had an easy game in Turzo-Kerek, Hungarian Junior Championship, Paks 1998. No good is 10.♘bd2, but nevertheless we will follow the game Shulzhenko-Grunina, Cherepovets 2001, for a bit, since Grunina demonstrates an excellent understanding of Black's strategy in such positions: 10...♘bc6 11.♘b3 ♘f5 12.♗d2 ♗e7 13.♖ac1 0-0 (Black has succeeded in exchanging off her bad French bishop, and she has placed her knights on the best squares c6 and f5 from where they attack d4. She now starts to increase the pressure on the queenside) 14.♖c2 ♕b6 15.♗c3 a5! 16.♕d2 a4 17.♘c1 ♕a7!? (preparing the manoeuvre ♗d8-b6 to attack the base of White's pawn chain) 18.♘e2 ♗d8 19.♖fc1 ♗b6 20.b3 f6! (now the front of the chain is attacked with this typical French move) 21.♘f4 ♖ae8 22.♖d1 fxe5 23.dxe5



and here she could have crowned her positional effort with the tactic 23...♗e3! 24.fxe3 ♘xe3 which would have won on the spot.

7...♘e7

Preparing ...♘bc6. Also playable is the immediate 7...♘c6.

8.0-0

Now 8.♘d2 would be similar to Vorobiov-Chuprov above. 8.f4 ♘bc6 9.♗e3 ♘xd4 10.cxd4 ♕b6 11.♕d2 ♗b5 12.♗xb5+ axb5 13.0-0 h5 14.♘c3 b4 15.♘e2 ♘f5 16.♗f2 ♗e7 17.♖fc1 ♔d7 and Black was fine in Klovans-Jakobsen, Arvier 2006.

8...♘bc6 9.♘xc6 ♗xc6

Or 9...♘xc6.

10.♘d2

Perhaps White should have settled for 10.♗e3 ♘f5 11.♗d4.

10...d4

Changing the character of the position. Clearly this is not forced, and Black is fine in any case.

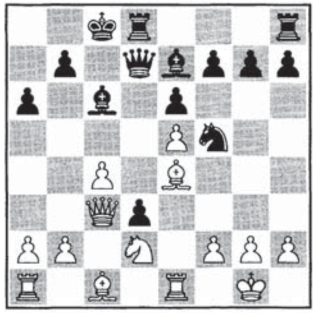
11.c4

11.cxd4 ♕xd4 12.♘c4 ♘f5 is OK for Black since 13.♗e3? is bad due to 13...♕e4!.

11...d3

The d-pawn is cutting the board into two halves. Eingorn has won a lot of space by marching forward.

12.♗f3 ♕d4 13.♕b3 0-0-0 14.♖e1 ♕d7 15.♗e4 ♘f5 16.♕c3 ♗e7



17.♘b3

Eingorn now grasps the initiative by setting up an attack along the h1–a8 diagonal.

17...♗xe4 18.♖xe4 ♕c6 19.♖e1?!

19.f3 was a better defence.

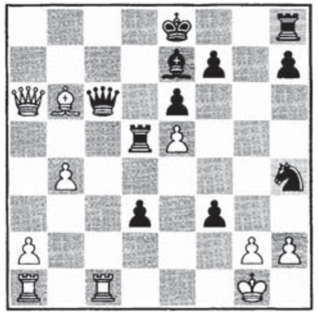
19...g5! 20.♗e3 ♘h4 21.f3 g4

Well-played! Eingorn uses the momentum well.

22.♘a5 ♕c7 23.c5 ♖d5 24.b4 gxf3 25.c6 b5

Black is winning now, so White starts a desperate 'attack'.

26.♘c4 bxc4 27.♕xc4 ♔d8 28.♕xa6 ♔e8 29.♗b6 ♕xc6 30.♖ec1



30...♖c5!

This shocker wins; it is based on the fact that 31...f2+ followed by 32...♕xg2+ cannot be prevented.

31.♖xc5

Or 31.bxc5 ♖g8 32.g3 f2+ 33.♔xf2 ♕f3+ 34.♔e1 ♕e2 mate.

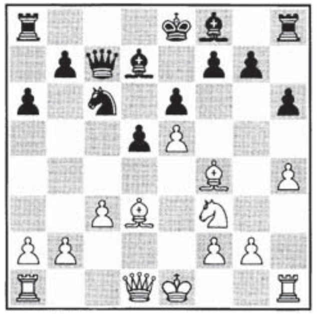
31...f2+ 32.♔xf2 ♕xg2+ 33.♔e3 ♕e2+ 34.♔d4 ♘f5+ 35.♔c4 d2+ 36.♔b3 ♕xa6 0-1

☐ **Zurab Azmaiparashvili**
■ **Nukhim Rashkovsky**
Kiev ch-URS 1986

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.c3 a6 4.d4 d5 5.e5 ♗d7 6.♗d3 cxd4 7.cxd4

With the bishop on d3 it is actually more logical to take back with the knight than with the bishop on e2 (as in Schischke-Eingorn). 7.♘xd4 and now:

● It makes sense to prepare ...♘bc6 with 7...♘e7. A model game from Black's point of view was Schlosser-Braun, Altenkirchen 2005: 8.♘d2 ♘bc6 9.♘2f3 ♕c7 10.♘xc6 (10.♕e2) 10...♘xc6 11.♗f4 h6! 12.h4



12...d4!? 13.cxd4 ♘b4 (Black will obtain excellent compensation for the pawn) 14.a3 ♘xd3+ 15.♕xd3 ♗b5 (preventing White from castling. No one would dare to speak of a 'bad bishop' now!) 16.♕d1 ♕c6 17.♖c1 (17.d5 to return the pawn was already the best chance) 17...♕e4+ 18.♗e3 ♗e7 (now Black is just better) 19.♖c3 0-0 20.a4 ♗c6 21.0-0 ♖ac8 22.b3 ♗d5 23.♗d2 ♖xc3 24.♗xc3 ♖c8 25.♖e1 ♕g4 26.♖e3 ♗xh4! and Black won fairly quickly.

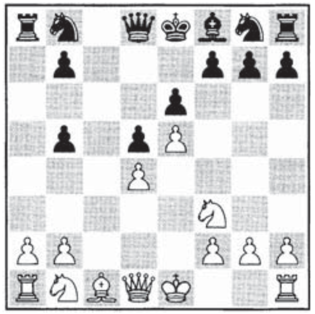
● Natural is 7...♘c6 8.♘xc6 ♗xc6 9.0–0 (or 9.♕e2 ♕d7 10.0-0 ♘e7 11.♘a3 ♘g6 12.♘c2 ♗c5 13.♗e3 ♗xe3 14.♕xe3 ♗b5 15.f4 0-0 16.♘d4 ♗xd3 17.♕xd3 f6 with equal chances in the game Sanduleac-Drazic, Subotica 2003) 9...♘e7 10.♘d2, which occurred in two internet blitz games Karjakin-Baklan. Black is perhaps slightly worse.

I would therefore give preference to Braun's move 7...♘e7.

7...♗b5 8.♗c2

An ambitious move. White keeps the light-squared bishop and hopes to chase away its opponent with ♘c3. If it works then he will gain a significant advantage. If his plan fails he will have allowed a monster on the diagonal f1–a6!

Important for this whole SOS line is the position after 8.♗xb5+ axb5.



As pointed out above, the diagrammed position may also occur via 6.♗e2.

Some practical examples to demonstrate that Black has few problems. After 9.0-0 Black can simply develop with 9...♘c6, but the space gaining 9...b4 – to prevent 10.♘c3 – is also good:

● 9...b4 10.♕d3 ♘c6 11.♘bd2 (Black is OK after 11.♗g5 ♘ge7 12.♘bd2 h6 13.♗xe7 ♗xe7 14.♘b3 ♕b6 15.♖fc1 0-0 16.♘c5 ♖fc8 Chaichi-Pashikian, Lahijan 2005) 11...♘ge7 12.♘b3 ♕b6 13.♗d2 ♕a6!? 14.♕xa6 ♖xa6 15.♖fc1 ♘c8 16.♘c5?! (16.♘e1) 16...♗xc5 17.♖xc5 0-0 18.♔f1 f6 19.exf6 gxf6 20.b3?! ♘d6 with a clear edge. Cherenkova-Grunina, Serpukhov 2003.

● 9...♘c6 10.♘c3 b4 11.♘b5!? (uncompromising play – White will be obliged to play ♘d6+ soon. Safer is 11.♘e2 ♘ge7 12.b3 ♘f5 13.♗g5 ♗e7 14.♗xe7 ♕xe7 15.♕d3 0-0 16.♘g3 ♘h4 17.♘e1 f6 18.exf6 ♕xf6 19.♘c2 ♖a5 and the players agreed to a draw in Navrotescu-Ionescu, Romania 1992) 11...♖a5 12.♕d3 ♕b6 13.♘d6+ ♗xd6 14.exd6 ♘f6 15.♗d2 ♘e4 (15...0-0) 16.d7+!? ♔xd7, Dusper-Sulava, Pula 1998. And now 17.♘e5+ ♘xe5 18.dxe5 ♕b5 19.♕e3 ♖ha8 20.♖fc1!? is about equal after 20...♖xa2 21.♖xa2 ♖xa2 22.♕f4 (22.♗e1 ♖xb2 23.♕f4 ♘c3 24.♕xf7+ ♔d8=) 22...♔e8 23.♖c8+ ♔d7 24.♖c1 ♔e8 with a repetition.

White can also opt for 8.0-0 ♘c6 9.♘c3 ♗xd3 10.♕xd3 ♘ge7.

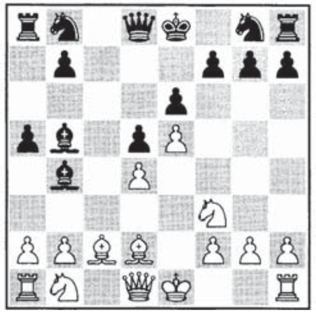
We have seen quite a few of these positions by now. Black never has any problems. I would advise you to play through a few of the examples to see where the pieces belong.

This following game is another good model: 11.♘e2 ♘g6 12.♘f4 ♘xf4 13.♗xf4 ♗e7 14.♗d2 0-0 15.♗c3 b5 16.a3 ♕b6 17.b3 ♖fc8 18.♗b2 ♖c7 19.♖fc1 ♖ac8 20.h4 h5 21.g3 g6 22.♔g2 ♗f8 23.♘d2 ♗h6 24.f4 ♘e7 25.♖xc7 ♖xc7 26.♖c1 ♖xc1 27.♗xc1 ♘f5 28.♗b2 ♗f8 29.♘f1 ♕a5 and with his superior pieces Black was clearly better in Relange-Glek, Le Touquet 1993.

8...♗b4+

This is obligatory. Black cannot allow 9.♘c3.

9.♗d2 a5



Protecting the bishop and enabling Black to withdraw his light-squared bishop to a6 if necessary. Note the role of the a-pawn in this game. It twice protects a bishop on the b-file. Of course 9...♗xd2+? 10.♕xd2 a5 11.♘c3 ♗a6 12.♘e2 was never Black's intention.

10.♘c3 ♗xc3!?

This is the complicated and ambitious choice. Also possible is the simple 10...♗a6 11.♘e2 ♘c6 12.0-0 ♘ge7 13.a3 ♗xd2 14.♕xd2 ♕b6 15.♖fe1 ♗xe2 ½–½ Aseev-Eingorn, Berlin 1997.

11.♗xc3

Here 11.bxc3 leads to a strategically complicated position. For example: 11...h6 12.♘g1!? ♘e7 13.♘e2 ♘d7 14.♖b1 ♗a6 15.♘f4!? g6 16.♗d3 ♗xd3 17.♘xd3 b6 18.a4 ♖c8 with about equal chances in Andreev-Anapolsky, Alushta 2003.

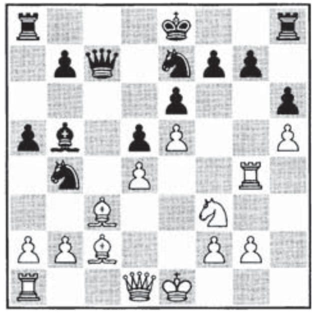
11...♘c6

White's dilemma is clear. He will either have to forget about castling for some time, or admit that his 8th move was too ambitious and retrace his steps with ♗d3.

12.h4 ♘ge7 13.h5 h6 14.♖h4 ♕c7 15.♖g4

Both sides have made some typically 'French' moves. Now rather than play 15...0–0 (which is possible) Rashkovsky embarks on the adventurous

15...♘b4!?



16.♗b1

16.♖xg7 ♘xc2+ 17.♕xc2 ♘f5 18.♖g4 ♕c4 is the kind of line that only a computer would seriously contemplate.

16...♕c4 17.♘d2

17.♖xg7 ♕f1+ 18.♔d2 ♕xf2+ 19.♔c1 ♘f5 is hardly attractive for White.

17...♘d3+ 18.♗xd3 ♕xd3

Black has fantastic play along the light squares. The opposite-coloured bishops only fuel Black's attacking potential.

19.a4 ♗a6 20.♗xa5

To have at least a pawn for his worries. Taking the other pawn on offer is wrong: 20.♖xg7? ♘f5 21.♖g4 loses to 21...♘e3!.

20...♖c8

Not 20...♘f5? 21.♖a3 and the queen is trapped.

21.♖a3 ♕f5 22.♖gg3?!

22.♖xg7! ♕f4 and Black has compensation for his two-pawn deficit.

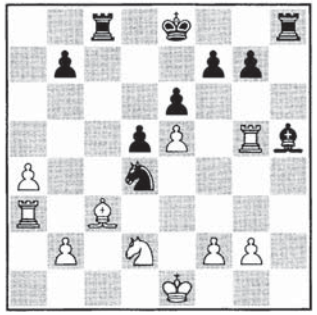
22...♕f4 23.♗c3 ♘f5 24.♕g4

White needs to exchange queens.

24...♕g5 25.♕xg5 hxg5 26.♖xg5 ♘xd4! 27.♔d1?!

Not 27.♗xd4?? ♖c1 mate. White should have played 27.♘e4! ♘c2+ 28.♔d2 ♘xa3 29.♘d6+ though.

27...♗e2+ 28.♔e1 ♗xh5



Now Black enjoys a clear edge.

29.♖xh5 ♘c2+ 30.♔d1 ♖xh5 31.♔xc2 d4 32.♘e4

Best was 32.♘c4 ♖xc4 33.♔d3 ♖c7 (the rook ending after 33...dxc3!? 34.♔xc4 cxb2 35.♖b3 ♖xe5 36.♖xb2 does not win) 34.♗xd4 ♖h1 and Black still has to work hard.

32...♔d7 33.♘d6 ♖c6 34.♘xb7 ♖xe5 35.b4 ♖xc3+ 36.♖xc3 dxc3 37.♔xc3 ♖e2

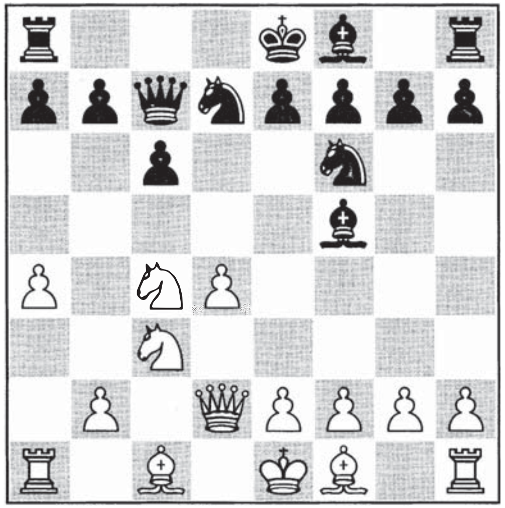
The knight is bad in an ending with pawns on both flanks. Despite the fact that it is only White who has two passers on the queenside! The rest is no longer interesting for our purpose. Black won after

38.♘c5+ ♔c6 39.♘d3 e5 40.g3?! f6 41.♔c4 ♖c2+ 42.♔b3 ♖e2 43.♔c4 e4 44.♘c5 f5 45.♘e6 ♖c2+ 46.♔d4 g6 47.♔e3 ♔d6 48.♘g5 ♖c4 49.♔f4 ♖xb4 50.a5 ♔e7 51.a6 ♖a4 52.g4 e3+! 53.♔xe3 ♖xg4 54.♘f3 ♖a4 55.♘e5? ♖e4+ 0-1

CHAPTER 15

Dorian Rogozenko

A Slav Surprise



Facing 7...♕c7 with 8.♕d2

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 dxc4 5.a4 ♗f5 6.♘e5 ♘bd7 7.♘xc4 ♕c7 8.♕d2!?

This strange-looking move was first played in the 1930s and after a long period only in …1998! I must confess that although I play the Slav Defence with both colours, I didn't know about the existence of 8.♕d2 until I saw the game Mikhalevski-Bareev, Turin 2006, when the Israeli GM defeated his strong opponent in the very important Olympiad match Russia-Israel. Indeed, there is practically no theory here, with a mere dozen games played so far.

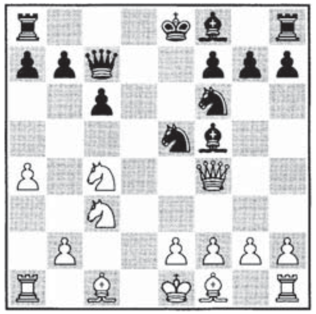
A closer look at the position reveals the fact that 8.♕d2 is designed to neutralize Black's main idea behind 7...♕c7 – the central advance ...e7-e5. It is worth noticing that by playing 7...♕c7 Black usually seeks a complicated middlegame. The variation became fashionable for Black when Morozevich started to use it with great success, outplaying his opponents in sharp middlegame positions. Well, the move 8.♕d2 completely neutralizes Black's intentions, since the active 8...e5 is no longer possible (it simply loses material after 9.dxe5 followed by 10.♕f4). Moreover, in what can be considered the main line of 8.♕d2 White achieves a slightly better endgame, which can be quite annoying for an aggressive opponent. After 8.♕d2 in many cases White succeeds to exchange a knight for a bishop, forcing Black to either play something risky (this is what Bareev did against Mikhalevski), or try to defend an inferior position. In our main game below the European Women Champion of 2006 went for an apparently solid endgame, but the ex-World Women Champion demonstrated the power of the bishop pair and went on to crush Black in great style.

☐ **Maia Chiburdanidze**
■ **Ekaterina Polovnikova**
Krasnoturinsk 2004

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 dxc4 5.a4 ♗f5 6.♘e5 ♘bd7 7.♘xc4 ♕c7 8.♕d2 e6

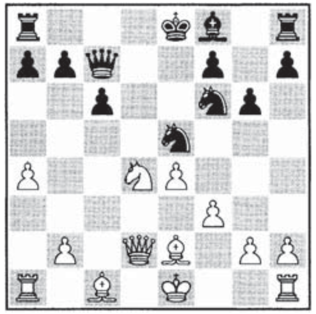
The most natural reply. Let's see what other moves were tried in practice.

– As mentioned 8...e5? loses: 9.dxe5 ♘xe5 10.♕f4



10...♘fd7 11.♕xf5 ♘xc4 12.♕e4+ ♘ce5 13.f4 f5 14.♕xf5 winning material.

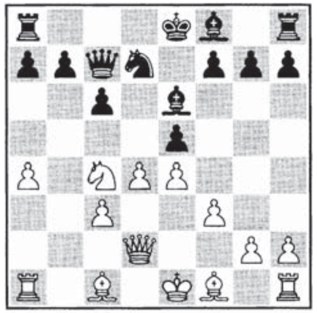
– 8...g6. The main idea behind this move is to protect bishop f5 and to prepare ...e7-e5. 9.f3 e5 (9...♗g7? loses material after 10.e4 ♗e6 11.d5 cxd5 12.exd5 ♗f5 13.♘b5 ♕b8 14.g4 ♘e5 15.♘xe5 ♕xe5+ 16.♕e2 ♕xe2+ 17.♗xe2) 10.e4 exd4 (10...♗e6? 11.d5+–) 11.♘e2 ♗e6 12.♘xd4 ♗xc4 13.♗xc4 (so after all Black couldn't keep both bishops on the board. However, before talking about a clear advantage, White still needs to finish his development) 13...♘e5 14.♗e2



14...0-0-0 (Bareev is rightly trying to complicate matters, as after 14...♗g7 15.♕c2! 0-0 16.0-0 ♖ad8 17.♗e3 thanks to the bishop pair White has a clear advantage) 15.♕c3 ♗g7 (15...a5 16.♘c2±) 16.♗e3 ♘eg4!? (in case of 16...♖he8 White can avoid tactical ideas from Black by continuing either 17.0-0-0 followed by 18.♔b1, or play for a bigger advantage with 17.♖d1 preparing to castle short. Then in order to avoid a much worse middlegame Black must sacrifice a piece: 17...♘eg4 18.fxg4 ♘xe4, although after 19.♕c1 ♕a5+ 20.♔f1 it remains unclear if Black will be able to prove sufficient compensation) 17.fxg4 ♘xe4 18.♕c4 ♖he8 (18...♕a5+ 19.b4 ♕e5 20.♖d1 ♘g3 21.hxg3 ♕xe3 22.♖d3 ♕e7 23.♘c2±) 19.0-0-0 (19.♖a3 is another possibility, when Black has nothing better than 19...♘d2 but in the resulting position after 20.♔xd2 ♖xe3 21.♔xe3 ♖xd4 22.♕xd4 ♗xd4+ 23.♔xd4 White's prospects are preferable) 19...♕e5 20.♖d3 ♕c5? (obligatory was 20...♘c5, with good chances to escape after 21.♖c3 ♖xd4 22.♗xd4 ♕xd4 23.♗f3±) 21.♘c2! ♕e5 22.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 23.♕b3 (now White is just a piece up) 23...♘d2 24.♗xd2 ♕xe2 25.♗g5 ♖d3 26.♕b4 ♕xg2 27.♖e1 b6 28.♖e8+ ♔b7 29.♕e7+ ♔a6 30.♘b4+ 1-0, Mikhalevski-Bareev, Turin Olympiad 2006.

– 8...♗g6 9.♕f4 (9.g3 is another option) 9...♕xf4 10.♗xf4 ♘d5 11.♗g3 h5 (11...♘b4 12.0-0-0±) 12.f3 ♘7b6 13.♘e5 ♗h7 14.a5 ♘b4 15.♖c1 ♘d7 16.e4 ♘xe5 17.♗xe5 f6 (17...♖d8 18.d5!±) 18.♗f4 ♖d8 19.♗e3 with a slight but pleasant advantage in P.Cramling-Hamelink, English Team Championship 2005/06.

– 8...♘d5 9.f3 e5 10.e4 ♘xc3 11.bxc3 ♗e6



Now 12.d5 cxd5 13.exd5 ♗f5 14.d6 ♕c6 15.♗a3 a6 16.♗b4 g6 was double-edged in Elianov-Rodshtein, Ashdod 2004. Therefore White may prefer 12.♗e2, when he enjoys a slight pull after 12...♖d8 (not 12...♗e7? 13.d5 cxd5 14.exd5 ♗f5 15.d6+–) 13.0-0 ♗e7 14.♕c2 0-0 15.♗e3.

– 8...♘b6 9.♘e5 e6 (9...♘bd7 10.♕f4!?±) 10.f3 ♖d8 (10...0-0-0?! 11.e4 ♗g6 12.♕f2 ♘bd7 13.♘c4 ♘b6 14.♗e3 and the black king might become a target for attack in the future) 11.e4 ♗g6 12.♕f2 ♘bd7 and now in the game Kekelidze-Pitl, Deizisau 2006, instead of 13.♗f4 ♘xe5 14.♗xe5 ♕a5 with some activity for Black, White had to continue 13.♘c4 e5 (13...♘b6 14.♗e3±) 14.dxe5 ♘xe5 (or 14...♗c5 15.♘d6+! ♔f8 16.♗e3 ♗xe3 17.♕xe3 ♘xe5 18.♘c4±) 15.♗e3 and White is again slightly better.

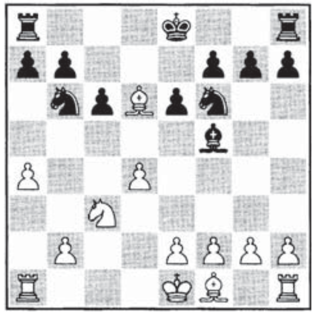
9.♕f4

This is the point behind White's set-up. With the knight on c4 White is able to use the weakness of square d6. The next moves are more or less forced.

9...♕xf4

After 9...0-0-0 10.♕xc7+ ♔xc7, besides 11.♗f4+ White can also consider 11.f3!? ♔c8 12.e4 ♗g6 13.a5, with advantage.

10.♗xf4 ♘b6 11.♘d6+ ♗xd6 12.♗xd6



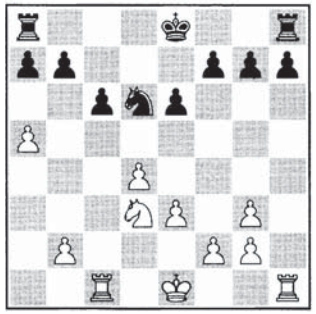
If White will succeed to complete development and consolidate the position, her advantage will become obvious.

12...0-0-0

Two years after the present game, in the tournament that became her biggest achievement so far, Ekaterina played 12...♘c4. Then in Dzagnidze-Atalik, Kusadasi 2006, (in 2006 Ekaterina Polovnikova married the Turkish GM Suat Atalik and changed her name) White retreated the bishop to f4 – 13.♗f4 – allowing 13...♘d5!. Then after 14.e4 ♘xf4 Nana Dzagnidze went for an interesting pawn sacrifice: 15.♗xc4 (the simple 15.exf5 ♘xb2 16.♖b1 ♘bd3+ 17.♗xd3 ♘xd3+ 18.♔d2 ♘f4 19.g3 followed by 20.♖xb7 deserves attention) 15...♘xg2+ 16.♔e2 ♗g4+ 17.f3 ♗h5 18.h4 ♖d8 19.♖ad1 h6 20.♖h2 ♘f4+ 21.♔e3 ♘g6 22.♘e2 e5 23.d5 ♘e7 24.♘g3 ♗g6 25.h5

♗h7 26.♖hd2 and the sharp battle ended in a draw later on.

In fact 12...♘c4 must be answered by 13.♗g3! (in P.Schmidt-Stahlberg, Pärnu 1937, 13.♗a3 proved less strong) and White keeps an edge in the endgame 13...♗c2 (this somewhat extravagant move is rather a necessity. 13...♘xb2? loses a piece after 14.♖a2 ♘c4 15.e4; 13...♗g6 is a big advantage for White after 14.e4 ♘b6 (14...♘xb2 15.♖a2+–; 14...♘a5 15.♖a3! b6 16.b4 ♘b7 17.♗a6 ♘d8 18.f3±) 15.a5 ♘bd7 16.f3) 14.e3 (14.e4 ♘a5! using the unprotected pawn on d4) 14...♗b3 (now 14...♘a5? is bad in view of 15.b4 ♘b3 16.♖a2 and Black will lose the knight on b3) 15.♘e2!? (good is also 15.a5±) 15...♘a5 (15...♘xb2 16.♖b1 ♘d3+ 17.♔d2±; 15...♘e4? 16.♘c1+–) 16.♘c1 ♗c4 (16...♗d5 17.f3 ♗c4 18.♘d3! ♘d5 19.♔f2±) 17.♗xc4 (after 17.♘d3 Black probably equalizes with 17...♘b3 18.♖d1 ♘e4 19.♗f4 g5) 17...♘xc4 18.♘d3 ♘e4 19.♖c1 ♘xg3 20.hxg3 ♘d6 21.a5



The space advantage together with the possibility to use square c5 for the knight and pressure on both wings secures White a small, but long-lasting edge. However, perhaps something like this is what Black should be aiming for from the previous diagrammed position.

13.♗c5

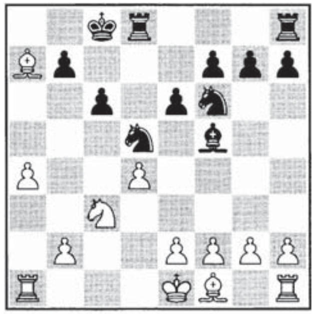
White's dark-squared bishop is a very important piece. Now it exerts pressure on the diagonal a7-g1, threatening 14.a5 followed by 15.♗xa7. Notice that the bishop is also a good defender for pawn d4.

13...♔b8

This natural desire to protect pawn a7 allows White to build a strong center and conveniently finish his development. However, it is not clear what Black should do instead.

● White's chances are preferable following the sacrifice of pawn a7:

13...♘bd5 14.♗xa7 (here 14.♘xd5 ♘xd5 15.e3 b6 16.♗a3 a5! doesn't look like a real advantage for White)

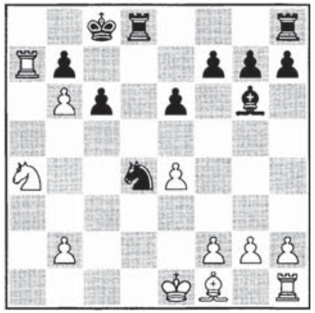


– Not good is 14...♘b4: 15.0-0-0 ♘g4 16.e4 ♘xf2 (16...♗g6 17.♖d2+–) 17.exf5 ♘xh1 18.fxe6 fxe6 19.♗c5 ♘d5 20.♘e4 b6 (20...♘e3 21.♖e1 ♘g4 22.♗c4±) 21.♗a3 ♘e3 22.♗a6+ ♔b8 23.♖xh1 ♖xd4 24.♘c3 and the two bishops are much stronger than the rook and pawn.

– After 14...b6 there follows a long tactical sequence: 15.a5 ♔b7 (15...♘b4 16.0-0-0 bxa5 17.♗b6 ♖d7 18.♗xa5 ♘bd5 19.♘xd5 cxd5 20.f3±) 16.♗xb6 (16.axb6 ♘b4 17.0-0-0 ♘g4 18.e4 ♘xf2 19.exf5 is very unclear) 16...♘xb6 17.axb6 ♖xd4 (17...♔xb6 18.e3±; 17...♖a8 18.♘a4!±) 18.♖a7+ ♔xb6 19.♖xf7 ♖a8 20.f3 ♖a1+ 21.♔f2 ♖b4 22.g4 ♗g6 23.♖xg7 ♖xb2 24.♗g2 ♖a3 (24...♖xh1 25.♘a4+! ♔b5 26.♘xb2 ♖b1 (26...♖xh2? 27.♔g3 ♖h6 28.e4 is disastrous for Black) 27.h4!±) 25.♖c1 and Black does not have sufficient compensation for the pawn.

Note that the attempt to chase away the bishop from c5 is more difficult than it may seem.

● For instance 13...♘fd7 leads by force to a difficult position for Black: 14.a5 ♘xc5 (14...♘d5 15.♘xd5 exd5 16.♗xa7 ♔c7 17.e3 ♖a8 18.♗c5±) 15.axb6 ♘b3 16.♖xa7 ♘xd4 17.e4 ♗g6 18.♘a4! White has a mating attack in the endgame.



The knight comes to c5 and Black is in trouble. Checking the white king brings nothing: 18...♘c2+ 19.♔e2 ♘d4+ 20.♔e3 ♘c2+ 21.♔f4 e5+ 22.♔g3 winning.

14.f3!

Right in time for e2-e4. The next part of the game is a perfect illustration of the superiority of bishops over knights.

14...♖he8 15.e4 ♗g6 16.♗e2 e5?

Black should have continued to wait in passivity, even if White's advantage is beyond question in that case as well. This attempt to get some air for the pieces quickly backfires. Notice the psychological background: in the present opening variation Black subconsciously aims for the central advance ...e5, but that's it – 8.♕d2 makes the difference: Black must usually forget his initial intentions.

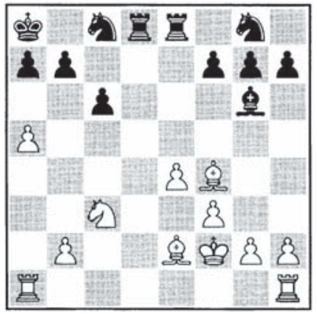
17.dxe5 ♖xe5 18.♗e3!

The bishop switches to the diagonal b8-h2. Notice that due to the absence of his dark-squared bishop there is nothing Black can do to neutralize the activity of her opponent's bishop.

18...♖ee8 19.♔f2 ♘g8

The knights are very poor and Black wants to create some targets for attack by means of ...f7-f5. This obviously cannot help anymore.

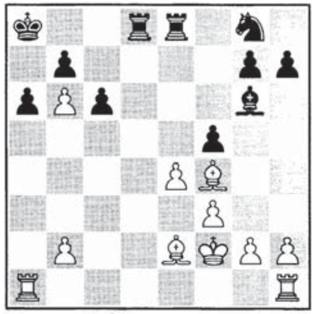
20.♗f4+ ♔a8 21.a5 ♘c8



22.♘a4!

Suddenly everything will end with a direct attack. All white pieces coordinate perfectly.

22...f5 23.♘b6+ ♘xb6 24.axb6 a6



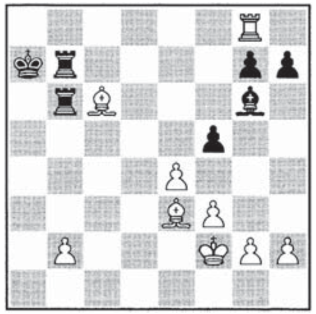
25.♖xa6+! bxa6 26.♗xa6

White wins in all variations. The direct threat is 27.♖a1 followed by 28.♗c8 mate!

26...fxe4

Or 26...♖e7 27.♖a1 ♖dd7 28.b7+ ♖xb7 29.♗b5+! ♖a7 30.♗xc6+ ♖b7 31.♖d1! ♖a6

32.♖d8+ ♔a7 33.♗e3+ ♖ab6 34.♖xg8 and Black is dead-lost.



This position deserves a diagram.
After 26...fxe4 Black is quickly mated following:

27.♖a1 e3+ 28.♔e1

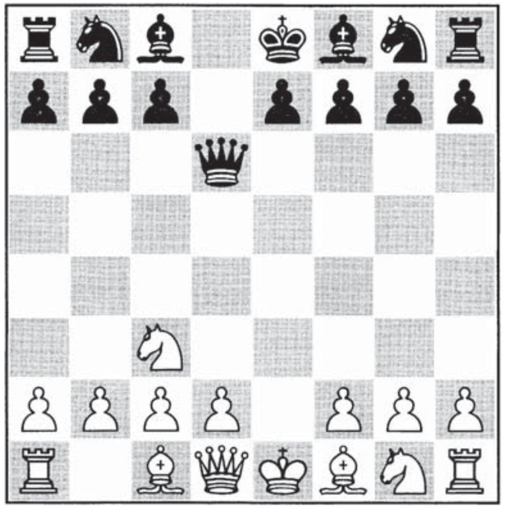
Black resigned. A wonderful game of Maia, reminding of her best years.

The conclusion must be that in this popular Slav line 8.♕d2 has great surprise value. The queen move slows down Black's aggressive intentions in the opening, and, thanks to the possibility to obtain the bishop pair, contains potential for activity in the endgame.

CHAPTER 16

Sergey Tiviakov

Scandinavian with 3...♕d6



A slip of the hand?

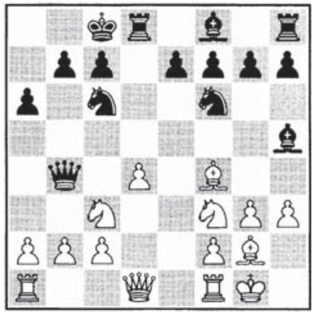
Everything started in August 2005. I was playing in an open tournament in Solsona (Spain). I was White against a Cuban player Omar Almeida, and after a mere 11 moves I was lost. Luckily for me my draw offer on move 12 was accepted by my opponent.

☐ **Sergey Tiviakov**
■ **Omar Almeida**
Solsona 2005

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♕xd5 3.♘c3 ♕d6 4.d4 ♘f6 5.♘f3 a6 6.g3 ♗g4 7.h3 ♗h5 8.♗g2 ♘c6 9.0-0 0-0-0 10.♗f4?!

After the correct 10.♗e3 e5 an equal ending arises almost by force.

10...♕b4



11.d5?

After this mistake White loses material.

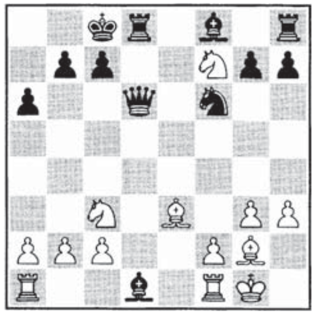
11...e6 12.a3 **½-½**

Well, this was a very useful experience for me. I thought, if I can get a lost position with white so quickly (and I have to admit that I had even studied this variation regularly before as White) then why could the same thing not happen to other strong players?!
So, I decided to work on this line to incorporate the Scandinavian Defence into my repertoire. After my return from Spain there were still three weeks left and I prepared it for the 2005 Dutch championship, my immediate tournament after Solsona.

Erik van den Doel was my first 'victim'. After I played 1...d5 it was quite funny to see the reaction on Erik's face. He thought my hand had slipped and that I had made a wrong pawn move – 1...d5 instead of 1...c5.

☐ **Erik van den Doel**
■ **Sergey Tiviakov**
Leeuwarden ch-NED 2005 (2)

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♕xd5 3.♘c3 ♕d6 4.d4 ♘f6 5.♘f3 a6 6.g3 ♗g4 7.h3 ♗h5 8.♗g2 ♘c6 9.0-0 0-0-0 10.♗e3
Erik van den Doel played better than I did against Almeida and after a big think (one hour!) he found the way to exchange into an equal ending.
10...e5 11.dxe5 ♘xe5 12.♘xe5 ♗xd1 13.♘xf7



13...♗xc2
Black has to return the queen otherwise he stands much worse.
14.♘xd6+ ♗xd6
The ending is equal.
15.♖ac1 ♗g6 16.♘a4 ♗e4 17.♘b6+ ♔b8 18.♘c4 ♗xg2 19.♔xg2 ♗e7 20.♖fd1 ♖he8 ½-½

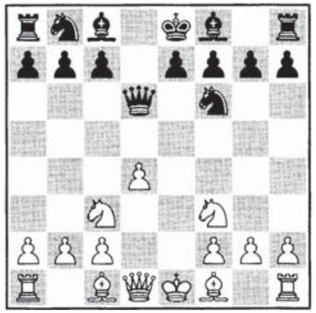
Until then I had only played the Sicilian Defence (Maroczy and Dragon systems) with a few games with 1...c6 thrown in for good measure. And after long – long years of playing everyone got used to it. Frankly speaking, I also got tired of playing the same old lines over and over again. So the Scandinavian Defence came as a welcome change.
In the Dutch championship I played two more games with the Scandinavian, they all ended in draws.

The next real test of my Scandinavian Defence came in the Wijk aan Zee 2006 tournament. Against Anand and Kamsky I took 1½ points out 2. Both of my opponents were not able to get out of the opening normally. Anand was able to make a draw, but Kamsky lost. It reminded me a lot of my experience against Almeida, only this time I could be found behind the black pieces.
Subsequently, I drew Grischuk and Svidler; obtaining a huge advantage from the opening against the former.
The main advantage of the variation is the lack of theory. All sorts of moves are possible and they are all playable. What I like most is the fact that the player who plays better wins!

Now let us look at the main ideas and plans in this system. The main principle in this line for Black is to try to finish the development of his pieces as quickly as possible. If he manages to do that he can rarely be worse.

Black's bishops deserve special treatment: first the c8-bishop must develop, then it is the turn of the f8-bishop! Actually, in both of my games against Anand and Grischuk (funny games!) I was never able to develop them. In the game against Anand the f8-bishop made its first move on the 40th move. Versus Grischuk it wasn't touched at all. Despite that Black was much better in both games.

After 3.♘c3 ♕d6 White has many different ways to develop his pieces. We'll focus our attention here on 4.d4 ♘f6 5.♘f3 since after all other moves Black can equalize without many problems.



In the position in the diagram Black has two main answers:

I 5...c6
II 5...a6

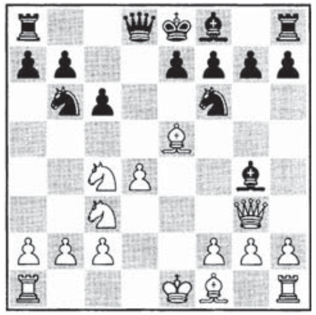
Both of them are equally playable and were tested by me in tournament practice.

Variation I

5...c6 leads to much more forced play than 5...a6. The difference lies in the fact that after 6.♘e5 Black has no 6...♘c6 at his disposal.
White has to play 6.♘e5, otherwise Black himself plays ...♗g4 or ...♗f5, once and for all solving the problem of his c8-bishop, equalising relatively easily. After 6.♘e5 ♘bd7 7.♘c4 (7.♗f4 ♘d5 is equal as in Anand-Tiviakov, Wijk aan Zee 2006) 7...♕c7 8.♕f3 ♘b6 White is slightly better. Nevertheless, not only Black but also White has to play carefully.

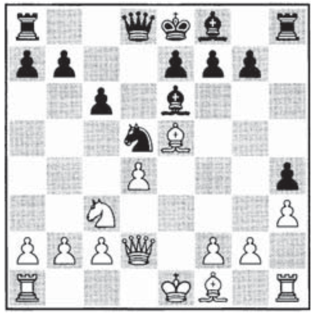
☐ **Alexander Grischuk**
■ **Sergey Tiviakov**
Sochi tt 2006

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♕xd5 3.♘c3 ♕d6 4.d4 ♘f6 5.♘f3 c6 6.♘e5 ♘bd7 7.♘c4
In Anand-Tiviakov, Wijk aan Zee 2006, Black soon obtained a decent game following 7.♗f4 ♘d5! 8.♘xd5 ♕xd5 9.♗e2 ♘xe5 10.♗xe5 ♕xg2 11.♗f3 ♕g6 12.d5? (better was 12.♕e2!?) 12...♗g4∓ 13.dxc6 bxc6 14.♕e2 ♗xf3 15.♕xf3 ♖d8.
7...♕c7 8.♕f3 ♘b6 9.♗f4
Here 9.♘e5 is another critical move.
9...♕d8 10.♗e5 ♗g4 11.♕g3



11...h5
A very important position for the assessment of the whole line with 5...c6.
12.f3
A new move. Yet, 12.h3 was better. There were lots of games played with it.

After 12...h4 13.♕f4 ♗e6 14.♘e3 ♘bd5 15.♘exd5 ♘xd5 16.♕d2 a critical position has been reached.



● Black may opt for 16...♗f5 when practice has seen:

– 17.♗d3 ♗xd3 18.♕xd3 e6 (18...♘xc3 19.bxc3± Kotronias-Ardelean, Kavala 2004) 19.0-0 ♘e7!? 20.♖fe1 ♘g6 21.♗h2 ♗d6 22.♗xd6 ♕xd6 23.♘e4 and White was better in N.Kosintseva-Nikolaidis, Moscow 2005.

– 17.♗c4 e6 18.♘xd5 exd5 19.♗d3 ♗xd3 20.♕xd3 f6! 21.♕g6+ ♔e7 22.♗f4 ♕e8 23.♕d3 ♔f7+ 24.♔d2 ♕e4 with equality in Skembris-Nikolaidis, Athens ch-GRE 2004.

● An alternative is 16...♘xc3 17.♕xc3 (17.bxc3!? ♕d5 18.♕e3 gives White the initiative according to Nikolaidis, but Black has 18...♗f5! planning ...♕e4) 17...♗d5 (17...♕d5!?) 18.♕d2 (18.0-0-0 e6 19.♔b1 b5∞) 18...e6 19.c4 ♗e4 20.f3 (20.0-0-0!? was preferable) 20...♗f5 21.a3 (21.0-0-0 is equal) 21...♖h5 (21...f6 22.♗f4 g5 (or 22...♗d6=) 23.♗e3 ♕c7 is equal) 22.♖d1 ♗d6 (22...g6!?=) 23.♕e3 Hossain-Tiviakov, Turin Olympiad 2006. And now 23...♕e7 planning to castle queenside would have been equal.

12...♗e6

12...h4 is a worthwhile alternative.

13.♘e3

13.♘xb6!? ♕xb6 14.0-0-0 0-0-0 (14...h4!?) leads to an unclear position. Wrong is 13.♗c7?! ♕xd4 14.♖d1 ♕c5 which just gives up the pawn.

13...♘bd5

Or 13...♘fd5.

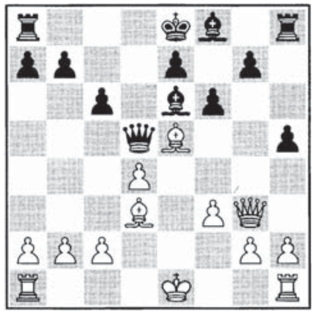
14.♘cxd5 ♘xd5 15.♘xd5

In case of 15.♕f2 f6 the bishop is awkwardly placed on e5.

15...♕xd5 16.♗d3

After 16.c3 ♗f5 the position is equal; or 16...h4 17.♕f2 (17.♕f4 f6 – 17...0-0-0= – 18.♗c7 g5 19.♕e3 ♗f5 20.h3 ♕d7 21.♗h2 0-0-0∞) 17...h3 18.g3 0-0-0 also with equal chances.

16...f6



17.♗b8?!

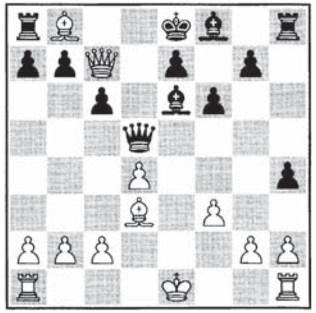
White goes too far in his desire to play for a win. After the correct 17.♗f4 ♗f5 18.♗xf5 (18.0-0-0?! ♕xa2 19.♗xf5 ♕a1+ 20.♔d2 ♕a5+∓) 18...♕xf5 19.c3 (19.♗e3 ♕xc2∓) 19...h4 20.♕g4 ♕xg4 21.fxg4 an equal ending appears on the board.

Alternatively, 17.♗c7 ♗f7 (17...h4!?) 18.♕f2 ♕e6+ 19.♗e2 (19.♕e2=) 19...♕d7 20.♗g3 (20.♗f4 ♕f5 21.♗e3 ♕xc2∓) 20...0-0-0 with complex play and chances for both sides was also playable.

17...h4!

17...♕a5+ 18.c3 h4 19.♕c7 ♕xc7 20.♗xc7 ♗f7 is equal. But I already wanted more than just equality!

18.♕c7



18...♔f7!

A very strong and paradoxical move! Now it becomes clear that White's pieces are stuck in the black camp.

19.♕xb7

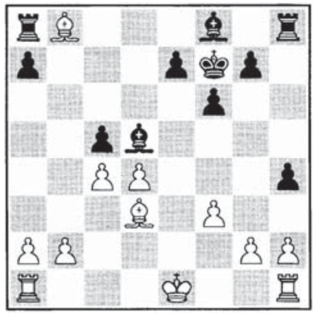
19.0-0-0? loses after 19...g6! (19...h3 20.g4 ♕d6 21.♕xd6 exd6 22.♗c7 b6∓, ♗c7<) 20.c4 (20.f4 ♗h6 21.c4 ♕d8–+) 20...♕d6 21.♕xd6 exd6 22.♗c7 b6.

19...c5! 20.♕xd5

Impossible for White is 20.♕b5? c4.

20...♗xd5 21.c4

Black is slightly better in the ending after both 21.♗f4 cxd4 and 21.♗c7 cxd4.



21...♗xf3?!

A mistake based on the wrong assessment of the sharp ending where Black has an extra pawn but falls behind in the development. After the correct 21...♗b7 22.♗c7 (22.♗f4 cxd4 23.♔e2 e5∓) 22...cxd4 (22...h3 23.d5 hxg2 24.♖g1 e6 25.dxe6+ ♔xe6 26.♔f2±) 23.♔e2 e5 24.♗a5 ♔e6 Black keeps the advantage due to the strong pawn centre.

21...♖xb8 22.cxd5 cxd4 23.0-0-0 is unclear.

22.♗xa7 ♗xg2 23.♖g1 ♖xa7 24.♖xg2 cxd4 25.♗g6+ ♔g8 26.c5

Here Grischuk offered me a draw which I accepted. There are so many possibilities: 26...♖h6; 26...h3, 26...e5. And even now I can't say who is better here. The position is unclear.

Variation II

5...a6 gives White more options than 5...c6. Since 6.♘e5 leads to nothing after 6...♘c6 White has to look for other ways.

Until recently the most dangerous move for Black was considered to be 6.g3. But I have discovered some new ideas, which can be found in my annotated games against Svidler and Al-Modiahki.

Frankly speaking, at this moment I don't see any clear way to get an opening advantage in this line of the Scandinavian Defence.

☐ **Gata Kamsky**
■ **Sergey Tiviakov**
Wijk aan Zee 2006

1.e4 d5

A lot has been written on the Internet about my choice of the 'dubious' Scandinavian Defence in a tournament of the highest level. But the reputation of the Scandinavian Defence is much worse than the positions arising from it. What else can be worse than the positions arising in the Dragon where Black can lose by force?! Also the Scandinavian Defence is mostly played by weaker players, that's why the statistics don't favour Black, but it doesn't reflect the actual way of life here.

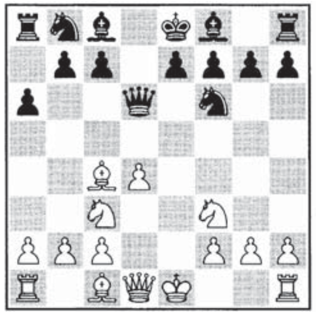
2.exd5

Strangely enough my choice of the Scandinavian came as a full surprise for Gata. He sank into thinking for almost half an hour before making this move. Quite strange, I think.

2...♕xd5 3.♘c3 ♕d6 4.d4 ♘f6 5.♗c4

Anand played 5.♘f3 here, but there is not much theory anyway. White can make any normal move.

5...a6 6.♘f3



6...♗g4!?

Not the only good move in the position, but since Kamsky was not ready theoretically I wanted to provoke him to play aggressively by h2-h3 and g2-g4, trying to win this game.

7.h3 ♗h5 8.g4

White has to play this move otherwise it is not easy to get rid of the pin.

8...♗g6 9.♘e5

Here 9.♗e3, followed by ♕d2, 0-0-0, deserved serious attention. After the text Black develops his knight a tempo.

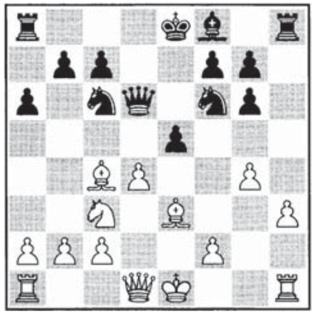
9...♘c6 10.♘xg6

10.♗f4 ♘xe5, followed by ...♕c6 is bad for White.

10...hxg6 11.♗e3?!

After this move White starts to experience some problems. The correct 11.g5 should first have been played, and only then 12.♗e3. The knight f6 is not only driven from the excellent f6-square, but even more importantly the pawn g4 is no longer hanging.

11...e5



12.d5

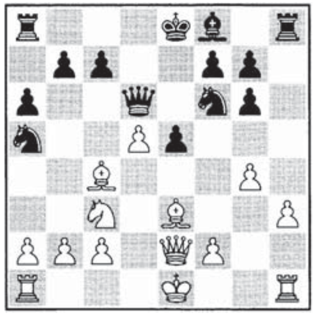
Only this is new, but White position is already worse.

12...♘a5

Probably, this move was missed by Gata. The knight stands badly on a5, but with concrete play Black wins a pawn.

13.♕e2!?

13.♗e2 0-0-0 14.♕d2 (14.g5 ♘xd5 15.♕xd5 ♕xd5 16.♘xd5 ♖xd5 17.♖d1 ♖xd1+ 18.♔xd1 ♗d6 and Black was a pawn up and won in Hakki-Tiviakov, Amman 2006) 14...♘xd5 15.0-0-0 should have been preferred. White has some compensation for the pawn.



13...♘xc4

The simplest. Instead 13...♕b4?! 14.♗b3 ♕xg4 15.hxg4 ♖xh1+ 16.♔d2 ♖xa1 leads to unnecessary complications.

14.♕xc4 b5

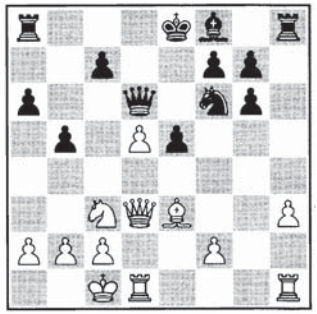
White can't defend both pawns d5 and g4 simultaneously.

15.♕d3

15.♕c6+ ♕xc6 16.dxc6 ♘xg4 is better for Black. While the second player is winning after 15.♕e2 b4 16.♘b1 ♕xd5.

15...♘xg4 16.0-0-0 ♘f6

16...♘xe3!? 17.fxe3 (or 17.♕xe3 ♗e7) 17...f5 was also possible, with advantage for Black.



17.f4!

A very strong move, underestimated by me. White sacrifices a second pawn for the initiative. Otherwise Black would play ♗f8-e7 and finish his development comfortably.

17...exf4?!

The computer gives 17...0-0-0 as the best move with a large advantage for Black, but during the game I was afraid to make this move.

18.♘e4 ♘xe4 19.♕xe4+ ♗e7

19...♔d7?! 20.♗xf4 ♖h4 21.♖hf1 (Black wins after 21.♖d4? ♕f6!) unfortunately doesn't work for Black.

20.♗d4?!

After 20.♗xf4 ♖h4 21.♗xd6 ♖xe4 22.♗xc7 ♔d7 Black is clearly better in the ending, but White should nevertheless have gone for this line, since Black has no material advantage at least. I was surprised that Kamsky played 20.♗d4 without much thinking.

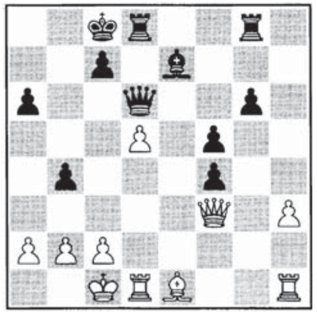
20...f5 21.♕f3 0-0-0

Black has to castle queenside. His king is not safe anymore, White gets counterplay.

22.♗xg7?!

After 22.♖he1 ♗h4 (22...♕xd5 23.♕xd5 ♖xd5 24.♖xe7 ♖hd8 25.♖xg7 ♖xd4 26.♖xd4 ♖xd4 27.♖xg6 is not clear, White keeps drawing chances in an ending) 23.♗e5 ♕d7 24.♖e2 g5 Black keeps his material advantage

22...♖hg8 23.♗c3 b4 24.♗e1



24...g5?

A serious mistake which costs Black several tempi. After the correct 24...♖ge8! followed by ♗f6, ♖e4, Black should win without many problems.

25.♕d3!

I missed this move. Now Black has to spend some time to protect the pawn on f5 and develop the bishop to f6 and rook to e4, worsening the position of king c8 (put it on b7).

25...♖gf8 26.♗f2 ♔b7 27.♖he1 ♗f6 28.♕f3?

After this mistake (Gata was already in time-trouble) Black is back on the winning track.

But even after the strongest 28.♕c4 ♖fe8 29.♗c5 ♕d7 followed by ♕b5 Black should eventually win because of the extra passed pawns on the kingside.

28...♖fe8 29.♖f1

Gata missed that 29.♖e6 ♖xe6 30.dxe6+ ♕c6 loses.

29...♖e4

The rest should be an easy win for Black. But since both of the players didn't have much time until the time control, there were mistakes, which eventually didn't change the correct outcome of this game.

30.♔b1 ♕e5

30...g4! 31.hxg4 ♕e5 32.♕b3 fxg4 is an easy win for Black.

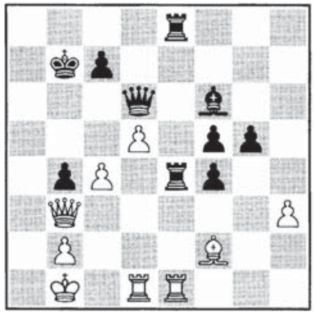
31.♕b3 a5 32.c3 ♕d6 33.a3 ♖a8!?

Black is spoiled for choice with so many possibilities.

34.axb4 axb4 35.♖fe1 ♖ae8

35...♔c8 36.c4 ♕a6 wins easily.

36.c4



36...♖xe1!?

Here I saw a nice trap for White and decided to go for this line.

37.♗xe1

37.♖xe1 ♖xe1+ 38.♗xe1 ♕b6 is hopeless for White.

37...♖e2 38.♗xb4?

This loses by force. Instead 38.♗d2 was better.

38...♕b6 39.c5 ♕b5 40.c6+ ♔b8!

The point of the trap! 40...♔c8 draws after 41.d6!! cxd6 42.♕g8+, but the text wins easily.

41.d6 ♖xb2+ 42.♕xb2 ♗xb2 43.d7

Now it is without check, Black can play ♗f6.

43...♗f6 0-1

This win allowed me to finish on a respectable 50% result.

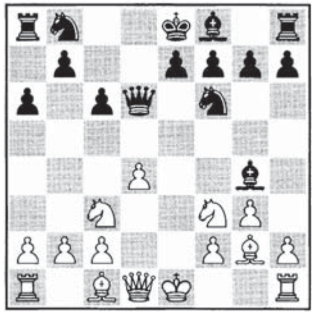
☐ **Peter Svidler**
■ **Sergey Tiviakov**
Turin Olympiad 2006

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♕xd5 3.♘c3 ♕d6 4.d4 ♘f6 5.♘f3 a6 6.g3

Peter chooses the most principled continuation. Other moves pose less threats for Black.

6...♗g4 7.♗g2 c6

7...♘c6 is the main continuation here, with a lot of theory and sharp lines, but it was not the point of the present game to play sharp. I decided to choose the safer and much rarer 7...c6.



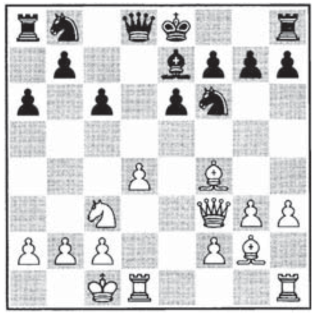
8.♗f4!

This move is new, but it is clearly stronger than 8.0-0. If White castles kingside, he has no chances for an opening advantage whatsoever.

8...♕d8 9.h3

White has no other useful moves and has to force the exchange on f3 immediately. Although he gains the bishop pair, Black's position is very solid.

9...♗xf3 10.♕xf3 e6 11.0-0-0 ♗e7



Here White has an lead in development, a space advantage and the pair of bishops. Despite all that it is not easy for White to obtain anything concrete. Meanwhile Black's play is easy, he is going to finish the development by ♘bd7, ♘d5 and then start advancing the pawns on the queenside – b7-b5 etc – with enough counterplay. In his turn White has to advance the kingside pawn trying to create the attack on the black king.

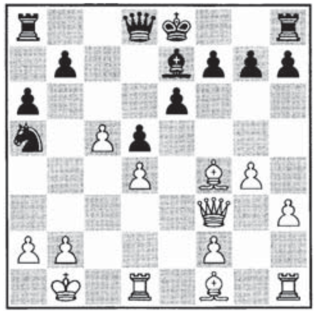
12.g4 ♘bd7 13.♔b1 ♘d5 14.♘xd5?!

After the game Peter was unhappy with this move. He felt he should have played 14.♗c1!?, but after 14...b5 followed by the advance of the other queenside pawns, Black creates enough counterplay. The position remains very complex, with chances for both sides.

14...cxd5 15.c4 ♘b6

Later Peter told me he missed that move. But it is the only black move in the position: it consolidates his centre, transferring the knight to c6, where he will attack the pawn d4.

16.c5 ♘c4 17.♗f1 ♘a5



If Black plays ♘c6, puts the bishop on the diagonal a1-h8 and afterwards opens the b-file, White would end up in trouble. He has to prevent the development of the black bishop on the diagonal a1-h8.

18.♕g3

Unfortunately for Black, White can prevent the realisation of the previously mentioned plan. He is threatening to play g4-g5 followed by the advance of the h pawn. Besides, he is also threatening to win the knight by ♗f4-c7.

18...♗h4

It took a lot of time to make this move. At first I was going to play 18...♘c6 or 18...♖c8 or even 18...♕d7 (with the idea ♖c8, ♗d8-c7). But then I decided to disturb White's plan and prevent the advance of the white pawns on the kingside.

19.♕e3 h6 20.♗e5

White is playing safe, deciding to exchange the bishops.

20.♗h2!? followed by f4-f5 was too risky. And according to Peter, White has more chances to lose than to win.

20...♗f6 21.♗xf6 ♕xf6 22.f4 ♘c6 23.g5 ♕e7 24.h4 g6

Black is not in a hurry to determine the position of the king and tries to refrain from castling as long as possible. One of the great advantages of the Scandinavian is that there is not much theory, there is much space for creativity.

25.♖h3

After 25.gxh6 0-0-0 Black will soon win the h6 pawn back, leaving White with too many weaknesses in his camp.

25...0-0-0

25...h5!? followed by 0-0, was possible.

26.♗e2 hxg5 27.fxg5

After 27.hxg5 ♕c7, followed by ♘e7-f5, it is only White who can get into trouble.

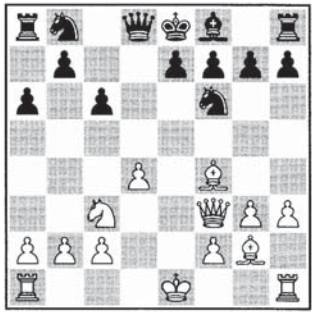
27...e5 **½-½**

After the exchange of the queens a draw is the most likely result. I decided to call it a day and offered a draw.

☐ **Mohamad Al-Modiahki**
■ **Sergey Tiviakov**
Amsterdam 2006

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♕xd5 3.♘c3 ♕d6 4.d4 ♘f6 5.♘f3 a6 6.g3 ♗g4 7.♗g2 c6 8.♗f4 ♕d8 9.h3 ♗xf3 10.♕xf3

Or 10.♗xf3 e6 with equality.



10...♕xd4!?

In my game against Svidler I was afraid to take the pawn. Only after spending some time at home analysing this line I was ready to take it. It looks very dangerous, but in fact it is quite playable. Despite the fact that Black is behind in development he has no weaknesses. Black needs only three moves to complete his development. Now the course of the game changes drastically. The move played by me against Svidler is also good, Black position is rock solid there.

11.0-0

11.♗e3!? deserves serious attention. For example, 11...♕d8 12.0-0 ♘bd7 13.♖ad1 (13.♘e4!?) 13...e6 14.♘e4 ♘xe4 15.♕xe4 with compensation for the pawn. 11.♖d1 ♕b6 12.0-0 e6 transposes into the line with 11.0-0.

11...e6 12.♖ad1

After 12.♖fd1 ♕b6 13.♗e3 (13.♘a4!? is interesting) 13...♕c7 (13...♕a5!?) 14.♘e4!? (14.♗f4 ♕b6=) 14...♘xe4 15.♕xe4 ♘d7 16.♗d4 White has compensation for the pawn.

Or 12.♗c7 ♘bd7 13.♖fd1 ♕c5 14.♕d3!? with some compensation.

12...♕b6 13.♘a4

Here again White had a choice between 13.♗e3!? and 13.♖d2!?.

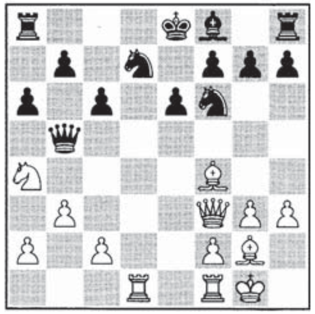
13...♕b5

After 13...♕b4 14.b3 ♘bd7 15.♗d2 ♕a3 16.♗c3 White gets a strong bishop on the diagonal a1-h8.

14.b3

14.♘c3!? ♕b6 15.♘a4 ♕b5 is a draw by repetition but 15...♕b4 – see 13...♕b4 – gives Black an option to fight.

14...♘bd7



Slowly but surely Black finishes his development. White has to do something active, otherwise he simply remains a pawn down.

15.c4

Or 15.g4 h6 16.h4 0-0-0!? with slightly better chances for Black.

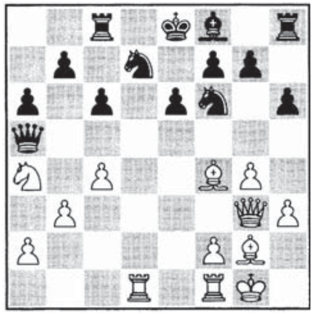
15...♕a5 16.g4

Here the immediate 16.♖d3!? deserves attention.

16...h6 17.♕g3

Or 17.h4 0-0-0!? with a plus for Black. He is simply a pawn up.

17...♖c8



18.♕e3!

White finds a very interesting resource. He is ready to sacrifice material to seize the initiative. 18.♖d3 ♗b4 19.♖fd1 b5 is bad for White.

18...♖a8

After 18...b5 19.♕a7! bxa4 20.♕b7 ♕d8 21.♗xc6 White's compensation is very strong.

19.♕g3 ♗e7!?

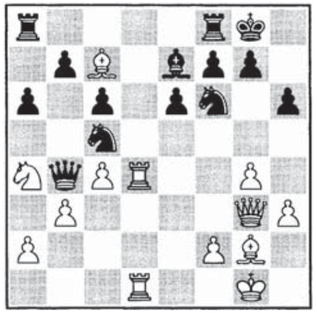
19...♖c8 is a draw. So if Black wants to play he has to calculate some sharp lines.

After 19...♕d8 20.♗c7 ♕c8 21.♖d3 ♗e7 22.♖fd1 White has good compensation.

20.♗c7 ♕b4 21.♖d4

Black is better after 21.♖d3 0-0 22.♖fd1 ♘c5.

21...0-0 22.♖fd1 ♘c5



23.♘b6?!

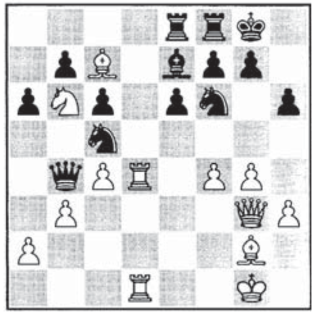
After the text move White's position becomes difficult. Better was 23.♗d6, but after 23...♗xd6 24.♕xd6 ♘fd7 (24...e5 25.♖4d2 ♘fd7 26.♘xc5 ♘xc5 27.♕xe5∓ gives the pawn back) 25.g5 e5 26.♖g4 hxg5 27.♖xg5 f6 Black keeps the advantage.

23...♖ae8

It was not easy to make this move. There was another good move: 23...e5!? 24.♕xe5 ♖ae8 25.♕g3 (25.♕h2 ♘e6 26.♖4d2 ♘xc7 27.♕xc7 – transposes to 25.♕g3) 25...♘e6 26.♖4d2 ♘xc7 27.♕xc7 ♕a5! with a huge advantage for Black.

24.f4

24.♕e5 a5∓ planning ...♘a6.



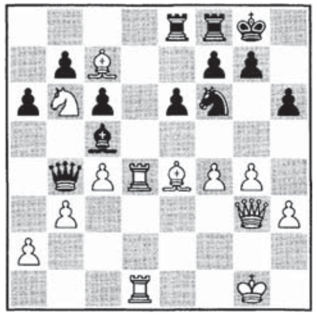
24...♘ce4!!

Playing 23...♖ae8 I already had in mind this beautiful and strong move. 24...a5 is also possible.

25.♗xe4

After 25.♖xe4 ♘xe4 26.♗xe4 ♗c5+ 27.♔h1 ♗xb6 28.♗d6 ♕a5 29.♗xf8 ♔xf8 Black is a pawn up and should win eventually.

25...♗c5



26.a3?!

This move loses. Other moves are superior, but Black is always better:

– 26.♔g2 ♗xd4 (26...♘xe4? 27.♖xe4 ♗xb6 28.♗d6±; 26...♗xb6?! 27.a3±) 27.♖xd4 c5 (27...♘xe4 28.♖xe4 ♖e7 29.f5 e5 30.♗xe5 ♕xb6 31.g5 ♕a5∓) 28.g5 ♘h5 29.♕f3 cxd4 30.♕xh5 ♕d2+ 31.♔f1 ♕c1+ loses as well.

– With the correct 26.♗c2 ♖d8 (26...♗xb6 27.♗xb6 ♕xb6 28.g5 ♘h5 29.♕f3 g6 30.gxh6 ♖d8 31.♕e3 ♖xd4 32.♖xd4∞) 27.♕e3 ♖xd4 28.♖xd4 ♘e8 29.♗d8 ♗xb6 30.♗xb6 ♕xb6 White could have prolonged his resistance, although his position is lost.

– 26.♕e3 ♗xb6 27.♗xb6 ♕xb6∓ was also preferable to the text.

26...♕xa3

Now Black wins easily.

27.♗c2

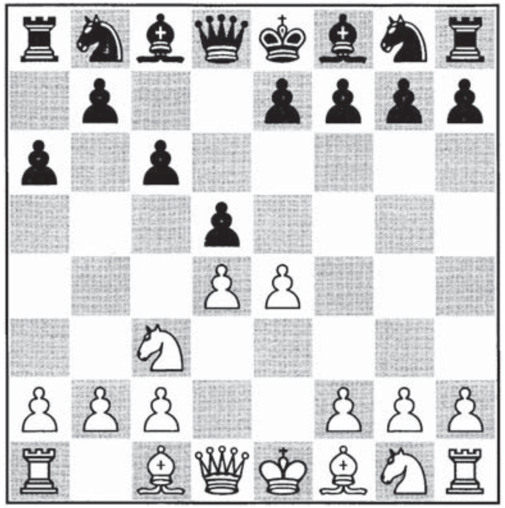
Black also wins following 27.♕e3 ♘xe4 28.♕xe4 ♕xb3 and 27.♗f3 ♖d8.

27...♖d8! 28.♗xd8 ♖xd8 29.♔g2 ♖xd4 0-1

CHAPTER 17

John van der Wiel

Caro-Kann with a Slav Touch



1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 a6

The first person I witnessed playing 3...a6 was Jon Speelman. This was in 1997 in a Man vs Computer tournament: exactly the right place to do so!

If your opponent is well versed in main lines, or if he/she likes dynamic and open play, you may consider trying 3...a6.

Of course it can't be the greatest of moves objectively, but it does have its merits. Rather like in the Slav, where it has become quite trendy, a7-a6 is a useful waiting move. Black is striving for a closed game (so d5xe4 is not often intended), whilst retaining the option to put his bishop outside the pawn chain. If possible, on g4.

White has several reasonable replies, which I shall subdivide into three sections:

I White just develops and allows Black to execute his plan.

II White builds up in such a way, that it is more difficult for Black to determine what his best plan is.

III White is immediately ready to sacrifice.

Each section will come with one annotated game, to give you some insight into how things might develop. In cases where Black doesn't seem to fare so well, I shall suggest possible improvements.

I Just Developing (4.♘f3)

☐ **Dogan Reyhan**
■ **Emir Dizdarevic**
Izmir 2004

1.e4 c6 2.♘c3 d5 3.d4 a6 4.♘f3 ♗g4

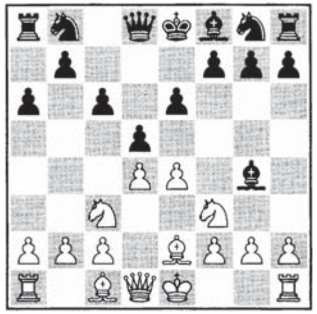
Black has achieved his first goal. The bishop is outside the pawn chain.

5.♗e2

A good alternative is 5.h3 ♗xf3 6.♕xf3. In a game Kutuzovic-Dizdarevic, Rabac 2003, a draw was agreed after 6...e6 7.♗d2! ♘f6 8.0-0-0 ♗b4 9.e5 ♗xc3?! 10.♗xc3 ♘e4 11.♗e1!. With 12.♕g4, 12.♕e3 or 12.h4 coming up and the knight on e4 in serious danger I would be more than slightly worried about Black's fate.

You may prefer 6...dxe4 (instead of 6...e6) 7.♕xe4 (7.♘xe4 ♕xd4 doesn't look like too much compensation. Compare this to Section III) 7...♘f6 8.♕d3 e6 with a solid game for Black. White may have a minimal plus, but in Beganovic-Jeremic, Neum 2003, Black was already more than comfortable after 9.♘e4?! ♘bd7 10.g3 ♘xe4 11.♕xe4 ♘f6 12.♕e3 ♗d6 13.♕g5 0-0 14.♗g2 ♕b6 15.c3 ♕b5! 16.♕xb5 axb5.

5...e6



6.0-0

The oldest move is 6.h3. In Zelcic-Milivojevic, Belgrade 1989, possibly the stem game of the whole variation, White was successful after 6...♗h5 7.0-0 ♗e7 8.♗e3 ♘f6 9.e5 ♘fd7 10.♘e1 ♗g6 11.f4 c5 12.dxc5 ♘c6 13.♔h1 0-0 14.♘a4 f6 15.♗g4 ♗f7 16.♘d3 fxe5 17.fxe5 ♘dxe5 18.♘xe5 ♘xe5 19.♘b6 ♘c4 20.♘xc4 dxc4 21.♕e2 with a clear plus and a quick win.

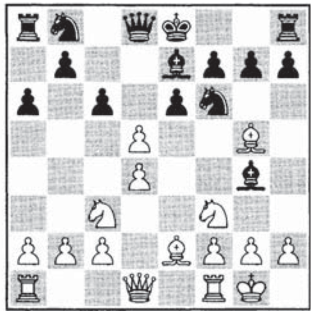
In general, with nearly all his pawns on white squares, Black doesn't mind giving up his bishop after h2-h3. Therefore I prefer Speelman's approach:

6...♗xf3 7.♗xf3 ♘f6 8.e5 ♘fd7 9.0-0 c5 10.♘xd5!? (not so crazy with White's centre crumbling) 10...exd5 11.♗xd5 ♘b6! 12.♗xb7 ♖a7 13.dxc5 (maybe 13.♕f3!? to play for initiative) 13...♕xd1 14.♖xd1 ♖xb7 15.cxb6 ♖xb6 16.b3 ♗e7 17.♗f4?! 0-0 18.♖d5 ♖e6 19.c4 ♘c6 20.♖ad1 ♖e8 21.♗g3 g5! (pawn e5 is too weak) 22.f4 gxf4 23.♗xf4 ♗f8 24.♔f2 ♘xe5 with a big advantage for Black, who went on to win in COMP Nightmare-Speelman, The Hague 1997.

Another idea for White is 6.e5, after which the thematic 6...c5 is playable. In Gavrilov-Gerovski, Skopje 1998, there followed: 7.♗e3 cxd4 8.♘xd4 ♗xe2 9.♘cxe2 ♕c7 10.f4 ♘e7 11.0-0. However, as White's lead in development gave him some chances, Black may elect to slow things down by means of 6...♘d7, perhaps 7...♘e7 and play ...c6-c5 at a more convenient time.

6...♘f6 7.♗g5 ♗e7 8.exd5?!

Whenever White takes on d5, barring special circumstances, Black is very happy to recapture with the c-pawn and pawn a6 always has a function. This position is in no way an exception. White should have played 8.e5 ♘fd7 9.♗xe7 ♕xe7, when White has some space and hopes of rearranging his pieces starting with 10.♘b1 or 10.♘e1. Black, on the other hand, has a clear plan with ...c6-c5 – endangering White's centre.



No doubt White was intending to continue with 8...cxd5 9.♘e5 but Black is one step ahead of him.

8...♗xf3!

Here the bishop pair won't mean a thing. It is easier to play against a bishop on f3, than a knight on e5.

9.♗xf3 cxd5

Thanks to his good pawn structure Black can already play for the advantage (using the 'minority attack').

10.♖e1 0-0 11.♘e2 ♘c6 12.a4 ♘e8 13.♗xe7 ♘xe7 14.c4

Not a bad idea to change the nature of the struggle before Black goes ♘e8-d6. Nevertheless Black maintains a plus.

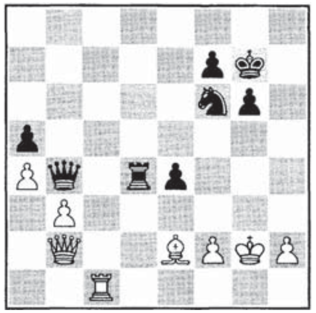
14...dxc4 15.♗xb7 ♖a7 16.♗f3 ♘f6 17.♖c1 ♖c7 18.♘f4?!

This won't do White much good. Simplifying with 18.b3 should offer better drawing chances.

18...♕d6 19.g3 ♖d8 20.♕c2 ♘f5 21.♘e2 g6 22.b3 c3 23.♖ed1 ♕b4 24.♖d3 ♖dc8 25.♔g2 ♔g7 26.♔g1 a5 27.d5 e5 28.d6

White is trying very hard to alleviate the pressure, but even after the text Black maintains an iron grip on the position.

28...♘xd6 29.♖xc3 ♖xc3 30.♘xc3 ♘f5 31.♕b2 ♘d4 32.♗d1 h5 33.♔g2 h4 34.gxh4 ♖h8 35.♘b5 ♖xh4 36.♘xd4 ♖xd4 37.♗f3 e4 38.♗e2



38...e3!

With a nasty threat: 39...♖d2 40.♖c2 ♕e4+. White should now have tried 39.♖c2 (when 39...♖d2 is still very strong), but, probably in time-trouble, he crumbles.

39.♖c4 ♖xc4 40.♗xc4 ♕d2 41.♕xd2 exd2 42.♗e2 ♘d5 43.♔f3 f5 44.♗d1 ♘c3 45.♗c2 d1♕+ 46.♗xd1 ♘xd1 47.♔e2 ♘c3+ 48.♔d3 ♘e4 49.f3 ♘g5 50.b4 axb4 51.a5 ♘xf3 52.a6 ♘e5+ 53.♔d4 ♘c6+ 54.♔c5 b3

White resigned.

II Keep Black guessing (various flexible 4th moves)

In fact, White has already tried lots of different moves apart from 4.♘f3 (I) and 4.♗d3 (III). All of those will be mentioned in the following game: there are no less than eight of them!

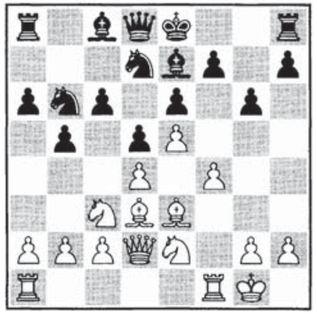
☐ **COMP Rebel**
■ **John van der Wiel**
Maastricht m 2001 (3)

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 a6 4.♗e2

As promised, a list of all known alternatives:

- 4.♗f4 and 4.♗e3. Here 4...g6 has been played, but I would recommend 4...b5, which discourages any plan involving queenside castling. In most cases Black will conduct the game in French style, with e7-e6 and at some point c6-c5 (if White has closed the centre).

- ● 4.a4 stops b7-b5, but gives Black a free hand. Thus, 4...dxe4 5.♘xe4 ♘f6 is a decent version of a main line. Playable is 4...e6 with ♗f8-b4 to come. Also reasonable is 4...g6. It's mainly a matter of taste.
- ● 4.f3 may turn out to be quite similar to 4.♗e3. A good practical example is Macieja-Gustafsson, ACP blitz 2004, which went: 4...e6 5.♗e3 b5! 6.♕d2 ♘d7 7.♗d3 ♘b6 8.♘ge2 ♘f6 9.0-0 ♗e7 10.e5 ♘fd7 11.f4 g6



12.a4?! (attacking on the wrong wing. I like 12.g4 and if 12...h5?! then 13.f5, so 12...c5 is more to the point) 12...♘c4! 13.♗xc4 bxc4 14.♖ab1 h5 15.b3 cxb3 16.♖xb3 a5! 17.♖fb1 ♗a6 and Black had excellent prospects.

- ● 4.g3 dxe4 (here, too, 4...e6 and 4...b5 are excellent alternatives. Not 4...g6 when 5.♗g2 would force an ugly-looking decision from Black) 5.♘xe4 ♗f5 (at least there is no g3-square, although White develops comfortably) 6.♗g2 e6 7.♘e2 ♘d7 8.0-0 ♘gf6 9.♘xf6+ ♘xf6 10.c4 ♗d6 11.♕b3 ♖b8 12.♗f4 (12.♗g5!?) 12...0-0 13.♖ad1 ♗g4 was Kozamernik-Dizdarevic, Ljubljana 2004, with nearly equal play and a draw in 83 moves.
- ● 4.h3 is not so testing for Black, either:

– 4...♘f6?! 5.e5 ♘fd7 6.f4 (6.e6!? could be quite dangerous for Black) 6...e6 7.♘f3 c5 8.♗e3 ♘c6 9.♕d2 was a very slightly improved French for White in M.Hansen-Borik, Germany Bundesliga B 1993/94.

– 4...e6 5.♘f3 ♘f6 (5...b5) 6.e5 ♘fd7 7.♘e2!? c5 8.dxc5?! (8.c3) 8...♘c6 9.♗f4 ♗xc5 10.♘c1 0-0 11.♘d3 ♗a7 12.♕d2 f6 led to satisfactory play for Black in Schuetze-Reuss, Osterburg ch-GER 2006.

– Another reliable plan is 4...b5.

- ● 4.e5 is one of White's best options, in my opinion. Now 4...♗f5 5.g4 ♗d7 (5...♗e6 6.♘h3! is too risky) may be playable, but it is an improved version for White on a main line in the Advance Variation.

Therefore 4...h5!? comes into consideration. After the strong 5.♗d3! Black can continue with 5...g6 and 6...♘h6 although admittedly this plan is rather eccentric.

Practice so far has seen:

– 4...g6 5.♘f3 (5.h3) 5...♗g4 6.♗e2 e6 7.♗e3 ♕c7 8.♘d2 ♗xe2 9.♘xe2 c5 10.c3 ♘c6 11.0-0 ♘ge7 12.♘g3! h5 13.h4 with a slight advantage for White, Sadikovic-Jeremic, Neum 2003.

– 4...e6 5.♗e3 ♕b6!? 6.♖b1 (6.♘a4) 6...c5 7.♘f3 ♗d7?! (better should be 7...♘c6 or even 7...♘h6!?) 8.♗e2 cxd4 9.♘xd4 ♗c5 10.b4? ♗xd4 (can Black afford 10...♗xb4!? 11.0-0 ♕a5 ?) 11.♗xd4 ♕d8 12.b5 and White was clearly better in D.Toth-Hever, Aggtelek 1998.

Summarizing: of this bunch 4.e5 may well be best. Against this, Black should probably (as in many cases) choose the French set-up with e7-e6. At least, the knight on c3 is not so great in an Advance French.

4...b5 5.a3

The constructors of Rebel have done some clever work. White refuses to play a closed position, which wouldn't be the computer's forte. And yes, 5.exd5 cxd5 6.♘xd5 ♕xd5 7.♗f3 ♕e6+ 8.♗e3 ♖a7 would be good for Black.

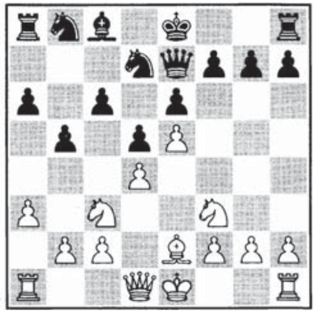
5...e6 6.♘f3 ♘f6 7.e5

Here I expected 7.♗g5. I don't believe a 21st century computer would view 7...h6 8.♗h4 g5 as a problem.

7...♘fd7 8.♗g5! ♗e7

Not willing to risk 8...f6 9.exf6, or 8...♕b6 9.b4!? (or even 9.♘a2 c5 10.c3), when Black will regret not having played ♗f8-e7.

9.♗xe7 ♕xe7



10.b4!?

Surprising, coming from a computer program, but certainly not bad. Without c6-c5 Black has to find other ways to live. 10.♘a2 c5 11.c3 ♘c6 would be approximately equal, with ...f6 coming some day.

10...a5 11.♘a2

After 11.♖b1 axb4 12.axb4 ♘a6 13.♘a2 ♘ac5!? Black develops enough play.

11...axb4 12.axb4 0-0 13.♗d3 f6 14.exf6!

14.♕e2 would run into 14...♕xb4+!? or 14...♖xa2!? or first 14...fxe5.

14...gxf6 15.0-0 ♖f7

Not 15...e5 16.♘h4!.

16.♖e1 ♘f8 17.♘h4

White is playing this phase very well. His activities on the kingside leave Black no peace.

17...♕d8 18.♖e3

A reasonable alternative was 18.♘c3.

18...♖g7 19.♖g3 ♕e7 20.♕f3

Please note: White has the threat of 21.♖e1 ♖xa2 22.♘f5.

Even stronger, however, was 20.♕e2!, also threatening 21.♘f5 and after 20...♕f7 or 20...♖a7 following up with 21.c3 and 22.♖e1.

20...♖xg3 21.♕xg3+ ♕g7 22.♕d6 ♕d7 23.♕f4 ♕g7 24.♘f3

The a-file pin is Black's only trump. What if 24.♖e1 tries to eliminate it: 24...♕g5! (24...♖xa2 25.♕xb8 is in White's favour) 25.♕c7 ♕xh4 26.♕xc8 (26.♖e3 ♗d7) 26...♕xd4!? and Black is probably alright.

24...♗d7 25.♕c7!?

Again: 25.♖e1 or not? There may follow: 25...e5! 26.dxe5 ♘e6 27.♕h4 fxe5! and Black is still about to win a piece. But how good will the compensation be after 28.♘c3 e4? Lord knows, or Rebel.

25...♗e8 26.♕d8

With a funny counter-pin on the back rank.

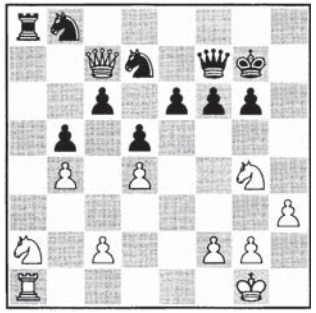
26...♗g6 27.h3!?

27.♖e1 looked more natural.

27...♕f7 28.♗xg6 hxg6 29.♘h2 ♔g7 30.♘g4 ♘fd7

30...♘h7 would complete the preparations for ♕f7-d7, but after 31.♕d6! ♕d7 32.♕f4 or ♕g3 the knight is poorly placed.

31.♕c7



31...e5!

The right countermeasure despite limited time. On 31...♘e5 White had the diabolical 32.♘xf6!.

32.♕b7?!

This temporarily wins a pawn and starts the variation that I calculated and hoped for. After 32.dxe5(!) ♘xe5 33.♕d6 the ♘a2 is in some trouble, but Black's king isn't secure and the position would be unclear.

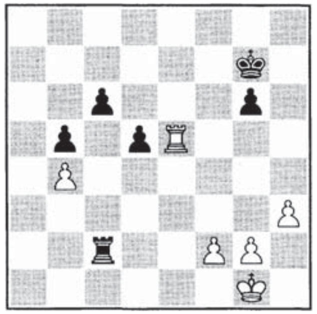
32...♖a3 33.dxe5 fxe5 34.♘xe5 ♘xe5 35.♕xb8 ♕f6! 36.♖e1

36.c3 may look logical, but there is a great reply: 36...♘d3 37.♕g3 ♘xb4! with three working pins. Yes, humans can calculate too!

36...♖xa2 37.♕xe5

Because 37.♖xe5 fails to 37...♖a1+ 38.♔h2 ♕f4+.

37...♕xe5 38.♖xe5 ♖xc2



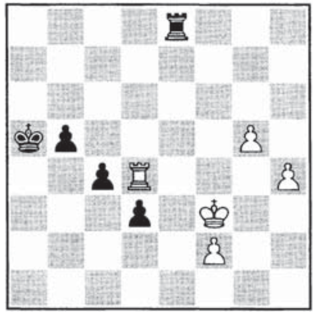
A better rook ending is the fruit of calculation.

39.♖e1?

Right at the beginning of the ending Rebel makes a big mistake. Instead of the far too passive text 39.♖e6 was called for. An example: 39...♖c1+ 40.♔h2 ♔f7 41.♖d6 ♔e7 42.♖xg6 d4 43.♖g4! ♖c4 44.♔g3 ♖xb4 45.♔f3 or 45.h4 and the game is far from over.

39...♔f6 40.♔f1 d4 41.♖e8 ♖c4 42.♖c8 ♔e7 43.♔e2 ♔d6 44.♖d8+ ♔c7 45.♖g8 ♖xb4 46.♔d3 c5 47.♖g7+ ♔b6 48.♖xg6+ ♔a5 49.h4 ♖b3+ 50.♔e4 d3 51.♖d6 c4 52.g4 ♖b2! 53.g5 ♖e2+ 54.♔f3 ♖e8 55.♖d4

Having seen that 55.g6 b4 56.h5 c3! wins for Black.



55...b4!

Even more convincing than 55...♔b4.

56.♖xc4 b3 57.♖c1 b2 58.♖d1

If 58.♖b1, then 58...d2 59.g6 ♔a4 etc.

58...♔b4 59.♔f4

Or 59.g6 ♔c3 60.h5 ♔c2 61.♖h1 b1♕! 62.♖xb1 ♔xb1 63.g7 d2 curtains.

59...♔c3

White resigned.

III The Danger (4.♗d3)

I don't believe in advertising variations without pointing out the dangers, so here it is: this Section III comes with a special warning! White plays a move that is positionally non-committal, implying that he is ready to sacrifice a pawn after 4...dxe4 5.♘xe4 (5.♗xe4 ♘f6 is less fearsome). The question is: should Black eat or not?

☐ **Vladimir Moliboga**
■ **Igor Dmitriev**
Litomysl 1994

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 a6 4.♗d3 dxe4

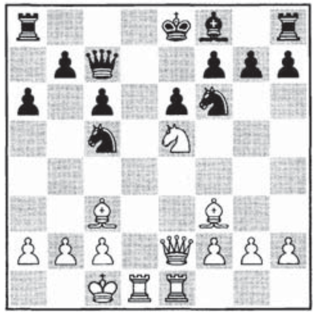
If Black is not so keen on material and wants to play a more closed position, there are:

● 4...e6?! 5.♘f3 ♘d7 6.0-0 ♘e7 7.e5 ♕c7 (7...c5!?) 8.♘e2 c5 9.c3 ♘c6 10.♘g3 ♗e7 11.♘h5! g6 12.♘g7+ ♔d8 13.♘g5 ♗xg5 14.♗xg5+ ♘e7 15.♕g4 with a big initiative for White, Schuerer-Voegeli, Silvaplana 1993.

● 4...g6!? 5.e5 (5.h3 and 5.♗e3 are worthy alternatives) 5...♗g7 6.♘f3 (6.h3 or 6.f4) 6...♗g4 7.h3 ♗d7? happened in Altermatt-Voegeli, Silvaplana 1993. Naturally Black should have opted for 7...♗xf3 8.♕xf3 ♘d7 or 8...e6 with a reasonable game.

5.♘xe4 ♕xd4 6.♘f3 ♕d5

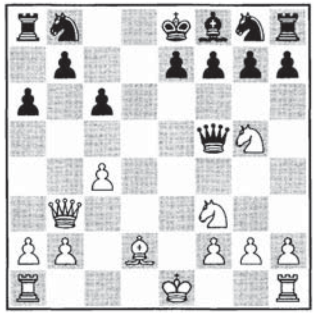
Possibly even more important for the theoretical verdict is the game Fressinet-Bricard, Bischwiller 1999: 6...♕d8(!) 7.♕e2 ♗f5 8.♗d2 ♗xe4!? (8...e6 9.0-0-0) 9.♗xe4 ♘f6 10.0-0-0 ♘bd7 (10...♘xe4 11.♕xe4 ♕d5 looks reasonable for Black, but maybe White can do better with 11.♗f4!, e.g. 11...♕a5 12.♕xe4 ♕xa2 13.♕b4! etc.) 11.♗c3 ♕c7 12.♘e5 e6 13.♖he1 ♘c5 14.♗f3



14...♖d8 (Black had several tough choices in this game. 14...♘d5!? looks like a good alternative here, for instance 15.♗xd5 cxd5 16.♖xd5 exd5 17.♘g6+ ♘e4! 18.♘xh8 0-0-0, which fails to impress for White, or 15.♗d4 0-0-0 16.♘c4 ♘d7 with an unclear position) 15.♘c4! ♖xd1+ 16.♖xd1 ♘cd7 17.♘e5 ♗e7 18.♘xd7 ♘xd7 19.♗xg7 ♖g8 20.♗c3 ♕xh2 (or else Black is simply worse) 21.g3 ♕h6+ 22.♔b1 ♘f6 23.♕e5 ♔f8 24.♕c7 ♗c5 25.b4 ♗xf2 26.♖d7! ♕g6 27.♗h5 1-0.

7.c4 ♕d8 8.♘eg5 ♗f5 9.♗xf5 ♕a5+ 10.♗d2 ♕xf5 11.♕b3!

Demonstrating a serious disadvantage of 6...♕d5.



11...♕c8

It is hard to imagine that Black will go unscathed after 11...b5!?, but at least in most cases he threatens to follow up with 12...h6. 12.0-0-0(!) h6 13.♗a5 looks like more than Black can digest, though, so anyone in favour of 12...f6!?

12.0-0-0 ♘d7

Now 12...h6 13.♘xf7! ♔xf7 14.♘e5+ is surely suicidal.

13.♗a5!

Introduces threats involving taking on f7 and/or d7.

13...♘gf6 14.♖he1

Even 14.c5 is dangerous, but 14...♘d5 saves Black. After the strong text Black can only choose between evils.

14...h6?!

This gives White the opportunity to win in great style, but 14...e6 wouldn't be much different, see: 15.♘xe6! fxe6 16.♖xe6+ ♔f7 (16...♗e7 17.♖de1 is hopeless) 17.♘g5+ ♔g8 (or 17...♔g6 18.♕d3+! and the attack is irresistible) 18.♖xf6! ♘c5 (after

18...♘xf6 19.c5+ ♘d5 20.♖xd5 Black can resign and 18...gxf6 19.c5+ ♔g7 20.♕f7+ ♔h6 21.♘e6! is curtains, too) 19.♕f3! gxf6 20.♕xf6 ♕e8 21.♗c3 with a beautiful win for White.

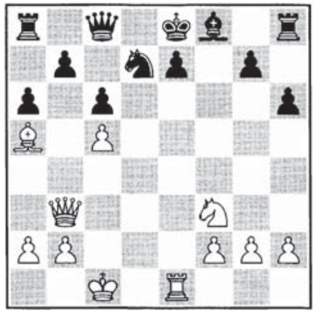
Black's best chance was 14...c5(!) 15.♘e5 (even here 15.♘xf7 is interesting) 15...♘xe5 16.♖d8+ ♕xd8 17.♗xd8 ♖xd8 18.♖xe5 ♘d7! (19.♖f5 g6) and White is 'only' much better.

15.♖xd7!

Beautiful, but 15.♘xf7 is also good.

15...♘xd7 16.♘xf7 ♔xf7 17.c5+ ♔e8

17...♔g6 18.♕d3+ ♔f7 19.♕c4+ could lead to the game position.



Now White has done a lot of damage for a rook, but can he win?

18.♕d3 ♔f7

Forced, as 18...♘xc5 19.♕g6+ ♔d7 20.♘e5+ is mate and 18...♘f6 19.♕g6+ ♔d7 20.♘e5+ ♔e6 21.♘f7+ or ♘c4+ wins easily for White.

19.♕c4+! ♔e8 20.♕e4

After this sweet manoeuvre things are clear: 20...♔f7 doesn't parry the threat of 21.♕g6+, since 21.♕e6+ ♔e8 22.♕g6 mates.

20...♘e5

No choice, but after this Black clearly fights for a lost cause.

21.♘xe5 ♕e6 22.♕d3!

With 23.♘g6 not being the only threat, as we shall see.

22...h5 23.♘c4

Even stronger.

23...♕h6+

Not 23...♕d5 24.♕g6+ etc.

24.♗d2 ♕h7 25.♘d6+ ♔d7 26.♕h3+

And as the bishop will reappear on a5, Black resigned.

Who is this Moliboga? I hope 'moli' means something like 'inspired', because he certainly conducted this game with divine inspiration.

The above may frighten you out of playing 3...a6, but it shouldn't really. First of all, there is the option of quiet development with 4...g6. Secondly, I believe that 4...dxe4 is playable (see the notes to the included game Fressinet-Bricard) and that it is the most important move in a theoretical sense. Moreover: have you really lived when you have never taken a centre pawn? But hear my advice: first try this at home!

CHAPTER 18

Who is Who

A bit of Grünfeld bashing has always been popular among SOS authors. However, a master always finds his grandmaster. **Ian Rogers** presents no less than three SOS weapons in one chapter. Read all about the ideas of Alan Goldsmith. Alan Who?

Dutch GM **Erwin l'Ami** is known for his adherence to main lines. So if he is willing to play an early queen move there must be something to it. Erwin analyzes a former pet line of Tony Miles to conclude that Black is OK after 1.e4 c6 2.c4 e5 3.♘f3 ♕a5.

The Hyper-Accelerated Dragon can be annoying to meet – especially for all 3.♗b5(+) lovers. Just like Spassky you might feel that with 2...g6 Black is simply asking for 3.h4. The authors of *Accelerated Dragons,* the Americans **John Donaldson** and **Jeremy Silman**, saw reason enough to go where no author has gone before.

Are you looking for a repertoire, or a surprise weapon, against 1.d4? **Arthur Kogan**'s 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 b6 is a sophisticated mix between the Grünfeld and the Queen's Indian, with some Budapest Gambit ideas thrown in as well.

Be warned, the Israeli grandmaster has another, more primitive, side to his personality. Check out his Tarzan Attack too!

The principles of good opening play forbid you to play twice with the same piece in the opening. Enter the Hungarian Baron Ladislaus Döry with his defence 1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 ♘e4. Noblesse oblige. It was none other than Paul Keres who won the 1937 theme tournament in Vienna as **Adrian Mikhalchishin** reports.

Karpov's former trainer also reveals a secret in the main tabiya position of the Closed Ruy Lopez after 9.h3. The young Polish IM Grzegorz Gajewski is in the habit of playing 9...♖b8 and he has found Spanish expert Vladimir Malaniuk on his side.

If you're looking for a surprise weapon versus the Open Games, but feel that Nakamura's 2.♕h5 is one bridge too far, then **Glenn Flear** has just the repertoire for you. The Englishman feels that it makes perfect sense to spice up the Vienna and the Bishop's Opening with some early queen moves.

A propos queen moves. How about the rather curious 8.♕d2 in the Slav? **Dorian Rogozenko**, an expert in this venerable defence, confesses that he had never seen the move until Mikhalevski beat Bareev at the 2006 Olympiad.

In SOS-4 Arthur Kogan revealed his secrets in the Scandinavian with 3...♕d8. **Sergey Tiviakov** now does the same for the 3...♕d6 Scandinavian. He relates how his life, and his repertoire, will never be the same again after an opening disaster with white.

In the days when playing the computer could be a joyful experience, **John van der Wiel** watched Jon Speelman play 3...a6 in the Caro-Kann versus the machine. In cycling they would call this strategy *sur place.* The Dutch grandmaster explains that it is better to get your bishop outside the pawn chain.

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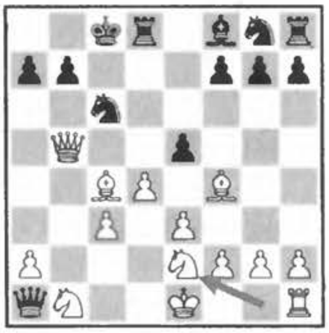
Jeroen Bosch

The SOS Files



Van der Werf-Krudde after 11.♘e2

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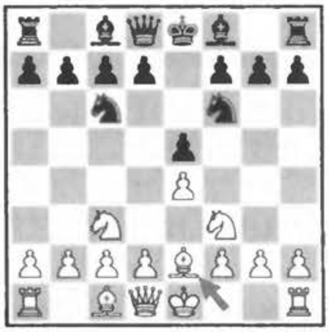
John van der Wiel

A Harmless Little Bishop Move

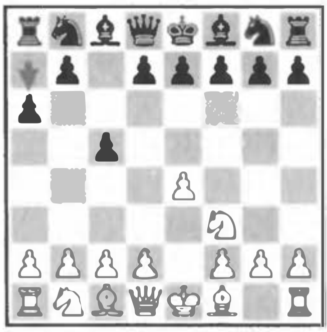


1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗e2

CHAPTER 3 - page 25

Jeroen Bosch

Sicilian: the O'Kelly Variation

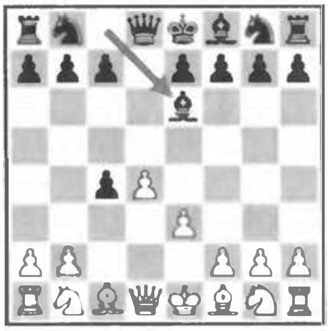


1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 a6

CHAPTER 4 - page 39

Glenn Flear

Really Accepting the QGA

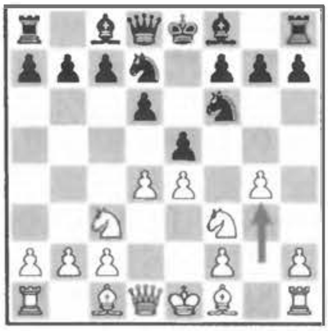


1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e3 ♗e6!?

CHAPTER 5 - page 50

Friso Nijboer

The Shirov Gambit versus the Philidor

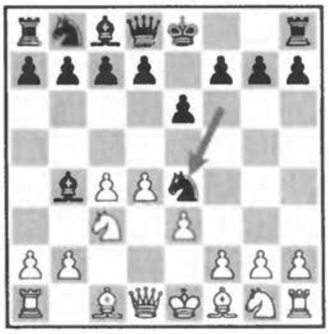


Let's play 5.g4!

CHAPTER 6 - page 57

Dorian Rogozenko

Early Surprise in a Classical Nimzo

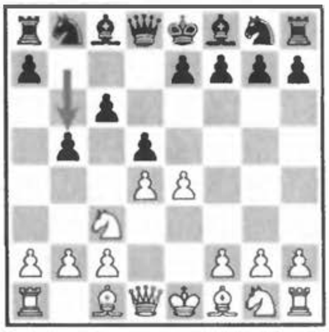


Rubinstein Variation with 4...♘e4

CHAPTER 7 - page 66

Adrian Mikhalchishin

The Caro-Kann of Bukhuti Gurgenidze

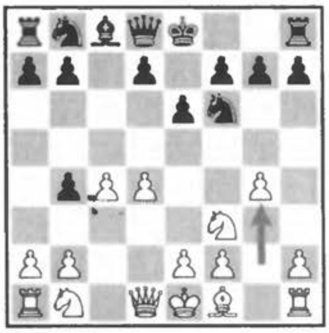


1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 b5!?

CHAPTER 8 - page 70

Jeroen Bosch

Bayonet Blow in the Bogo

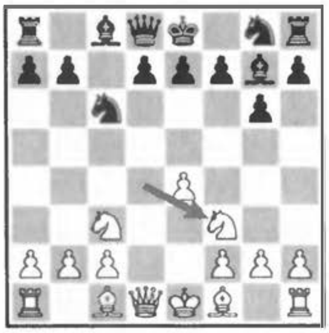


6.g4 in the Vitolinsh Variation

CHAPTER 9 - page 76

Arthur Kogan

Inspiration versus the Dragon

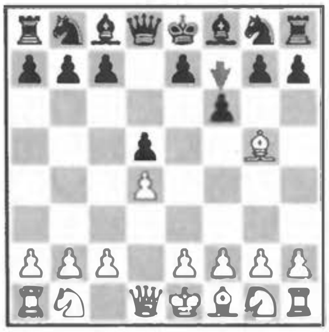


Play like Tal

CHAPTER 10 - page 83

Jeroen Bosch

Chasing the 'Trompowsky' Bishop

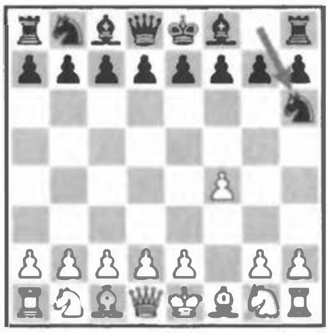


1.d4 d5 2.♗g5 f6

CHAPTER 11 - page 94

Dimitri Reinderman

Edgy Knight against the Bird

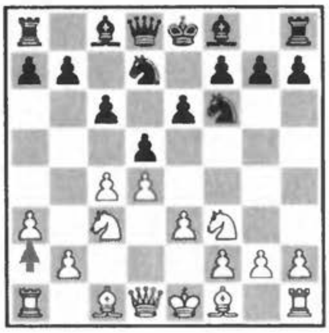


1.f4 ♘h6

CHAPTER 12 - page 103

Glenn Flear

The Semi-Slav with 6.a3

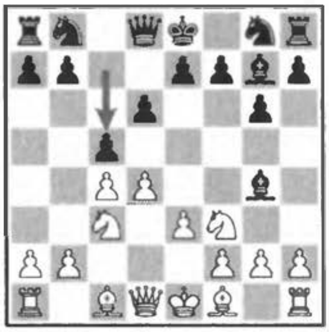


A simple idea with some bite

CHAPTER 13 - page 116

Alexander Finkel

Modern for Advanced Players

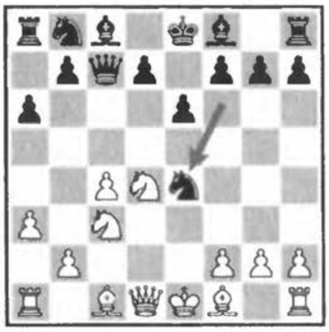


Develop your bishops first

CHAPTER 14 - page 125

Jeroen Bosch

Taimanov's Surprise Sac in the Kan

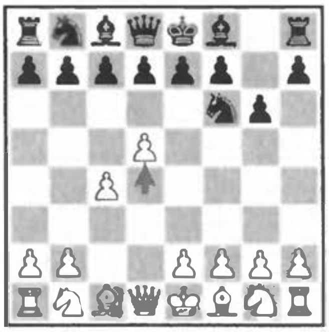


The intrepid 7...♘xe4

CHAPTER 15 - page 130

Adrian Mikhalchishin

Anti-Grünfeld and Anti-Volga

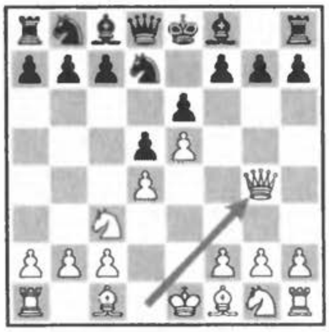


1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.d5!?

CHAPTER 16 - page 134

Igor Glek & Jean-Olivier Leconte

French: the Gledhill Attack

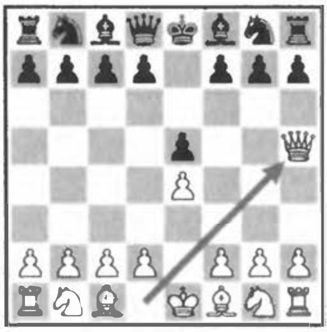


A new direction

CHAPTER 17 - page 138

Hikaru Nakamura

Not Going for Scholar's Mate



1.e4 e5 2.♛h5

CHAPTER 1

Jeroen Bosch

The SOS Files

Welcome to the Jungle!

SOS-6, Chapter 6, p.51

Out there in the jungle that is the weekend congress or the open tournament circuit it pays off to have your own pet systems. The present game is a case in point. Mark Hebden has always been successful in Britain's congresses. One of the English grandmaster's home-cooked lines is what Arthur Kogan has dubbed the Tarzan Attack in SOS-6. The primitive and aggressive nature of this line should explain the name.

⁂

☐ **Mark Hebden**
■ **Michael Hennigan**
England tt 2006/07

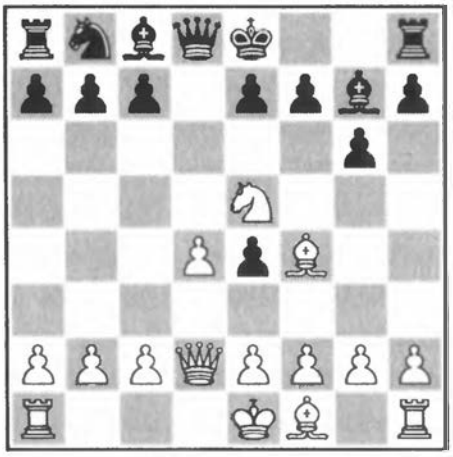
1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.♗f4 ♗g7 5.♕d2

This is what the Tarzan Attack is all about. White prepares to exchange the fianchetto bishop and is getting ready to castle queenside.

5...0-0

Prié-Massoni, Calvi 2007, continued instead 5...♗f5 6.0-0-0 ♘bd7 7.♗h6 0-0 8.♗xg7 ♔xg7 9.h3!? c6 10.♖g1 ♘e4 11.♘xe4 dxe4 12.g4! ♗e6 13.♘g5 with interesting play.

The main line is 5...♘e4. Black is exploiting White's last move to exchange a pair of knights whilst gaining some space. After 6.♘xe4 dxe4 7.♘e5 we reach the diagrammed position



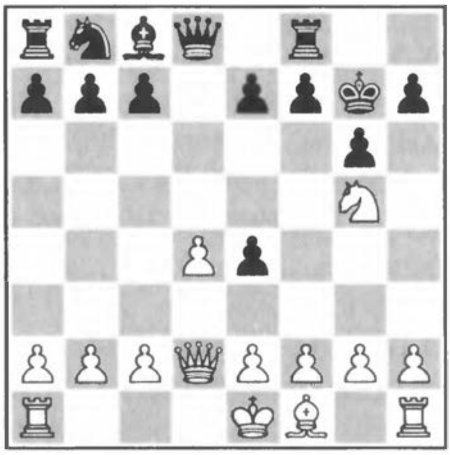
● The main line is 7...♗e6 when Hebden-Rayner, Hastings 2006/07, went: 8.e3 ♘d7 (or 8...0-0 9.♕b4!? b6 – 9...♗d5 10.c4 – 10.0-0-0 a5 11.♕a4 ♗d5 12.♗b5 ♖a7 13.h4 with interesting play in Hebden-Arakhamia, Swansea 2006; possibly stronger after 8...0-0 is 9.c3 f6 10.♘c4 ♗d5 11.♘a5! b6 12.c4! ♗f7 13.♘b3 f5 with the better game for White in Kogan-Damljanovic, Zaragoza 2003) 9.♘xd7 (9.♘c4 0-0 10.d5!? is Kogan's novelty as suggested in SOS-6. Instead the game Yusupov-Kasparov, Belfort 1988, went 10.♗e2 ♗xc4 11.♗xc4 e5 with equality) 9...♕xd7 10.c4 (10.♕b4!? is another Kogan novelty that may promise some advantage) 10...f5 11.h4 h6 (not wishing to repeat 11...0-0 12.h5 ♖fd8 13.hxg6 hxg6 from Hebden-Van der Weide, Liverpool 2006) 12.f3 exf3 13.gxf3 ♗f7 14.0-0-0 ♕a4

15.♔b1 0-0-0 16.b3 ♕a3 17.♗d3, and now 17...c5 was best to preserve the equilibrium.

● 7...♘c6?! (a novel approach by Matthew Turner) 8.♘xc6 bxc6 9.e3 c5 (this Grünfeld lever was Black's idea. Possibly he overlooked Hebden's original reply) 10.♕a5! ♕d5 (10...cxd4?? 11.♗xc7 wins the queen!) 11.♗xc7 (11.♗e2 0-0 12.♖d1 is also better for White) 11...0-0 12.♗e2 ♗e6 13.♗g3 ♕b7 14.♕xc5 (White can also play 14.♕b5 ♕xb5 15.♗xb5 cxd4 16.exd4 ♗xd4 17.c3 followed by 18.♗c6) 14...♕xb2 15.0-0 (White is a pawn up and Black's fianchetto bishop is out of play. The opening has been a complete success) 15...♖fc8 16.♕xe7 ♖xc2 Hebden-Turner, 4NCL 2006/07. Rather than the game continuation 17.♗a6?! White should now play 17.♗d1!? to manoeuvre the bishop to b3, after 17...♖cc8 (17...♕xa1 18.♗xc2 ♕xa2 19.♗xe4) 18.♗b3.

6.♗h6 c5

In a recent internet blitz game Arthur Kogan demonstrated that he likes to play what he preaches: 6...♘e4 7.♘xe4 dxe4 8.♝xg7 ♔xg7 9.♘g5 (9.♘e5 ♗e6)



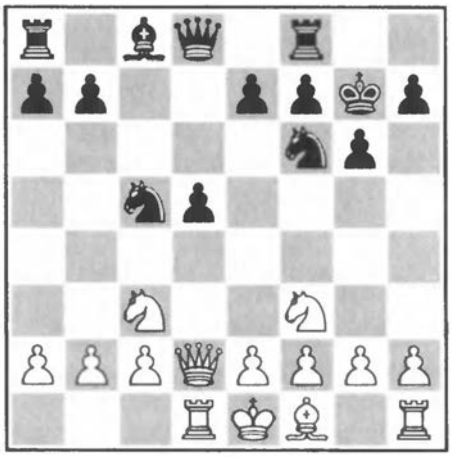
● White had won in Kogan-Martin, Benasque 2002, after 9...f5 10.h4! h6 11.♘h3 e5 12.e3 ♕xh4 13.dxe5 ♕e7 14.f4! exf3 (14...♖d8 15.♕c3±) 15.gxf3 ♕xe5 16.0-0-0 ♘c6 17.♘f4 ♗e6 18.♗d3 ♗f7 19.♖dg1 ♖ae8 20.e4! g5 21.♖xh6! fxe4 (21...♔xh6 22.♕h2+ ♔g7 23.♖xg5+ ♔f6 24.♖xf5+ ♕xf5 25.exf5+−) 22.♖xg5+! ♔xh6 (22...♕xg5 23.♘e6+ ♖xe6 24.♕xg5+ ♗g6 25.♗xe4+−) 23.♖xe5 ♖xe5 24.♘e6+ e3 25.♕h2+ ♖h5 26.♕f4+ 1-0.

● 9...♕d5 10.c4 (according to Kogan in SOS-6 this is an important improvement first played by Prié) 10...♕xc4 11.♘xe4 ♖d8 12.e3 ♕e6 13.♗d3 f5 14.♘c5 ♕f6 15.0-0 b6 16.♘b3 c5 17.♕e2 cxd4 18.♘xd4 e5 19.♕f3! e4 20.♗xe4 fxe4 21.♕xe4 ♖xd4 22.♕xa8 1-0 Kogan-Zinchenko, ICC blitz 2007.

7.♗xg7 ♔xg7 8.dxc5 ♘a6!?

8...♘c6 9.♖d1 (9.e3) 9...e6 10.e4 dxe4 11.♘g5 gave White a much better ending in Rakic-Petursson, Ljubljana 1981.

9.♖d1 ♘xc5



10.♕d4!?

Previously, the game Hebden-Brandenburg, Liverpool 2006, had seen 10.♘xd5 when White had won a pawn. Black has an edge in development though. The game continued 10...♘ce4!? 11.♕b4 ♘xd5 (11...a5) 12.♕xe4 ♕a5+ 13.c3 and Black was only slightly worse.

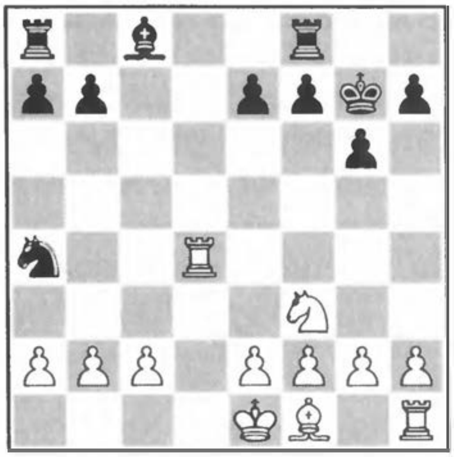
10...♕d6

In case of 10...♘e6 White keeps the pressure with 11.♕e5.

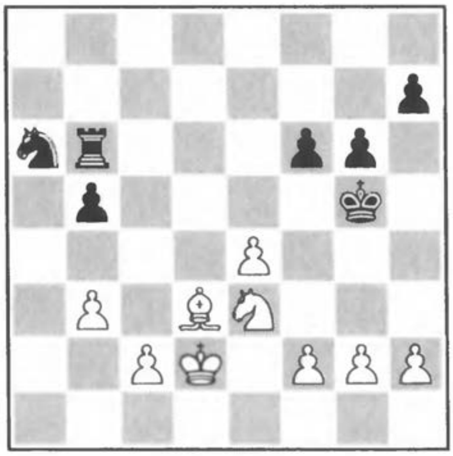
11.♘xd5

Having avoided the ...♘ce4 possibility, Hebden now takes the pawn.

11...♕xd5 12.♕xd5 ♘xd5 13.♖xd5 ♘a4 14.♖d4!



14...b5 14...♘xb2?? 15.♖b4 traps the knight. **15.b3 ♘c3 16.♔d2** Returning the pawn for a positional advantage. **16...♘xa2 17.e4 ♖b8 18.♘e5 f6 19.♘c6 ♖b7 20.♗d3 e5 21.♖d6 ♖b6** due to this pin Black's knight is able to escape. **22.♖a1 ♘b4 23.♖xa7+ ♔h6 24.♖c7 ♘a6** Now to avoid a repetition White must give up the exchange. **25.♖xc8! ♖xc8 26.♘xe5 ♖cb8** Or 26...♖xd6 27.♘f7+ ♔g7 28.♘xd6 and pawn b5 drops as well. **27.♘g4+ ♔g5 28.♖xb6 ♖xb6 29.♘e3**



White has two pawns for the exchange and a much better king. **29...♘c7?!** A better attempt was 29...♘c5: it is vital to remove the bishop in this ending. **30.g3 ♔h6 31.♔c3 ♔g7 32.♔b4 ♖b8 33.♔a5 ♔f7 34.♘d5! ♘xd5 35.exd5 b4?** Stronger was 35...♖d8 36.♔xb5 ♖xd5+ 37.♔c6 ♖d4 38.♔c5 ♖d8. **36.♗b5 ♔e7** Black cannot force a repetition, due to 36...♖c8 37.♗c4 ♖b8 38.d6+! ♔f8 39.♗b5. **37.♔xb4** Three passed pawns on the queenside is just too much. White won after **37...♔d6 38.c4 ♖a8 39.♗c6 ♖a2 40.c5+ ♔c7 41.♔b5 ♖xf2 42.d6+ ♔d8 43.♔b6 ♖xh2 44.♗b5 ♖d2 45.c6 ♖xd6 46.♔b7** **1-0**

Updating Gajewski's Ruy Lopez

SOS-6, Chapter 13, p.104

In SOS-6 Adrian Mikhalchishin noted the arrival of a new Spanish line – Grzegorz Gajewski's 9...♖b8 in the classical tabiya of the Closed Ruy Lopezafter 9.h3. Gajewski's line was played a couple of times in the European Championship in Dresden. In our main game we see Arkady Naiditsch adopting 9...♖b8 to obtain an excellent position.

☐ **Igor Kurnosov**
■ **Arkady Naiditsch**
Dresden Ech 2007

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♗e7 6.♖e1 b5 7.♗b3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.h3 ♖b8

As Mikhalchishin explains in SOS-6 there are some very concrete points connected to the rook move (for one: it is important that the rook is not hanging on a8 as we will see). However, if you think about it in an abstract manner: is there any reason why 9...♖b8 would be worse than 9...♘b8? The latter move (which undevelops the knight from its natural square to its original one) is the start of the ultra-respectable Breyer Variation!

10.d4

The main reply of course. Black now executes his strategical idea:

10...exd4 11.cxd4 d5! 12.e5

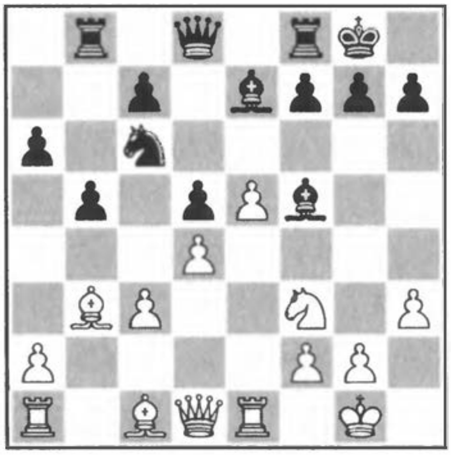
An important tactical point of 9...♖b8 is 12.♘e5 ♘xe5 13.dxe5 ♘xe4 14.♗xd5 and with a rook on a8 Black would be lost now! Now the position is equal as was demonstrated in Stehno-Malaniuk, Marianske Lazne 2006: with 14...♘c5 15.♕f3 c6! 16.♗xc6 ♘d3 17.♖d1 ♘xe5 Black won in 49 moves.

12...♘e4

This is the main tabiya of 9...♖b8. White must choose between 13.♘bd2 and 13.♘c3.

13.♘bd2

After 13.♘c3 Black should take, and develop his bishop to the important b1-h7 diagonal: 13...♘xc3 14.bxc3 ♗f5



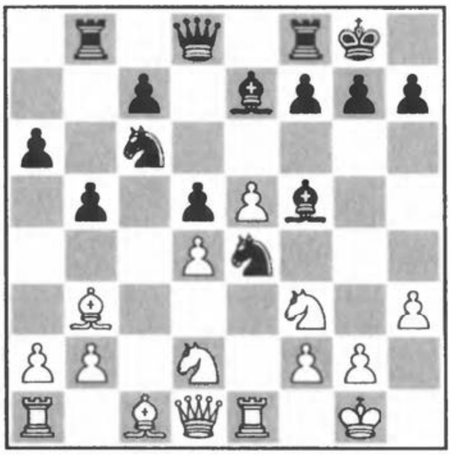
An interesting strategical position has arisen. White should try to develop some initiative on the kingside. Black is going to prepare ...c5 (often by means of ...♘a5) and prevent White from advancing his f2-pawn all the way up to f5. 15.♗c2 was played in Z.Almasi-Pavasovic, Sibenik 2006. White won quickly, but Mikhalchishin suggests several improvements in SOS-6. Let's see two fairly recent Polish games:

– 15.♗f4 is in principle illogical (White should prepare f2-f4 at some point). After 15...♕d7 White exchanged the bishop with 16.♗g5 ♗xg5 17.♘xg5 ♘a5?! (17...h6 18.♘f3 and now Black is OK after a knight move – 18...♘a5 or 18...♘e7) 18.♗c2 (18.g4 ♗g6 19.f4) 18...h6 19.♘f3 ♘c4 20.♗xf5 ♕xf5 21.♘h4 ♕d7?! (21...♕g5) 22.f4 ♖b6 23.f5 g5 24.♕g4 ♔h7 and White was better and should now have played 25.♘f3 rather than 25.♘g6?! ♖g8! 26.e6 fxe6 27.fxe6?! (27.♘e5) 27...♕e8 and Black won after a long game, Krzyzanowski-Mickiewicz, Koszalin 2006.

– 15.♘h2 ♘a5 16.♘f1 ♘c4 17.g4 ♗c8 18.♘g3 c5 19.♘f5 g6 20.♘xe7+ ♕xe7 21.♗xc4 dxc4 22.♗h6 (22.d5 ♗b7 with complex play) 22...♖e8 23.♕d2 (23.d5 ♕h4! 24.♗f4 ♕xh3 25.e6 ♖b7) 23...♗b7 and the game ended in a draw after the sharp 24.d5 f6!? 25.exf6 ♕xf6 26.♗f4 ♖bd8 27.♗g5 ♖xe1+ 28.♖xe1 ♕f3 29.♗xd8 ♗xd5 and with a rook up White must go for a perpetual with 30.♖e8+ ♔f7 31.♖e7+ ♔g8 ½-½ Rybak-Czyz, Krakow 2006.

13...♗f5

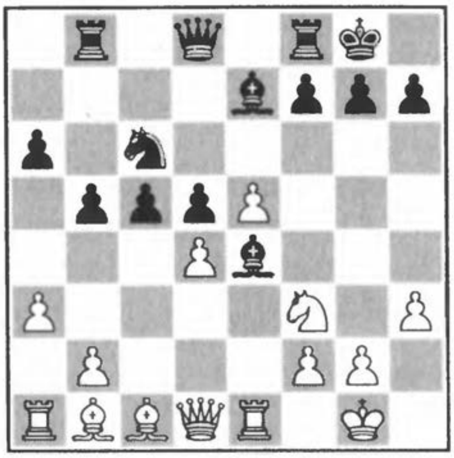
Again placing this bishop on the b1-h7 diagonal is most natural.



14.♘f1

The alternative is 14.♗c2 when play may continue: 14...♘b4 15.♗b1 (15.♗xe4 dxe4 16.♘xe4 ♕d5 – 16...♗xe4 17.♖xe4 ♕d5 Mikhalchishin – 17.♗g5 ♗xg5 18.♘fxg5

♖bd8 19.a3 ♘c6 20.♘c3 ♕xd4 21.♕f3 ♘e7 22.♖ad1 ♕c4 23.♘ge4 ♗xe4 24.♘xe4 ♘g6 and play was equal, but White won in Spraggett-Gajewski, Calvia 2006) 15...c5 16.a3 (16.♘xe4 dxe4 17.♗xe4 ♗xe4 18.♖xe4 c4 was fine for Black in Fedorchuk-Gajewski, Warsaw Ech 2005. See SOS-6) 16...♘c6 17.♘xe4 ♗xe4



and Black is OK, as was borne out in recent practice: 18.dxc5 (or 18.♗xe4dxe4 19.♖xe4 ♕d5 20.♖g4 f5! 21.exf6 ♗xf6 Erdogdu-Malaniuk, Arad 2006) 18...♗xc5 19.♗e3 ♗xe3 20.♖xe3 ♗xb1 21.♖xb1 d4 22.♖e4 ♕d5 23.♕d3 ♖fe8 24.♖be1 ♖bd8 25.b4 h6 26.♕d2 ♖e6 27.♕d3 ♖de8 28.♖c1 ♘xe5 29.♘xe5 ♖xe5 30.♖xd4 and draw agreed in Radulski-Gajewski, Cappelle la Grande 2007.

14...♘a5

Also playable is 14...♕d7 15.♘e3 ♗e6 16.♗c2 f5 17.exf6 ♗xf6 18.♘xd5 ♗xd5 19.♗xe4 ♗xe4 (19...♖bd8! is equal) 20.♖xe4 ♕d5 21.♕b3! ♕xb3 22.axb3 ♖fe8 23.♖xe8+ ♖xe8 24.♗e3 ♖d8 25.♖xa6 ♘xd4 and the game Stanojoski-Sowray, Dresden Ech 2007, ended eventually in a draw. White could have won now, though, with 26.♖xf6!.

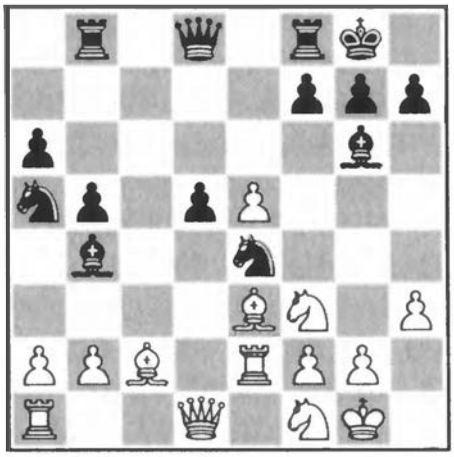
15.♗c2

15.♗xd5! ♕xd5 (15...♘xf2!?) 16.♘e3 ♕d7 17.♘xf5 ♕xf5 18.♕c2 was given by Mikhalchishin in SOS-6.

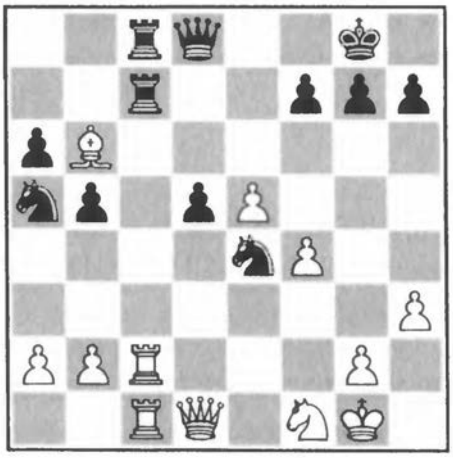
15...c5

Naiditsch executes Black's main strategical idea: the ...c5 break.

16.dxc5 ♗xc5 17.♗e3 ♗b4! 18.♖e2 ♗g6



Black has an isolated pawn, but active pieces. Play in fact resembles the Open Spanish rather than the Closed. Let's see the rest of the game with some brief notes: **19.♘d4 ♗e7?! 20.f3 ♘g5 21.f4 ♗xc2 22.♖xc2 ♘e4 23.♘f5 ♖e8 24.♘xe7+ ♖xe7 25.♗d4 ♖c7 26.♖ac1** 26.♖xc7 ♕xc7 27.♖c1 promises an edge. **26...♖bc8** Ready to exchange all rooks and inviting **27.♗b6!?**



27...♖xc2! 28.♗xd8 ♖xc1 29.♕xd5 ♘c6! 30.♗h4 30.e6 ♘xd8 31.exf7+ (31.e7 ♘c6 32.♕xe4 ♖e8 is fine)

31...♘xf7 32.♕xe4 and Black's rooks are equal to White's queen and pawn. **30...♘c5 31.♕d2 ♖c4 32.♘e3 ♖xf4 33.♗f2 ♖d4** Now Black is clearly better. **34.♕e2 ♖e4 35.♕c2 ♘d4 36.♕d1 ♘ce6 37.♔h2 ♖xe5** Black is just winning. In the end he only manages a draw, and we may surely blame the FIDE tempo. **38.a4 h5 39.axb5 axb5 40.♕a1 ♞f5?! 41.b4? f6** 41...♖xe3. **42.♕a6 ♖e8 43.♘xf5 ♖xf5 44.♕c6 ♔f7 45.♗c5 ♘xc5?! 46.bxc5 ♖e7 47.♕xb5 ♖c7 48.♕b3+ ♔e7 49.♕g3 ♖fxc5 50.♕xg7+** Now the game is drawn. **50...♔e6 51.♕g8+ ♔f5 52.h4 ♖e5 53.♔h3 ♖c3+ 54.g3 ♖c7 55.♔g2 ♖ee7 56.♔h3 ♖f7 57.♔g2 ♖cd7 58.♔h3 ♖g7 59.♕e8 ♖h7 60.♕g8 ♖de7 61.g4+ hxg4+ 62.♕xg4+ ♔e5 63.♕e2+ ♔d6** **½-½**

Bayonet Attack or Hara-Kiri?

SOS-1, Chapter 4, p.40

In the fifth round of the 2006 Olympiad in Torino Norway met Finland. In this Scandinavian encounter grandmaster Einar Gausel quickly disposed of his opponent with an SOS. Or was is Tapani Sammalvuo who committed hara-kiri with his bayonet attack?

☐ **Tapani Sammalvuo**
■ **Einar Gausel**
Turin Olympiad 2006

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗b5 ♗d6

An excellent SOS-way of combating the Spanish Four Knights. Black defends e5 and prepares to castle, followed by ...♖e8, ...♗f8 playing for ...d5.

5.g4

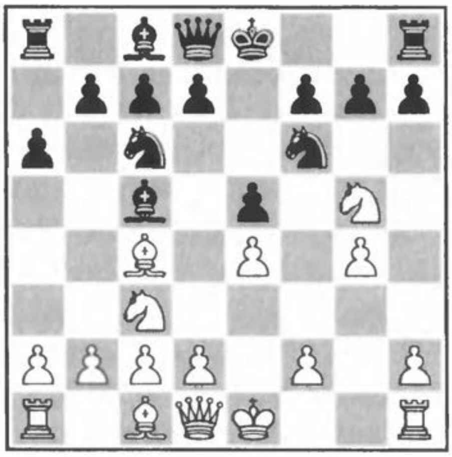
This bayonet attack is an original suggestion of Jan Pinski's in his book *The Four Knights* (2003). Pinski now recommended 5...♗c5 for Black, by the way.

The SOS Files of SOS-5 featured the game Böhnisch-Kortchnoi, Dresden 2006, which ran 5.a4 0-0 6.d3 ♖e8 7.♗c4 h6 and only after this move did White play 8.g4, when Kortchnoi responded in exemplary fashion with 8...♗b4! 9.g5 d5!. See SOS-5 for the details.

5...a6

This intermediate move looks no worse than Pinski's 5...♗c5. White cannot take on c6, as g4 would turn out to be a mere weakness.

6.♗c4 ♗c5 7.♘g5



Sammalvuo aims to capitalize on Black's decision to insert 5...a6 6.♗c4, by taking aim at f7. This primitive set-up meets with a strong response though. Also consistent was 7.g5, when 7...♘g4 8.♖f1 d6 9.h3?! ♘xf2 10.♖xf2 ♗xf2+ 11.♔xf2 ♗xh3 is better for Black. Best was perhaps 7.h3 d6 but that's not why you play 5.g4.

7...d5!

This counter measure in the centre is very strong. The knight on g5 is hanging in the air. Compare this to the above-mentioned game Böhnisch-Kortchnoi.

8.♘xd5

The alternatives are no better:

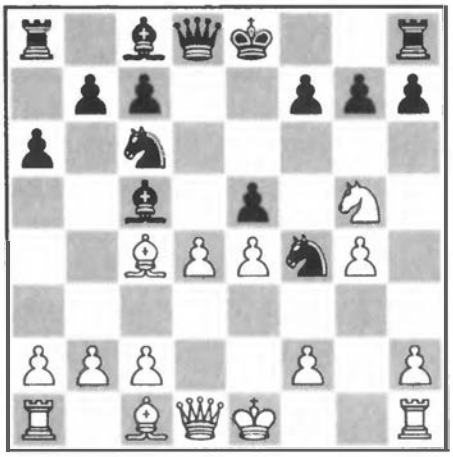
- 8.exd5 ♗xf2+ (8...♘xg4!? 9.♘ce4) 9.♔xf2 (9.♔f1 ♘a5 is also very good for Black) 9...♘xg4+ and 10...♕xg5 is winning.
- 8.♗xd5 ♗xf2+ 9.♔xf2 (9.♔f1 ♘xd5–+) 9...♘xg4+ 10.♔f1 ♕xg5 and White is a pawn down and has no compensation for his bad king either!

8...♘xd5

But not 8...♗xf2+ 9.♔xf2 ♘xg4+ 10.♔f1 ♕xg5 11.h3 and suddenly White's pieces are well-coordinated.

9.exd5

Here 9.d4 ♘f4 is a real slugfest, where Black comes out on top in the end:



- 10.♗xf7+ ♔f8 11.dxc5 (11.♗xf4 exf4 12.♘e6+ ♗xe6 13.♗xe6 ♘xd4) 11...♕xg5.
- 10.♘xf7 ♕xd4 11.♕xd4 ♘xd4.
- 10.♗xf4 exf4 11.♘xf7 ♕xd4 12.♕xd4 ♘xd4 13.♘xh8 ♘xc2+ 14.♔d2 ♘xa1.

There is not much joy for White in 9.♗xd5 ♕xg5 10.d4 ♕h4 11.dxc5 (11.♕f3 ♘xd4 12.♕xf7+ ♔d8–+) 11...♗xg4 either.

9...♕xg5 10.d4

White cannot take, since 10.dxc6 ♕f4! 11.♕e2 ♗xf2+ wins on the spot. The text appears to retrieve material though.

10...♕g6!

Possibly Sammalvuo overlooked this possibility? Black creates a powerful threat of his own (11...♕e4+) which not exactly saves his attacked pieces but leaves him with a winning attack nevertheless.

11.♗d3 e4

Now White is forced to take both minor pieces.

12.dxc5

12.♗e2 ♘xd4 wins.

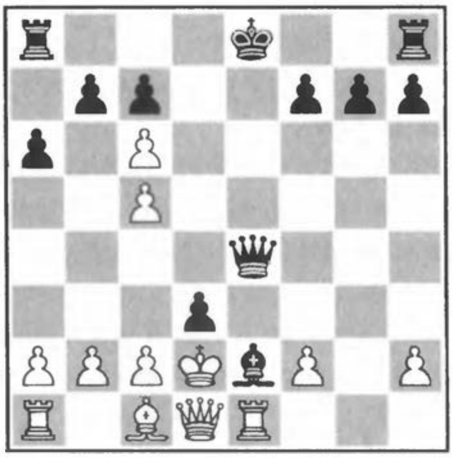
12...exd3 13.dxc6 ♕e4+

This is the crux, White's king remains in the line of fire. The opposite-coloured bishops merely help to enhance Gausel's attack.

14.♔d2 ♗xg4 15.♖e1

15.cxb7 ♖d8 16.b8♕ and now Fritz likes to rub it in with 16...0-0!, although other moves win easily too.

15...♗e2



16.cxb7 ♖d8 and here Sammalvuo played **17.♖xe2** and resigned before Gausel could respond with the obvious 17...dxe2+. **0-1**

Player meets Author

SOS-5, Chapter 12, p.98

In SOS-5 Mark van der Werf wrote on the Improved London System (1.d4 d5 2.♗f4). In this season's Dutch team championship he was able to use his knowledge, combined with fine tactical acumen, to good effect. A resounding win using a sacrificial idea of the late Tony Miles was the result.

The strength of this particular SOS is demonstrated by the fact that GMs Igor Miladinovic and Juan Bellon Lopez have recently also fallen victim to the same line. Apparently, they had not read SOS-5.

So, there is every reason to award the SOS Prize to Mark van der Werf. However, as the author of 'Bishop First: 1.d4 d5 2.♗f4', he is not eligible to personally receive the sum of € 250. In his professional life Van der Werf is manager of the Dutch Chess Federation. In this capacity he shall donate the money to a Dutch Chess in Schools project called 'SpeelZ'.

☐ **Mark van der Werf**
■ **Fitzgerald Krudde**
Netherlands tt 2006/07

1.d4 d5 2.♗f4

In his article Van der Werf explains the advantages of developing the bishop first, whilst postponing the development of the king's knight. (The traditional London System runs 2.♘f3 and 3.♗f4.) Krudde now goes for the most active option.

2...c5 3.e3

There is something to be said in favour of the aggressive 3.e4!? as played by Winants, Rowson and (on occasion) McShane. See SOS-5.

3...♘c6

3...♕b6 4.♘c3 e6 5.♘b5 ♘a6 6.a4 favours White according to Van der Werf. Play resembles the Baltic Defence (1.d4 d5 2.c4 ♗f5) but with an important extra tempo.

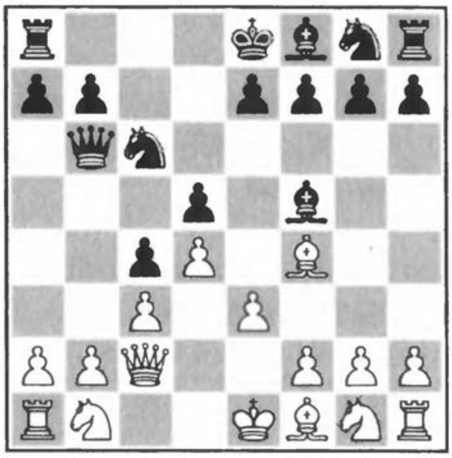
4.c3 ♕b6

A normal move in all Queen's Pawn openings where the bishop has left the queenside. Here 4...e6 5.♘d2 ♗d6 6.♗xd6 ♕xd6 7.♕g4! Rowson-Haslinger, British Championship, Scarborough 2004, demonstrates one of the advantages of postponing the development of the g1-knight. Instead 4...♘f6 5.♘d2 ♗f5 6.♘gf3 e6 7.♕b3 is more solid, but perhaps a tad better for White.

5.♕b3 c4

5...♕xb3 6.axb3 and in this ending White will get pressure on the queenside.

6.♕c2 ♗f5?



What could be more logical than to develop with tempo. Surely the bishop is immune following ...♕xb2?. Had both sides developed their king's knights then this would indeed have been the case. Now Van der Werf capitalizes on his knowledge with

7.♕xf5!

As played by Tony Miles against Ara Minasian in Ohrid 2001. White obtains a winning position directly from the opening! (The real honour ought to have gone to Faruk Bistric who first played this against Sveshnikov – sadly he lost the game.)

7...♕xb2 8.♕xd5 ♕xa1

There is not much joy in the alternatives:

– 8...♘f6?! 9.♕xc4 ♘e4? fails to 10.♕b5! ♕xf2+ (another recent addition to Black's catastrophic record with 6...♗f5? is 10...♕c1+ 11.♔e2 ♕c2+ 12.♔f3 g5 13.♘h3 f5 14.♗xg5 ♕d1+ 15.♗e2 ♕xh1 16.♕xb7 ♘d8 17.♕b5+ ♔f7 18.♕xf5+ ♘f6 and Black resigned without waiting for his opponent's reply in Bogosavljevic-Miladinovic, Serbian Championship, Vrsac 2007) 11.♔d1 a6 12.♕e2 e5 13.♗g3 ♕f6 14.♕f3

♕g6 15.♗c4 and White was just a piece up in Sedlak-Czebe, Subotica 2005.

– 8...♕c1+?! 9.♔e2 ♕b2+ 10.♔f3 (the king is actually no worse on f3 than on e1) 10...♘f6 11.♕xc4 ♕xa1 12.♕b3 0-0-0 13.♗b5 was Miles-Minasian, Ohrid 2001. Her majesty is trapped on a1. White has a winning advantage.

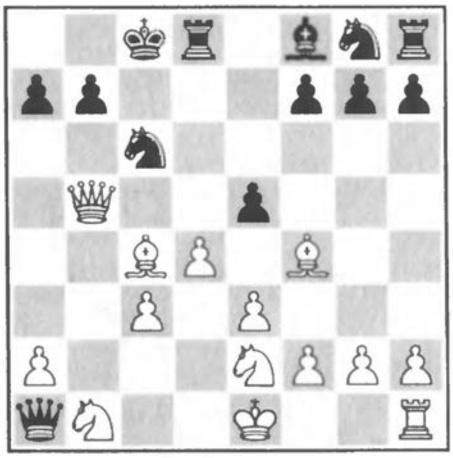
9.♕b5 0-0-0

9...a6 10.♕xb7 ♘d8 11.♕e4! and White has a big edge. Note that 11.♕b4 ♖c8 12.♘f3 ♕xa2 13.♘e5 e6 14.♗xc4 ♖xc4 15.♕xc4 ♕xb1+ 16.♔d2 ♕b5 was the unsuccessful stem game Bistric-Sveshnikov, Bled 1991. While 11.♕xa8 ♕xb1+ 12.♔e2 e5! is perhaps only a draw – see SOS-5.

10.♗xc4

White is hardly behind in material, and Black's queen is trapped on a1. Black has to act fast, so Krudde's next is forced

10...e5 11.♘e2!



This is best. The main idea behind 10...e5 was 11.♗xe5 ♗b4.

11...♗d6

11...exf4 12.0-0 and Black's queen will drop off according to Van der Werf in SOS-5! Sadly, GM Bellon Lopez had not read these lines, as witness 12...fxe3 13.fxe3 ♘ge7 14.♘d2 a6 15.♕b6 ♘d5 16.♗xd5 ♕xf1+ 17.♔xf1 ♖xd5 18.c4 ♖f5+ 19.♔g1 ♗e7 20.♘e4 ♔b8 21.d5 ♗d8 22.♕b1 ♘a5 23.♘c5 ♖g5 24.♘d4 ♔a7 25.♕b4 ♖g6 26.♘d7 ♖e8 27.♕c5+ ♖b6 and White won in Hamark-Bellon Lopez, Stockholm 2006/07.

12.0-0 a6

White just wins after 12...exf4 13.♘d2.

13.♕b3 ♘a5 14.♗e6+!

Excellent! Also winning is 14.♕a4 exf4 15.♕xa5 ♕b2 16.♘xf4 ♗xf4 (16...♘e7 17.♘d3) 17.exf4 and Black's queen escapes, but White is no longer behind in material and positionally better.

14...fxe6

14...♔b8 15.♕b6 and 14...♔c7 15.♕a4 are no better.

15.♕xe6+ ♖d7

15...♔c7 16.♗xe5 ♘f6 17.♕e7+ ♖d7 18.♗xd6+ and White is winning on points, since 18...♔c6 is met by 19.d5+.

16.dxe5 ♘e7

The bishop must block the d-file, as 16...♗c7 17.♖d1 wins. So White wins another piece and gets a passer on d6.

17.exd6 ♘g6 18.♗g3

White is just winning. The rest is simple.

18...♕b2 19.♘d4 ♖d8 20.♕d5 ♕b6 21.♘d2 ♘e7 22.♕e4 ♘ec6 23.♘e6 ♖e8 24.♖b1 ♕a7 25.♕d5

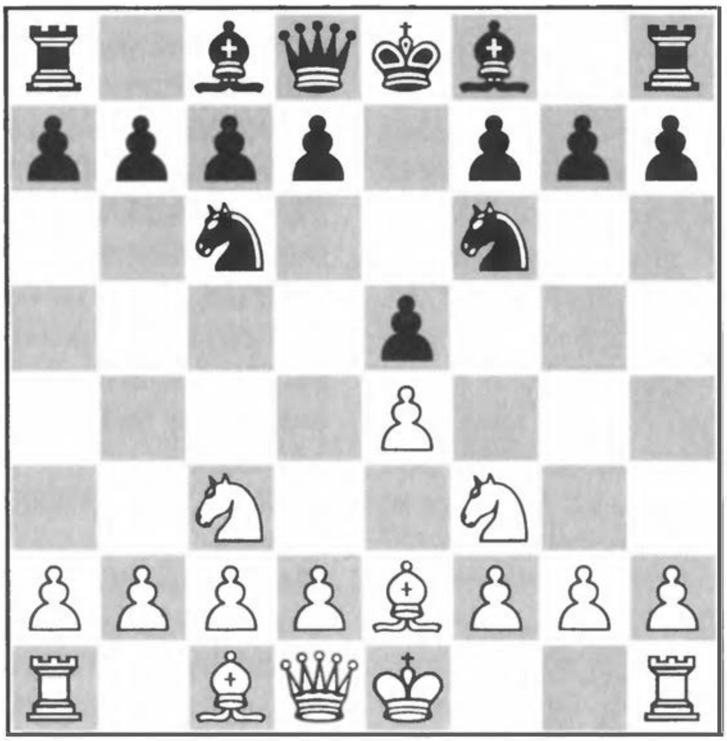
There is a huge difference in activity between White's queen and Black's queen.

25...b6 26.♘c4 b5 27.♘xa5 ♘xa5 28.♘c5 ♖ed8 29.♘xd7 ♖xd7 30.♖d1 ♕b7 31.♕g8+ 1-0

CHAPTER 2

John van der Wiel

A Harmless Little Bishop Move



1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗e2

In the 1980s 4.♗e2 was a surprise weapon of mine. It scored 5-1, no draws. Then it was put to reset, but recently I employed it again (after almost 22 years), managing to surprise two fellow countrymen with it. Current score: 6-2, still no draws.

As Black has good active responses to straightforward white play in the Four Knights (4.d4 exd4 5.♘xd4 ♗b4; 4.♗c4 ♘xe4; 4.♗b5 ♘d4), the move is quite logical by elimination. It develops a piece and aims to play d2-d4 at a more suitable moment, i.e. after 4...♗e7, 4...d6 or 4...g6. Usually it leads to very different positions than 4.a3, an elder SOS-move (see SOS-1, the very first chapter). For example, 4.a3 d5 5.♝b5!? is quite another story than 4.♗e2 d5 5.exd5 ♘xd5 6.0-0.

After the harmless looking 4.♗e2 I consider 4...d5 and 4...♗b4 to be Black's best replies. To 4...♗c5 there is the standard reaction 5.♘xe5 in a very good version, see: 5...♘xe5 6.d4 ♗b4 7.dxe5 ♘xe4 8.♕d3 ♘xc3 9.bxc3 ♗e7 10.♕g3 g6 11.♗h6, with advantage for White in Van der Wiel-Kuijf, Dutch championship, Hilversum 1984.

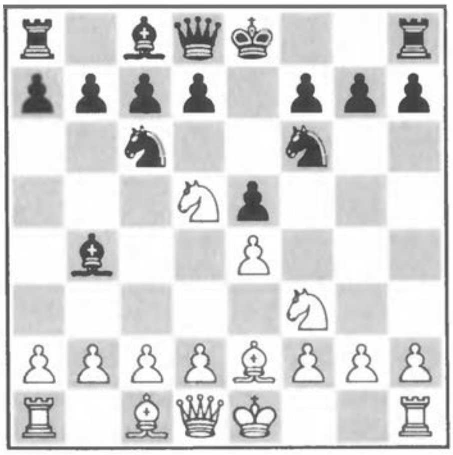
The three games that I shall show you with Black's main moves, will be a personal account of my experiences with 4.♗e2. There are a few other adepts, too: Germany's Oliver Brendel and a much older one, Joseph Blackburne. I don't think that Blackburne invented 4.♗e2, I suspect with such a name he invented the solarium, but we might call this the Blackburne Variation. Other great masters of the past who gave 4.♗e2 a try were: Paulsen, Lasker, Janowski, Teichmann and Nimzowitsch.

Knowing some of the intricacies of 4.♗e2, you may be able to forge it into a weapon, although admittedly it is not the refutation of 1...e5 and sometimes the work has to be done in an ending with a tiny plus. However, with zero draws out of eight games and my general drawing percentage being relatively high, 4.♗e2 cannot be so harmless now can it?

[Editorial note: Unfortunately a recent draw in the Dutch team competition is a small blemish on this clean sheet.]

☐ **John van der Wiel**
■ **Harmen Jonkman**
Wijk aan Zee 2007

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗e2 ♗b4 5.♘d5



5...♗a5

A logical, but already highly unusual move. 5...♘xe4 6.♘xb4 ♘xb4 7.d3 ♘f6 8.♘xe5 gave White two bishops and a nice edge in Van der Wiel-Day, Grand Manan 1984. Somewhat more reliable is 5...♗e7, as in Blackburne-Tarrasch, Ostend 1905 (among others), when 6.d3 d6 7.♘xe7 ♕xe7 still earns White the bishop pair, in a more closed position.

6.c3!?

Instead 6.♘xf6+ ♕xf6 looks equal. 6.♗c4?! would produce a well-known position with reversed colours. White's bishop is already developed, though, and there are better options (one of which is 6.0-0).

6...♘xe4

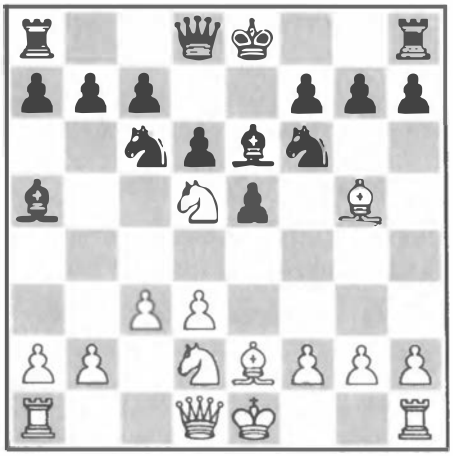
The bravest and most principled. On the solid 6...d6:

– 7.d3 ♘xd5 8.exd5 ♘e7 9.♕a4+ c6 is absolutely nothing for White.

– 7.b4 ♗b6 8.a4 ♘xe4 and 7.d4 exd4 8.♗g5 dxc3 aren't easily justified.

– 7.♕a4! ♗d7 8.d3 ♗b6 9.♘xb6 (unfortunately, 9.♗g5 ♘e7! fails to convince) 9...axb6 10.♕c2 gives White two bishops and a mini-plus.

7.d3 ♘f6 8.♗g5 d6 9.♘d2! ♗e6



10.♗xf6?!

Aiming for a positional bind, but here White misses a good chance: 10.♘xf6+! gxf6 11.♗h4 d5 (12.♘e4 was threatened) 12.0-0, with f2-f4 coming up. This plan is very hard to counteract (12...♗b6 13.♔h1) and extremely dangerous for Black.

10...gxf6 11.♗f3 ♗b6 12.♘c4

12.♕a4 f5 or 12...0-0 is fine for Black.

12...♘b8!?

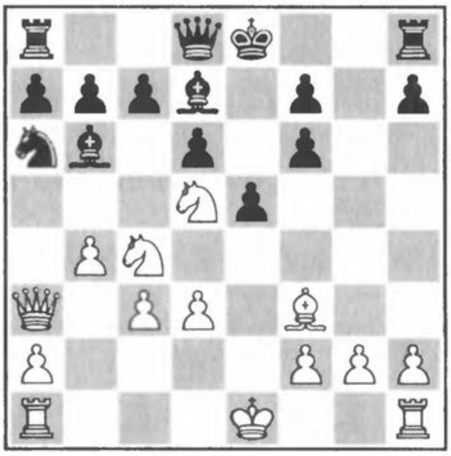
Here 12...0-0 13.a4 ♗xd5 14.♗xd5 ♘e7 15.♗xb7 ♖b8 and d6-d5 would be satisfactory for Black, but even the strange-looking text turns out to be playable.

13.♕a4+ ♗d7

After 13...♘d7 14.♘cxb6 cxb6 15.d4 or 15.0-0-0 White has at least enough compensation.

14.♕a3 ♘a6! 15.b4

This could lead to a draw, but at this point I couldn't find anything better. 15.♘dxb6?! axb6 16.♗xb7 ♖a7 would be welcomed by Black.



15...0-0 16.♕c1 c6

This forces events. Instead 16...♔g7 was a reasonable alternative.

17.♘dxb6 axb6 18.♘xd6 ♗e6! 19.♕h6

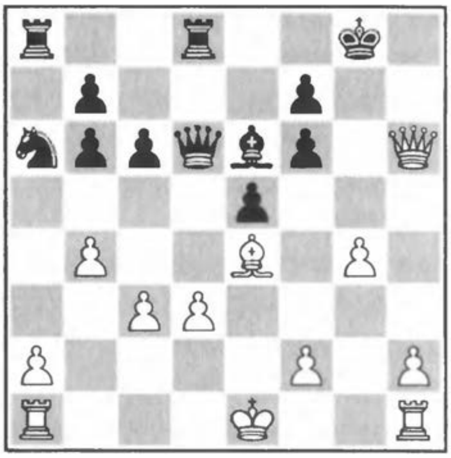
Rather than 19.♘e4 f5 (20.♕h6 f6) which might invite trouble for White.

19...♕xd6 20.♗e4 ♖fd8

The easiest path to a draw is 20...f5! 21.♗xf5 ♖fd8 22.♗xh7+ ♔h8 23.♗e4+ ♔g8. As Black intends to chase both attacking pieces with ♗e6-d5, White will soon have to resort to perpetual check.

21.♗xh7+ ♔h8 22.♗e4+ ♔g8 23.g4!

As 23.h4 f5 24.♖h3 f4! gets White nowhere. After the text Black is obliged to return the piece.



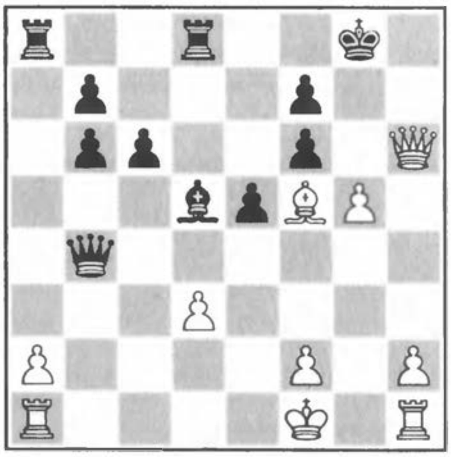
23...♘xb4! 24.cxb4

Neither 24.♖g1 ♘xd3+ nor 24.♖d1 ♘d5 are any good.

24...♕xb4+ 25.♔f1 ♗d5??

So close to home, Black falters. 25...♕b2! 26.♖e1 (or 26.♔g2 ♗d5) 26...♖xa2 attacks f2 and thus forces the draw.

26.♗h7+ ♔h8 27.♗f5+ ♔g8 28.♗h7+ ♔h8 29.♗f5+ ♔g8 30.g5!



Suddenly Black is left defenceless, for 30...fxg5 and 30...♕f4 both run into 31.♖g1.

30...♕d4 31.♖e1 e4

Or 31...♖xa2 32.♕h7+ ♔f8 33.♕h8+ ♔e7 34.♕xf6+ ♔e8 35.♖xe5+ ♗e6 36.♖xe6+! fxe6 37.♗g6+ and Black loses.

32.♗h7+ ♔h8 33.♗xe4+ ♔g8 34.♗h7+ 1-0

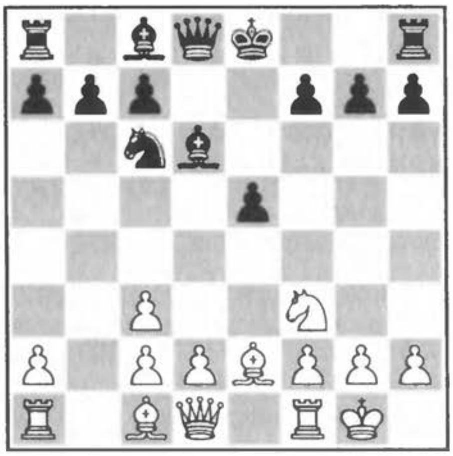
And Black resigns with 34...♔h8 35.♗g6/f5+ ♔g8 36.♕h7+ and 37.♕h8 mate coming up.

So after 4...♗b4 5.♘d5 White always seems to have some chances: either two bishops or some activity. Against 4...d5 his theoretical task may be harder.

☐ **John van der Wiel**
■ **Jan Timman**
Wijk aan Zee 1985

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗e2 d5 5.exd5 ♘xd5 6.0-0 ♘xc3 7.bxc3 ♗d6

For 7...e4 see the next game.



8.d4

Here 8.♗b5 would mean a Scotch Four Knights with reversed colours.

8...0-0 9.♖b1

9.♖e1 merits investigation, but the text looks a bit more precise.

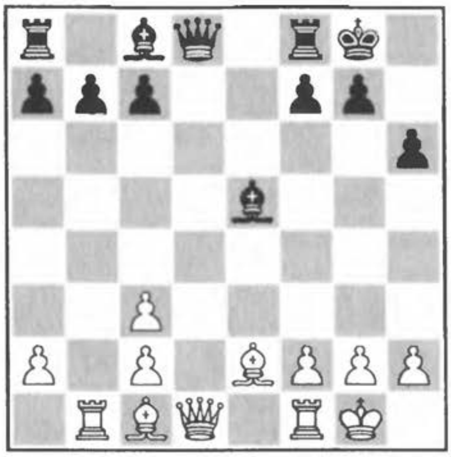
9...h6(!)

A most reliable set-up. Another good move is 9...b6, when 10.♘g5 ♗e7 is adequate for Black, e.g. 11.♗f3 ♗d7 12.dxe5 ♗xg5 13.♗xg5 ♕xg5 14.♕xd7 ♘xe5 etc. However, 10.♖e1! is more testing. Black would like to have ...e5-e4 without being disturbed by ♘f3-g5. Finally, 9...♕f6 is a little shakier in view of 10.d5, followed by 11.♗g5 or ♘g5.

10.dxe5

Not an impressive-looking move, but it is hard to find anything else.

10...♘xe5 11.♘xe5 ♗xe5



12.♗a3?

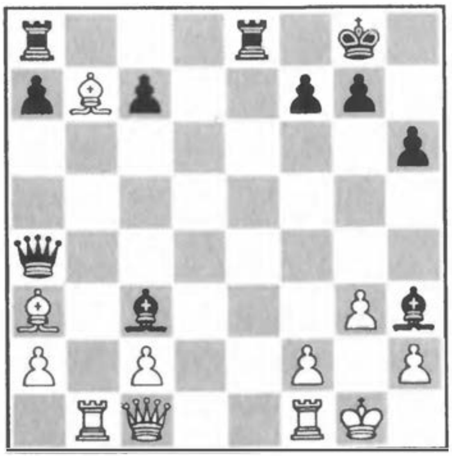
As Timman rightly indicated, 12.♗f3 should have been selected. There may follow: 12...♖b8 (12...♗xc3!?) 13.♗a3 and now not 13...♖e8? 14.♗c6!, but 13...♗d6 14.♗xd6 ♕xd6 15.♕xd6 cxd6 16.♖fd1 ♖d8. This ending looks like a dead draw, but if you dig a little deeper, you might conclude that White has something to play for, starting with 17.♖d4!.

12...♖e8 13.♗f3 ♕h4!

Black already seizes the initiative.

14.g3 ♕a4 15.♕c1 ♗xc3 16.♗xb7 ♗h3

Timman criticizes this move, saying Black has a big advantage after 16...♗xb7 17.♖xb7 ♗a5!. If 18.♖b3 (18.♗c5? ♕c6) then 18...♖e1. This is indisputably true, but maybe White can put up a fight with 18.c4!? ♗b6 19.c5 ♕c6 20.cxb6 ♕xb7 21.bxc7 and now 21...♖ac8 22.♗d6 or 21...♖e6 22.♖d1.



17.♗b2!

After 17.♗xa8?! ♖xa8 Black threatens ♕a4-e4, which gives White all sorts of trouble. For instance:

– 18.♕e3 ♕xa3 and White can't capitalize on the third rank situation (19.♖b3 ♕a6!), or

– 18.♗b2 ♕c6! 19.f3 ♗xf1 20.♕xf1 (20.♗xc3 ♕xf3) 20...♕b6+ and Black wins.

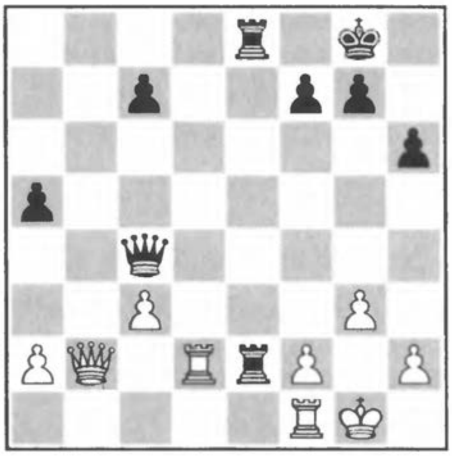
17...♗xb2 18.♖xb2 ♖ad8 19.♗g2 ♗xg2 20.♔xg2 ♖e2 21.c3

Another reasonable try is 21.♕f4, but 21...♕xf4 22.gxf4 a6! may then spell trouble. Anyhow, after the text White is only slightly worse.

21...♖de8 22.♖d2 a5 23.♕b2

According to Timman White should have preferred 23.♖fd1 ♕e4+ 24.♔g1 ♕f3 25.♖f1. I am not sure though: after 25...h5 or first ...f6 Black's forces still look menacing.

23...♕c6+ 24.♔g1 ♕c4!



25.a3?

This wasn't my best game ever. Instead of the disastrous text White should have attempted 25.♖xe2 (25.♔g2!?) 25...♖xe2 26.♕b3 ♕xb3 27.axb3 ♖b2. Here Timman gives 28.b4 axb4 29.cxb4 ♖xb4 30.♖c1 ♖b7, which I believe Black should win in the long run, moving his king towards the c-pawn. There is a more exact method, though: 28.♖a1 ♖xb3 29.♖xa5 ♖xc3 30.♖a8+! ♔h7 31.♖c8, when Black's rook is less effective and White's active one is also eyeing the kingside, seriously improving the drawing chances.

25...♖e1!

With a killing attack.

26.♖xe1 ♖xe1+ 27.♔g2 ♕f1+ 28.♔f3 ♕h1+ 29.♔g4 f5+! 30.♔h3

Or 30.♔xf5 ♕f3+.

30...♕f1+ 0-1

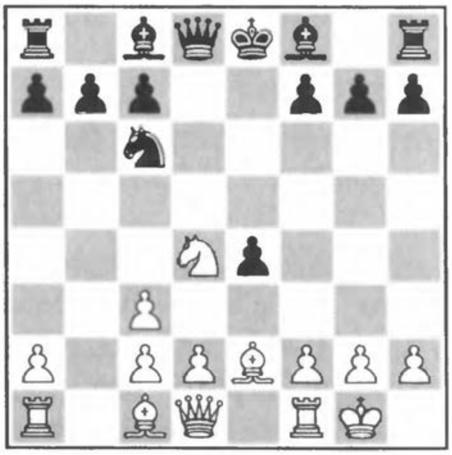
Intending 31.♔h4 g5+ 32.♔h5 ♕h3+ 33.♔g6 ♖e6 mate!

Now you know the downside of the story, but also the possible improvement starting with 12.♗f3. The following game was played one month later.

☐ **John van der Wiel**
■ **Artur Yusupov**
Reykjavik 1985

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗e2 d5 5.exd5 ♘xd5 6.0-0 ♘xc3 7.bxc3 e4 8.♘d4

A (usually temporary) pawn sac, as 8.♘e1 ♗c5 or ...♗d6 is too modest.



8...♘xd4 9.cxd4 ♕xd4 10.c3!

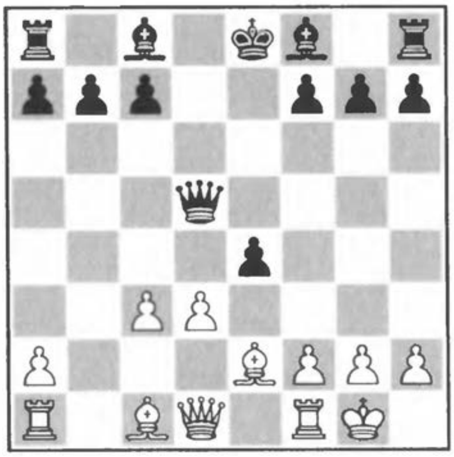
This position can also be reached with reversed colours (and the pawn on a3) from the older 4.a3 SOS-line, the Gunsberg Variation: 4...♗e7 5.d4 etc. After 5...exd4 6.♘xd4 0-0 7.♘xc6 bxc6 8.e5 ♘d5 9.♘xd5 cxd5

10.♕xd5, Hebden-Ady, London 1986, continued 10...♖b8?! 11.♗d3 d6 12.0-0 ♗b7 13.♕d4 dxe5 14.♕xe5 ♗f6 15.♕g3 ♖e8 16.♗f4! and Black had no compensation. To be honest, I believe that on 10.♖b1 in my game 10...♗c5! 11.♗b2 ♕d6 would be even stronger.

10...♕d5

10...♕e5!? 11.d4 exd3 12.♖e1! gives White good chances, as does 11...♕e6 12.f3 in this line.

11.d3



11...♗d6

11...exd3 12.♗f3 would be ill-advised, but otherwise Black has a range of choices, see:

- 11...♗c5 12.dxe4 ♕xd1 13.♖xd1 ♗e6 14.♗f4 ♖c8 (14...♗b6 15.a4 a5 16.♖ab1 with some advantage for White. ♗f4-e5-d4 is often the plan) 15.a4! ♔e7 16.♖db1 b6 17.♗a6 ♖cd8 18.♗xc7 ♖d2 19.♖f1 was Van der Wiel-Scheeren, Dutch league 1984/85. White is a little better and went on to win from there.
- 11...♗d7 12.dxe4 ♕xd1 13.♖xd1 ♗c6 (13...0-0-0!? 14.♗e3 may cause Black some problems and 13...♗d6 14.♗e3 discourages both castling options) 14.♗f4 and White's better development gives him an edge.
- 11...♗f5 12.dxe4 ♕xd1 (12...♗xe4?! 13.♕a4+) 13.♗xd1 ♗e6 (not 13...♗xe4 14.♖e1 0-0-0 15.♗g4+ f5 16.♗g5! and White will win material) 14.♗e3 and I would mildly prefer White. It may be hard to believe that Black cannot fully equalize with an uncompromised pawn structure, but White has some centre, good development and good pieces, which makes him a slight favourite in my view.

The same holds for the text though.

12.dxe4 ♕xd1

12...♕xe4 13.♗b5+ ♔d8 14.♖e1 would be a risky choice. More reliable is 12...♕e5!? 13.g3 0-0 (13...♗h3?! 14.♕a4+), which could be called unclear.

13.♖xd1 0-0 14.♗e3 ♗e6 15.a4!

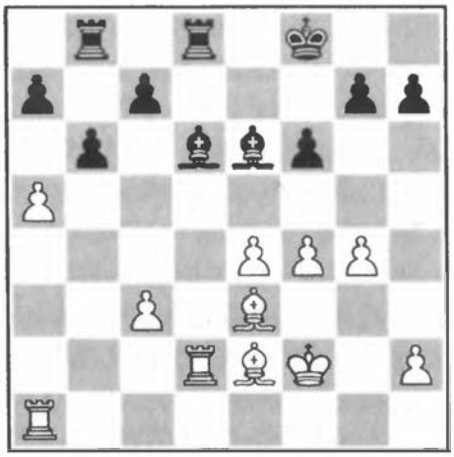
This way, rather than having a weakish a-pawn, White can use it to keep some pressure on Black's position, like in a minority attack. An important point is 15...a5 16.♖ab1 b6 17.♗xb6!.

15...♖fd8 16.a5 b6 17.f4 f6 18.♔f2 ♖ab8 19.♖d2

White has a slight spatial advantage.

19...♔f8 20.g4?!

It is hard to foresee why, but this is a mistake. White should have elected 20.h4, also part of the general plan of advancing the majority. Note the instructive neo-socialist system: first a clever individual leads the way (a2-a4-a5), later the masses can follow. The difference with 20.g4 I will show you later.



20...bxa5!!

Very alert play by Yusupov, who was already 3-0 up against me back then.

21.♖xa5 ♖b3 22.♖c2?!

An important reason behind Black's 20th is that 22.e5 fxe5 23.fxe5 ♗e7 24.♖xd8+ ♗xd8 25.♖xa7 (threatening 26.♖a8) runs into 25...♗h4+! and only then 26...♖xc3. With white pawns on h4 (en prise!) and g2, see the comment to move 20, the same line would lead to White winning the c-pawn after 25...♗xh4+ 26.g3.

Like 22.e5, the text is no good either. White should have played for a draw by means of 22.♖xa7 ♖xc3 23.e5 fxe5 24.fxe5 ♖xe3! 25.exd6 ♖c3 26.♖d3! (or 26.♖a6).

22...♖a3!

With a diabolical idea: 23.♖xa3 ♗xa3 24.♗xa7? ♗b3, trapping White's rook!

23.♖h5 ♔g8

Here 23...h6 24.♗c5 would alleviate White's task, but 23...♗b3, intending 24.♖c1 ♖a2 or 24.♖d2 ♗f7 25.♖xh7 ♔g8 was very interesting.

24.c4!

Now 24.♗c5 ♖a5! 25.♗xd6 ♖xh5 26.♗xc7?! ♖xh2+ gives Black a big advantage.

24...♗b4 25.♖b5 a5(?!)

The complicated way, where 25...♗e1+ 26.♔xe1 ♖xe3 27.f5 would have been somewhat better for Black.

26.c5 ♖a2?

This is too slow and soon Black will find himself in trouble. Correct was 26...♖b3!, after which the main line goes: 27.c6 a4 28.♖b7 ♗d6 (28...a3 29.f5! ♗f7 30.♖xc7 leads to hair-raising complications that favour White and can be found in New In Chess Magazine 1985/6 or New In Chess Yearbook 3) 29.♗c4! ♗xc4 30.♖xc4 ♖a8 31.♖xa4 ♖xa4 32.♖xb3 ♖xe4 33.♖b8+ ♔f7 34.♖d8 and a draw becomes inevitable.

27.♖xa2 ♗xa2 28.♖b7 ♖d7?!

Better chances of salvation were offered by 28...c6 29.♖b6 ♗f7 (29...♖c8 or ♖a8 30.♗a6!), although White is clearly better after 30.♖xc6 a4 31.♖b6.

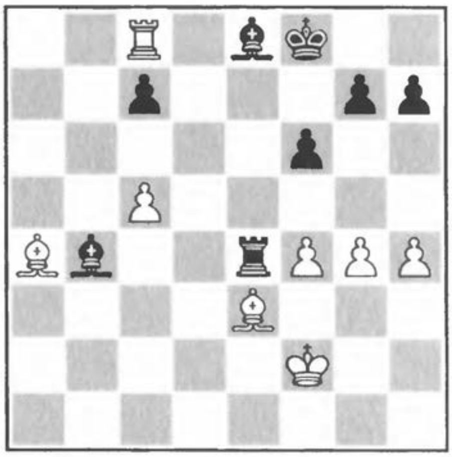
29.♗b5!

Watch this bishop.

29...♖e7 30.♗c6 White fully dominates the scene. **30...♔f8 31.h4 ♗f7?! 32.♖b8+ ♗e8 33.♖c8 a4**

A desperate attempt. If 33...♔f7, then 34.♗d5+! ♔f8 35.♗d4 or 35.h5 is probably even stronger than anything else.

34.♗xa4 ♖xe4

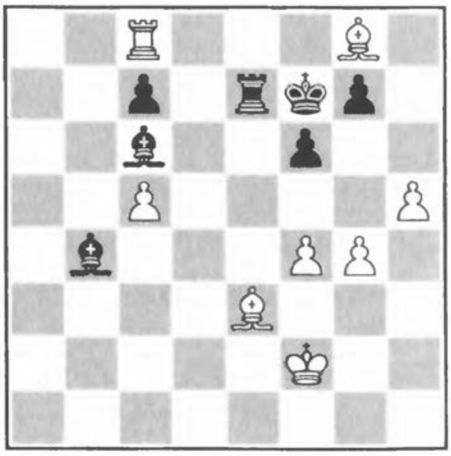


35.♗c2! ♖e7

Of course 35...♖xe3 36.♔xe3 ♗xc5+ 37.♔f3 offers no hope, as 38.♗a4, 38.♖xc7 and 38.♗xh7 are threatened.

36.♗xh7 ♔f7 36...g5 37.♗g6 gxf4 38.♗d4 leaves Black defenceless.

37.h5! ♗c6 On 37...♔e6 the most convincing way is 38.♖d8!. **38.♗g8** mate

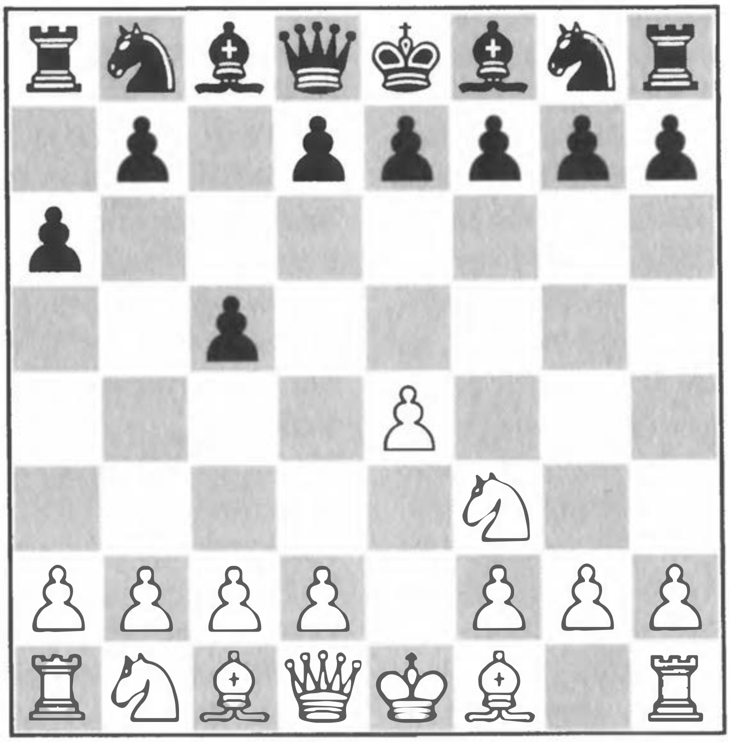


Hey, wasn't that our harmless little bishop?

CHAPTER 3

Jeroen Bosch

Sicilian: the O'Kelly Variation



1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 a6

I had some doubts about including the O'Kelly Sicilian in the SOS series. On the one hand, 2...a6 fits perfectly into the SOS format. Moving the rook-pawn neither contributes to Black's development nor to his central influence, so it is a typical non-standard move that characterizes so many SOS lines. (Of course ...a6 is useful in almost every Sicilian line.)

Moreover, it is highly annoying for loads and loads of players. The 3.♗b5(+) variations are obviously out, and more surprisingly so are the Open Sicilians in a way – for 3.d4 (arguably best against the respectable 2...d6, 2...♘c6 and 2...e6) allows Black to get the best of all Sicilian worlds with 3...cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 e5.

Indeed, many strong grandmasters have played the O'Kelly and continue to do so with considerable success. On top of all that I have played a few games on the black side myself and never experienced any problems in the opening.

So why my hesitation to include 2...a6 in the SOS-series? First of all, it could be argued that the O'Kelly is in a way too mainstream. Indeed, John Nunn devoted a separate chapter to it in his *Beating the Sicilian* (although, admittedly, the chapter was brief and he expressed his doubts whether a full chapter was necessary). True, the more recent Bashing the Sicilian book (*Experts vs. the Sicil-*

ian) relegates 2...a6 to a chapter called Minor Lines. However, Khalifman in his *Opening for White according to Anand* series (see volume 8) devotes almost 70 pages to it!

More importantly, though, I feel that 2...a6 is a very useful weapon to include in your armoury if, and perhaps only if, you can back it up with another Sicilian (especially the Kan Variation). I shall argue below why I think that this is the case. Incidentally, John Emms arrived at the same conclusion at the end of his chapter on the O'Kelly in *Dangerous Weapons: the Sicilian* (Everyman 2006, written together with Richard Palliser). So this is the real downside from a SOS point of view. To play a more or less unorthodox opening you need to have at least some basic knowledge of a very respectable one as well. In the end, I decided that the virtues of the O'Kelly outweighed this and turned the scales in favour of its treatment here. For, mind you, facing the O'Kelly as White is very unpleasant for many players of the Open Sicilian.

Considering the above justification it should not surprise you that the set-up of this chapter is a little different. In certain cases I will analyse and explain typical variations as is customary, but at other times I will only give a few illustrative lines and indicate what are, in my view, the best transpositional options. I will even direct you to other SOS chapters. First we will start though with a game of our eponymous hero.

☐ **Jan Sefc**
■ **Alberic O'Kelly de Galway**
Trencianske Teplice 1949

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 a6

Belgian grandmaster O'Kelly (or more correctly O'Kelly de Galway which is too long for an opening variation but goes well with the title of count that he carried and with his none too common first name of Alberic) played 2...a6 a couple of times halfway through the twentieth century. He was not the first to play 2...a6 and he certainly didn't dab into it too frequently, but as a strong player he did realize why 2...a6 defused 3.d4:

3.d4

So White 'falls for it'! While White is not worse after the automatic 3.d4 he does lose the initiative. Interestingly, 3.d4 is played in over a third of all games with the O'Kelly in the Megabase 2007.

3...cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6

The immediate 4...e5 is also good.

5.♘c3

Meek is 5.♗d3 because of 5...♘c6 (5...e5 is of course also good) when after 6.♘xc6 Black can equalize with 6...dxc6 followed by 7...e5.

However, more interesting is 6...bxc6 which was O'Kelly's own choice against Poulsen at the Dubrovnik Olympiad (1950). The game went: 7.0-0 e5 8.c4 ♗c5 9.♘c3 d6 10.♖b1 (10.♕f3 ♘d7 11.♗e3 0-0 12.♖fd1 ♖b8 13.b3 ♗d4! Stoliar-Spassky, Leningrad 1957) 10...♖b8 11.♗g5 0-0 12.♔h1 h6 13.♗h4 g5! 14.♗g3 h5!? 15.h4? (15.f3) 15...♘g4! 16.♕d2 gxh4 17.♗h2 ♕f6 18.♘d1 h3! and Black had achieved a won position.

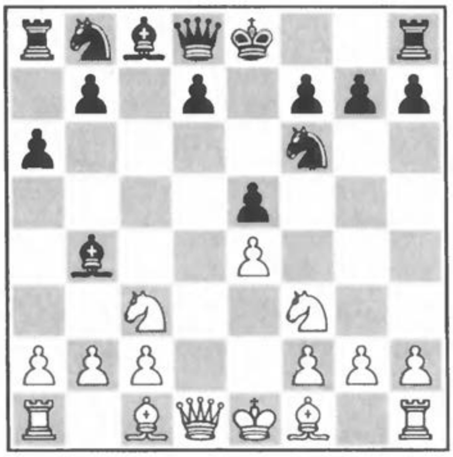
5...e5!

If you hold a somewhat negative view of the O'Kelly then you will say that this advance is the whole (and single) point of 2...a6. Of course Black can play the Najdorf (5...d6) here, but the text is much more vigorous. Black fully utilizes his control over the b5-square with this thrust in the centre. It is important that his dark-squared bishop is not yet hemmed in by his own pawns and can freely move to b4 or c5.

6.♘f3

Note that 6.♘f5 is adequately met by 6...d5. If 6.♘b3 then Black plays 6...♗b4 as in our present game, while in case of 6.♘de2 (overprotecting c3) Black should go for the a7-f2 diagonal with 6...♗c5.

6...♗b4



7.♗c4!

The best move under the circumstances. We will look at some of the alternatives below.

7...♕c7!

Most accurate. Possible is 7...0-0 but not 7...♘xe4? because of 8.♕d5 or even 8.0-0.

8.♕d3

Or 8.♗b3 d6 (8...♗xc3+ 9.bxc3 ♕xc3+ 10.♗d2 ♕c5 11.0-0 is supposed to give White compensation for the pawn. Russian grandmaster Pavel Tregubov nevertheless went for this and obtained an excellent position after 11...0-0 12.a4?! d6 13.♗e3 ♕c7 14.♘d2 ♗e6 15.c4? ♘bd7 Braslavsky-Tregubov, Tomsk 1998) 9.0-0 ♗xc3 10.bxc3 and now 10...♘bd7 is somewhat better for Black.

8...b5

Black can keep ...b5 in reserve with 8...d6.

9.♗b3 d6

This is more accurate than 9...♗b7 10.♗d2 d6 11.♘d5 ♘xd5 12.♗xd5 ♗xd2+ 13.♕xd2 ♘c6 and White was slightly better, but lost, in T.Ernst-Csom, Gausdal 1993.

10.♗d2

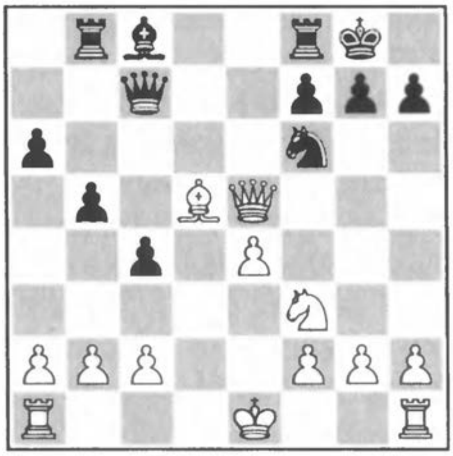
10.0-0 is well-met by 10...♗xc3 11.bxc3 ♘bd7 12.♖d1 ♘c5 13.♕xd6 ♕xd6 14.♖xd6 ♘fxe4 Kupreichik-Csom, Lenk 1991.

10...♗xc3! 11.♗xc3 ♘bd7

Black has given up the bishop pair, but with White's poor coordination this is no problem. Note how easy Black has achieved all of his Sicilian (Najdorf) moves.

12.♗b4 ♘c5 13.♗xc5 dxc5 14.♗d5 c4 Alternatives are 14...♗b7 and 14...♖b8.

15.♕d2 ♖b8 16.♕g5!? 0-0 17.♕xe5



17...♕xe5?!

Best was 17...♘xd5! 18.♕xd5 ♗b7 and Black is better.

18.♘xe5 ♘xd5 19.♘c6!

Possibly O'Kelly had overlooked this intermediate move?

19...♘b4! 20.♘xb4 ♗b7 21.0-0-0 ♗xe4 22.f3 ♗b7

Play is equal and the game ended in a draw.

Now that we have glimpsed how easy life can be in the O'Kelly for Black it is time to make a theoretical investigation. First I will briefly deal with some minor lines after 2...a6:

- **3.d3**. Playing for a King's Indian set-up in advance is always possible (but not so ambitious) of course. After 2...e6 3.d3 is fairly popular (since playing ...e5 will now cost a tempo). By comparison 2...a6 may not be the most useful move against such a KI set-up, but ...e5 can still be played in one go. A sample line runs: **3...♘c6** Quite feasible (and in line with 2...a6) is also 3...b5 4.g3 ♗b7 5.♗g2 d6. **4.g3 g6 5.♗g2 ♗g7 6.0-0 d6 7.♘bd2 e5** Or 7...♘f6. **8.c3 ♘ge7 9.a3 0-0 10.b4 h6** And Black is fine.

● **3.g3** This may lead to similar play as 3.d3 after 3...♘c6. Black may also play 3...b5 4.♗g2 ♗b7 5.d3 d6 once again. While Hungarian grandmaster Istvan Csom prefers the more restrained **3...b6**, when his games typically continue with **4.♗g2 ♗b7 5.d3 e6 6.0-0 ♗e7** followed by ...d6, ...♘f6, ...♘c6, ...0-0, ...♕c7 with a very healthy set-up. Csom is actually the grandmaster with the most O'Kelly games to his credit.

● **3.b3** Here too Black has nothing to worry about. **3...d6 4.♗b2 ♘f6** is fine, for example: **5.e5 dxe5 6.♘xe5 ♘bd7 7.♘xd7 ♗xd7 8.♗e2** Or 8.♘a3 b5 9.c4 ♕b6 10.♗e2 ♗c6 11.♗f3 ♖d8 12.0-0 e6 Monroy-Vl.Georgiev, Guingamp 2000. **8...e6 9.0-0 ♕c7 10.a4 ♗d6 11.h3 ♗h2+ 12.♔h1 ♗e5 13.c3 ♖d8 14.♗f3 ♗c6** With a good position for Black in Khaetsky-Strelnikov, Kharkov 2000.

● **3.b4** The Sicilian Wing Gambit is dubious, but it increases somewhat in strength versus 2...a6. Now, refusing the gambit with 3...d6 is entirely possible, but so is accepting with **3...cxb4**. Now a recent Eingorn game went: 4.♗c4?! e6 5.♕e2 ♘f6 6.♗b2 ♘xe4! 7.♕xe4 d5 8.♗xd5 ♕xd5 9.♕xd5 exd5 10.a3 ♘c6 and White did not have enough compensation in Chizelle-Eingorn, Metz 2007. On the fourth move White should play **4.a3** (4.d4 d5). Now Black can take on a3 and play 5...d6 and ...♘f6, but O'Kelly expert Csom has played **4...b5** (following in the footsteps of Ljubojevic) when after 5.d4 (5.axb4 ♗b7 6.c4 – 6.♗d3!? – 6...bxc4 7.♗xc4 e6 was the earlier Planinc-Ljubojevic, Yugoslavia 1970) 5...♗b7 6.♗d3 ♘f6 7.♕e2 e6 8.0-0 d5 9.♘bd2 dxe4 10.♘xe4 ♘bd7 11.axb4 ♘xe4 12.♗xe4 ♗xe4 13.♕xe4 ♗e7 14.♘e5 0-0 the players agreed a draw in McDonald-Csom, Budapest 1996.

I have divided the material as follows:

I 3.d4
II 3.♘c3
III 3.c3
IV 3.c4

Variation I

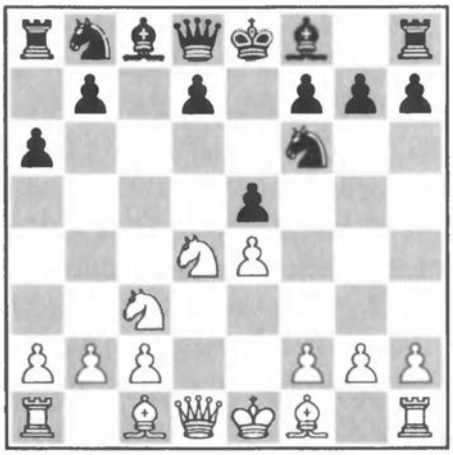
3.d4

We briefly discussed this in Sefc-O'Kelly. Here we will look at the main theoretical options following

3...cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 e5

We will not go into 4...e5 as played for instance by Taimanov and Ljubojevic since 4...♘f6 and 5...e5 is more forcing.

On move 4 White also has 4.c3 to go for a Morra Gambit. However, 4...dxc3 5.♘xc3 will just lead to a normal Morra which is nothing to write home about for White. While 4.♕xd4 ♘c6 followed by 5...d6 is a normal line in the Hungarian Variation.



A 6.♘f5
B 6.♘de2
C 6.♘b3
D 6.♘f3

Subvariation A

6.♘f5

This gives Black the opportunity to realize all the active moves in the position: ...d5 and ...♗b4.

6...d5 7.♗g5

No better is 7.♘g3 d4 or 7...♗b4.

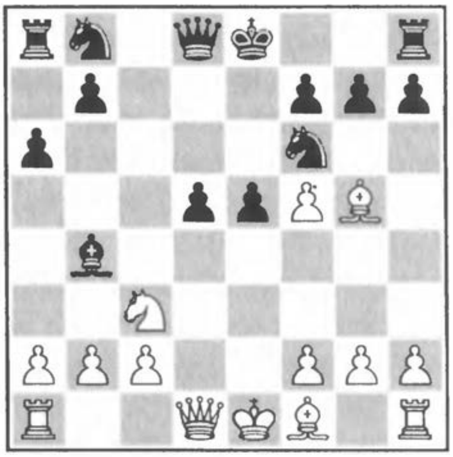
7...♗xf5

Or 7...d4 8.♗xf6 gxf6 (this is probably better than 8...♕xf6 9.♘d5 ♕d8 10.♗c4 which is about equal) 9.♘b1 ♗xf5 (sound alternatives are 9...♘c6 and 9...♕b6) 10.exf5 ♘c6 11.♗c4 ♗b4+ 12.♘d2 ♕a5 13.a3 ♗xd2+ 14.♕xd2 ♕xd2+ 15.♔xd2 ♖c8 16.g4 h5 and Black was slightly better in Zygouris-Zahariev, Hania 1992.

8.exf5

Here 8.♗xf6 gxf6 (8...♕xf6? 9.♘xd5) 9.exf5 ♗b4 is excellent for Black too. For example: 10.a3 ♗xc3+ 11.bxc3 ♕a5 12.♕d2 ♘c6 13.c4 ♕xd2+ 14.♔xd2 0-0-0∓ Morgentaler-Zalys, Montreal 1980.

8...♗b4



9.♗d2 ♘c6 10.a3 ♗c5 Also good is 10...♗xc3 11.♗xc3 ♘e4 12.♗d3 ♘xc3 13.bxc3 ♕g5 14.0-0 e4 15.♕e1 0-0 16.♗e2 ♕xf5∓ Muralidharan-Ravichandran, Chennai 2000. **11.♗g5? ♕b6! 12.♕d2 ♗xf2+! 13.♕xf2 ♕xb2 14.♖b1 ♕xc3+ 15.♕d2 ♕xd2+ 16.♗xd2 0-0-0**

And Black won in Dimitrov-Simeonov, Sofia rapid 2004.

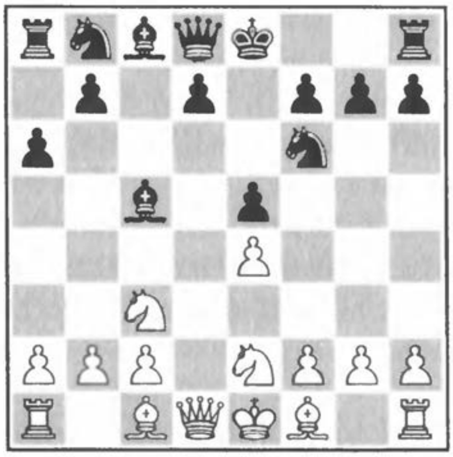
Subvariation B

6.♘de2

Now that White has overprotected c3 it makes sense to play

6...♗c5

Csom has played 6...d6 here, when Black is playing a kind of (satisfactory) Najdorf.



7.♘g3

Both Mednis and Martin Pribyl have played the odd-looking 7.♗e3 here, which in my opinion is the best move in the position. After 7...♗xe3 8.fxe3 White controls some important squares in return for his doubled e-pawns.

7...d6 8.♗e2

Certainly not 8.♗c4 ♘g4 9.0-0?? (9.♖f1) 9...♕h4 10.h3 ♘xf2 11.♖xf2 ♕xg3 12.♗xf7+ ♔f8 0-1 Shigarev-Bondarenko, Moscow 1996.

8...0-0

8...♗e6 9.0-0 0-0 10.♔h1 d5 with equal play in Koch-Euwe, Berlin 1950.

9.0-0 ♘c6 10.♘d5

Alternatively, 10.♗g5 h6 11.♗xf6 ♕xf6 is about equal too.

10...♘xd5 11.exd5 ♘e7 12.♔h1 f5

And Black was OK in Cabrera Galeano-Khamrakulov, La Roda 2007.

Subvariation C

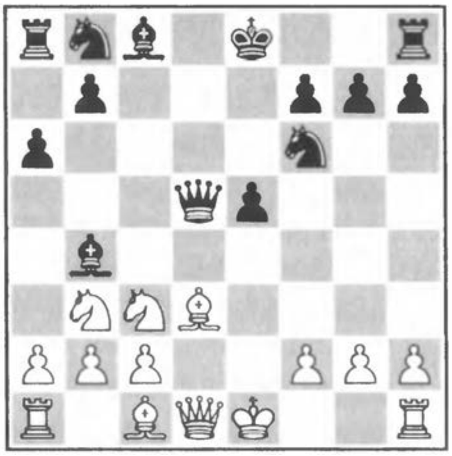
6.♘b3 ♗b4

Now White must make up his mind how to protect the e4-pawn and how to react to the upcoming ...d5 advance.

7.♗d2

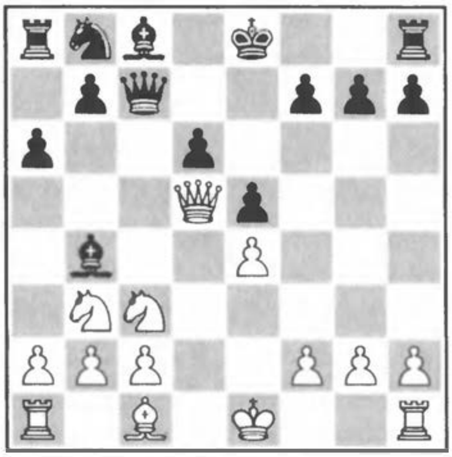
This passive move is possibly best. White avoids the fracturing of his pawn structure, which is not very ambitious, but given the concrete situation White should already be careful not to end up in a statically worse position. To back this up, here are some alternative lines:

- 7.♗d3. Most natural, but Black achieves an easy game with 7...d5 8.exd5 (8.0-0 ♗xc3 9.bxc3 dxe4 10.♗e2 ♕c7 gives no compensation for the material and structural deficit, Pradas Soria-Khamrakulov, Valencia 2001) 8...♕xd5



(Dorfman's move is even better than 8...♘xd5, when Emms recommends 9.0-0– 9.♗d2♘xc3 10.bxc3♗d6 11.0-0–9...♘xc3 10.bxc3 ♗xc3 11.♗a3 which has been played a few times too) 9.0-0 ♗xc3 10.bxc3 0-0 11.c4 ♕c6 12.♗b2 (or 12.♗g5 ♘bd7 and as Dorfman writes in *The Method in Chess*: 'White has nothing to compensate his static deficit') 12...♖e8 13.♖e1 ♘bd7 14.♕d2 b6 15.♕g5 h6 16.♕h4♗b7 17.f3 a5 and Black was clearly better in Scheidegger-Dorfman, Cannes 1993.

- 7.♗c4 is met by 7...♕c7! 8.♗d5 (8.♕d3 b5 9.♗d5 ♘xd5 10.exd5 and Black achieved a clear positional edge with 10...♗xc3+ 11.bxc3 d6 12.0-0 0-0 13.a4 ♗d7 14.a5 ♖c8 15.♖e1 ♗e8 16.♗a3 ♘d7 Pineault-Hebert, Montreal 1983) 8...♘xd5 9.♕xd5 d6



Nikolaidis was twice successful from this position:

– 10.♗d2 ♗e6 11.♕d3 ♘c6 12.0-0 ♗xc3 13.♗xc3 0-0 14.♖ad1 ♖ad8 15.f4 f6 16.fxe5 dxe5 17.♕e3 b6 18.♘c1 a5 19.a3 ♘a7! with a clear edge, Bogdanos-Nikolaidis, Athens 1994.

– 10.0-0 ♗e6 11.♕d3 ♗xc3 12.bxc3 ♗c4 13.♕g3 ♗xf1 14.♕xg7 ♖f8 15.♗h6 ♘d7 16.♖xf1 0-0-0 and Black was winning in Tsintsar-Nikolaidis, Aegina 1995.

- 7.♕d3 d5 8.exd5 ♘xd5 (8...♕xd5) 9.♗d2 ♘xc3 10.bxc3 ♗d6 11.♗e2 ♕c7 12.c4 ♘d7 13.♗f3 ♘c5 14.♘xc5 ♗xc5 15.♗d5 was about equal in Platt-O'Kelly de Galway, Trencianske Teplice 1949.
- 7.♗g5 h6 8.♗xf6 ♗xc3+! 9.bxc3 ♕xf6 10.♕d3 0-0 11.a4 d6 12.♖d1 ♖d8 13.♕e3 ♘c6 14.c4 ♗e6 with a positional edge in Papastavropoulos-Grivas, Athens 1996.

7...0-0

In a previous effort Khamrakulov had played the weaker 7...d6 8.♗d3 0-0 9.0-0 ♘bd7 10.f4 exf4 11.♗xf4 ♗xc3 12.bxc3 ♘e5 13.♗g5 and White was slightly better in Prieto Busto-Khamrakulov, Gijon 2003.

8.♗d3 ♘c6

Or the immediate 8...♗xc3 9.♗xc3 d5 10.exd5 and Black has easy equality after both 10...♕xd5 and 10...♘xd5.

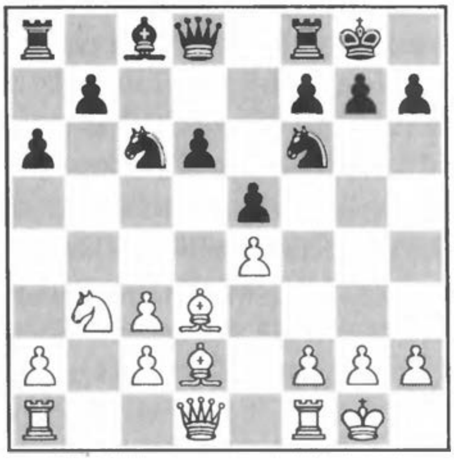
9.0-0

Play is equal after 9.♘d5 ♗xd2+ 10.♕xd2 d6.

9...♗xc3 10.bxc3?

Correct was 10.♗xc3 d5.

10...d6



Having given up his bishop pair Khamrakulov keeps the position closed. Nevertheless, 10...d5 was good too.

11.♗g5?! h6 12.♗h4 ♗e6 13.♕e2 ♖c8

Black has an excellent position. White's next blunders an exchange.

14.♗c4? ♘d4 15.cxd4 ♗xc4

And Black won in Navarro-Khamrakulov, Benidorm 2007.

Subvariation D

6.♘f3

This looks better than 6.♘b3, but Black still has

6...♗b4

to try and grasp the initiative. White should ignore the threat to his e-pawn with

7.♗c4

Here 7.♘xe5 is simply met by 7...0-0! 8.♗d3 d5 9.0-0 ♗xc3 10.bxc3 dxe4 and Black was already better in Keres-F.Olafsson, Yugoslavia 1959.

Black is very comfortable after 7.♗g5 d6 8.♗c4 h6 9.♗d2 ♘bd7 10.♘d5 ♘xd5 11.♗xd5 ♗c5 and now 12.b4?! ♗b6 13.♕e2 ♘f6 14.♗b3 ♗e6∓ did not improve matters. Smyslov-H.Müller, Venice 1950.

Note that 7.♗d3 is actually worse here than after 6.♘b3 because of 7...d5 8.exd5? e4 9.♗xe4 ♘xe4 10.♕e2 0-0 and Black wins a piece.

The passive 7.♗d2 can be answered by 7...d6, when Black is fine in all lines. For example:

- 8.♘d5 ♘xd5 9.exd5 ♗xd2+ 10.♕xd2 0-0 11.♗e2 f5 S.Roth-Khamrakulov, Oldenburg 2001.
- 8.♗c4 0-0 9.♕e2 ♘bd7 10.♘d5 ♗xd2+ 11.♘xd2 b5 12.♘xf6+ ♘xf6 13.♗b3 ♗b7 Wanderley-Csom, Porto 2000.
- 8.♗d3 0-0 9.0-0 ♗g4 10.a3 ♗xc3 11.♗xc3 ♘c6 12.h3 ♗h5 13.♕e2 ♖e8 14.♖ad1 d5 was great for Black in Klein-Gligoric, Santa Fe 1960.

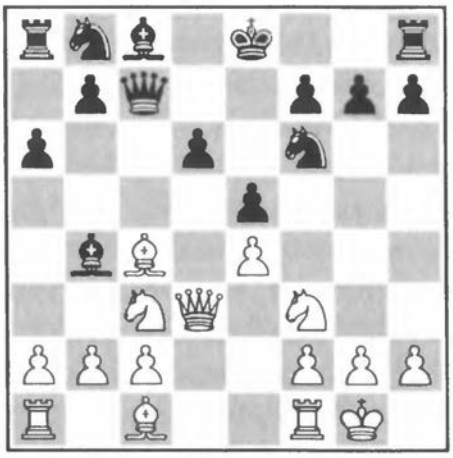
7...♕c7 8.♕d3

Or 8.♗b3 0-0 (see 8...d6 above) 9.0-0 ♗xc3 10.bxc3 Geller-Taimanov, Leningrad 1957, and now 10...d6 11.♖e1 ♘bd7 12.♗g5 h6 13.♗h4 b6 with equal play is an old analysis by Gligoric and V.Sokolov.

8...d6

We looked at 8...b5 in Sefc-O'Kelly above.

9.0-0



9...♗xc3! 10.♕xc3

This is tactically possible, but it loses a lot of time. After 10.bxc3 it is most accurate to refrain from ...b5 for the moment 10...♘bd7 (10...b5 11.♗b3 ♘bd7 12.♖d1 ♘c5 13.♕xd6 ♕xd6 14.♖xd6 ♘fxe4 15.♖c6 ♗d7 16.♗d5! Fedorchuk-Anapolsky, Alushta 2002) 11.♖d1 (or 11.♗a3 ♘c5 12.♗xc5 ♕xc5 13.♖ad1 ½-½ El Taher-Dutreeuw, Turin ol 2006) 11...♘c5 12.♕xd6 ♕xd6 13.♖xd6 ♘fxe4 14.♖d1 ♗e6 15.♗xe6 ♘xe6 16.♘xe5 ♘xc3 17.♖d3 ♘e2+ 18.♔f1 ♘xc1 19.♖xc1 ♖c8 and Black is marginally better. Soylu-Mariotti, Budva Zonal 1981.

10...0-0

Not 10...♘xe4? 11.♗xf7+ ♕xf7 12.♕xc8+.

11.♕d3 b5 12.♗b3

12.♗d5 ♘xd5 13.♕xd5 ♗b7 14.♕d3 ♘d7 15.♗e3 ♘f6 16.♘d2 d5 also gave Black a very comfortable game in Meijers-Eingorn, Böblingen 1997.

12...♗b7 13.♘d2 ♘bd7 14.f3 ♘c5

Black has a super-Najdorf.

15.♕e2 ♖fe8 16.c4 ♖ac8 17.♖d1 bxc4 18.♘xc4 d5 19.exd5 ♘xd5 20.♗e3 e4 21.f4 ♘d3

With a huge edge in Quesada-Rossolimo, Havana 1952.

Variation II (3.♘c3)

In the first round of the 2002 semi-finals of the Dutch Championship (which are played according to the knock-out system) I was paired against IM Hoeksema. For my black game I decided to surprise him and played the O'Kelly Variation. After some thought he played 3.♘c3 which suited me fine: after 3...e6 4.d4 cxd4 5.♘xd4 ♕c7 the game had transferred into the so-called Kan Variation. The next weekend I had to play GM Nijboer. Even though he had a week to prepare for the O'Kelly I could not contain my curiosity and again went for 2...a6. He too played 3.♘c3 and play once again transposed into the Kan. How is this – a GM has a week to prepare for the O'Kelly and all he can think up is a transfer into a regular Sicilian? When I asked him afterwards it turned out that it wasn't for want of trying. Nijboer claimed that he had almost 'refuted' the O'Kelly starting with 3.c3 but that he didn't like one particular line (below we will see which one) and then saw nothing better than 3.♘c3.

So on the one hand, 3.♘c3 is an admission of failure. Black can simply transfer the game into a Sicilian of his liking (usually by having avoided certain side-lines), for, apart from the Kan with 3...e6 4.d4 cxd4 5.♘xd4 ♕c7 or 5...b5 (when White has lost the options of 5.♗d3 and 5.c4), Black can also play 5...♘c6 (the Taimanov), and even 3...d6 4.d4 cxd4 5.♘xd4 ♘f6 (the Najdorf).

On the other hand, it seems that Black has to have some sort of regular Sicilian up his sleeve, for otherwise he can be embarrassed by 3.♘c3.

To my mind it is advisable to play the O'Kelly in combination with another Sicilian (preferably the Kan – see my recommendation for Black after 3.c4 in Variation IV). However, against 3.♘c3 there is one typical O'Kelly line that is worth investigating. It is the pet-line of GM Bojan Kurajica, and in a way all you need to do is to study his complete games with 3...b5 4.d4 e6 – and I can assure they are well-worth seeing.

☐ **Goran Trkulja**
■ **Bojan Kurajica**
Neum 2004

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 a6 3.♘c3 b5!?

The alternative move order is 3...e6 4.d4 b5.

4.d4

A young Karpov faced 4.a4 and was better after 4...b4 5.♘d5 (stronger is 5.♘e2 but in Apicella-Guidarelli, Besançon 2006, Black was fine after 5...♗b7 6.♘g3 e6 7.♗d3 ♘f6 8.e5 ♘d5 9.♗e4 ♕c7 10.0-0 d6 11.exd6 ♗xd6 12.♖e1 0-0) 5...♗b7 6.d3 ♗xd5!?

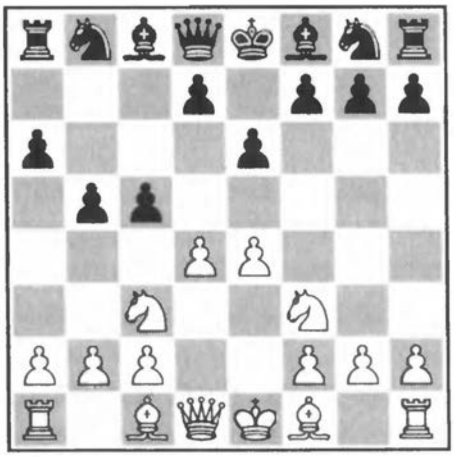
7.exd5 ♘f6 8.d4 ♘xd5 9.♗c4 ♘f6 10.dxc5 (10.d5) 10...e6 11.♗e3 ♕c7 12.♕d4 ♘c6 13.♕d3 ♘g4 14.♗xa6 ♘xe3 15.fxe3 ♗xc5 16.♗b5 0-0 17.0-0 d5 Vybornov-Karpov, Moscow 1968.

4.d3 ♗b7 5.g3 g6 6.♗g2 ♗g7 7.0-0 d6 8.a3 ♘d7 9.♗e3 e5 10.♘d5 ♘e7 11.c4 ♘xd5 12.cxd5 0-0 was a good effort by Kurajica. He went on to win in Gallagher-Kurajica, Istanbul Olympiad 2000.

4...e6

So this is what Kurajica's idea is all about. He doesn't take on d4, but decides to wait for a bit (should White lose his nerve and take on c5 himself then Black has a super-Kan). Strategically this is risky because of the looming d4-d5 advance. However, in the resulting closed (Benoni-like) positions Black has already achieved the ...b5 advance.

Note that 4...cxd4 5.♘xd4 e6 is the Kan again, while 4...b4 is risky, but it has been played occasionally by strong players.

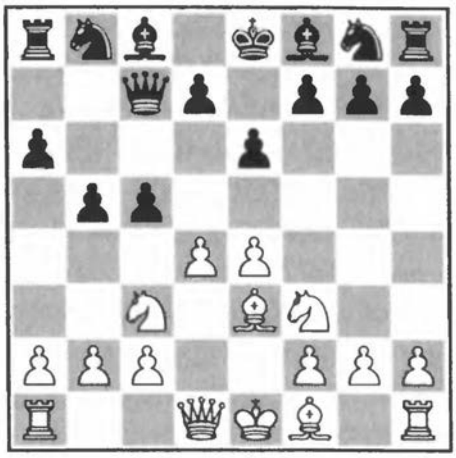


5.d5

White gains space. In practice 5.♗e3 and 5.dxc5 are more popular, while 5.♗g5 has also been played.

Here is an overview:

- 5.♗e3 ♕c7 continuing his waiting-policy.



– 6.a3 ♗b7 7.♗d3 ♘f6 8.0-0 ♘g4 9.h3 ♘xe3 10.fxe3 ♘c6 11.a4 b4 12.♘e2 g6 13.d5 ♘e5 14.c4 ♗g7 favoured Black in Ljubicic-Kurajica, Split 2004.

– 6.a4 b4 7.♘b1 ♘f6 8.♘bd2 d5!? 9.e5 cxd4! 10.♗xd4 ♘fd7 11.b3 ♘c6 12.♗b2 ♗c5 13.♗d3 ♘cxe5 14.♘xe5 ♘xe5 Black is a healthy pawn up. Because the rest of the game is great I will give the remaining moves without comments: 15.♕e2 ♗d6 16.♖c1 0-0 17.g3 f6 18.f4 ♘xd3+ 19.cxd3 ♕b6 20.♘f3 e5! 21.fxe5 fxe5 22.♘xe5 ♗xe5 23.♗xe5 ♗g4! 24.♕d2 ♖f3 25.d4 ♕g6! 26.♕c2 ♕g5 27.♕d2 ♖e3+ 28.♔f2 ♖f8+ 29.♗f4 ♖xf4+ 30.gxf4 ♕xf4+ 31.♔g1 ♖g3+ 0-1 Mitkov-Kurajica, Skopje 2002.

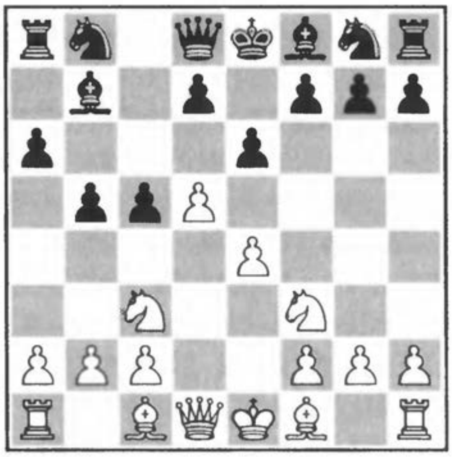
– 6.dxc5 ♗xc5 7.♗d4 ♗xd4 8.♕xd4 f6 (this may look odd, but it is a normal move in the Taimanov type of position that follows. Let us enjoy this model game for a bit longer) 9.0-0-0 ♘c6 10.♕e3 ♘h6! 11.h3 ♘f7 12.g4 ♗b7 13.♖g1 ♖c8 Black is doing great already. 14.♖d2 g5! (fixing some important dark squares. With this in mind the following knight manoeuvres are easily understood) 15.♗e2 ♘ce5 16.♖gd1 ♕c5! 17.♘d4 ♘g6! 18.♗f1 ♘fe5 with a huge positional advantage in Rogic-Kurajica, Bled 1997.

- 5.dxc5 ♗xc5 6.♗d3 (this could be called a Kan Variation: viz. 3...e6 4.d4 cxd4 5.♘xd4 b5 6.♗d3 ♗c5!? 7.♘f3) 6...♗b7 7.0-0 (or 7.♕e2 ♘c6 8.♗e3 ♗xe3 9.♕xe3

♕c7 10.0-0 ♘ge7 11.♖ad1 0-0 12.e5 ♘g6 13.♖fe1 ♘ce7 14.♗e4 ♖ac8 15.a3 ♗xe4 16.♕xe4 ♘c6 with equal play. Camino Carrio-Kurajica, Santa Cruz de la Palma 2005) 7...♕c7 8.♕e2 ♘c6 9.♗e3 ♗e7!? 10.♘d4 ♘f6 11.f4 d6 12.♔h1 b4 13.♘d1 0-0 with a very satisfactory Scheveningen for Black. Zozulia-Baklan, Werther 2004.

● 5.♗g5 ♕c7 6.♕d2 ♗b7 7.♗f4 ♕a5 8.d5 b4 9.♘d1 ♘f6 10.dxe6 dxe6! 11.e5 ♘d5 12.♗d3 ♘d7 13.♗g3 ♕c7 14.b3 ♘5b6 15.♕e2 c4! 16.bxc4 ♖c8 17.♘b2 ♗c5 18.0-0 ♗xf3! 19.♕xf3 ♗d4 with a clear edge in Schöne-Gaponenko, Leutersdorf 2004.

5...♗b7



6.a4

This doesn't work out so well. Yet, it is not clear what does. Some practical examples:

– 6.♗g5 ♗e7 (6...♕c7) 7.♗xe7 ♘xe7 8.dxe6 fxe6 9.♕d6 b4 10.♘a4 ♗xe4 11.♕xc5 0-0 is fine for Black. Decoster-Motwani, Belgium tt 2006/07.

– 6.d6!? f6?! (6...b4 is the acid test) 7.e5 ♗xf3 8.gxf3! (8.♕xf3 ♘c6 and White's centre crumbles) 8...fxe5 9.f4! ♘c6 10.♗g2 b4 11.♘a4 (11.♗xc6) 11...♕f6 12.♗xc6! dxc6 13.♕f3 ♖d8 14.♕xc6+ ♔f7 15.♕b7+ ♔e8 16.♕c6+ (why not play on with 16.♘xc5?) 16...♔f7 17.♕b7+ ♔e8 18.♕c6+ ½-½ Stojanovski-Kurajica, Sarajevo 2006.

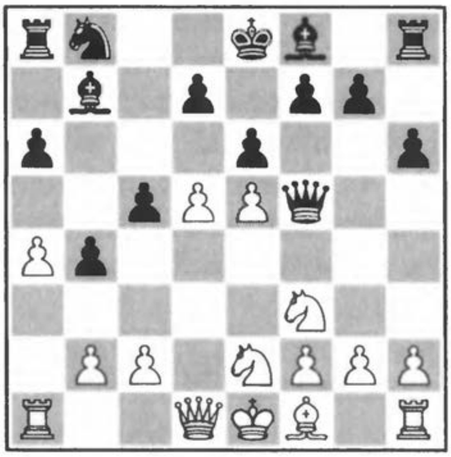
– 6.a3 ♘f6 7.♗g5 ♕c7 8.♕d2 d6 9.♗e2 ♘bd7 10.dxe6 fxe6 11.e5 dxe5 12.♗h4 ♗e7 13.♘g5 ♕b6 14.♕d3 0-0 15.♘xh7 c4 16.♘xf6+ ♗xf6 17.♕h3 ♗xh4 18.♕xh4 ♖f4 and Black had the initiative in Trkulja-Mohr, Sarajevo 1998. The real move order in this game was 5.a3 ♗b7 6.d5 ♘f6 and so on.

– 6.♗f4 b4 7.♘a4 ♘f6 8.dxe6 fxe6 9.e5 ♘d5 10.♗g5 Zelcic-Stevic, Bosnjaci 2003 (via 5.♗f4 ♗b7 6.d5). And now John Emms recommends 10...♕c7 in his chapter on the O'Kelly in *Dangerous Weapons.*

6...b4 7.♘e2 ♘f6 8.♗g5

White is not better in the ending after 8.dxe6 dxe6 9.♕xd8+ ♔xd8.

8...h6 9.♗xf6 ♕xf6 10.e5 ♕f5!



White has pushed his central pawns only to find out that he cannot keep them. Meanwhile he has also given up his dark-squared bishop. In short a positional catastrophe is looming.

11.♘g3 ♕f4 12.dxe6 dxe6 13.♕d2

The ending is bad, but how else to avoid the immediate loss of the e-pawn.

13...♕xd2+ 14.♘xd2 ♘d7 15.♘c4 ♗d5 16.f4 g5! 17.f5 h5! Clearly stronger than taking on c4. **18.fxe6 fxe6 19.♗d3 ♗xg2 20.♖g1 ♗d5 21.0-0-0 0-0-0 22.♘d6+ ♗xd6 23.♗xa6+ ♔b8 24.exd6 h4 25.♘f1 ♖hg8 26.♘e3 ♘f6 27.♘xd5 exd5 28.♗e2 ♖xd6** Black has a healthy pawn and more space in the ending. **29.h3 ♖e6 30.♗f3 ♖e5 31.♖de1**

♖ge8 32.♖xe5 ♖xe5 33.♔d2 ♔c7 34.c3 ♖f5 35.♔e2 b3 36.♖a1 ♖e5+ 37.♔d3 ♔b6 38.a5+ ♔a6 39.♖a3 ♘d7 40.♗g4 c4+ 41.♔d2 ♘c5 42.♗e2 ♘e4+ 43.♔d1 Now everything wins, but Kurajica opts for the prettiest and strongest solution: **43...♘xc3+! 44.bxc3 ♖xe2! 0-1**

So we have seen that neither 3.d4 nor 3.♘c3 can offer anything convincing against the O'Kelly. With 3.d4 White is playing into Black's hands since the resulting Open Sicilian positions are very comfortable for the second player. More subtle is 3.♘c3 to reach an Open Sicilian without allowing Black the kind of initiative he obtains after 3.d4. However, Black may either transpose into a respectable Sicilian (demonstrating that 3.♘c3 does not refute 2...a6) or adopt Kurajica's pet line.

So it is clear that if a 'refutation' exists it would have to start with a move of White's c-pawn. Indeed, repertoire books have focussed on either 3.c3 or 3.c4.

Variation III

3.c3

White goes for an Alapin Sicilian where Black has committed himself to an early ...a6. Clearly this is an achievement for White. On the other hand, several strong grandmasters have reasoned that, since the Alapin is not the most critical approach, they do not run any risk either. The experts all seem to agree that Black can safely play 3...d5 4.exd5 ♕xd5 5.d4 ♘f6 6.♗e2 cxd4 7.cxd4 e6 8.♘c3 and now 8...♕a5, 8...♕d6 or 8...♕d8. Dorfman, Eingorn and Csom are all happy to play in this way. Eingorn also likes our SOS solution 3...e6 4.d4 d5 5.e5 ♗d7 (see SOS-6), while Csom plays 3...♕a5 fairly frequently (see SOS-1 for a chapter on 1.e4 c5 2.c3 ♕a5). In this chapter I will concentrate 3...e6.

3...e6

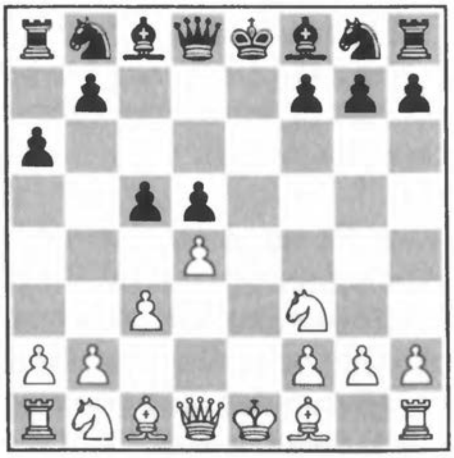
This may transpose to a line in the French which was treated in SOS-6. Let me just briefly mention 3...d5 4.exd5 ♘f6!? (the sound alternative is 4...♕xd5 as I have mentioned above). The knight move is enterprising, but quite risky too. I first looked at this line in 2005 but never played it.

The point is that if White holds onto the pawn with 5.c4 then 5...e6 6.dxe6 ♗xe6 gives Black a lot of compensation. In the 2007 European Championship the game Naiditsch-Sowray went 7.♗e2 ♘c6 8.d3 ♗d6 9.♘c3 ♕c7 10.♗g5 0-0-0 11.♕b3 ♖he8 12.♘e4 ♗e5 13.0-0 ♘d4 14.♘xd4 ♖xd4 15.♘g3 h5 with great play for the pawn. Black later obtained a winning position, but then succumbed (given the FIDE tempo this probably happened in time-trouble).

More problematic is 5.d4 cxd4 6.♕a4+! (6.♕xd4 ♕xd5 is equal, 6.cxd4 ♘xd5 is fine too) when 6...♕d7 (6...♗d7?! 7.♕xd4 ♗g4 has been tried too) 7.♕xd7+ ♘bxd7 8.c4 is the crucial line. Khalifman feels that White is better, but Emms makes a case for it in his Dangerous Weapons chapter on the O'Kelly.

4.d4 d5 5.e5

This is best. Less critical is 5.exd5 exd5! (5...♕xd5 is similar to 3...d5 4.exd5 ♕xd5) with a well-known theoretical position that is usually reached via the move order 1.e4 c5 2.c3 e6 3.d4 d5 4.exd5 exd5 5.♘f3 (5.♗e3 keeps more options) 5...a6.



A few examples:

– 6.♗f4 ♘c6 7.♗e2 ♘f6 (7...c4 8.♘bd2 ♗d6 9.♗xd6 ♛xd6 10.0-0 ♘ge7 Alienkin-Kasparov, Baku 1978) 8.0-0 ♗e7 9.dxc5 ♗xc5 10.♘bd2 0-0 11.♘b3 ♗b6 12.♘fd4 ♘e4 13.f3 ♘d6 14.♔h1 ♛f6 Kasparov-Topalov, Geneve rapid 1996.

– 6.♗e3 c4 (6...cxd4 7.♘xd4 ♘f6 is playable too) 7.b3 cxb3 8.axb3 ♗d6 9.♗d3 ♘c6 10.♘bd2 ♘ge7 11.0-0 0-0 12.♛c2 h6 13.♖fe1 f5 with decent play in Demuth-Eingorn, Oberwart 1995.

– 6.♗d3 ♗d6 (or 6...c4 7.♗e2 ♗d6) 7.dxc5 ♗xc5 8.0-0♘e7 9.♛a4+♘bc6 10.♛h4 ♗f5 11.♗xf5 ♘xf5 12.♛g4 ♘ce7 13.♘bd2 0-0 14.♘b3 ♗a7 15.♗f4 ♛c8 was OK for Black in Groszpeter-Eingorn, Oberwart 1996.

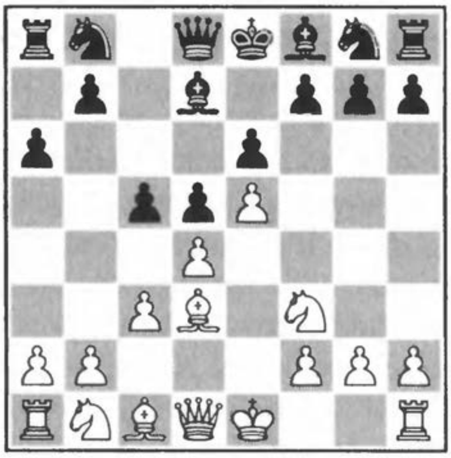
– 6.♗e2 cxd4 (6...c4 7.♗f4 ♗d6 8.♗xd6 ♛xd6 9.b3 cxb3 10.axb3 ♘e7 11.0-0 0-0 Timoschenko-Kasparov, Tbilisi 1978; 6...♘f6 and 6...♘c6 are popular too) 7.♘xd4 ♗d6 8.♘d2 ♘f6 9.0-0 0-0 10.♘2f3 h6 11.♗e3 ♘c6 12.h3 ♖e8 13.♛c2 ♘e4 14.♖fe1 ♛f6 was equal in Rotman-Eingorn, Metz 1996.

The other option on move 5 cannot unduly worry Black either: 5.dxc5 ♗xc5 6.exd5 exd5 7.♗e2 ♘f6 (7...♘c6 8.♘bd2 ♘ge7 9.0-0 0-0 10.♘b3 ♗b6 11.♘bd4 ♘f5 12.♘xf5 ♗xf5 was OK for Black in Gutierrez Olivares-Strikovic, Santa Cruz de la Palma 2005) 8.0-0 h6 (or 8...0-0 9.♗g5 ♖e8 Torrecillas Martinez-Psakhis, Andorra 2001) 9.♘bd2 0-0 10.♘b3 ♗d6 11.♘bd4 ♘c6 12.♛c2 ♖e8 13.♗d3 ♘e4 was comfortable for Black in Broekmeulen-Bosch, 's-Hertogenbosch 2003.

5...♗d7

In Variation II I mentioned that GM Nijboer thought he had almost 'refuted' the O'Kelly with 3.c3. This original French Advance was in fact the line that he made him decide to go for 3.♘c3 after all. In SOS-6 I have explored the whole Variation in Chapter 14. It makes little sense to repeat that here. However, I will briefly mention the lines that are recommended in the topical repertoire books for White.

6.♗d3



6...cxd4 7.♘xd4

The other line is 7.cxd4 ♗b5, when Khalifman concentrates on 8.♗c2 ♗b4+ 9.♗d2 a5 10.♘c3 and now:

– 10...♗a6 from Aseev-Eingorn, Berlin 1997, should according to the former FIDE World Champion be met by 11.♘g5!?, while

– 10...♗xc3 11.bxc3 (11.♗xc3 see SOS-6) 11...h6 12.♘g1!? ♘e7 13.♞e2 ♘d7 14.♖b1 ♗a6 15.♘f4 g6 was Andreev-Anapolsky, Alushta 2003, when the game continued 16.♗d3 as given in SOS-6. Khalifman recommends 16.♘d3 with a slight advantage instead. I agree that 11.♘g5 is quite dangerous for Black after 10...♗a6. After all, 10...♗xc3 11.bxc3 h6 is designed to prevent the knight-sally. So Black should make do with the strategically complex positions after 10...♗xc3.

The text is given an exclam by John Shaw in *Experts vs. the Sicilian*. This seems a little exaggerated. Shaw gives 7...♘c6 8.♘xc6 ♗xc6 9.0-0 'and White's lead in development gives him attacking chances on the kingside.' In SOS-6 I mentioned that this occurred in two internet blitz games Karjakin-Baklan. While I also gave

7...♘e7

(which is not mentioned by Shaw) as stronger, to prepare ...♘bc6. See SOS-6 with reference to the game Schlosser-Braun, Altenkirchen 2005.

Variation IV

3.c4

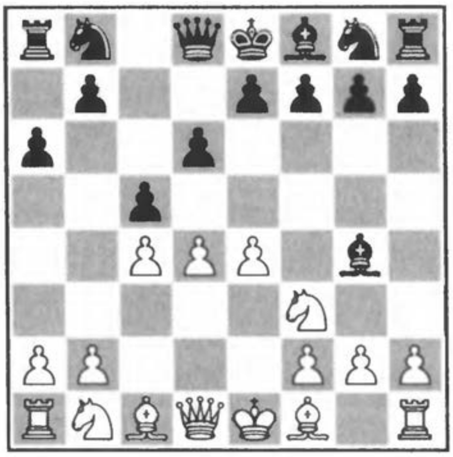
'The strongest reply of all', according to John Nunn in *Beating the Sicilian* (the first edition). The Doctor's stern verdict holds up to scrutiny only against the typical O'Kelly replies. If Black is happy to transpose into the Kan then there is nothing particularly strong about the text.

3...e6

The traditional O'Kelly reply has always been 3...♘c6 4.d4 cxd4 5.♘xd4 ♘f6 6.♘c3 e5 7.♘f5 d5 which looks nice but scores disastrously for Black (this is Nunn's main line too). Somewhat better is 5...e5 6.♘f5 d6 (6...d5 is again dubious) 7.♘c3 g6 8.♘e3 which is Emms' main line in *Dangerous Weapons*.

Personally, I wouldn't enjoy playing these somewhat inferior positions (though if you have a liking for the Kalashnikov then you may think otherwise). To Emms' credit I should add that he points out the dangers and notes the option of going for the Kan.

It would be great if Black could play the line 3...d6 4.d4 ♗g4!?.



This works out fairly well for Black after 5.d5 e5!? for in the resulting Benoni Wall position Black has managed to pin the knight while ...a6 is useful too. Black will continue by taking on f3 and exchanging the dark-squared bishops. An example is Okkes-Bosch, Dutch tt 2003: 6.♘c3 ♘d7 7..♗e2 ♗xf3 8.♗xf3 g6 9.h4!? h5 10.♗e2 ♗h6 11.g3 ♔f8! 12..♗d3 ♔g7 with equal chances for both sides.

The main idea behind 4...♗g4 is 5.dxc5 ♗xf3 6.♕xf3 dxc5 when Black can make use of the hole on d4 to achieve a good game. For example:

– 7.♗e3 ♘c6 8.♘c3 e6 9..♗e2?! ♘d4 10.♗xd4 cxd4 11.♖d1 ♕b6 with a clear advantage. Butunoi-Ardeleanu, Arad 2006.

– 7.e5 ♘c6 8.e6 fxe6 9.♗d3 (9.♕h5+ g6 10.♕xc5 ♘d4 Postny-Golod, Ramat Aviv 2004) 9...♘f6 10.♕h3 ♘b4 11.♔e2 ♕d4 12.♖d1 ♘xd3 13.♖xd3 ♕xc4 14.♘d2 ♕g4+ and Black has gained a material edge Arakhamia-Kurajica, Malaga 2001.

– 7.♕b3?! ♘c6 8.♕xb7? ♘b4 9.♘a3 ♖b8 10.♕a7 ♕c8 11.♗e3 e6 0-1 Caminade-O.Foisor, Naujac 2002.

However, I must warn you that 5.dxc5 ♗xf3 6.gxf3! is at present considered to be very strong for White. The problem is that after both 6...dxc5 7.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 8.♗e3 and 6...♕a5+ 7.♘c3 ♕xc5 8..♗e3 White gains a lot of time which more than compensates his fractured pawn structure. I am not very optimistic about the chances that this line will be rehabilitated and so it makes sense (if you want to play the O'Kelly) to concentrate on 3...e6.

4.♘c3

This is more subtle than 4.d4 when Black can immediately transpose into the Kan with 4...cxd4 5.♘xd4 ♘f6 6.♘c3 ♕c7 or 6...♗b4.

4...♕c7

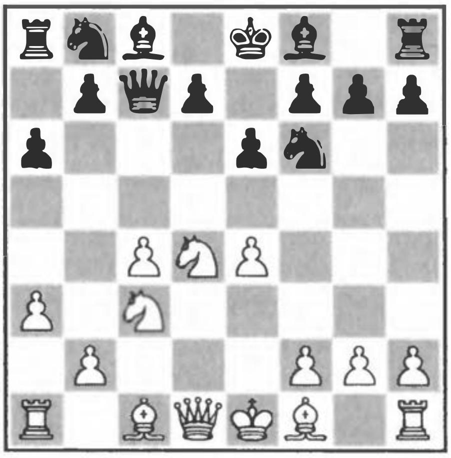
This is better than 4...♘c6 5.d4 cxd4 6.♘xd4 ♗b4 7.♘xc6! which is the line that Nunn gave. Quite playable is 4...b6, when 5.d4 cxd4 6.♘xd4 ♗b7 leads to a hedgehog. In the recent game Strohhäker-Jones, Dresden 2007, Black gave this an original twist though, with 7.♗e2 ♕c7 8.0-0 ♘f6 9.f3 ♗d6!? 10.♔h1 ♗f4 with interesting play.

5.d4

White can postpone d4 still longer. In Tomczak-Wojtaszek, Opole 2007, Black obtained an excellent position after 5.♗e2 b6 6.0-0 ♗b7 7.♖e1 d6 8.d4 cxd4 9.♘xd4 ♘f6 10.♗d3 ♘bd7 11.f4 g6 12.♕f3 h5!? 13.h3 ♗e7 14.♘b3 h4 15.♗e3 g5! 16.♘d2 gxf4 17.♕xf4 ♘e5.

5...cxd4 6.♘xd4 ♘f6 7.a3

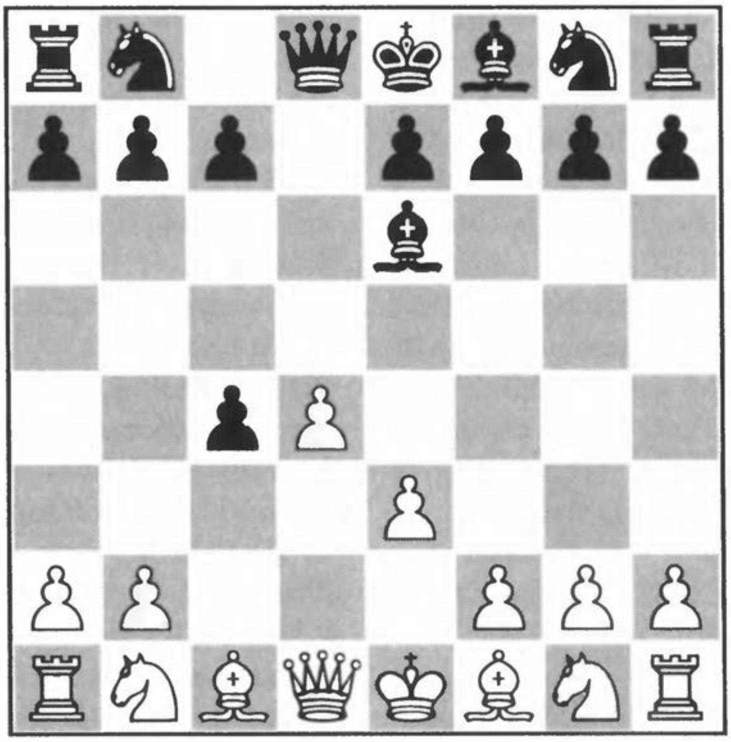
This position is usually reached via the move order 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 a6 5.c4 ♘f6 6.♘c3 ♕c7 7.a3. Black now has several conventional ways of continuing. In true SOS-style I would recommend 7...♘xe4!? which is the subject of Chapter 14 in this book!



CHAPTER 4

Glenn Flear

Really Accepting the QGA



1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e3 ♗e6!?

I'm going to be looking at play that arises after the moves

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e3 ♗e6!?

Apart from cheekily holding onto the c-pawn in an unconventional manner the move crosses White's attempts to steer the game towards the calmer lines of the QGA. Quite a few players opt for 3.e3 as Black has a number of tricky-SOS lines against 3.♘f3 e.g.

- 3...c6 which often arises via 2...c6 3.♘f3 dxc4;
- 3...♘d7 see SOS-3;
- 3...e6 4.e4 b5;
- 3...a6 4.e3 (or if 4.e4 then 4...b5) 4...♗g4 5.♗xc4 e6.

So imagine your opponent's surprise when you hit him with this one!

The inconvenience of this move, apart from blocking the e-pawn is that the bishop can be exposed to an attack on e6 with either ♘g5 or ♘f4, so Black has to be ready to react accordingly. The act of holding onto the c-pawn however is annoying for White as he either has to lose time to regain the pawn or indulge in tricky gambit-play which can be risky.

Despite the obvious surprise value these lines do occur fairly frequently in grandmaster games so they are given a certain respect by those in the know even amongst professionals.

The following eight games will illustrate the principle ideas for both sides. Here is how they are related to the variation, even though some of these games started with alternative move orders.

4.♘f3

If 4.♘a3 then 4...c5! Khermanov-Khamitskiy (Game 1).

Here 4.♘c3 c6 5.a4 ♘f6 6.♘f3 transposes to the main line. Note that 4.♘d2 is also met by 4...c5!. While 4.♘e2 f6?! is treated in Kozul-Varga (Game 2).

4...c6

This position was popularized a few years ago by Rausis via a Slav move-order (1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 dxc4 4.e3 ♗e6!).

Also possible is 4...♘f6 5.♘c3 c6 6.♘g5 ♕d7 Gelfand-Zilberman (Game 3), or 6...♗d5 Krush-Mikhalevski (Game 4).

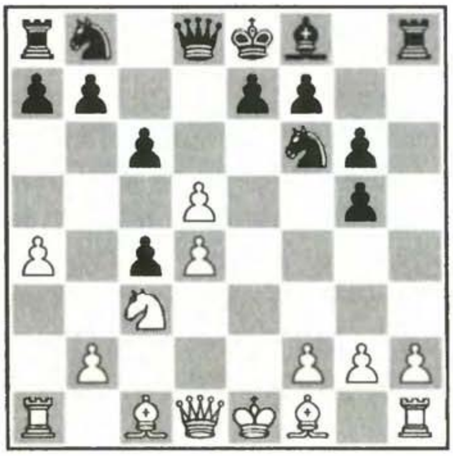
5.a4

5.♘c3 b5 6.a4 b4 7.♘e4 ♘f6 Annageldyev-Vasilev (Game 5).

5...♘f6 6.♘c3

6.♘a3 c5 7.♘xc4 ♘c6 8.♘ce5 ♗d5 Teofilovic-Dizdarevic (Game 6).

6...g6 7.♘g5 ♗d5 8.e4 h6 9.exd5 hxg5



10.dxc6

10.♗xc4 David-Levin (Game 7).

10...♘xc6 11.d5

Vallejo Pons-Fontaine (Game 8).

Game 1

□ **Alexander Khermanov**
■ **Sergey Khamitskiy**
Petrovskaya Ladya 2007

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e3 ♗e6 4.♘a3

Aiming to restore material equality, but giving Black time and space to strike back at the centre.

After 4.♘d2 simplest is again 4...c5 which will probably transpose.

4...c5!

This vigorous response should soon bring Black equality.

5.♘f3 ♘f6 6.♗xc4

Equally lacking in bite is 6.♘xc4 e.g. 6...♘c6 7.♗e2 cxd4 8.exd4 g6 9.0-0 ♗g7 10.♘ce5 ♗d5 11.♘xc6 bxc6 12.♗f4 0-0 13.♗e5 ♕b6 with balanced chances, I.Botvinnik-Lev, Israeli tt 2002.

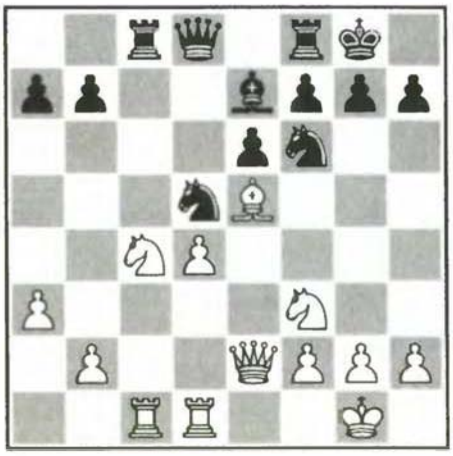
6...♗xc4 7.♘xc4 e6 8.0-0 ♘c6 9.♕e2

Otherwise 9.♘ce5 ♘xe5 10.♘xe5 a6 11.dxc5 ♕xd1 12.♖xd1 ♗xc5 was dead equal in Navarovszky-Gawlikowski, Warsaw 1961.

9...cxd4 10.♖d1 ♗e7 11.exd4

The exchange of the light-squared bishops leaves White with less attacking chances than in many typical IQP positions.

11...0-0 12.♗f4 ♖c8 13.♗e5 ♘b4 14.a3 ♘bd5 15.♖ac1 ½-½



Chances are more or less equal. Black has a solid defensive set-up but is a long way from being able to profit from his slightly superior structure. White's pieces are slightly more active and he therefore keeps the game in balance.

Conclusion: 4.♘a3 offers nothing.

Game 2

☐ **Zdenko Kozul**
■ **Zoltan Varga**
Pula 2002

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e3 ♗e6 4.♘e2!?

Threatening ♘f4 hitting the bishop. A modest idea but one against which Black has yet to find a satisfactory solution.

4...f6?

An original concept very much in the SOS way of thinking, but although it worked in this game it's undoubtedly too weakening.

More routine is 4...♘f6 but after 5.♘f4 the bishop has to move away from the pawn:

- 5...♗c8 (a concession which almost admits that he has lost his opening discussion as well as time and the centre) 6.♗xc4 e6 7.♘c3 ♘c6 8.0-0 ♗d6 9.♘d3 a6 10.a3 e5 11.dxe5 ♗xe5 12.♘xe5 ♘xe5 13.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 14.♗e2 favoured White in Dambacher-Levin, Belgium tt 2006/07.
- More natural would seem to be 5...♗f5, but after 6.♘c3 ♘bd7 7.♗xc4 e6 8.f3 ♘b6 9.♗b3 h6 10.e4 ♗h7 11.0-0 Ulibin-Turova, St.Petersburg 2003, White was well in control.

The Irish number one Baburin had a disaster following 4...♗d7?!, i.e. 5.♘ec3 b5 6.♕f3! ♘a6 7.♘xb5!! ♘f6 (7...♗xb5 8.♗xc4 ♗xc4 9.♕c6+ would be catastrophic for Black) 8.♗xc4 e6 9.♕b7 c6 10.♕xa6 cxb5 11.♗xb5 and Black had lost two pawns in Kiriakov-Baburin, Port Erin 2001.

How about 4...b5! which certainly emphasizes that Black is keen on holding onto the c-pawn! 5.♘f4 (after 5.♘ec3 c6 6.♕f3 ♘f6 White has nothing for the pawn as 7.♘xb5?? just loses to 7...♗d5) 5...♗f5 (or perhaps 5...♗c8 6.b3 e5!?) 6.♘c3 c6 7.e4 ♗c8 with murky complications. Black has lost time but at least he holds onto his extra pawn.

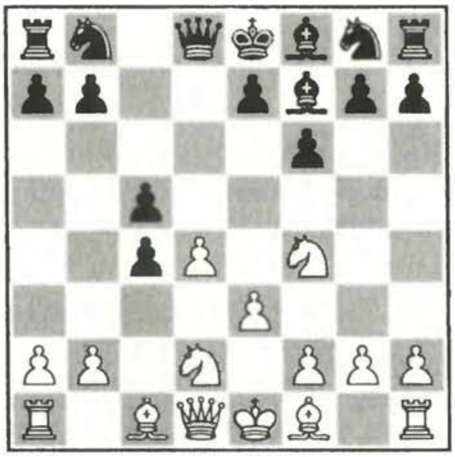
5.♘d2

After 5.♘f4 ♗f7 White lacks a coherent continuation as after 6.♘d2 Black gains time with 6...e5.

5...c5

White also keeps the initiative after 5...♗f7 6.♘c3 e5 7.♗xc4!.

6.♘f4 ♗f7



7.d5?

The most awkward for Black is the simplifying 7.♗xc4! as the e6-square is then nothing less than a gaping hole in Black's position: 7...♗xc4 (7...♕c8 8.♗xf7+ ♔xf7 9.♕h5+; and 7...♘h6 8.♗xf7+ ♘xf7 9.♘e6 ♕d7 10.♘xc5 are dire) 8.♘xc4 cxd4 9.exd4 (9.♕h5+!? g6 10.♘xg6 hxg6 11.♕xh8 ♕d5 12.b3 ♕xg2 is less clear) 9...g6 (9...e5? is bad because of 10.♕h5+) 10.♘e6 ♕d7 11.d5 with an overwhelming positional advantage.

7...♗xd5!

It's important to eliminate this important pawn.

8.♘xd5 ♕xd5 9.e4 ♕d7 10.♗xc4

White has a clear lead in development for his pawn but Varga doesn't panic.

10...♘c6 11.♕h5+ g6 12.♕xc5

Material equality is re-established but Black can now activate.

12...♘d4 13.0-0 e6 14.♕a5 b5 15.♗b3 ♘e7 16.♗d1 ♘ec6 17.♕c3 ♗g7 18.♘b3 0-0 19.♕h3 f5 20.exf5 exf5 21.♗e3 ♔h8 ½-½

White has the bishop pair but the centralized, and well-supported, knight on d4 stops him doing anything much.

Conclusion: 4.♘e2 is awkward to meet. In reply I suggest the courageous 4...b5 as worth a try.

Game 3

☐ **Boris Gelfand**
■ **Yaacov Zilberman**
Tel Aviv 1999

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e3 ♗e6 4.♘f3 ♘f6 5.♘c3 c6 6.♘g5 ♕d7!?

Gelfand labels this as dubious. However, in a similar vein, Kasparov played 6...♕c8!? in a blitz game against Korchnoi.

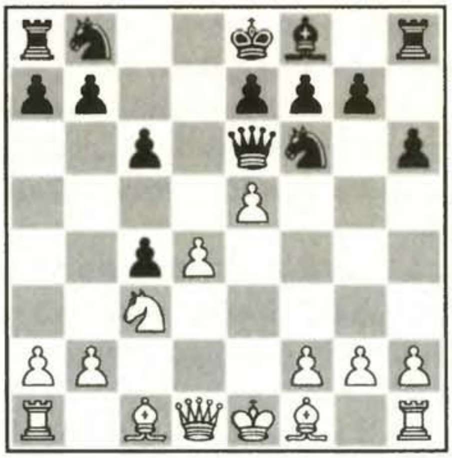
For 6...♗d5 see Game 4 (Krush-Mikhalevski, Schaumburg 2006).

7.e4 h6

The ambitious 7...b5 is provocative, whereas the calm 7...g6!? with the idea of just getting on with development is met by 8.e5 ♘d5 9.♘xe6 ♕xe6 10.♗xc4 ♘d7 11.♕b3 ♘7b6 12.♘xd5 cxd5 13.♗b5+ and White is for preference.

8.♘xe6 ♕xe6 9.e5!

This is more testing than 9.f3 ♘bd7 10.a4 a5 11.♗e3 ♘b6 12.♗e2 ♘fd5 13.♕d2 ♘xe3 14.♕xe3 g6 15.0-0 ♗g7, Rodshtein-Lubczynski, Internet blitz 2006, after which Black stood well.



9...♘d5?!

Gelfand gives 9...♘bd7 10.♗e2 ♘d5 11.0-0 h5 (instead, 11...♘xc3?! 12.bxc3 ♘b6 looks suspicious after 13.♗g4 ♕d5 14.e6!) 12.♘e4 with compensation.

However, I prefer 9...♘fd7! 10.♗e2 ♘b6 11.0-0 ♕d7 12.♗e3 e6, when White has space, but Black is untangling and holds onto the pawn.

10.♗xc4 ♕d7 11.0-0 e6 12.♘e4 ♘b6 13.b3 ♘a6?!

A better chance is 13...c5, but even here White looks on top: 14.dxc5 ♘xc4 15.bxc4 ♕xd1 16.♖xd1 ♘d7 17.♖b1 for instance, although then Black can try and mix things with 17...b6!?.

14.♗xa6 bxa6 15.♗e3 ♗e7 16.♕g4 g6 17.♕e2 White dominates the board as Black has weaknesses on both wings and nowhere to hide his king. **17...♕b7 18.♕d2 ♖d8 19.♖ac1 ♘d5 20.♖c4 g5 21.f4! gxf4 22.♗xf4 ♕d7 23.♗xh6! ♖h7** Here 23...♘b6 fails to 24.♕f4 ♖h7 25.♕g3.

24.♗g5 ♔f8 25.♗xe7+ ♕xe7 26.♕g5 ♖g7 27.♕h6 1-0

Conclusion: if Black wants to meet 4.♘f3 ♘f6 5.♘c3 c6 6.♘g5 with 6...♕d7!? he'll need to seek an improvement in the notes to this game. In particular see the note to Black's 9th move.

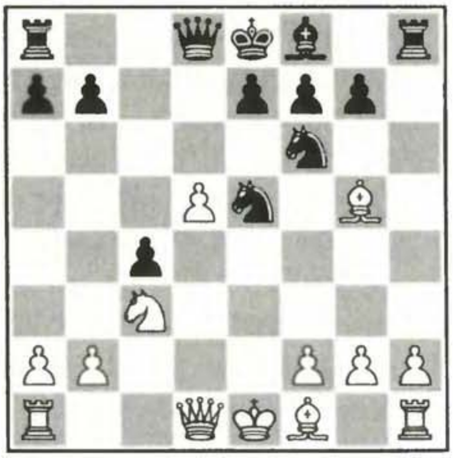
Game 4

☐ **Irena Krush**
■ **Victor Mikhalevski**
Schaumburg 2006

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 dxc4 5.e3 ♗e6 6.♘g5 ♗d5!? 7.e4 h6 8.exd5 hxg5 9.dxc6 ♘xc6 10.d5

Less critical is 10.♗xg5 e.g. 10...♕xd4 11.♕xd4 ♘xd4 12.0-0-0 ♘c6 13.♗xc4 e6 with approximate equality in Tregubov-Kirov, Cetinje 1996.

10...♘e5 11.♗xg5



Instead, 11.♕d4 ♘fd7 (11...♕d6 12.♗xg5 a6 transposes to the next note) 12.♗xg5 f6?! 13.♗e3 g5 14.♗e2 ♗g7 15.f4 gxf4 16.♕xf4 led to a white win in Akopian-Kirov, Palma de Mallorca 1989.

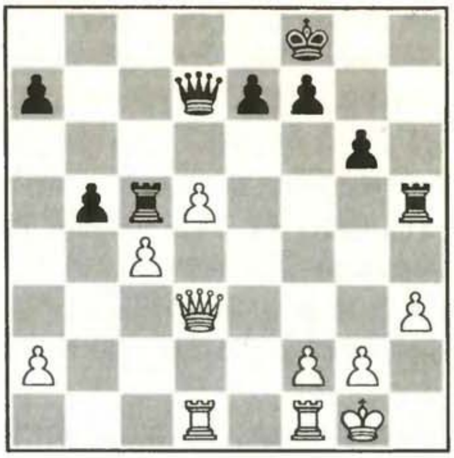
11...g6!?

A new move in this particular position. Previously there had been a preference for 11...a6, e.g. 12.♕d4 ♕d6 13.♗xc4 ♘xc4 14.♕xc4 ♖xh2 15.♖xh2 ♕xh2 16.0-0-0 ♕d6 17.♗f4 ♕d7 Gofshtein-Lalic, Neum 2000, when a draw was agreed. White has the better development but he obviously did not see how to profit from it.

12.♗xc4 ♘xc4 13.♕a4+ ♕d7 14.♕xc4 ♖c8 15.♕d3 ♗g7 16.0-0 ♖h5

White is also probably a shade better after the alternative 16...0-0 17.♖ac1 ♖fd8.

17.♗xf6 ♗xf6 18.♖ad1 ♔f8 19.h3 ♗xc3! 20.bxc3 ♖c5 21.c4 b5!



Breaking up White's centre.

22.d6!?

Black seems to be solid enough after 22.cxb5 ♖hxd5 23.♕f3 ♖xb5.

22...bxc4?!

Passed pawns are not always a positive feature if they are blockaded. Instead the safe 22...♖xc4 23.dxe7+ ♕xe7 24.♖fe1 ♕f6 is equal.

23.dxe7+ ♕xe7 24.♕c3

White has less pawn islands and the safer king, so retains some chances of obtaining a lasting advantage.

24...♕e5 25.♖d4 ♕f6

White still keeps the better chances after 25...♖h4 26.f4! ♕f6 27.♖c1.

26.♖c1 ♖h4 27.♖xh4 ♕xh4 28.g3!?

Another idea is 28.♖b1! ♖c8 29.♖b7, with pressure.

28...♕xh3 29.♕b4 ♕h5 30.♖xc4 ♕d1+ 31.♔h2 ♕h5+ 32.♖h4!

Correctly avoiding the draw.

32...♕e5 33.♕b7 ♖d5 34.♕a8+ ♔e7 35.♕xa7+

Winning a pawn. Now the next task is to get to the time control without letting slip the advantage.

35...♖d7 36.♕a8 ♖d8 37.♕a3+ ♔f6 38.♕b3?! 38.♖h7 stops Black's king escaping to safety. **38...♔g7 39.a4 g5 40.♖b4??** A fortieth move that throws away the advantage. Necessary was 40.♖h5! ♔g6 41.♖h3 with ideas of ♕f3-h5+. **40...♖d2 41.♔g2?** Although 41.♕f3 ♕c5 42.♖b5 ♖xf2+ 43.♔g1 ♖xf3+ 44.♖xc5 ♖xg3+ would give Black every chance of winning, the text leads to a quick mate. **41...♕c5 42.♖b5 ♕xf2+ 43.♔h3 ♕f1+ 44.♔g4 ♖d4+ 0-1**

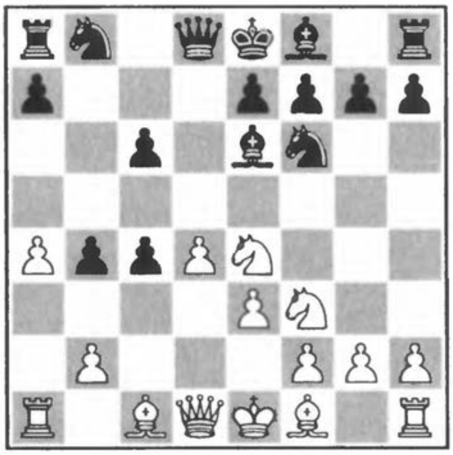
It's mate. A tragedy for White, but anything can happen in time trouble.

Conclusion: it seems that 6...♗d5!? is playable, but White may be able to retain a pull. If we compare these positions with those arising in Game 8, there White has played a2-a4 and Black a developing move. So White has better chances in Game 4.

Game 5

☐ **Orazly Annageldyev**
■ **Milen Vasilev**
Izmir2006

1.♘f3 d5 2.d4 c6 3.c4 dxc4 4.e3 ♗e6 5.♘c3 b5 6.a4 b4 7.♘e4 ♘f6



White has to decide what to do with his knight.

8.♘c5

Grigorov-Vasilev, Bulgaria tt 2006, continued with 8.♘xf6+ exf6 9.♗d2 ♘d7 10.♖c1 c3 11.bxc3 b3 12.c4 b2 13.♖b1 ♖b8 with an unclear middlegame in prospect. Which is the most important: White's centre or Black's advanced pawn?

Otherwise 8.♘ed2 c3 9.bxc3 bxc3 10.♘c4 g6 11.♗e2 ♗g7 12.0-0 0-0 13.♕d3 c5 Boganov-Varga, Zalakaros 2002, was about equal.

In fact, 8.♘g3! is perhaps White's most dangerous option:

– Black held out for a draw in Rusev-Danner, Gothenburg 2005, after 8...c5 9.♘g5 ♗d5 10.e4 h6 11.exd5 hxg5 12.dxc5 ♕xd5 13.♕xd5 ♘xd5 14.♗xc4 e6 15.♗b5+ ♘d7, but he was always somewhat worse.

– The same was equally true of the following: 8...h6 9.♗d2 a5 10.♖c1 ♘bd7 11.♗xc4 ♗xc4 12.♖xc4 c5 13.dxc5 ♖c8 14.♕c2 e6 15.0-0 ♖xc5 16.e4 ♗e7 Arencibia-Perez, Santa Clara 2001.

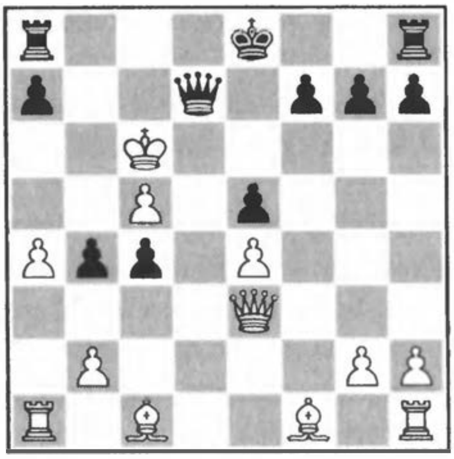
– Critical is 8...♗d5 9.♕c2 e6!? 10.♗xc4 (after 10.e4 b3 11.♕b1 ♗b4+ 12.♗d2 ♕a5 Black has interesting compensation for the piece) 10...♘bd7 11.e4 ♗xc4 12.♕xc4 c5 13.♗e3 cxd4 14.♗xd4 ♗e7 15.0-0 0-0 (15...a5!?) 16.a5 and White had an edge in P. Cramling-Govciyan, France tt 2006.

8...♗d5 9.♕c2

The most trustworthy move.

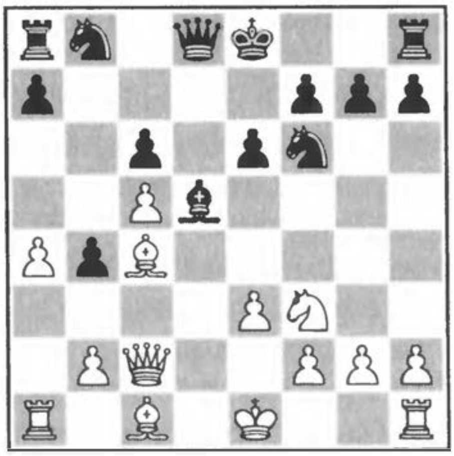
Black seized the initiative after 9.♗d2 e6 10.♗xb4 ♘bd7 11.♗e2 ♖b8 12.♗c3 ♗xc5 13.dxc5 ♘e4!? in Krush-Ehlvest, New York 2006.

The other move, 9.♘e5?!, has never really recovered from the following game: 9...e6 10.f3 ♗xc5 11.dxc5 ♘fd7 12.♘xd7 (12.♕d4 should be met by 12...0-0! 13.♘xc4 ♘a6!) 12...♘xd7 13.e4 ♗xe4 14.fxe4 ♕h4+ 15.♔e2 ♘e5 16.♕d2 ♘d3 17.♕e3 ♕e1+ 18.♔f3♘e5+ 19.♔f4 ♕h4+ 20.♔xe5 ♕f6+ 21.♔d6 e5+ 22.♔c7 ♕d8+ 23.♔xc6 ♕d7 mate



Izoria-Kupreichik, Istanbul 2003. No further comment is necessary!

9...e6 10.♗xc4 ♗xc5 11.dxc5



11...♕a5!?

Varying from a previous game of his opponent. However after 11...♘bd7 12.b3 ♘xc5 13.0-0 ♗e4 14.♕b2 0-0 15.♗d2 a5 16.♖fd1 ♕b6 17.♘e5 ♖fd8 Black had no particular worries in Annageldyev-Danielian, Alushta 2004.

12.♗xd5 cxd5 13.♘d4 0-0 14.♗d2 ♘a6

Is the c-pawn an asset or a weakness for White?

15.c6 e5! 16.♘b5

White later will regret this choice of square. More prudent would have been 16.♘f3.

16...♘e4 17.0-0 Instead, after 17.f3 ♘xd2 18.♕xd2 ♕b6 19.♖c1 ♖ac8 White suffers due to the weakness of his e3-pawn. **17...♘ac5 18.♖fd1 a6** Suddenly the knight is trapped. **19.♗xb4** Making the most of a desperate situation. **19...♕xb4 20.♘c7 d4 21.exd4 exd4 22.♘xa8 ♖xa8 23.♕e2 ♖c8 24.♖ac1 d3 25.♕e3 d2 26.♖a1 ♘b3 27.♖a3 ♘ec5 28.h3 ♕c4 29.♔h2 ♕e6 30.♕g3 ♖xc6 0-1**

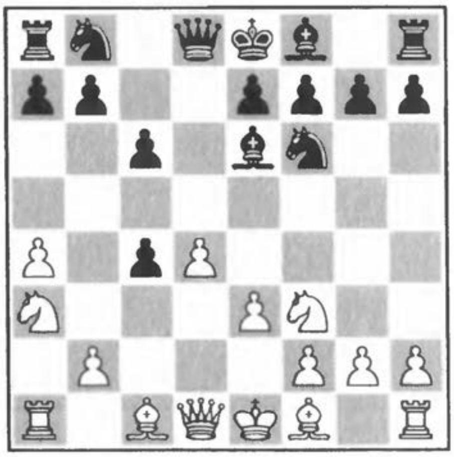
So the c-pawn proved to be a weakness after all. To be fair, this was due to the rest of White's position falling to pieces!

Conclusion: 8.♘g3 is the most testing in this line, see the notes to White's eighth move.

Game 6

☐ **Vjeran Teofilovic**
■ **Emir Dizdarevic**
Bizovac 2005

1.♘f3 d5 2.d4 c6 3.c4 dxc4 4.e3 ♗e6 5.a4 ♘f6 6.♘a3



White shows his distaste for being a pawn down and decides to recuperate it immediately. This however gives Black sufficient time to hit back at White's centre.

6...c5! 7.♘xc4 ♘c6 8.♘ce5

White has all sorts of problems after 8.dxc5? ♕xd1+ 9.♔xd1 ♘e4.

8...♗d5

I consider 8...cxd4!? to be risky, e.g. 9.♗b5 dxe3 10.♕xd8+ ♖xd8 11.♗xe3 ♗d7 (the untested 11...♗d5!? 12.♗xa7 ♘d7 may offer a better chance of equalizing) 12.♘xd7 ♘xd7 13.♖c1 e6 14.♗xc6 bxc6 15.♖xc6 ♗b4+ 16.♔e2, Flear-Rausis, France tt 1998, when Black is only slightly worse after 16...a5.

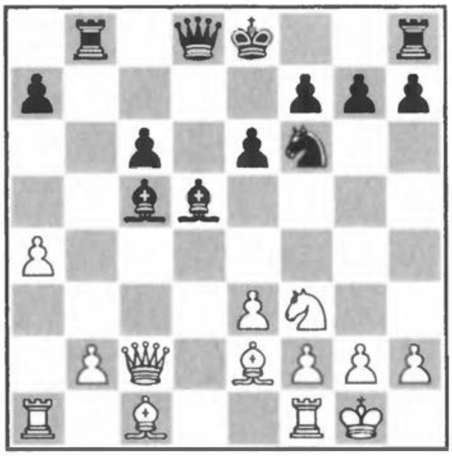
9.♘xc6 bxc6!

The most dynamic recapture. Such broken pawns are nominally 'weaknesses' but Black's potential activity along the b-file outweighs any counter-activity that White is likely to generate.

10.♗e2 e6

Also reasonable is releasing the tension with 10...cxd4 11.♕xd4 e6, and although after 12.0-0 ♗e7 13.♘e5 (13.b4!?) 13...♕c7 14.♘c4 ♖d8 15.♕c3 0-0 16.f3 White went on to win in Touzane-Rausis, France tt 1999, at this point Black seemed to be doing well.

11.0-0 ♖b8 12.dxc5 ♗xc5 13.♕c2



13...♕e7

Play was also about equal after 13...♗b4 14.♘d2 0-0 15.♗d3 e5 16.e4 ♗e6 17.♘c4 ♘d7 18.♗e3 ♕c7 in Czerwonski-Zubov, Warsaw rapid 2006.

14.♘d2 e5 15.b3 0-0 16.♗b2

White is catching up in development and could reasonably expect to obtain a balanced game so Dizdarevic decides to gain space.

16...e4!

The type of pawn wedge that is typically associated with kingside attacking chances.

17.♖fc1

Instead 17.♗xf6 gxf6 wouldn't be a particular inconvenience for Black who would have the bishop pair and plenty of dark squares. White's inactive pieces then couldn't effectively probe the damaged kingside pawns in the foreseeable future.

17...♘d7 18.♘c4 ♗b4 19.♖ab1 ♕e6 20.♗c3 ♖fd8 21.♘a5

Finally getting some action against the isolated c-pawn.

21...♗xc3 22.♕xc3 ♘e5

Defending and pushing forward at the same time.

23.♘c4

Black now has a couple of ways of settling for half-a-point i.e. repeating (23...♘d7) or exchanging some pieces on c4 (23....♗xc4) etc. but being the highest ranked player and with time trouble approaching the grandmaster plays ambitiously...

23...♘d3!?

This knight can't be left to cause havoc from d3.

24.♗xd3 exd3 25.♘d2 ♕g6

The advanced pawn and Black's light-squared play give him some kingside pressure but breaking through isn't evident, and furthermore, if White can keep his defences intact then Black's queenside pawns, including the one on d3, may prove to be weak.

26.f3 h5 27.b4! h4 28.♔f2 ♕d6 29.♔g1 ♕h6 30.♔f2 a6 In order to slow down counterplay with b4-b5. **31.♕c5 ♕f6 32.♕c3 ♕d6 33.♔g1 ♕g6 34.♔f2 ♖d6!?** The best chance to break the deadlock. **35.♕c5** After 35.e4 ♗e6 36.♕c5 ♖bd8 play would be double-edged but White probably shouldn't be worse. **35...♖f6?** 35...♖e8! would keep things unclear. **36.b5?** A serious error. Strong is 36.e4! with the tactical point that 36...♗xe4?? allows 37.♕e5 forking and winning. **36...axb5 37.axb5 h3 38.g3 ♗xf3!** A killer blow. **39.♘xf3 ♕g4 40.♕xc6 ♖xc6 41.bxc6 ♖xb1 42.♖xb1 ♕c4 43.♖b8+ ♔h7 44.♘d4 d2 0-1**

Conclusion: 6.♘a3 yields no advantage.

Game 7

☐ **Vincent David**
■ **Felix Levin**
Rochefort 2004

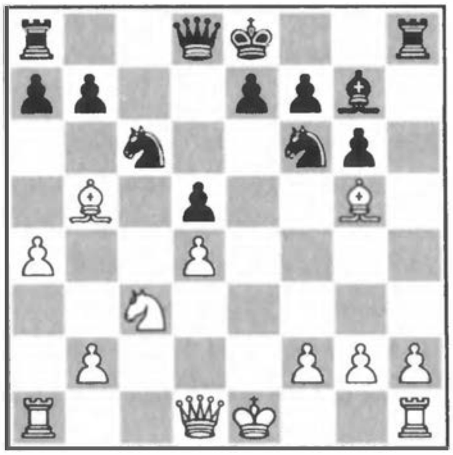
1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.♘f3 c6 4.e3 ♗e6 5.a4 ♘f6 6.♘c3 g6 7.♘g5 ♗d5 8.e4 h6 9.exd5 hxg5 10.♗xc4

For 10.dxc6 see Game 8.

10...cxd5

Instead 10...♘xd5? won't do because of White's dangerous threats following 11.♕b3.

11.♗b5+ ♘c6 12.♗xg5 ♗g7



White hasn't shown any way to obtain an advantage from here.

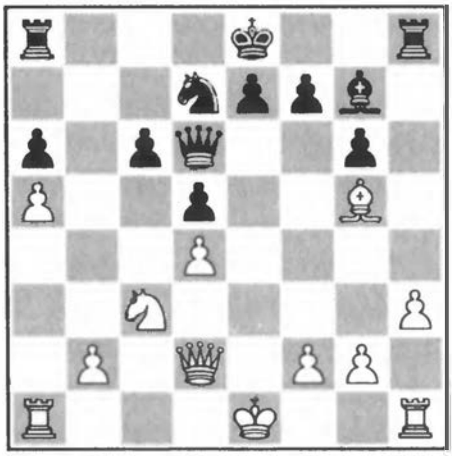
13.a5

White failed to obtain enough compensation for his pawn after 13.h4!? a6 14.♗xc6+ bxc6 15.♕f3?! ♖b8 16.0-0 ♖xb2 17.♖ab1 ♖xb1 18.♖xb1 0-0 19.♕d3 ♕a5 Bacrot-Landa, Internet blitz 2004.

13...a6 14.♗xc6+ bxc6 15.♕e2 ♕d6

Black has achieved a good game, he has the semi-open b- and h-files for his rooks and a central majority. These should be more significant factors than his weakened queenside pawn structure.

16.h3 ♘d7 17.♕d2



17...0-0

After the interesting idea 17...♕e6+! 18.♔f1 (18.♘e2?! c5! looks promising for Black) 18...♕d6, Black loses two tempi to deny White the right to castle. Note that White's rook on h1 would then have problems to come into play.

18.0-0 e6 19.♗f4 e5

The only way to compete for the b8-h2 diagonal.

20.dxe5 ♗xe5 21.♖a4 ♖fe8 22.♖d1

White's pieces are now fairly well coordinated and he has essentially equalized.

22...♖ab8 23.♗xe5 ♕xe5 24.♖h4!

Both a question of freeing a4 for the knight as well as seeking some tricks on the h-file.

24...♕g7 25.♘a4 ♖b5 26.b4 ♖e6 27.♖e1 ♕f6 28.♖xe6 ♕xe6 29.♕c3!

A nuisance for Black who has to make the following potentially weakening move.

29...f6 30.♕c2 ♔g7 31.♕c1 g5

32.♖d4 ♖b8

Levin finally gets the time to bring this rook into play as there's nothing doing on the queenside.

33.h4?!

David should have also taken the opportunity to re-deploy his least effective piece with 33.♘b2 ♖h8 34.♘d3 when he would be ready for anything.

33...♖e8 34.♖d1?

Better is 34.hxg5 ♕e1+ 35.♕xe1 ♖xe1+ 36.♔h2 fxg5 with a playable ending.

34...gxh4!

Snatching a pawn as White cannot cause any serious damage.

35.♕f4 ♖h8 36.♕c7 ♔g6 37.♕a7

Black is also much better after 37.♘c5 ♘xc5 38.bxc5 ♖h5! 39.♕d6 (or 39.♕b7 h3!) 39...♖e5.

37...h3! 38.♕xa6 ♘e5 39.♕e2?

Although 39.♕f1 is a lesser evil White would still come under tremendous pressure after 39...♔f7!.

39...hxg2 40.f4 ♖h1+ 0-1

Conclusion: 10.♗xc4 causes no real worries for Black.

Game 8

☐ **Francisco Vallejo Pons**
■ **Robert Fontaine**
France tt 2005

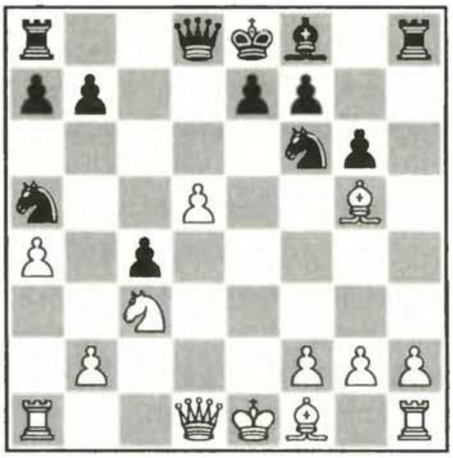
1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 dxc4 4.e3 ♗e6 5.a4 ♘f6 6.♘c3 g6 7.♘g5 ♗d5 8.e4 h6 9.exd5 hxg5 10.dxc6

For 10.♗xc4 see Game 7.

10...♘xc6 11.d5 ♘a5

Black could also consider 11...♘e5 although the knight is less stable here e.g. 12.♗xg5 ♗g7 13.f4!? (the principled idea) 13...♘eg4 14.♗xf6?! (giving up the bishop rather lightly. Correct is 14.♗xc4 ♕b6 15.♕e2 ♖xh2 16.0-0-0 with a sharp but balanced position) 14...♘xf6 15.♗xc4 ♕b6 Rusev-Starostits, blitz 2004, with excellent compensation for Black e.g. 16.♕e2 ♖xh2!.

12.♗xg5



A key position has arisen. Material is equal and White has the bishop pair, but in return Black has the open h-file, unfettered access to b3 and play against the isolated d-pawn. I quite like Black's chances.

12...♕d6

A good move but Black could also play 12...♗g7, for instance 13.♖b1 ♕d6 14.♕d2 ♕e5+ 15.♕e3 ♘g4 16.♕xe5 ♗xe5 Purtseladze-Domany, Herceg Novi jr 2006 and Black is at least equal.

13.g3

Dydyshko was clearly unhappy with his game when he played 13.h4 and offered a draw, which was accepted in Dydyshko-Kupreichik, Minsk ch-BLR 2005.

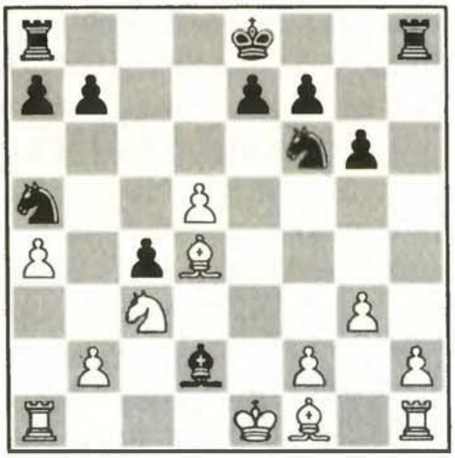
13...♕e5+

Preferable is 13...♗h6! e.g. 14.♗xh6 ♖xh6 15.♗g2 ♖h5 16.0-0 0-0-0 and Black has the initiative.

14.♗e3 ♗h6 15.♕d4 ♕xd4 16.♗xd4

The queenless middlegame seems fairly balanced and Black could now even continue quietly with 16...♗g7, but Robert Fontaine decided on a sharper continuation.

16...♗d2+!?



17.♔d1

After 17.♔xd2 ♘b3+ 18.♔e3 ♘xa1 19.♗xf6 exf6 20.♗xc4 ♘c2+ 21.♔d2 ♘d4 the knight emerges and Black retains the material advantage of the exchange for a pawn. White would perhaps then have positional compensation but Vallejo decides that the best way to hope for an advantage is to keep the tension.

17...♗xc3 18.♗xc3 ♖h5

Otherwise, after 18...0-0-0 White continues with 19.♔c2 ♖xd5 20.♖e1 ♔d7 21.h4 and despite the pawn deficit he has good play with the bishop pair.

19.♔c2

Instead 19.♗xa5? is strongly met by 19...♖xd5+ 20.♗d2 ♘e4 regaining the piece with interest.

19...♖xd5 20.♖e1 ♔f8 21.♗g2 ♖f5 22.f4 ♘c6 23.♖d1 ♘g4?!

Offering a chance for White to invade on d7 will cost Black dear. Instead, not 23...♖c8?? 24.♗h3, but 23...a5!, e.g. 24.♖he1 ♘b4+ with a decent game.

24.♖he1 ♘f2 25.♖d7 ♘d3 26.♖e3 ♘c5 27.♖c7

This is stronger than 27.♗xc6 bxc6 28.♖dxe7 ♘xa4 when Black should be able to hold.

27...♘xa4?

This just seems to lead to the loss of a pawn and a miserable rook ending. Instead, the last chance was 27...♘d8! 28.♖exe7 ♘ce6, when if White wants to try and win he'll have to sacrifice the exchange, e.g. 29.♖cd7 ♘c5 30.♖c7 ♘ce6 31.h4! (maintaining a kingside bind) 31...♘xc7 32.♖xc7 ♖b8 33.♖xc4 with admittedly excellent compensation, but White is still a long way from proving a decisive advantage.

28.♖xb7 ♘xc3 29.♗xc6 ♘d5 30.♗xd5 ♖xd5 31.♖exe7 ♖f5 32.♖xa7 ♖xa7 33.♖xa7

Against a lesser player Fontaine may have had drawing chances, but Vallejo gives him no chance.

33...g5 34.fxg5 ♖f2+ 35.♔c3 ♖xh2 36.♖b7 ♖g2 37.♔xc4 ♖xg3 38.♖b5 ♖g4+ 39.♔c3 ♔e7 Otherwise 39...♖g3+ just pushes White's king where it wants to go: 40.♔b4 ♖g4+ 41.♔a5. **40.b4 ♔d6 41.♖f5 ♔e6 42.♖c5 ♔d7 43.♔b3 f6 44.gxf6 ♖f4 45.♔a4 ♖xf6 46.♔a5 ♖f1 47.b5 ♖a1+ 48.♔b6 ♖a2 49.♖c1 ♖b2 50.♔a6 ♖a2+ 51.♔b7 ♖d2 52.b6 ♔d8 53.♔a7 ♖a2+ 54.♔b8 ♖d2 55.b7 ♖a2 56.♖d1+ ♔e7 57.♖d4 1-0**

Conclusion: 10.dxc6 may even favour Black.

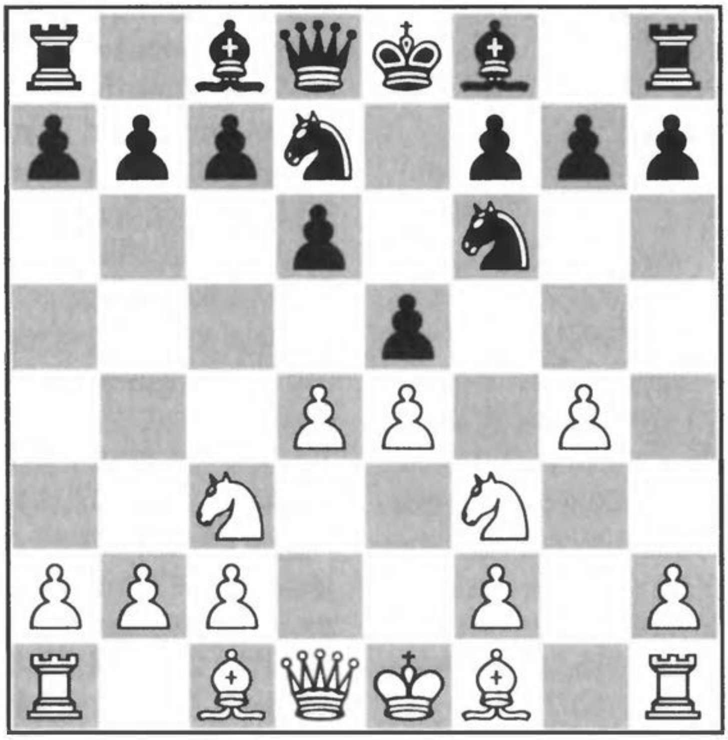
A final word: There are a few lines which are challenging for the second player (see Games 2-5), but no more than in many 're-spectable' opening variations.

This SOS-idea in my opinion is both playable and actually quite tricky for White. For example, the main line as covered in Games 7 and 8 looks good for Black.

CHAPTER 5

Friso Nijboer

The Shirov Gambit versus the Philidor



Let's play 5.g4!

In my opinion, White is slightly better in the main line Philidor after 1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 e5 4.♘f3 ♘bd7 5.♗c4 ♗e7 6.0-0 0-0 7.♖el c6 8.a4 a5. However, it is not so easy to make something of this small edge against a player experienced in defending this type of closed position. The same goes for the slightly better ending after 4.dxe5.

When Shirov played 5.g4 in 2003 against Azmaiparashvili the chess world looked on in amazement. The fact that Shirov repeated his line in several games demonstrates that this idea should to be taken seriously and is anything but a one-off novelty.

Black has three different methods of responding to 5.g4. When Black accepts the pawn on offer with 5...♘xg4 then he must be prepared to walk through a veritable mine field of tactical traps. White's compensation derives from the fact that Black's king will find it hard to reach a safe haven.

Black needs to keep the position closed and must seek counterplay against White's powerful light-squared bishop. The crucial game in my opinion is Stevic-Sebenic, Nova Gorica 2007.

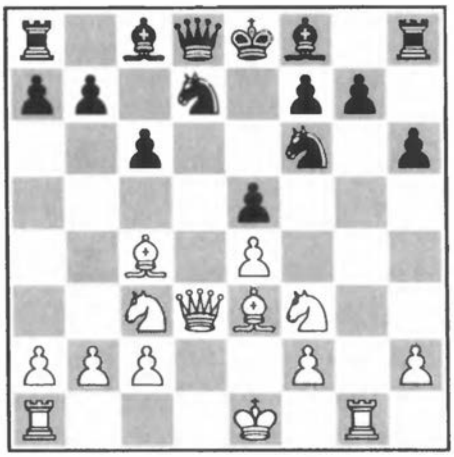
It is possible to neglect 5.g4 with the simple 5...g6. Black moves his knight to h5 after 6.g5 and then goes on to fianchetto his bishop. In my opinion, this reaction is a little too simple. White obtains a better ending as may be seen from Nijboer-Strikovic, Calvia 2006.

The third possibility is 5...h6. At first sight this appears ridiculous as 6.g5 hxg5 7.♘xg5 gives White an untouchable knight on g5 – the square f7 is extremely vulnerable. However, the correct response was played in a 1999 game between Vaisser and Bauer: Black must play 8...c6 threatening the annoying... ♕b6 to trade queens.

In conclusion, the whole 5.g4 line leads to lively play with chances for both sides. There is plenty of room for creativity and I am curious how the Shirov Gambit will develop.

□ **Alexey Shirov**
■ **John Shaw**
Gibraltar 2005

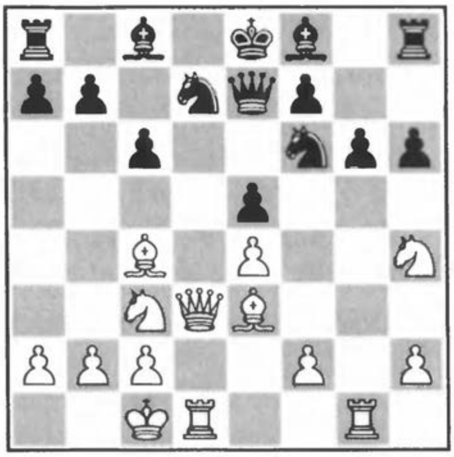
1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 e5 4.♘f3 ♘bd7 5.g4 ♘xg4 6.♖g1 ♘gf6 7.♗c4 h6 8.♗e3 c6 9.dxe5 dxe5 10.♕d3



10...♘h5?!

A mistake after 5...♘xg4 is nearly almost fatal. Thus, one year later Shirov-Klinova, Gibraltar 2006, went: 10...♕c7? 11.♗xf7+ ♔xf7 12.♕c4+ ♔e7 (no better is 12...♔e8 13.♕e6+ ♗e7 14.♖xg7 ♕d6 15.♕f7+ ♔d8 16.♖d1 ♖f8 17.♖xd6 ♖xf7 18.♖xd7+ ♔xd7 19.♖xf7 and White is two pawns up) 13.♘h4 ♘b6 14.♘g6+ ♔e8 15.♗xb6 axb6 16.♘xh8 g5 17.♘g6 ♗c5 18.0-0-0 and Black resigned.

In the game Berg-Seeman, Kusadasi 2006, Black opted for 10...♕e7. After 11.0-0-0 g6 12.♘h4 White was ready to march with his f-pawn and eager to sacrifice somewhere.



– Seeman now played the timid 12...♖g8?!. After the forceful 13.f4 a6 14.♘f3 exf4 15.♗xf4 b5 16.e5 bxc4 17.♕xc4 White held a huge initiative. So Black went for the ending after 17...♕b4 (no good is 17...♕c5 18.♕e2 ♘h5 19.e6 ♘df6 20.exf7+ ♔xf7 21.♘e5+ ♔g7 22.♗e3 with a huge attack) 18.♕xb4 ♗xb4 19.exf6 ♗xc3 20.bxc3 ♘xf6 21.♗xh6 ♗e6 22.♘d4. Although Black may not be lost, it is hard to defend in practice and Berg won on move 30.

– The real question is how White should respond to 12...♘h5. The positional 13.♘g2 is possible to prepare f2-f4. The sacrifice 13.♗xf7+ ♕xf7 14.♘xg6 ♘f4 15.♗xf4 ♖g8 16.♗xe5 ♖xg6 17.♖xg6 ♕xg6 18.♗g3 ♘c5 is interesting, but at best unclear.

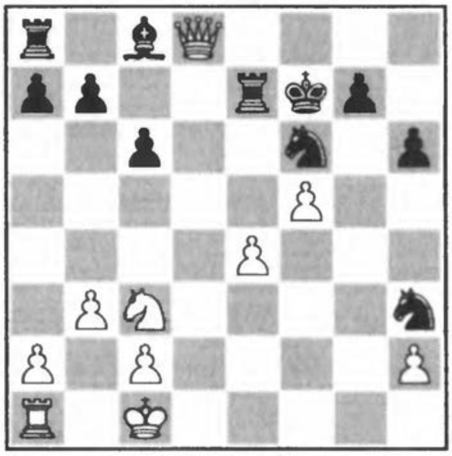
In my opinion, 10...b5 is the most principal reply. See the next game. Now we continue with Shaw's 10...♘h5?!.

11.♗xf7+

Shirov immediately seeks to punish Black. The sacrifice may be good, but the resulting position is so complex that a mistake is easily made.

Meanwhile, White had the much more practical 11.0-0-0 at his disposal. It is important that Black's positional threat of 11...♕f6 fails tactically to the brutal 12.♘b5! cxb5 (after 12...♘f4 13.♗xf4 ♕xf4+ 14.♔b1 Black can no longer parry all the threats) 13.♗xb5 ♕e7 14.♘xe5 ♘f6 15.f4! a6 16.♗c5! ♕xc5 17.♘xd7 ♗xd7 18.♗xd7+ ♔d8 19.e5 and White's attack is too strong.

11...♔xf7 12.♘xe5+ ♘xe5 13.♕xd8 ♘f3+ 14.♔d1 ♘xg1 15.♔c1 ♘h3 16.f4 ♗c5 17.♕c7+ ♗e7 18.♗c5 ♖e8 19.f5 ♔f8 20.♗xe7+ ♖xe7 21.♕d8+ ♔f7 22.b3 ♘f6



23.♔b2?

White is still better after 23.♕d4 ♘g4 24.♔b2 ♘e5. The text allows a neat drawing motif.

23...♘g5 24.♖g1 ♖d7 25.♕h8 ♖e7 26.♕d8 ♖d7 27.♕h8 ♖e7 ½-½

☐ **Hrvoje Stevic**
■ **Matej Sebenik**
Nova Gorica 2007

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 e5 4.♘f3 ♘bd7 5.g4 ♘xg4 6.♖g1 ♘gf6 7.♗c4 h6

It is dangerous to give up the centre with 7...exd4. White develops fast after 8.♕xd4, while 8.♘xd4 also gives him a big initiative.

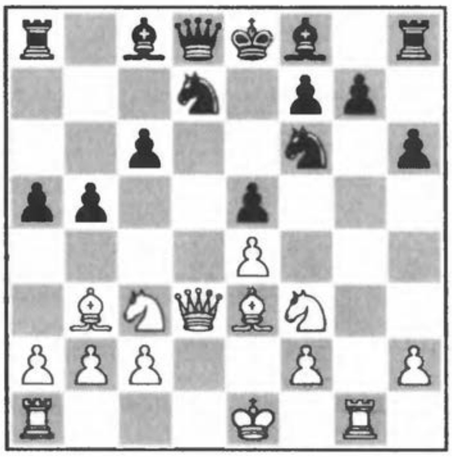
8.♗e3 c6 9.dxe5

This is the correct moment to fix the pawn structure. Otherwise Black will obtain additional possibilities. An attempt to circumvent the game with 9.♕d3?! has a contrary effect after 9...b5 10.♗b3 a5 11.d5 a4 12.dxc6 axb3 13.cxd7+ ♕xd7 14.cxb3 b4 and Black is better.

9...dxe5 10.♕d3 b5 11.♗b3

Here 11.♗xf7+?! fails to 11...♔xf7 12.♘xe5+ ♘xe5! 13.♕xd8 ♘f3+ 14.♔d1 ♘xg1 15.♔c1 ♗e7 16.♕c7 (very bad is 16.♕xh8 ♗b7 17.♕xa8 ♗xa8 and Black has a won position) 16...♗g4! 17.♗c5 ♖he8 and his activity guarantees Black an edge.

11...a5



In my opinion this is the critical position of the whole 5.g4 complex.

12.a4 bxa4

If 12...b4? then 13.♕c4 ♕e7 14.♕xc6 ♖b8 15.♘b5 and White wins.

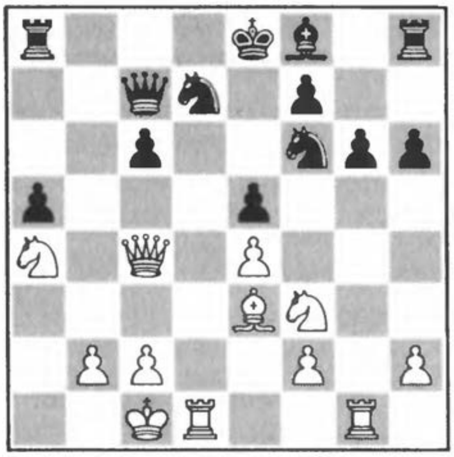
13.♗c4?!

White wants to keep his attacking bishop, but Black's response in the game is excellent.

The standard 13.♗xf7+? is bad due to 13...♔xf7 14.♕c4+ ♔e8 15.♘h4 (15.♕e6!?) 15...g5 16.♘g6 ♖g8 17.♕e6+ ♗e7 18.♘xe7 ♕xe7 19.♕xc6 ♖b8 and Black has nothing to fear.

In case of 13.♖xa4 ♗a6 14.♗c4 ♗xc4

15.♕xc4 ♕c8 White has no good follow-up. Correct is 13.♘xa4. From now on White will always have structural compensation due to Black's inferior pawn structure. Play might continue 13...♗a6 14.♗c4 (again taking on f7 is wrong: 14.♗xf7+ ♔xf7 15.♕b3+ ♔e8 16.♕e6+ ♕e7 17.♕xc6 ♕b4+) 14...♗xc4 15.♕xc4 g6 16.0-0-0 ♕c7

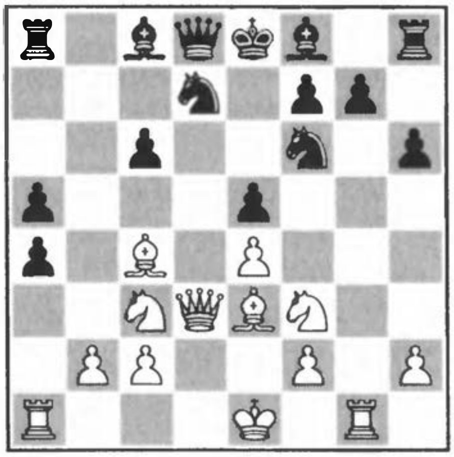


I think that chances are equal in the diagrammed position. White has all sorts of possibilities to make something of his slight edge in development. Let's continue our analysis:

17.♘c5 (adventurous players will like 17.♘h4?! ♗e7 18.♘xg6 fxg6 19.♖xg6 with an unclear game) 17...♖d8! (this is best. The naïve 17...♗e7? fails to 18.♘xd7 ♘xd7 19.♖xd7 ♕xd7 20.♘xe5 ♕e6 21.♕xe6 fxe6 22.♖xg6 and White wins) 18.♘xd7 ♖xd7 (better than 18...♘xd7? when White has 19.♖xg6 fxg6 20.♕e6+ ♗e7 21.♕xg6+ ♔f8 22.♗xh6+ ♖xh6 23.♕xh6+ ♔f7 24.♕h7+ ♔f8 25.♖g1 and wins) and now for example 19.♗d2 with equality:

- 19...♗b4 20.♗xb4 axb4 21.♕xb4 c5 22.♖xd7 ♘xd7 23.♕b3.
- or 19...♗g7 20.♗c3 ♖xd1+ 21.♖xd1 ♘d7 22.♕a4 0-0 23.♕xa5 ♕b7 24.♘xe5 ♘xe5 25.♗xe5 ♗xe5 26.♕xe5 ♖a8.

So let us see what is wrong with Stevic's move in the game 13.♗c4.



13...a3!

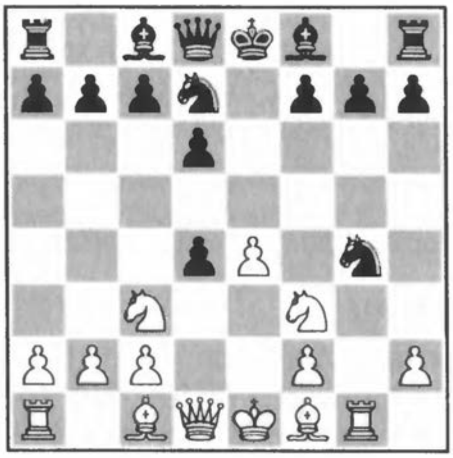
This move in connection with his next free the a5-square for Black's queen when Black can mobilize his pieces quickly.

14.bxa3 a4 15.♘h4 ♕a5 16.♗d2 ♗a6 17.♘d5 cxd5 18.♗xa5 ♗xc4 19.♕h3 ♖xa5 20.♖b1 ♘xe4 21.♖b8+ ♘xb8 22.♕c8+ ♔e7 23.♕c7+ ♔e6 24.♕xa5 ♗c5 25.♖g4 ♗xf2+

With three minor pieces and three pawns for White's queen Black is completely winning. He won on move 47.

☐ **Koen Leenhouts**
■ **Marc Dutreeuw**
Belgium tt 2006/07

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 e5 4.♘f3 ♘bd7 5.g4 ♘xg4 6.♖g1 exd4



7.♘xd4

Here everybody always automatically takes back on d4. However, in my opinion 7.♗g5 is a dangerous option:

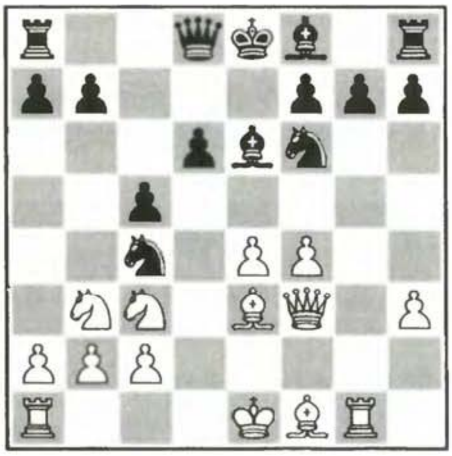
– in case of 7...♘df6 8.♕xd4, or 7...♘gf6 8.♕xd4, White develops fast and has dangerous attacking chances.

– 7...♗e7?! is bad due to 8.♗xe7 ♕xe7 9.♘d5 ♕xe4+ 10.♕e2♘e3! 11.♘xc7+♔d8 12.♘xa8 (easier to evaluate is 12.fxe3 ♔xc7 13.♘xd4 ♕h4+ 14.♖g3 ♘e5 15.♕d2 with an attack for White) 12...♘xc2+ 13.♔d2 ♕xe2+ 14.♗xe2 ♘xa1 15.♘xd4 and in all likelihood White has a good position.

– 7...f6 8.♘xd4 ♘xf2 9.♕e2 ♘e5 10.♗f4 ♘fg4 11.h3 g5 12..♗g3 c6 (not 12...♘h6 13.♕h5+ with an edge in development for White and play on the light squares) 13.hxg4 ♕b6 14.0-0-0.♗xg4 15.♕f2! ♗xd1 and now White wins after the spectacular 16.♘d5! cxd5 17.♕xf6 ♘c6 18.♗b5 ♗e2 19.exd5 ♗xb5 20.dxc6.

7...♘de5 8.h3 ♘f6 9.♗e3 c5 10.♘b3 ♗e6 11.f4 ♘c4 12.♕f3

Entirely possible was 12.♗xc4 ♗xc4 13.♕f3 ♕b6 14.0-0-0 0-0-0 15..♗f2 followed by .♗h4 with a good game.



12...♕b6?!

I see nothing against the greedy 12...♘xb2!. After 13.♗b5+ ♘d7 14.♗c1 ♘c4 15.f5 ♘e5 16.♕g3 .♗c4 17.♗xc4 ♘xc4 18.♗f4 White's compensation is negligible.

13.0-0-0 0-0-0 14.♗f2 g6 15.♘a4?!

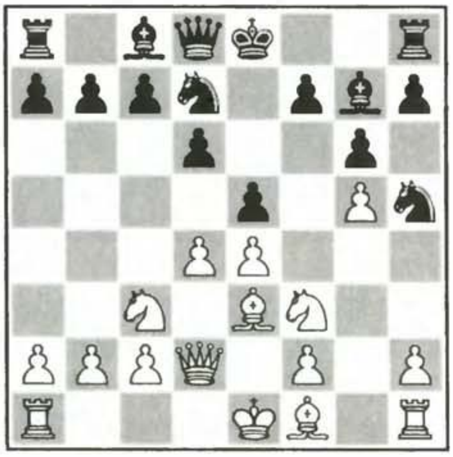
Correct was 15..♗h4 ♗e7 16..♗xc4 .♗xc4 17.♘d2 ♕a6 18.e5 ♘g8 19.♘de4 .♗xh4 20.♕g4+.

15...♕c6 16.♘axc5 dxc5 17.♖xd8+ ♔xd8 18.♕c3 ♗e7 19.♗xc4 ♗xc4 20.♕xc4 ♕xe4 21.♕c3 ♖e8 22.♘xc5 ♕xf4+ 23.♗e3 ♕c7 24.♖f1 ♔c8 25.♗d4 ♘d7 26.♘xd7 ♕xc3 27.♗xc3 ♗g5+ 28.♔b1 ♔xd7 29.♖xf7+

And the game ended in a draw on move 43.

☐ **Friso Nijboer**
■ **Aleksa Strikovic**
Calvia 2006

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 e5 4.♘f3 ♘bd7 5.g4 g6 6.g5 ♘h5 7.♗e3 ♗g7 8.♕d2



8...c6

After 8...0-0 9.0-0-0, the game Lastin-Azmaiparashvili, Tripoli Wch 2004, continued with the suicidal 9...f5?, after 10.exf5 ♖xf5 Lastin played 11.dxe5. Best would havebeen 11.♗e2! ♕f8 12.♘h4 ♖f4 13.♘g2 exd4 14.♘xf4 dxc3 15.♕d5+ ♔h8 16..♗xh5 ♘b6 17.♕b3 gxh5 18.♘xh5 and wins.

Interesting, but also incorrect, is 9...♘b6?! 10.dxe5 .♗g4 11..♗e2 ♘c4 (11....♗xf3 is easier to refute: 12.♗xf3 ♘c4 13.♕e2 ♘xe3 14.♕xe3 ♗xe5 15.♘e2! ♘g7 16.♗g2 ♘e6 17.f4 ♘xf4 18.♘xf4 ♕xg5 19.♖hf1 ♗xf4 20.♖xf4 ♕xg2 21.♖h4 and White wins) 12.♗xc4 ♗xf3 13.exd6 cxd6 (after 13...♕xd6 14.♕xd6 cxd6 15.♗d5 White has lots of squares and the initiative) and with his control over square d5 and his active pieces White must be better.

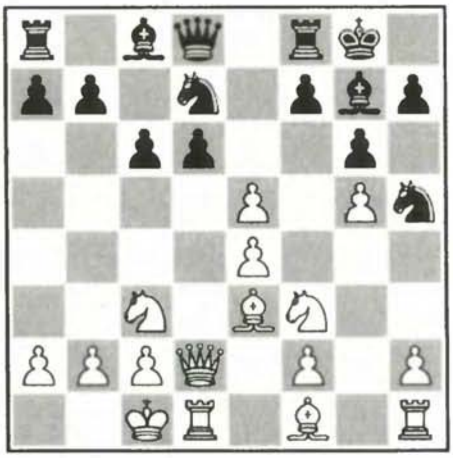
I therefore conclude that 9...c6 is best to transpose into the main game.

9.0-0-0 0-0

9...♕a5 has no independent meaning – after 10.dxe5 Black must take back with the pawn: 10...dxe5 (10...♘xe5? fails to 11.♕xd6 ♘xf3 12.♖d5) 11.♗h3 0-0.

10.dxe5

Inferior is 10.♔b1?! ♕a5 11.d5 c5 12.♘b5 ♕b6 13.a4 ♘b8 14.♘e1 ♕d8 15.♗e2 a6 16.♘a3 b5 and Black's attack is faster, Leon Hoyos-Hernandez, Mexico City 2006.



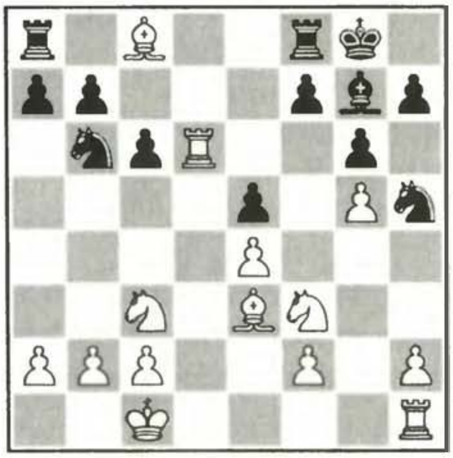
10...dxe5

Bad is 10...♘xe5? 11.♘xe5 ♗xe5 12.♗e2 ♕a5 13.f4 ♗xc3 14.♕xc3 ♕xc3 (White has a great attack after 14...♕xa2 15.♗c4 ♕a4 16.♔b1) 15.bxc3 d5 16.exd5 ♖e8 17.♖he1! (excellent, the invasion on the 8th rank guarantees a big edge) 17...♖xe3 18.♗xh5 ♖xe1 (insufficient is 18...♖xc3 19.♖d3 ♖c4 20.♖e8+ ♔g7 21.♗e2) 19.♖xe1 ♗d7 (in case of 19...gxh5 White has 20.♖e8+ ♔g7 21.d6 and wins) 20.♗f3 and White has a superior position.

11.♗h3 ♕c7

An important alternative is 11...♕a5 12.♗xd7 ♖d8 13.♘a4! ♕xd2+ (the point is that 13...♕xa4? fails to 14.♗xc6 ♖xd2 15.♗xa4; possible is 13...♕a6 14.♕d3 ♕xd3 15.♖xd3 ♖xd7 16.♖a3! ♖d8 17.h3! ♗f8 18.♗c5 ♗xc5 19.♘xc5 but White retains an edge) 14.♘xd2 ♗xd7 15.♘c5 b6 16.♘xd7 ♖xd7 17.♘c4 ♖ad8 18.♖xd7 ♖xd7 19.♖d1 ♖xd1+ 20.♔xd1 and White is better in the ending.

12.♕d6 ♕xd6 13.♖xd6 ♘b6 14.♗xc8



14...♖fxc8?!

More accurate is 14...♖axc8 15.b3 ♖cd8 (the optimistic 15...f5 16.a4 fxe4 17.♘d2 ♘f4 18.♘dxe4 is also better for White) 16.♖hd1 (16.♖xd8 ♖xd8 17.♖d1 transposes to the game) 16...♖xd6 17.♖xd6 f6 18.a4 fxg5 19.♘xg5 ♘f4 20.a5 and White has a large advantage.

15.b3 ♖d8 16.♖xd8+?!

This is unnatural. Instead, 16.♖hd1 ♖xd6 17.♖xd6 f5 18.a4 ♖f8 19.♗c5! would have given White a lovely position.

16...♖xd8 17.♖d1 ♖xd1+ 18.♘xd1 f6

No good is 18...f5? because of 19.exf5 gxf5 20.♗xb6 axb6 21.♘e3.

19.h4?

After this loss of time Black is able to take over the initiative in the ending. White had to continue with his plan by means of 19.♘b2 h6 20.h4 hxg5 21.hxg5 f5 22.exf5 gxf5 23.♗xb6 axb6 24.♘c4 e4 25.♘h4 f4 and White still holds the better chances.

19...♔f7 20.♘b2 f5 21.♗xb6 axb6 22.♘c4 ♔e6 23.♘xb6 fxe4 24.♘d2 ♗f8 25.♘xe4 ♔f5 26.f3 ♔f4 27.♘d2

Black is also better after 27.♘d7 ♗a3+ 28.♔d1 ♔xf3 29.♘d2+ ♔g4 30.♘c4 ♗b4 31.♘cxe5+ ♔xh4 32.♘d3.

27...♘g3 28.♘d7 ♗e7 29.♘c4 ♘f5 30.♘a5 ♘xh4 31.♘xb7 ♘xf3 32.a4 e4 33.♘dc5 ♘d4?

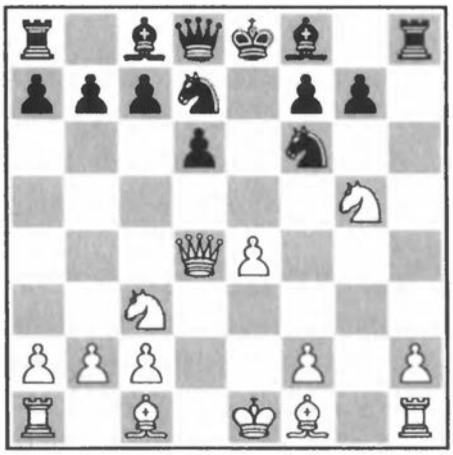
Black had an easy win with 33...e3. In the game White won after mutual inaccuracies.

☐ **Anatoly Vaisser**
■ **Christian Bauer**
Besançon ch-FRA 1999

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 ♘bd7 4.g4

Note the move order. Now Black has to defend with 4...h6. The game transposes to 1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 e5 4.♘f3 ♘bd7 5.g4 h6.

4...h6 5.♘f3 e5 6.g5 hxg5 7.♘xg5 exd4 8.♕xd4



8...c6!

This flexible move is best. In Nepomniachtchi-Hautot, Fügen 2006, 8...♘e5?! led to a clearly inferior game after 9.♗e2 ♗e7 10.f4 ♘fg4 11.h3 ♘h6 12.♖g1 ♘c6 13.♕d3 ♘g8 14.♗e3 f6 15.♘f3 ♗f8 16.0-0-0.

9.♗f4

White has lots of possibilities here, but it is not so easy to determine which move is best. The text is logical: White controls square e5, thereby threatening 10.♗c4, attacking pawn d6 and developing a piece.

The alternatives are less good:

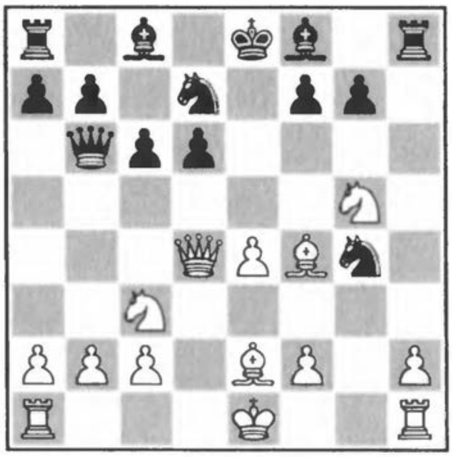
– 9.f4 ♘h7! (a standard move in the ...h6 variation; bad is 9...d5? 10.exd5 ♗c5 11.♕d3 0-0 12.♗d2 with an attack) 10.♘f3 (not 10.♘xh7? ♕h4+) 10...♕b6 with an unclear position.

– 9.♗c4? is bad because of 9...♘e5 10.♗e2.

9...♘g4 10.♗e2?!

A complex position. I believe that White obtains an edge if he succeeds in castling queenside without allowing the exchange of queens. That is why I would recommend 10.f3 and now 10...♘ge5 11.0-0-0 ♕b6 12.♕d2 ♗e7 13.♗e2 is perhaps not entirely clear, but I would prefer White.

10...♕b6



11.♖d1?

This is a mistake, but 11.♕xb6 ♘xb6 12.♖g1 ♘e5 13.0-0-0 f6 14.♘f3 g5 is also better for Black.

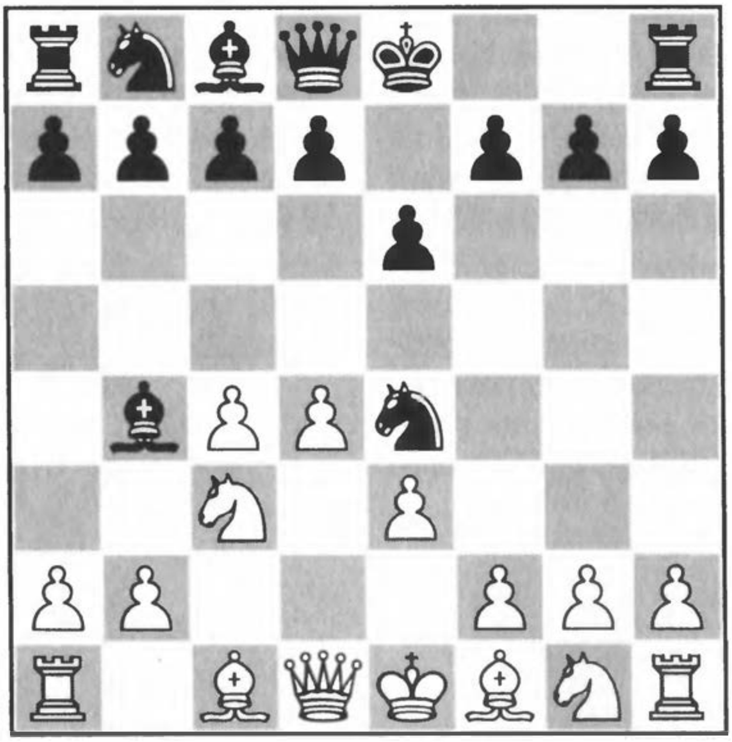
11...♕xd4 12.♖xd4 ♘de5 13.♗g3 f6 14.♘f3 ♗e6 15.0-0 g5 16.♖fd1 ♘xf3+ 17.♗xf3 ♘e5 18.♗e2 ♗e7 19.a4 a5

With a clear positional edge for Black, who won on move 54.

CHAPTER 6

Dorian Rogozenko

Early Surprise in a Classical Nimzo



Rubinstein Variation with 4...♘e4

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.e3 ♘e4

Black's last move is a rare guest in practice. On the Grandmaster level it has been played only occasionally. However, Black did score extremely well in those few games. Usually, books don't deal with 4...♘e4, with the notable exception of *Dangerous Weapons: The Nimzo-Indian* (Emms, Ward and Palliser; Everyman 2006).

Clearly, 4...♘e4 represents a quite unique occasion to surprise your opponent in a classical variation of the Nimzo-Indian as early as move 4! The idea behind 4...♘e4 is obvious: to put immediate pressure on White's position, disturbing for the moment White's intention to develop quickly with 5.♗d3, followed by ♘ge2 or ♘f3.

5.♕c2

This is the best continuation for White. Other moves can hardly pretend to fight for an opening advantage:

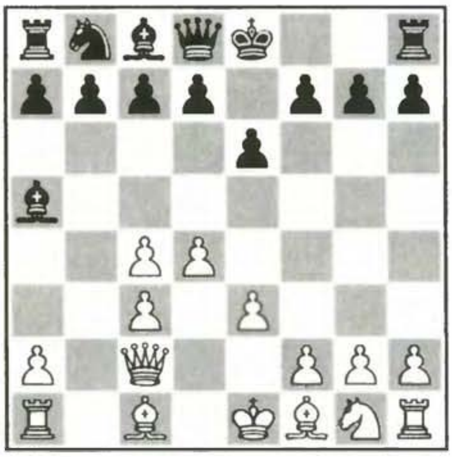
- 5.♕g4 ♘xc3 6.♗d2 (or 6.a3 ♗e7 7.bxc3 0-0 8.♗d3 d6 9.♕h5 f5 equal) 6...0-0 7.bxc3 ♗e7 8.♗d3 d6 with equal chances.
- 5.♘e2 leaves Black with several playable possibilities. Here is a recent practical example: 5...d5 6.f3 (6.a3 ♘xc3 7.♘xc3 ♗xc3+ 8.bxc3 0-0 9.♗d3 b6 10.0-0 ♗a6=) 6...♘xc3 7.bxc3 (7.♘xc3 0-0 8.♗d3 dxc4 9.♗xc4 e5! pointing out the weaknesses created by the advance of the f-pawn. White

cannot take on e5 in view of the check on h4, at the same time attacking the bishop on c4) 7...♗e7 8.♘g3 h5!? 9.♗d3 h4 10.♘e2 c6 11.e4 dxe4 12.fxe4 e5 13.0-0 h3 14.g3 ♗g4 and Black converted his initiative into a full point, A.Smirnov-Miezis, Tallinn 2007.

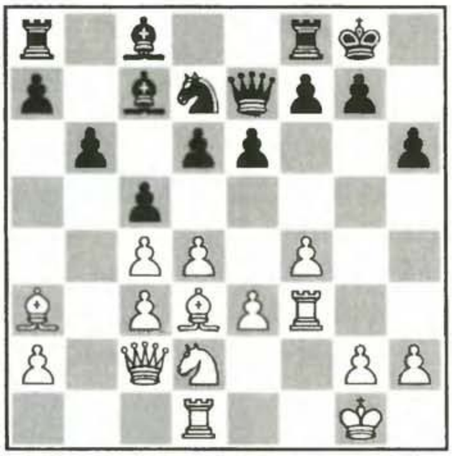
– 5.♗d2 leads to positions where Black achieves everything he is dreaming of in the Nimzo-Indian: 5...♗xc3 6.♗xc3 ♘xc3 7.bxc3 d6 8.♗d3 c5 9.♘f3 ♘c6 10.♕c2 h6 11.0-0 0-0 12.♖fd1 ♕c7 and Black is already better. Laframboise-Lawson, Montreal 2003.

5...f5

For those players who like to create unbalanced positions right from the beginning and are not afraid of taking some risk, the variation 5...♘xc3 6.bxc3 ♗a5!? can represent an attractive option.



This was played in a recent game between two GMs, where Black nicely outplayed his strong opponent in strictly positional style: 7.♗a3 d6 8.♘f3 (after this move Black achieves a solid position and I would have little doubts to recommend this variation for Black if White would have been forced to play this way. In my opinion, White's chances are objectively preferable after 8.♗d3 ♘d7 9.♘e2 c5 10.0-0, when in contrast to the game White has better prospects to create a kingside initiative. However, the position is complicated and may well suit creative players, who fear no ghosts and have a sharp eye for counterplay. Another try – 8.c5 – is hardly dangerous: 8...dxc5 9.♗xc5 ♘d7 10.♗a3 c5 11.♗d3 h6 12.♘e2 ♕c7 13.0-0 0-0 with a normal position for Black) 8...♘d7 9.♖d1 (this will soon turn out to be a waste of time. However, it does not make a substantial difference: Black already has a reasonable game anyway) 9...♕e7 10.♗d3 c5 11.0-0 ♗c7 12.♘d2 h6 13.f4 0-0 14.♖f3 b6

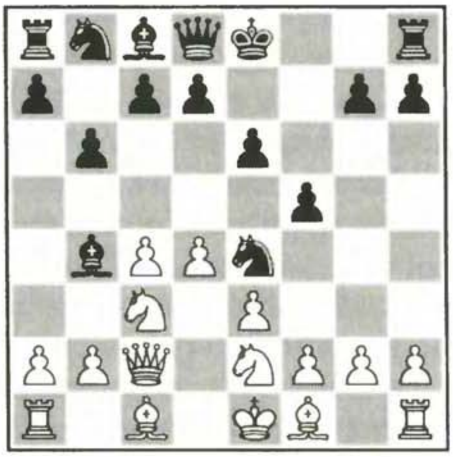


One may ask what the black bishop is doing on c7? A good question, but first one should answer a similar question about the bishop on a3. In fact ♗c7 has enough possibilities to enter the game later on, in any case much more so than the bishop on a3. The next part of the game shows how difficult for White it is to find a sensible plan or create any threats in such a position: 15.♖df1 ♗b7 16.♖h3 ♖ae8 17.♗c1 d5 (Black is well-prepared for the battle in the centre) 18.e4 dxe4 19.♘xe4 ♘f6 20.♘g5 (finally White brings the knight closer to the opponent's king. Unfortunately for him, there is no attack and the knight on g5 is only optically better placed than on d2) 20...♖d8 21.♗e3 ♖d7 22.♔h1 ♖fd8 23.♘f3 (bringing it back home. But then one may wonder about what the rook on h3 is doing?) 23...♘g4 24.♗c1 cxd4 25.♘xd4 ♘f6 26.♖e1

♗d6 27.♕e2 ♕f8 28.♖g3 ♔h8 29.♗c2 ♗a3 30.♗d2 ♗c5 Black has an obvious advantage and duly won. Alexandrov-V.Popov, Moscow 2006.

6.♗d3

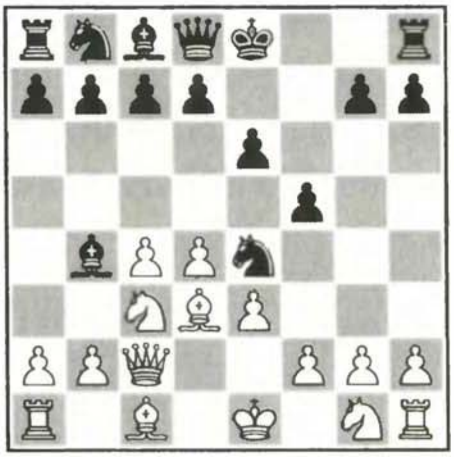
The most popular continuation. If White is trying to transpose the game into theoretical paths, then 6.♘e2 is a good alternative. Nevertheless it must be mentioned that after 6.♘e2 b6 we achieve a theoretical position, where Black has avoided several quite unpleasant variations. This position usually arises via the move order 4...b6 5.♘e2 (5.♗d3 – first alternative) 5...♘e4 6.♕c2 (now 6.♗d2 is another important option for White) 6...f5.



Presenting this line is not the purpose of this article. I will only mention that in my opinion with accurate play White can hope for only a slight edge after the precise 7.a3 (7.♘f4c5 8.♗d3 cxd49.exd4♘xc3 10.bxc3 ♗d6∓ Salov-Timman, Amsterdam 1996) 7...♗xc3+ 8.♘xc3 ♗b7 9.b3! (9.d5 ♘xc3 10.♕xc3 ♕e7 11.dxe6 – 11.b4 a5= – 11...dxe6 12.b3 ♘d7 13.♗b2 e5 14.0-0-0 0-0-0 equal) 9...0-0 10.♗b2, although the position certainly remains playable for Black.

Returning to the position after 5...f5 in the main line. If 6.f3 then 6...♕h4+ (deserving of attention is the more quiet 6...♘xc3 7.bxc3 ♗e7 8.♗d3 b6 9.♘e2 0-0 10.e4 g6 11.0-0 ♘c6 12.♗h6 ♖f7 (unclear) 13.♘c1 ♗g5 14.♗xg5 ♕xg5 15.f4 ♕h6 16.e5 ♘e7 17.♘b3 ♗b7 18.♕f2 g5 with a slight edge for Black Estrada Degrandi-Kalkstein, Montevideo 1954) 7.g3 ♘xg3 8.♕f2 f4 9.e4 (9.♘e2 ♘f5 10.♘xf4 0-0=) 9...♕h5 (9...g5!? 10.hxg3 ♕xh1 11.gxf4 g4 12.♗e3 ♖g8 unclear) 10.hxg3 ♕xh1 11.♗xf4 (11.♘h3 0-0 12.♗xf4 is refuted by 12...e5 13.dxe5 d6 as mentioned by Emms in *Dangerous Weapons*) 11...0-0 12.0-0-0 ♕h5 13.♗xc7 d5 with very sharp and double-edged play.

Note that 6.♘f3 b6 7.♗d3 ♗b7 8.0-0 ♗xc3 9.bxc3 0-0 leads to a theoretical position that is favourable for Black, see Variation I.



Now Black has a choice between 6...♗xc3+ (Variation I) and 6...0-0 (Variation II).

Variation I

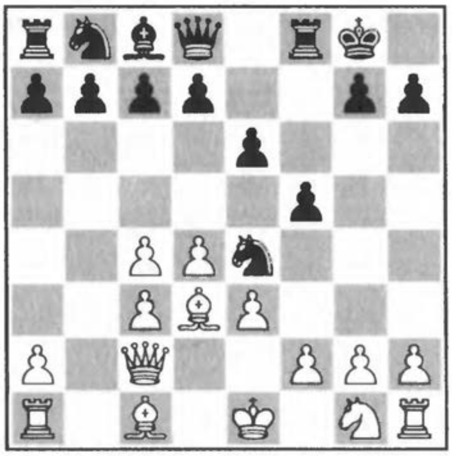
☐ **Alexey Mitenkov**
■ **Nukhim Rashkovsky**
Moscow 1995

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.e3 ♘e4 5.♕c2 f5 6.♗d3 ♗xc3+ 7.bxc3 0-0

By playing this way Black is willing to transpose into a theoretical variation, which normally arises by the following move order:

4...b6 5.♗d3 ♗b7 6.♘f3 ♘e4 7.♕c2 f5 8.0-0 ♗xc3 9.bxc3 0-0. White's options to fight for an advantage here are connected with either 10.♘d2 or 10.♘e1, but in both cases Black has reasonable chances. Please note that 10.♗a3 is pointless. Black can answer this with 10...d6, 10...c5, or 10...♖f6. In all cases the bishop is committed too early to a3 and it is rather misplaced there.

An important point is that the mentioned variation is quite favourable for Black, since he has avoided the stronger 7.0-0 (instead of 7.♕c2). Therefore in the diagram position White's task is to avoid such a transposition.



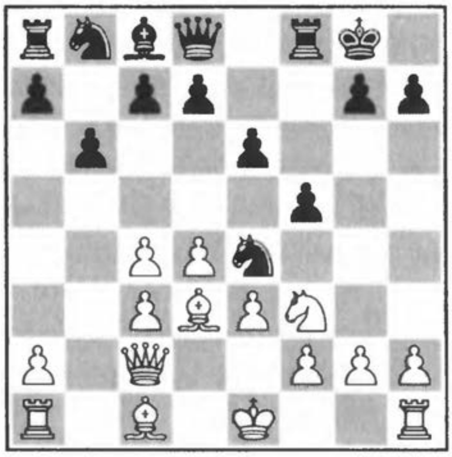
8.♘f3

Here we have the first important possibility for White to avoid the mentioned theoretical variation with 8.♘e2, intending to play for a quick f3 and e4. Without practical games it makes no sense to start analyzing deeply at such an early stage. It is worth mentioning that if Black will succeed to create pressure against pawn c4, that would be quite efficient with a white knight on e2.

Some sample variations are: 8...b6 9.0-0 (9.♗xe4 fxe4 10.♕xe4 d5 with compensation; 9.♗a3!?) 9...♗b7 10.f3 ♘d6 11.♗a3 (11.e4 fxe4 12.fxe4 ♖xf1+ 13.♔xf1 ♕h4 unclear) 11...♘c6 12.e4 fxe4 13.fxe4 ♕g5 and White should be somewhat better, but the position is quite messy.

Note that 8.♗xe4 fxe4 9.♕xe4 d5 10.♕d3 ♕g5 offers Black typical counterplay thanks to the lead in development and a better control over the light squares.

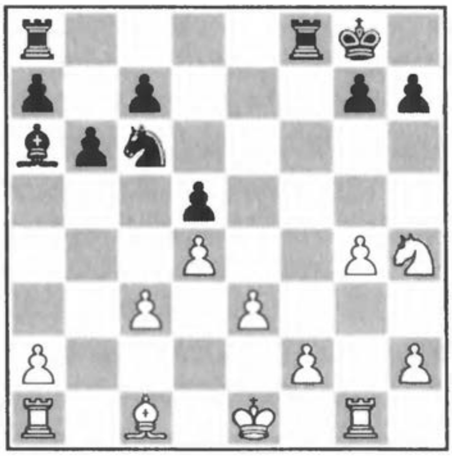
8...b6



9.♗a3!?

This is White's second possibility to avoid the above-mentioned theoretical line (9.0-0 ♗b7 would transpose into it).

The third and last important alternative for White is to grab the pawn. After 9.♗xe4 fxe4 10.♕xe4 d5 (deserving of attention is 10...♘c6!? to which 11.d5 brings nothing special: 11...♕f6 12.0-0 ♘a5 with decent compensation) 11.cxd5 (11.♕c2!?) 11...exd5 White has the important resource 12.♕h4, offering the exchange of queens. The only available game Osnos-Bastrikov, Tashkent 1958, continued 12...♕xh4 13.♘xh4 ♗a6 14.g4!? ♘c6 15.♖g1



After 15...♗d3 16.♖g3 ♘a5 17.♘f3 ♘c4 18.♘e5 ♘xe5 19.dxe5 ♖fe8 20.f4 White succeeded to convert his minimal material advantage, although it must be mentioned that in the end Black misplayed a drawish position (most likely it happened in severe time-trouble).

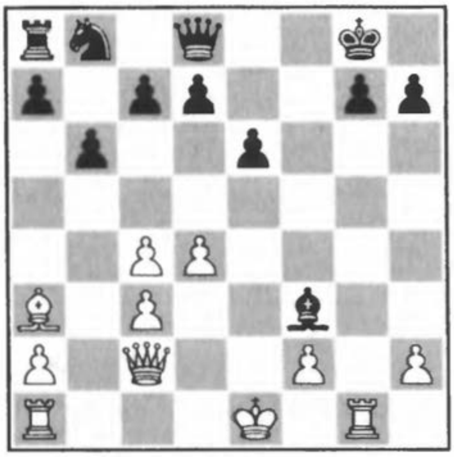
However, instead of 15...♗d3 better looks 15...♖ae8 16.♖g3 ♘a5 17.♘f3 ♘c4, not allowing the knight to jump on e5. Black is active and has good control over important squares. It is very difficult for White to make use of his extra pawn.

9...♘d6

In case of 9...c5 10.♗xe4 fxe4 11.♕xe4 d5 12.♕c2 full compensation is quite questionable due to the fact that White has almost completed development and his bishop is actively involved in the fight for the centre.

10.0-0

The critical move is 10.e4. Then in order to avoid passivity Black should probably sacrifice the exchange: 10...fxe4 11.♗xe4 ♘xe4 12.♗xf8 ♗b7 (another possibility is 12...♘g5 13.♘xg5 ♕xg5 14.♕e4 ♘c6 and now 15.♗a3 ♗a6 or 15.f4 ♕h4+ 16.g3 ♕h5 in both cases with compensation) 13.♗a3 ♘g5, and if 14.♘d2 ♗xg2 15.♖g1, then 15...♘f3+ 16.♘xf3 ♗xf3



With such a pawn structure and king in the centre it is not simple for White to take advantage of his extra exchange. For instance: 17.♕d2 (the attempt to create a quick attack is not successful: 17.♖g3 ♗h5 18.♔d2 ♕f6 and Black takes over the initiative) 17...♕f6 18.♕g5 ♕xg5 19.♖xg5 with good compensation in the endgame.

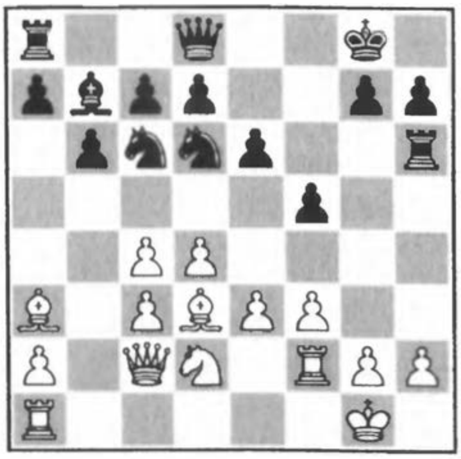
Of course all these variations are tricky and it might turn out that White is objectively better somewhere, but generally Black's position contains sufficient resources for counterplay.

10...♗b7 11.♘d2 ♖f6 12.f3

Black equalizes after 12.c5 bxc5 (12...♘f7 13.e4) 13.♗xc5 ♖g6 14.e4 fxe4 15.♘xe4 ♘xe4 16.♗xe4 ♗xe4 17.♕xe4 d5 18.♕f4 ♘d7.

Again 12.e4 is a move, although now it is less dangerous than on move ten. Black continues 12...fxe4 13.♘xe4 ♗xe4 14.♗xe4 ♘xe4 15.♕xe4 ♘c6, keeping plenty of possibilities for counterplay. If 16.d5 then 16...♘a5 with a complicated position.

12...♖h6 13.♖f2 ♘c6



Black has completed his development and can be optimistic about the future. He will combine a kingside attack with activity against White's weakened pawn structure on the opposite wing. The present game illustrates Black's potential in such positions very well.

14.♖e1 ♕h4 15.♘f1

White's plan is apparently logical, but now his pawn on c4 becomes vulnerable and Black immediately uses this factor. **15...♘a5 16.c5 ♘f7 17.e4 f4 18.♗b4 ♘c6 19.♗c4 d6!**

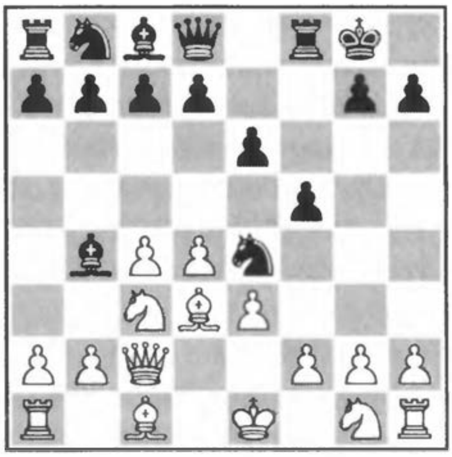
Powerful play against doubled pawns. It may appear somewhat paradoxical, but in fact it is very typical: undoubling those pawns leaves White with other, even more annoying weaknesses.

20.♕e2 For 20.cxd6 cxd6 followed by ...♖c8 adds another plus to Black's position. **20...dxc5 21.dxc5 ♘g5** Black's attack is already decisive. **22.♕c2?** A mistake in a difficult situation. **22...♘e5 23.♗b3** Or 23.♗e2 ♖g6 winning. **23...♖g6** Taking on f3 wins quicker: 23...♘exf3+ and White loses a lot of material, since 24.gxf3 ♘h3+ 25.♔g2 ♖g6+ 26.♘g3 fxg3 is a complete disaster. **24.♔h1 ♘d3** Winning a clean exchange. The rest is not difficult. **25.♖ee2 ♘xf2+ 26.♖xf2 ♖d8 27.♖e2 ♘f7 28.cxb6 axb6 29.c4 c5 30.♗c3 e5 31.♕b2 ♕e7 32.h3 ♖gd6 0-1**

Variation II

☐ **Alexey Alexandrov**
■ **Sarunas Sulskis**
New York open 1998

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.e3 ♘e4 5.♕c2 f5 6.♗d3 0-0



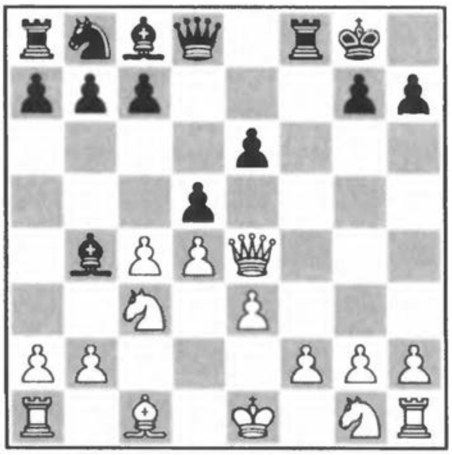
Refraining from exchanging on c3 has advantages and drawbacks. The good thing for Black is that White is deprived from any ♗c1-a3 ideas. Besides, winning the pawn by taking twice on e4 becomes even less attractive for White now, since the bishop pair will offer Black additional possibilities.

On the other hand the drawback of 6...0-0 compared to the previous game is quite obvious: White's pawn structure remains intact now. One can't have everything in chess...

7.♘e2

A standard and logical continuation. White achieves a perfect development for his kingside pieces and avoids doubled pawns on the c-file.

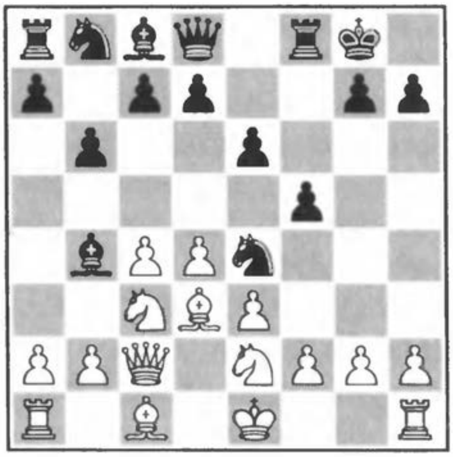
- Dubious is 7.f3?! ♕h4+ 8.g3 ♘xg3 9.♕f2 f4 with an advantage for Black.
- After the greedy 7.♗xe4 fxe4 8.♕xe4 (more cautious is 8.♗d2 when apart from different reasonable possibilities to sacrifice a pawn Black has the simple 8...♗xc3 9.♗xc3 d5 with equality) 8...d5



Black has good positional compensation owing to the weaknesses of the light squares in White's camp, his lead in development and the open f-file (notice that Black could include 8...♗xc3+ 9.bxc3 and only now advance the d-pawn, which would lead to Variation I. However, keeping the bishop offers a larger choice). Now exchanging pawns on d5 opens the position and looks too dangerous. Leaving the tension also works in Black's favour, who can use tactical factors due to his lead in development: 9.♕d3 (9.♕c2 e5!?, as suggested by Emms, opens the diagonal c8-h3 for the bishop and offers Black a dangerous initiative) 9...b6 (this is just one of several attractive options) 10.cxd5 (10.♘e2 ♗a6 11.b3 ♘c6 followed by ...♘a5 is difficult for White) 10...♕g5! The most convincing. After 11.g3 exd5 White will regret the absence of his light-squared bishop. Black's initiative is obvious.

- 7.♘f3 b6 8.♗xe4 (8.0-0 ♗xc3 9.bxc3 ♗b7 leads to a favourable for Black theoretical position mentioned at the beginning of Variation I) 8...fxe4 9.♕xe4 d5 (the exchange on c3 – 9...♗xc3+ 10.bxc3 d5 – is discussed in Variation I, see the comment on move 9 with 9.♗xe4) 10.♕c2 ♗a6. This position was never met in practice. Emms believes Black has enough compensation. Indeed, two bishops and a lead in development will most likely secure Black reasonable chances. Glenn Flear considers that Black is doing fine in case of 10...c5 11.a3 ♗xc3+ 12.♕xc3 ♗b7. In my opinion, also not bad looks the simple 10...dxc4!?.

7...b6



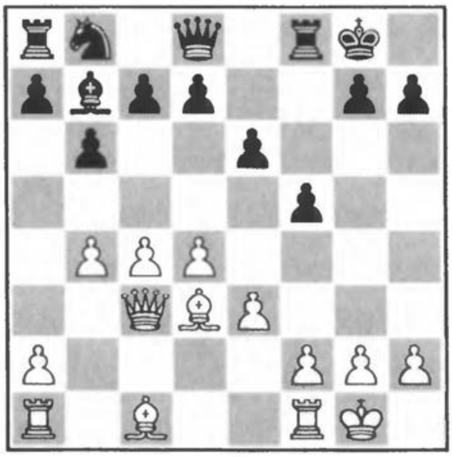
This is the first critical point of Variation II.

8.0-0

With the king's knight already developed grabbing the pawn is more justified than on the previous move, therefore 8.♗xe4!? fxe4 9.♕xe4 represents an important alternative to the game continuation. Black's compensation here is difficult to prove and the evaluation is rather a matter of taste. Active players will see enough potential in Black's position and enjoy the long-term slight initiative. Emms recommends 9...d5 (an attractive option is 9...♘c6!? 10.0-0 ♗b7) 10.cxd5 (10.♕c2 dxc4 is fine for Black) 10...exd5 11.♕c2 ♗a6 12.0-0 ♕d7 13.a3 ♗xc3 14.bxc3 ♘c6 with reasonable play on the light squares to compensate for the pawn.

8...♗xc3 9.♗xe4?!

Alexandrov must have missed something in his calculations. Most likely he planned to continue later with 11.cxd5 (see my annotations below to White's 11th move). Instead, he should have simply recaptured on c3 with the knight. After 9.♘xc3 ♘xc3 10.♕xc3 ♗b7 11.b4 we reach the second critical moment of the variation 6...0-0:

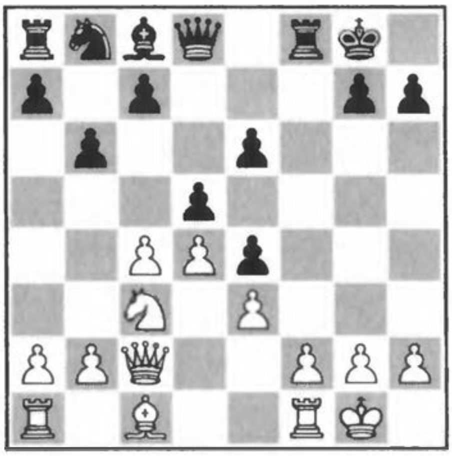


There is little doubt that thanks to his bishop pair White is objectively slightly better. Nevertheless the position might be perfectly playable with black. He will soon have a comfortable development of all pieces and from the practical point of view it is quite easy to handle such situations, since it is White who must prove something. Notice that Black keeps counterplay possibilities thanks to his space advantage on the kingside. A possible variation is 11...d6 12.♗b2 ♘d7 13.d5 (or 13.f3 ♕g5 14.♖ae1 a5 15.b5 ♖f6) 13...♕e7 (13...e5 14.f4± Sulskis) 14.♖ad1 (after both 14.dxe6 ♘e5 or 14.e4 f4!? Black has counterplay) 14...a5 15.a3 axb4 16.axb4 ♘e5 (even here 16...b5!? deserves attention, but of course Black can also adopt a more quiet strategy with 16...♘f6 17.f3 ♕f7 and White is only marginally better) 17.♗e2 b5!? (this is an interesting attempt to clarify the situation in the centre) 18.dxe6 bxc4 19.♗xc4 ♖f6! (19...♘f3+ brings nothing yet in view of 20.♔h1) 20.♗e2 ♖xe6 with a double-edged position. On move 20 White can also play 20.♗d5. Play is equal after the long sample line 20...♗xd5 21.♖xd5 ♖g6!? 22.f4 ♕xe6 23.♖a5 ♖xa5 24.bxa5 ♕d5 25.e4 ♕xe4 26.♕b3+ ♔f8 27.♕b8+ ♔f7 28.♕xc7+ ♔f8.

9...fxe4 10.♘xc3

10.♕xe4? loses in view of 10...d5.

10...d5



As usual in such positions where White gives up his light-squared bishop Black has good play. The only justification of 9.♗xe4 could be 11.cxd5 followed by 12.♕b3, but this does not work concretely.

11.b4

The apparently strong 11.cxd5 exd5 12.♕b3 runs into 12...♗a6! and it turns out that White will struggle in an inferior position: if the attacked rook moves away from f1, then simply 13...♗c4 follows, with advantage. Giving up the exchange represents only a try to escape: 13.♘xd5 (13.♕xd5+ ♕xd5 14.♘xd5 ♗xf1 15.♔xf1 – 15.♘xc7? ♗d3 16.♘xa8 ♘a6 loses – 15...♘a6∓) 13...♗xf1 14.♔xf1 (14.♘xc7+ is worse due to 14...♖f7 15.♘xa8 ♕f6 16.♕c2 ♗d3 and the knight remains trapped on a8) 14...♖f7. Black is better.

11...♘c6

A provocative move. Simpler and stronger is the more natural 11...♗b7 12.♗b2 ♘d7, when Black's chances are at least equal. For instance: 13.b5 (13.cxd5 exd5 14.b5 – 14.♕b3 ♘f6 – 14...♖f7 15.a4 ♘f8 with good attacking prospects on the kingside: ♕g5, ♘g6 etc.) 13...dxc4!? 14.♘xe4 a6 15.a4 ♘f6 16.♘xf6+ ♕xf6 17.f3 (after 17.d5 ♕g5 White must search for a way to escape; 17.♕xc4? is bad: 17...♗xg2! 18.♔xg2 ♕f3+ 19.♔g1 ♖f6 20.♕xc7 ♖g6+ 21.♕g3 ♖xg3+ 22.hxg3 h5∓) 17...axb5 18.axb5 ♖xa1 19.♗xa1 ♕g5 20.♕xc4 ♕xe3+ and a draw is the most likely outcome.

12.♕b3

Now 12.b5 ♘a5 is equal.

The right way to exploit the drawbacks of Black's previous move was 12.♗a3 and White has some initiative in a complicated position. However, this is not really important for us, since 11...♘c6 was not necessary.

12...♗a6! 13.♕a4

Or 13.b5 ♘a5 14.♕c2 ♗b7∓.

13...♗xc4 14.♕xc6

Immediately losing is 14.♖d1? ♕f6.

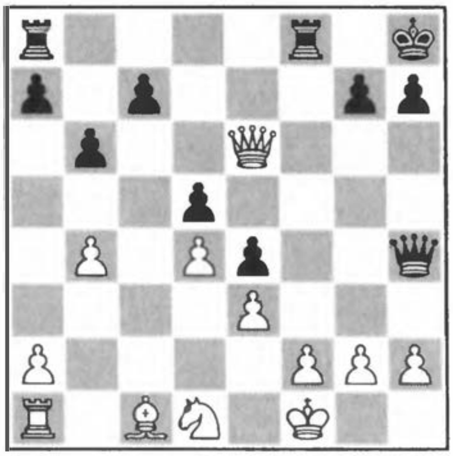
14...♗xf1 15.♕xe6+?

This loses. In a difficult situation White had to play 15.♔xf1 ♕h4 16.♘d1 ♕xh2 (16...♖xf2+ 17.♘xf2 ♖f8 doesn't work now because of the defence 18.♕c2, after which in spite of Black's attack White remains with material up: 18...♕xh2 19.♗b2 ♕h1+ 20.♔e2 ♕xg2 21.♖f1 ♕f3+ 22.♔e1 ♕xe3+ 23.♕e2. Black has all his eight pawns versus White's three, but two pieces are two pieces. White should be able to regroup and win) 17.♕xe6+ ♔h8 18.♕h3 ♕d6 and Black is somewhat better.

15...♔h8 16.♔xf1 ♕h4

Now, however, Black is winning in all variations.

17.♘d1



17...♖xf2+!

As from e6 the queen won't be able to protect the king.

18.♘xf2

18.♔g1 ♖e2 19.♗d2 ♖e1+ 20.♗xe1 ♕xe1 mate.

18...♖f8 19.♔e2 ♕xf2+ 20.♔d1 ♕f1+

White is severely punished for weakening the light squares in the opening.

21.♔c2 ♕d3+ 22.♔b2 ♖f2+ 0-1

Now it is time to draw conclusions. 4...♘e4 will produce a shock effect even against strong players. It often leads to specific positions (just look at the diagrams) and in most cases they are quite different from the usual 4.e3 lines. Besides, 4...♘e4 has little theory and just a few concrete variations to learn – certainly not a thing to ignore in the Rubinstein Variation (4.e3), which is the most complicated and largest part of the Nimzo-Indian.

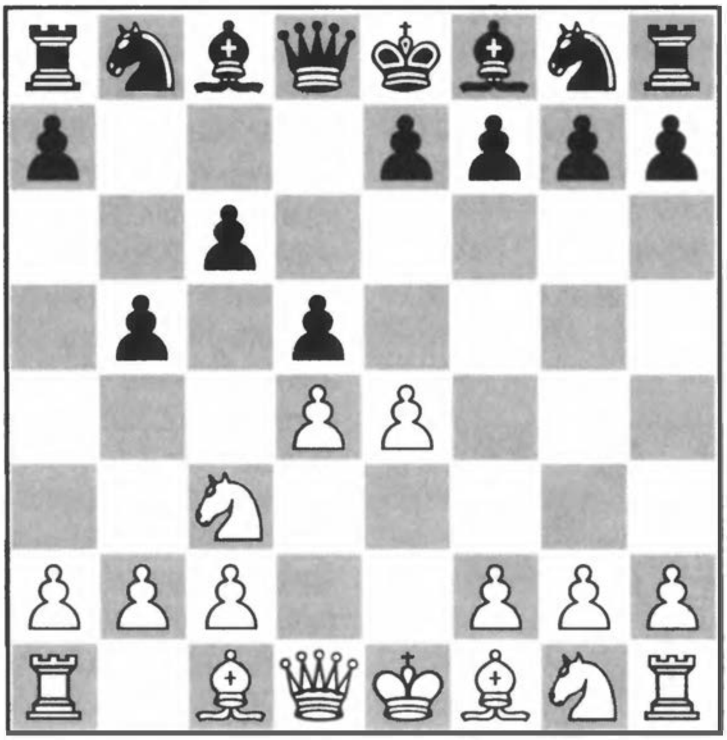
The bad news is that a well-prepared opponent with white should be able to emerge with some opening advantage after 4...♘e4. However, this is rather a relative drawback: after all playing with black is playing with black...

In our case one must basically decide what variation to play (I or II, or even 5...♘xc3 6.bxc3 ♗a5!? as mentioned in the introduction), depending on one's own view on the mentioned critical moments. This is a choice between different types of positions, so with 4...♘e4 everyone should be able to find something suitable to his style.

CHAPTER 7

Adrian Mikhalchishin

The Caro-Kann of Bukhuti Gurgenidze



1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 b5!?

Bukhuti Ivanovich Gurgenidze (born in 1933) was the first Georgian International Grandmaster and he won the Georgian championship thirteen times.

As a player he was characterized by a sharp and unusual style, referred to as 'Caucasian' and later 'Moldavian'. He, as well as his pupils, were very fond of knights and pathologically disdainful of bishops. Consequently, it was essential at any given opportunity to exchange your bishops for enemy knights. The Georgian players were so devoted to knights that their well-known study-composer Gia Nadareishvili even created the special knight theme, calling it 'the dance on horses with sabres'.

Gurgenidze was well-known as the trainer of Nana Alexandria, and as the Director of the Georgian Chess Palace named after Nona Gaprindashvili. However, Gurgenidze also became known for his original opening ideas, one of which was his flank Caro-Kann opening.

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 b5!?

This idea has sufficient logical foundation. Devoted SOS readers may be reminded of John van der Wiel's chapter on 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 a6 in SOS-6. Gurgenidze's 3...b5 is sharper though.

Now White has four different options.

4.a3

The most simple and natural move to stop further development of Black's initiative on the queenside.

The other continuations are:

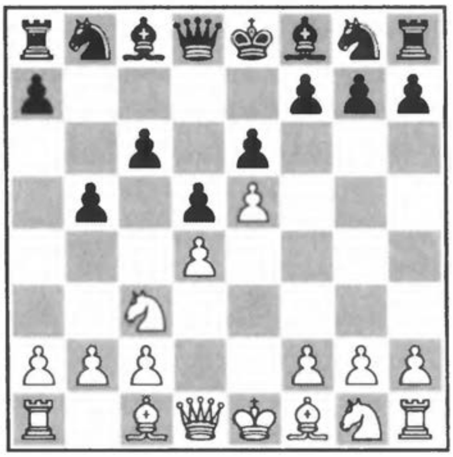
- 4.e5 and now:

– After 4...♗f5 comes the typical 5.g4! ♗d7 6.♗e3 h5 7.gxh5 ♘h6 8.♘ge2 ♗g4 9.♕d2 e6 (maybe 9...♗xh5 10.e6!? fxe6 11.♘f4 ♗f7 is not that bad?) 10.♘g3 ♘d7 11.♗e2 ♗xe2 12.♘cxe2 c5 13.c3 cxd4 14.♗xd4 ♕c7 15.f4 with advantage, Tischbierek-Weiss, Aschach 2001.

– 4...h5?! is possible, but Black is crossing the danger line.

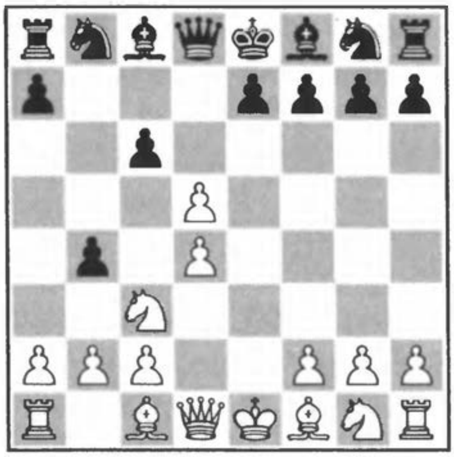
– Interesting is 4...b4 5.♘ce2 e6 followed by 6...♗a6.

– 4...e6



5.♘f3 (after 5.♗d3 b4 6.♘ce2 ♗a6 7.♘f3 ♗xd3 8.♕xd3 c5 9.0-0 ♘c6 10.♗f4 ♕b6 11.h4 c4! 12.♕d2 h5 Black has an agreeable position, Senff-Gorbatow, Lippstadt 1998; very modest is 5.a3 a5 6.♘ce2 ♗a6 7.♘f4 b4 8.♗xa6 ♘xa6 9.axb4 axb4 10.♘f3 ♗e7 11.h4 h5 12.♘g5 ♗xg5 13.hxg5 g6 14.♗e3 ♘e7 with equality, I.Zaitsev-Gurgenidze, Alma Ata 1968/69) 5...♘e7 (typical in this sort of positions. Also of interest was 5...b4 6.♘e2 ♗a6. The actual move in the game seems far too risky) 6.♗d3 b4 7.♘a4! ♗a6 8.♘c5 ♕b6! (that is the way to combat the c5 knight) 9.a3 ♗xd3 10.♕xd3 ♘c8 11.axb4 ♕xb4+ 12.♗d2 ♕b6 13.♕c3 ♗e7 14.0-0 0-0 15.♗g5 ♗xc5 16.dxc5 ♕c7 17.♖a4 ♘e7 18.h4 h6, and Black held the position, Pavasovic-Teske, Graz 2001.

- 4.exd5 b4



and now:

– Possible is 5.♘ce2.

– The alternative 5.♘a4 is worse: 5...cxd5 6.♗d3 (the sharper 6.a3!? bxa3 7.b3 e6 8.♘f3 ♘f6 9.♗d3 ♗d6 10.0-0 ♕e7 11.♘c5 0-0 12.♗xa3 ♘c6 13.♗b5 ♘d8! 14.b4 ♘e4! did not yield anything to White, Juracsik-Boguszlavskij, Hungary 2002/03) 6...e6 7.♗e3 ♘f6 8.♘e2 ♗d6 9.0-0 0-0 10.♘g3 ♗a6 with approximate equality.

– 5.♘e4 cxd5 (worse is 5...♕xd5 6.♘g3 ♘f6 7.♘f3 h5?! 8.♗e3 h4 9.♘e2 h3 10.♘f4 with advantage for White) 6.♘g3 (the aggressive 6.♘c5 e6 7.♘d3 ♘f6 8.♘f3 ♗e7 9.♘de5 0-0 10.♗d3 ♘e4 11.♘d2 f5 12.♕e2 ♕b6 13.♘df3 ♗d7 14.h4 ♗e8! does not yield any results, Berger-Schleicher, Hamburg 2000; neither does 6.♘g5 ♘f6 7.♗d3 h6 8.♘5f3 ♘bd7 9.♘e5 e6 10.♘gf3 a5 11.0-0 ♗d6 12.♖e1 ♗a6 and Black solves the problem of his king's security by the exchange on d3) 6...♘f6 7.♗d3 e6 8.♘f3 ♗e7 9.♘e5 0-0 10.0-0 a5 11.♘h5 ♗a6 12.♗xa6 ♖xa6 13.♘f4 ♘c6 14.♕e2 ♕b6 and Black successfully equalized, Dubisch-Silman, Seattle 1985.

- 4.♗d3 b4 and now:

– 5.♘a4 dxe4 6.♗xe4 ♘f6 7.♗f3 ♗a6 8.♘e2 ♗b5 9.♘c5 ♘bd7 10.♘d3 e6 11.0-0 ♘d5 12.♖e1 ♗e7 gave Black excellent play, Kupreichik-Bellon, Wijk aan Zee II 1977.

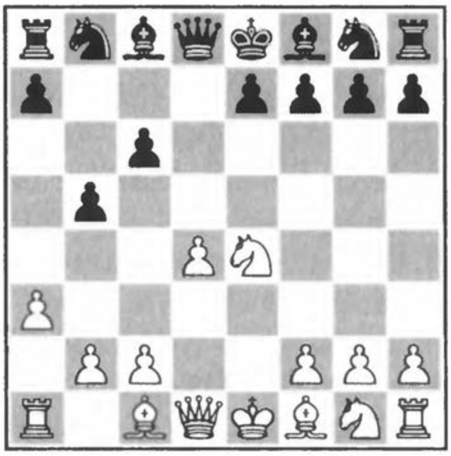
– 5.♘ce2 dxe4 6.♗xe4 ♘f6 7.♗f3 e6 8.♘h3 ♗e7 9.0-0 0-0 10.♖e1 a5 11.a3 ♗b7 12.♘hf4 Lechtynsky-Plachetka, Havirov 1970, and here 12...♕b6 or 12...♕c7 gave chances of a successful struggle.

4...dxe4

Some might like to try the alternative 4...a6, which is, in substance, quite sound. 5.♘f3 (stronger was 5.♗g5!, thwarting the development of Black pieces) 5...♗g4 6.♗e2 ♘f6 7.h3 ♗xf3 8.♗xf3 e6 9.♗f4 ♗e7 10.0-0 0-0 and Black is quite OK, Stojanovic-Scekic, Jahorina 2001.

5.♘xe4

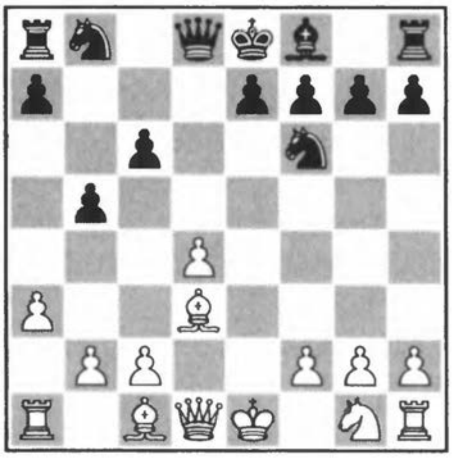
And here Black has two plans:



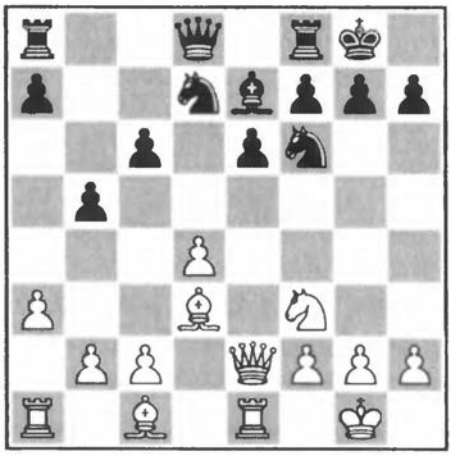
5...♘f6!

The idea was taken up by none other than the great David Bronstein.

The other option is 5...♗f5 6.♗d3!? (clearly weaker would be 6.♘g3?! ♗g6 7.♘f3 ♘d7 8.h4 h6 9.h5 ♗h7 10.♗d3 ♗xd3 11.♕xd3 e6, where a classical variation emerges, including b5 and a3, which definitely favours the black side) 6...♗xe4 (worth considering was simply 6...e6; the pawn sacrifice 6...♕xd4 7.♘f3 ♕d5 8.♕e2 hands White a powerful initiative) 7.♗xe4 ♘f6 8.♗d3 (Tal is keen to sacrifice the pawn, but nevertheless the following line also deserved attention: 8.♗f3!? e6 9.♘e2 ♗d6 10.0-0 ♕c7 11.h3 ♘bd7 and then 12...♖d8)



8...e6 (or 8...♕xd4 9.♘f3 ♕d5 10.0-0 e6 11.♕e2 ♗e7 12.c4 with an initiative in return for the sacrificed pawn) 9.♘f3 ♗e7 10.♕e2 ♘bd7 11.0-0 0-0 12.♖e1



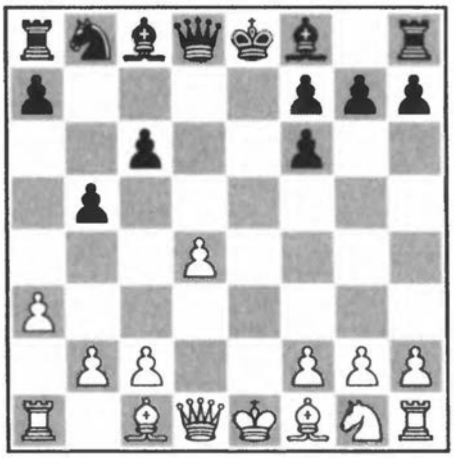
Tal-Gurgenidze, Alma Ata 1968/69. And here Black should perform the following set-up: 12...♕c7, followed by a7-a5, b5-b4, and at the first opportunity c6-c5.

6.♘xf6+

In answer to 6.♘g3, Black has 6...e5.

6...exf6

Too foolhardy is 6...gxf6?!, for in the 'normal' ...gxf6 Caro-Kann Black aims to castle queenside.



7.c3

The extremely sharp 7.a4 brings nothing after 7...b4 8.♗c4 ♗d6 9.♕e2+ ♕e7 10.♕xe7+ ♔xe7 11.♘e2 ♗e6 12.♗d3 ♘d7 13.0-0, as in the stem game Klovans-Gurgenidze, Soviet Championship, Alma Ata 1968/69, and here 13...♘b6 with the idea of ...♘d5 would equalize.

Another idea, 7.c4, is also fruitless: 7...♗d6! 8.♗e3 (8.cxb5 0-0 9.bxc6 ♘xc6 10.♗e3 f5! with compensation) 8...0-09.c5 ♗c7 10.d5? (better is 10.♗d3!?) 10...cxd5 11.♕d2 d4! 12.♗xd4 ♘c6 with excellent play, Cosulich-Soltis, Reggio Emilia 1970/71.

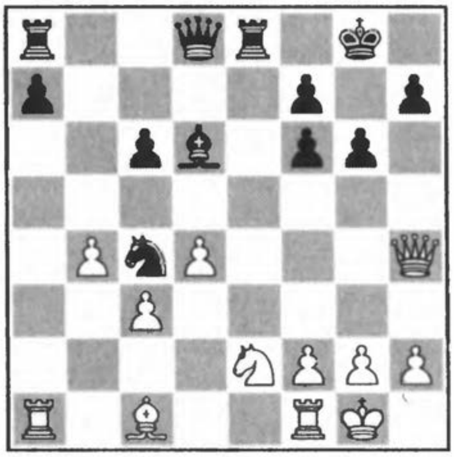
7...♗d6 8.♗d3 0-0 9.♕f3 ♗e6 10.♘e2 ♗d5 11.♕h3 g6 12.0-0 ♘d7 13.a4 bxa4!

Weaker is 13...a6 14.axb5 cxb5 15.♘f4 and White is better.

14.♖xa4

Worth trying could be 14.c4 ♗e6 15.♕f3 with sharp play.

14...♖e8 15.b4 ♘b6 16.♖a1 ♗e6 17.♕h4 ♗c4! 18.♗xc4 ♘xc4



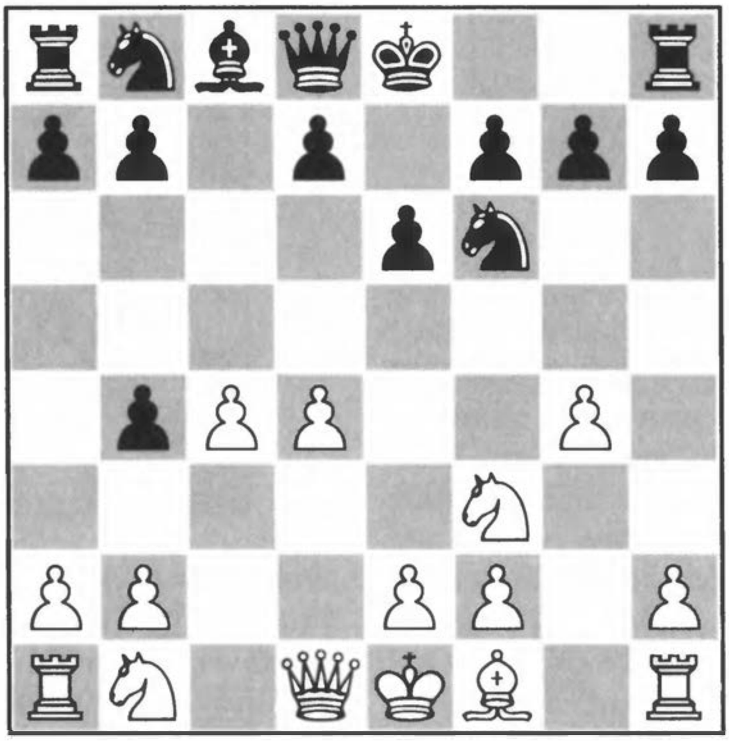
With comfortable play for Black in Shmits-Bronstein, Dnepropetrovsk 1970. The game ended in a draw after

19.♘g3 ♗f8 20.♗h6 ♗xh6 21.♕xh6 a5 22.bxa5 ♖xa5 23.♕f4 ♔g7 24.h4 h5 25.♖fc1 ♖e6 26.♖ab1 ♕e7 27.♖d1 ♖d5 28.♕f3 ♖d8 29.♕d3 ♘e5 30.♕d2 ♘c4 ½-½

CHAPTER 8

Jeroen Bosch

Bayonet Blow in the Bogo



6.g4 in the Vitolinsh Variation

The Vitolinsh Variation of the Bogo-Indian (starting with 4...c5) is a strategically original and highly surprising line. Black does not mind that after 5.♗xb4 he is forced to take away from the centre with 5...cxb4. From a conventional point of view he has compromised his structure and lessened his (pawn) control of the centre.

However, Vitolinsh and his followers (including many top-GMs) showed time and again that Black could follow a successful dark-square strategy with ...d6 and ...e5, as well as ...b6 and ...a5. In case of d4-d5, square c5 (freed by 5...cxb4) becomes available to a black knight. Moreover, the b4 pawn takes away the natural c3-square from White's knight. This problem may be solved with a3, but then ...bxa3 frees the b4-square for a black knight too.

Clearly, 4...c5 could be the subject of an SOS, too, if it had not become such a main line in the years following Vitolinsh's first games with in the 1970s. This Bogo-Indian became especially popular in the mid-1980s. Among the main developers of Vitolinsh's line were such strong grandmasters as Kortchnoi and Nikolic, but also (to a lesser extent) Timman, Seirawan and Salov – this list is by no means exhaustive, of course.

The variation is being played right into the 21st century, which demonstrates its viability. Among its current advocates are

Nisipeanu and Moiseenko. The most popular line after 5.♗xb4 cxb4 is 6.g3, but given the current popularity of g4 in many openings it probably won't surprise you unduly that we will advocate 6.g4!? in the present article.

☐ **Yannick Pelletier**
■ **Oleg Romanishin**
Istanbul Ech 2003

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 ♗b4+ 4.♗d2 c5

The move of the late Latvian genius Alvis Vitolinsh. White's best bet is to accept the challenge with

5.♗xb4 cxb4

And now we will look at the SOS move:

6.g4!?

In Kasparov's *Revolution in the 70s*, Adrian Mikhalchishin opines that the current g4 rage derives from the Karpov-Kasparov matches. When Kasparov encountered problems in the Keres Attack of the Sicilian (1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 d6 6.g4), he switched to the move order 2...♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 e6 5.♘c3 d6, when he was surprised by (Igor Zaitsev's) 6.g4. Even without a knight on f6 this move turned out to be playable. Today the g4 advance may be found in the Meran (6.♕c2 ♗d6 7.g4 – Shabalov and Shirov), the English Opening (1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.g4 – Zviagintsev), and the Philidor (1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 ♘bd7 4.♘c3 ♘f6 5.g4 – again Shirov). For the latter, see Nijboer's chapter on page 50 of this SOS volume.

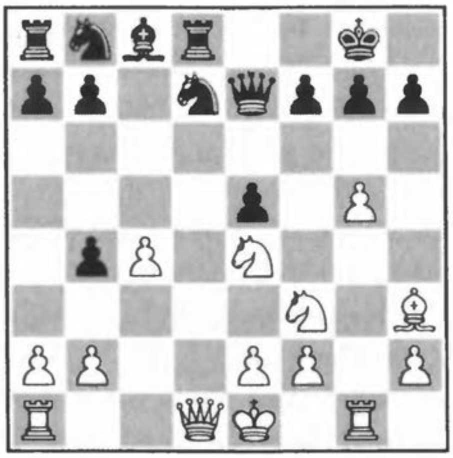
The point of g4 in the present position is not an extended fianchetto (an aggressive version of 6.g3 so to speak). Indeed, in none of the games played with 6.g4 is the bishop developed to g2. No, its main idea is very close to the Keres attack. With 6.g4 White is starting an attack on the kingside and preparing to chase away the f6 knight to gain central influence. Thus, White will typically follow this audacious advance with moves like ♖g1, g5, and h4 to strengthen his argument on the kingside; and ♘bd2, e3, and ♗d3 to increase his influence in the centre.

The position of both kings deserves a mention. Black lacks the time to develop his queenside pieces and to castle to that side of the board. Leaving his king in the centre disturbs his coordination too much (he needs to prepare e6-e5 at some point), so he is left no other option than to castle into the storm. White's king, on the other hand, will never go to the kingside. His majesty is either left on its original square, where things could become hairy should Black succeed in opening up the centre, or he will castle queenside.

6...0-0

Romanishin decides to castle into it. Naturally, taking on g4 is bad. After **6...♘xg4** 7.♖g1 White will retrieve the pawn on g7 with a favourable position.

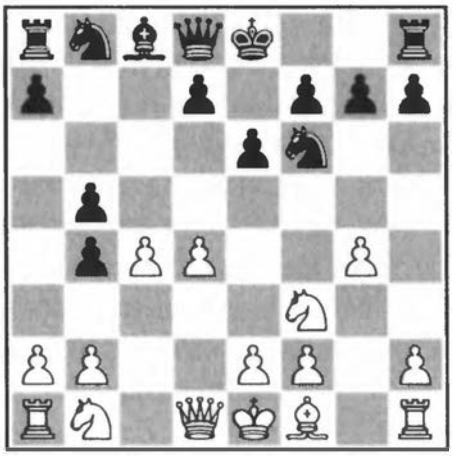
In the stem game of 6.g4 Black played the natural **6...d6**. He was soon worse. White played 7.♘bd2 0-0 8.g5 ♘fd7 9.♘e4!? ♕e7 10.♖g1 e5?! 11.dxe5! dxe5 12.♗h3!? (12.♕d6) 12...♖d8



and now the powerful 13.♕d6 ♔f8 14.0-0-0

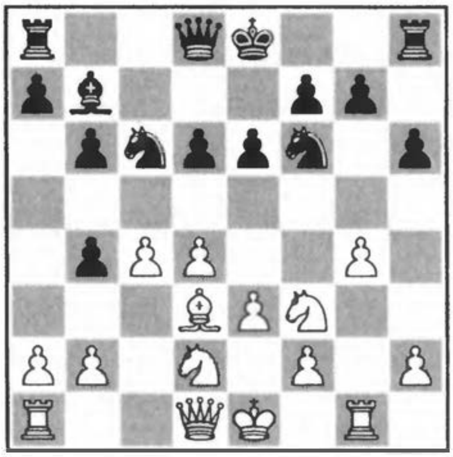
♘c6 15.♕xe7+ ♔xe7 16.♘d6 gave White a superior ending. The game continued: 16...g6 17.♖d5 ♘b6 18.♘xc8+ ♖axc8 19.♗xc8 ♖xc8 20.♖d2 ♘xc4 21.♖c2, and White converted his material advantage in Legky-Spiridonov, Orange 1990.

Black's most interesting reply is the counter-blow **6...b5**, which is aesthetically pleasing (mirror symmetry) too.



The high-level encounter Krasenkow-Moiseenko, Saint Vincent 2005, went: 7.cxb5 ♗b7 8.♘bd2 0-0 9.♖g1 a6 10.e3 axb5 11.♗xb5, when Black had sacrificed a pawn to achieve free piece play. After 11...d6 12.g5 ♘d5 13.♗d3 ♘d7 Krasenkow chose 14.♘c4? (but it was stronger to play 14.♕c2 g6 15.h4. And the preparatory 14.h4 with a subsequent ♕c2 or ♕b1 also deserves attention) 14...♕e7 15.h4. Black is now ready for 15...e5, which shows that the inclusion of 14.♘c4 ♕e7 was not a good idea. Let's follow the game until the end: 16.♗f5 ♘7b6 17.♘xb6 ♘xb6 18.♖g3 g6 19.♗c2 ♖ac8 20.♗b3 ♘c4 21.♕e2 ♗a6 (Black now clearly has a lot of counterplay and White has good reason to worry) 22.♘d2 (22.h5 ♕b7 is awkward too) 22...d5 23.♗xc4 dxc4 24.♘e4 exd4? (this loses the momentum. Very strong was the sacrifice 24...c3! 25.♕xa6 cxb2 26.♖d1 ♖c1 27.♘d2 exd4, and White's position is probably beyond saving) 25.♘f6+ ♔h8 26.exd4 ♕xe2+ 27.♔xe2 c3+ 28.♔d1 cxb2 29.♖b1 ♖fd8 30.d5 ♗c4 31.♖xb2 ♗xd5 32.♔e2 ♗c4+, and a draw was agreed.

Black may want to stop g5 with **6...b6**. After 7.♖g1 b6 8.e3 ♗b7 9.♘bd2 ♘c6 10.♗d3 d6



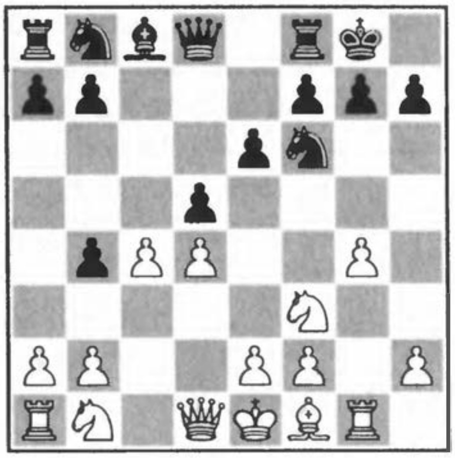
White's position nevertheless looks more pleasant to play. 11.♕a4 (a serious and consistent alternative is 11.h4) 11...♕d7 12.♘e4 (again 12.h4!? makes sense. The endgame after 12...♘e5 13.♕xd7+ ♘exd7 favours White after 14.g5) 12...♘xe4 13.♗xe4 ♘a5! 14.♕xd7+ ♔xd7 15.♗xb7 ♘xb7 16.♔e2 Black is no worse in this ending. After 16...♖ac8 17.♖gc1 ♖c7 18.a3 bxa3 19.♖xa3 ♖a8 20.b4 a5! 21.bxa5 ♖xa5 22.♖b3 ♖a2+ it is Black rather than White who has reasons to hope for more. His b-pawn may be isolated and backward, but he has an active rook on the second rank, and pawn c4 is weak and can easily be attacked once more by ...♘a5 (Bodiroga-Ilincic, Sombor 2004).

7.♖g1

Played in the style of the Keres Attack. Pawn g4 is protected and the pawn storm is prepared. It is also useful to remove the rook from the h1-a8 diagonal.

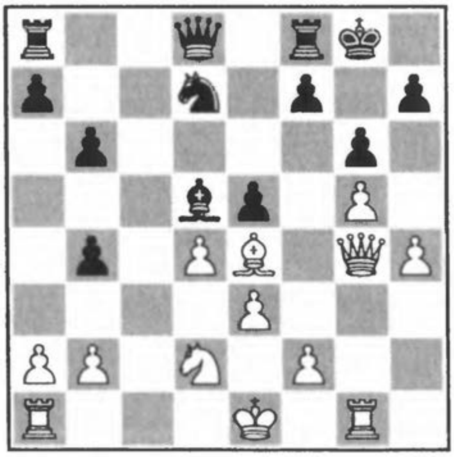
7...d5

Reacting to White's flank attack by firmly establishing a hold in the centre.

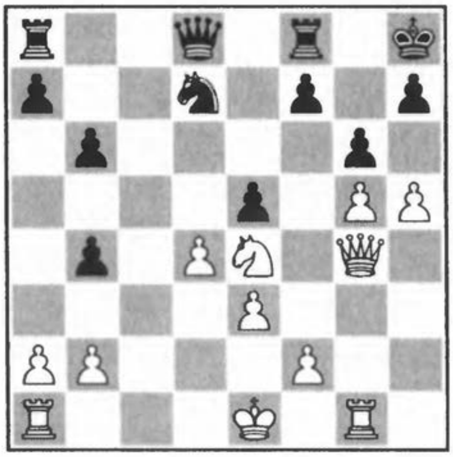


It is more 'Indian' to play 7...b6, when White should develop along the scheme outlined above: 8.♘bd2 ♗b7 9.e3 ♘e4 10.♗d3 ♘xd2 11.♘xd2

Black has managed to exchange a piece (somewhat reducing White's fire power). However, White's remaining pieces are all good and he has fair chances of a successful attack. With his king still on e1, the position remains double-edged, of course. Black should initiate counterplay in the centre as soon as possible. 11...d5 12.g5 (further advancing the pawn and giving the queen access to the kingside) 12...♘d7 13.♕g4 g6!? (as 13...e5 is unpleasantly met by 14.♗f5) 14.h4 e5 15.cxd5 ♗xd5 16.♗e4, exchanging the powerful bishop. After the weakening ...g6 White's bishop has fulfilled its task. The knight should gain access to e4, underlining the weakness of square f6.

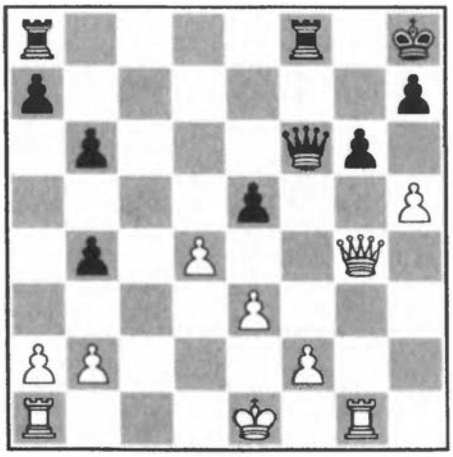


● Let's analyse the natural 16...♗xe4 17.♘xe4, and now, because of the threat of 18.♕xd7, Black must lose a tempo with his king. After, say, 17...♔h8 (17...f5? 18.gxf6 ♘xf6 19.♕e6+ and 20.♕xe5), White must act quickly with 18.h5! (for the alternatives promise nothing: 18.0-0-0 is met by 18...f5 19.gxf6 ♘xf6 20.♘xf6 ♕xf6, or 20.♕g2 ♕c8+ 21.♔b1 ♕f5; while 18.♖d1 f5 19.gxf6 ♘xf6 is also OK for Black).



Now the lines fork:

– White has a powerful initiative after 18...f5, which is a forcing line: 19.gxf6 ♘xf6 20.♘xf6 ♕xf6



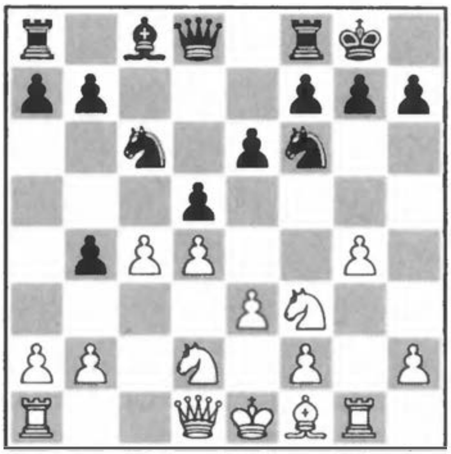
21.hxg6! ♕xf2+ 22.♔d1 ♕f3+ (22...hxg6 23.♕xg6 ♕f3+ 24.♔d2 ♕f2+ 25.♔d3 ♕f5+ 26.♕xf5 ♖xf5 27.♔e4, and White wins) 23.♕xf3 ♖xf3 24.♔e2, and White is better in the rook ending.

– 18...♖c8 19.hxg6 fxg6 20.♖d1, and White's structural advantages are beginning to count.

– 18...exd4 at least destroys White's superior structure: 19.♘d6! dxe3 20.♕d4+ f6 (not 20...♔g8 21.h6 f6 22.♕d5+ ♔h8 23.♘f7++–) 21.fxe3 ♘e5 (21...gxh5 22.g6 hxg6 23.♖xg6 ♘e5 24.♖h6+ ♔g7 25.♘f5+ ♔g8 26.♕e4, with a winning attack) 22.♖f1 ♘c6 (22...gxh5!?) 23.♕d5 ♕e7! 24.e4! ♖ad8 25.0-0-0, and White wins material.

● Instead, the game Handke-Fluvia Poyatos, Barcelona 2004, went: 16...h5? 17.♕g3? (it is much more natural to open the position with 17.gxh6! ♘f6 18.♕f3 exd4 – 18...♘xe4 19.♘xe4 f5? 20.♕g3 wins – 19.♗xd5 ♘xd5 20.e4, followed by 21.h5, is very strong) 17...♗xe4 18.♘xe4 exd4?! (18...♕c8 would have prevented White from castling) 19.0-0-0 ♖c8+ 20.♔b1 ♕c7? (the resulting endgame is very difficult for Black) 21.♕xc7 ♖xc7 22.♖xd4 ♘e5 23.♖gd1 ♖fc8 24.♘d6 ♘f3? (24...♖d8) 25.♘xc8 ♘xd4 26.♖xd4 ♖xc8 27.♖xb4, and White was a sound pawn up in the rook ending.

8.e3 ♘c6 9.♘bd2



9...a5

Romanishin starts an offensive on the queenside. Although the plan of a5-a4-a3 gains space and dark squares, it is rather slow. Moreover, White's play on the kingside is much more dangerous. Practice has seen 9...♘e4, which exchanges a piece. After 10.♗d3 (10.♘xe4 dxe4 11.♘d2 f5 is OK for Black) 10...♘xd2 11.♘xd2 (11.♕xd2) 11...dxc4 (11...e5) 12.♗xc4 (12.♘xc4) 12...♘a5 White was hardly better, Ivekovic-Franciskovic, Sibenik 2006.

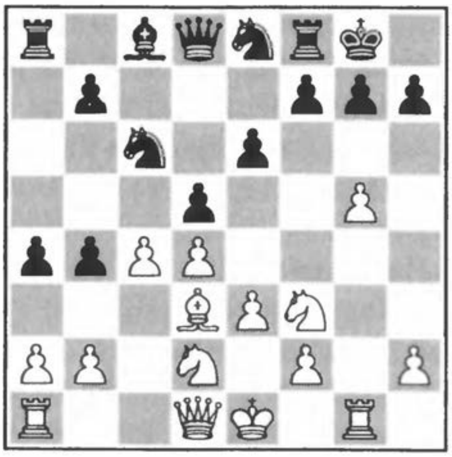
10.g5

Even stronger than 10.♗d3.

10...♘e8

Romanishin does not play 10...♘e4, because after 11.♘xe4 dxe4 12.♘d2 Black cannot play 12...f5, since White can take en passant. White is also better after 10...♘d7.

11.♗d3 a4



12.♘e5

Pelletier wants to score quickly. Black's reply is forced and after

12...♘xe5 13.dxe5

White has a distinct space advantage on the kingside. This enables his pieces to operate actively. But it was also possible to take a quieter approach on move 12.

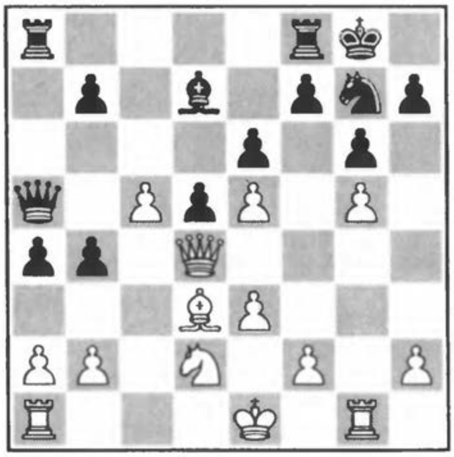
13...g6

14.♕h5 g6 15.♕h6, followed by ♖g1-g3(4)-h3(4), was a threat. Black is preparing some sort of 'last stand' with ...♘g7.

14.♕g4 ♘g7 15.c5

Suddenly changing his plans by making pawn b4 his target.

15...♕a5 16.♕d4 ♗d7



17.♖g4!

Now the rook comes into play via the fourth rank as well. Pelletier's imaginative use of his major pieces along a rank (rather than along a file) is reminiscent of some of Karpov's games.

17...♖fc8 18.♕xb4

Here 18.♖c1 is met by 18...b6.

18...♕c7

Now 18...♕xc5 19.♕xc5 (19.♕xb7 is double-edged) 19...♖xc5 20.♖b4 is rather similar to the game. Less accurate is 18...♖xc5?! 19.♕xa5 ♖cxa5 (19...♖axa5? 20.b4 axb3 21.♘xb3+–) 20.♖c1.

18...♕a7, with the point of 19.♖c1 b6, is perhaps best met by 19.♕b6.

19.♘f3

Or 19.♕b6 ♕xe5.

19...♕xc5 20.♕xc5 ♖xc5 21.♖b4

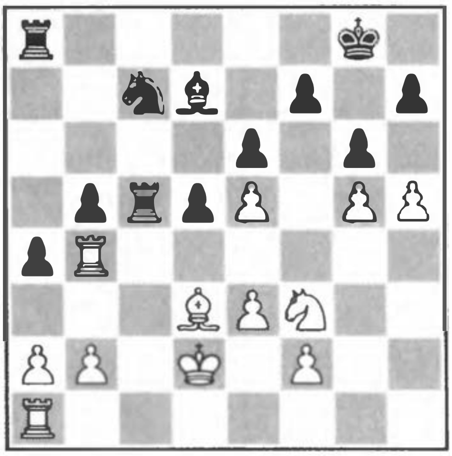
White has a pleasant positional advantage, although will not be all that easy to breach the fortress.

21...b5 22.♔d2 ♘e8 23.h4 ♘c7

The knight manoeuvre is played with a very concrete idea in mind.

24.h5

With the prophylactic 24.♖f4! White could have kept his advantage.



24...♖c4!

Not really a sacrifice, since Black can retrieve the exchange with ...♘a6 or ...♘d5 whenever he wishes.

25.♖xc4

Admitting his mistake. In case of 25.♗xc4 dxc4 26.hxg6 hxg6 27.♘d4 ♘d5 Black need not take back the exchange at the first opportunity. For example: 28.♘c2 ♔g7 29.a3 ♖h8.

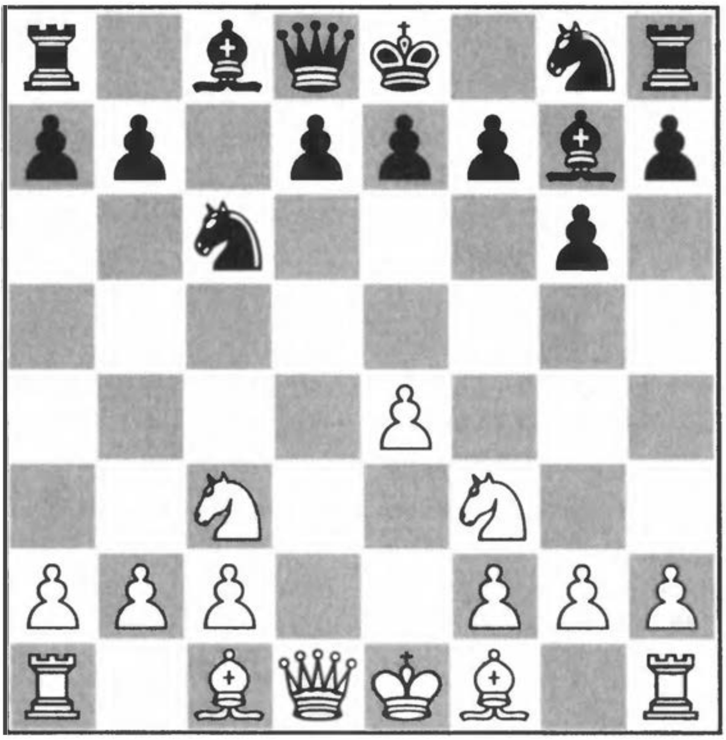
25...bxc4 26.♗c2 ♖b8

Now Black is fine, so the players agreed a draw.

CHAPTER 9

Arthur Kogan

Inspiration versus the Dragon



Play like Tal

It all started with my preparation for a league game against Dragon expert Boris Alterman. My previous game against him was a painful memory – I lost without a fight, and was therefore out for revenge. However, Alterman's repertoire was not an easy nut to crack. He played both the Dragon and the Accelerated Dragon – and what is worse: he played them well!

At the time I hardly ever used a computer, in fact I even didn't have one, so I had to make do with my daily fitness training and a creative brain! Yes, I became a GM without the assistance of a computer. Something I am not so proud of these days, since maybe if I had had one... I just used some Informators and books in the old style and trusted my memory even more than today.

So considering all this, and the fact that Boris was really a theoretical guy who successfully employed his well-studied lines, I really wanted to surprise him. For many years already, I had employed rare lines versus the Dragon. However, not one of them would be suitable to really surprise Boris.

Then I decided to use another simple strategy: I was going to invent a line with a harmonious piece set-up and with good central control aiming to play for a small edge. So, no long and forced lines (the usual aim of any Dragon player). Next, if he was going to complicate matters, my better centre and pieces would punish him! This was my 'simple plan' that I thought should work well against such an aggressive and ambitious player as Boris. Still, this is easier said than done, and I couldn't sleep that night until I suddenly got an idea! And guess what? It worked even better than I thought!

☐ **Arthur Kogan**
■ **Boris Alterman**
Israel tt 1999

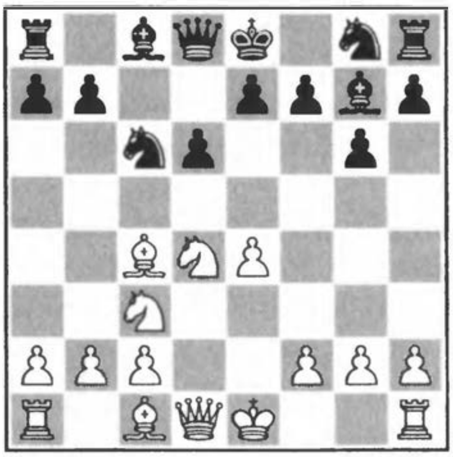
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6

I was more worried about the Accelerated Dragon, but my idea was to play 2...♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 g6 5.♘c3 ♗g7 and now 6.♘f3!. See the next game for this move order. I didn't sleep the previous night before I had figured out how to develop my pieces! The main idea is to avoid the sharp Dragon lines, without worrying about the usual tactics versus the d4-knight. The scheme that I wanted to follow was: ♗c4, 0-0, ♖e1, ♗g5, ♕d2 or ♕e2 and ♖ad1. Then, with all my pieces nicely positioned I can consider such actions as ♘d5 or ♗h6. I guess I didn't worry too much about 6...♗xc3+, since I still have to meet the Dragon player who is ready to give up his dark-squared bishop for only the doubling of pawns – leaving his king without its main defender in the process. Objectively, 6...♗xc3+ 7.bxc3 ♘f6 8.♗d3 is not so clear though.

3.♘c3

A tricky move order that works well in this game. After 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 g6 6.♗c4 (6.♘f3) 6...♗g7 7.h3 (see my comments below) 0-0 8.♘f3 Black is not obliged to play 8...♘c6 (which would transpose to the main game) but he can also play 8...♘bd7 as in Benjamin-Gufeld, New York 1989.

3...♘c6 4.d4 cxd4 5.♘xd4 g6 6.♗c4 ♗g7



7.♘f3!

Why not play it here as well? Later I found that I was not the first guy to play like this (as usual!), but surely I must be the first GM to recommend it!

7...♘f6

No good is 7...♕a5 8.♗d2 (8.0-0 ♗xc3 9.bxc3 ♕xc3∓ is too much) 8...♕c5 9.♕e2 (9.♗b3) 9...♗xc3? 10.♗xc3 ♘f6 11.0-0-0 0-0 was bad for Black in Grosse-Führer, Vienna 2003 – 12.♗xf6! exf6 13.♖d5! and White wins a pawn.

No better is 7...a6 8.0-0 e6? (weakening d6 is too high a price for controlling d5 here) 9.♖e1 (9.♕d3 and ♖d1 is logical here) 9...♘ge7 10.♗g5 0-0 11.♕d2 b5 12.♗b3 ♕c7 13.h4!? ♗b7 14.h5 ♘a5 15.♗h6 ♘xb3 16.axb3 b4 17.♘a4 d5 18.♗xg7 ♔xg7 19.h6+ ♔g8 20.♕d4 which gives White a great position. After 20...f6, White played 21.exd5 ♗xd5 22.♘c5 in Zeier-Metzger, Schöneck 1999. Even better is 21.♘c5! which spells big trouble for Black: 21...♕b6 22.♘d7 (22.exd5 e5 23.♘xe5 fxe5 24.♖xe5) 22...♕xd4 23.♘xd4 ♖f7 24.♘c5±.

As usual it seems too risky to give up the dark-squared bishop. For example: 7...♗xc3+ 8.bxc3 ♘f6 9.0-0 (9.♕d3) 9...♘xe4(9...♗g4 10.♗h6) 10.♗xf7+! ♔xf7 11.♕d5+ ♔g7 12.♕xe4 ♖f8 13.♕h4 (or 13.♘d4) with decent attacking chances on the dark squares.

8.h3!

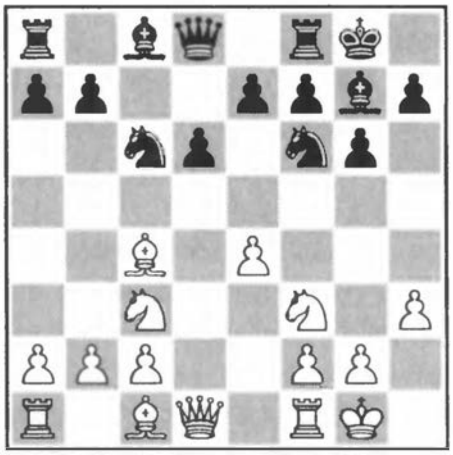
Prophylaxis against a possible pin with ...♗g4. In fact I saw that many amateurs lose games because of not playing this small move!

Interesting but probably not too promising is 8.e5 dxe5 9.♕xd8+ ♘xd8 (9...♔xd8 10.♘g5) 10.♘xe5 0-0 11.0-0 ♗f5 12.♗b3 ♘e6 with counterplay Hrebicek-Evan, Cesky Brod 1995.

8...0-0

Miranda-Pastor, San Salvador 2001, saw White react to 8...♗d7 with 9.a3?! (both h3 and a3 is too much of a good thing: time counts for something in chess) 9...♖c8 10.♗a2 a6 11.♕e2 b5 12.♗d2 ♕c7 13.♘g5 ♘e5 14.f4 ♘c4 and Black was very OK.

9.0-0



9...b6

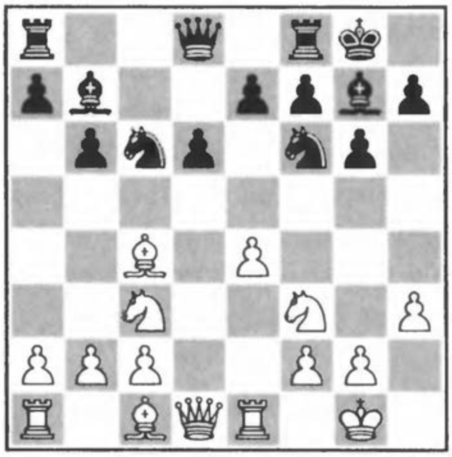
For 9...a6 10.♖e1 see the next game Kogan-Bemporad, Genova 2002.

In case of 9...♗d7 10.♖e1 ♕c8 11.♘d5 ♘xd5 12.exd5 ♘e5 13.♗b3 b5 14.c3 ♘xf3+ 15.♕xf3 the pressure on e7 is unpleasant, and this gives White a long-term advantage. White kept his edge in Duarte-Limberg, Balneario Camboriu 2005, after 15...e5!? 16.dxe6 (16.a4) 16...fxe6 17.♕g3 d5 18.♗f4.

10.♖e1

Also good is 10.♕e2 ♗b7 11.♗g5 with ♖ad1 coming up.

10...♗b7



11.♘d5!?

I wanted to play a quick c3 to close the diagonal of Black's Dragon bishop. Moreover, after a possible exchange on d5 I will get the e-file for my rook to press down on e7.

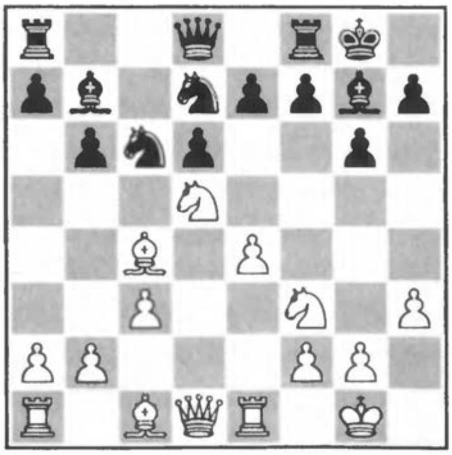
Other normal moves where 11.♕e2 and 11.♗g5.

11...♘d7

White retains an edge after 11...♘a5 12.♘xf6+ ♗xf6 13.♗d5 (13.♗d3) 13...♕c7 14.c3 ♘c4 15.♖e2.

12.c3

My computer engine comes up with the original idea to exchange Black's c6-knight with 12.♗b5!? a6 13.♗xc6 ♗xc6 14.♗g5 ♖e8 15.♘d4 ♗b7 16.♕d2. This seems slightly better for White, just compare the pieces.



12...e6

Black is aiming for complications, but he needed to be accurate with 12...♘de5! 13.♘xe5 ♘xe5 14.♗b3 (14.♗g5!? f6 15.♘xf6+ ♔h8 16.♘d5 ♘xc4 17.♗xe7 ♕d7 18.♗xf8 ♖xf8 19.♕e2 with unclear play is an interesting option I thought about during the game) 14...e6 15.♘f4 ♕e7 16.♘d3 ♖fd8. This seems very solid for Black, but it is clearly not why someone like Alterman plays the Dragon.

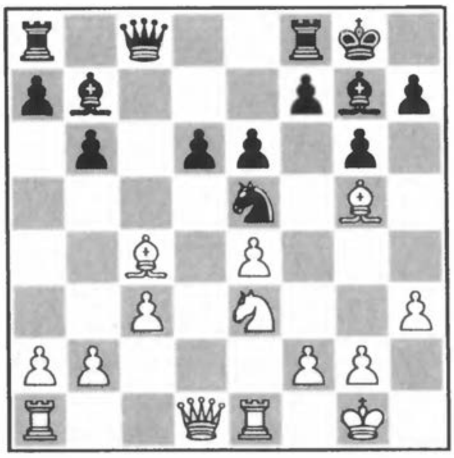
13.♗g5!

Otherwise Black will play ...♘e5 with nice active play.

13...♕c8

The point of my play was 13...f6 14.♘f4!. In fact the same idea once brought me an important win with black against Smirin, but in the English Opening! Here 14...fxg5 15.♘xe6 ♕e7 16.♘fxg5! (16.♘xf8+ ♔xf8 17.♕d5 ♘f6 18.♕b5 planning e5) 16...♘ce5 17.♗b3 seems very promising for White, but I leave it to you to have fun and analyse it deeper.

14.♘e3 ♘ce5 15.♘xe5 ♘xe5



16.♗f1!

After ...e6 the bishop no longer needs to stay on the a2-g8 diagonal – it has work to do on the f1-a6 diagonal. Besides, the bishop might help my king should Black manage to activate his light-squared bishop.

Just bad is 16.♗b3 ♗xe4 17.f3 ♗c6 18.♕xd6 ♗xf3!.

16...♗xe4

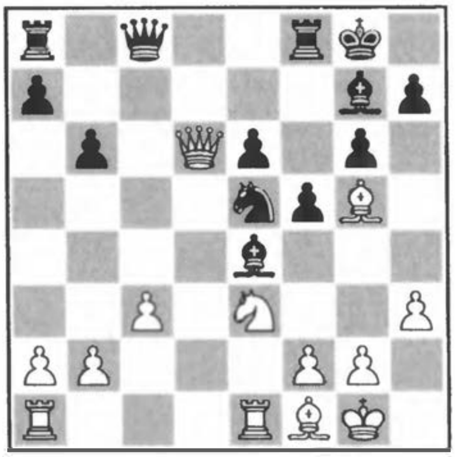
Typical of Alterman, going for complications! Instead 16...f6 17.♗f4 ♖d8 18.♕c2 and ♖ad1 gives nice pressure (just look at ♗g7, how does he feel here?).

17.♕xd6

I assessed that my better pieces and pressure on the e-file should promise me some edge, though I have to play very accurately in view of his possible actions with ...f5.

17...f5

Black hopes to get chances on the kingside, but ♗f1 is doing a great defending job, and pawn e6 is left as a weakness. Still, it took me some time to refute this idea. White is slightly better after 17...♕b7 18.♖ad1 as 18...♗f3 is met by 19.♖d4!.



18.♕a3!

This was a hard move to make. Finally I saw the plan of moving my queen to b3 and my g5-bishop to a3.

18...h6 19.♗e7!

White also keeps some edge after 19.♗f4 ♘f7 20.f3 ♗b7 21.♘c4.

19...♖e8 20.♖ad1

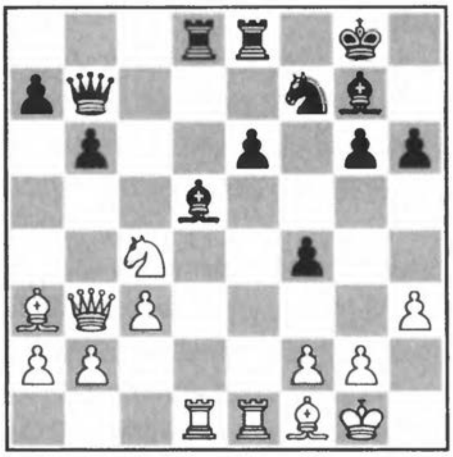
Another piece enters the game, harmony is the key-word here!

20...♕b7 21.♗d6 ♘f7 22.♕b3! ♖ad8

I had to consider many lines, but a funny one was: 22...♘xd6 23.♖xd6 ♕e7 (23...♕f7 24.♗c4) 24.♖xe6! ♕xe6 25.♗c4 and wins. ♗f1 has woken up to finish the job of his friends!

23.♗a3 f4 24.♘c4 ♗d5

Or 24...f3 25.g3 ♗d5 26.♕c2 ♕c6 27.♘e3 ♗e4 28.♕b3 with a slight pull.



25.♕c2!

Suddenly pawn g6 is a target as well! He may have defended e6, but my queen is never tired of making trouble!

25...b5

If 25...♕c6 then 26.♘d2.

26.♘d2 a5

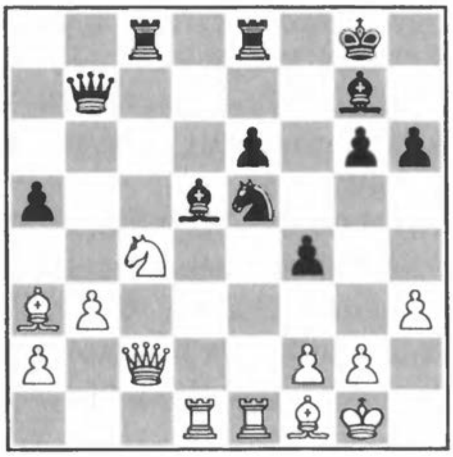
Trying to trap my bishop?

27.c4!

Another move I had to see in advance, but a pleasant one to make!

27...bxc4 28.♘xc4 ♖c8 29.b3 ♘e5?

Black was in trouble anyway, but he overlooks something in his calculations. Here 29...♔h7 is met by 30.♗d3!, and 29...g5 by 30.♕g6! ♘h8 31.♕h5.



30.♖xe5!

Accurate calculation is always needed to finish a nice game.

30...♗xc4

30...♗xe5 31.♕xg6+ ♗g7 32.♘d6! was the point!

31.♗xc4 ♗xe5 32.♕xg6+ ♔h8

White also wins after 32...♕g7 33.♗xe6+ ♔h8 34.♕xg7+ ♔xg7 35.♗xc8 ♖xc8 36.♖d5, and after 32...♗g7 33.♗xe6+ ♔h8 34.♖d7!.

33.♗xe6 ♖cd8 34.♖d7! 1-0

This was the move that Alterman missed!

□ **Arthur Kogan**
■ **Filippo Bemporad**
Genova 2002

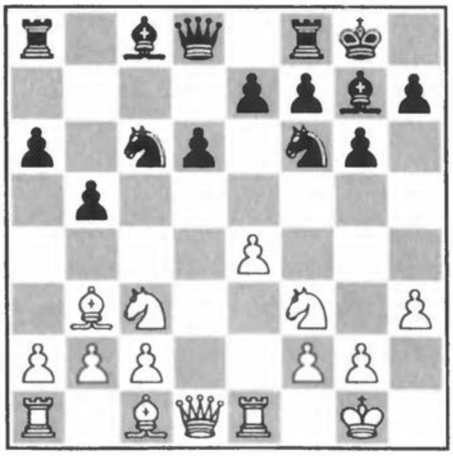
1.e4 c5 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.♘f3 g6 4.d4 cxd4 5.♘xd4 ♗g7 6.♘f3

Via yet another different move order we reach our SOS subject.

6...d6 7.♗c4 a6 8.0-0 ♘f6 9.h3 0-0 10.♖e1 b5

10...♘a5 11.♗b3 ♘xb3 12.axb3 ♗d7 13.♘d5 (13.♗g5) 13...e6 (13...♘xd5 14.exd5 ♖c8 15.c3±) 14.♘xf6+ ♗xf6 15.♕xd6 ♗c6 16.♕g3± Duarte-Pradines, Villa Martelli 2004.

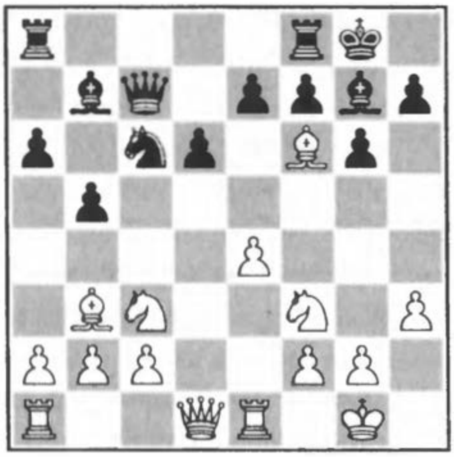
10...b5 11.♗b3



11...♗b7

In case of 11...♘a5 White can play the standard 12.♗g5 ♗b7 13.♕e2 with ♖ad1 to follow. Alternatively, also good is 12.♘d5!?. After 12...♘xb3 13.axb3 ♗b7 14.c3 we reach a typical position which is usually more pleasant for White, since he has more space for his pieces, and Black's two bishops are kept in check by White's pawns. In the game Elias-Tobares, Buenos Aires 2005, play continued 14...♘d7 15.♗g5 f6 16.♗h4 e6 and now, instead of the game continuation 17.♘b4?! ♘c5 18.♘d4 ♕d7 with counterplay, White could have kept a small edge with 17.♘f4 ♕e7 18.♗g3.

Worse is 11...♕c7 12.♗g5 ♗b7 13.♗xf6! This is an important idea to know, since now ♘d5 comes with tempo!



13...♗xf6 (13...exf6 14.♘d5 or 14.a4 with a clear edge) 14.♘d5 ♕d8 15.♘xf6+ exf6 16.♗d5± Mayorga-Guerra, Balneario Camboriu 2005. Instead of the last move also good are 16.a4 and 16.♕d2.

12.♗g5

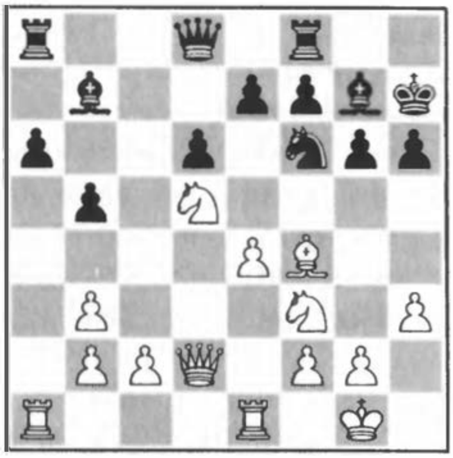
12.♗f4 followed by 13.♕d2 is also a logical plan, to prepare ♗h6.

12...h6 13.♗f4 ♘a5 14.♘d5

Also possible was 14.♕d3.

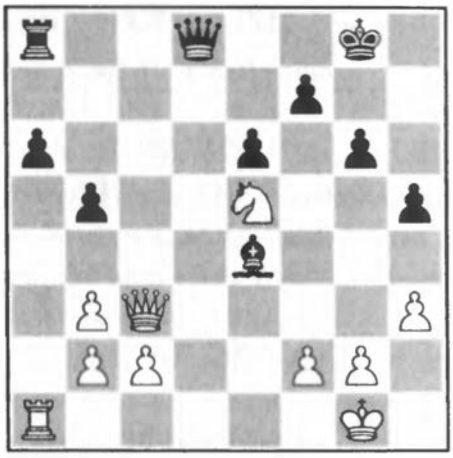
14...♘xb3 15.axb3 ♔h7 16.♕d2?!

This mistake allows Black to demonstrate his tactical abilities. Correct was 16.♕d3 when White has a small edge.



16...♘xe4! 17.♖xe4 e6 18.♗xd6 ♗xd5 19.♗xf8 ♗xe4 20.♗xg7 ♔xg7 21.♕c3+ ♔g8 22.♘e5 h5!

Black prevents 23.♘g4 and is OK now. I tried hard in the rest of the game, but Black defended well.



23.♕e3 ♗xc2 24.♖c1 ♕d5 25.♔h2 ♖c8 26.♕f4 ♕b7 27.g4 hxg4 28.♘xg4 ♗f5 29.♘f6+ ♔g7 30.♖xc8 ♕xc8 31.♕e5 ♕c2 32.♔g2 ♕xb3 33.f3 ♕c2+ 34.♔g3 ♕c1

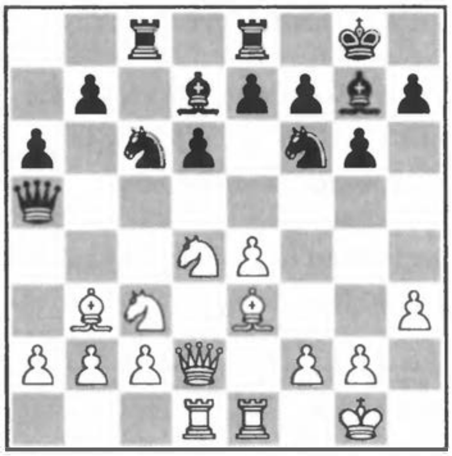
Now I have to be satisfied with a perpetual.

35.♘h5+ ♔f8 36.♕d6+ ♔g8 37.♕d8+ ♔h7 38.♘f6+ ♔g7 39.♘e8+ ♔f8 40.♘c7+ ♔g7 41.♘e8+ ♔f8 ½-½

My inspiration for this surprising opening idea was derived from a great game by Mikhail Tal. Here it is with some brief notes.

☐ **Mikhail Tal**
■ **Curt Hansen**
Reykjavik 1986

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 g6 6.♗c4 ♗g7 7.0-0 0-0 8.h3 ♘c6 9.♗e3 ♗d7 10.♖e1 ♖c8 11.♗b3 ♕a5 12.♕d2 ♖fe8 13.♖ad1 a6



14.♘f3!

With more space it is logical to keep pieces on the board, but Tal was one of the first grandmasters to introduce this 'simple plan' here.

14...b5 15.♗h6 ♘d8

William Watson later tried 15...♗h8. After 16.♘g5 ♘e5 Chandler (London 1987) played 17.♕f4 ♘c4 18.♘d5 ♗c6 19.c3 ♗xd5 20.♖xd5 ♗g7 and the game ended in a draw. Jansa-Watson, Gausdal 1988, went 17.f4 ♘c4 18.e5! ♘h5 19.♕f2 with an attack.

However, even stronger was 16.e5! when White gets a nice initiative. A line I really like, runs 16...b4 17.exf6 bxc3 18.♗xf7+!! ♔xf7 19.♘g5+ ♔xf6 (19...♔g8 20.f7 mate) 20.♕xd6+!! exd6 21.♖xd6+ ♗e6 22.♖dxe6+ ♖xe6 23.♖xe6+. Did you ever see such a mate?

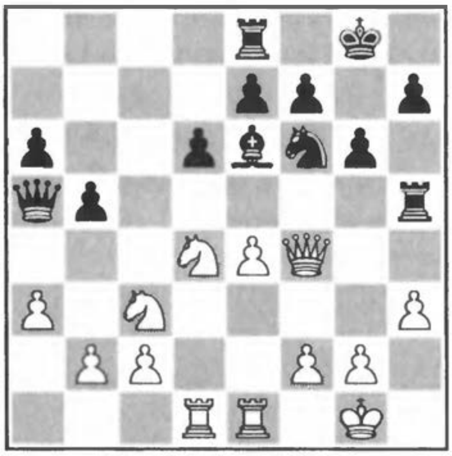
16.♘d4

With ♘f5-ideas 'à la Tal'. Possible was 16.e5!? dxe5 17.♗xg7 ♔xg7 18.♘xe5 ♗e6 19.♕e3 with an initiative.

16...♖c5

White is better after 16...e5 17.♗xg7 ♔xg7 18.♘f5+! ♗xf5 19.exf5.

17.a3 ♗xh6 18.♕xh6 ♖h5 19.♕f4 ♘e6 20.♗xe6 ♗xe6



21.g4!?

Tal plays creative chess as he did in the good old days! With 21.g4 he is trying to trap the black rook! In fact he could also play the simple 21.♘xe6 fxe6 22.e5! dxe5 23.♕e3 with a serious positional edge.

21...♖xh3 22.f3 b4

Less clear was 22...h5! 23.g5 ♘h7 24.♔g2 (24.♘xe6 fxe6 25.♔g2 ♖f8) 24...♗d7 25.♘f5 gxf5 26.♔xh3 fxe4+ 27.♔h4! exf3 28.♔xh5.

23.axb4 ♕xb4 24.♔g2 ♕xb2 25.♘d5! ♗xd5 26.exd5 ♘xd5 27.♕d2 ♖h4 28.♔g3!

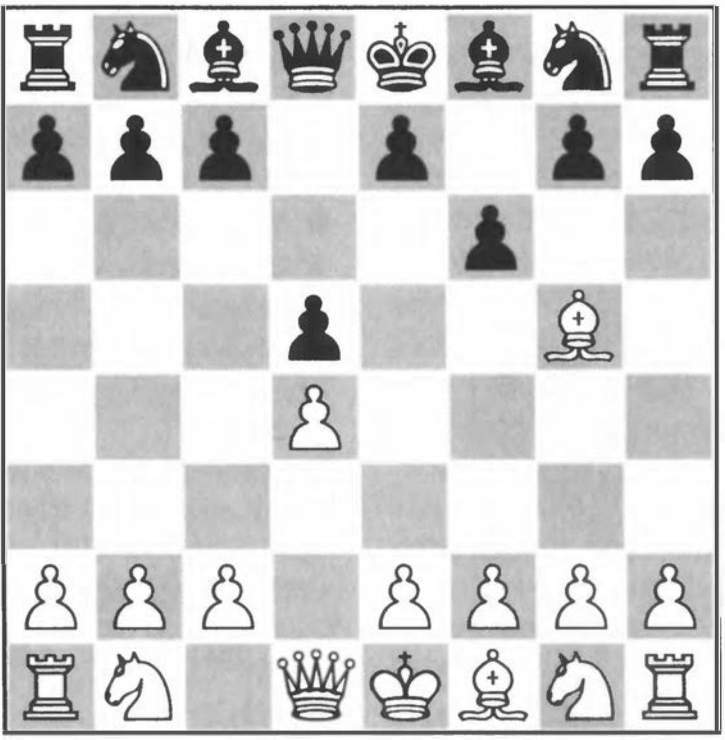
Suddenly, after the smoke has cleared Black appears to be just lost.

28...♘c3 29.♖a1 ♘e2+ 30.♘xe2 ♕f6 31.g5! 1-0

CHAPTER 10

Jeroen Bosch

Chasing the 'Trompowsky' Bishop



1.d4 d5 2.♗g5 f6

With **1.d4 d5 2.♗g5** White has his bishop shooting in thin air.

This is an irregular opening that resembles the Trompowsky (1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗g5). Not surprisingly it has often been played by Trompowsky expert Julian Hodgson. Should Black continue with the natural 2...♘f6, then his pawns will be doubled following 3.♗xf6.

Equalizing is perhaps not Black's biggest problem. A reliable (but somewhat boring) system is 2...h6 3.♗h4 c6 4.♘f3 ♕b6 5.b3 ♗f5 for example.

We set ourselves the task here to surprise our opponent and achieve a tense situation where Black can play for the win. That is best done with

2...f6!?

This ugly move is what this SOS is all about. Rather than putting the question to the bishop with the natural 2...h6 we block the natural development square of the knight and weaken the a2-g8 diagonal. So much for sensible opening play!

However, to mention two very concrete and positive points now:

- after 3.♗h4 Black has 3...♘h6 planning 4...♘f5 to further harass the bishop, and
- after 3.♗f4 the extra tempo (...f6) may turn out useful in preparation of ...e5.

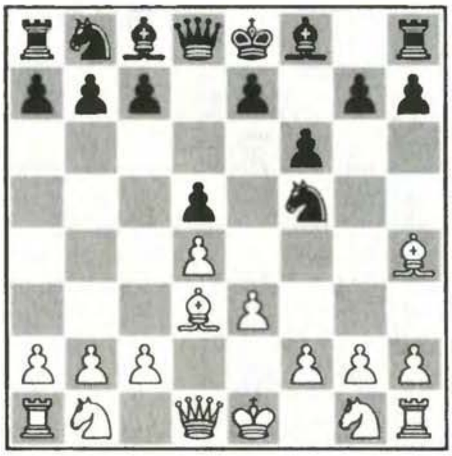
☐ **Victor Mikhalevski**
■ **Leonid Milov**
Dieren 1997

1.d4 d5 2.♗g5 f6 3.♗h4 ♘h6 4.e3

The main alternative is 4.f3 – see the next game Drazic-Zhang Pengxiang. Neither 4.c4 ♘f5, nor 4.♘f3 ♘f5 5.♗g3 h5 can worry Black. In fact Black has a bright future in both cases.

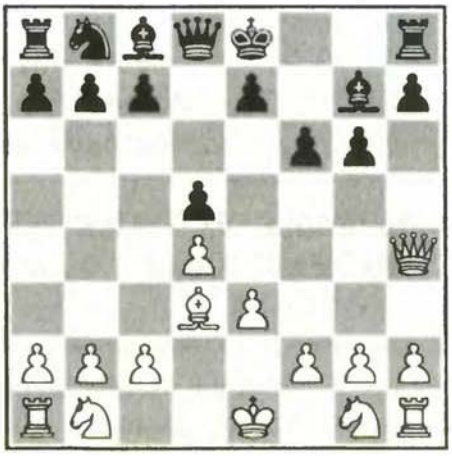
4...♘f5 5.♗g3

Not forced, as White has 5.♗d3.



A simple solution now is 5...♘c6 6.♗g3 ♘b4 7.♗e2 ♘xg3 8.hxg3 ♗f5 9.♘a3 e5 and Black held a slight initiative in Kosic-Volkov, Korinthos 2002. However, Black more often just takes the bishop, or continues his ambitious strategy with 5...h5.

● 5...♘xh4 6.♕h5+ g6 7.♕xh4 ♗g7

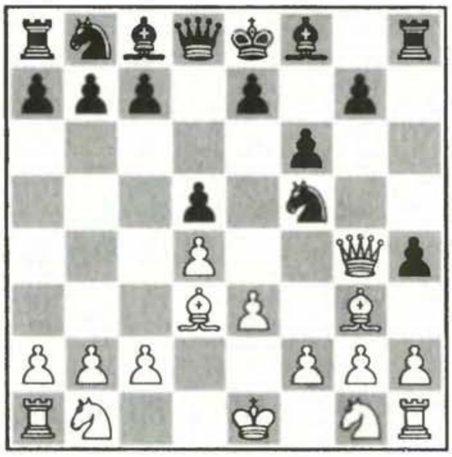


Owing to his bishop pair Black is absolutely fine. Some examples:

- 8.♘d2 c5 9.c3 ♘c6 10.♘gf3 ♕b6 11.♖b1 0-0 12.0-0 f5, Lukasiewicz-Fressinet, Cannes 1998.
- 8.♘c3 ♘c6 9.a3 e5 10.dxe5 ♘xe5 11.0-0-0 c6 12.e4 d4 13.♘ce2 ♗e6, Biriukov-Yagupov, Tula 2004.
- 8.c4 ♘c6 9.a3 e5 10.♘c3 exd4 with a superior game in A.Smith-Bosch, Manchester 1997.

● 5...h5. This is what I played the second time around. Now 6.♗xf5 is a sad necessity. In Rogers-Bosch, Hoogeveen 1997, Black's game was preferable following 6...♗xf5 7.h3 e6 8.♗g3 h4 9.♗h2 c5 10.♗xb8 ♖xb8 11.♘f3 ♔f7.

The problem for White is that 6.♗g3? runs into 6...h4. Now 7.♕g4

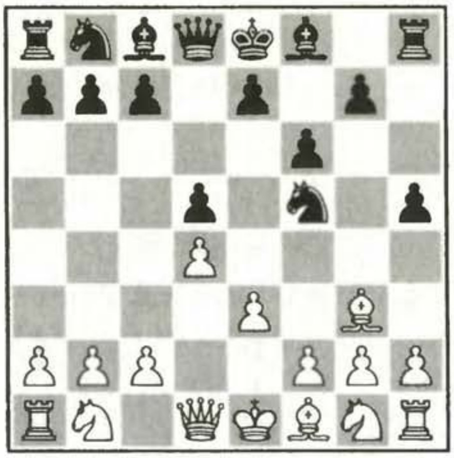


should be the justification of White's play. This position has occurred in practice, when Black settled for 7...e6 8.♕g6+ ♔e7 9.♗f4 ♗d7, and for 7...hxg3 8.♕g6+ ♔d7 9.♗xf5+ e6.

However, as Ian Rogers pointed out to me in the post mortem of our game, Black wins on the spot with 7...♘d6! 8.♕g6+ ♘f7 9.♗f4 e5 10.dxe5 fxe5 11.♗xe5 ♖h6!. Perhaps one of our SOS readers will be able to strike in this way!

As an afterthought, 5.♘f3?! is dubious since 5...g5 6.♗xg5 (6.♗g3 h5) 6...fxg5 7.♘xg5 is hardly enough should you not fall for 7...e6? 8.♕h5+ ♔d7?! 9.♘f7 ♕e8 10.g4! Femandes-Mellado Trivino, Elgoibar 1998. Decent moves are 7...♕d6, 7...♘g7 or even 7...h5.

5...h5



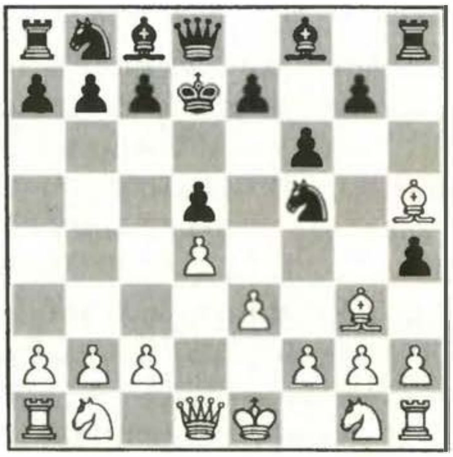
Black is punishing White for his frivolous 2.♗g5. He consistently chases the bishop (2...f6, 3...♘h6 and 4...♘f5, and now 5...h5 threatening 6...h4) aiming to gain a structural advantage. Therefore 5...♘xg3 would have been all wrong. After 6.hxg3 White's structure is preferable (...f6 is weakening and the open h-file favours White too).

Unwilling to acquiesce into something like 6.h4 ♘xg3 7.fxg3 White is now forced to seek complications with

6.♗e2!?

For 6.♗d3? h4 transposes to our comments above (5.♗d3 h5 6.♗g3? h4).

6...h4 7.♗h5+ ♔d7



Clearly, this SOS makes for exciting chess! Black must mind his king, but far more concretely White's dark-squared bishop is trapped.

8.♗f4

This is best. White has also started a counter-attack on the knight with either 8.♗g6 or 8.♗g4. Let's have a look:

- 8.♗g6 ♘xe3 (8...e6 9.♗f4 ♘e7 10.♕d3 ♘a6 11.c3 ♘xg6 12.♕xg6 ♕e8 13.♕xe8+ ♔xe8 and Black is better in the ending, Piankov-Benitah, La Fère 2003; 8...hxg3 9.♗xf5+ e6 followed by 10...gxf2+ is a decent alternative) 9.fxe3 hxg3 10.♕g4+ e6 11.♘f3 ♗d6 12.♘c3 c6 13.0-0-0 gxh2 14.e4 gave White some compensation in Kerkmeester-Kroeze, Enschede 1998.
- 8.♗g4 e6 (8...hxg3 9.♗xf5+ e6) 9.♗f4 g5 10.e4 dxe4 11.♗c1 and this position may be compared to our main game after White's 10th move. The inclusion of ♗g4 and ...e6 should favour Black.

8...g5

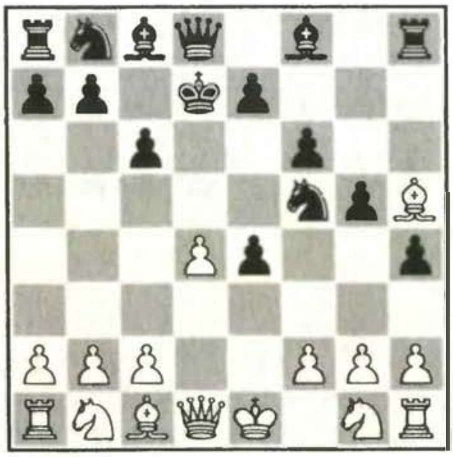
Finally trapping the bishop. White can save it though at the cost of a pawn.

9.e4 dxe4 10.♗c1

Back at square one! White has made 5 out of the first 10 moves with this bishop.

10...c6

Not 10...e6 11.d5!.



11.♘c3

Just bad is 11.♗g4? ♔c7 (even stronger than 11...e6) 12.♘e2 ♘d6 (12...h3! 13.g3 – 13...♗xh3 ♖xh3 14.gxh3 ♘h4; 13.gxh3 ♘h4 – 13...♘e3 14.♗xe3 ♗xg4) 13.♗xc8 ♛xc8 14.♘bc3 h3! 15.g3 ♛g4 and Black had achieved a winning position in the blitz game Adams-Van Wely, Wijk aan Zee 1998.

11...♔c7

Now d4 is attacked, so there is nothing better than pushing the d-pawn with

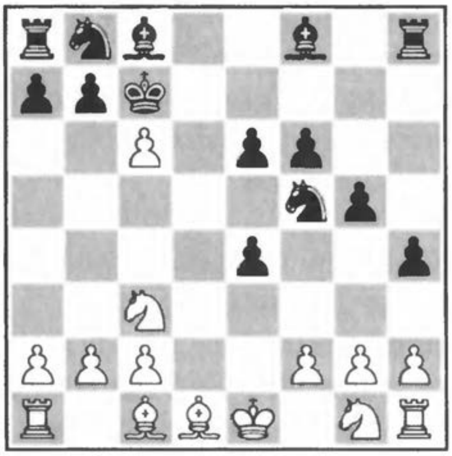
12.d5 e6

Interesting is 12...e5 which has not been tested yet.

13.dxc6 ♛xd1+

Deserving of attention is 13...♘xc6.

14.♗xd1



14...♗b4

Not the only move, but let's respect the stem game.

In Galyas-I.Almasi, Budapest 2000, Black preferred 14...e3!?, to fracture his adversary's pawn structure. After 15.fxe3 he should perhaps have preferred 15...♘xc6 to 15...bxc6 16.e4 ♘d4 17.e5! with a slight edge for White.

That the ending in the diagram position is fine for Black is easily shown by means of my 1997 (New in Chess Yearbook 42) suggestion of 14...♘xc6 15.♘xe4 ♗e7 when Black is comfortable in the ending.

15.♗d2

15.cxb7 ♗xb7 gives dangerous play along the diagonal.

15...♗xc3

Not obligatory. Other moves are 15...e3 and 15...♘xc6.

16.♗xc3 e5 17.cxb7 ♔xb7 18.f3 ♘e3

18...e3 is a worthwhile option. **19.♔f2** and now **19...♘xd1+ 20.♖xd1 ♗f5** gave equal chances. Black could have retreated his knight to f5 (planning ...e3+ after all), since 19...♘f5 20.fxe4 fails to 20...♘g3! 21.hxg3 hxg3+ 22.♔xg3 ♖xh1.

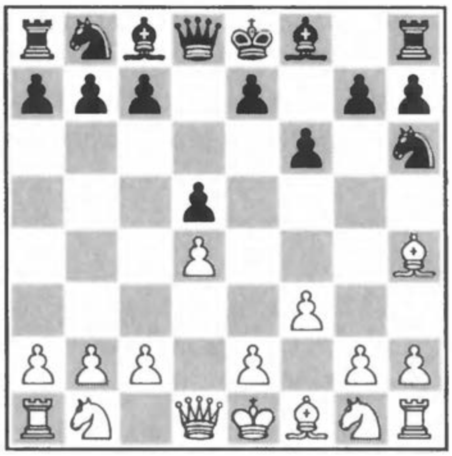
Theoretically it is clear that Black has few problems following 3.♗h4 ♘h6 4.e3 ♘f5.

☐ **Sinisa Drazic**

■ **Zhang Pengxiang**

Cannes 2005

1.d4 d5 2.♗g5 f6 3.♗h4 ♘h6 4.f3

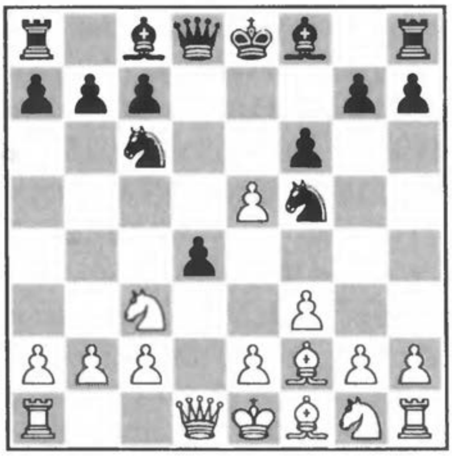


White returns the compliment. Drazic blocks the natural square of his knight to save his Trompowsky bishop any further embarrassments. It will find some rest on f2. Black has plenty of opportunities now.

4...c5

Attacking the centre and possibly taking advantage of the fact that the dark-squared bishop is no longer there to protect the queenside (...♛b6). Playable, though a bit passive is 4...c6, which I won't go into. Here 4...e5 5.dxe5 ♘f5 6.♗f2 fxe5 7.e4 dxe4 8.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 9.fxe4 ♘d6 10.♘c3 was agreed drawn in Dudas-Nemeth, Budapest 2000. However, since that is Black's maximum result from this boring (and slightly worse) queenless middlegame we will ignore 4...e5 too.

Worthy of attention (as an alternative to the text) is 4...♘c6 5.♘c3 ♘f5 (or 5...e6 6.♕d2 ♗b4 7.0-0-0 ♘f5 8.♗f2 ♘d6 9.e3 ♘a5∓ Bistrikova-Stiazhkina, St Petersburg 2001) 6.♗f2 e5 7.dxe5 d4



which is good for Black. In Chepukaitis-Novik, Internet 2002, there followed 8.g4 dxc3 9.♕xd8+ ♘xd8 10.gxf5 cxb2 with an excellent game.

5.dxc5

Black is superior in the centre following this, but White increases the radius of his bishop for soon it will arrive on f2. This is why the alternatives 5.e3 and 5.c3 to bolster the centre won't frighten the second player.

5.e3 ♘c6 6.♘c3 e6 7.♗f2 a6!? was all right for Black in Fries Nielsen-Klimov, Stockholm 1998.

5.c3 and now:

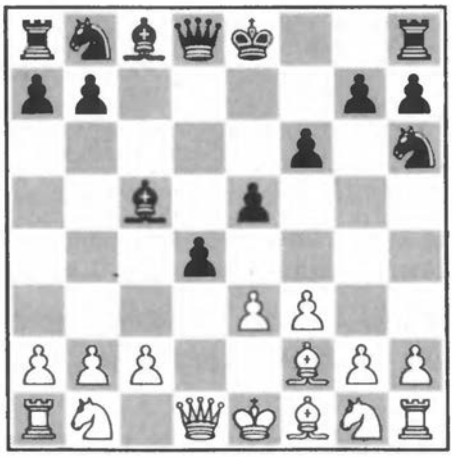
– 5...♘c6 6.dxc5 (perhaps not fully in line with his previous move) 6...e5 7.♗f2 (7.b4 a5 8.b5 ♘a7 9.♗f2 ♘xb5) 7...♗f5 8.e4!? dxe4 9.♕xd8+ ♖xd8 10.♘d2 exf3 11.gxf3 ♗e7 and Black had a slight edge in Bonin-Lapshun, Parsippany 2001.

– 5...cxd4 6.cxd4 ♘c6 7.e3 e5!? (quiet play gives approximately equal chances) 8.♘c3 ♘f5 9.♗f2 ♗e6 (9...♗b4) 10.♘ge2 ♗b4 11.♘g3 ♕a5 and Black had the initiative in Lapshun-Nakamura, New York 2002.

– 5...♕b6 6.♕d2 e6 7.e4 (7.g4?! ♘c6 8.♗f2 e5 9.e3 ♗e6 10.♘e2 ♗e7 11.♗g2 0-0 12.0-0 ♖ad8 and Black's position is superior, Alonso-Alvarez Ibarra, Bizkaia 2004) 7...♘c6 8.♘e2 dxe4 9.fxe4 ♗e7 10.♗f2 0-0 11.h3 f5! 12.e5 ♖d8 13.♕c2 ♗d7 14.♘d2 cxd4 15.♘xd4 ♘xd4 16.♗xd4 ♗h4+ 17.♔d1 ♕c7 with a clear edge for Black in M.Houska-Prié, London 1994.

5...♘f5

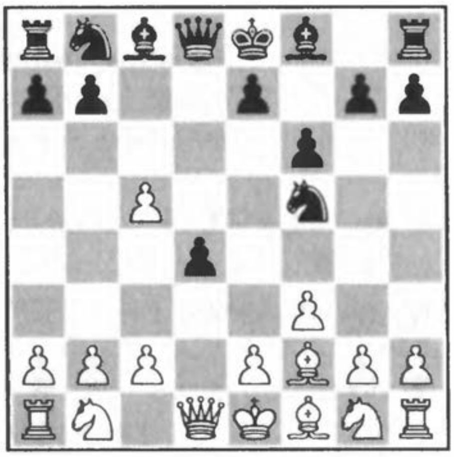
Going for a sharp ending. Drazic has also encountered 5...e5 6.♗f2 d4 (6...♘a6 7.e4 dxe4 8.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 9.♗xa6 bxa6 10.♘c3 was slightly better for White in Drazic-Brancaleoni, Assisi 2003) 7.e3 ♗xc5



8.exd4 ♗xd4 (8...exd4!? 9.♗c4 ♘f5 10.♘e2 ♘c6 11.c3 ♘e3 12.♗xe3 dxe3 looks OK for Black, Chepukaitis-Milov, fide.com 2002) 9.♗xd4 exd4 10.♗b5+ (10.♗c4 ♘c6 – 10...♘f5! – 11.♘d2 ♔d7?! – 11...♘f5 12.♕e2+ ♔f8 – 12.♘b3 ♔c7 13.♕d2 ♘f5 14.♗b5 ♕d5 15.♗xc6 bxc6 16.0-0-0 is suspicious for Black, Clarke-Lalic, Belfast 2001) 10...♘c6 11.c3 0-0 12.♘e2 ♖e8?!

(12...♘f5 13.♗xc6 bxc6 14.♘xd4– 14.cxd4 ♖e8 15.0-0 c5! – 14...♖b8!? and Black has excellent compensation for the pawn) 13.cxd4 ♘f5 14.0-0 ♘e3 15.♕b3+ ♔h8 16.♖f2 ♘xd4 (16...♗f5 17.♘bc3) 17.♘xd4 ♕xd4 18.♖d2 (18.♗xe8 ♘d1 19.♕c2 ♗f5 20.♕d2 ♕xf2+ 21.♕xf2 ♘xf2 22.♔xf2 ♖xe8 23.♘c3 is equal) 18...♕c5?(18...♕e5! 19.♗xe8? – 19.♘a3 ♗e6 – 19...♘g4! is the saving resource when Black's chances are preferable) 19.♗xe8 ♘c2+ 20.♔f1 ♘xa1 21.♕c3 ♕xc3 22.♘xc3 ♗f5 23.♗a4 and White won the ending in Drazic-Geenen, Milan 2002.

6.♗f2 d4



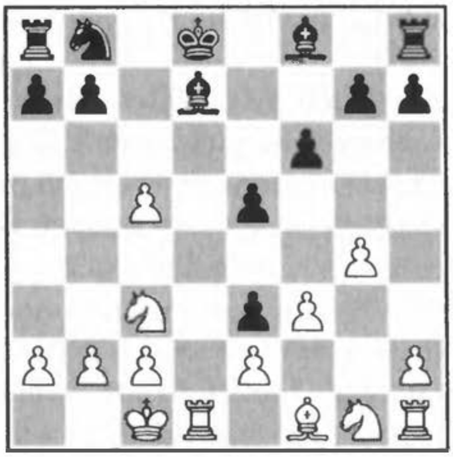
Staking a big claim. Black is vastly superior if he will be allowed to continue with ...e5, ...♗xc5 and ...♘c6. Therefore Drazic now forces an unorthodox ending with

7.g4

There now follows a forced sequence.

7...♘e3 8.♗xe3 dxe3 9.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 10.♘c3 e5 11.0-0-0+ ♗d7!

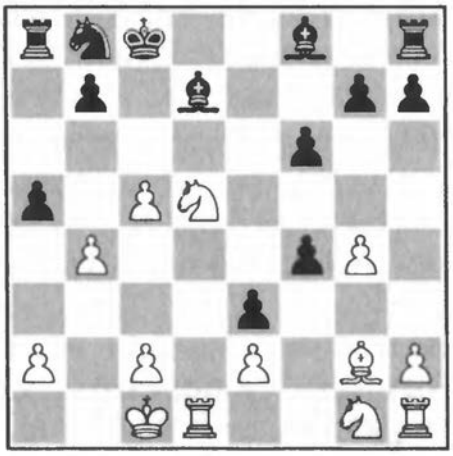
For the moment White has a lead in development. However, how should he untangle his kingside? Black may worry about his e3-pawn, but clearly it could be the nail in White's coffin. One could call this position double-edged, but I would prefer Black who holds more space and controls the dark squares.



12.f4

This pawn sacrifice must be correct. White absolutely has to keep the initiative and find some means to develop his kingside. The following game was extremely depressing from White's point of view: 12.♘e4 ♘a6 13.g5 f5 14.♘d6 ♗xd6! (14...♔c7 15.♘f7 ♖g8 16.♘xe5 ♗e6 17.f4±) 15.♖xd6 (15.cxd6 f4 and White's knight will never be able to enter the game. Not that the game is any better) 15...♔c7 16.♖d3 f4! 17.♗h3 ♖ad8 18.♗xd7 ♖xd7 19.♘h3 ♖hd8 and Black easily won. He is simply a piece up, as White's knight will never go beyond the squares h3 and g1. Mohrlok-Ter Minasian, Germany Bundesliga B 1999/00.

12...exf4 13.♗g2 ♔c8 14.b4 a5 15.♘d5



Drazic has managed to create some real

threats. His opponent is up to the task though. The subsequent exchange sacrifice is forced but strong.

15...♖a6! 16.♘b6+

Biting the bullet, perhaps he could wait with 16.c3.

16...♖xb6 17.cxb6 ♗xb4

Black has huge compensation for the exchange in the form of one pawn, the bishop pair, space, and control over the dark squares. White must worry about several loose pawns and his development.

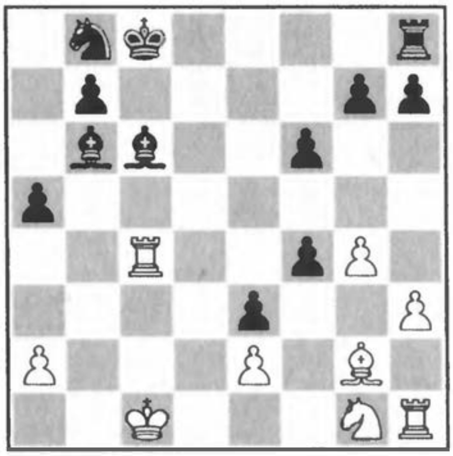
18.h3 ♗b5!?

Or 18...♗a3+ 19.♔b1 ♗c5.

19.c3?

To exchange at least one of Black's powerful bishops. But White loses too much material in the process.

19...♗xc3 20.♖d5 ♗c6 21.♖c5 ♗d4 22.♖c4 ♗xb6



23.h4?!

I would prefer 23.♗xc6 ♘xc6 24.♖xf4.

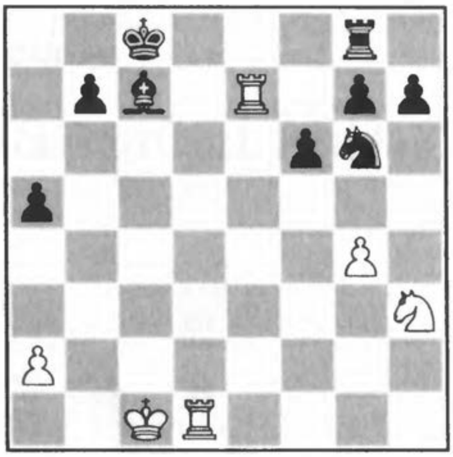
23...♗c7 24.♗xc6 ♘xc6 25.♘h3

At least White has finally managed to disentangle his kingside.

25...f3 26.exf3 ♘e5

Eliminating more material by exchanging his e-pawn for two of White's kingside pawns.

27.♖c3 ♘xf3 28.♖xe3 ♘xh4 29.♖e7 ♖g8 30.♖d1 ♘g6



Just in time to check White's activity. With three pawns and a bishop versus a rook Black should win. The rest is a 'matter of technique' as they say.

31.♖e4 ♖d8 32.a4 h6 33.♖xd8+ ♔xd8 34.♔c2 ♔d7 35.♔b3 ♘e5 36.♘f4 g5 37.♘h5 ♔e6 38.♔c3 ♗b6 39.♖e2 ♗c5 40.♔b3 ♔f7!

Planning ...♔g6 and ...♘xg4. White's reply is the best practical chance. But with so much material behind he will never succeed in setting up the desired light-square blockade.

41.♖xe5 fxe5 42.♘g3 ♔g6 43.♔c4 ♗f2 44.♘e4 ♗e1 45.♘c5

Or 45.♔d5 h5 46.gxh5+ ♔xh5 47.♔xe5 g4 48.♔f4 ♔h4 and wins.

45...h5 46.♘d3 ♗g3 47.gxh5+ ♔xh5 48.♔d5 g4 49.♔e4 ♔h4 50.♘c5 ♗f4 51.♘d3 g3 52.♔f3 ♔h3 53.♘e1 ♗d2

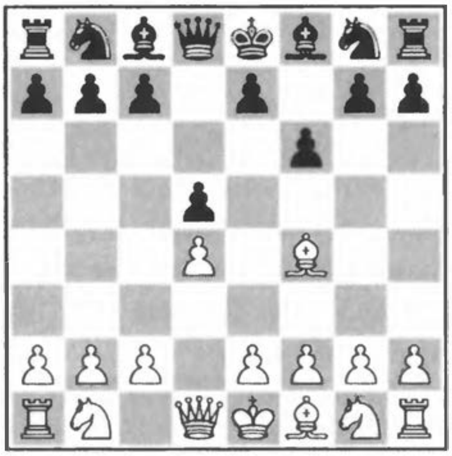
0-1

☐ **Miklos Galyas**
■ **Gabor Kallai**
Budapest 2000

1.d4 d5 2.♗g5 f6 3.♗f4

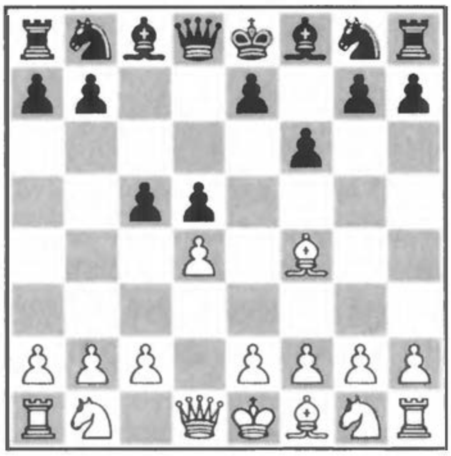
Perhaps this is more sensible than 3.♗h4 which allows Black to execute his main idea with 3...♘h6. White sort of returns to SOS-waters (1.d4 d5 2.♗f4 was discussed in

SOS-5) aiming to demonstrate that the extra tempo (2...f6) is harmful for Black. It is true that Black can no longer harmoniously develop with ...♘f6. However, as we will see below, Black can make use of the extra tempo to prepare ...e5.



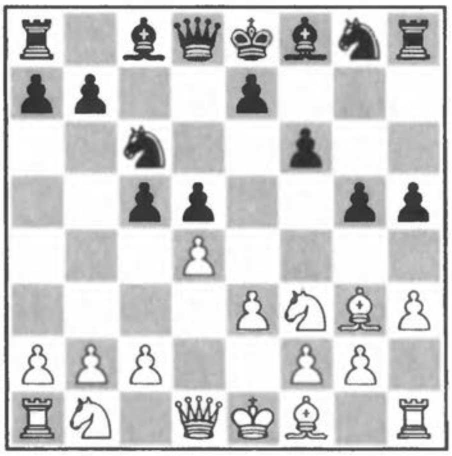
3...♘c6

Developing a piece and preparing ...e5. Worthy of serious attention is 3...c5.



● 4.♗xb8. A characteristic move that is also a motif in the Baltic Defence (1.d4 d5 2.c4 ♗f5). White removes the b8-knight to gain control over square d4 and to speed up his development (♗b5 check might make sense soon). 4...♖xb8 5.♘c3 e6 (highly ambitious is 5...e5 6.e3 cxd4 7.exd4 ♗b4 8.♗b5+ ♗d7 – 8...♔f7!? 9.dxe5 ♕a5 – 9.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 10.♘e2 ♘e7 11.0-0 0-0 12.♕d3 ♗xc3 13.♘xc3 e4 14.♕d2 b5 with a slight edge for Black in Argandona Riveiro-Bellon Lopez, Mislata 2003) 6.e3 (6.e4 dxe4 7.d5 Hodgson-Steingrimsson, German Bundesliga 2002/03, is not very convincing after 7...exd5 8.♘xd5 ♗e6) 6...a6 7.♗d3 f5 8.g4 ♘f6 9.gxf5 c4 10.♗f1 exf5 11.♗g2 ♗b4 12.♘e2 ♗e6 13.0-0 0-0 14.a3 ♗a5 15.b4 ♗c7 16.f4 b5 with excellent play. Torre-Nielsen, Bled Olympiad 2002.

● 4.e3 ♘c6 5.♘f3 g5!? (or 5...♗g4 6.♗e2 cxd4 7.exd4 e6 8.c3 ♗d6 9.♗g3 ♘ge7 10.♘h4 ♗xe2 11.♕xe2 ♔f7 12.0-0 g5 13.♘f3 ♘g6 with an easy game for Black. Akobian-Popov, Novgorod 1999. While 5...♗f5 6.♗d3 ♕d7 7.♘c3 g5!? 8.♗g3 ♗xd3 9.♕xd3 c4 10.♕e2 e6 11.e4 0-0-0 12.h3 ♗b4 was also fine for Black in Sucher-Schmittdiel, Austria Staatsliga B 2001/02) 6.♗g3 h5 7.h3



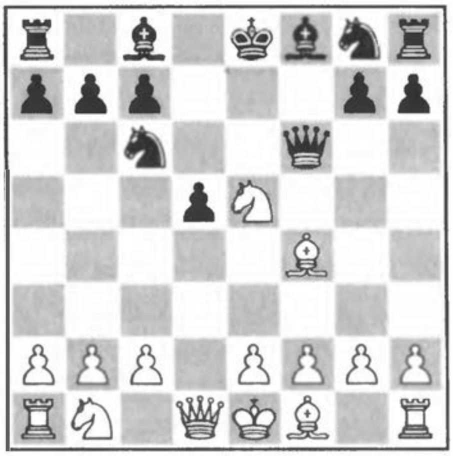
7...♘h6 (or 7...cxd4 8.exd4 ♘h6 9.♘c3 ♘f5 10.♗d3 ♘b4 – 10...♘xg3 11.♗g6+ – 11.♗b5+ ♔f7 12.a3 ♘c6 13.♕d3 a6 14.♗a4 e6 with the better game in Okrajek-Levin, Bad Wörishofen 2000) 8.c3 ♕b6 9.♕c1 ♘f5 10.♗d3 c4 11.♗c2 ♘xg3 12.fxg3 (12.♗g6+ ♔d8 13.fxg3 e6) 12...♕c7 13.♔f2 e6 14.♘bd2 ♗d6 15.♘f1 h4 16.g4 ♗d7 17.♗g6+ ♔e7 18.♗c2 ♖ag8 19.e4 ♗f4 gave Black a great game in Kornev-Sveshnikov, Samara 2000.

4.♘f3

Rather meek is 4.c3 e5 5.♗g3 ♗e6 6.e3 ♗d6 7.♗b5 ♘e7 8.dxe5 fxe5 9.♘f3 ♗g4 10.♕b3 ♗xf3 11.gxf3 0-0 12.♘d2 ♔h8 Kallio-Krasenkow, Copenhagen 2003. The same goes for 4.e3 e5 5.♗g3 ♗d6 6.♘f3 ♘ge7 7.c4 exd4 8.♘xd4 ♘xd4 9.♕xd4 ♗b4+ 10.♘c3 c5 Chepukaitis-Bezgodov, St Petersburg 1995.

4...♗g4

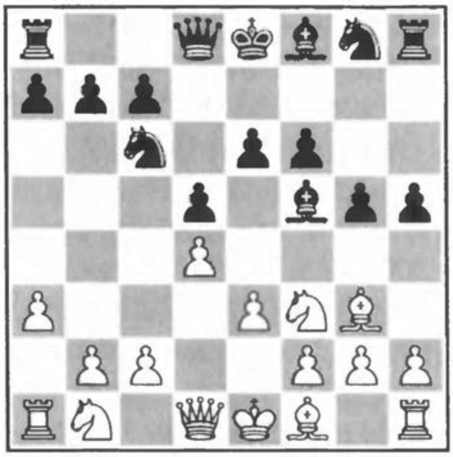
Here 4...e5 5.dxe5 fxe5 6.♘xe5 ♕f6 is a Blackmar-Diemer with colours reversed (remember the extra tempo 2...f6).



The point is that White has not chosen the best set-up against the Blackmar-Diemer here. Have fun!

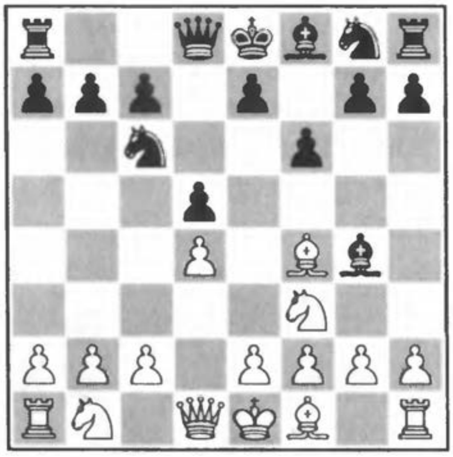
A serious alternative for the text is 4...♗f5. Bad now is 5.c4?! because of 5...e5! 6.cxd5 (6.dxe5 ♗b4+) 6...♘b4 (primitive but it works!) 7.e4 ♗xe4 8.♕a4+ c6 9.dxe5 ♗xb1 10.♖xb1 ♕xd5 11.♗e2 ♕e4! 12.0-0 ♕xf4 and White had insufficient compensation for the piece in Adams-Morozevich, Tilburg 1993.

Therefore play usually continues with 5.e3 and now: 5...e6 6.a3 (6.♘h4 ♗e4 7.f3 ♗g6 8.♘xg6 hxg6 9.c4 ♗d6 10.♗xd6 ♕xd6 11.c5 ♕d7 12.♗b5 ♘ge7 13.♘c3 e5 with equality. Rufino Bengoetxea-Sion Castro, Mondariz 1995) 6...g5!? (6...♗d6 7.♗g3 ♘ge7 8.c4 0-0 9.♘c3 ♗g6 10.b4 a6 11.♕b3 with a slight edge, Hodgson-Shaw, Aberdeen 1996) 7.♗g3 h5



8.h3 and now practice has seen two quick draws.

- 8...♗d6 9.♗xd6 cxd6!? 10.♗d3 ♘ge7 11.♘c3 ♕b6 12.♗xf5 ♘xf5 13.♕d3 ½-½ Galyas-Gyimesi, Budapest 2000.
- 8...h4 9.♗h2 ♗d6 10.♗xd6 ♕xd6 11.c4 ½-½ Kireev-Nester, Olomouc 2006.



5.♞bd2

There are other moves of course:

- 5.♗g3 e6 (5...♘h6 6.e3 ♘f5 7.♗d3 ♕d7 8.c3 and now Black played in Blackmar-Diemer style with 8...e5!? 9.dxe5 fxe5 10.♗xe5 0-0-0 11.♗g3 ♗c5, Bleis-Hector, Copenhagen 2005) 6.e3 ♘h6 7.h3 ♗h5 8.♗e2 ♗f7 9.c4 ♘f5 10.♗h2 a6 11.♘c3±, Nei-Sherbakov, Jyväskylä 1994.

– 5.h3 ♗h5 (5...♗xf3 6.exf3 e5) 6.c3 ♕d7 7.♘bd2 0-0-0 8.b4 e5 9.♗e3 e4 10.♘g1 f5 with unclear play in Burmakin-Ruck, Oberwart 1999.

– 5.c3 ♕d7 6.♘bd2 0-0-0 (or 6...e6 7.♕a4?! ♘ge7 8.h3 ♗h5 9.e3 g5 10.♗h2 ♗g6 11.♘b3 ♘c8 12.♕b5 a6 13.♕e2 – 13.♕xb7 ♖a7 – 13...♘b6 14.♘fd2 ♘a4 15.0-0-0?? ♘xc3 0-1, Lank-Vigorito, Las Vegas 2005) 7.h3 ♗xf3! 8.♘xf3 e5 9.dxe5 ♕f5 10.e3 fxe5 11.g4 ♕e6 with satisfactory play in Arduman-Claesen, Istanbul Olympiade 2000.

– 5.c4 dxc4 (5...e5) 6.d5 e5 7.♗c1 ♘b4 8.e4 c6 9.a3 ♘d3+ (9...f5!?; 9...♗xf3 10.gxf3 ♘d3+ 11.♗xd3 cxd3) 10.♗xd3 cxd3 11.dxc6 bxc6 12.0-0 with some compensation, Morozevich-Van Wely, Monaco blind 2005.

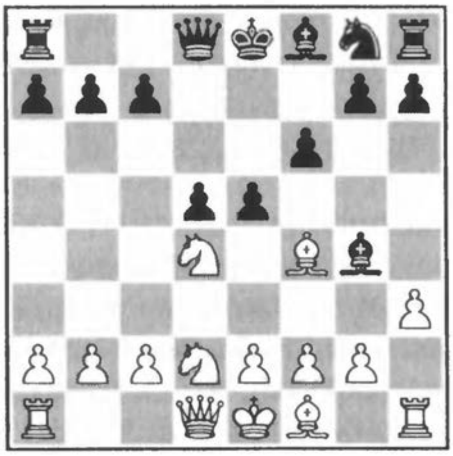
5...♘xd4!?

Black is taking full advantage of his extra tempo (2...f6). This leads to an unclear game.

6.♘xd4

Bad is 6.♗xc7? ♕xc7 7.♘xd4 e5 8.h3 ♗d7 9.♘4b3 d4 and without any complications Black had a nice structural edge, Todorovic-Yeo, Belgrade 2003.

6...e5 7.h3



Without this clever little move White would be bad off. Black now has to decide whether to (passively) keep the bishop on the c8-h3 diagonal or to play 7...♗h5 which allows (a future) ♘e6.

7...♗h5

This is best. White has 8.e4 in reply to either 7...♗d7 or 7...♗c8.

– 7...♗d7 8.♗e3?! (8.e4!) 8...exd4 9.♗xd4 c5 10.♗e3 ♕c7 11.♘f3 ♗c6 12.g3 ♗d6 13.♗g2 ♘e7 with the better game, Mitura-M.Jirovsky, Pribram 2000.

– 7...♗c8 8.e4! exf4 9.♕h5+ g6 10.♕xd5 ♕xd5 11.exd5 a6 12.0-0-0 and White is better in the ending, Vasilev-Jordanov, Plovdiv 2004.

8.♘e6

Direct play, but this is possibly not White's best option.

– 8.c4 deserves full attention, if only because it was Hodgson's choice. 8...exd4 (bad is 8...exf4 because of 9.♕b3 or 9.♘e6 ♕d6 10.cxd5; 8...♗f7 9.♕b3 ♘e7 is worth investigating, as is 8...dxc4 9.♘e6 ♕e7) 9.♕b3 ♗d6 10.♗xd6 ♕xd6 11.♕xb7 ♖d8 12.♕xa7 (12.cxd5 ♘e7 13.♕xa7) 12...dxc4 13.♕a4+ ♕d7?! 14.♕xd7+ ♖xd7 15.♘xc4 and White was a pawn up, Hodgson-Yeo, British Championship, Southampton 1986.

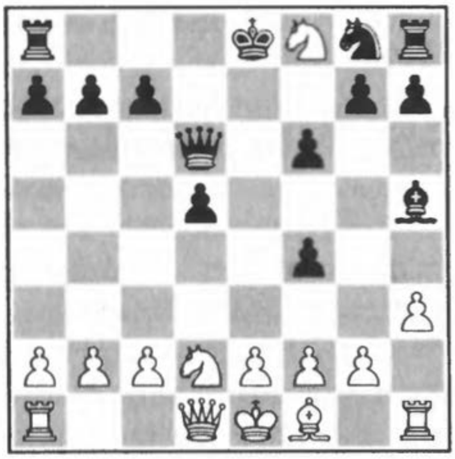
– 8.♗xe5?! fxe5 9.♘e6 ♕e7 10.♘xf8 0-0-0 is nice for Black, Grant-Crouch, Scottish Championship, Aviemore 1997.

– 8.g4 ♗f7 9.e3 exf4 10.exf4 and now, for example, 10...♕e7+ rather than 10...♕d6 11.♕e2+ ♕e7, Galyas-Szabolcsi, Budapest 1999.

– Tricky is 8.c3 exf4 (8...♕d7) 9.♕b3 ♖b8? (9...♔f7 10.♕xb7 ♘e7) 10.♘e6 ♕d7 11.♘xf4 (11.♕xd5!) 11...♗f7∓, Bombek-Priborsky, Pardubice 2005.

8...♕d6 9.♘xf8 exf4

The f4-pawn obstructs White's kingside development (he would like to play e3 or g3). The f8-knight is trapped and can be won at leisure. White's subsequent knight dance does not improve his position.



10.♘c4 ♕c6 11.♘a5 ♕b6 12.♘b3 ♗f7 13.♘xh7

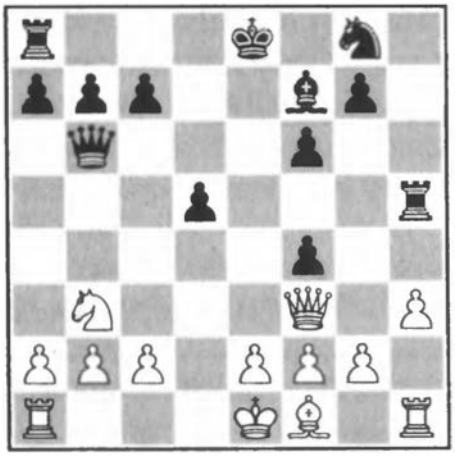
Simply 13.♕d2 is better.

13...♖xh7 14.♕d3 ♖h5

Or 14...♖h4!?.

15.♕f3

15.0-0-0 0-0-0 16.♕f3 was preferable, yet Black is fine after 16...♘h6.



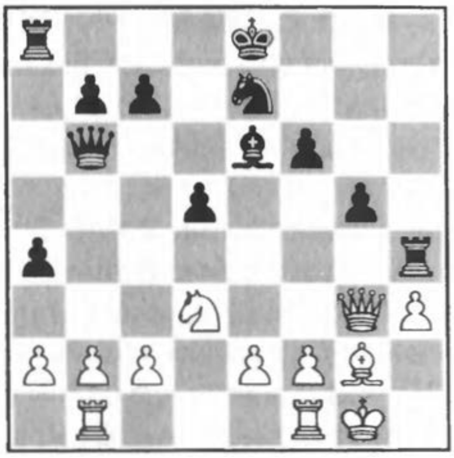
15...a5!? 16.♖b1?!

16.♕xf4? is met by 16...a4 17.♘d4 ♕xb2 18.♖d1 ♖e5. If 16.0-0-0 then also 16...a4.

16...a4 17.♘c1 ♖h4

Black has a huge space advantage. White now (erroneously) plays the ugly 18.g3 to be able to complete his development.

18.g3 fxg3 19.♕xg3 g5! 20.♗g2 ♘e7 21.0-0 ♗e6 22.♘d3



22...♔f7

22...0-0-0 was also good.

23.e3 ♖ah8 24.f4? ♘f5 25.♕f2 g4! 26.e4

If 26.hxg4 then just 26...♖xg4.

26...dxe4

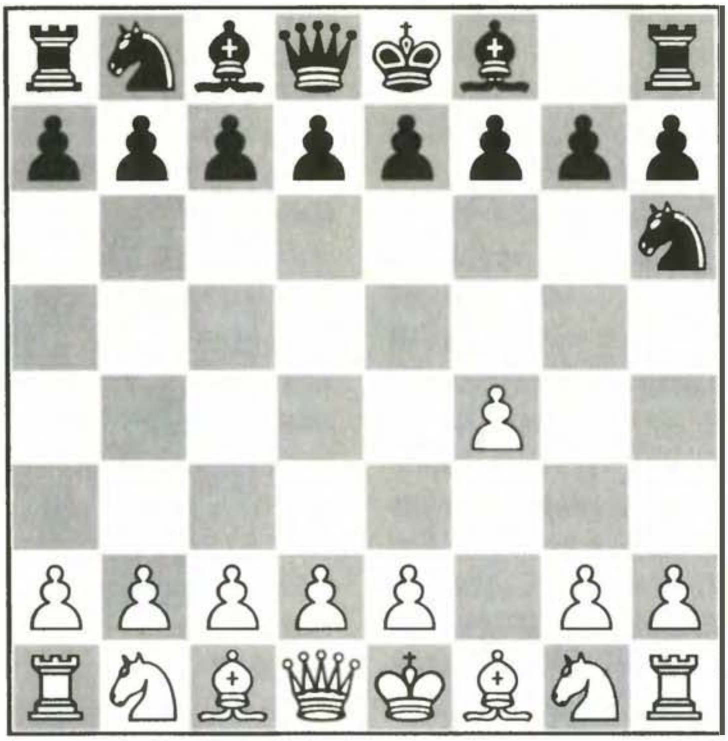
and White resigned.

His position is hopeless after 27.♕xb6 cxb6 28.♗xe4 ♘g3 29.♖fe1 gxh3 30.♔h2 ♘xe4 31.♖xe4 ♖g4.

CHAPTER 11

Dimitri Reinderman

Edgy Knight against the Bird



1.f4 ♘h6

In the database you will find few games with 1.f4 ♘h6. It looks like a patzer-move, just like 1...♘a6 or 1...h5. But the move is actually good! Can you believe it? I will try to convince you with this article.

A common move in the Dutch Defence for White is ♘h3. If this move is good with white, it can't be bad with reversed colours, right?

But OK, it's not a Dutch yet after 1.f4 ♘h6. Why would you want to start with 1...♘h6 instead of playing 1...d5 and then ♘h6 on the third or fourth move? Well, the 'problem' with 1...d5 is that White can play 2.b3, going for a set-up which is normally not possible in the Dutch. However, if after 1...♘h6 White plays 2.b3 on autopilot then 2...e5! will come as a nasty surprise! Indeed, 1...♘h6 is very useful then. I will analyse this in Section I.

White can also forget about the Dutch and play 2.e4, trying to prove that the knight on h6 is silly. However, after 2...d5! the square f5 becomes available for the not-so-silly knight! This will be analysed in Section II.

If White wants to play a reversed Dutch, he can play a Leningrad set-up (as shown in Section III).

He can also opt for the Stonewall or the Classical Variation (both in Section IV). You will be shown some examples from grandmaster practice.

Section I – Bird-Larsen

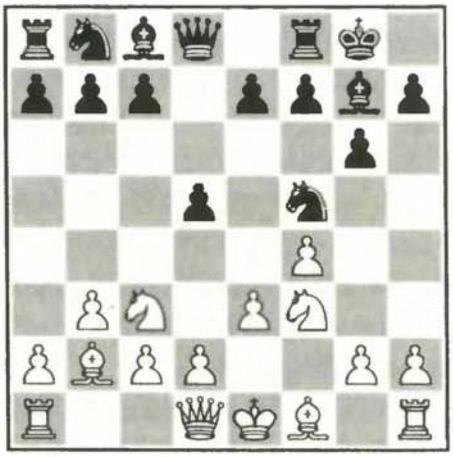
☐ **Roger Pernet**
■ **Martin Appleberry**
Paris 2004

1.f4 ♘h6 2.b3

I started playing f4 and b3 myself after buying the 1989 book of Soltis, *Bird-Larsen Attack*. It is a dangerous system against players who are not familiar with Nimzo-Indian positions. A nice example is 1.e3!? ♘f6 2.f4 d5 3.♘f3 c5 4.b3 ♘c6 5.♗b5 ♗d7 6.♗b2 e6 7.♗xc6 bxc6?! 8.0-0 ♗e7 9.d3 0-0 10.♕e2 a5 11.♘c3 ♕c7 12.♘a4 ♗c8 13.c4 ♘d7 14.♗a3 ♖e8 15.♖ac1 ♗a6 16.g3 ♗d6 17.e4 f5 18.e5 ♗e7 19.h3 ♖f8? 20.cxd5 cxd5 21.♘d4 ♖fe8 22.♘xe6 and White won in Reinderman-Diepeveen, Nijmegen 1992.

As this game shows, there are different move orders to play the Bird-Larsen. In 1989 Soltis recommended the move order 1.f4 and 2.b3 (and ♘f3 normally on the 4th or 5th move). In a later book (*Winning with 1.f4*, 1992) he preferred the sequence 1.f4 and 2.♘f3 instead (playing b3 on the third or fourth move).

After 1.f4 ♘h6 2.♘f3 g6 White can still try 3.b3, but after 3...♗g7 4.♘c3 (more sensible than 4.c3 or 4.d4) 4...d5 5.e3 0-0 6.♗b2 ♘f5



Black has the plan of 7...♘c6 and 8....e5, or 8...d4. White should play 7.g4, and after 7...d4!? (7...♘d6) 8.♘a4 ♘d6 9.h3 c5!? 10.♘xc5 (10.exd4 cxd4 11.♘xd4 e5 looks dangerous for White) 10...dxe3 11.♗xg7 ♔xg7 12.♕e2 I think both sides can play for a win with even odds.

2...e5!

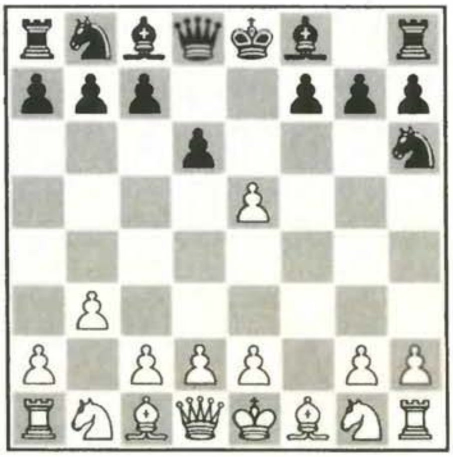
Transposing to the From's Gambit, where ♘h6 is more useful than b3.

3.fxe5

The only reasonable alternative is 3.e4, transposing to a King's Gambit, where both b3 and ♘h6 are uncommon developing moves. (Actually sometimes the bishop does go to b2 in the King's Gambit, but it prefers just to take the pawn on f4.) Black can take on f4 and continue with d5, g5, ♗e7 or even f5, but I propose 3...♗c5!?, targeting square f2.

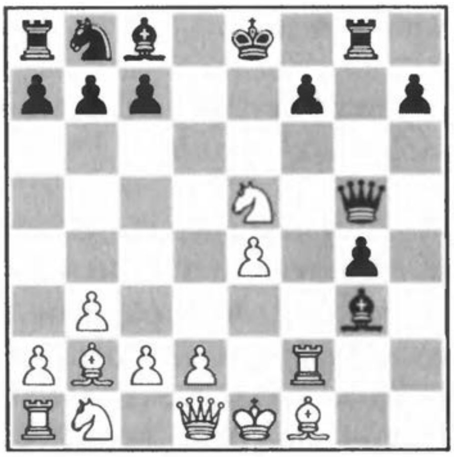
Play might continue 4.♘f3 (on 4.♗c4 both 4...d5 and 4...♗xg1 5.♖xg1 ♕h4+ are interesting) 4...♘g4 5.♘xe5 ♗f2+ (5...♘xe5 6.d4) 6.♔e2 d6 7.♘f3 ♘c6 8.d4 (8.h3 is met by 8...♗d4, and 8.♗b2 by 8...♕e7) 8...♕f6 9.c3 ♕h6 10.♕d3 0-0 with an unusual position (it looks like the bishop has used a parachute to land on f2) where Black has good compensation for the pawn.

3...d6



4.♘f3

Taking on d6 (as in the From's Gambit proper) is really too dangerous. After 4.exd6 ♗xd6 White can't really do anything about the threat on h2, e.g. 5.♘f3 ♘g4 6.g3?! ♘xh2 7.♖xh2 ♗xg3+ 8.♖f2 g5 9.e4 g4 10.♗b2 ♖g8 11.♘e5 ♕g5



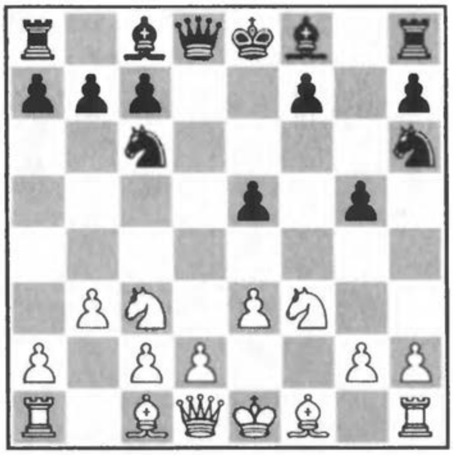
And in this position Black holds a big advantage. For example:

- 12.♗c4 ♗e6 13.♘d3 ♗xf2+ 14.♔xf2 ♕h4+ 15.♔e3 ♘c6.
- 12.♘d3 ♗xf2+ 13.♘xf2 g3.
- 12.♗b5+ ♘c6 13.♘xc6 ♕xb5 14.♘e5 f6 15.♘c4 ♕h5.

4...dxe5 5.♘c3

Of course 5.♘xe5? ♕d4 is bad, so White just develops.

5...♘c6 6.e3 g5!?



A good idea, gaining both space and time.

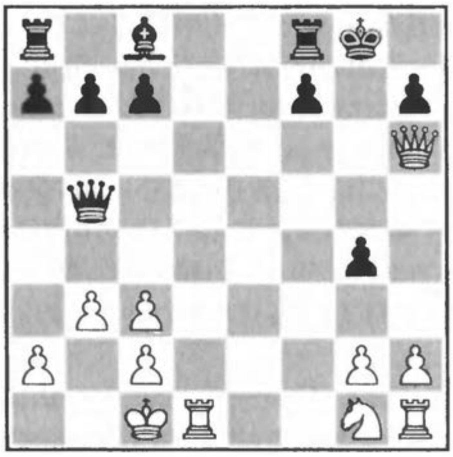
7.♗b5 ♗g7 8.♗b2 g4 9.♘g1 0-0 10.♕e2?!

Better was 10.♘ge2, which is equal.

10...♘d4

A nice shot, but not as good as 10...♘b4 11.0-0-0 c6 12.a3 cxb5 13.axb4 ♗d7 and Black is somewhat better.

11.exd4 exd4 12.0-0-0 dxc3 13.♗xc3 ♗xc3 14.dxc3 ♕g5+ 15.♕d2 ♕xb5 16.♕xh6



16...f6

Now 17...♕g5+ is a threat, since after 18.♕xg5 fxg5 the black rook becomes active and the white knight doesn't have a dream square on f4 anymore. White should now play 17.♕d2 to prevent this, planning 18.♘e2 or 18.h3.

17.h3?! ♕g5+ 18.♕xg5+ fxg5 19.hxg4 ♗xg4 20.♘f3 ♖xf3! 21.♖d4??

This immediately throws the game. After the normal 21.gxf3 ♗xf3 22.♖hg1 ♗xd1 23.♖xg5+ ♔f7 24.♔xd1 h6 Black has good winning chances.

21...♖f4 **0-1**

Section II – 2.e4 or 2.♘f3 g6 3.e4

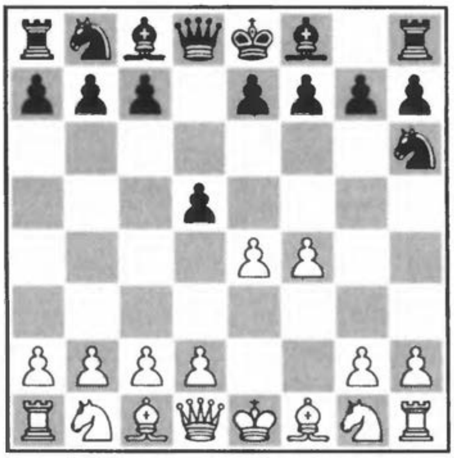
In this section we will investigate 1.f4 ♘h6 2.e4 and 2.♘f3 g6 3.e4. In both cases Black should respond to e4 with ...d5.

I think including 2.♘f3 g6 is better for White than 2.e4 d5 right away. We will start our investigation with the latter and delve more deeply in the other, more accurate, line.

Variation A: 2.e4 d5
Variation B: 2.♘f3 g6 3.e4 d5

Variation A

1.f4 ♘h6 2.e4 d5



The correct response. Black never intended his knight to stay on the rim forever. After both 3.exd5 and 3.e5 the square f5 is freed for the not-so-dim knight.

3.exd5

3.e5 c5 4.♘f3 ♘c6 looks like a French or Caro-Kann Advance, but it's not so easy for White to play d4. The black knight can go to f5, or even to f7 after f6. The white-squared bishop may be exchanged for the f3-knight, but keeping it on c8 for a while should be fine too.

3...♕xd5 4.♘c3 ♕d6

As Black wants to play for the d4-square, I prefer this to 4...♕a5.

5.♘f3 ♘c6!?

Here 5...g6 transposes to Variation B. Taking on f4 is met by 6.d4 with good compensation.

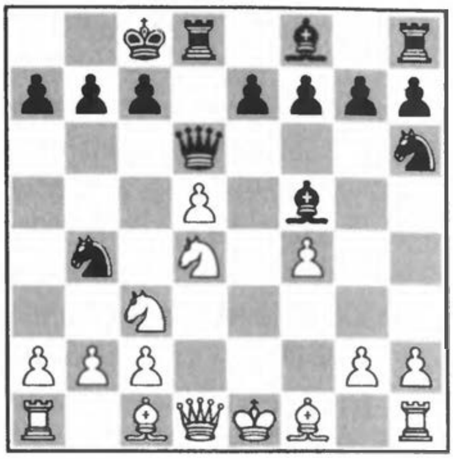
6.d4

After 6.♗c4 ♗g4 7.♘b5 ♕d7 8.h3 ♗xf3 9.♕xf3 a6 10.♘c3 ♘f5 Black is fine.

6...♗f5!

Blocking the knight on h6, but 6...♗g4 7.d5 is better for White. Now both 7...♘b4 and 7...0-0-0 are threats, and 7.♗e3 runs into 7...♘g4.

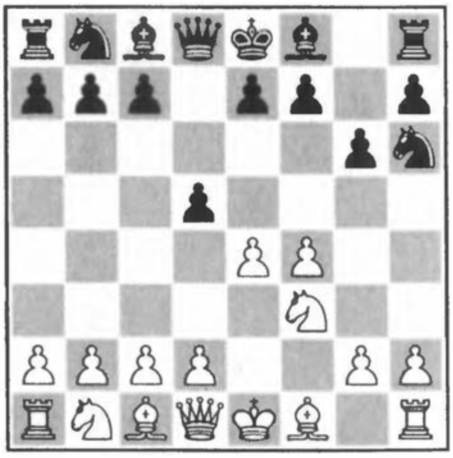
7.d5 ♘b4 8.♘d4 0-0-0



White has trouble keeping his d-pawn, while **9.♘xf5 ♘xf5 10.a3 ♘xd5 11.♘xd5 ♕xd5 12.♕xd5 ♖xd5 13.♗c4 ♖d6 14.♗xf7 ♘d4** loses the c-pawn.

Variation B

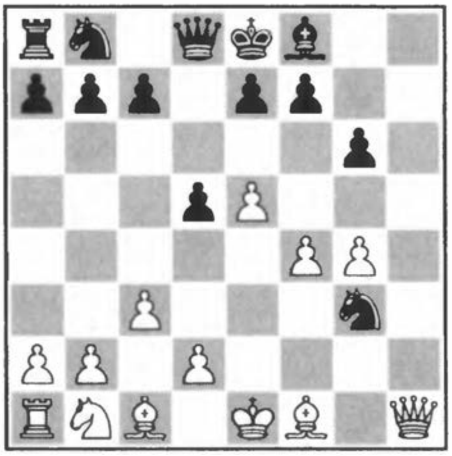
1.f4 ♘h6 2.♘f3 g6 3.e4 d5



Now White again has two choices: 4.exd5 and 4.e5.

4.exd5

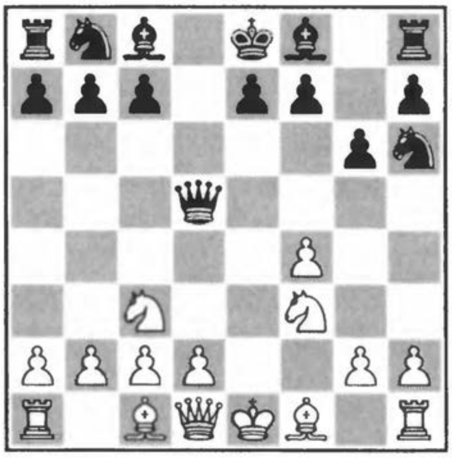
The position after 4.e5 is similar to the Gurgenidze Variation (1.e4 g6 2.d4 ♗g7 3.♘c3 c6 4.f4 d5 5.e5 – not to be mistaken with Chapter 7). Black has two plans here: the classic h5/♗g4/♘f5 going for a blockade position, or the modern ♘h6/f6, attacking the centre. In the current position, I prefer the classic plan, since in that case the bishop is better on f8 than on g7. I advise you to play through the game Sepp-Gurevich as model game for the classic plan (see the next game). However, first I will analyse if White can find a way to take advantage of the move order: 4...♗g4 5.h3 (after 5.♗e2 Black can play 5...♘f5, since 6.h3? ♘g3 is good for Black. Black will then continue with e6, h5 etc.) 5...♗xf3 6.♕xf3 ♘f5 (otherwise White will play 7.g4) 7.c3 (7.♕b3 e6 8.♕xb7 ♘d7 is dangerous for White, and 7.g4 ♘d4 8.♕d3 c5 9.c3 ♘e6 10.f5 c4 11.♕e3 gxf5 12.gxf5 ♘g7 13.e6 fxe6 14.fxe6 ♕d6 leads to an interesting position with about equal chances) 7...h5 (after 7...e6 8.g4 ♘h4 9.♕f2 ♗e7 10.d4 I prefer White, even after 10...♘f5 11.♔d1 ♗h4 12.♕f3 ♘g3 13.♖g1 ♘xf1 14.♖xf1) 8.g4 (8.e6 is a nice idea, but Black just plays 8...h4) 8...hxg4 9.hxg4 ♖xh1 10.♕xh1 ♘g3



11.♕h3 (11.♗b5+ c6 12.♕f3 cxb5 13.♕xg3 e6 doesn't White give any advantage) 11...♘xf1 12.♔xf1 ♕d7 13.d4 ♘c6 14.♗e3 0-0-0 15.♘d2 f6. White has more space, but Black has the good bishop and a safer king's position. I think the position is about equal.

4...♕xd5 5.♘c3

Now Black must make up his mind where to place his queen.



5...♕d8

After 5...♕a5 6.d4 ♗g4 (6...♗g7 7.♘e5) 7.h3 ♗xf3 8.♕xf3 c6 (8...♘c6 9.♗b5) 9.g4 the knight on h6 is offside.

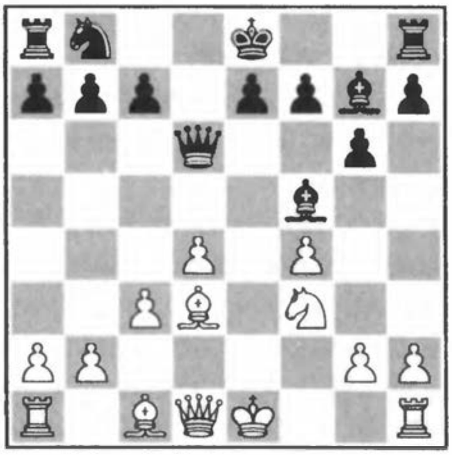
And 5...♕d6 6.d4 ♗g7 7.♘e4 ♕d5 8.♗d3 ♘c6 9.c3 ♗f5 10.♕e2 0-0 11.0-0 ♘g4 12.♖e1 ♘f6 13.♘fg5 ♘xe4 14.♘xe4 is a bit better for White.

That leaves 5...♕d8, keeping an eye on d4 without letting White gain a tempo with ♘e4.

6.d4 ♗g7 7.♘e4

After 7.♗c4 0-0 8.0-0 ♘f5 9.d5 c6 Black is fine.

7...♘f5 8.c3 ♘d6 9.♗d3 ♗f5 10.♘xd6+ ♕xd6

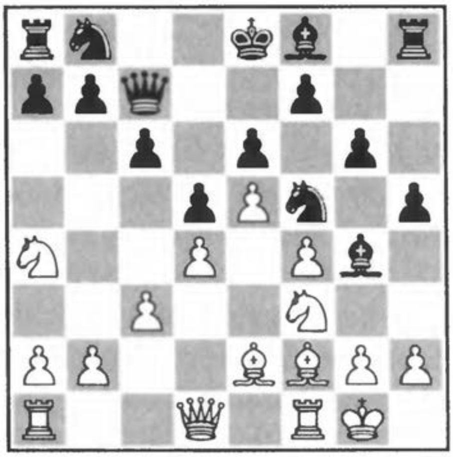


Black has equalized. The position is somewhat similar to a position in Kasparov-Anand, New York PCA World Championship 1995 (14), after 1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♕xd5 3.♘c3 ♕a5 4.d4 ♘f6 5.♘f3 c6 6.♘e5 ♗e6 7.♗d3 ♘bd7 8.f4 g6 9.0-0 ♗g7 10.♔h1 ♗f5. Black has good chances for a white-square blockade both after an exchange on f5 and if White moves his bishop from d3.

A good example of Black's chances in the Gurgenidze Variation is the following illustrative game.

☐ **Olav Sepp**
■ **Mikhail Gurevich**
Brugge open 1995

1.e4 d6 2.d4 g6 3.♘c3 c6 4.f4 d5 5.e5 h5 6.♘f3 ♘h6 7.♗e3 ♕b6 8.♘a4 ♕a5+ 9.c3 ♕c7 10.♗e2 ♗g4 11.0-0 ♘f5 12.♗f2 e6



13.b4?!

White wants to reinforce the c5-square and prevent ...c5. However, in doing so White leaves a gaping hole on c4. A better idea would be 13.b3 and 14.c4, trying to open the position.

Note that on 13.h3 Black reacts with 13...♗xf3 14.♗xf3 h4. In that case White doesn't have the standard plan of g4 anymore, though Black has to pay attention not to lose his intrepid h-pawn.

13...♘d7 14.♘c5

14.♖b1 ♘b6 15.♘xb6 axb6 16.a4 is unclear according to Gurevich, which is not really a helpful comment, I know. Black will play bishop to e7 and king to g7 when Black has two plans:

– ...♖a7 and ...♖ha8, and if ♖a1 then ...b5, when a5 is met by ...b6
– the alternative plan is to go for ...c5.

If White plays g3 (planning ♔g2, h3, g4), then ...h4 is always an option – to play on the h-file.

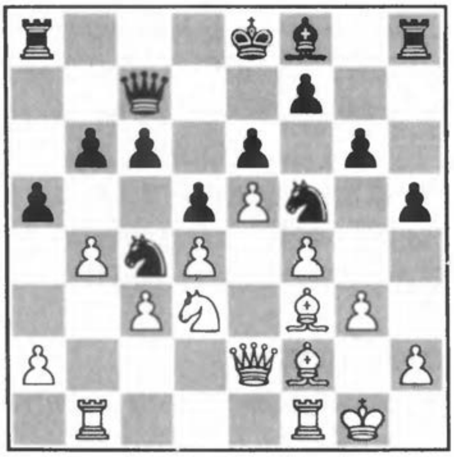
14...♘b6!

Going for c4.

15.♖b1

After 15.♘d2 ♗xe2 16.♕xe2 Black has a superior bishop in compensation for White's space advantage.

15...♗xf3 16.♗xf3 ♘c4 17.♕e2 b6 18.♘d3 a5 19.g3



This is a common plan for White, preparing h3 and g4.

19...♗e7 20.h3 axb4 21.♘xb4

Or 21.cxb4 ♕a7 with pressure.

21...♔d7

Defending the c-pawn and connecting the rooks, so they can double on the a-file (or maybe even on the h-file).

22.g4 hxg4 23.hxg4 ♘h4 24.♗xh4 ♖xh4 25.♗g2 ♖a3 26.♖b3 ♕a7

Threatening to take on b4 and on a2, but after White's next move the bishop is needed as a defender.

27.f5 gxf5 28.gxf5 ♕a8 29.fxe6+ fxe6 30.♖f7 ♕g8 31.♖xa3 ♘xa3 32.♕f2?

Here White misses a chance: after 32.♖xe7+ ♔xe7 33.♕a6 ♘c4 34.♘xc6+ ♔f8 35.♕c8+ ♔g7 36.♘d8 ♖h6 37.♕d7+ ♔f8 38.♕c8 ♔g7 39.♕d7+ White can force a draw (but no more).

32...♖g4 33.♖f3 ♘c4 34.♘d3 ♕g6 35.♔h2 ♕h6+ 36.♗h3?

Better was 36.♖h3.

36...♘d2 37.♖f4

Not 37.♖f6!? ♗xf6 38.exf6 ♖g3! winning.

37...♘e4 38.♕f1 ♖g5 39.♖f3

39.♘f2 ♖h5 40.♘xe4 ♖xh3+ 41.♕xh3 ♕xf4+ 42.♘g3 ♕d2+ 43.♕g2 ♕xc3 also wins for Black.

39...♘d2 40.♕e2 ♘xf3+ 41.♕xf3 ♖g7

Black is a healthy exchange up.

42.♘f2 ♗g5 43.♘g4 ♗f4+ 44.♔g2 ♕g5 45.c4 ♔c7 46.cxd5 exd5 47.♕a3 ♔b7 48.♕f8 ♗e3 49.e6 ♗xd4 50.♔f3 ♗c5 51.♕h8 ♕f5+ 0-1

Section III – Leningrad

What happens if White goes for a Dutch Leningrad with colours reversed?

☐ **Mihai Grünberg**
■ **Rustam Dautov**
Port Erin 2002

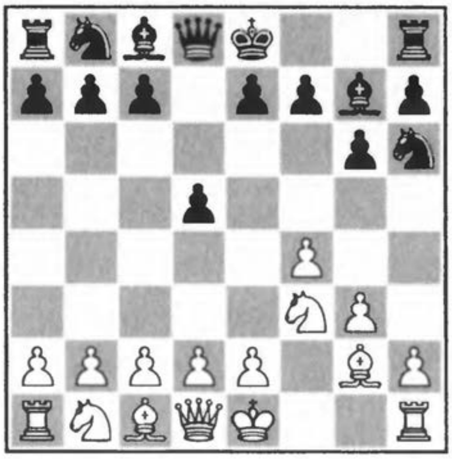
1.f4

We would reach the position in this game via our SOS-move order 1.f4 ♘h6 2.♘f3 g6 3.g3 d5 4.♗g2 ♗g7.

When White plays a Leningrad set-up, it's best to transpose to a position which is normally reached by 1.f4 d5 2.♘f3 g6 3.g3 ♗g7 4.♗g2 ♘h6. There is no advantage to playing 1...♘h6 in this case, but no disadvantage either.

The extra move White has compared to the Leningrad Dutch is enough not to be worse, but not enough to claim an advantage.

1...d5 2.♘f3 g6 3.g3 ♗g7 4.♗g2 ♘h6



5.d3

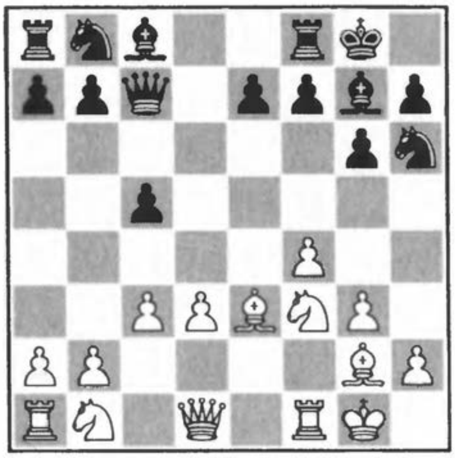
Going for e4 right away is the most common set-up. However, there are a lot of different set-ups that White can try:

- 5.c3 c5 6.d3 d4 transposes.
- 5.0-0 ♘f5 6.♘c3 d4 7.♘e4 ♘c6 8.c3 e5 9.fxe5 ♘xe5 10.♘xe5 ♗xe5 11.cxd4 ♗xd4+ 12.e3 ♗g7 with equality.
- 5.0-0 c5 6.e3!? (so Black can't take en passant after d3 and e4) 6...♘c6 7.d3 0-0 8.c3 b6 9.♕a4 ♕d7 10.e4 dxe4 11.dxe4 ♘d4 12.♕xd7 ♘xf3+ 13.♗xf3 ♗xd7 14.e5 ♖ad8 15.a4 f6 16.exf6 exf6 and soon a drawish ending was reached in Gurevich-Gelfand, Palma de Mallorca 1989.
- 5.0-0 ♘f5 6.d4 h5 7.♗h1 c5 8.c3 ♘d7 9.♘e5 and here Black was outplayed in Gardner-Novikov, Edmonton 2000 (2221 vs 2611!) but of course there is nothing wrong with Black's position.
- 5.0-0 0-0 6.c4 d4 7.d3 ♘c6 8.♘a3 ♘f5 9.♖b1 e5 10.♘c2 a5 11.♔h1 ♖e8 and Black was a little better in Manolov-Vasilev, Bulgarian Championship, Tsarevo 2001.
- 5.0-0 0-0 6.d3 d4 7.♘a3 c5 8.♘c4 ♘f5 9.e4 dxe3 10.c3 ♘c6 11.♘xe3 led to an equal position in Becx-Nijboer, Tilburg 2003.

5...d4 6.c3 c5 7.e4 dxe3 8.♗xe3 ♕c7

Instead of the text, 8...♘d7 is also good. Two rounds after this game Grünberg-Rotshtein, Port Erin 2002 went: 9.0-0 0-0 10.♘a3 ♖b8 11.♘c2 b6 12.d4 ♗b7 13.♘e5 cxd4 14.♘xd7 ♕xd7 15.♗xd4 ♗xg2 16.♔xg2 ♕b5 17.♗xg7 ♔xg7 18.♕d4+ ♔g8 19.c4 ♕c6+ 20.♕d5 ♕xd5+ 21.cxd5 with an endgame that is more equal for Black than for White.

9.0-0 0-0



10.h3

To prevent 10...♘g4, but it's a bit weakening. My own experience with this position is 10.♔h1 b6 11.a4 ♘c6 12.♘a3 ♗b7 13.♘c4 ♖ad8 14.♕c2 ♘f5 15.♗g1 ♘d6 16.♘e3 e6 17.h3?! ♘f5 18.♘xf5 exf5 19.♖fe1 ♖fe8 and Black was a little better in Reinderman-David, Brussels Zonal 1993.

10...♘f5 11.♗f2 e6

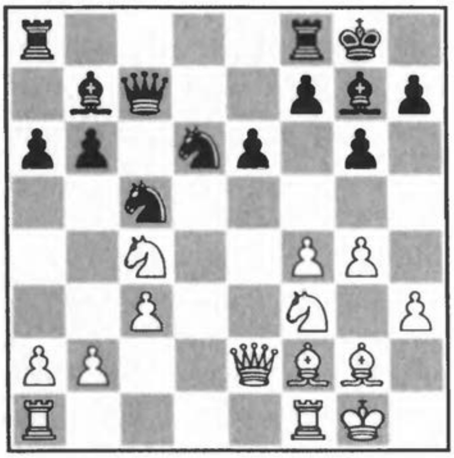
Probably played with the intention of going to e7 (and d5) if White plays g4.

12.♘a3 ♘d7

Black has to be a little careful: 12...b6 13.♘b5 ♕e7 14.g4 a6 15.♘g5 ♗b7 16.♗xb7 ♕xb7 17.gxf5 axb5 18.fxe6 wins a pawn for White.

13.d4 a6 14.dxc5 ♘xc5 15.♕e2 b6 16.♘c4 ♗b7 17.g4 ♘d6

Now if White plays 18.♘fe5 (or exchanges on d6 first and then plays ♘fe5) the position is still equal. However, he sees a trick, but it is not a good one.



18.♘xb6? ♕xb6 19.b4 ♘de4 20.bxc5 ♕c7 21.♘e5 ♘xf2 22.♕xf2 ♗xg2 23.♔xg2 ♗xe5 24.fxe5 ♕xe5

Material is equal now, but White's pawns are very weak.

25.♕d4 ♕c7 26.♕d6 ♖fc8 27.♖ab1 ♖a7

There is no need to hurry.

28.♖b3 ♕xc5 29.♕xc5 ♖xc5

Black is active and has a good pawn more, so the rest is not difficult.

30.♖d1 ♔g7 31.♖d6 a5 32.♖d4 ♖ac7 33.♖a4 h5 34.gxh5 ♖xh5 35.c4 ♖cc5 36.♔f2 ♔f6 37.♔e3? ♖xh3+ 38.♔d4 ♖hh5 0-1

Section IV – Classical and Stonewall

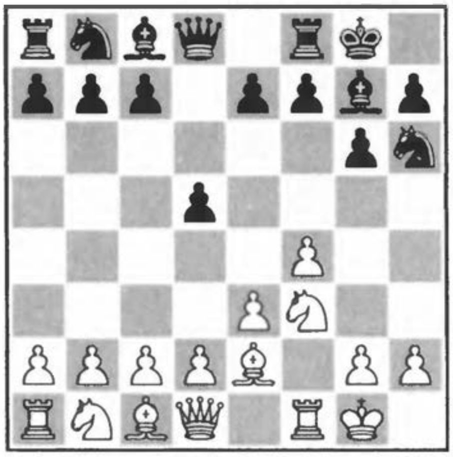
☐ **Simon Williams**
■ **Thomas Luther**
Port Erin 2003

1.f4 d5 2.e3 g6 3.♘f3 ♗g7 4.♗e2 ♘h6

Our SOS move order to reach the same position is 1.f4 ♘h6 2.♘f3 g6 3.e3 d5 4.♗e2 ♗g7.

Incidentally, Williams is an expert of the Classical Variation of the Dutch. He wrote a book about it and beat (among others) Ivan Sokolov with it.

5.0-0 0-0



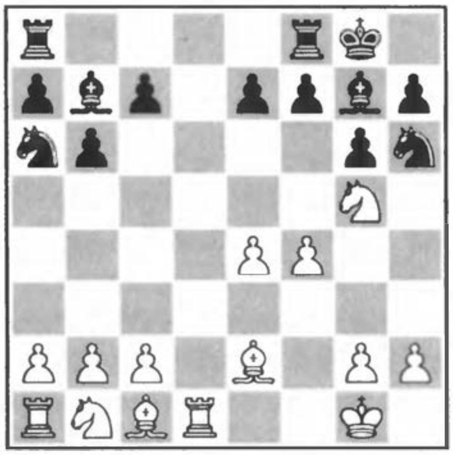
6.d3

In a game between two grandmasters, White played a kind of Stonewall: 6.c4 c6 7.d4 ♗g4 8.♕b3 ♕b6 9.♕a3 ♘f5 10.♘c3?! (better is 10.c5) 10...dxc4 11.♔h1 (after 11.♗xc4 ♗xf3 12.♖xf3 ♘xd4 13.exd4 ♕xd4+ 14.♗e3 ♕xc4 15.♕xe7 ♘a6 Black is better) 11...♘d6 12.b3 cxb3 13.♖b1 ♘d7 14.♖xb3 ♕c7 and White didn't have enough for the pawn in Chernyshov-Dautov, Ohrid 2001.

6...b6 7.e4 dxe4 8.dxe4 ♗b7 9.♘g5

A strange move, but e4 was not easy to defend: 9.♘bd2 runs into 9...♘g4 and after 9.♗d3 Black plays 9...♘d7 and 10...♘c5 is annoying.

9...♕xd1 10.♖xd1 ♘a6



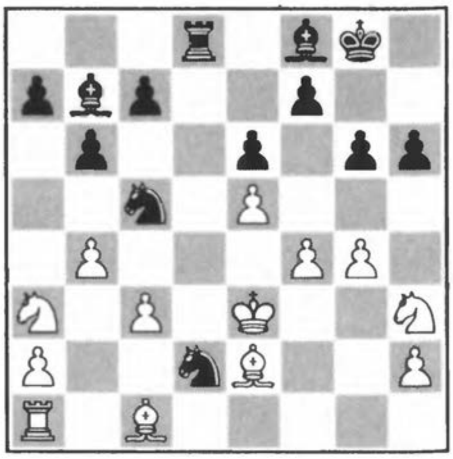
11.e5

I wouldn't let ♘h6 get out of his cage yet: 11.♘c3 ♘c5 12.♗e3 ♗xc3 13.♗xc5 ♗xb2 14.♖ab1 ♗f6 15.e5 is equal.

11...♖fd8 12.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 13.♘a3 ♘f5 14.g4 ♘d4 15.♗c4 e6 16.c3 h6 17.♘h3?!

Better was 17.cxd4 hxg5 18.♘b5 gxf4 19.♗xf4 ♘b4 with a small advantage for Black.

17...♘f3+ 18.♔f2 ♘d2 19.♗e2 ♘c5 20.♔e3 ♗f8 21.b4



Now it gets interesting. How can Black save his hanging knights?

21...♘de4!

A nice concept!

22.♘b1 f5 23.gxf5 gxf5 24.♗a3 ♘a4 25.♗f3 b5 26.♗c1 ♘b6 27.♔e2

With White still undeveloped, it's no wonder Black has a winning combination now.

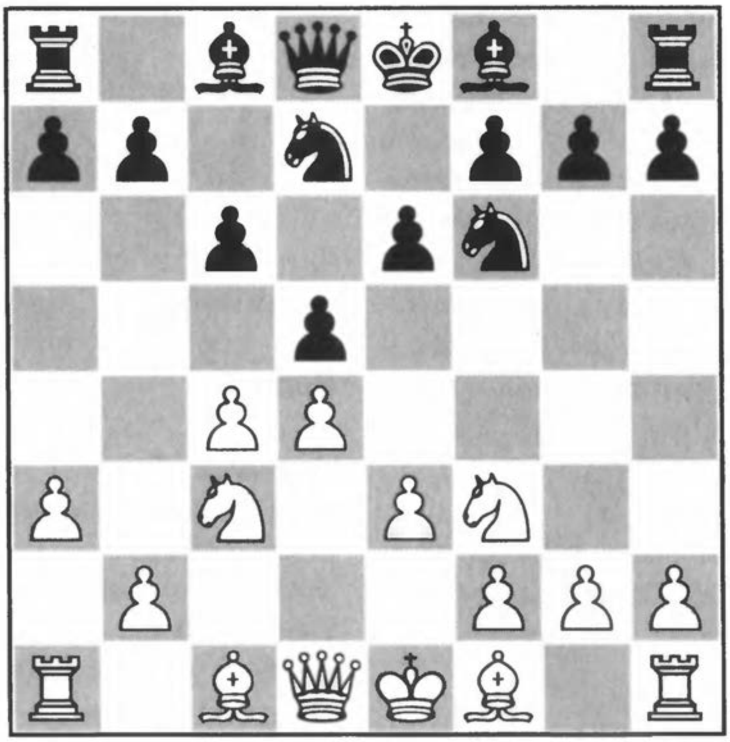
27...♘xc3+ 28.♘xc3 ♗xf3+ 29.♔xf3 ♖d3+ 30.♔g2 ♖xc3 31.a3 ♘d5 32.♘f2 c5 33.♔f1 c4 34.♔e2 ♖c2+ 35.♔f3 ♖c3+ 36.♔e2 ♖c2+ 37.♔f3 ♗e7 0-1

Conclusion: 1...♘h6 offers good chances for equality or even more after 1.f4. It's especially good against players who want to play 2.b3. If you know your opponent will play 2.♘f3 and 3.g3, you can play 1...♘h6 anyway for its shock value. However, it will probably lead to normal variations though.

CHAPTER 12

Glenn Flear

The Semi-Slav with 6.a3



A simple idea with some bite

The problem when meeting the Semi-Slav is that Black's opening is not at all bad and there is just so much theory.

So I suggest a positional weapon with white that steers the game away from the main lines and into positions where Black has to make the difficult decisions early on.

After the standard moves **1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.e3 ♘bd7** I'm proposing **6.a3!?**

White intends the space-gaining b2-b4. A simple idea but one with some bite.

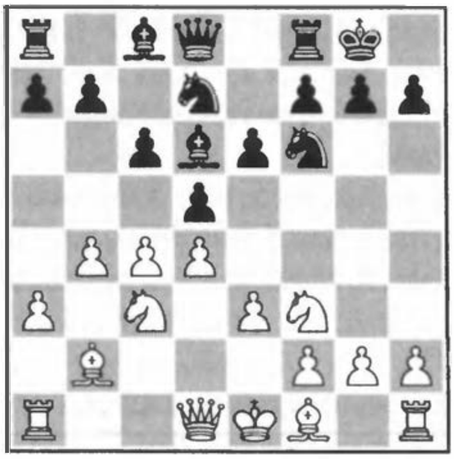
This has been played as a surprise weapon by the likes of Tony Miles and Kiril Georgiev. I have to admit that I have a flattering 5/5 with this move, although the idea isn't that good!

Most players now reply with

6...♗d6

In Game 1, I examine 6...g6 and 6...b6!?.

7.b4 0-0 8.♗b2



8...♕e7

I wouldn't recommend 8...e5?! 9.cxd5 exd4, as 10.♕xd4! would leave Black with insufficient compensation for the pawn.

Instead, 10.♘xd4?! cxd5 11.♗e2 ♘b6 12.0-0 ♖e8 13.♘f3 a6 14.♕d4 (the right square but after losing two tempi(!) there is no advantage!) 14...♗g4 15.♖ac1 was about equal in Eslon-Flear, Palma de Mallorca 1991.

For 8...dxc4 9.♗xc4 b5 (9...e5, as in Flear-Meynard, Saint Affrique 2002, features in Game 3) 10.♗d3 a5, Flear-Fontaine, Saint Affrique 1999, see Game 2, and finally 8...♘e4 9.♘xe4 dxe4 10.♘d2 f5 11.♕b3 was played in Flear-Pelletier (Game 4) and Flear-Doornbos (Game 5), both French Team Championship 1999/00.

9.♕c2 e5

I consider this to be more accurate than 9...dxc4 10.♗xc4 e5. Another sensible move is 9...♖e8 intending a later ...e5, see the notes to Game 6.

10.cxd5 cxd5

Definitely better than 10...e4? 11.dxc6, when White wins a pawn, and probably superior to 10...♘xd5 11.♘xd5 cxd5 12.dxe5 ♘xe5 13.♗e2 when White keeps a pull.

11.dxe5

Another idea is 11.♘b5 e4, see the notes to Game 6.

11...♘xe5 12.♘b5

The more solid 12.♘d4 has been suggested.

12...♘xf3+ 13.gxf3 ♗e5 14.♗xe5

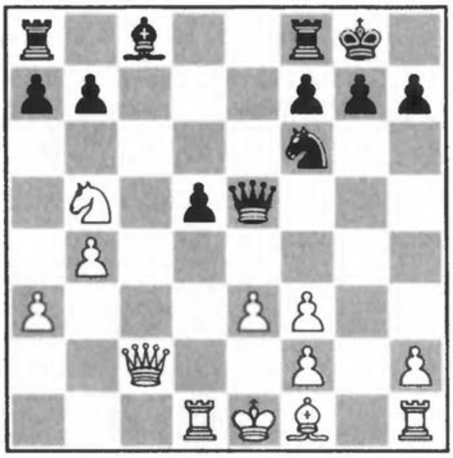
Otherwise 14.♘d4 a5 15.b5 ♗d7 proved to be unclear, see the notes to Game 6.

14...♕xe5

And as Agrest-Serper, Oberwart 1994, (which continued with 15.♘d4, see Game 6) turned out in Black's favour I instead suggest

15.♖d1!

when I think White has chances to retain an edge.



Black avoids 6...♗d6

Game 1

☐ **Glenn Flear**
■ **Fabian Lipinsky**
Tunis 1999

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e3 e6 5.♘f3 ♘bd7 6.a3 b6!?

The other fianchetto 6...g6 is similar to the Schlechter System, a solid but passive hybrid between the Slav and the Grünfeld. The following example is slightly better for White: 7.♗d3 ♗g7 8.0-0 0-0 9.♖e1! ♕c7 10.♕c2 dxc4 11.♗xc4 e5 12.♗a2 exd4 13.exd4 ♘b6 14.♗g5 ♗f5 15.♕d2 J.Petronic-Djuric, Vrnjacka Banja 1998.

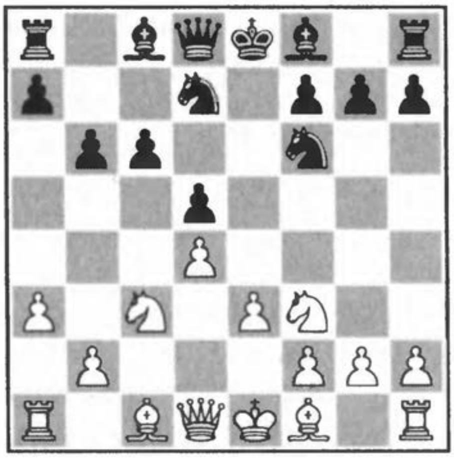
7.cxd5

As Black is unlikely to play in Meran-style with ...dxc4 and ...b5 there is a good case for 7.♗d3 e.g. 7...♗d6 and now:

- White could try 8.e4!?, when the addition of the extra moves a2-a3 by White and ...b7-b6 by Black (compared to a common position from the Semi-Slav) doesn't allow any ...♗b4+ ideas. However 8...dxe4 9.♘xe4 ♘xe4 10.♗xe4 ♗b7 11.0-0 ♕c7 12.♕e2 0-0 would give Black good chances for equality with ...♘f6 and ...c5 in the air. The move ...b6 also proving useful.

– 8.0-0 0-0 9.b4 is perhaps most in the spirit of the 6.a3 variation.

7...exd5



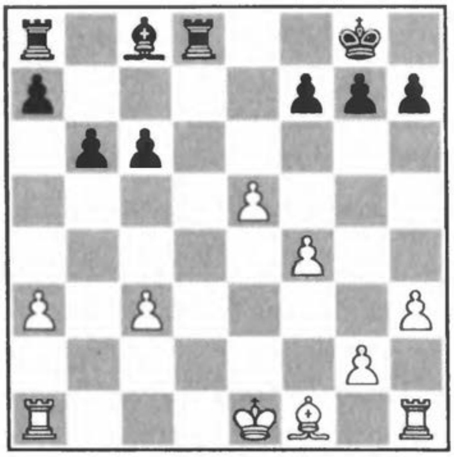
8.♘e5?

Far too wild. Instead, simply 8.♗d3 ♗d6 9.0-0 0-0 10.b4 is correct, with play akin to some variations of the Nimzo-Indian. White has the slightly better pawn structure but will still have to find a solution to the development of his dark-squared bishop.

8...♘xe5 9.dxe5 ♘g4 10.f4 ♗c5 11.♕f3 0-0 12.h3 ♘xe3

Alternatively, 12...♘h6 13.b4 (of course justifying 6.a3!) 13...♗e7 14.♗b2 is murky, but White should be fine.

13.♗xe3 ♗xe3 14.♕xe3 d4 15.♕d3 dxc3 16.♕xd8 ♖xd8 17.bxc3



A relief, White has just about equalized!

17...♗f5 18.g3! ♖d5 19.c4 ♖d4 20.♖d1 ♖ad8 21.♖xd4 ♖xd4 22.♖h2 ♖e4+ 23.♔d2 g5 24.fxg5 ♖xe5 25.♖e2 ♖a5

Instead, the exchange of rooks would be drawish.

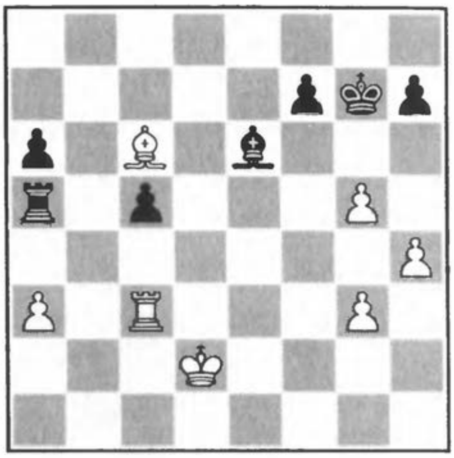
26.♖e3 ♔g7 27.h4 ♗e6 28.♗e2 ♖a4 29.♖c3 a6 30.♗f3 ♖a5 31.c5!

31.♗xc6 is met by 31...♖c5.

31...bxc5!?

Instead, 31...♖xc5 would still be fairly balanced.

32.♗xc6



32...c4?

Ceding the d4-square to White's king is a positional mistake. Instead, activating his king with 32...f6! 33.gxf6+ ♔xf6 should still be fine for Black.

33.♔e3 ♖c5 34.♗b7 a5 35.♔d4 ♖c7 36.♗a6

The c-pawn is now fatally weak.

36...♖d7+ 37.♔c5 ♖d5+ 38.♔b6 ♖e5 39.♗xc4

Also possible is the attempt to win a tempo with 39.a4.

39...♗xc4 40.♖xc4 ♖e3 41.a4 ♖e5 42.♖c5 ♖e3 43.♔xa5 ♖xg3 44.♖c4 h6 45.gxh6+ ♔xh6 46.♔b5 f5 47.a5 ♖g8 48.a6 ♖f8 49.a7 f4 50.♖xf4 ♖xf4 51.a8♕ ♖xh4 52.♕g2

52.♔c5! would have been more precise. Nevertheless White won on move 84.

Black plays on the queenside

Game 2

☐ **Glenn Flear**
■ **Robert Fontaine**
Saint Affrique 1999

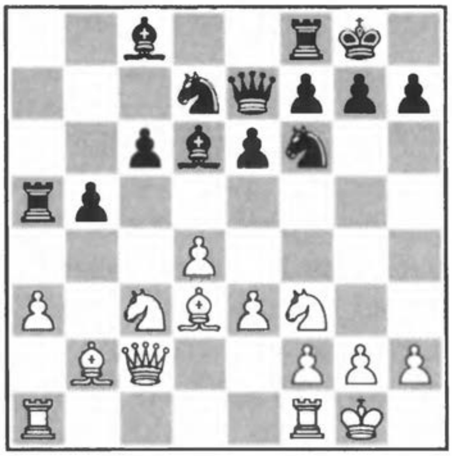
1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e3 e6 5.♘f3 ♘bd7 6.a3 ♗d6 7.b4 0-0 8.♗b2 dxc4

Trying to punish White's opening by forcing means, but it's generally a slight concession to allow the bishop to c4 in one move.

9.♗xc4 b5 10.♗d3 a5 11.bxa5 ♖xa5 12.0-0 ♕e7

White is saddled with an isolated a-pawn but can Black really afford the time and effort to snatch it?

13.♕c2



13...♗xa3?!

The best move is probably 13...♗b7! against which White has a wide choice. My preference is for 14.♘e4! (not 14.e4?! e5 15.dxe5 ♘xe5 16.♘xe5 ♕xe5 17.f4 ♕h5 as Black's play against White's king is too dangerous) 14...♘xe4 (14...♗xa3? is dubious because of 15.♘c5! winning material) 15.♗xe4 ♘f6 (after 15...f5 16.♗xc6 ♖c8 White should keep some advantage after 17.d5! exd5 18.♗xd5+!, rather than 17.♕d2?! ♗xc6 18.♕xa5 ♗xf3 19.gxf3 ♕g5+ 20.♔h1 ♕h5 as Black then has at least a draw) 16.♗xc6! (this is still the right decision. I'm not keen on 16.♗d3?! ♗xa3 – 16...c5 17.dxc5 ♗xc5 18.♗xf6 gxf6 19.♗xh7+ ♔g7 20.♗e4 ♗xa3 is playable but the text is the serious test – 17.e4 h6! – better than 17...♗b4?! 18.♖xa5 ♗xa5 19.e5 ♘d5 20.♗xh7+ regaining the pawn with the better chances as Black's king is weak – as I don't believe that White has enough compensation for the pawn) 16...♕c7 (following 16...♖c8 White escapes the pin with 17.♕d2) 17.♖fc1 ♖c8 18.♘e5! and White retains the advantage e.g. 18...♗xc6 19.♘xc6 ♖aa8 20.g3 ♘d5 21.e4.

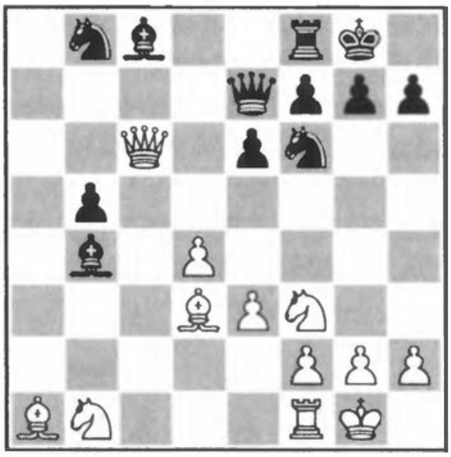
14.♘b1!

Regaining the pawn in favourable circumstances.

14...♗b4

Even worse is 14...b4?due to 15.♘xa3 bxa3 16.♕c3.

15.♕xc6 ♖xa1 16.♗xa1 ♘b8



17.♕c2

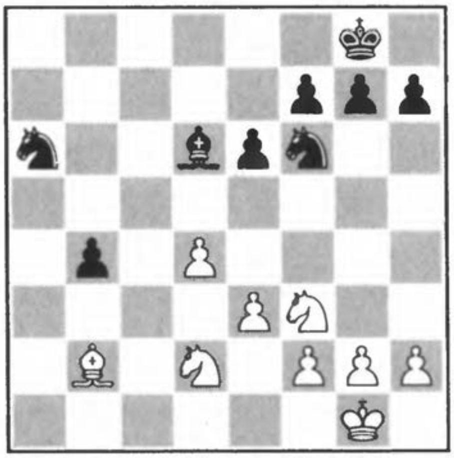
Avoiding 17.♕xb5?? ♗a6.

Black has an isolated pawn which will require defending and White has the more harmonious development. The fact that the b-pawn is actually passed is not significant as its advance can easily be curbed by White.

17...♗a6 18.♖c1 ♗d6 19.♕e2 ♕b7 20.♘bd2 b4 21.♗b2 ♖c8 22.♖xc8+

It's also possible to try and keep some pressure in the middlegame with 22.♘c4!?.

22...♕xc8 23.♗xa6 ♕xa6 24.♕xa6 ♘xa6



My opponent offered a draw but White is clearly better due to the superior king and Black's b4-pawn which is frankly more isolated than it is passed!

25.♔f1! ♘d5 26.♔e2 ♘b6 27.♔d3 ♘c7 28.♘c4

Clearing the passage for White's dominant monarch.

28...♘xc4 29.♔xc4 f5 30.h3

It's only a question of time before the b-pawn falls.

30...h6 31.♗c1 ♔f7 32.♗d2 ♘d5 33.♘e1 g5 34.♘d3 h5 35.♗xb4 ♘xb4 36.♘xb4 g4 37.♘d3 ♔e7 38.f3 gxh3 39.gxh3 h4 40.♘e5 ♔f6 41.f4 ♗e7 42.♘f3 ♔f7 43.d5 exd5+ 44.♔xd5 ♔g6 45.♔e6 1-0

Black combines ...e5 with queenside play

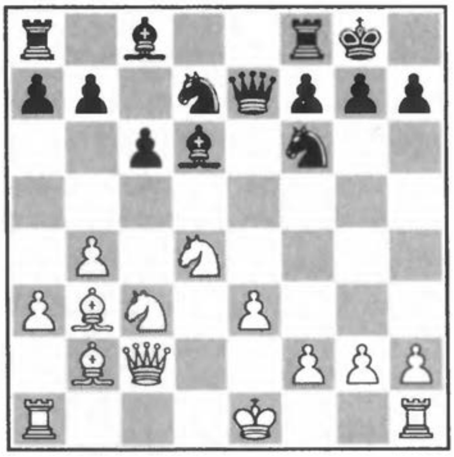
Game 3

☐ **Glenn Flear**
■ **Thibault Meynard**
Saint Affrique 2002

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e3 e6 5.♘f3 ♘bd7 6.a3 ♗d6 7.b4 0-0 8.♗b2 dxc4 9.♗xc4 e5 10.♗b3

Miles chose 10.♗a2!? in this position. The bishop might be slightly less exposed there. Then after 10...♕e7 11.♕c2 exd4 12.♘xd4, I'm not sure that many would want to control the f5-square with 12...g6!? as this is potentially self-weakening. Instead after 12...♘e5 13.h3 ♖e8 14.0-0 ♘g6 15.♘f5 ♗xf5 16.♕xf5 ♕e5 17.♕xe5 ♘xe5 18.♖ad1, Miles-Grzesik, Bundesliga 1984/85, White had the advantage of the bishop pair.

10...♕e7 11.♕c2 exd4 12.♘xd4



12...♘e5

I can't see anything concrete against 12...g6 despite the fact that it's an ugly-looking move. Weaknesses may appear on the kingside in the longer-term and Black may regret not having the g6-square available for his knight, e.g. 13.0-0 ♘e5 14.h3 ♖e8 15.♖ae1 threatening f2-f4 followed by e3-e4.

13.♘f5?!

This is premature. In an analogous position Miles preferred 13.h3 ♖e8 14.0-0 ♘g6 and only now ventured 15.♘f5, see the note to move 10.

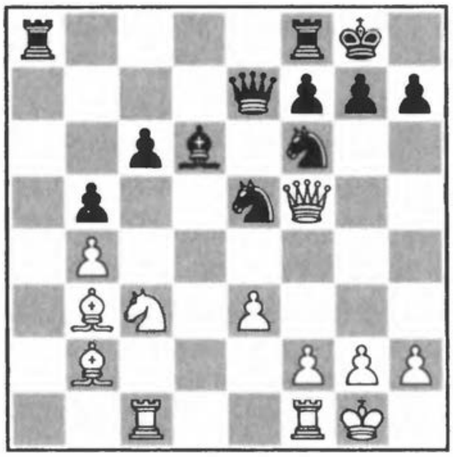
13...♗xf5 14.♕xf5 b5

Better is 14...♖fd8, threatening ...♘d3, and if 15.♖d1 then 15...a5 is awkward.

15.0-0 a5

Another player is tempted by White's queenside, but White has the bishop pair as compensation for any problems over there.

16.♖ac1 axb4 17.axb4



17...♘g6?!

Although 17...♗xb4 18.♘xb5 yields White an edge, possible is the introductory 17...g6! 18.♕b1, and only now 18...♗xb4, when after 19.♘e4 ♘xe4 20.♕xe4 ♗d6 21.♖fd1 ♖fe8 22.♗xe5 a draw would be the most likely result.

18.♘e2 ♖ac8 19.♘d4

The c6-square suddenly proves to be a serious weakness.

19...♕e4

A more robust defence is 19...♗e5! but after 20.♖fd1 White keeps up the pressure, noting that 20...♕xb4? gets into hot water after 21.♗xf7+!.

20.♕xe4 ♘xe4 21.♖fd1 ♗xb4 22.♘xc6 ♗d2?

After 22...♗c3 23.♗xc3 ♖xc6 24.♗b4 ♖xc1 25.♖xc1 White is much better but Black would have drawing chances.

23.♖c2 b4

Now 23...♗c3 loses the exchange after 24.♗xc3 ♖xc6 25.♗b4 ♖xc2 26.♗xc2.

24.♗d5 b3 25.♖c4 ♘d6 26.♖a4 ♗xe3 27.fxe3 ♖fe8 28.♖d3 ♘e7 29.♘xe7+ ♖xe7 30.♖xb3 ♖d7 31.e4

And Black resigned.

Black plays with 8...♘e4

Game 4

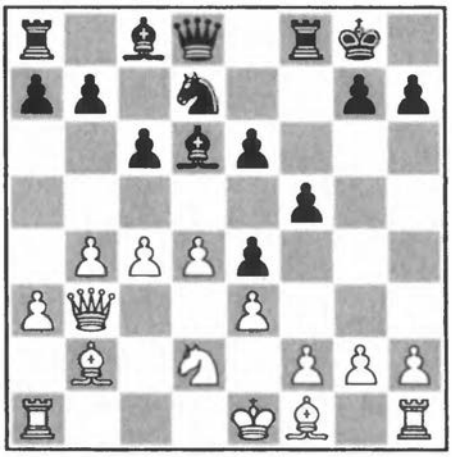
□ Glenn Flear
■ Yannick Pelletier
France tt 1999/00

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e3 e6 5.♘f3 ♘bd7 6.a3 ♗d6 7.b4 0-0 8.♗b2 ♘e4!?

In this position White has no choice but to continue with

9.♘xe4 dxe4 10.♘d2 f5 11.♕b3

White has a preponderance on the queenside but this is partially balanced out by Black having more space on the right-hand side of the board.



11...♕e7

After 11...♘f6 12.f4 exf3 13.gxf3 a5 14.0-0-0 axb4 15.axb4 b5 16.c5 ♗b8 17.♗d3, Malaniuk-Ortega, Formia 1995, White's space advantage enabled him to keep the better chances.

I employed Malaniuk's idea of playing an early f2-f4 a few months later in Game 5 in an analogous position.

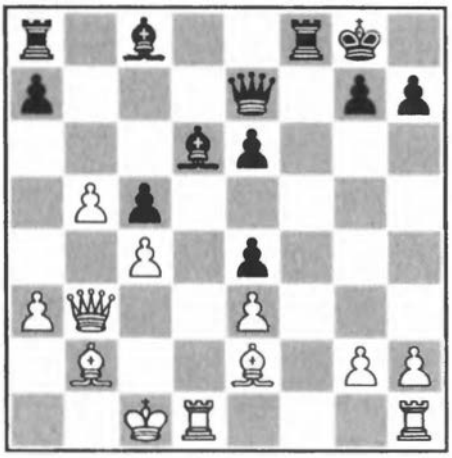
12.0-0-0 ♘f6 13.♗e2 b6

I quite like the idea of 13...♔h8 intending ...e5, see Flear-Doornbos, Game 5.

14.f3 c5

Pelletier decides not to exchange on f3, but he ends up with the inferior pawn structure.

15.dxc5 bxc5 16.fxe4 ♘xe4 17.♘xe4 fxe4 18.b5!



The queenside is closed off to any potential Black attack, but at the cost of allowing Black to penetrate with his rook. Is this important?

18...♖f2 19.♖d2 ♗b7

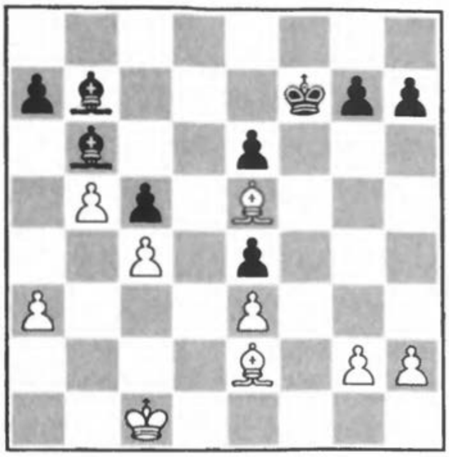
Although 19...♖xg2 is tempting, White then keeps the advantage: 20.♕c2! (20.♖hd1 ♗c7 21.♕c2 can be adequately met by 21...♕h4) 20...♗b7 21.♖hd1 ♖d8 (if 21...♗c7?? then 22.♖d7) 22.♗e5! ♖xe2 23.♗xd6 ♖xd2 24.♗xe7 ♖xd1+ 25.♕xd1 ♖xd1+ 26.♔xd1 and White has the better chances in the opposite-coloured bishop ending.

20.♕d1! ♖d8 21.♗e5 ♗c7 22.♖xd8+ ♕xd8

After 22...♗xd8 23.♖f1, Black doesn't have time to take the g-pawn as 23...♖xg2?? loses to 24.♗d6.

23.♕xd8+ ♗xd8 24.♖d1 ♗b6 25.♖d7! ♖f7 26.♖xf7 ♔xf7

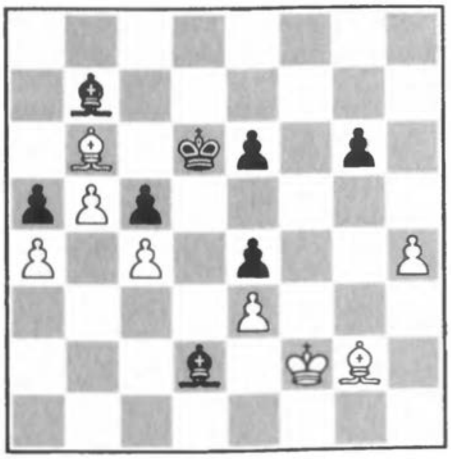
Black's invasion is repulsed (just!) by the forcing of mass exchanges. Now the double-bishop ending proves to be better for White as he retains the better pawn structure (the 3 v 2 queenside majority being more use than Black's 2 v 1 on the e-file!).



27.♔d1 g6 28.♔e1 ♔e7 29.♔f2 ♗a5 30.♗d1 h5 31.h4 a6 32.a4 ♗d2 33.g4

White needs to eventually invade with his king if he is to hope to convert his advantage. The text move has this in mind but first the scope of the light-squared bishop has to be improved.

33...hxg4 34.♗xg4 a5 35.♗h3 ♔d7 36.♗f4 ♔e7 37.♗c7 ♔d7 38.♗b6 ♔d6 39.♗g2



39...e5?!

This soon loses a pawn to Zugzwang but I doubt that Black can save this ending anyway:

– 39...♗b4 40.♔g3 ♗d2 41.♔f4 e5+ 42.♔g5 ♗xe3+ 43.♔xg6 ♗d2 44.♗f1! e3 45.♗e2 ♗e4+ 46.♔f7 ♗c2 47.♗a7 ♔c7 48.h5 ♗xa4 49.h6 ♗c2 50.♗xc5 etc.

– 39...♗a8 40.♔g3 e5 41.♔g4 ♗xe3

42.♗xa5 ♗b7 43.♔g3! (not 43.♗e1?? ♗f4 and the threat of mate would embarrass White's king) 43...♗f4+ 44.♔f2 e3+ 45.♔f1 e2+ 46.♔f2 ♗e3+ 47.♔xe3 ♗xg2 48.♔xe2 ♗e4 49.♔d2 and the connected passed pawns lead to victory despite the opposite bishops: 49...♔d7 50.♗b6 ♔d6 51.♗d8 ♗f3 52.♗g5 ♔c7 53.a5 ♗g2 54.♗e3 ♔d6 55.a6 and then b5-b6-b7 etc.

40.♔e2 ♗b4 41.♔f2 ♗c3 42.♗a7 ♗b2 43.♗b8+ ♔e7 44.♗c7 ♗c3 45.♗h3

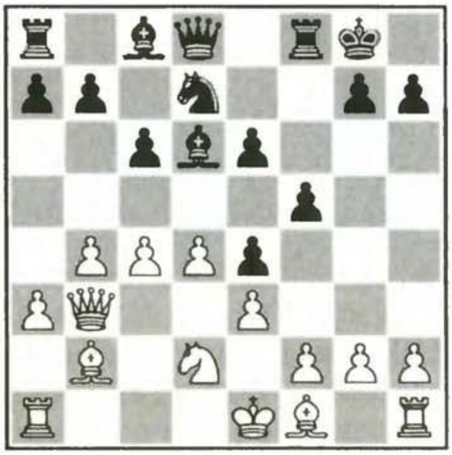
Zugzwang!

45...♗b4 46.♗xe5 ♗d2 47.♔e2 ♗b4 48.♗b2 ♔d6 49.♗f6 ♗a3 50.♔f2 ♗b4 51.♔g3 1-0

Game 5

☐ **Glenn Flear**
■ **Yann Doornbos**
French tt 1999/00

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e3 e6 5.♘f3 ♘bd7 6.a3 ♗d6 7.b4 0-0 8.♗b2 ♘e4!? 9.♘xe4 dxe4 10.♘d2 f5 11.♕b3



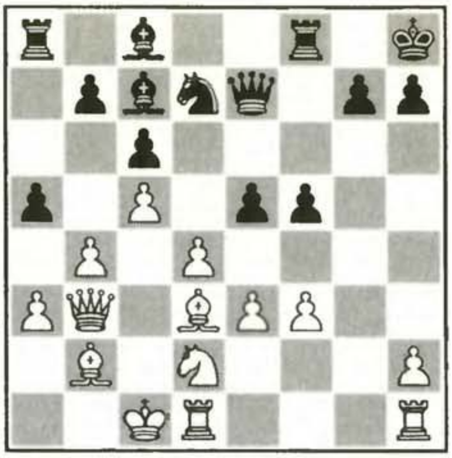
11...♔h8!

This move enables Black to safely play ...e5 challenging White's space advantage.

12.0-0-0 ♕e7 13.f4 exf3 14.gxf3 e5

The position remains rich and full of possibilities. Black's bishop on c8 being a slight concern for him.

15.♗d3 a5 16.c5 ♗c7



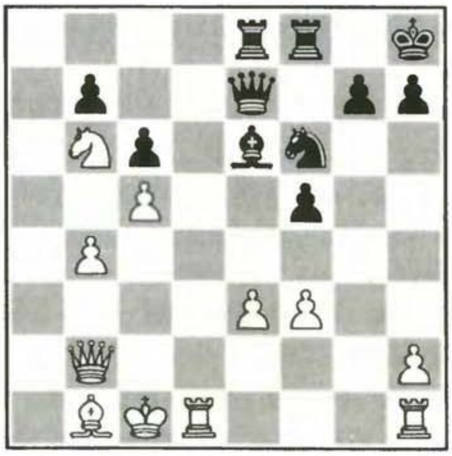
17.♗b1?

Misplacing the bishop whilst allowing the opening of the a-file just helps Black! Instead the space-gaining idea 17.b5!? is possible when after 17...cxb5 (or 17...♘f6 18.b6) 18.♗xb5 White's pieces are the most dynamic.

17...axb4 18.axb4 ♘f6

Now ...♗e6 is coming when Black will obtain a fully mobilised game.

19.dxe5 ♗xe5 20.♘c4 ♗xb2+ 21.♕xb2 ♗e6 22.♘b6 ♖ae8



With Black's pieces well-placed in the centre and White's king rather shaky, Black already has to be better.

23.♖he1 ♗d5

Also promising is 23...♘d5 24.♘c4 b6!.

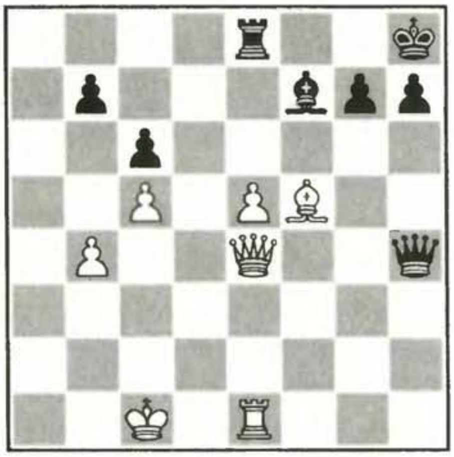
24.♗xf5 ♗xf3 25.♖d6 ♘d5 26.♘xd5 ♗xd5 27.♗b1 ♕g5

Opening lines on the queenside with 27...b6! is also good.

28.♕d2 ♕h4 29.♖d7 ♖f7 30.♖xf7 ♗xf7 31.e4 ♖d8 32.♕e3 ♕xh2

The only way for White to now obtain compensation for the pawn is to create some mischief arising from the presence of a passed e-pawn.

33.e5 ♖e8 34.♗f5 ♕h4 35.♕e4



35...♕xe4?!

Black would retain more winning chances by keeping the queens on (White's king is the most vulnerable in a middlegame, but the more active in an ending), e.g. 35...♕g5+ 36.♔c2 h5 with a clearer advantage than in the game.

36.♖xe4 ♗d5 37.♖e3 g6 38.♗d7 ♖e7 39.♗c8 ♗e6 40.♗xe6 ♖xe6 41.♔d2 ♔g7 42.♔d3 g5?!

A better practical chance to keep some advantage is 42...♖e8 43.♔e4 ♔f7, but White can still mix it with 44.b5!?.

43.♔e4 ♖g6 44.♔f5! ♔f7 45.♖h3 ♖g7 46.b5! cxb5 47.♖b3 ♔e7 48.♖xb5 ♖f7+ 49.♔xg5 ♔e6 50.♖b6+ ♔d5?

Pushing too hard for a win. With more time my opponent would have come to his senses and played 50...♔xe5, when 51.c6 bxc6 52.♖xc6 would draw.

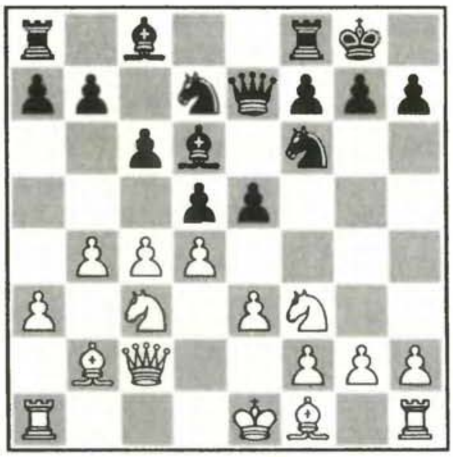
51.e6 ♖c7 52.♔f6 ♔xc5 53.♖b1 1-0

Black reacts with an early ...e5.

Game 6

☐ **Evgeny Agrest**
■ **Grigory Serper**
Oberwart 1994

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e3 e6 5.♘f3 ♘bd7 6.a3 ♗d6 7.b4 0-0 8.♗b2 ♕e7 9.♕c2 e5!



In my opinion the most convincing defence for Black.

Delaying this advance is possible: 9...♖e8 10.h3!? (10.♗e2 is perhaps more natural but the text is a useful waiting move. A number of openings feature an early h2-h3, or a2-a3 and even some good ones feature both!) 10...a6 (after 10...e5 11.cxd5 e4?! – Black should settle for 11...cxd5 with play similar to what follows in the main game – 12.dxc6 and Black didn't obtain enough for the pawn in Tyomkin-Boudre, Toulouse 1997) 11.c5 (11.♗d3!? dxc4 12.♗xc4 b5 13.♗d3 a5 14.bxa5 ♖xa5 should be compared to Flear-Fontaine, Game 2) 11...♗c7 12.♗d3 e5 13.dxe5♘xe5 14.♘xe5 ♗xe5 15.0-0♗c7 (threatening ...♕e5) 16.♖ae1 ♘e4 17.f4 f5 18.♗xe4 dxe4 19.♘e2 ♗e6 20.♘d4 was the continuation of Tisdall-Skembris, Gausdal 1993, when after 20...♕f7! chances would be balanced.

10.cxd5 cxd5

After 10...e4?! 11.dxc6! exf3 12.cxd7 fxg2 13.♗xg2 ♗xd7, White had an extra pawn in Ki.Georgiev-Lukacs, Stara Zagora Zonal 1990. Then either 14.e4 or 14.0-0 would have been prudent, whereas the game continuation 14.♗xb7!? ♖ab8 15.♗f3 ♖fc8 16.♕d3 ♗e6 gave Black some practical chances for his pawns.

The remaining option is 10...♘xd5 which despite enabling White to obtain the slightly better pawn structure after 11.♘xd5 cxd5 12.dxe5 ♘xe5 13.♗e2, it should be mentioned that these type of isolated pawn positions only give a small pull for White. Chepukaitis-Ofstad, Bad Zwischenahn 2003, continued with the further moves 13...♘xf3+ 14.♗xf3 ♗e6 15.♕c3 ♕g5 16.0-0 ♖ac8 17.♕d2 ♖c4 and Black had sufficient activity to enable him to hold.

11.dxe5

Seeking the bishop pair with 11.♘b5 seems somewhat slow, e.g. 11...e4 12.♘d2 ♘b6 13.♗e2?! (if 13.♘xd6 ♕xd6 then 14.♖c1! with chances for both sides is best, rather than 14.a4?! ♗e6 15.♕c5 ♕d8 16.♕a5, as in that case Black can obtain strong counterplay with 16...♘g4!?) 13...♗g4 14.♘xd6 ♕xd6 15.f3 ♖ac8 16.♕b3 exf3 17.gxf3 ♗f5 18.b5 ♗c2 and Black was better in Ki.Georgiev-Markus, Bar 2003.

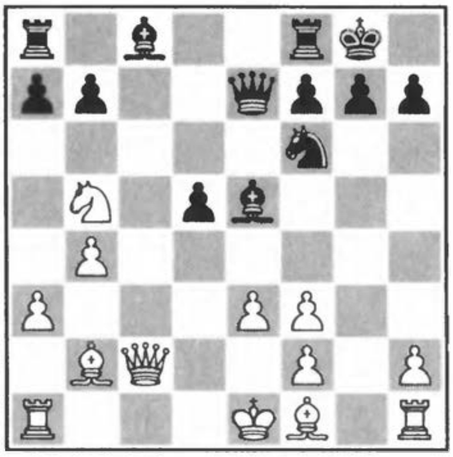
11...♘xe5 12.♘b5!?

Although the natural 12.♘d4 (keeping the kingside intact) seems reasonable enough, White has a hole on c4 (compared to some analogous IQP positions with the pawn on b3 and bishop on b2), so I doubt that he will be able to claim anything more than a nominal advantage.

12...♘xf3+ 13.gxf3

Now White's king insecurity is an issue, but so is his control over some key central squares.

13...♗e5



14.♗xe5

Also rather unclear was the following: 14.♘d4 a5 15.b5 ♗d7 16.♗d3 ♖fc8 17.♕e2 ♖e8 (Black's active pieces more or less compensate for his isolani) 18.h4 ♘h5 19.♔f1 ♕f6 20.♕d1 g6 21.♗e2, Dao Thien Hai-Prié, Budapest 1993, and White has reorganized his pieces ready for a timely f3-f4.

14...♕xe5 15.♘d4?!

This obvious move is the source of White's difficulties. Instead White should keep his control of the c7-square and so I suggest 15.♖d1! ♕h5 (White has an adequate control of events in the complications following 15...♗d7 16.♕c7 ♕h5 17.♘d4) 16.♘d4 ♗h3 17.♗xh3 (or even 17.♕c7 ♗xf1 18.♔xf1 with chances for both sides) 17...♕xh3 18.♕f5 ♕h4 19.0-0 and White may even be better.

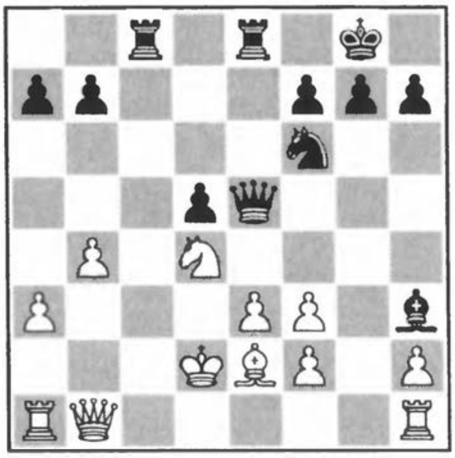
15...♖e8 16.♗e2

I also prefer Black after 16.♕d2 ♗d7 17.♖c1 ♖ac8 18.♖xc8 ♖xc8 19.h4 ♘h5.

16...♗h3 17.♔d2!?

A radical solution for the king!

17...♖ac8 18.♕b1



18...a5!?

Greedy but good is 18...♗g2!? 19.♖g1 ♕xh2 20.♕f5 h6!.

19.bxa5 ♗g2 20.♖c1 ♖xc1 21.♕xc1 ♗h3 22.♖b1 ♕xh2

The game has become very sharp, but in these cases White's inferior king is a constant worry for him.

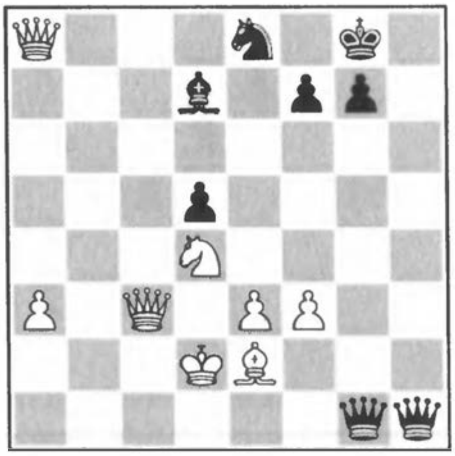
23.♖xb7 ♕xf2 24.♖b3 ♗c8 25.♕e1 ♕h2

Black should not exchange queens.

26.♔d1 ♗d7 27.♕b4 h5 An exciting race follows. **28.a6 h4 29.a7 h3 30.♔d2 ♕g1 31.♕c3 h2 32.♖b8 h1♕ 33.♖xe8+ ♘xe8**

Agrest was understandably even more concerned about 33...♗xe8 34.a8♕ ♘e4+ 35.fxe4 ♕e1+ 36.♔c2 ♕b1+ 37.♔d2 ♕he1 mate.

34.a8♕



Material is equal but the chances of survival of the two kings is not!

34...♕b1 35.♕c2 ♕he1+ 36.♔d3 ♗b5+!

Winning a piece.

37.♘xb5 ♕xc2+ 38.♔xc2 ♕xe2+ 39.♔c3 ♕xb5 40.a4 ♕c4+ 41.♔d2 ♕b4+ 42.♔e2 ♔f8 43.a5 ♕b5+ 44.♔f2 ♔e7 45.♕a7+ ♔d8 46.♕a8+ ♔d7 47.a6 ♕c6 0-1

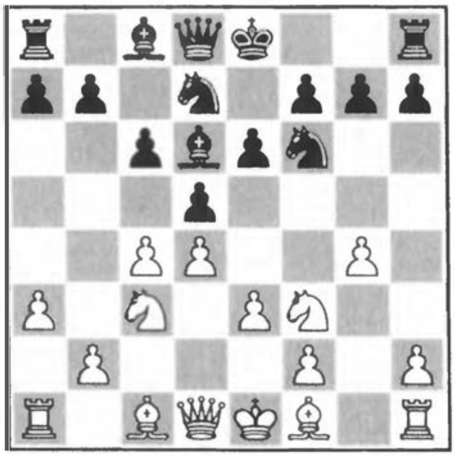
The Epishin Attack

A somewhat more aggressive interpretation is illustrated by the following game.

Game 7

☐ **Tiger Hillarp Persson**
■ **Erwin L'Ami**
Malmö 2007

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.e3 e6 5.♘c3 ♘bd7 6.a3 ♗d6 7.g4!?



In 2006, Epishin introduced a hybrid system combining 6.a3 with the thrust g2-g4 which is most often associated with 6.♕c2 ♗d6 7.g4.

The advantage of this set-up is that Black is not able to resort to a defence based on ...♗b4, but on the other hand he has an easier time playing his knight to e4 early in the game. White has made one less developing move so there is a compelling case for Black to open up the game.

7...e5!

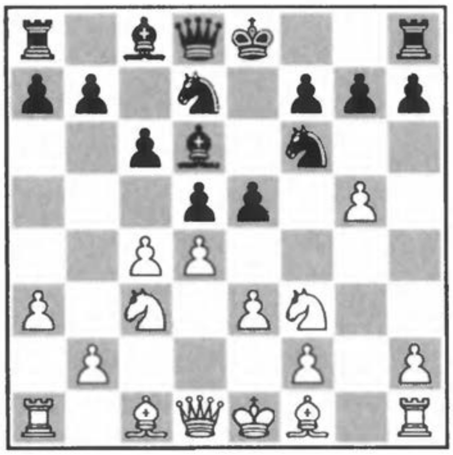
L'Ami correctly hits back in the centre. Well let's face it, if White intends fiddling about on the wings then this just has to be the way to react!

The initial game in this system saw Black reacting passively with 7...b6?! 8.g5 ♘g8, when White was able to gain the initiative: 9.cxd5 exd5 10.e4 ♘e7 11.exd5 cxd5 12.♗d3 0-0 13.♕c2 g6 14.h4 ♖e8 15.h5 Epishin-Godena, San Marino 2006.

More recently Kobalia was more successful with the prophylactic 7...h6 e.g. 8.♖g1 dxc4 9.♗xc4 b5 10.♗e2 b4 11.axb4 ♗xb4 12.h4 c5 13.♔f1 ♗b7 14.g5 hxg5 15.hxg5 ♘e4 16.♘xe4 ♗xe4 17.♗d2, Epishin-Kobalia, Dresden 2007 with a balanced game.

8.g5

After 8.cxd5 ♘xd5 9.♘xd5 cxd5 10.dxe5 ♘xe5 11.♘xe5 ♗xe5 12.♗g2 ♗e6 White's pawn on g4 is misplaced.



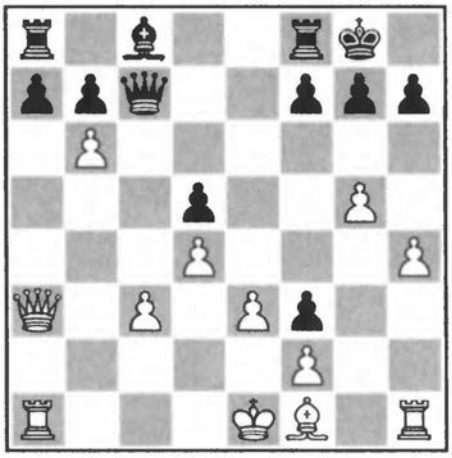
8...♘e4 9.cxd5 ♘xc3 10.bxc3 cxd5 11.♕b3 ♕c7 12.a4 0-0 13.h4

With his centre reasonably solid White aims to expand his influence on both wings. A curious plan but not one that should worry the second player.

13...♘b6 14.♗a3 ♗xa3 15.♕xa3 e4 16.a5

After the more solid 16.♘d2, with 16...♗d7!? Black obtains a queenside initiative.

16...exf3 17.axb6



17...axb6!?

Surely after 17...♕xb6! White can't have enough for his pawn e.g. 18.♗d3 ♗g4 19.♔d2 (or 19.h5 ♕e6 20.g6 h6) 19...♖fc8 20.♖ab1 ♕c6 21.♖b5 ♗f5 22.♖c5 ♕e6 and Black is clearly better.

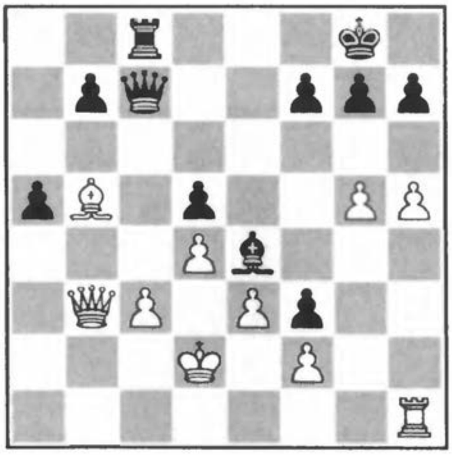
18.♕b2

18.♕xa8? gets into hot water after 18...♕xc3+ 19.♔d1 ♗f5!.

18...♗f5 19.♔d2 ♖a5 20.♖xa5 bxa5 21.♗b5

In this way the black queenside is stymied.

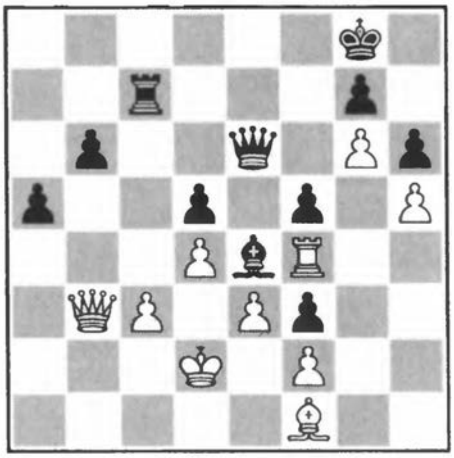
21...♖c8 22.♕b3 ♗e4 23.h5!?



Black may have an extra pawn but if he's going nowhere on the queenside then he will have problems converting any advantage. Furthermore, this kingside advance will give him additional things to think about.

23...♕d6 24.♖h4 h6!? 25.g6 f5 26.♖f4 ♖c7 27.♗f1 ♕c6 28.♗b5 ♕e6 29.♗f1 b6

Spurning the draw. The following move is based on good chess psychology.



30.♗d3!

If Black wants to play for a win he naturally feels that he should 'do something'. So Tiger offers his opponent the opportunity to capture on d3, but this then gives both players winning chances.

30...♗xd3 31.♔xd3 ♔f8 32.♖xf3!

Rather cheeky, but why not?

32...♔e7

Alternatively, 32...♕e4+ yields nothing after 33.♔e2.

33.♖f4 ♔f6 34.♔e2 ♔g5?

Manly (foolhardy?), but fraught with danger.

35.♕b1! ♔f6 36.♕h1!

Chasing the black king away.

36...♔e7 37.♕h4+ ♕f6 38.♕h3 ♔e6 39.e4!

Black's king is the weaker. This is often the decisive factor in late-middlegames with only a queen and rook each.

39...dxe4 40.♖xe4+ ♔d6 41.♖e5 ♕g5?!

A better chance was 41...♖e7 42.f4 ♔c7, as it doesn't lose a pawn, although White's central domination would be unpleasant to face.

42.♖xf5 ♕g1 43.♖e5 ♖d7 44.♖e6+ ♔c7 45.♕f3 1-0

Black's king is just too open.

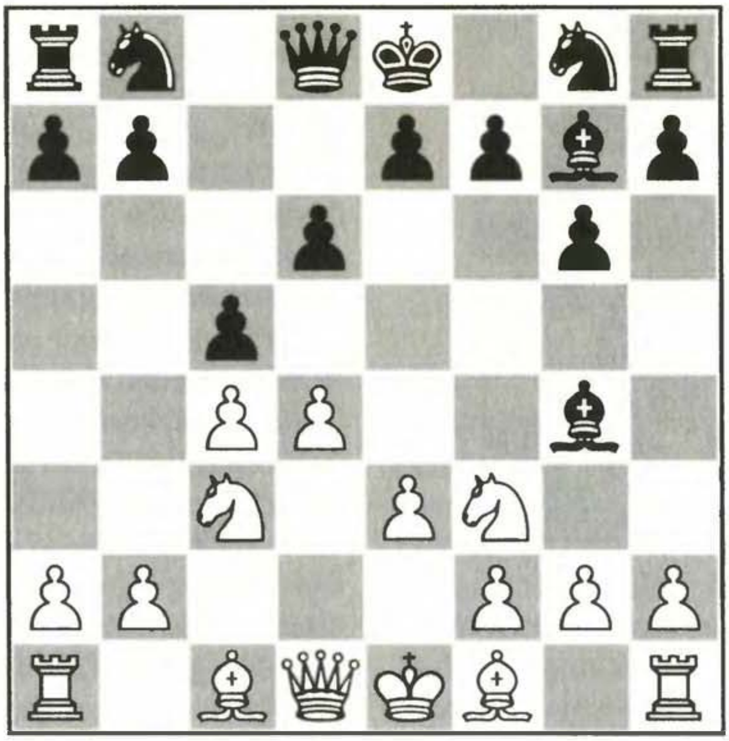
I don't think that the Epishin Attack is very convincing after L'Ami's 7...e5 and I personally would recommend sticking to 7.b4.

Conclusion: I doubt that 6.a3 is the best move in the position but it's not a bad surprise weapon.

CHAPTER 13

Alexander Finkel

Modern for Advanced Players



Develop your bishops first

I've been playing the variation which I'd like to introduce to you for many years. My score against 2300-2600 players is something between 70% to 80%. Taking into account these amazing statistics and adding to it that I can hardly call myself a very strong player, the most natural conclusion is that this line is probably not such a bad one.

I have to say that the variation which I chose to cover in this article is quite rarely played as most Modern Defence players confronted with the 1.d4 d6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♗g7 4.♘f3 move order prefer to switch to regular lines of the King's Indian by playing 4...♘f6, or they opt for 4...e5 (see Dorian Rogozenko's articles on 'An Indian SOS' in SOS-4). This statement is equally correct for the following move order: 1.♘f3 g6 2.d4 ♗g7 3.c4 d6 4.♘c3 – eventually leading to an identical position.

White's point is to avoid typical Modern Defence lines with an early ...♘c6 and ...e5, however, by adopting this move order White exposes himself to an early 4...♗g4!?.

The idea behind 4...♗g4 is to put immediate pressure on White's centre. Black takes full advantage of the position of the knight on g8 (I understand that my last statement sounds a bit unusual at best, but it's actually true) throwing in 5...c5 on the next move and developing the knight to f6 or f5 (via h6) depending on the circumstances.

The focus of our survey is the line arising after 1.♘f3 g6 2.d4 ♗g7 3.c4 d6 4.♘c3 ♗g4 5.e3 c5!?. Black's last move actually 'sets the tone' for the forthcoming play, although White has the last word in selecting the pawn structure and determining the character of the position.

Allow me to make my point by referring to White's main options on the 6th move: 6.♗e2 and 6.d5. After 6.♗e2 Black's plan involves piece play against white central pawns on d4 and c4, which is quite different from the Benoni-like positions arising after 6.d5, where Black usually wants to play ...e6 and ...exd5 followed by a pawn advance on the queenside. It is appropriate to mention that 6.♗e2 is way more popular than 6.d5!?. Personally, I'm not sure whether this preference is objectively justified.

By choosing this variation Black wants to fight for the initiative from the very first moves, forcing White to think on his own rather than to follow well-known theoretical patterns. That's what SOS is all about, isn't it?

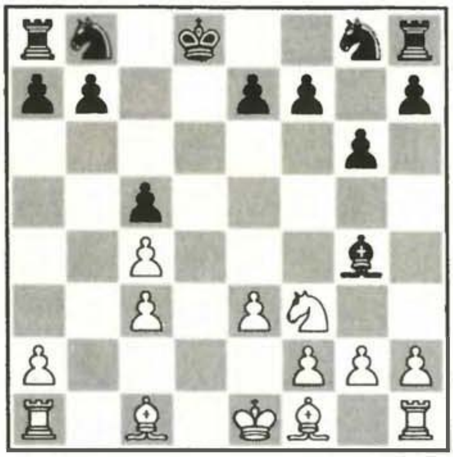
☐ **Claude Landenbergue**
■ **Alexander Finkel**
Budapest 1993

1.d4 g6 2.c4 ♗g7 3.♘f3 d6 4.♘c3 ♗g4 5.e3 c5 6.♗e2

White's main move, which is considered to be the most challenging one for Black. White isn't ready yet to release the pressure in the centre by pushing d5. For 6.d5 see Gausel-Jansa below.

Other moves are hardly dangerous for Black.

● The capture on c5 is just bad for White because after 6.dxc5?! ♗xc3+ 7.bxc3 dxc5 8.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 White is left with weaknesses on c3 and c4 and passive bishops:



– 9.♘e5 ♗e6 10.e4 ♘f6 11.♖b1 ♘xe4 12.♖xb7 ♘d6 13.♖b1 ♘d7 14.♗f4 ♘b6 15.♗e2 f6 16.♘d3 ♖c8 17.♗xd6 exd6 was somewhat better for Black in V. Mikhalevski-Davies, Rishon-le-Zion 1995.

– No better is 9.♘d2 ♘f6 10.a4 ♘c6 11.a5 ♔c7 12.♘b3 b6 13.f3 ♗d7 14.e4 ♖hb8 15.♗e2 e5 16.0-0 ♗e6 with a slight edge. Kraschl-Kozul, Oberwart 1995.

● More appealing for White is 6.♕a4+!? ♗d7 7.♕c2 ♘c6?! 8.d5 ♘a5 9.b3!? ♘f6 10.♗b2 0-0 11.♗e2 a6 12.0-0 ♖b8 13.♘d2 b5 14.e4e6 15.♘d1 exd5 16.exd5 and White had a comfortable edge in Irzhanov-Kakageldyev, Ashkhabad 1996. The black knight is completely out of play on a5, while White's bishop is clearly better placed on e2 comparing to Yugoslav Variation of the KID in which Black is putting pressure on c4 by a similar manoeuvre.

On the seventh move Black should play 7...cxd4!? 8.exd4 ♗g4 with characteristic pressure on d4.

6...cxd4

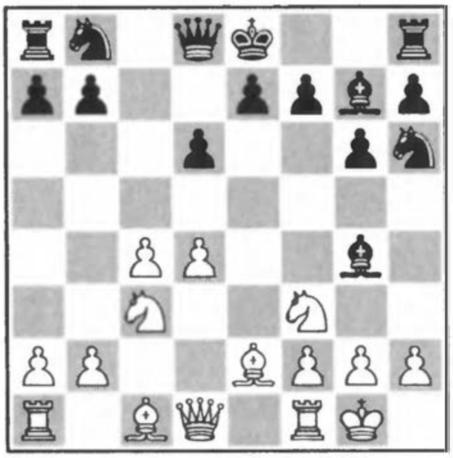
It's too early for 6...♘h6?! as after 7.d5 the black knight is useless on h6.

7.exd4 ♘h6

Heading for f5.

8.0-0

This is natural, but I believe that White can pose Black more problems with 8.h3 (see the next game). Deserving of attention is the immediate 8.d5!? 0-0 9.0-0 ♘d7 10.♗d2 Marin-Jansa, Warsaw Zonal 1987.



8...0-0

Keeping all options open. Also possible is 8...♘f5:

– 9.h3 ♗xf3 10.♗xf3 ♘c6 11.d5 (11.♗xc6+ bxc6 12.d5 cxd5 13.♘xd5 0-0 14.♖b1 e6 15.♘e3 ♘d4 was equal in Werbeck-Jansa, Eupen rapid 1994) 11...♘e5 12.♗d2 0-0 13.♗e2 ♖c8 14.b3 ♕b6 15.a4 a6 16.a5 ♕d4 unclear, Peelen-Hartoch, Wijk aan Zee 2001.

– 9.♕a4+?! ♕d7 10.♕xd7+ ♘xd7 11.♘d5 ♖c8 12.♖e1 e6 13.♘e3 ♗xf3 14.♗xf3 ♘xd4 15.♗xb7 ♖b8 with a plus for Black. Volkov-Gelman, Krasnoyarsk 1998.

– 9.d5!? ♘d7 10.♗d2 (White must protect the knight on c3 in order to play b3 later on) 10...0-0 11.b3 a6 12.a4 ♖c8 (12...♘c5 13.♖b1 e5 14.dxe6 fxe6 15.b4 ♘d7 16.♘g5 ♗xe2 17.♘xe2 ♖e8 18.♕b3± Ivkov-Magem Badals, Spain 1990) 13.♖a3 ♘c5 14.a5 b6 15.axb6 ♕xb6 with counterplay. Lukacs-Jo.Horvath, Hungary tt 1999/00.

9.♕b3?!

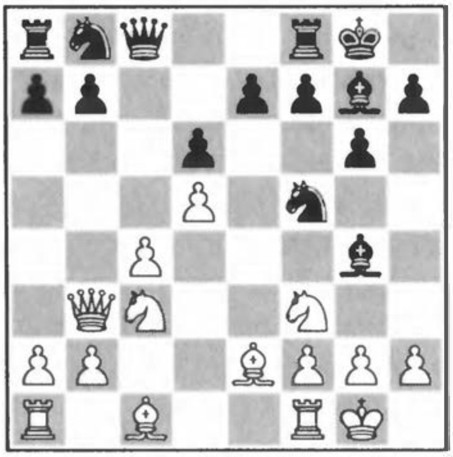
Not the best square for the queen, as after a future d5 Black will gain a tempo by ♘c5. Black played inaccurately in St.Pedersen-Berg, Forli 1991: 9.♗g5 ♘f5 10.♖c1 ♘d7 11.♕d2 ♗xf3?! 12.♗xf3 ♘xd4 13.♗xb7 ♖b8 14.♗d5±.

Black gains counterplay after 9.h3 ♗xf3 10.♗xf3 ♘c6 11.d5 ♘e5 12.♗e2 ♖c8 13.♕b3 ♘f5.

9...♕c8

Often in this line the black queen moves to c8 in order to protect his b7-pawn and attack the white one on c4.

10.d5 ♘f5



11.♘e4?!

White is struggling to find good squares for his pieces. Perhaps he should have protected his c4-pawn indirectly here with 11.♖e1!?, in order to meet 11...♗xf3 with 12.♗xf3 ♘d4 13.♕d1 ♘xf3+?! 14.♕xf3 ♕xc4 15.♖xe7 with a slight edge.

11...♘d7 12.♘g3 ♘c5 13.♕d1

Another inaccuracy, after which White is starting to experience serious problems. White's main concern is to develop his dark-squared bishop, which proves to be a very difficult task.

13.♘xf5 ♕xf5 (White is better after 13...♘xb3 14.♘xe7+ ♔h8 15.♘xc8 ♘xc1 – 15...♘xa1? 16.♘xd6± – 16.♖axc1 ♖axc8 17.b3 ♗xf3 18.♗xf3 ♖fe8) 14.♕d1 e6 15.h3 ♗xf3 16.♗xf3 ♖ad8 was still unclear.

13...♘xg3 14.hxg3 ♖e8!

Black is ready to push e6, implementing one of the basic principles of middlegame play – once you have an advantage in development the most efficient way to exploit it is by opening up the position.

15.♘h4

Also after 15.♖e1 e6 16.dxe6 ♕xe6 17.♖b1 ♗f5 18.♖a1 ♕f6∓ it's pretty tough for White to move.

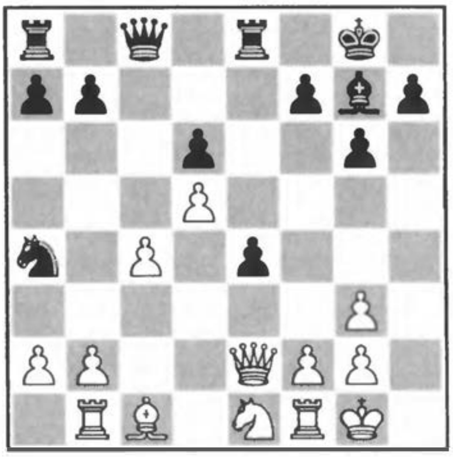
15...♗xe2 16.♕xe2 e5!

It's more important for Black to push ...e4 than to create a weakness on d5.

17.♘f3

Black is better after 17.dxe6 ♕xe6 18.♗e3 (or 18.♕xe6 ♖xe6 19.♘f3 ♖c8∓) 18...♘a4 19.♖ab1 ♘b6 20.b3 d5.

17...e4 18.♘e1 ♘a4 19.♖b1



19...b5!

Black is willing to trade his b-pawn for a central pawn on d5, taking control over the centre.

20.cxb5 ♕c5 21.♗f4

More persistent was 21.♘c2! ♕xd5 22.♖d1 ♕e6 (22...♕xa2? 23.♖a1 ♕b3 24.♖a3+−) 23.a3 d5 24.♘d4 ♕d7∓.

21...♖ac8 22.♖c1

Preferable was 22.a3!?.

22...♕xd5

Now material losses are inevitable for White.

23.♖d1 ♕xa2 24.♖xd6 ♘c3!

Winning two pawns with one move!

25.♕e3 ♘xb5 26.♖d2 ♗xb2 27.♗g5

Black also wins after 27.♕e2 ♘c3 28.♕e3 f5 29.♗g5 ♘d5 30.♕e2 ♖b8.

27...♕a3 28.♕xa3 ♗xa3

With two sound pawns up the endgame should be very easily winning for Black. Although I nearly managed to spoil it, I won on move 75.

☐ **Pia Cramling**
■ **Evgeny Agrest**
Gothenburg ch-SWE 2005

A very tense game which could have gone either way as both sides made quite a few inaccuracies in the middlegame. Overall it's quite typical for the and complicated struggle which is offered by this line.

1.d4 d6 2.♘f3 g6 3.c4 ♗g7 4.♘c3 ♗g4 5.e3 c5 6.♗e2 cxd4

For those of you who are in for some 'extreme' stuff I recommend the weird looking 6...♘c6!? 7.d5 ♗xf3 8.♗xf3 ♗xc3+ 9.bxc3 ♘e5 10.♗e2 f5 (Black's main strategic idea is to restrict the bishops, so preventing e4 is one the main priorities) 11.♖b1 ♕a5 12.♖xb7 ♕xa2 13.e4 fxe4 14.0-0 ♘f6 with very complex play, Barsov-Hennig, Breda 2000.

7.exd4

Black is doing just great after 7.♘xd4 ♗xe2 8.♘dxe2 (8.♘cxe2 ♘f6 9.0-0 0-0 10.b3 ♘a6 11.♗b2 d5 12.♖c1 ♖c8= Stangl-K.Berg, Munich 1991/92) 8...♘f6 and White must either push e4 later on, getting a position that is very similar to a Sicilian with 3.♗b5+ but with a wasted tempo on e2-e3-e4, or allow ...d5 by going for an early b3. 9.0-0 0-0 10.b3 ♘c6 11.♗b2 ♕a5 12.♕d2 a6 13.♖fd1 ♖fc8 14.♘d5 ♘xd5 15.cxd5 ♕xd2 16.♖xd2 ♘e5 17.h3 ♖c7∓ Dobosz-Jansa, Würzburg 1989.

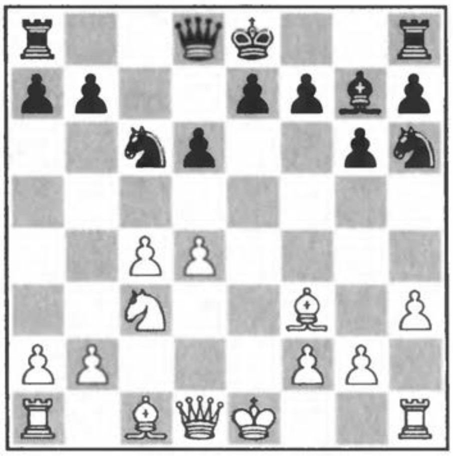
7...♘h6

This move is more promising for Black than 7...♘c6, transposing into a quite unpleasant line of the English Opening. After 7...♘c6 White doesn't have to waste a tempo on playing h3, since after d5 Black would have to take on f3 anyway. These little improvements is what opening preparation is about.

The next two games illustrate that White is very comfortable placed after 7...♘c6?! 8.0-0 ♘h6 and now:

- either 9.d5 ♗xf3 10.♗xf3 ♘e5 11.♗e2 0-0 12.♔h1 ♖c8 13.b3 a6 14.♗d2 ♘f5 15.f4 ♘d7 16.♖c1 Lechtynsky-Davies, Osterskars 1995, or
- 9.♗d2 0-0 10.d5 ♗xf3 11.♗xf3 ♘e5 12.♗e2 ♘f5 13.♖e1 ♖c8 14.b3 a6 15.a4 ♕b6 16.♗f1 Cvitan-Hug, Lucerne 1997.

8.h3 ♗xf3 9.♗xf3 ♘c6



10.g4!?

An ambitious attempt to exploit the poor position of the knight on h6. On the negative side we should mention the slightly vulnerable pawn formation on the kingside – White's king might get a bit too exposed, to put it simple.

● After 10.d5 ♘e5 White must play accurately to retain a minimal edge:

- 11.♗e4?! ♖c8 12.0-0 ♘xc4 13.♕b3 ♘b6 14.♖e1 ♘g8 15.♕b5+ ♕d7 16.♕a5 ♘f6∓ R.Garcia-Giaccio, Buenos Aires 1990.
- 11.0-0♘f5 12.♗e4♖c8 13.g4♘d4 14.b3 f5 15.gxf5 gxf5 16.♗g2± Zoler-Hutters, Panormo 2001.
- 11.♗e2♘f5 12.♗d2 0-0 13.0-0 a6 14.♖e1 ♕b6 15.b3 ♕d4 16.♖c1 ♘d3 17.♗xd3 ♕xd3 18.a4 with a minor edge, but Black's position remains very solid. Portisch-Timman, Wijk aan Zee 1975.

● In case of 10.♗xh6 Black easily keeps good counterchances: 10...♗xh6 11.♕a4 (or 11.0-0 0-0 12.♖e1 ♗g7 13.♗xc6 bxc6 14.d5 ♖c8 15.♖c1 cxd5 16.♕xd5 e6 17.♕d3 ♕a5∓ Haimovich-Ree, Amsterdam 2001) 11...♕d7 12.♖d1 ♗g7 (12...0-0 13.0-0 ♗g7 14.♖fe1 ♖fd8 15.♗xc6 bxc6 16.♖e3 d5∞ Cebalo-Hoi, Copenhagen 1991) 13.♘e2 0-0 14.b4 e6 15.0-0 d5 16.cxd5 exd5 with equality in Krivoshey-Naer, Polanica Zdroj 1999.

10...♘g8!?

The knight has no prospects on h6, so it makes perfect sense to bring it to f6.

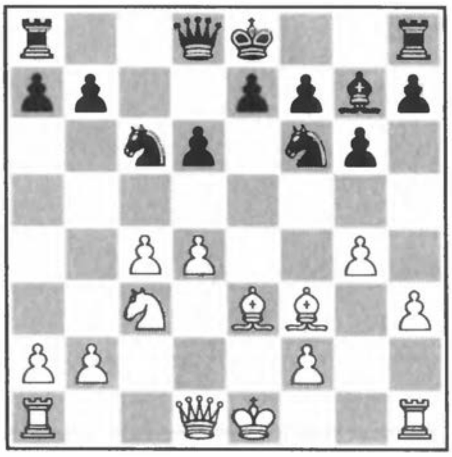
After the careless 10...0-0?! 11.♗e3 e5 12.♗xc6! bxc6? (it was necessary to jump into complications by 12...exd4) 13.dxe5 Black found himself in deep trouble as it's pretty difficult to protect the knight on h6 without giving up some material: 13...♖e8 (13...dxe5 14.♕c1+−) 14.♕d2 ♖xe5 15.0-0-0 ♖xe3 16.♕xe3± Bode-Alber, Schöneck 1991.

White retained a small edge after 10...♕d7 11.♗e3 f5 12.♕d2 f4 (12...fxg4 13.♗xc6 ♕xc6 14.d5 ♕xc4 15.♗xh6 ♗xc3 16.♕xc3 ♕e4+ 17.♔d2 ♕xd5+ 18.♕d3±) 13.♗xf4 ♘xd4 14.♗d5 ♘f7 15.♗e3 Wells-Conquest, European Championship, Istanbul 2003.

11.♗e3

It's too early for 11.♕a4?! ♗xd4 12.♗xc6+ bxc6 13.♕xc6+ ♔f8 and Black gets the upper hand.

11...♘f6



12.♔f1

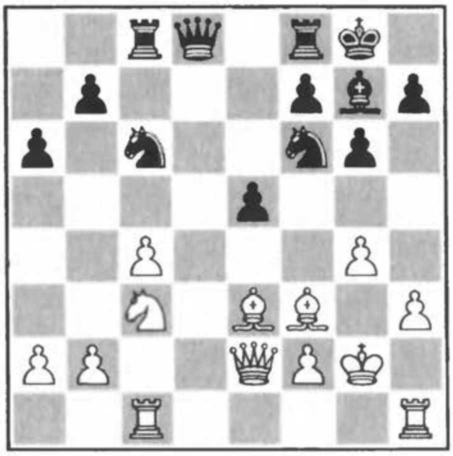
Once the pawn on d4 is protected 12.♕a4 (this makes a lot more sense now than on the previous move) 12...♕d7 13.g5 ♘h5 14.♖d1 followed by 15.c5 looks like an interesting try to fight for an advantage.

Also possible was 12.0-0.

12...0-0 13.♔g2 ♖c8 14.♖c1 a6 15.♕e2

White has the bishop pair and some space advantage while Black hopes to get at the opponent's king.

15...e5 16.dxe5 dxe5



17.♘d5?!

It was clearly better to support an invasion to d5 by the preliminary 17.♖hd1!? as the black queen doesn't have too many squares to retreat to: 17...♘d4 (17...♕e8 18.♗c5 ♘d4 19.♗xd4 exd4 20.♖xd4±; 17...♕e7 18.♘d5±) 18.♗xd4 exd4 19.♗xb7 ♖e8 20.♕f3 ♖xc4 21.♗xa6±.

17...♘d7!

All of a sudden Black is ready to play his trumps by pushing his f-pawn.

18.g5 ♔h8

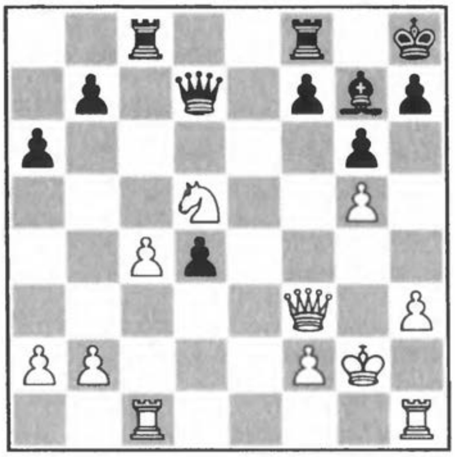
Useful prophylaxis. Not 18...f5?! 19.gxf6 ♘xf6 20.♖hd1 e4 21.♘xf6+ ♕xf6 22.♗xe4±.

19.♗g4

Another step in the wrong direction. After trading the bishops White's king becomes much more vulnerable.

19.h4!? f5 20.gxf6 ♘xf6 21.h5 gxh5 (21...e4 22.♗g4 ♘xg4 23.♕xg4±) 22.♘xf6 ♗xf6 23.♖xh5 ♖g8+ 24.♔h1 was the way to go.

19...♘d4 20.♗xd4 exd4 21.♗xd7 ♕xd7 22.♕f3



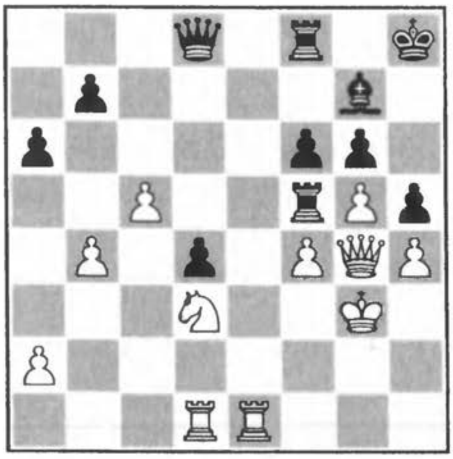
22...♖c6?!

This move is too slow. More in the spirit of the position was 22...♕d8!, after which White's best choice would be a transposition into an inferior rook endgame: 23.♘f6 (23.h4 f6 24.♕g3? ♖xc4!–+) 23...♗xf6 24.♕xf6+ ♕xf6 25.gxf6 ♖c6 26.♖hd1 ♖d8 27.♖d3 ♖xf6 28.♖cd1∓. White should be able to hold the endgame without too many problems.

23.♖he1 ♖e6 24.♘f4 ♖d6 25.c5 ♖c6

Admitting that his previous moves were wrong. **26.♕g4** 26.♕d5 ♕c7. **26...♕d8**

Playing with fire. **27.b4 ♖c7 28.♖cd1 ♖d7 29.♘d3** 29.♖d3!?. **29...♖d5 30.h4 ♖f5 31.f4 f6 32.♔g3** 32.♔g1. **32...h5?!**

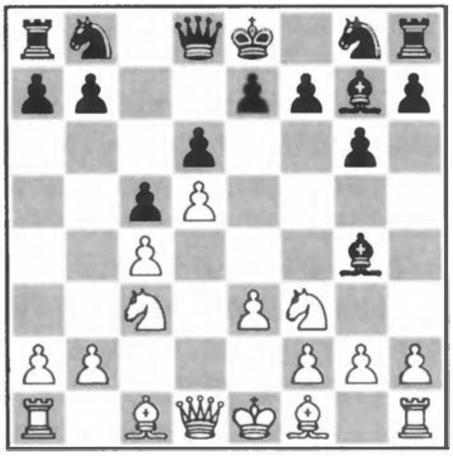


Black is obsessed with the idea to attack, while he should be thinking about neutralizing White's initiative. **33.gxh6 ♗xh6 34.♖e6** Now the pawn on d4 is doomed. **34...♖h5** Or 34...♖e8 35.♖de1 ♖xe6 36.♖xe6 ♕d5 37.♖e8+ ♔h7 38.♖e7+ ♗g7 39.♕f3±. **35.♖d6 ♕e8 36.♖e1 ♕b5 37.♕xg6??** Throwing away the game in one move. After the accurate 37.♖xd4 f5 38.♕d1 it would be very difficult for Black to survive. **37...♖g8 38.♖d8 ♕xd3+!0-1**

☐ **Einar Gausel**
■ **Vlastimil Jansa**
Gausdal Troll Masters 1991

1.d4 d6 2.♘f3 g6 3.c4 ♗g7 4.♘c3 ♗g4 5.e3 c5 6.d5!?

By choosing this move White strives for typical KID/Benoni positions.



6...♘f6

The most flexible move. Alternatives are clearly worse, even though the idea of giving up the dark-squared bishop is quite interesting. Anyway, I would recommend to stick to 6...♘f6, as it's not so easy for Black to keep the position closed.

– 6...e5? 7.dxe6! ♗xe6 8.♘b5 ♘f6 9.♕xd6 ♕xd6 10.♘xd6+ ♔d7 11.♘xb7 ♘a6 12.a3 ♖ab8 13.♘a5 ♘e4 14.♗d3 f5 15.♘d2 ♘xd2 16.♔xd2 ♗xb2 17.♖b1 with a big edge in Ehlvest-A.Ivanov, New York 1989.

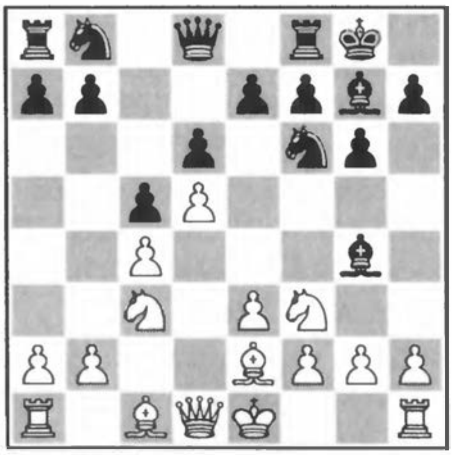
– 6...♗xc3+?! 7.bxc3 ♕a5 (7...♘d7 8.♗e2 ♕a5 9.♕c2 ♘b6 10.e4 ♕a4 11.♕b3 ½-½ Sakaev-Gulko, Elista ol 1998) 8.♗d2 ♘f6 9.♕b3 0-0 10.♗d3 ♘bd7 11.h3 ♗f5? 12.♗xf5 gxf5 13.0-0 ♘b6 14.♘h4 White is better. Kargoll-Dischinger, Dresden 1998.

– 6...♗xf3?! 7.gxf3 ♗xc3+ 8.bxc3 ♕a5 9.♗d2 ♘d7 10.♗e2 ♘gf6 11.♕c2 0-0-0 12.f4 h6 13.h4 g5 14.hxg5 hxg5 15.♖xh8 ♖xh8 16.fxg5 ♖h1+ and Black had counterplay (and won) in Pogorelov-Sanchez Aller, Mondariz Balneario 2003.

7.♗e2

Less convincing is 7.h3 ♗xf3 8.♕xf3 (White's queen is badly placed on f3) 8...0-0 (or 8...♘a6 9.♗d2 ♘c7 10.g4!? ♖b8 11.g5 ♘d7 12.h4 a6 13.a4 e6 14.e4 unclear. Ostenstad-Bern, Vettre 1992) 9.♕d1?! ♘a6 10.♗e2 ♘c7 11.0-0 a6 12.♖b1 b5 13.b3 ♖b8 14.♕c2 e6 15.dxe6 fxe6 16.e4 b4 17.♘d1 e5∓ Guliev-Kakageldyev, Simferopol 1989.

7...0-0



8.h3

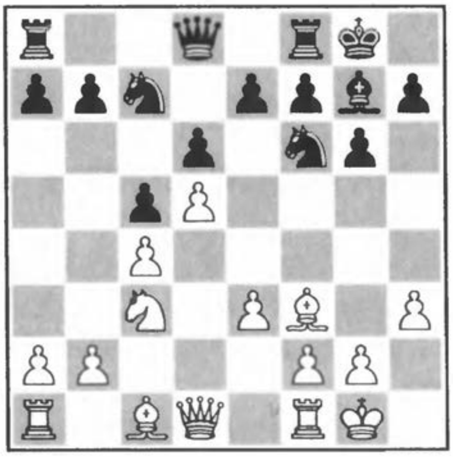
Forcing Black to take on f3. After 8.0-0 e5?! play is most likely to transpose into an unfavourable kind of KID: 9.e4 (9.dxe6 ♗xe6 10.e4 ♘c6 11.♗g5 ♕b6 12.♕d2 ♘d4 13.♖fd1 ♘g4? 14.♘xd4 ♗xd4 15.♗xg4 ♗xg4 16.♘d5+– Nielsen-Hoi, Tønder

1993) 9...♘h5 10.h3 ♗c8 11.♖e1 ♘f4 12.♗f1 ♘d7 13.g3 ♘h5 14.♗g2 a6 15.♗e3 h6 16.♘d2± Toth-Kluger, Budapest 1971. However, after 8.0-0 Black should play 8...♘a6 intending to take on f3 later on. For example: 9.e4 ♘c7 10.♗f4 ♘d7 11.h3 ♗xf3 12.♗xf3 ♖e8 13.♗e2 ♗d4 14.♕d2 with a minimal edge Komljenovic-Jansa, Bad Mergentheim 1989.

8...♗xf3 9.♗xf3 ♘a6

As I mentioned, Black's plan in these kinds of positions is to push ...e6, take on d5 and start his actions on the queenside with ...b5 in case White recaptures on d5 with the c-pawn. The knight comes to c7 to support the future advance of the b pawn.

10.0-0 ♘c7



11.♖b1?!

This move is just a waste of tempo. White is not in time to prepare the b4-break, which is one of White's alternative plans in the position.

For that reason it was better to stick to orthodox play involving e4 and ♗f4: 11.e4 ♖b8 12.♗e2 a6 13.a4 e6 14.♗f4 exd5 15.cxd5 ♖e8 with about equal chances in a complex position.

11...♖b8

Black is ready for ...b5 so White has to take some measures against it.

12.♗e2 a6 13.a4 e5

I would have opted for 13...e6, keeping the option to take on d5.

14.dxe6

Black obtains interesting counterplay after 14.e4 ♘d7 15.♗e3 f5 16.b4!? (16.exf5 gxf5 17.f4 e4∞) 16...f4 17.♗c1 cxb4 18.♖xb4 a5 19.♖b1 ♘c5.

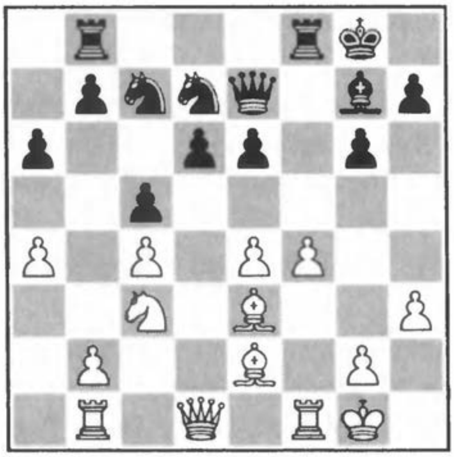
14...fxe6 15.e4

Weakening the crucial d4-square. A better way to deal with ...d5 is 15.b4!? cxb4 16.♖xb4 b6 (16...♘d7?! 17.♘e4 d5 18.cxd5 exd5 19.♘g3±) 17.♗a3 intending to bring the rook to d2 via b2.

15...♕e7 16.♗e3 ♘d7

On its way to d4.

17.f4



17...♖bd8!

This is a multi-purpose move – Black takes care of d6 against a possible doubling of White's major pieces on the d-file and prepares the manoeuvre ♘b8-c6-d4.

18.♕d2

Deserving of attention was 18.♕d3!?, to play 19.f5 in case of 18...♘b8.

18...♘b8 19.♗d3 ♘c6 20.♖be1 ♗d4! 21.♗xd4

21.f5 ♗xe3+ 22.♕xe3 ♘e5 23.♕g3 ♕g7.

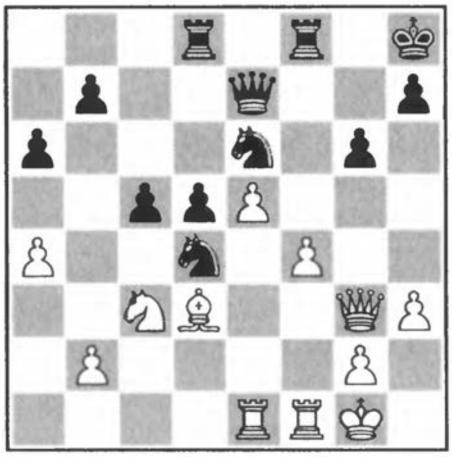
21...♘xd4 22.e5?!

Preferable was 22.f5.

22...d5 23.cxd5 exd5

Or 23...♘xd5 24.♘e4 b5 25.axb5 axb5.

24.♕f2 ♘ce6 25.♕g3 ♔h8



White's play on the kingside is easily neutralized, while it's pretty tough to deal with the advance of the black pawns on the queenside and in the centre.

26.♖f2

White's pieces are cramped, so getting rid of one of them is an idea: 26.♘e2!? c4 27.♘xd4 ♕c5 28.♕e3 ♘xd4 29.♗b1 ♘b3 30.♕xc5 ♘xc5 31.a5 ♘b3 32.g4.

26...c4 27.♗b1 b5 28.axb5 axb5 29.f5?

Just making things easier for Black.
Instead 29.♕g4 was better.

29...gxf5 30.♖ef1 f4 31.♕g4 ♖g8

Apparently Black was in some sort of a time scramble, as his play for the next 10-12 moves is not very convincing! After the simple 31...f3! the game wouldn't have lasted for another 30 moves.

32.♕h5 ♖g5 33.♕h6 ♕g7 34.♕h4 b4

There was nothing wrong with 34...f3 35.g4 ♖xe5 winning.

35.♘a2 ♖g8 36.g4 h6?!

I'm not really sure what this move was for.

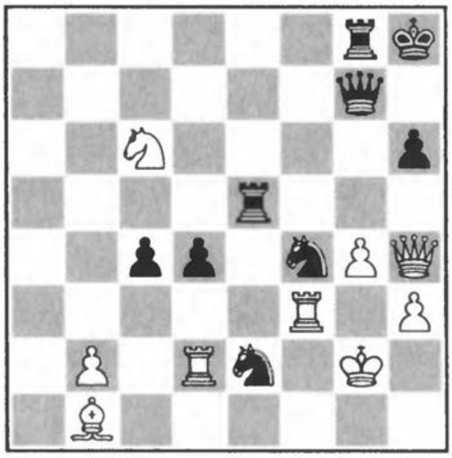
37.♘xb4 ♖xe5 38.♖d2 ♘e2+

38...♖e3!.

39.♔g2

Things are starting to become quite unclear.

39...d4 40.♘c6 f3+?! 41.♖xf3 ♘6f4+



42.♔f2?

After the correct 42.♔f1! Black might get into trouble after 42...♖e6 43.♘xd4 ♘xd4 44.♖xf4.

42...♖e6

Starting a forced sequence of moves leading to a better endgame.

43.♘xd4 ♘xd4 44.♖xf4 ♕e5 45.♖e4 ♖f8+

45...♕h2+ 46.♔e3 ♕g1+ 47.♕f2 ♕xb1 48.♖xe6 ♘xe6 49.♕f6+ ♘g7 50.♕xh6+ ♕h7 51.♕xh7+ ♔xh7 52.♖d4 is only equal.

46.♔g2

Black wins after 46.♔e1? ♕xe4+!.

46...♘f3 47.♖xe5 ♘xh4+ 48.♔g3 ♖xe5 49.♔xh4 ♖b8 50.♗a2 ♖c5 51.♖c2 ♖b4 52.♖d2 ♔g7 53.♖d4 ♔f6 54.b3??

54.♖e4.

54...♔e5

Forcing the exchange of rooks, while White's bishop is trapped on a2.

55.♖xc4 ♖cxc4 56.bxc4 ♖b2

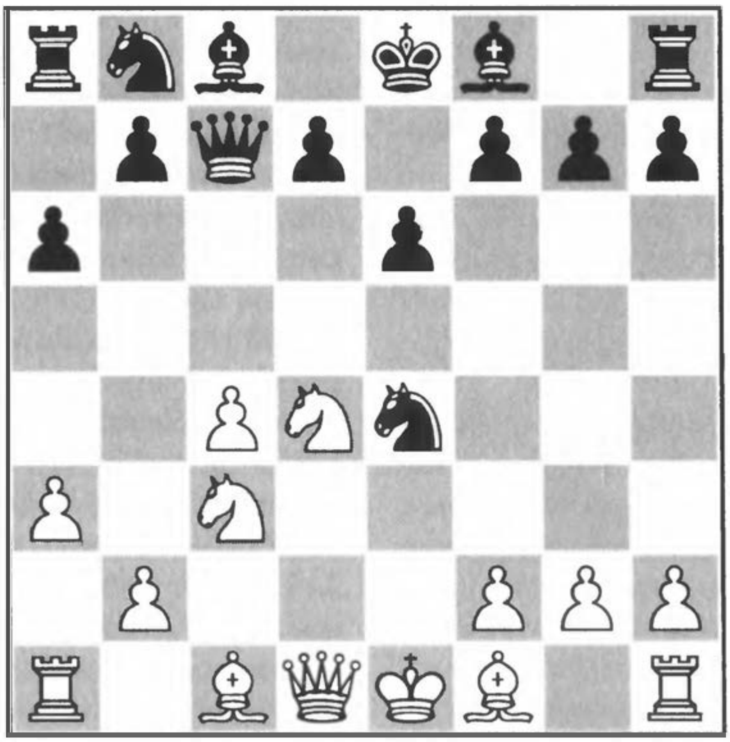
The rest is of no interest.

57.♔h5 ♖xa2 58.♔xh6 ♖h2 59.g5 ♖xh3+ 60.♔g6 ♖c3 0-1

CHAPTER 14

Jeroen Bosch

Taimanov's Surprise Sac in the Kan



The intrepid 7...♘xe4

This SOS chapter is based on an off-hand suggestion by Mark Taimanov. In his 1984 monograph on the Sicilian Paulsen (Batsford) he casually mentions an early knight sac in a main-line Kan Variation. Only to continue that, even though the move is interesting, it has yet to be tested in practice.

It is always nice when a grandmaster gives away a novelty for free. Yet in this case, his readership was not convinced. Although some games did feature 7...♘xe4!? we had to wait until 2002 for a top-level encounter. In the match Moscow vs. St Petersburg, an intrepid Peter Svidler braved Alexander Morozevich's attack with this provocative move from his townsman. Svidler's example has been followed in recent years by talented young players such as Mark Paragua, Jan Werle and Arik Braun. It seems that strong players are willing to risk 7...♘xe4 for the right occasion.

☐ **Alexander Morozevich**
■ **Peter Svidler**
Moscow-St Petersburg 2002

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 a6 5.c4 ♘f6 6.♘c3 ♕c7

The alternative 6...♗b4 is considered riskier. The text prepares the pin and usually provokes White into playing the cautious

7.a3

An important tabiya position in the 5.c4 Kan. White is ready for a hedgehog after 7...d6, 7...♘c6 or 7...b6. To quote from Kasparov's oeuvre:

– 7...d6 8.♗e3 b6 9.♖c1 ♘bd7 10.♗e2 ♗b7 11.f3 ♗e7 12.0-0 0-0, Kasparov-Kramnik, Moscow 2001.

– 7...♘c6 8.♗e3 ♗e7 9.♖c1 0-0 10.♗e2 ♘xd4! 11.♕xd4 d6 12.0-0 ♖b8 13.♕b6, Kasparov-Ivanchuk, Linares 2002.

White is slightly better in both cases.

If you want to avoid this type of position, if you don't mind taking risks and if you have steady nerves, take a deep breath and play...

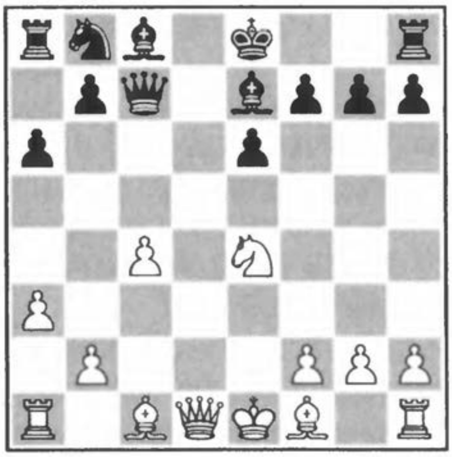
7...♘xe4!?

It sure makes for an interesting diagram! In fact – here comes the good news – it is not even a sacrifice! Black wins the knight back by force. On the downside, you need to bring your queen out into the open to win back material, and you are opening some lines and diagonals in the process.

However, please remember it is all for a good cause: you are avoiding yet another hedgehog with that eternal space disadvantage.

8.♘xe4

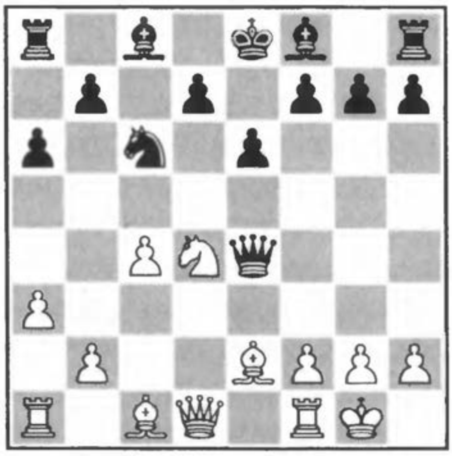
It is only when White realizes that he does not actually win a piece that he may start to investigate 8.♘xe6!?. After 8.♘xe6, play could continue 8...dxe6 9.♘xe4 ♗e7 10.♗d3 (after 10.♗e2 0-0 11.0-0, Stevic-Kellenberger, Bratislava jr 1993, Black should play 11...♘c6 or 11...♘d7 instead of the game continuation 11...f5) 10...0-0 11.0-0 (less good was 11.♕h5 f5 12.♘c3 ♖d8 13.♕e2 ♘c6 14.0-0 ♘d4 15.♕d1 b6 16.♗e3 ♗b7∓ Mandl-Lang Zalan, Germany tt 2000), and now 11...♘c6 looks about equal.



8...♕e5 9.♗d3

White sensibly continues his development instead of desperately trying to hang on to a knight that will soon be lost anyway. Practice has also seen:

- 9.♕d3 d5 10.cxd5 (Black is slightly better after 10.f3 dxe4 11.♕xe4 ♕xe4+ 12.fxe4, Schiebuhr-Gerstner, Bargteheide 1989) 10...exd5 11.f3 ♘d7 12.♗e3 dxe4 13.♕xe4 ♕xe4 14.fxe4 ♘e5 (perhaps 14...♘f6 is even stronger 15.e5 ♘g4 16.♗f4 ♗c5 17.♖d1 0-0 18.♗e2 ♖d8∓ Adriano-Barnsley, cr 1995) 15.♗e2 ♗d6 16.h3 with equality, Angström-Ronlan, cr 1993.
- 9.f3 d5 and Black retrieves the knight with equal play.
- White can develop the bishop in a more modest fashion, too: 9.♗e2 ♕xe4 10.0-0 ♘c6



– 11.♘xc6 bxc6 12.b4 (or 12.♗d2 ♗e7 13.♗c3 0-0, Puijman-Werle, Vlissingen 2004) 12...♗e7 13.♗b2 0-0 14.c5, and

White had some compensation in Schmaus-Hornung, Munich 1993.

– 11.♗e3 ♗e7 12.♖e1 ♕e5 13.♘xc6 bxc6 14.♗d4 ♕g5 15.♗d3, and again White has compensation for the pawn, Caminade-Renaudin, Paris 1991.

● 9.♕c2 can be answered by 9...♕xd4 10.♗e3 ♕e5. Also possible is 9...f5 10.♗e3 ♕xe4 (or 10...fxe4) 11.♗d3 ♕xg2 12.0-0-0 ♘c6 with sharp play Guerra Costa-Perez Fungueiro, Pontevedra 2004.

● 9.♗e3 ♕xe4 10.♕d2 and now 10...♘c6 looks logical. Instead the game Maenhout-Dutreeuw, Belgium tt 2005/06, went 10...d6 11.♗d3 (11.f4 looks stronger) 11...♕xg2 12.0-0-0 ♕h3 and play somewhat resembled the Polugaevsky Variation in that Black has taken a few pawns with his queen while White has mobilized all his forces in the meantime. In the game Black obtained winning play only to overlook a repetition.

Let's continue with the main game. With 9.♗d3 White returns the knight and sacrifices a pawn to boot for superior development.

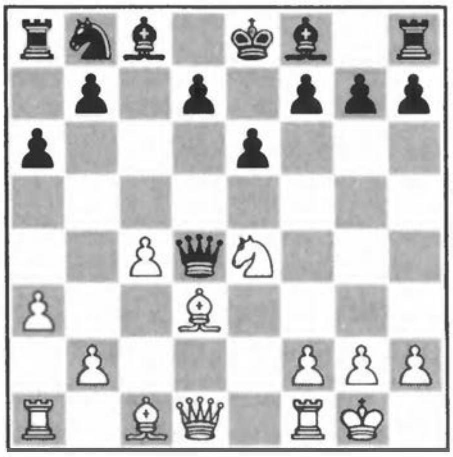
9...♕xd4 10.0-0

In some correspondence games White postponed castling:

● 10.♕c2 f5 11.♗e3 ♕e5 12.f4 ♕c7 13.♘c3 ♗c5 14.♕f2 d6 15.♗xf5? exf5 16.♘d5 ♕c6 (16...♕d8! is clearly better) 17.b4! ♗e6 18.bxc5 dxc5 19.0-0, with compensation for the pawn, Pfeiffer-Eiselt, cr 1989.

● 10.♕e2 ♗e7 (10...f5) 11.f4 (11.♗e3 ♕e5 12.0-0 f5 13.f4 ♕c7 14.♘c3 d6? 15.♗xf5! 0-0 – 15...exf5 16.♘d5+– – 16.♗c2±, Staudler-Neckel, cr 1986) 11...♕b6 12.♗e3 ♕a5+ 13.♗d2 ♕c7 14.0-0 0-0? (14...f5) 15.f5! exf5? (15...f6) 16.♖xf5 g6? (16...d6 or 16...d5 were necessary) 17.♘f6+ ♗xf6 18.♖xf6 with a superior game in Kuvaldin-Vasiakin, cr 1990.

These games are useful, since they illustrate some standard manoeuvres. Thus White will aim for f4-f5 to open files. Black will often prevent this by playing f5 himself. It should come as no surprise (considering his lack of development and uncastled king) that Black has to watch out for tactics – especially the sacrifice ♗f5 to obtain the d5 square for the knight.



10...f5

This move, which prevents White from playing f4-f5, was an important novelty at the time.

After 10...♘c6 11.♕c2 f5 (if 11...♗e7 12.♗e3 ♕e5 13.f4 ♕c7 Annageldyev-Mahjoob, Kish 2003, then White should consider 14.f5 or 14.c5 rather than the game continuation 14.♘g5) 12.♗e3 fxe4 (an interesting alternative for the standard 12...♕e5 13.f4 ♕c7) 13.♗xd4 ♘xd4 14.♕c3 ♗c5 15.b4 exd3 16.♕xd3 ♗a7 17.c5 ♘f5 18.♖ac1 0-0 19.♖fe1 b5 with unclear play, in the end the three pieces had a field day in the game Krstic-Braun, Balatonlelle 2006.

Better is 11.♗e3 when after 11...♕e5 the game Ribeiro-Costa, Portugal 1993, continued 12.b4 ♗e7 (perhaps here 12...f5) 13.f4 ♕c7 14.♕h5!? d6 15.b5 ♘d8 16.♗d4 ♗f8 17.♖ae1±. Even better than 12.b4 is 12.f4 ♕c7 13.f5 (the standard approach) 13...d6 14.♖c1 ♘e5 (14...exf5 15.♘c3±) 15.♗b1 ♗e7 16.f6 gxf6 17.♘xf6+ ♗xf6 18.♖xf6±

♗d7? 19.c5! dxc5 20.♗f4+–, Watanabe-C.Braga, Sao Paulo 1991.

Quite risky is 10...♗e7. The game Annageldyev-Paragua, Alushta 2004, went 11.♗e3 ♕xb2 12.♕h5 (12.f4 looks better) 12...g6 13.♕h6♖g8 14.♗g5?! f5! 15.♗xe7? fxe4 16.♕h4 g5! 17.♗xg5exd3 18.♗f6 ♕e2 19.♕xh7 ♖xg2+ and Black won.

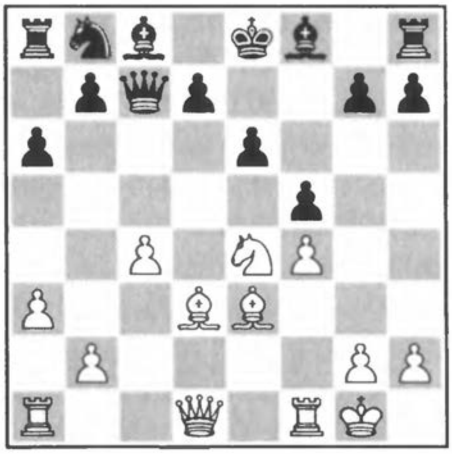
11.♗e3

Less critical is 11.♘c3 ♘c6 12.♗e3 ♕f6, as in M.Müller-A.Heinz, Bundesliga B 2003/04. White has compensation for the pawn, but nothing special.

11...♕e5

It is very risky to take the proverbial poisoned pawn. The game M.Pavlov-Deriabin, Alushta 2007, went: 11...♕xb2 12.♖b1 ♕xa3 13.♖b3 ♕e7 14.♗c5 ♕f7 15.♘d6+ ♗xd6 16.♗xd6 and White had a huge edge in development and controlled a lot of dark squares in return for three(!) pawns. Still if you don't take chances you won't make advances?

12.f4 ♕c7



13.♘g5

This is ostensibly the most aggressive move. The alternative is 13.♘c3!?. For the moment 13...♗e7? fails to 14.♗xf5! exf5 15.♘d5 ♕c6 16.♖e1!±. So 13...♗c5 is forced when, just as in the game, 14.♕h5+ g6 15.♕h3 forces another weakness. Without the (vulnerable) knight on g5 there is no defensive resource like 15...h6. Therefore, White has compensation for the pawn.

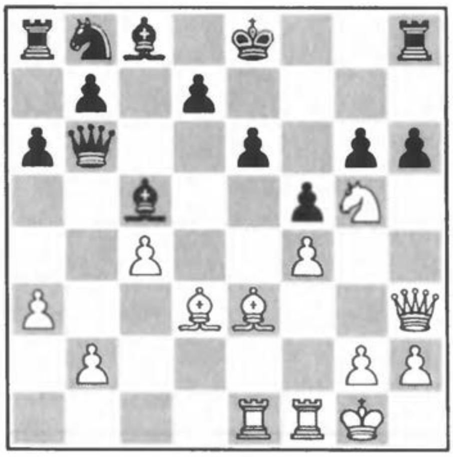
Instead of 15.♕h3 White can also play 15.♕e2. The game Michielsen-Balint, Haarlem 2005, saw: 15...0-0 (perhaps 15...♕b6) 16.♘a4 ♗xe3+ 17.♕xe3 b5 (preferable is 17...♘c6) 18.♘b6 ♖a7 19.cxb5 axb5 20.♖ac1 with the clearly better game.

13...♗c5 14.♕h5+ g6 15.♕h3

After this move White appears to be worse. In practice White has later concentrated on the move 15.♕e2 here. A young Magnus Carlsen led the way: 15...♕b6 (or 15...0-0 16.b4 ♗xe3+ 17.♕xe3 h6 18.♘f3 ♘c6 19.c5 with typical compensation in Swinkels-A.Heinz, Pulvermühle 2004) 16.♗xc5 ♕xc5+ 17.♔h1 White has dangerous compensation for the pawn. Note that her majesty is better placed on e2 than on h3 as in the main game. 17...♘c6 (after 17...♕e7 18.b4 – 18.c5 – 18...b6 19.♕f3 – 19.♕e3 – 19...♖a7 20.♕e3 ♖b7 21.♗e2 h6 22.♘h3 ♘c6 23.♗f3 b5 24.♗xc6 dxc6 25.c5 White had more than enough for the pawn in T.Heinz-Vuillermoz, France 2004/05) 18.b4 ♕f8 (avoiding 18...♕d4 19.♗xf5! 0-0 20.♖ad1) 19.♕b2 h6 20.♘f3 ♖g8 21.b5 and it was no fun playing black in Carlsen-Trygstad, Fredrikstad 2003.

So if you are willing to take up 7...♘xe4 the position after 15.♕e2 appears to be crucial.

15...h6! 16.♖ae1 ♕b6



Black is still dangerously behind in development, and he won't catch up soon either. However, Svidler has cleverly provoked his opponent, who is now forced to sac more material.

17.♗xf5

No better is 17.♗xc5 ♕xc5+ 18.♔h1 ♕d4!, when White has to give his bishop too (19.♖e5 ♘c6). After 19.♗xf5 hxg5! (but not 19...gxf5 20.♕h5+ ♔d8 21.♖d1! ♕f6 22.♕f7! ♕xf7 23.♘xf7+ ♔e7 24.♘xh8 ♔f6 25.g4) 20.♗xg6+ ♔d8 Black is OK.

The circumspect 17.♖f3 brings no relief either after the simple 17...♗xe3+ 18.♖fxe3 ♕xb2, and even the complex 17...♗d4 seems to work, i.e. 18.b4 ♕d6 19.♗xf5 hxg5 20.♗xg6+ ♔d8 21.♕g3 ♗xe3+ 22.♖exe3 ♘c6.

17...gxf5 18.♕h5+? ♔d8

More dangerous is 18...♔e7. White loses after 19.♕f7+ ♔d6. However, 19.♗xc5+ ♕xc5+ 20.♔h1 is still unclear.

Now comes another more or less forced sequence.

19.♘f7+ ♔c7 20.♘xh8 ♗xe3+ 21.♔h1 ♕xb2

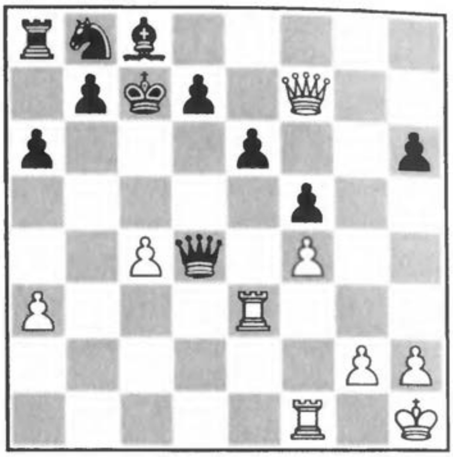
Or 21...♗d4.

22.♖xe3 ♕xh8 23.♕f7 ♕d4!

Centralizing the queen is more important than developing pieces. White has decent counterplay after 23...♘c6? 24.♖xe6 ♘d8 25.♕f6 ♕xf6 26.♖xf6.

Also playable though is 23...♔b6 24.c5+ ♔a7.

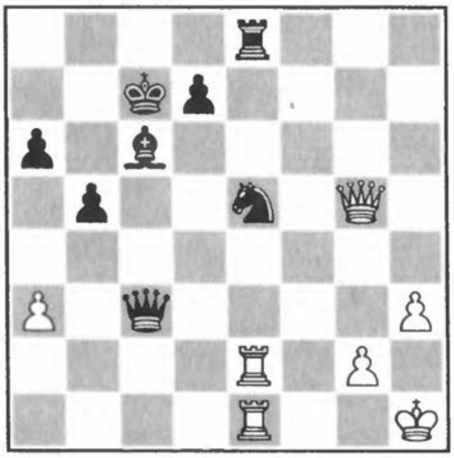
After Svidler's 23...♕d4 Black's entire queenside is still undeveloped, but White has too few pieces left to inconvenience the black king. Svidler's material advantage now carries the day. The rest of the game needs little or no comment.



24.♖xe6 ♕xc4 25.♖fe1 ♕xf4 26.♖6e5 ♘c6 27.♖xf5 ♕d2 28.♖ff1 b5 29.♖d1 ♕e3 30.♖f3 ♕e4 31.h3 h5 32.♕xh5 ♗b7 33.♕g5 ♖e8

Black finally completes his development.

34.♖fd3 ♘e5 35.♖e3 ♕c2 36.♖ee1 ♗c6 37.♖d2 ♕c3 38.♖de2

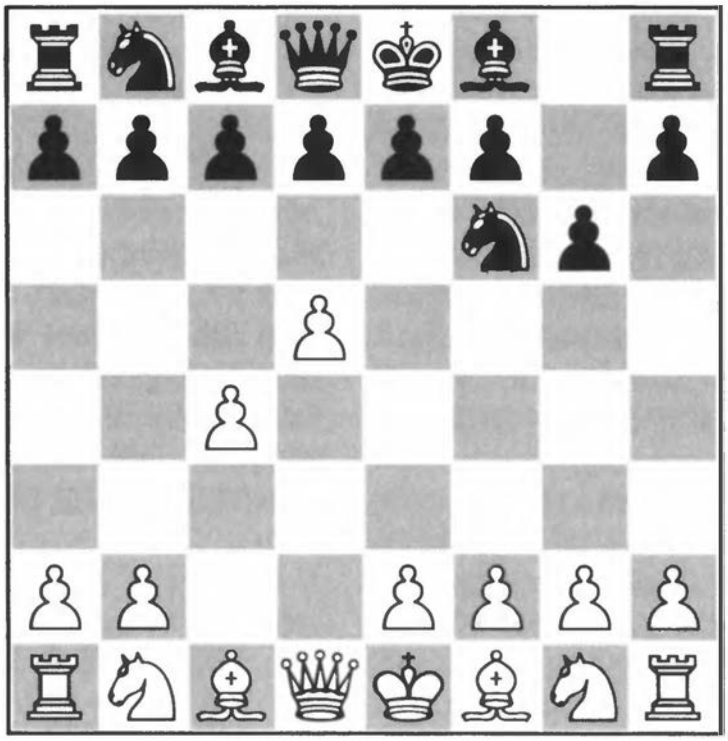


38...d6 There is no need for the flashy 38...♕xh3+ 39.♔g1 ♕h8 40.♖xe5 ♖g8, and Black wins. **39.♖e3 ♕c4 40.♖g3 ♔b6 41.♕d2 ♕c5 42.♔h2 ♘c4 43.♕c3 ♖xe1 44.♕xe1 ♘xa3 45.h4 b4 46.♖g5 ♕d4 47.♕g3 ♘c2 48.♖g4 ♗e4 49.♖f4 ♘e3 50.♕g8 ♕e5 51.♕g3 ♘xg2 52.♖xe4 ♕xe4 53.♕xd6+ ♔b5 0-1**

CHAPTER 15

Adrian Mikhalchishin

Anti-Grünfeld and Anti-Volga



1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.d5!?

An interesting and quite obvious way of countering the Grünfeld Defence is occupying the d5 square. With the move 3.d5 White gains space and he seriously limits Black's abilities, but at the same time White also has less options regarding the transformation of structure. It helps if you play the Sämisch against the King's Indian.

Black can respond in a King's Indian way. Alternatively, he might like to play in Grünfeld (c7-c6) or Volga-style (b7-b5). Let us consider these options.

I 3...b5
II 3...c6
III 3...♗g7

Variation I

3...b5!? 4.cxb5

One could try 4.a4!? bxc4 5.♘c3 ♗g7 6.e4 d6 7.♗xc4 (the typical 7.♘f3 0-0 8.♘d2 attempting to take with a knight on c4 ought to be tested) 7...0-0 8.♘f3 c5 9.h3 ♘a6 10.0-0 ♘b4 11.♘d2 e6 12.dxe6 ♗xe6 with complicated play, Horvath-Feher, Szekszard 1996.

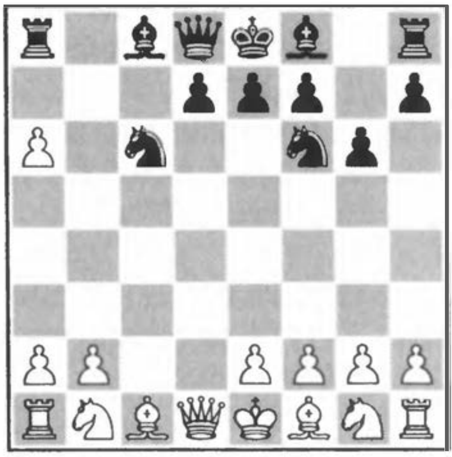
4...a6 5.bxa6

5.e3 ♗g7 6.♘c3 0-0 7.♘f3 ♗b7 8.♗e2?! (correct is 8.bxa6 ♘xa6 9.♗c4 ♘b4 10.0-0±) 8...axb5 9.♗xb5 ♘xd5 10.♘xd5 ♗xd5 11.♕xd5 c6 12.♗xc6 ♘xc6 13.0-0 ♕c7 14.♖d1 Spasov-Ribli, Camagüey 1974. And here either 14...♖fb8 or 14...♘b4 leads to excellent play for Black.

5...c6 6.dxc6

Or 6.♘c3 cxd5 7.♘xd5 ♕a5+ 8.♘c3 ♗g7 9.♗d2 ♘xa6 10.♘f3 ♗b7 11.e3 0-0 12.♗e2 ♕f5 13.0-0 e5 14.♕b1! and White has a healthy extra pawn, Peev-Radev, Bulgarian Championship Pernik 1975.

6...♘xc6



7.♘c3

This is stronger than 7.e3 ♗g7 8.♘f3 0-0 9.♗e2 ♗xa6 10.♗xa6? ♕a5+ 11.♘c3 ♘e4! 12.0-0 ♘xc3 13.bxc3 ♖xa6 when White has an extra pawn, but several pawn weaknesses, Dzindzichashvili-Adorjan, Amsterdam 1978.

7...♗xa6 8.g3! ♗g7 9.♗g2 0-0 10.♘h3 ♕b6 11.0-0 ♗c4

Possible is the immediate 11...e6 with the idea of ...d5.

12.♘f4 e6 13.♕d2 ♕a5 14.♖b1 d5 15.b3 ♗a6 16.a3 ♕c7 17.♗b2±

Varga-Feher, Hungary tt 1997/98.

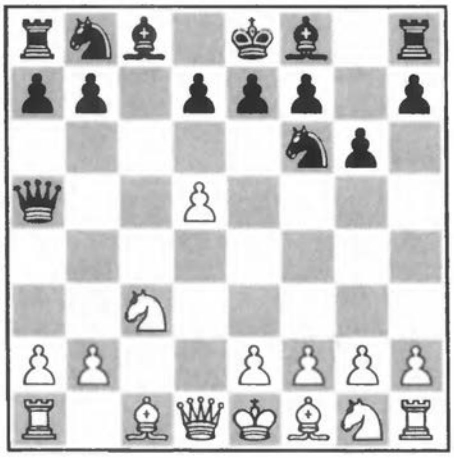
Variation II

3...c6 4.♘c3 cxd5

A gambit somewhat reminiscent of the Volga is 4...b5?. However, after 5.cxb5 cxb5 6.♘xb5 ♕a5+ 7.♘c3 ♗b7 8.♗d2 ♘xd5 9.♘xd5 ♕xd5 10.♗c3± this leads to inferior endgame prospects.

5.cxd5 ♕a5

If Black opts for the quiet 5...♗g7 then comes 6.e4 d6 7.♘f3 0-0 8.♗e2 ♗g4 (the sharp 8...b5 is like hitting water with an axe: 9.a3! a6 10.♗e3 ♘bd7 11.♘d4 ♗b7 12.f3 ♖c8 13.0-0 ♘e5 14.♕d2 ♘c4 15.♗xc4 ♖xc4 16.b3 ♖c8 17.a4 with a clear advantage for White, Gheorghiu-Honfi, Baden Baden 1981) 9.♗e3 ♘bd7 10.0-0 (quite possible is 10.♘d2 or 10.♘d4 with a slight advantage for White) 10...♗xf3 (the exchange is not essential, although White leaves the f3-square on the following move) 11.♗xf3 ♕a5 12.♗e2 (interesting is 12.a3 ♖fc8 13.b4 ♕d8 14.♗d4) 12...♖fc8 13.♖c1 ♕b4! 14.♕c2 ♘c5 15.f3 ♘fd7 16.♖f2 ♘b6 17.a3 ♕b3 18.♗f1 ♕xc2 19.♖cxc2 ♘ba4 20.♘b5 with a somewhat better position for White, Hort-Ogaard, Reykjavik 1978.



6.f3!?

Aiming for a Sämisch like position. White has other options too:

– 6.♕b3 ♗g7 7.♗d2 d6 8.♖c1 (8.e4!? 0-0 9.f3) 8...♘a6 9.e4 0-0 10.♘f3 ♗d7! 11.♕xb7 ♘c5 12.b4 ♘xb7 13.bxa5 ♘c5! 14.e5 ♘g4! with complicated play, Lilienthal-Shamkovich, Moscow 1962.

– 6.g3 ♘e4? (best is 6...b5!? as played by Uhlmann against Kortchnoi in Sarajevo 1969) 7.♕d4 ♘xc3 8.♗d2 ♕xd5? (8...♖g8 9.♗xc3 was much better for White in Euwe-Nestler, Dubrovnik ol 1950) 9.♕xc3 ♘c6 10.♕xh8 ♘d4 11.♖c1 ♕xh1 12.♕xd4

♕xg1 13.♕xa7 1-0 Oakley-Nash, England cr 1954.

– 6.♕d2 ♗g7 7.e4 d6 8.♗d3 0-0 9.♘ge2 ♘bd7 10.a3 ♘e5 11.0-0 ♗d7 and Black has excellent opportunities.

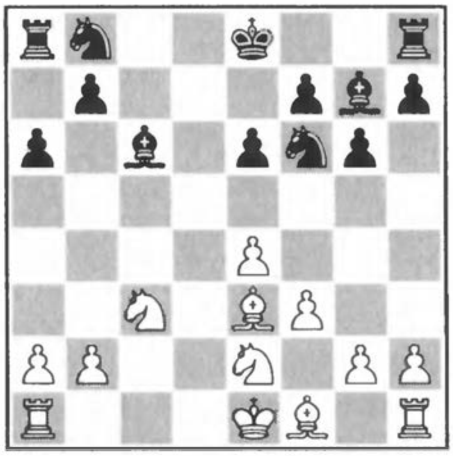
6...e6

After 6...♗g7 7.e4 d6 8.♗e3 0-0 9.♕d2 we reach the Sämisch Variation of the King's Indian.

7.dxe6

This is more logical than 7.e4 ♗g7 8.♘h3 0-0 9.♗d2 (as for 9.♗e2, there is 9...b5 10.dxe6 dxe6 11.♗xb5 ♘xe4 12.fxe4 ♗xc3+ 13.bxc3 ♕xb5 14.♔f2 ♘c6 with good play) 9...♕b6 10.♘a4 ♕d4 11.♗c3 ♕e3+ 12.♗e2 exd5 13.♗d4!? ♕h6 14.e5 ♘e8 15.♘f2 d6 16.exd6 ♗xd4 17.♕xd4 ♘xd6 18.♕xd5 ♘f5 with excellent play for Black.

7...dxe6 8.e4 ♗g7 9.♕a4+ ♕xa4 10.♘xa4 ♗d7 11.♘c3 a6 12.♗e3 ♗c6 13.♘ge2



Here the players agreed a draw, but White has a comfortable endgame. Bukic-Pribyl, Vmjacka Banja Zonal 1972.

Variation III

3...♗g7

Also possible is 3...e5, after 4.♘c3 Black chose an original way to avoid the King's Indian set-up in Bosboom-Nijboer, Amsterdam 2002: 4...♗c5 5.a3!? 0-0 6.♘f3 e4 7.♘d4 ♖e8 8.e3 c6 9.♗e2 cxd5 10.cxd5 a6 11.b4 ♗f8 12.♗b2 d6 13.0-0 ♘bd7. Now 14.♕b3 would have given White a slight advantage.

4.♘c3 0-0

After 4...e6 5.♘f3 exd5 6.cxd5 d6 7.g3 0-0 8.♗g2 ♘bd7 9.0-0 ♘e5 10.♗e3 ♖e8 11.♗d4 a5 12.♖e1 b6 13.a3 White is somewhat better, Rytov-Ludolf, Tartu ch-EST 1972

5.e4 d6

In case of a direct transposition into the King's Indian by 5...e5, then 6.♗e2 d6 7.g4! and Black experiences difficulties.

6.♘f3

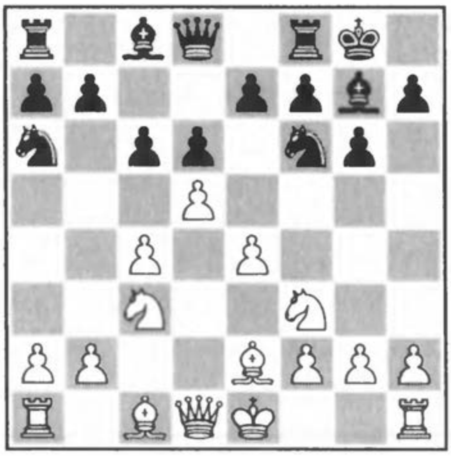
The main continuation. Quite possible too is 6.♗d3 c6 7.♘f3 (7.♘ge2 should be tested in practice) 7...♘a6 8.0-0 ♘c5 9.♗c2 a5 10.♗e3 ♕c7 11.h3 ♖e8 12.♖e1 e5 13.a3 ♗d7 14.♖c1 cxd5 15.cxd5 b5 16.b4 axb4 17.axb4 ♘a6 18.♗d3! with a white advantage, Hort-Sax, Hastings 1977/78.

6...c6

6...e6 7.♗e2 exd5 8.exd5 (8.cxd5!? ♖e8 9.♘d2) 8...♗g4 9.0-0 ♘bd7 10.h3 ♗xf3 11.♗xf3 ♖e8 12.♗f4 ♘c5 13.♕c2 a5 14.♖fe1 ♕d7 15.♘b5 Cicak-Socko, Cork 2005.

If 6...e5 then White may be able to find a more useful move than 7.♗e2 which would transpose into the Petrosian system of the King's Indian.

7.♗e2 ♘a6



8.♗e3

8.0-0 ♘c5 9.♕c2 cxd5 10.cxd5 ♗d7 11.♗e3 ♖c8 12.♘d2 b5 13.a3 a5 14.♕b1 b4 15.axb4 axb4 16.♘a2 ♖b8 with excellent play for Black in Jacimovic-Bogdanovic, Zlatibor tt 1989.

8...e6 9.dxc6?

This looks like the wrong decision, clearly better is 9.dxe6!? ♗xe6 10.0-0 ♕e7 11.♕c2 ♘g4 12.♗g5 ♕c7 13.♖ad1 ♖ae8 14.♗f4 ♘e5 15.b3 ♗c8 16.♘d4 ♘c5 17.h3 a5 18.♖fe1 and White had a space advantage in the game Uhlmann-Liebert, Zinnowitz 1971.

9...bxc6 10.0-0 ♘g4 11.♗g5 ♕c7 12.♕c2

Also interesting is 12.h3!?, forcing the opponent's knight to make clear choices.

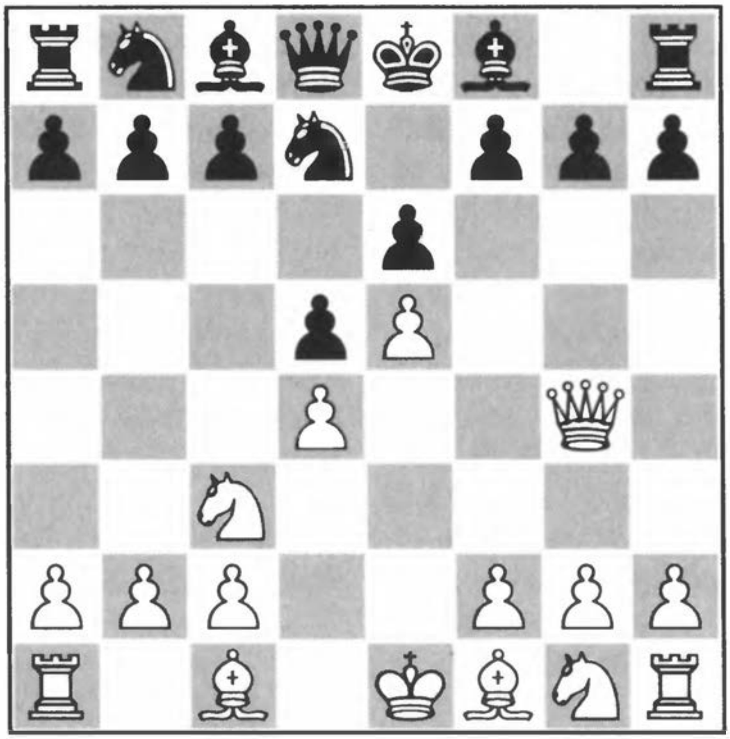
12...h6 13.♗d2 e5 14.♘a4 ♘f6 15.b4 ♖b8 16.a3 d5!

with sharp play, Shabalov-V.Mikhalevski, Foxwoods 2006.

CHAPTER 16

Igor Glek & Jean-Olivier Leconte

French: the Gledhill Attack



A new direction

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘fd7 5.♕g4

This is the so-called Gledhill Attack. It is named after the English chess player Walter Gledhill (1854-1917) who published his analysis in 1901 in *British Chess Magazine*. None other than World Champion Emanuel Lasker added his comments in the magazine. With such support it is not surprising that in the first half of the twentieth century the Gledhill Attack was played by some of the best players in the world. Thus your database will reveal that Marshall, Euwe, Bogoljubow, Tartakower, and Eliskases all tried their hand at 5.♕g4. Theory later came to frown upon the early queen move though, when, after 5...c5, the standard replies 6.♘f3 and 6.♗e3 were more or less refuted.

In this article we will make a case for the Gledhill Attack building our argument upon Jean-Olivier Leconte's novelty of 6.dxc5.

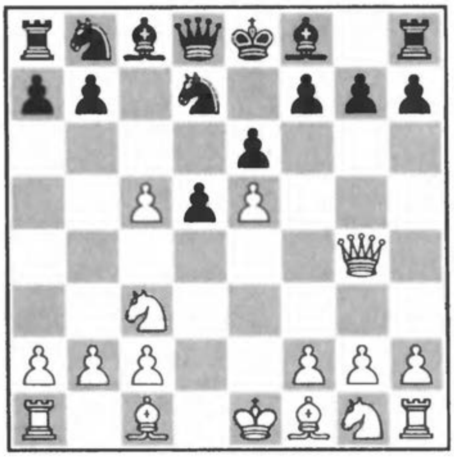
1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘fd7 5.♕g4 c5

This is clearly the crucial move. In case of 5...f5 White can play 6.♕g3 c5 7.dxc5 ♘xc5 8.♗e3 ♘c6 9.♗xc5. While 5...h5 can be met by 6.♕f4 c5 7.♘f3. Now 7...♘c6? is refuted by 8.♘g5! winning. White has a slight edge after 7...cxd4 8.♘b5 ♘c6 9.♘bxd4.

6.dxc5!

This novelty of Leconte is the crux. Other moves are known to be bad:

– The *Encyclopedia* gives 6.♗e3 ♘c6 7.0-0-0 cxd4 8.♗xd4 ♘xd4 9.♖xd4 f5 (9...♘xe5) 10.exf6 ♘xf6∓ Max Euwe.
– While 6.♘f3 cxd4 7.♘b5 (or 7.♘xd4 ♘xe5 8.♕g3 ♘bc6 9.♗b5 a6 10.♗xc6+ ♘xc6 11.♗e3 ♗e7∓ Estrin-Lilienthal, Baku 1951) 7...♘c6 8.♘d6+ ♗xd6 9.♕xg7 ♗xe5 10.♘xe5 ♕f6 was an edge for Black in Bogoljubow-Réti, Mährisch Ostrau 1923.



After the text, Black can try:
I 6...♘xe5
II 6...♘c6

Instead 6...f5 7.♕g3 is just good for White. The correct answer to 6...h5 is 7.♕f4 (7.♕g3 h4 8.♕f4 ♘c6 9.♘f3 ♗xc5 10.♘b5 a6 11.♘d6+ ♗xd6 12.exd6 ♕f6 was good for Black in Schmidt-Haas, Germany tt 1995/96) 7...♗xc5 8.♘f3 ♘c6 (if 8...♕b6 then either 9.♕g3± or 9.♘a4 ♗xf2+? 10.♔e2) 9.♗e2± followed by castling, or 9.♕g3±.

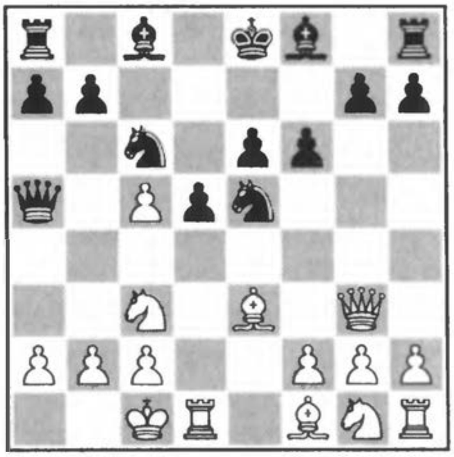
Variation I

6...♘xe5 7.♕g3

The white queen eyes both g7 and c7. Black now has two major options: 7...♘g6 and 7...♘bc6.

The alternative 7...♘ec6 is good for White after 8.♘b5 ♘a6 9.c3.

More serious is 7...f6 which leads to a mess after 8.♗e3 (or 8.♘b5!? a6? 9.♘d6+ ♗xd6 10.♕xg7 ♘f7 11.cxd6) 8...♕a5 9.0-0-0 ♘bc6, and now:



– 10.♘b5!? d4 (10...♔f7 11.♔b1) 11.♗f4 ♕xa2 (11...a6 12.♘d6+ ♗xd6 13.♕xg7 ♘f7 14.♗xd6 ♕xa2 15.♗e2!) 12.♘c7+ ♔f7 13.♘xa8 ♗xc5±.
– 10.f4 ♘d7 11.♘b5.

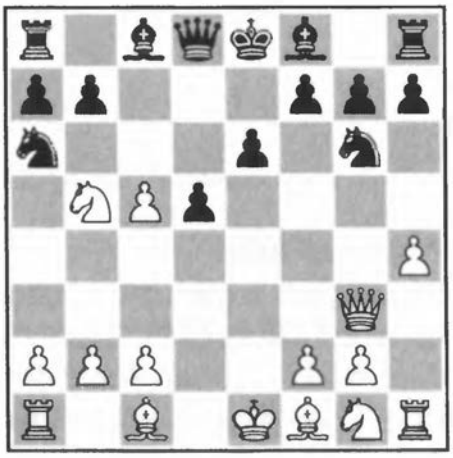
● 7...♘g6 8.♘b5!

The game Niedra-Nitzsche, Germany cr 1988, went 8.h4 ♗xc5 9.h5 ♘e7 10.♕xg7 ♖g8 11.♕xh7.

8...♘a6

This seems forced in view of 8...e5 9.h4 a6 (not 9...h5 10.♗d3 a6 11.♗xg6) 10.h5 axb5 11.hxg6 fxg6 12.♖xh7! with a winning edge.

9.h4



9...♕f6

Black fares no better after:

– 9...e5 10.h5 ♘f4 11.♘d6+! (this check followed by taking on g7 is a recurring theme in our 6.dxc5 system) 11...♗xd6 12.♕xg7 ♖f8 13.cxd6 ♕xd6 14.♗xf4 exf4 15.0-0-0±.

– 9...h5 10.♗d3 ♕f6 (10...♗xc5 11.♗xg6 fxg6 12.♕xg6+ ♔f8 13.♖h3) 11.♘d6+ (11.♘f3 ♗xc5 12.0-0 is also very good for White) 11...♗xd6 12.♕xd6 ♕e7 13.♗xg6 fxg6 14.♗g5 ♕xd6 15.cxd6 ♔d7 16.♘f3 ♔xd6 17.♗f4+ ♔e7 18.♘e5 ♔f6 19.♖h3. White will soon recover his small investment with interest.

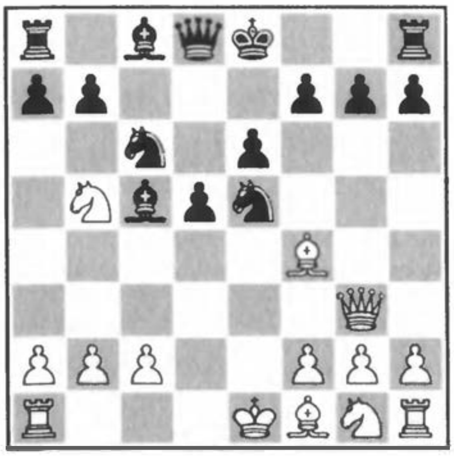
10.h5 ♘e5 11.♗g5 ♕f5 12.♘d4 ♕e4+ 13.♗e3 And now after **13...♗xc5 14.♖h4** Black's queen is trapped.

● **7...♘bc6 8.♘b5! ♗xc5**

White is just better after 8...f6 9.♘d6+ ♗xd6 10.♕xg7 ♘f7 11.cxd6 ♘b4 12.♔d1 ♕xd6 13.♕xf6.

9.♗f4!

White must consider his development too.



9...a6 10.♗xe5 axb5

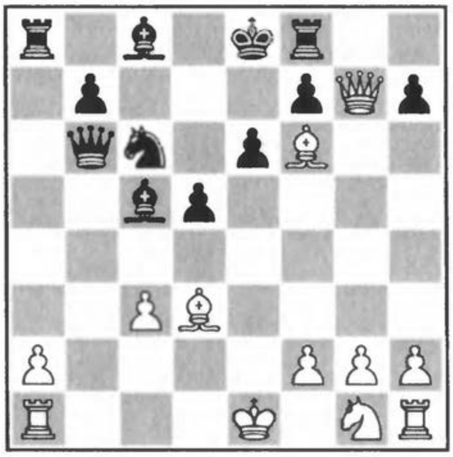
We also prefer White after 10...♘xe5 11.♕xe5 axb5 12.♕xg7 ♖f8 13.♗xb5+ ♗d7 14.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 15.♘e2 ♕b5 16.a3 d4 (16...♕a5+ 17.c3 ♕b6 18.0-0 was good for White in a 2007 ICC game of Jean-Olivier Leconte) 17.♕xh7 ♕xb2 18.0-0±.

11.♕xg7

Bad is 11.♗xg7? ♖g8 12.♗f6 ♖xg3 13.♗xd8 ♖g4 14.♗f6 ♖ga4.

11...♖f8 12.♗f6! ♕b6

Attacking f2. Also interesting is 12...♕a5+ 13.c3 b4 14.♗d3 bxc3 15.bxc3 ♕b6:



– 16.♘h3 e5 17.♖b1 ♕a7 18.♕xh7 ♗xh3 19.♕xh3 ♗xf2+ 20.♔f1 e4 21.♗xe4!? dxe4 22.♖d1 ♖g8 23.♕d7+ ended in a draw in another ICC game of Jean-Olivier.

– Stronger was 16.♕g3! ♕b2 17.♖b1 ♕xa2 18.♘f3 ♗d7 19.0-0±.

13.♗d3!

This sacrifice is best. Rather than losing time by protecting f2 White makes Black lose time by taking an 'insignificant' pawn. Unclear is 13.♕g3 ♘b4 14.♗d3 ♘xd3+ 15.cxd3. Just plain bad is 13.♘h3? e5 14.0-0-0 ♖xa2.

13...♗xf2+ 14.♔f1 ♗d4

The alternatives are not too uplifting either: 14...♗d7 15.♘f3 ♗c5 16.♕xh7; 14...♘b4 15.♗xh7 ♗xg1 16.♖xg1 ♗d7 17.♕g3. White is better in both cases.

15.♘f3 ♗xf6 16.♕xf6 ♗d7

No better is 16...h5 17.♖e1 ♘b4 18.♘g5 ♘xd3 19.cxd3 ♖xa2 20.♘h7 ♖g8 21.♕e5 ♔d8 22.♖c1 ♖a8 23.♕f4±.

17.♘g5 ♕d4 18.♘xh7 ♕xf6+ 19.♘xf6+ ♔e7 20.♘xd7 ♔xd7 21.♗xb5

And White is a sound pawn up in the ending.

Variation II

6...♘c6 7.♘f3

If you enjoy analysing for yourself you may want to consider 7.f4.

7...♘dxe5

In a training game, my wife – WGM Maria Leconte Nepeina – played 7...a6. The game went: 8.♗g5!? ♕c7 (perhaps 8...♕a5 9.0-0-0 ♘dxe5 10.♘xe5 ♘xe5 and now either 11.♕e2 or 11.♕a4+) 9.0-0-0 ♘dxe5 10.♘xe5 ♘xe5 (not 10...♕xe5 11.♘a4!) 11.♕g3 ♗xc5 12.♘e4!? ♗a7 (12...dxe4 13.♕xe5!! ♕xe5 14.♖d8 mate) 13.♘f6+! gxf6 (13...♔f8 14.♘h5∞) 14.♗xf6 ♗xf2 15.♕xf2 ♘g4 16.♕f3 ♘xf6 17.♕xf6 ♖g8 18.♔b1! ♕e7 19.♕h6 with more than enough for the pawn.

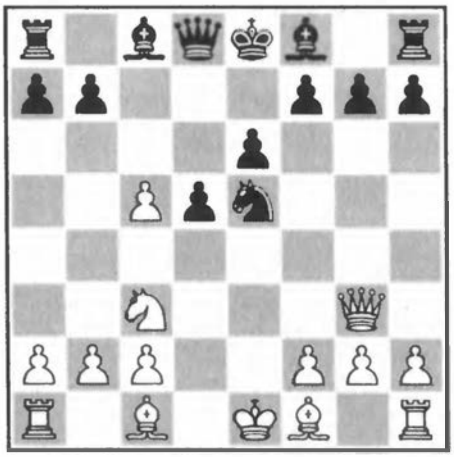
On move 8 it was also interesting to play 8.♗f4 ♕c7 9.♗e2 ♘dxe5 10.♘xe5 ♘xe5 11.♕g3 f6 12.b4±.

If Black plays 7...♘xc5 then 8.a3!?, and now:

– 8...g6 9.♗g5 ♕b6 10.♗b5 ♗g7 11.♕h4 ♗d7 12.♗f6 0-0 13.b4 ♘a6 14.♗xg7 ♔xg7 15.♕f6+ ♔g8 16.0-0 d4 17.♗xc6 ♗xc6 18.♘e2 ♗xf3 19.♕xf3±

– 8...a6 9.b4!? ♘d7 10.♕g3 ♕c7 11.♗b2 g6 (11...♘cxe5 12.♘xe5 ♕xe5+ 13.♕xe5 ♘xe5 14.♘xd5 exd5 15.♗xe5 a5 16.b5±) 12.b5 axb5 13.♘xb5 ♕a5+ 14.♗c3.

8.♘xe5 ♘xe5 9.♕g3



● 9...♘c6

Apart from the text and 9...♘g6 we analyse:

– 9...f6 10.♗f4 ♘g6 11.♗c7± ♕e7 12.♗d6 ♕d8 13.♗d3.

– 9...♘c4 10.♗xc4 dxc4 11.0-0±.

– 9...♘d7 10.♘b5 e5 11.♘d6+ (11.b4!?) 11...♗xd6 12.♕xg7 ♕f6 13.♕xf6 ♘xf6 14.cxd6 ♔d7 15.f4±.

10.♘b5 e5 11.♘d6+!

Again the same check spoils all the fun for Black.

11...♗xd6 12.♕xg7 ♖f8 13.cxd6 ♕xd6 14.♗h6

White wins an exchange.

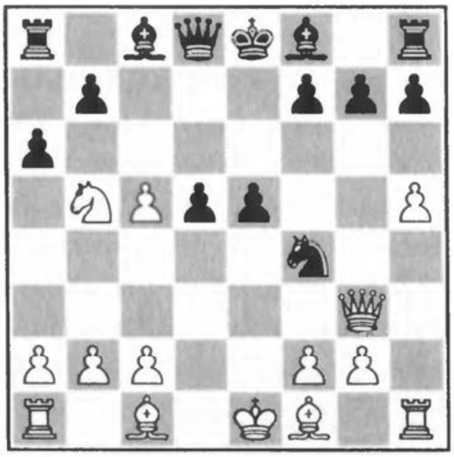
● 9...♘g6 10.♘b5 e5

10...♗xc5 11.♘c7+ ♔f8 12.♘xa8 ♗d6 13.♕b3 b6 14.a4 ♗b7 15.a5 ♗c5 16.axb6 axb6 17.♖a7 ♗xa8 18.♕a4 and White won in Leconte-GranSiurell, ICC 2007.

11.h4 a6

11...h5 12.♗d3 a6 13.♗xg6 axb5 14.♕xe5+ (14.♗d3!) 14...♕e7 15.♕xe7+ ♗xe7 16.♗d3 ♗d7 17.♗e3 with a clear plus in Leconte-Cuenca, ICC 2007.

12.h5 ♘f4



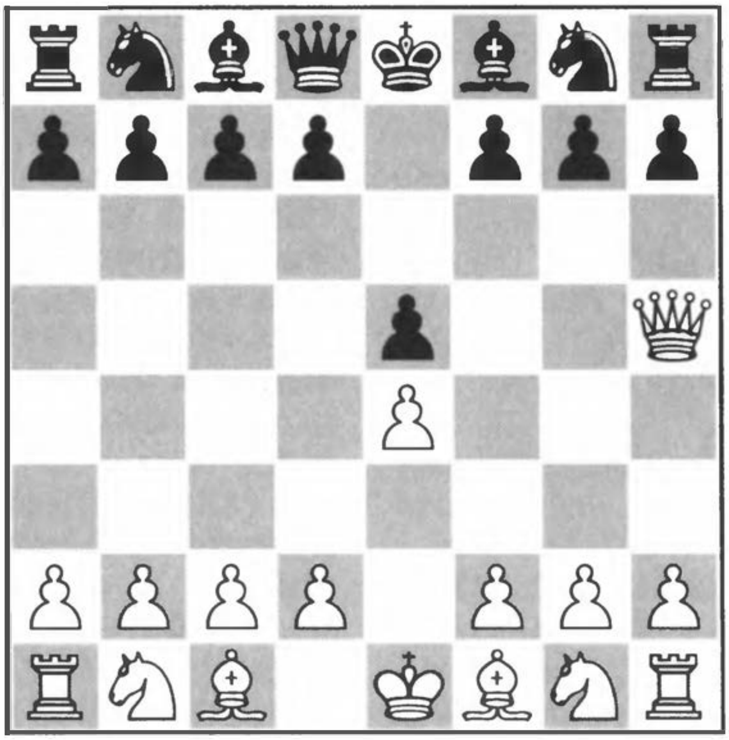
13.♘d6+! ♗xd6 14.♕xg7 ♖f8 15.cxd6 ♕xd6 16.♗xf4 exf4 17.0-0-0 ♗e6 18.♕xh7

With an obvious advantage.

CHAPTER 17

Hikaru Nakamura

Not Going for Scholar's Mate



1.e4 e5 2.♕h5

Some two years ago I played the now rather (in)famous 2.♕h5 against GM Sasikiran from India. While I am not happy with the final result of the game I still feel that this funny looking line is quite playable. With 2.♕h5 I do not intend to go forthe four move checkmate known as Scholar's Mate. Instead my main goal is simply to develop the bishop to c4, the knight to e2, and castle kingside, with a small advantage.

The first player who seriously developed 2.♕h5 as a system was master Bernard Parham from Indiana. Many people consider the idea of bringing out the queen so early in the game to be very crude and rudimentary. However it is fairly logical as it creates mating threats and potentially allows White to develop his kingside pieces very harmoniously. Unlike Parham, I do not have a lot of confidence in ♕h5 against other systems such as the Caro-Kann or the Sicilian. I learned this the hard way when I got destroyed by GM Volokitin after 1.e4 c5 2.♕h5 ♘f6 3.♕h4 ♘c6 and so on (Lausanne 2005).

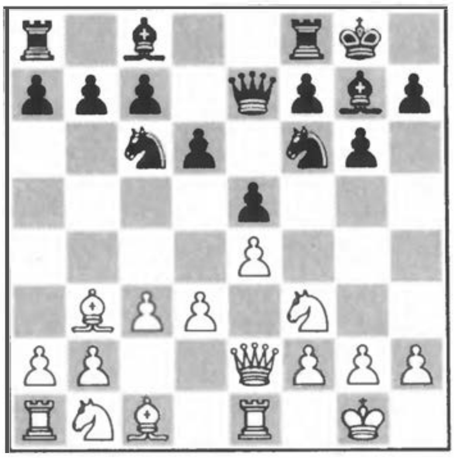
Playing 2.♕h5 in the Open Games is an easy way to avoid theory... or was. It seems that ever since I played it, it has been studied quite a bit. If an amateur wishes to play it as a main opening, it is possible. However, if anyone above master level plays this opening, they should use it as a surprise weapon only.

☐ **Hikaru Nakamura**
■ **Krishnan Sasikiran**
Copenhagen/Malmö 2005

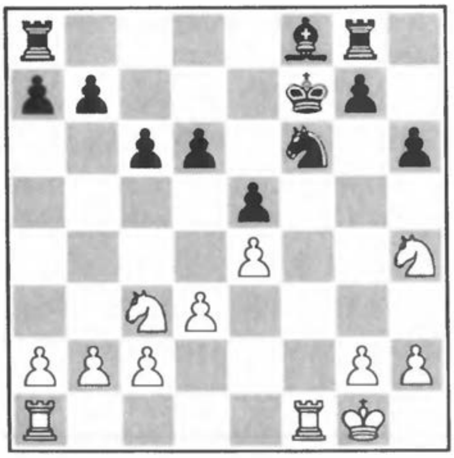
1.e4 e5 2.♕h5 ♘c6

This natural move is the most popular reply in practice. Please note that **2...d6** 3.♗c4 g6 4.♕f3 will transpose into the main line.

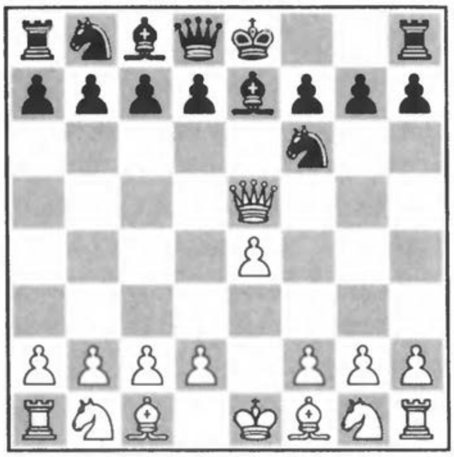
Black may consider **2...♕f6** which leads to a fairly standard position after 3.♗c4 ♘c6 4.c3 g6 5.♕e2 ♗g7 6.♘f3 ♕e7 7.d3 ♘f6 8.0-0 0-0 9.♖e1 d6 10.♗b3 with a strong resemblance to a Ruy Lopez.



In the rapid game Nakamura-Harikrishna, 2005, there followed: **2...♕e7** 3.♗c4 d6 4.d3 ♗e6 5.♗g5 ♘f6 6.♕h4 ♘bd7 7.♘c3 c6 8.♘ge2 h6 9.♗xf6 ♕xf6 10.♕xf6 ♘xf6 11.♗xe6 fxe6 12.f4 exf4 13.♘xf4 e5 14.♘g6 ♖g8 15.0-0 ♔f7 16.♘h4 with approximately equal chances.

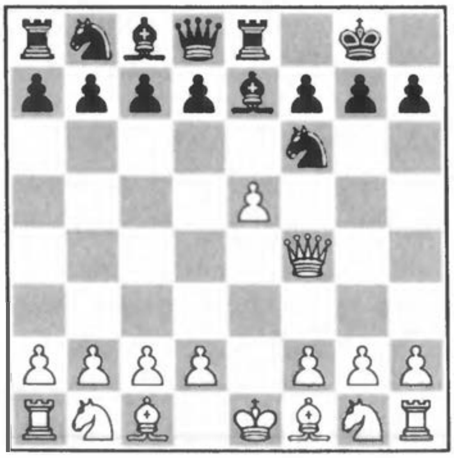


The best move for a player with aggressive intentions is **2...♘f6**. At the same time, it seems quite logical, as it helps Black to develop very quickly, while White has to waste several tempi with his queen before completing development. After 3.♕xe5+ ♗e7 we reach the diagrammed position:



Now blocking the e-file with 4.♗e2? is not the best option. I analyse: 4...♘c6 5.♕f4 d5 (alternatives are 5...0-0 and 5...♘d4 6.♗d1 ♘e6) 6.exd5 (after 6.e5 ♘e4 Black has a substantial advantage due to the multiple threats on the white monarch in the next couple of moves; after 6.♘c3 ♘d4 7.♗d1 ♘e6 Black has the upper hand) 6...♘xd5 7.♕g3 ♘d4 and Black is better.

Therefore White should play the prophylactic 4.♕f4 and now play may continue 4...0-0 (or 4...♘c6 5.e5 ♘d5 6.♕e4 ♘b6 7.♘f3 0-0 8.♗d3 g6 9.0-0±) 5.e5 ♖e8



Now of course 6.exf6? is met by 6...♗d6+, but White has two good alternatives:

– 6.♗e2 ♘d5 7.♕e4 ♘b4 8.♘a3 d5 9.♕f4 d4 (9...♘8c6 10.d4) 10.♘f3 d3 11.cxd3 ♘xd3+ 12.♗xd3 ♕xd3 13.♕c4 ♕g6 14.0-0 Black has some compensation here, but I feel as though White is fine.

– 6.♘c3 ♗d6 7.d4 c5 8.♗e3 cxd4 9.♗xd4 ♘c6 10.♘f3 ♘xd4 11.♕xd4 ♗xe5 12.♘xe5 ♕e7 13.0-0-0 ♕xe5 14.♕xe5 ♖xe5 15.♗c4 White has a small advantage due to the backward pawn on d7 as well as the potential problems for Black's development.

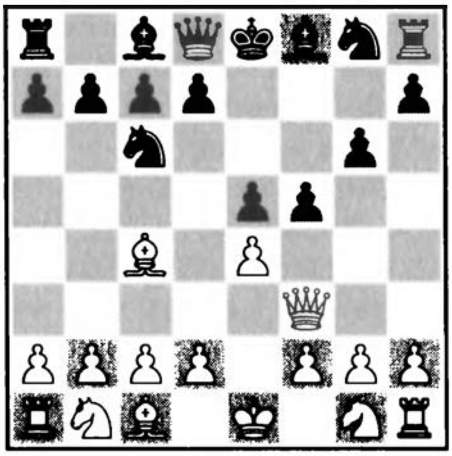
3.♗c4 g6

He spotted the mate! Or 3...♕e7 4.♘e2 ♘f6 5.♕f3 with similar play as in the game.

4.♕f3 ♘f6

Instead 4...♕f6 5.c3 ♕xf3 6.♘xf3 ♗g7 7.d3 leads to an equal position with play for both sides.

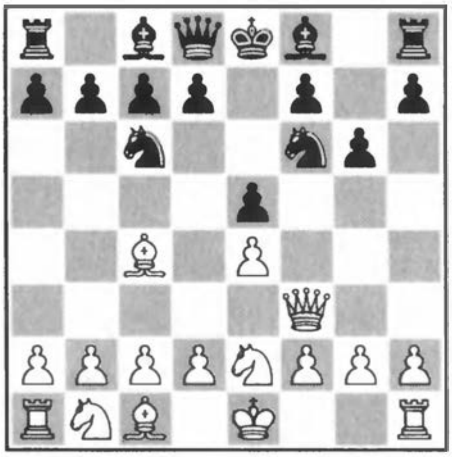
Many people are wondering whether 4...f5!? is the move which completely neutralizes the whole ♕h5 idea.



After our game in Denmark, GM Sasikiran gave some analysis of this variation. However, even in his analysis Black was not better.

This move probably is good enough for equality, but I don't think that Black has any advantage. Let's continue 5.♘e2 (not 5.exf5? ♘d4 6.♕g3 ♕f6 7.♗b3 ♘e7) 5...♘f6 6.d3 d6 7.♗g5 ♗g7 8.♘bc3 and White is perfectly fine in this position.

5.♘e2



Editorial note: Protecting his queen against a future ...♘d4 and developing a minor piece! If we put aside our prejudices for the moment, and look 'objectively' at the position, then we may conclude that White may not have an edge, but he is certainly not worse either.

Interestingly, this is a conclusion that none other than Vladimir Kramnik had also arrived at years and years ago. Kramnik had the very concrete idea of trying 2.♕h5 in some sort of decisive blitz game against Kasparov. Given the right moment the advantages are clear: no Kasparov home analysis to be worried about, and imagine the psychological advantage of such an 'insult'. (Kramnik told this to Short, and the latter revealed it to a wider audience in a Sunday Telegraph column).

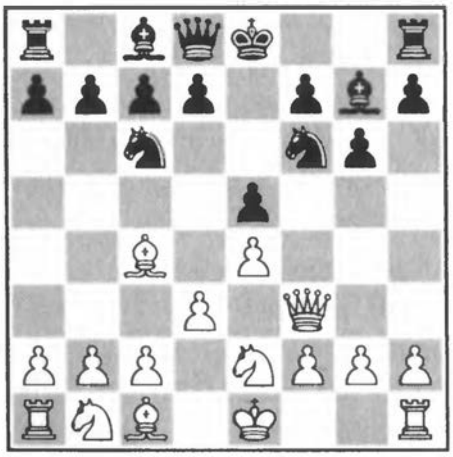
5...♗g7

A later game Nakamura-Mitkov, Minneapolis 2005, saw: 5...d6 6.h3 ♗g7 7.d3 ♗e6 8.♗b3 h6 (or 8...0-0 9.0-0 with another normal position) 9.♗e3 ♗xb3 10.axb3 d5 11.0-0 0-0 12.♘a3 ♚h7 13.b4 a6 14.c3 with equal chances.

6.♘bc3?!

Although playable there is another move order which is slightly preferable as it allows White to play h3 preventing ...♗g4: 6.d3 d6 7.h3 ♗e6 8.♗b3 ♘b4 9.♘a3. Compare this to the next comment. Here White can keep the pawn structure intact, while preventing ...♗g4 at the same time.

Editorial note: On the Playchess.com server an internet blitz event was held on 30 April 2005. Winner of the 'Champion's Challenge' was Anton Filippov who overcame Nakamura in the final. As you may have guessed Nakamura started all his blitz games in the final with 2.♕h5. They always reached the position after 6.d3 when in chronological order the games went:



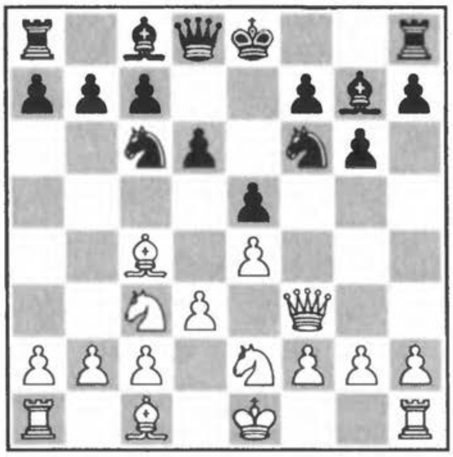
– 6...d6 7.h3 a6 8.♘bc3 ♘a5 9.♗g5 h6 10.♗e3 ♘xc4 11.dxc4 ♗e6 12.b3 0-0, Game 1.

– 6...d5 7.exd5 ♘b4 8.♗b3 ♘bxd5 9.h3 0-0 10.♗g5 c6 11.♘bc3 h6 12.♘xd5 hxg5 13.♘dc3, Game 3.

– 6...0-07.h3 d5 8.exd5 ♘b4 9.♗b3 ♘bxd5 10.♘bc3 c6 11.♗g5 ♕a5 12.♗d2 ♕b6 13.g4, Game 5.

6...d6 7.d3

Here 7.h3?! ♗e6 (7...♘a5 8.d3 ♘xc4 9.dxc4 ♗e6 10.b3) 8.♗b3 ♗xb3 9.cxb3 (after 9.axb3 ♘b4 Black is better) and although White appears to be OK here, I dislike this position due to the pawn structure weaknesses.



7...♗g4

Other possibilities include:

– 7...♘a5 8.♗g5 (or 8.h3 ♘xc4 9.dxc4 ♗e6 10.b3 c6 11.♗b20-0 12.0-0-0 with equality) 8...h6 (8...♘xc4? 9.♘d5! – this little tactic leads to a completely winning position for White) 9.♗xf6 ♕xf6 (9...♗xf6 10.♘b5 ♔e7 11.♘ec3) 10.♘b5 ♕e7 11.♘ec3 ♗e6 12.♗xe6 fxe6 13.♕g4 ♔f7 14.0-0 White stands slightly better here due to the idea of f4 as well as having a better pawn structure.

– 7...h6 8.h3 ♘a5 9.♗e3 ♘xc4 10.dxc4 ♗e6 11.b3 0-0 12.0-0-0 with equal play in Smallville-NECF, ICC Blitz 2006.

– 7...♗e6 8.♗g5 h6 9.♗e3 ♗xc4 10.dxc4 0-0 11.0-0-0♕d7 12.h3 a6 13.♔b1 White's chances are slightly preferable.

8.♕g3 ♕d7 9.f3

This is better than it may look at first sight. With pawn e4 well-defended White is later on able to start pushing d3-d4.

9...♗e6 10.♗g5 ♘h5

For 10...♗xc4 11.dxc4 is slightly better for White.

11.♕h4 h6 12.♗e3 ♘a5 13.♗b3 ♘xb3 14.axb3 a6

To be able to castle queenside in the future. Sasikiran does not want to castle kingside of course, as White is ready for an attack with g2-g4.

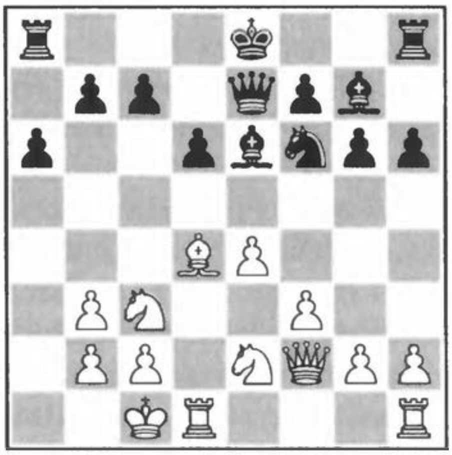
15.d4 ♕e7 16.♕f2 exd4

Editorial note: Releasing the tension is more or less forced. White is better after:

- 16...0-0? 17.dxe5, and
- 16...f5?! 17.exf5 gxf5 18.dxe5 dxe5 19.0-0-0, and
- 16...0-0-0 17.d5 ♗d7 18.g4 ♘f6 19.♗d2 ♔b8 20.b4.

17.♗xd4 ♘f6 18.0-0-0

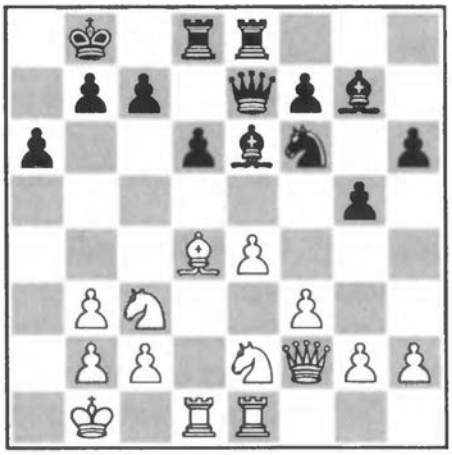
After the opening battle, White stands clearly better. Despite the fact that I proceeded to play too aggressively, this does not take away from the fact that White came out of this opening with a clear advantage.



18...0-0-0 19.♘f4 ♖hg8

Protecting the bishop, as 19...♖he8?! 20.♘fd5 ♗xd5 21.♘xd5 ♘xd5 22.♗xg7 is good for White.

20.♖he1 ♔b8 21.♔b1 g5 22.♘fe2 ♖ge8



23.g4?

Much better was 23.e5! dxe5 (23...♘h5 24.g4 dxe5 25.♗a7+ ♔a8 26.♗c5 ♕f6 27.gxh5±) 24.♗a7+ ♔a8 25.♗c5 ♖d6 26.♘g3! ♖ed8 27.♗xd6 cxd6 28.♕b6±.

23...♕f8 24.♘g3 ♘d7 25.♗e3 ♕h8 26.♘ge2 ♗e5 27.h4 ♕g7 28.♖h1 ♘f6 29.♗d4 ♘d7 30.♕e3 ♕f6 31.hxg5 hxg5 32.♗xe5 ♕xe5 33.♖h5 ♖g8 34.♘d5 ♖de8 35.♕c1 ♕g7 36.♘e3 ♘f6 37.♖h2 ♖h8 38.♖g2

Or 38.♖dh1 ♖xh2 39.♖xh2 ♖h8 40.♕h1 ♖xh2 41.♕xh2 ♕h7. Yet again, the position remains balanced. The remainder is less interesting for our purposes.

38...♘d7 39.♘d4 ♖h3 40.c4 ♕f6 41.♖f2 ♖eh8 42.b4 ♕e5 43.c5 dxc5 44.bxc5 ♘xc5 45.♕c3 f6

Black has a winning position.

46.♖c2 ♘a4 47.♕b4 ♗d7 48.♘b3 ♖h1 49.♖xh1 ♖xh1+ 50.♔a2 ♘b6 51.♕f8+ ♕e8 52.♕xe8+

52.♕xf6 loses to 52...♗e6!.

52...♗xe8 53.♘c5 ♘d7 54.♘xd7+

Or 54.♘d5 ♘xc5 55.♖xc5 ♗f7.

54...♗xd7 55.♔b3 ♖e1 56.♖c3 ♗e6+ 57.♔c2 ♖e2+ 58.♔c1 a5 59.♘c2 ♖f2 60.♘d4 ♗d7 61.♖c5 b6 62.♖d5 ♔c8 63.e5 fxe5 64.♖xe5 c5 65.♘b3 ♖f1+ 66.♔d2 a4 67.♘xc5

Losing, but 67.♘c1 ♖xf3 68.♖xg5 ♖f2+ 69.♔c3 ♖g2 would not really prolong the fight as 70.♖g8+ ♔c7 71.g5 loses the knight after 71...♗f5.

67...bxc5 68.♖xc5+ ♔b7 69.♖xg5 ♖xf3 70.♖d5 ♗e6 71.♖d3 ♖f1 72.♖g3 ♖f2+ 73.♔c3 ♔b6 74.♔b4 ♖f4+ 75.♔a3 ♔b5 76.♖e3 ♗d5 77.♖d3 ♗c4 78.♖e3 ♖d4 79.g5 ♖d1 80.b3 axb3 81.♖e8 ♖a1+ 82.♔b2 ♖a2+ 83.♔c3 ♖c2+ 84.♔d4 b2 85.♖b8+ ♔a4 86.g6 ♗b5 87.g7 b1♕ 0-1

CHAPTER 18

Who is Who

How modest can you be? **John van der Wiel** prefers to harmlessly develop his bishop to e2 in the Four Knights. A typical waiting move that vaguely resembles 4.a3 – the Gunsberg Variation – subject of the very first volume in the SOS series. There is no need for false modesty though, when we see the Dutch grandmaster reveal his drawing percentage and his games.

Early rook pawn moves are always welcomed by SOS scribes. This time it is **Glenn Flear** who advocates 6.a3 versus the Semi-Slav. It has some bite too as Flear's own perfect score might indicate.
Let's accept the Queen's Gambit and by all means hang on to the pawn with 3...♗e6 too. At least this is what the Englishman preaches in his other contribution.

Friso Nijboer is known for his attacking skills. It should surprise no one that he counters Philidor's Defence with the Shirov Gambit.

The Rubinstein Variation of the Nimzo Indian stands for theory – vast amounts of it. Now there is a way to get round all this as **Dorian Rogozenko** explains with his customary objectivity.

SOS-6 featured a treatise on 3...a6 in the Caro-Kann by John van der Wiel. This time **Adrian Mikhalchishin** goes one step beyond with the immediate 3...b5 – the old Gurgenidze Variation.

The Slovenian grandmaster is out to make life difficult for all those Grünfeld and Benoni players too. Surprise your opponent with 3.d5!

Taking Mikhail Tal as his source of inspiration, **Arthur Kogan** presents a typical SOS weapon versus the (Accelerated) Dragon. Important news for all insomniacs out there.

A Bird man himself, **Dimitri Reinderman** knows the perfect antidote (on move 1!). Find out why a knight on h6 is never dim after 1.f4.

Lasker taught us to develop knights before bishops. **Alexander Finkel** demonstrates that in the Modern you can put pressure on White's centre by moving your bishops first. Flexibility rules as the knights will eventually home in on the central squares.

We gladly welcome a joint effort by **Jean-Olivier Leconte** and **Igor Glek** to revitalize the obsolete Gledhill Attack versus the French. Some primitive tactics and a novelty on move 6 are involved to bring 5.♕g4 back into the limelight.

Did someone just mention the word primitive? Of course we could not resist when **Hikaru Nakamura** was prepared to speak his mind on 2.♕h5. Never did he intend to go for Scholar's Mate, nor did he just want to shock his opponent. Logical and harmonious are the keywords in his introduction.

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JEROEN BOSCH
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VOL. 8

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SECRETS OF OPENING SURPRISES

8

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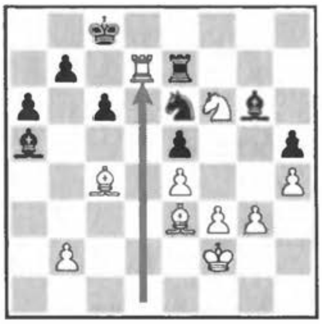
Jeroen Bosch

The SOS Files



Vitiugov-Naer after 34.♖d7!

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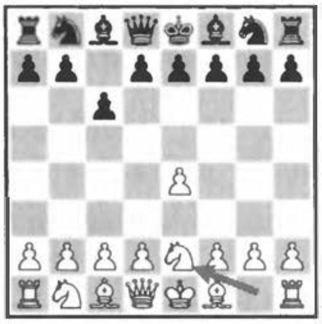
Ruben Felgaer

Meeting the Caro-Kann with 2.♘e2



Another Short Variation

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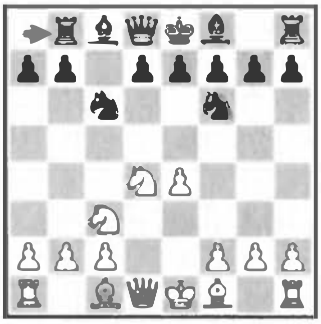
Dimitri Reinderman

The Meszaros Variation of the Sicilian



Is 5...♖b8 a useful move?

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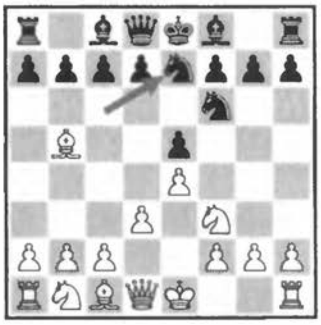

Doesn’t 4...♘e7 blunder a pawn?

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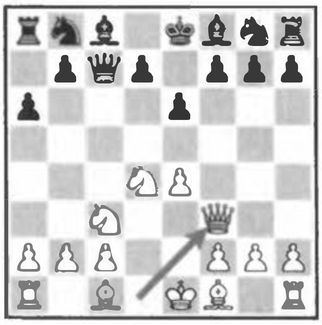
Alexander Finkel

SOS versus the Paulsen



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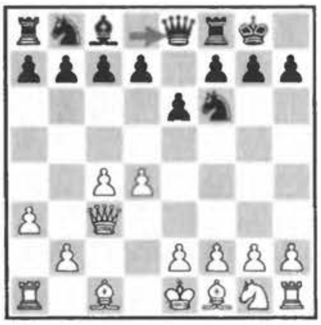

Keene's queen move

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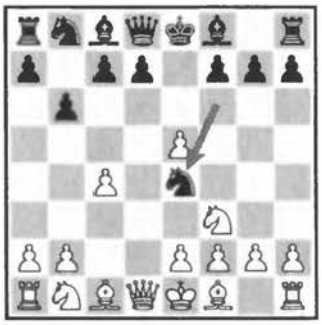
Arthur Kogan

The Budapest Gambit Can Still Surprise!



A personal view on 3...♘e4

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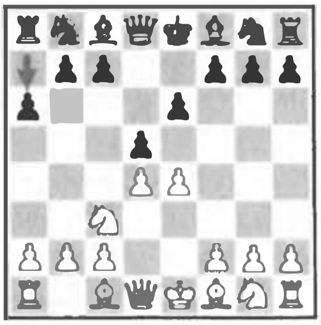
Jeroen Bosch

French Prophylaxis



1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 a6!?

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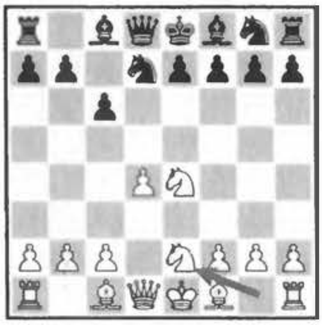
Adrian Mikhalchishin

Caro-Kann: Dementiev Variation



'Grandma's' 5.♘e2

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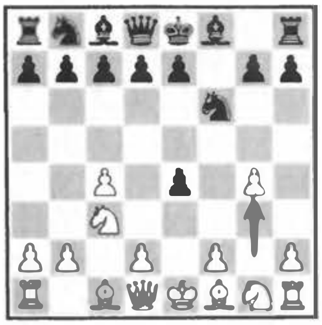
The Porcupine Variation



1.c4 f5 2.e4 fxe4 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.g4

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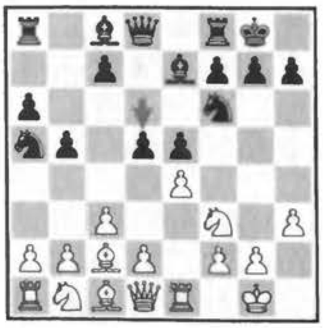
Gajewski's Incredible Spanish Novelty



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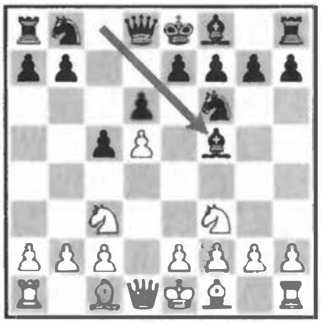
Arthur Kogan

Play the Spielmann Attack



1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 c5 3.d5 d6 4.♘c3 ♗f5

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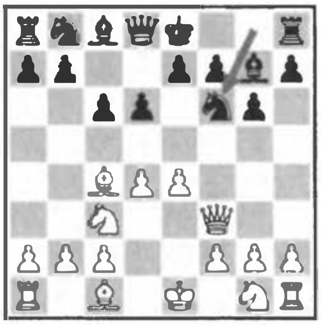
Alexander Finkel

An Old Idea in the Modern Defence



An interesting pawn sacrifice

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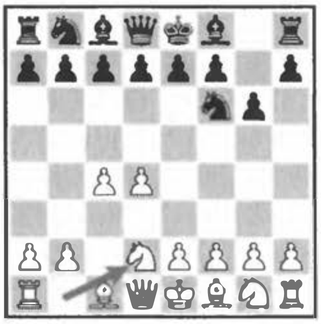
Jeroen Bosch

A Modest Indian



1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘d2

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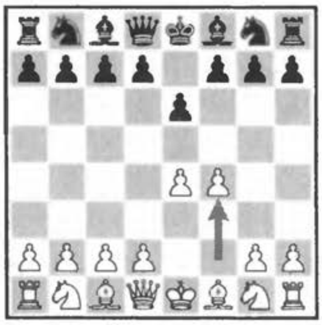
Igor Glek

A 19th Century Weapon versus the French



1.e4 e6 2.f4!?

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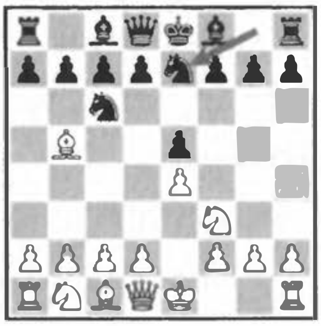
Leonid Gofshtein

A Dynamic Ruy Lopez Surprise



1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘ge7

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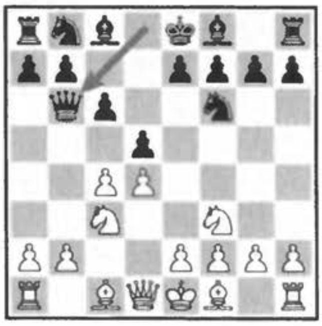
Dorian Rogozenko

Kamsky's 'Spare' Slav



1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 ♕b6

CHAPTER 1

Jeroen Bosch

The SOS Files

The Unknown 'Refutation'

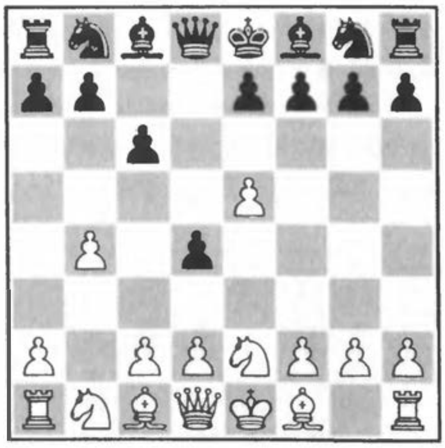
SOS-8, Chapter 2, p.17

In this SOS volume you will find an article by Ruben Felgaer on the Caro-Kann with 2.♘e2. In modern chess Nigel Short has probably done most to popularize this odd knight move, however the idea goes back to the early decades of the previous century. IM Janos (Ion) Balogh (1892-1980), born in the Austro-Hungarian empire in the area of what later became Western Rumania, was an early expert. Dutch IM Gerard Welling informed us that Balogh eventually gave up on 2.♘e2 because of 2...d5 3.e5 d4!?. Interestingly, nobody ever played this against Balogh – he just didn't have a clue what to do after 3...d4.

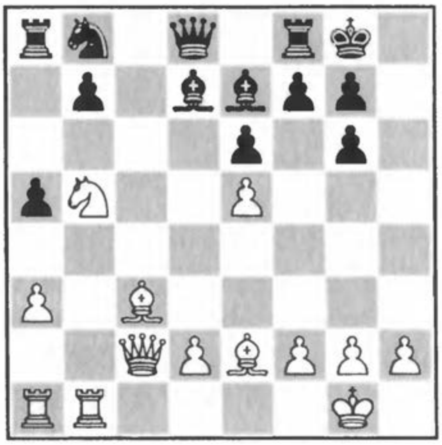
☐ **Thal Abergel**
■ **Merab Gagunashvili**
Cappelle la Grande 2007

1.e4 c6 2.♘e2 d5 3.e5 d4!?
The move 3...d4 cuts off White's e-pawn from its central neighbour. Creative play is now required from both sides.
4.b4!?
White aims to isolate Black's d-pawn by preventing c6-c5 and is going to attack the little guy with ♗b2. Ironically, Black has moves like ...♕d5 and ...g5 to isolate and attack the e5-pawn, as may be seen from the following practical examples:

– 4.♘g3 ♕d5! 5.♕e2 (5.f4 g5!?) 5...♘d7 6.f4 g5 7.c4 (7.e6) 7...♕e6 8.f5 (8.d3 gxf4 9.♗xf4 ♗g7) 8...♕xe5 and Black was just a pawn up in Smith-Broom, England tt 2003/04.
– 4.♘f4 g5! 5.♘d3 ♕d5 6.b3? ♗g7 7.c4 ♕e4+ 8.♕e2 ♕xe2+ 9.♗xe2 ♗f5 10.♗b2 ♗xd3 11.♗xd3 ♗xe5 likewise netted the second player the e-pawn. Parkin-Rutherford, Glenrothes 1996.
– 4.c3!? c5 5.f4 ♘c6 6.♘g3 g5!? 7.fxg5 ♕d5 8.♕e2 ♗g7 9.♕e4 ♗e6 10.♗b5 ♗xe5 11.♗xc6+ bxc6 12.d3 and now 12...h6 would have been a clear improvement over 12...♗xg3+? 13.hxg3 ♕xe4+?! 14.dxe4, Niedermaier-Burggraf, Forchheim 2002.
– An interesting option is 4.c4.



4...a5 5.♗b2 d3! 6.♘f4! 6.cxd3 axb4 favours Black. **6...dxc2 7.♕xc2 e6** 7...axb4 8.e6!? leads to complications. **8.b5 ♘e7 9.♘c3 ♘g6 10.♘xg6 hxg6 11.♗e2** It is better to develop than to play 11.♘e4 cxb5 12.♗xb5+ ♗d7 which merely eases Black's task. **11...cxb5 12.♘xb5 ♘c6 13.0-0** White has a pleasant edge. **13...♗e7 14.a3 0-0 15.♖fb1 ♗d7 16.♗c3 ♘b8**

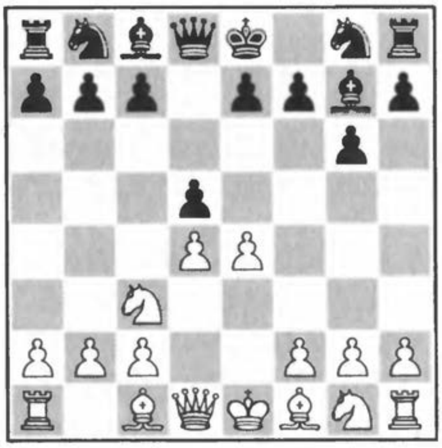


17.♘d4!? Abergel takes the draw by repetition against his higher-rated opponent. **17...♖a7 18.♘b5 ♖a8 19.♘d4 ♖a7 20.♘b5** ½-½

Amateurs and GMs play 3...d5

SOS-1, Chapter 13, p.106

We received a sympathetic letter from Erwin Bilgen, praising SOS as the ideal weapon for the amateur chess player. Erwin included a game of his own with 3...d5 in the Modern. This is actually a great surprise weapon that merits some attention in different versions. **1.e4 g6 2.d4 ♗g7 3.♘c3 d5**



● 4.♘xd5 c6 5.♘c3 ♕xd4 6.♗d3 ♘d7?! (Better are 6...e5 7.♘f3 ♕d8 8.0-0 ♘e7 or 6...♘f6 7.♘f3 ♕d8) 7.♘f3 ♕d6 8.♕e2 ♘c5 9.♗c4 e5? 10.♗e3 ♘e6?! 11.♖d1 ♕e7 12.a4 f6?! 13.♕d2 g5 14.0-0 ♘h6 and now White played the cheeky 15.♘d5!? which worked out well after 15...cxd5 16.exd5 ♘d8 (16...♘f4!) 17.d6 in Zagema-Martens, Dutch tt 2007/08.

● 4.exd5 ♘f6 5.♗c4 ♘bd7 6.♘ge2 ♘b6 7.♗b5+ ♗d7 8.♕d3 a6 9.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 10.♗d2 ♘fxd5 11.♘xd5 ♕xd5 12.0-0 ♘c4 13.♗c3 ♘d6 14.♘f4 ♕f5 15.♕xf5 ♘xf5 and Black was better in Thiess-Bilgen, Düsseldorf 2007.

● 4.exd5 ♘f6 5.♗b5+ ♘bd7 6.♗g5 0-0 7.♗xd7 ♕xd7 8.♕f3 ♖b8 (8...b5! was recommended in Europa Rochade 2007/11. Too risky then is 9.d6: after either 9...♖b8 10.dxc7 ♖b6, Europa Rochade, or 9...cxd6! 10.♕xa8 ♗b7 11.♕xa7 ♖a8 12.♕b6 ♗xg2) 9.♘ge2 b5 10.♗xf6 ♗xf6 (10...exf6 11.♘e4 ♖e8) 11.♘e4 ♗g7 12.0-0-0 ♖e8 13.♘f4 and both the game continuation 13...♕g4, Baramidze-Troyke, Nuremberg 2007, and 13...♗h6 give Black equal chances.

The ...d5 thrust is also interesting under slightly different circumstances.

☐ **Arkady Naiditsch**
■ **Vitaly Tseshkovsky**
Moscow 2005

1.e4 g6 2.d4 ♗g7 3.♘c3 a6!?
An interesting move. Black plays a Pirc/Modern Defence without committing his d-pawn just yet. Should White decide to prevent ...b5 with say 4.a4 then Black will happily transfer the game into the Pirc, arguing that the inclusion of 3...a6 4.a4 favours him. Of course, 3...a6 is provocative, and Naiditsch needs no further encouragement to lash out with his h-pawn.

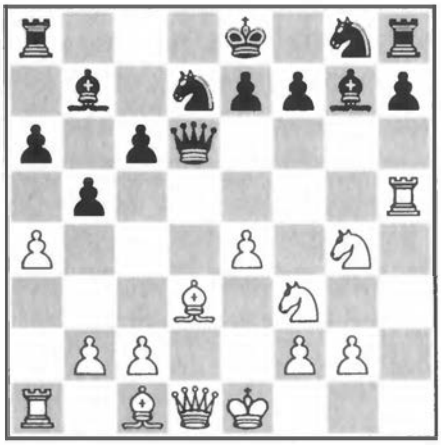
4.h4!?

Not illogical, the ...g6 pawn is a clear target, and White keeps an opening edge after 4...h5 (which has occurred several times in practice).

4...d5!? 5.♘xd5!

5.e5 h5 is very OK for Black, while after 5.exd5 ♘f6 the inclusion of 3...a6 and 4.h4 favours Black compared to our regular SOS-line.

5...c6 6.♘e3 ♕xd4 7.♗d3 7.♕xd4 ♗xd4 8.h5! ♘d7 9.f4 ♗g7 10.e5 ♘b6 11.g4 ♘h6 12.g5 ♘f5 13.♗d3 ♘g3 14.h6 was Motylev-Chernyshov, Krasnoyarsk 2003. **7...b5** 7...e5 8.♘c4 ♕d8 9.♗e3± demonstrates that the inclusion of 3...a6 doesn't always favour Black – square b6 is a big problem here. Quite natural though was 7...♘f6. **8.h5 ♘d7 9.♘f3 ♕d6 10.a4 ♗b7 11.♘g4** Aiming for 12.h6. **11...gxh5** Playing for a risky tactic. 11...♘gf6 12.h6 ♗f8 13.♘xf6+ exf6 with an unclear game. **12.♖xh5**



12...♗xb2 This was the point of his previous move. **13.♗xb2 ♕b4+ 14.♔f1 ♕xb2 15.e5** Black has won a pawn, but at a considerable risk. **15...♘c5 16.♘g5!? ♘xd3 17.cxd3 f5 18.♘e3 ♕xe5?** Missing White's retort. **19.♘f7!** winning an exchange since 19...♔xf7 20.♖xf5+ loses on the spot. White won on the 35th move.

☐ **Vidmantas Malisauskas**
■ **Boris Chatalbashev**
Crete Ech-tt 2007

1.e4 g6 2.♘c3 ♗g7 3.h4!?

An interesting sideline. Malisauskas has frequently played this set-up versus the Modern.

3...h5

Stopping the march of the h-pawn is most popular in practice.

– 3...c5 4.h5 (the only consistent move) 4...♘c6 5.♗b5 ♘d4 6.♗c4 a6 7.♘ce2 e6 8.♘xd4 cxd4 9.d3 h6 10.hxg6 fxg6 11.♗b3 and White was better in Malisauskas-Dziuban, Yerevan 1996.

– 3...c6 4.h5 (again the only sensible continuation) 4...d5 5.d3! and now either 5...e5 6.g3 d4 7.♘ce2 g5 8.f4 g4 9.fxe5 ♗xe5 10.c3 c5 11.cxd4 cxd4 12.♗f4 f6 13.♗d2!? which was unclear in Malisauskas-Minasian, Budapest 1996. Or 5...dxe4 6.♘xe4 ♗f5 7.h6!? ♗e5 8.♘f3 ♗xe4 9.dxe4 (9.♘xe5 ♗xg2 10.♗xg2 ♕a5+) 9...♕xd1+ 10.♔xd1 ♗c7 11.♘g5 ♘d7 12.♗c4 with an endgame plus in Sadler-Polzin, Germany Bundesliga 2000/01.

4.d4 d5!?

Our SOS move! The inclusion of 3.h4 h5 slightly favours Black.

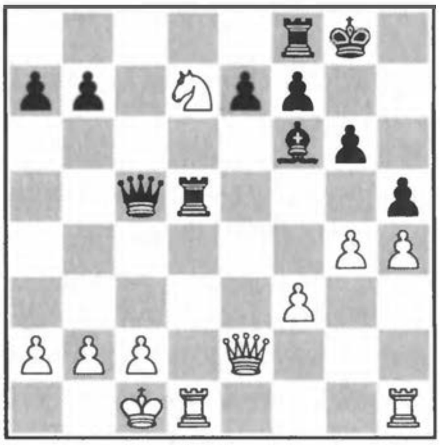
5.exd5 ♘f6 6.♗c4 ♘bd7 7.♘f3 ♘b6 8.♗b5+

The check is inconsistent with his 6th move. However, Malisauskas now probably realized that the inclusion of h4 h5 enables Black to place his bishop on g4 with particular strength. 8.♗b3 a5 9.a3 a4 10.♗a2 ♘bxd5 or 10...♗g4.

8...♗d7 9.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 10.♘e5

10.0-0 ♘fxd5 is more than OK for Black.

10...♕f5 11.♕e2 0-0 12.f3!? Trying to make something of his early h4 advance. **12...♖ad8 13.g4 ♕c8 14.♗g5** Black is somewhat better after 14.♗d2 ♘bxd5 15.0-0-0 ♘xc3 16.♗xc3 ♕e6. **14...♘bxd5 15.♘xd5 ♖xd5 16.0-0-0 c5** Very sound, but Black could also consider 16...♖fd8. **17.dxc5 ♕xc5** The most natural move, but White can now force a draw. Interesting is 17...♖xc5!? when 18.♗xf6 is met by 18...exf6 19.♘d3 ♖e8. **18.♗xf6!** Otherwise Black is better. **18...♗xf6 19.♘d7**



And now White does not gain material because of **19...♗xb2+! 20.♔xb2 ♕b4+** when Black forces perpetual check. **21.♔c1** Not 21.♔a1? ♖b5!. **21...♕a3+ 22.♔b1 ♕b4+ 23.♔c1 ♕a3+** ½-½

Out of the French Book

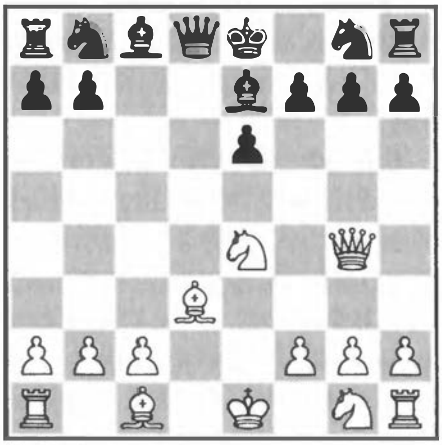
SOS-3, Chapter 8, p.71

☐ **Juan Mellado Trivino**
■ **Mikel Huerga Leache**
Andorra 2007

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♗d3 c5 4.exd5!
4.c3 ♘c6 5.♘e2 cxd4 6.cxd4 ♘b4 was Bluvshtein-Degraeve, Montreal 2002. The text was given as an improvement in SOS-5. **4...♕xd5** Safer is 4...exd5. **5.♘c3! ♕d8** Obviously not 5...♕xg2?? 6.♗e4 trapping the queen.

However, 5...♕xd4 is also risky. The game Bosch-Stellwagen, Dutch tt 2006/07, went 6.♘f3 ♕d8 7.♕e2 ♘c6 8.♗f4 (8.♗b5) 8...♗d6 9.♗xd6 ♕xd6 10.♗b5 with sufficient compensation for the pawn but no more. After the game it was established that 6.♘b5 ♕d8 7.♗f4 ♘a6 8.♕e2 gives White very dangerous compensation. For example: 8...♘f6 9.0-0-0 ♗d7 10.♘f3.

6.dxc5 ♗xc5 7.♘e4 ♗e7 8.♕g4



8...g6 9.♕g3 ♘c6 10.♗d2 ♘f6 11.0-0-0 0-0 12.h4 White gets there first. **12...♕d5 13.♘c3 ♕e5** 13...♕a5. **14.f4 ♕a5 15.♘f3 ♘b4 16.♘e5 ♘fd5?** 16...♘xd3+ was correct. Now White has a strong pawn sacrifice. **17.♗c4! ♘xc3 18.♗xc3 ♘xa2+ 19.♗xa2 ♕xa2** Black has won a pawn and his queen is uncomfortably close to White's king, but whereas White is fully developed Black's queenside is doing nothing. White has a winning attack after **20.h5 g5** What else? **21.fxg5 ♕a1+ 22.♔d2 ♖d8+ 23.♘d3 ♗d6 24.♕f3 ♕a4 25.♕f6 ♗f4+ 26.♔e2** and Black resigned, for 26...♕xc2+ 27.♖d2 is game over.

An Easy Win

SOS-7, Chapter 5, p.50

Over the past few years Shirov has stubbornly upheld his 5.g4 gambit versus the Philidor. In SOS-7 a recent convert, Friso Nijboer, took stock. In the 2007 European Team Championship Ante Brkic scored an easy win.

□ **Ante Brkic**
■ **John Trevelyan**
Crete Ech-tt 2007

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 e5 4.♘f3 ♘bd7 5.g4 h6

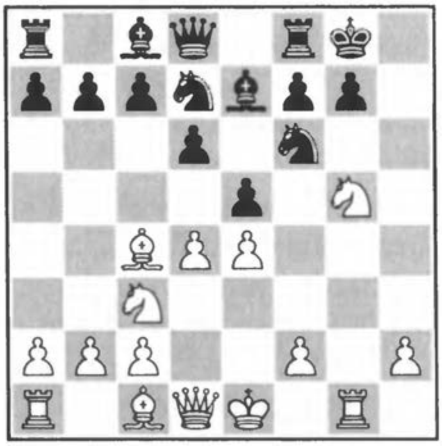
According to Nijboer this 'appears ridiculous as 6.g5 hxg5 7.♘xg5 gives White an untouchable knight on g5 – the square f7 is extremely vulnerable.'

6.g5 hxg5 7.♘xg5 ♗e7

This developing move is a mistake. White can now attack f7 forcing Black to castle into the storm. Nijboer indicates in SOS-7 that the correct response is 7...exd4 8.♕xd4 c6. He then shows how White can keep an edge. Instead of 8...c6, worse is 8...♘e5?! 9.♗e2 ♗e7 10.f4 ♘fg4 11.h3 ♘h6 12.♖g1 ♘c6 13.♕d3 ♘g8 14.♗e3 f6 15.♘f3 ♗f8 16.0-0-0 with a superior game in Nepomniachtchi-Hautot, Fügen 2006.

8.♗c4 0-0 9.♖g1

With the g-file already open Black's king is not safe after having been forced to castle kingside.



9...exd4

9...c6 10.d5!? b5 11.♗b3 b4 led to a four queen game after 12.dxc6 bxc3 13.cxd7 cxb2 14.dxc8♕ bxc1♕? (14...bxa1♕ 15.♕h3 ♕a5+ 16.♗d2 ♕xd1+ 17.♔xd1 ♕c7 18.♖g3 with a winning attack) 15.♕h3? (missing an immediate win with 15.♗xf7+! ♖xf7 – 15...♔h8 16.♕h3+ – 16.♕xd8+ ♗xd8 17.♖xc1) 15...♕a5+ 16.♔f1 ♕a6+ 17.♔g2 ♕xg5+ 18.♔h1 ♕f4? (18...♘xe4!–+) 19.♖xg7+! ♔xg7 20.♕g1+ ♘g4 21.♕hxg4+ ♕xg4 22.♕xg4+ ♔h6 23.♖g1 1-0, Filipovic-Jurkovic, Zadar 2003.

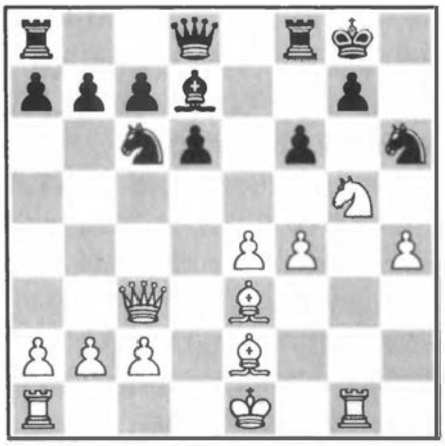
10.♕xd4 ♘e5 11.♗e2 ♘fg4

No better is 11...c5 12.♕d1 b5 13.f4 ♘c6 14.♗e3!? d5 (14...b4 15.♘d5 ♗b7 16.♗d3) 15.♘xd5 ♘xd5 16.♕xd5 ♘b4 17.♕xd8 ♖xd8 18.♗d1 and White was a sound pawn up in Sidorenko-Krapivin, Pardubice 2007.

12.h4 ♗f6 13.♕d1 ♘h6 14.♗e3 ♗d7 15.f4 ♘c6 16.♕d2

White is ready for 17.0-0-0 followed by 18.e5 or 18.♘d5, so Black trades a piece. The bishop is unfortunately his best minor piece.

16...♗xc3 17.♕xc3 f6



Black loses the exchange after moves like 17...♔h8 18.♘e6 and 17...♕e7 18.♘h7.

18.0-0-0 Not really a sacrifice. Black is completely busted. **18...♕e7** 18...fxg5 loses quickly after either 19.♗c4+ ♘f7 (19...♔h8 20.hxg5) 20.♖xg5, or 19.hxg5 ♘f7 20.g6. **19.f5 ♔h8** 19...fxg5 20.♗c4+ (20.♗xg5) 20...♔h8 21.hxg5. **20.♘h3 ♕xe4** 21.♘f4 was a big threat. Now White wins by force though: **21.♗xh6 gxh6 22.♕d2 ♔h7?** White wins after 22...♕xh4 23.♘f4 ♗xf5 24.♖h1 ♕g5 25.♖dg1. While 22...♕e7 23.♘f4 ♘e5

24.♗d3 ♖g8 is tougher, Black suffers after 25.♘d5 ♕f8 26.♖xg8+ ♔xg8 27.♘xc7. **23.♖g4** And now if the queen retreats, 24.♖g6 decides. Trevelyan resigned.

Gajewski Galore

SOS-6, Chapter 13, p.104

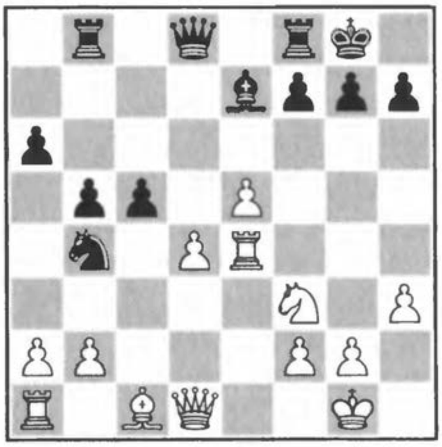
In SOS-6 we have sung the praises of Gregorz Gajewski for inventing 9...♖b8. While Black's successes in this line continue Gajewski has moved on to another astonishing Spanish concept – see Chapter 11 in the present volume.

☐ **David Pruess**
■ **Vladimir Petkov**
Sautron 2007

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♗e7 6.♖e1 b5 7.♗b3 0-0 8.c3 d6 9.h3 ♖b8 10.d4

In an 'advanced' chess game Topalov opted for the modest 10.d3, when chances were approximately even after 10...♘a5 11.♗c2 c5 12.♘bd2 ♘c6 13.♘f1 ♖e8 14.a3 h6 15.♘g3 ♗e6 16.d4 exd4 17.cxd4 cxd4 18.♘e2 d3 19.♗xd3 ♘e5 in Topalov-Anand, Leon 2007.

10...exd4 11.cxd4 d5 12.e5 ♘e4 13.♘bd2 ♗f5 14.♗c2 ♘b4 15.♗b1 c5 16.♘xe4 dxe4 17.♗xe4 ♗xe4 18.♖xe4



18...♕d5

A logical move. Previously the immediate 18...c4 had been played by the creator of the whole system. When 19.♖g4 f5 20.exf6 ♗xf6 21.♗g5 ♘d3 22.♗xf6 ♕xf6 23.b3 ♘f4 reaches a critical position. 24.♘e5 ♖bd8 25.♔h2 c3! was Fedorchuk-Gajewski, Warsaw 2005. Play is rather similar to the present game. In both games the c-pawn plays an important role.

Stronger is 24.bxc4 bxc4 25.♕c2 c3! and now White sacrificed an exchange in Solodovnichenko-Zubarev, Odessa 2007, to get rid of the dangerous c-pawn. Play was equal after 26.♖xf4!? ♕xf4 27.♕xc3 ♖b6 28.♖e1 h6 29.♕c2 ♕f5 30.♕e2 ♕d5 31.♖d1 ♖e6 32.♕c2 ♖c6 33.♕e2.

19.♕e2 c4 20.♖g4 f5 21.exf6 ♗xf6 22.♗g5 ♘d3 23.♗xf6 ♖xf6 24.b3 ♖e6

To prevent White's queen from entering on e7. Although Black keeps chances too after both 24...♖bf8 25.♕e7 ♖6f7 26.♕e4 and 24...♘f4 25.♕e7!? ♖f7 26.♕e5 ♖c8.

25.♕c2 h6

Controlling square g5 in view of 25...♖be8 26.bxc4 bxc4 (or 26...♕xc4 27.♕xc4 bxc4 28.d5 and White remains a pawn up) 27.♖g5! ♘e1! 28.♖xd5 ♘xc2 29.♖b1 and White is clearly better.

26.♖d1

White can try to involve his a1-rook into play with 26.a4 after 26...♖f8 27.axb5 axb5 28.♖a7 White is clearly better placed than in the game. Therefore Black should perhaps prefer 26...h5!? 27.♖g5 (27.♖g3 ♘f4 is complicated although it is true that the pawn is awkwardly placed on h5) 27...♘e1! 28.♘xe1 ♕xg5 29.bxc4 bxc4 30.♕xc4 and with two pawns for the exchange and the pawn on h5 rather than on h6 White is somewhat better.

26...♖f8 27.bxc4 bxc4 28.♖g3 ♖e4 29.♖d2 ♘f4

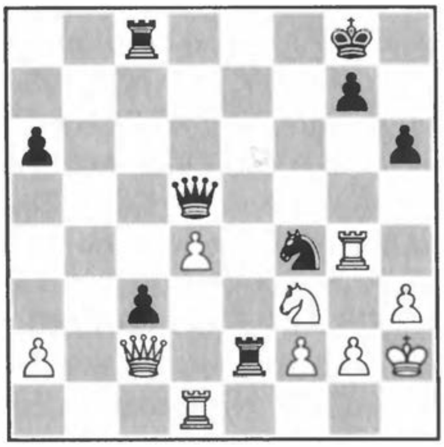
29...♖xf3 30.♖xf3 (30.gxf3!? ♖e1+ 31.♔h2 ♕xd4) 30...♘e1 31.♕c3 ♘xf3+ 32.♕xf3

♖e1+ 33.♔h2 ♕xf3 34.gxf3 is a draw.

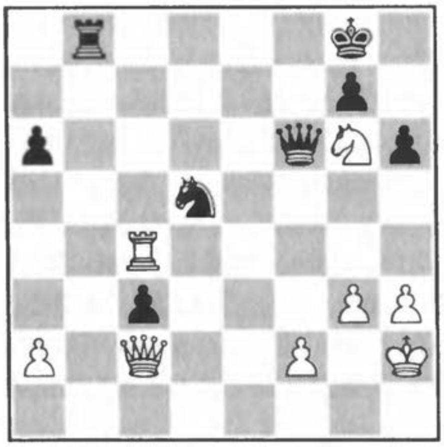
30.♔h2 ♖c8!?

Going for more than the drawish ending after 30...c3 31.♕xc3 ♘e2 32.♕b3 ♕xb3 33.axb3 ♘xg3 34.♔xg3.

31.♖g4 c3! 32.♖d1 ♖e2



33.♖d2 The only move! Black wins after 33.♕c1 c2 34.♖f1 (34.♖g1 ♘d3 35.♕xh6 ♖c7) 34...♘d3 35.♕xh6 ♕d7. **33...♖e4** Repeating the moves. **34.♖d1 ♖e2 35.♖d2 ♖xd2! 36.♘xd2 ♕xd4 37.♘e4 ♕e5 38.g3? ♘d5?!** Black could win on the spot with 38...♘e6 or 38...♘e2 when the threat of ...♘d4 leaves White helpless. **39.♘d2? ♔h8?** Undoubtedly in time trouble Black misses the simple 39...♕e2 40.♕f5 ♘e7. **40.♘f3 ♕f6 41.♘h4 ♖b8 42.♘g6+?** The best defence was 42.♖c4!. **42...♔g8** Now Black is winning again. **43.♖c4**



43...♘e3! A lovely way to end the game. **44.fxe3 ♖b2 45.♖c8+ ♔f7 46.♖f8+ ♔e6 47.♘f4+ ♔d7 0-1**

Winning the SOS Prize

SOS-6, Chapter 15, p.117

Young Nikita Vitiugov is one of Russia's rising stars. By employing a SOS in a topical Slav he reaches a slightly better ending against fellow 2600-GM Evgeny Naer. The latter is subtly outplayed and finished off with a tactical shot on the 34th move. A deserving winner wouldn't you say?

☐ **Nikita Vitiugov**
■ **Evgeny Naer**
Krasnoyarsk 2007

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 dxc4 5.a4 ♗f5 6.♘e5 ♘bd7 7.♘xc4 ♕c7 8.♕d2

This odd-looking queen move – a real surprise! – in a highly theoretical Slav is designed to kill Black's main strategical idea in this position: the ...e5 advance. In SOS-6 Dorian Rogozenko explained the ins and outs.

8...♘b6

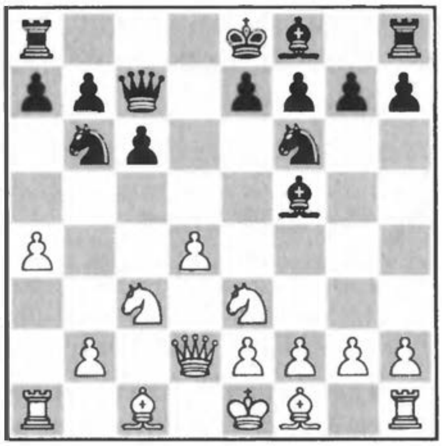
The point of White's previous move is apparent after 8...e5? when 9.dxe5 ♘xe5 10.♕f4! is very awkward for Black.

Rogozenko's mainline was 8...e6 9.♕f4 ♕xf4 10.♗xf4 ♘b6 11.♘d6+ ♗xd6 12.♗xd6 when White is slightly better in the resulting ending.

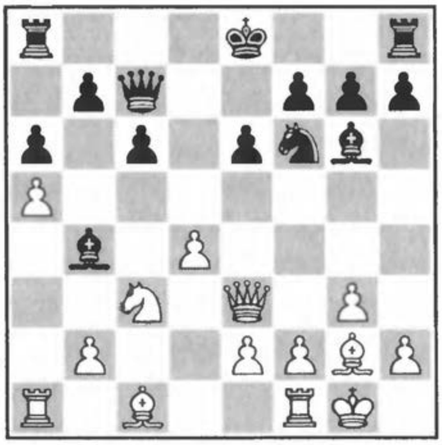
9.♘e3!?

A novelty that is more ambitious than 9.♘xb6 axb6 10.♕f4 ♕xf4 11.♗xf4 with an equal ending.

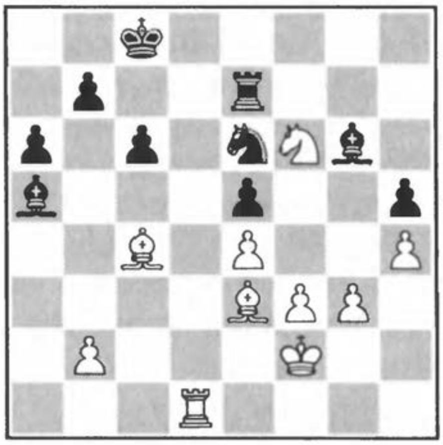
Previously 9.♘e5 had also been tried. After 9...e6 10.f3 Black can play 10...0-0-0 or 10...♖d8. See SOS-6 for the details.



9...♗g6 10.a5 ♘bd5 11.g3 Rather than setting up a pawn centre with f3 and e4, Vitiugov calmly continues his development by fianchettoing his bishop and castling kingside. **11...e6 12.♗g2 ♘xe3** The alternative is the immediate 12...♗b4. **13.♕xe3 a6** Avoiding 13...♗b4 14.a6. **14.0-0 ♗b4**



15.♕e5!? ♕xe5 White is slightly better after 15...♗d6 16.♕g5. **16.dxe5 ♘d5 17.♗d2 0-0-0 18.e4** White intends to play against the light-squared bishop on g6. **18...♘c7?!** Is White really better after 18...♘xc3 19.♗xc3 ♗xc3 20.bxc3 ♖d3? This looks like an equalizing line for Black. Now White has a pleasant ending. **19.♗e3 ♖d3?!** This is an empty shot, as Vitiugov will demonstrate. **20.♖fc1 h6 21.♗f1 ♖d7 22.f3** Now it is clear that White's strategy of keeping Black's bishop out of play has succeeded. Note that that the doubled e-pawns control important squares. Black has a serious space disadvantage. **22...♔b8 23.♔f2** Over the next few moves Vitiugov calmly improves his pieces. **23...♖hd8** Black controls the only open file on the board, but as there are no squares on which he can enter this is of little significance. **24.♗e2 h5?! 25.h4 f6 26.exf6 gxf6 27.♘a4 e5 28.♘b6!** Gaining control over the d-file, and therefore stronger than 28.♘c5 ♖d6. **28...♖h7** Black cannot keep the rook on the d-file, as 28...♖d6 29.♖c4 ♗d2 30.♗c5 loses the exchange. **29.♖d1 ♖xd1 30.♖xd1** White has made huge progress. He now controls the only open file. His pieces are far more active than Black's, and his pawn structure is also superior. 31.♖d8+ is a major threat. **30...♘e6 31.♘d7+ ♔c8 32.♗c4! ♖e7 33.♘xf6** Also very strong was 33.♗b6. **33...♗xa5**

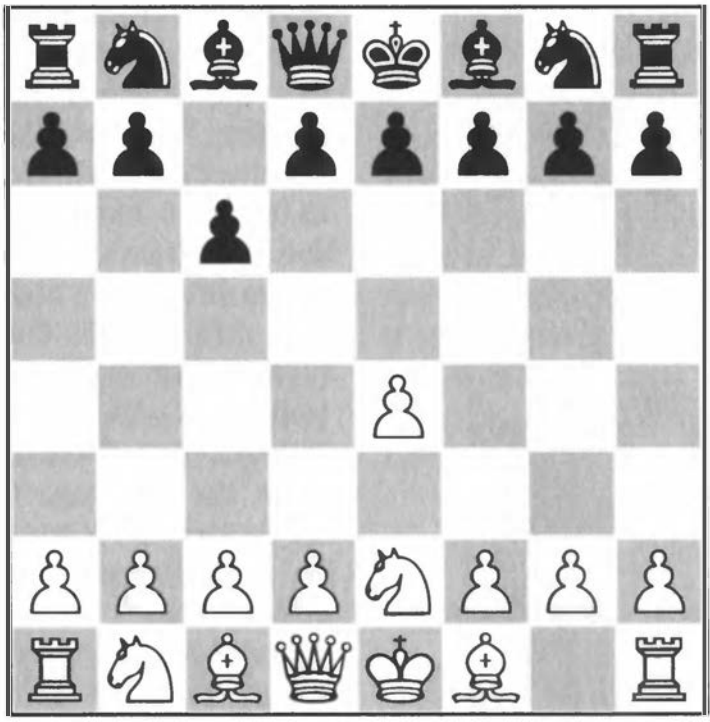


34.♖d7! A spectacular move. Likewise, the artistic 34.♘g8! ♖e8 35.♖d6 was also sufficient. **34...♖f7 35.♖xf7 ♗xf7 36.♘xh5** Winning a pawn. With two passed pawns on the kingside White is winning. **36...♔d7 37.♘g7! b5 38.♗xe6+ ♗xe6 39.♗c5!?** Or 39.♘xe6. **39...♗b3?! 40.h5 ♗d2 41.♗e3 ♗b4 42.h6 ♗g8 43.f4 exf4 44.gxf4 ♗f8 45.f5 ♗xg7 46.hxg7 ♔e7 47.b4** **1-0**

CHAPTER 2

Ruben Felgaer

Meeting the Caro-Kann with 2.♘e2



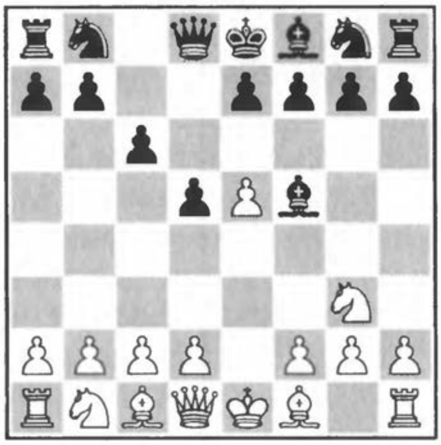
Another Short Variation

At first sight it is difficult to understand why White would be interested in playing 2.♘e2 against the Caro-Kann Defence. The shortcomings are clear: the knight blocks the development of the bishop and there is no gain in the centre. However, it is not without reason that this early knight move has been played by numerous masters and grandmasters. One of the founding fathers of this variation is Nigel Short, since he played it several times and obtained fantastic results. Indeed, on second sight, the advantages of 2.♘e2 become evident. The rationale of this move is that if Black plays in the traditional way – that means 3...♗f5 as against the regular Advance Variation – 1.e4 c6 2.♘e2 d5 3.e5 ♗f5, he will encounter surprising problems after 4.♘g3. This will be analysed in the first game of this article. Consequently, the majority of players chooses 3...c5, which leads to a very interesting Advance Variation that will be analysed extensively in the remainder of this article.

I have tried almost all the alternatives for the main variations against the Caro-Kann Defence. For this reason, when GM Vallejo suggested that I should have a look at the strange 2.♘e2!?, I said to myself: why not? I should say that I was most favourably impressed by this variation because it is poisonous and it is generally not studied by our opponents. So, the chances of obtaining an advantage, or at least an interesting position, are extremely high.

☐ **Ruben Felgaer**
■ **Elizbar Ubilava**
Olite tt 2006

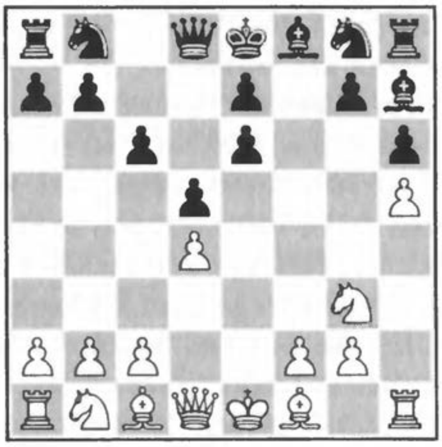
1.e4 c6 2.♘e2 d5 3.e5 ♗f5 4.♘g3



4...♗d7

My prestigious opponent chooses a safe retreat of the bishop.

● As was mentioned earlier, the analysis of 4...♗g6 is critical to the understanding of the variation: 4...♗g6 5.h4! h6 6.h5 ♗h7 7.e6! (this blocking sac 'à la Rudolf Spielmann' is possible because White saved a tempo by postponing d4. Black suffers problems to complete his development. Such is the problem of this variation that 3...♗f5 followed by 4...♗g6 is not played anymore) 7...fxe6 8.d4



– after 8...♕d6 9.f4! ♘d7 10.♗d3 ♗xd3 11.♕xd3 0-0-0 12.0-0 ♘gf6 13.b3 the bishop on f8 is in a lousy situation, White's advantage is clear, Bauckloh-Gruss, Germany tt 1993/94.

– 8...e5!? (a modern way of playing. Black returns the pawn in order to develop his pieces properly. In my opinion, this is the only way in which Black has chances to equalize) 9.dxe5 e6 10.♗d3 ♗xd3 11.♕xd3 ♘e7 12.♘d2 ♘d7 13.f4 ♕c7 14.♘f3 c5 15.0-0 0-0-0 16.c4. This is a fighting position, but White's position looks preferable, Richmond-Nelson, Manila ol 1992.

– 8...♘f6 9.♗d3 ♘a6 10.♗xh7 ♖xh7 11.♕d3 ♕d6 12.♕g6+ ♔d7 13.♘c3 ♖d8 14.0-0 ♔c8 15.♖e1 ♘c7 16.♘ce2 ♕d7 17.♘f4. Again Black's bishop on f8 determines the advantage for White, who did not have any problems to achieve victory in the game Rossetto-Luckis, Buenos Aires ch-ARG 1961.

● Another possible retreat is 4...♗e6. Even though this move looks strange, it has its logic. But the main reason to include this game is the strength of the players: 5.d4 g6 6.c3 (playing flexibly) 6...h5 (6...♗g7 7.♗e3 ♘h6 8.♗d3±) 7.♗d3 ♕c8 (7...♗g7 8.0-0 h4 9.♘e2 h3 10.g3 ♗f5 11.♗xf5 gxf5 12.e6! fxe6 13.♘f4 ♕d6 14.♕b3 b6 15.♘g6 ♖h5 16.♗f4± Lukacs) 8.h4 (8.0-0!?±) 8...♘h6 9.♘d2 (intending ♘f3, exploiting the weaknesses of the dark squares) 9...♗g7 10.0-0 c5 11.♘f3 ♘c6 12.♗e3 ♗g4 13.♗e2 cxd4 14.cxd4 0-0 15.♖c1 ♘f5 16.♘xf5 ♕xf5 17.♖c5 ♕d7 18.♘g5 ♗xe2 19.♕xe2 f6 20.exf6 ♖xf6 (20...exf6 21.♘h3) 21.♕d3 ♖d8 22.f4!±, Short-Sasikiran, Istanbul ol 2000.

● 4...e6. It does not make any sense to give up this bishop so quickly. White did not have problems to obtain an advantage after 5.♘xf5 exf5 6.d4 ♘d7 7.♗d3 g6 8.♘d2 ♗g7 9.♘f3 ♘f8 10.0-0 ♘e6 11.b3 ♘e7 12.♗a3

0-0 13.c4 in Rowson-T.Johansen, Lyngby 1996.

5.d4 e6 6.c4!

Before Black plays ...c5, in which case he would achieve a reasonable French Defence.

6...b5?!

A compromising move to which I do not see any advantage. However, Black's position was already not simple: 6...♘e7 7.♘c3 ♘g6 (7...dxc4 8.♗xc4 ♘d5 9.0-0±) 8.♗e3± where there are no doubts about White's opening advantage.

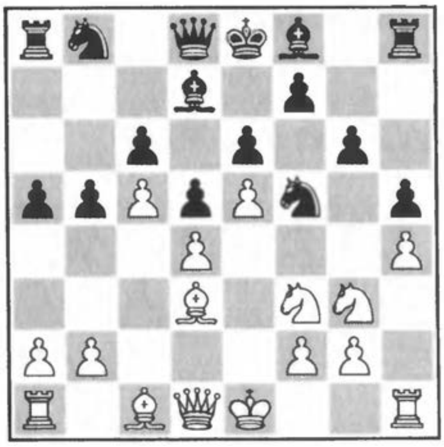
7.c5

Obtaining more space.

7...a5

Otherwise White could play a4 and if b4, a5! isolating the pawn. White is just better after 7...f6 8.exf6 ♘xf6 9.♘d2 ♗e7 10.♘f3 0-0 11.♗d3.

8.♗d3 g6 9.h4 h5 10.♘d2 ♘e7 11.♘f3 ♘f5



12.♘e2!

The secret of this position is to know when it is the most appropriate moment to change pieces on f5. Due to the great space advantage of my position, I can manoeuvre without hesitation until I find the ideal position.

12...♘a6 13.♗g5 ♗e7 14.♘f4 ♘c7

14...♗xg5 15.hxg5 ♘xd4 (Ubilava) was an interesting possibility of complicating the game. However, after the counter-sacrifice 16.♘xg6! (Black gets a lot of pawns after 16.♘xd4 ♕xg5 17.♘de2 ♕xe5) and now:

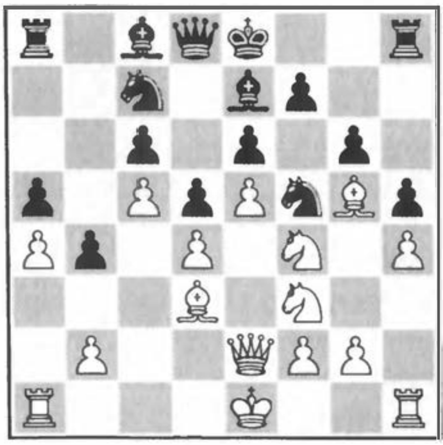
- 16...♘xf3+ 17.♕xf3 ♕xg5 (17...♖g8 18.♖xh5! – this is a winning attack – 18...fxg6 – or 18...♘xc5 19.♖h7 ♘xd3+ 20.♔f1!+– – 19.♗xg6+ ♖xg6 20.♖h8+ ♔e7 21.♖h7+ ♔e8 22.♕f7 mate) 18.♘xh8 ♕xe5+ 19.♗e2 ♕xh8 20.0-0-0±.
- 16...♖g8 17.♖xh5!? ♘xc5 (17...fxg6 18.♗xg6+ ♖xg6 19.♖h8++–) 18.♘f4 ♘xf3+ 19.♕xf3 ♘xd3+ 20.♘xd3 ♕e7 21.♕e3± with absolute control.

15.♕e2 b4 16.a4!

Avoiding counter-attacks on the queenside. If 16.0-0-0 then 16...♘b5.

16...♗c8!

After 16...bxa3 17.♖xa3 ♕b8 18.0-0 the a5 pawn is very weak.



17.♕d2!

A prophylactic move, avoiding an unnecessary exchange of pieces.

17.b3? ♗a6, or also 17.♗xf5? exf5 18.b3 ♘e6, would improve Black's chances.

17...♗a6 18.♗c2! b3

This move sacrifices a pawn without any compensation. However, Black does not have many moves, whereas I could gradually improve my position. For example 18...0-0 19.b3! ♕d7 20.0-0-0± with the idea of breaking with g4.

19.♗xf5!

Now is the proper moment. Instead 19.♗xb3 ♖b8 20.♕c3 ♖b4 is unclear.

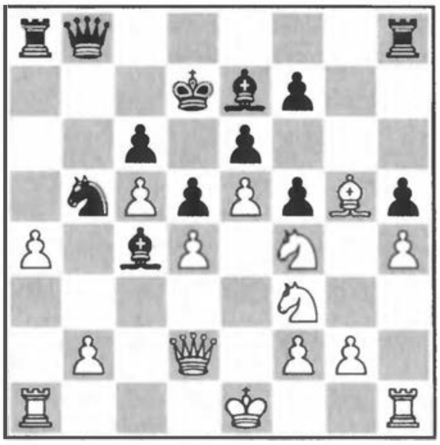
19...gxf5 20.♕xa5! ♔d7!?

The flashy 20...♗e2 does not work, because after 21.♗xe7 ♕xe7 22.♕c3 ♗c4 23.♖a3 White is winning.

21.♕d2 ♗b5 22.♕b4 ♕b8 23.♕xb3 ♗c4

Here 23...♗xa4 24.♕xb8 ♖hxb8 25.♗xe7 ♔xe7 26.0-0 ♖xb2 27.♘xh5 would be a simple win.

24.♕c3 ♘b5 25.♕d2



25...♘xd4

The only practical chance of complicating the game. Otherwise White is just winning.

26.♕xd4

26.♘xd4? ♕xe5+ 27.♘fe2 ♗xc5.

26...♕b4+ 27.♕c3 ♗xc5 28.♘d2 ♕b8 29.b3 ♗b4 30.♕e3

30.♕b2 also wins.

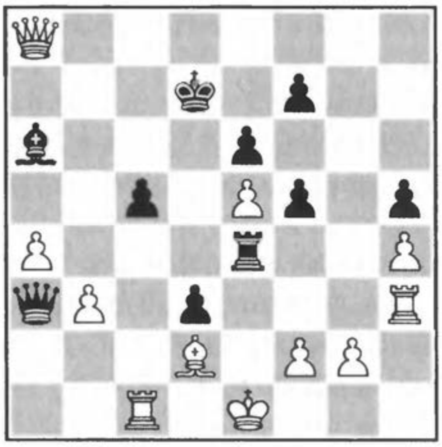
30...♗a6 31.♖c1 c5 32.♗f6 d4 33.♕f3 ♗xd2+ 34.♔xd2 ♕b4+ 35.♔d1 ♖hg8 36.♘d5!

When it looked that Black obtained something, this tactical punch puts everything in order.

36...♕a5

36...exd5 37.♕xd5+ ♔c7 38.♖xc5+ wins.

37.♘e7 ♕b6 38.♘xg8 ♖xg8 39.♗g5 ♕b4 40.♗d2 ♕a3 41.♖h3 d3 42.♔e1 ♖g4 43.♕a8 ♖e4+

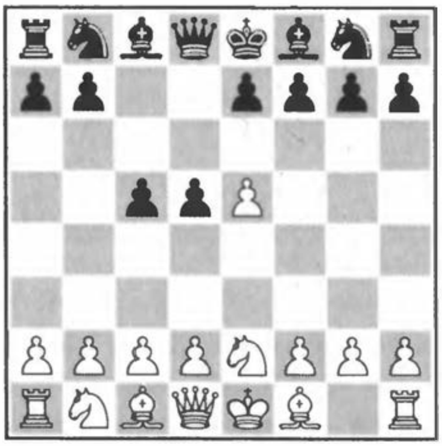


44.♖e3

There is always time to make the last mistake! See 44.♔f1?? ♕xc1+! and 44.♗e3?? ♕xc1 mate! Now, my opponent resigned without attempting 44...♖xh4 45.g3! ♖h2 46.♖xd3+! ♗xd3 47.♕b7+ ♔e8 48.♕c8+ ♔e7 49.♗g5+ and mates.

☐ **Nigel Short**
■ **Anatoly Lein**
Hastings 1979/80

1.e4 c6 2.♘e2 d5 3.e5 c5



In the remaining games in this article, we will deal with the positions resulting from 3...c5. This move does not lack logic and is indeed the most popular continuation. It should be pointed out that some of the games we are going to analyse come from another move order in the Advance Variation (1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.♘e2), but the majority comes from 2.♘e2. Those who think that this is cheap propaganda could check their database!

4.d4

I confess that on several occasions I was tempted to play 4.b4 and only due to 4...♘c6! I never played it.

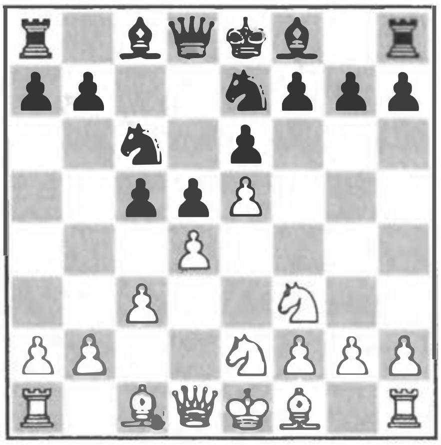
4...e6?!

The aim is to transpose to a French Defence, but having wasted a tempo with the pawn (1...c6 and 3...c5) it leaves White with good chances. The variation we will analyse profusely below is 4...♘c6 5.c3.

5.♘d2 ♘c6 6.♘f3 ♘ge7

Perhaps 6...cxd4!?.

7.c3



7...♗d7

7...cxd4 8.cxd4 ♘f5 looks better than the game. However, what follows is not very helpful for Black: 9.a3! ♕b6 10.g4! ♘fe7 11.♘f4 ♘a5 12.♖b1 ♘b3 13.♗e3 ♗d7 14.♗d3 ♖c8 15.♗c2 ♘a5 16.♔f1! ♘c4 17.♗c1 ♗b5 18.♔g2 (White's position looks very good and we could leave this game here, but we will continue due to the strength of the player conducting the white pieces) 18...♕c7 19.♗d3 ♗d7 20.b3 ♘a5 21.♗d2 ♕b6 22.♘h5 (White improves more and more...) 22...♗b5 23.♗b4 ♗xd3 24.♕xd3 ♘ac6 25.♗c5 ♕a6 26.♕e3 b6 27.♗d6 ♘g6 28.♗xf8 ♔xf8 29.♖hc1 ♕xa3 30.♖c3 ♕e7 31.♖bc1 ♕d7 32.b4 ♘ge7 33.♘f6! (punching time) 33...♕d8 (33...gxf6 34.♕h6+ ♔e8 35.exf6 ♘g6 36.b5±) 34.b5 ♘a5? 35.♖xc8 ♘xc8 36.♖xc8! followed by the lethal check on a3, Kasparov-Kayumov, Moscow 1976.

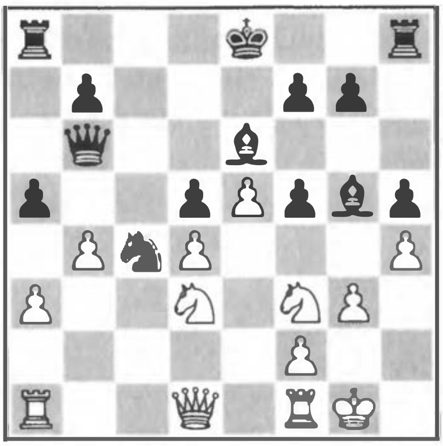
8.h4! cxd4 9.cxd4 ♘f5 10.a3 h5 11.g3

The space advantage, as in Kasparov's example, gives White a more than comfortable position.

11...♕b6 12.♗h3 ♘a5 13.b4 ♘c4 14.♗xf5 exf5 15.♘f4 ♗e6 16.0-0 ♗e7 17.♘d3! a5 18.♗g5

A thematic exchange of bishops to weaken the dark squares.

18...♗xg5



19.bxa5!

An important intermediate move in view of 19.♘xg5 ♕xd4.

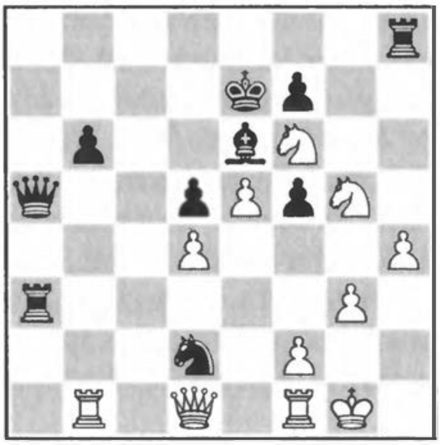
19...♖xa5 20.♖b1 ♕a7 21.♘xg5 b6

21...♕xd4? 22.♖xb7±.

22.♘f4 ♔d7?

Leaving the king exposed, which with Short's precise play is a decisive factor. Instead 22...♖h6 23.♘xh5 ♔f8 looks more tenacious.

23.♘xh5 ♖xa3 24.♘xg7 ♕a5 25.♘h5 ♘d2 26.♘f6+ ♔e7



27.♖c1! ♘c4

The only move as 27...♘xf1 28.♖c7+ ♔f8 29.♕c1! gives White an irresistible attack, for example 29...♘xg3 30.♘xe6+ fxe6 31.♖c8+ ♔f7 32.♕c7+ ♔g6 33.♖g8+ ♖xg8 34.♕h7 mate.

28.♘h3! b5 29.♘f4 b4 30.♖xc4!? dxc4 31.d5 ♕c5 32.dxe6 ♖xg3+ 33.♔h2 ♖d3 34.♘xd3 cxd3 35.f4! ♕c2+ 36.♕xc2 dxc2 37.♘d5+ ♔xe6 38.♘xb4 ♖xh4+ 39.♔g3 ♖g4+ 40.♔f3 f6 41.exf6 ♖h4 42.♘xc2 ♖h3+ 43.♔e2 1-0

☐ **Nigel Short**
■ **Boris Gulko**
Horgen 1995

1.e4 c6 2.♘e2 d5 3.e5 c5 4.d4 ♘c6 5.c3 ♗f5 6.dxc5!

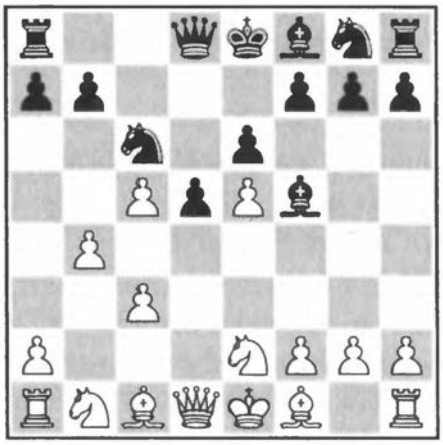
Another critical move in this variation. White is prepared to give up pawn e5, in exchange for rapid mobilization of his forces through ♘d4, attacking the black bishop. Note that 6.♘g3 ♗g6 7.h4 is no longer useful after 7...e6 8.h5 ♗xb1 9.♖xb1 cxd4 10.cxd4 ♕b6∓.

6...e6

After this game 6...e6 gained a bad reputation and Black preferred the immediate capture on e5.

6...♘xe5!? will be analysed in Felgaer-Annaberdiev below.

7.b4!



White keeps looking for an unbalanced and dynamic position.

7...a5

Taking the pawn on e5 allows White to gain a strong initiative, as I managed to show in a recent game:

7...♘xe5 8.♘d4 ♘e7 9.♗b5+! (9.♗f4 f6! 10.♗b5+ ♔f7 11.0-0± was also successful in Kabanov-Riazantsev, Tomsk 2006, but the immediate check looks stronger) 9...♘d7 (9...♘5c6 10.0-0 a6 11.♗a4±) 10.0-0 a6 11.♗a4! (it is easy to observe that Black has serious problems to complete his development) 11...♖c8 12.♖e1 h6 (12...♗xb1 does not relieve the position: 13.♖xb1 ♘c6 14.♘xe6 fxe6 15.♕xd5 ♗e7 16.♕xe6+–) 13.♘d2 (13.♘xf5 ♘xf5 14.♕xd5+– was simple) 13...♕c7 (13...♗g6 14.♖xe6! fxe6 15.♘xe6 capturing the queen!) 14.c4! ♗g6 15.♗b2 dxc4 16.♘xc4 ♘c6 17.♘xe6! fxe6 18.♖xe6+ ♔f7 19.♕f3+ ♔xe6 20.♖e1+ ♘de5 21.♘xe5 ♘xe5 22.♗xe5 ♕xe5 23.♗b3+, 1-0 Felgaer-Arbuello, Avellaneda 2007.

8.♘d4! axb4 9.cxb4 ♕c7

As Ftacnik analyses, other moves do not lead to happiness either:

– 9...♗xb1 10.♖xb1 ♕h4 (or 10...♘xe5 11.♗b5+ ♘d7 12.♕e2) 11.♗e3 ♖a3 12.♗d3! ♘xe5 (12...♘xd4 13.♗xd4 ♖xa2 14.♖a1!

♖xa1 15.♕xa1 ♗e7 16.♕a4+ ♔d8 17.♕a8+ ♔c7 18.b5!!+– ♕xd4 19.b6+ ♔c6 20.♕e8+ ♔xc5 21.♕b5 mate, a nice variation) 13.♗b5+ ♘d7 14.0-0 and the advantage in development gives a clear advantage to White

– 9...♘xb4? 10.♗b5+ ♔e7 11.♕b3 wins.

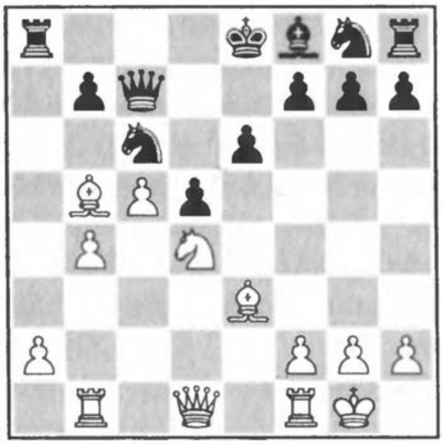
– 9...♘xe5 10.♗b5+ ♘d7 11.♘xf5 exf5 12.♕xd5 is also hopeless for Black.

10.♗b5 ♗xb1

Probably not the most fortunate exchange. However, I insist that White is anyway more than happy with his opening.

Better was 10...♕xe5+ 11.♗e3 ♘e7 12.0-0 ♕c7 13.♘c3 with a great advantage in development.

11.♖xb1 ♕xe5+ 12.♗e3 ♕c7 13.0-0



13...♗e7

Any move that does not develop is out of contact with reality. For example 13...♖xa2 14.♗a4! e5 (14...♗e7 15.b5!+–) 15.♘xc6 bxc6 16.♕b3 ♖xa4 17.♕xa4 ♕c8 18.b5+–. Or 13...♘e7 14.♗a4 with the idea of b5.

14.♗xc6+ bxc6 15.b5

With the idea of opening the position with Black's king in the middle. Black is helpless.

15...cxb5 Or 15...♗xc5 16.bxc6 ♗xd4 17.♕xd4 ♘f6 18.♖b7! ♕xc6 19.♕b4 ♘d7 20.♖c1 ♕a6 21.♖cc7 winning. **16.♘xb5 ♕c6 17.♘d4 ♕c8** 17...♕xc5 18.♘xe6+–. **18.♕b3 ♘f6 19.♕b5+ ♔f8** 19...♕d7 20.c6 ♕c7 21.♕b7+–. **20.♘c6 ♘e4 21.♘xe7 ♔xe7 22.♕b2 ♖d8** 22...f6 23.f3 ♘g5 24.♗xg5 ♕xc5+ 25.♔h1 fxg5 26.♕xg7++–. **23.♕xg7 ♖xa2 24.♖fc1 ♖g8 25.♕e5 f6 26.♕h5 ♖g7 27.c6 ♔d6 28.c7 ♖a8** Or 28...♖xc7 29.♖b6+ ♔d7 30.♕f7+ ♔d8 31.♕g8+ ♔d7 32.♕xe6+ winning. **29.♗f4+ e5 30.♗xe5+! fxe5 31.♕h6+ 1-0**

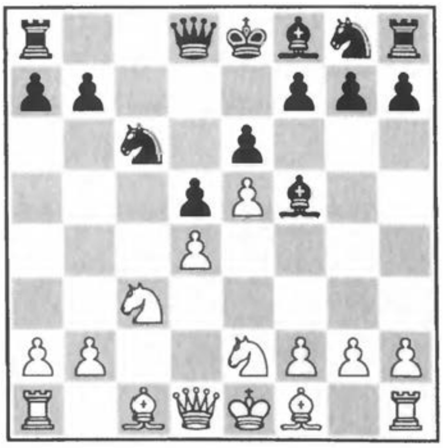
After this game many players looked at 2.♘e2 with different eyes.

☐ **Jesus de la Villa Garcia**
■ **Husein Nezad**
Andorra 2004

1.e4 c6 2.♘e2 d5 3.e5 c5 4.d4 ♘c6 5.c3 cxd4

Having seen the demolishing victory of Short against Gulko, it is logical to ask oneself why not to exchange pawns on d4 and avoid everything that happened in that game. However, this has the inconvenience of allowing the development of White's queen's knight to c3. For this reason White has the chance to obtain an advantage in more tranquil positions.

6.cxd4 ♗f5 7.♘bc3 e6



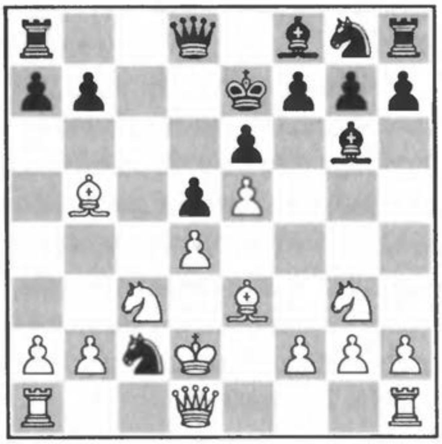
8.♗e3!?

This move was played only a few times and is my recommendation. Even though only the future can determine how good it is, I consider that there are good perspectives of achieving an advantage.

8.♘g3 is the conventional move with which high level games were played. For example: 8...♗g6 9.♗b5 (9.h4) 9...♘e7 10.♗g5 ♖c8 (10...h6 11.♗xe7 ♗xe7 12.0-0 ½-½ Movsesian-Sakaev, Istanbul Ech 2003) 11.0-0 h6 12.♗h4 a6 13.♗xc6+ ♖xc6 14.f4 ♕d7 15.♗xe7 ♗xe7 16.f5 exf5 17.♕f3 unclear, Van den Doel-Magem Badals, Mondariz 2000.

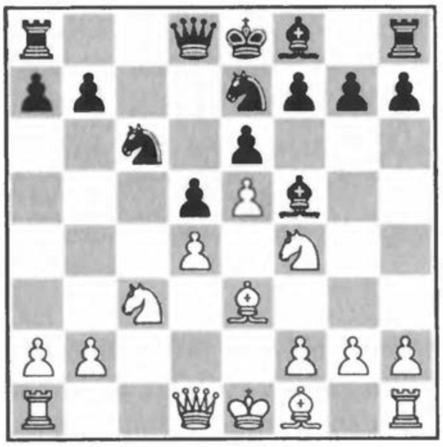
8...♘ge7

Instead 8...♘b4 leads to an amusing line: 9.♘g3! ♘c2+ 10.♔d2 ♗g6 (10...♘xa1?? 11.♕a4+ ♔e7 12.♕b4+ ♔d7 13.♕xb7+ ♔e8 14.♗b5++–) 11.♗b5+ ♔e7



12.f4!? (12.♖c1 ♘xe3 13.♔xe3 f6 unclear) 12...♘xa1 13.f5 ♗xf5 14.♘xf5+ exf5 15.♕f3 with a powerful attack.

9.♘f4!



Now the idea of 8.♗e3 is evident. White is still flexible where to place the knight; here it is clear that f4 is the most adequate square.

9...h6 10.♖c1 ♗h7

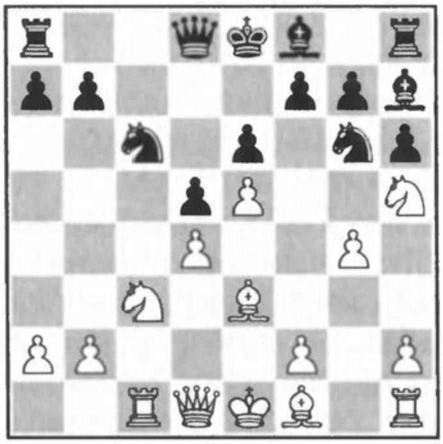
After 10...♘g6 11.g4! is very strong: 11...♗e4 12.♘xe4 dxe4 13.♘xg6 ♗b4+ 14.♔e2 fxg6 15.♗g2 with a clear advantage. Likewise, 10...a6, avoiding a future ♗b5, also has its problems: 11.♗e2 ♗h7 12.♗h5! ♕d7 13.♘a4, with a very good position for White.

11.g4

Avoiding ♘f5, but this move is a bit strange. 11.♗b5!?, with a slight edge, is the improvement I would suggest. White has an interesting opening position, where he could put pressure due to his space advantage:

11...a6 (11...♘f5 12.♗xc6+ bxc6 13.0-0± followed by ♘a4, exploiting the black weakness on c6) 12.♗a4 b5 (this only weakens Black's position) 13.♗b3 (an alternative is 13.♗c2) 13...♖c8 14.0-0 ♘f5 15.a4 b4 16.♘cxd5!? exd5 17.♗xd5 ♘ce7 18.♗c4 with strong compensation for the sacrificed material.

11...♘g6 12.♘h5



12...♘gxe5! 13.dxe5 d4 14.♗xd4 ♕xd4 15.♕xd4 ♘xd4 16.♗g2 0-0-0

With unclear play in a complex ending that in the end was won by White.

☐ **Ruben Felgaer**
■ **Meilis Annaberdiev**
Turin Olympiad 2006

1.e4 c6

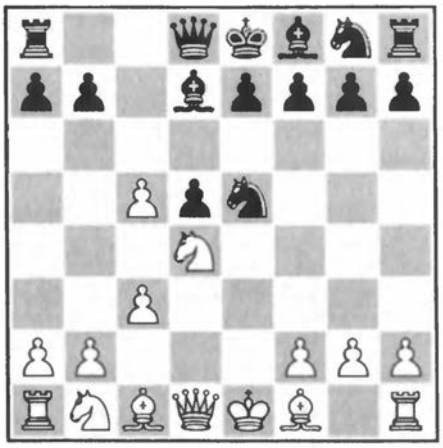
This game was played in the Turin Olympiad. While I was playing on first board of the Argentine team, in the neighbouring match England was playing Peru. When I saw Short away from his board I could not resist and told him that I was playing his variation. Regrettably the game did not finish with the desired result; maybe the fact that the father of this variation was watching my game was too much pressure for me!

2.♘e2 d5 3.e5 c5 4.d4 ♘c6 5.c3 ♗f5 6.dxc5 ♘xe5!?

The immediate capture on e5, as mentioned earlier, has a good reputation. This is because Black achieves active positions (several times at the cost of a pawn), which is the opposite situation of the one observed after 6...e6. However, I think that White, with precise play, can achieve interesting and, in several cases, advantageous positions.

7.♘d4 ♗d7

Controlling the check on b5, but at the same time interfering with the defence of the queen of the d5 pawn. This situation is exploited by White with his following move.



8.♕h5!

Ambitious and challenging the rule that we are taught as kids: do not expose the queen in the opening. However, I have seen this being played for free and here we could say that a pawn is a pawn!

8.♗e2 e6 9.b4 had been played with success by a very young Short. However, I think Black did not have any trouble in the opening after 9...♘f6 10.0-0 ♗e7 11.♗e3 0-0 12.♘d2 ♕c7 13.f4 ♘g6 14.♕e1 b6! 15.♘4b3 ♗a4 unclear, Short-Speelman, Chester ch-GBR 1979.

8...♘c6

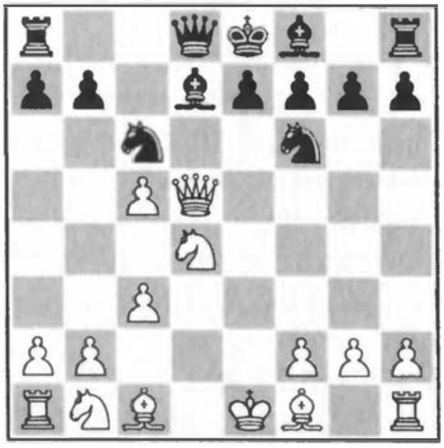
This natural retreat happened to be a novelty. However, I was prepared for this move. Alternatives are:

– 8...♘g6 9.♕xd5 ♕c8 (9...e5? 10.♗c4±; 9...♕c7?! 10.♗b5±) 10.♗b5 (10.b4!? ♘f6 11.♕b3 e5 12.♗c4!? (Vukovic) is an interesting sac, but it is unnecessary) 10...♗xb5 11.♘xb5 ♘f6 12.♕f3 a6 (12...♘e5? 13.♕e2 ♕xc5? 14.b4+–) 13.♘d4 e5?! (13...♘e5± intending ...♕c5) 14.♘f5± with an excellent position in the game Vukovic-Markovic, Jahorina tt 2001 (the comments are by Vukovic in *Informator* 82).

– 8...♕c7?! 9.♘b5 ♕b8 10.♗f4 ♘d3+ 11.♗xd3 ♕xf4 12.♘d2 ♘f6 13.♕e2 a6?? (13...e6 14.b4 ♗e7 15.♘f3±) 14.♘d6+ 1-0 Felgaer-Cuartas, Barcelona (rapid) 2006.

– 8...♕b8!? is an option to be investigated.

9.♕xd5 ♘f6



10.♕g5!

This looks strange, but it is important to control e5 and the queen from g5 (or g3) will hinder Black's development.

Indeed, 10.♕b3 e5 11.♘xc6 (11.♗c4 ♘a5!) 11...♗xc6 is preferable for Black.

10...e5

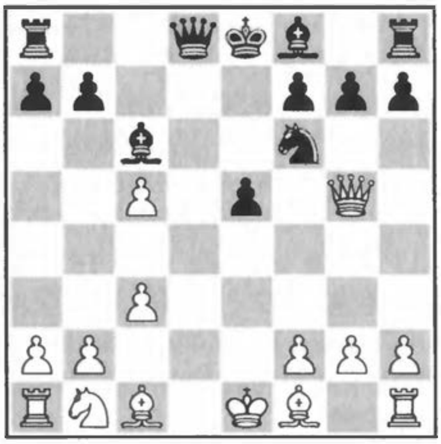
If 10...h6 11.♕g3 then none of Black's moves offer anything decent:

– 11...e6 12.♘b5 ♖c8 13.♘d6+ ♗xd6 14.cxd6±.

– 11...e5 12.♘xc6 ♗xc6 13.♕xe5+ ♗e7 14.♗c4 ♗xg2?! 15.♖g1 ♗d5 16.♘a3! ♔f8 17.♗e3±.

– 11...♘xd4 12.cxd4 ♗c6 13.♗e3 ♕a5+ 14.♘d2 ♘e4 (14...e6 15.♗e2 ♘e4 16.♕e5 b6? 17.♗f3) 15.♕e5 ♖d8 16.f3 ♘xd2 17.♗xd2 ♕a4 18.♗c3± Black does not have compensation for the pawn.

11.♘xc6 ♗xc6



12.♗c4?

An important mistake. I had analysed taking on e5 and inexplicably I moved the bishop first. The truth is that after the capture of the second pawn, Black has an advantage in development, but the time he needs to regain one of the pawns will be used by White to settle his forces and maintain the advantage of a pawn.

12.♕xe5+! ♗e7 13.♗c4:

– 13...♗xg2? 14.♖g1 ♗d5 15.♘a3! ♔f8 (15...0-0 16.♗h6) 16.♗e3 with a huge advantage.

– 13...0-0 14.0-0 ♘d7 (14...♖e8 15.♗e3 ♘d7 16.♕h5 g6 17.♗xf7+!+–) 15.♕g3 ♘xc5 16.♗h6 ♗f6 17.♘d2 b5 18.♗e2 ♖e8 19.♗e3±, there is no full compensation for the pawn.

12...♕c7 13.b4 ♗e7 14.0-0

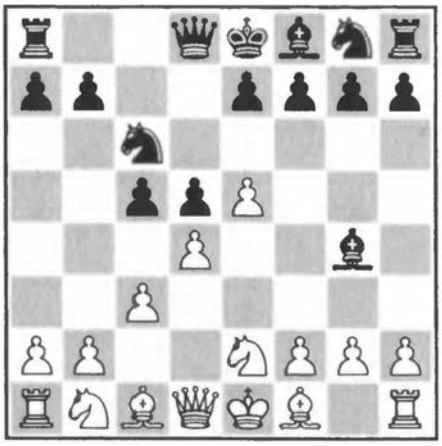
14.♕xg7 is very dangerous because of 14...0-0-0 15.♗xf7 ♕d7! 16.0-0? ♖hg8!.

14...0-0 15.♘d2 ♖ad8 16.♘b3 b6!

Destroying my pawn structure on the queenside, after which the position is complex. After several manoeuvres my opponent managed to get the full point. Nevertheless, I do not have any reason to blame 2.♘e2 for the result of this game. In case I had played 12.♕xe5 the opening would have been a success.

☐ **Nigel Short**
■ **Alexey Dreev**
Hyderabad FIDE World Cup final 2002

1.e4 c6 2.♘e2 d5 3.e5 c5 4.d4 ♘c6 5.c3 ♗g4!?



A provocative move. Knowing that the development of the bishop to f5 is not without problems, Black looks for new horizons on g4.

6.♗e3

There are plenty of alternatives.

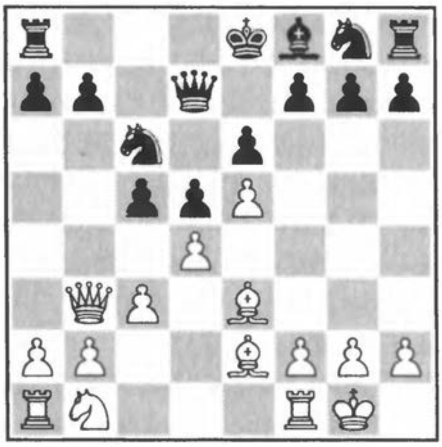
● 6.h3 ♗xe2 7.♗xe2 e6 (7...cxd4 8.cxd4 ♕b6 seems annoying for White, but the capture of the pawn is dangerous because of the lack of development: 9.♗e3 ♕xb2 10.♘d2 ♕b6 11.♖b1 ♕c7 12.♕b3 ♖b8 13.e6! – playing with great energy – 13...fxe6 14.0-0 ♘f6 15.♖fc1 ♘d7 16.♗g4 ♔f7 17.♖e1 ♘d8 18.♘f3± and the black position was not enviable in Kadar-Nestrovic, Harkany 1997) 8.0-0 cxd4 9.cxd4 ♘ge7 10.♘c3 ♘f5 11.♗e3 ♗e7 with an even game.

● 6.f3 and now:

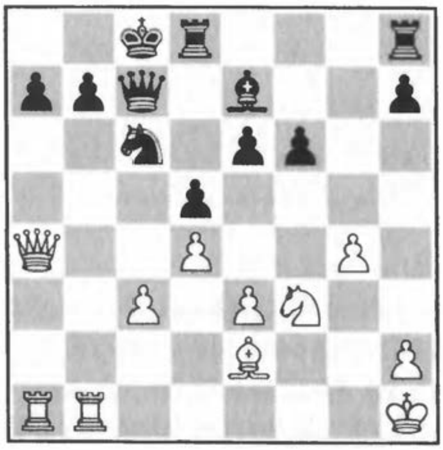
– 6...♗d7 7.e6?! (this looks too adventurous, but taking into account that White managed to defeat a former World Champion, we could show a few more moves. 7.♘f4 is unclear) 7...♗xe6 8.dxc5 ♘f6 9.b4 g6 10.♗f4 ♗g7 11.♘d4 0-0 12.♘xc6 bxc6 13.♗e5 ♗h6 14.♗d3 ♘d7 15.♗d4 f6 16.0-0 ♗f7 17.a4 e5 and Black was OK, although White won in Barendregt-Botvinnik, Amsterdam 1966.

– 6...♗f5!. This is Black's idea. Placing the bishop on f5 when the f-pawn has moved to f3 will create problems for White: 7.dxc5 e6 (7...♘xe5!? 8.♘d4 ♗d7 – note that White cannot play ♕h5 in this line – 9.f4 ♘c6 10.♗e3∞ ♘f6 11.♘d2 e6 and Black has a good position, similar to the one seen in Short-Speelman – 8.b4 a5 9.♘d4 axb4 10.cxb4?? (10.♗b5 ♕a5!∞) 10...♕h4+!–+, again shows the disadvantages of having the pawn on f3.

● 6.♕b3!? was my attempt to improve White's game: 6...♗xe2! (my opponent chooses the safest option. 6...♕b6 7.dxc5! ♕xb3 8.axb3 ♘xe5 9.♘d4 ♘c6 10.b4! e5 11.♘xc6 bxc6 12.♘d2 ♘f6 13.♘b3 followed by ♘a5 with excellent prospects for White) 7.♗xe2 ♕d7 8.♗e3 e6 (8...cxd4 9.cxd4 e6 10.♘c3±) 9.0-0 (9.dxc5 ♘xe5 10.♘d2 ♘f6 11.f4 ♘c6 12.0-0 ♗e7 could be investigated, but, in principle, Black does not have any problems):



9...♘ge7! (the fact that Black did not exchange pawns on d4 is critical to avoid the development of the knight via c3) 10.♘d2 ♘f5 11.♘f3 ♗e7 (it could be said that Black passed the test of the opening without inconvenience) 12.g4?! (objectively a risky and bad move. On the other hand, this is the type of thing one has to do to fight for the full point) 12...♘xe3 13.fxe3 c4? (returning the favour, Black would have a perfect position after 13...f6!) 14.♕c2 f6 15.exf6 gxf6 16.♔h1 0-0-0 17.b3 cxb3 (not 17...h5 18.gxh5 ♖xh5 19.♘e5! ♖xh2+ 20.♔xh2 ♖h8+ 21.♔g2 fxe5 22.♕g6! followed by ♗g4, winning) 18.axb3 ♕c7 19.b4! (sacrificing a pawn in exchange for a strong initiative) 19...♘xb4 20.♕a4 ♘c6 21.♖fb1.



Now the attack on the open a- and b-files is annoying. The game continued 21...♖d6 (21...h5 22.♗a6!) 22.♗b5 (22.c4!) 22...♖g8 23.g5! h6? 24.gxh6 ♖h8 25.♗xc6 ♖xc6 26.♕xa7 ♖xh6 27.♖g1! (playing on the whole board) 27...♖xc3?! 28.♕a8+ ♔d7 29.♖gb1! (the right rook! Not 29.♖ab1? ♖c2 30.♖xb7 ♖cxh2+ 31.♘xh2 ♖xh2 mate) 29...♔d6 30.♖xb7 ♖c1+ 31.♖xc1 ♕xc1+ 32.♘g1 +– ♖xh2+ 33.♔xh2 ♕c2+ 34.♔g3 ♕g6+ 35.♔f2 ♕f5+ 36.♔e1 1-0 Felgaer-Houska, Gibraltar 2007.

6...♕b6 7.♕d2 cxd4 8.cxd4 ♗xe2!

After 8...e6 9.♘g3 the bishop on g4 would be in an uncomfortable position.

9.♗xe2 e6 10.♘c3 ♘ge7

10...♗b4!? deserves to be tried by Black.

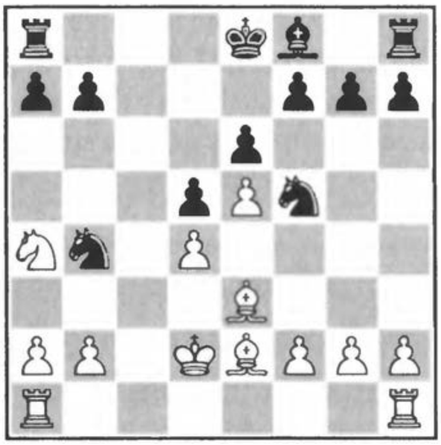
11.♘a4!?

Leading to an ending in which White has a space advantage and certain pressure. On the other hand, Black's position has no weaknesses. Hence, his position is solid.

11...♕b4 12.♕xb4 ♘xb4 13.♔d2

13.0-0 ♘f5 14.♗b5+ ♘c6 15.♖ac1± deserves attention (Lukacs).

13...♘f5



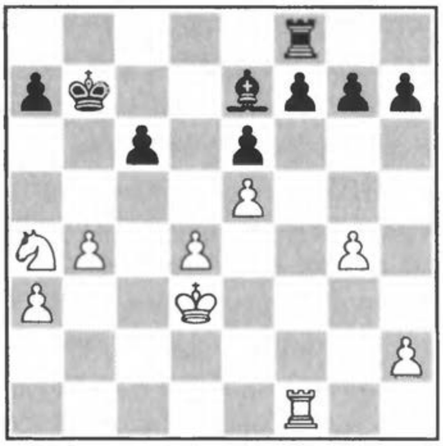
14.a3?

As pointed out by Lukacs, this move could be considered a waste of a tempo. More precise seems 14.♗b5+ ♘c6 15.♖ac1 ♗b4+ 16.♔e2 ♖c8 17.♗xc6+ bxc6 18.♖c2 ♔d7 19.♖hc1± with pressure on the squares c6 and c5 (Lukacs).

14...♘c6 15.♗b5 ♗e7 16.♖ac1 ♔d7

Now the game seems equal.

17.♔d3 ♖hc8 18.g4 ♘xe3 19.fxe3 ♖c7 20.♖hf1 ♖f8 21.e4 dxe4+ 22.♔xe4 ♔c8 23.♗xc6 ♖xc6 24.♖xc6+ bxc6 25.b4 ♔b7 26.♔d3



26...f6!

Getting rid of the weakness on f7, when the game leads to a draw.

27.exf6 ♖xf6 28.♖xf6 gxf6 29.♔c4 f5 30.gxf5 exf5 31.♘c3 ♔c7 32.d5 f4 33.dxc6 ♔xc6 34.♘e4 ♗h4 35.a4 ♗e1 36.♘g5 h5 37.♘f3 ♗f2 38.♘e5+ ♔d6 39.♘f3 ♔c6 40.h3 ♗e3

Draw.

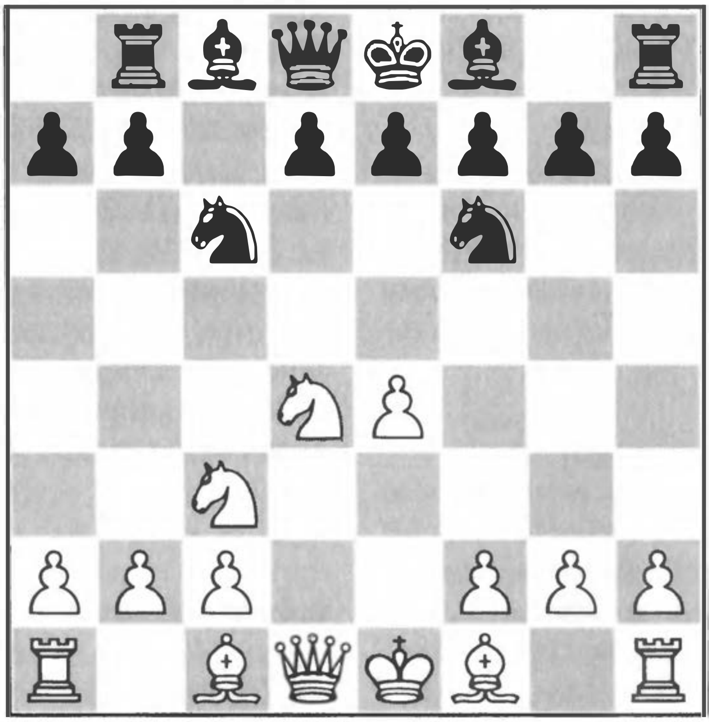
As we have seen, the variation with 5...♗g4 seems to be a solid option for Black. Nevertheless, the game shows that White has chances to achieve a certain advantage.

To conclude, I hope the reader finds in 2.♘e2 a new tool to fight against the Caro-Kann and to achieve interesting and amusing positions. Those who have applied the recipes of this series before will know that the surprise factor is very important. It is even better when the variation is more poisonous than it would seem at first sight.

CHAPTER 3

Dimitri Reinderman

The Meszaros Variation of the Sicilian



Is 5...♖b8 a useful move?

Recently I told a friend I was working on an article for SOS. I put up the position after 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 and explained to him that the subject started with a black move in this position. Guess which move?

He thought and tried 5...♕a5. Nope. 5...♕b6? Nope. 5...h6? Nope. After some more thought he gave up. When he heard the answer, he explained that he did see the move was legal and had considered it, but just couldn't see any sense in playing that move. And I understood that, for who would guess that 5...♖b8 is a good move?

The concept behind the rook move was devised by Hungarian IM András Mészáros. In 2006 Meszaros published a book called *Traps in the Opening*, which includes a chapter on the Meszaros Variation.

It all started in 1992 when Meszaros wondered if Black would have a good waiting move after 5.♘c3 in the Sicilian. He wanted to be able to react flexibly on whatever set-up White would play, and eventually decided that 5...♖b8 was the best waiting move.

Since 1992 he played a lot of games with it, scoring according to his rating, which is a decent result with black. As Meszaros is clearly the biggest supporter of 5...♖b8 naming it the Meszaros Variation is justified, although grandmaster Jacob Murey also

deserves to be mentioned, scoring three wins and two draws with the rook move.
OK, so these (and some other players) have scored well with 5...♖b8, but the move does not really develop the black position, right? Yes, that is true, and there are a few other disadvantages connected to the move:
– It doesn't prevent White from playing e5 (after taking on c6).
– ♗f4 can come with tempo.
– a7 is no longer protected by the rook.
– Castling queenside is no longer an option.
This final point is especially relevant in the ♗g5-variation, where in similar positions (after ♗xf6, gxf6) the king often goes to the queenside.

However, there are advantages too:
– After ♘xc6 bxc6 the rook becomes active on the semi-open b-file, eyeing b2.
– The black bishop can still go to b4 or c5 after a subsequent ...e6 or ...e5.
– Black might be able to play ...d5 in one go.
– If White is able to play ♘c7+, it doesn't win the rook.

An important psychological advantage – next to the surprise element – is that you can transpose to other Sicilian variations like the Sveshnikov, the Scheveningen, the Dragon, the Classical or the ...♕b6-variation. (Although you have always made the slight concession of having played an early ...♖b8.) You may be able to catch many an opponent on the wrong foot in this way.
Be aware this can work the other way round too: if you transpose to another Sicilian variation and get a good version of it, but are unfamiliar with that variation, you might not play it well. So it is very useful to have a broad knowledge of the Sicilian when playing 5...♖b8.

Enough theoretical talk about the move, let's look at the practice of 5...♖b8. Below you'll find three games of Meszaros and two of Murey, with respectively 6.♗e2, 6.♗g5, 6.♘xc6, 6.♗c4 and 6.♗e3. In the first game I also look at irregular replies on move six. Most of the analyses are mine, though of course I also borrowed some from Meszaros' article.

After finishing this article, I tried 5...♖b8 against strong IM Jan Sprenger in the Dutch team competition. After 6.♗e3 g6 7.♗c4 (he had used 23 minutes already by now) 7...♗g7 8.f3 0-0 9.♕d2 d6 10.0-0-0 ♗d7 we had transposed to the Chinese Dragon. However, normally he does not play ♗c4 against the Dragon, and he admitted afterwards that not being familiar with it was a disadvantage for him. I made an easy draw with black.

6.♗e2 and others

☐ **Zigurds Lanka**
■ **Andras Meszaros**
Passau 1996

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♖b8 6.♗e2

This is by far the most common reply to 5...♖b8. Meszaros thinks it's dubious, and it's true that Black has good chances to equalize after 6.♗e2. Less common are:
- 6.g3 is a solid move. Black can transpose to the Scheveningen or the Dragon, but 6...e5 7.♘de2 ♗c5 8.♗g2 a6 9.0-0 d6 is a playable alternative.
- 6.f3 is an attempt to reach the English Attack, but 6...e5 7.♘b3 ♗b4 is fine for Black.
- 6.f4 ♕b6 7.♘b3 (7.♘xc6 bxc6 8.e5 ♘d5 9.♘xd5 cxd5 10.♕xd5 e6 11.♕f3 ♗c5 and Black has good compensation) 7...d6 leads to a normal Sicilian position.
- 6.♗f4 d6 (also good is 6...e5!? 7.♘xc6

bxc6 8.♗xe5 ♖xb2 with equality) 7.♘xc6 bxc6 8.e5 and now Black should not play 8...♘d5?! 9.♘xd5 cxd5 10.♕xd5 e6 11.♗b5+ ♗d7 12.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 13.♕d2 d5 14.c3± as in Szurovsky-Meszaros, Miskolc 1996, but 8...♘g4 9.exd6 e5 with equal chances.

- 6.g4 can be taken: 6...♘xg4 7.♘xc6 dxc6 8.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 gives white some compensation for the pawn, but Black is at least equal.
- 6.a4, 6.a3, 6.h3, 6.♘b3 or maybe even 6.♖g1 are other possibilities for White, but they're unlikely to be critical for the evaluation of the Meszaros Variation.

6...e5

In the main lines of the Sveshnikov, Black almost always plays ...♖b8, while White normally puts his bishop on a more active square than e2. So it makes sense to transpose to the Sveshnikov now. Of course you can transpose to variations like the Scheveningen or the Dragon too, having avoided the Keres or Yugoslav Attack. And if you don't want any transposition at all, you can try 6...d5, since the normal reply to it (7.♗b5) is not so effective anymore. White is only a little better after 6...d5 7.exd5 ♘xd5 8.♘db5 ♘xc3 9.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 10.♘xc3 ♗f5 11.♗f4 e5 12.0-0-0+ ♔e8 13.♗e3 or 7.♗f4 e5 8.exd5 exf4 9.dxc6.

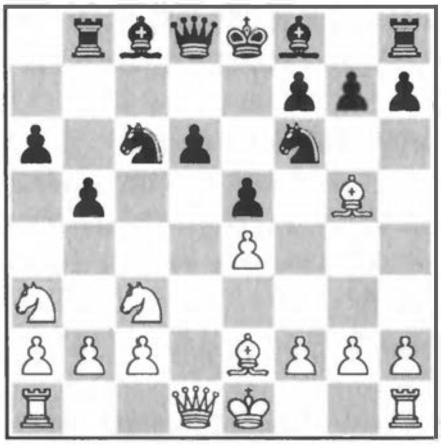
7.♘db5

All other moves are OK for Black: 7.♘b3 ♗b4, 7.♘f3 ♗b4 and 7.♘f5 d5.

7...d6 8.♗g5

If White plays 8.♘d5 ♘xd5 9.exd5 ♘e7, we get a variation where ♗e2 is more useful than ...♖b8. However, that is a general observation. More concretely, 10.c3 a6 11.♕a4, which is known to be very strong with the rook on a8, now just loses a piece. So White should play 10.c4 a6 11.♘c3 and now Black can choose between 11...♘f5 and 11...♘g6. In the 'normal' variation (without ♖b8 and ♗e2 included) theory thinks the latter equalises and the former is better for White. However, that is if White moves his bishop to d3! So the position is interesting and probably only a little better for White.

8...a6 9.♘a3 b5



10.♗xf6

The alternative is 10.♘d5, after which Black can try two moves:

– 10...♗e7 11.♗xf6 ♗xf6 12.c3 0-0 13.♘c2 transposes to a regular Sveshnikov where White has played the modest ♗e2. In his *The Sveshnikov Reloaded* Rogozenko writes that this gives Black 'relatively easy equality', but 'often general understanding prevails over precise theoretical knowledge'.

– 10...♕a5+ 11.♗d2 ♕d8 (11...♕a4!? is interesting) 12.♘xf6+ (12.♗g5 repeats moves; 12.c4 ♘xe4 13.cxb5 ♗e6 14.♗c4 axb5 15.♘xb5 ♖xb5 16.♗xb5 ♗xd5 looks good for Black) 12...♕xf6 13.c3 (13.0-0 ♘d4 14.♗d3 ♕g6 15.♔h1 ♗e7 16.c3 ♘e6 is about equal) 13...♗e6 14.0-0 ♗e7 15.♘c2 0-0 16.♘e3 with a tiny advantage for White.

10...♕xf6

This is possible now and perhaps advisable if you're not familiar with the type of position after 10...gxf6 11.♘d5 f5 12.exf5 ♗xf5 13.c3 ♗g7 14.♘c2 0-0 15.0-0 ♗e6 – Sveshnikov players would love to get this position with black though.

11.♘d5 ♕g6

Here 11...♕d8 followed by ...g6, ...♗g7, ...0-0 and ...f5 is a decent alternative.

12.♗f3

White actually doesn't need to defend e4: after 12.0-0 ♕xe4 13.c4 (13.♗f3 ♕d4) 13...♘d4 14.♗d3 ♕g4 15.cxb5 ♕xd1 16.♖fxd1 axb5 17.♘xb5 ♗b7 18.♘dc7+ ♔d8 19.♘xd4 ♔xc7 20.♘b5+ he has the initiative.

12...♘d4 13.0-0

Here 13.♘c7+ ♔d8 14.♘d5 ♗e6 15.♘e3 followed by c3 might give some advantage, although my computer prefers Black here.

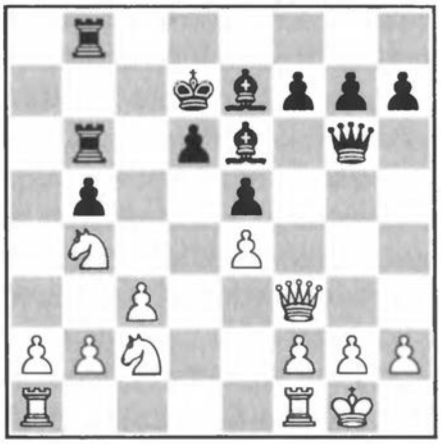
13...♗e6?

Black should have played 13...♗b7.

14.♘c7+

Now White collects a pawn, for which Black doesn't have enough compensation.

14...♔d7 15.♘xa6 ♖b6 16.♘b4 ♗e7 17.c3 ♘xf3+ 18.♕xf3 ♖hb8 19.♘ac2



19...d5?

Black tries to complicate the game, but objectively this is wrong. Though it's hard to sit and wait, I think the best chance would be to play for an endgame where the bishops give some drawing chances.

20.exd5 ♗g4 21.♕g3 ♕h5 22.♘c6 ♗d6 23.♘xb8+ ♗xb8 24.d6 ♖xd6 25.f3 ♗f5 26.♕xe5 ♔c8 27.♘e3 ♖e6 28.♕c5+ ♔b7 29.♕xb5+ ♔c8 30.f4?

Correct was 30.♕c5+ ♔b7 31.♕d5+ ♔c8 32.♘xf5 ♕xh2+ 33.♔f2 ♗a7+ 34.♘d4 and wins.

30...♗a7

Winning back a piece. However, Black will still be behind in material and position.

31.♖ae1 ♖xe3 32.♔h1 ♖e6 33.♖xe6 fxe6 34.♕c6+ ♔b8 35.♕d6+ ♔b7 36.♕d7+ ♔a8 37.♖d1

Now Black loses heavy material or is mated.

37...♕h4

He prefers a quick end.

38.♕c8+ ♗b8 39.♕c6+ 1-0

6.♗g5

☐ **Bela Molnar**
■ **Jacob Murey**
Pula 2002

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♘c3 ♘c6 4.d4 cxd4 5.♘xd4 ♖b8 6.♗g5

6.♗g5 is a popular move against 5...d6, so it's a logical choice against 5...♖b8 too. Now Black can transpose to the Classical (Richter-Rauzer) Attack with 6...d6, but in that variation ♖b8 is almost never played: the rook is normally either at a8 or c8. Transposing to the Sveshnikov or the Dragon is also unwise.

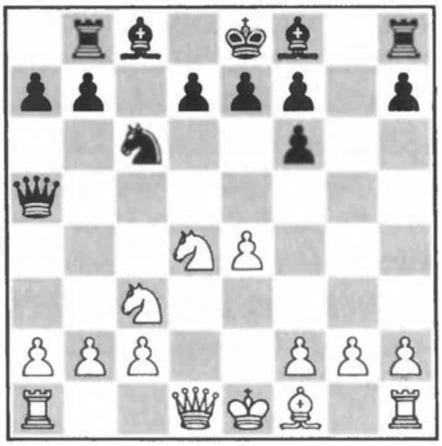
Possible and not bad is 6...e6!?, since 7.♘xc6 bxc6 8.e5 ♕a5 is good for Black. White should play 7.♗e2 or 7.♕d2, with some advantage.

6...♕a5

6...♕b6 will give a similar structure after 7.♘b3 e6 8.♗xf6 gxf6.

7.♗xf6 gxf6

We should compare this position with the one after 5...d6 6.♗g5 ♕a5 7.♗xf6 gxf6. In that position White often plays 8.♘b3 ♕g5 9.♘d5, but with the rook on b8 Black doesn't have to be afraid of ♘c7+ anymore. Another common move in that position, 8.♗b5, will now only hit thin air. So although ...d6 is in general more useful in this position, the move 5...♖b8 does have some specific advantages. If you want to play this variation, an important thing to know is that Black often offers to trade queens (and White tends to avoid that). Without queens the position of the black king in the centre is not a problem anymore. Another issue in this position is: will the dark-squared bishop become active, or passive?



8.♘f5

Other moves:

- 8.♘b3 ♕g5 9.g3 (9.♘d5 e6 10.♘c7+ ♔d8 11.♘b5 ♕e5∓) 9...d6 10.♗g2 f5 followed by ...♗g7.
- 8.♕d2 ♘xd4 9.♕xd4 ♗h6 10.g3 (10.♗e2 ♗f4 11.0-0 ♗e5=) 10...b6 followed by ♕c5 should not worry Black.
- 8.♗e2 is the most sensible move. For example: 8...♖g8 9.0-0 d6 10.♘d5 ♗h3 11.♗f3 ♘e5 12.♘e3 ♗h6 13.♘df5 ♗xe3 14.♘xe3 ♕d2! 15.♔h1 ♕xd1 16.♗xd1 ♗d7 17.f4 ♘c6 18.♘d5 ♖c8 19.c3 which is known to be good for White from the game Ebeling-Krogius, Jyväskylä 1993. (Via a regular Rauzer move order).

In our move order – so with the rook on b8 – 18...f5 looks like an equalizer. I feel that White should be able to get some advantage after 6...♕a5, but it's not easy to prove.

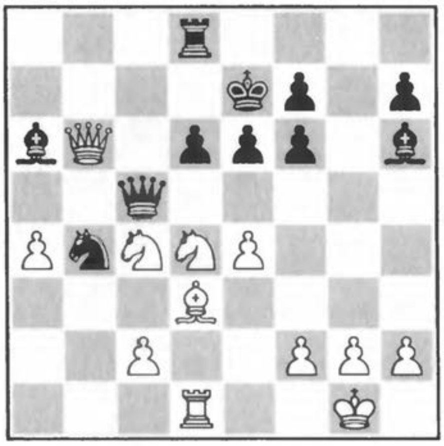
8...d6 9.♗d3 b5

After 9...e6 10.♘e3 ♗h6 11.♘c4 the pawn on d6 will drop.

10.0-0 b4 11.♘e2 e6 12.♘e3 ♗h6 13.♘c4 ♕c5

Now compared to the previous comment White doesn't have ♘a4, so pawn d6 is safely defended. Chances are about equal here.

14.a3 a5 15.axb4 ♖xb4 16.b3 a4 17.♖xa4 ♖xa4 18.bxa4 ♔e7 19.♕b1 ♗a6 20.♕b6 ♘b4 21.♖d1 ♖d8 22.♘d4



22...♔e8?

A mistake, or at least a very risky attempt to win.

22...♗xc4 23.♕xb4 ♕xb4 24.♘c6+ ♔d7 25.♘xb4 ♗xd3 26.cxd3 ♖a8 is equal, since defending the a-pawn with 27.♖a1 gives Black a good position after 27...♖c8 28.♔f1 ♗d2 29.♘a2 ♖c2.

23.♘b5 ♕xb6 24.♘xb6 ♔e7 25.♖b1 ♘xd3 26.cxd3 d5 27.exd5 exd5 28.g3 ♗d2 29.♖b2? After 29.♘c7 Black would have big problems. **29...♗a5 30.♘d4?!** 30.♘c7 still keeps some advantage. **30...♔d6 31.♘f5+??** A blunder. Instead 31.♖c2 ♗xd3 32.♖c6+ ♔e5 33.♘f3+ ♔f5 34.♘h4+ ♔e5 35.♘f3+ draws. **31...♔c7** **0-1**

6.♘xc6

☐ **Martin Guillet**
■ **Jacob Murey**
Avoine 2003

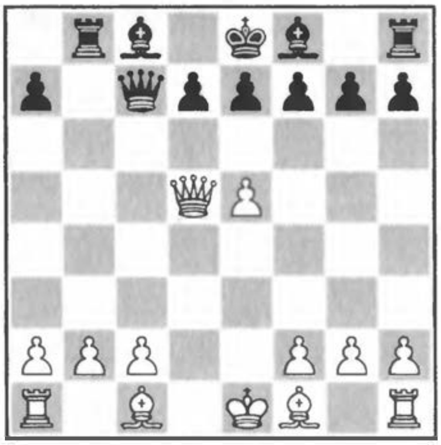
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♖b8 6.♘xc6

6.♘xc6 is the best move after 5...g6, and after random moves like 5...a6 or 5...h6. It also more or less forces Black to sacrifice a pawn. However, it does turn 5...♖b8 into a very useful move.

6...bxc6 7.e5 ♘d5

After 7...♘g8 White is just better.

8.♘xd5 cxd5 9.♕xd5 ♕c7



For the pawn Black has two semi-open files, a nice long diagonal and a slight advantage in development. Is it enough? Perhaps not quite, but the practical chances are good.

10.♕d4

With this move White prepares developing his bishops (10.♗e3 ♖xb2 or 10.♗d3 ♗b7 11.♕d4 ♗xg2 are good for Black). After 10.c3 e6 or 10.♕e4?! ♗b7 White has to go to d4 anyway.

10...e6

Instead 10...♕xc2 11.♗d3 is good for White. While 10...♗b7 11.♗e3 e6 12.0-0-0 ♗e7 13.♗b5 (after 13.♕xa7 it's dubious whether Black has enough for two pawns) 13...♗d5 14.a4 a6 15.♗xa6 ♖b4 16.♕c3 ♕xc3 17.bxc3 ♖xa4 18.♗b5 ♖g4 was OK for Black in Szilagyi-Okhotnik, Szombathely 2003.

11.♗e3

An interesting variation given by Meszaros is 11.c3 ♗c5 12.♕f4 0-0 13.♕g3 (13.♗d3 f6) 13...d6 14.b4 (14.♗h6 f5) 14...♖xb4! 15.cxb4 ♗d4 16.exd6 ♕c2 and Black will win back the rook, and probably the pawn too sooner or later.

Another plausible move is 11.♗d3, when 11...♗c5 12.♕f4 d6 (12...♗b4+ forces White to give up castling, but after 13.♔e2 it's only a temporarily inconvenience: 13...0-0 14.♖d1 and White is ready to bring his king into safety) 13.exd6 ♗xd6 14.♕c4 ♕a5+ 15.c3 0-0 gives Black decent compensation for the pawn.

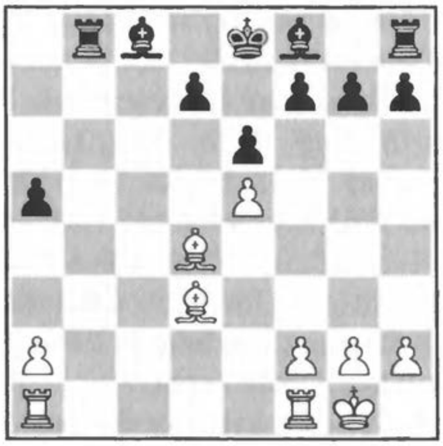
11...♕xc2

A good alternative is 11...♕a5+ 12.♗d2 ♗b4, when only the ugly 13.♗c3 saves the pawn for White.

12.♗d3

12.♗b5!? ♖xb5 (12...♕c7) 13.♖c1 ♗b4+ 14.♔f1 ♕xc1+ 15.♗xc1 ♗a6 16.♔g1 ♖d5 17.♕g4 h5 18.♕f3 ♖xe5 gives a position in which the stronger player will have good winning chances.

12...♕xb2 13.0-0 ♕xd4 14.♗xd4 a5



Now White is the one who has good compensation for a pawn. He doesn't play very accurately though and will gradually lose the compensation.

15.♖fc1 ♗e7 16.♗a7 ♖a8 17.♗e4 ♗b7 18.♗xb7 ♖xa7 19.♖c8+ ♗d8 20.♖b8 f6 21.♖c1?

There is no good reason to give the second pawn. I give the remainder of the game without comments.

21...fxe5 22.♖cc8 ♔e7 23.♔f1 a4 24.♗e4 d5 25.♗c2 e4 26.♖a8 ♖xa8 27.♖xa8 ♖f8 28.♔e2 ♖f5 29.♖b8 a3 30.♖b3 ♗c7 31.♖xa3 ♗xh2 32.♖h3 ♗g1 33.f3 h6 34.♖g3 g5 35.a4 ♗b6 36.♗b1 exf3+ 37.♖xf3 ♖xf3 38.♔xf3 h5 39.♗g6 h4 40.♔g4 ♔f6 41.♗c2 ♗d8 42.♗b1 ♔e5 43.a5 ♗xa5 44.♔xg5 ♗e1 45.♔g4 ♔d4 46.♔f3 e5 47.♔e2 ♗g3 48.♗g6 e4 49.♗f7 ♔e5 50.♗g8 d4 51.♗c4 ♔f4 52.♗a6 d3+ 53.♔d2 ♗f2 54.♗b7 ♔e5 55.♗c6 ♔d4 56.♔d1 ♗g3 0-1

6.♗c4

☐ **Sofia Polgar**
■ **Andras Meszaros**
Budapest 1992

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♖b8 6.♗c4

According to Meszaros this is the best move, giving White the 'usual advantage'.

6...♕b6

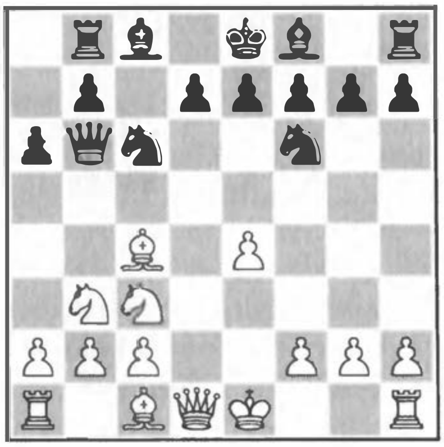
At first sight 6...e6 looks good, since the bishop on c4 is not standing very well in Taimanov-like variations. However, after 7.0-0 White is threatening 8.♘xc6 bxc6 9.e5 ♘d5 10.♘e4 and neither 7...♕c7 8.♘db5 (the queen misses the usual return square on b8), nor 7...♗b4 8.♘db5 d6 9.a3 is attractive. By forcing the knight on d4 away, Black doesn't have to worry about ♘xc6 anymore.

7.♘b3

Here 7.♘xc6 bxc6 8.e5 ♘d5 9.♗xd5 cxd5 10.♘xd5 ♕c6 11.♘e3 ♗a6 gives Black enough compensation for the pawn.

7...a6

This is a position where Black would rather have played 5...d6 than 5...♖b8. This is especially apparent after 7...e6 8.♗f4. So Black has to be careful not to get a bad position, but he's not without hope, uninspired play by White can turn the tides. It seems that 7...a6 is necessary, since after 7...♕c7 8.0-0 e6 9.♘b5 ♕e5 10.♖e1 Black's position is difficult.



8.0-0 e6

Meszaros recommends 8...♕c7 here, to prevent ♗f4. If White plays ♗d3, ♗e3, f4, ♕f3, ♖ae1 etc, Black ...e6, ...d6, ...♗e7, ...0-0etc. White has chances for an attack, Black has the long-term prospects.

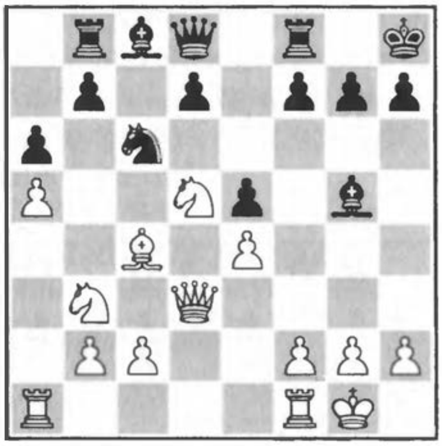
However, 9.♘d5 ♘xd5 10.exd5 seems to give White an advantage, e.g. 10...♘b4 (10...♘e5 11.♗e2 d6 12.f4 and Black lacks in space and development) 11.♘d2 e6 12.♖e1 b5 13.♗b3 ♗b7?! 14.♘e4! ♘xd5? 15.♗xd5 ♗xd5 16.♕xd5! exd5 17.♘f6+ ♔d8 18.♖e8 mate.

Perhaps Black should try 8...♘e5 9.♗e2 d6 10.♗e3 ♕c7. White is of course better, but Black has counterchances with ...♘c4, ...♘g4 or perhaps ...g5 one time.

9.♗f4 e5 10.♗g5 ♗e7 11.a4?!

Not the best move, after 11.♘d5 ♕d8 (11...♘xd5 12.♕xd5 0-0 13.♗xe7 ♘xe7 14.♕xe5) 12.♘xe7 ♕xe7 13.♕f3 0-0 14.♖fd1 d6 15.♗xf6 gxf6 16.c3 the position is clearly better for White.

11...0-0 12.♗xf6 ♗xf6 13.♘d5 ♕d8 14.a5 ♗g5 15.♕d3 ♔h8



16.g3?!

White should either play something like 16.♖fd1 or 16.♕c3!? d6 17.♗xa6 bxa6 18.♕xc6 ♗b7 19.♕c4 ♕c8 20.♕d3 f5 21.f3 when Black does have compensation though.

16...d6 17.f4 exf4 18.gxf4 ♗h6 19.♔h1 ♗e6

Pawn f4 is a target now: Black can play ...♕h4, ...f5 etc. White doesn't want to play f5 herself because of ♘e5, but has troubles finding another plan as her next moves show.

20.♘b6 ♕h4 21.♘d5 ♗h3 22.♖f3 ♗g4 23.♖ff1

Here 23.♖g3 f5 24.♘d4 is better.

23...f5 24.♘d2 ♖be8 25.♘c7 fxe4 26.♘xe4? ♗xf4!

Now Black is winning.

27.♘g3 ♘e5 28.♕b3 ♖c8 29.♘e6 ♗xg3 30.♖xf8+ ♖xf8 31.♕xg3 ♕xg3 32.hxg3 ♖f2 33.♗d5 ♗xe6 0-1

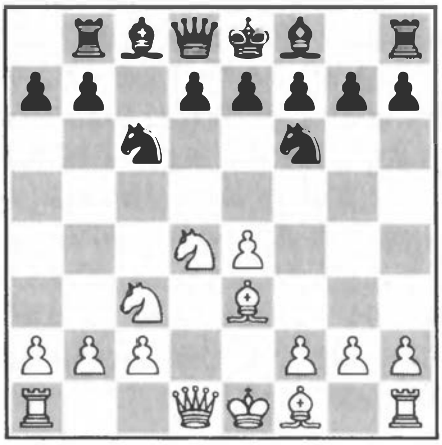
A nice victory of Meszaros against one of the famous Polgar sisters.

6.♗e3

☐ **Istvan Borocz**
■ **Andras Meszaros**
Szekszard 1995

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♖b8 6.♗e3

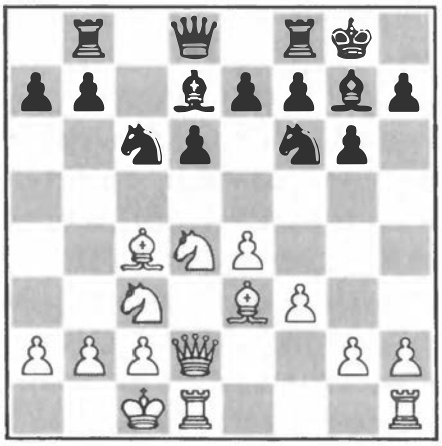
A flexible move, useful both in set-ups with f3 and with f4. It leaves b2 unprotected, but attacks a7 indirectly.



6...a6

Shouldn't Black start thinking about real development moves? Well, 6...d6 is possible, yet no-one plays 5...d6 6.♗e3 ♖b8 and for a good reason. 6...e6 has the problem that 7.♘db5! gives White a clear advantage: after 7...d6 White can just take on a7.

However, 6...g6 is a good option. After 7.♗c4 ♗g7 8.f3 0-0 9.♕d2 d6 10.0-0-0 ♗d7

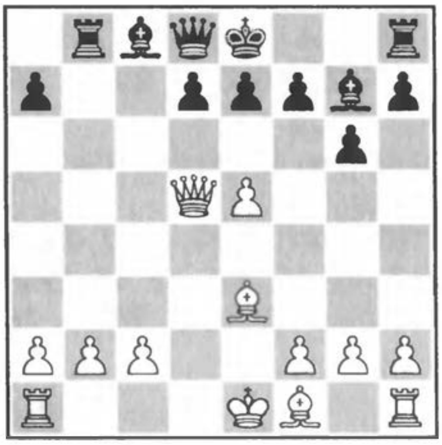


we have transposed to the 'Chinese Dragon', which has been played by among others: Tiviakov, Bu Xiangzhi and Ward.

This is what I played against Sprenger too (as I mentioned above). The game was drawn after: 11.♗b3 ♘a5 12.♗h6 b5 13.♗xg7 ♔xg7 14.h4 e5 15.♘de2 b4 16.♘d5 ♘xb3+ 17.cxb3 ♘xd5 18.♕xd5 ♖b6 19.♔b1 h5 20.♕a5 ♕c7 21.♕d5 ♗e6.

If White doesn't play 7.♗c4 Black might be able to play d7-d5, e.g. 7.f3 ♗g7 8.♕d2 0-0 9.0-0-0 d5 10.♔b1 would transpose to a well-known position, only that normally it is White to move!

Another well-known position (from the Accelerated Dragon) arises, via transposition, after 7.♘xc6 bxc6 8.e5 ♘d5 9.♘xd5 cxd5 10.♕xd5 ♗g7.



Donaldson and Silman (in their book *Accelerated Dragons*, 1993) think that Black is OK in all cases:

- 11.0-0-0 ♗b7 12.♕d4 0-0 13.f4 d6.
- 11.♗c4 0-0 12.0-0 ♕c7 13.♗f4 ♗b7 14.♕d4 d6!.
- 11.♗xa7 ♖xb2 12.♗d4 ♖xc2 13.♗d3 e6 14.♕a8 ♖c6 15.♗b5 ♖a6!? 16.♗xa6 ♕a5+ 17.♔f1 0-0 18.♕a7 ♗xa6+ 19.♔g1 ♗xe5 20.h4 ♕d5! 21.♗xe5 ♗b7 22.♖h2 ♕xe5 23.♖d1 ♗c6, a long but interesting variation.

7.♗e2

7.♗c4 e6 8.0-0 ♕c7 seems like a decent Taimanov for Black.

Stronger is 7.♘xc6 which is a good move here: 7...bxc6 8.e5 ♘d5 9.♘xd5 cxd5 10.♕xd5 (10...♖xb2? 11.e6! fxe6 – 11...dxe6 12.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 13.0-0-0++– – 12.♕h5+ g6 13.♕e5 winning) 10...e6 11.♕d4 ♕a5+ 12.♗d2 ♗b4 13.♖d1 (13.c3 ♗c5 14.♕g4 ♖xb2 15.♕xg7 ♖f8 is good for Black, but 13.♗c3 ♗xc3+ 14.♕xc3 ♕xc3+ 15.bxc3 is also a bit better for White) 13...♗xd2+ 14.♖xd2 ♕xa2 15.b3 ♕b1+ 16.♔e2 0-0 17.g3 ♕a2 18.♗g2 ♕a5 19.♖a1 ♕b5+ 20.♖d3 gives White an advantage because of the better pawn structure.

7...e5

Again playing it the Sveshnikov way is the best reaction to ♗e2.

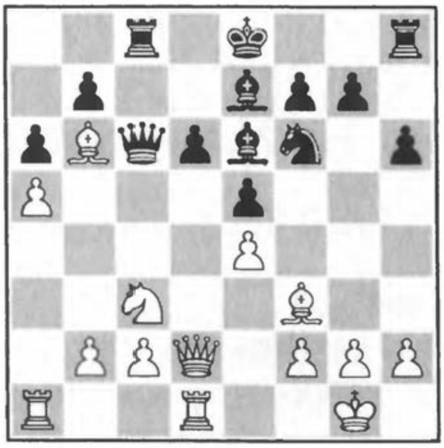
8.♘b3 d6

Stronger is 8...♗b4! 9.♗f3 ♗xc3+ 10.bxc3 d6, with an equal position.

9.a4 ♗e6 10.0-0 ♗e7

We now have a Boleslavsky Variation where ...♖b8 would normally not be your first choice. True, it does make standard moves like ♘d5 less attractive. Besides, White might not be familiar with this type of position.

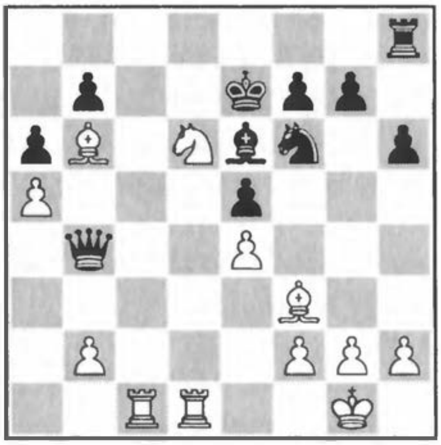
11.♗f3 ♘a5 12.♘xa5 ♕xa5 13.♕d2 h6 14.♖fd1 ♕c7 15.a5 ♖c8 16.♗b6 ♕c6



17.♘d5?!

With this move White plans an interesting but dubious queen sacrifice. He probably did it because he didn't see a good way to defend c2 in preparation of ♘d5. However, it was possible to keep a small edge with h3, ♕e1 and ♖d2.

17...♕xc2 18.♘xe7 ♕xd2 19.♘xc8 ♕b4 20.♘xd6+ ♔e7 21.♖ac1



Rook, bishop and active pieces gives White enough compensation to draw, but Black is the only one with realistic winning chances.

21...♘d7 22.♗c7 ♔f6 23.♘f5 ♔g6

Instead 23...♕xb2 24.♖b1 ♕c2 25.♖dc1 ♕a2 26.♖xb7 ♗xf5 27.exf5 ♔xf5 28.h3 ♘f6 29.g4+ ♔g6 30.♗xe5 ♖e8 31.♗xf6 ♔xf6 32.♖c5 is almost equal.

24.♗g4 ♔h7

Again, taking on b2 doesn't seem to win: 24...♕xb2 25.♘e7+ ♔g5 26.♖b1 ♕a2 27.♖a1 ♕b3 28.♖ab1 ♕a4 29.♗xe6 fxe6 30.♖a1 ♕b5 31.♖ab1 ♕a4 32.♖a1

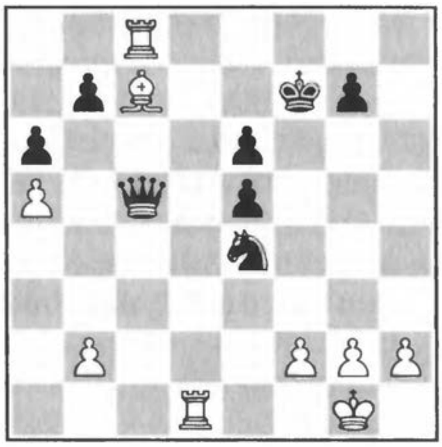
25.♘xh6 ♘f6 26.♗xe6 fxe6 27.♘f7 ♖c8 28.♖c3?

After 28.♘d6 ♖f8 29.f3 Black's advantage is small.

28...♘xe4

28...♕xb2 is perhaps even better, winning a pawn for nothing.

29.♖h3+ ♔g8 30.♖h8+ ♔xf7 31.♖xc8 ♕c5



32.♖cd8?

Better is 32.h3 ♕xf2+ 33.♔h2, which threatens 34.♖d7+.

32...♕xf2+ 33.♔h1 ♕xb2 34.♖8d7+ ♔g6 35.♗b6 ♘c3 36.♖f1? ♕b5 37.♖df7 ♘d5 38.♖7f3 ♘xb6 39.axb6 ♕xb6

Three pawns up means that Black is easily winning now.

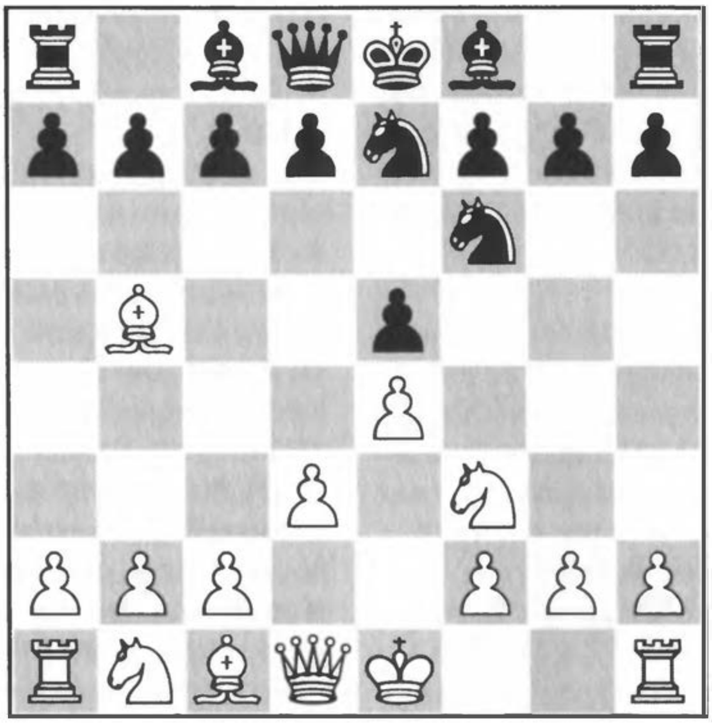
40.h4 ♕d4 41.♖g3+ ♔h7 42.♖f7 e4 43.♖xb7 e3 44.♖b1 e2 45.♔h2 ♕e5 46.♖e1 ♔h6 47.♔h3 ♕f5+ 48.♔h2 ♕f1 0-1

In conclusion, White is better after 5...♖b8, but not so much, so it's a good move to let your opponent think for himself. Often transpositions to other Sicilians will occur, and the big question then is: which player is better prepared for this particular transformation? If you like to outwit your opponent in such a way, or if you just like Sicilians – without repeating grandmaster games for twenty moves – give the Meszaros Variation a try!

CHAPTER 4

Jeroen Bosch

SOS versus Anti-Berlin



Doesn't 4...♘e7 blunder a pawn?

☐ **Thomas Ernst**
■ **Tom Wedberg**
Umea ch-SWE 2003

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘f6 4.d3

'Not aiming for an opening advantage' is Kasparov's dry remark in Volume I of his *My Great Predecessors* series (when commenting on the fourth match game for the World Championship between Steinitz and Chigorin, Havana 1892). Indeed, 'only 4.0-0 gives chances of an advantage' he adds to the first match game for the World Championship between Marshall and Lasker (USA 1907), when Marshal went for 4.d4.

However, we all remember that it was partly on account of Kramnik's successful handling of the Berlin Variation (4.0-0 ♘xe4 5.d4 ♘d6 6.♗xc6 dxc6 7.dxe5 ♘f5 8.♕xd8+ ♔xd8) that Garry Kasparov lost his world title in 2000. And however principled 4.0-0 may be, Kasparov later revealed that his friends were begging him during the match to stop banging his head against the Berlin Wall with 4.0-0 and just play a (non-critical) move like 4.d3 or 4.♕e2.

These days both 4.d3 and 4.♕e2 are fairly popular. Objectively 4.0-0 may be stronger, but not all white players enjoy proving their endgame skills after a mere eight moves. With 4.d3 you may lose the theoretical battle but at least you obtain your regular type of

Ruy Lopez position (with the queens on). Black has reasonable satisfactory answers to 4.d3 in the form of 4...d6 and 4...♗c5. However, wouldn't it be nice to put a spoke in White's wheel? To this end 4...♗d6 (a typical SOS move that we have come across numerous times in the course of this column) is unsuitable. White will be happy to play 5.♘bd2, preparing ♘c4. Please note, though, that 4...♗d6 is playable versus 4.♕e2 – a subject I may return to in a future column.

Against 4.d3 I propose the queer 4...♘e7 instead.

4...♘e7!?

Now why should you want to voluntarily remove your knight from its so-called natural square to obstruct your own development? Doesn't this waste valuable time in the opening (playing twice with the same piece and obviously a third time is in the making)?

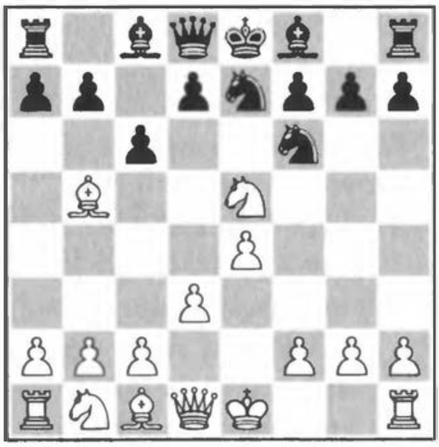
A few things may be said in favour of 4...♘e7: First of all, Black is reacting to a very concrete threat (5.♗xc6 and 6.♘xe5).

Secondly, Black starts the normal regrouping manoeuvre ...♘c6-e7-g6 at an unusually early stage, but in economical manner.

A third argument in favour of the knight move is that ...c6 (later followed by ...d5) is prepared.

So far so good. However, doesn't Black blunder a pawn with 4...♘e7?

No he doesn't! After 5.♘xe5?? Black has 5...c6.



Now 6.♗c4 loses a piece after 6...♕a5+. So there is nothing better for White than the murky 6.♘xf7 ♔xf7 7.♗c4+ d5 8.♗b3. This actually occurred in practice, but two pawns are insufficient compensation here. Note that the intermediate 6.♘c4 – threatening mate – is simply met by 6...d6, when Black still wins.

By now I hope I have convinced you that 4...♘e7 at least deserves some attention.

5.0-0

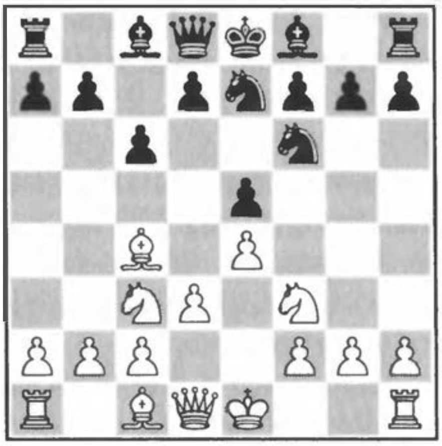
The most natural continuation, but other, sharper, approaches deserve attention:

- 5.d4 ♘xe4 6.dxe5 a6 (perhaps just 6...c6 7.♗d3 ♘c5, or 7.♗c4 d5) 7.♗d3 ♘c5 8.♗e3 d6 (8...♘d5!?) 9.♗c4 d5 (better is 9...♗e6 10.♗xe6 ♘xe6 11.exd6 ♘f5!, as Black has decent compensation after 12.dxc7 ♕xc7 13.0-0 ♘xe3 14.fxe3 ♗c5) 10.♗xc5 dxc4 11.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 12.♘c3 ♗e6. White is a little better in this Berlin Wall type of position, Bezold-Lehner, Austria tt 2006/07.
- 5.♗c4. White redirects his bishop to the a2-g8 diagonal in the light of the upcoming ...c6. Obviously, pawn e5 is now under threat again.

It would be desirable to play 5...♘g6 if White had nothing better than 6.♘g5 d5 7.exd5 h6 8.♘e4 ♘xd5 as in Lee-Gunsberg, London 1887. However, as Bent Larsen demonstrated in an article in Kaissiber 20 (2005) White has 6.h4! which leaves Black more or less defenceless: 7.h5 is a strong threat and after 6...h5 7.♘g5 the knight can no longer be evicted from its attacking position.

Thus, play usually continues: 5...c6 6.♘c3 (instead, 6.0-0 ♘g6 7.♘c3 ♗e7 8.d4 d6 9.a4 ♗g4 10.♗e2 0-0 11.♗e3 ♕c7 was about equal in Cuartas-Baron Rodriguez, Sabadell 2007)

Note that this critical position may also be reached via the move order 5.♘c3 c6 6.♗c4. However, after 5.♘c3 Black may prefer 5...♘g6 (see below).

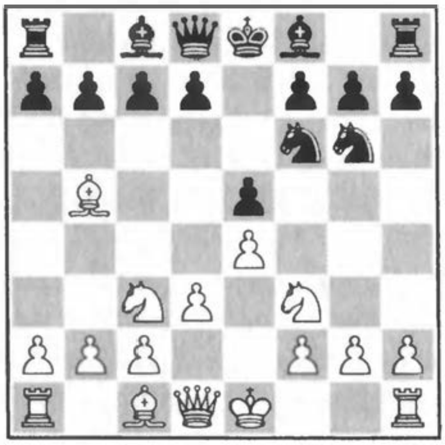


6...♕a5 (typical provocative play by Miles. However, he may have wanted to avoid 6...♘g6 7.d4 as in Gabrielian-Gorbatow, Moscow 2006, below) 7.0-0 h6 (7...d5 8.♘xe5! dxc4 9.♘xc4 ♕c7 10.e5 and so on is indicated by Gary Lane in his *The Ruy Lopez Explained*, Batsford 2005) 8.d4 d6. White clearly has obtained a favourable version of the Hanham Variation of Philidor's Defence. Miles had sufficiently provoked his opponent by this time however to make him surrender a few pieces after: 9.d5?! b5! 10.♗b3 c5 11.a4 b4 12.♘b5 ♘g6 (not 12...♘xe4? 13.♘d2 ♘xd2 14.♘xd6+ ♔d7 15.♘xf7 which wins for White). Now in view of his trapped knight on b5 and the closed nature of the position White has nothing better but to continue down the chosen path with 13.♘xe5 ♘xe5 14.f4 a6! 15.fxe5 dxe5 16.d6 axb5 17.d7+ ♗xd7 18.♗xf7+ ♔d8 19.♗e3 bxa4, and Black won in Vysochin-Miles, Cappelle la Grande 1997.

Instead of 6...♕a5 practice has also seen 6...♘g6, and now:

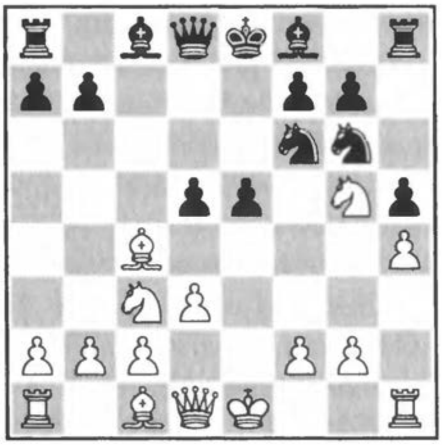
- 7.♘g5 d5 8.exd5 h6 (to avoid 8...cxd5 9.♘xd5! ♘xd5 10.♕f3) 9.♘ge4 (9.♘xf7 ♔xf7 10.dxc6+ ♔e8 is an interesting piece sac) 9...♘xd5 10.♕f3 ♗e6 11.♗e3 ♗e7 12.0-0-0 ♕d7 13.h3 f5 and Black was OK in Ostojic-Kurajica, Cateske Toplice ch-YUG 1968.
- 7.d4! ♗b4?! (7...exd4 8.♕xd4 is an edge for White, while 7...d6? 8.dxe5 wins material) 8.dxe5 ♘xe4 9.♕d4! ♕a5 10.♕xe4! ♗xc3+ 11.bxc3 ♕xc3+ 12.♔e2 ♕xa1 13.♖d1 ♕c3 14.♗d2 ♕b2 15.♗b3 0-0 16.♕b4! (taking away square c3 from Black's queen and gaining time because of the direct threat of 17.♗xf7+) 16...d5 17.♗c1 a5 18.♕d2 ♕xc1 19.♕xc1 a4 20.♗xd5 cxd5, and Black resigned in Gabrielian-Gorbatow, Moscow 2006.

● 5.♘c3 (sensibly transposing into a Spanish Four Knights of sorts) 5...♘g6. Now in Mason-Gunsberg, Breslau 1889, White opted for 6.♗c4, when after 6...♗c5 7.♗e3 d6 8.♕e2 ♗b6 9.0-0-0 ♗xe3+ 10.fxe3 c6 11.d4 ♕e7 play was tense but still equal. Modern practice has witnessed two dangerous attempts:



- 6.d4 ♗b4?! (6...c6?! 7.dxe5 ♘g4 8.♗e2±; strongest may well be the SOS move 6...♗d6, with interesting play) 7.0-0 ♗xc3 8.bxc3 ♘xe4 (Black is playing with fire) 9.♕e1! ♘d6 10.dxe5! ♘xb5 11.♗g5 ♘e7 12.a4 h6 13.♗h4 0-0? 14.axb5 ♕e8 15.♘d4 ♘g6 16.♗g3 ♕e7 17.f4 ♖e8 18.b6! ♕c5 (18...cxb6 19.♘f5 ♕c5+ 20.♗f2 and 21.♗d4, with a great attack) 19.bxc7 d6 20.♕f2 dxe5 21.fxe5, with a positional edge in Navara-Luch, Czech Republic 2006.
- 6.h4!? c6 (if 6...h5 then both Alapin's 7.♗c4 ♗b4!? 8.♘g5 ♖f8 and 7.d4 must be

examined) 7.♗c4 h5 8.♘g5 (direct play, Efimenko must have already planned the coming piece sacrifice here. The alternative is 8.d4) 8...d5 9.exd5 cxd5?



Now Black appears to be fine. However, with the spectacular 10.♘xd5! Efimenko tears Black's position apart: 10...♘xd5 11.♕f3 ♗e6 (11...♘gf4 12.♗xf4 ♘xf4 13.♘xf7 or 13.♗xf7+) 12.♘xe6 fxe6 13.♗b5+ ♔e7 14.♗g5+ ♘f6 15.♕xb7+ ♔d6 16.c4 ♖c8 17.♗d2, with a well-nigh winning edge. Efimenko-Cherniaev, Coventry 2005.

Remarkably, the entire line including the piece sacrifice has been known for well over a century. In an editorial note to Larsen's above-mentioned article in Kaissiber Stefan Bücker cites the correspondence game Blake-Fraser from 1889 where White played the immediate 16.♗d2.

On move 9 Black's only chance is 9...b5!? 10.♗b3 cxd5. Now 11.♘xd5?♘xd5 12.♕f3 ♗e6 fails to convince: without a check on the a4-e8 diagonal White does not have enough for the piece.

And 11.♘xb5 gives Black sufficient play for the pawn with 11...♗c5 or even simply 11...♗e7 and 12...0-0.

In case of 11.d4 Black must avoid 11...e4? 12.♕e2 followed by 13.f3. Better is 11...♗b4!? 12.dxe5 ♘xe5 13.0-0 (13.♕d4 ♘c6 14.♕e3+; 13.♗f4) 13...♗xc3 14.bxc3 0-0, which is fairly unclear after either 15.♖e1 or 15.♗f4.

5...♘g6

Mission accomplished! The knight has been re-directed from c6 to g6. To make something of his position White should play d3-d4 at some point. The b5-bishop is hitting thin air at the moment.

The immediate 5...c6 6.♗a4 (or 6.♗c4 d5) 6...♘g6 7.♖e1 d6 8.♘bd2 ♗e7 9.c3 0-0 10.d4 led to a perfectly normal position in Yudasin-Bisguier, Kerhonkson 2002.

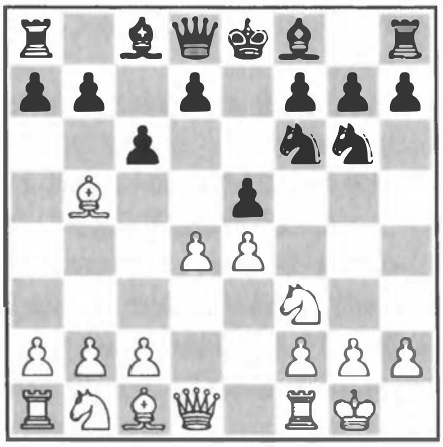
6.d4

Here 6.♘c3 c6 7.♗a4 (7.♗c4 ♗e7) 7...♗e7 8.♗b3 0-0 9.d4 d6 10.dxe5 dxe5 11.h3 ♕c7 gave equal play in the recent Stokes-James, Great Yarmouth ch-GBR 2007.

Slower but in character with the Ruy Lopez is 6.c3 (this quiet approach is also possible on move 5) 6...c6 7.♗a4 ♗e7 8.♖e1 0-0 9.♘bd2 d6. R.Mainka-Welling, Saarlouis 2000.

6...c6

This is more accurate than 6...♗e7 7.♖e1 (7.dxe5 ♘xe4 8.♖e1 ♘c5) 7...exd4 (7...c6 8.dxe5!) 8.e5 ♘d5 9.♕xd4 c6 10.♗c4 ♘b6 11.♗b3 0-0 12.♘c3 d5 13.exd6 ♕xd6 14.♕xd6 ♗xd6 15.♗e3 ♗g4, for now 16.♘g5! was still a tiny but annoying little something in Grischuk-Kharlov, Internet 2004.

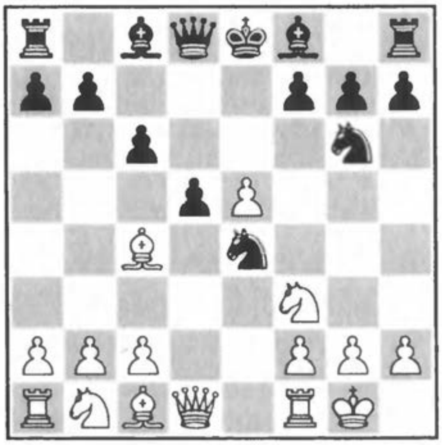


7.♗c4

7.♗a4 is also met by 7...♘xe4 8.♘xe5 (8.dxe5 ♘c5) 8...♘xe5 9.♕e2 d5. Black is already very comfortable. After 10.dxe5 ♘c5 11.♗b3 ♘xb3 12.axb3 ♗c5 13.♗e3 ♗b6! 14.♗xb6 ♕xb6 15.♔h1 0-0 16.♖a4? f6 his chances were preferable in Zakharov-Bykhovsky, Moscow 1961.

The immediate 7.dxe5 does not significantly alter things after 7...♘xe4 (7...cxb5? 8.exf6 is much better for White of course). For example: 8.♕e2 (preventing ...d5 for the moment; 8.♗c4 transposes to our main game) 8...♘c5 9.♗c4 ♗e7 10.♘c3 0-0 11.♗e3 b5!? 12.♗b3 ♘xb3 13.axb3 ♕c7 (White has trouble defending his e-pawn now) 14.♗d4 ♗b7 15.♖fd1 b4 16.♘a4 c5 17.♗e3 ♗xf3 18.♕xf3 ♘xe5 19.♕g3 d6, and Black was a sound pawn up in Cherniaev-Sepp, Moscow 2005.

7...♘xe4 8.dxe5 d5



This advance may also be postponed. Kiril Georgiev preferred 8...♗e7 9.♖e1 and now 9...d5. After 10.exd6 ♘xd6 11.♗b3 0-0 we have reached a similar position as below. Black has equal chances. 12.♘c3 ♗f6 (12...♖e8) 13.♗e3 ♗xc3 (this attempt to unbalance the game is a bit risky. However, Elo-favourite Georgiev obviously felt compelled to do something in this symmetrical position) 14.bxc3 ♗g4 15.♗c5! ♗xf3 16.♕xf3 b6! 17.♕xc6 bxc5 18.♖ad1 ♖c8 19.♕xd6 ♕a5 20.♕d5 ♕xc3, and after a long fight Atakisi-Georgiev, Gothenburg Ech-tt 2005, ended in a draw.

9.exd6

By capturing en passant White effectively resigns himself to an equal position. However, not steering the game into a symmetrical pawn structure is dangerous only for White.

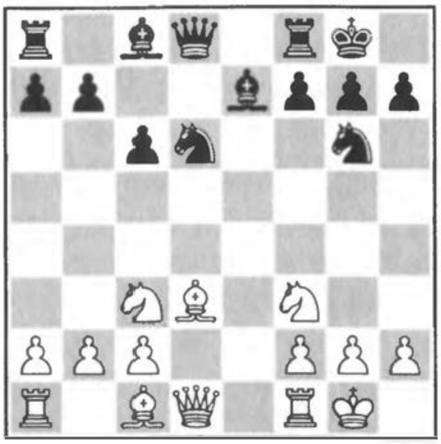
9...♘xd6

Clearly not 9...♗xd6? 10.♕d4! (note that after 10.♖e1 Black has 10...0-0 in view of 11.♖xe4?? ♗xh2+) 10...♘f6 11.♖e1+ ♘e7 12.♗g5, with a large edge.

10.♗d3

The other bishop move also fails to annoy Black: 10.♗b3 ♗e7 11.♘c3 0-0 12.h3 ♗f6 13.♘e2 ♘e4! 14.c3 ♕c7 15.♗e3 ♖e8 16.♖e1 c5 17.♗d5 ♗f5, with an easy game for Black, Ginzburg-Saric, Saint Vincent tt 2005.

10...♗e7 11.♘c3 0-0



12.♘e4

This leads to further exchanges, but 12.h3 ♗f5 also gives Black a fully equal game.

12...♗g4 13.h3 ♗xf3 14.♕xf3 ♘e5

Getting rid of another pair of minor pieces.

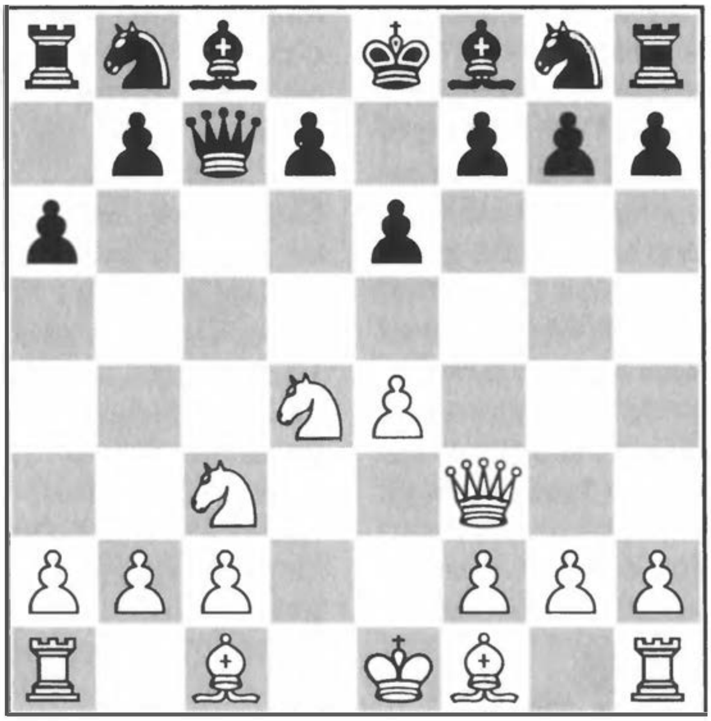
15.♕g3 ♘xd3 16.♕xd3 ♘xe4 17.♕xe4 ♗f6 18.c3 ♖e8

And the peace was signed.

CHAPTER 5

Alexander Finkel

SOS versus the Paulsen



The early queen move 6.♕f3!?

Some time ago I was working with one of my students on building an opening repertoire with the white pieces against the Sicilian. After learning the lines against the Najdorf and the Rauzer we finally reached the Paulsen/Kan Variation, which was the last line on our Sicilian list. We had no trouble finding something satisfactory against 5...b5 and 5...♘c6, but then we saw some games with 5...♛c7 and realized that we might have a problem.

The thing is that if White is not interested in playing 6.♗e2 and 6.g3 he doesn't really have too many options, as 6.♗e3 – which is perfectly fine in case of 5...♘c6 – is met here with 6...♗b4 followed by ...♘f6 and ...d5 (basically that's the main idea behind 5..♛c7 – to avoid ♗e3 followed by 0-0-0 lines). So I started looking for some alternatives to meet this move order.

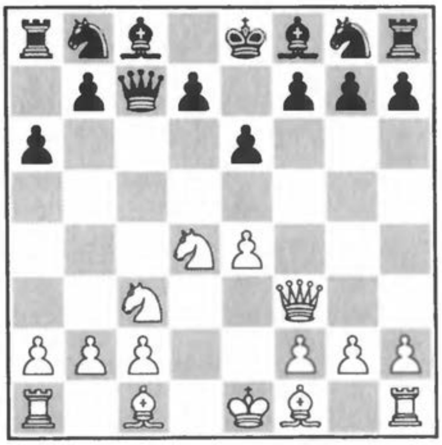
Just at the same time the Super Final of the Russian championship was taking place. Once in a while I was checking out the games, looking for some interesting opening ideas. That's how I ran into the game Nepomniachtchi-Rublevsky, which was played in that event. The way in which the talented Russian youngster crushed one of the world's leading experts in the Paulsen Variation looked extremely appealing to me, so we immediately decided to add this funny looking move to our opening repertoire!

It is funny that Black's early queen move is answered by another early queen move. With 6.♕f3 White immediately puts pressure on Black's position, trying to take advantage of a certain delay in development of Black's pieces, and dragging Black into unfamiliar territory.

To illustrate the ideas behind 6.♕f3 I selected two main games: Nepomniachtchi's win over Rublevsky and a much earlier win by Igor Zaitsev. Of course 6.♕f3 is not an elementary win against the Paulsen, but one thing is for sure – this move poses Black quite a few problems!

☐ **Ian Nepomniachtchi**
■ **Sergey Rublevsky**
Moscow ch-RUS 2006

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 a6 5.♘c3 ♕c7 6.♕f3!?

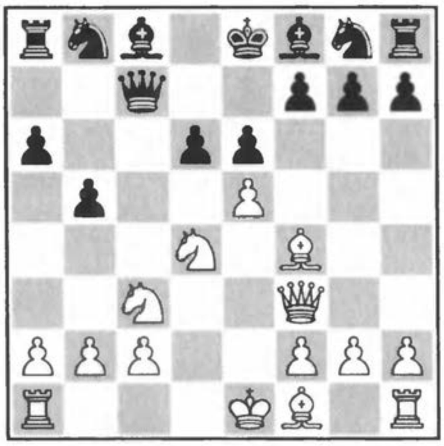


6...♘f6

This move appears to be Black's most natural choice, however there are reasonable alternatives.

Firstly, after 6...♘c6, White should not play 7.♘b3, as occurred in the first game played in this line about 50(!) years ago: 7.♘b3?! ♘f6 8.♗f4 d6 9.♗e2 ♗e7 10.♕g3 0-0 11.♖d1 ♖d8 12.0-0 b5 with equal chances, Kortchnoi-Taimanov, Riga ch-URS 1958. It makes more sense to play 7.♘xc6!?. When practice saw: 7...♕xc6 (both 7...dxc6 and 7...bxc6 are possible too) 8.♗d3 b5 9.0-0 ♗b7 10.♕g3 d6 11.♖e1! ♘f6? 12.a4 b4 13.♘d5 with an obvious edge in Kecic-Kodela, Ljubljana 1998.

Secondly, it seems that 6...b5 doesn't work out too well with White's queen on f3, but it is playable: 6...b5 7.♗f4 d6 8.e5!



Now 8...dxe5 9.♘dxb5 axb5 10.♗xb5+ ♘d7 11.♕xa8 exf4 12.0-0-0 ♘f6 13.♘e4 ♔e7 14.♘d6 ♘b6 15.♖he1 wins for White. So Black should play 8...d5, when after 9.0-0-0 ♘e7 the sacrifice 10.♘dxb5!? axb5 11.♘xb5 ♕a5 12.♘d6+ ♔d7 gives unclear play.

7.♗g5!?

For 7.♗d3 see the next game I.Zaitsev-Pyhälä, Jyväskylä 1994.

7...♕e5

Here 7...♗b4 8.0-0-0 would probably have transposed, as Black hardly has anything better than 8...♗xc3 9.bxc3 ♕e5, when White may opt for the game continuation with 10.♗e3.

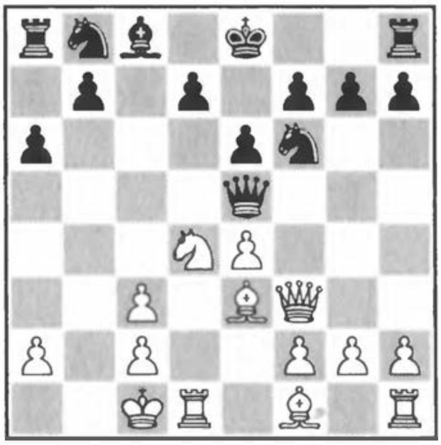
It's important to mention that after 7.♗g5 Black has 7...♗e7 at his disposal, but most Paulsen players wouldn't want to switch to the Nadorf kind of position arising in that case, so it's a rather unlikely scenario.

7...♗e7 8.0-0-0 d6 9.♕g3 ♘bd7 10.f4 b5 11.♗xf6 ♘xf6 12.e5 dxe5 13.fxe5 ♘d7 14.♗xb5 axb5 15.♘dxb5 ♕c5 16.♕xg7 ♖f8 17.♘d6+ ♗xd6 18.exd6 unclear, Shabalov-Aldama, Las Vegas 2006.

8.♗e3 ♗b4

Black appears to have grasped the initiative. However, the Russian youngster has an interesting pawn sac in mind.

9.0-0-0! ♗xc3 10.bxc3



10...0-0

Apart from castling Black has:

– the blunder 10...♘xe4? which loses to 11.♗f4 ♕d5 12.c4.

– It seems that Black could accept the pawn sacrifice by 10...♕xe4!, but White obtains compensation after 11.♕g3 ♕g6 (11...0-0 12.♗d3 ♕g4 13.♗g5! ♕xg3 14.hxg3 with a clear edge in the ending) 12.♕d6 ♘d5 13.♗d3 ♕f6 14.♖he1 (or 14.♗d2) 14...♘c6 15.♘xc6 ♘xe3 16.♘b4! a5 (16...♕xf2!? 17.♖e2 ♘f5; 16...♘xd1 17.♘d5 ♘xf2 18.♘xf6+ gxf6 19.♗f5±) 17.♗b5 ♕e7 18.♖xe3 axb4 19.cxb4 ♖xa2 20.♔b1 ♖a8 21.c4, although things are very unclear in that case.

– 10...d5 11.exd5 ♘xd5 12.♗d2 0-0 13.♗d3 ♘c6 14.♕g3 ♕h5 15.♘xc6 bxc6 16.c4±, Fier-Zuluaga, Cali 2007.

11.♗d3 d6

The immediate 11...b5 appears to be a bit risky, as after 12.♗f4 ♕c5 13.♘b3 ♕c6 (13...♕xc3? loses after 14.♗d6 ♖e8 15.e5 ♘d5 16.♗xh7+ ♔xh7 17.♕xf7 ♖d8 18.♖d3) 14.♗e5 ♘e8 15.♗d4 d6 16.♘a5 ♕c7 17.e5 White has a dangerous initiative on the kingside.

More solid is 11...d5 12.♗f4 dxe4 13.♗xe5 exf3 14.♘xf3 ♘bd7 15.♗d6 ♖e8, with an unclear position.

12.♘b3

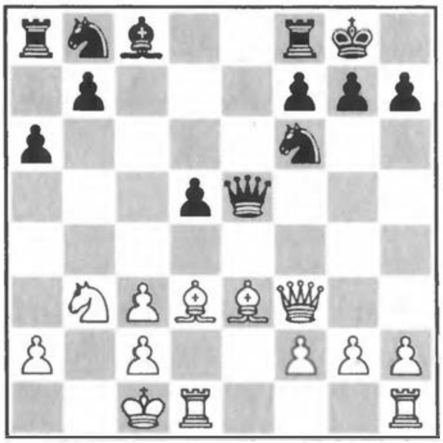
In case of 12.♗f4 ♕c5 13.♘b3 ♕c6 Black is threatening e6-e5 and ♗g4, while 14.♗g5 is answered by 14...♘bd7∓.

12...d5

12...♘c6 deserved attention: 13.♗f4 ♕xc3 14.♗xd6 ♖d8 15.♗e2 ♕xf3 16.♗xf3, but White keeps the slightly better chances in the arising endgame.

13.exd5 exd5?!

This looks dubious but White also has some edge after 13...♘xd5!? 14.♗d4 ♕g5+ 15.♔b2 ♘c6 16.h4±.



14.h3

Dealing with the threat of 14...♗g4.

In case of 14.♗f4 ♕e7 15.♖he1 Black would have played 15...♗e6, and now 16.♗g5 is parried by 16...♘bd7 with decent counterchances.

Note that winning the exchange with 15...♕a3+ 16.♔b1 ♗g4?!, gets Black into trouble after 17.♕g3 ♗xd1? 18.♗d6 ♕a4

(18...♘h5 19.♗xh7+! ♔h8 20.♗xa3 ♘xg3 21.♗d3!+–) 19.♗xf8 ♗g4 (19...♔xf8? 20.♕d6++–) 20.f3 ♘c6 21.♗xg7 ♔xg7 22.♗f5, with a significant advantage for White.

14...♘c6 15.♗f4 ♕e7

Not 15...♕xc3? 16.♗xh7+.

16.♗g5!

The most logical continuation. In case of 16.♖he1 ♗e6 17.♗g5 ♕a3+ 18.♔b1 ♘e4 19.♗xe4 dxe4 20.♕xe4 ♖fe8 White hardly has any advantage.

16...♗e6

It was possible to try same idea as in the previous note, but after 16...♕a3+ 17.♔b1 ♘e4 18.♗xe4 dxe4 19.♕xe4 ♗e6 20.♗e3! ♖fe8 21.♗c5 ♕xa2+!? 22.♔xa2 ♗xb3+ 23.cxb3 ♖xe4 24.♖he1± Black would have to work pretty hard to hold the arising endgame.

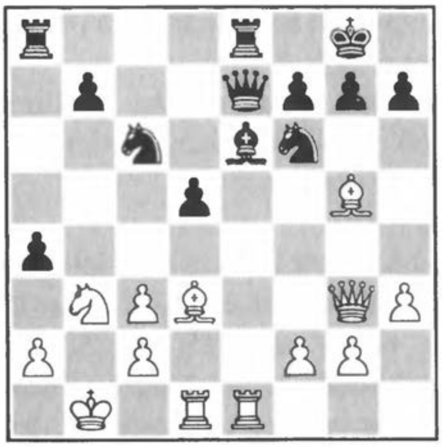
17.♕g3

The ending after 17.♗xf6 ♕xf6 18.♕xf6 gxf6 19.f4 is advantageous for White, but the young rising star of Russian chess strives for more than that.

17...♖fe8 18.♔b1

Necessary prophylaxis as 18.♕h4? is met by 18...♕a3+ 19.♔b1 ♘e4! 20.♗xe4 dxe4∓.

18...a5 19.♖he1 a4?



20.♘c5!

This move by itself isn't that hard to find, but White's next move is very easy to overlook!

20...♖a5

After 20...♕xc5 21.♗xf6 g6 22.♕h4 a3 23.f4 h5 24.♔c1! the threat of f4-f5 is highly unpleasant.

Instead 20...h6 loses to 21.♗xh6! ♘h5 22.♕f3 ♕xc5 23.♕xh5 gxh6 24.♕xh6 ♕xc3 25.♗h7+ ♔h8 26.♖xe6!? (or 26.♗e4+ ♔g8 27.♖e3 ♕b4+ 28.♔a1 ♕xe4 29.♖g3+ ♕g6 30.♖xg6+ fxg6 31.♕xg6+ ♔f8 32.♖d3) 26...♕b4+ 27.♔c1 ♕a3+ 28.♔d2 ♕f8 29.♗f5+ ♕xh6+ 30.♖xh6+ ♔g7 31.♖d6 with a sound pawn up.

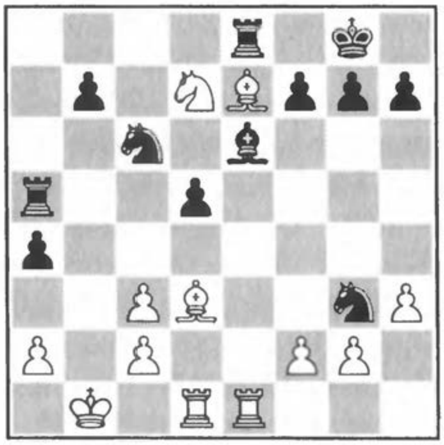
21.♘d7!

A very nice move, which virtually decides the game in White's favour.

21...♘h5

White wins after 21...♕xd7 22.♗xf6 g6 23.♕f4!.

22.♗xe7 ♘xg3



23.♗b4!

White's pieces are so much stronger than the black ones that despite the material balance Black's position is extremely difficult.

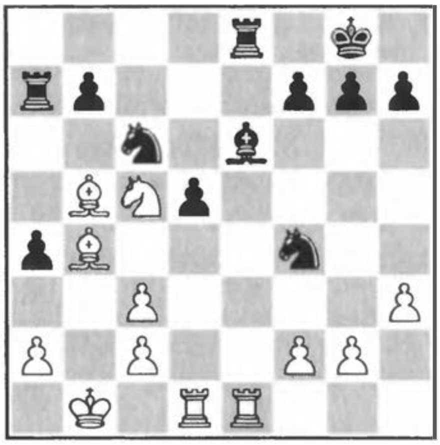
23...♖a7

Hopeless is 23...♘xb4 24.cxb4 ♖a7 25.♖xe6 and 26.fxg3, and with two minor pieces for the rook White wins easily.

24.♗c5! ♖a5

White's advantage is overwhelming in case of 24...b6 25.♘xb6 ♘e4 26.♗xe4 dxe4 27.♖d6.

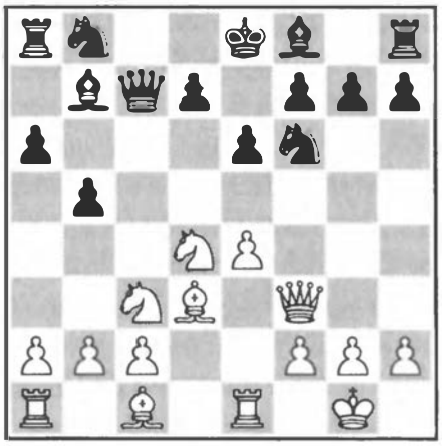
25.♗b4 ♖a7 26.♘c5 ♘h5
The black pieces are not coordinated after 26...♘xb4 27.cxb4 ♘h5 28.♗b5±.
27.♗b5 ♘f4



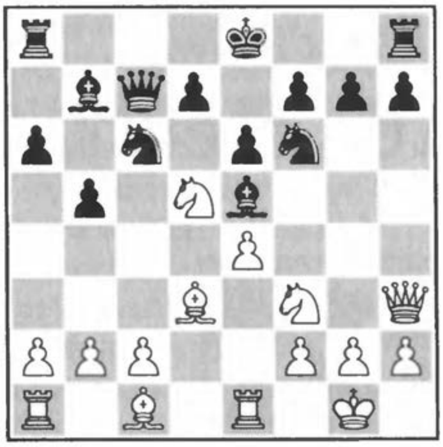
28.g3
Far less convincing is 28.♘xb7 ♘xb4 29.♗xe8 ♖xb7 30.cxb4 ♘xg2± followed by ...♖xb4+.
28...♘xh3 28...♘g6 29.♖xd5± wasn't a much better alternative. **29.f4 ♖aa8?!** Better was the computer move 29...♖e7. **30.♘xb7 ♖ec8** 30...♘xb4 31.♗xe8 ♖xe8 32.cxb4 ♖b8 33.♘c5 and wins. **31.♘d6 ♘f2** 31...♖c7 32.f5 ♗d7 33.♖xd5+–. **32.♘xc8 ♖xc8** 32...♘xd1 33.♗xc6 ♖xc8 34.♗xa4 ♘xc3+ 35.♗xc3 ♖xc3 36.f5+–. **33.♖d2 ♘e4 34.♖xe4!** Exploiting the weakness of the back rank. **34...dxe4 35.♗xc6 e3 36.♖d4 e2 37.c4 ♖b8 38.♔c1! 1-0**

☐ **Igor Zaitsev**
■ **Antti Pyhälä**
Jyväskylä 1994

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.♘c3 a6 4.d4 cxd4 5.♘xd4 ♕c7 6.♕f3 ♘f6 7.♗d3!?
Another interesting attempt to meet 6...♘f6. White doesn't hurry with the development of the dark-squared bishop, keeping an option to put it on e3 later to switch to a 'normal' Scheveningen set-up, when the queen would come to g3 or h3 according to the circumstances. In this particular game White's strategical idea worked out perfectly, but the main reason for Black's quick defeat lies in a series of dubious moves later on.
7...b5 8.0-0 ♗b7 9.♖e1



9...♗d6?!
Black opts for this rather awkward move instead of the natural looking 9...d6 10.♕g3 ♘bd7 leading to an unclear position in which Black's chances appear to be pretty good.
10.♕h3 ♗e5
Quite a risky decision, which would have made sense had Black captured on c3 on the next move.
More in the spirit of the position was 10...♘c6 11.♘f3 ♘e5 12.♘xe5 ♗xe5 13.♗d2 d6 unclear.
11.♘f3 ♘c6?
A very bad move, which runs into a typical Sicilian reaction for this kind of positions.
Clearly better was 11...♗xc3, although without the dark-squared bishop Black's defensive task wouldn't be easy: 12.bxc3 d5 13.e5 (or 13.exd5 ♗xd5 14.a4 bxa4 15.♗a3) 13...♘e4 14.a4 ♕xc3 15.♖b1 b4 16.♕g4 with an attack.
12.♘d5!



It's hard to call this move a sacrifice, as White comfortably restores the material balance.

12...♕b8

It was necessary to take on d5, hoping to hold the position arising after 12...exd5 13.exd5 ♘xd5 14.♘xe5 ♘xe5 15.f4 ♘xf4 (15...d6 16.fxe5 dxe5 17.♕h5±) 16.♗xf4 d6 17.♗xe5 dxe5 18.♕h5.

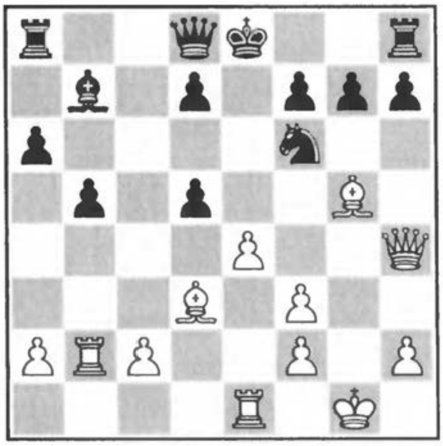
13.♕h4!?

Very serious attention deserved 13.♘xe5 ♘xe5 (13...♕xe5? 14.♗f4+–) 14.♗f4 d6 15.♘xf6+ gxf6 16.♕h6, intending to exploit the weakness of the dark squares in Black's camp.

13...♕d8?

Missing the last chance to put up proper resistance after 13...exd5 14.exd5 ♘xd5 15.♘xe5 ♘xe5 16.f4 ♘xf4 17.♗xf4 d6 18.♗xe5 dxe5 19.♖xe5+ (19.♕h5!?) 19...♕xe5 20.♖e1 ♕xe1+ 21.♕xe1+, although White is better in that case too.

14.♗g5! ♗xb2 15.♖ab1 ♘e5 16.♖xb2 ♘xf3+ 17.gxf3 exd5



18.♖b4!

Bringing the last remaining piece into play!

18...dxe4?!

A bit more persistent was 18...d6 19.e5 dxe5 20.♖xe5+ ♔f8 21.♖f4 ♖g8 22.♗xh7 ♕c7 23.♖e3, but it would hardly have changed the outcome of the game.

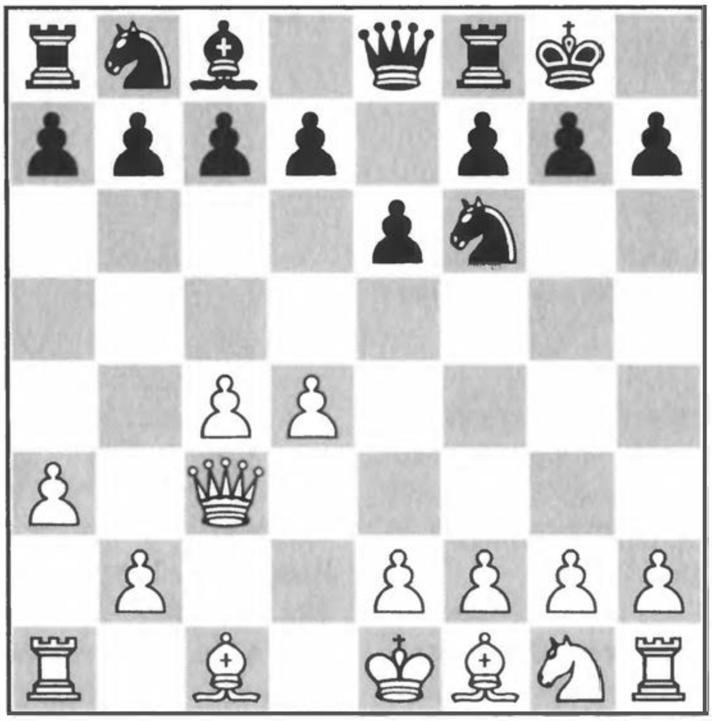
19.♗xe4 ♗xe4 20.♗xf6

Black resigned, for 20...gxf6 21.♖bxe4+ ♔f8 22.♕h6+ ♔g8 23.♖g4 is mate.

CHAPTER 6

Sébastien Mazé and Matthieu Cornette

Nimzo-Indian with 6...♕e8!?



Keene's queen move

This rare queen move was played for the first time in 1973 by Raymond Keene. Jan Timman followed in the same year. It never became fashionable, but in 2006 strong GMs like Bauer, Pelletier and Nikolaidis, have played it with excellent results.

What's the idea behind the queen's move? This is a good question. 6...♕e8 looks stupid, but this move has got some points:

– The first one is to prevent the pin ♗g5 (because of ...♘e4), which occurs in the main theoretical line 6...b6 7.♗g5 etc.

– Secondly, from e8, her majesty defends thee-pawn, intending to play ...d6 and ...e5.

– Sometimes, your queen can go to h5(!) after playing ...♘e4 and ...f5.

– Finally, the queen move may introduce a 'light-squared' strategy on the queenside: when Black plays ...a5, intending to fix the queenside by means of ...a4, White usually prevents that advance with b3. Now, after a subsequent ...a4 (which is answered by b4), your queen on e8 enables you to play ...b5 because this pawn is protected! Pushing the b-pawn in this way makes your bishop on b7 very strong, and it gains a splendid outpost on d5 for a knight.

It may sound difficult to believe that 6...♕e8 hides so many ideas, but the annotated games that follow should convince you!

What are the different plans at White's disposal?

– The most ambitious one is to play 7.f3, aiming to build up a strong pawn-centre by playing e4 next. Black has to react with ...e5, and be ready to counter d5 with the pawn thrust ...f5. See the notes to Botsari-Nikolaidis.

– A common plan is associated with a kingside fianchetto. Very often White plays this move without thinking too much, just because it's the normal move in the main line! White can play g3 with ♘f3 or not. If he does, this is the case where Black has to play on the white squares. If not, Black can simply play ...e5. See the notes to Hauchard-Bauer.

– Sometimes White tries something else, for example ♘f3, e3 and b4; or ♕c2, in order to play ♗g5. The first set-up, though natural-looking, allows Black the opportunity to seize the initiative by ...♘e4 and ...f5. In case White opts for the second one, his opponent will play ...e5. See the game Papadopoulos-Nikolaidis for more details.

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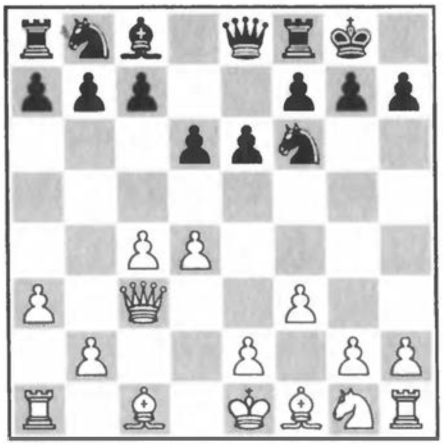
■ **Ioannis Nikolaidis**
Athens tt 2006

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♕c2 0-0 5.a3 ♗xc3+ 6.♕xc3 ♕e8!? 7.f3!?

The main continuation. White controls the e4-square, and is ready to play e4, or maybe ♗g5, to disturb Black's coordination.

7...d6



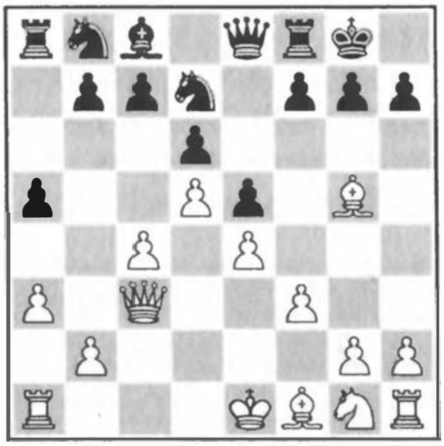
The correct reply. In answer to the threat of ♗g5, Black has vacated the d7-square for his knight. Of course, the other idea of his last move is to play ...e5.

8.e4

Tempting, but clearly inaccurate, is **8.♗g5**. When you see the move of Nikolaidis in the game (after 8.e4) you will understand. Indeed, **8...♘fd7!** is the strongest reply. Black is ready to play ...e5 and later ...f5. The bishop is not well placed on g5.

Rather timid now looks 9.e3. After 9...e5 10.d5 (10.0-0-0 is a brave try: 10...♘c6! – with the idea to play ...f5 – 11.g4 f5 and the position is very complicated) 10...f5 11.0-0-0 a5 it is clear that Black is better, as he can more easily open files towards the enemy king. Claassen-Rechmann, Porz 1990.

So White continues with **9.e4**. This position can be reached by a different move-order too (after 8.e4 ♘fd7). Would White then consider 9.♗g5? Of course not, so 8.♗g5 must be considered inaccurate. Black goes **9...e5 10.d5 a5**. It's very useful to take space on the queenside. Black wants to play ...a4 followed by ...♘c5.

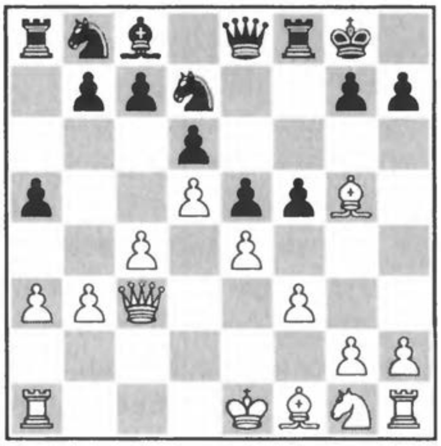


We will look at 11.b4, 11.b3 and 11.♗e3.

– **11.b4** axb4 12.axb4 ♖xa1+ 13.♕xa1 f5 (the obvious move) 14.exf5 (not 14.♗d3 ♘a6 15.♕c3 h6∓ and ...♕g6 is coming) 14...e4! (14...♖xf5 was also possible and strong. 15.♗e3 e4! 16.f4! and now 16...♘a6 or

16...♖f8!?) 15.f4 (in comparison with 14...♖xf5, the ♗g5 is misplaced. Black is slightly better after 15.g4 exf3+ 16.♔f2 ♕e4! 17.♘xf3 ♕xg4) 15...♘a6! 16.♕a3 h6 17.♗h4 ♖xf5 18.♘h3 g5!? and Black's chances were preferable in Sjöberg-Lindberg, Stockholm 1993.

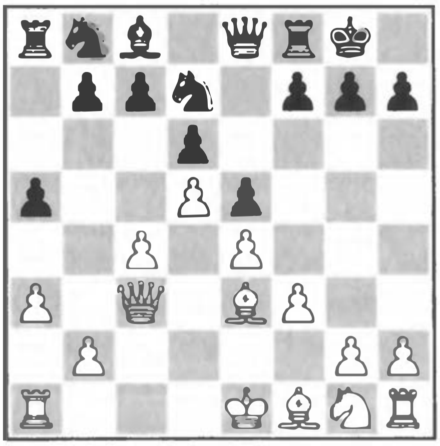
– **11.b3** (to prevent ...a4) 11...f5



Bad now is 12.♗d3?! ♘c5 13.exf5 (not 13.♗c2 ♕g6∓) 13...♘xd3+ 14.♕xd3 ♗xf5 and Black stood better in the game P.Dimitrov-Pantev, Pamporovo 2001.

Correct is 12.exf5 ♖xf5 (12...♘c5 13.g4!) 13.♗e3 e4 (it's important to prevent ♗d3. Therefore 13...♘c5 is less effective, for example: 14.♗xc5 dxc5 15.♗d3 ♖f7 16.♘e2, when White is slightly better) 14.0-0-0 ♘a6 15.fxe4 ♖f8 16.♘f3 ♘ac5 and Black has ample compensation for the pawn.

– **11.♗e3**



In Sonntag-Rechmann, Germany tt 1989/90, Black played 11...♕e7 12.b4 (12.♗d3 would be followed by 12...♘c5 and then ...♘bd7 or ...a4. Note that 12...♘a6 13.b4 is annoying) 12...axb4 13.axb4 ♖xa1+ 14.♕xa1 f5 15.♗d3 (15.exf5 e4! is very powerful, for instance: 16.♕d4 ♘f6 17.fxe4 – or 17.g4 exf3 – 17...♘xe4 and ...♗xf5 next) 15...♘a6 (threatening the b4-pawn) 16.♕a5 ♘f6 when Black had a satisfactory position. However, Black has several tempting alternatives to 11...♕e7.

11...a4 is also logical. Black's next moves are ...♘a6 and ...♘dc5.

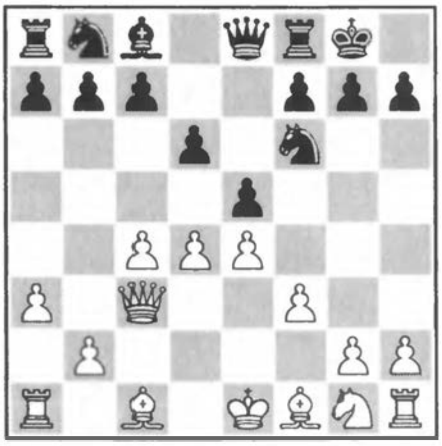
11...f5 looks tempting, but after 12.exf5 it's not easy for Black to find an adequate follow-up: 12...e4 (12...♖xf5 13.♗d3 ♖f8 14.♘e2±; 12...♘c5 13.♗xc5 dxc5 14.g4±) 13.0-0-0 ♘f6 14.g4 exf3 15.♘xf3 with a white initiative.

11...♘c5 is the last logical choice: Black wants to play ...♘bd7, ...a4 or maybe ...f5, given the circumstances. 12.b4 (12.♗xc5 dxc5 and the position is not bad for Black. His worse structure is compensated by a strong bishop, the possibility to put the knight on d6, and the move ...f5) 12...♘a4 13.♕c2 f5 and the position is very unclear, but it seems that Black has decent attacking prospects.

8...♘fd7!?

A new move from Nikolaidis. Black wants to be ready to play ...f5 as soon as White plays d5.

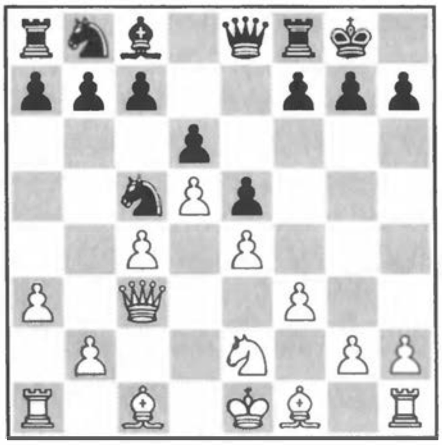
In the past 8...e5 was the usual choice here:



● 9.♘e2!? ♘fd7! (not 9...exd4 10.♘xd4 d5 11.cxd5 ♘xd5 12.♕b3 and White has an obvious positional advantage; 9...c5 – Black decided to take care of the pawn structure himself by provoking the closing of the centre. I don't think however that this is the right plan – 10.d5 ♔h8 11.g4!± – the centre being blocked, it is important to start active play on the kingside. After the g-pawn has moved, the knight lands on a nice place on g3. Golod-Lerner, Tel Aviv 2005) 10.d5 (10.♗e3 transposes directly into 9.♗e3 below) 10...♘c5! planning ...f5.

In case of the other natural move – 10...a5 – White can claim a slight advantage with 11.b4! (11.♗e3 a4 or 11.b3 ♘c5 are fine for Black) 11...axb4 (11...f5 12.exf5 e4 13.f4 ♘b6 14.g4±) 12.axb4 ♖xa1 13.♕xa1 ♘a6 (13...f5?! 14.exf5 e4 15.f4, when I don't see a good move for Black) 14.♕c3 (14.♕b1 – defending the b4 pawn, and keeping control of the f5 square – 14...♘f6 15.♘g3 ♕a4 16.♗d2 c5!?) 14...♘f6 15.♔f2 ♕a4 16.♗d2 c5 17.dxc6 bxc6 18.♘g3 and White is slightly better.

After 10...♘c5! there may follow:



– 11.b4 ♘a4 12.♕c2 f5 and Black has got what he wanted.

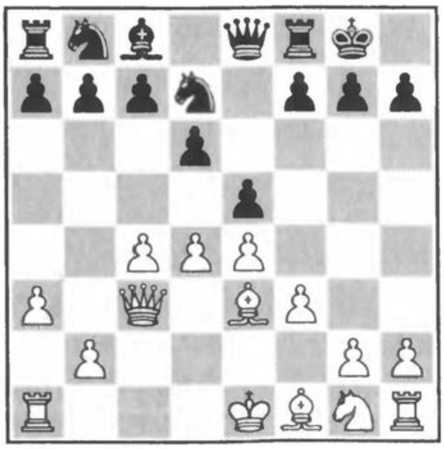
– 11.g4 a5 12.♗e3 (12.b4?! axb4 13.axb4 ♘d3+∓) 12...a4 seems good for Black.

– 11.♘g3 a5 12.♗e3 (12.b4 axb4 13.axb4 ♖xa1 14.♕xa1 ♘b3 15.♕c3 ♘xc1 16.♕xc1 ♕a4∓; 12.b3 a4! 13.b4 ♘b3 14.♖a2 f5 15.exf5 ♗xf5 16.♘xf5 ♘xc1 17.♕xc1 ♖xf5 and the rook can be rerouted to d4, via f4. Black is fine) 12...a4 13.♗xc5 dxc5. This kind of position is unclear. This is a sample line of what can happen: 14.♗d3 ♘d7 15.0-0 ♘b6 16.♖ae1 f6 and if 17.f4 (17.♗c2 ♕e7 18.♖f2 ♗d7 followed by ...♘c8 and ...♘d6) 17...exf4 18.♖xf4 ♘d7.

– 11.♗e3 a5! 12.b3 (12.♘g3 a4) 12...f5! (12...a4!? 13.b4 ♘b3 14.♖d1 f5 15.exf5 ♗xf5 16.♘g3 e4∞) 13.♗xc5 dxc5 14.exf5 (14.♘g3 f4!) 14...♗xf5 15.♘g3 e4!. Before playing ...f5 it is important to include the moves 11...a5 and 12.b3. If 11...f5 then 12.♗xc5 dxc5 favours White.

● 9.d5 (too simple to be really strong!) 9...a5 (intending ...a4) 10.b3 ♘fd7 (...f5 and ...♘c5 are coming) 11.g4 ♘c5 12.♗e3 a4! (now Black decides to play on the queenside) 13.b4 (13.♗xc5 dxc5 is good for Black) 13...♘b3 14.♖a2 c6 15.♗d3 cxd5 16.cxd5 ♕e7 17.♘e2 ♘a6 18.♗c2 (18.♘c1 h5!) 18...♗d7 19.♗xb3 ♖fc8! 20.♕d3 axb3 21.♕xb3 ♕h4+ Black had enough compensation in Foisor-Bischoff, Groningen 1990.

● 9.♗e3 ♘fd7 (9...♘c6 was played by Adams, but I'm not sure if this is the right idea: 10.♘e2 a5 11.d5 ♘e7 12.h4 a4 13.h5 ♘d7 14.g4 and I prefer White in this position, Gulko-Adams, Hastings 1989/90)

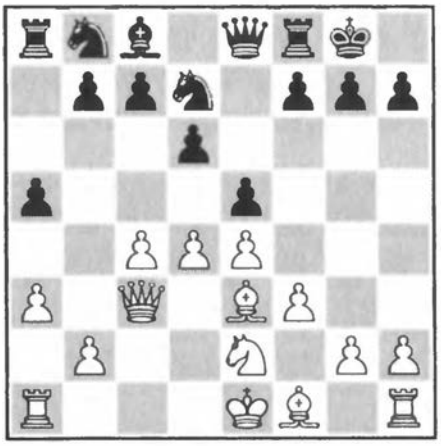


White can react in several ways now:

– 10.♗d3 exd4 11.♗xd4 ♘e5 12.♗c2 ♘bc6 13.♗e3 ♗e6 and Black has no problem (interesting is 13...♕e6 with the idea to transfer the queen to g6: 14.b3 ♕g6 15.♔f1 f5). 14.c5 ♘c4!? 15.♗f2 (15.cxd6 cxd6 16.♗f4 ♖c8 17.♘e2 ♘6e5∓) 15...f5! 16.0-0-0 (16.b3 ♘4e5 17.cxd6 cxd6 18.♘e2 ♖c8) 16...fxe4 17.♗xe4 Baburin-Arkhipov, Oberwart 1991. And now 17...♕h5! and I trust Black's chances more.

– 10.♘e2 may be the best move. Black has to find an appropriate answer now: 10...a5!.

I think this is an interesting novelty. The idea is to wait while playing a useful move. Now White has to find something. With his knight on e2, finishing the development may prove difficult. 10...♘c6 11.d5 ♘e7 12.g4 looks difficult for Black whose game is a bit cramped. 10...c5 was played three times in the database, but each time White answered 11.d5 and won convincingly. It is difficult for Black to find a good plan there, as there is nothing he can hope for on the queenside, while carrying out the thematical f5-break will be very difficult after g4 and/or ♘g3. 10...f5 is tempting but not so strong: 11.exf5 ♖xf5 12.0-0-0!±.



After 10...a5 White's best is: 11.c5! dxc5 (11...exd4?! 12.♗xd4 attacking the g7 pawn) 12.dxc5♘c6 13.♘g3 ♘f6 14.♖d1 a4 15.♗b5 ♗d7 16.0-0 ♕e7 17.♖d2 ♖fd8 18.♖fd1 g6 followed by ...♔g7. White stands slightly better, but Black's position is quite solid.

Other moves include:

11.b4 axb4 (11...f5!?) 12.axb4 ♖xa1+ 13.♕xa1 ♘c6 with unclear play.

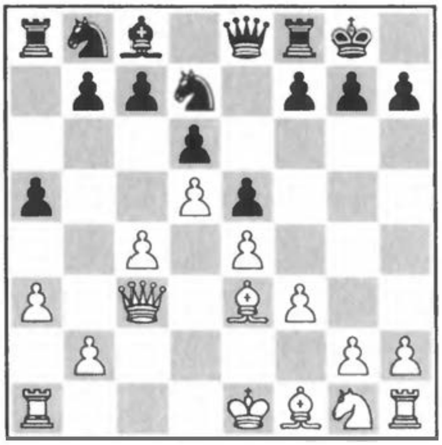
11.0-0-0 exd4 12.♗xd4 (12.♘xd4 ♘c5 13.♘b5 ♕e7 followed by ...♘c6, ...b6) 12...f6 (...♘c6 and ...♘c5 are next on the agenda).

11.♖d1!? a4! 12.c5! dxc5 13.dxe5! (13.dxc5 ♘c6 14.♘g3 ♘f6 intending ...♗e6-b3 and then ...♕e6) 13...b6 (13...♕xe5 14.♗f4 ♕xc3+ 15.♘xc3±; 13...♘c6 14.f4 f6 15.exf6 ♘xf6 16.e5) 14.f4 ♗a6 15.♘g3 ♗xf1 16.♖xf1 (16.♔xf1 ♕e6 followed by ...f6, when the position is very complicated) 16...♕e6 17.♔f2 f6 18.exf6 (18.♕d2 fxe5 19.f5 ♕f7) 18...♘xf6 unclear.

11.d5 (the logical option, but this move justifies the black set-up – ...a5 now completely fits in the position) 11...a4 transposing to the same kind of position as 10.d5.

– 10.d5. It's strange, but this position never appeared in practice. This is a key-position.

10...a5 (I always like this move. Black prevents his opponent from grabbing space on the queenside and tries to control some important squares: b3 and c5, in order to secure an outpost for the ♘d7. Not 10...f5?! 11.exf5 ♖xf5 – 11...e4 12.0-0-0; 11...♘c5 12.♗xc5 dxc5 13.g4 – 12.♗d3, followed by ♘e2, which is better for White)



Now 11.♘e2 transposes into the line starting with 10.♘e2.

11.♗d3 a4 (11...♘a6?! 12.b4) 12.♘e2 (12.♗c2 ♘c5 13.♗xc5 dxc5 14.♘e2 ♘d7 15.0-0 ♕e7 and Black will play ...f6, ...♘b6 and so on, to transfer the knight to d6) 12...♘a6 13.♗c2 ♘ac5. After that Black will have to conceive a plan: I would say ...b6, ...♕e7, ...♘f6, ...♗d7 and after something like ...♘e8, ...g6, ...♘g7 he is prepared for ...f5.

11.b4 f5!? (an interesting try) 12.exf5 e4! 13.f4 (13.bxa5 ♘f6 followed by ...♗xf5, ...♘a6 and so on) 13...axb4 14.axb4 ♖xa1+ 15.♕xa1 ♘f6. The position is unclear. Note: we saw the same position with the knight on e2 instead of the bishop at e3. In that case White would have been able to support his pawn by ♘g3, and in case of ...♘g4, then ♗d4, hitting g7.

The most natural reaction is 11.b3 (avoiding a4) 11...♘c5 12.♘e2 f5! 13.♗xc5 dxc5 14.exf5 ♗xf5 15.♘g3 e4! 16.0-0-0 (16.fxe4 ♗xe4 17.0-0-0 ♗g6 and ...a4 is coming) 16...a4! 17.♖e1 axb3 18.♕xb3 ♘d7 19.♘xf5 ♖xf5 20.♖xe4 ♖e5 21.♗d3 ♘f6 22.♖xe5 ♕xe5 and Black has enough compensation on account of the weak enemy king.

After 11.b3 ♘c5, White can also play 12.b4 ♘a4 13.♕c2 f5 with a double-edged game: 14.c5 (14.b5 f4 15.♗f2 ♘c5∞; 14.♗d3 ♘a6 15.♗d2 axb4 16.axb4 ♘b6 – threatening ♘xb4 – 17.♖a2 ♕g6 with an unclear position) 14...fxe4 15.fxe4 ♘a6 16.c6 (16.♘f3 axb4 17.axb4 ♘xb4 18.♕d2 ♘a6∞) 16...♕g6! and the position is very complicated.

9.♗d3

The logical continuation. White wants to prevent ...f5.

9.♗e3 e5 transposes into ...e5 first. It's difficult to find another option. 9.♘e2 e5 also transposes to lines we already discussed.

9...e5 10.d5

10.♘e2 is the alternative: 10...exd4 11.♘xd4 ♘e5 12.♗e2 (12.0-0 ♘xd3 13.♕xd3 ♘c6 followed by ...♗e6, when the position is approximately equal) 12...♘bc6 13.0-0 ♘xd4 14.♕xd4 f5! with equal play.

10...f5

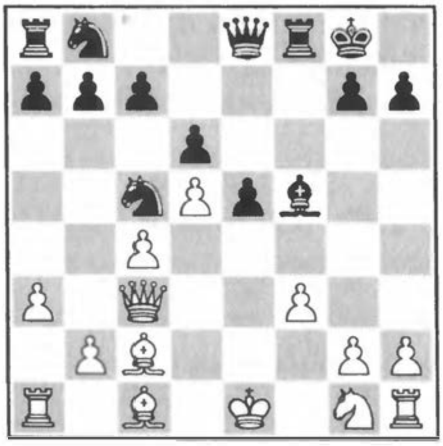
But we don't care! This is more accurate than 10...♘c5: 11.♗c2 f5 12.b4!. This is the reason why Nikolaidis played ...f5 first.

11.exf5 ♘c5 12.♗c2

12.g4 was more testing, but it is always risky to play g4 with your king in the centre. 12...e4 and now:

- 13.fxe4?! ♘xe4∓.
- 13.♗e2 ♘bd7 (13...♘d3+ 14.♗xd3 exd3+ 15.♔f2±) 14.♗e3 g6 15.fxg6 hxg6 16.0-0-0 ♘a4 17.♕d4 ♘ac5 18.♔b1 ♘e5 19.♗h6 ♖f7.
- 13.♗c2 ♘bd7 14.♗e3 ♘d3+ (14...♘e5) 15.♗xd3 exd3 16.♕xd3 ♘e5 17.♕e2 ♘xc4 18.♔f2.

12...♗xf5



13.b4

White may have other, better, options, but in any case Black's prospects are quite good.

- 13.♗xf5 ♖xf5 14.♘e2 (14.b4 e4! 15.bxc5 exf3+ 16.♔f2 fxg2+ 17.♔xg2 ♕e4+ 18.♘f3 ♘d7∓) 14...e4 15.0-0 exf3 16.♖xf3 ♖xf3 17.♕xf3 ♘bd7 Black is fine. ... ♘e5 and ...♕g6 are coming.

– 13.♘e2 ♗xc2 14.♕xc2 e4 15.fxe4 (15.0-0 exf3 16.gxf3 ♘bd7 17.b4 ♘b3!∓) 15...♘bd7 16.♗f4 ♕xe4 17.♕xe4 ♘xe4 18.0-0 g5 19.♗e3 ♘e5 and Black stands slightly better.

13...e4!

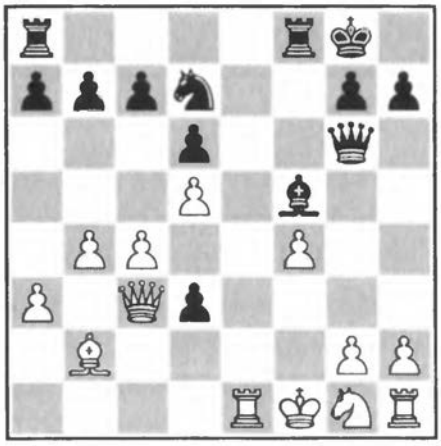
Very often the right move!

Instead 13...♕g6!? was also strong: 14.♗xf5! (14.♘e2 ♗xc2 15.bxc5 ♘d7∓) 14...♕xg2 15.♕c2 ♕xh1 16.♗e3 e4! 17.fxe4 (17.♗xh7+ ♔xh7 18.bxc5 ♘d7∓) 17...♘cd7! (17...g6 18.♗g4 ♖f4 a nice shot, but after 19.♕e2! life isn't so rosy for Black) 18.0-0-0♘e5 19.♗d4 ♘bd7 20.♕e2 (threatening to trap the queen) 20...♖xf5! 21.exf5 ♖e8∓.

14.f4?!

After this move, White's situation is critical. 14.♗e3 ♘d3+ (14...exf3 15.♘xf3 ♗d3 16.♕d2 ♗xc2 17.bxc5 looks rather acceptable for White) 15.♔d2 ♗g6 (15...♘e5 16.f4! ♘g4 17.h3 ♘xe3 18.♕xe3 ♘d7 19.g4 ♗g6 20.♘e2 and, even though the king has landed on d2, White is OK) 16.♘h3 (16.fxe4?! ♘f2!) 16...♘d7 and the position is very complicated. It is however easier to play with a safe king than with a wandering one!

14...♘d3+ 15.♗xd3 Not 15.♔f1 ♘d7 16.♘e2 a5!∓. **15...exd3+ 16.♔f1 ♘d7 17.♗b2** Threatening mate! **17...♕g6 18.♖e1**



18...♘e5! Now, it's over! **19.♕d4** 19.fxe5 ♗h3+ 20.♘f3 ♕xg2 mate. **19...d2 20.♕xd2 ♗d3+ 21.♔f2 ♘xc4 22.♕c1 ♘xb2 23.♕xb2 ♖xf4+ 24.♘f3 ♖af8 25.♖e3 ♗e4 26.♕b3 ♕h5 27.♕c3 ♗xd5 0-1**

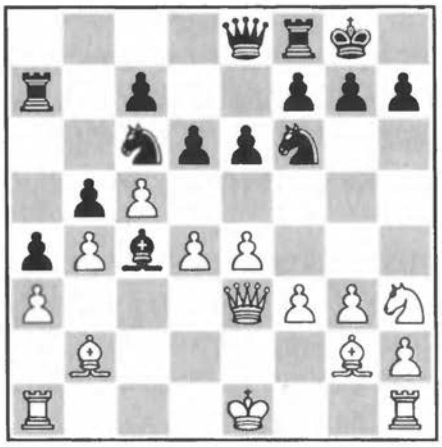
A very good game by Black. He played a novelty, which introduces not a new idea but a refined move-order. The point is to react actively against the most logical move, 9.♗d3.

7.f3 is a very interesting move, aiming at building a strong centre, but we have seen that Black has got adequate resources.

☐ **Arnaud Hauchard**
■ **Christian Bauer**
Narbonne ch-FRA 1997

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♕c2 0-0 5.a3 ♗xc3+ 6.♕xc3 ♕e8!? 7.g3

– 7.b3 (not the usual move-order, but we will transpose in the 7.g3 line) 7...d6 8.♗b2 a5! (White firmly covers the e5-square, so that it's time to switch to the other plan) 9.g3 a4! 10.b4 b5! (a nice positional idea, aimed at controlling the white squares and securing a first-class outpost for a knight at d5) 11.♗g2 ♖a7 12.c5 (12.cxb5 ♕xb5 followed by ...♗a6 or ...♗b7. Paradoxically, opening the position may suit Black better than his opponent. Indeed, his pieces become very active and White can't castle easily, as e2 is hanging) 12...♗b7 (if Black manages to trade this bishop, White will remain with a bad one at b2, which explains the answer) 13.f3 (13.♘f3 ♗e4! followed by ...♘d5 and ...♘c6) 13...♗d5 14.♘h3 ♗c4!? (14...♘c6 was also possible, but it's typical of Bauer's style to create concrete problems!) 15.e4 ♘c6 (the position is very murky) 16.♕e3

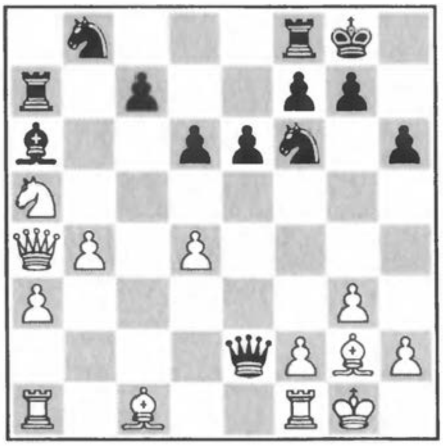


16...♖a6 (16...dxc5 was the other possibility, but Black wanted to keep the tension: 17.bxc5 b4! or 17.dxc5 e5∞) 17.0-0-0 e5! 18.d5 ♘e7 19.♔b1 ♘d7 20.♖c1?! allows a strong reply: 20...c6! (what a move. I am sure that White forgot about this eventuality) 21.cxd6 ♘c8 22.dxc6 ♖xc6 23.f4 (23.♖hd1 ♘xd6) 23...♖xd6 (23...f6!? 24.♘f2 ♘xd6 25.♖hd1 ♕f7∓) 24.♘f2 ♘cb6 25.♗h3 ♗b3 and Black stood slightly better and went on to win in N.Brunner-Bauer, Metz 2006.

– 7.♘f3 b6 (in the introduction I told you about this game, which illustrates the fact that the plan ...♘e4 and ...f5 isn't so effective when White plays with g3. Hence, 7...d6! is the correct move) 8.g3 ♗b7 9.♗g2 d6 10.0-0 ♘e4 11.♕c2 f5 12.d5! (this is always the right reaction) 12...exd5 13.cxd5!? (if Black doesn't grab the pawn, then after ♖d1 White stands simply better. 13.♘d4 was also possible, with the idea ♘b5) 13...♗xd5 14.♖d1 and White enjoys a pleasant initiative for the sacrificed pawn. Ree-Timman, Amsterdam 1973.

7...d6

7...a5 (even though this is not the normal idea, there is nothing wrong with the move) 8.b3 d6 9.♗g2 h6!? (normal was ...e5, but it looks like Pelletier is insisting on trying to implement the plan with ...a4 and ...b5. With the bishop on g2, however, it was not possible right now. He thus decided to wait for the arrival of the knight on f3. White was on the other hand threatening ♗g5 – because ...♘e4 isn't possible – so that 9...h6!? makes sense here) 10.♘f3 (given what precedes 10.♗b2! was better) 10...a4 (of course) 11.b4 b5! 12.♘d2 (12.cxb5 ♘d5! is an important intermediate move, covering the c7-pawn. The idea is to cement the knight by means of ...f5 and delay the unavoidable recapture of the b5-pawn. 13.♕c2 f5 14.0-0 ♕xb5∞) 12...♖a7 13.0-0 ♗b7 (like in Brunner-Bauer, the exchange of the light-squared bishops is desirable for Black) 14.♕d3 (an artificial move, designed to play e4. 14.e4 bxc4 15.♖e1 d5!) 14...bxc4 15.♘xc4 ♗a6!? (a concrete idea. This may not be the best, but in a practical game it is very important to create problems! 15...♗xg2 16.♔xg2 ♕b5 was the other possibility, intending to play ...♘c6 next) 16.♕c2 ♕b5 17.♘a5 ♕xe2 (the idea of the preceding moves) 18.♕xa4



We have been following Moor-Pelletier, Switzerland 2006. In the game Pelletier now played 18...♘bd7 when White could have obtained a slight advantage with 19.♕d1! (instead of the game continuation 19.♕b3). Equality would have resulted from 18...♘d5 19.♕d1! ♕xd1 20.♖xd1 ♘c3 21.♖d2 ♗b5!.

8.♘f3

Or 8.♗g2 e5! (the adequate reaction) 9.dxe5 (9.♘f3 e4!) 9...dxe5 10.♘f3 (10.♗e3 ♕e7 –

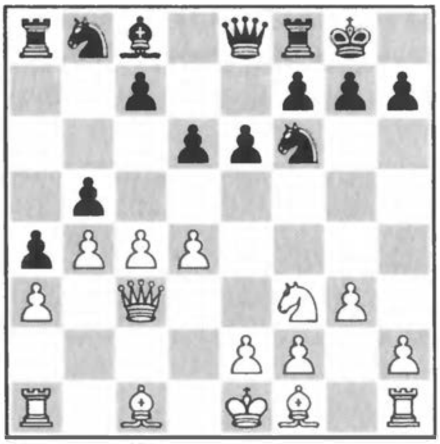
Her Majesty has accomplished her mission successfully – 11.♘f3 ♘c6 12.b4 ♖e8 13.0-0 ♗f5 14.♖ad1 h6=) 10...♘c6 11.0-0 (11.b4 ♗f5!) 11...a5! 12.b3 ♘e4!? (an interesting transfer of the knight) 13.♕e3 ♘d6 14.♗b2 f6 (...a4 is in the air, but ...♘f5 too) 15.c5 ♘f5 16.♕e4 ♕f7 and Black's position was OK in Faldt-Sjöberg, Sweden 1995/96.

8...a5! 9.b3

The traditional reaction. If Black is allowed to get ...a4 in, the white queenside will be permanently fixed.

9...a4! 10.b4 b5!

Owing to the queen's placement this move is possible. Black's dream, after White plays c5, would be a massive swap, resulting in an endgame 'knight against bad bishop'



11.c5

– 11.♗g2 bxc4 12.♕xc4 ♖a7! (this move frequently occurs in this line) 13.0-0 ♘d5 14.♕c2 (14.e4 ♗a6!) 14...f5 (Black wants to play ...♘d7 and ...♘f6) 15.e4 fxe4 16.♕xe4 ♘d7 17.♖e1 ♘7f6 and the position was unclear in Dzevlan-Sjöberg, Stockholm 1993.

– 11.cxb5 ♖a7!? (11...♘d5!? 12.♕c2 f5 is more standard, as we have already seen. Black can then recapture the enemy pawn with the queen or by means of ...♗d7. It is possible to insert ...♘d7, ...♘b6 or ...♘f6 before, in order to improve the knight's position) 12.♕c2 (12.♗g5 ♘d5 followed by ...f5) 12...♗b7!? 13.♗g5 ♗e4! (that's the idea! Black will continue with ...♘d5 and ...f5, when he controls the light squares) 14.♕b2 ♘d5 15.♖g1 f5 and I like Black's position, Kolev-Pavlovic, Vrnjacka Banja 1990.

11...♗b7 12.♗g2 ♗e4!

12...♗d5!? is of course also playable, but I prefer Bauer's move: 13.0-0 ♘c6, and now:

– 14.♖e1 ♘e7 15.♕d3 ♗e4 16.♕d1 dxc5 17.dxc5 ♖d8 18.♗d2 ♘c6 19.♖a2 ♕d7∓ Medancic-Kosten, Amantea 1992.

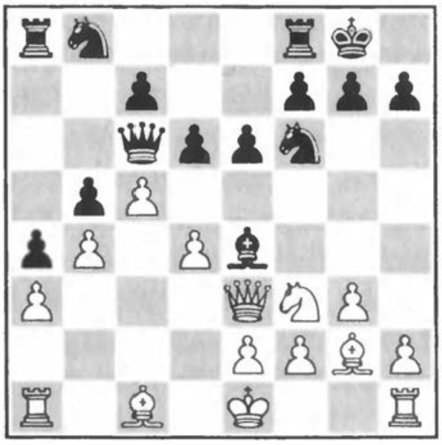
– 14.♗f4 ♘e4 15.♕b2 f5 16.♖ac1 ♘e7 17.cxd6 cxd6 18.♖c7 ♘g6 19.♘d2 ♘xf4 20.gxf4 ♘f6 21.f3 ♖c8∓ Lapcevic-Vratonjic, Vrnjacka Banja ch--SER 2006.

– 14.♗b2 ♘e7 15.♖fe1 ♘e4 16.♕c2 f5 17.♘d2 ♘xd2 with counterplay, M.Gurevich-Adams, Palma de Mallorca 1989.

13.♕e3

13.0-0?! ♘d5 14.♕d2 f5 15.♖e1 f4 16.♘h4 ♗xg2 17.♘xg2 ♕g6 with an attack, Chekhov-Sjöberg, Kecskemet 1991.

13...♕c6



This is a logical development of Black's opening strategy.

14.0-0 ♕d5 15.♗b2 ♘c6

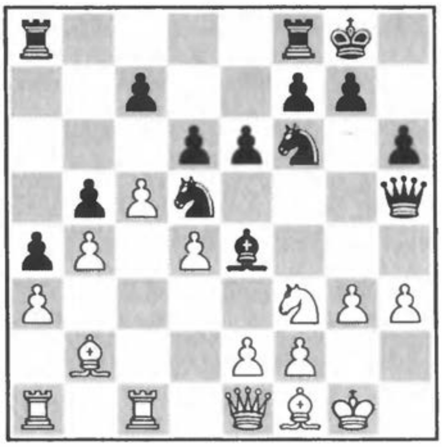
It's clear that Black is fine here. From now on, I will follow an analysis of Finkel's, with some suggestions for improvements.

16.♖fc1!? ♘e7 17.♗f1 ♕h5 18.h3

♘ed5 19.♕d2 h6?!

Too slow. Correct was 19...♗f5! 20.♕g5 (20.g4 ♗xg4 21.hxg4 ♕xg4+; 20.cxd6 ♘e4 21.♕e1 cxd6∞) 20...♕xg5 21.♘xg5 h6 equal.

20.♕e1!



Finally threatening to move the knight from f3, and thus forcing Black to take the knight and concede the advantage of the bishop pair. In most of the cases this plus is quite an important one.

20...♗xf3 21.exf3 ♖ab8 22.♔g2 ♕g6 23.♕d2 ♘h7 24.♖e1?!

A very strange decision to remove the rook from the semi-open c-file and to put it on e1, where it is out of play. The simple 24.cxd6 cxd6 25.♖c6 ♖fd8 26.♖ac1 ♕h5 27.♗e2 would have promised White a serious advantage. Somewhat better is 26...♘hf6 27.♕c2! ♕xc2 28.♖1xc2 ♔f8±.

24...f5 25.♖ad1 ♖fe8 26.♗d3 ♘g5 27.h4 ♘f7

Now Black has sufficient play to compensate for the two bishops.

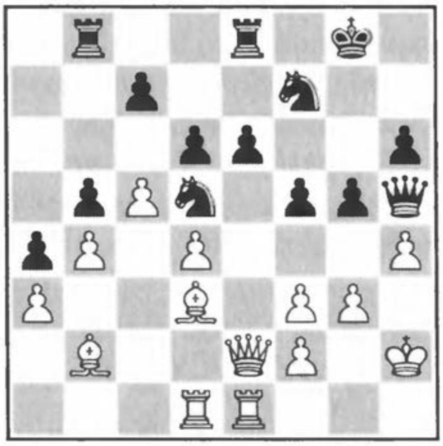
28.♔h2

28.♖e2 ♕f6 29.♖de1 g5 30.♖h1 ♔g7 31.♖ee1 unclear.

28...♕h5 29.♕e2 g5?

Giving up the queenside and hoping to create something on the kingside, which seems to be impossible.

29...c6 deserved attention, when after 30.cxd6 ♘xd6 31.♖c1 ♖bc8 32.♖c2 ♕f7 33.♖ec1 Black has a playable position.



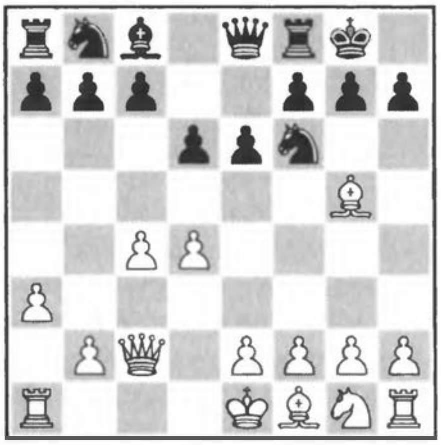
30.♔g2?! Strong was 30.♗xb5! ♖e7 (30...gxh4 31.g4) 31.♔g2 gxh4 32.♗c6! hxg3 33.fxg3 f4 34.g4±. **30...gxh4 31.♖h1?** After this move White not only loses his advantage, but he creates himself problems, which are not so easy to solve. Perhaps 31.♗xb5!?. **31...♘g5! 32.f4** For 32.♖xh4 ♕xh4! 33.gxh4 ♘f4+ 34.♔h1 ♘xe2 35.hxg5 ♘f4∓. **32...h3+ 33.♔f1 ♘f3 34.♕c2** 34.♗xb5 ♖e7! (not 34...♖xb5 35.♕xb5 ♘h2+ 36.♔e1 ♘f3+ 37.♔f1=) 35.♗c4 h2 36.♕d3 ♘xf4! 37.gxf4 ♖g7 38.♗xe6+ ♔f8 39.♕xf5+ ♕xf5 40.♗xf5 ♖e8! winning. **34...h2 35.♔g2 ♘xf4+! 36.gxf4 ♖e7! 37.d5 e5 38.♔f1 ♖g7 39.♕c1 ♖g1+ 40.♔e2 ♘d4+ 41.♔d2 ♖xh1 0-1**

☐ **Panagiotis Papadopoulos**
■ **Ioannis Nikolaidis**
Litohoro 2006

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♕c2 0-0 5.a3 ♗xc3+ 6.♕xc3 ♕e8 7.♘f3

A quite logical move. We can't blame White for developing a knight.

7.♕c2, planning to play ♗g5, looks strange. In fact, we'll get the same kind of position as in the variation 7.f3. In that case we learned that the bishop isn't well placed at g5, and that it is better for White to have the e4-pawn covered by a colleague at f3, rather than by the queen. 7...d6 8.♗g5 and now either 8...♘bd7 or 8...♘fd7. The latter may be easier to remember since this knight always retreats to d7 in this line. In the present variation, both knight-jumps are appropriate and of a roughly equal value.



8...♘bd7 9.e4 h6 10.♗d2 (not the most common square for the bishop. 10.♗h4 e5!) 10...e5 11.d5 a5 12.b3 ♘c5 13.f3 ♘h5! and I think Black stands already better, as ...a4 or ...f5 is coming, Anelli-Valerga, Buenos Aires 2005.

Alternatively, 8...♘fd7 9.e4 e5 10.d5 a5 11.♖d1 is best answered by 11...♘a6!. Because the rook is on d1, b4 isn't possible. ...♘dc5 is coming, followed by ...f5.

Less good are 11...f5 12.exf5 ♘c5 13.g4 (now we can see the only difference: it is not possible to open the centre by means of e4) and 11...a4 12.♗e3 ♘c5 (12...♖a5?!. I don't like this move from Kharlov-Ward, Gausdal 1992) 13.♗xc5 dxc5 14.♘e2±.

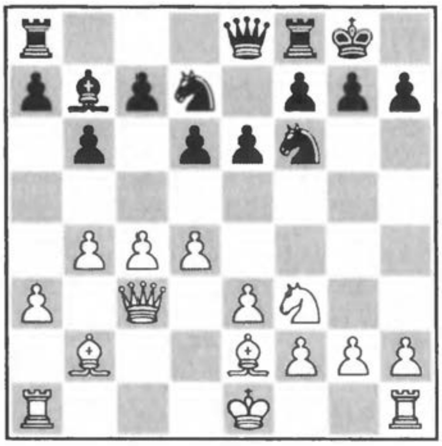
7...d6 8.e3

This doesn't look too ambitious. White wishes to develop the bishop on e2 and take space on the queenside with b4. Now we will see another plan for Black, and a very exciting one! Please note that 8.g3 transposes to Hauchard-Bauer.

8...b6

Logical. White didn't fight for the white squares, so Black simply develops his bishop on its strongest diagonal.

9.b4 ♗b7 10.♗e2 ♘bd7 11.♗b2



11...♘e4!

Of course the right idea. White isn't well-prepared to deal with this strong knight.

12.♕b3 f5!

In general, when Black obtains this set-up, his opponent tries to react with d5, but in the current situation it's not very effective.

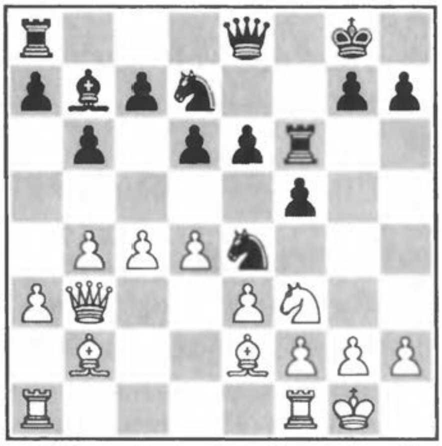
13.0-0

13.d5 exd5 14.cxd5 ♘df6 followed by ...♕f7. The d5-pawn is too weak and bound to fall.

13...♖f6!?

A logical continuation. Nikolaidis brings all his pieces into the attack.

13...♘df6 was also possible and better, leaving Black with a good game.

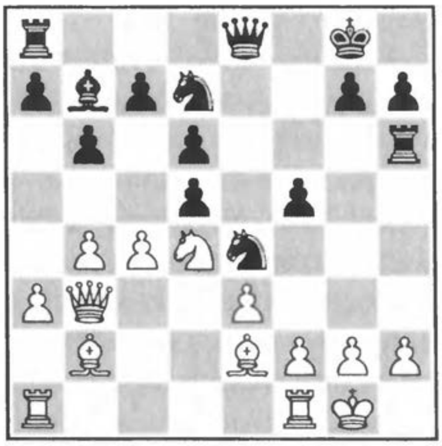


14.♖ac1

Best was 14.d5!. Trying to play d5 rather than c5 was superior for two reasons: White would open the a1-h8 diagonal while closing the menacing h1-a8 one. Now:

14...♖g6 is not very logical. Black needs to deploy the queen to h5!. 15.♖ad1! (15.♘d4 ♘d2 16.♕c3 ♘xf1 17.♘xe6 ♘xh2 18.♔xh2 ♘f6∓) 15...c5 (interesting, in order to prevent ♘d4, but insufficient to equalize. 15...exd5 16.♘h4) 16.dxc6! ♗xc6 17.c5! bxc5 18.♘h4! cxb4 19.♘xg6 ♕xg6 20.f3 ♘ec5 21.♕xb4 ♖b8 22.♕d2±.

14...e5 is of course possible, intending to continue aggressively. The drawback of this move is the entombment of the bishop on b7. Best, though, is 14...♖h6 15.♘d4! (15.dxe6 ♕xe6 16.♖ad1 ♕f7! 17.♘d4 c5 18.♘b5 a6 19.♘c3 ♘xc3 20.♕xc3 ♖e8 and Black looks fine) 15...exd5! (not 15...♘d2 16.♕c3 ♘xf1 17.♘xe6 ♘e5 18.♖xf1 ♖xe6 19.dxe6 ♕xe6 20.c5! and White has got some pressure)



- 16.cxd5 ♘d2 17.♕c3 ♘xf1 18.♘xf5 (18.♖xf1 ♗xd5) 18...♖g6 19.♗xf1 ♗xd5 20.♕xc7 ♕e6 21.♘g3 ♘e5 and the position is messy.
- 16.♘xf5 ♖g6 17.cxd5 ♘d2 18.♕d3 ♘xf1 19.♖xf1. White has good compensation for the exchange but after 19...♘f6 20.♗f3 ♕f7 followed by ...♖e8, the black position is very solid.

14...♖h6!

Black follows his plan.

15.c5

The threat is c6. 15.d5 e5! is again playable, when in comparison with the same position one move earlier, Black has inserted a more useful move than White. Next is ...♕h5.

15...♕h5!

Now we can see yet another idea of 6...♕e8!

16.♖fd1

16.h3 ♗d5! (the bishop is very strong and shouldn't be left shut in by c6) 17.♗c4 ♘df6 Now Black is slightly better, mainly because of the very bad ♗b2. The knight move is stronger than 17...♖g6 18.♗xd5 ♕xf3 19.g3 ♖xg3+ which looks attractive, but Black is only rewarded by a perpetual check: 20.fxg3 ♕xg3+ 21.♔h1 ♕xh3+ 22.♔g1 ♕g3+ 23.♔h1.

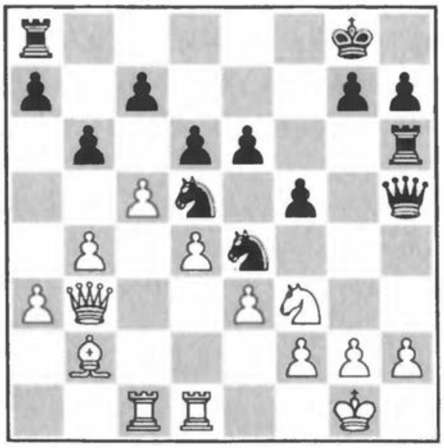
If 16.c6 then 16...♘d2!−+. This is the idea!

16...♗d5! 17.♗c4

17.♕a4 ♘df6 (♘g4 is coming) 18.cxd6 (18.h3 ♘g5!) 18...cxd6 19.♕a6 ♖f8! and White has got serious concerns, for example: 20.h3 (20.♕xa7 ♘g5! 21.♖c7 ♖g6!−+; 20.♖c8 ♘g5!) 20...♘g5 21.♘xg5 ♕xg5 22.♗f1 ♖xh3 23.♖c8 ♘e4∓.

17...♘df6 18.♗xd5 ♘xd5

The dark horses completely dominate the position.



19.cxd6 cxd6 20.♖c6 ♖g6! 21.♘e1 ♖f8

21...f4! was even better.

22.♕c2

Or 22.f3 ♘g5 winning.

22...f4! 23.exf4?!

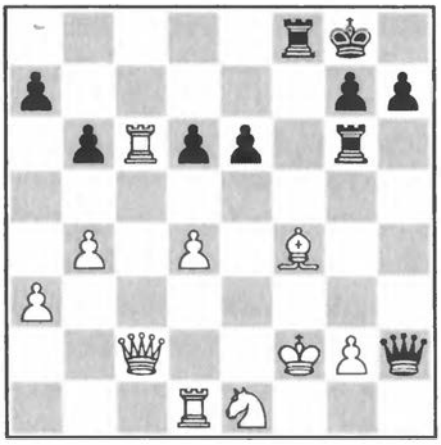
The last mistake, but it was already too late. 23.♖c8 fxe3 24.♖xf8+ (24.f3 ♕xh2+! 25.♔xh2 ♖h6+ 26.♔g1 ♘g3 mating) 24...♔xf8 25.fxe3 ♘xe3 26.♕c8+ ♔f7 27.♕d7+ ♔f6 28.d5+ ♔g5 and the king escapes to h6.

23...♘xf2

Not the most precise, but everything is winning!

After 23...♘xf4! the computer assesses the position as +6.00 for Black!

24.♔xf2 ♕xh2 25.♗c1 ♘xf4 26.♗xf4



26...♕xf4+?

Black misses an easy win! Now his task is getting harder. Winning was 26...♖xg2+! 27.♘xg2 ♖xf4+ 28.♔e3 ♕g3+ 29.♔d2 ♖xd4+ 30.♔e2 (30.♔c1 ♕xa3+) 30...♕xg2+ 31.♔e3 ♕xc2 32.♖xc2 ♖xd1.

27.♘f3 ♕g5 28.♖g1?

28.♖f1! was the only chance when Black has to find precise moves to carry on the assault: 28...♕xg2+ 29.♔e1 ♕g3+ 30.♔d1 ♕h3! 31.♖f2! (31.♕d3 ♖gf6! 32.♖c3 g5∓) 31...♖g3 32.♖c3 h5 followed by ...♕g4 and ...h4, but it's not clear that Black stands really better.

28...♕h4+ 29.♔e2 ♖xf3!

The decisive blow.

30.♔xf3

30.♖c8+ ♖f8 31.♖xf8+ ♔xf8 32.♕c8+ ♔f7 33.♕c7+ ♕e7∓.

30...♖f6+ 31.♔e3

And White resigned. After 31...♕g3+ the game is over.

This game is a good illustration of how to play against ♞f3, e3 and b4. ...♕e8 is really useful for that purpose; when Black manages to play ...♕h5, things are becoming very dangerous for White.

In conclusion:

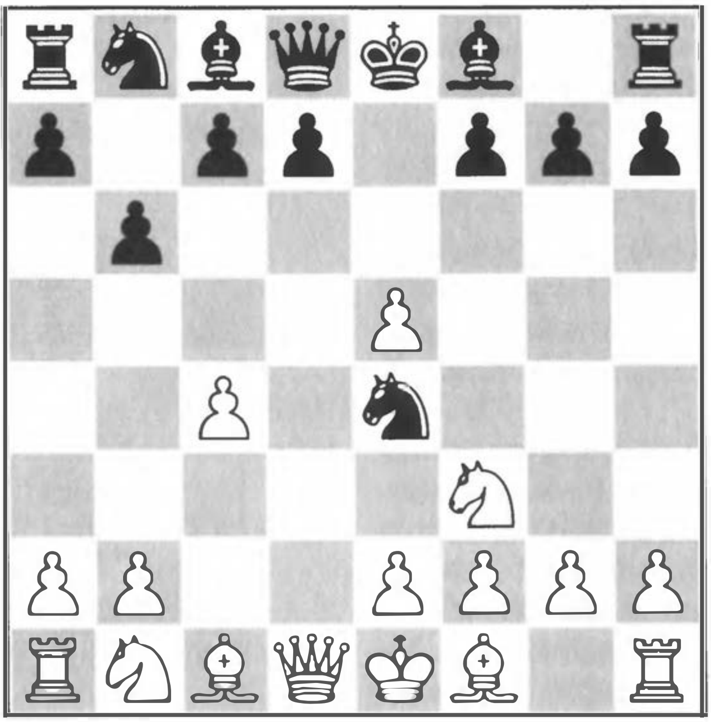
- 6...♕e8 in the 4.♕c2 Nimzo-Indian is completely sound and playable. This unusual move clearly isn't so 'stupid'.
- 7.f3 seems to be the critical line, but the last attempt from Nikolaidis playing the black side is really motivating.

All in all, the ball is in White's court, and it is his turn to demonstrate a real edge. We wish you a lot of success with this variation!

CHAPTER 7

Arthur Kogan

The Budapest Gambit Can Still Surprise!



A personal view on 3...♘e4

Do you like gambits as Black, but do you have the feeling that most gambits are too well studied? Well, here is a gambit that I found very interesting and not too popular in practice, so it gives excellent SOS chances! I will try to show you the main ideas with my home analysis and a special selection of instructive games:

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e5

The Budapest Gambit, so what is new here?

3.dxe5 ♘e4

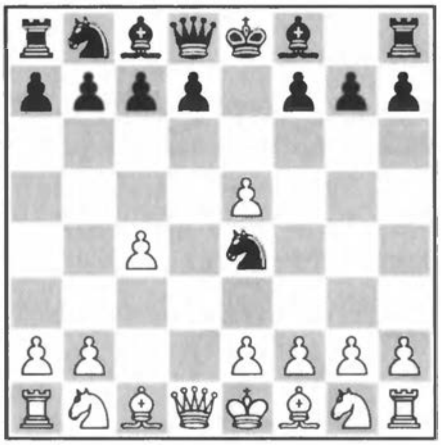
OK, 3...♘g4 is more common and well studied, so let's try to surprise! With the odd 3...♘e4 (the Fajarowicz line) we don't even attack e5, so it can really confuse White. The usual idea for Black is to develop quickly and later to break with ...d6 or ...f6, to open more files and diagonals for his pieces, a strategy which can create fun games!

I will present you with a personal view of how Black should play against the main lines.

I will look at:

A 4.a3
B 4.♕c2
C 4.♘d2
D 4.♘f3

However, let's first investigate a few minor alternatives:



– 4.g3 ♗c5 (or 4...♗b4+) 5.e3 ♘c6 6.♗g2 ♗b4+ 7.♘d2 ♘c5 8.♘f3 ♘d3+ 9.♔e2 ♘xc1+ 10.♖xc1 0-0 with obvious compensation in Schandorff-Conquest, Torshavn 1997.

– 4.♕d5 is ambitious but risky. Let's see 4...♗b4+ (4...f5 is less precise but still playable: 5.exf6 ♘xf6 6.♕d1 ♗c5 7.♘f3 ♘c6 8.♘c3 d6 9.e3 0-0 10.♗e2 ♗g4 11.h3 ♗d7 12.a3 a5 13.b3 ♕e8 14.♗b2 ♕g6 with compensation in Alterman-Kogan, Tel Aviv 1996) 5.♗d2 (or 5.♘d2 f5! 6.exf6 ♘xf6=∞) 5...♘xd2 6.♘xd2 ♘c6 7.♘f3 d6 8.exd6 ♗e6 9.dxc7 ♕xc7 10.♕g5 0-0 and even with two pawns down I would prefer Black here, what about you? A clue: look at the white king just to make your choice easier.

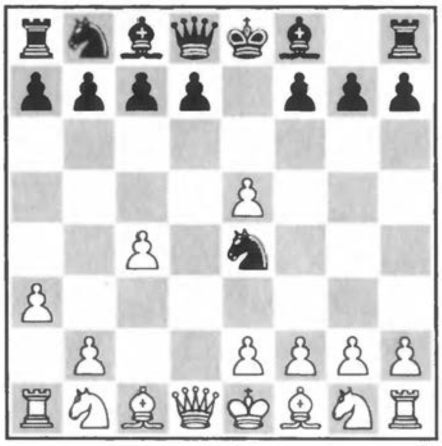
– 4.♕d4 ♗b4+ 5.♘c3 ♘xc3 6.bxc3 ♘c6 7.♕e3 ♗a5 seems to give Black very decent compensation (7...♗e7 is more risky but gave Black a nice win after 8.♕g3 ♔f8 9.♗f4 b6 10.♘f3 h6 11.h4 ♗a6 12.e4 ♗c5 13.h5 ♕e7 14.♘h4 ♕e6 15.♗e2 ♖e8 16.♗g4 ♕xc4 17.♕f3 ♔g8 18.e6 dxe6 19.e5 ♘b4! 0-1 Svela-Reefschläger, Gausdal 1990). If 8.♗a3 then Black goes 8...♕h4!.

– 4.♗f4 ♗b4+ 5.♘d2 ♘c6 6.♘f3 g5!? (6...♕e7) After this provocative move White lost quickly after: 7.♗g3 (7.♗e3 ♕e7) 7...g4 (7...♘d4! looks nice too, and there is also 7...h5) 8.♗h4? (8.a3) 8...f6 9.exf6 gxf3 10.f7+ ♔xf7 11.♗xd8 ♗xd2+ 12.♕xd2 ♘xd2 13.♗xc7 ♘xf1 14.gxf3 d5 15.cxd5 ♘b4 16.♔xf1 ♗h3+ 0-1 Ianov-Gutdeutsch, Koszeg 1996.

Variation A

4.a3

This is a main approach versus the Fajarowicz. White makes sure that he is not disturbed by a check on b4.



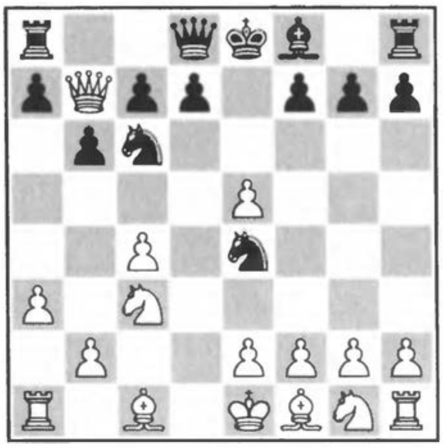
4...d6

It is logical to give our pieces more space and to try to use White's slow move. I consider the text to be the strongest move.

● Too 'creative' is 4...♕h4!? 5.g3 ♕h5 6.♗g2 ♕xe5 7.♕c2 ♘f6 8.♘f3 ♕h5 9.♘c3 ♗e7 10.h3 c6 11.e4± Van Wely-Alburt, New York 1994.

● Not too helpful was 4...a5 5.♕c2 d5 6.♘d2 ♗f5 7.♘xe4 ♗xe4 8.♕a4+ ♘c6 9.♗f4 g5 10.♗g3 ½-½ Drasko-Forgacs, Caorle 1989.

● 4...b6!? is in the article's spirit. The main idea of the ...b6 trap is 5.♕d5 (a funny game was 5.♕c2 ♗b7 6.♘c3 ♘xc3 7.♕xc3 a5 8.♘f3 ♗b4! 0-1 Schmied-Schlindwein, Untergrombach 2003) 5...♗b7! 6.♕xb7 ♘c6, when the white queen is in danger – ...♘c5, ...a6 or ...a5 are threats to White's queen. However after 7.♘c3!, a hard move to find behind the board, but I must mention it here, the problem is that Black can't play ...♗b4.

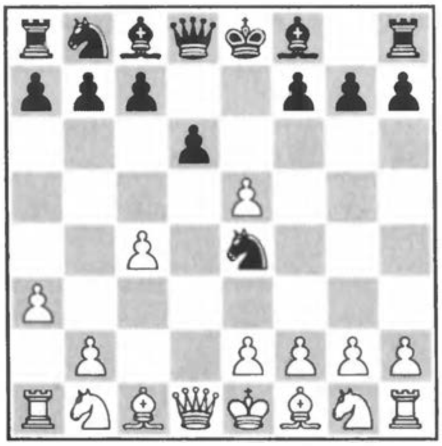


– The point is that after 7...♘c5, 8.♗g5! saves the white queen and gives some edge for White: 8...♘xb7 9.♗xd8 ♔xd8 10.f4 ♘ba5 11.e3 ♘b3 12.♖d1 ♗c5 13.♔f2 g5 14.g3.

Other moves are also insufficient:

– 7...♘xc3 8.bxc3 a6 9.♗g5 ♗e7 10.♗xe7 ♔xe7 11.0-0-0 ♖a7 12.♕xc6.

– 7...♖b8 8.♕xb8 (8.♕a6 ♘c5) 8...♕xb8 9.♘xe4 and White will have an important material edge for the queen.



5.♘f3

Here 5.exd6 ♗xd6 6.♘d2 ♗f5 7.e3 ♕e7 8.♘gf3 ♘c6 9.♗e2 0-0-0 gave Black a nice initiative and a winning edge after: 10.0-0 ♖he8 11.♕b3 ♕f6 12.♘xe4 ♗xe4 13.♗d2 ♕h6 (13...♗xh2+! 14.♔xh2 ♗xf3 15.♗xf3 ♖xd2∓) 14.g3 ♕h3 15.♗c3 ♖e6 16.♖fd1 g5! 17.♖d2 g4 18.♘h4 ♖h6 19.f4 gxf3 20.♗f1 ♕g4 21.♖xd6 ♖dxd6 G.Buckley-T.Wall, England tt 1997/98.

5.♕c2 was played by GM Atalik, but it did not help him to win against a much lower rated player who surprised him with 5...d5!? (5...♗f5 seems very logical as well) 6.♘c3 (6.♘d2 ♗f5) 6...♘xc3 7.♕xc3 d4 8.♕g3 ♗e6 9.e4 ♘c6 10.♗d2 d3! 11.♗xd3 ♘xe5! 12.♗c2 ♘xc4 13.♗c3 ♗d6 14.♕xg7 ♗e5! 15.♕h6 ♗xc3+ 16.bxc3 ♕d6 17.♘e2 0-0-0 with excellent compensation in Atalik-Fette, Groningen 1999.

5...♘c6

A creative game was played by GM Gutman after 5...♗f5 6.g3 h5!? 7.♗g2 ♘c6 8.♘d4 ♘xd4 9.♕xd4 ♘c5 10.♕e3 dxe5 11.b4 ♘e6 12.♗b2 f6 13.♗xb7 ♖b8 14.♗e4 ♗c5! 15.♕f3 ♗g4 16.♗g6+ ♔e7 17.♕d3 ♕xd3 18.♗xd3 h4! 19.♘c3 a5 20.♘d5+ ♔f7 21.♗c3 c6 22.bxc5 cxd5 23.c6 d4 24.♗xa5 ♘c5 with compensation, Levin-Gutman, Altenkirchen ch-GER 2001.

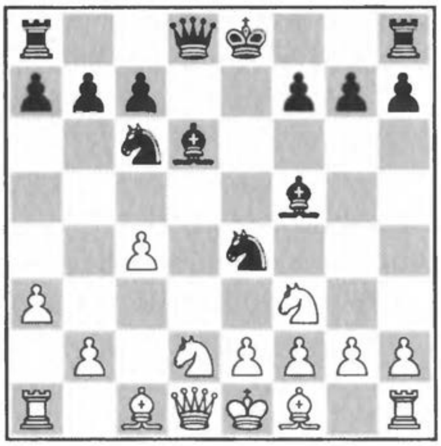
6.exd6

6.♕c2 ♗f5 (not 6...♘c5 7.b4 ♘e6 8.♗b2 dxe5 9.e3 f6 10.♗d3 g6 11.h4 ♗g7 12.♘c3 f5 13.0-0-0 Garcia Vicente-Rogers, Las Palmas 1995) led to crazy complications after: 7.♘bd2 ♘g3 8.e4 ♘xh1 9.exf5 dxe5 10.♘e4 ♗e7 (play is unclear) 11.♗e3 0-0 (11...♕d7) 12.♔e2 (12.♗d3 g6 13.0-0-0) 12...♘d4+ 13.♗xd4 exd4 14.♖d1 c5 15.g4 ♗h4 16.♗g2 ♘xf2 17.♘xf2 ♖e8+ and Black won in Hermesmann-Bigalke, Hamburg 2001.

6...♗xd6 7.♘bd2

The blunder 7.g3? has occurred more than once in practice! Black has 7...♘xf2! since 8.♔xf2 is met by 8...♗xg3+ winning the queen.

7...♗f5



8.♘xe4

The natural 8.g3 is weak after 8...♗c5! 9.e3 ♕f6 (or 9...♕e7 10.♕e2 0-0-0 11.♘h4 ♘xd2 12.♗xd2 ♗e4 13.♕g4+ ♔b8 14.f3 f5 15.♕h3 ♗c2 16.e4 fxe4 17.♘f5 ♕d7 Garcia del Campo-Garcia Castro, Villagarcia de Arosa 2005) 10.♗g2 0-0-0 11.0-0 h5 with nice attacking chances. White now gave back the pawn, but was worse in Olsen-Conquest, Reykjavik 1996, after 12.♘d4 ♘xd2 13.♗xd2 ♘xd4 14.exd4 ♗xd4 15.♕f3 c6 16.♗e3 ♗xb2 17.♖a2 ♗d4 18.♖d2 ♗xe3 19.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 20.fxe3 ♗g6 with a big edge.

8...♗xe4

Black has a dangerous initiative as was confirmed in practice.

9.e3

Or 9.♕b3 ♕e7 10.♗e3 0-0 11.g3? (11.♘d2 ♖fe8) 11...♗xf3 12.exf3 ♘d4 13.♕d1 ♗b4+!! 0-1 Bjerring-Hvenekilde, Tastrup 1995.

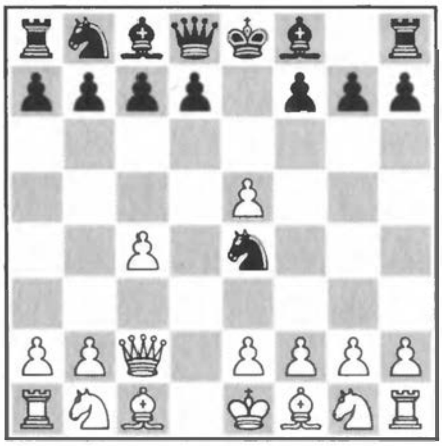
9...♕e7 10.♘d2 0-0-0 11.♕a4 ♘d4! 12.♘xe4 ♕xe4 13.♔d1 ♘c2! 14.♕xc2 ♗b4+ 15.♗d2 ♖xd2+ 16.♕xd2 ♗xd2 17.♔xd2 ♖d8+ 18.♔c3 ♕e5+ 19.♔c2 ♕f5+ 20.♔c3 ♕f6+ 21.♔b3 ♖d2

And Black is winning, S.Bekker Jensen-Simonsen, Copenhagen 2000.

Variation B

4.♕c2

In my opinion Black now has two good options:



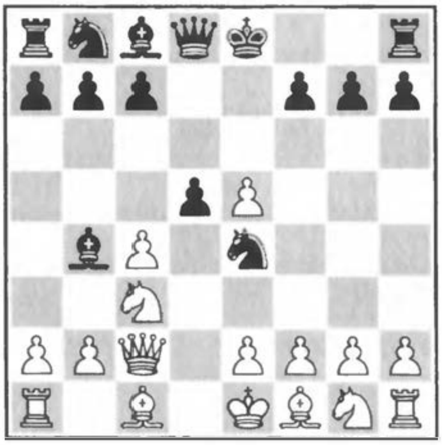
B1 4...♗b4+
B2 4...d5

In both cases Black develops quickly and obtains a highly dangerous initiative for the pawn.

Variation B1

4...♗b4+ 5.♘d2

Rather meek is 5.♗d2. After 5...♘xd2 6.♘xd2 ♘c6 7.♘f3 ♕e7 8.a3 ♗xd2+ 9.♕xd2 ♘xe5 10.♘xe5 ♕xe5 11.e3 d6 12.♗e2 a5 13.0-0 a4 14.♖fd1 0-0 15.♖ac1 the position should be about equal, but the black pawn on a4 gives him some hope for the long-term fight. Black indeed won a nice game in Meins-Gutman, Höckendorf 2004. Black is also fine after 5.♘c3 d5



– 6.exd6 ♗f5! worked well against the Russian (now French) GM after 7.♗d2 ♘xd6 8.e4 ♗xc3 9.♗xc3 ♗xe4 10.♕d2 0-0 11.0-0-0 ♘a6 (11...♘d7) 12.♕f4 ♕e8 13.b3 ♗g6 14.♗d3 ♘c5 15.♕d4 ♘xd3+ 16.♖xd3 f6 17.♕d5+ and now instead of 17...♕f7 18.♕xf7+ and draw agreed in Vaisser-Vökler, Groningen 1991, Black should have played 17...♔h8! with a clear edge.

– 6.cxd5 ♕xd5 7.♗d2 ♕xd2+! 8.♕xd2 ♘xd2 9.♔xd2 ♘c6 10.♘f3 ♗g4 and Black regained the pawn with a nice initiative to win the endgame! Cruz Lopez Claret-Bellon Lopez, Lleida ch-ESP 1991.

5...d5!

Here too this active pawn thrust is the right method.

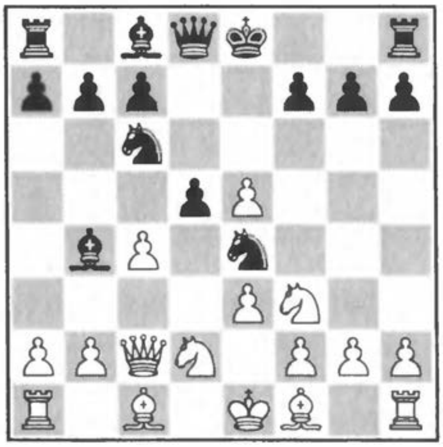
6.♘f3

Not 6.exd6 ♗f5! which simply favours Black:

– Cooperative is 7.dxc7 ♕xc7 8.♕a4+ ♘c6 9.♘f3 0-0-0 10.a3 ♗xd2+ 11.♗xd2 ♘xd2 12.♘xd2 ♖xd2 13.♔xd2 ♕e5 winning, Müs-Reinhardt, cr 1934.

– However, White did not fare any better in Pöltl-Cigan, Gleisdorf 1989, with 7.♕a4+ ♘c6 8.♘f3 ♕xd6 9.a3 ♘c5 10.♕d1 0-0-0 11.e3 ♖he8 12.♗e2 ♘d3+ 13.♗xd3 ♗xd3 14.♕b3 ♘d4 15.axb4 ♘xb3 0-1.

6...♘c6 7.e3



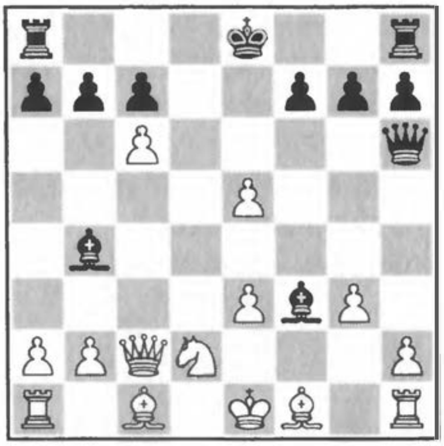
7...♗g4!?

This is the most aggressive move, but some home analysis is required in the complications that follow. My way to play would be the 'simple' 7...♗f5 8.♗d3 0-0 with compensation.

8.cxd5 ♗xf3 9.dxc6

Otherwise Black is just better.

9...♕h4 10.g3 ♘xg3 11.fxg3 ♕h6



– The sacrifice worked well in Stohl-Trapl, Namestovo 1987, after 12.♗b5 ♕xe3+ 13.♔f1 0-0 14.♘xf3 ♕xf3+ 15.♔g1 ♗a5! Black now has a great attack and won following 16.h3 ♕xg3+ 17.♕g2 ♕e1+ 18.♕f1 ♕g3+ 19.♕g2 ♕xe5 20.♕e2 ♗b6+ 21.♔g2 ♕d5+ 22.♔h2 ♖ae8 23.♕c4 ♕e5+ 24.♔g2 ♖e6! and so on.

– Stronger is 12.♕b3!, and now rather than 12...0-0 13.♖g1 ♗xd2+ 14.♗xd2 ♕xh2 15.e4! ♕xg1 16.♕xf3± Finegold-Vökler, Groningen 1990, I would recommend 12...♗xd2+ 13.♗xd2 ♗xh1 14.cxb7 ♖b8.

Variation B2

4...d5!? 5.♘d2

Other options include:

– Short and nice was 5.e3 ♘c6 6.a3 ♗f5 7.♕a4 ♘c5 8.♕d1 dxc4 9.♕xd8+ ♖xd8 10.♗xc4 ♘xe5 11.♘d2 ♘xc4 12.♘xc4 ♘b3 0-1 Asensio Soto-Granados Gomez, Cordoba 1995.

– 5.♘f3 ♗f5 6.♕d1 ♘c6 7.e3 ♗b4+

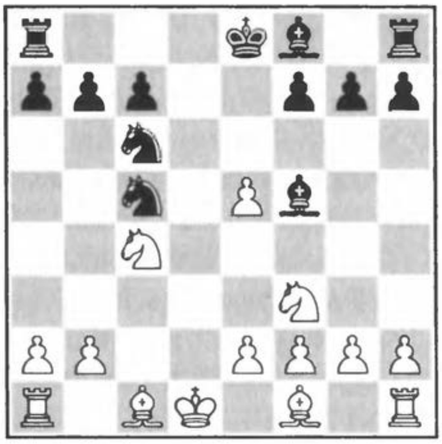
8.♘bd2 d4 9.exd4 ♘xd4 10.♘xd4 ♗xd2+ 11.♗xd2 ♕xd4 12.♗e3 ♕xb2 13.♕d4 ♕b4+ 14.♗d2 ♘xd2 15.♕xd2 ♕xd2+ 16.♔xd2 0-0-0+ 17.♔c3 ♖he8 and having regained the pawn, Black has a clear edge in the ending. Vazquez-Liascovich, Buenos Aires 2001.

– 5.exd6 ♗f5 6.♘c3 ♘xd6 7.e4 ♘xe4 8.♘xe4 ♗b4+ 9.♗d2 (9.♔e2 0-0 gives Black too strong an attack) 9...♗xd2+ 10.♕xd2 ♗xe4 11.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 12.0-0-0+ ♔c8 with equality in Alber-Trapl, Litomerice 1990.

5...♗f5 6.♕a4+ ♘c6 7.♘gf3 ♘c5

Forcing a favourable ending.

8.♕d1 dxc4 9.♘xc4 ♕xd1+ 10.♔xd1



After 10...♘e4 11.♔e1 ♗b4+ 12.♗d2 ♘xd2 13.♘cxd2 0-0-0 14.a3 Tabernig-Schlindwein, Austria tt-2 2000/01, Black should have played 14...♗xd2+ 15.♘xd2 ♘xe5 with a slight plus, rather than 14...♘d4 which led to equality.

In fact, I would prefer the even more ambitious 10...0-0-0+ 11.♗d2 (11.♔e1 ♗e6 12.e3 ♘b4) 11...♘e4 12.♔e1 b5 13.♘e3 ♗e6 14.a3 ♘xd2 15.♘xd2 ♘xe5 with a great game for Black.

Variation C

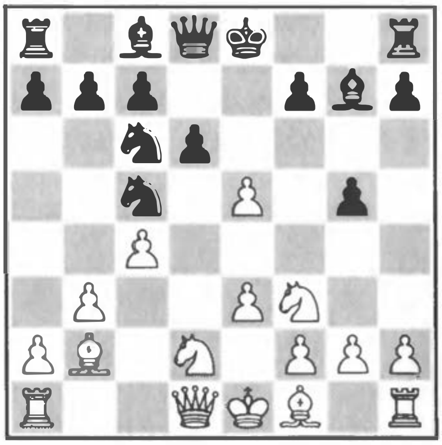
4.♘d2 ♘c5

The main line, but 4...♗b4 deserves attention. Now 5.♕c2 transposes to a previous line. Of independent interest is 5.g3 b6!? (not 5...♘c6 6.♗g2 ♘xd2 7.♗xd2 ♕e7 8.f4 g5 9.♗xb4 ♕xb4+ 10.♕d2 ♕xc4 11.♖c1 ♕xa2 12.♘f3 g4 13.♘g5± Larsen-Romero Holmes, Mesa 1992; but 5...d6 is an alternative). With this original move GM Lopez Bellon once again managed to surprise another solid GM. After 6.♗g2 ♗b7 7.f3 ♘xd2 8.♗xd2 ♕e7 9.e4 ♘c6 10.♘e2 ♘xe5 Black was already better. After the further 11.0-0 ♘xc4 12.♗xb4 ♕xb4 13.♕d4 c5 14.♕xg7 ♕xb2 15.♕xb2 ♘xb2 16.♘c3 ♗c6 17.f4 0-0-0 he was pawn up in the ending. Epishin-Bellon Lopez, Malaga 2000.

5.♘gf3 ♘c6 6.e3

● 6.g3 d6 (or 6...♕e7 7.♗g2 g6!? 8.0-0 ♗g7 9.♘b3 ♘e6 10.♗e3 0-0 11.♕d5 a5 12.♘c5? ♘b4 13.♘xe6 ♘xd5 14.♗c5 ♕xe6 15.cxd5 ♕xd5 16.♗xf8 ♔xf8–+ Perez-Zapata, Havana 2001) 7.exd6 ♗xd6 8.♗g2 ♗f5 9.0-0 ♕e7 10.♘b3 0-0-0 11.♗e3 h5 with unclear play in Cosma-Stefanova, Niksic 1994.

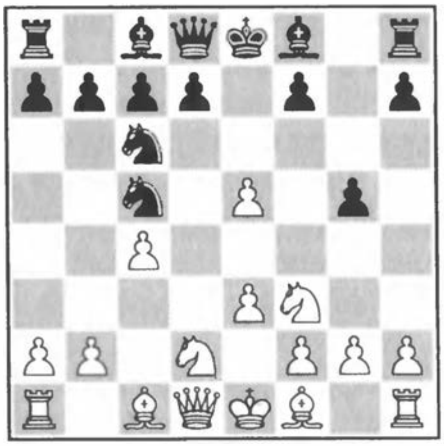
● 6.b3 g5! 7.♗b2 ♗g7 8.e3 d6



– 9.♘d4 ♘b4 (or simply 9...♘xe5) 10.♘2f3 dxe5 11.a3 ♘ba6 12.b4 exd4 13.bxc5 g4 14.♘xd4 0-0 15.g3 c6 16.♕c2 ♘xc5 17.0-0-0 ♕a5 with counterplay, Black won eventually in Ulko-Gorbatow, Moscow 1997.

– 9.♗e2 dxe5 10.0-0 ♗f5 11.b4?! ♘xb4 12.♗xe5 ♗xe5 13.♘xe5 ♕d6! 14.e4 (14.♘df3 f6) 14...♕xe5 15.exf5 0-0-0! 16.♗f3 ♕c3! with a superb position in Demirel-Kogan, Vlissingen 1996.

6...g5!?



This is a typical idea that I used more than once in this opening! Even if it looks risky, it also poses White some very concrete problems.

Another 'normal way' to continue is 6...d6. While 6...g6 7.♘b3 ♘xb3 8.♕xb3 ♗g7 9.♗d2 ♕e7 10.♗c3 0-0 11.♗e2 b6 12.0-0 ♗b7 13.♖fd1 ♖ad8 14.♖ac1 ♘xe5 15.♘xe5 ♗xe5 16.c5 ♕g5 17.♗f1 ♗xc3 18.♕xc3 ♗c6 was solid for Black who eventually drew in Psakhis-Zapata, Las Vegas 1999.

7.h3 ♗g7 8.♘d4 ♘xe5 9.♘2f3 d6 10.♕c2 ♕f6!?

Also playable is 10...♕e7.

11.♗e2 h5 12.♖b1 g4 13.hxg4 hxg4 14.♖xh8+ ♗xh8 15.♘d2 g3!

With a promising position for Black, Zournatsidis-Kogan, Athens 1999.

Variation D

4.♘f3

The most normal move, but since Black did not attack the e5 pawn, White has a big choice as we have seen.

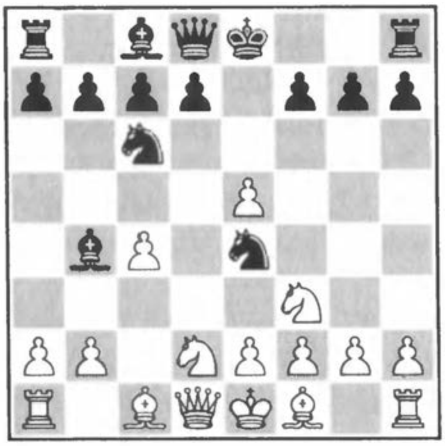
4...b6!?

This move which I played successfully a couple of times is what I offer you here. Black wants to finish his development and prepare to castle queenside when the bishop on b7 might be a very important piece for attacking the white king!

Another advantage of 4...b6 is that it contains a deadly trap.

● In fact the main line with 4...♗b4+ is also quite playable. Bellon Lopez is the main advocate of this variation with many interesting games against strong players.

Let us investigate: 4...♗b4+ 5.♘bd2 (here 5.♗d2 ♘xd2 6.♘bxd2 ♘c6 7.a3 transposes) 5...♘c6

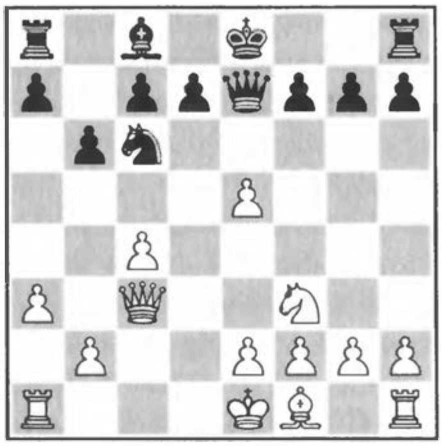


Now White's main move is 6.a3. Other moves are less critical. For example:

– 6.g3 d6 (6...♕e7 7.♗g2 ♘xe5 8.0-0 ♘xd2 9.♗xd2 ♘xf3+ 10.♗xf3 ♗xd2 11.♕xd2 0-0 led to equality in Dreev-Kahn, ICC 2003) 7.exd6 ♕xd6 8.a3 ♕c5 9.e3 ♗xd2+ 10.♘xd2 ♘xd2 11.♗xd2 ♗e6 with compensation in Mandelbaum-Bisguier, Helsinki ol 1952.

– 6.e3 ♕e7 7.♗e2 b6 8.0-0 ♘xd2 9.♗xd2 ♗xd2 10.♕xd2 ♗b7 11.♕c3 0-0-0 12.♖ac1 ♖he8 13.c5 ♔b8 14.♖fd1 g5 with counterplay in Campos Moreno-Vega Holm, Santiago 1995.

So White should play 6.a3 when the following line is forced: 6...♘xd2 7.♗xd2 ♗xd2+ 8.♕xd2 ♕e7 9.♕c3 (otherwise Black would just take back on e5 with an easy game) 9...b6



This is a critical position for 4...♗b4+. In practice Black has done well:

– 10.g3 ♗b7 11.♗h3 0-0-0 12.0-0-0 ♖he8 13.♖d5 ♘b8 14.♖d3 ♗xf3 15.♖xf3 ♕c5! 16.♖xf7? (a blunder, necessary was 16.♖d1) 16...♕c6! 17.♖d1 ♕h6+ 18.f4 ♕xh3 and Black won in Ionescu-Bellon Lopez, Bern 1992.

– 10.e3 ♗b7 11.♗e2 0-0-0 12.0-0-0 g5 (or 12...♖he8 13.♖d5 ♘b8 14.♖d2 ♘c6 15.♖d5 ♘b8 16.♖d2 ♘c6 ½-½ Oms Pallise-Narciso Dublan, Paretana 2000) 13.h3 h5 14.♗d3 ♖he8 15.♗e4 ♘xe5 16.♗xb7+ ♔xb7 17.♘xe5 ♕xe5 18.♕xe5 ♖xe5 with an equal game. Summermatter-Bellon Lopez, Bern 1995.

● Bellon Lopez has also played 4...♘c6. To give one example: 5.a3 (5.♘bd2) 5...a5 6.e3 g6!? 7.♗d3 ♘c5 8.e4 ♗g7 9.♗g5 ♘xd3+ 10.♕xd3 ♘xe5! 11.♕d5 ♘xf3+ 12.gxf3 ♗f6 13.♗xf6 ♕xf6 which was fine in Gonzalez Velez-Bellon Lopez, Terrassa 1994.

5.♘bd2

● White can prevent any unpleasantness on b4 with 5.a3. After 5...♗b7 there can follow:

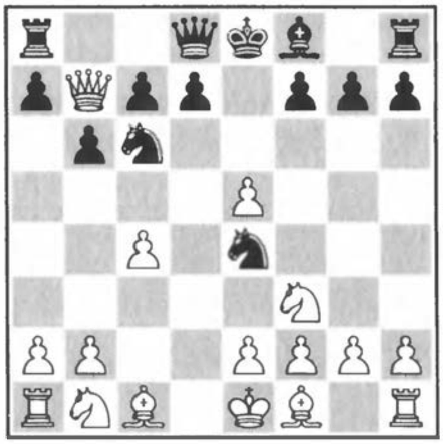
– 6.e3 ♘c6 7.b3 ♕e7 8.♗b2 0-0-0 9.♕c2 ♘g5 10.♗e2 ♘xf3+ 11.♗xf3 ♘xe5 12.♗xb7+ ♔xb7 13.♘c3 (13.♕e4+ ♘c6) 13...♕e6 14.♕e4+ c6 15.♘e2 ♘g6 16.♕c2 ♘h4 with counterplay in Sarmiento Alfonso-Romero Holmes, Mesa 1992.

– 6.♘bd2 looks best. Now 6...♕e7 7.♕c2 ♘xd2 8.♗xd2 ♘c6 9.♗c3 was clearly better for White, Hillarp Persson-Romero Holmes, Benidorm 2003. The same goes for 6...a5 7.♘xe4 ♗xe4 8.♕d4 ♗b7 9.♕g4, Eliet-Herbrechtsmeier, France tt 2001. Perhaps some black players will like 6...f5.

However, my personal favourite is 6...♘c5 7.b4 ♘e6 with the idea of ...g5-g4 with ...♗g7 coming up. Black has typical compensation!

● 5.♕d5 is the big question! What about this double threat?

However, this is what we have been waiting for: 5...♗b7! 6.♕xb7 ♘c6. A piece down, Black is trapping the queen with a slow move! Now ...♘c5 is one threat and more hidden one's are ...a5 or ...a6 with the idea of ...♖a7! Very tricky, right?



I analyse:

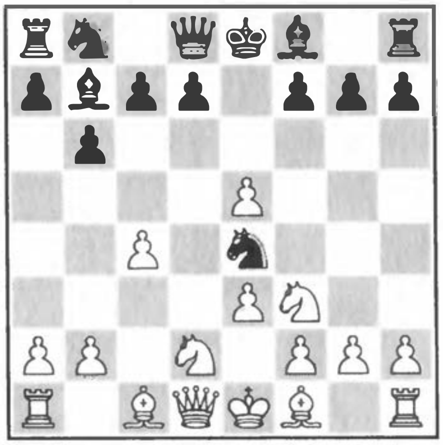
– 7.♘d4 ♗b4+ 8.♘c3 0-0 9.♘xc6 dxc6 10.a3 ♘xc3 11.♗d2 (11.f4 ♕d1+ 12.♔f2 ♗c5+ 13.♔f3 ♘xe2) 11...♘e4 12.♗xb4 ♕d4.

– 7.♕a6 ♗b4+! (7...♘c5 8.♕a3) 8.♗d2 ♘c5 9.♕b5 ♗xd2+ 10.♘bxd2 a6! and surprisingly the queen is lost! This is the main trap and at least one of my students was already happy to catch his opponent in this way!

– 7.♗e3 ♗b4+ (7...a6 8.♘d4 ♗b4+ 9.♘c3) 8.♘c3 ♘xc3 9.a3 ♘a5 10.♕a6 ♘d5+ 11.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 12.♘xd2 ♘f4 13.e3 ♘e6 14.b4 ♘c6 with compensation.

5...♗b7 6.e3

White has other options of course. I won quite a few rapid games with 6.♘xe4 ♗xe4 7.a3 ♘c6 8.♗f4 f6! with excellent counterplay.



6...g5!?

This was my provocative novelty, and although I can't say that objectively it is the best move in the position, I can assure you that it will be a SOS bomb that will shake your opponent. Just look at what happened in the present game.

Other possibilities are: 6...♘c5 7.b4 ♘e6 8.♖b1 a5 9.b5 d6, 6...♗b4, and 6...a5!?.

7.♘xe4 ♗xe4 8.♕d4

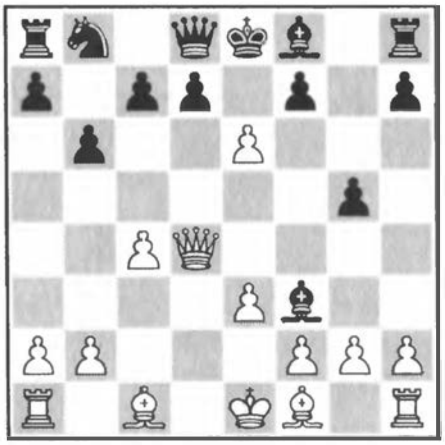
White can't resist and tries to punish my suspicious ...g5 move! If 8.♗d3 then 8...♗b4+. In case of 8.e6 Black goes 8...f6! 9.exd7+ ♘xd7 with ...♕e7 and ...0-0-0 and some compensation against a worried white king.

8...♗xf3!?

But not 8...♗b7 9.e6! f6 10.♘xg5.

9.e6

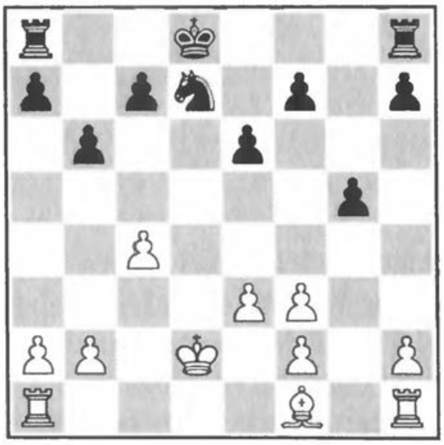
The real test was 9.gxf3 ♘c6 (9...♗b4+ 10.♔e2 ♘c6 11.♕d5) 10.♕d5 ♗b4+ 11.♔e2 (11.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 12.♔xd2 ♕e7 13.f4 gxf4 14.exf4 0-0-0 with compensation because ...f6 is coming) 11...a5!? (11...f6 12.e6) 12.a3 ♗c5 with ...♕e7 and a possible ...f6 and Black is still in the game.



9...♗b4+! 10.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 11.♔xd2 dxe6

The surprise is that the white queen is pinned!

12.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 13.gxf3 ♘d7



And suddenly Black has got a better endgame! White quickly succumbed after:

14.h4 gxh4 15.♖xh4 ♔e7 16.♗e2 ♖ad8 17.♖h6 ♖hg8 18.♖f1 e5 19.♔e1 ♘f6 20.♗d1 ♖d6! 21.♖fh1 ♖gd8 22.♗b3 ♖d2

White's position is hopeless.

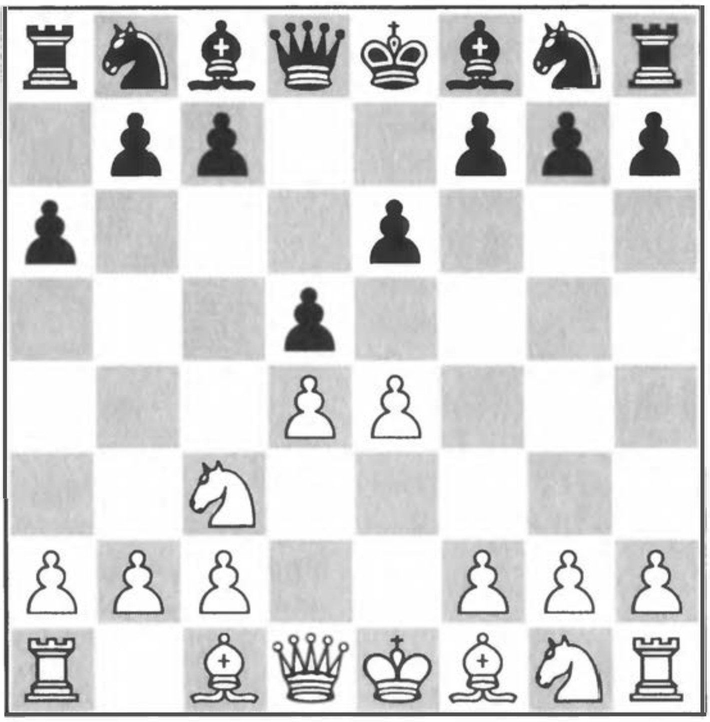
23.♖xf6 ♔xf6 24.♖xh7 ♖xb2 25.c5 ♔g6 26.♖h4 ♖dd2 0-1

Castany Pampalona-Kogan, Manresa 1997.

CHAPTER 8

Jeroen Bosch

French Prophylaxis



1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 a6!?

In Volume 2 of the SOS series I wrote on 3...h6 in the French. A useful waiting move that had found favour in the eyes of GMs like Legky and Eingorn. This time I would like to return to the French Defence with yet another waiting move: 3...a6.

The main ideas behind the 3...a6 system are close to those behind 3...h6. After the natural 4.♘f3 Black has 4...♘f6 when 5.e5 can be answered by 5...♘fd7 when in the resulting French middlegame White's knight is slightly misplaced on f3 (White cannot play f4).

Likewise, Black may profit after another developing move – 4.♗d3 – with 4...♘c6 (attacking pawn d4) when the main line goes 5.♘f3 ♘b4 and if the bishop retreats then 6...♘f6 7.e5 ♘e4 may follow. We will of course analyse both 4.♘f3 and 4.♗d3 in more detail – they remain White's most important answers to 3...a6 despite the fact that it could be argued that Black's prophylactic strategy can be successfully executed against both moves.

In practice White has often gone for 4.exd5 exd5 5.♕f3 as well (similar to a Larsen system versus the Winawer) arguing that 3...a6 is a complete waste of time. However, it should be pointed out that the knight on c3 is misplaced in these French Exchange lines and Black has no problems after this approach.

The 3...a6 system is mainly adopted by French GM Eric Prié and Ukrainian GM Nikolay Legky. Both have upheld this line on numerous occasions over the course of time.

Legky, plays both 3...h6 and 3...a6 which might illustrate that both waiting moves are of equal merit. While 3...h6 protects the g5-square (thus avoiding the pin on the f6-knight with a possible ♗g5, and ♘g5 in some lines), the move 3...a6 protects square b5 which makes an early ...c5 more attractive as ♗b5+ is not on the cards. I can recommend 3...a6 as more than a surprise weapon, and it certainly makes sense to combine both early rook-pawn moves in your repertoire as Legky does.

☐ **Khandzhar Odeev**
■ **Nikolay Legky**
Odessa 1991

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 a6 4.exd5

A belated Exchange Variation. This is not critical in my opinion, but you will certainly encounter this in practice when you start playing 3...a6. Minor alternatives include:

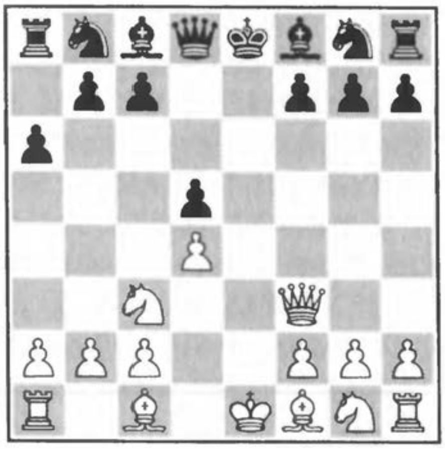
– 4.♗e3 (best of the rest) 4...♗b4 (in a Winawer it is not clear what the bishop is doing on e3. Worse is 4...♘f6 5.e5. 4.♗e3 also has the merit of protecting pawn d4 and preventing an early ...c5) 5.e5 ♘e7 6.a3 ♗xc3+ 7.bxc3 ♗d7!? (7...c5; 7...♘f5 8.♘f3) 8.♘f3 ♗b5 (it could be argued that this manoeuvre is another point of 3...a6, but in all honesty you won't find many games in this chapter where this was possible. It may remind you though of SOS-6 Chapter 14 – the French Advance with 4...♗d7 and 5...a6) 9.♗xb5+ axb5 10.0-0 c6 and Black had a pleasant structural advantage in Van den Bergh-Prié, cr 1991.

– 4.a3 (anything you can do...) 4...♘f6 (the Rubinstein approach 4...dxe4 5.♘xe4 ♗e7 6.♘f3 ♘f6 7.♗d3 ♘xe4 8.♗xe4 c5 9.0-0 was slightly better for White in Lanka-Prié, Paris 1990) 5.e5 (or 5.♗g5 ♗e7 6.e5 ♘fd7 7.♗xe7 ♕xe7 8.f4 c5 9.♘f3 ♘c6 with a normal French position – from the Classical 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗g5 ♗e7 5.e5 line – where Black's ...a6 is slightly more useful than White's a3. 10.♕d2 0-0 (10...cxd4 11.♘xd4 ♘dxe5) 11.♗e2 cxd4 12.♘xd4 ♘dxe5! 13.♘f5 exf5 14.♘xd5 ♕c5 15.fxe5 ♗e6 was more or less winning for Black in Horak-Trapl, Teplice 2007) 5...♘fd7 6.♘f3 c5 7.dxc5 ♗xc5 8.♗d3 ♘c6 9.♗f4 was an innocent line from the French between two future super GMs. Guseinov-Radjabov, Moscow 1997.

– 4.g3 ♘f6 (or even 4...b5?! 5.♗g2 ♗b7 6.exd5 ♘e7!? 7.♘f3 ♘xd5 8.♘e4 ♘d7 9.0-0 ♗e7 10.♕d3 0-0 which was fairly decent in Rantanen-Legky, Jyväskylä 2007) 5.♗g2 dxe4 6.♘xe4 ♘xe4 7.♗xe4 c5 8.♘e2 was equal at this stage in Fernandez Garcia-Prié, Leon 1991.

– 4.e5 c5 Perfectly viable. White cannot protect d4 with his c-pawn and 3...a6 is useful. 5.♘f3 ♘c6 6.dxc5 ♗xc5 7.♗d3 f6 8.♗f4?! g5!? (8...fxe5 9.♘xe5 is met by 9...♕f6!, and 9.♗xe5 ♘xe5 10.♘xe5 by 10...♕g5) 9.exf6? (the attack is illusory 9.♗g3 g4 10.♘d2 had to be tried) 9...gxf4 10.♘g5 ♘xf6 11.♕d2 e5 and Black won in Bourne-Tiller, England tt-2 2000/01.

4...exd5 5.♕f3



This gives the whole line some bite. It closely resembles Larsen's 3...♗b4 4.exd5 exd5 5.♕f3!?, when Larsen-Portisch, Amsterdam 1964, went 5...♘c6 6.♗b5!. This demonstrates the usefulness of 3...a6 once again. Legky has 5...♘c6 in the game.

Other approaches are completely innocuous:

– 5.♗d3 ♘c6 6.♘ge2 ♗e7 7.0-0 ♘f6 8.♗g5 ♘b4 9.♖e1 0-0 10.♘g3 h6 11.♗f4 ♗g4 12.♕d2 ♘xd3 13.♕xd3 ♕d7 was, if anything, better for Black who went on to win in Poirier-Prié, cr 1991.

– 5.♗f4 ♘f6 6.♕d2 ♗b4 7.f3 0-0 8.0-0-0 ♘bd7 9.h4 b5 10.h5 ♘b6 11.♔b1 (11.h6) 11...♖b8 12.♘ge2 ♘c4 13.♕d3 a5 14.g4 ♗a6 15.g5 ♗xc3 16.♕xc3 b4 with double-edged play, Landa-Legky, France 2002.

5...♘c6

The most aggressive line, although Black was fine too after 5...♗e6 6.♗d3 ♘c6 7.♘ge2 ♘f6 8.h3 ♘b4! 9.0-0 ♘xd3 Armanda-Kovacevic, Kastela 2002.

6.♗e3

Exchanging the d-pawns is dangerous for White: 6.♘xd5 ♘xd4 (6...♗e6 7.♘e3 ♕xd4 8.♘e2 ♕e5 9.g3 ♘f6 10.♗g2 0-0-0 is also promising for Black, Herb-Legky, Mulhouse 2000) 7.♕e4+ ♗e6 and now:

– 8.♘xc7+ ♕xc7 9.♕xd4 and Black has satisfactory replies in the form of 9...♘f6, 9...♕xc2 and 9...♖d8.

– 8.♕xd4 ♕xd5 9.♕xd5 ♗xd5 10.♗e3 is equal.

– 8.♘e3?! ♘c6 9.♘e2 ♘f6 10.♕f3 ♗b4+! 11.♘c3 (11.c3? ♘e5) 11...♕e7 12.♗d2 ♗g4 13.♕g3 0-0-0 with a big edge for Black, Birmingham-Prié, Angers ch-FRA 1990.

6.♘ge2? is awkward after 6...♘b4! 7.♔d1 ♘e7 8.a3 ♘bc6 9.♗e3 h5 10.h3 ♗g4! 11.♕f4 ♘g6 12.♕g5 ♕xg5 13.♗xg5 ♗e6 14.g3 f6 15.♗e3 0-0-0 with a slight edge for Black. Dutreeuw-Legky, Asti 1995.

6...♘f6 7.h3

Necessary in order to prevent ...♗g4 and to be able to castle queenside, which must be the whole idea of 5.♕f3.

7...♗e7

Not the only move in this position:

– 7...♗b4?! 8.♗d3 0-0 9.♘e2 ♘e4 10.♗xe4 dxe4 11.♕xe4 ♖e8 12.♕d3 ♕f6 13.0-0-0 ♗f5 14.♘d5! and Black did not have enough for the pawn in Chandler-Hodgson, London 1991.

– 7...♗e6 8.g4 ♗e7 9.♘ge2 ♘e4! 10.♗g2 ♘b4!? was Domont-Legky, France 2006.

8.0-0-0 0-0 9.g4

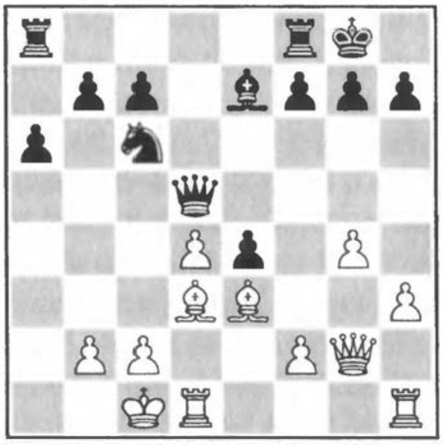
Castling on opposite sides nearly always leads to exciting chess. Here Black is more conventionally placed, while White has his queen on the kingside and advanced his g-pawn.

9...♗e6 10.♘ge2 ♘e4! 11.♘xe4 dxe4 12.♕g2

Not 12.♕xe4? because of 12...♗d5.

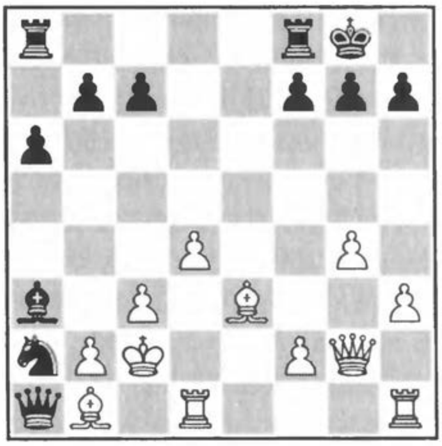
12...♗xa2! 13.♘c3

Black is a pawn up after 13.d5 ♘b4 14.♘c3 ♗xd5 15.♘xd5 ♘xd5 16.♕xe4 ♘c3! 17.♖xd8 ♘xe4 18.♖xa8 ♖xa8 19.♗g2. **13...♗d5 14.♘xd5** 14.♘xe4 ♖e8 also favours Black. **14...♕xd5 15.♗d3**



White must have counted on this move, hoping to retrieve the pawn with a pair of bishops as one of his assets. Legky now uses the

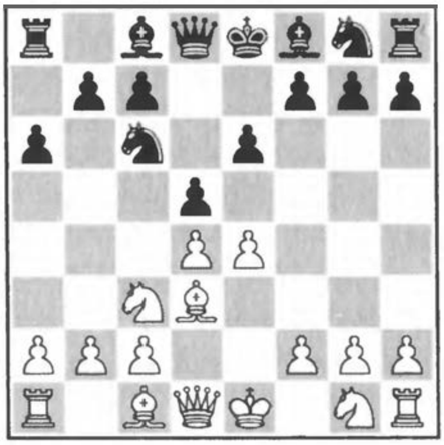
momentum to set up a menacing attack.
15...♘b4! 16.♗xe4?! Correct was 16.♕xe4 ♘xd3+ 17.♕xd3 which leaves Black somewhat better. **16...♕a5 17.c3 ♕a1+ 18.♗b1 ♘a2+ 19.♔c2 ♗a3**



A funny position. Legky has voluntarily cornered his own pieces, but the attack is dangerous and defending such positions is usually not given to mere mortals.
20.♗c1 The insane 20.♕xb7 is what Rybka wants to play in this position with some amazing lines that are beyond the scope of this book on openings. **20...♖fe8 21.♖he1 ♘xc1 22.bxa3 ♖e2+! 23.♖xe2 ♘xe2 24.♕f3 ♖e8** Now 25.♖d2 was correct with approximately equal chances after 25...♘f4 26.♕xf4 ♖e1 and the resulting queen ending should be a draw. Instead the game went: **25.♔b3? g6 26.d5 b5 27.♕d3 a5 28.♕d2 b4! 29.cxb4?** Stronger was 29.axb4 axb4 30.cxb4 when the attack goes on after 30...♕a7. **29...a4+! 30.♔c4 ♕xa3 31.♕d3 ♕b2 32.♗c2 a3** The a-pawn lures White's queen away. **33.♕b3 ♕e5 34.♕xa3 ♕f4+ 35.♔b3 ♕xf2** Black is ready for the final assault. **36.♕a4 ♖e3+ 37.♗d3 ♘f4** 37...♕f6. **38.♕b5 ♕f3** 38...♕e2. **39.♔c2 ♘xd3 40.♖xd3 ♕e2+ 41.♔c3 ♕e1+ 42.♔d4 ♖e4+** and mates.

☐ **Miroslav Zufic**
■ **Nikolay Legky**
Cappelle la Grande 2003

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 a6 4.♗d3 ♘c6



Another idea to make use of 3...a6 is 4...c5. This is less attractive though because of 5.dxc5 ♗xc5 6.exd5 (nothing much is gained by 6.♘f3 ♘f6 7.0-0 ♘c6 8.exd5. In Wyss-Tiller, Davos 2005, play slowly turned in Black's favour after 8.e5 ♘d7 9.♖e1 ♗e7 10.♗f4 ♘c5 11.♗f1 b5 12.a3 ♗b7 13.♕d2 h6 14.♖ad1 g5!? 15.♗g3 h5) 6...exd5 7.♘xd5! ♗xf2+ 8.♔xf2 ♕xd5 9.♕f3 ♘f6 10.♕xd5 ♘xd5 11.♘f3 0-0 12.a3 ♘c6 13.h3 h6 14.♗d2 and the pair of bishops and the majority on the queenside guarantees White a long-term edge, Rantanen-Kovacevic, Palma de Mallorca 1989.

If Black wants to make anything of 4...c5 then he should investigate 5...♘f6!? 6.exd5 ♘xd5, as 7.♘xd5 ♕xd5 8.♕f3 ♕xf3 9.♘xf3 ♗xc5 10.♗f4 ♘c6 11.c3 f6 was equal in Helfi-Prié, Challes 1990. Possible improvements are 7.♞e4!? and 7.♘ge2 ♗xc5 8.♘xd5 ♕xd5 (8...exd5) 9.0-0 0-0 10.♘c3 with a slight edge. Dubious is 5...d4 as 6.♘a4 ♘d7 7.b4 b6 8.cxb6 ♘xb6 9.♘c5 ♘d7 10.♘xd7 ♗xb4+ 11.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 12.♕xd2 ♗xd7 13.♘f3 ♗c6 14.♕b4 clearly favoured White in Koch-Prié, Angers ch-FRA 1990.
5.♘f3

Defending pawn d4 in the most natural way. 5.♘ge2 allows Black to execute his strategical idea to capture the bishop with 5...♘b4 after 6.0-0 ♗e7 7.♘g3 ♘xd3 8.cxd3!? ♘f6 9.e5 ♘g8!? 10.♔h1 ♗d7 11.♗e3 ♗f8!? 12.♖c1 White had a huge edge in development, but Black was structurally better. The game Herbrechtsmeier-Legky, France 2002, continued 12...h5 13.♘ge2 ♘h6 14.f3 ♘f5 15.♗f2 ♕g5 16.♘g1 ♗c6 and Black was better.

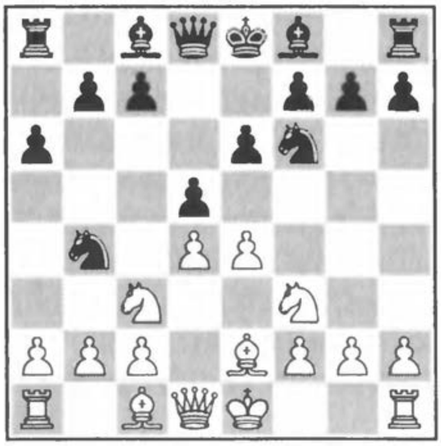
5...♘b4

This is the crux. Black is going after the light-squared bishop, and if it retreats then 6...♘f6 increases the pressure on point e4.

6.♗e2

Keeping the bishop. There is something to be said for 6.0-0 ♘f6 7.e5 ♘xd3 (7...♘d7 8.♘g5! ♘xd3 9.cxd3 ♗e7 10.♕h5 g6 11.♕h6 ♗f8 12.♕h3 ♗g7 13.b3 was very good for White in Glek-Legky, Douai 1993) 8.cxd3 ♘g8 when White is playing a middlegame, while Black still has to develop all his pieces (having exchanged one knight and 'undeveloped' another). Yet, these French structures are resilient, and it is not so easy to breach Black's fortress. Black managed to develop all his pieces after 9.♗f4 ♗e7 10.b4 ♗d7 11.♖b1 ♕b8 12.♕c2 ♗d8 13.a4 ♘e7 14.b5 0-0 15.bxa6 ♖xa6 in Acher-Legky, Cannes 1999, when the stronger player went on to win.

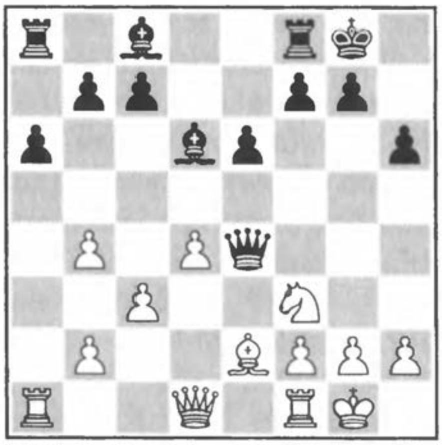
6...♘f6



7.e5

Taking up space and establishing the typical French pawn chain.

- Fairly innocent is **7.exd5** ♘bxd5 8.♘xd5 exd5 9.0-0 ♗e7 (9...♗d6 10.♗g5 h6 11.♗h4 0-0 was Tregubov-Bauer, Clichy 2004) 10.♘e5 ♗f5 11.♗e3 h6 12.c3 0-0 13.♕b3 ♖b8 14.♖ae1 ♗d6 15.♕d1 c6 with equal play in Dubois-Prié, France 1991.
- More interesting than 7.exd5 is **7.♗g5**. At least White takes advantage of Black's omission of 3...h6 in favour of 3...a6! Now **7...h6** more or less forces 8.♗xf6 ♕xf6 9.a3 dxe4 10.♘xe4 ♕g6 11.axb4 ♕xe4 12.c3, when Black has the bishop pair, but White has more space and a slightly superior structure. White should be somewhat better. After 12...♗d6 13.0-0 0-0 practice has seen:



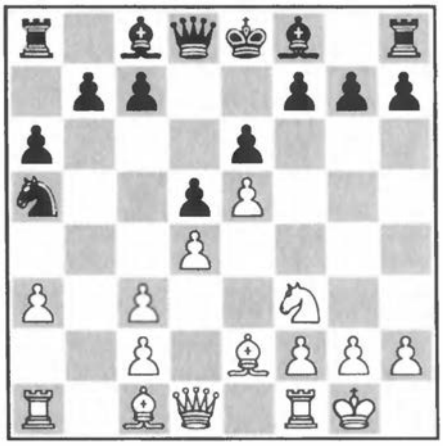
  - 14.♖e1 ♕f4 15.♗d3 ♗d7 16.♘e5 ♗b5 17.g3 ♕g5 18.h4 ♕e7 19.♗b1 ♖fd8 20.♕c2, with a large advantage in Odeev-Yu Shaoteng, Jodhpur Ach-tt 2003.
  - 14.♗d3 ♕f4 15.g3 ♕f6 16.♕e2 ♗d7 17.♘e5 ♖fd8 18.♘xd7 ♖xd7 19.b5 a5 20.♗e4 (20.♕e4! would have been very unpleasant for Black) 20...♖a7 21.f4 ♖d8 22.♕g2 ♖b8, Bellamine-Legky, Metz 2001. Black won in the end!
- After **7.♗g5** Black also has **7...♗e7** which I prefer over 7...h6. After 8.e5 ♘e4

9.♗xe7 ♕xe7 10.♘xe4 dxe4 11.♘d2 e3! (11...♕g5 12.♘xe4 – or 12.0-0 e3 13.♘e4 – 12...♕xg2 13.♗f3 ♕g6 14.c3±) 12.fxe3 (12.♘f3 exf2+ 13.♔xf2 c5) 12...♘d5 13.♔f2 ♕g5 14.♘f1 f6 15.c4 (15.h4 ♕h6 16.c4 ♘b6) 15...♘b6 16.exf6 (16.h4; 16.c5) 16...0-0, with a lot of fun for the pawn, Romero Holmes-Prié, Leon 1991.

As an afterthought, perhaps it is interesting to investigate 7...dxe4!? 8.♘xe4 ♗e7.

7...♘e4 8.0-0

Considering the next comment it does not make any sense to play 8.a3 forcing 8...♘xc3 9.bxc3 ♘c6 after 10.0-0 ♘a5.



We have reached a position that is similar to Gashimov-Eingorn, Bled Olympiad 2002 – see SOS-2, Chapter 8 – there is only one difference: in Gashimov-Eingorn the a-pawn is still on a7 while the h-pawn is on h6! Indeed, in that game 3...h6 was played instead of 3...a6. Gashimov chose 11.♕d3 but Black was fine after 11...♗d7 12.♘e1 c5 13.f4 ♕c7.

I like Pieri's 11.♘e1 better than 11.♕d3 – White immediately starts the plan of preparing to march his f-pawn. However, with the a-pawn on the sixth rank rather than the h-pawn the more aggressive 11.♘g5 is also an option. 11.♘e1 c5 12.f4 g6 13.♘f3 ♕c7 14.♗e3 ♗d7 15.♔h1 cxd4 (also interesting is 15...0-0-0 16.♘g5 – 16.a4!? – 16...♗a4) 16.cxd4 ♖c8 (16...♗a4; 16...♘c4) 17.♗d3 ♗b5?! and, although he later lost, Black was doing fine at this stage in Pieri-Legky, Milan 1992.

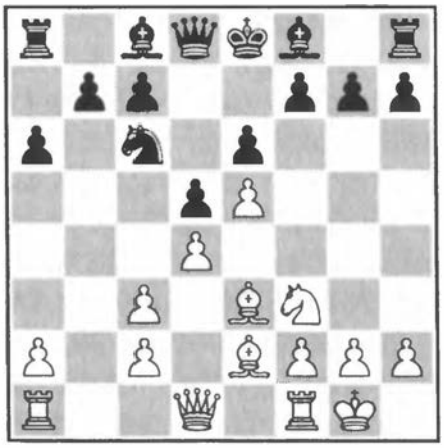
8...♘c6

Black voluntarily retreats his knight to c6 blocking his own c-pawn which is dying to advance to c5. The reason is very concrete, for, after 8...c5 9.dxc5 ♗xc5 10.♘xe4 dxe4 11.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 White has 12.♘g5! when 12...♘xc2 13.♘xf7+ ♔e8 14.♘xh8 ♘xa1 15.♗e3 ♗xe3 16.fxe3 led to a very difficult ending for Black in Lutz-Legky, France 2002. Here we see a vital difference between 3...a6 and 3...h6. In case of the latter Black can play 8...c5 after 8.0-0 because White's knight has no access to g5. That is not to say that 3...h6 is stronger than 3...a6. Both moves, however similar strategically, simply have their own merits.

9.♗e3

White develops a piece while giving his d4-pawn some additional coverage (*Überdeckung*). Yet, I am not sure if this is best. 9.♘b1!? is met by 9...f6. But 9.♗d3 ♘xc3 10.bxc3 ♘a5 (perhaps Black should settle for 10...♗e7 first) 11.♘g5 is a normal approach – again highlighting the fact that square g5 is not protected.

9...♘xc3 10.bxc3



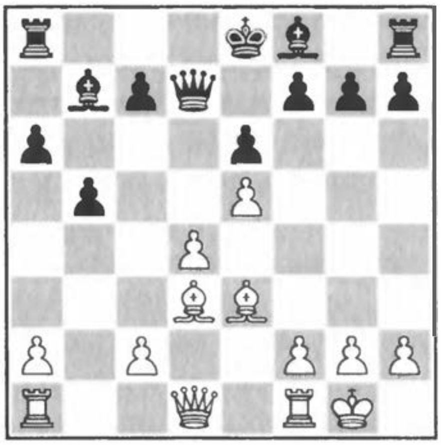
10...♘a5

Also playable is 10...♗e7 11.♘d2 ♘a5 12.f4 ♗d7 13.c4 dxc4 14.♘xc4 ♘xc4 15.♗xc4 and now Prié demonstrated the usefulness of 3...a6 with 15...♗b5! when after 16.♗d3 c5 17.dxc5 ♕c7 18.♗xb5+ axb5 19.♕d3 the players agreed a draw in Kindermann-Prié, Uzes 1990.

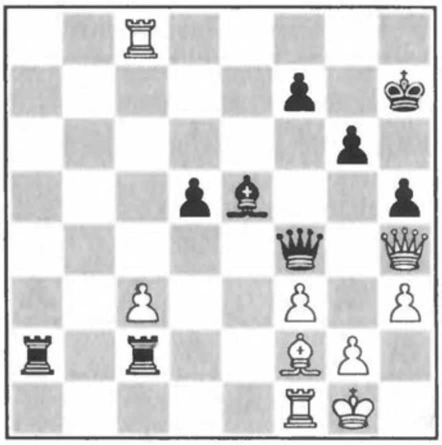
11.♘d2 ♕d7!?

Alternatives include 11...♗d7 and 11...♗e7. White now improves his pawn structure by pushing his c-pawn, but this does not bring him any advantage in the game.

12.c4 ♘xc4 13.♘xc4 dxc4 14.♗xc4 b5 15.♗d3 ♗b7



Black has reasonable counterplay due to his control of the long diagonal. We are passed the opening stage and I give the remainder of the game with some brief notes. **16.♕g4 g6 17.f3!?** Shortening the diagonal. **17...♗g7 18.a4 0-0 19.♖fb1 ♗c6 20.axb5 axb5 21.♗e4 ♗d5 22.♗xd5 ♕xd5** Due to Black's better control over the white squares and his slightly superior bishop, Legky's chances are somewhat preferable. **23.♕e4 ♖a4 24.♕d3 ♖c4 25.♖a5 ♖b8 26.♕b3 c6 27.c3 ♗f8 28.♕b2 ♕d8 29.♖ba1 h5 30.♕b3 ♔g7 31.♖a7 ♕d5 32.♖c7 ♖a4! 33.♕d1 ♕c4 34.♖c1?! ♖a2** Black has visually improved his position, but White retains counterplay. **35.♕e1 ♔g8 36.♕h4 ♕e2 37.♗f2 ♖ba8 38.h3 ♕d2 39.♖f1 ♗g7** 39...♗h6!. **40.♕e7! ♕f4 41.♗g3! ♕f5 42.♖xc6 ♖c2 43.♕h4** Black has a strong attack after 43.♕b7 ♖aa2 44.♗f2 ♕f4, for example 45.♖a6 (45.♕xb5? ♕e3!−+) 45...♖ab2 46.♖a8+ ♔h7 47.♕e4 ♗h6!−+. **43...b4! 44.d5? exd5 45.♕xb4 ♖aa2 46.♗f2 ♗xe5 47.♕h4 ♕f4 48.♖c8+ ♔h7**



And White resigned, as after 49.♕xf4 ♗xf4 Black still has a winning attack: 50...♗e3 and 50...♖xf2 are threats and 50.♖e8 is met by 50...♗c7 planning 51...♗b6.

☐ **Krishnan Sasikiran**
■ **Christian Bauer**
La Roche-sur-Yon 2006

1.d4 a6

Note the odd move order in this game. If a 2600-GM can play 1...a6 and get away with it against a colleague like Sasikiran (2670 when this game was played) then surely we lesser mortals are allowed to play ...a6 on the third move!

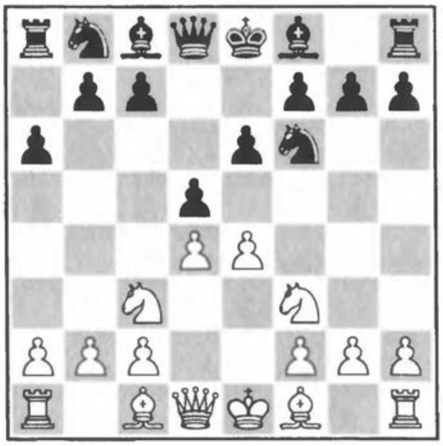
2.e4 e6 3.♘f3

Or 3.c4 c5.

3...d5

3...c5 was also an option.

4.♘c3 ♘f6



1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 a6 4.♘f3 ♘f6 is how we would have reached the diagram position. Black's idea is that 5.e5 is answered by 5...♘fd7 (but not 5...♘e4 6.♘xe4 dxe4 7.♘g5 and White is better), when the knight on f3 is slightly misplaced, as White no longer has f4. After 6.♗d3 c5 7.dxc5 (7.♘g5? ♗e7 8.♕h5 g6 9.♕g4 cxd4 10.♘xe6 ♘c5! 11.♘xd8 ♗xg4 netted Black a piece in Smirin-Legky, Metz 1991) 7...♘c6 8.♗f4 ♘xc5 9.0-0 ♗e7 10.♖e1 0-0 we reach a normal French Defence type of position. Black was doing fine after both:

- 11.♗g3 f5 12.exf6 ♗xf6 13.♘e5 ♘xe5 14.♗xe5 ♕b6 Armanda-Kovacevic, Solin 2003, and
- 11.♕d2 f5 12.exf6 ♗xf6 13.♘e5 ♘xe5 14.♗xe5 ♗xe5 15.♖xe5 ♕f6 Sale-Z.Lehmann, Budapest 1992.

5.♗d3

White retains the tension in the centre which he can also do with **5.♗g5**. However, after 5...♗e7 he must still make up his mind:

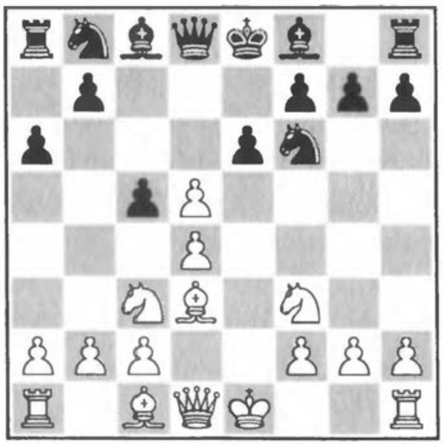
- 6.♗d3 can be met by 6...♘xe4 as 7.♗xe7?! (7.♘xe4 dxe4 8.♗xe7 ♕xe7 9.♗xe4 and Black has nearly equalized) 7...♘xc3 8.♗xd8 ♘xd1 9.♖xd1?! (9.♗xc7 ♘xb2 10.♗e2 b5) 9...♔xd8 10.♘g5 ♔e7 11.♘xh7 ♘c6 12.c3 f6 wins for Black, Neiman-Prié, Paris 1990.
- 6.e5 ♘fd7 7.♕d2 c5 8.♗xe7 ♕xe7 9.dxc5 ♘c6 10.♕f4 ♕xc5 11.♗d3 ♕b4 12.♕xb4 ♘xb4 13.0-0 ♘c6 was a pleasant ending for Black in Moal-Prié, Cannes 1990.
- Just bad is 6.♕d2? ♘xe4 7.♘xe4 dxe4 8.♗xe7 ♕xe7 9.♘g5 f5 10.♗e2 0-0 11.f3? e3! 0-1, Bhuiyan-Legky, Sautron 2001.
- While after 6.exd5 Black's best is 6...exd5 which is fully equal and therefore better than 6...♘xd5 7.♗xe7 ♕xe7 8.♕d2 ♕b4 9.♘xd5 ♕xd2+ 10.♔xd2 exd5 11.♖e1+ when White has a slight edge, Koch-Prié, Marseille 1990.

5.exd5 exd5 is just an Exchange Variation where White has nothing. The inclusion of 3.♘c3 a6 does not harm Black.

5...c5

Black strikes in the centre. The ...c5 advance is one of the main ideas behind 3...a6.

6.exd5



The only critical reply. 6.0-0 cxd4 7.♘xd4 ♘c6 8.♗e3 ♗e7 9.exd5 exd5 10.h3 0-0 was about equal in Van Elst-Legky, France 2002.

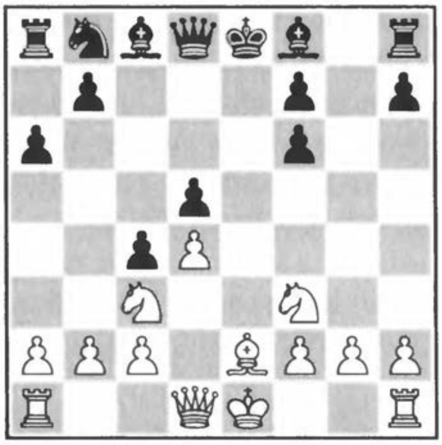
6...exd5

More or less forced: 6...cxd4 7.♘xd4 ♘xd5 8.♘xd5 ♕xd5 9.0-0 ♗e7 was better for White in Pikula-Stojanovic, Herceg Novi tt 2001. However after 6...cxd4 White has the even stronger 7.dxe6! dxc3 (7...♗xe6 8.♘xd4) 8.exf7+ ♔xf7 9.♗g6+ ♔e7 10.♕e2+ ♔d7 (10...♗e6 11.♗f5 ♕d5 12.♘d4) 11.♗f4 which gives White a winning attack.

Nothing to write home about is 6...♘xd5 7.♘xd5 ♕xd5 8.c4.

7.0-0

White should seriously consider 7.♗g5 c4 (to avoid White's next it appears logical to play 7...♗e6. However, White is much better after both 8.♕e2 and 8.0-0 c4?! 9.♗xc4! dxc4 10.d5) 8.♗xf6! gxf6 9.♗e2



when Black has a pair of bishops, but White has a superior pawn structure. For example:

– 9...♗h6 10.0-0 0-0 11.♘h4 ♗g5 12.♗g4!?♗xh4 13.♗xc8 ♕xc8 14.♕h5 (retrieving the piece as 14...♗g5 15.f4 wins for White) 14...♘c6 15.♕xh4 ♕f5 16.♖ae1 ♔h8 17.♘d1 (17.♘xd5!? ♕xd5 18.♕xf6+ ♔g8 19.♖e3 ♖fe8 20.♖g3+ ♔f8 21.c3) 17...♕g5 18.♕xg5 fxg5 19.c3±, Bruzon Bautista-Borges Mateos, Santa Clara 2004.

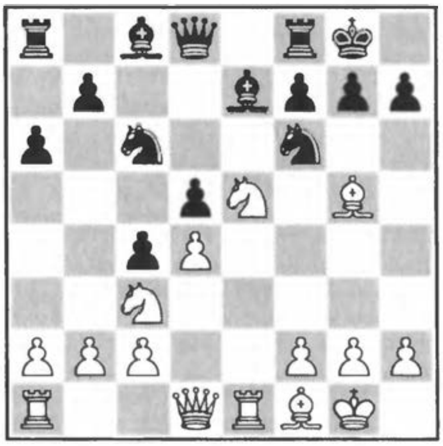
– 9...♗e6 10.0-0 b5?! 11.♖e1 ♗g7 12.♘h4 0-0 13.♗g4 ♕d7 14.♗f3 ♘c6 15.g3 f5 16.♘e2 f4! 17.c3 fxg3 18.hxg3 ♗h6 19.♘g2 ♘e7 20.♘ef4 and White had retained his positional edge. Pavlovic-Stojanovic, Herceg Novi tt 2001.

7...c4

The next sequence of moves is more or less forced.

8.♖e1+ ♗e7 9.♗f1 0-0 10.♗g5 ♘c6 11.♘e5

White has a stronghold on e5, while Black enjoys some space advantage on the queenside. The pawn strucuture is symmetrical. Play is about equal.



11...♗e6 12.♘xc6

12.h3 ♖c8 13.♖b1 ♖e8 14.a3 ♕b6 15.♗e3 was equal in Lamoureux-Prié, Val Maubuée 1990.

12...bxc6 13.♘a4 ♕a5

Black has an easy game. Clearly, Sasikiran has been unable to put 3...a6 (or in fact 1...a6!) to a serious test.

14.b3 ♖fe8 15.♕d2!? ♕xd2 16.♗xd2 ♘e4 17.♗a5 ♗f6 18.♖ad1 ♘d6 19.c3 ♗g5 20.♘b6 ♖ab8 21.bxc4 ♘xc4 22.♘xc4 dxc4

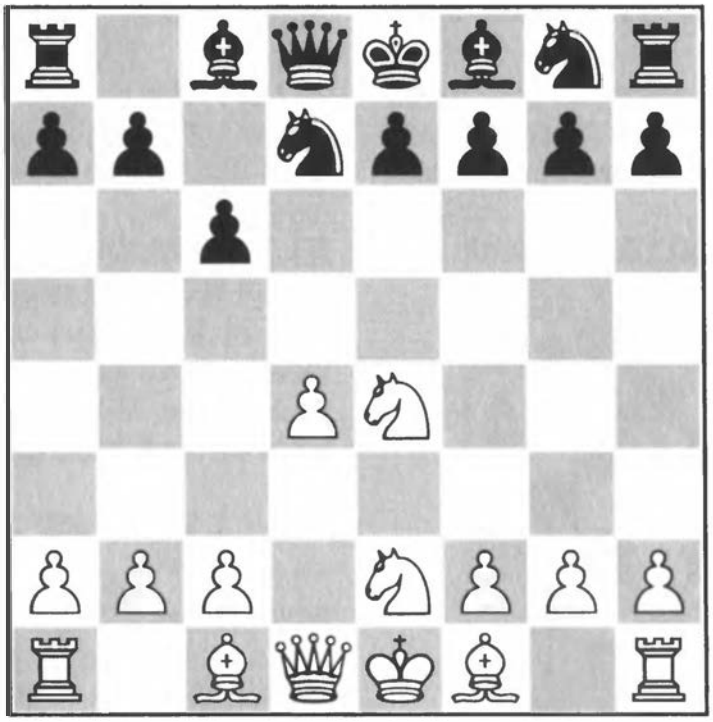
Play is still equal. The doubled c-pawns are no disadvantage here. Black's bishop has an excellent square on d5.

23.♗c7 ♖bc8 24.♗d6 ♗d5 25.f4 ♖ed8!? 26.fxg5 ♖xd6 27.♖b1 ♖e6 28.♔f2 ♔f8 29.♖xe6 ♗xe6 30.♖b6 c5! 31.d5 31.dxc5 ♖xc5 32.♖xa6 ♖f5+ 33.♔e1 ♖xg5 is equal, as is 31.♔e3 cxd4+ 32.♔xd4 ♖d8+ 33.♔e3 ♖d1. **31...♗xd5 32.♖xa6 ♖b8** Black has sufficient counterplay in exchange for the passed a-pawn. **33.♖a5 ♖b2+ 34.♔e3 ♖c2 35.♖xc5 ♗e6 36.a4 ♖xc3+ 37.♔d4 ♖a3 38.a5 ♔e7 39.♗xc4 ♖a4! 40.a6 ♗xc4** ½-½

CHAPTER 9

Adrian Mikhalchishin

Caro-Kann: Dementiev Variation



'Grandma's' 5.♘e2

I would like to say a couple of words about a forgotten yet great Soviet chess trainer: master Oleg Dementiev from Kaliningrad. He worked with the team of Armenia, especially with Vaganian and Petrosian and he 'brought up' Vladimir Akopian. Dementiev was a very strong master, participating in the finals of Russian and USSR championships, a musician by profession, who played the piano wonderfully.

Dementiev could work on chess for days, consuming unbelievable quantities of strong tea and smoking countless cigarettes. He had a curious nickname among his chess friends – 'babushka' ('grandma'). Dementiev had a beautiful positional style and he played many attacking games, but in the training field his main activity was the introduction of new ideas.

It was Dementiev who caused the renaissance of the Fischer variation against the Najdorf: 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♗c4 e6 7.♗b3 b5 8.0-0 ♗e7 9.♕f3. Here he had several brilliant ideas. In the Petrosian System 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.♘c3 ♗b7 5.a3 d5 6.cxd5 ♘xd5 he introduced the solid 7.♗d2!, causing significant difficulties for Black.

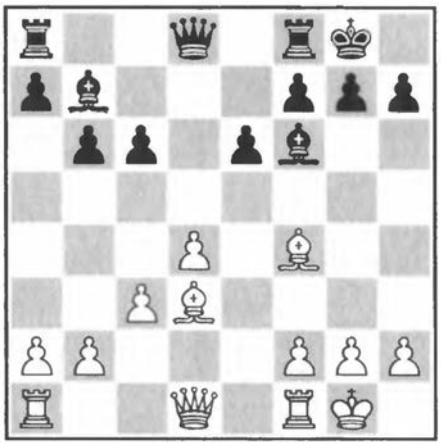
Here I would like to tell about another invention of Dementiev, which was played not so much by his pupils, but by the friends of his pupils – Oleg Romanishin and yours truly.

□ **Oleg Dementiev**
■ **Ratmir Kholmov**
Riga ch-URS 1970

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♘xe4 ♘d7 5.♘e2 ♘gf6 6.♘2g3 e6 7.♗c4 ♗e7 8.0-0 ♘xe4 9.♘xe4 ♘f6 10.♘xf6+ ♗xf6

All the knights are exchanged (as in the game Mikhalchishin-Short, Lviv 1984, see below). White nevertheless keeps a space advantage.

11.c3 0-0 12.♗f4 b6 13.♗d3 ♗b7

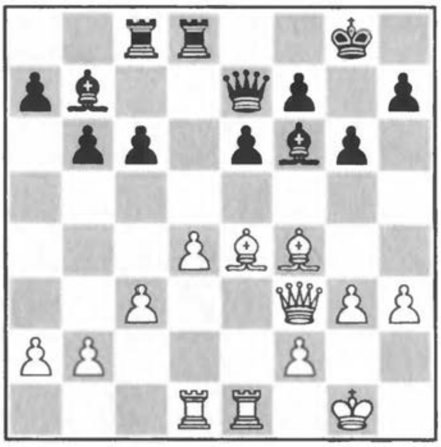


14.♕f3!

An excellent prophylactic move. In this classical position (according to Nimzowitsch, this type of centre with black pawns on c6 and e6 versus a white pawn on d4 is known as 'saw' – German: Sägestellung) Black is aiming to advance either ...c5 or ...e5, whereas White's strategy rests on the idea to prevent these advances. That is exactly what White is doing with the text and his next couple of moves.

14...♕d7 15.♗e4 ♖ac8 16.♖ad1 ♖fd8 17.♖fe1 ♕e7 18.h3 g6 19.g3!

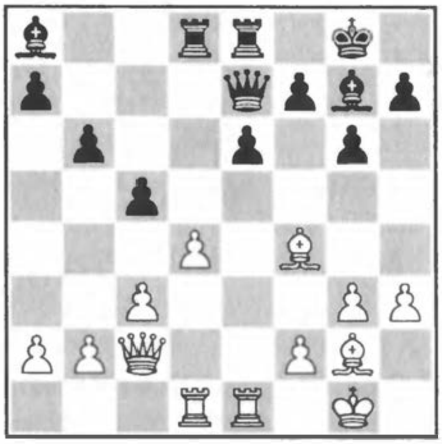
White starts a very complex restructuring – the bishop retreats to g2, while the queen transfer along the route f3-e3-e4-c2-a4 is being planned, in order to attack Black's weak points on the queenside.



19...♗g7 20.♕e3 ♖e8 21.♗g2 ♖cd8

In case of 21...c5?, then after 22.d5 e5 23.d6 ♕d7 24.♗xb7 Black might as well resign. Weird, but this move was suggested in *Chess Informant* by Mikhail Tal himself.

22.♕e4 ♗a8 23.♕c2 c5?



It would be better to remain passive and play 23...a5 24.♕a4 ♕d7.

Now White invade will invade the seventh rank with a decisive advantage.

24.♗xa8 ♖xa8 25.dxc5 ♕xc5 26.♖d7 e5 27.♕b3 ♕f8 28.♗e3 ♖e7 29.♖ed1 ♖xd7 30.♖xd7 ♗f6 31.♕b5 ♕e8 32.♕c6 ♔g7

In case of 32...♖c8, 33.♕xf6! ♕xd7 34.♗h6 would be winning.

33.♕b7 h5 34.b3

It was possible to take on f7 outright, but White prefers to improve his structure.

34...e4 35.♖xf7+ ♕xf7 36.♕xa8 ♗xc3 37.♕xe4 ♕d7 38.♔g2 b5 39.♕a8 ♗d4 40.♗f4 ♗b6 41.♕e4

White is a sound pawn up. The conversion of this edge is simple as Black's king is not safe. White won after:

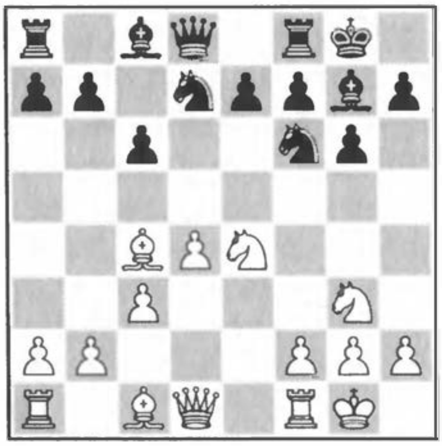
41...♔f7 42.♕f3 ♔g8 43.♗e5 ♗d8 44.♗b2 b4 45.♕e4 ♔f7 46.♕c4+ ♕e6 47.♕xb4 ♕d5+ 48.♔g1 ♕d1+ 49.♔h2 ♗b6 50.♕f4+ ♔e8 51.♕e4+ ♔f7 52.♕b7+ ♔e6 53.♕c6+ ♔e7 54.♕xg6 ♕d2 55.♕f6+ ♔d7 56.♔g2 ♕d5+ 57.♕f3 ♕d2 58.♕f5+ ♔c6 59.♕c8+ ♔d6 60.♗a3+ ♔e5 61.♕e8+ ♔f6 62.♗b2+ 1-0

☐ **Oleg Romanishin**
■ **Tigran Petrosian**
Moscow tt 1979

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♘xe4 ♘d7 5.♘e2 ♘gf6 6.♘2g3 g6 7.♗c4

Also not bad was 7.♗g5, 8.♕d2 and 9.0-0-0, developing an initiative on the kingside.

7...♗g7 8.c3 0-0 9.0-0



9...♘d5?

It is rather strange to see the Tiger declining to exchange pieces. Better was 9...♘b6.

10.♖e1 e5 11.♗g5 f6?

Well, the Tiger loathes to give up pawns. The correct move was 11...♕b6! 12.dxe5 ♘xe5 13.♗xd5 cxd5 14.♕xd5 ♗e6 with serious compensation.

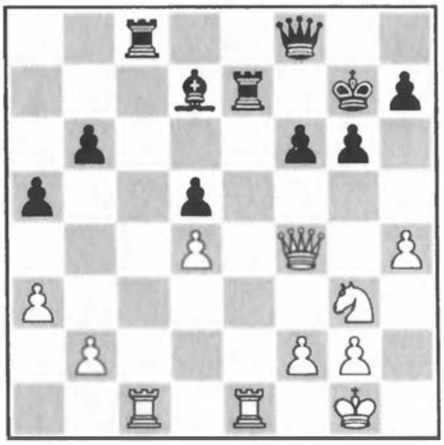
12.♗d2 exd4 13.cxd4 ♘b6 14.♗b3 ♔h8 15.♕c1 a5 16.a3 ♘c7?!

Here 16...f5 was worth considering.

17.♘c5! ♘bd5 18.♗h6 b6 19.♗xg7+ ♔xg7 20.♘d3 ♗d7 21.♘f4 ♖f7

Another option was the bishop transfer to f7 via e8.

22.h4! ♖c8 23.♕d2 ♕f8 24.♖ac1 ♖e7 25.♘xd5 ♘xd5 26.♗xd5 cxd5 27.♕f4!



Given the symmetrical pawn structure, White's advantage is determined by the activity of the pieces.

27...♖xe1+ 28.♖xe1 ♖c6 29.h5 ♕d6 30.♕e3 ♖c7 31.♕e7+!

This leads to an unpleasant pin.

31...♕xe7 32.♖xe7+ ♔h6 33.♔h2 a4 34.f4!

White has a winning advantage.

34...b5 35.♖f7 f5 36.♖e7 ♖b7 37.hxg6 ♔xg6 38.♘e2 ♗c8 39.♖e8 ♖c7 40.♘c3 ♗a6?

Just as hopeless would be 40...♔f7 41.♘xb5 ♖c6 42.♖xc8!

41.♖e6+

And Black resigned.

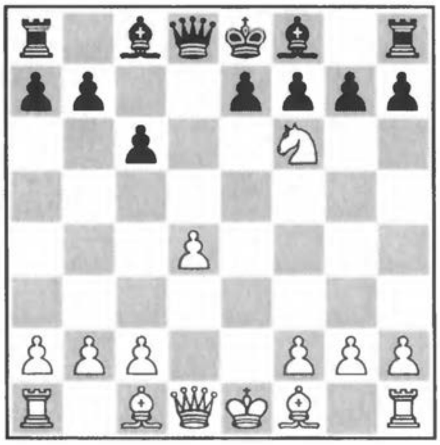
Five years later the idea of 'Dema', as Dementiev was also referred to, was successfully employed by the author of this article.

☐ **Adrian Mikhalchishin**
■ **Nigel Short**
Lviv 1984

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♘xe4 ♘d7 5.♘e2 ♘gf6

Play was about equal in Panchenko-Speelman, Sochi 1982, after 5...♘df6 6.♘2g3 ♘xe4 7.♘xe4 ♗f5 8.♘g3 ♗g6 9.h4 h6 10.♗e3 e6 11.h5 ♗h7 12.♗d3 ♗xd3 13.♕xd3 ♘f6 14.0-0-0.

6.♘2g3 ♘xe4 7.♘xe4 ♘f6!? 8.♘xf6+



8...gxf6

A very aggressive continuation – more sober was 8...exf6.

9.c3 ♗f5 10.♗c4 e6 11.♗f4 ♗d6 12.♕f3 ♗xf4 13.♕xf4 ♖g8 14.g3 ♕b6 15.0-0-0 0-0-0 16.h3 ♕c7 17.♕e3?!

Stronger was 17.♕f3 ♕e7 18.g4 with an advantage.

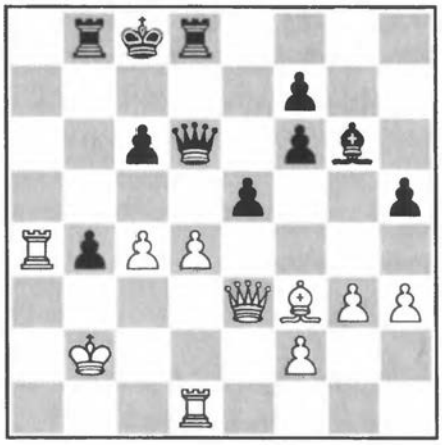
17...h5 18.b3! ♕d6 19.♔b2

With the idea of ♗e2, followed by c3-c4, a2-a3, b3-b4 to gain the edge.

19...♖g5!? 20.♗e2 ♗g6 21.a4 ♖a5 22.♗f3 b5 23.♖a1 bxa4 24.b4 ♖b5 25.♖xa4 a5 26.♖ha1 axb4 27.c4 ♖b8?

Clearly better would have been 27...♖b7.

28.♖d1! e5

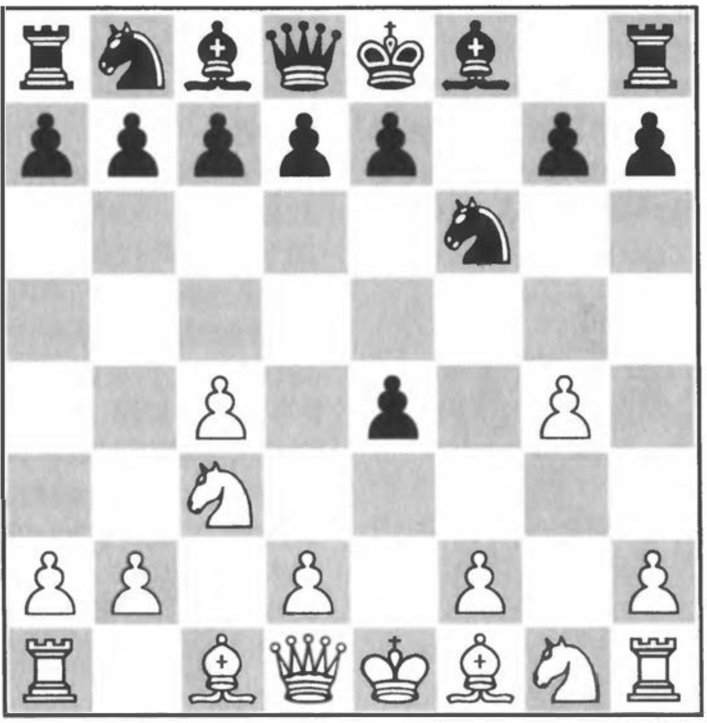


29.♖a6 e4 30.♗xe4 ♗xe4 31.♕xe4 ♔b7 32.c5! ♕e6 33.♖b6+ ♔c7 34.♕f4+ ♔d7 35.♖xb8 ♕e2+ 36.♔c1 ♖xb8 37.♕xb8 ♕c4+ 38.♔d2 ♕c3+ 39.♔e2 ♕c2+ 40.♔e1! ♕e4+ 41.♔f1 ♕h1+ 42.♔e2 ♕e4+ 43.♔d2 ♕f3 44.♕xb4 1-0

CHAPTER 10

Dimitri Reinderman

The Porcupine Variation



1.c4 f5 2.e4 fxe4 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.g4

The English Opening is often played by people who want to get a quiet position from the opening. In most countries that is, but not in Spain: if you answer 1.c4 with 1...f5 against someone with a double surname, you might be surprised by an obscure gambit called the Porcupine Variation: 2.e4 fxe4 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.g4!?. No quiet positions for them!

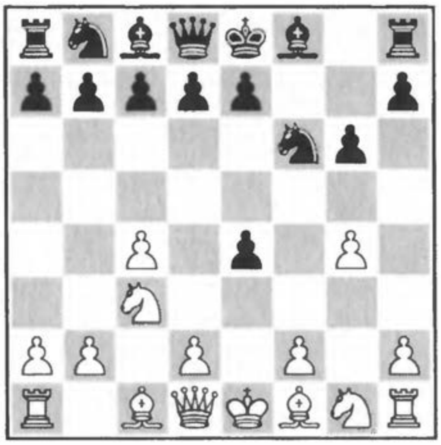
The variation looks a bit like the Staunton Gambit, 1.d4 f5 2.e4 fxe4 3.♘c3. In this variation Black can get a good position by defending e4 with ...♘f6, ...d5 and possibly ...♗f5. In the Porcupine Variation White can take the pawn on d5 with his c-pawn and chase the other defender of e4 with his g-pawn. After the e-pawn is taken, White has possibilities of an attack on the light squares. White can also make it a real gambit by playing d3: if Black takes, he will get trouble on the diagonal b1-h7 after ♗xd3. Not all is well for White though, since g4 is a weakening move. After for example 4...g6 5.g5 ♘h5 the square f4 looks attractive for the black knight. Moving your pawn to g4 also makes kingside castling unattractive, and neither is it easy to find a safe place for the king on the queenside. With the Porcupine you can stab your opponent quickly, but the quills can also hurt you. However, so far the practical results, 60% in 31 games, speak for White.

Though Black has a lot of legal moves after 4.g4, only three react in some way to the threat of 5.g5, and in almost all games so far Black played either 4...g6, 4...h6 or 4...d5.

☐ **Juan Mellado Trivino**
■ **Unai Garbisu de Goni**
Zamora ch-ESP 1996

1.c4 f5 2.e4 fxe4 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.g4 g6

The most logical move, since it reacts to the white threat and also because Leningrad players want to play ...g6 anyway.



5.g5

I think this is the best move. Two rounds after this game Mellado Trivino deviated against Garbiso de Goni with 5.h4. Then 5...d5 6.g5 ♘h5 7.cxd5 ♗g7 8.♕a4+ c6 9.♗g2 0-0 10.♗xe4 cxd5 11.♗xd5+ ♔h8 was not bad for Black, but 6...d4 7.gxf6 dxc3 is even better (Sokolsky-Antoshin, Soviet Union 1960).

In a rapid game against a 2100 player I tried 5.d3, and after 5...d5 6.g5 d4 7.♘ce2 ♘g4 8.dxe4 ♘c6 9.h3 ♘ge5 10.♘g3 ♗g7 11.f4, everything looks all right. That is, until, like my opponent, you spot 11...0-0 with definitive problems which I didn't manage to solve.

5...♘h5 6.♘ge2

6.♗g2 ♗g7 7.♗xe4 e5 8.d3 ♘c6 9.♘ge2 d6 was fine for Black in Asienso Lisan-Mellado Trivino(!), Barcelona rapid 1996. Alternatives like 6.d3 ♗g7 7.dxe4 0-0 and 6.♘xe4 d5!? (6...♗g7 7.d4 d5 8.♘g3 ♘xg3 9.hxg3 ♘c6 10.♗e3, Sokolsky-Vasiukov, Odessa 1960) 7.♘g3 (7.cxd5 ♕xd5 8.♗g2 ♕d3 9.♘c5 ♕d4 10.♘xb7? ♘f4–+) 7...♘xg3 8.hxg3 ♗g7 9.♗g2 dxc4 10.♕c2?! (10.♕a4+ is equal) 10...♕d3! 11.♕xd3 cxd3 12.♗e4 0-0∓, Andres Gonzalez-Cenal Gutierrez, Spain 1999, won't bother Black.

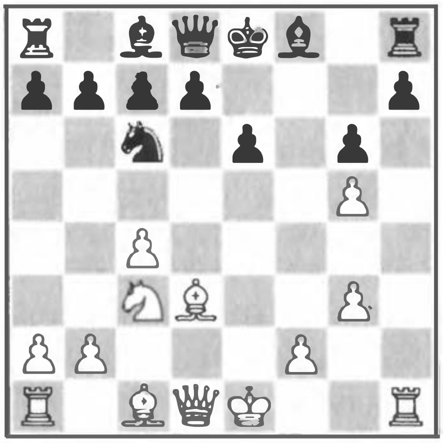
6...e6

Giving back the pawn is also possible – after 6...♗g7 7.♘xe4 0-0 8.d4 ♘c6 9.♗g2 d6 10.0-0 ♗g4 11.f3 ♗f5 12.♗e3 chances are about equal.

7.d3 exd3

After 7...♗g7 a possible variation is 8.dxe4 0-0 9.♗e3 ♘c6 10.f4 e5 11.f5 gxf5 12.exf5 ♖xf5 13.♕d5+ ♖f7 14.0-0-0, when White has enough compensation for the pawn.

8.♘g3 ♘xg3 9.hxg3 ♘c6 10.♗xd3



10...♘e5

10...♗g7 11.♖xh7 ♗xc3+ 12.bxc3 ♖xh7 13.♗xg6+ ♖f7 14.♗xf7+ ♔xf7 15.♕h5+ ♔g7 16.♕h6+ ♔g8 17.♕g6+ would give a draw, but not more. Of course White can just continue his development – instead of taking on h7 – he has enough compensation for the pawn.

11.♗f4 ♗g7

11...♘xd3+ 12.♕xd3 ♗g7 13.0-0-0 0-0 14.♖h4 would give White dangerous threats on the h-file.

12.♗c2 d6

Dubious is 12...♘xc4?! 13.♖xh7 ♖xh7 14.♗xg6+ ♔e7 15.♗xh7 ♘xb2 16.♕c2 ♘c4 17.g6 (threatening 18.♗g5+ ♗f6 19.g7) 17...♕h8 18.♘b5! d5 (18...♗xa1 19.♕xc4+−) 19.♖c1 ♗e5 20.♘xc7 ♗xc7 21.♗xc7 when White has a clear advantage.

13.♕e2 ♕e7 14.c5!? ♗d7 15.0-0-0 ♗c6 16.♘e4 ♗xe4

Castling is an option:

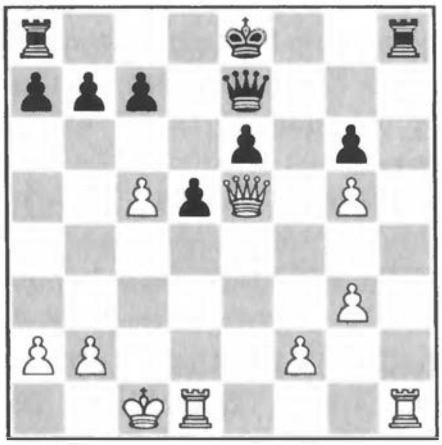
- 16...0-0-0 17.cxd6 cxd6 18.♘xd6+ ♖xd6 19.♗xe5 ♖xd1+ 20.♖xd1 ♕xg5+ 21.f4 ♕e7 would be a tiny bit better for White.
- 16...0-0 is not so clear, but surely White has enough compensation for the pawn then.

17.♗xe4 d5

Returning the pawn, since after 17...0-0-0 18.♗g2 ♔b8 19.♔b1 White's bishops and rooks execute strong pressure on the black position.

18.♗xe5 ♗xe5 19.♗xg6+ hxg6 20.♕xe5

White has some initiative here, but with some careful moves Black should be able to draw.



20...♖f8?! 20...♖xh1 21.♖xh1 0-0-0 is easier to defend for Black. **21.♖he1 ♕xc5+** 21...0-0-0 22.♕xe6+ ♕xe6 23.♖xe6 ♖xf2 24.♖xg6 ♖g2 25.♖d3 would not be so easy for Black to draw. **22.♔b1 0-0-0 23.♕xe6+ ♔b8 24.f4 ♕f2 25.♕e3 ♕g2 26.♖d3 ♖h8 27.♕e2 ♕h3?!** After 27...♕xe2 28.♖xe2 c6 29.♖e6 ♖dg8 30.♔c2 ♖h2+ White is just a bit better. **28.♕e6 ♕g2?** 28...♕xe6 29.♖xe6 ♖hg8 30.♔c2 is worse for Black than the variation above, but still drawable. Now Black just loses a pawn. **29.♕xg6 ♖h2 30.♖b3?!** 30.♕f6 keeps the extra pawn. **30...a5?** 30...♖h1! 31.♖e3 (31.♕e6 d4⇄) 31...♖xe1+ 32.♖xe1 ♕xg3 33.♕e8 ♔c8 34.♕e6+ ♔b8 35.♕e3 ♕g4 gives decent drawing chances. **31.♕c6! ♕xb2+** Or 31...b6 32.♖xb6+ cxb6 33.♕xb6+ ♔c8 34.♖c1+ winning. **32.♖xb2 ♖xb2+ 33.♔xb2 bxc6 34.g6** The pawns cannot be stopped. **1-0**

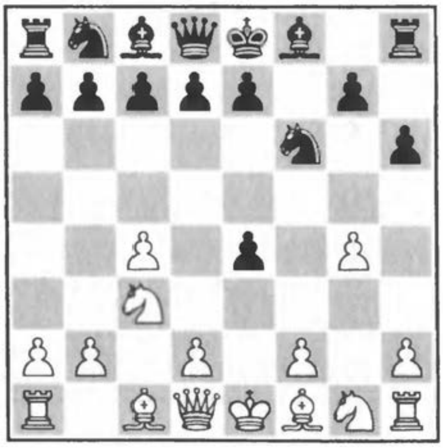
☐ **Juan Manuel Bellon Lopez**
■ **Martyn Goodger**
Gibraltar 2006

1.c4 f5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.e4 fxe4

2.e4 fxe4 3.♘c3 and 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.e4 have so far always led to the same position, but Black might try 3...♘xe4. Play can continue 4.♘xe4 fxe4 5.♕h5+ g6 6.♕e5 ♖g8 7.♕xe4 ♘c6 8.♘f3 with mutual chances.

4.g4 h6

After 1.d4 f5 2.e4 fxe4 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.g4, the best move is 4...h6. That is perhaps the reason why people have played it in this position too, but here it offers White chances for an advantage.



5.♗g2

I prefer this to 5.d3 d5 6.cxd5 (6.dxe4 has been played three times, but after 6...d4 Black is better) 6...♘xd5 (6...♗xg4 7.♕a4+ ♘bd7 8.dxe4 is a little better for White) 7.♕a4+ ♘c6 8.♕xe4, when Black will regret having played h6, though after 8...e6 9.♕g6+ ♔d7 followed by 10...♕f6 things are not so clear.

But Black can play more convincingly, as Johan van Mil already showed against Hvenekilde (Copenhagen 1984): 5...e5! 6.g5 hxg5 7.♗xg5 d6 8.♗g2 ♗e7 9.♘ge2 ♘c6 10.♗xf6 ♗xf6 11.♗xe4 ♗e6 12.♕a4 ♕d7 and Black had a small advantage.

5...d5

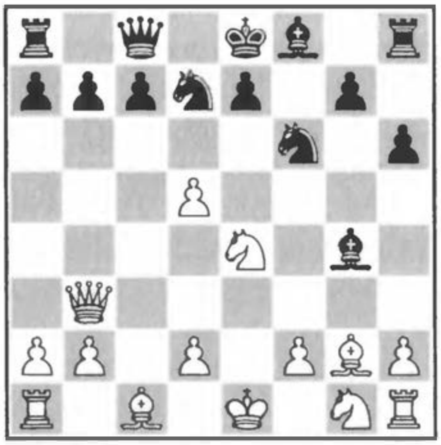
Things can quickly go wrong for Black if he is not careful:

- 5...e5 6.h4 ♗e7? 7.g5 hxg5 8.hxg5 ♖xh1 9.♗xh1 ♘g8 10.♕h5+ ♔f8 11.♗xe4 c6? 12.♕f3+ 1-0, Mellado Trivino-Vallejo Pons, Oropesa del Mar 1996. The current super GM was only 16 then, but already rated 2420.
- 5...e6?! 6.h4 c5?! 7.g5 hxg5?! 8.hxg5 ♖xh1 9.♗xh1 was also already losing for Black in Persson-Orel, Eger 1995.

6.cxd5 ♗xg4 7.♕b3 ♕c8

7...♘bd7 8.♘xe4 g6 9.d3 ♗g7 10.h3 ♗f5 11.♘e2 was a little better for White in Narciso Dublan-Luque Canalejo, Cordoba 1995.

8.♘xe4 ♘bd7



9.d3

I like 9.♘e2 ♘b6 10.♘f4 for White.

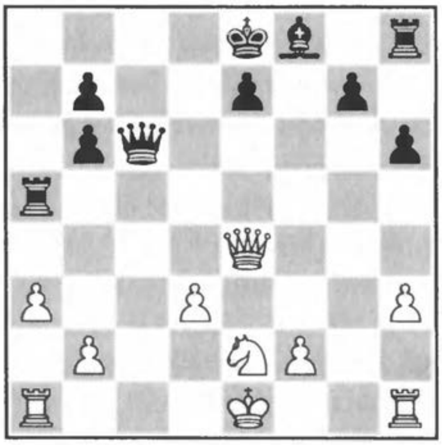
9...♘b6 10.h3 ♗h5 11.♗e3 ♗f7

Stronger was the simple 11...♘fxd5.

12.♘c3 c6 13.♗xb6

13.dxc6!? ♗xb3 14.cxb7 ♕e6 15.bxa8♕+ ♘xa8 16.axb3 gives White a rook, bishop, pawn and initiative for the queen, which is enough, but with five weak pawns it won't be better for White.

13...axb6 14.♘ge2 ♘xd5 15.♘xd5 ♗xd5 16.♗xd5 cxd5 17.♕xd5 ♖a5 18.♕e4 ♕c6 19.a3



19...e5?

This doesn't help Black in the bishop versus knight fight. The black bishop wants to be on the long diagonal, so 19...g5 should have been played.

20.♖c1 ♕xe4 After 20...♖c5 21.♖xc5 ♕xc5 22.d4 Black loses a pawn. **21.dxe4 ♖c5 22.♘c3 ♗e7 23.♔e2 0-0 24.♘a4 ♖xc1** 24...♖c6 25.♖xc6 bxc6 26.♖c1 b5 27.♘b6 ♖f4 28.f3 ♖h4 29.♔f2 is also better for White. **25.♖xc1 b5 26.♘b6 ♖f4?** 26...b4 27.a4 ♗d6 keeps material equality. **27.♘d5! ♖f7 28.♖c8+ ♗f8 29.♖e8** Winning either pawn e5 or (via e6-b6) pawn b5. **29...♔h7 30.♖xe5 ♗d6 31.♖e6 ♗c5 32.f4 ♗d4 33.b4 ♗b2 34.f5** 34.♔d3 ♗xa3 35.♔c2 would lock up the bishop. **34...♗xa3 35.h4 h5 36.♔d3 ♗b2 37.♘f4 ♖d7+ 38.♔c2 ♗f6 39.♘g6 ♖c7+** Losing without a chance, but 39...♖d4 40.♖e8 ♖d8 41.♖xd8 ♗xd8

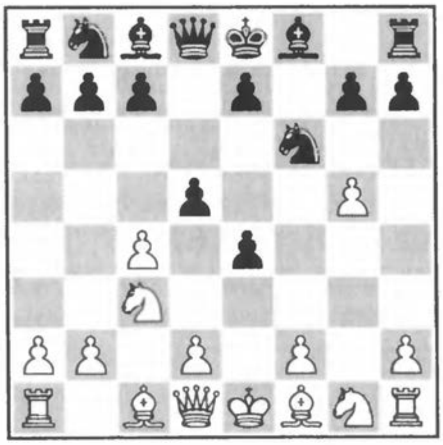
42.e5 ♔g8 43.♔d3 ♚f7 44.♔e4 ♗b6 45.♔d5 is also winning for White. **40.♔d3 ♖c3+ 41.♔e2 ♖c2+ 42.♔d1 ♖c8 43.e5 ♗xh4 44.♘xh4 ♖c4 45.♘g6 h4 46.♖e8 ♔h6 47.e6 ♔g5 48.e7 ♖d4+ 49.♔c2 1-0**

☐ **Guillermo Baches Garcia**
■ **Joan Canal Oliveras**
Manresa 1997

1.c4 f5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.e4 fxe4 4.g4 d5

A good move, but normally it should take an unprepared opponent a lot of time to play it. To evaluate this move well, Black should calculate at least until move 14 and see that giving up castling is not a big problem.

5.g5



5...d4

Black tried 5...♘g4 6.cxd5 a few times, and now:

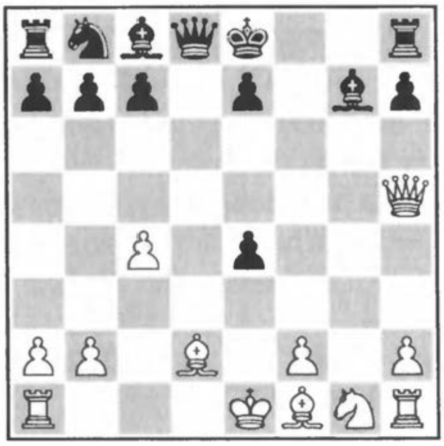
– 6...e5?! 7.♘xe4 (safe and good. 7.h3 ♘xf2 8.♔xf2 ♗c5+ 9.♔e2 ♕xg5 10.d4 exd3+ 11.♕xd3 ♕h5+ 12.♕f3 ♕g6 as in Brkic-Cerubdzic, Novi Becej 2007, is probably better for White too, but clearly less safe) 7...♗c5 (7...♕xd5 8.♗g2 wins a queen or the knight on g4) 8.♘xc5 ♕xd5 9.f3 ♕xc5 10.fxg4 0-0 11.d4 exd4 12.♗d3? ♕c6 led to a black win in Persson-Müller, Eger 1993, but after 8.♕a4+ ♗d7 9.♕b3 ♗d4 10.f3 White wins a piece under rather safe circumstances.

– Better is 6...c6 7.f3 exf3 8.♘xf3 cxd5!? (8...♕d6) 9.h3 ♕d6 10.♗b5+ ♘c6 11.hxg4 ♕g3+ 12.♔e2 ♗xg4 13.♕f1, when Black has two pawns for the piece and possibly a third one is on the way, while the white king is standing badly. Still, my computer prefers White and I haven't been able to prove him wrong.

6.gxf6 dxc3 7.fxg7 cxd2+

7...♗xg7 8.♕h5+ ♔f8 9.dxc3 ♘d7 10.♕d5 c6 11.♕xe4 gives White an extra pawn and a better position.

8.♗xd2 ♗xg7 9.♕h5+



9...♔f8

Development is equal, but the black king is standing badly and the extra pawn Black has is weak. So at first sight it looks like White should have plenty of compensation here. However, White can't easily develop the kingside and that makes it difficult to attack the black king.

10.♗h6

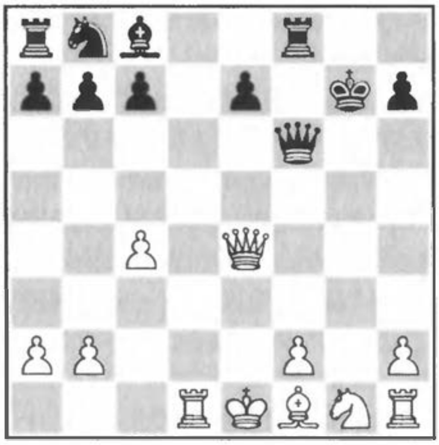
Here 10.0-0-0 ♕e8 11.♕h4 ♕g6 12.♘e2 ♘c6 13.♖g1 ♕f6 leads to an equal position.

10...♕d6 11.♖d1 ♕g6

Of course not 11...♕xh6?? 12.♖d8 mate.

12.♗xg7+ ♔xg7 13.♕e5+ ♕f6 14.♕xe4 ♖f8

White regained his pawn, but both kings are not safe now, while development is still equal.



15.♘f3!

In such a position developing is better than a passive move like 15.♖d2. The knight is untouchable due to 16.♖g1+.

15...♘c6 16.♖g1+ ♔h8 17.♗d3 ♗f5

Ever since his ninth move, Black probably had in his mind that exchanging queens would be beneficial for him. However, now it changes the position in a positive way for White, who will have the better king position. Instead 17...♖f7 keeps the tension and is about equal.

18.♕xf5 ♕xf5 19.♗xf5 ♖xf5 20.♖g3 ♖af8 21.♔e2 e5?!

This allows White's next move, which otherwise would have failed to 22...♖xf3 23.♖xf3 ♖xf3 24.♔xf3 ♘e5+.

22.♖d7 ♖5f7 23.♖xf7 ♖xf7

Trading the rooks benefits White, since the pressure on the f-file is gone. Also, the fewer the pieces, the more important his king activity will be. Still it's not easy to make progress.

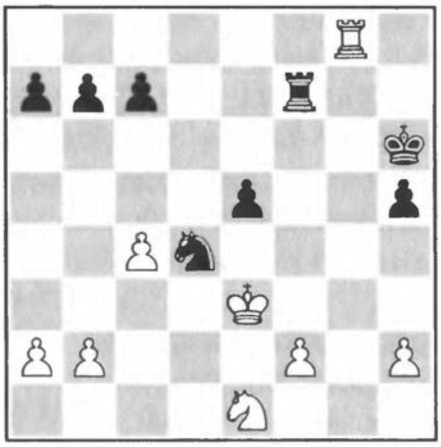
24.♔e3 h6 25.♖g4

Or 25.a3 a5 26.b3 ♔h7 27.♔e4.

25...♔h7 26.♘e1

With the idea ♘d3 and ♔e4, since 26.♔e4 ♘b4, threatening 27...♘xa2 and 27...♘d3, is annoying. Another idea was 26.♖e4 ♖e7 27.♖h4 ♔g7 28.♖g4+ ♔f6 29.♔e4, with some advantage.

26...h5 27.♖g5 ♔h6 28.♖g8 ♘d4



29.♘d3?

29.♖e8! ♘f5+ 30.♔e2 keeps the better chances: for example 30...♖e7 (30...♘d4+ 31.♔f1 ♘c6 32.♘d3 ♖f5 33.b3 ♔g6 34.♘c5 b6 35.♘a6 ♖f7 36.♖e6+ wins a pawn) 31.♖xe7 ♘xe7 32.♘d3 ♘g6 33.♔e3 ♔g5 34.♔e4 ♔f6 35.b4 b6 36.b5 ♔e6 37.f4 exf4 38.♘xf4+ ♘xf4 39.♔xf4 would win for White.

29...♘f5+ 30.♔e4 ♘d6+ 31.♔xe5 ♘xc4+ 32.♔d4 ♘d2 33.f4 ♖d7+

33...♘f3+ 34.♔e4 ♘xh2 35.♘e5 gives White enough play to draw, but not more.

34.♔c3 ♘e4+ 35.♔c2 ♖f7 36.b4 ♘f6 37.♖d8 ♖d7 38.♖a8 a6 39.♖b8 b6 40.♖a8 ♖d4 41.a3 ♘d5 42.♖h8+ ♔g7 43.♖xh5??

A horrific blunder. 43.♖c8 or 43.♖a8 would lead to a draw.

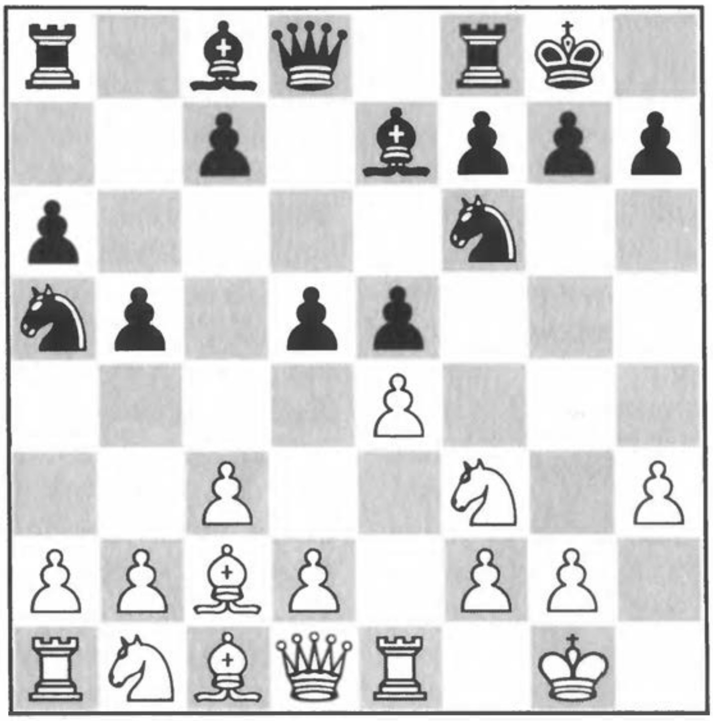
43...♖xd3 44.♖g5+ ♔f6 0-1

Conclusion: theoretically Black is fine in the Porcupine Variation, and I don't expect to see it often in grandmaster practice. However, it leads to interesting, unbalanced positions and is setting problems for the opponent right from the start. I would recommend the variation for club level play: you'll have a good chance to either get a time advantage first and a board advantage later, or to get a quick win.

CHAPTER 11

Jeroen Bosch

Gajewski's Incredible Spanish Novelty



Marshall Attack in the Chigorin?

Two SOS volumes ago Adrian Mikhalchishin wrote an article on Grzegorz Gajewski's 9...♖b8 in the classical Spanish.

Normally SOS lines leave the well-trodden paths as soon as possible, but it was easy to make an exception for Gajewski's 9...♖b8: a new idea in one of the most important tabiyas of modern chess. Remarkably enough Gajewski has meanwhile introduced another novel concept in the closed Ruy Lopez. In the Chigorin Variation after 9...♘a5 10.♗c2 the whole world plays 10...c5 but not Gajewski. His stunning 10...d5!? is reminiscent of the Marshall Attack and the resulting positions are extremely sharp – an ideal weapon to play for a win with black. So far the results have been uplifting to say the least, and, for the moment, the ball is firmly in White's court. It is hard to imagine that Gajewski's concept is the refutation of the Ruy Lopez, but when this book was going to the press, it was clear that Magnus Carlsen had prepared this very line for the World Cup!

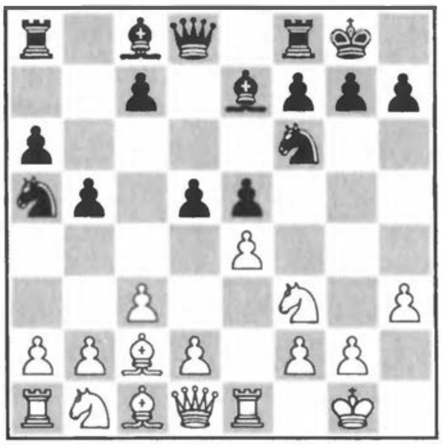
☐ **Viktor Kuznetsov**
■ **Grzegorz Gajewski**
Pardubice 2007

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♗e7 6.♖e1 b5 7.♗b3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.h3 ♘a5

Gajewski's previous find was 9...♖b8, with the point that after 10.d4 exd4 11.cxd4 Black has 11...d5 (with the rook on a8 White would be able to play 12.♘e5 ♘xe5 13.dxe5 ♘xe4 14.♗xd5 with a double attack – this is the tactical point of 9...♖b8) 12.e5 ♘e4 with a decent position – see SOS-6 and the SOS Files of SOS-7.

10.♗c2 d5!?

For over a century the logical follow-up of 9...♘a5 has been 10...c5, to gain influence in the centre and to slowly equalize later on. Clearly, Gajewski is not interested in equalizing and boldly advances his d-pawn, sacrificing material for considerable attacking chances, as we will see.



11.exd5

A cop-out was 11.d3 dxe4 12.dxe4 ♕xd1 13.♖xd1 ♗b7 ½-½ Klundt-Bromberger, Nuremberg 2007. While 11.♘xe5 dxe4 12.d4 (12.♗xe4 ♘xe4 13.♖xe4 ♗b7 14.♖e1 ♕d5 and Black has more than enough for the pawn as any Marshall-gambiteer will acknowledge) 12...exd3 is also equal.

A serious alternative is 11.d4. However, after 11...♘xe4 12.♘xe5 f6 13.♘f3 ♘c4 14.♘bd2 (taking the pawn still gives a lot of compensation) 14...♘cxd2 15.♗xd2 ♗b7 16.♗f4 ♗d6 chances were even in Smirin-Greenfeld, Beer Sheva rapid 2007. Black also has the more ambitious 11...dxe4 12.♘xe5 c5, as 13.♗xe4 ♘xe4 14.♖xe4 ♗b7 still gives more than enough play for the pawn.

Recent practice has seen 13.♗g5 ♗b7, and now:

– 14.♘d2 cxd4 15.cxd4 ♖e8 (15...♕xd4 16.♘xe4 is inferior) 16.♗xf6 (16.♘b3 ♘xb3 17.♗xb3 ♘d5 18.♗xe7 ♖xe7 equal, Dominguez-Carlsen, Khanty-Mansiysk 2007) 16...♗xf6 17.♘xe4 ♗xe5 18.dxe5 ♖xe5 when White should avoid 19.b4? ♘c6 20.♘c5 ♕xd1+ 21.♖axd1 ♖xe1+ 22.♖xe1 ♘xb4 and Black won after a long game in Charbonneau-Benjamin, Internet 2007.

– 14.dxc5?! ♕c7! 15.♗xf6 ♖ad8! (15...♗xf6 16.♘d7!) 16.♕e2?! (16.♘d7 ♖xd7 17.♗d4 was preferable) 16...♗xf6 17.♘g4? (17.c6!) 17...♗g5 18.♘e3 f5 19.b4 and now 19...f4! 20.♘f1 f3 20.gxf3 e3! ended in a crushing win, Volokitin-Wojtaszek, Heraklion Ech-tt 2007.

11...e4

The point of his previous move. White must either give up his 'Spanish' bishop or lose some time wandering around with his knight.

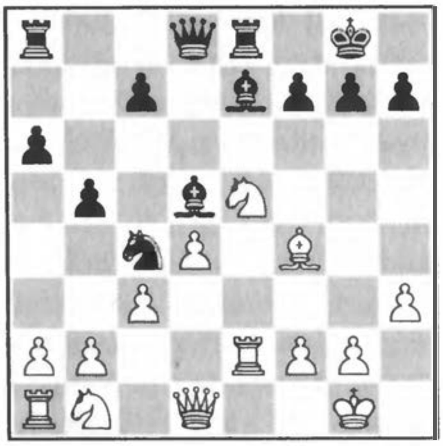
12.♘g5

The most obvious move in the position. White intends to take on e4 with the knight preserving his light-squared bishop. In the months following this game other knight moves have so far been unsuccessful:

● 12.♘d4 ♕xd5 13.f3. Apparently the point of White's previous move, but it looks unnatural and Black has several satisfactory answers. Votava goes for the sharpest approach: 13...♗xh3!? (worthy of investigation are 13...♗c5!? 14.fxe4 ♕e5 planning 15...♘c6, and 13...♗d6 14.fxe4 ♕e5) 14.fxe4?! (14.gxh3 c5 15.♘b3 ♕g5+ and Black has a least a draw) 14...♕g5 15.♕f3 ♗g4. Material is equal, but Black has a huge edge in development. The game continued: 16.d3 ♕h4 17.♕f2 ♘h5 18.♕xh4 ♗xh4 19.♖f1 ♘g3 20.♖f4 ♗g5 21.♖xg4 ♗xc1

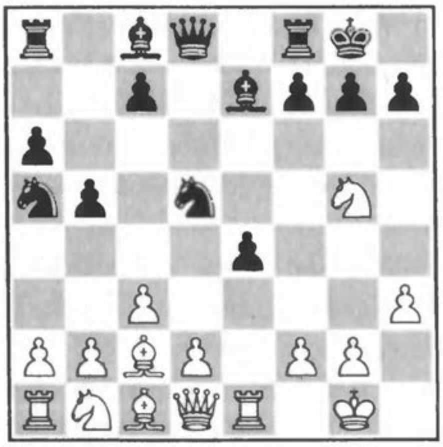
22.♘b3? ♗xb2 23.♘xa5 ♘e2+ 24.♔f1 ♘c1! 25.♔e1 ♗xa1 26.♔d2 ♗b2 and Black won in Krejci-Votava, Ceska Trebova 2007.

- 12.♘e5 ♕xd5 13.d4 exd3 14.♕xd3 ♗b7 15.♕xd5 ♗xd5 16.♗g5 ♖fe8 was equal in Nemcova-Manik, Ceska Trebova 2007.
- Michael Adams played 12.♗xe4 against Carlsen in the fourth round of the World Cup. After 12...♘xe4 13.♖xe4 ♗b7! 14.d4 (14...♗xd5 15.♖e1 ♗d6) -14...♖e8 15.♗f4 ♘c4 16.♖e2 (16.b3 ♘b6 17.c4 bxc4 18.bxc4 ♘xc4 with equal chances in Kaplan-Ragger, Yerevan 2007) 16...♗xd5 17.♘e5



17...♗g5 18.♗g3 ♘xe5 19.♖xe5 ♖xe5 20.♗xe5 ♕d7 21.♘a3 f6 22.♗g3 and White was slightly better in Adams-Carlsen, Khanty-Mansiysk 2007. Carlsen held on to the draw and qualified for the next round.

12...♘xd5



13.♘xe4

Computers are good at finding tricks like 13.♘xh7!?. However, with most of White's army stuck in the barracks on the queenside this is unlikely to be more than a blank. 13...♔xh7 (13...♖e8 does not trap the knight after 14.♗xe4 f5 15.♗xd5+ ♕xd5 16.♘g5) 14.♗xe4+ ♔g8 15.♗xd5 ♕xd5 16.♖xe7 ♗xh3! (Black can also pick up an exchange for two pawns with 16...♗e6 17.d4 ♕d6 18.♖xe6 ♕xe6 when the game is about equal) 17.♕f3 (17.♕f1 ♗e6 clearly favours Black) 17...♕xf3 (17...♕g5!?) 18.gxf3 and now – despite his extra pawn – after either 18...♖ae8 or 18...c5 White must suffer in the ending.

After 13.♘xe4 it may appear at first sight that Black does not have enough for the pawn. True, he has an edge in development, but the knight on a5 does not look too good. Within a few moves (d4, ♘d2-f3) White will be solidly placed. However, Black's compensation is of a very dynamic and concrete nature. The next four moves his f-pawn is going to make a career for himself, tearing White's castled position apart in the progress. Gajewski must have found the whole concept in his study – a strong example of computer-assisted analysis making for attractive chess!

13...f5! 14.♘g3

No improvement was the intermediate 14.b4? fxe4 15.bxa5. After 15...♗c5 Black has a winning attack: 16.♖xe4 (16.♖f1 ♕h4 17.♕e1 – 17.d4 exd3 18.♕xd3 ♗b7 – 17...♗xh3 18.♗xe4 ♖ae8! 19.♗xd5+ ♔h8 also wins) 16...♗xf2+ 17.♔h1 ♗f5 18.♗a3 c5! 19.♖e5? ♗xc2 20.♕xc2 ♗g3 21.♖f5 ♕g5! 22.♖xf8+ ♖xf8 23.♕d1 ♕h5 0-1, Jameson-Rudd, Liverpool 2007.

14...f4

With tempo the pawn marches on.

15.♘e4

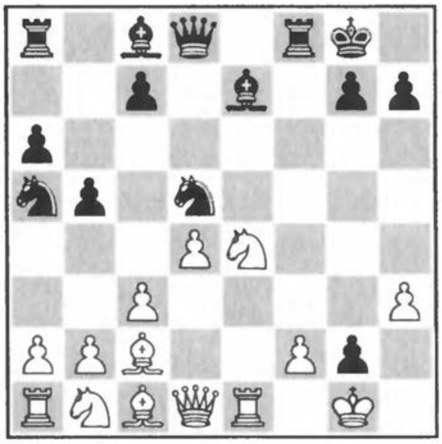
Of course 15.♘f1 is also met by 15...f3. Computers have no inhibitions, hence, they do not ignore the odd-looking 15.♘h5. The point is that after 15...g6 16.b4 (16.♗e4 c6 transposes to 15...c6) 16...♘c4 17.a4 Black loses a few pawns and has to loosen his position to win the knight.

Therefore Tony Kosten has recommended 15...c6 for Black (on *chesspublishing.com*). The knight on h5 looks stupid, and if the regular Marshall is OK for Black (and there are still no signs to the contrary) then this must be fine for Black too.

15...f3

Now White cannot keep his castle intact so he might as well do something about his development.

16.d4 fxg2



17.♘g3

With games played and published almost instantly modern theory develops quickly. A few months after the stem game the game Weeks-Mannion, Port Erin 2007, continued 17.♕h5, which was no improvement over the stem game, though, for after 17...g6 18.♕h6 ♖f5! White must lose more time with 19.♘g3 ♗f8 20.♕d2 ♖f7 (20...♘c4) 21.♕d3? ♗xh3 and Black won.

Please note that once White has played 12.♘g5 and 13.♘xe4 the position after 16...fxg2 arises almost by force.

17...♕d6

Now that his f-pawn has come to a standstill it is actually not so easy to determine what the best move is for Black. With the text Black makes a generally useful move (the rooks will be connected once Black moves his bishop from c8 now, and ...♘f4 is prepared).

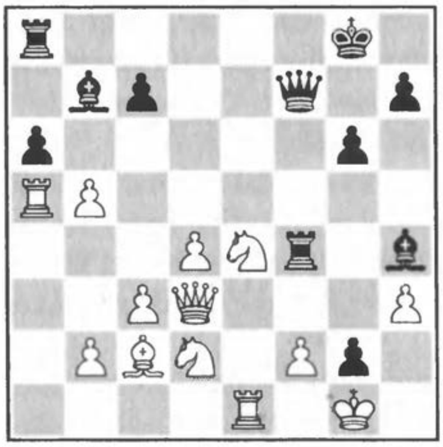
Also useful is the prophylactic 17...c6.

Worse looks 17...♘f6?! 18.♗g5, as Notkin has indicated in *Chess Today*. While 17...♗xh3?? 18.♕h5 blunders a piece of course.

Worthy of further investigation though is the sharp 17...c5!? 18.♗e4 (18.dxc5 ♗xc5 19.♘e4 ♗b6) 18...♖a7 (18...♗b7 19.♘f5) 19.dxc5 (19.♗xg2 ♖d7) 19...♖d7 20.b4 ♘f6 (20...♘xc3 21.♘xc3 ♖xd1 22.♖xd1 favours White) 21.♘d2 ♘xe4 22.♘gxe4 ♘c6 and White has a small material advantage, but his kingside is weakened and he duly misses his light-squared bishop. Black aims to continue with ...♖d3 and ...♘e5.

18.♗e4

In the game Wang Hao-Gawain Jones from the England-China match (Liverpool 2007) the stem game was followed until now, with the Chinese grandmaster echoing Black's last move with 18.♕d3!? g6 19.♘e4 (19.♔xg2 ♕c6!? 20.♘e4 ♗h4 21.♖e2 ♗f5 22.f3 ♕d7 retrieves the pawn with great play) 19...♕e6 20.♗h6 (safer is perhaps 20.♕g3 when her majesty can aid the king in his defence) 20...♘f4 (strong looks 20...♖f5 21.♘bd2 ♖h5 Rybka quickly indicates the following tactical line which leads to an approximately equal position: 22.♗g5 ♖xh3 23.♘g3 ♕d7 24.♗xe7 ♘xe7 25.♕f3 ♗b7 26.♗b3+ ♘d5 27.♖e7! ♕xe7 28.♗xd5+ ♔g7 29.♗xb7 ♖f8 30.♕xg2 ♖xg3! 31.♕xg3 – 31.fxg3 ♕e3+ 32.♔h1 ♖f2∓ – 31...♘xb7. The whole line was also given by Tony Kosten on chesspublishing.com. Finding all this at the board is obviously not so simple) 21.♗xf4 ♖xf4 22.♘bd2 ♕f7 23.a4?! ♗h4 24.axb5 ♗b7! 25.♖xa5 (25.♖e2 was the best chance, but who can blame White for taking the knight?)



25...♖xe4 (a pity, Jones would have been rewarded for his uncompromising play had he found 25...♗xe4! 26.♘xe4 – 26.♖xe4 ♖g4!! which wins on the spot but is easily missed by a human. The threat of 27...♕xf2+ and promoting the g-pawn cannot be parried satisfactorily – 26...♖xe4 27.♖e2 ♖xe2 28.♕xe2 ♖e8 29.♗b3 ♖xe2 30.♗xf7+ ♔xf7 31.bxa6 ♗xf2+ 32.♔xg2 ♗xd4+ 33.♔f3 ♖f2+ 34.♔e4 ♗a7 and this is a superior version of the ending that eventually arises in this game) 26.♘xe4 ♗xe4 27.♕e3 ♗xc2 28.bxa6 ♗e4 29.a7 ♖f8 30.f4 ♗d5? (30...♗a8) 31.♖e2 ♕f5? 32.♖a1? (32.a8♕ ♖xa8 33.♖xa8+ ♗xa8 34.♕e8+ ♔g7 35.♕xa8 ♕xh3 36.♕xg2 wins) 32...♗g5 33.♕e5 ♗xf4 34.♕xf5 gxf5 35.c4 ♗f3 36.♖xg2+ ♗xg2 37.♔xg2 ♖a8 38.♔f3 clearly White has a lot more for the piece now than in the note to 25...♖xe4. The game ended in a draw after 104 moves in a rook versus rook and bishop ending.

This high-level encounter demonstrates that Black has tremendous play in the position after 17...♕d6. It also demonstrates that the ensuing positions are very complex for mere mortals.

18...♗b7?!

It is logical to develop the bishop on the long diagonal, but this loses control over the f5-square. After White's next Black is forced to sacrifice material, for which he objectively does not obtain sufficient compensation. This sober remark, does feel inadequate though considering the beautiful win that follows.

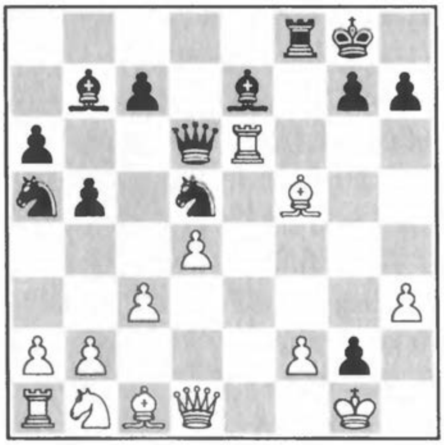
19.♘f5 ♖xf5

The only continuation that is consistent with his previous move.

20.♗xf5 ♖f8

Now if the bishop moves from the f-file Black has attacking ideas like ...♗h4 and ...♖xf2 (followed by ...♕h2). Therefore 21.♕g4!? was a serious option, but so is Kuznetsov's intermediate

21.♖e6!



21...♖xf5!?

I don't know if Gajewski planned this spectacular move when he opted for 18...♗b7. It may also have been the result of the following process of elimination: 21...♕d8 more or less loses to 22.♕h5 ♘f6 23.♖xf6! ♖xf6 24.♕xh7+ ♔f7 25.♗g5, and 21...♕d7 is simply met by 22.♖f6! ♕e8 23.♖xf8+ ♗xf8 24.♗g4 and Black's attack is going nowhere.

22.♖xd6 ♗xd6 23.a4?

With all his pieces on the back rank, Kuznetsov aims to involve his rook in the fastest way by opening up the a-file. This weakens square b3 though. The sober 23.♕e2 looks best.

23...♗g3!?

Another great move!

24.f3

The best defence. If White takes the bishop then 24.fxg3 ♖f1+ 25.♕xf1 gxf1♕+ 26.♔xf1 ♘b3 demonstrates the downside of 23.a4, after 27.♖a3 ♘xc1 28.axb5 axb5 29.♖a7 ♗c8 Black's pieces are somewhat better than White's rook and pawn. Losing is 24.♔xg2? ♘xc3+.

24...♗f4!?

Insufficient in the end is 24...♘c4 25.♕e2 ♘de3 26.♗xe3 ♖xf3 27.♗c1 ♖f1+ 28.♕xf1 ♗h2+ 29.♔f2 ♗g3+ 30.♔e2 and White remains an exchange up.

25.axb5

Not a bad move. A draw is the most likely result in the tactics resulting from 25.♗xf4 ♘xf4 26.h4 (26.♘d2 ♖g5!) taking away the g5-square from Black's rook, viz. 26...♖f6!? (26...♘c4 27.♘d2 ♘h3+ 28.♔xg2 ♘e3+ 29.♔xh3 ♘xd1 30.♖xd1 is about equal too) 27.♘d2 ♖g6 28.♕c2 ♘h3+ 29.♔h2 g1♕+ 30.♖xg1 ♘xg1 31.d5! ♗xd5 32.♕f5 and either White or Black will hold a perpetual: 32...c6 33.♕c8+ ♔f7 34.♕c7+ ♔e6 35.♕xa5 (35.♕c8+) 35...♗xf3 36.♘xf3 (36.♕xa6 ♖g2+ 37.♔h1 ♗d5) 36...♘xf3+ 37.♔h3 ♘g1+.

25...♗xc1 26.♖xa5?

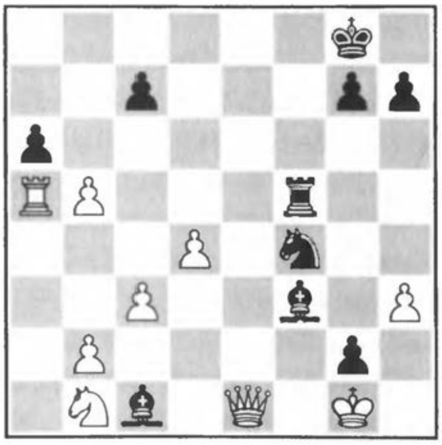
Taking the wrong piece. After 26.♕xc1!? ♖xf3 (26...♘b3? 27.♕c2 loses outright. More complex is 26...♘f4 27.♕xf4! ♖xf4 28.bxa6 ♗a8 29.♖xa5 ♖xf3 30.♔xg2 ♖xc3+ 31.♔f2 ♖c2+ 32.♔e3 ♖xb2 33.♘d2 which is still better for White) 27.bxa6 (perhaps 27.♕g5!? ♖f1+ 28.♔xg2 ♘e3+ 29.♔h2 ♖h1+ 30.♔g3 ♖g1+ 31.♔f4 ♘d5+ 32.♕xd5+! ♗xd5 33.♖xa5 ♖xb1 34.bxa6 with a slightly better version of the main line) 27...♗a8 28.♖xa5 ♘e3 29.♕xe3 ♖f1+ 30.♔h2 ♖h1+ 31.♔g3 g1♕+ 32.♕xg1 ♖xg1+ 33.♔f4 ♖xb1 is remarkably like the above-mentioned game Wang Hao-Jones, but with a white-squared bishop instead. A draw is likely.

26...♘f4 27.♕e1?

This is a clear mistake. After 27.♘d2 ♗xd2 28.♕xd2 ♗xf3 29.♔h2 ♘xh3 30.♖a1 most humans would continue 30...g1♕+ 31.♖xg1 ♘xg1 32.♔xg1 axb5 which should end in a draw.

However, on move 30 Black has 30...♖h5!? 31.♔g3 ♘g5!? 32.♕e3 ♖h3+ 33.♔f4 h6!?, an unbelievable computer line that appears to favour Black. He combines an attack against White's king with the threat to promote his g-pawn.

27...♗xf3



Now Black's army is well-coordinated; he has a winning attack.

28.bxa6 ♘xh3+ 29.♔h2 ♗f4+

Or 29...g1♕+ which after 30.♕xg1 ♗f4+ 31.♔xh3 ♖xa5 transposes to the game.

30.♔xh3 g1♘+

An artist through and through.

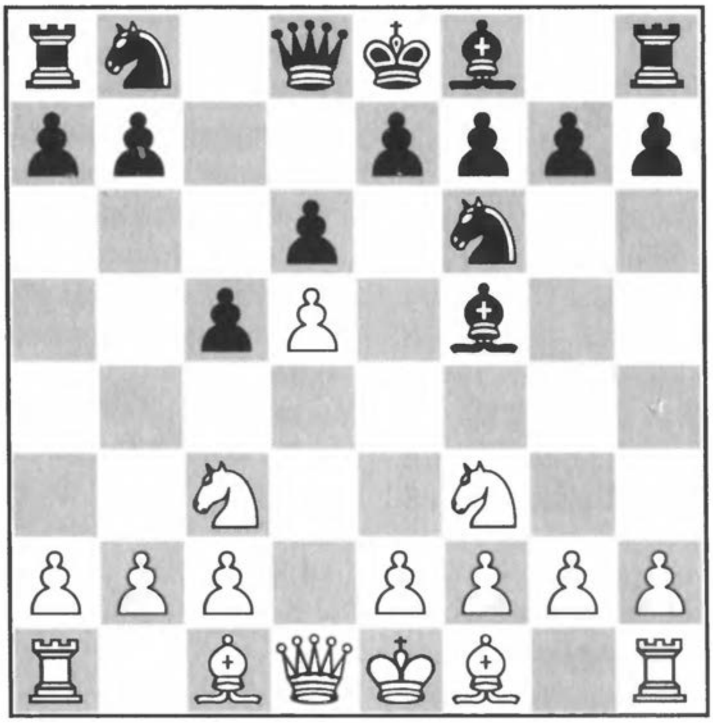
31.♕xg1 ♖xa5

Kuznetsov resigned since he can only avert mate by giving his queen for one of Black's bishops. A well-deserved and fantastic win for the creative inventor of 10...d5.

CHAPTER 12

Arthur Kogan

Play the Spielmann Attack



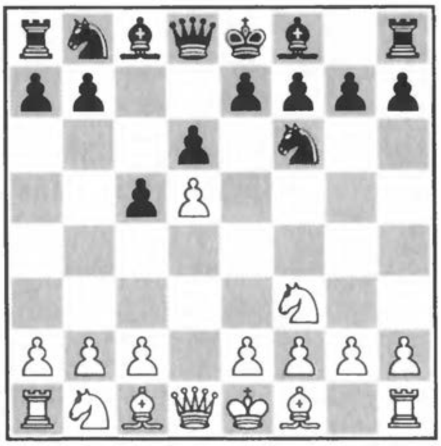
1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 c5 3.d5 d6 4.♘c3 ♗f5

Since I have always wanted to play for a win with black I have often used different gambits against classical 1.d4 and 2.c4 players: the Volga Gambit, the Blumenfeld Gambit and even the Budapest Gambit – as you can find in Chapter4 in this same SOS volume.
However, in the last few years many people have started to get worried about such aggressive gambit lines, and usually when they face me they prefer to play the modest 2.♘f3, trying to prevent such gambit lines and aiming to cool down my opening ambitions.
In reply I have often relied on the aggressive 2...c5 3.d5 b5!?, which leads to sharp counterplay, but after a few good results it was no surprise anymore and people came prepared and found solid replies too.
So obviously in need of a new idea I started to search between the 'dusty shelves' of my brain, to slowly remember an idea which I had found some time ago. I remembered I had even tried it once, against WGM Cosma from Rumania, and analysed it for a bit, but since I could neither find nor remember the game I decided to have a quick look in the MegaBase. Surprisingly (for me that is), it contained some games with 'my idea' – this just confirmed my desire to try it again!
I will present here two analysed games: Roussel-Kogan and Grünfeld-Spielmann. Both games feature an early ...g5.

☐ **Thomas Roussel-Roozmon**
■ **Arthur Kogan**
Montreal 2005

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 c5 3.d5 d6

A first small surprise for my young opponent.



4.♘c3

This is the most common response to 3...d6, since it's considered that against Benoni-structures, it is better to keep the c4 square for a knight and finish your development quickly to prepare a central break.

In case of 4.c4, next to 4...b5 – a Volga Gambit after 5.cxb5 a6, a typical SOS answer could be 4...♗f5!? (controlling e4 can't be so bad, right?). After 5.♘c3 ♘a6!? (threatening 6...♘b4! which psychologically can be unpleasant for a white player: to be 'under attack' in so early a stage) 6.a3, and now Black can play an original King's Indian/ Benoni-type of position with 6...g6. However, 6...e5 also make sense: 7.♘d2 e4!? (7...♗e7 8.e4 ♗d7) 8.♕c2 ♕a5 9.f3 ♗e7 10.fxe4 ♗g6 with compensation.

4...♗f5!

These days this may seem like an original or even strange move, but in fact this old idea was already employed by the creative (and classical) GM Rudolf Spielmann. Black is preventing e4 and from a certain point of view this is the most logical thing for Black to do here. Perhaps you should not be surprised to know that engines consider it as best move here!

Other possible lines include: 4...♕a5, 4...e6, 4...e5.

5.♘d2

This is the critical move against this line. White is fighting for control over e4, and hoping to gain a tempo to prove that 4...♗f5 was a waste of time, since ♘d2 with a future ♘c4 is anyway one of White's typical plans in this pawn structure.

● 5.e4!? is a risky gambit that can lead to very unclear complications after 5...♘xe4 6.♕d3:

– not 6...♘g3? 7.♕b5+.

– 6...♕a5 7.♘g5! c4 8.♕f3! (8.♕xc4 ♘xc3) 8...♘xc3 9.♕xf5! ♘e4+ 10.c3 ♘xg5 11.♕c8+ ♕d8 12.♕xb7 ♘d7 13.♗xg5 ♖b8 14.♕xa7 ♖xb2 15.0-0-0! with an attack.

– 6...c4!? is an option that deserves attention.

– 6...♘xc3 7.♕xf5 g6 8.♕d3 ♘a4 9.♕b3 ♘b6 10.a4 and White gets some compensation for the pawn.

● After 5.♘h4 Black can play 5...♗g4 and now:

– 6.h3 ♗d7 7.e4 e5 (7...b5!?) 8.♕f3 (8.♘f3 b5! 9.♗g5 b4 10.♗xf6 gxf6 11.♘b1 f5 with counterplay, Robveille-Dupre Guegan, Queven 1999) 8...g6 9.a4 ♘h5 (9...♗e7 10.♗h6±; 9...♗g7 10.♗e2±) 10.♘f5±.

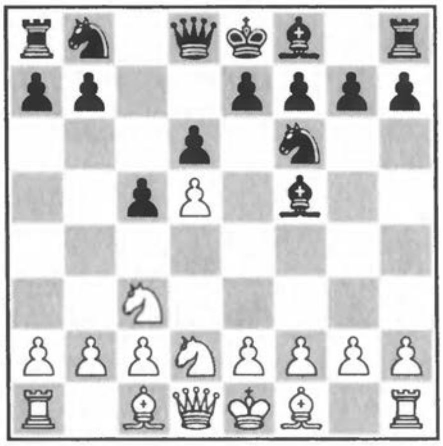
– 6.f3 ♗d7 7.e4 e6 8.dxe6 ♗xe6 9.♘f5 ♗xf5 (9...g6 10.♘h6±, Tamarkin-Rose, Nassau 1988) 10.exf5 d5 with counterplay.

Best after 5.♘h4 is probably 5...♗d7 6.e4 e6 7.♘f3 when the game has transformed into the 4...e6 variation with a small difference: Black is a tempo up; he has played ♗c8-d7. For example: 7...exd5 8.exd5 ♗e7 9.♗e2 0-0 10.h3 ♘a6 11.a4 ♘c7 (11...♘b4! with ...♗f5 in the air seems very promising for Black) 12.0-0 b6 13.♗e3 ♖e8 14.♖e1 ♕c8 15.♘g5

♗f8 16.♗f3 ♗f5 17.g4 ♗g6 (the game is unclear, but after White's next Black gains the upper hand) 18.h4?! h6 19.h5 ♗xh5! 20.gxh5 hxg5 21.♗xg5 ♖xe1+ 22.♕xe1 ♕f5∓, Majer-Sö.Maus, Germany 1993.

After 5.♘h4 ♗d7 6.e4 Black may also consider 6...g6 which can't be bad, for what is the knight on h4 doing?

Also possible is 6...b5!? 7.♗xb5 ♗xb5 8.♘xb5 ♘xe4 (8...♕a5+ 9.♘c3 ♘xe4) 9.0-0 Kodinets-Gabrielian, Internet 2004. And now 9...a6 10.♘a3 g6 is playable.



5...g5!

This is the original idea I had in mind when I called 4...♗f5 a 'logical idea', but as usual these days, in a MegaBase search I found that it was played before.

However, this time I was made more curious since Spielmann made it all look so easy about 85 years ago. Black's idea is to hide ♗f5 behind the g5-pawn, and making it harder for White to play f4, at the same time Black also wants to fianchetto his bishop to g7. Another future idea is the pawn break with f5!

Oops, I forgot to mention: the move's disadvantage is obvious: it weakens the kingside.

The original inventor of 5...g5 also tried 5...e6, which is also playable but risky, after for example 6.e4 ♗g6:

– 7.♗b5+ ♘bd7 8.dxe6 fxe6 9.0-0 (interesting complications arise after 9.♘c4 ♘xe4 10.♘xe4 ♗xe4 11.♘xd6+ ♗xd6 12.♕xd6 ♕a5+ 13.♗d2 ♕xb5 14.♗g5?! – perpetual check is 14.♕xe6+ ♔d8 15.♗g5+ ♔c7 16.♗f4+ ♔d8 17.♗g5+ – 14...♔f7 15.0-0-0 ♘f6? – 15...♗d5!∓ – 16.♗xf6 gxf6 17.♕c7+ ♔g6 18.♖d7 with an attack, Berges-Goletto, Creon 2001) 9...a6 10.♗xd7+ (10.♗c4 ♗f7) 10...♘xd7 11.f4 ♗f7 12.a4 (12.f5±) 12...♗e7 13.a5 0-0 with counterplay, H.Danielsen-N.J.Nielsen, Denmark ch 1987.

– 7.♗e2 a6 (7...exd5 8.exd5 ♗e7 9.0-0 with f4 coming seems annoying for Black) 8.a4 exd5 9.exd5 ♗e7 10.0-0 0-0 (10...h5? 11.♘c4 ♘bd7 12.♖e1 ♔f8 13.♗f4±, Rubinstein-Spielmann, Triberg 1921) 11.f4!, when 12.f5 is a big threat and if 11...♗f5 then 12.g4!.

6.e4 ♗g6 7.f3!?

By overprotecting e4, White wants to lock up my bishop on g6 and at the same time to free ♘d2 to move to c4.

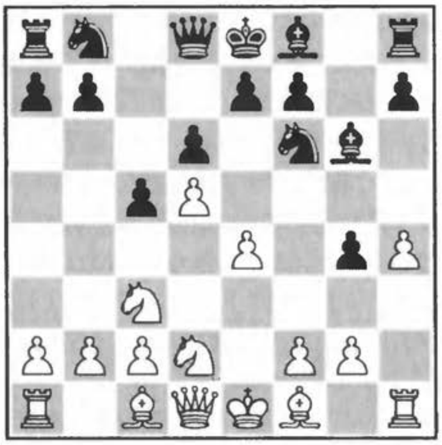
White has many other options, and this is not bad, since he has got something to think about after only a few moves! Thus, for example, 7.♗e2 ♗g7 8.0-0 ♘bd7 9.♖e1 0-0 will lead to our next game Grünfeld-Spielmann, Bad Pistyan 1922.

● One of the more ambitious moves to try to refute Black's set-up is **7.h4!**. This was played in a rapid game between Yusupov and Milov. Milov picked up the whole idea by watching (with a big smile) one of my games in Benasque just few months before.

My personal recommendation would be 7...gxh4!? 8.f4 e6! to break White's centre and get some space for Black's pieces. This also looks dangerous for White.

Milov, however, played **7...g4**.

Now White could try 8.♗e2 h5 9.f4 gxf3 10.gxf3 ♗h6 11.♖g1± according to IM Tsesarsky. However, 10...♘bd7 11.f4 e6! seems very unclear to me, since White is far from happy with his pieces, as you can see yourself.



Yusupov played the stronger **8.h5!**.

Now 8...♗xh5 would lead to complex play after 9.♗b5+ (9.e5!? dxe5 10.♗b5+) 9...♘bd7 10.♘c4 ♗g6 11.e5 (11.♗g5=/∞) 11...a6! (this is an important idea to have in mind) 12.♗xd7+ (12.exf6 axb5 13.♘xb5 ♘xf6 14.♕e2 ♗g7 eventually favours Black) 12...♘xd7 13.exd6 b5! (13...exd6 14.♕e2+ ♘e5 15.♗f4 f6 16.♗xe5 fxe5 17.♕xg4±) 14.dxe7 ♕xe7+ 15.♘e3 g3!.

Milov went for 8...♘xh5 instead, when the game continued 9.♕xg4 ♘f6 10.♕h4 ♘bd7 11.♗e2 h5?! (11...♗g7 is a logical improvement, playing ...h5 only if White plays 0-0, and otherwise Black can play for ...e6, and even ...0-0 since he has got two bishops to protect his majesty!) 12.g4! ♗g7 13.g5 ♘g4 14.♕g3 (14.♗xg4? hxg4 15.♕xh8+ ♗xh8 16.♖xh8+ ♘f8 17.♘c4 ♕d7∓) 14...f5? (better is 14...♗d4, but 15.♘d1! still favours White) 15.gxf6 ♘dxf6 16.f3 ♘e5 17.♘c4±, Yusupov-Milov, Bastia rapid 2002.

● Also logical is **7.♗d3 ♘bd7 8.♘c4**.

Now I would recommend the tricky pawn sac 8...a6 9.♗xg5 (9.a4 h6 might transpose to 8...h6) 9...b5 10.♘d2 c4 11.♗e2 b4 12.♘a4 c3! 13.bxc3 ♕a5! and Black seems to do fine, for example after: 14.♘b2 bxc3 15.♘dc4 ♕c7 16.♘a4 ♘xe4 17.♗e3 ♗g7.

After 8...h6 9.0-0 (9.h4 g4) 9...a6 10.a4 I would prefer 10...♗g7 11.f4 (11.a5 ♘h5!) 11...gxf4 12.♗xf4 ♕c7 with unclear play. White is somewhat better after 10...♘b6 11.♘e3. While 10...♖b8 11.a5 gave White also a slight plus in M.Hoffmann-Si.Maus, Germany Bundesliga B 1989/90.

Now it is high time to return to the main game after 7.f3.

7...♘bd7

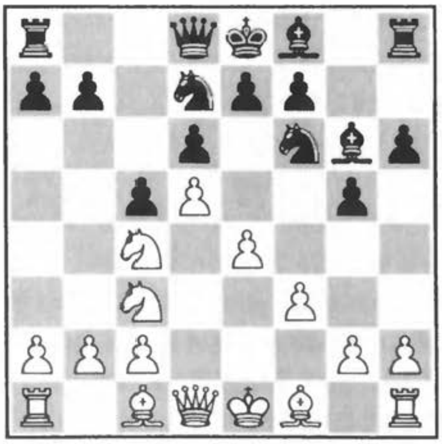
Starting the fight for e5! The alternative is 7...♗g7.

8.♘c4

Black has good counterplay after 8.h4!? gxh4 9.♖xh4 e6!.

8...h6

For a moment I even considered the funny 8...g4? until I found 9.fxg4 ♘xe4 10.♘xe4 ♗xe4 11.♕e2! ♗xd5 (11...♘f6 12.g5) 12.♘xd6 mate.



9.♗d3

Perhaps demonstrating that f3 was unnecessary, but in fact preparing the h4 break.

9.g4!? with the idea of h4 was interesting, but Black can reply 9...h5! 10.♗xg5 hxg4 11.fxg4 b5! (11...♘xe4? 12.♘xe4 ♗xe4 13.♘xd6+!) with nice active play.

9.h4 g4 is not a problem since e4 is vulnerable.

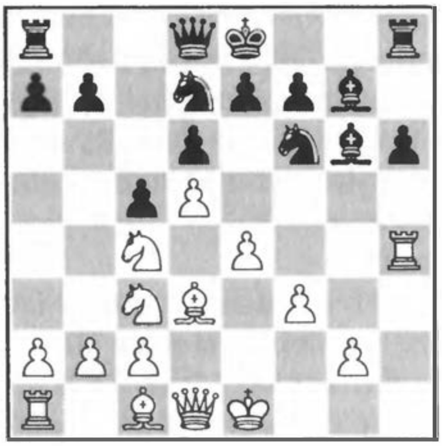
9...♗g7 10.h4

All these moves took my opponent a lot of time, so I already had the SOS advantage over him! In case of 10.a4 Black has 10...♘h5!.

10...gxh4

Original and probably playable was the gambit 10...g4 11.fxg4 h5!.

11.♖xh4



11...♘b6

With a space disadvantage it is normal to try to exchange a few pieces, and especially this annoying knight on c4.

A bit more accurate was 11...a6 though, threatening ...b5 and at the same time obtaining a safe square for my queen on c7. After 12.a4 ♘b6 (12...b5 13.axb5 axb5 14.♖xa8 ♕xa8 15.♘xb5) 13.♘e3 ♕c7 with the idea of preparing ...0-0-0 and breaking with ...e6 Black has nice counterplay.

12.♗e3

In the game I was a bit worried about 12.♘e2!? with the idea of ♘f4, but Black seems OK after 12...♘xc4 13.♗xc4 ♕c7 14.♘f4 0-0-0 with unclear play.

12.♘e3 ♕c7 13.a4 seems the most logical way for White, but it is still very unclear after 13...c4!? (13...a6) 14.♗e2 a5 15.♘b5 ♕c5.

12...♘xc4 13.♗xc4 a6

13...♕b6! was even stronger. It contains a nice trap: 14.♕d2? ♘xe4! 15.♘xe4 ♕xb2 16.♖c1 ♗xe4∓. After the stronger 14.♗b5+ (14.♗b3 ♘d7) 14...♘d7 (14...♔f8 15.a4; 14...♔d8 15.a4 a6 16.a5 ♕c7 17.♗e2) followed by ...0-0-0 Black is still more than fine.

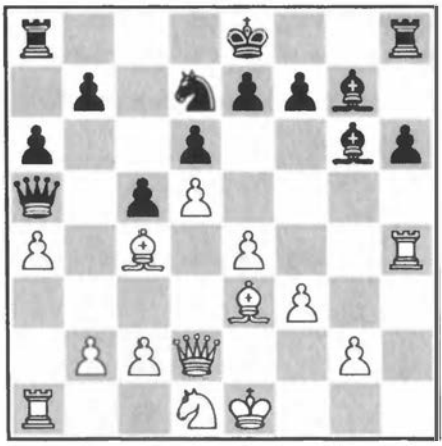
14.a4

Black has decent counterplay after 14.♕d2 b5 15.♗e2 ♘d7.

14...♘d7

If 14...♕b6 then 15.♗b3. Another interesting option I thought about was 14...♕a5 15.♗d2 (15.♕d2 b5! 16.♗e2 b4 17.♘d1 h5) 15...♘d7.

15.♕d2 ♕a5 16.♘d1



16...♕c7!

A logical pawn sac, since with the white king in the centre and the knight on d1, I am not worried about a small pawn on h6. Here I was quite satisfied with the result of my opening, since not only did I have a nice time advantage, I also had a clear plan in mind! Black is ready to play ...0-0-0 and he will next try to open the centre by preparing ...e6 or even ...f5!

17.c3

After 17.♗xh6 0-0-0! 18.♗g5 ♘e5 (or 18...♗e5) 19.♗e2 f6 20.♖xh8 ♖xh8 21.♗f4 f5 and I prefer Black.

17...0-0-0! 18.♘f2

18.♗xh6 ♘e5 19.♗e2 and now 19...e6!. Although Black is spoilt for choice as 19...♖dg8 and 19...c4!? are also not bad.

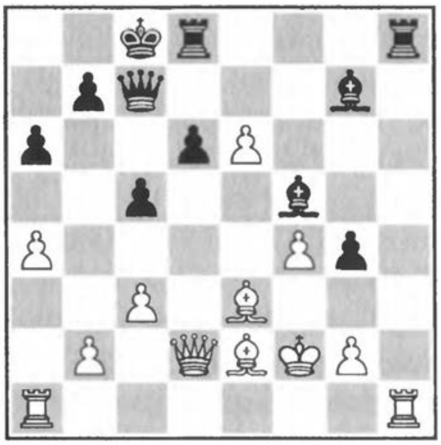
18...h5 19.♖h1?!

The position is very original and White has to play very concretely. Better was 19.♘h3! with ♘f4 or ♘g5 ideas. After 19...♗f6!

20.♗g5 (20.♘g5 ♖hg8) 20...♗e5 21.♗f4 ♖dg8 Black is OK.
19...♘e5 Not 19...f5?! 20.exf5 ♗xf5 21.♗d3! e6 22.0-0-0±. **20.♗e2 f5!** As promised, here is the first pawn break! **21.exf5** Black is somewhat better after 21.0-0-0 fxe4 22.♘xe4 ♗xe4 23.fxe4 h4. The same goes for the game continuation though. **21...♗xf5 22.f4?!** 22.♗g5 ♖de8 followed by ...e6 is very strong. **22...♘g4 23.♘xg4** Or 23.♗d3 ♗d7. **23...hxg4 24.♔f2** 24.0-0-0 ♕a5∓. **24...e5!**

Here is the second pawn break! Black has a clear edge now.

25.dxe6



25...♗xe6

Even better was 25...♕e7! 26.♖ad1 ♖xh1 27.♖xh1 ♕xe6∓.

26.♖xh8 ♖xh8 27.♖d1 ♗f8!

Anyway my bishop did nothing on g7, so I want him to help to free my queen for more important actions than defending a small pawn on d6.

Black holds an edge after 27...d5 28.b4! c4! (28...♗f6 29.♗xc5 g3+ 30.♔g1 ♕h7 31.♔f1∞) 29.♗d4 ♕e7 30.♗xg7 ♕xg7 31.♕d4 ♕h6 32.♕e5 ♕h4+ 33.♔e3 ♖e8 34.♔d2 ♗d7 35.♕xd5 ♗xa4.

28.♕d3 ♕f7?

This logical move gives away all my advantage! I thought too much about my last few moves, and also got into time-trouble.

Correct was 28...♕e7! 29.b4 (29.♕g6 ♖g8) 29...g3+! 30.♔g1 (30.♔e1 ♗b3! 31.♖a1 ♖h1+ 32.♗f1 ♗c4!–+) 30...♗c4!! 31.♗g4+ ♔b8↑ 32.♕d2 ♗b3 33.♖e1 ♕h4 34.♗h3 ♗xa4 35.bxc5 dxc5 36.f5 ♔a7 37.♗f4 ♗h6!∓.

Worse was 28...♕g7? because of 29.♗xc5!.

29.b4! ♗e7 30.bxc5 g3+! 31.♔g1

A nice line is 31.♔xg3 ♗h4+ 32.♔f3 ♕h5+ 33.♔e4 ♕g6+ 34.♔f3 (34.♔d4 ♗f6 mate) 34...♗g4 mate.

31...dxc5

I even tried to calculate crazy lines like 31...♗f5!? 32.♕c4 (32.♕d5 ♕h7 33.♔f1 ♗e4 34.♕e6+ ♔b8) 32...d5 33.♕xd5 ♕h7 34.♔f1 ♗e4 35.♕e6+ ♔b8 36.♔e1 unclear.

32.♕e4!

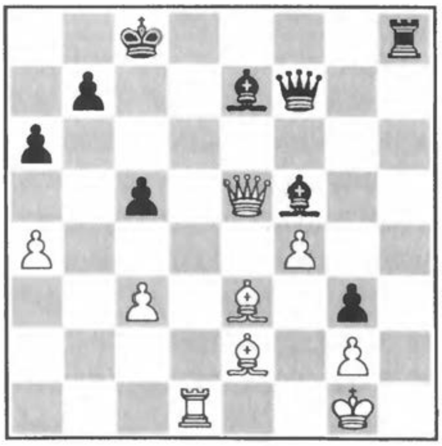
32.♗f3 ♖d8 33.♕b1 ♖xd1+ 34.♕xd1 ♕g6∓.

32...♗f5

32...♖d8 33.♖xd8+ ♗xd8 34.♗xc5 ♗c7 35.♗h5.

33.♕e5!

My opponent played very well in the last few moves, and now I finally understood that I had lost my advantage and should start to take care. Wrong was 33.♕f3 ♕g6∓.



33...♖e8!?

Here 33...♖h6! was safer, but Black cannot hope to win after 34.♖d5 (34.♗f3 ♕h7 35.♔f1 ♗d3+ 36.♔e1 ♗d6 37.♗xb7+ ♔b8

38.♕d5 ♗c2) 34...♗d7 35.f5 ♖h4 36.♗f4 ♖h1+ 37.♔xh1 ♕h7+ 38.♗h5 ♕xh5+ 39.♔g1 ♕h2+ 40.♔f1 ♕h1+ 41.♔e2 ♕xg2+ 42.♔d3 c4+ equal.

White is better after 33...♕h7 34.♔f1 ♕h1+ 35.♗g1 ♕h7 36.♗f3. While 33...♖h4 is nothing after 34.♗f3 or 34.♖d5.

34.♖d5!

Again the best move! My tricky idea was 34.♗xc5 ♗d8! 35.♕d4 ♕h7 36.♔f1 ♗c7∓, with the treat of 37...♖d8, amongst others.

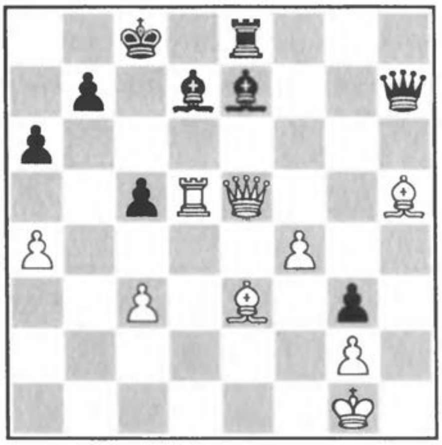
34...♗d7

The only move, played with a few seconds on the clock. Luckily, the white king is still not completely safe.

35.♗h5

On 35.♗f3 I planned 35...♕e6! when the game is equal after 36.♗h5! ♕xe5 37.♖xe5 ♖h8 38.♖xe7 ♖xh5 39.♖g7 ♗xa4 40.♖xg3 b6.

35...♕h7!



36.♔f1

White is probably playing for a win already, since he could secure the draw with 36.♖xd7! ♔xd7 37.♗xe8+ ♔xe8 38.f5 ♕h5 39.♕d5 ♕e2 40.♕g8+ ♔d7 41.♕e6+. Instead 41.♕xg3 ♕d1+ 42.♔h2 ♕xa4 is unclear.

Black is fine after 36.a5 ♗f8 37.♖xd7 ♖xe5 38.♖xh7 ♖xe3 39.♔f1 ♗e7!.

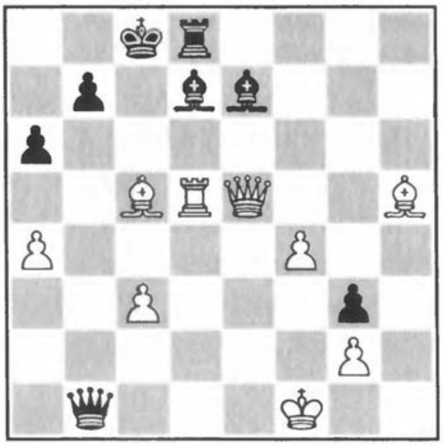
36...♖d8

I also wanted to fight on! Instead 36...♗f8 leads to a nice draw after 37.♖xc5+! (37.♗xe8 ♕b1+) 37...♗xc5 38.♕xc5+ ♔b8 39.♕a7+.

37.♗xc5

Still logical was 37.♖xc5+! ♗xc5 38.♕xc5+ ♗c6 39.♗g4+ ♖d7 40.♗xd7+ ♔xd7 41.♕d4+ ♔c8. With threats like 42...♕h1 and 42...♕b1 White appears to be in trouble, but he has 42.♗g1! ♕b1+ (42...b6! and the fight goes on) 43.♔e2 ♕c2+ 44.♔e1 ♕xg2 45.♕h8+ ♔c7 46.♕e5+ equal.

37...♕b1+



38.♔e2??

The decisive mistake in time-trouble. After a long series of good moves, White finally got tired I guess. 38.♖d1! was still a draw after 38...♗b5+ 39.♔e1! ♖xd1+ 40.♗xd1 ♗xa4 41.♕e6+! ♔b8 42.♕e5+ ♔c8 (and not 42...♔a8?? 43.♕h8+).

38...♕a2+

The immediate 38...♗f6!! was good as well: 39.♕d6 (39.♕xf6 ♕e4+) 39...♕e4+ (39...♗b5+–+) 40.♔f1 (40.♔d2 ♗f5–+) 40...♗b5+ winning.

39.♔f3 ♗f6!!

A big surprise!

40.♕e4

40.♕d6 ♗h3! also wins, but not 40...♗e7? 41.♕e5.

40...♗c6 **0-1**

White can't prevent losing too much material. Look at the black and white pieces, really a strange position, almost a kind of Picasso, right?

And now let's see a game by two strong creative GM's from the past, who between themselves invented more than a few openings. One of them is one of my all-time favourites the great chess artist: Rudolf Spielmann!

☐ **Ernst Grünfeld**
■ **Rudolf Spielmann**
Bad Pistyan 1922

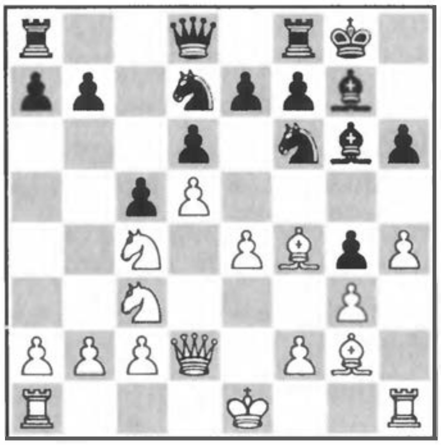
1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 c5 3.d5 d6 4.♘c3 ♗f5

And here we go with the Spielmann attack! – it really would be to confusing to call it the Anti-Grünfeld, right?

Spielmann employed our subject for the first time in this game, and perhaps even for first time in history.

5.♘d2

Another interesting game of Spielmann's went 5.g3 h6 (5...g6; 5...♕c8!?) 6.♗g2 g5 7.h4 g4 8.♘d2 ♘bd7 9.e4 ♗g6 10.♘c4 ♗g7 11.♗f4 0-0 12.♕d2



12...♔h7 (or 12...b5 13.♘xb5 ♘xe4 14.♗xe4 ♗xe4 15.0-0 ♔h7) 13.f3 b5! An important typical idea we should always consider in this structure. Black had excellent counterplay in Kmoch-Spielmann, Vienna 1922.

5...g5! 6.e4 ♗g6 7.♗e2

In the previous game we looked at 7.f3, and the alternatives 7.h4 and 7.♗d3. Grünfeld chooses a normal, perhaps slightly modest set-up.

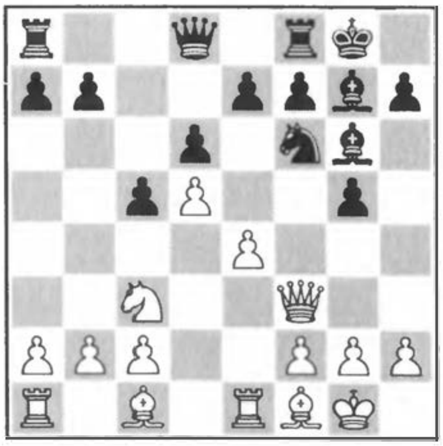
7...♗g7 8.0-0 ♘bd7 9.♖e1

Romanishin once tried 9.a4 0-0 (also not so clear is 9...h6 10.f3 ♘e5 11.g3 ♕c7 12.f4 gxf4 13.gxf4 ♘ed7 14.f5 ♗h7 15.♘c4 h5) 10.♘c4 ♘xe4 (I would recommend 10...h6! 11.f3 ♘h5 with counterplay) 11.♘xe4 ♗xe4 12.♗xg5 now White enjoys some advantage 12...♘e5 (12...♘b6 13.♖e1± – 13.♘e3 ♗xb2) 13.f3 ♗f5 14.c3 a6 15.♕d2 ♔h8 16.♘e3 ♗d7 17.f4 ♘g6 18.f5 and White had the advantage in Romanishin-Kayar, Istanbul Ech 2003.

9...0-0 10.♗f1 ♘e5

Another normal move is 10...h6. While 10...♗h5!? is also interesting. For example: 11.f3 g4 12.f4 g3 13.♗e2 gxh2+ 14.♔xh2 ♗xe2 15.♕xe2 h5!.

11.♘f3 ♘xf3+ 12.♕xf3



12...h6

As I already mentioned, exchanging pieces – especially a pair of knights – is making Black's life easier since he has less space.

13.♕d1

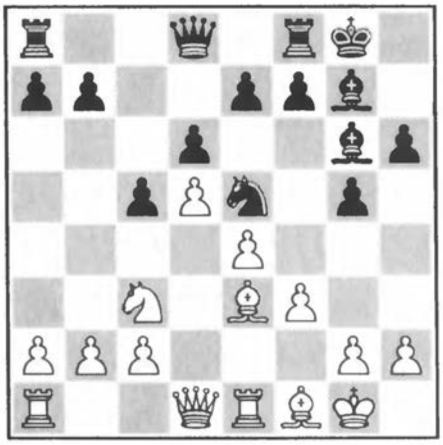
This is too passive. More critical was something like 13.h4 gxh4 (or 13...g4 14.♕g3 a6 15.a4 ♕a5!?) 14.♕h3 h5!? (14...♕d7 15.♕xh4 ♕g4) 15.♕xh4 ♘g4! with decent counterplay.

13...♘d7 14.♗e3

Again, more critical was 14.h4, but Black seems to do very well after 14...♗f6 (14...f6 is maybe OK but just looks too ugly) 15.hxg5 hxg5 16.♖e3! ♔g7 17.♖g3 ♖h8! (who cares about a small pawn here?) 18.♗xg5 ♗e5 19.♖h3 (19.f4?? ♗d4+) 19...♖xh3 20.gxh3 ♘f6 and even with a pawn down I would prefer Black. Actually, 20...♕b6!? is also good I guess.

14...♘e5 15.f3

15.h4 g4 keeps the knight on e5 for long enough to get serious counterplay on the kingside.



15...f5!

This is in fact the position I was dreaming of when I had first found this ...♗f5 and ...g5 line! Black breaks White's centre, increasing the radius of his bishop on g6, his rook on f8, and even his queen. While the other rook can join the 'party' very soon! And yes, Black will soon be able to announce a direct attack on the white monarch!

15...a6 16.a4 ♕a5 would be another plan playing on the queenside. However, when we finally have our dream position, why not follow our dream!

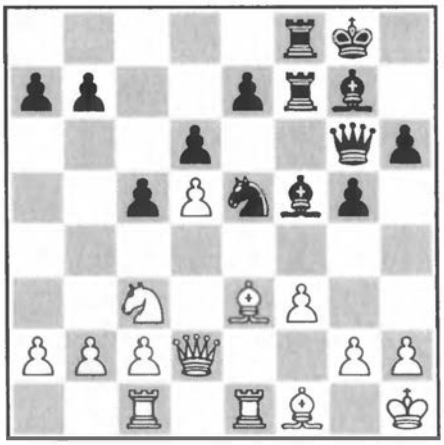
16.exf5 ♗xf5 17.♗f2 ♕e8!

No need to explain this move, but I would like to mention that apart from bringing the queen to the attack, the small pawn on c2 is also a target!

18.♖c1 ♕g6 19.♔h1 ♖f7!

Simple and good! The rook is coming to f8 and ready to help his friends as well!

20.♕d2 ♖af8 21.♗e3



21...♕h5!

Further improving the queen and preparing the march of the g-pawn.

22.♗g1 ♗c8!

Even though I am seeing this great game for at least the fiftieth time, I still enjoy it immensely because of the harmony between the pieces.

23.♗e3

23.♖e4 seems very solid, but Black goes on to attack with 23...g4 24.f4 g3 25.♗e2 ♘g4 26.h3 ♕h4.

23...g4! 24.f4 g3!

So many exclamation marks come instead of a simple bravo!

25.h3 ♘g6

Now pawn f4 is a new target! However, 25...♘g4! was more natural and probably stronger, but it was easy to miss the great combination after 26.♗e2 ♖xf4!! 27.♗xf4 ♘f2+

28.♔g1 ♘xh3+ 29.gxh3 ♕xh3 (also winning is 29...♗d4+! 30.♕xd4 ♕xh3!) 30.♗f1 ♗d4+ 31.♖e3 (31.♗e3 ♖xf1+ 32.♖xf1 ♗xe3+ 33.♕xe3 ♕h2 mate) 31...♕h4! and wins.

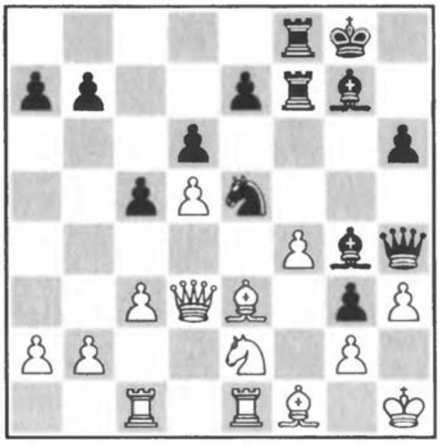
26.♘e2 ♕h4 27.c3 ♗g4!

The bishop is back in town again! After 27...♗f5 28.♗g1 ♗e4 (28...h5) the move 29.♘xg3! still holds.

28.♕d3

Black is better after 28.♕c2 ♗f5 29.♕a4 ♘e5! (29...b5 30.♕xb5 ♗e4 31.♔g1) 30.♘g1 (30.fxe5?? ♕xa4) 30...♘g4.

28...♘e5!



The start of a nice combination.

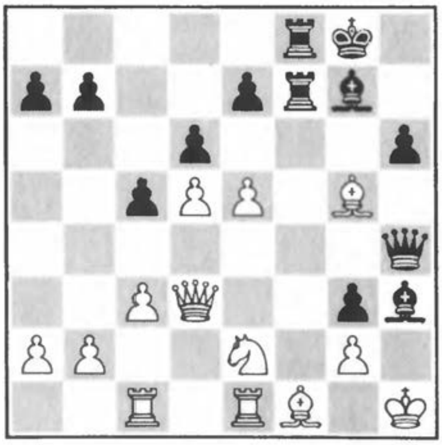
29.fxe5 ♗xh3??

But oh, this move could have destroyed an all-but perfect game! Possibly in time-trouble, and after playing a great game, Spielmann suddenly misses a very important defence.

The winning move order was first 29...♗f5! (to kick the white queen away from the defence) 30.♕b5 (30.♗g5 hxg5 31.♕xg3 ♗xe5 32.♕xh4 gxh4 is positionally lost for White) and only now 30...♗xh3! 31.gxh3 ♖xf1+! 32.♔g2 (32.♖xf1 ♕xh3+ 33.♔g1 ♕h2 mate) 32...♕e4+! 33.♔xg3 ♕xe3+ 34.♔h2 (34.♔g4 ♕g5 mate) 34...♕f2 mate.

30.♗g5??

Returning the favour! I guess that Grünfeld was in shock from the 'smooth' way in which he was outplayed, and just couldn't believe that Spielmann would let him escape. Consequently, he misses a golden chance: 30.gxh3! ♖xf1+ (but White is not forced to take it!) 31.♔g2!± (31.♖xf1?? ♕xh3+ 32.♔g1 ♕h2 mate). I guess he just forgot about this move! Now I don't see any win for Black, something that is confirmed by the engine. 31...♖1f2+ (31...♖1f3 32.♖f1) 32.♗xf2 ♖xf2+ 33.♔g1 ♕xh3 (33...♗xe5 34.♕g6+ ♔h8 35.♖f1) 34.♕xg3! is the problem, White's queen is doing an excellent defensive job and now Black is suddenly lost.



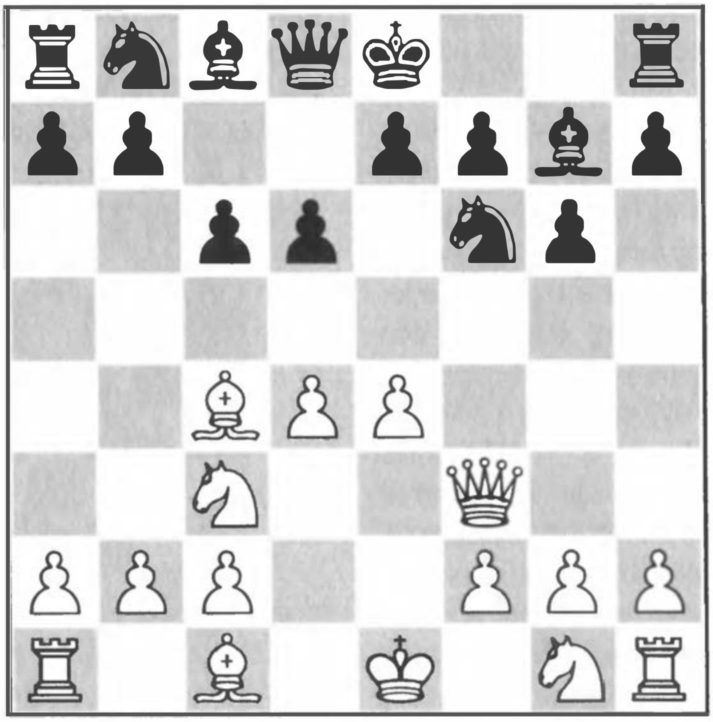
30...♝xg2+!

And because of the mate on h2 White resigned! I hope you enjoyed this game as much as I did enjoy watching it again!

CHAPTER 13

Alexander Finkel

An Old Idea in the Modern Defence



An interesting pawn sacrifice

In this chapter I'm going to draw your attention to a very interesting pawn sacrifice, which I employed on a couple of occasions in the mid 1990s.

Frankly speaking I don't even remember how and where I found this idea (by 'found' I mean the source in which it was discovered as it wasn't my idea after all), but I guess it's not really important.

In the last decade of the 20th century the line 1.e4 g6 2.d4 ♗g7 3.♘c3 c6 was quite fashionable. White was struggling to prove his advantage after 4.f4, so 4.♗c4 d6 5.♕f3 had become a rather popular move order. Over the years the popularity of 3...c6 gradually decreased, but 4.♗c4 d6 5.♕f3 remained one of the most popular ways to deal with 3...c6. I don't think that 5...♘f6!? is objectively better than the regular 5...e6, but it most definitely deserves very serious attention.

The acid test of Black's idea is accepting the pawn sacrifice with 6.e5 dxe5 7.dxe5 ♘d5 8.♘xd5 cxd5 9.♗xd5 0-0.

This is the first critical position of this line. It's worth mentioning that White has successfully tried other moves than 10.♗xb7, which is most definitely Black's main concern. However, both 10.♘e2 and 10.♗f4 are not dangerous for Black if he reacts correctly (see below).

Which brings us to the next critical position, arising after 10.♗xb7 ♗xb7 11.♕xb7 ♕a5+ 12.c3 ♘a6. At the moment White is two pawns up, but he is supposed to find the right path, which is actually not a very easy task, since there are plenty of tactical tricks at Black's disposal! Both commented games deal extensively with this position, so you should be fine after studying them!

In conclusion, I'd like to say a couple of words about the advantages and disadvantages of this line:

The main advantage for Black is that White is facing complex tactical problems right from the beginning of the game. Black gets a serious edge in development and good attacking chances if White misplays the opening. Another positive thing about this line is that it's perfectly sound, so Black never faces any real danger of losing, even if White plays the best moves!

On the negative side I'd like to mention White's ability to get a slightly better endgame, which will most likely end in a draw. However, it's pretty difficult to find an opening where White can't force a draw if he's really eager to do so!

☐ **Juri Sinowjew**
■ **Alexander Finkel**
Budapest 1993

1.e4 g6 2.d4 ♗g7 3.♘c3 c6 4.♗c4 d6 5.♕f3 ♘f6!?

The main theoretical continuation is 5...e6.

6.e5!?

There is no question that accepting the pawn sacrifice is White's only chance to fight for an opening advantage. White's queen is misplaced on f3, so after 6.h3 0-0 7.♗b3 ♘bd7 8.♘ge2 b5 9.a3 ♗b7 10.0-0 c5 11.♗e3 a6 12.♖ad1 ♖c8 White has to play accurately to keep the balance, Wang Zili-Finkel, Groningen 1996.

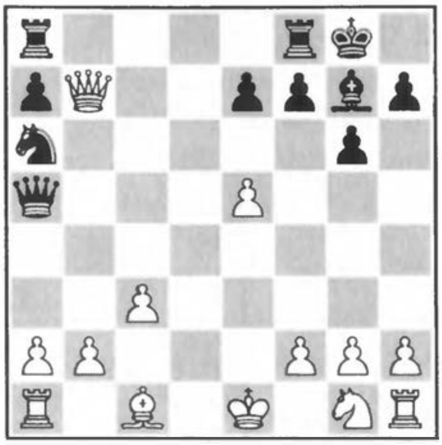
6...dxe5 7.dxe5 ♘d5 8.♘xd5 cxd5 9.♗xd5

Once again White doesn't really have much of a choice, as after 9.♕xd5 ♕xd5 10.♗xd5 ♗xe5 11.♘f3 ♗g7 Black doesn't experience any problems.

9...0-0 10.♗xb7 ♕a5+ 11.c3

The moves of both sides are forced. Bad is 11.♗d2? ♕xe5+ 12.♘e2 ♕xb2 13.♗xa8 ♕xa1+.

11...♗xb7 12.♕xb7 ♘a6



Black's counterplay is based on the ...♘c5-b3 idea and on his serious advantage in development. However, White has enough resources not just to keep the balance, but even to pose Black some problems.

13.♘f3!?

Forcing a transposition into a slightly better endgame. For 13.♕f3 see the next game.

13...♘c5!

Bad are 13...♖ab8? 14.♕xa7! (planning ♕e3-e2), and 13...♖fb8?! 14.♕xe7 ♕b5! 15.♗e3!± to limit the a6-knight. Dubious in this second line, by the way, is 15.♘d4?! ♕c4 16.e6 ♖e8! 17.♕xf7+ ♔h8 18.♗e3 ♘c5 19.0-0-0 ♕xa2 planning 20...♖ab8.

14.b4!

This is the only move, which illustrates the minefield that White has been forced to enter after 5...♘f6.

14...♘xb7 15.bxa5 ♖fc8?!

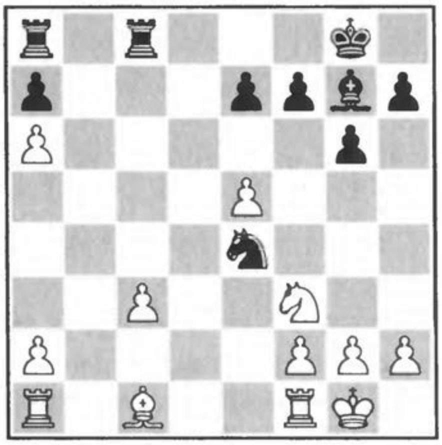
This move is a bit artificial, but during the game I was desperately looking for some winning chances.

It's objectively better to play the natural 15...♘xa5 16.♗e3 ♘c6 and now:

- 17.♖b1 ♘xe5 18.♘xe5 ♗xe5 19.c4 ♖ac8 20.c5 ♖fd8 21.♔e2 ♗d4 with equality, Leko-Hamdouchi, Cap d'Agde 1994.
- 17.♗d4 ♖fb8 18.0-0 ♖b2 (with sufficient compensation for the pawn) 19.♖fd1 (or 19.♖fe1 ♖d8! planning ...♖d5-a5) 19...♖c8?! 20.♖db1 ♖cb8 21.♖xb2 ♖xb2 22.♔f1±, Santo Roman-Bricard, Chambery ch-FRA 1994.

After the text White obtains a minimal edge.

16.a6! ♘c5 17.0-0 ♘e4!



It's much more important to get rid of the pawn on c3, as the one on a6 will eventually fall anyway.

18.♗a3 e6 19.♖fc1!?

Black also seems to be doing fine after 19.♖fb1 ♘xc3 20.♖b7 ♖c6! 21.♗b4 (21.♘g5 ♗xe5! 22.♖e1 ♗c7 planning 23...♘d5∓) 21...♘d5 22.♗d6 h6!, followed by ...♖xa6 on the next move with equal play.

19...♘xc3 20.♔f1! ♗h6!

It's vital to take square c1 under control.

21.♖c2 ♘b5 22.♖xc8+ ♖xc8 23.♗e7! ♘c7

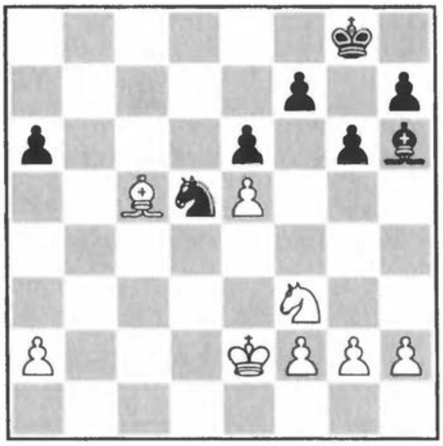
Thanks to 20...♗h6 White is deprived of the opportunity to pin the knight by ♖c1.

White would win after 23...♖c7 24.♖b1 ♖xe7 25.♖xb5.

24.♖b1 ♘xa6 25.♖b7?!

Losing his advantage. After the correct 25.♖b3!? ♗f8 26.♗xf8 ♔xf8 27.♖a3 ♖c1+ 28.♔e2 White would keep a tiny edge due to the more active king.

25...♖c7 26.♖xc7 ♘xc7 27.♗c5 a6 28.♔e2 ♘d5



29.♔d3?

Missing Black's 31st move. Correct was 29.g3 ♘c3+ 30.♔d3 ♘xa2 31.♔c2 a5 32.♔b3 ♘c1+ 33.♔c2 with equality. Also equal is 29.a3.

29...♘f4+ 30.♔c4 ♘xg2 31.♔b4 ♘e1!

Preventing the white king to go to a5. Black should win now.

32.♘xe1

White is forced to transpose into a lost bishop ending, as after 32.♘d4 ♘d3+ 33.♔c4 ♘xe5+ he loses another pawn for no compensation.

32...♗d2+ 33.♔c4 ♗xe1 34.♗d4 g5 35.h3 h5 36.f3 ♔h7 37.♔c5 ♔g6 38.♔b6 a5 39.a4 ♔f5 40.♗e3 ♗c3?!

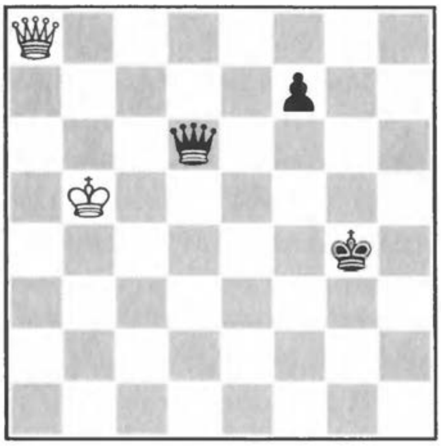
Wasting a precious tempo. Things would have been much easier for Black after the immediate 40...g4! 41.hxg4+ hxg4 42.fxg4+ ♔xe5 and wins.

41.♔b5 g4! 42.hxg4+ hxg4 43.fxg4+ ♔xe5 44.♗b6 ♔f4?

Another mistake, after which I had to work for another couple of hours in order to achieve victory, while after the rather simple 44...♔d5! 45.♗xa5 ♗xa5 46.♔xa5 ♔c5 47.♔a6 e5 48.a5 ♔c6 49.♔a7 e4 50.a6 ♔c7

51.g5 e3 52.g6 fxg6 53.♔a8 e2 54.a7 ♔b6! Black is winning by force.

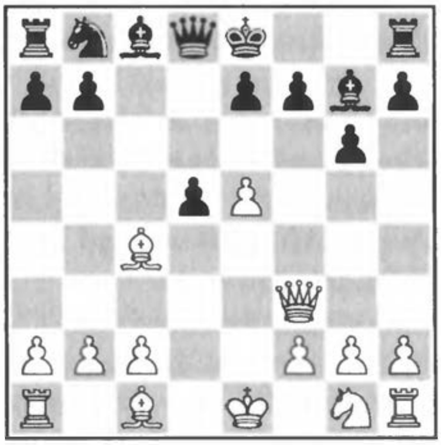
45.♗xa5 ♗xa5 46.♔xa5 e5 47.♔b5 e4 48.a5 e3 49.a6 e2 50.a7 e1♕ 51.a8♕ ♕e5+ 52.♔b6 ♕d6+ 53.♔b5 ♔xg4



I must admit that I wasn't sure during the game what the theoretical evaluation of this endgame is (Black is winning), but fortunately it's not really important for our subject! Suffice to say that I won on move 112!

☐ **Romeo Milu**
■ **Vadim Chernov**
Bucharest 1995

1.e4 g6 2.d4 ♗g7 3.♘c3 c6 4.♗c4 d6 5.♕f3 ♘f6 6.e5 dxe5 7.dxe5 ♘d5 8.♘xd5 cxd5



9.♗xd5

As I already mentioned in my comments to the previous game White has nothing in case of 9.♕xd5 ♕xd5 10.♗xd5 ♗xe5 11.♘f3 ♗g7 12.c3 ♘c6 13.♗f4 Krajnak-Okhotnik, Kosice 1997, and now rather than 13...e6, 13...♗g4!? would have equalized.

9...0-0 10.♗xb7

– 10.♘e2 ♘d7? (correct is 10...♕c7 11.0-0 e6 12.♗b3 ♘c6 with equal chances) 11.e6 fxe6 12.♗xe6+ ♔h8 13.♕h3 ♘e5 14.0-0 ♕b6 15.♗xc8 ♖axc8 16.c3± L.Vajda-Mateuta, Bucharest 1997.

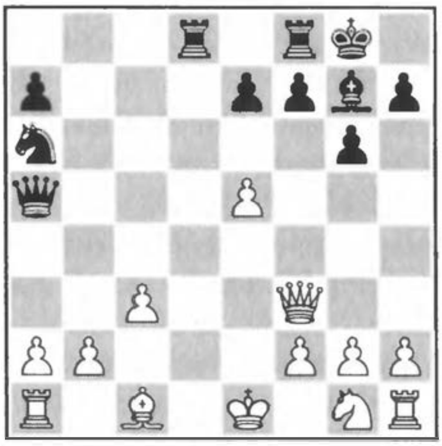
– 10.♗f4!? ♕c7!? (dubious is 10...♗g4?! 11.♗xf7+ ♖xf7 12.♕xg4 Borge-Hoi, Copenhagen 1997) 11.e6!? ♕xc2 12.exf7+ ♔h8 13.♘e2 ♕xb2 14.♖d1 ♘c6! 15.h4! unclear.

10...♕a5+ 11.c3 ♗xb7 12.♕xb7 ♘a6 13.♕f3!?

Another critical move for the evaluation of 5...♘f6!?. By playing this move White is willing to sacrifice an exchange in order to get some play on the kingside later on.

13.♘f3 was examined in the previous game. Weaker is 13.♘e2 ♘c5 14.♕f3 ♘b3 15.axb3 ♕xa1 16.♕e4 ♖ab8 17.0-0 ♖xb3 18.e6 f5 19.♕d5 ♕a4∓, Ovetchkin-Gabdrakhmanov, Orel 1996.

13...♖ad8



14.♘e2

Dubious is 14.♘h3?! ♘c5 15.0-0 (15.b4?? ♘d3+ 16.♕xd3 ♕xe5+–+) 15...♘b3

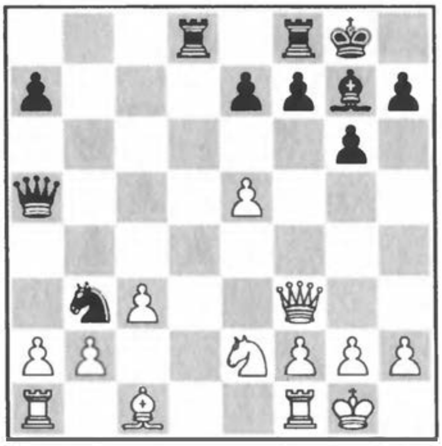
16.axb3 ♕xa1 17.♗g5 ♕xb2 18.♗xe7 ♗xe5 with compensation.

While 14.♕e2?♘c5! 15.b4 ♘d3+ 16.♕xd3 ♕xe5+ wins for Black.

14...♘c5 15.0-0!?

Needless to say that after 15.b4 ♕a4 16.0-0 ♘b3 17.♖b1 ♘xc1 18.♖bxc1 ♗xe5 Black has more than sufficient compensation for the pawn.

15...♘b3



16.axb3

This exchange sacrifice was White's idea behind his 13th move. It's pretty difficult for Black to bring his rooks into play, as the white knight takes up a very commanding position on d4. On the other hand, White can't create much on the kingside without opening the d-file for the black rooks by bringing the knight to g5, so Black is likely to get counterplay in any case!

16.♖b1 ♕xa2 17.♗g5 ♘d2 18.♗xd2 ♖xd2 is OK for Black.

16...♕xa1 17.♘d4 ♕a6

Not 17...♗xe5? 18.♘c6 winning, but 17...♕a2 is interesting.

18.♗e3?

This move is bad since it allows Black a clear tactical shot.

Practice has also seen 18.♗f4 ♖d7 19.h3 ♖fd8? (19...♕b6 was equal) 20.♘c6 ♖c8 21.e6! fxe6 22.♘b8 ♖xb8 23.♗xb8±, Thipsay-Koshy, India 1994.

18...♖c8?

Returning the favour. After the correct 18...♗xe5! 19.♘c6 ♗xh2+ 20.♔xh2 ♕xf1 21.♘xe7+ ♔g7 22.♘d5 ♕a6 the best White can hope for is to win back the exchange, which would leave him struggling for a draw.

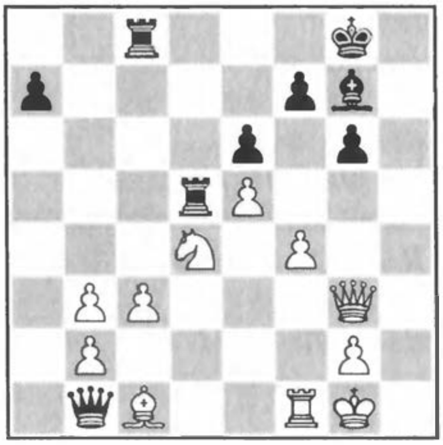
19.♕g3

Now White is on time to consolidate his position and start some action on the kingside.

19...♕a2

Play is unclear after 19...♖fd8 20.f4 ♖d5 21.b4 ♕b7.

20.♗c1 e6 21.h4 ♖fd8 22.h5 ♖d5 23.hxg6 hxg6 24.f4 ♕b1!



Bringing the queen into play and threatening to play 25...♖xd4.

25.♕f2

Here 25.♕f3 (planning 25...♖xd4? 26.♗e3±) deserved attention, keeping an eye on d3.

25...♕d3 26.♗e3 ♖a5 27.♘f3 a6 28.b4 ♖a2 29.♗c5 ♕c4 30.♘g5 ♗h6

Not 30...a5? 31.♗d6! and Black is helpless against ♕a7 and ♕h4 ideas.

31.♘h3!?

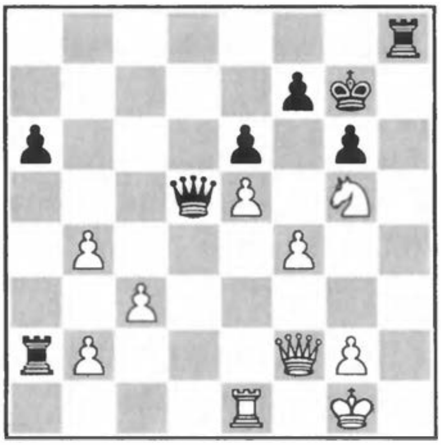
Correctly avoiding 31.♕h4 ♗xg5 32.♕xg5 ♖xb2 33.♖d1 ♕e2 34.♖d7 ♖c2 35.♖xf7 ♕xg2+! 36.♕xg2 ♖xg2+ 37.♔xg2 ♔xf7∓.

31...♕d5 32.♔h2 ♗f8 33.♗xf8

Without the bishops White's queenside

pawns become extremely vulnerable, so deserving of attention was 33.♗d4.

33...♔xf8 34.♘g5 ♔g7 35.♖e1 ♖h8+ 36.♔g1



36...♖h5?!

Strong was 36...a5! and now:

- 37.♘xf7? ♔xf7 38.♕a7+ ♔e8! 39.♕g7 ♖f8 40.♕xg6+ ♔d8–+.
- 37.bxa5 ♕xa5 38.♘e4 ♖b8∓.

37.♖f1 ♕a8 38.♖d1 ♕d5! 39.♖f1

Not 39.♖xd5? ♖a1+ 40.♕f1 ♖h1+ 41.♔xh1 ♖xf1+ 42.♔h2 exd5∓.

39...♕d3 40.♖e1 ♖h8 41.♘e4 a5!∓

Black is finally on the right track!

42.♘d6

White has no easy life after 42.bxa5 ♖b8! 43.♕e2 (43.♘c5 ♕c4 44.♖e2 ♖xa5 45.♘e4 ♖a2∓) 43...♕xe2 44.♖xe2 ♖bxb2 45.♖xb2 ♖xb2 46.♘d6 ♖a2 47.♘b7 ♖c2 48.♔f1 ♖xc3 49.♔e2 ♖a3∓, but maybe it was a better chance.

42...axb4 43.cxb4 ♕b3 44.f5!?

A desperate attempt to get some counterplay.

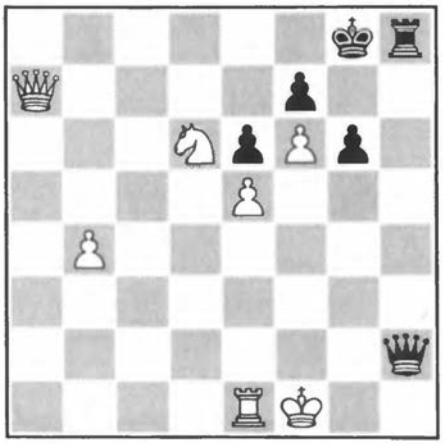
44...♖xb2!?

The simplest path to the win was 44...gxf5! 45.♕f4 ♖h5 46.♘e8+ ♔h8 47.♘f6 ♕xb2.

45.f6+ ♔g8 46.♕a7 ♖xg2+! 47.♔xg2 ♕b2+

Black has a forced win in the long line 47...♕h3+ 48.♔f2 (48.♔g1 ♕g3+ 49.♔f1 ♕f3+ 50.♕f2 ♖h1 mate) 48...♕h2+ 49.♔f1 (49.♔e3 ♖h3+ 50.♔e4 ♕g2+ 51.♔f4 g5 mate) 49...♕f4+ 50.♔e2 (50.♕f2 ♖h1+ 51.♔e2 ♕xe5+–+) 50...♕xe5+ 51.♕e3 ♖h2+ 52.♔f1 ♖h1+ 53.♔f2 ♕h2+ 54.♔f3 ♕h3+ 55.♔e4 ♕h4+.

48.♔g1 ♕h2+ 49.♔f1



49...♕h1+?

Missing a forced win with 49...♕f4+! and so on.

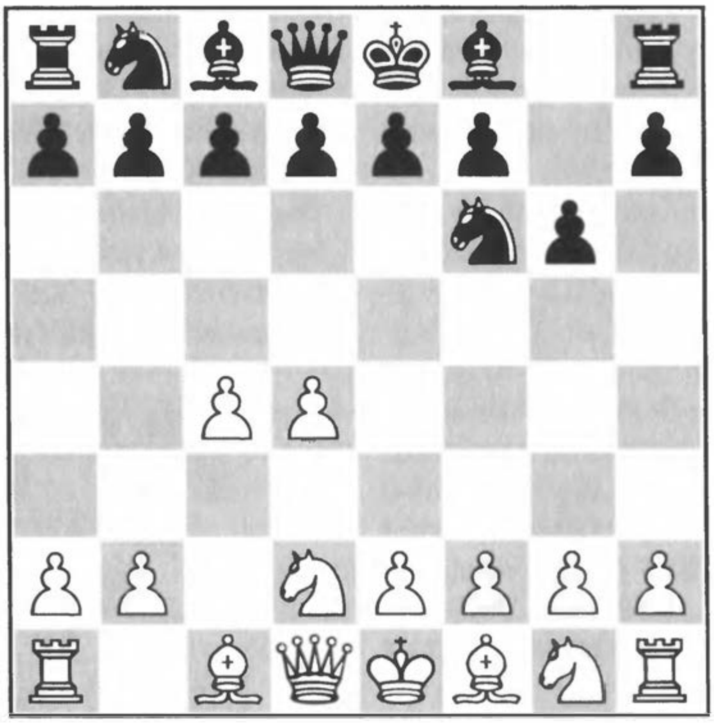
50.♔e2 ♖h2+ 51.♔d3 ♕d5+ 52.♔c3 ♕d2+ 53.♔c4 ♕d5+ 54.♔c3 ♖h3+ 55.♖e3 ♕xe5+ 56.♔c4 ½-½

As you probably know, in queen endings the number of pawns doesn't really matter in case the defending side has a passer. That's why after 56.♔c4 ♖h4+ 57.♖e4 ♖xe4+ 58.♘xe4 ♕xe4+ 59.♕d4 White has absolutely nothing to worry about.

CHAPTER 14

Jeroen Bosch

A Modest Indian



1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘d2

This SOS could easily be dubbed Sadler's Opening Surprise. English grandmaster Matthew Sadler adopted the modest 3.♘d2 on a couple of occasions. Notably in a Monaco rapid game against Anand, and in a Bundesliga game against Igor Stohl (1-0 in 20 moves!). Other grandmasters on the white side include Vladimir Burmakin and Mikhail Ivanov. Lev Gutman has pointed out in *Kaissiber* 24 that the Soviet master Peter Romanovsky is a forerunner – his preferred move order was 3.♘f3 ♗g7 4.♘bd2.

Why develop your queen's knight to d2 (where it blocks the bishop and does not control the important d5 square) when the 'natural' square c3 is still available? The main (technical) reason for doing so is the Grünfeld Indian. After 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.e4 ♘xc3 6.bxc3 White has a classical centre, but the lever c7-c5 in combination with a bishop on the long diagonal, a knight on c6 and even a bishop on g4 will put intense pressure on d4. In contrast, after 3.♘d2 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.e4 Black cannot take on c3 so White gains a full tempo. Moreover, after a subsequent ♘d2-b3 the lever ...c5 is prevented for some time to come.

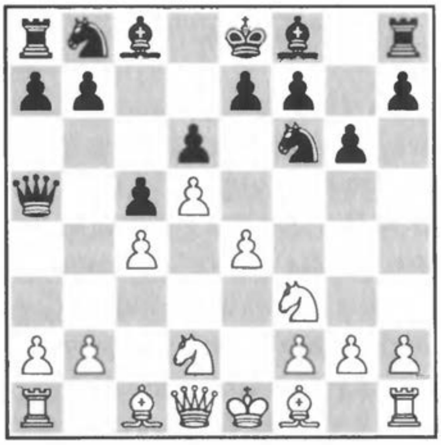
So, 3.♘d2 is an excellent psychological weapon against Grünfeld players. In our main game we will witness how an experienced Grünfeld player like Igor Stohl does not make it past the twentieth move!

☐ **Matthew Sadler**
■ **Igor Stohl**
Germany Bundesliga 1997/98

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘d2 d5

Stohl has been an adherent of the Grünfeld for so long that he probably makes his first three moves almost automatically. While technically this logical move cannot be a mistake of course, it must be exactly what Sadler had been hoping for.

● 3...c5 is not a bad move, but perhaps not a very likely response. Indeed, Benoni players will either prefer 2...c5 or a 2...e6 move order. 4.d5 ♕a5 (here 4...b5 5.e4 d6 6.cxb5 directly transposes to Beliavsky-Martinez, Las Vegas 2000. See SOS-3 for Alexander Beliavsky's chapter on 4.♘d2 versus the Volga!) 5.♘f3 d6 (here 5...♗g7 6.♕c2 0-0 7.e4 d6 8.♗e2 ♗g4 9.0-0 ♘bd7 10.h3 ♗xf3 11.♘xf3 a6 12.♗d2 ♕c7 13.♗c3 was better for White in Burmakin-Kodric, Ljubljana 1996 – via 2.♘f3 g6 3.c4 ♗g7 4.♘bd2 c5 5.d5 ♕a5) 6.e4!?



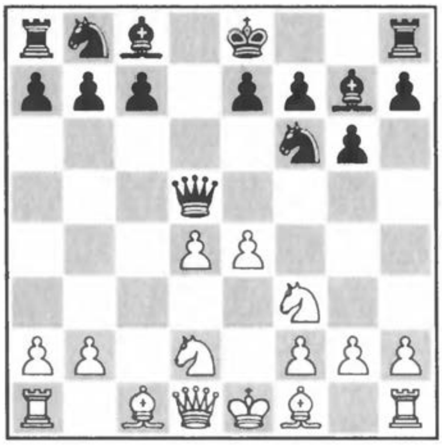
– Now taking the pawn with 6...♘xe4 is met by 7.b4! ♕xb4 8.♖b1, when giving up the queen is insufficient: 8...♘xd2 (8...♕a5 9.♖b5 wins a piece for a few pawns) 9.♖xb4 ♘xf3+ 10.♕xf3 cxb4. From a material point of view Black is sort of OK, but White obtains a strong attack now with: 11.♗b2 ♖g8 12.c5! dxc5 13.♗b5+! and now either 13...♗d7 14.♗c4! or 13...♘d7 14.d6!.

– So, in Sadler-Anand, Monaco rapid 1998, Black went for the sober 6...♗g7 7.♗d3 0-0 8.0-0 e5 9.♖e1 ♘a6 10.a3 ♗d7 11.♖b1 with a slight advantage for White.

● 3...d6 4.♘gf3 ♗g7 5.e4 0-0 is a King's Indian with a (slightly silly) knight on d2 rather than on c3. This is Black's best option. I would now play 6.♗d3 and 7.0-0.

4.cxd5 ♘xd5

The Grünfeld move, but in this position taking with the queen is an option too. After **4...♕xd5 5.♘gf3 ♗g7** White has a strong pawn sacrifice with **6.e4!**



We are now at an important crossroads:

● Taking up the gauntlet with 6...♘xe4 is extremely risky 7.♗c4 and now:

– 7...♕a5 8.b4! ♕xb4 9.♖b1 ♕c3 (relatively best is 9...♘c3 10.♖xb4 ♘xd1 11.♔xd1; 9...♕a5 10.♖b5) 10.♖b3 ♘xf2 (10...♕a5 11.♖b5 ♕c3 12.♗b2) 11.♔xf2 ♕a5 12.♖b5 ♕a6 13.♖f5 ♕b6 14.♗xf7+ ♔d8 (14...♔f8 was Skembris-Makropoulou, Greece 1994) 15.♘c4 ♕a6 16.♖a5 ♕f6 17.♘e5 and White was completely winning in M.Ivanov-Kopylova, Kiel 2001.

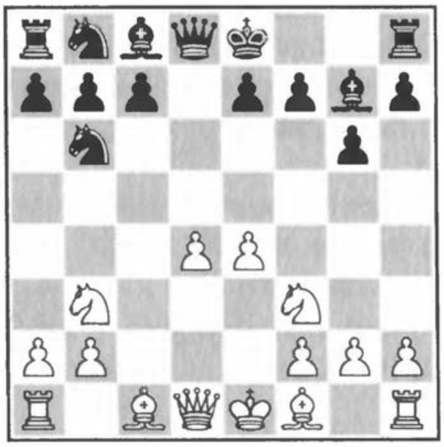
– Better is 7...♕c6, although White probably stays ahead in the complications following 8.d5 ♕c5 9.♕a4+ b5 (9...♗d7 10.♘xe4) 10.♗xb5+ c6 11.dxc6 ♕xf2+ 12.♔d1 ♘c5

13.♕a3 ♘e6 14.c7+ ♘d7 15.♗c6. It makes sense to practice a little with your computer engine here. White is about to win material, but his king is in the centre.

- Passive is 6...♕a5 7.♗c4 c6?! (7...♘xe4 8.b4 transposes to the previous comment) 8.a3 (after 8.0-0! Black is playing a very passive Grünfeld) 8...0-0 9.b4 ♕c7 10.♗b2 ♗g4 11.h3 ♗xf3 12.♕xf3 was very pleasant for White in M. Ivanov-Hugentobler, Austria 2004/05.
- 6...♕d8 7.♗c4 (less logical is 7.♕c2 0-0 8.♗e2 ♘fd7?! – Black is fine after 8...♘c6 9.d5 ♘b8 followed by 10...c6 – 9.0-0 e5?! 10.♘xe5 ♘xe5 11.dxe5 ♗xe5 12.♘f3 ♗g7 13.♗g5 with a positional edge in Schukin-Rogovoi, St Petersburg 1999) 7...0-0 8.0-0 ♘c6 (8...♗g4 9.♕b3 ♘c6 10.e5 also favoured White in M.Ivanov-Bejaoui, Werther 2006) 9.e5! (9.d5 ♘b8 when 10...c6 might equalize) 9...♘d5 10.♘e4 ♗g4 11.♗e2 ♘b6 (the immediate 11...f6 also makes sense) 12.♗e3 f6 13.h3!? (the solid 13.exf6 promises a slight edge) 13...♗f5?! 14.exf6 exf6 15.♘c5 with a positional edge in Romanovsky-Gothilf, Leningrad 1938. Romanovsky employed the move order 3.♘f3 ♗g7 4.♘bd2. On move 13 Black should perhaps have preferred 13...♗xf3 when 14.♗xf3 fxe5 15.♘c5 leads to interesting complications:
  - 15...♘xd4 16.♗xb7 ♖b8 17.♖c1.
  - 15...♖xf3 16.♕xf3 exd4 17.♘xb7 ♕d5 18.♕xd5+ ♘xd5 19.♗c1 ♖b8 20.♘c5.
  - 15...exd4 16.♕b3+ ♔h8 17.♗d2 ♖f6 18.♘xb7 ♕g8! 19.♗e4 gives White more than enough for the pawn. He has two lovely bishops, possible pressure along the c- and e-files, and Black's pawn structure is disjointed.

5.♘gf3 ♗g7 6.e4 ♘b6 7.♘b3

White has formed the ideal d4-e4 centre, and avoided typical Grünfeld counterplay with ...c5. Note that the strategic ideas are fairly similar to those in Nadanian's ♘a4 system – see Jonathan Rowson's chapter in SOS-2 on 'The Improved Nadanian': 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.♘f3 ♗g7 5.cxd5 ♘xd5 6.♘a4. It could be argued that b3 is a better place for the knight than a4.



7...0-0 8.♗e3

Sadler's choice, but 8.♗e2 also makes sense. After 8...♘c6 (8...a5 9.♗e3 transposes to Burmakin-Orlov below; if 8...♗g4 then 9.♗e3) 9.0-0 a5 10.♗e3 f5!? 11.exf5 ♗xf5 12.♘c5! ♖b8 13.♖c1 White is better anyway, but Black should now seek improvements over 13...e5 (13...♕d6!?) 14.♕b3+ (14.♘xb7!) 14...♔h8 15.dxe5 ♘xe5 16.♘d4, which was excellent for White, Mateuta-Bernard, Bucharest 2002. Again via the move order 1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 g6 3.c4 ♗g7 4.♘bd2. Perhaps ♗e3 is always necessary while an early ♗e2 can be avoided sometimes – see our main game! So perhaps it makes sense to play 8.♗e3 and to take it from there.

8...♗g4

Harassing the knight on b3 hardly works: 8...a5 9.♗e2 a4 10.♘c5 ♘8d7 11.♕c2 c6 12.♖d1 ♖e8?! 13.0-0 ♕c7?! 14.♘d3 ♘f8 15.♗f4 ♕d8 16.d5! was too cooperative in Burmakin-V.Orlov, St Petersburg 1995. Burmakin again employed his preferred move order of 3.♘f3 ♗g7 4.♘bd2.

9.♕d2

Very active, but 9.♗e2 is also very natural. The text and especially the follow-up is more double-edged.

9...♘c6

It is perhaps more accurate to play 9...f5!? as 10.♘e5!? ♗xe5 11.dxe5 ♕xd2+ 12.♗xd2 (12.♘xd2 f4!) 12...fxe4 13.h3 ♗f5 is OK for Black. When White settles for 10.h3 ♗xf3 11.gxf3 ♘c6 he has spent a tempo (h2-h3) on forcing an exchange that Black makes voluntarily in the game.

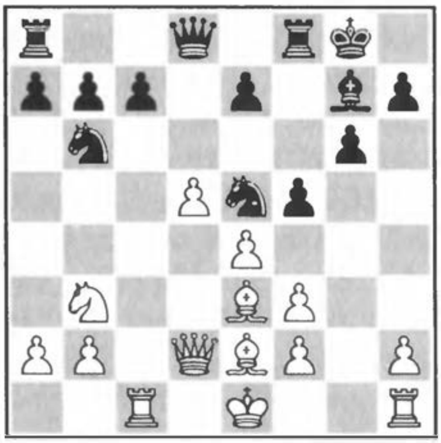
10.♖c1

Other moves include the mundane 10.♗e2 and the creative 10.♗b5!?.

10...f5 11.d5 ♗xf3

Not 11...♘e5 12.♘xe5 ♗xe5 13.h3, but interesting is 11...fxe4!? 12.dxc6exf3 13.cxb7 ♖b8.

12.gxf3 ♘e5 13.♗e2



A typical Grünfeld position (from say the Russian variation) has arisen despite our 3.♘d2 start. White looks a little more comfortable here.

13...fxe4

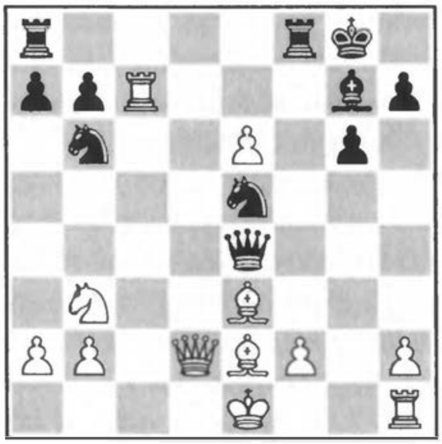
Stohl is looking for complications. The typical 13...c6 is met by 14.f4 and now:

- 14...♘g4 15.♗xg4 fxg4 16.♘c5.
- 14...♘f7 15.dxc6 ♕xd2+ 16.♗xd2 bxc6 17.e5.
- 14...♘ed7 15.dxc6 bxc6 16.e5.

14.fxe4 e6!?

This was Stohl's idea. It is true that 14...♘f3+ 15.♗xf3 ♖xf3 16.♘c5 is just bad for Black.

15.dxe6 ♕h4 16.♖xc7 ♕xe4



17.0-0 ♖ad8?

This decides the game after Sadler's powerful retort. 17...♖fd8 is favourably met by 18.♕c2 ♕xc2 19.♖xc2 ♘d5 20.♗g5.

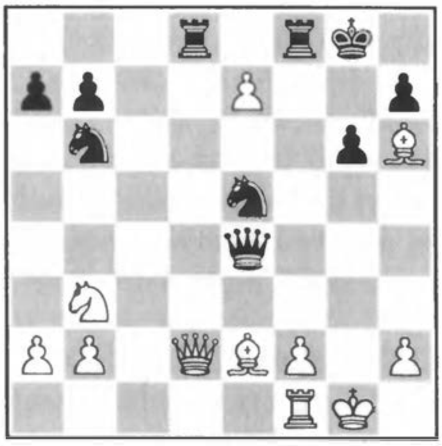
Best is perhaps 17...♘f3+ 18.♗xf3 ♕xf3 and now 19.♕d1 ♘d5 20.♕xf3 ♖xf3 21.♖xb7 ♘xe3 22.fxe3 ♖xe3 should lead to a draw according to Breutigam in *Schach Magazin 64* (1998/4).

However, 19.♖xg7+!? ♔xg7 20.♗h6+ ♔g8 21.♕d4 ♖f6 (can Black draw after 21...♕f6 22.♗xf8 ♕xd4 23.♘xd4 ♔xf8?) 22.♘d2! ♕f5 23.♖e1! favours White.

18.♖xg7+!

Much stronger than 18.e7 ♖xd2 19.exf8♕+ ♗xf8 20.♘xd2.

18...♔xg7 19.♗h6+ ♔g8 20.e7!

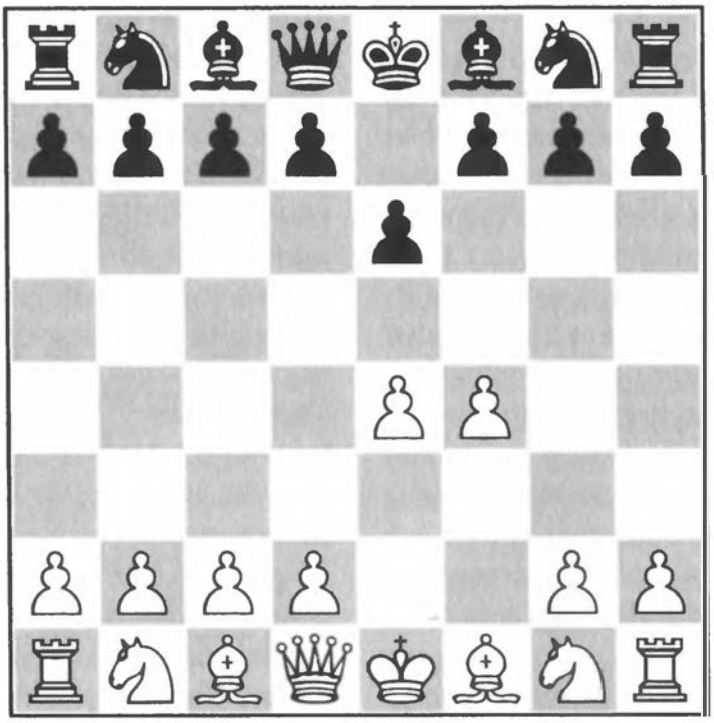


And Black resigned. After 20...♘f3+ 21.♗xf3 ♕xe7 22.♗xf8 he remains a piece down.

CHAPTER 15

Igor Glek

A 19th Century Weapon versus the French



1.e4 e6 2.f4!?

With 2.f4 we return to the nineteenth century, when modern chess understanding made its first steps. The basic idea is clear I suppose – after 2...d5 to play 3.e5! – gaining some space in the centre. So, in principle we see the same ideas as in the popular Advance Variation (2.d4 d5 3.e5), but White doesn't permit Black to create immediate counterplay against pawn d4 (as happens for example in the Advance Variation after 3...c5 4.c3 ♘c6 5.♘f3 ♕b6).

Today we can judge how talented and creative players like Alexander McDonnell and Louis Charles De Labourdonnais were. Both of them were fighting the French with 2.f4.

Perhaps it is interesting for the readers to know why a French expert like myself has come to adopt such a seldom variation. I personally began to test 2.f4 after I lost two games with white in the French Rubinstein after 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 in early 2007 – against G.Meier in the German Bundesliga (4...♘d7) and against M.Stojanovic in the Swiss team championship (4...♗d7). As has been my custom in recent years I tried to play quite rare lines that brought me some success before, but this time I was not very happy after the opening. Well, I shouldn't blame my losses on the opening alone, but still. Moreover, the overall feeling was made even worse by the fact that these two games represented my only two losses in the 2006/07 season in four team competitions Then in March 2007 the excellent chess journalist IM Max Notkin (www. chesspro. ru) sent me a letter with the 50 best chess games of 2006 (in his opinion) asking me to judge them and name the top-10 for his website's annual competition.

And you know, dear reader, which game I rated the best of all? Possibly you will be surprised, but in my opinion the top honours should go to Zviagintsev-Zhang Pengxiang (China-Russia Summit 2006)!

This game took my attention because of its originality – I'd say it was played on another dimension. Playing through the game it is very difficult to understand which move is good and which is bad. Almost as if Zviagintsev was playing anti-computer chess against his esteemed colleague!

It's very difficult to analyse the separate moves of such games! But the whole game is really a fine work of art.

GM Vadim Zviagintsev is probably one of the most creative modern GMs around. He is constantly trying to find new ways – remember his 4.g4 after 1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4, and of course his 2.♘a3 in Sicilian! (See SOS-5). So, the fact that Zviagintsev played 2.f4 means a lot to me. Finally, I understood that this was just the perfect weapon for me these days (I am spending some time on organizational matters rather than on chess study): there is little theory and clear strategical plans.

So, I came to test 2.f4 in some games in the Swiss and French team championships in April-July. I won my first four games with this line, and I am eager to see what will happen next...

My opponents usually played in the same way as they would against 2.d4 d5 3.e5 line – ...c7-c5, ...♘b8-c6, ...♘g8-e7(h6)-f5. My reaction was ♘b1-a3-c2 and then not d2-d4 immediately, but first ♗f1-d3. Interestingly, we can already see this manoeuvre in McDonnell's and Labourdonnais' games! Finally, after the 'preparatory' ♘b1-a3-c2 White is ready to play d2-d4. However, it's not always essential to do so! A very interesting option is ♗f1-d3 without d4, which is how I played in the above-mentioned games. Before me GMs like Viktor Komliakov and Slavko Cicak did the same.

GM Dimitry Bunzmann tried against me to play like Rafael Vaganian sometime does against 2.d4 d5 3.e5 – without c7-c5, trying to exchange his bishop after b7-b6. But this is not a good option versus 2.f4.

So, what is the best way for Black here? Maybe to play ...d5-d4 (after an early ...♕b6 to avoid d2-d4), maybe ...f7-f6 somewhere. One thing is clear we need more games to come to any definitive conclusions here.

In general, there are many transpositions possible in this line. Strategical understanding thus takes precedence over memorizing moves. One final point: there is after 2.f4 no reason to be afraid of the Sicilian with 2...c5 as after 3.♘f3 Black's best and most consistent move is 3...d5 when after 4.e5 we have returned to our subject (of course the Grand Prix moves 4.exd5 and 4.♗b5+ are possible too).

☐ **Igor Glek**
■ **Nicolas Curien**
Switzerland tt 2007

1.e4 e6 2.f4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.♘f3 ♘c6 5.c3 ♘ge7 6.♘a3 ♘f5 7.♘c2 h5

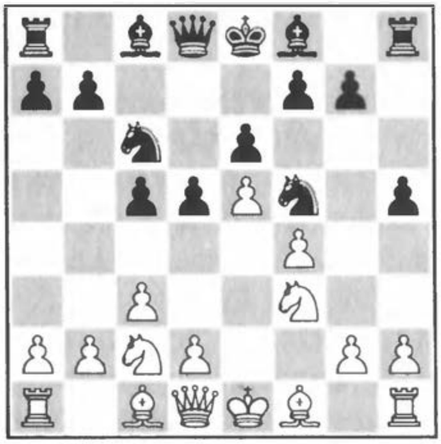
7...d4 8.♗d3 and now:

- 8...dxc3 9.dxc3 b6 10.0-0 ♗b7 11.♕e2 ♗e7 12.♖d1 ♕c7 13.♗xf5!? exf5 14.♘e3 ♗c8 15.♘d5 ♕b7 16.♗e3 Kr.Georgiev-Spiridonov, Chalon sur Saone 1991.
- 8...♗e7 9.0-0 0-0 10.♕e2 ♕b6 11.♔h1

♗d7 12.b3(also good are 12.g4and 12.♗e4) 12...a5 13.♖b1 g6 14.♗a3 dxc3 15.dxc3 h5 16.♘d2 ♔g7 17.♘e3 ♘xe3 18.♕xe3 ♘a7 19.b4± Gamboa-Sadvakasov, Santa Clara 1999.

7...c4 8.d3 cxd3 9.♗xd3 ♗c5 10.♗xf5 exf5 11.♗e3 ♗xe3 12.♘xe3± Komliakov-Nogueiras, Dos Hermanas Internet 2004

After 7...f6 White has many reasonable options: 8.d4, 8.♗b5 and 8.exf6.



8.♗d3

8.g3 ♗d7 9.d3 b5 10.♗h3 g6 11.0-0 ♕b6 12.♗d2 a5 13.♗e1 c4+ 14.♗f2 ♗c5 15.d4 with approximate equality in Bologan-Burmakin, Istanbul Ech 2003.

8...g6

8...♗e7 9.♗xf5 exf5 10.d4 ♕b6 11.dxc5 ♗xc5 12.b4 ♗e7 13.a4 ♗e6 14.a5 ♕c7 15.♗e3 ♖c8 16.0-0 0-0 17.♘fd4 ♘xd4 18.♗xd4 with a slight edge in Komliakov-Shabanov, Serpukhov 2004.

9.0-0 c4 Another option is 9...♕b6. **10.♗xf5 gxf5 11.d3 b5 12.♗e3 a5 13.♘fd4 ♘xd4 14.♘xd4 ♕d7** Not 14...♗c5? 15.♘xf5. **15.a4! ♗a6** White is also better after 15...b4 16.dxc4 dxc4 17.♕e2 or 17.♖f2. **16.axb5 ♗xb5 17.♘xb5 ♕xb5 18.dxc4 ♕xc4 19.♕a4+** Transposing into a clearly favourable ending. **19...♕xa4 20.♖xa4 ♗e7 21.♖fa1 ♗d8 22.b4 ♔d7 23.bxa5 ♖a6 24.c4! dxc4** Stronger was 24...f6. **25.♖d1+ ♔e7 26.♗c5+ ♔e8 27.♖b4! ♗c7 28.♖b7 ♖c6 29.♗b4 f6 30.♖a7 ♖h7 31.♖a8+ ♔f7 32.♖d7+ ♔g6 33.♖g8+ 1-0**

☐ **Igor Glek**
■ **Andreas Huss**
Switzerland tt 2007

1.e4 e6 2.f4 d5 3.e5 ♘h6 4.♘f3 c5 5.c3 ♘c6 6.♘a3 ♗e7 7.♘c2 ♘f5

Cicak-Degerman, Sweden tt 2001/02, went 7...0-0 8.d4 f6 9.♗d3 cxd4 10.cxd4 ♘b4 11.♘xb4 ♗xb4+ 12.♔e2 ♗d7 13.♕b3 ♕b6 14.a3 ♗e7 15.♕xb6 axb6 16.♖g1 planning 17.g4 with a pleasant edge.

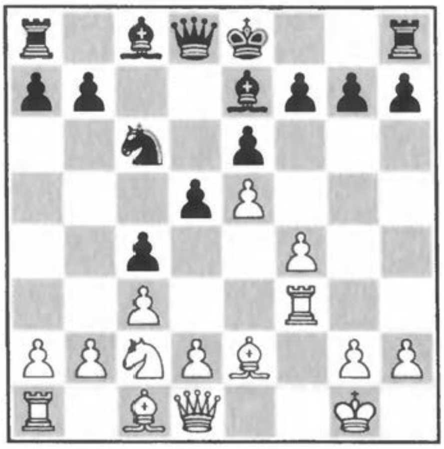
8.♗d3!?

The alternatives are 8.d4 and 8.♘e3. Thus a game of Russian women champion Korbut continued: 8.d4 a6 9.♗d3 c4 10.♗xf5 exf5 11.0-0 ♗e6 12.♗e3 0-0 13.♗f2 b5 14.♕e1 a5 15.♗h4 b4 16.♗xe7 ♕xe7 17.♘h4 Korbut-Tairova, Orel ch-RUS women 2006.

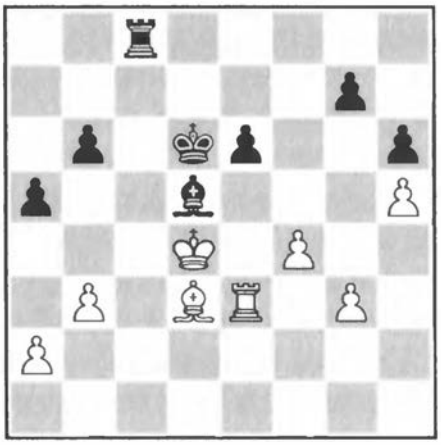
8...♘h4

Komliakov-Rychagov, Moscow 1997, instead went: 8...♕b6 9.♘e3 g6 10.0-0 ♗d7 11.♔h1 0-0-0 12.♖b1 ♕c7 13.♘c2 f6 14.♗xf5 gxf5 15.b4 fxe5 16.b5 ♘b8 17.♘xe5 and White is a little better.

9.0-0 c4 10.♗e2 ♘xf3+ 11.♖xf3



11...♗c5+ White remains somewhat better also after 11...f6 12.exf6 ♗xf6 13.d4. **12.♔h1 ♗d7 13.d4 cxd3 14.♗xd3 f5 15.exf6 ♕xf6 16.♗e3 ♗xe3 17.♘xe3 0-0-0 18.♘g4 ♕e7 19.♕e2± ♕d6 20.♖e1 ♖df8 21.♘e5 ♘xe5 22.♕xe5 ♕xe5 23.♖xe5 ♔c7 24.♔g1 ♔d6 25.g3 h6 26.h4 ♖f6 27.h5 ♗e8 28.c4!? ♗c6 29.♖fe3 b6 30.♔f2 ♖c8 31.b3 a5 32.♖e2** With the idea of ♔f2-e3-d4. **32...dxc4 33.♗xc4 ♗d5 34.♖d2 ♖c5 35.♗d3 ♔e7 36.♔e3 ♖f8 37.♗e4! ♖c3+ 38.♖d3 ♖xd3+ 39.♗xd3 ♔d6 40.♔d4 ♖d8 41.♖e3 ♖c8**



Now White finds a manoeuvre to transpose into a winning rook ending.

42.♗c4! ♖c5 43.♖e5! a4 44.♗xd5 exd5 45.f5 axb3 46.axb3 ♖b5 47.♖e6+ ♔d7 48.g4! ♖xb3 49.♖g6 ♔e7 50.♖xg7+ ♔f6 51.♖g6+ ♔f7 52.♔xd5 ♖b4 53.♔e5 b5 54.f6 ♖c4 55.♖g7+ ♔f8 56.g5 ♖h4 57.g6 ♖xh5+ 58.♔e6 1-0

☐ **Igor Glek**
■ **Etienne Goudriaan**
Haarlem 2007

1.e4 e6 2.f4 d5 3.e5 ♘h6 4.♘f3 c5 5.c3 ♘c6 6.♘a3 ♗d7 7.♘c2 ♘f5 8.♗d3!?

Here too White may consider 8.d4 or 8.♘e3. The latter was tried in Cicak-Koutsin, Prievidza 1996: 8.♘e3 ♗e7 9.♘xf5 exf5 10.g3 ♗e6 11.d3 0-0 12.♗g2 b5 13.d4 c4 14.a3 a5 15.♘d2 ♖b8 16.♘f1 ♕d7 17.♘e3 ♗d8 18.a4 with a clear edge.

After 8.♗e2 c4 9.0-0 h5 10.d4 b5 11.b3 ♕b6 12.♘e3 ♘ce7 13.♕c2 cxb3 14.axb3 a5 15.♖d1 ♘xe3 16.♗xe3 ♘f5 17.♗f2 ♗e7 18.c4 dxc4 19.bxc4 b4 Korbut-Guseva, Orel 2006, White should have preferred 20.♗d3± over the game continuation 20.c5.

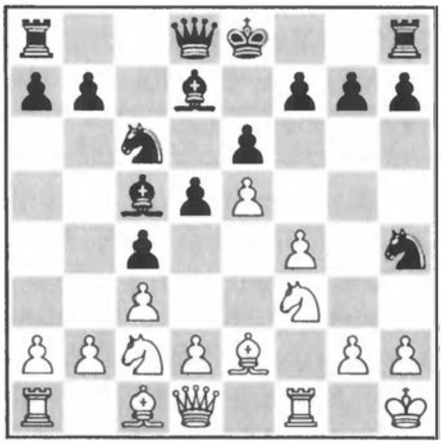
8...♘h4

This manoeuvre was executed one move later in Komliakov-Psakhis, Yerevan Olympiad 1996: 8...♗e7 9.0-0 ♘h4 10.♗e2 ♘xf3+ 11.♗xf3 0-0 12.♕e2 f6 13.exf6 ♖xf6 14.d3 ♗d6 15.g3 with equal play.

9.0-0 c4 10.♗e2 ♗c5+

With 10...♘xf3+ 11.♖xf3 ♗c5+ (11...f6 12.exf6) 12.♔h1 Black would have gotten a position from Glek-Huss above with an extra tempo.

11.♔h1



11...♘f5?!

Again 11...♘xf3 like in the game Glek-Huss was much more logical. See the previous comment.

12.d4 cxd3 13.♗xd3

White has an obvious positional edge.

13...g6 14.♗xf5! gxf5 15.♗e3 ♗xe3 16.♘xe3 ♕b6 17.♕d2 ♖c8

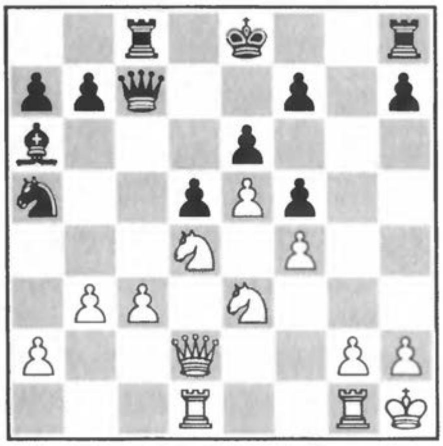
17...0-0-0 may be better, now Black's king is not safe.

18.♖ad1 ♘a5 19.b3 ♗b5 20.♖g1

By all appearances 21.g4 is going to be very strong.

20...♕c7 21.♘d4 ♗a6

Now 22.♖c1 followed by 23.g4 was good enough for a big advantage, but White has another idea in mind...



22.♘dxf5! Crushing Black's position! **22...exf5 23.♘xd5 ♕c6** No improvement is 23...♕d8 24.♘f6+ ♔e7 25.♕e3 ♕b6 26.♘d5+. **24.♕d4!** With a clear idea: 25.e6. **24...♕e6**

And Black resigned not waiting for 25.♘c7+.

Black's game was beyond salvation anyway:

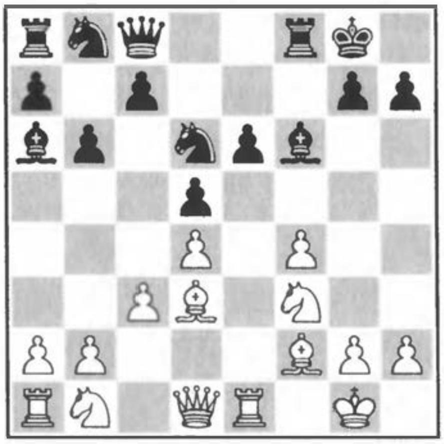
- 24...♖d8 25.e6 ♖xd5 26.♕xh8+ ♔e7 27.c4+– or 27.exf7+–.
- 24...♖f8 25.♘f6+ ♔e7 26.♕b4+ ♕c5 27.♖d7+ ♔e6 28.♕xc5 ♖xc5 29.♖gd1 ♖c6 30.♖d8 ♖xd8 31.♖xd8 ♖c7 (or 31...b6 32.♖e8 mate) 32.♖d6+ ♔e7 33.♘d5++–.

☐ **Igor Glek**
■ **Dimitry Bunzmann**
France tt 2007

1.e4 e6 2.f4 d5 3.e5 ♘h6 4.♘f3 ♗e7 5.c3 0-0 6.d4

Why not finally? Black has done little towards control over the important squares d4 and e5.

6...b6 Ah, now we can see that Black wants to play ...c7-c5 and wishes to exchange the light-squared bishops. **7.♗e3** Trying to gain some time. If 7.♗d3 immediately then 7...♗a6. **7...f6** 7...c5 was the alternative. **8.exf6 ♗xf6 9.♗d3** It's time to finish my development. **9...♗a6 10.0-0 ♘f5 11.♗f2 ♕c8 12.♖e1 ♘d6**



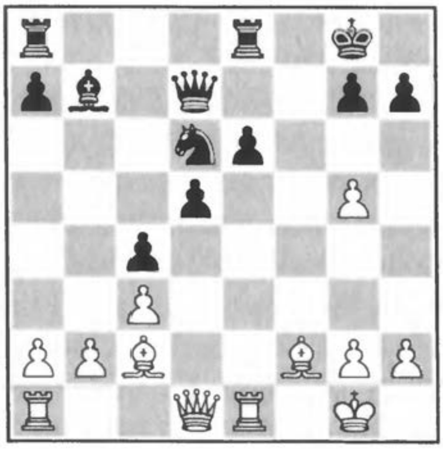
13.♗c2!

I had a distinct feeling that my bishop should be more useful than Black's.

13...c5 14.♘bd2 ♖e8 15.dxc5 bxc5 16.♘b3 c4

Black's position falls apart after 16...♘d7 17.f5.

17.♘c5 ♗b7 18.♘g5! ♗xg5 19.fxg5 ♘d7 20.♘xd7 ♕xd7



21.♗xh7+!

A typical sacrifice, the rest is quite easy.

21...♔xh7 22.♕h5+ ♔g8 23.g6 e5 24.♗h4 ♘f7 25.♕h7+ ♔f8 26.♖f1

And mate follows.

So here is the best game of 2006!

☐ **Vadim Zviagintsev**
■ **Zhang Pengxiang**
Ergun tt 2006

1.e4 e6 2.f4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.♘f3 ♘c6

Playing consistently for control over the d4-square. Practice has also seen:

– 4...♘e7 5.c3 ♘bc6 6.♘a3 b6 (6...♖b8 7.d4 c4 8.♘c2 b5 9.♗e2 h5 10.♘e3 b4 11.0-0 ♘f5 12.♘xf5 exf5 13.♗d2 bxc3 14.♗xc3 Komliakov-Dragomaretsky, Moscow 1990) 7.d4 ♕d7 8.♗e2 h5 9.♘h4 g6 10.0-0 ♘f5 11.♘xf5 gxf5 12.♘c2 Komliakov-Volkov, Sochi 1997.

– 4...h5 5.c3 ♘h6 6.d4 ♘c6 7.♗d3 ♕b6 8.a3 ♗d7 9.b4 cxd4 10.b5 ♘a5 11.♘xd4 Smyslov-Vaganian, Moscow blitz 1993.

5.c3 ♗d7

A logical set-up developing the queenside first. There are plenty of alternatives of course. Historically interesting are:

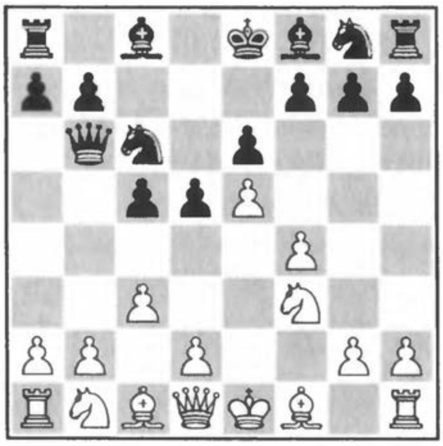
– 5...♗e7 6.♗d3 ♘h6 7.♗c2 ♗d7 8.0-0 f5 9.a3 McDonnell-Fraser, London m 1831.

– 5...♕b6 6.♗d3 ♗d7 7.♗c2 f6 8.0-0 ♗e7 9.♔h1 0-0-0 10.a3 De Labourdonnais-Wilson, London 1837.

– 5...♕b6 6.♗d3 a6 7.♗c2 ♗d7 8.d4 cxd4 9.cxd4 ♗b4+ 10.♘c3 ♘ge7 11.0-0 0-0 12.♗xh7+ and White won in De Labourdonnais-Lecrivain, Paris 1837.

Note the positioning of the bishop in front of the d-pawn, the sometimes useful little pawn move a3, and the classical sacrifice on h7.

5...♕b6 as in these De Labourdonnais games is natural of course and reminiscent of one of Black's main set-ups against the Advance Variation. A few, more modern, examples after 5...♕b6 and now:



6.♘a3 ♗d7 7.♘c2 ♘h6 8.♗e2 f5 9.d4 cxd4 10.♘cxd4 ♘xd4 11.♘xd4 Cicak-Gdanski, Ostrava 1998.

6.♘a3 ♘h6 7.♘c2 ♗e7 8.d4 f6 9.♗d3 ♘f7 10.0-0 Biolek-Balogh, Slovakia tt 2005/06.

6.d3 ♘ge7 7.g3 ♘f5 8.♗g2 ♗e7 9.0-0 h5 10.♘a3 ♗d7 11.♘c2 0-0-0 12.♕e2 d4 13.c4 Komliakov-Ristovic, Pozarevac 1995.

– Also normal is 5...♘h6 6.♘a3 f6 (6...♕b6 7.♘c2 ♗d7 and now rather than 8.♘e3?! f6! Komliakov-Rustemov, Moscow 1998, Psakhis has recommended 8.d4) 7.d4 cxd4 8.cxd4 fxe5 9.fxe5 ♗xa3 10.♗xh6 ♗b4+ 11.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 12.♕xd2 ♗d7 13.0-0-0 ♕a5 14.♕xa5 ♘xa5 15.b3 ♔e7 16.♔d2 ½-½ Cicak-Kindermann, Germany Bundesliga 2000/01.

6.♘a3 f6

This typical French move is a novelty. Previous experience saw:

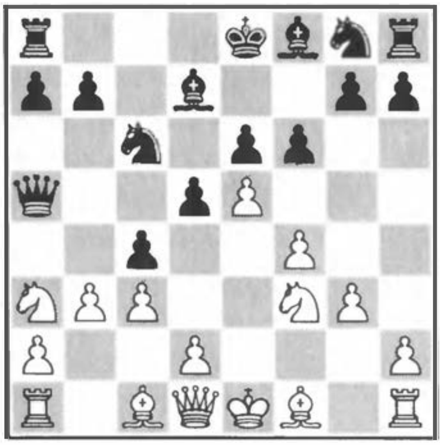
– 6...♕b6 7.♘c2 ♘ge7 8.d4 cxd4 9.♘cxd4 ♖c8 10.♘c2 ♘f5 11.♗d3 g6 12.g4, Cicak-Nothnagel, Germany Bundesliga B 1996/97.

– 6...♘h6 7.♘c2 ♗e7 8.d4 0-0 9.♗d3 cxd4 10.cxd4 ♘b4 11.♘xb4 ♗xb4+ 12.♗d2 ♕b6 R.Biolek-Kukla, Strmilov 2005.

7.g3

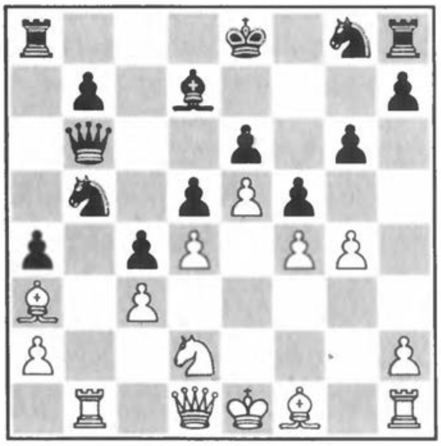
Certainly not the only move that comes into consideration. Naturally 7.d4!? is possible, as are 7.♘c2!? and 7.exf6!? ♘xf6 8.♗b5 (or 8.♘c2).

7...c4 8.b3 The move 8.♘c2 is met by 8...fxe5 9.fxe5 ♕c7. But interesting was 8.d4!? cxd3 9.♗xd3. **8...♕a5**



9.b4!? A worthwhile alternative is 9.♘c2!?. **9...♕b6 10.d4** Not 10.d3 ♘xb4! 11.dxc4 ♕a5. Possible was 10.♖b1!? ♘h6 11.d4. **10...a5! 11.b5 ♘a7 12.♖b1 f5** 12...♗xa3 is met by 13.♗xa3 ♘xb5 14.♘h4!?. **13.♘d2 ♗xa3 14.♗xa3 ♘xb5 15.♗b2** Or 15.♗c5 ♕c7 and now the exchange sacrifice 16.♖xb5!? ♗xb5. **15...a4 16.♗a3! g6 17.g4**

Is this a blunder or a sacrifice? As usual the answer here depends on the result. White has compensation after 17.♝g2.



17...♕d8! 18.♖xb5 ♗xb5

It looks that there is no necessity to win a second pawn by sending the queen outside: 18...♕h4+ 19.♔e2 ♕xg4+ 20.♘f3 ♗xb5 21.♕b1 ♗c6 22.♔e3.

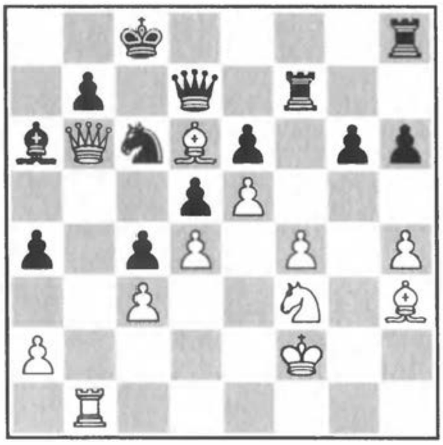
19.h4 ♘h6

Black is an exchange and one pawn up: what is White hoping for? However, let's see what is going to happen.

20.gxf5 ♘xf5 21.♘f3 ♕d7 22.♔f2 0-0-0

Perhaps 22...h6!? followed by ♔e8-f7!?.

23.♗h3 h6 24.♕b1 ♖df8 25.♕b4 ♖f7 26.♕a5 ♗a6 27.♖b1 ♘e7 28.♗d6 ♘c6 29.♕b6



It looks that White has excellent compensation. Or not? I don't know! And I guess neither does Fritz.

29...g5?!

If 29...♖e8 then 30.♖g1.

30.♖g1! ♖e8

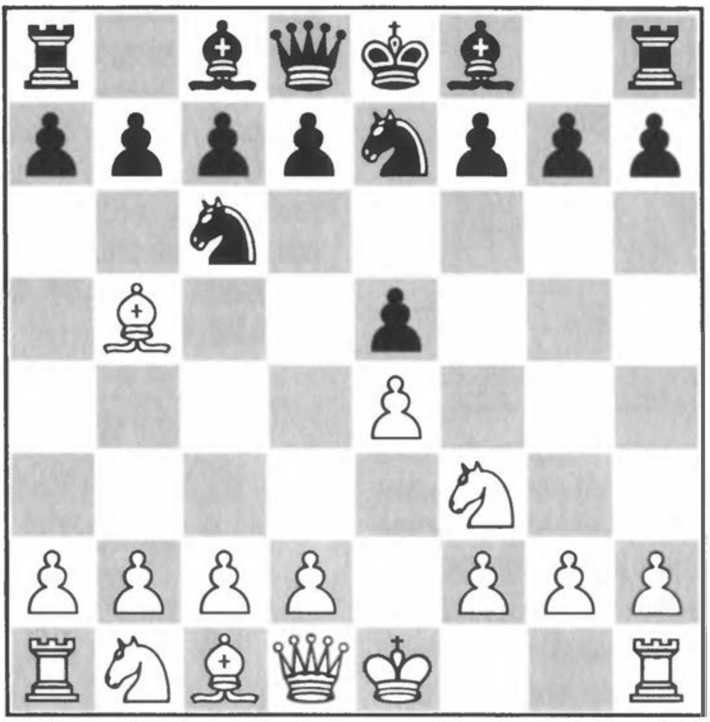
White wins after 30...gxh4 31.♖g6 ♖e8 32.♖xh6 ♖h7 33.♖xe6 ♖xe6 34.♘g5. However, in the game White is winning too.

31.hxg5 hxg5 32.♘xg5 ♖xf4+ 33.♔e3 ♖h4 34.♗xe6 ♖xe6 35.♘xe6 ♖h3+ 36.♔e2 ♖h8 37.♖g7 ♘xd4+ 38.♕xd4 1-0

CHAPTER 16

Leonid Gofshtein

A Dynamic Ruy Lopez Surprise

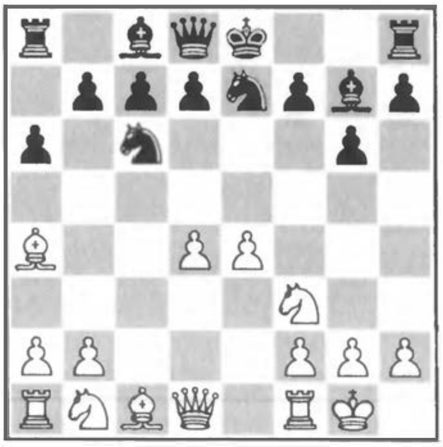


1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘ge7

It must have been around 1993 when I first came to take this line seriously after a white game versus GM Jacob Murey. Murey is of course one the great explorers in chess. Who does not remember his astonishing novelty in the Petroff (1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.d4 ♘xe4 4.♗d3 ♘c6!?). And I could mention many other ideas in all sorts of openings.

In our game after the well-known moves – 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘ge7 4.0-0 g6 5.c3 ♗g7 6.d4 exd4 7.cxd4 – Murey suddenly played 7...a6 (instead of the theoretical line 7...d5 8.exd5 ♘xd5 9.♖e1+ with a solid plus for White).

Now if White takes on c6 after 7...a6 then Black replies 8...bxc6 when he has good counterplay with two bishops compensating for his fractured pawn structure. If White retreats his bishop to e2 or c4, then Black has 8...d5 with good play. After 8.♗a4



Murey played the surprising 8...0-0, foregoing the opportunity to take up space in the centre with ...d5. I thought this was anti-positional for it allows White to play 9.d5 but it turned out that after 9...b5 we have merely reached a complex position, and, indeed, it was Black who was successful in the end.

A few years later whilst preparing myself for the coming Israeli championship I decided to widen my repertoire. It was at this moment that I remembered my encounter with Murey. I soon discovered that in this variation Black achieves dynamic positions like in the King's Indian or the Benoni – and these openings were more customary in my repertoire than the Spanish.

It was clear to me that this line was going to be a surprise for many of my opponents. Besides I did not have the urge to compete in a 'memory game', and in this line there were few long and forced theoretical variations. Over the years I have played this line every now and then and achieved decent results and positions that are close to my dynamic style. Among those who successfully play this line are the grandmasters: Benjamin, Korneev, Murey, Arkhipov, Varga; as well as the IMs Berkovich and Mozes. In 'former times' Bent Larsen also used to play 3...♞ge7.

☐ **Leonid Shamkovich**
■ **Jacob Murey**
New York 1989

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 g6

This game will transpose to one of the main lines after 3...♘ge7. Editorial note: Glenn Flear wrote on 3...g6 in SOS-2.

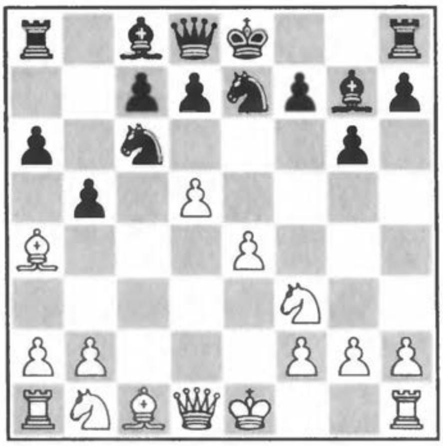
4.c3

It is very 'Spanish' to play c3 and d4. It is this set-up that I will investigate in the first four games in this chapter. It is White's most common reply in practice. We will see that Black will often attack the centre later on with ...f5.

4...a6 5.♗a4

Editorial note: in SOS-2 Flear demonstrated that in this move order 5.♗c4 is White's best chance for an opening advantage. In this game play will simply transpose.

5...♘ge7 6.d4 exd4 7.cxd4 ♗g7 8.d5 b5



9.♗c2

9.dxc6 leads to unclear play. The game Butunoi-Gofshtein, Latschach 2007, went: 9...bxa4 10.♕xa4 ♘xc6 11.♗g5!? f6.

9...♘a5 10.♘bd2 d6 11.♖b1

White prepares b4 and tries to exchange or limit Black's active knight.

11...c5

A natural move, Black takes up space and secures his knight.

12.a3

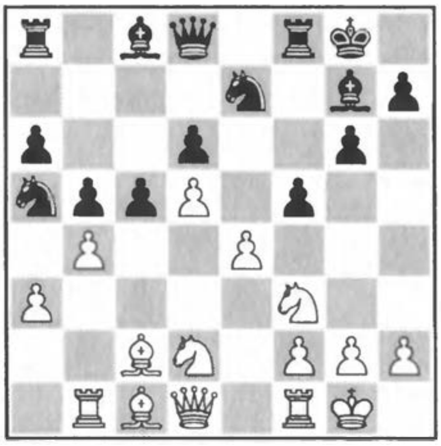
White still aims for b4. After 12.dxc6, Black achieves equality with 12...♘axc6 13.0-0 0-0 14.♘b3 ♗e6.

12...0-0 13.0-0 f5!?

Black starts his play on the kingside. After 13...c4 White would obtain a clear edge with the manoeuvre 14.♖e1, ♘f1, and ♗e3-d4.

14.b4

Interesting is 14.♘g5. White wants to land a knight on e6. In this case Black should seek play on the queenside and in the centre with: 14...fxe4 15.♘dxe4 ♕c7 16.♖e1 (16.♘e6 ♗xe6 17.dxe6 d5) 16...♘c4 17.b3 ♘b6 18.♘e6 ♗xe6 19.dxe6 d5 20.♘g5 c4 with complex play.



14...fxe4 Black also achieves counterplay with 14...cxb4 15.axb4 ♘c4 16.♘xc4 bxc4. **15.♘xe4** In case of 15.♗xe4 Black has a pleasant choice between 15...♘b7 16.♕c2 ♗f5 and 15...cxb4 16.axb4 ♘c4 17.♘xc4 bxc4 18.♕c2 ♗d7. **15...cxb4 16.axb4 ♘c4** Black's piece activity compensates for the weaknesses on his kingside. **17.♘eg5** White once again prepares to go to e6. **17...♕b6 18.♖e1 ♘f5!?** A dynamic defence. Black activates his pieces. **19.♘e6 ♗xe6 20.dxe6 ♖ae8 21.♗e4!? h6!?** To cover the g5-square. **22.♗d5 ♔h7 23.♖b3 ♘d4!? 24.♖d3 ♖f5!? 25.♘xd4** If 25.♗e4 then 25...♘xf3+ 26.♖xf3 ♖xf3 27.♗xf3 ♕d4. **25...♖xd5** Black aims to exchange pieces since pawn e6 will become weak in an ending. **26.♘f3** Or 26.♘b3 ♖xd3 27.♕xd3 ♕d8. **26...♖xd3 27.♕xd3 ♕c6** Preparing ...d5 to attack pawn e6. **28.♗f4**

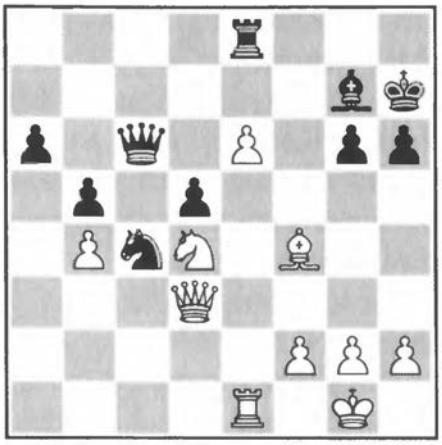
White had to play 28.e7 followed by h4. In case of the immediate 28.h4 then 28...♘e5 attacks the pawn. For example: 28.e7!? d5 29.h4 ♘d6 30.h5 ♘e4 31.hxg6+ ♕xg6 32.♕xd5 with equal play.

Attacking g6 with 28.♘h4 does not work after: 28...♘e5 29.♕b1 (29.♕g3 ♖xe6 30.f4 ♘d3!) 29...♖xe6 30.f4 ♕c3!.

28...d5 29.♘d4

After 29.e7 Black gains the initiative with 29...♕f6 30.♗e3 ♖xe7 31.♕xd5 ♘xe3 32.fxe3 ♕b2.

29...♕b6 30.♘f3 ♕c6 31.♘d4



31...♘b2!

This lovely move stresses Black's initiative.

32.♕h3

Better was 32.♕d2, but even then White loses the pawn after: 32...♕c4 33.♗e5 (33.♗e3 ♘d3 34.♖d1 ♗xd4 35.♗xd4 ♕xd4 36.♕xd3 ♕xd3 37.♖xd3 ♖xe6) 33...♘d3.

32...♕c4 33.♗e3 ♕xb4 34.f4??

This move and the next were probably timetrouble mistakes.

Normal was 34.♖b1 ♕a3 35.♕f3 ♘c4.

34...♘c4?? 35.♕f3 ♕c3 36.h4 ♘d2 37.♗xd2 ♕xd4+ 38.♗e3 ♕e4 0-1

☐ **Sergey Erenburg**

■ **Leonid Gofshtein**

Ashdod 2004

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘ge7 4.0-0

Yet another move order is 4.c3 a6 5.♗a4 g6 6.d4 exd4 7.cxd4.

4...g6 5.c3 a6 6.♗a4 ♗g7 7.d4 exd4

8.cxd4 0-0

The normal move 8...d5 is more classical. With 8...0-0 Black does not occupy the centre, he will later attack from the side with ...b5, ...c5 and even ...f5.

9.d5

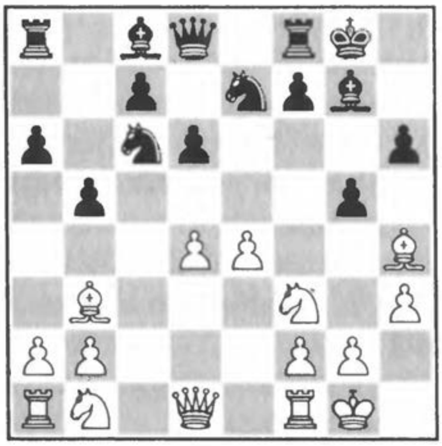
White wants to punish Black for his anti-positional play. Also possible are 9.♘c3 and 9.♗g5 when the follow examples illustrate Black's possibilities:

● 9.♘c3:

– 9...d5 (going for a blockade) 10.exd5 (10.♗xc6?! bxc6 11.e5 ♗g4 12.h3 ♗xf3 13.♕xf3 f6 14.exf6 ♗xf6 with counterplay Leonardo-Santos, Barreiro ch-POR 2000) 10...♘xd5 11.♗g5 ♘xc3 12.bxc3 ♕d6 13.♕d2 with an edge for White Fishbein-Murey, Vienna 1991.

– 9...b5!? (typical move for this line) 10.♗b3 ♘a5 11.♗c2 d6 12.h3 c5 13.♗g5 ♘ac6?! (correct was 13...h6to first let White decide where to put the bishop: 14.♗h4 ♘ac6 15.♘d5 g5) 14.♘d5 f6 15.♘xe7+ ♕xe7 with counterplay Vasiesiu-E.Mozes, Timisu de Sus 1998.

● 9.♗g5?! b5 10.♗b3 h6 11.♗h4 d6 12.h3 g5!? looks dangerous, but Black should not fear any 'ghosts':



– 13.♗xg5 hxg5 14.♘xg5 ♗f6 (14...♗h6) 15.♕h5 ♗xg5 16.♕xg5+ ♔h7 17.♕h4+ ♔g7 18.♕g3+ ♘g6 disarms the attack.

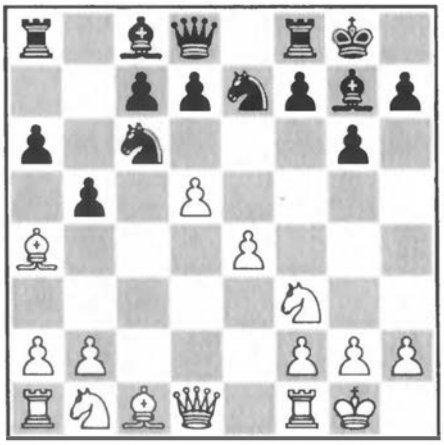
– 13.♗g3 ♘a5 14.♘c3 ♔h8 15.♗c2 f5!? (another characteristic move) 16.♖e1 f4 17.♗h2 c5 with counterplay, Nepomniachtchi-Pavasovic, playchess.com 2006.

9...b5

This is Black's main idea. The move 9...♘a5 was also seen in practice. After 10.♘c3 Black was OK after both

– 10...d6 11.♗c2 ♗g4 12.h3 ♗xf3 13.♕xf3 ♘c4 14.♕e2 ♘e5 15.♗d2 f5 16.f4 ♘d7, Fogarasi-Varga, Gyula 1998, and

– 10...b5 11.♗c2 d6 12.♘d4 ♗d7 13.♗g5 h6 14.♗h4 ♘c4 15.b3 ♘a3, Krivokapic-Pilgaard, Budapest 2007.



10.♗b3

The retreat to c2 is possible too. Black has decent play as practice has shown:

10.♗c2 ♘a5 11.♘c3 (11.a4 b4 12.♘bd2 d6 13.♖e1 c6, Kupreichik-Arkhipov, Münster 1991) 11...d6 and now:

– 12.♖e1 ♘c4 (or 12...♗b7 13.♘d4 c5 14.dxc6♘exc6 15.♘xc6♗xc6 16.♘d5♖c8, Fusthy-Mozes, Hungary tt 1993/94) 13.♘d4 ♗d7 14.♖b1 c5 15.dxc6 ♘xc6 16.♘xc6 ♗xc6 17.♘d5 ♗xd5 18.exd5 ♕a5 Boudre-Murey, Paris 1990.

– 12.♘d4 ♗b7 13.♖b1 c5 14.dxc6 ♘axc6 15.♘xc6 ♘xc6 16.♗e3 ♖c8 17.a4 ♘b4 18.♗b3 bxa4 19.♗xa4 d5 20.exd5 ♘xd5 Brodsky-Murey, Rishon-le-Zion 1997/98.

Note that Black also gains good play after

10.dxc6 bxa4 11.♕xa4 ♘xc6.

10...♘a5 11.♗d2!?

An original idea to force Black to exchange his active knight for White's passive bishop.

11...♘xb3

Very risky is: 11...♗xb2 12.♗xa5 .♗xa1 13.♘c3!? (less clear are 13.♕c1 d6 14.♘c3 ♗xc3 15.♕xc3 ♖a7 16.♕f6 ♘c6 and 13.d6 ♘c6 14.dxc7 ♕f6 15.♗d2) 13...♗xc3 14.♗xc3 d6 15.♕d2 f6 16.♘d4 ♗d7 17.f4 with an attack.

12.♕xb3 d6 13.♗c3 c5

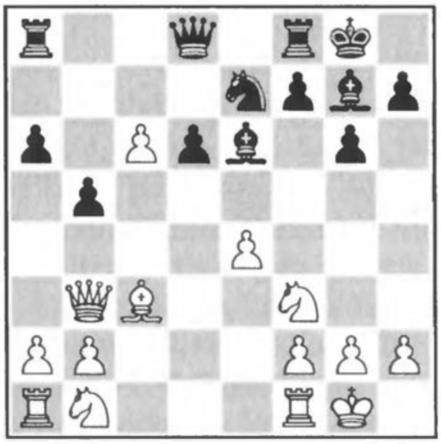
Black frees his game.

14.dxc6

Stronger was 14.♗xg7, although Black has good play on the queenside after: 14...♔xg7 15.♘bd2 f6.

14...♗e6!

A very important intermediate move.



15.♕a3

Also possible was 15.♕c2, when play might develop 15...♖c8 16.♗xg7 ♔xg7 17.♘d4 ♘xc6 18.♘xc6 ♕e8! 19.♖c1 ♗d7 20.♕c3+ ♔g8 21.♘d2 ♗xc6 22.♕a3 d5 23.exd5 ♗xd5 24.♕xa6 ♖xc1+ 25.♖xc1 ♕e5.

15...♘xc6 Sacrificing a pawn to enter a drawish endgame. **16.♗xg7 ♔xg7 17.♕c3+ ♘e5 18.♘xe5 dxe5 19.♕xe5+ ♕f6!** After the exchange of queens Black's king will become active. **20.♕xf6+ ♔xf6 21.♘c3 ♖fd8 22.♖ad1 b4!?** Forcing a double rook ending. **23.♘d5+ ♗xd5 24.exd5 ♖ac8 25.♖d2 ♖c5 26.♖fd1 ♔e7** Moving the king over to block the opponent's passed pawn. **27.f4 ♔d6** White offered a draw because of the manoeuvre ♖d8-b8-b5.

28.♔f2 **½-½**

☐ **Ilya Smirin**

■ **Joel Benjamin**

Foxwoods 2002

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘ge7 4.0-0 g6 5.c3 a6 6.♗a4 ♗g7 7.d4 exd4 8.cxd4 b5

Black immediately starts his play on the queenside. We have already seen 8...0-09.d5 and then 9...b5.

9.♗b3

The recent game Van den Doel-Gofshtein, Dieren 2007, went 9.♗c2!? d6 10.h3 0-0 11.♗e3 ♘a5 12.♘bd2 when White gained the initiative after the nervous 12...c5?! 13.dxc5 .♗xb2 14.cxd6. Stronger would have been 12...f5 with a decent game.

9...d6 10.a4

A typical 'Spanish' move to force a weakness on the queenside.

10...b4

It is better to close the queenside than to allow White to exchange his passive rook after 10...♗d7 11.axb5 axb5 12.♖xa8 ♕xa8 13.♘c3 with a clear edge for White.

11.a5 0-0 12.d5

White prevents ...d5. Black is OK after 12.h3 d5!? 13.e5 f6 14.exf6 ♗xf6 15.♗h6 ♖e8.

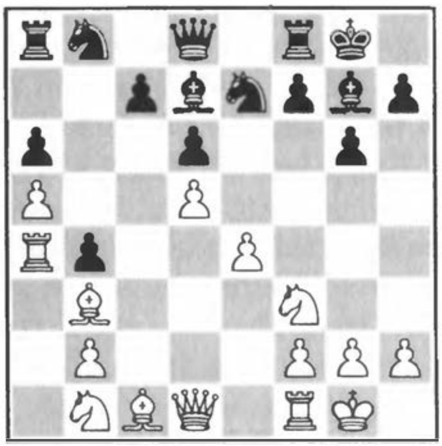
12...♘b8

Black manoeuvres his knight to c5. Worse was 12...♘a7 to go to b5.

13.♖a4?!

Not the most accurate move. Stronger was 13.♘bd2: 13...♘d7 14.♗c4 ♘c5 (14...♘f6 15.♕a4 ♖b8 16.♖e1 ♗b7 17.♕c2) 15.♖e1 c6 16.dxc6 ♘xc6 17.♗d5 ♗b7 18.♘c4 with a slight edge.

13...♗d7!?



14.♖a2

White must retreat since 14.♖xb4 ♗b5 is too dangerous.

14...♗g4 15.♘bd2

White has no advantage after 15.h3 because of 15...♗xf3 16.♕xf3 ♘d7 17..♗e3 f5.

15...♘d7 16.h3 ♗xf3 17.♘xf3 ♘c5

White may have two bishops, but Black's pieces are very active.

18.♖e1 ♖b8!? 19.♗c4 b3

Or 19...c6 20.dxc6 ♘xc6 21.♕d5 ♕c7 22.♗f4 ♘e5.

20.♖a1

After 20.♖a3 Black gains equality with precise play: 20...c6 21.♗xb3 ♕c7!? (21...cxd5 22.exd5±; 21...♘xb3 22.♖xb3 ♕xa5 23.♗g5±) 22.dxc6 ♘xc6 23.♗d5 ♗xb2 24.♗xb2 ♖xb2.

20...♖e8 21.♗d2!?

White finishes his development and would like to exchange the b-pawns.

Black has counterplay after 21.♘d2 ♖b4 22.♗xb3 ♕b8 23.♗c4 ♗xb2 24.♗xb2 ♖xb2. While play is equal after 21.♖e3 ♖b4 22.♗xb3 ♗h6 23.♖c3 ♗g7 24.♖e3 ♗h6.

21...♘c8!?

Opening a file for the rook, worse was 21...♗xb2 22.♖b1 ♗g7 23.♗xb3 c6 24.♗c4±.

22.♖b1

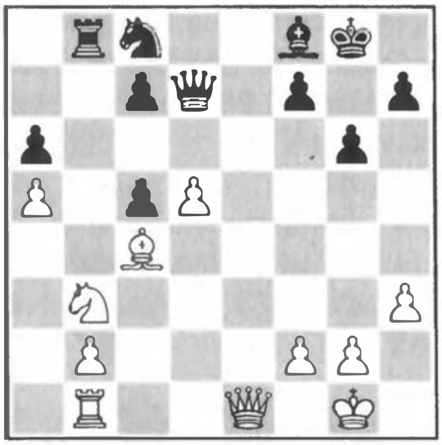
Also possible was 22.♕c1!? ♘a7!? (better than 22...♖xe4?! 23.♖xe4 ♘xe4 24.♗xa6 ♘e7 25.♗c4±) 23.♗h6 ♗xh6 24.♕xh6 ♕f6.

22...♕d7

Black activates his queen. Also not bad was the alternative 22...♖xe4!? 23.♖xe4 ♘xe4 24.♗xa6 ♘e7 25.♗c4 c6!? 26.dxc6 d5 27..♗xb3 ♘xd2 28.♘xd2 ♕xa5 with equality.

23.♗e3 ♖xe4 24.♘d2 ♖e7 25.♗xc5 dxc5 26.♘xb3 ♖xe1+ 27.♕xe1 ♗f8

Black has more chances to draw than White has to win.



28.♕c3

White has only a slight advantage after 28.♕e3 ♕a4 29.♖c1 ♘d6 30.♘xc5 ♕xa5 31.♗xa6 ♖xb2. Black has sufficient counterplay in case of 28.♕e5 ♘a7 29.♕e3 ♖b4 30.♘xc5 ♕e7.

28...♕f5!?

Accurate defence. Black prepares to move his knight over to d6.

29.♘d2

If 29.♖e1 then 29...♘d6 30.♗xa6 ♗g7 31.♕e3 c4!?.

29...♗g7 30.♕d3 ♕xd3 31.♗xd3 ♘d6

A draw was agreed here. Both sides have weaknesses and the opposite-coloured bishops are an important drawing factor as well.

☐ **Vladimir Baklan**
■ **Joel Benjamin**
Moscow FIDE-Wch k.o. rapid (1.3) 2001

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘ge7 4.0-0 g6 5.c3 a6 6.♗a4 ♗g7 7.d4 exd4 8.cxd4 b5 9.♗b3 d6 10.h3

Here the energetic 10.♘c3 planning 11.♘d5 comes into consideration: 10...0-0 11.♘d5 h6!? 12.♘xe7+ (Black is fine after 12.♕c2 ♗g4 13.♘xe7+ ♘xe7 14.♗e3 ♗xf3 15.gxf3 c6 16.♖fe1 ♕d7) 12...♘xe7 13.d5 a5!? 14.a4 bxa4 15.♖xa4 ♗d7 16.♖a1 c5 or 16...c6 17.dxc6 ♗xc6 18.♖e1 ♕b6.

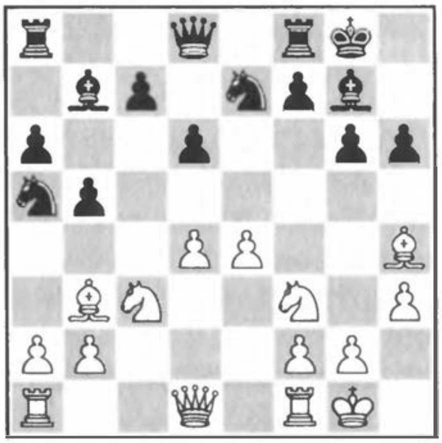
10...0-0 11.♘c3 ♗b7 12.♗g5

In case of the immediate 12.♘d5 Black has the prophylactic 12...h6, when the knight will be manoeuvred via a5 or b8. For example: 13.♕d2 ♘b8 14.♖e1 ♘xd5 15.♗xd5 ♗xd5 16.exd5 c6.

12...h6 13.♗h4

Black also obtains good play after: 13.♗e3 ♘a5!? 14.♖e1 b4 15.♘d5 ♘xb3 16.♕xb3 ♘xd5 17.exd5 ♕d7∓.

13...♘a5



14.♗c2

White preserves his bishop. After 14.♖e1 Black has several satisfactory ways to obtain counterplay:

– 14...♕d7!? 15.♖c1 ♖fe8 16.♗g3 ♘xb3 17.♕xb3 c5 18.dxc5 dxc5 19.♖ed1 ♕e6.

– 14...♘xb3 15.♕xb3 ♕d7 with good play (but not 15...c5?! 16.dxc5 dxc5 17.♖ad1).

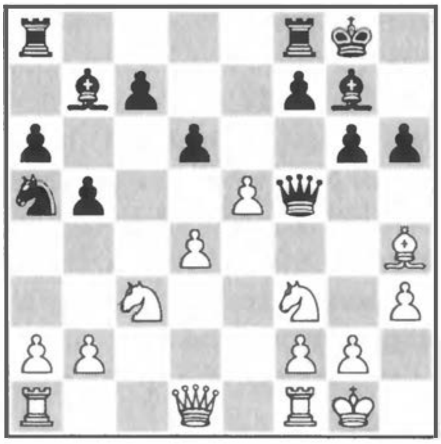
– 14...g5!? 15.♗xg5 (15.♗g3 b4!? 16.♘d5 ♘xb3 17.♕xb3 ♘xd5 18.exd5 ♕d7 and Black is somewhat better) 15...hxg5 16.♘xg5 ♗f6 17.♕h5 ♗xg5 18.♕xg5+ ♔h8 19.♕h6+ ♔g8 20.♖e3 ♘xb3 21.♖g3+ ♘g6 22.♖xg6+ fxg6 23.♕xg6+ with perpetual check.

After finishing his development Black must always gain counterplay by ...f5 or ...c5.

14...♕d7 15.e5?!

Black is also fine after 15.♖e1 ♖ae8 16.a3 f5.

15...♘f5! 16.♗xf5 ♕xf5



17.exd6

If 17.♗g3 then Black has 17...♘c4!? or even better 17...♗xf3!.

17...cxd6 18.♗e7 ♖fe8 19.♗xd6 ♘c4

White may be a pawn up, but Black holds the initiative.

20.♗e5 ♗xf3 21.♕xf3 ♕xf3 22.gxf3 ♗xe5!?

Taking with the bishop is superior to 22...♘xe5?! 23.dxe5 ♗xe5 24.♖ac1 ♖ac8 25.♖fd1 b4 26.♘a4. This is because the knight is active.

23.dxe5 ♖xe5 24.f4

Black also wins a pawn after: 24.b4 ♖g5+ (24...♖f5 25.♔g2 ♘d2 26.♖fd1 ♖g5+ 27.♔h1 ♘xf3) 25.♔h2 ♘d2.

24...♖f5

Stronger was 24...♖h5. For example: 25.b3 ♖xh3 26.♘e4 ♘b2!? 27.♔g2 (27.♘g3 ♘d3) 27...♖h4 (27...♖d3 28.♖ab1 ♖d4 29.♘f6+ ♔g7 30.♘h5+ gxh5 31.♖xb2 ♖xf4) 28.♔g3 g5 29.♘f6+ ♔g7 30.fxg5 hxg5 31.♘d5 ♖ah8.

25.b3 ♘d2?!

And here 25...♘b2 planning ♘b2-d3-f4 would have been preferable: 26.♘e4 ♘d3 27.♖ad1 ♘xf4∓.

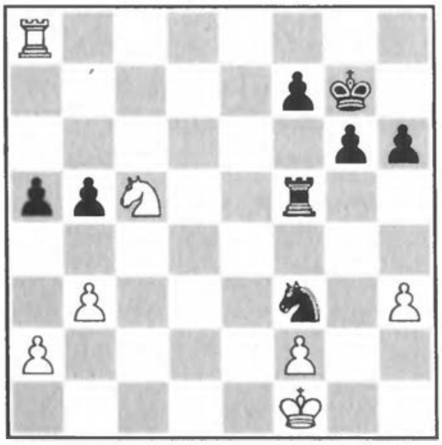
26.♖fd1 ♖d8

There are more chances to win with the knights on, as can be seen from: 26...b4 27.♖xd2 bxc3 28.♖c2 ♖c8 29.♖ac1; 26...♖c8 27.♖xd2 ♖xc3 28.♔g2 ♖xf4 29.♖e1.

27.♘e4

White sacrifices a pawn to activate his pieces. Worse is 27.♘e2 ♖fd5 28.♔g2 ♔g7 29.♖ac1 ♖8d6 30.b4 ♔f6.

27...♘f3+ 28.♔f1 ♖xd1+ 29.♖xd1 ♖xf4 30.♘c5 a5 31.♖d8+ ♔g7 32.♖a8 ♖f5



33.♘d3?!

Good chances to draw gives 33.♘b7, see: 33...♖e5 (33...♘g5 34.♘d6 ♖f4 35.♔g2) 34.♔g2 (34.♖xa5 ♘d2+ 35.♔g2 ♖g5+ 36.♔h1 ♘f3) 34...♘e1+ 35.♔f1.

33...b4 34.♖d8 ♘d2+! Now Black gains a decisive edge. **35.♔e2 ♘e4 36.♖d4 ♘c3+ 37.♔e3 ♘xa2 38.♖d7 ♘c3 39.♔d4 ♘e2+ 40.♔e3 ♘g1 41.h4 ♘f3 42.♘f4 ♘xh4 43.♘e6+ ♔f6 44.♘d8 ♖e5+** Exchanging rooks for a winning knight ending. The alternative was 44...♖f3+ 45.♔e4 ♖xb3 46.f4 g5 47.♖xf7+ ♔g6. **45.♔f4 ♖e7 46.♖xe7 ♔xe7 47.♘c6+ ♔d6 48.♘xa5 h5 49.♘c4+ ♔d5 50.♔e3 ♘g2+** More simple was 50...♘f5+, to centralize the knight: 51.♔f4 ♘d4 52.♘d2 f6. **51.♔d3** Black wins after 51.♔f3 ♘e1+ 52.♔e2 ♘c2. **51...♘f4+ 52.♔e3 ♘e6 53.♘b6+ ♔c6 54.♘c4 g5** Better was 54...f6. **55.♘e5+ ♔d5 56.♘d3** After 56.♘xf7 g4 57.♘h6 ♘d4 58.♘g8 ♔e5 White's knight is out of play. **56...f5 57.♔d2?** Stronger was 57.♘xb4+: 57...♔d6 58.♘d3 g4 with chances for a draw. **57...♘c5 58.♘xb4+ ♔e4! 59.♔e2 f4 60.♔f1** Or 60.f3+ ♔f5 61.♘c6 ♘xb3–+. **60...♘xb3 61.♘c6 ♘d4 62.♘e7 0-1**

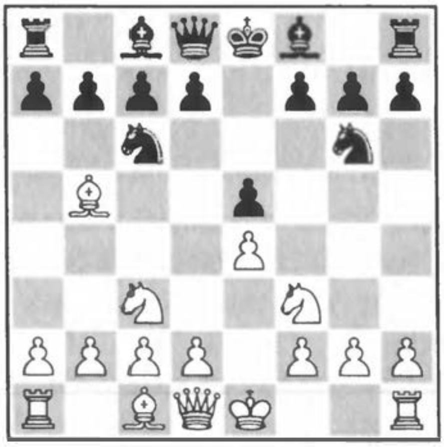
☐ **Ivan Cheparinov**
■ **Mark Berkovich**
Andorra 2002

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘ge7 4.♘c3

With this move White prefers to control the centre with pieces.

4...♘g6

Here 4...g6 would transpose to positions from the 3...g6 line (see SOS-2).



5.d4

Interesting is the (modern) move 5.h4. I think that Black should play as in the game Borocz-Berkovich, Budapest 1998: 5.h4 ♘d4!? 6.♗c4 c6!? 7.♘g5 d5 8.exd5 ♗f5 9.d3 b5 10.♗b3 b4 11.♘ce4 h6 12.♘f3 ♘xb3 13.axb3 cxd5 14.♘g3 ♗g4 15.h5 ♘f4 16.♗xf4 exf4 17.♘e2 ♗d6 when Black's chances are to be preferred.

5...exd4 6.♘xd4 ♗c5 7.♘b3

7.♗e3 gains nothing after 7...♗xd4 8.♗xd4 0-0 9.0-0 d6 10.f4 f5 11.g3 fxe4 12.♘xe4 ♗f5 13.♘f2 ♘xd4 14.♕xd4 c6 15.♗c4+ d5, with equality Hracek-D'Amore, Manila ol 1992.

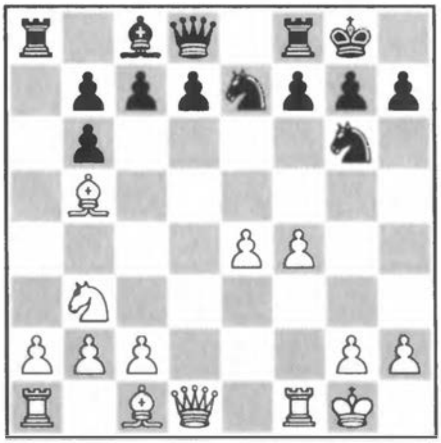
7...♗b6 8.0-0 0-0 9.♘d5!?

Aiming to compromise Black's pawn structure on the queenside.

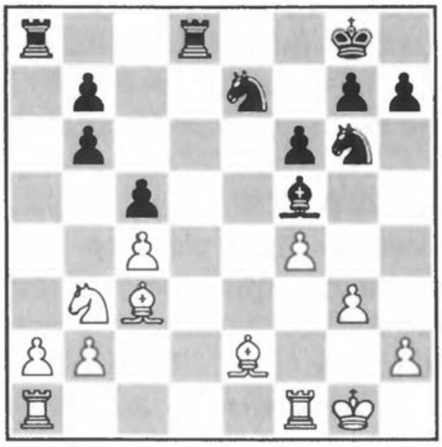
9...♘ce7!?

A novelty that prevents 10.a4 a6 11.♘xb6 with a clear positional edge. White achieved exactly this in Psakhis-Sokolov, Leeuwarden 1993, after 9...d6 10.a4 ♗e6 11.♗e2 ♖e8 12.c3 a6 13.♘xb6 cxb6 14.♘d4 ♗d7 15.♘f5 ♗xf5 16.exf5 ♘h4 17.♗d3 ♘e5 18.♗e4 ♕c8 19.♕d5.

10.♘xb6 axb6 11.f4



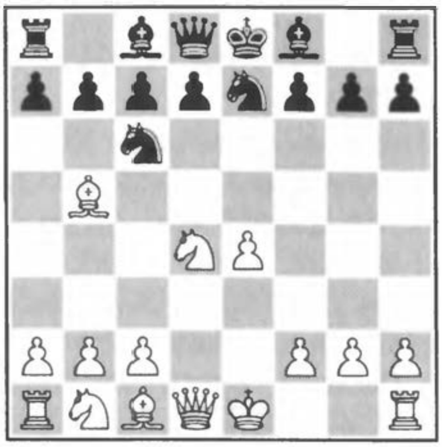
11...f6!? Black prevents the march of the white f-pawn. **12.♕h5 d5!?** Black gains counterplay with this characteristic move. **13.exd5** Or 13.♖d1 ♕d6. **13...♕xd5 14.♕xd5+ ♘xd5 15.♗d2 ♖d8 16.♗e2 c5!?** Black has no problems although White has a pair of bishops. **17.c4 ♘de7 18.♗c3 ♗f5 19.g3**



19...♗d3 After this exchange it is clear that Black has no worries. **20.♗xd3 ♖xd3 21.♖ae1 ♘c6 22.♘c1 ♖d6 23.b3 h5 24.♔f2 ♔f7 25.♖d1 ♖ad8 26.♖xd6 ♖xd6 27.♔e3 ♘ge7 28.♘d3 ♘f5+ 29.♔d2 ♘fd4 30.♖f2 b5 31.♗xd4 ♘xd4 32.cxb5 ♘xb5 33.♔e3 ♖e6+ 34.♔d2 ♖d6 35.♔e3 ♖e6+ 36.♔d2** In the end it is even Black who holds a minimal edge. ½-½

☐ **Konstantinos Moutousis**
■ **Alexey Dreev**
Tunja Wch-jr 1989

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘ge7 4.d4 exd4 5.♘xd4



5...g6

Black has many playable possibilities:

– 5...♘xd4 6.♕xd4 a6!?. When the game Tsebekov-Varavin, Elista ch-RUS 1996, went: 7.♗c4 b5 8.♗e2 ♘c6 9.♕d1 ♗c5. This deserves further tests. Wilhelm Steinitz once played 6...♘c6 7.♗xc6 bxc6 8.0-0 d6 9.♘c3 ♗e6 10.e5 d5 11.f4 c5 12.♕a4+ ♗d7 13.♕a6 c6 14.f5 ♕c8 15.♕d3 ♗e7±, Fleissig-Steinitz, Vienna 1873.

– 5...♘g6!?. This may transpose to the previous game. After 6.0-0 ♗c5 7.♗e3 ♗b6 8.♘c3 0-0 9.♘ce2 ♘ce5 10.♘g3 d5 11.exd5 ♕xd5 play was equal in Topalovic-Krstic, Kastav 2002.

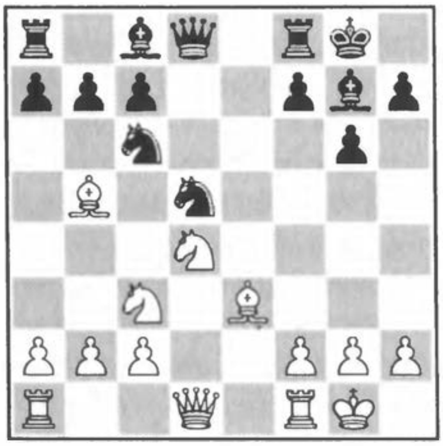
6.♘c3 ♗g7 7.♗e3 0-0 8.0-0 d5

Black immediately wants to solve his problems. Deserving of attention are both 8...d6 and 8...f5.

– 8...d6 9.♖e1 ♘e5 10.♗g5 h6 11.♗h4 g5 12.♗g3 f5 13.exf5 ♘xf5 14.♘xf5 ♗xf5, Geo.Timoshenko-Filipenko, Naberezhnie Chelni 1993.

– 8...f5!? 9.♗c4+ ♔h8 10.exf5 ♘xf5 11.♘xf5 ♖xf5 12.f4 d6 13.g4 ♖f8 14.♖f2 ♗d7 with counterplay, De Rivière-Steinitz, Paris 1867.

9.exd5 ♘xd5



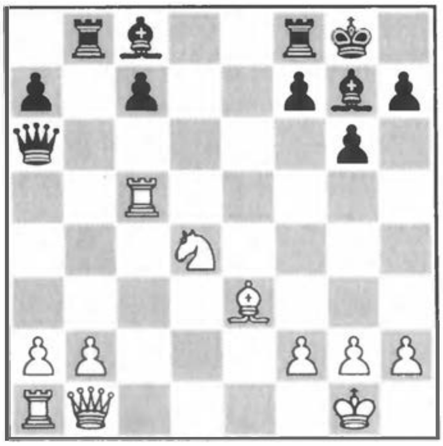
10.♘xd5

A critical position in this line. Interesting is 10.♘xc6 and White may keep some pressure: 10...bxc6 11.♘xd5!? (not 11.♗xc6?! ♘xe3 12.fxe3 ♖b8 with compensation, Kagan-Berkovich, Tel Aviv 1992) 11...cxb5 12.♗c5 ♖e8 13.♘e7+ ♔h8 14.♕f3 ♗e6 15.♖ad1 ♕b8 16.♘c6 ♕b7 17.♗d4 b4 18.♖fe1, with an edge in Dvoiris-Filipenko, Katowice 1992.

10...♕xd5 11.c4 ♕e4 12.♗xc6 bxc6

A pair of bishops is ample compensation for the weaknesses on the queenside.

13.♕b1 ♕h4 14.♖d1 c5 15.♘f3 ♕xc4 16.♖c1 ♕a6 17.♖xc5 ♖b8 18.♘d4



18...♖b4

Black is slowly taking over.

19.♘b3 ♕b7 20.♘a5 ♕a6 21.♕f1

Perhaps 21.♘b3!?.

21...♖xb2 22.♘c4 ♖b5 23.♖xc7

White is worse and therefore tries to complicate matters.

23...♗xa1 24.♕xa1 ♗f5 25.♘d2 ♖d8 26.g4

Black also wins after 26.♗h6 ♖b1+.

26...♖b1+!

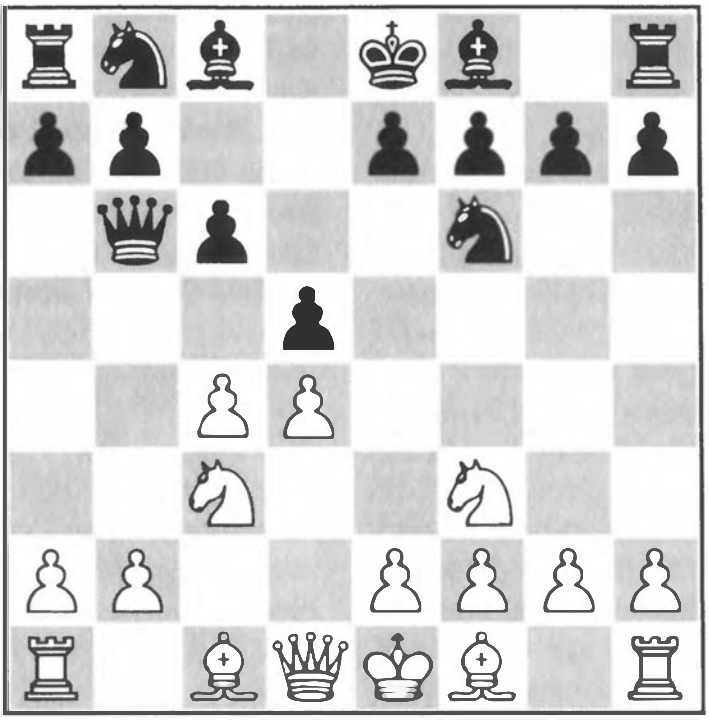
Now Black wins by force.

27.♘xb1 ♖d1+ 28.♔g2 ♕f1+ 29.♔g3 ♕g1+ 0-1

CHAPTER 17

Dorian Rogozenko

Kamsky's 'Spare' Slav



1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 ♕b6

Building an opening repertoire is a very complex and long process. Apart from learning and practicing, it also requires a permanent effort to keep your preferred openings up-to-date. It's a hard job, which few people can do properly. Therefore it is always good to have some 'spare' openings. These spare openings must be reliable and not very theoretical, so that you won't have to spend time keeping them up-to-date. And, such a spare opening should contain a surprise element.

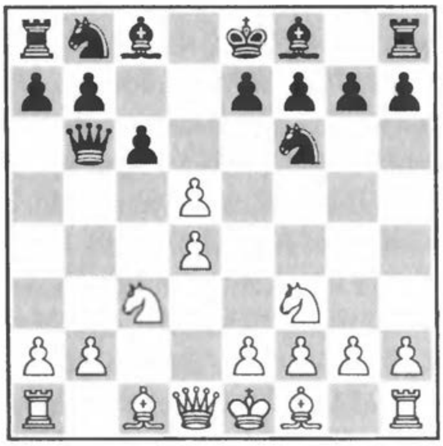
The move 4...♕b6 fits well into the above-mentioned categories. Due to the fact that it has never been a topical subject, there is a high probability that your opponent will be surprised and unprepared. Its reliability was best demonstrated in the last two years by Gata Kamsky, who after his return to chess (after almost 10 years of absence!) chose 4...♕b6 as one of his main weapons against 1.d4. Amazingly, in this opening system even top GMs failed to achieve any real advantage against the American GM.

The main and obvious idea of 4...♕b6 is to set pressure on b2 and thus prevent White from developing the dark-squared bishop. But there is another, more hidden idea behind the queen's sortie to b6: to develop the bishop from c8. Let me explain: in the Slav Defence before playing a move like ... ♗f5 Black must always reckon with the answer ♕d1-b3, after which it is not easy for Black to deal with the pressure on b7 and d5. With the black queen on b6 White's ♕b3 won't be that dangerous anymore.

It's time to examine White's options in the diagram position.

Variation I

5.cxd5



This is a possible reaction if White is willing to transpose into the Slav Exchange Variation, where ...♕b6 is known to be a rare continuation. However, the queen on b6 will still prevent White from developing the dark-squared bishop and this factor should not be ignored, especially taking into consideration that in the classical Slav Exchange move order White develops the dark-squared bishop as quickly as possible, often even before his king's knight.

5...cxd5 6.a3

By taking control over square b4 White indirectly protects pawn b2. The idea is to prepare 7.♗f4, after which taking on b2 would be impossible due to the answer 8.♘a4, catching the queen. Other options are:

– 6.♕b3 ♕xb3 7.axb3 ♗d7 8.♗f4 ♘c6 9.e3 e6 10.♘e5 ♘xe5 11.♗xe5 ♗b4 12.♗d3 ♔e7 13.♔e2 ♖hc8=, Fridman-Slobodjan, Halle Wch-jr 1995.

– 6.e3 ♘c6 7.a3 ♗g4 8.♗e2 e6 9.0-0 ♗d6 10.♘a4 ♕c7 11.h3 ♗h5 12.b4 0-0 13.♘c5 a5 14.b5 ♘e7 15.♗b2 ♘c8 16.♖c1 ♕e7 17.a4 ♘b6 is very comfortable for Black, Nekliudov-Baklan, Cappelle la Grande 1997.

– 6.♘a4 ♕c7 7.♗d2 ♘c6 8.♖c1 e6 equal.

6...♗f5

Again preventing the development of ♗c1, since now 7.♗f4 loses a pawn after 7...♕xb2 8.♘a4 ♕c2.

7.♘e5

Alternatives lead to equal positions as well: 7.e3 e6 8.♗b5+ ♘c6 9.♘e5 ♗d6 10.g4 ♗xe5 11.gxf5 ♗d6. Or 7.♘h4 ♗d7. Or 7.♘a4 ♕c7 (threatening 8...♗c2) 8.♗d2 e6 9.♖c1 ♘c6 10.b4 a6 11.e3 ♗d6 12.♘c5 0-0 13.♗e2 ♗g4 14.h3 ♗h5 15.0-0 ♖fc8.

7...e6 8.e3 ♘fd7

The most accurate continuation. In case of 8...♘c6 White seizes the initiative with 9.g4 ♗g6 10.h4.

9.♗b5 ♗d6 10.0-0

Both 10.♘xd7 ♘xd7 11.♕a4 ♖d8 12.0-0 a6 and 10.♕a4 ♗xe5 11.dxe5 ♘c6 12.0-0 0-0 are better for Black.

10...♗xe5 11.dxe5 ♘c6 12.f4 ♗g6

Black has reasonable play.

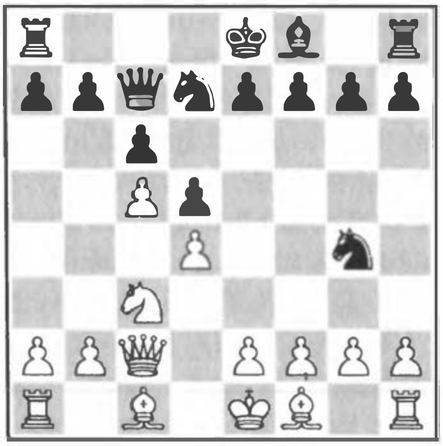
Variation II

5.♕c2 Protecting b2 and preventing 5...♗f5. **5...♗g4** If not on f5, then on g4...

6.c5

We see here another feature of the queen on b6: 6.♘e5 is bad due to 6...♕xd4.

6...♕c7 7.♘e5 ♘bd7 8.♘xg4 ♘xg4

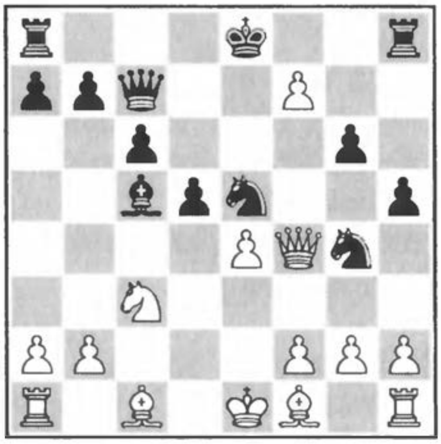


White has the bishop pair and a space advantage. However, Slav players won't be disturbed by such 'minor details'. They know that the exchange of the light-squared bishop for a knight is favourable in the Slav. Most importantly, by advancing the c-pawn White has closed the position and in the arising pawn formation Black is usually doing fine if he succeeds in playing ...e5. The only potential danger in such positions is the advance e4, and the question is how dangerous 9.e4 is now. Let's see.

9.e4

The alternatives are harmless:

- 9.♕f5 h5 10.e4 g6 11.♕f4 e5 12.dxe5 ♗xc5 13.e6 ♘de5 14.exf7+.



This position was reached in the very first game with the move 4...♕b6 – Schlechter-Süchting, Karlsbad 1911 (that's why 4...♕b6 is commonly known as the Süchting Variation). Now instead of going with the king to the centre – 14...♔d7?! – Black had to hide it on f8. After 14...♔f8 White is in trouble.

- 9.e3 e5 10.♗e2 ♘gf6 11.b4 (11.♗d2 ♗e7 12.b4 b6 13.0-0 0-0 14.♖ab1 ♖fe8 15.cxb6 axb6 16.♘b5 ♕b7 17.dxe5 ♘xe5 18.♘d4 b5 19.♘b3 ♘c4∓ Rubinstein-Dus Chotimirsky, Karlsbad 1911) 11...g6 12.b5 ♗g7 13.0-0 0-0 14.♖b1 ♖fe8 15.♖d1 ♘f8 16.bxc6 bxc6 17.dxe5 ♕xe5 equal, Shipov-Vysochin, Yalta 1996.

9...e5!

It turns out that Black is well-prepared for the confrontation in the centre.

10.exd5

The complications after 10.♗e2 exd4 11.♗xg4 dxc3 12.exd5 (12.0-0 ♘f6 13.♗f3 dxe4 14.♗xe4 ♗xc5∓) 12...cxd5 13.0-0 ♘f6 14.♖e1+ ♗e7 favour Black.

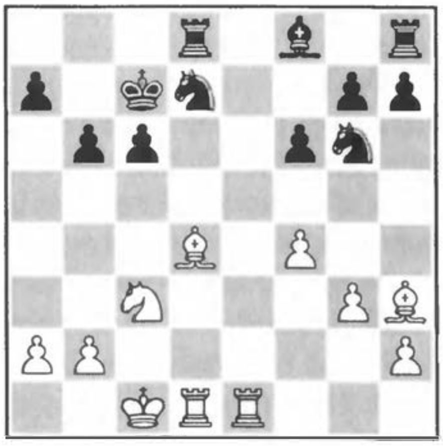
10...exd4 11.d6

11.♕e4+ ♕e5 12.dxc6 bxc6 13.♗f4 ♕xe4+ 14.♘xe4 ♘xc5 15.♘xc5 ♗xc5. White's compensation for the pawn is enough only for equality: 16.♖c1 (16.♗a6 was Ac-Singliar, Slovakia 1997, where Black had to continue 16...♖d8 17.♗b7 0-0 18.♗xc6 d3 19.0-0 ♗d6∓) 16...♗b4+ 17.♔e2 ♖d8 18.♔f3 h5 19.♖xc6 (19.h3 ♗d6!) 19...d3 20.♖c1 0-0 21.♖d1 (21.h3 g5! 22.♗xg5 ♘e5+ 23.♔e4 f6 24.♗f4 ♘g6∓) 21...♗d6 22.h3 ♘xf2 23.♔xf2 ♗xf4 24.♖xd3 with equality.

11...♕a5 12.♕e4+ ♘ge5 13.♕xd4 ♕xc5 14.♗e3

In case of 14.♕e4 ♗xd6 15.f4 (15.♗e3 ♕a5 16.f4 ♘f6∓) 15...♘f6 16.♕e2 0-0-0 17.fxe5 (17.♗e3 ♘d3+! 18.♕xd3 ♖he8–+) 17...♗xe5 Black has a powerful attack for the piece.

14...♕xd6 15.0-0-0 ♕xd4 16.♗xd4 0-0-0 17.f4 ♘g6 18.g3 b6 19.♗h3 ♔c7 20.♖he1 f6



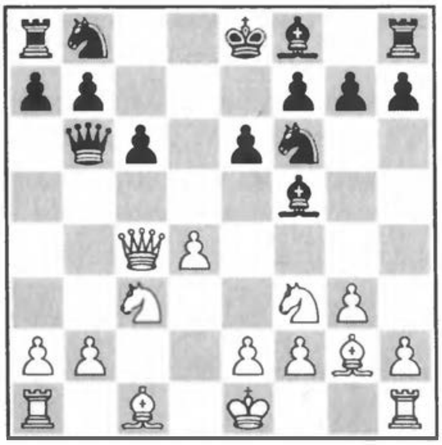
Again White's compensation is at best only enough for equality, Yasinsky-Frog, Moscow 1995.

Variation III

5.♕b3 dxc4 6.♕xc4 ♗f5

The sharp alternative 6...♗g4 played once by Kamsky is objectively weaker: 7.e4! (after 7.♘e5 ♗e6 8.♕a4 ♘bd7 the position is about equal, since White cannot conveniently occupy the centre with the pawns: 9.e4 – or 9.♘xd7 ♗xd7 and again 10.e4 doesn't work out well: 10...e5! 11.dxe5 ♘g4 12.♕c2 ♗c5∓ – 9...♘xe5 10.dxe5 ♘g4 11.♕c2 ♘xe5 12.♗e3 – 12.f4 ♘g4 13.f5 ♗d7 leaves Black with a healthy extra pawn – 12...♕a5 13.f4 ♘c4 14.♗f2 g6 15.♗d4 f6 and White does not have enough compensation for the pawn) 7...♗xf3 8.gxf3 e6 9.♗e3 ♘bd7 10.0-0-0 ♕b4 11.♖g1 ♕xc4 12.♗xc4 ♖c8 13.♔b1 and, although the rapid game Krivoshey-Kamsky, Mainz 2007, ended with Black's victory, two bishops in an open position must secure White an advantage.

7.g3 e6 8.♗g2



8...♕b4!

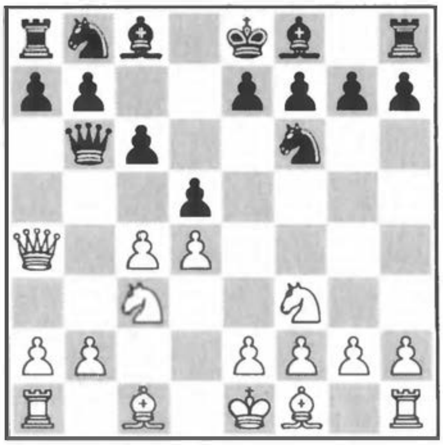
The move played by Smyslov almost 30 years ago is the most logical continuation: Black uses the opportunity to exchange queens, after which White's plus is insignificant:

9.♘e5 ♘bd7 10.♕xb4 ♗xb4 11.♘xd7 ♘xd7 12.0-0 0-0 13.♗f4 ♖ad8 14.♖ac1 ♘b6 15.♖fd1 ♖d7 16.e4 ♗g6 17.a3 ♗e7 18.d5 cxd5 19.exd5 ♖fd8 20.dxe6 fxe6 21.♖xd7 ♖xd7 22.♖d1 ♖xd1+ 23.♘xd1 ♘d5

A draw was agreed in Gheorghiu-Smyslov, Buenos Aires 1978.

Variation IV

5.♕a4



5...e6 6.e3 ♘bd7 7.♕c2

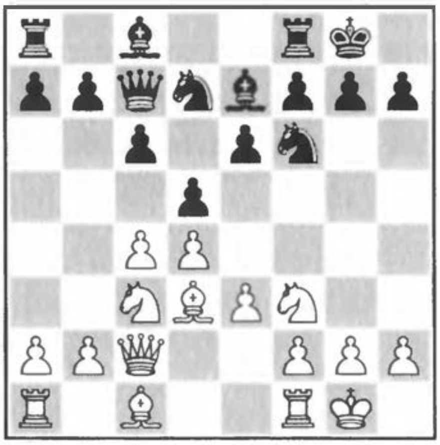
The maneuver ♕a4-c2 is an interesting idea discovered by Igor Glek. White transposes into the Meran Variation, where the extra move ...♕b6 blockades the advance of the b-pawn. This indeed secures White a slight plus.

On the other hand it should be mentioned that many White players who are ready to meet the Meran often play e2-e3 at an earlier stage, e.g. 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e3. Nowadays those who play 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 usually intend to answer 4...e6 with 5.♗g5, avoiding the Meran, which means that in our case many White players won't be ready for such a transposition.

7...♗e7

Perhaps an even better alternative is 7...♕c7 8.♗d3 dxc4 9.♗xc4 ♗d6 10.0-00-0 when by transposition we reach a quite reasonable sideline of the Meran: 11.♗d2 (11.h3 e5 12.♗b3 b6!? 13.♖d1 ♗a6 14.e4 ♖ae8 equal, Timoschenko-Schulze, Bad Wörishofen 1998) 11...a6. Here and on the next move Black can go for the advance ...e5 with approximate equality, but in Peng Zhaoqin-M.Bensdorp, Leeuwarden ch-NED (Women) 2002, Black postponed it for a while and in a double-edged battle finally achieved an advantage.

8.♗d3 0-0 9.0-0 ♕c7



We have the 6.♕c2 Variation in the Meran with the slightly unusual ♕c7 for Black. In fact this is not a bad square, the plan being ...b6, ...♗b7, ...♖ac8, ...♖fd8. White is just marginally better:

10.♗d2

– 10.e4 dxe4 11.♘xe4 ♘xe4 12.♗xe4 ♘f6 13.♗d3 c5 14.♗e3 b6 was equal in Sitnik-Nikolov, Ljubljana 2004.

– 10.b3 b6 11.♗b2 ♗b7 12.e4 dxe4 13.♘xe4 ♘xe4 14.♗xe4 ♘f6 15.♗d3 c5 and suddenly it is White who must be careful to keep the balance, Sebenik-Nikolov, Ljubljana 1997.

10...b6 11.cxd5 cxd5 12.♖fc1 ♕b8

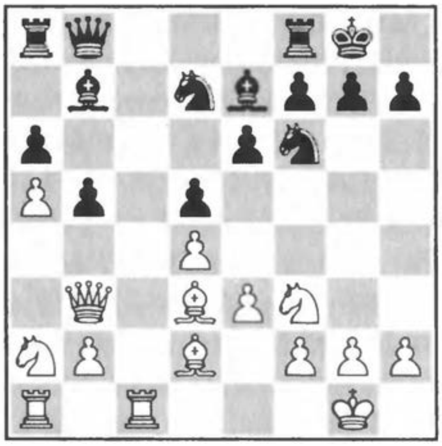
A suggestion of Glek's. In the game Glek-Baklan, Berlin 1997, Black defended against the threat 13.♘xd5 with 12...♔h8, which led to an inferior endgame: 13.♘b5 ♕xc2 14.♖xc2 a6 15.♘c7♖a7 16.♖ac1 ♗b7 17.a3, and although I am not sure whether this is really problematic for Black, 12...♕b8 is stronger.

13.a4

13.♘b5?! a6 14.♘c7 ♖a7 loses material.

13...a6 14.a5 b5 15.♘a2 ♗b7 16.♕b3

Play is equal after 16.♕c7 ♖c8 17.♕xb8 ♖axb8 18.♗b4 ♔f8.



This position is evaluated by Glek as slightly better for White.

16...♘e4 17.♗b4 ♗d6

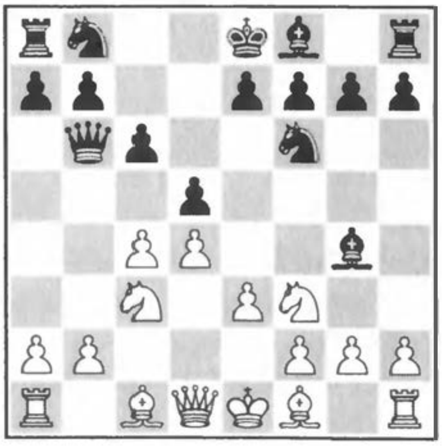
17...♗xb4 18.♕xb4 (18.♘xb4 ♕d6=) 18...♖c8 19.♖xc8+ (19.♕e7 ♕d6=) 19...♕xc8 20.♖c1 ♕d8 is possible too.

18.♖c2 ♖c8 19.♖xc8+ ♕xc8 20.♖c1 ♕d8

With a draw as the most likely result.

Variation V

5.e3 ♗g4



In principle already here one can notice that Black has achieved a normal Slav type of position.

6.h3

– 6.b3 e6 7.♗b2 ♘bd7 8.♗d3 ♗e7 9.h3 ♗h5 10.♕c2 ♗g6 11.0-0 0-0 12.♗xg6 hxg6 13.e4 dxe4 14.♘xe4 ♘xe4 15.♕xe4 a5 16.♖ad1 ♖fe8=, Verdikhanov-Shabanov, Moscow 1991.

– 6.♗d3 e6 7.0-0 ♘bd7 8.a3 a5 9.h3 ♗xf3 10.♕xf3 ♗e7 11.♕g3 0-0 12.c5 ♕a7= 13.♗d2 b6 14.b4 axb4 15.axb4 ♕xa1 16.♖xa1 ♖xa1+ 17.♔h2 bxc5 18.bxc5 ♖c8 19.f4 h5 20.♕f2 ♖b8 21.♗e1 g6 22.♕d2 ♗d8 23.♗g3 ♖b3, and Black soon won in the Internet blitz game Socko-Kamsky, 2006.

– 6.cxd5 cxd5 7.♕a4+ ♗d7 8.♗b5 a6 9.♗xd7+ ♘bxd7 10.0-0 e6 11.♘e5 is Alekhine-Hromadka, Bad Pistyan 1922. Now the easiest way to complete development is 11...♖d8 followed by ...♗d6 and ...0-0, with a comfortable position.

6...♗xf3 7.♕xf3 e6 8.♗d3

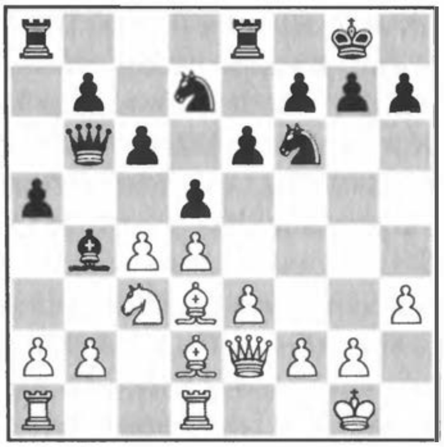
– 8.c5 ♕c7 9.e4 dxe4 10.♘xe4 ♘xe4 11.♕xe4 ♘d7 12.♗f4 ♕a5+ 13.♗d2 ♕d8 14.♗d3 ♘f6 with equality.

– 8.♕g3!? ♘bd7 9.♗d3 was met in Shulman-Seeman, Stockholm 1997/98, where Black produced the ugly 9...g6.

Instead of playing an inferior strategical position, he should have gone for double-edged variations after 9...♗e7 (or 9...dxc4 10.♗xc4 ♕b4 11.♗d3 ♗d6 12.♕xg7 ♖g8 13.♕h6 ♖xg2) 10.c5 (10.♕xg7 ♖g8 11.♕h6 dxc4 12.♗xc4 ♖xg2) 10...♕d8 11.♕xg7 ♖g8 12.♕h6 ♖xg2 in all cases with unclear positions where Black certainly has his chances.

– 8.♗e2 ♘bd7 9.♕g3 ♗b4 10.0-0 0-0 11.♗d2 ♗xc3 12.♗xc3 ♘e4 13.♕h4 ♘xc3 14.bxc3 ♘f6 15.cxd5 cxd5 16.♖fb1 ♕c6 17.♖b3 ♖ac8 18.♗b5 ♕d6 19.♗d3 ♖c7 Black is slightly better, Z.Polgar-Kamsky, New York rapid 2006.

8...♗b4 9.0-0 0-0 10.♕e2 ♘bd7 11.♗d2 a5 12.♖fd1 ♖fe8



In a way this is a typical Slav position for Black: slightly passive, but with easy development and no weaknesses. The game Nisipeanu-Kamsky, Sofia 2007, continued:

13.♖ab1

13.e4? ♕xd4 14.♗e3 ♕e5∓.

13...♗f8 14.♗e1 g6 15.♕c2 ♕a7 16.♗f1 ♘b6 17.b3 ♘c8 18.♕b2

18.e4 ♘xe4 19.♘xe4 dxe4 20.♕xe4 ♗g7=.

18...♘d6 19.c5 ♘de4 20.a3 ♘xc3 21.♗xc3 ♘e4 22.♗e1 e5! 23.b4

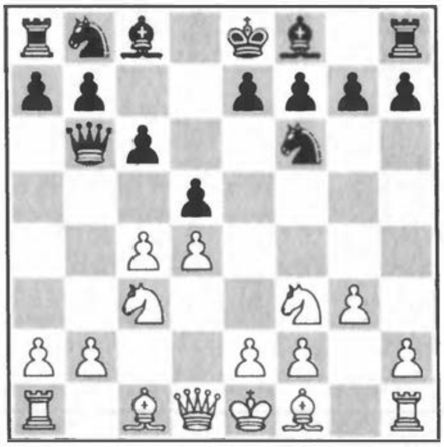
23.dxe5 ♗g7 24.f4 ♕xc5∓.

23...exd4 24.exd4 axb4 25.axb4 ♗g7

Due to the weakness on d4 White should display some accuracy. The game was drawn after 47 moves.

Variation VI

5.g3



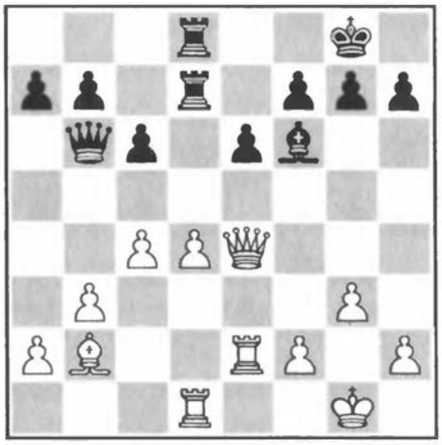
This move is a sign of a healthy flexible approach. In situations where White fianchettoes the bishop Black's most principled plan is to take on c4 and then protect the extra pawn by advancing ...b5. With the queen on b6 such a plan is no longer attractive.

5...♗f5

As mentioned, after 5...dxc4 6.♗g2 the queen is misplaced on b6. White will sooner or later regain his pawn (for instance ♘e5xc4) and will have better pieces in an open position.

But a reasonable alternative is 5...♗g4 6.♘e5 ♗f5 with the idea ...e6 and ...♘bd7. The loss of tempo (♗g4-f5) has its justification: first of all the bishop on f5 is more stable now, since Black doesn't have to worry about ♘f3-h4 any longer. Secondly, the knight on e5 is potentially exposed to an exchange for the b8-knight, which is something Black should be aiming for in such positions.

Here is the only available example from practice where Black played 5...♗g4: 6.♘e5 ♗f5 7.♗g2 e6 8.0-0 ♗e7 9.♖e1 0-0 10.b3 ♘bd7 11.♘xd7 ♘xd7 12.e4 dxe4 13.♘xe4 ♘f6 14.♗b2 ♖fd8 15.♕c2 ♖d7 16.♖ad1 ♖ad8 17.♖e2 ♘xe4 18.♗xe4 ♗xe4 19.♕xe4 ♗f6



This is the kind of position Black is happy to get: on the board we have only those black pieces that create pressure on d4. Although White should be normally able to hold it, in the game Gazikova-Podoba, Slovakia 2000 Black went on to win.

6.♗g2

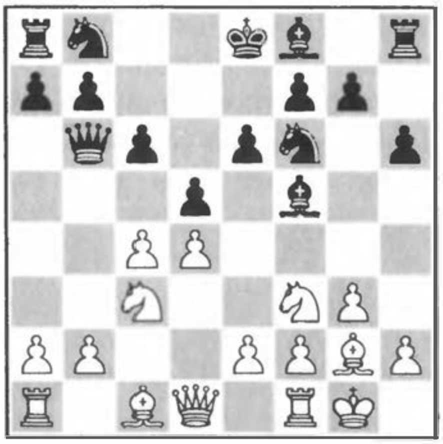
Or 6.c5 ♕d8!?(6...♕c7 transposes into 5.c5 ♕c7 6.g3).

6.♘h4 ♗e6 7.c5 ♕d8 8.♗g2 g6 9.0-0 ♗g7 leads to a typical position where it is rather difficult for White to make use of his space advantage. For instance: 10.b4 (10.f4 ♕c8!) 10...0-0 11.♗f4 h6 12.♘f3 ♘bd7 13.b5 g5 14.♗e3 ♗f5 and Black will prepare the central advance ...e5, with enough counterplay. Notice that if Black is willing to avoid any ♘h4-ideas, he can even start with 5...h6.

6...h6

White's only sensible attempt to fight for an advantage is connected with the advance e2-e4, therefore it makes sense to keep the light-squared bishop alive, since it controls square e4.

7.0-0 e6



White can claim a plus due to the fact that his position is slightly more active. But Black is solid and has no weaknesses. Here are a few examples from practice:

- **8.♕b3 ♕xb3 9.axb3 ♘bd7 10.c5 a6 11.b4 ♘e4 12.♗d2 ♘xd2 13.♘xd2 ♖d8 14.f3 ♗h7 15.e4 ♘f6 16.e5 ♘d7**= Tisdall-Dambrauskas, Tanta 1998.

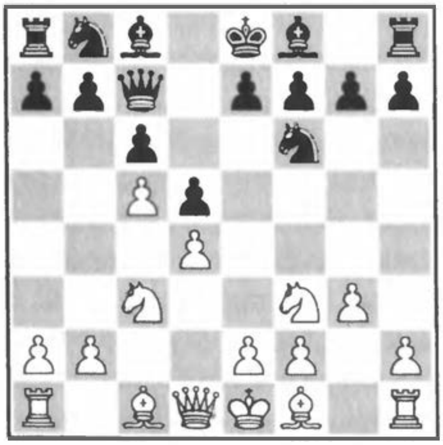
● **8.♘a4 ♕a6 9.cxd5 cxd5 10.♗f4 ♘c6 11.♖c1 ♗e7** 11...♕b5!?=. **12.♘c5 ♗xc5 13.dxc5 0-0 14.a3 ♕b5 15.♘d4** A rather forced positional pawn sacrifice, since after 15.b4 a5! 16.♘d4 ♘xd4 17.♕xd4 axb4 18.axb4 ♖a4 19.♗xh6 ♖xb4 20.♕e5 ♖c8 Black's chances are preferable. **15...♘xd4 16.♕xd4 ♕xe2 17.♗e5 ♘e8 18.♖fe1 ♕a6 19.b4 ♕c6 20.♕b2 a6 21.a4** Shulman-Seeman, St Petersburg 1997. According to Baburin, Black should now have played 21...f6 22.b5 axb5 23.axb5 ♕c8 24.♗d4, with an unclear position.

● **8.♘e5 ♗e7 9.b3** Or 9.c5 ♕d8 10.f3 ♗h7 11.e4 0-0 12.♗e3 ♘bd7 13.♘xd7 ♘xd7 14.e5 b6 15.b4 bxc5 16.bxc5 ♖b8 17.♕d2 ½-½ Hrbolka-Singliar, Klatovy 1998. **9...0-0 10.♗b2 ♖d8 11.e3 ♘bd7 12.♘xd7 ♖xd7 13.♕e2 ♗g4! 14.f3 ♗h5** with equal chances in Gusev-Seoev, Simferopol 1989.

Variation VII

5.c5 ♕c7 6.g3

6.♘e5 is best answered by 6...♘bd7 with favourable exchanges.



A very natural reaction from White – he seizes space on the queenside and prepares to develop the bishop on f4 with tempo.

On the other hand, now the position became static and White's plan is quite predictable: he will complete development and then advance his queenside pawns. This will increase White's space advantage, which can be dangerous for Black only if he fails to exchange any pieces, or if Black doesn't create any counterplay. In such positions Black has two possibilities for counterplay: either the central advance ...e5, or ...b6, which often stops the advance of White's pawns.

Those players familiar with the Chebanenko Slav will quickly notice that although being 1-2 tempos down, here it favours Black to have the pawn on a7 instead of on a6, which apart from controlling square b6 also makes the advance ...b6 much more effective.

In the diagram position Black has two possibilities to continue:

Subvariation A

6...♗f5 7.♗f4

7.♗g2 g6 8.h3 ♗g7 9.♗f4 ♕c8 10.g4 ♗e6 11.0-0 0-0 12.e3 h5 13.g5 ♘e4 14.♔h2 ♘xc3 15.bxc3 ♘d7 16.a4 b6 17.cxb6 axb6 18.♘d2 ♖a7 is a complicated position with mutual chances, Shulman-Stopa, Dallas 2006.

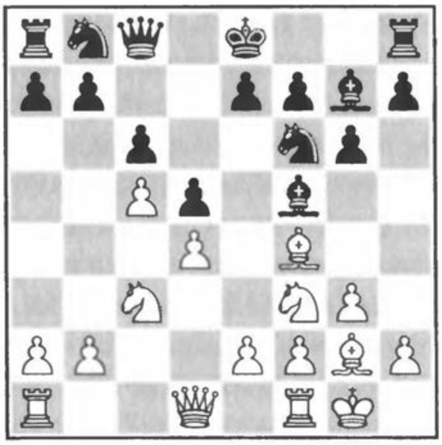
7...♕c8 8.♗g2

8.h3 ♘e4!? 9.♗g2 (9.♘xe4 ♗xe4 10.♗g2 ♘d7 11.0-0 g6=) 9...♘xc3 10.bxc3 Stohl-Mokry, Olomouc 1998. Now according to Stohl Black could achieve good play with a quick ...b6: 10...♘d7 11.0-0 (11.♘h4 ♗e6 12.e4 dxe4 13.♗xe4 ♘f6 14.♗g2 ♗c4!?∞) 11...b6 12.♘h4 ♗e6 13.cxb6 axb6.

8...g6

There is nothing wrong with 8...♗h3 then after 9.0-0 ♗xg2 10.♔xg2 ♘bd7 11.b4 Stohl considers that White is slightly better. Perhaps this is true, but Black can certainly play such a position. E.g. 11...g6 12.a4 ♗g7 13.b5 0-0 14.♕d3 (14.a5 allows quick counterplay: 14...♘e4! then 15.♕d3 runs into 15...♘dxc5! and White's position collapses) 14...b6! 15.cxb6 axb6 16.bxc6 (16.♖fc1 c5) 16...♕xc6 17.♘b5 ♖fc8 18.♖fc1 ♕b7 with equality.

9.0-0 ♗g7



Black should be able to neutralize White's minimal edge:

10.♖c1

– 10.b4 0-0 11.b5 ♘e4=.

– A quick plan with e4 is not good: 10.♘d2 0-0 11.e4 dxe4 12.♘dxe4 ♘xe4 13.♘xe4 ♖d8 and White's centre collapses once more.

10...♘e4 11.b4 0-0 12.♘xe4 ♗xe4 13.♕d2 ♖e8 14.♖fd1 f6 15.♗h6 ♘a6 16.♗xg7 ♔xg7 17.♕b2 ♘c7 18.a4 a6= Genova-Kalmukova, Bulgaria 1989.

Subvariation B

6...♗g4

Kamsky's recipe.

7.♘e5 ♗e6 8.♗f4 ♕c8 9.♗g2 g6 10.0-0 ♗g7 11.b4 0-0

Note that in general Black should aim for this arrangement of the pieces .

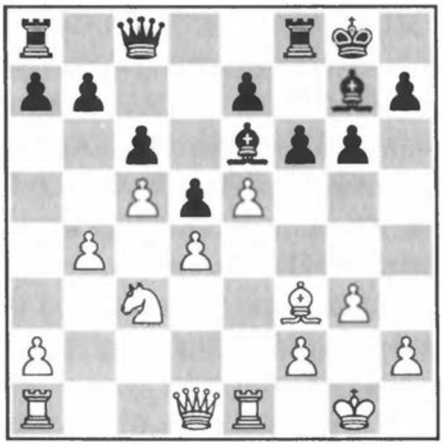
12.♖e1

After 12.b5 Black can choose between 12...♗h3 and 12...♘h5, preparing counterplay connected with ...f6 at some moment.

12...♘h5! 13.e3 ♘d7 14.♗f3

White's play is hardly impressive, but it only indicates that it is not so simple to stop Black's increasing activity in the centre and on the kingside.

14...♘xf4 15.exf4 ♘xe5 16.fxe5 f6!



Black exchanged pieces and created favourable play in the centre, achieving an advantage. Note that if White would have played b4-b5, then his problems would have been even bigger, since the pawn on b5 would have created additional weaknesses for White (White's pawn centre would have been more unstable). The game Bacrot-Kamsky, Sofia 2006 continued **17.exf6 ♗xf6 18.♗h1 g5 19.♕d2 ♕d7 20.♖e3 ♗f5 21.♖ae1 e6 22.♗g2 ♕g7! 23.♘e2 ♔h8 24.♖d1 ♖ae8** and although White managed to save this position, Black's advantage is unquestionable.

Conclusion: the drawback of 4...♕b6 is that White has a relatively large choice of attractive options. However, the good news is that White cannot achieve more than just a slight edge anyway. The main secret of 4...♕b6 is that Black shouldn't really care if White succeeds to emerge marginally better out of the opening. Apart from surprising your opponent with unexpected variation, the main idea of 4...♕b6 is to achieve a solid position and then play relatively simple chess, without having to worry about studying long theoretical variations.

CHAPTER 18

Who is Who

After some Caro-Kann misadventures Argentina's top-GM **Ruben Felgaer** decided to adopt 2.♘e2 a Nigel Short patent. The enigmatic knight move brought him success, and, as Felgaer candidly reveals, a disappointing loss under the 'stern eye' of the master.

In another SOS versus the Caro-Kann **Adrian Mikhalchishin** advises you to develop your knight to e2 too. He obtained his secret straight from the horse's mouth: 'babushka' Oleg Dementiev.

Some 15 years ago Hungarian IM Andras Meszaros invented a waiting move in the Classical Sicilian. **Dimitri Reinderman** debates the pros and cons of 5...♖b8.
The Dutch GM also takes a look at 1.c4 f5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.e4 fxe4 4.g4!?. Beware of the quills of the Porcupine!

With black **Arthur Kogan** likes to raise the stakes by playing all sorts of regular and irregular gambits. In this volume he reveals some personal secrets in the Fajarowicz Variation of the Budapest Gambit. While after 1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 c5 3.d5 he advocates the Spielmann Attack with 3...d6 4.♘c3 ♗f5. In both articles the Israeli GM demonstrates a liking for early ...g5 thrusts.

Kogan's compatriot **Alexander Finkel** has other preferences. He propagates an early ♕f3 against the reliable Paulsen/Kan Sicilian. And when they hit you with that same move in the Modern Finkel advises you to sac a pawn!

In the Nimzo-Indian 4.♕c2 is still going strong. **Matthieu Cornette** & **Sebastien Mazé** analyse an old Keene idea – 6...♕e8 – and convincingly demonstrate why modern GMs like Bauer, Pelletier and Nikolaidis have followed in his footsteps.

A few disappointing losses as White in the French Defence prompted **Igor Glek** to search for a new weapon. Via a best game of 2006 competition (Zviagintsev-Zhang Pengxiang) he arrived at McDonnell's and Labourdonnais' 2.f4.

Playing against a creative mind is inspirational. Impressed with Jacob Murey's handling of the old Ruy Lopez with 3...♘e7, **Leonid Gofshtein** explains how he changed sides and came to adopt this line with black.

Gata Kamsky has made a successful comeback to chess. Over the past few years he has relied on an obscure Slav with 4...♕b6. **Dorian Rogozenko** makes a thorough survey of the early queen move.

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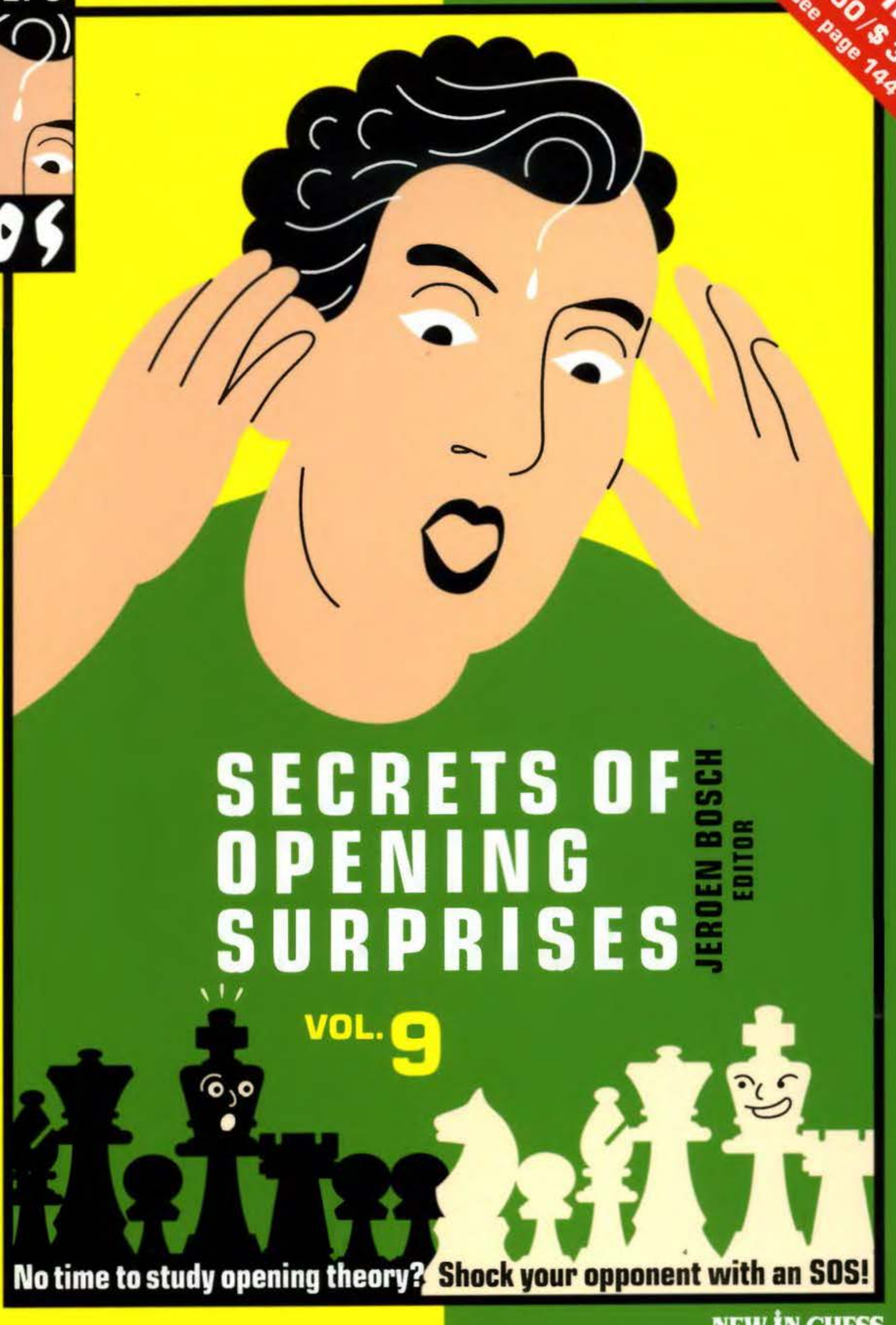

SECRETS OF OPENING SURPRISES

JEROEN BOSCH
EDITOR

VOL. 9

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SOS – Secrets of Opening Surprises 9

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Vladimir Burmakin
Dimitri Reinderman
Arthur Kogan
Igor Lysyj
Jeroen Bosch

2008 New In Chess – The Netherlands

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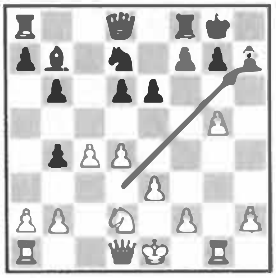
Jeroen Bosch

The SOS Files



Gozzoli-Kallai after 14.♗xh7+!?

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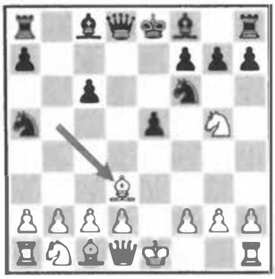
Daniel Stellwagen

Two Knights: Another Gunsberg Surprise

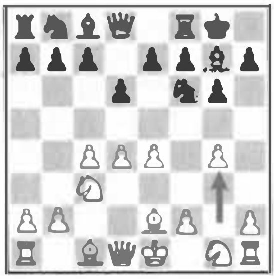


Avoiding radar detection with 8.♗d3

CHAPTER 3 - page 24

Adrian Mikhalchishin

A Bayonet Attack vs the King's Indian

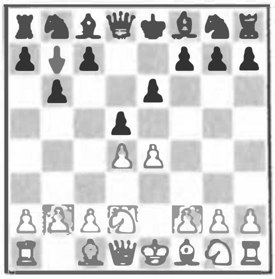


Let's give 6.g4 a try

CHAPTER 4 - page 28

Jeroen Bosch

Fianchetto in the French Tarrasch



A Gulko favourite 3...b6

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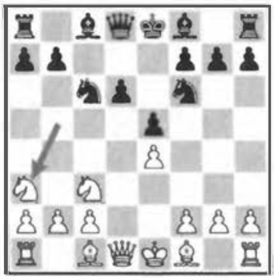
Dorian Rogozenco

SOS versus the Sveshnikov



A voluntary knight retreat

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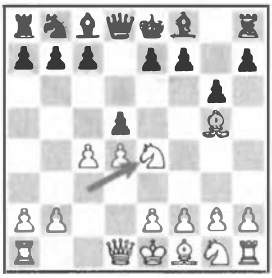
Glenn Flear

Seeking Greener Pastures in the Grünfeld



4.♗g5 ♘e4 5.♘xe4!?

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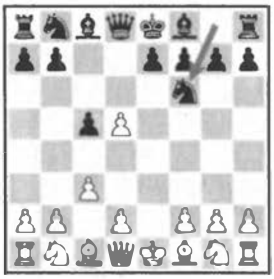
Alexander Finkel

A Scandinavian Motif in the Alapin

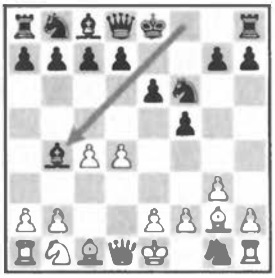


1.e4 c5 2.c3 d5 3.exd5 ♘f6

CHAPTER 8 - page 59

Igor Glek

The Dutch Indian



1.d4 f5 2.c4 ♘f6 3.g3 e6 4.♗g2 ♗b4+

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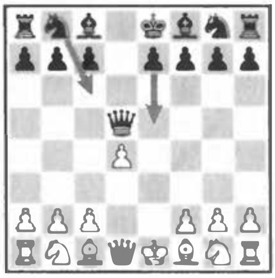
Sergey Tiviakov

Two replies to 3.d4 in the Scandinavian



Let's play 3...e5 or 3...♘c6

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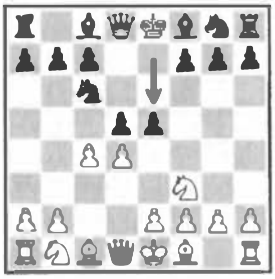
Jeroen Bosch

This is not the Chigorin

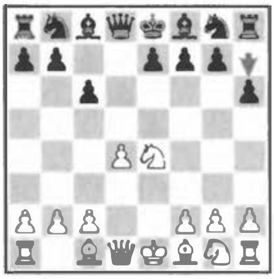


1.d4 d5 2.c4 ♘c6 3.♘f3 e5!?

CHAPTER 11 - page 89

Vladimir Burmakin

Caro-Kann: Bellon Variation



1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♘xe4 h6

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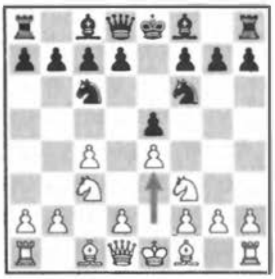
Dimitri Reinderman

English: Nimzowitsch Variation



Four Knights with 4.e4

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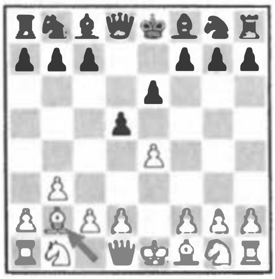
Alexander Finkel

Réti's Line against the French



1.e4 e6 2.b3 d5 3.♗b2

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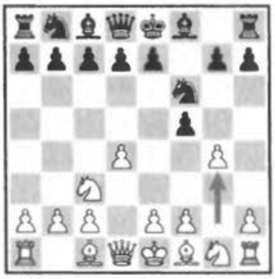
Adrian Mikhalchishin

Dutch: Bogoljubow Gambit

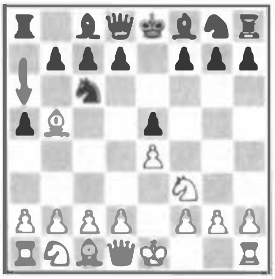


1.d4 f5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.g4!?

CHAPTER 15 - page 113

Jeroen Bosch

Ruy Lopez: the Popov Variation



3...a5 more than a Fingerfehler?

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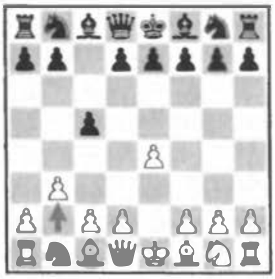
Arthur Kogan

Sicilian: the Czerniak Attack



1.e4 c5 2.b3

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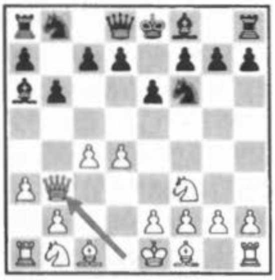
Igor Lysyj

Queen's Indian: the Surprising 5.♕b3



A rare queen move

CHAPTER 1

Jeroen Bosch

The SOS Files

SOS-win for Stefanova

SOS-3, Chapter 15, p.117

Let's enjoy a great SOS attacking game by one of the strongest women on the tournament circuit – Antoaneta Stefanova. This game features an important new idea in the Evans Gambit.

☐ **Tigran Petrosian**
■ **Antoaneta Stefanova**
Gibraltar 2008

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♗c5 4.b4 ♗xb4 5.c3 ♗d6!?

So here is our SOS antidote – the so-called Stoneware Defence.

6.d4 ♘f6 7.0-0 0-0 8.♖e1 b6!?

Interestingly, Stefanova avoids the more common 8...h6. Now 9.♘h4?! (best is 9.♘bd2 ♖e8, see SOS-3) 9...exd4! favours Black: 10.♘f5 (Black won quickly after 10.♘g6 b5!? 11.♘xf8 bxc4 12.♘xd7 ♕xd7 13.♘a3 ♘e5 14.♕xd4 ♘d3 15.♖e3 ♗c5 16.♕xc4 ♘xc1 0-1, in Sidorenko-Golod, Ramat Aviv 2004; 10.cxd4 ♗b4! 11.♗d2 ♘xe4! 12.♖xe4 d5 was indicated in SOS-3) 10...♗c5 11.♕f3N (11.cxd4 d5! 12.exd5 ♗xf5 13.dxc5 ♘a5 was Jobava-Grischuk, Plovdiv 2003) 11...d5 (11...d6) 12.♘xh6+ gxh6 13.exd5 ♗g4 14.♕f4 ♕d6!? (14...♘a5) 15.dxc6 ♕xf4 16.♗xf4 bxc6 17.♗e5 ♖fe8 18.♔f1 ♘d7 19.♗xd4 ♖xe1+ 20.♔xe1 ♗xd4 21.cxd4 ♘b6 22.♗e2 ♗xe2 23.♔xe2 ♖e8+ 24.♔d2 ♖e4 and the ending clearly favoured Black, Novitzky-Romanov, Minsk 2007.

9.♗d5

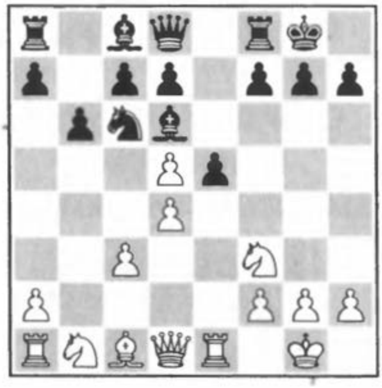
Or 9.♗g5 h6 10.♗h4 and now 10...♗b7! is more logical than 10...exd4 11.cxd4 (11.e5!) 11...♗e7 12.e5 ♘h7 13.♗xe7 ♘xe7 14.d5, Dolgopolyi-Bornemann, Lüdenscheid 2003.

9.♗b5!? is another test of 8...b6.

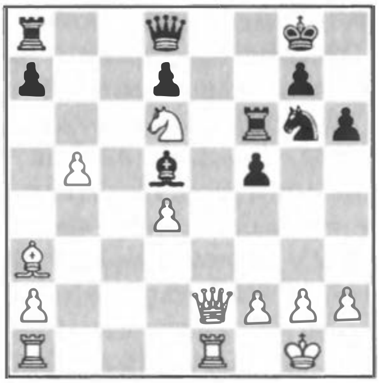
9...♘xd5!

Black loses a piece after 9...♗b7? 10.♗xc6 dxc6 11.dxe5 and has insufficient compensation in the ending after 11...♗xe5 12.♕xd8 ♖axd8 13.♘xe5.

10.exd5



10...e4! Stefanova returns the gambit pawn. A very interesting idea which is the real point of 8...b6! **11.♘g5!?** 11.♖xe4 ♘a5 followed by ...♗b7 or ...♗a6, and if White is unable to conjure up an attack from somewhere (and this is not immediately obvious) then Black is strategically superior. **11...♘e7 12.♕h5!** 12.♘xe4 ♘xd5 13.♞xd6 cxd6 14.c4 ♘f6 15.♗f4 ♖e8 looks OK for Black. **12...h6 13.♘xe4 f5!? 14.♘xd6 cxd6 15.♗a3** 15.♗f4 ♖f6 16.♘d2 ♗a6 17.c4. **15...♖f6 16.♘d2 ♗a6** Preventing 17.♘c4. **17.c4 b5!? 18.♕e2** A double attack, but things are not that clear as it turns out. Black has no worries after 18.cxb5 ♗xb5. **18...♘g6 19.cxb5 ♗b7 20.♘c4** 20.♕f3. **20...♗xd5 21.♘xd6**



White is a pawn up, but Stefanova now takes over the attack in impressive fashion. **21...♘h4! 22.♕e5** Even worse is 22.f3'? ♖g6∓. Black also has the upper hand after 22.♕h5 ♖g6! 23.♖e8+ (23.g3 ♗f3! 24.♖e8+ ♕xe8 25.♕xh4 ♕e2∓) 23...♕xe8 24.♘xe8 ♖xg2+ 25.♔f1 ♖xh2 26.♗d6 ♖h3!. **22...♗xg2 23.♕g3 ♗e4!** Instead, 23...♖g6 24.♕xg6 ♘xg6 25.♖e8+ ♕xe8 26.♘xe8 is about equal. **24.♕b3+** 24.♔f1 ♘f3−+. **24...♖e6 25.♘xe4 fxe4 26.♔h1 ♘f3 27.♖e3 d5** Now Petrosian can only give material to postpone the imminent attack. **28.♖xf3 exf3 29.♖g1 ♕d7 30.♕xf3 ♖ae8** Black is just an exchange up, the rest is a matter of technique. **31.♗c5 ♖e1 32.a4 ♖xg1+ 33.♔xg1 ♖e1+ 34.♔g2 ♖a1 35.♗a3 ♕e6 36.a5 ♕g6+ 37.♔h3 ♔h7 38.♔h4 ♖g1 39.♗e7 ♕e6 0-1**

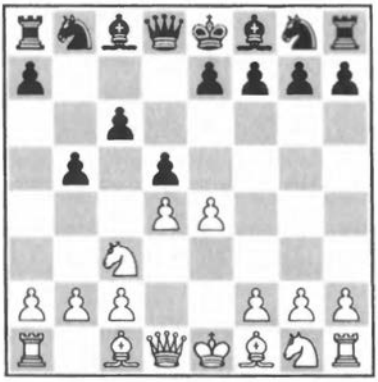
In Memoriam Bukhuti Gurgenidze

SOS-7, Chapter 7, p.66

Recently, at the age of 74, Georgian grandmaster Bukhuti Gurgenidze passed away. The multiple champion of Georgia was known as the successful coach of, among others, World Champions Nona Gaprindashvili and Maya Chiburdanidze. He was also famous for some creative opening ideas. Let us see how Dutch GM Erwin l'Ami uncorked the Gurgenidze Variation of the Caro-Kann in the 2008 European Championship.

☐ **Marcos Llaneza Vega**
■ **Erwin l'Ami**
Plovdiv 2008

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 b5!?



And here is Bukhuti Gurgenidze's invention. Black has a light-square strategy in mind, threatening to chase away the knight, thus increasing his control over the central squares e4 and d5.

4.exd5

4.a3 dxe4 5.♘xe4 ♘f6 6.♘xf6+ exf6! as played by Gurgenidze and Bronstein, was Adrian Mikhalchishin's main line in SOS-7. Other moves include: 4.♗d3 b4 5.♘ce2 dxe4 6.♗xe4 ♘f6 and 4.e5 e6, often followed by ...b4 and ...♗a6.

4...b4 5.♘a4?!

Mikhalchishin condemns this in SOS-7, preferring 5.♘ce2 or 5.♘e4.

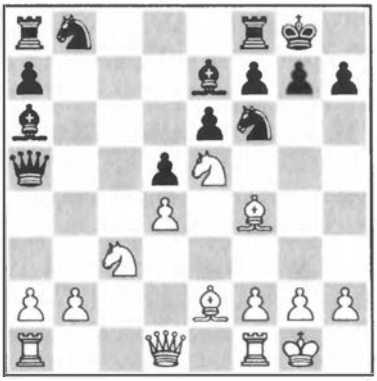
5...cxd5 6.♘f3

Also possible are 6.a3 bxa3 7.b3 e6 8.♘f3 ♘f6 and 6.♗d3 e6 7.♗e3 ♘f6 8.♘e2 ♗d6, which are covered in SOS-7. In both cases chances are about equal.

6...♘f6 7.♘e5 e6 8.♗f4 ♗e7 9.♗e2 0-0 10.0-0 ♕a5

Attacking the knight and preparing ...♗a6. Note that Black has a very solid position in the centre. The strategic exchange of the light-squared bishops will give him the better chances.

11.c4 bxc3 12.♘xc3 ♗a6

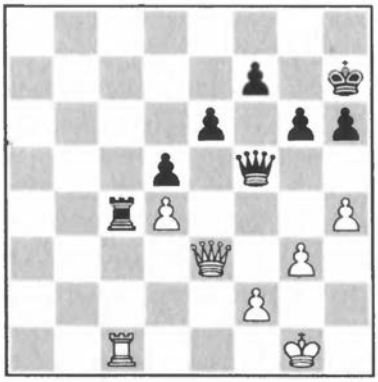


With such a diagonal this cannot be called a 'bad' bishop of course.

13.a3 ♖c8! 14.b4 ♗xe2 15.♕xe2 ♕b6 16.♖ac1 ♘c6

Every exchange of pieces emphasizes Black's structural superiority.

17.♘xc6 ♕xc6 18.♕b2 If 18.♞e4 then 18...♕a4. **18...♘d7** Re-directing the knight to the juicy c4-square. **19.♘e4 ♕b5 20.♘d6 ♗xd6 21.♗xd6 ♖c4 22.♕d2** White is manoeuvring his queen over the kingside since Black has so few defenders there. He could hardly wait for Black to improve his pieces on the queenside still further. **22...♘b6 23.♕g5** Threatening 24.♗e5. **23...h6 24.♕g3 ♖xc1 25.♖xc1 ♘c4 26.♗e5** What else? **26...♘xe5 27.♕xe5** After 27.dxe5 Black has a protected passed pawn and White's queenside remains just as weak as in the game. **27...a5** The minority attack further increases Black's advantage. **28.♕d6 axb4** 28...♕a4 was also strong. **29.axb4** If 29.♕xb4 then 29...♕a4! is awkward to meet. **29...♕c4** Or 29...♖a4! **30.♕c5 ♕b3 31.h3** It is hard to give White some decent advice: 31.b5 ♖b8; 31.♕b6 ♖a4 32.b5 ♕b2. **31...♖b8 32.♕d6 ♖xb4** Black has won a pawn. His position is won because in addition to his material advantage White's d-pawn is isolated. **33.♕f4 ♖c4 34.♖a1 ♕b7 35.g3 ♔h7 36.♕e3 ♕e7** l'Ami now moves around for a bit. **37.♕d3+ g6 38.h4 ♕f6 39.♖d1 ♔g7 40.♕e3 ♕f5 41.♖e1 ♔h7 42.♖c1?**



However unpleasant White should have waited passively for Black to do something. **42...♕e4! 43.♖xc4 ♕xe3 44.fxe3 dxc4** The pawn ending is winning. **45.♔f2 ♚g7 46.♔e2 ♔f6 47.e4**

e5! 48.d5 ♔e7 49.g4 h5 50.gxh5 50.g5 f6–+. **50...gxh5 51.♔d2 ♔d6 52.♔c2** After 52.♔c3 both 52...f5 and 52...♔c5 win. **52...f5! 53.♔c3 fxe4 54.♔xc4 e3 0-1**

Winning Ugly

SOS-7, Chapter 10, p.83

After 1.d4 d5 fans of the Trompowsky will favour the bishop move 2.♗g5. However, in this nameless variation the bishop does not attack a knight but hits thin air. As I demonstrated in SOS-7 Black can win a tempo with the ugly 2...f6. In the present game Eugenio Torre suffers a bad defeat with white almost straight out of the opening.

☐ **Eugenio Torre**
■ **Das Neelotpal**
Cebu 2007

1.d4 d5 2.♗g5 f6!? 3.♗f4

3.♗h4 ♘h6 4.e3 ♘f5 5.♗g3 h5 is one of the main ideas behind Black's set-up. Black is OK in the complications after 6.♗e2 h4 7.♗h5+ ♔d7 8.♗g4?! (8.♗f4 g5 9.e4 dxe4 10.♗c1 is better) 8...hxg3 9.♗xf5+ e6 (so far my analysis in SOS-7). The white player in the following game apparently hadn't read the book! 10.♗h3 gxf2+ 11.♔xf2 c6 12.♘f3 ♔c7 13.c4 f5 (13...g5) 14.♕f1 g5 15.g4 ♕f6 16.♘bd2 ♕h6 17.♗g2 fxg4, with a superior game in J.Nielsen-Karpatchev, Esbjerg 2007.

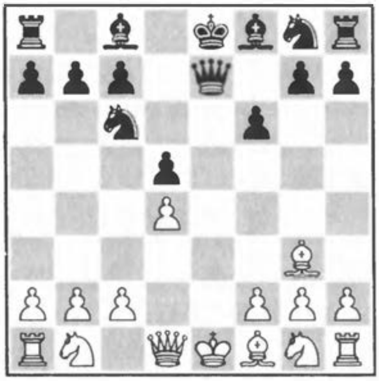
3...♘c6 4.e3

Very modest. More testing is 4.♘f3 ♗g4 5.♘bd2 ♘xd4 6.♘xd4 e5.

4...e5 5.♗g3 exd4!

I gave a short game reference in SOS-7 with 5...♗d6 (which is also fine for Black). Still, I now consider the text to be even stronger. Black has every right to play for an advantage as early as move 5!

6.exd4 ♕e7+!



A very annoying check. Black is also fine after moves like 6...♗d6 or 6...♗f5, but Neelotpal is playing to win.

7.♘e2 ♗f5 8.c3

This really is too passive. White has to play 8.♘c3 but after 8...0-0-0 9.a3 h5! 10.♗f4 g5! 11.♗e3 h4 Black has the same superior structure as in the main game. 12.h3 ♕h7 13.♔d2 (very awkward!) 13...♘h6 14.♔c1 ♗g6 15.g4 hxg3 16.♘xg3 ♘f5 17.♘xf5 ♗xf5, with a clear advantage in Krasnov-Yagupov, St Petersburg 1999.

8...h5! 9.h3 h4 10.♗h2 0-0-0 11.♘a3 g6!? 12.♕d2 ♗h6 13.♗f4 g5 14.♗e3

Now the bishop has done his job on the c1-h6 diagonal and returns to f8 to do some more damage there. Black has a great game despite the symmetrical pawn structure.

14...♗f8! 15.♘c1

Note the devious 15.0-0-0? ♕xa3! 16.bxa3 ♗xa3+ 17.♕b2 ♗xb2+ 18.♔xb2 with a sound pawn up for Black.

15...♘h6 16.♗b5

Slightly better was 16.♘d3.

16...♕e6 17.♘d3

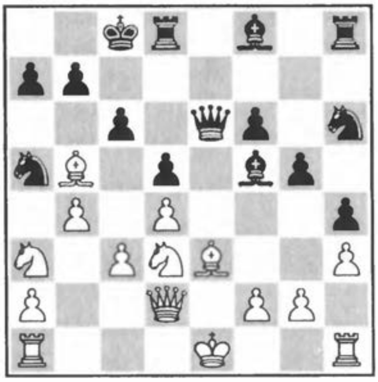
17.♘b3∓ was preferable.

17...♘a5 18.b4

If 18.♘c2? then 18...♘c4 19.♕e2

(19.♗xc4 dxc4 20.♘c1 ♕e4 wins) 19...a6 20.♗xc4 dxc4 21.♘c5 ♗xc5 22.dxc5 and now 22...♗d3 (22...♕e4) 23.♕d2 ♘f5 24.0-0-0 ♗e4 is one example of how Black can win.

18...c6



19.♗a4 19.bxa5 ♗xa3. **19...♕e4!** White is completely busted. **20.♘b2?** 20.♘c5 ♕xg2 21.0-0-0 ♘c4 22.♘xc4 dxc4. **20...♕xg2 21.0-0-0 ♗xh3** and with two pawns up, Black is completely winning. **22.♖dg1 ♕f3 23.♗d1 ♕f5 24.♗e2 ♗g4 25.f3 ♗h5 26.♖f1 ♕e6 27.♖e1 ♘f5 28.♘c2 ♘c4 29.♗xc4 dxc4 30.♗xg5 ♕f7 31.♗f4 ♗xf3 32.♖hf1 ♗d5** And White resigned on move 42 after making the time control.

Harmless after all?

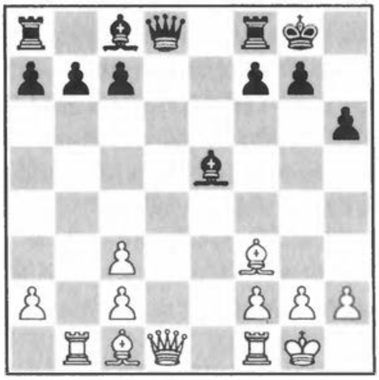
SOS-7, Chapter 2, p.18

John van der Wiel wrote an entertaining article on 4.♗e2 in the Four Knights for SOS-7. Although he called the bishop move 'harmless' he could boast a clean sheet of 6 wins and 2 losses at the time (no draws!). In the 2007 Dutch Championship he 'suffered' a draw in his pet line. Perhaps his opponent has finally rid Van der Wiel of his love for the harmless bishop move?

☐ **John van der Wiel**
■ **Ruud Janssen**
Hilversum 2007

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗e2 d5 5.exd5 ♘xd5 6.0-0 ♘xc3 7.bxc3 ♗d6 8.d4 0-0 9.♖b1 h6! 10.dxe5 ♘xe5 11.♘xe5 ♗xe5 12.♗f3

Stronger than 12.♗a3? ♖e8 13.♗f3 ♕h4! 14.g3 ♕a4!, which was Van der Wiel-Timman, Wijk aan Zee 1985.



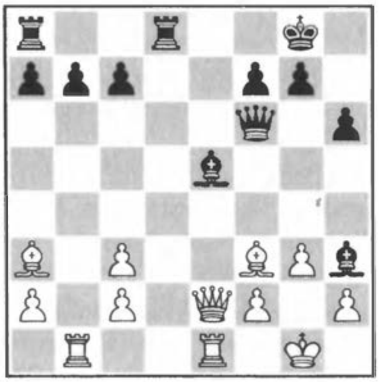
12...♕h4

In SOS-7 Van der Wiel argued that White might be able to play for a tiny edge here, but 12...♕h4 may have come as an unpleasant surprise. In his analysis Van der Wiel indicated both 12...♖b8 and 12...♗xc3 but not the text.

13.g3 ♕f6! 14.♗a3 ♖d8 15.♕e2 ♗h3

Black is so active that he cannot be worse.

16.♖fe1



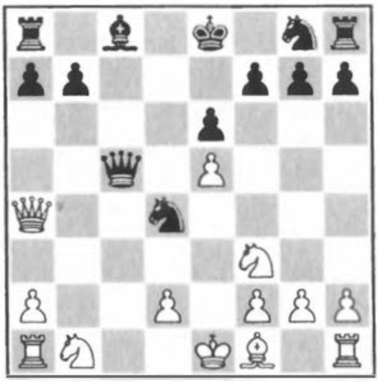
16...♖d2! 17.♕e3 17.♕xd2?? ♕xf3 mates. **17...♖xc2 18.♗xb7 ♖e8 19.♗c5 ½-½**

Novelty in the Flexible French

SOS-1, Chapter 17, p.134

SOS-1 featured a lengthy article on the French Wing Gambit. In a recent New In Chess publication – *The Flexible French* – Viktor Moskalenko has suggested an important novelty in the sideline with 4...d4 (known from the famous game Boersma-Kortchnoi, Dutch championship, Leeuwarden 1977).

1.e4 e6 2.♘f3 d5 3.e5 c5 4.b4 d4!? 4...cxb4 5.a3 is the main line. **5.bxc5 ♗xc5 6.♗a3 ♕a5 7.♗xc5 ♕xc5 8.c3 ♘c6 9.cxd4 ♘xd4 10.♕a4+**



10...♗d7

This piece sacrifice was first suggested by Danish IM Erling Mortensen.

10...♘c6 11.♘c3 ♕a5 was Boersma-Kortchnoi. See SOS-1, p.143. White now has 12.♕g4!.

11.♕xd4 ♕c1+ 12.♔e2 ♗b5+ 13.d3

13.♔e3 ♗xf1 and now:

– 14.♕c3? ♕d1!∓ was Deman-Haberkorn, Belgium tt 1999/00.

– 14.♕a4+ ♔f8 15.♕b5!? ♕xd2+!? 16.♘bxd2 ♗xb5 17.♘d4 White has some compensation for the pawn.

– 14.♕d3 ♕c5+! 15.♕d4 ♕xd4+ (15...♕c1=) 16.♘xd4 ♗xg2 17.♖g1 ♗c6.

13...♖d8!

This is Moskalenko's novelty. We will reproduce his analysis from *The Flexible French* here. 13...♗xd3+? 14.♕xd3 ♕b2+ 15.♘bd2 ♕xa1 16.♕b5+ and White should win is Mortensen's line. Even stronger is 16.♕c2, trapping the queen.

14.♘bd2 ♕a3!

Not 14...♗xd3+? 15.♕xd3 ♕xa1 16.♕c2, trapping the queen.

15.♕f4

Losing is 15.♘c4? ♗xc4 16.♕xc4 ♕b2+.

15...♕b2 16.♖d1 ♗xd3+ 17.♔e1 ♗c2

With unclear play according to Moskalenko.

Classical Bishop Sacrifice Wins SOS Prize

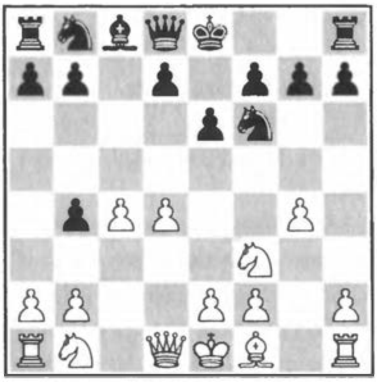
SOS-7, Chapter 8, p.70

In SOS-7 I presented an attractive way to combat the Vitolinsh Variation of the Bogo-Indian. Rather than play the theoretical 6.g3, White can lash out with 6.g4 to follow the modern g4-rage.

In the present game Frenchman Yannick Gozzoli adds more fuel to the fire with an unclear classical bishop sacrifice for long-term compensation. In the end his passed g-pawn reaches the end-zone. Clearly, a deserving winner of the SOS Prize!

☐ **Yannick Gozzoli**
■ **Gabor Kallai**
France tt 2008

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 ♗b4+ 4.♗d2 c5 5.♗xb4 cxb4 6.g4!?



6...0-0

Black ignores White's flank action and castles into it. Bad is 6...♘xg4 7.♖g1.

- The interesting 6...b5 was also covered in SOS-7. 7.e3 (7.cxb5 ♗b7 8.♘bd2 0-0 9.♖g1 was Krasenkow-Moiseenko, Saint Vincent 2005) 7...bxc4 8.♗xc4 ♗b7 9.♘bd2 ♕b6 10.♗d3! d5 11.g5 ♘fd7 12.♕a4 ♘c6 13.♖c1 ♖c8 14.♘b3 0-0 15.h4 ♖c7 16.♕b5 ♖fc8 17.♔d2 ♘e7 18.♖xc7 ♖xc7 19.♖c1 ♕xb5 20.♗xb5 ♖xc1 21.♔xc1 and White won the ending in Jianu-Van Hoolandt, Heraklion 2007. His king is much better placed and pawn b4 is very weak.
- 6...d5 7.♘bd2 ♘c6 8.e3 dxc4 9.♗xc4 0-0 10.g5 ♘d7 11.♘e4 (11.♕c2!) 11...e5 12.♖g1 exd4 13.♘xd4 ♘xd4 (13...♘de5) 14.♕xd4 ♘b6 and now 15.♗xf7+?! turned out to be too optimistic after 15...♔xf7 16.g6+ hxg6 (16...♔g8? 17.gxh7+ mates; 16...♔e7 17.♕xg7+ ♔e8 18.gxh7+–; 16...♔e8 17.♘d6++–) 17.♘g5+ ♔e8 (17...♔g8? 18.♕h4 ♖f6 19.♖d1!+–) 18.♕e4+ ♕e7 19.♕xg6+ ♔d8 20.0-0-0+ ♔c7∓, Bernasek-Babula, Czech Championship, Havlickuv Brod 2008.

7.g5!?

A novelty over 7.♖g1 as first played by another Yannick. See the main game Pelletier-Romanishin, Istanbul 2003, in SOS-7.

7...♘e4 8.♖g1 b6

An entirely different cup of tea is 8...d5.

9.♘bd2 ♗b7 10.♘xe4! ♗xe4 11.e3 d6 12.♘d2

A perfect move. The bishop is chased from its dominant position – thus preparing ♗f1-d3 – while the diagonal d1-h5 is also opened.

12...♗b7

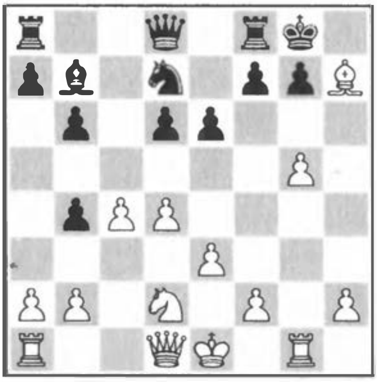
Not 12...♗g6 13.♗g2 (13.h4) 13...d5 14.cxd5 exd5 15.♕b3.

13.♗d3 ♘d7

At first sight it seems safer to play 13...f5 but after 14.gxf6 ♕xf6 White has the surprising 15.♕h5! ♕xf2+ 16.♔d1 ♕xg1+ (16...♗f3+ 17.♘xf3 ♕xf3+ 18.♕xf3 ♖xf3 19.♗e4+–) 17.♔c2 ♕xe3, when he cashes in with 18.♕xh7+ ♔f7 19.♖f1+ ♔e8 20.♕g6+ ♔d8 21.♖xf8+ ♔c7 22.d5!.

Now something like 14.♕g4 followed by castling queenside must be better for White. However, we must admire Gozzoli for his pluck to embark on an unclear piece sacrifice with

14.♗xh7+!?



14...♔xh7 15.♕h5+ ♔g8 16.♖g4

Bringing in the rook to mate across the h-file, but things are not that easy. Black still has a lot of defensive resources.

16...♖e8

Black can return the piece in several ways. Although White appears to keep at least a small edge then.

– 16...f5 17.♖h4 ♘f6 18.gxf6 ♖xf6

(18...♕xf6 19.0-0-0) 19.♕h7+ ♔f7 20.0-0-0.

– 16...g6 17.♕h6 ♘f6 18.gxf6 ♕xf6 19.h4.

17.♖f4!?

Or 17.♖h4 ♔f8.

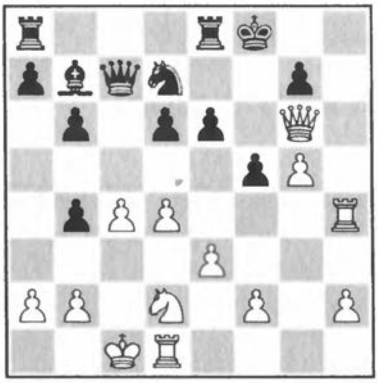
17...f5

The most logical move. Black can sort of force a perpetual with 17...g6 18.♕h6 ♘f8 19.♖h4 f5 20.♕h8+ ♔f7 21.♖h7+ ♘xh7 22.♕xh7+. Unclear is 17...f6 18.g6 ♕c8 (making space for the king to escape via d8 and c7) 19.♖h4 (19.♕h7+ ♔f8 20.h4!?) 19...♔f8 20.♕h8+ ♔e7 21.♕xg7+ ♔d8 22.♕f7 ♔c7 23.g7.

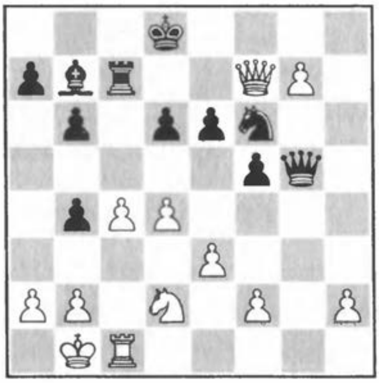
18.0-0-0 ♕c7

Black could have considered 18...♘f8!? 19.♖h4 (Black defends after 19.g6 ♕f6 20.♖g1 ♘d7) 19...g6 (19...e5 20.d5) 20.♕h8+ ♔f7 21.♖h7+ (21.f4? ♖e7) 21...♘xh7 22.♕xh7+ ♔f8 and White has to settle for a perpetual.

19.♖h4 ♔f8 20.♕g6!



20...♔e7 20...♔g8 is a witty retort. White probably should acquiesce to the draw with 21.♕h5 ♔f8. **21.♕xg7+ ♔d8 22.♖h7** White has clear compensation for the piece in the form of his passed pawns on the kingside and Black's lack of coordination. **22...♕c6** 22...d5 can be met by 23.♘f3! when 23...♕xc4+? loses to 24.♔b1 ♕c6 25.♖c1 ♕d6 26.♘e5 ♘xe5 27.♖c7. **23.♔b1** Gozzoli now takes some safety precautions before moving his g-passer across. **23...♖c8 24.♖c1 ♖c7** 24...♔c7? 25.d5!+–. **25.g6 ♕g2 26.♖h8 ♕g5** Everything loses by now. For example: 26...♗e4+ 27.♔a1 or 27.♘xe4 ♕xe4+ 28.♔a1 ♖xc4 29.♖b1; 26...♖xh8 27.♕xh8+ ♔e7 28.♕g7+ ♔d8 29.♕g8+ ♔e7 30.♕f7+ ♔d8 31.g7. **27.♖xe8+ ♔xe8 28.♕f7+ ♔d8 29.g7 ♘f6**

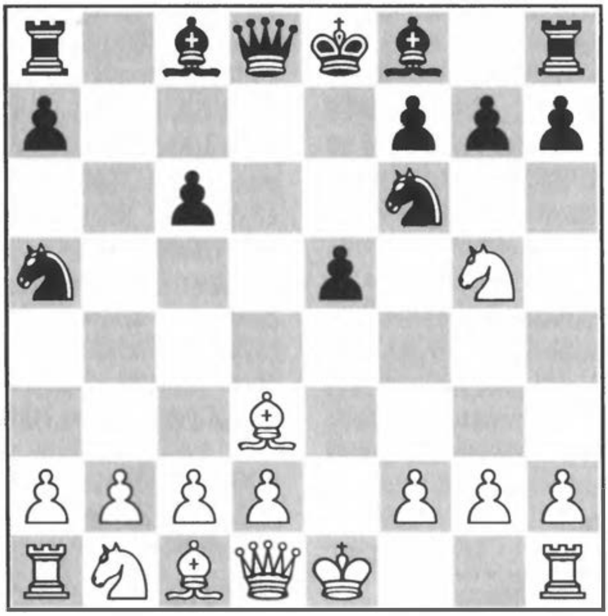


30.♕xf6+! ♕xf6 31.g8♕+ ♔d7 32.♖g1 ♗c8 33.d5 and Black had enough. A lovely win.

CHAPTER 2

Daniel Stellwagen

Two Knights: Another Gunsberg Surprise



Avoiding radar detection with 8.♗d3

These are difficult times for the 1.e4 player. Often you sit down hoping to play an interesting, sharp game only to be confronted by dull lines in the Ruy Lopez such as the Berlin Wall. At other times you suddenly find yourself walking a tightrope in heavily analysed lines such as the Marshall Gambit or the Zaitsev, struggling against the analysis conjured up by the latest version of Rybka. Wouldn't it be nice to catch these 1...e5 players off-guard once in a while and force them to play a completely new kind of position? Of course it would! Check out this new idea in one of the oldest openings in chess history, the Two Knights Defence, and see for yourself.

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♘f6

Of course 3...♘f6 is not obligatory, and 3...♗c5 is another major line. However, most people prefer to play 3...♘f6 as this doesn't allow crazy things such as the Evans gambit (3...♗c5 4.b4!?). Also, the 3...♞f6 move order allows Black to develop the bishop to e7, which is more according to Ruy Lopez structures.

4.♘g5 d5 5.exd5 ♘a5 6.♗b5+ c6 7.dxc6 bxc6

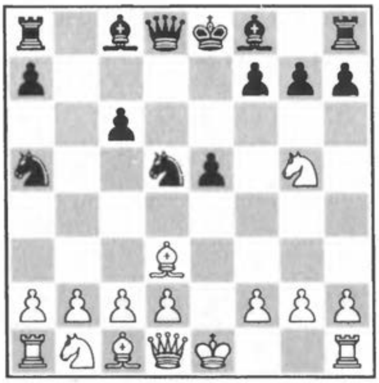
These are considered the best moves after 4.♘g5. There are a few sidelines earlier on, such as 4...♗c5 and 5...b5, but these are considered to be incorrect for a good reason. For over a hundred years, practically everybody has played 8.♗e2 in this position. The occasional oddball played 8.♗f1, but in general that has received adequate punishment. However, the move

8.♗d3!?

has avoided radar detection. Since 1890(!), when the move first appeared in the 22nd match game Gunsberg-Chigorin almost no games have been played with it. 8.♗d3 is also hardly ever mentioned in theoretical works, even though it is, in my opinion, certainly no worse than the main line with 8.♗e2, making it an ideal SOS-weapon.

I will start by analysing the move 8...♘d5. Next, we will look at the stem game Gunsberg-Chigorin in which 8...♗c5 was played. This is clearly inferior to the knight jumps 8...♘d5 and 8...♘g4 (see the game Stellwagen-l'Ami) as it allows White to consolidate his material advantage. Finally, 8...h6 is the main move after 8.♗e2, but after Gunsberg's 8.♗d3 it doesn't make much sense, since White can simply play 9.♘e4 (see Stellwagen-De Jong).

8...♘d5



9.♘f3

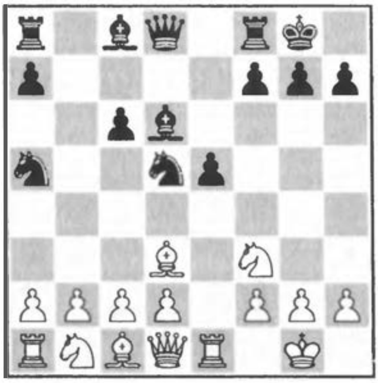
The most natural move, giving White chances to consolidate his extra pawn. 9.♘e4 also occurred in several games, but this provocative move cannot be recommended. For example, 9...♘f4 10.♗f1 f5 11.♘ec3 ♗c5 12.d3 0-0 13.g3 ♖e8! gives Black a dangerous initiative. Instead 11.♘g3 blocks the g3 square, making it difficult to get rid of the black knight on f4. After 11...♗d6! (less clear is 11...♗c5 12.c3 ♗b6 13.d4 as in Castaldi-Keres, Stockholm Olympiad 1937) 12.♘c3 0-0 13.d3 ♗b7 followed by ...c5 Black creates an overwhelming initiative.

9...♗d6

Here 9...♘f4 is an interesting option, but after 10.0-0 ♘xd3 11.cxd3 ♗d6 (11...f6 12.d4 exd4 13.♖e1+ ♔f7 14.d3±) 12.♖e1 0-0 13.♘xe5 ♖e8 it is doubtful whether Black can prove sufficient compensation for his two pawn deficit.

10.0-0 0-0 11.♖e1

This is a critical position for the 8.♗d3 line. White's plan is to simply play 12.♗f1 and 13.d3 followed by development of the queenside. Black has to act fast to find compensation. The only chance is to break through on the kingside with ...f5 and ...e4, but this is easier said than done.

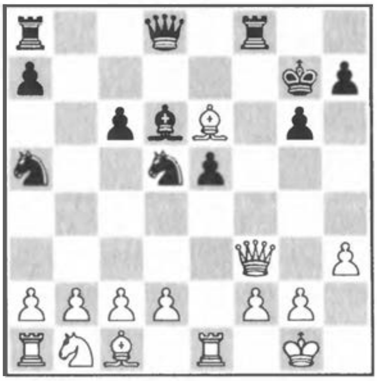


11...♕c7

Black has two other options to defend the e5 pawn:

- 11...♗g4 looks most natural, but is in fact not dangerous for White.

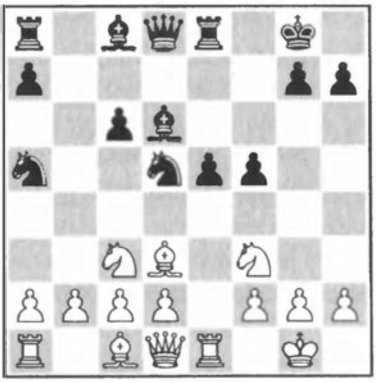
– 12.h3 ♗xf3 (12...♗h5 13.♗f5! rigorously stops the advance of the black f-pawn, thus halting the opponent's initiative) 13.♕xf3 f5 (the only chance, as White has nothing to fear after 13...♘f4 14.♗f1 f5 15.d3±) 14.♗xf5 g6 15.♗e6+ ♔g7



16.♗xd5! (a very nice positional queen sacrifice, leaving White with a clear plus) 16...♗c5 17.♖e2 ♖xf3 18.♗xf3±.

– In fact, 12.♗e2!? is also possible, since 12...e4 doesn't seem to yield anything for Black after 13.♘d4 ♗xe2 (13...♗d7 14.d3 f5 15.♘c3±) 14.♕xe2 f5 15.♘c3.

● 11...♖e8 is the main alternative to 11...♕c7. After 12.♘c3 (now 12.♗f1 would have dire consequences due to the immediate 12...e4) 12...f5, we arrive at the crucial position:



– 13.♗f1 e4 14.♘d4 (now it is too late for 14.♘xd5, as, after 14...exf3 15.♘c3 fxg2 16.♗xg2 ♗e6, Black has good compensation due to the weakened white kingside) 14...♘f6! 15.h3 almost forced, as it would be very dangerous to allow the black knight on g4. However, now Black can already force a draw: 15...♗c5 16.♘b3 ♘xb3 17.axb3 – 17.♗c4+ ♗e6 18.♗xe6+ ♖xe6 19.axb3 ♕d4 20.♕e2 ♖ae8 looks very dangerous for White – 17...♗xf2+ 18.♔xf2 ♕d4+ 19.♔g3 ♕d6+.

– 13.♘xd5! (this improves the black structure, but it is too dangerous not to exchange the black knight) 13...cxd5 14.♗b5 ♗d7 15.♗xd7 ♕xd7 16.d3±. Actually, 14.♗f1!? is also interesting. White aims to redeploy the bishop on g2 later on. A possible continuation is 14...♘c6 (14...e4 is dubious: 15.♘d4 ♗c5 16.c3±) 15.d3 ♕c7 16.g3, and Black still has to prove full compensation.

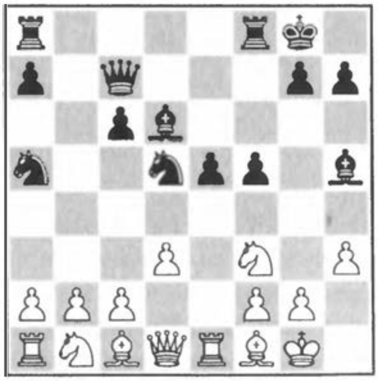
12.♗f1 ♗g4

Only now does Black develop the bishop. 12...f5 would be too early. White simply plays 13.d3, with a solid position.

13.h3 ♗h5

The direct approach with 13...♗xf3 is not dangerous for White after 14.♕xf3 f5 15.d3 e4 16.♕d1!±. However, certainly not 16.dxe4 fxe4 17.♕xe4 ♗c5∓.

14.d3 f5



15.♗e2

The white bishop sure moves around a lot in this opening, but it's all for a good reason. The pin on the d1-h5 diagonal was very disturbing and had to be solved, since Black was threatening to strike with 15...e4.

15...♖ae8

15...e4 is bad due to the reply 16.♘g5! (16.dxe4 fxe4 17.♘g5 e3! with a very unclear mess) 16...♗xe2 17.♖xe2 ♖ae8 18.dxe4 ♘f4 19.♖e1 h6 20.e5!±.

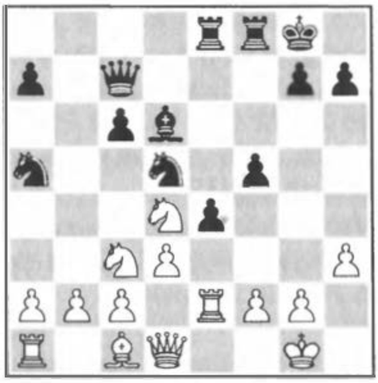
15...♖ad8 is also bad, since it does not stop the white threat of 16.♘xe5.

16.♘c3 e4

The most consistent continuation.

Black can also play more slowly by first allowing the knight on a5 back into play, but this gives White more time to finish his development: after 16...♘b7 17.♗d2 ♘d8 (or 17...♘c5 18.d4!±) White has several options. For example 18.♘g5±, exchanging bishops.

17.♘d4 ♗xe2 18.♖xe2



Black has some compensation for sure, but he is still a long way from getting the pawn back. The same conclusion holds after 18.♘dxe2.

Of course, the lines given above are not the only options, but it should give a good impression of what is going on in the 8.♗d3 line. It seems to me that there is no reason why 8.♗d3 should not be held in the same esteem as the 'main line' 8.♗e2. I hope there will be more games in the future, as it is certainly worth to give this line a try.

The following three games will illustrate the possibilities (and attractions!) of Gunsberg's line.

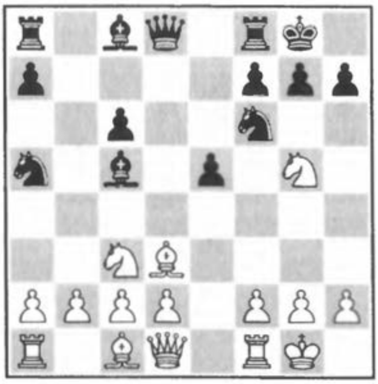
☐ **Isidor Gunsberg**
■ **Mikhail Chigorin**
Havana (22nd match game) 1890

This was the first game in which 8.♗d3 was ever played. White obtained a clear opening advantage and was simply a pawn up for no compensation. Later White badly went astray on moves 15 and 22 and ended up by losing the game. Perhaps this game is the reason why people never took the line seriously?

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♘f6 4.♘g5 d5 5.exd5 ♘a5 6.♗b5+ c6 7.dxc6 bxc6 8.♗d3 ♗c5

This is not a very challenging move, as it allows White to quietly finish development and enjoy his extra pawn.

9.0-0 0-0 10.♘c3



Black has no compensation for the minus pawn. White is clearly better.

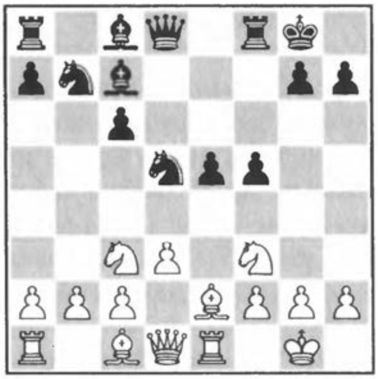
10...♗b6

A tricky move, making sure that a future ♘e4 does not gain a tempo. In this position White has several ways to obtain a clearly better position.

11.♗e2

Not bad, but 11.b4 ♘b7 12.♕f3 ♘d6 13.b5 is perhaps the most forceful way to press home the advantage.

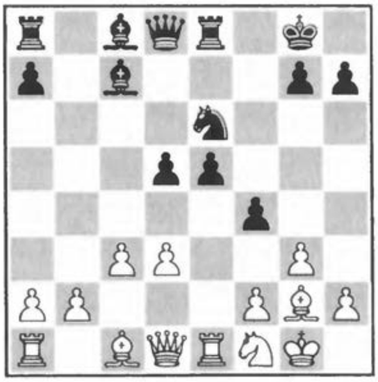
11...♘d5 12.d3 ♘b7 13.♘f3 ♗c7 14.♖e1 f5



15.♘d2?!

A very strange move, which allows Black to get back into the game. It would be more natural to play 15.♗f1 ♖e8 16.g3±.

15...♘c5 16.♘f1 ♘e6 17.♗f3 ♖e8 18.g3 ♘d4 19.♘xd5 cxd5 20.♗g2 f4 21.c3 ♘e6



22.b3??

After dubious play by both sides White has gotten a second chance. After 22.♕b3 he would still be in the driver's seat, with every chance to win the game. The move played in the game allows Black to start a very dangerous attack on the kingside.

22...♘g5 23.♕h5?! ♖e6 24.c4 ♖h6 25.♕e2 ♘h3+ 26.♔h1 ♗b7 27.cxd5? ♗xd5 28.♗e4 ♗b6

Now Black has a won game.

29.f3 ♗xe4 30.dxe4 ♕d7 31.g4 ♘f2+ 32.♔g2 ♕d8 33.♘e3 fxe3 34.♗xe3 ♗xe3 35.♕xe3 ♘h3

And Black went on to win.

☐ **Daniel Stellwagen**
■ **Erwin l'Ami**
Maastricht (4th match game) 2008

This game was played in an Advanced Chess match in which the Two Knights Defence was an obligatory opening. Both players were allowed to consult a computer during the game. This game was the last of the match and it turned out to be one of the most interesting games I ever played.

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♘f6 4.♘g5 d5 5.exd5 ♘a5 6.♗b5+ c6 7.dxc6 bxc6 8.♗d3 ♘g4!?

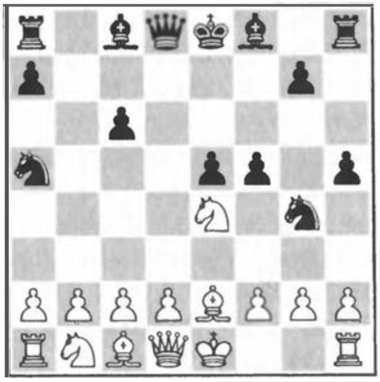
In the footsteps of the legendary Emanuel Lasker. Not surprisingly, 8...♘g4 is possibly the best move in the position.

9.♘e4

In the game Bird-Lasker, Newcastle 1892, there followed 9.♘f3, which is clearly inferior. There followed 9...f5 10.h3 e4 (10...♘xf2!? 11.♔xf2 ♗c5+ 12.♔f1 e4∓) 11.hxg4 exd3 12.cxd3 fxg4 13.♕e2+ ♗e7 14.♘g5 0-0 and Black was clearly better and went on to win.

9...f5 10.♗e2 h5!

An excellent move, supporting the knight on g4. Remarkable opening play!



11.h3

Continuing the fight for the initiative. White could also play 11.♘g3, but the position after 11...♗c5 12.♗xg4 hxg4 did not appeal to me.

11...fxe4 12.hxg4 ♗c5 13.b4!

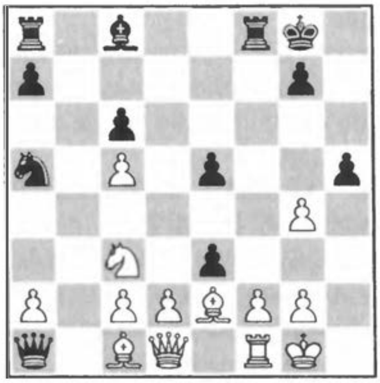
A very nice deflection, taking the heat off the f2 square. If Black would take the pawn on b4, I intended to play 14.♘c3, with a clear advantage.

Solid is 13.♘c3, which leads to an equal endgame after 13...♕d4 14.0-0 0-0 (14...hxg4 15.d3 and surprisingly the black queen does not reach the h-file: 15...♕d8 16.g3±) 15.♕e1 hxg4 16.d3 exd3 17.♗xd3 ♖xf2! 18.♕xf2 ♕xf2+ 19.♖xf2 g3.

13...♕d4!

Well played! It looks like the black queen will get into serious trouble, but there are still sufficient resources to free her majesty later on.

14.bxc5 0-0 15.0-0 ♕xa1 16.♘c3 e3!



A truly picturesque position. Welcome to the bizarre world of the Two Knights Defence! 16...hxg4 would have been very dangerous, since White can then avoid the exchange of rooks with 17.♖e1, after which it is not clear how Black can save the queen.

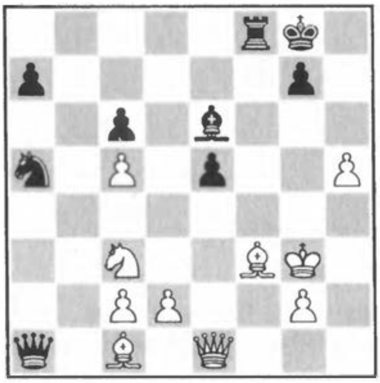
17.gxh5 exf2+ 18.♖xf2 ♖xf2 19.♔xf2

It looks like Black has solved all his problems, but there are still several hurdles to pass. Even though White will not be able to capture her, the black queen is still boxed in and unable to take part in those sections of the board where the real action is taking place. White plans to exploit this by launching an attack against the black king. More concrete, my plan was to play ♕e1, d3, ♔g3-h2 followed by the h5-h6 break. It is surprisingly difficult for Black to counter this plan.

19...♗e6 20.♗f3 ♖f8 21.♔g3 ♗xa2

The only way to ever get the queen out of a1.

22.♕e1 ♗e6



23.d4

Before I switched my attention to the move played in the game, I intended to play 23.d3, after which Black has to be very careful to avoid immediate disaster: 23...♘b7! (23...♗f5 24.h6 gxh6 25.♔h2 ♗g6 26.♘e4± was the type of attack I was thinking of in the position after move 19) 24.♕xe5 ♕xc1 25.♕xe6+ ♔h8 26.♕e5 results in a completely unclear position.

23.♔h2!? is an interesting alternative. Since

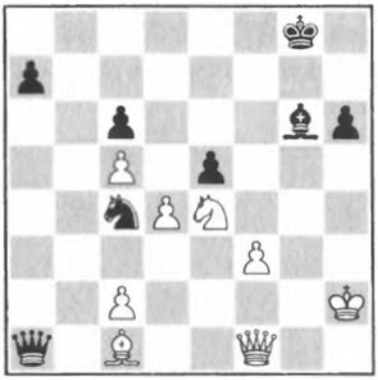
White has to play ♔h2 in almost every line anyway, it is better to just get it over with and stay flexible.

23...♘c4 24.♔h2 ♖xf3!

A very nice defensive resource. After this move I could no longer find an advantage for White.

25.gxf3 ♗f7 26.h6 gxh6 27.♘e4 ♗g6 28.♕f1

28.♕g1 was another very nasty winning attempt. Unfortunately, after 28...♔f7 29.♕f1 Black has the move 29...♘e3, which secures the draw: 30.♘d6+ (30.♕h3 ♘f5=) 30...♔g7 31.♕g1 ♘xc2 32.d5!? (a last attempt to confuse things) 32...♕a2 33.♕f2 ♕xd5 34.♕h4 ♕d3 35.♗xh6+ ♔g8 36.♕f6 ♕e2+ 37.♔g3 ♕e1+.



28...♔h8!

The only move, forcing a draw.

29.♕xc4 ♕xc1 30.♕e6 ♕f4+ 31.♘g3 ♗h5! The final saving resource. **32.♕c8+ ♔h7 33.♕c7+ ♔g8 34.♕b8+ ♔f7 35.♕c7+ ♔g8 36.♕b8+**

Draw.

☐ **Daniel Stellwagen**
■ **Jan-Willem de Jong**
Hilversum 2008

In the penultimate round of the Dutch championship I badly needed to win in order to stay in the race for first place. My opponent was a strong international master, who is known for his very decent and solid play. I didn't fancy a long struggle in a slightly better endgame in the Open Spanish and decided to surprise my opponent with 8.♗d3. It turned out to be an excellent choice, as I won the game almost straight from the opening.

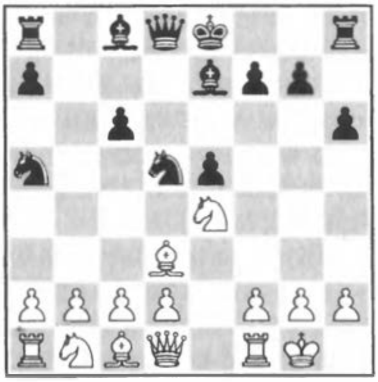
1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♘f6 4.♘g5 d5 5.exd5 ♘a5 6.♗b5+ c6 7.dxc6 bxc6 8.♗d3 h6?!

The move 8...h6 is not a good reaction to 8.♗d3. Contrary to the main line with 8.♗e2, White now has control over the e4 square.

9.♘e4 ♘d5

Compared to the 8...♘d5 lines Black has wasted a tempo with ...h6, giving White a clear advantage.

10.0-0 ♗e7



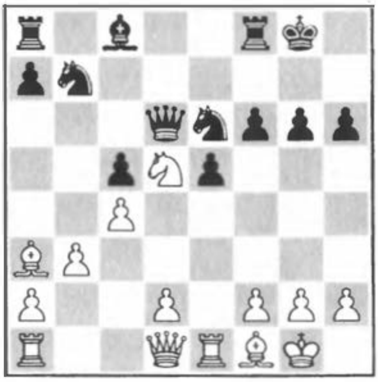
11.♘g3!

This move gains even more time for development. White is threatening to establish a blockade on f5, forcing Black to spend a tempo on ...g6.

11...g6 12.♖e1 ♕c7 13.b3 0-0 14.♗b2± ♗d6 15.c4!?

15.♗f1 f5 16.c4 ♘f6 17.d4 e4 18.♘c3 was another good way to finish development, but during the game I was reluctant to allow my opponent such an active move as ...f5.

15...♘f4 16.♗f1 c5 17.♘c3 f6 18.♘ge4 ♕d8 19.♗a3 ♘b7 20.♘d5 ♘e6 21.♘xd6 ♕xd6

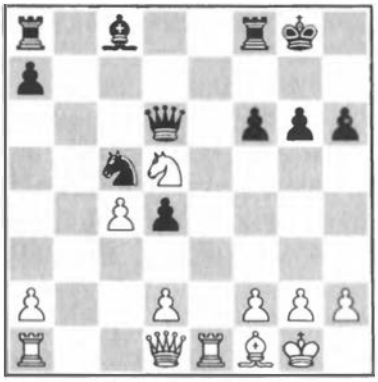


22.b4

During the last couple of moves I improved the position of my pieces, getting ready to eliminate the blockade on d4. After 22.b4 the position opens up, making the conversion of the extra pawn much easier.

22...cxb4 23.♗xb4 ♘bc5 24.♗c3 ♘d4 25.♗xd4 exd4

Black is still putting up a fight to stay in the game. If my opponent would get to play 26...♗e6, the technical task would be quite difficult. With the next queen manoeuvre I can take advantage of the temporary lack of coordination of the black pieces.



26.♕b1! ♗f5 27.♕b2 ♘e6 28.♕b7 ♖ae8 29.♕xa7

With two pawns down and approaching time-trouble my opponent was facing an unfair battle to save the game.

29...♖f7 30.♕a4 ♖b8 31.d3 ♔g7 32.♖ab1 ♖fb7 33.♖xb7+ ♖xb7 34.♕a8 ♕b8 35.♕a6 ♖b1

The last trick. Now 36.♖xe6 would lose to 36...♖xf1+.

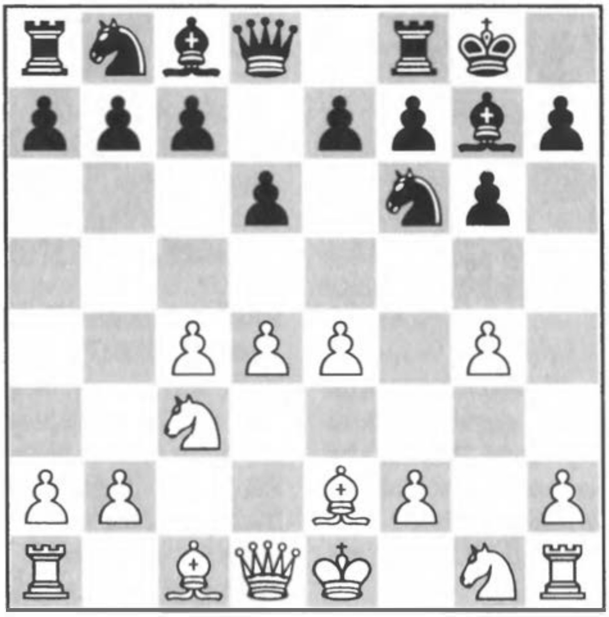
36.♖xb1 ♕xb1 37.♕a7+ ♔g8 38.♕e7 g5 39.♕xf6

Black resigned.

CHAPTER 3

Adrian Mikhalchishin

A Bayonet Attack vs the King's Indian



Let's give 6.g4 a try

This original hybrid of the Averbakh and Sämisch Variations has the aim of restricting Black's possibilities as much as possible. By playing g4-g5 White drives the black knight away from the centre, and in addition this neutralises the effectiveness of Black's typical counterplay with f7-f5. The additional gain in space should also not be underestimated.

Black has numerous continuations, but the main ones are 6...e5 or 6...c5.

First we will examine other moves:

- **6...♘c6 7.d5 ♘e5 8.g5 ♘e8 9.f4 ♘d7 10.♘f3 ♘c5 11.♗e3** 11.♕c2!? is better. **11...b6**

After 11...♗xc3+ 12.bxc3 ♘xe4 the game is quite unclear – the question is whether or not White has compensation for the pawn.

12.♕c2 ♗d7 13.0-0-0 a5 14.h4 ♗xc3 15.♗xc5 ♗xb2+ 16.♕xb2 bxc5 17.h5!

With an attack, Thrower-Okrzeja, Islington 1972.

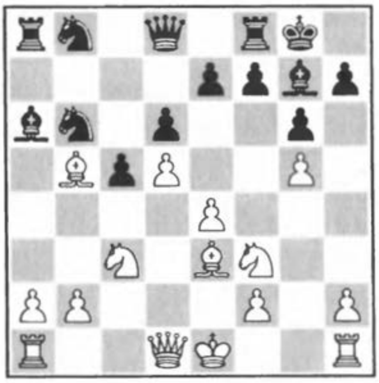
- **6...♘a6** Of the 'crooked' moves, this is the most interesting. **7.g5 ♘d7 8.h4 e5 9.d5 f5 10.gxf6** 10.f3 is also possible. **10...♘xf6 11.h5 gxh5 12.♗xh5 c6 13.♗f3 cxd5 14.cxd5 b5! 15.♗e3 b4 16.♘b1 ♘c5 17.♗xc5 dxc5 18.♘d2 ♘e8 19.♖c1 ♕b6**

With a complicated game, Hoffman-Fedorowicz, Reno 1999.

● 6...a6 7.g5 ♘fd7

Bad is 7...♘h5? 8.♗e3 b5 9.♗xh5 gxh5 10.♕xh5, Bareev-Djuric, Bled 1991.

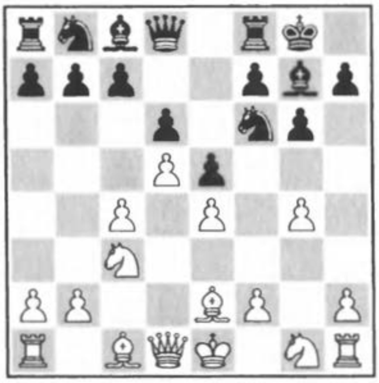
8.♗e3 c5 9.d5 b5 10.♘f3 ♘b6 11.cxb5 axb5 12.♗xb5 ♗a6



Here in the game Hort-Lanka, Manila 1992, White played **13.♕e2?** which was met by the fearfully strong **13...♘a4!!** After 13.♗xa6 ♘xa6 14.♕e2 the game is unclear.

Variation I

6...e5 7.d5



7...c6

The main plan of counterplay. Also possible is 7...♘e8, a move in the style of the Sämisch Variation. After 8.h4 f5 quite playable is the simple 9.g5 – for the moment not determining the position in the centre.

Instead, the game Sakaev-Sosa, Maringa 1991, went: 9.exf5 gxf5 10.g5 ♘d7 11.♘h3 (the forceful 11.f4 is also not bad, blocking the black pawns in the centre) 11...e4 12.♘f4 ♘e5 13.♗e3 c6 14.♕d2 cxd5 15.♕xd5+ (after 15.cxd5 ♘c7 Black has counterplay with ...b5) 15...♔h8 16.0-0-0 ♘c7 17.♕d2 (clearly not 17.♕xd6 ♘d3+!) 17...♗e6 18.♘cd5 ♗xd5 19.cxd5! (the weakness of the e6-square will now become chronic) 19...♘a6 20.♔b1 ♘c5 21.♗xc5 dxc5 22.h5, with an obvious advantage for White.

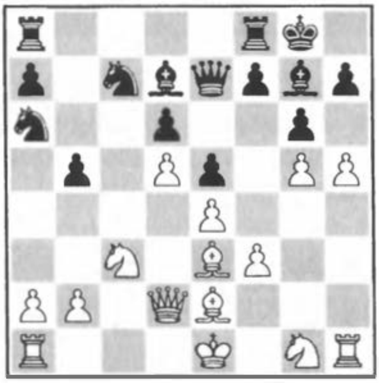
8.g5

I prefer this, although after 8.h4 cxd5 9.cxd5 ♘a6 10.h5 ♘c5 11.f3 a5 12.♗e3 ♗d7 13.♕d2 ♕e8 14.♘d1 b5 15.♘f2, strangely enough, White does not stand badly, Misanovic-Skripchenko, Kishinev 1995.

8...♘e8

8...♘h5 is too provocative; after 9.♗xh5 gxh5 10.♕xh5 ♘a6 11.♗e3 ♘b4 12.♕d1 cxd5 13.cxd5 f5 14.gxf6 ♕xf6 15.a3 ♘a6 16.b4 Black has no obvious compensation for the pawn, Kasparian-Gurgenidze, Tbilisi 1951.

9.h4 ♘c7 10.♗e3 ♘ba6 11.♕d2 cxd5 12.cxd5 ♗d7 13.h5 b5 14.f3 ♕e7



15.♘d1!? b4 16.a4! ♖fc8

After 16...bxa3 17.♖xa3, what is to be done with the knight on a6?

17.b3 ♗f8 18.♗c4

And White has a clear advantage, Fitel-Ushakov, Podolsk 1993.

Variation II

6...c5!

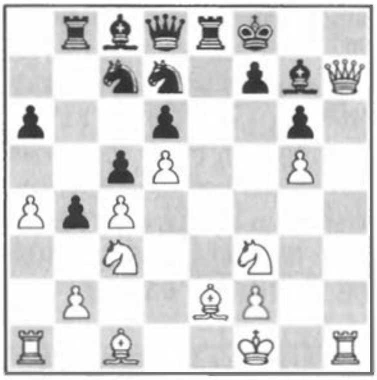
This is undoubtedly the best reply to the g2-g4 variation, but the problem is that most King's Indian players prefer to play e7-e5 !

7.d5

The immediate 7.g5 is also possible, but this does not make any fundamental difference.

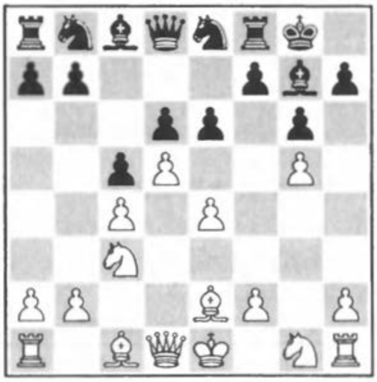
7...e6

In the event of 7...♘bd7 8.g5 ♘e8 9.h4 ♘c7 10.a4 e6 11.h5 exd5 12.exd5 ♖e8 13.hxg6 hxg6 14.♔f1 ♖b8 (bad is 14...♗xc3 15.bxc3 ♖e4 16.♕d3 followed by 17.♕h3 and an irresistible attack) 15.♕d3 a6 16.♕h3 b5 17.♕h7+ ♔f8 18.♘f3 b4



19.♗f4! ♘e5 20.♘xe5 dxe5 21.♗e3 White has an enormous advantage, Hillarp Persson-Pellus Ruiz, Barcelona 2004.

8.g5 ♘e8



9.h4

None other than Viktor Kortchnoi played 9.♘f3, against Cooper, Thessaloniki Olympiad 1988, which continued 9...exd5 10.cxd5 ♘c7 11.♕c2 b5 12.h4 ♗g4 13.♘g1! ♗d7 14.a4! bxa4 15.♗f4 ♕e7 16.f3 ♘ba6 17.♗xa6 ♘xa6 18.♕h2!, with advantage to White.

9...exd5

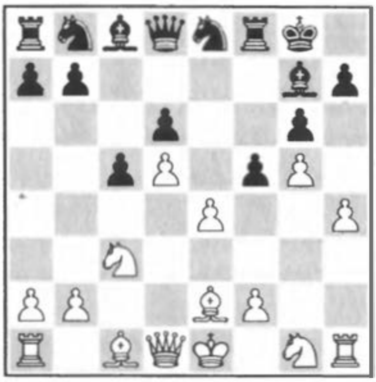
A move such as 9...f5 is possible, although after 10.exf5 ♖xf5 11.♗e3 b5 12.cxb5 ♗b7 13.♗g4 White has a clear advantage.

10.cxd5

Not very good is 10.exd5. After 10...♘c7 11.h5 ♖e8 12.♕d3 ♗f5 13.♕g3 ♘d7 14.hxg6 ♗xg6 15.♘h3 ♕e7 16.♘f4 b5 17.♔f1 bxc4 18.♕h4 ♖ab8 White has no particular attacking prospects, Gonda-L.Vajda, Basel 2007.

10...f5!?

The classical 10...♘c7 11.a4 ♖e8 12.f3 ♘d7 13.♘h3 a6 14.♘f2 ♘f8 is also possible (Efimov-Gufeld, USSR 1986), and here White should play 15.♗f4, 16.♕d2 and 17.♘d1, trying to play one of his knights to g4, after which the black king will be in danger.



11.gxf6

Incidentally, 11.f3, planning 12.♘h3, is interesting. This move deserves to be tested in practice.

11...♘xf6

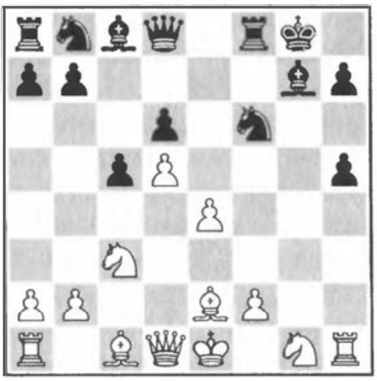
After 11...♕xf6 12.♗e3 h6 13.♕d2 ♘d7 14.0-0-0 ♘e5 15.♘h3 ♗g4 16.♗xg4 ♘xg4

17.♗f4 ♕xh4 18.♖dg1! White has serious threats, Thurmer-L.Szabo, Hungary 2006.

12.h5

Necessary, as otherwise after ♕d8-e7 White will have to play f2-f3, which gives Black a further opportunity after ♘f6-h5 to launch an attack on the dark squares.

12...gxh5



13.♘h3?!

It is better to capture: 13.♗xh5 ♕e7 14.♗g5 h6 15.♗h4 ♕e5 16.♗f3 with the threat of 17.♗g3. Play is very complicated.

White can also try 13.♗g5 ♕e8 14.f3. In other words, anything except that which occurred in the game.

13...♘g4 14.♗g5?

Perhaps 14.♕b3 should be recommended, with the idea of ♘d1 and the switching of the queen to g3?

14...♘xf2!

White loses a pawn without any compensation.

15.♕d2 ♗f6 16.♖g1 ♗g4! 17.♗xg4 ♘xg4 18.0-0-0 ♘d7 19.♖df1 ♔h8

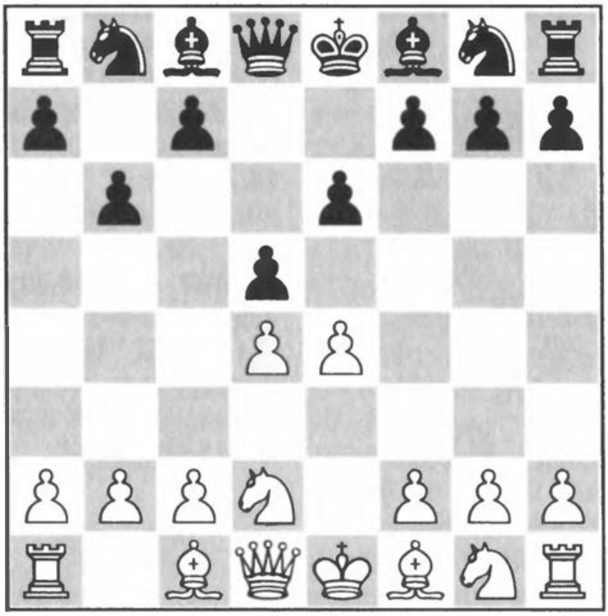
and Black has a great advantage Hoffman-Sorin, Villa Ballester 2000.

Of course, on the 13th move White's play could be improved.

CHAPTER 4

Jeroen Bosch

Fianchetto in the French Tarrasch



A Gulko favourite 3...b6

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 b6

We have become accustomed to French subjects in the SOS series. It is presumably the closed and solid structure of the French Defence that allows Black to take certain liberties with regard to the rules of sound opening play. Thus we saw Black postpone his development with the prophylactic 3...h6 in SOS-2, place his knight in front of the c-pawn with 3...♘c6 in SOS-3, bring out his queen early in the game with 3...dxe4 4.♘xe4 ♕d5 in SOS-4, and play the other rook pawn with 3...a6 in SOS-8. If considered in this way then our present subject scores fewer points on the surprise scale. After all, 3...b6 is a development move – Black prepares the bishop fianchetto or, alternatively, the exchange of the light-squared bishop via a6. Originally, this nameless variation was developed by Hungarian masters according to Suetin. Be that as it may, one of its most faithful high-level adherents has been Boris Gulko, while in recent years Polish GM Bartosz Socko has stepped into his shoes. Over the years, Gerald Hertneck and Jesus Nogueiras have made their own contributions to the virtually non-existent theory of 3...b6. Most games below have followed the Tarrasch move order: 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 b6. However, please note transpositional possibilities such as: 3.♘d2 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘fd7 5.♘gf3 b6; the Rubinstein Variation 3...dxe4 with an early ...b6; and, even, 1...b6 move orders.

☐ **Imed Abdelnabbi**
■ **Bartosz Socko**
Linares 2003

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 b6 4.exd5

This immediate exchange on d5 is not very dangerous for Black. The pawn on b6 may be slightly misplaced, but the knight on d2 should not have left its stable so early as it disturbs White's piece coordination. The strongest continuations are those that keep White's play flexible (4.c3 and 4.♘gf3), thus leaving Black to guess where to put his bishop (on a6 in closed positions, on b7 in open positions, or even on c8 in symmetrical positions after pawns have been exchanged on d5).

● 4.e5. This is not critical for the evaluation of 3...b6. Black's main intention was to trade bishops along the f1-a6 diagonal anyway, and in a position that resembles the Advance Variation this is certainly good. Play could continue 4...♗a6 5.♗xa6 ♘xa6 6.c3 ♕d7 7.♕e2 ♘b8 when we reach a normal French position. Black has achieved his aim, but White is no worse of course. Play is typically 'slow'.

On the fourth move Black can also play the subtle 4...♘e7, with the idea of 5.♗d3 ♗a6 to gain a tempo. Another useful waiting move is 4...♕d7.

Note that 4.♗d3 has no independent value.

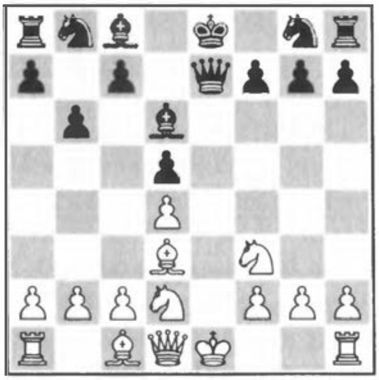
4...exd5

When you regularly play the French you won't be too bothered about this Exchange Variation – 3.exd5 is simply one of the options you have to take into account when the French features on your repertoire. Too boring for you? Then you can try 4...♕xd5!? 5.♘gf3 ♘f6 6.♗c4 ♕d8 which has been played a couple of times by Russian GM Leonid Totsky.

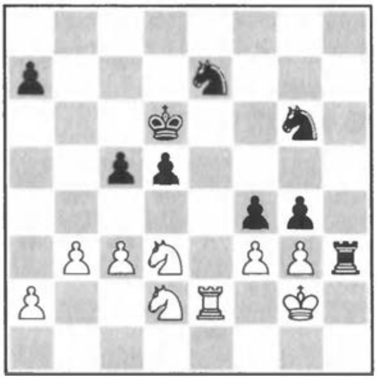
5.♘gf3

It is quite amazing, but this natural move is actually inaccurate as Miles explained almost twenty years ago – see the game continuation. White has to play the Tarrasch knight twice: 5.♘df3 ♗d6 6.♗d3 (White gains no advantage with 6.♗g5 ♘e7 7.♗d3 0-0 8.♘e2 c5 9.c3 ♘bc6 10.h3 ♕c7 11.0-0 h6 12.♗e3 c4! 13.♗c2 ♗f5 Novopashin-Gulko, Volgodonsk 1981) 6...♗g4! 7.c3 ♘d7 8.♕c2 ♘gf6 9.♗g5 h6 (9...♕e7+ 10.♔f1 was Miles' intention, when the game is unclear) 10.♗e3 (10.♗h4 ♕e7+) 10...c5! 11.h3 ♗e6 12.♘e2 c4! 13.♗f5 ♗xf5 14.♕xf5. Black has played the opening well and could now have equalized with 14...♕c7, according to Miles. Instead, 14...g6? gave White a pull in Miles-Nikolac, Wijk aan Zee 1979. Pawn h6 is a clear target for White. 5.♗d3 ♗d6 6.♘gf3 transposes to our main game.

5...♗d6 6.♗d3 ♕e7+!



At just the right time this check disturbs White's simple plan of castling, ♖e1, ♘f1, ♘g3, ♗g5 and so on. **7.♕e2** 7.♗e2 was played in Paoli-Marovic, Dortmund 1973, when rather than 7...♘f6 it would have made sense to play 7...♗a6 8.c4 ♘f6 9.0-0 0-0 10.♖e1 ♕d8. **7...♕xe2+ 8.♗xe2 ♗a6 9.0-0 ♗xe2 10.♖e1 ♘e7 11.♖xe2 f6** Black is fully equal, having traded the light-squared bishops. **12.♘e1 ♘c6 13.♘df3 g5** Here we go! **14.c3 ♔d7 15.♘c2 ♘g6 16.g3** Perhaps it was better not to give Black a clear target with 16.♘e3 ♖ae8 17.♖e1 ♘ce7. **16...h5 17.b3 h4 18.♗a3 ♗xa3 19.♘xa3** White has succeeded in trading of his own 'bad' bishop, but Black has used the time well to develop a nasty kingside initiative. **19...g4 20.♘d2 ♖ae8 21.♖ae1 ♖xe2 22.♖xe2 f5 23.♘c2 ♘ce7** Socko wants to play in the centre as well. There was something to be said for advancing still further on the kingside with 23...f4. **24.♘e1 c5 25.dxc5 bxc5 26.♘d3 ♔d6 27.f3 hxg3 28.hxg3 ♖h3** Black is clearly pressing by now. **29.♔g2** 29.♖g2 would have prevented Black's next. **29...f4!**



30.♘xf4? White succumbs, this is the worst of the candidate moves. Stronger are 30.♘f1 and 30.gxf4 ♘h4+ 31.♔g1 ♘ef5∓. **30...♘xf4+ 31.gxf4 ♘g6!** This intermediate move does the trick – Black is winning. **32.♔g1 g3! 33.♖e8** 33.♘f1 ♘xf4 34.♖d2 g2 wins as 35.♘h2? ♖g3 loses heavy material. **33...♘xf4** Now the passed pawn and his piece coordination win Black at least a piece. **34.♖d8+ ♔e7 35.♖g8 ♖h2 36.♖xg3 ♖xd2 37.♖g7+ ♔e6 38.♖xa7 ♘e2+ 39.♔f1 ♘xc3** **0-1**

☐ **Andreas Tzermiadianos**
■ **Bartosz Socko**
Halkidiki 2002

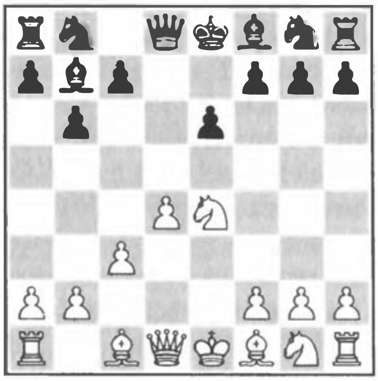
1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 b6 4.c3

This prevents ...♗a6 for the moment and is generally a useful move. Still, I regard 4.♘gf3 as stronger. It isn't always clear whether the pawn belongs on c3 (in certain positions it belongs on c4, while if White castles queenside the pawn would be better off on c2).

4...dxe4

Gulko has also played 4...♗b7 when White can try to disturb Black's coordination with 5.♗b5+ c6 6.♗d3 c5! 7.e5 ♘c6. This resembles the Advance Variation. The knight is slightly passive on d2, but Black's ...b6 and ...♗b7 is not the normal way to combat the Advance Variation. Gulko played this against both Dorfman and Aseev in the 1980s.

5.♘xe4 ♗b7



6.♗b5+

This check is again intended to disturb Black's natural development. Black has a playable position as is borne out by the following examples:

- The direct 6.♕f3 gave White nothing special after 6...♕c8 7.♗b5+ ♘d7 8.♕e2 c6 9.♗d3 ♘gf6 and after 10.♘g3?! c5! he even obtained the worse of it, Martens-Geselschap, Netherlands 1989.
- 6.♘g3, to avoid further exchanges, is reasonable, but White has no advantage. For example: 6...♘f6 7.♘f3 ♗e7 8.♗d3 0-0 9.♕e2 c5 10.dxc5 ♗xc5 11.♗g5 ♘bd7 12.♖d1 ♕c7 13.0-0 h6 14.♗c1 ♖ad8, with equality in Juarez Flores-Arencibia, Cali 1990.

– Of course White can also place the bishop immediately on d3: 6.♗d3 ♘f6 7.♗g5 ♗e7 8.♗xf6!? gxf6 9.♘f3 c6!? (9...♘d7; 9...f5) 10.♕e2 ♕c7 11.0-0-0 ♘d7 12.♔b1 0-0-0 (Black is not worse here) 13.♗a6 ♗xa6 14.♕xa6+♔b8 15.♖he1 (15.♕e2) 15...♖hg8 16.g3 b5 (cutting off the queen – see also the main game) 17.♘ed2 ♔a8 18.♘b3 ♖b8 was better for Black as White's queen is in trouble. De la Paz-Gomez, Cuba 1997.

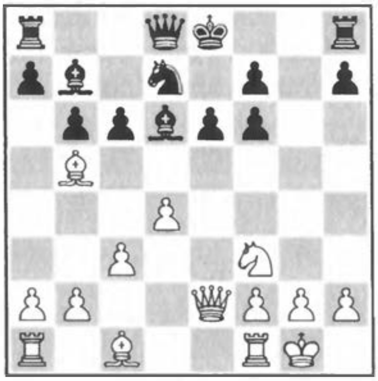
6...♘d7 7.♕e2 ♘f6

If you don't mind the structure with the doubled f-pawns (and someone like Morozevich plays such positions with great virtuosity) then this is your move. A more quiet approach is also possible though. You can play 7...a6 first, and only after 8.♗d3 c5 or 8...♗e7 9.♘f3 ♘gf6.

8.♘xf6+

White can also take on f6 with his bishop: 8.♗g5 ♗e7 9.♗xf6 gxf6 10.♘f3 c6 11.♗d3 ♕c7, Garcia-Nogueiras, Havana 1994.

8...gxf6 9.♘f3 ♗d6 10.0-0 c6

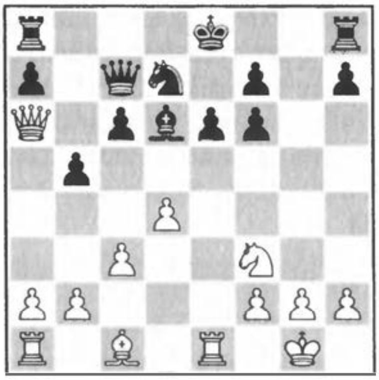


Getting rid of the annoying pin. White has to make up his mind between 11.♗a6 and 11.♗d3.

11.♗a6

Trading bishops makes sense to prevent Black from castling queenside, but White loses time with the exchange and from a structural point of view Black doesn't mind the trade. 11.♗d3 ♕c7 12.a4 to discourage queenside castling was played in Yudasin-Gulko, Frunze 1981. A tense game was the result, after 12...c5 13.♗e4 ♖g8 14.d5 f5 15.♗xf5 ♗xd5 16.♗e4 0-0-0 17.a5 Black could now have kept equal chances with 17...♗xe4 18.♕xe4 ♕b7.

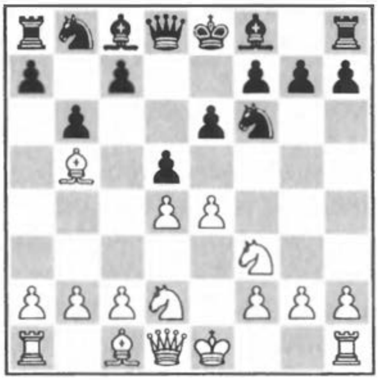
11...♗xa6 12.♕xa6 ♕c7 13.♖e1 b5!



Ouch! White is in big trouble. 14...♘b8 is a big threat and only the ugly game continuation will save her majesty. **14.b4 ♘b6!** Not 14...♘b8 15.♕a3. White now has to bail out (positionally) with **15.a4! ♘xa4 16.d5! ♕b6** Forcing the exchange of queens. 16...0-0 and 16...♘xc3 17.dxe6 are unclear. **17.♕xb6** 17.♖xa4 bxa4 18.♕xa4 is parried by 18...♕b5!. **17...axb6 18.dxe6** 18.dxc6. **18...0-0!? 19.♗h6** 19.♘d4!? fxe6 20.♖xe6 ♗e5 21.♘xc6 ♗xc3=. **19...♖fe8 20.♖ad1 ♗f8 21.exf7+ ♔xf7 22.♖d7+ ♖e7 23.♖exe7+?!** Safer was 23.♖dxe7+ ♗xe7 24.♘d4. **23...♗xe7 24.g3?** White has to watch his back rank, but this is a big mistake. Correct was 24.♗d2. **24...♘xc3 25.♘d4?** In a difficult (nearly losing) position White makes another mistake that decides the game. **25...♖a1+ 26.♔g2 ♖d1** The pin wins material. **27.♗e3 c5 28.bxc5 bxc5 29.♘xb5 ♖xd7 30.♘xc3 c4** Black is an exchange up and won.

☐ **Daniel Campora**
■ **Boris Gulko**
Biel 1988

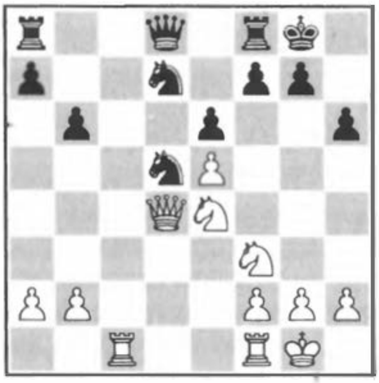
1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 b6 4.♘gf3
This must be the strongest move. White does not commit himself to anything in the centre yet. Black should now reply with
4...♘f6
It would be to soon to play 4...♗b7 as after 5.♗b5+ c6 6.♗d3 strategically Black would want to play 6...♗a6 but that would involve the loss of an important tempo in the opening (see the main game where Gulko has played 4...♘f6).
5.♗b5+



Again White checks the king to disturb Black's coordination, but here he doesn't succeed. Black is happy to reply with 5...c6 and 6...♗a6 achieving one of his main strategical goals. The immediate 5.♗d3 requires more accurate play from Black although he should be OK:

- 5...♗a6?! 6.♗xa6 ♘xa6 7.exd5 ♕xd5 (certainly not 7...exd5 8.♕e2+! ♕e7 9.♘e5±) 8.c4 ♕b7 is a favourite of German grandmaster Gerald Hertneck. While playable he has found no followers. White has an opening advantage after 9.0-0.
- 5...♗e7!. I think that this is the most accurate move. Black just continues with his development and waits for things to come: 6.0-0 dxe4 (now that White has castled kingside it makes sense to go for the Rubinstein.) 7.♘xe4 ♗b7 8.♕e2 0-0.

In practice two top-level games ended in quick draws from this position (Parma-Ljubojevic, Ljubljana 1975, and Balashov-Gulko, Moscow 1982).
5...c6 6.♗d3 ♗a6 7.♗xa6
7.♕e2 ♗xd3 8.♕xd3 ♗e7 9.0-0 0-0 10.♖d1 ♕c7 11.c4 ♖d8 12.cxd5 cxd5 13.e5 ♘fd7 14.♘f1 ♘c6 was equal in Polivoda-Socko, Warsaw rapid 2005.
7...♘xa6 8.e5
8.exd5 cxd5 (bad is 8...exd5? 9.♕e2+ ♕e7 10.♘e5±) 9.♘e5 (9.c4, threatening ♕a4+ again, is equal after 9...♘c7) 9...♗d6 10.♕e2 ♘c7 11.♘f1 ♕c8 12.♘g3 ♕a6 and Black was more than comfortable in Saren-Andersson, Helsinki zonal 1972.
8.♕e2?! is inaccurate because of 8...♘b4!.
8...♘d7 9.0-0 c5 10.c4!? Increasing the tension, but I would prefer 10.c3. **10...♘c7 11.cxd5 ♘xd5** Not 11...exd5?! 12.♘b1! and Black is worse. **12.♘e4 ♗e7 13.♗g5!** Black is fine after 13.dxc5 ♘xc5 14.♘xc5 ♗xc5. **13...0-0 14.♖c1 cxd4 15.♕xd4 ♗xg5 16.♘exg5 h6 17.♘e4**

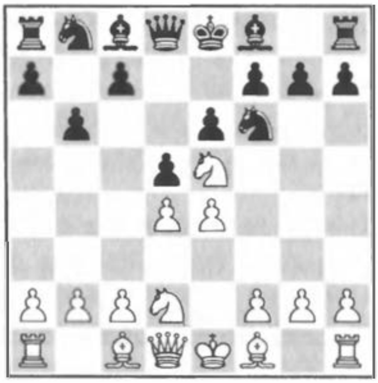


Black has a strong knight on d5 and a solid position. White has more space and a future ♘d6 followed by doubling on the c-file could become annoying. Gulko recognizes the danger of passivity and now plays the very neat **17...b5!** As Gulko indicated in his notes in the *Informant* Black plans either ♕b6 or ♕a5 to gain sufficient counterplay. **18.♘d6?!** Black has counterplay after 18.♖c6 ♕a5 19.a3 b4. While 18.a3!? ♕b6 19.♕xb6 axb6 should be equal. **18...♕b6 19.♖fe1 ♖fd8 20.♕xb6?** Both the computer and Gulko indicate that White could keep even chances with 20.♘f5!. **20...axb6 21.♘xb5 ♖xa2** Black now has a slight advantage. His rook is on the second rank, while his d5-knight glues the entire position together. **22.♖c2 ♘c5 23.♔f1?** 23.g3∓ Gulko. **23...♘b4 24.♖ce2 ♘bd3 25.♖b1 ♖da8!** White is really suffering now. **26.♘a3 ♘a4 27.♘e1 ♘f4!** Not 27...♘dxb2? 28.♘c4. **28.♖e4? ♘d5 29.♘ac2** 29.♘c4 ♘ac3–+. **29...♘xb2** Black is a sound pawn up and won.

☐ **Jan Voormans**
■ **Robert Atlas**
Dieren 1989

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 b6 4.♘gf3 ♘f6 5.exd5

This looks boring after 5...exd5, but it contains some venom in combination with 6.♘e5. Black also has to care after the immediate 5.♘e5.



Bad is 5...dxe4 because of 6.♗b5+!, when White has at least a slight edge: 6...♗d7 (6...♘bd7? 7.♘c6+–; 6...♔e7?!; 6...♘fd7?! 7.♘xe4) 7.♘xd7 ♘bxd7 8.♗c6±.

Against 5...♗b7 the check is also unpleasant: 6.♗b5+! c6 7.♗d3 and White keeps an edge here. For example 7...♗e7 (7...dxe4 8.♘xe4 ♕xd4 9.♘xf6+ gxf6 10.♘xf7! ♖g8 11.♕h5!±; 7...♗d6 and now 8.♘xf7!? is Igor Zaitsev's suggestion. He calls it unclear, but White ought to be better after, say 8...♔xf7 9.e5 c5 10.♘f3; 7...c5 is best met by 8.0-0) 8.exd5 exd5 9.0-0 0-0 10.♖e1!?. Compared to a normal Exchange Variation White has some plusses. In practice White did well.

Correct is 5...c6! 6.♗d3 ♗e7 7.exd5 exd5 (7...cxd5) 8.0-0 0-0 9.♖e1 (now the bishop is still on c8 – compared to the line after 5...♗b7 above – this increases Black's defensive options) 9...♕c7 10.♘df3 ♗d6 11.c3 ♖e8 (11...♗a6!? 12.♗xa6 ♘xa6 13.♕d3 ♘b8) 12.♗f4 ♘bd7 13.c4!? (13.♕c2 ♘f8) 13...♘f8 14.♖c1 ♘h5 15.♗d2 ♗e6 16.♘g5 (16.cxd5 ♗xd5 17.♗b5!; 16.c5!) 16...♘f6 17.♘xe6 ♘xe6 18.cxd5 ♘xd4 19.♘xc6 ♖xe1+ 20.♗xe1 ♗xh2+ 21.♔h1 ♗f4 22.♖c4 ♘xc6 23.dxc6 ♖e8, and Black had kept his act together, and had sufficient counterplay by now in Batsanin-Totsky, Perm 1998.

5...exd5

Black can capture on d5 with a piece. Totsky has favoured 5...♕xd5 in a few outings. While 5...♘xd5 was played by Rozentalis.

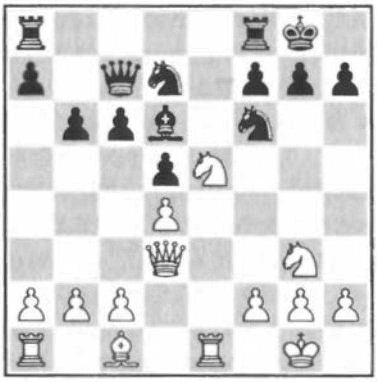
6.♘e5

The only dangerous continuation. The check on b5 is inappropriate now: 6.♗b5+ c6 7.♗d3 ♗d6 8.0-0 0-0 9.♖e1 ♗g4 10.♘f1 ♕c7 11.h3 ♗h5 12.♗g5 ♘bd7 13.♗h4 ½-½, Röder-Weiner, Bad Neustadt 1986.

6...c6

This is accurate. 6...♗b7?! and now 7.♗b5+ and 6...♗d6?! 7.♗b5+ are known to favour White.

7.♗d3 ♗d6 8.0-0 0-0 9.♖e1 ♕c7 10.♘f1 10.c3 ♗a6 is equal. **10...♗a6 11.♘g3 ♗xd3 12.♕xd3 ♘bd7**



Black had equalized. The rest of the game (Black won in the end) is not relevant for our subject.

☐ **Evgeny Vasiukov**
■ **Boris Gulko**
Volgodonsk 1981

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 b6 4.♘gf3 ♘f6 5.e5 ♘fd7

Note that another common move order to reach this position is 3.♘d2 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘fd7 5.♘gf3 and only now 5...b6. White now has to determine the further course of action. He can simply develop with 6.♗d3 and allow the trade of bishops. He can also move his c-pawn. With 6.c4 he increases the tension in the centre; 6.c3 bolsters the centre and postpones the development of the bishop (in case of a quick ...♗a6 White hopes to gain a tempo).

6.♗d3

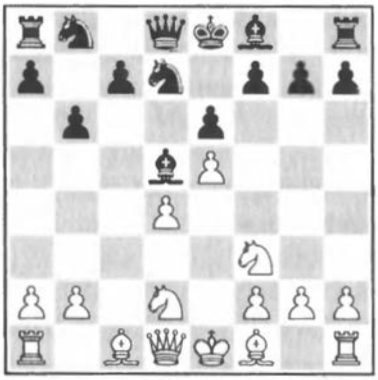
● 6.c3 ♗e7. Now White can decide to wait by playing on either side:

– 7.h4!? ♗a6 (7...c5; 7...h6) 8.h5 c5 9.♖h3 cxd4 10.cxd4 f5 11.exf6 ♗xf6 12.♗xa6 ♘xa6 13.♕e2 ♘c7 14.♘f1 0-0 15.♗f4 was unclear in Lobron-Qi Jingxuan, Hannover 1983.

– 7.b4!? ♗a6 (7...c5) 8.b5 ♗b7 9.a4 a6 10.♗b2 axb5 11.axb5 ♖xa1 12.♕xa1 c6 13.♗a3 cxb5 14.♗xb5±, Zapata-Nogueiras, Cienfuegos 1997.

– Alternatively, he can also agree to the trade of bishops with 7.♗d3 ♗a6 8.♗xa6 ♘xa6 9.♕e2 (9.0-0 c5 10.a3 ♘c7 11.♖e1, Dolmatov-Rakic, Frunze 1983. And now simply 11...0-0 looks better than 11...♘f8 as in the game) 9...♕c8 10.0-0 0-0 11.♖e1 c5 12.a3 ♘ab8! 13.♘f1 ♕a6 14.♕d1 ♘c6 was OK for Black in Rantalainen-Westerinen, Uppsala 1969.

● 6.c4 ♗b7 7.cxd5 ♗xd5



Now the bishop is useful on the long diagonal, but White has more space.

– 8.♗c4 ♗e7 (8...♗xc4 9.♘xc4±) 9.0-0 c6 10.♕e2 0-0 11.♘e4 and now rather than 11...a5?!, A.Sokolov-Gulko, Moscow 1983, Black should play Gulko's 11...♖e8, or 11...b5 12.♗d3 ♘b6 13.♗g5±.

– 8.♗d3 c5 9.♗e4 ♘c6 10.♗xd5 exd5 11.0-0 ♗e7, and play is about equal.

6...♗a6

It makes sense to exchange the bishops immediately, given that White has already spent a tempo on his light-squared bishop.

7.♗xa6 ♘xa6 8.0-0 c5 9.c4

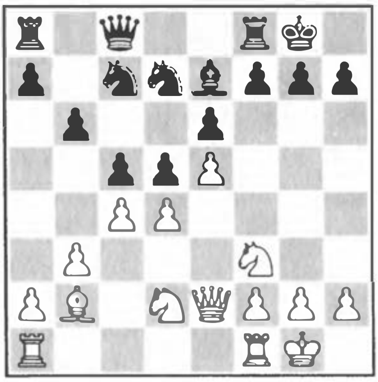
This looks like the best try for an advantage.

9.c3 ♗e7 is about equal. 9.♕e2 ♘b4!? 10.c3 ♘c6 is also OK for Black.

9...♗e7 10.♕e2 ♘c7

Fortifying his stronghold on d5 and defending against the indirect attack.

11.b3 0-0 12.♗b2 ♕c8!



A useful manoeuvre to remember. Black places his queen on the f1-a6 diagonal (sometimes on the long diagonal), thus connecting his rooks and increasing his influence in the centre.

13.♖fd1

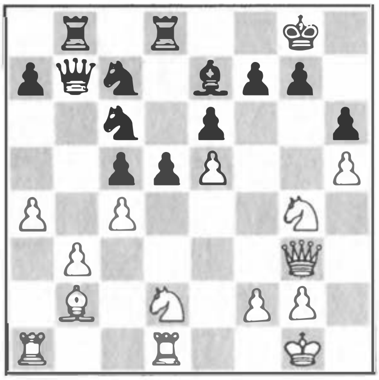
13.♖ac1 ♕a6 14.♖c2 ♖ac8 15.♖fc1 ♖fd8 16.g3 ♘b8 (a good move, the knight is heading for c6 – we may observe the same knight dance in the main game) 17.dxc5 bxc5 18.♔f1 ♘c6 19.a3 (19.cxd5 ♕xe2+ 20.♔xe2 exd5, and the hanging pawns provide Black with sufficient counterplay and are not really a weakness here. For example: 21.♘d4!? ♘xd4+ 22.♗xd4 ♘e6 23.♗b2 a5) 19...♕b7!? 20.♘e1? dxc4! 21.♕xc4 ♘d4 22.♗xd4 ♖xd4 23.♕c3 ♕h1+ 24.♔e2 ♕xh2 and Black won after several inaccuracies on both sides. Canepa-Rossetto, Montevideo 1941.

13...♕a6 14.a4 ♖fd8 15.h4

White aims to use his space advantage to start an offensive on the kingside.

15...♘b8! Gulko is increasing his influence in the centre.

16.h5 h6 17.dxc5 White gives up his pawn chain for the attack – he prepares ♘h2-g4. **17...bxc5 18.♘h2 ♘c6 19.♘g4 ♖ab8** Black has the better structure and may claim a slight advantage. **20.♕f3 ♕b7 21.♕g3 ♔f8 22.♕d3 ♔g8 23.♕g3**

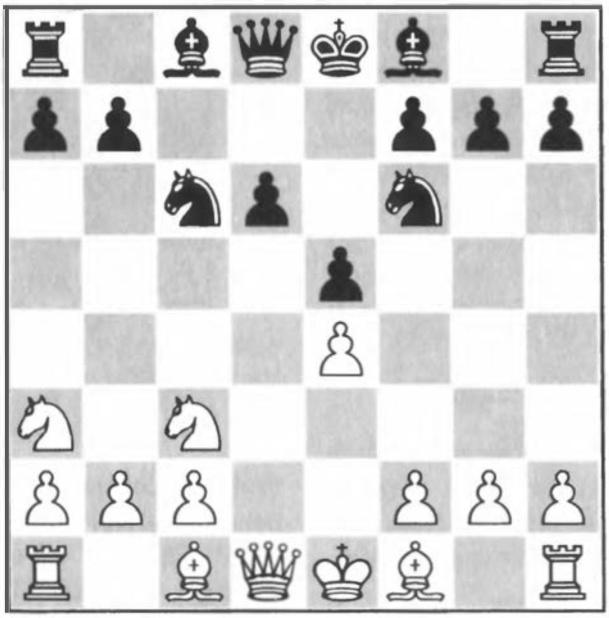


White is satisfied with a draw by repetition. **23...♔h8!** but Gulko isn't! **24.♕f4 ♗g5! 25.♕xf7 ♗xd2 26.♖xd2 ♖f8 27.♕g6 ♘e7 28.♕b1 ♕xb3** Winning back the pawn. The intermediate 28...♖f4 looks attractive, until you spot 29.♘f6! gxf6 30.exf6 ♘f5 31.cxd5 exd5 32.♗e5 ♖e4 33.♖e2! which is the kind of thing you like to avoid when there is a safe edge available. White is better in the complications, and, indeed, winning after 33...♖xe2? 34.♕xf5. **29.cxd5 ♘cxd5 30.♕c1 ♖f4! 31.♖a3** White still had to play 31.♞f6! when Black should calmly go 31...♖c8!. But not 31...gxf6? 32.exf6 ♘xf6 33.♗e5 ♖f5 34.♖b2 ♖xe5 35.♖xb3 ♖xb3 36.♕xh6+. **31...♕b4 32.♘e3 ♘xe3 33.♖xe3 ♘d5 34.♖g3 ♖c4** Black's pieces coordinate well – he wins a pawn now. **35.♕d1 ♕xa4 36.♕e1 ♖c2! 37.♖a3?** This loses a piece after **37...♕c4! 38.♖xa7 ♖bxb2 39.♖xc2 ♕xc2 40.♖a8+ ♔h7 41.♖a1 c4 42.♖c1 ♕d3** and White resigned.

CHAPTER 5

Dorian Rogozenco

SOS versus the Sveshnikov



A voluntary knight retreat

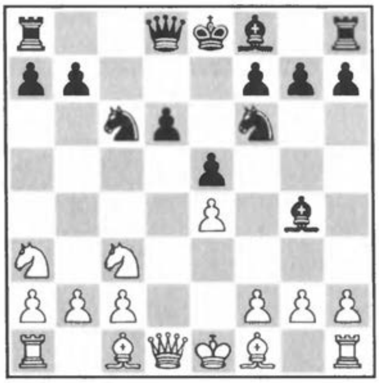
The Sveshnikov Sicilian is a very dynamic opening. The biggest problem in Black's position is the weakness of square d5, while traditionally the main concern for White is the poorly placed knight on a3. In the main lines of this opening at some point White must bring his a3-knight into play, but there is an interesting possibility to solve this issue at once and at the same time almost certainly surprise your opponent. With the help of 7.♘a3 White retreats the knight immediately, without expecting the opponent to attack it with the move ...a6. The idea is crystal clear: Black can't answer 7...b5 and thus the knight will enter quickly into play via square c4.

An unexpected move like 7.♘a3 can greatly surprise your opponent, who will need some time to realize that most things he learned about the Sveshnikov Sicilian are suddenly of little use. Indeed, White will succeed to bring his knight to e3 without having to move the c-pawn (in the main lines of the Sveshnikov Sicilian c2-c3 is essential to bring the a3-knight to e3 via square c2). 7.♘a3 was used by several Grandmasters, such as L-D Nisipeanu, O.Korneev, C.Bauer, H.Hamdouchi and D.Mastrovasilis. It must be mentioned that if Black reacts well, 7.♘a3 does not bring an opening advantage. Nevertheless the fact that some of these grandmasters have played it on more than just one occasion means that apart from its surprise value 7.♘a3 has also certain objective merits.

In the diagram position White plans ♗g5 and ♘c4-e3, quickly taking firm control over square d5. In practice most players react in the spirit of the Sveshnikov Sicilian by continuing 7...a6, hoping that White will play 8.♗g5 and the game will transpose into well-known theoretical paths after 8...b5. We shall also look at all other moves that have been played in practice (by sorting them according to their increasing order of popularity: 7...♗g4, 7...h6, 7...♗e7 and 7...♗e6).

Variation I

7...♗g4



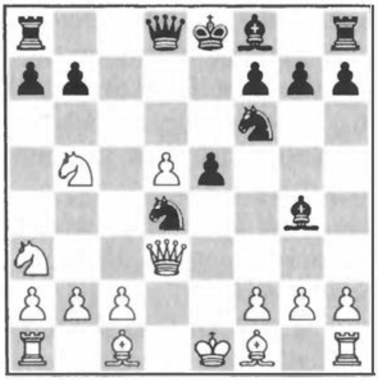
This rare move indicates a good positional understanding: before playing the bishop to e6 Black provokes weaknesses in White's camp.

8.♕d3!?

A very ambitious answer. White leaves the bishop on g4 and hopes to exploit its exposed position later by bringing the knight to e3. After 8.f3 ♗e6 the standard plan with ♗g5xf6 and ♘c4-e3 is not attractive for White due to the dark-squared weaknesses created by 8.f3. Instead, White should continue 9.♗c4 ♗e7! (9...♗xc4 10.♘xc4 is an edge for White) 10.♗e3 0-0 11.0-0, which is about equal. Of course 8.♗e2 ♗xe2 9.♕xe2 d5! is equal.

8...♗e7

8...♘b4? runs into 9.♕b5+ winning a pawn. For the evaluation of 8.♕d3 it is important to see what happens after 8...d5 9.exd5 ♘d4 (in case of 9...♘b4 10.♕g3 ♘bxd5 11.♗b5+ ♗d7 12.♘xd5 ♘xd5 13.0-0 the lead in development secures White a clear advantage) 10.♘cb5!



Without practical material a precise assessment of such a sharp position is hardly possible, but the following variations show at least that it is not easy for Black to keep the initiative and thus prove compensation for the pawn:

Now 10...♗f5 is met by 11.♕g3.

Also insufficient is 10...♘xd5 11.♘xd4exd4 12.♕xd4 ♕e7+ 13.♗e3 ♘xe3 (13...♕b4+ 14.c3 ♕xd4 15.♗xd4 ♗xa3 16.bxa3 0-0 17.f3±) 14.♗b5+! ♗d7 15.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 16.♕xe3+.

So, we must investigate 10...♗xa3 11.♘xd4, and now:

- in case of 11...exd4 12.♕xa3 ♕xd5 13.f3 White intends ♗d3 and 0-0 with advantage. The bishop sac is insufficient: 13...0-0-0 14.fxg4 ♖he8+ 15.♔f2 ♘xg4+ 16.♔g1 ♖e1 17.♕g3!.
- 11...♗b4+ 12.c3 ♕xd5 (12...exd4

13.♕b5+ ♕d7 14.♕xb4 0-0-0 15.f3 ♖he8+ 16.♔f2 ♕xd5 17.♕xd4!) 13.♕b5+ ♕xb5 14.♘xb5 ♗a5 15.♘d6+ ♔e7 16.♘xb7 ♗b6 17.b3 ♘d5 (17...♘e4 18.f3 ♘f2 19.fxg4 ♘xh1 20.♗a3+ ♔f6 21.♘c5±) 18.♗a3+ ♔f6 19.♖c1, and again White defends, keeping the extra pawn.

9.♗g5 0-0 10.♘c4 ♘b4

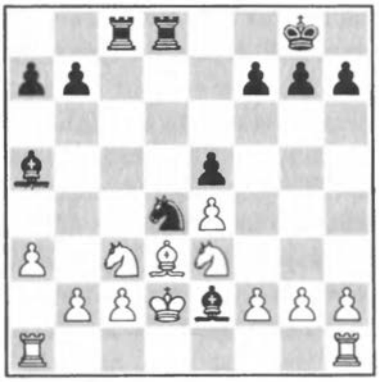
Although the typical position arising after 10...♘d4 11.♘e3 ♗e6 12.♗xf6 ♗xf6 13.♘cd5 ♗g5 14.c3 ♘c6 15.♗e2 is very close to equal, in such positions White can claim a plus thanks to his better control in the centre. A possible follow-up is 15...g6 16.0-0 f5 17.exf5 gxf5 18.f4 ♗h6 19.♖ad1 ♔h8 20.g3, with an edge for White.

11.♕d2 ♖c8 12.a3 ♘c6 13.♗xf6 ♗xf6 14.♕xd6 ♘d4

Radjabov must have been unsure about Black's compensation after 14...♕e8 15.♕d2 ♘d4 16.♗d3.

15.♕xd8 ♗xd8 16.♘e3 ♗a5 17.♔d2 ♖fd8 18.♗d3 ♗e2!

This strong resource offers Black good chances to keep the balance. Worse is 18...♗e6 19.b4 ♗b6 20.♘cd5±.



19.♖ab1

White decided to make a draw, since due to the positional threat 20.b4 Black is now forced to repeat moves.

There are two possible alternatives. The quiet 19.♘d5 ♗xd3 20.♔xd3 ♗xc3 21.bxc3 ♘e6 22.♔e3 ♔f8 23.♖hd1 leaves White with a minimal edge, while 19.b4 leads to a double-edged position after 19...♘xc2 (worse is 19...♗xd3 20.♔xd3 ♘b3+? 21.♘ed5 ♘xa1 22.bxa5) 20.♘xe2 (20.♔xe2 ♘xe3 21.♔d2 ♘c4+ 22.♔e2 is equal) 20...♘xb4! 21.axb4 ♗xb4+ 22.♘c3 ♗xc3+ 23.♔e2 ♗xa1 24.♖xa1 a6, and now in spite of the fact that Black has a rook and two passed pawns for White's two minor pieces, the transfer of the bishop to d5 reduces the rooks' activity: 25.♗c4! ♔f8 26.♗d5.

19...♗xd3

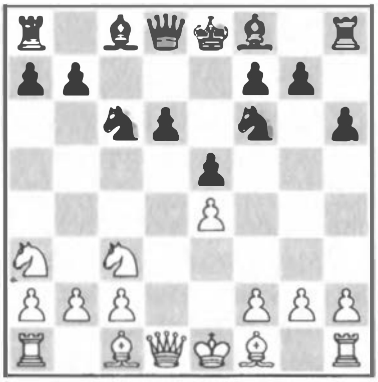
Not 19...♔f8? 20.b4 ♗xd3 (now 20...♘xc2? simply loses a piece after 21.♘xe2) 21.cxd3 ♗b6 22.♘cd5±.

20.cxd3 ♘b3+ 21.♔c2 ♘d4+ ½-½

Bauer-Radjabov, Enghien-les-Bains, 2003.

Variation II

7...h6

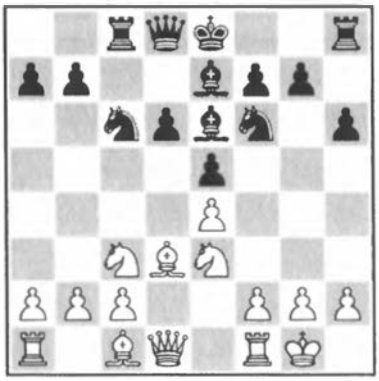


In order to fight for square d5 Black spends a tempo and prevents ♗c1-g5.

8.♘c4 ♗e6

In Gasanov-Matiushin, Mariupol 2003, there followed 8...♗e7 9.♘e3 ♗e6 10.g3!? (10.♗d3 0-0 11.0-0 ♖c8 transposes to the main line, but an interesting alternative to consider here is 10.♗c4, since Black's standard reaction to allow the exchange of bishops on e6 would leave a weak square g6 in Black's camp) 10...0-0 11.♗g2 ♕d7 12.0-0 ♖fd8 13.f4 ♗h3 14.f5 ♗xg2 15.♔xg2 ♘d4?! (15...d5 16.exd5 ♘b4 was called for, although after 17.♕f3 Black can't take back the pawn right away – 17...♘bxd5 18.♘exd5 ♘xd5 – due to 19.♖d1) 16.♘ed5, with a positional advantage for White.

9.♘e3 ♖c8 10.♗d3 ♗e7 11.0-0



11...0-0

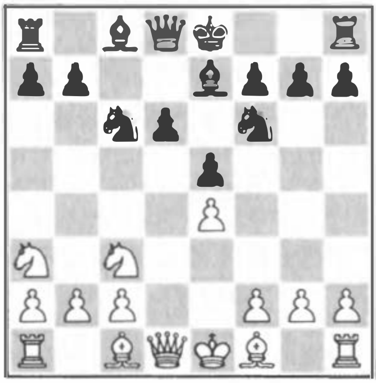
Now the game Van Blitterswijk-Reinderman, Netherlands 2006, continued 12.f4. The drawback of this move is obvious: it offers Black a wonderful square on e5 for his pieces. The game continued 12...exf4 13.♖xf4 ♖e8 14.♔h1 ♗f8 15.♗d2 g6 16.♕g1 ♗g7 17.♘ed5 ♘d7 18.♗e3 a6 19.a4 ♘ce5 20.♗d4 ♘c6 21.♗xg7 ♔xg7 22.♕f2 ♖f8 23.♖f1 ♕g5, with mutual chances. Later Black outplayed his opponent in a double-edged battle.

A more promising continuation is 12.♘cd5, with the idea of c3 and ♗c2. Taking on d5 favours White due to the better control of the light squares after 12...♗xd5 13.exd5 ♘b4 14.♗f5.

Notice that the pawn on h6 is a weakness for Black in such structures.

Variation III

7...♗e7



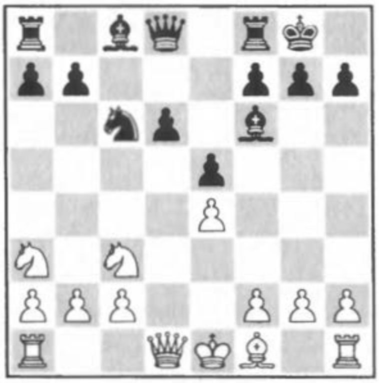
8.♗g5

Here 8.♘c4 allows 8...♘xe4! anyway, when after 9.♘xe4 d5 10.♘g3 dxc4 11.♕xd8+ ♗xd8 12.♗xc4 the endgame is equal.

8...♘xe4

The justification of the previous move: by simplifying the position Black hopes to solve all opening problems as quickly as possible.

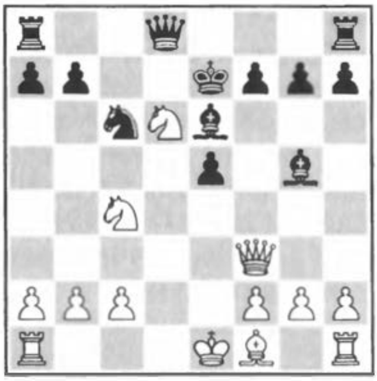
- 8...♗g4 must be answered either with 9.♕d3, similar to Variation I 7...♗g4, or with 9.♕d2 ♖c8 10.♘c4 0-0 11.♘e3 ♗e6 12.♗d3.
- White's prospects also look preferable after 8...0-0 9.♗xf6 ♗xf6



– 10.♘c4 ♗e6 11.♕xd6 ♕c8 12.♕d2 ♖d8 and now in the game Bauer-Lautier, France 2002, instead of 13.♕c1 ♘d4 14.♘e3 ♗e7 15.a3 ♗g5 which offered Black good play for the pawn, stronger is 13.♘d5 ♘e7 14.♘ce3 ♗g5 15.c4, and Black still has to prove his compensation.

– an interesting alternative is 10.♗c4!?. The game Nisipeanu-Fluvia, Andorra 2003, continued 10...a6 11.♘d5 b5 12.♘xf6+ ♕xf6 13.♗d5 ♗d7 14.c3 b4 15.♘c4 (a standard and ambitious method for White, who is ready to remain with a weak pawn on c3 in order to control square d4; 15.cxb4 ♖ab8 is about equal) 15...♖ab8 16.♕a4!? ♖fc8 17.0-0 ♖c7 18.♖ad1 – Nisipeanu's provocative play worked out perfectly – 18...♘d4 19.♕a5 ♘f3+? 20.♔h1 ♖c5 21.♕xa6 ♕f4 22.g3 ♕g4 23.♕xd6 ♖f8 24.♘xe5 ♘xe5 25.f3! ♘xf3 26.♕xc5 and White won quickly.

9.♘xe4 ♗xg5 10.♘xd6+ ♔e7 11.♘ac4 ♗e6 12.♕f3



This position was twice played on grandmaster level and in both games Black continued:

12...♘d4

The surprising 12...♗d2+ 13.♘xd2 (13.♔xd2?! ♗xc4) 13...♕xd6 offers Black good chances to keep the balance, although White still has resources to fight for an advantage: 14.♗d3 ♖hd8 (14...♕b4 15.a3! ♕g4 16.♕e3 ♕xg2 17.0-0-0 secures White a clear initiative) 15.0-0 ♔f8 and now either 16.♘e4 ♕e7 17.♕e3 h6 18.f4, or 16.♖ad1!? ♕b4 17.♘e4 ♕xb2 18.♖b1 ♕xa2 19.♖xb7.

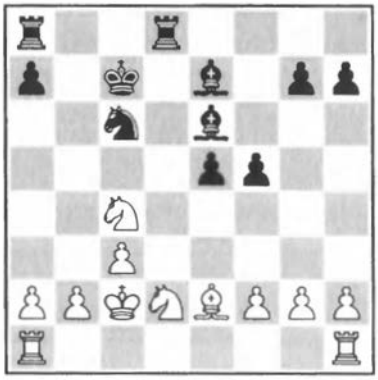
13.♕xb7+ ♕d7

In Mastrovasilis-Spasov, Kavala 2007, 13...♔f8 14.♗d3 f5 15.0-0 e4 16.♗xe4! fxe4 17.♖ad1 ♗f6 18.♕xe4 ♗xc4 19.♘xc4 ♖c8 20.♘e5 ♕e7 21.f4 ♘xc2 22.♖c1 was just lost for Black.

14.♕xd7+ ♔xd7 15.♔d1!?

This looks more promising for White than the game Mastrovasilis-Nedev, 2007, which continued 15.♗d3 ♗e7 16.c3 ♗xd6 17.♘xd6 ♔xd6 18.cxd4 exd4 19.♔d2 ♗d5 20.f3 and the players agreed a draw.

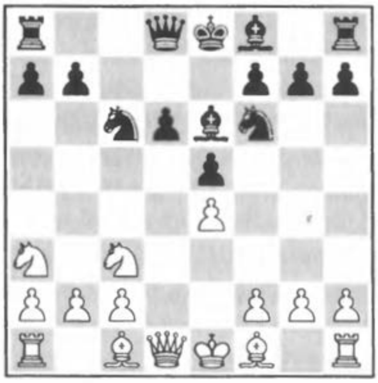
15...♗e7 16.♘e4 ♘c6 17.c3 f5 18.♘ed2 ♔c7 19.♗e2 ♖hd8 20.♔c2



Thanks to the bishop pair Black has some compensation for the pawn, but with no weaknesses in his structure and no development problems it is rather White who plays for a win.

Variation IV

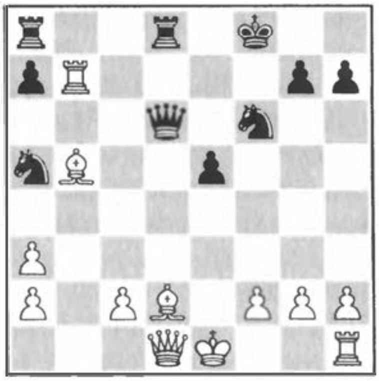
7...♗e6



The purpose of this move is to quickly develop the queenside, increasing Black's control over the important squares c4 and d5.

8.♗g5 ♖c8

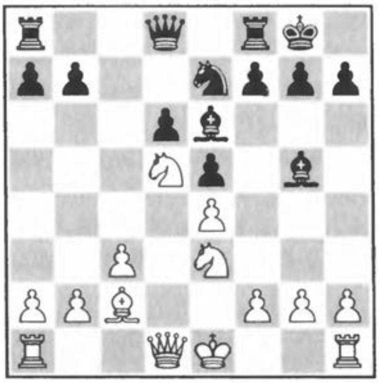
– In the game Hintikka-Ivanov, Finland 2004, the Russian player tried to confuse his opponent with 8...d5. White reacted correctly: 9.exd5 ♗xa3 10.bxa3 ♕a5 11.dxe6 ♕xc3+ 12.♗d2 ♕c5 (12...♕xa3 13.exf7+ ♔xf7 14.♗c4+ ♔e7 15.0-0 also doesn't solve Black's problems) 13.exf7+ ♔xf7 14.♖b1 ♖hd8 15.♖b5 ♕d6 (more cautious is to defend the worse endgame after 15...♕e7 16.♕b1 b6 17.♗c4+ ♔f8 18.♗b4 ♘xb4 19.♕xb4) 16.♗c4+ ♔e8 17.♖xb7 (17.♕e2±) 17...♘a5 18.♗b5+ ♔f8



19.♖d7! (19.♗b4? loses due to 19...♕xb4+ 20.axb4 ♖xd1+ 21.♔xd1 ♘xb7) 19...♖xd7 20.♗xd7 ♕xa3 and now the easiest way to keep the advantage was 21.♕b1 ♔f7 22.♗f5 g6 23.♗d3 e4 24.♗b5.

– 8...a6 leads to the Bird Variation, traditionally arising via the move order 7.♗g5 a6 8.♘a3 ♗e6. White achieves an advantage with 9.♘c4 ♖c8 10.♘d5 ♗xd5 11.♗xf6! gxf6 12.♕xd5. Black's activity won't compensate for his ruined pawn structure and the absence of the important light-squared bishop. For instance: 12...♘d4 (or 12...♘b4 13.♕d2 d5 14.exd5 ♕xd5 15.♕xd5 ♘xd5 16.0-0-0 with advantage in endgame) 13.♗d3 ♕e7 14.♕a5 ♖xc4 (14...♖c5 15.♕d2±) 15.♗xc4 ♞xc2+ 16.♔e2 ♘xa1 17.♖c1! and Black is in trouble.

– In my opinion the most accurate for Black is to transpose to similar positions from Variation III by continuing 8...♗e7. Let's see why: 9.♗xf6 (9.♘c4 followed by 10.♗xf6 merely transposes, since 9...♘xe4 favours White: 10.♘xe4 ♗xg5 11.♘cxd6+ ♔f8 12.♘xb7 ♕xd1+ 13.♖xd1 ♗e7 14.♘bc5) 9...♗xf6 10.♘c4 ♘d4 (the knight will have to return soon, but Black needs this move in order to protect pawn d6; 10...0-0 11.♕xd6 ♕c8 leads to a position from Bauer-Lautier, France 2002, see 7...♗e7 8.♗g5 0-0) 11.♘e3 (interesting is 11.♘d5!? ♗xd5 12.exd5 0-0 13.c3 ♘f5 14.♗d3 ♘e7 – 14...e4 doesn't work – White simply takes the pawn: 15.♗xe4 ♖e8 16.♕d3 ♕e7 17.♘d2 ♗g5 18.0-0 ♗xd2 19.♗xf5± – 15.0-0 g6 16.a4, with a complex middlegame) 11...0-0 12.♘cd5 ♗g5 13.c3 ♘c6 14.♗d3 ♘e7 15.♗c2



This position is similar to the main line, but here Black has avoided White's extra options of 9.♗xf6 (Miralles-Boyd, mentioned below) and 10.♗xf6.

9.♘c4

This is the standard continuation. Nevertheless, it is very likely that 9.♗xf6 is at least not worse. The point is that the exchange of the bishop for the f6-knight is on White's agenda anyway, and bringing the opponent's queen to the exposed position on f6 makes a lot of sense (the knight will come to d5 with tempo later). The only available game continued 9...♕xf6 (playing in the spirit of the Sveshnikov Sicilian by taking with the pawn, 9...gxf6, is usually less attractive when the light-squared bishop has already defined its position. After 10.♘c4 the middlegame remains complicated, but my feeling is that White can be optimistic) 10.♘c4 ♕g6 (Black had to return the queen and accept a slightly inferior position after 10...♕d8 11.♘e3) 11.♘xd6+ ♗xd6 12.♕xd6 ♘d4 (missing White's answer) 13.0-0-0!. Suddenly Black is in deep trouble: his activity evaporates quickly, while in reality it is White who has threats in a position with an extra pawn: 13...♕g5+ 14.♔b1 ♕e7 15.♘b5♖d8 16.♕xe7+♔xe7 17.♘xd4 exd4 18.♗e2, with a technical win for White in the endgame, Miralles-Boyd, France 2000.

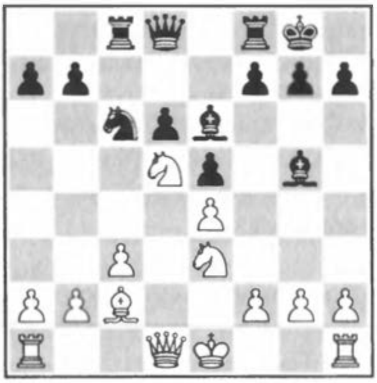
9...♘d4

Strategically bad is 9...♗e7?! 10.♗xf6 gxf6 11.♘e3.

10.♘e3

Again 10.♗xf6 ♕xf6 11.♘e3 is a strong alternative.

10...♗e7 11.♗xf6 ♗xf6 12.♗d3 ♗g5 13.♘cd5 0-0 14.c3 ♘c6 15.♗c2

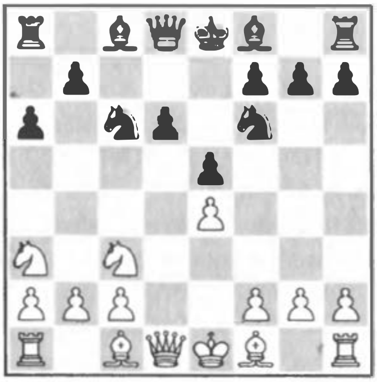


The position is reminiscent of the usual Sveshnikov Sicilian, with the difference that here Black has pawns on a7 and b7 instead of on a6 and b5 (which nevertheless doesn't mean any extra tempos for Black, since he lost time with ♘c6-d4-c6). In practice this position was met twice:

- **15...♘e7 16.♘xe7+ ♕xe7 17.♘d5 ♕d7 18.0-0 ♔h8 19.♔h1 f5 20.exf5 ♗xf5 21.f3 ♕e6 22.♗xf5 ♖xf5 23.♖e1** Stronger is 23.♕d3! ♖c5 24.♖ad1 with a strategic advantage. **23...♖c5 24.♘e3 ♖f8 25.♘g4 ♗f6 26.♕b3 ♕d7 27.♖ad1** White is better, Makoli-Ekeberg, Kemer 2007.
- **15...♔h8 16.h4** Better is 16.0-0 g6 17.♕d3 (or 17.♕e2) followed by ♖ad1. If 17...f5 then 18.exf5 gxf5 19.f4 gives a slight advantage for White. **16...♗xe3 17.♘xe3 ♕b6 18.♗b3 ♘a5! 19.♘d5 ♕b5 20.♘b4 ♘xb3 21.axb3 f5 22.exf5 ♖xf5 23.♕xd6 ♗xb3 24.♕d3 ♕xd3 25.♘xd3** The endgame soon ended in a draw, Makoli-Zhigalko, Dresden 2007.

Variation V

7...a6



In almost half of the games in which White played 7.♘a3, Black answered 7...a6. However, we deal here with a typical case when quantity does not mean quality. Objectively, 7...a6 is dubious which will become clear after the explanation below.

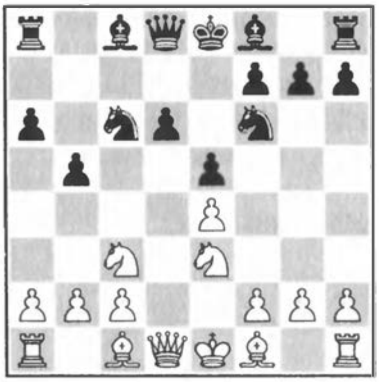
The diagram position can also arise via a different move order: 4...e5 5.♘b5 d6 6.♘1c3 a6 7.♘a3 and now 7...♘f6 (as in some of the games mentioned below). Due to the fact that after the last move Black will always have to reckon with the ♗c1-g5, 7...♘f6 is considered clearly inferior to 7...b5, 7...♗e6 or 7...♗e7 (and even these moves don't guarantee Black a solution to his opening problems!). Thus, in our case the move 7...a6 simply transposes into a favourable theoretical variation for White. Moreover, most Sveshnikov Sicilian players are not familiar with the theory of 4...e5 anyway, and therefore it is very likely that they will feel uncomfortable on this 'new' ground.

8.♘c4! b5

Even strong players get confused in a new situation. In the game Bauer-Mikhalevski, Biel 2002, the Israeli grandmaster played 8...♗e7 9.♗g5 0-0. Black's last two moves are certainly not best. In fact here we have another transposition: 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘c6 5.♘b5 d6 6.♗f4 e5 7.♗e3 a6 8.♘5c3 ♘f6 9.♗g5 ♗e7 10.♘d2 0-0 11.♘c4. In this variation Black is able to hold the balance with accurate play, but the difference is that in our main variation it is White's turn to move! 10.♗xf6 gxf6 (a sad necessity, 10...♗xf6 11.♕xd6 simply loses a pawn) 11.♗d3 ♔h8 12.♕h5 (12.♘e3 also gives a big advantage) 12...♖g8 13.♘e3 ♗e6 14.♘cd5 ♖g5 15.♕d1 ♕g8 16.g3 ♕g7 17.c3 ♕h6 18.♕f3 ♖c8 19.h4 ♕h5 20.♕xh5 ♖xh5 21.♗e2 ♖h6 22.h5 and Black found himself in a completely lost position.

9.♘e3

Compared to the Sveshnikov Sicilian here the knight is on e3 instead of a3, which clearly favours White. The advantage is not overwhelming, though, since the bishop is on c1 instead of g5. However, if Black plays quietly he will soon suffer under positional pressure.



9...b4

The alternatives are:

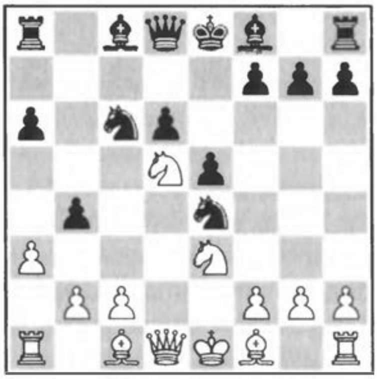
– 9...♗e7 10.g3!? (10.♗d3±). The fianchetto in such situations neutralizes any future Black's attempts to do something active in the centre (like preparing ...d5 or ...f5). 10...h5 (10...b4 11.♘cd5 ♘xe4 12.♗g2 f5 13.g4 is bad for Black) 11.♗g2 h4 12.0-0 ♘d4 13.♘cd5 ♘xd5 14.♘xd5 ♗e6 15.♘e3 hxg3 16.hxg3 ♕d7 17.c3 ♘c6 (17...♗h3? doesn't work: 18.cxd4 ♗xg2 19.♔xg2 ♕h3+ 20.♔f3) 18.♖e1 ♖b8 (18...♗h3 brings nothing in view of 19.♗f3) 19.a4 g6 20.axb5 axb5 21.♘d5 ♗d8 22.♗e3. With each move Black's strategical problems become more and more evident. In the game Anand-Radjabov, Linares 2003, White won convincingly: 22...♔f8 23.b4 ♔g7 24.♕d2 ♗xd5 25.♕xd5 ♘e7 26.♕d2 ♗b6 27.♖ed1 ♖hc8 28.♗h6+ ♔h7 29.♗g5 ♘g8 30.♔h2 ♖c4 31.♗f1 ♖xe4 32.f3 ♘f6 33.♗xf6 ♖e3 and Black resigned without waiting for his opponent's answer.

– 9...♗b7 10.g3 (here too 10.♗d3 should secure White an edge) 10...g6 (taking the pawn is dangerous: 10...b4 11.♘cd5 ♘xe4 12.♗g2 ♘c5 13.0-0 ♗e7 14.♘f5 with an obvious initiative) 11.a4 ♘d4 12.♗g2 ♗g7

13.♘cd5 ♘xd5 14.exd5 bxa4 15.♖xa4 0-0 16.c3 ♘b5 17.0-0 f5 18.♘c4 ♕c7 19.♘a5 ♗c8 20.♘c6 h6 21.♗e3 g5 22.c4 ♘d4 23.♘xd4 exd4 24.♗xd4, White is winning, Hamdouchi-Sengupta, Montpellier 2007.

– Finally 9...♗e6 10.♗d3 g6 11.0-0 ♗g7 12.a4 b4 13.♘cd5 0-0 14.♘xf6+ ♗xf6 15.♗c4 ♘a5 16.♗d5 is also slightly better for White, Korneev-Cheparinov, Seville 2003.

10.♞cd5 ♘xe4 11.a3



This position was reached in the game Anand-Ponomariov, Wijk aan Zee 2003. Owing to the multiple weaknesses in Black's pawn structure and the future activity of the white pieces, the compensation for the pawn is more than sufficient. The following variations are based mainly on Anand's comments.

11...bxa3

The best chance for Black was to return the pawn with 11...b3. Then after 12.cxb3 Black at least can exploit square d4 sometimes, although White retains the advantage anyway.

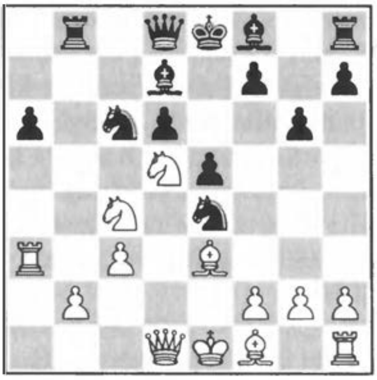
12.♖xa3 g6

The following variations show that White has great play everywhere: 12...♗b7 13.♗c4!±; 12...♗e7 13.♗b5! ♗d7 14.♗xc6 ♗xc6 15.♕g4±; 12...♘f6 13.♘xf6+ ♕xf6 14.♗b5 ♗d7 15.♕d5!±.

13.c3 ♗d7 14.♘c4 ♖b8

Or 14...♗g7 15.♗d3 ♘c5 16.♘xd6+ ♔f8 17.♗e3 ♘xd3+ 18.♕xd3±.

15.♗e3



According to Anand the position is already winning for White. The game continued:

15...f5 16.♗b6 ♖xb6 17.♘cxb6 ♗h6 18.♗d3 0-0 19.♗xe4 fxe4 20.0-0 ♗e6 21.♖xa6 ♕h4 22.♕e2 ♘d8 23.♖a8 ♔g7 24.g3 ♗g4 25.gxh4 ♗xe2 26.♖fa1 g5 27.♘d7 ♖f5 28.♖xd8 gxh4 29.♖g8+ ♔f7 30.♖a7 ♖f3 31.♘7f6+ ♔e6 32.♖e7+ ♔f5 33.♘g4 ♗d2 34.♘ge3+

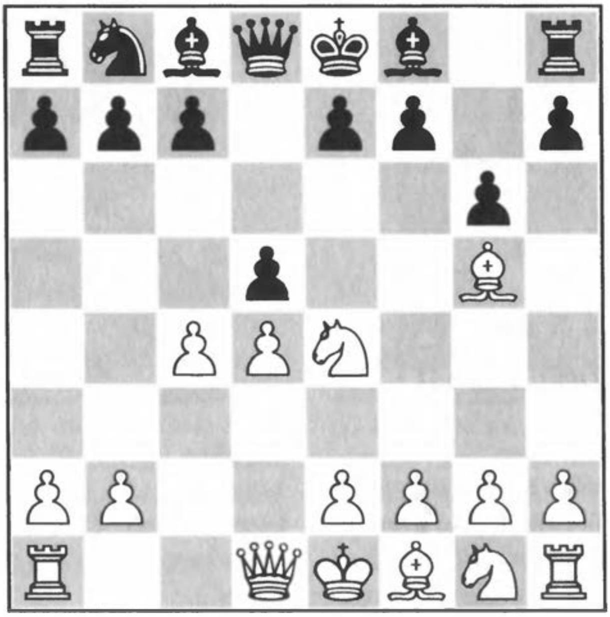
And Ponomariov resigned.

The conclusion is that with a little knowledge of typical plans and possible transpositions, 7.♘a3 can serve as a great surprise weapon against a Sveshnikov player.

CHAPTER 6

Glenn Flear

Seeking Greener Pastures in the Grünfeld



4.♗g5 ♘e4 5.♘xe4!?

When playing against dynamic openings such as the Grünfeld, your opponent is probably looking forward to some mainline theory which he probably knows backwards!

I'm suggesting a straightforward way of getting a lively game without having to learn much theory.

So after the popular moves...

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.♗g5 ♘e4

...your opponent will undoubtedly be surprised by...

5.♘xe4!?

This simple capture seems to take the sting out of Black's central counter-pressure.

You may feel compelled to ask the natural question: why does everyone play 5.♗h4 rather than this move then? Well, other folk certainly have their reasons, but blindly following the latest fashion is a curious way for intelligent people to behave. I'm sure SOS-readers are not generally content to just copy the crowd simply because it's easier than thinking for themselves!

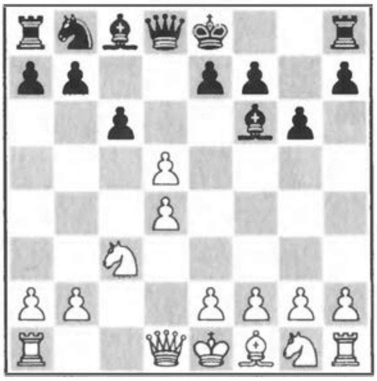
So don't be a sheep! I suggest that you have a good sniff at the following variations, and I'm sure that you'll be tempted by grazing on these fresh green pastures!

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.♗g5 ♘e4

Not the only move, but by far the most popular.

White has comfortable development as well as the centre after 4...dxc4?! 5.e4 ♗g7 6.♗xc4, so that's nothing to worry about.

However 4...♝g7 has been played a few times and deserves closer attention: 5.♗xf6 ♗xf6 6.cxd5 c6



and now White has two tries:

– 7.♖c1 0-0 (or 7...♕b6 8.e3 ♕xb2 9.♘f3 0-0 10.♗c4 ♗g4 11.0-0 and White seems to be doing OK e.g. 11...♕b4 12.♘e4 ♗g7 13.h3 ♝f5 14.♘c5♘d7 15.e4 ♘xc5 16.exf5 ♘e4 17.fxg6 hxg6 18.dxc6 ♘d6 19.♗b3±, Jianu-Shishkin, Bucharest 2006) 8.dxc6 ♗xd4 9.c7 ♗xc3+ 10.♖xc3 ♕xd1+ 11.♔xd1 ♘c6 12.e4 ♗d7 13.♘f3 ♖fc8 14.♗b5 ♖xc7 15.♚d2, Jobava-Miton, Skanderborg 2005, where White has a nominal edge due to his slightly more active pieces.

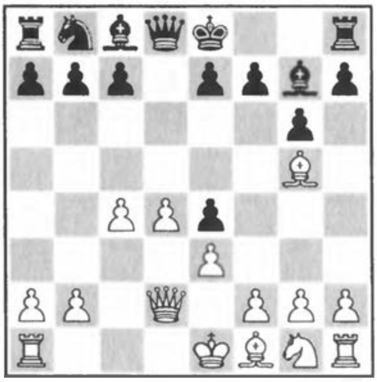
– 7.e4!? ♕b6 8.♘ge2 (or similarly 8.e5 ♕xb2 9.♘ge2 ♗g7 10.g3! 0-0 11.♗g2 cxd5 12.♖b1 ♕a3 13.♘xd5 ♘c6 14.0-0 ♖b8 15.♘ec3 ♗e6 16.♕d2±, I.Sokolov-Ristic, Bosnia 2002) 8...♕xb2 9.♖b1 ♕a3 10.g3 0-0 11.♗g2 ♗g7 12.♕d2 ♕a5 13.e5, Mchedlishvili-Sasikiran, Vlissingen 2004, and White's space advantage gave him a slight pull.

5.♘xe4!?

Which brings us back to the diagram above.

5...dxe4 6.♕d2 ♗g7 7.e3

Mikhalchishin gives the rather off-hand suggestion of 7.0-0-0!? h6 8.♗e3 b5 9.f3 unclear, but I don't really trust this line. Although White may well castle long anyway, there is usually a good case to get a concession or two out of Black first.



7...c5

I faced 7...h6 8.♝h4 g5 9.♗g3 e5 in Flear-Midoux, Calvi 2006, a game that I lost but where White was on top early on. See Game 1.

8.♘e2

The committal 8.d5!? ♕b6 9.0-0-0 ♘d7 10.♘e2 ♘e5 11.♘c3 ♗g4 12.♖e1 f5, Avontuur-Swinkels, Vlissingen 2005, seems satisfactory for Black.

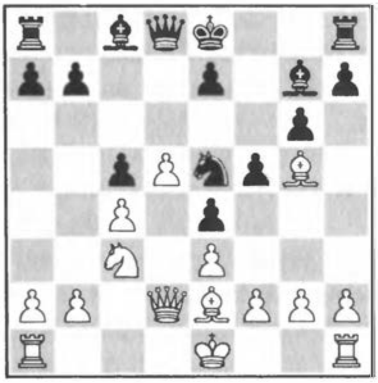
8...♘c6 9.d5 ♘e5 10.♘c3 f5

The standard way of defending the e4-pawn. The alternative 10...♗f5 is less trustworthy, for example 11.♗e2, and now:

– 11...0-0 12.f3 exf3 13.gxf3 favoured White slightly in Flear-Massoni, Calvi 2006, see Game 2.

– 11...♕b6 12.♖c1 h6 13.♗h4 g5 14.♗g3 0-0 15.f4 exf3 16.gxf3 h5?! 17.e4 ♗g6 18.h4!±, Zheliandinov-Mikhalchishin, Lvov 2002. Having had this difficult position with black probably induced Mikhalchishin to give this line a go with white later that year!

11.♗e2



11...♘f7

Black has certain difficulties after 11...0-0 12.d6!, Meynard-Schoucair, St. Affrique 2005, See Game 3.

After 11...h6, Mikhalchishin proposes 12.♗h4 ♕b6 13.f3 exf3 14.gxf3 g5 15.♗f2, with an edge to White. In this White could also try 13.d6!?, e.g. 13...♕xd6 14.♕xd6 exd6 15.0-0-0 ♘f7 (or if 15...♗e6, then simply 16.♘b5 0-0 17.b3±) 16.♘b5 ♚d7 17.♗g3 ♗f8 18.♖d5, with excellent compensation.

12.♗h4!? 0-0 13.f3

as in Mikhalchishin-Jelen, Slovenia 2002, see Game 4.

Am I whetting your appetite? There now follow four illustrative games for you to get your teeth into!

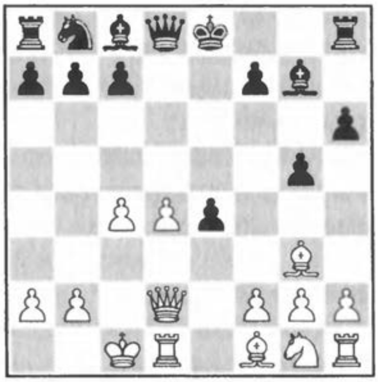
Game 1

☐ **Glenn Flear**
■ **Sebastien Midoux**
Calvi open 2006

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.♗g5 ♞e4 5.♘xe4 dxe4 6.♕d2 ♗g7 7.e3 h6 8.♗h4 g5 9.♗g3 e5!? An original idea. **10.0-0-0**

Capturing on e5 would cede the initiative to Black.

10...exd4 11.exd4



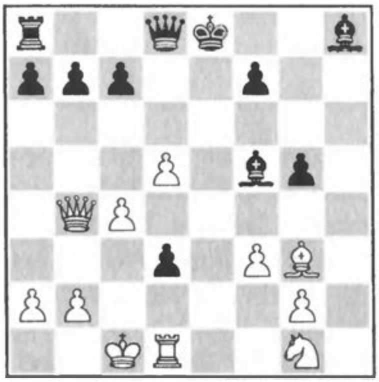
11...♘c6?!

After the superior 11...f5!?, White has 12.f4 to hold back Black's sea of pawns, but then matters are far from clear: 12...♘a6 13.♘e2 c5 14.♗f2 ♞b4 15.♔b1 for instance, is decidedly murky.

12.d5 ♘e5 13.h4

Simpler could be 13.f3, to dissolve Black's central bastion. White then seems to keep up the pressure: 13...exf3 14.♘xf3 ♘xf3 15.gxf3 0-0 16.h4 etc.

13...♗f5 14.hxg5 hxg5 15.♖xh8+ ♗xh8 16.f3 ♘d3+ 17.♗xd3 exd3 18.♕b4



18...c5!?

In order to complicate White's task.

19.♕xc5?!

A case of the wrong pawn. With the b8-square under White's control, the logical move is 19.♕xb7 with a clear plus.

19...♖c8! 20.♖e1+ ♗e6

Uncomfortable looking but Black can actually get away with this!

21.♕b5+ ♔f8 22.♔d2 ♗f5

White may have an extra pawn but his king is now the most vulnerable.

23.♗e5

Alternatives are no better:

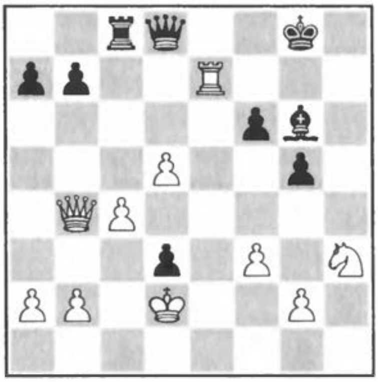
– 23.d6 ♗d7! 24.♕xb7 ♕a5+ 25.♔xd3 ♕xa2 looks shaky for White, and

– 23.♘h3 a6 (23...♕f6?! is well met by 24.♕xb7) 24.♕b4+ ♔g8 25.♘f2 b5 26.b3 ♕b6, also yields great play for Black.

23...♗xe5 24.♖xe5 ♗g6 25.♕b4+ ♔g8 26.♘h3

Time to welcome this knight to the game!

26...f6 27.♖e7?



A really naïve move. White should instead still be able to hold onto half-a-point after 27.♖e3 (or 27.♖e1) e.g. 27...b5 28.b3 bxc4 29.bxc4 ♖b8 30.♕c3 ♕b6 31.♖e6 ♕b1 32.♕xf6 ♕xa2+ 33.♔e3 ♕e2+ 34.♔d4 ♕b2+ 35.♔e3.

27...b5! 28.♖xa7 ♖xc4 29.♕xb5 ♕c8

Now Black is winning.

30.d6?

Not much better is 30.♕b3 ♖c2+ 31.♔d1 ♖xg2 32.d6+ ♔f8 33.d7 ♕c2+ 34.♕xc2 dxc2+ 35.♔c1 ♔e7 and Black wins.

30...♖c2+ 31.♔d1 ♖c1+

And Black won after an error-strewn Zeitnot...

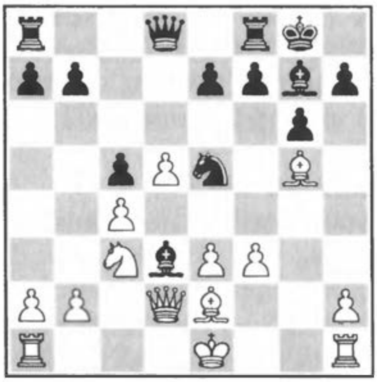
Game 2

☐ **Glenn Flear**
■ **Michael Massoni**
Calvi open 2006

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.♗g5 ♘e4 5.♘xe4 dxe4 6.♕d2 ♗g7 7.e3 c5 8.♘e2 ♘c6 9.d5 ♘e5 10.♘c3 ♗f5 11.♗e2 0-0 12.f3!?

The most direct. Castling (either side!) also comes into consideration.

12...exf3 13.gxf3 ♗d3!?



One way of exchanging bishops!

14.f4 ♗xe2 15.♕xe2 ♘d7 16.0-0

White is more active, but his pawn structure could become weak. On this theme my opponent goes one step further...

16...♗xc3?!

...but this is rather risky. More solid is 16...h6 17.♗h4 ♖e8.

17.bxc3 f6 18.♗h6 ♖e8 19.e4

Although 19.f5 is tempting, giving away the e5-square is unnecessary.

19...♕a5 20.♖f3

I now prefer 20.♕g4! ♘f8 21.♖f3.

20...♔h8 21.♖d1

Here the immediate 21.e5 looks more dangerous.

21...♕a6! 22.e5 ♘b6!

Black obtains counterplay and White's advantage seems to have deserted him.

23.exf6 exf6 24.♖e3 ♕a4

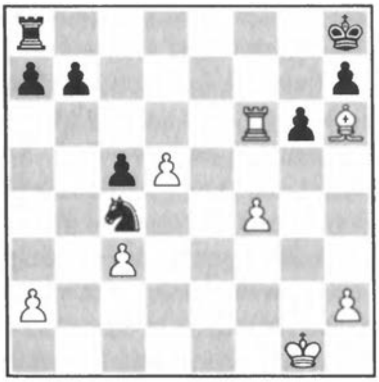
Black doesn't venture 24...♖xe3 25.♕xe3 ♕xc4? because of 26.♕e7.

25.♖e1 ♖xe3 26.♕xe3 ♕d7 27.♕e6

Aiming to keep the initiative in the ending, as the threats of ...♘xc4 and ...♕g4+ are otherwise too annoying.

27...♕xe6 28.♖xe6 ♘xc4 29.♖xf6?!

The wrong way to capture this pawn! Instead, 29.♖e7! b5 30.♗g7+ ♔g8 31.♗xf6 is correct. Then after the further 31...♖d8 32.♖g7+ ♔f8 33.♖xh7 ♖xd5 34.♖xa7± White is even a pawn up, but with split pawns. This fact, plus Black's active pieces, should offer the second player decent drawing chances.



29...♘e3??

Missing a golden opportunity! Necessary is 29...♔g8! (stopping the white rook making its way back to the seventh rank) when 30.f5 ♖d8! is just equal.

30.♖f7?!

Clear-cut is 30.d6! (allowing the threatened fork!) 30...♘g4 31.♗g5 h6 (equally hopeless is 31...♘xf6 32.♗xf6+ ♔g8 33.d7) 32.♗h4 g5 33.♖e6 gxh4 34.d7 and White wins.

30...♘xd5 31.♖xb7 ♔g8 32.♖g7+ ♔h8 33.♖d7 ♘e3 34.♗g7+

Redeploying the bishop to a more influential square.

34...♔g8 35.♗e5 ♘f5 36.♔f2 1-0

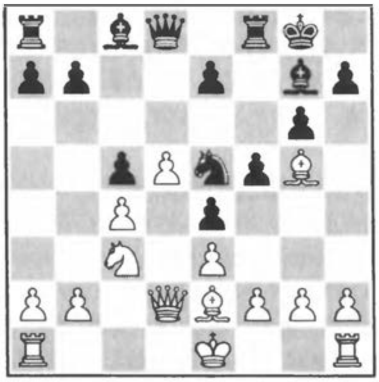
White's king comes into the game and Black is certainly suffering, but his resignation was somewhat premature. White soon wins a pawn, e.g. 36...a5 37.a4 c4 38.♔f3 h6 39.♖c7 ♖d8 40.♖xc4, but Black can still try and resist for a while with something like 40...♖d2.

Game 3

□ **Thibault Meynard**
■ **Henry Schoucair**
St Affrique 2005

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.♗g5 ♘e4 5.♘xe4 dxe4 6.♕d2 ♗g7 7.e3 c5 8.♘e2 ♘c6 9.d5 ♘e5 10.♘c3 f5 11.♗e2 0-0?!

Natural but not good. Black should prefer 11...h6 12.♗h4 0-0, or 11...♘f7 12.♗h4 0-0.



12.d6! ♕xd6

If 12...♗f6 then White obtains a crushing position, e.g. 13.♗xf6 exf6 14.♕d5+ ♘f7 15.0-0-0.

13.♘d5 ♕d7

Not 13...♖f7?, due to 14.♘xe7+.

14.♗xe7 ♖e8 15.♗xc5 b6?

Pushing White's bishop to a superior square. Instead, Black can regain his pawn and limit the damage with 15...b5!, e.g. 16.♗d4 (certainly not 16.cxb5? ♘d3+ 17.♗xd3 ♕xd5, as Black forks the bishops) 16...♘xc4! (after 16...bxc4 White keeps control with 17.♗xe5 ♗xe5 18.♗xc4) 17.♕c3 (whereas 17.♗xc4 bxc4 18.♗xg7?! ♕xg7 doesn't leave White with much) 17...♕xd5 (or here 17...♗b7 18.♘f6+ ♗xf6 19.♗xf6 leaves White with an edge) 18.♗xg7 and White's advantage is only a slight positional one.

16.♗d4 b5 17.♕c3?!

As 17.♗xe5 ♖xe5 18.♖d1 ♕f7 isn't that promising, White should probably try and bolster his centre with 17.b3!.

17...bxc4?!

Here 17...♗b7! would be more resistant.

18.♗xc4 ♘xc4 19.♕xc4 ♕e6?

The final error. The preferable queen move 19...♕f7, would enable Black to put up some resistance, but after 20.♗xg7 ♗e6 21.♗c3 ♗xd5 22.♕d4 he would no doubt suffer on the dark squares!

20.♗xg7 ♔xg7 21.♕c3+ ♔h6 22.♘c7 ♕e7 23.♘xa8 ♗a6 24.♘c7 ♖c8 25.♖c1 ♗d3 26.h4 f4 27.♕c5 1-0

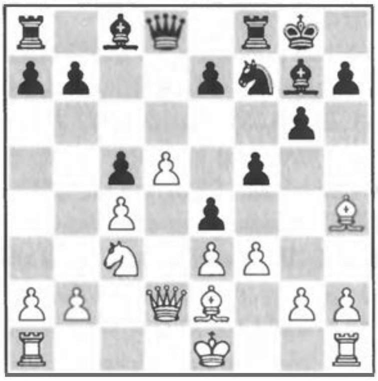
Game 4

☐ **Adrian Mikhalchishin**
■ **Igor Jelen**
Dobrna 2002

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.♗g5 ♘e4 5.♘xe4 dxe4 6.♕d2 ♗g7 7.e3 c5 8.♘e2 ♘c6 9.d5 ♘e5 10.♘c3 f5 11.♗e2 ♘f7 12.♗h4 0-0 13.f3

White typically tries to undermine Black's share of the centre in this way.

Mikhalchishin does however mention the following alternative in his notes, where White tries to exploit the fact that Black's knight is no longer on e5: 13.g4!? fxg4 14.♘xe4 ♘e5 15.h3 ♘f3+ 16.♗xf3 gxf3 17.0-0-0, which he gives as unclear.



13...exf3 14.gxf3 g5 15.♗g3 e5!?

Black could consider reacting on the queenside with 15...a6, as then ...b5 is in the air.

16.h4 g4 17.h5 gxf3

If 17...♘g5, White should probably keep an edge with 18.fxg4 fxg4 19.0-0-0.

18.♗xf3 ♘d6 19.♗e2 ♗d7 20.0-0-0

Castling belatedly, White finally gets round to placing his king into safety!

As a general rule in this whole variation it's prudent to open a few lines on the kingside and centre before committing the king in this way. The reasoning being that with Black preoccupied elsewhere, he is less likely to be disposed to launch queenside counterplay very effectively.

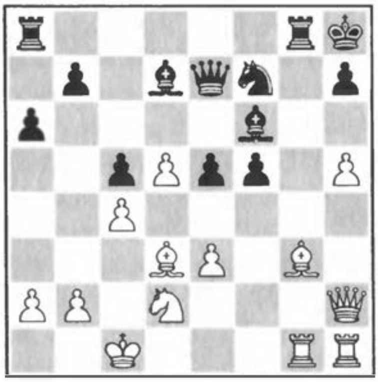
20...♔h8

Here 20...b5!? would be an attempt to randomize the position, when the continuation 21.♖hg1 ♔h8 22.♘xb5 ♘e4 would not be at all clear.

21.♗d3 a6 22.♖dg1 ♕e7 23.♕h2 ♗f6 24.♘b1!?

The knight is heading to d2 and then perhaps even to f3 and h4.

24...♖g8 25.♘d2 ♘f7



26.♘f3!?

A surprise!

26...e4 27.♘h4 ♘h6?!

Naturally after 27...exd3, White throws extra wood on the fire with 28.♘g6+!, forcing Black's hand: 28...hxg6 29.hxg6+ ♔g7 30.♕h7+ ♔f8 31.gxf7 ♕xe3+! (31...♖g7 loses to 32.♗d6! ♕xd6 33.♖xg7 ♗xg7 34.♕g8+ ♔e7 35.♕xg7 ♖f8 36.♖h6, as pointed out by Mikhalchishin) 32.♔b1 ♖g7 33.♗d6+ ♔xf7 34.♕h5+ ♔g8, and White has nothing better than a draw: 35.♕h8+ ♔f7 36.♕h5+ etc.

28.♗e2 ♖g7 29.♗d6 ♖xg1+ 30.♖xg1 ♕f7 31.♗xc5?!

Time trouble was probably responsible for this and several other imprecisions over the next few moves. One unfortunate consequence of being out of the book early on!

Mikhalchishin later demonstrated a couple of stronger ideas: 31.♕f4 ♖g8 32.♘g6+ hxg6 33.♕xh6+ ♕h7 34.♖xg6 and 31.♘g6+ hxg6 32.hxg6 ♕g7 33.♗f4 ♗xb2+ 34.♔b1 ♗a1 35.♗d1 (sensibly avoiding mate!) 35...♔g8 36.♗xh6, both of which seem to be better ways of pressing home the advantage.

31...♖c8 32.♕d6?!

Instead, 32.b4! would be more to the point.

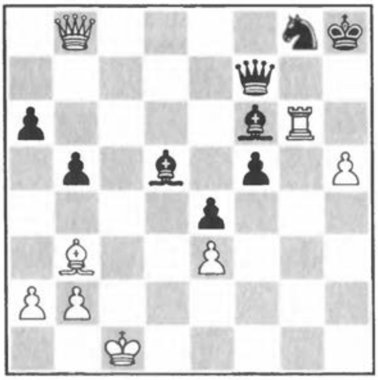
32...♖xc5 33.♘g6+?

And here 33.♕xc5 ♗xh4 34.♕b6 would still leave White with a pull.

33...hxg6 34.♖xg6 ♖xc4+ 35.♗xc4 ♘g8

White has let things slip so much that after 35...♘g4! Black shouldn't be worse.

36.♕c7 b5 37.♗b3 ♗e6 38.♕b8 ♗xd5



39.♖xf6!

Finally cracking open Black's defensive shell.

The erroneous 39.♗xd5? ♕xd5 40.♖xf6 leads to perpetual check after 40...♕c4+ etc.

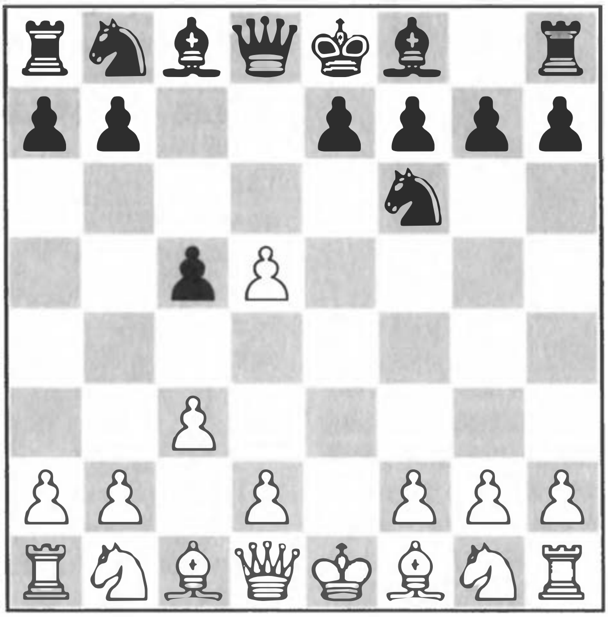
39...♕xf6 40.♗xd5 ♕g5 41.♔d2 ♔h7 42.♕xg8+ ♕xg8 43.♗xg8+ ♔xg8 44.♔c3 ♔g7 45.♔d4 1-0

In conclusion, White's main task is to get the timing right when it comes to castling and undermining the e4-pawn, but the above variations seem to offer him fair chances of an edge. Apart from the surprise value of 5.♘xe4!? I actually believe that the line holds up to serious scrutiny.

CHAPTER 7

Alexander Finkel

A Scandinavian Motif in the Alapin



1.e4 c5 2.c3 d5 3.exd5 ♘f6

In my previous articles for the SOS series I have always covered ideas that I truly believed in. This time I decided to explore a line which I would describe as being on the verge of soundness.

If you are not alarmed by this preamble and are willing to take risks (and I mean to take risks!) – then you might find this line a rather appealing attempt to spice things up in the ultra-solid Alapin.

Basically, the idea behind 3...♘f6 is to lure White into an immediate confrontation by offering him to hang on to a pawn. In case White accepts the invitation and grabs the pawn – at the cost of giving Black some control over the centre and a certain advantage in development – then we get to see a lot of action from the very first moves.

In my opinion White should objectively be able to emerge out of the complications with some edge, but Black has a decent shot at seizing the initiative in case of the slightest slip on White's part.

Nevertheless you should be aware that you are not necessarily going to drag your opponent into unfamiliar territory. In case of 3...♘f6 4.d4 or 4.♘f3 ♘xd5 5.d4 the game is likely to transpose into the lines which are strategically quite similar to the Alapin with 2...d5 (like the Panov Variation in the Caro-Kann, arising after 4.♘f3 ♘xd5 5.d4 cxd4 6.cxd4 ♘c6 7.♘c3 ♗g4, or one of the main variations of QGA/Semi-Tarrasch after 4.♘f3 ♘xd5 5.d4 cxd4 6.cxd4 ♘c6 7.♘c3 e6 8.♗d3 ♗e7 9.0-0 0-0 10.♖e1), so learning how to react against 4.♗b5+ and 4.c4 (the attempts at refuting this line) is not sufficient to play 3...♘f6 successfully.

I hope that the games that I selected for this article (which are entirely dedicated to those lines which are exclusive for 3...♘f6) will suffice as adequate study material. These games highlight the risks you are taking with this line, but at the same time give you enough tools to turn it into an efficient surprise weapon.

☐ **Julio Becerra**

■ **Joaquin Diaz**

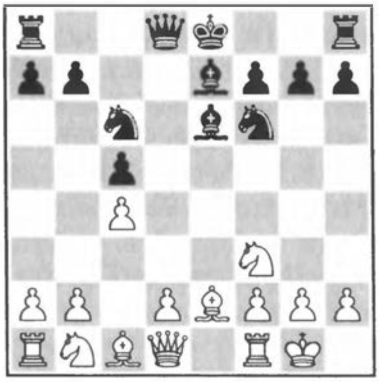
Las Tunas CUB-ch 1996

1.e4 c5 2.c3 d5 3.exd5 ♘f6 4.c4!?

This slightly awkward looking move scores well for White, but I don't think that it's objectively that good!

Hardly dangerous for Black is 4.♕a4+!? ♗d7 5.♕b3 ♕b6 6.♗c4 ♘a6 7.♘f3 ♘c7 8.d4 ♕xb3 9.♗xb3 ♘fxd5 10.0-0 cxd4 11.♘xd4 e6 with equality, Vysochin-El Ghazali, Cairo 2002.

4...e6 5.dxe6 ♗xe6 6.♘f3 ♘c6 7.♗e2 ♗e7 8.0-0



8...0-0

Black should have rather comfortable play for the pawn, even though it's not easy to prove in practice.

8...♕d7 9.d3 0-0 10.♗e3 ♖ad8 11.♘bd2 b6 12.♘b3 ♗g4 gave Black enough compensation in Rozentalis-Diaz, Trnava 1988. Interesting is 9.♘a3 ♖d8 10.♘c2 0-0 11.b4 ♘xb4 12.♘xb4 cxb4 13.♗b2 ♘e4 14.d4± Madeira-Needleman, Sao Paulo 2004.

9.b3 ♕d7

Black hardly has anything better:

– 9...♕d6 10.♗b2 ♖fd8 11.h3 ♕f4 12.♘a3 ♗f5 13.♘c2 ♘e4 14.♘e3±, Hausmann-May, Germany 1999.

– Or 9...♗f5 10.♗b2 ♘b4 11.♘a3 ♗d3 12.♘e1!? ♖e8 13.♘xd3 ♘xd3 14.♗c3 ♘e4 15.♕c2 ♘dxf2 16.♖xf2 ♘xf2 17.♔xf2±, Andrenko-Suleimanova, Evpatoria 2007.

10.♗b2 ♖ad8

Putting some pressure on the d-pawn.

11.♘e5

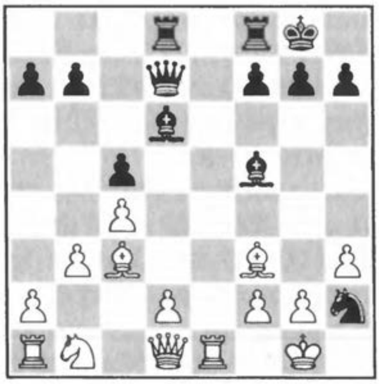
I believe White should keep the slightly better chances after 11.♘c3 ♗g4 12.♖e1 ♖fe8 13.h3 ♗h5 14.a3, but it's not perfectly clear how White should continue.

11...♘xe5 12.♗xe5 ♗f5 13.♗f3 ♘g4

13...b6!? deserves attention as in some lines the pawn on b7 is hanging.

14.♗g3

Clearly Black has dangerous compensation for the pawn. After the natural 14.♗c3?! ♗d6! 15.h3 ♘h2 16.♖e1



He has the tactical shot 16...♗c2! 17.♗g4 (17.♕xc2? ♘xf3+ 18.gxf3 ♕xh3 19.♖e5 ♗xe5 20.♗xe5 ♖fe8–+) 17...f5 18.♕xc2 fxg4 with an attack.

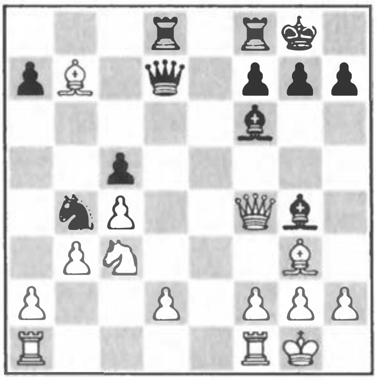
14...♗f6 15.♘c3 ♘e5

Black should not regain the material balance with 15...♕xd2 as this runs into 16.♘d5! ♕g5 17.♕c1±. Now 17...b6?! 18.h3 ♘h6 19.♗f4 ♕g6 20.♘xf6+ is losing.

16.♗d5 ♘d3 17.♕f3!?

Inviting Black to enter a forced line.

17...♘b4 18.♗xb7 ♗g4 19.♕f4



19...♕xb7?

Correct is the spectacular 19...♗e2! 20.♘xe2 ♗xa1 21.♖xa1 ♕xb7 22.♘c3 ♖fe8 with a complicated position.

20.♕xg4 ♖xd2 21.♘e4!

White just keeps his material advantage.

21...♗xa1 22.♘xd2 ♗c3 23.♘e4! f5 24.♕f3

Maybe more convincing was 24.♘xc5!? ♕c6 25.♕f3 ♕xf3 26.gxf3 ♘xa2 27.♖d1±.

24...♕xe4 25.♕xc3 ♘d3?!

Also after 25...f4 26.f3 ♘xa2 27.♕a5 ♕e3+ 28.♗f2 ♕xb3 29.♕xc5 White is clearly better, but it was Black's best try.

26.♖d1 ♖d8 27.♕d2 ♖d7 28.f3 ♕e6 29.♔f1 f4 30.♗f2 ♔f7 31.♕e2

Black is tied up over the d-file, so he stands no chance to survive.

31...♕f5 32.♗g1 ♘e5 33.♗xc5 ♖xd1+ 34.♕xd1 ♘xc4 35.♗xa7 ♘e5 36.♕d5+ ♔f6 37.♕e4 ♕d7 38.♗d4

1-0

☐ **David Smerdon**
■ **Attila Groszpeter**
Paks 2007

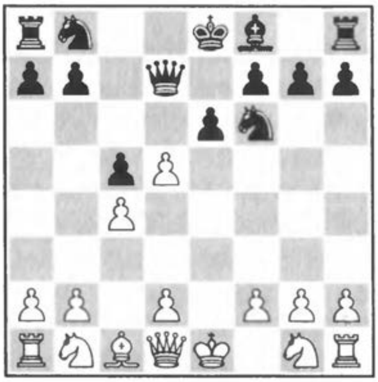
1.e4 c5 2.c3 d5 3.exd5 ♘f6 4.♗b5+

A popular reply.

4...♗d7

This move leads to rather forced play, which seems to be satisfactory for Black. Another option is 4...♘bd7 (see the next game), keeping the light-squared bishop on the board. I prefer the text though.

5.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 6.c4 e6



7.♕e2

Less accurate is 7.dxe6, as after 7...fxe6 8.♘f3 ♘c6 Black may opt for queenside castling. For example, 9.0-0 0-0-0 and now:

– 10.♘c3 e5 11.♕e2 ♕f5 12.♖e1 ♗d6 13.d3 ♖he8 14.♘e4 ♘d4 15.♘xd4 exd4 16.♕f3±, Nemirovski-Salaun, Epinal 1989.

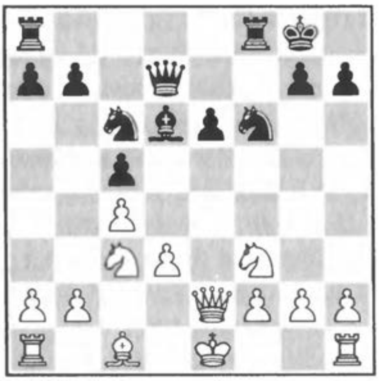
– 10.a3 e5 11.♘c3 ♗d6 12.♖e1 ♖he8 13.♞e4 ♗c7 with counterplay, Pop-Ezsol, Budapest 1996.

7...♗d6 8.♘f3

Forcing Black to define the position of his king.

Instead 8.dxe6 fxe6 9.♘f3 ♘c6 10.0-0 0-0 11.d3 ♘g4 12.♞bd2 ♖ad8 was more than OK for Black in F.Röder-Vokac, Prague 1990, after 13.h3?! ♘ge5 14.♘xe5 ♗xe5 15.♘e4 b6 16.♗g5?! ♕xd3 17.♕g4 ♖d4 18.♕xe6+ ♔h8.

8...0-0 9.dxe6 fxe6 10.♘c3 ♘c6 11.d3



11...e5!?

Black needs to open up the e-file for the rook. Bad are:

- 11...♖ae8 12.♘e4 b6 13.♗d2 ♗b8 14.♗c3 ♘g4 15.0-0-0 e5 16.♔b1 ♘d4 17.♗xd4 exd4 18.h3±, Tamm-Medunova, Dortmund 1993, and
- 11...♘d4 12.♘xd4 cxd4 13.♘e4 ♘xe4 14.♕xe4 ♗b4+ 15.♔e2 ♖f5 16.♗f4 ♖af8 17.♗g3 ♗e7 18.h4 b5 19.♖ac1±, Sowray-James, England tt 2006/07.

12.♘e4

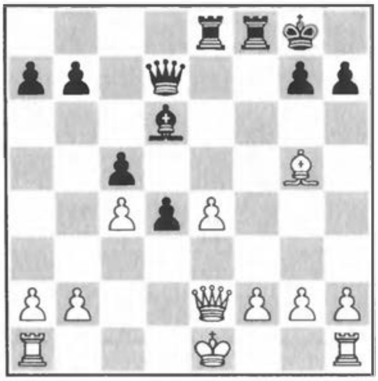
A very logical response, as White would have to put a knight on e4 sooner or later. The game N.Thomas-Kwiatkowski, England tt 2004/05, demonstrates how dangerous Black's counterplay is: 12.♗e3 ♞d4 13.♗xd4 exd4 14.♘e4 ♘xe4 15.dxe4 ♖ae8 16.♘d2 ♗f4 17.f3 d3.

12...♘d4 13.♘xd4 exd4 14.♗g5?!

After this move Black seems to have sufficient compensation for the pawn.

More ambitious is 14.0-0!? ♘xe4 15.dxe4 (not 15.♕xe4 ♖ae8 16.♕d5+ ♔h8 with counterplay) 15...d3?! 16.♕h5 ♖ad8 17.♕d5+, planning ♗e3 and ♖ad1. Black should play 15...♖ae8 instead.

14...♘xe4 15.dxe4 ♖ae8



16.f3

White is forced to keep his king in the centre unless he's ready to give up the extra pawn. 16.0-0-0 ♕f5! 17.exf5 ♖xe2 18.♖d2 ♖xd2 19.♗xd2 ♖xf5 20.f3 and material is even again.

16...♕c7 17.h4

Otherwise Black easily keeps the balance. For instance: 17.0-0-0 ♗xh2 18.♔b1 a6 19.♗d2 ♗f4 20.♗xf4 ♕xf4 21.♖h5 ♖e5.

17...♗g3+ 18.♔f1

Or 18.♔d1 d3 19.♕d2 h6 20.♗e3 ♖d8 21.♖c1 ♗e5 with dangerous counter chances.

18...♕e5 19.♖h3?

A serious mistake, after which White is doomed to defend a rather unpleasant rook endgame. Best was 19.♔g1 ♖e6(not 19...d3 20.♕xd3 ♕xb2 21.♖f1 ♗e5 22.♖b1 ♕xa2 23.♖xb7) 20.♕d3 ♖g6 with nice compensation.

19...d3!

Transposing into a superior endgame.

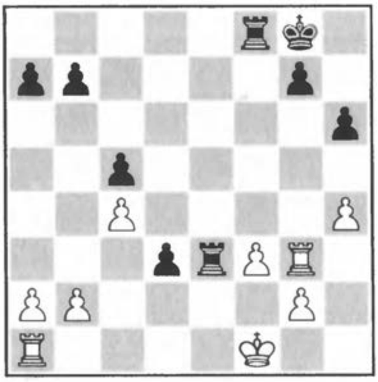
20.♕d2

20.♕xd3?! ♕xb2 just wins because of the double threat.

20...h6 21.♗e3 ♕xe4

This move became possible due to the position of the white bishop on e3.

22.♖xg3 ♕xe3 23.♕xe3 ♖xe3



24.♖d1

The alternative 24.♖g4 ♖e2 25.♖d1 (25.b3 h5 26.♖g3 ♖fe8 27.f4 d2–+) 25...♖xb2 26.♖xd3 ♖xa2 27.♖e4 ♖f7∓ is even worse. **24...♖f4 25.♖g4 ♖xg4 26.fxg4 ♖e4 27.b3** Or 27.♖xd3 ♖xc4 28.♖d7 ♖c1+ 29.♔e2 ♖c2+ 30.♔d3 ♖xb2∓. **27...♖f4+ 28.♔g1 ♖d4 29.♔f2 ♔f7 30.♔e3?!** 30.g5!?. **30...♖xg4 31.♖xd3 ♔e6 32.♔f3 ♖xh4** The endgame is winning for Black, but White could have forced his opponent to work a bit harder. **33.♖d5 b6 34.♖d8 ♖h5 35.g4? ♖h2** Winning another pawn. **36.a4 ♖h3+ 37.♔f4 ♖xb3 38.a5 ♖b4 39.♖e8+ ♔f6 40.♖f8+ ♔g6 41.♔e4** **0-1**

☐ **Vladimir Egin**
■ **Dmitry Losev**
Moscow Goldberg mem 1997

1.e4 c5 2.c3 d5 3.exd5 ♘f6 4.♗b5+ ♘bd7

This move leads to more complex play than 4...♗d7, but Black is taking quite a few risks along the way. I would personally prefer the bishop move.

5.c4

The most popular move. However, rather annoying for Black is 5.d4!? cxd4 6.♕xd4 g6 7.♘f3 ♗g7 8.0-0 0-0 9.d6!? exd6 10.♕xd6 ♘e4 11.♕d5 ♘dc5 12.♕xd8 ♖xd8 13.♘bd2 ♘d6 14.♗e2 ♖e8 15.♘d4!±, Vogt-Nemet, Arosa 1996.

5...g6

I am not sure whether this move should be recommended over 5...a6, as either way White should be able to emerge out of the opening with the upper hand.

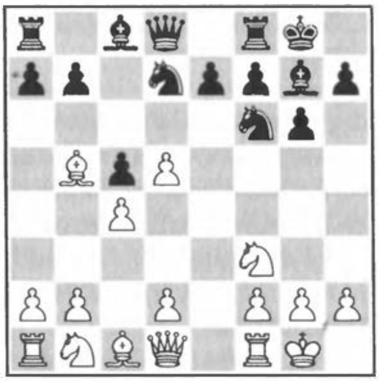
So, 5...a6!? 6.♗xd7+ ♗xd7 and now:

- 7.♘f3 e6 8.♕e2 ♗e7 9.dxe6 ♗xe6 10.0-0 ♗f5 11.♖e1 ♗d3 12.♕e5 ♔f8 (or 12...♗xc4 13.♕xc5 ♗d5 14.♘c3 ♗xf3 15.gxf3±) 13.♘c3 ♗d6 14.♕e3 ♗xc4 15.d4, Smagin-Sveshnikov, Amantea 1995.
- 7.d4!? ♖c8 8.♘f3 b5 9.♞e5 cxd4 10.♕xd4 e6 (or 10...bxc4 11.♘c3 ♗e6 12.♕d1! ♗d7 13.♗g5) 11.♗g5 h6 12.♕h4 ♗d6 13.♘g4, Zifroni-Manor, Tel Aviv 1997.

6.♘f3

Another decent attempt is 6.d4 cxd4 7.♕xd4 ♗g7 8.♗xd7+ ♗xd7 9.♘f3 0-0 10.0-0 e6 11.d6 ♗c6 12.♖d1 ♞e4 13.♕e3±, Vlassov-Losev, Moscow 1998.

6...♗g7 7.0-0 0-0



8.d4!?

It may appear that Black gets good counterplay, but White seems to be in control as the game proceeds, so I see nothing wrong with the text-move. Practice also saw:

- 8.♗xd7 ♕xd7 9.d4 cxd4 10.♘xd4 a6 11.a4 ♕c7 12.♕d3 ♘g4 13.♘f3 ♗f5 14.♕e2 ♖ac8=∞, Pavasovic-Domont, Geneva 1996.
- 8.♘c3 ♘b6 9.d3 a6 10.♗a4 ♕c7 11.♗b3 e6 12.♗g5 exd5 13.cxd5 ♘bd7 14.a4±, Rausis-Nemet, Basel 2000.

8...cxd4 9.♗xd7 ♗xd7

Here 9...♕xd7 10.♕xd4 b5 11.♘c3 bxc4 12.♘e5 ♕c7 is unclear, but I don't see much compensation after 10.♘xd4.

10.♘xd4 ♕b6 11.♘c3 ♕c5

Not 11...e6 12.dxe6 fxe6 13.♘f3 ♗c6 14.♕e2±.

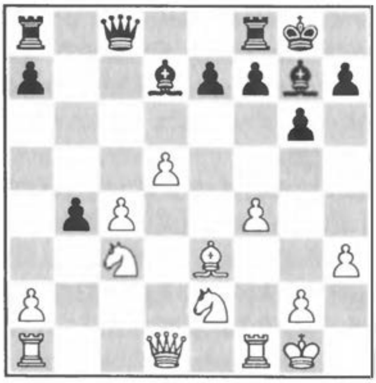
12.b3 ♘g4

Black is trying to hit White's centre with ...b5, but White easily suppresses these attempts. Unfortunately, 12...♘xd5?! 13.♘xd5 ♗xd4 14.♘xe7+ ♔h8 15.♗a3!± doesn't work.

13.♘de2 b5 14.h3 ♘e5?!

Not good enough. Stronger was 14...♘h6 15.♗e3 ♕c7 16.♗xh6 ♗xh6 17.♘xb5 ♗xb5 18.cxb5± when the best Black can hope for is still only some kind of endgame with a minimal material deficit.

15.♗e3 ♕c8 16.f4 ♘xc4 17.bxc4 b4



18.♘e4?!

Much simpler was 18.♗d4 bxc3 19.♗xg7 ♔xg7 20.♕d4+ ♔g8 21.♘xc3 and Black is helpless against the advance of the c-pawn.

18...♕xc4?!

Better is 18...♗xa1 19.♕xa1 ♕xc4 20.♘2g3 ♕xd5 21.♖d1, but White's chances are still preferable.

19.♗d4 ♖fd8 20.♘4g3 ♗b5 21.♗xg7 ♔xg7 22.♕c1±

And White eventually won.

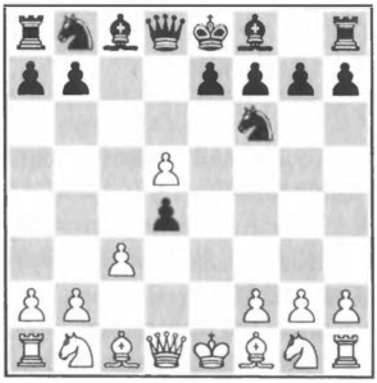
☐ **Levente Vajda**
■ **Ivan Nemet**
Basel 2002

1.e4 c5 2.c3 d5 3.exd5 ♘f6 4.d4!?

White does not try to refute Black's set-up but simply plays a natural move. This is less testing than 4.c4 or 4.♗b5+.

4...cxd4?!

Giving this line a unique character, but allowing White a slight opening advantage. Black could settle for 4...♘xd5 5.♘f3 cxd4 or 4...♕xd5.



5.♗b5+!

Stronger than 5.♕xd4 ♕xd5 or 5.cxd4 ♘xd5.

5...♗d7

White was winning after 5...♘bd7 6.♕xd4 g6 7.d6 exd6 8.♘f3 ♕e7+? 9.♔d1! a6

10.♖e1 axb5 11.♖xe7+ ♗xe7 12.♗h6, Ekström-Nemet, Pontresina 2000.

6.♗c4

Black's bishop is a bit misplaced, so White doesn't have to do much to get the upper hand.

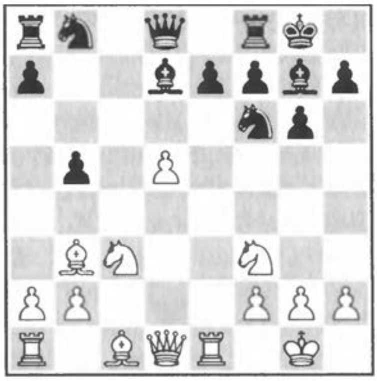
6...b5

Black's best shot. After 6...dxc3 7.♘xc3 ♘a6?! (7...g6!?) 8.♘f3 ♕a5 9.♘e5 b5 10.♞xd7 bxc4 11.♘e5 ♞b4 12.0-0 ♖d8 13.♕f3 ♕a6 14.♗g5 Black found himself in a very dangerous position in Chandler-Van der Wiel, Wijk aan Zee 1982.

7.♗b3 dxc3 8.♘xc3 g6 9.♞f3

Or 9.♕e2 ♗g7 10.♘f3 0-0 11.0-0 ♕a5 12.♖d1 ♞a6 13.♕xe7 b4 14.♗g5±, Rombaldoni-Gomez Esteban, Rome 1984.

9...♗g7 10.0-0 0-0 11.♖e1±



The pawns on b5 and e7 are obvious targets for the white pieces.

11...a5

Or 11...a6 12.h3 ♗c8 13.♗f4 ♗b7 14.d6±.

12.a3 ♘a6 13.h3

This move may not be necessary, so I would consider 13.♕e2!?, although White's plan in the game is not bad either.

13...♘c5 14.♗e3 ♘xb3

14...♕c7.

15.♕xb3 ♖b8 16.♗a7 ♖b7

16...♖c8 17.♗d4!±.

17.♗c5

The pawn on d5 is like a bone in Black's throat.

17...♖e8 18.♖ac1 b4

It will be difficult to protect the pawn on b4 later on, but Black is desperately trying to get some counterplay. White is somewhat better after 18...♖c7 19.♗d4 a4 20.♕d1 ♖c8 21.♕d2.

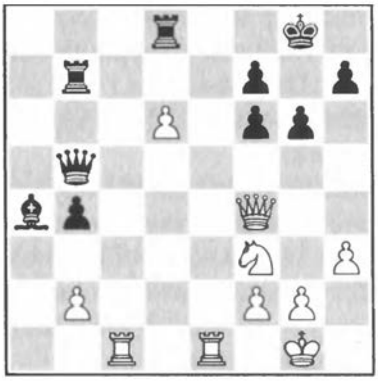
19.axb4 axb4 20.♘e4!?

Initiating a trade of minor pieces aimed to weaken b4. Interesting was 20.♘e5.

20...♕a5 21.♘xf6+ ♗xf6 22.♗d4! ♗a4 23.♕c4 ♖d8

23...♗xd4 24.♘xd4 ♖d8 25.♘c6 ♝xc6 26.dxc6 ♖c7±.

24.♗xf6 exf6 25.d6 ♕b5 26.♕f4



26...♖bd7?

It was a must to keep an eye on b4: 26...♖b6!?, intending 27.♖e4?! ♖dxd6∓. After the erroneous text White gets the upper hand.

27.♖e4± g5

27...♖xd6 28.♖xb4 g5 29.♖xb5 gxf4 30.♖b4 ♗c6 31.♖xf4 ♗xf3 32.♖xf3 ♖b8 33.b3±.

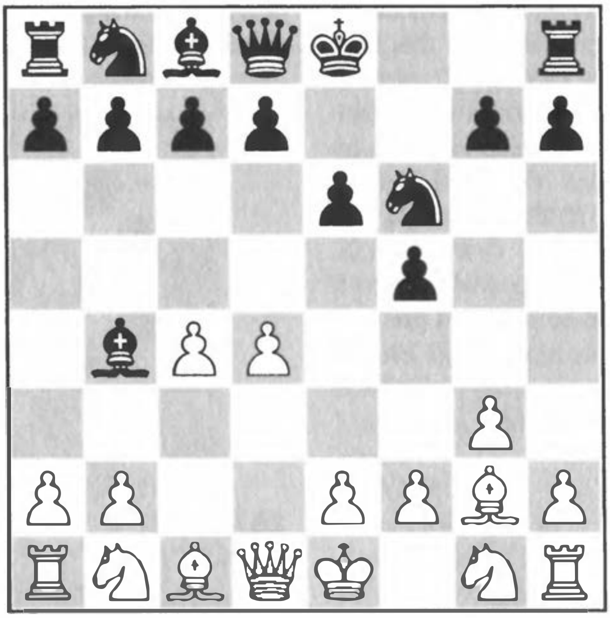
28.♕xf6 ♖xd6 29.♕xg5+ ♕xg5 30.♘xg5 h6 31.♘f3 ♗c6 32.♖g4+ ♔f8 33.♘e5 ♗e8 34.♖xb4

And the rest is a matter of technique.

CHAPTER 8

Igor Glek

The Dutch Indian



1.d4 f5 2.c4 ♘f6 3.g3 e6 4.♗g2 ♗b4+

I often played the Dutch in the 1980s and 1990s. Both the Leningrad and the Stonewall were on my repertoire.

In those days I sometimes obtained positions with the bishop on b4, but only if White had played an early ♘c3.

Thus, for example, after the moves 1.d4 e6 2.c4 f5 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 I would continue with the bishop move 4...♗b4!. See the game Gross-Glek (Cuxhaven 1993).

I was sure that such positions (with a knight on c3 and the bishop on b4) were good for Black, and, therefore I started giving the check whenever I expected my opponent to reply with ♘c3. At the start of the new millennium I began to give the check on b4 more regularly, as I understood by that time that things weren't so easy either for White when he answered with ♗d2 or ♘d2.

A note on the move order. White is of course not obliged to play an early c4 after 1...f5, although, many players do form the natural c4-d4 pawn centre as soon as they can. Personally, I have often played 1...e6 in reply to 1.d4 when 2.c4 f5 3.g3 leads to the Dutch Indian. Naturally, in order to adopt this move order it helps if the French features on your repertoire!

1.d4 f5 2.c4 ♘f6 3.g3 e6 4.♗g2 ♗b4+

After the bishop check White has three answers:

Variation I – 5.♘c3
Variation II – 5.♗d2
Variation III – 5.♘d2

Variation I

5.♘c3

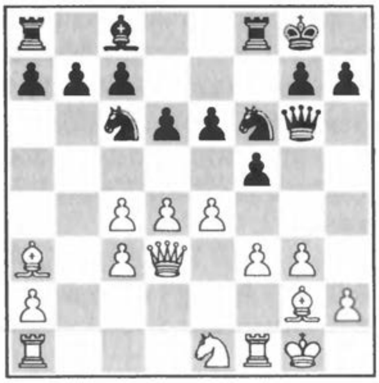
So here we see a mixture of the Nimzo-Indian and the Dutch. I believe that this reaction to the check is inferior. Sometimes Black obtains something like two extra tempos. How? Well, in the Nimzo-Indian in order to play f7-f5 Black often goes ♘f6-e4, f7-f5, and then (after f2-f3 for example) the knight jumps back to f6.

In fact practice confirms my conclusion – if you look at the database statistics you will see that they are very satisfactory for Black!

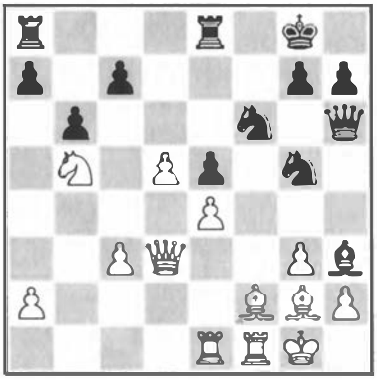
A nice game was played in the play-offs of the Dutch team championships in 2000:

☐ **Leon Pliester**
■ **Igor Glek**
Breda tt 2000

1.d4 e6 2.c4 f5 3.g3 ♘f6 4.♗g2 ♗b4+ 5.♘c3 0-0 6.♘f3 ♗xc3+ This voluntary taking on c3 is very strong. Black fractures White's pawn structure and obtains the typical Nimzo-Indian structure. **7.bxc3 d6 8.0-0 ♘c6 9.♗a3 ♘e4 10.♕d3 ♕f6 11.♘e1 ♕g6 12.f3 ♘f6 13.e4**



13...♖e8 Not the only way to play. Also possible was 13...e5!? 14.d5 ♞d8 15.c5 ♘f7. **14.c5 dxc5 15.♗xc5 e5 16.d5** Play is unclear after 16.♞c2!? f4. **16...♘d8 17.♘c2 ♘f7 18.♘a3 b6 19.♗f2 fxe4 20.fxe4 ♘g5!** The knights start their tango on White's kingside! **21.♖ae1 ♗h3∓ 22.♘b5 ♕h6** Stronger was 22...♖ad8!.



23.♘xc7?

Correct was 23.♗e3! ♗xg2 24.♔xg2 (24.♗xg5? ♗xf1) 24...♕h3+ 25.♔g1 ♘gxe4 26.♘xc7 ♘g4 27.♕e2 (27.♕c2 ♖f8∓) 27...♘xc3 28.♕d2 ♖f8 29.♘xa8 ♖xf1+ 30.♖xf1 ♘e4 31.♕e2 ♘xg3, and now:

– not 32.♖f8+ ♔xf8 33.♕f3+ ♔g8 34.hxg3 h5 35.d6 (35.♘c7 ♕h2+ 36.♔f1 ♕xa2–+) 35...♕h2+ 36.♔f1 ♕xa2 37.♗g1 ♕d2∓, but

– 32.hxg3 ♕xg3+ 33.♔h1 ♕h3+ 34.♔g1 is a perpetual.

23...♘g4!–+ 24.d6 ♗xg2 25.h4 ♗f3

White resigned.

☐ **Willy de Winter**
■ **Boris Spassky**
Lugano ol 1968

1.d4 f5 2.c4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 e6 4.g3 ♗b4 5.♗g2 0-0 6.♘f3 ♗xc3+ 7.bxc3 d6 8.0-0

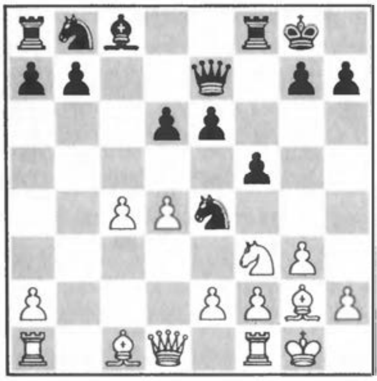
Black has an excellent position after 8.♗a3 ♘e4 9.♕c2 ♘c6 10.♘d2 ♘xd2 11.♕xd2 ♘a5 12.♕d3 ♕e8 13.0-0 ♕a4, Dominguez-Martin del Campo, Novi Sad Olympiad 1990.

8...♘c6

This natural move to prepare ...e5 is probably best. Indeed, Spassky repeated it in a later game. Still, Black has other reasonable alternatives which should prove that Black is more than fine in this line:

- After 8...♕e7

– 9.c5 ♘e4 10.cxd6 cxd6 11.c4



11...b6 12.♘g5 ♗b7 13.♘xe4 ♗xe4 14.f3 ♗b7 Black was fine in Ubilava-Eingorn, Minsk 1983.

– 9.♕b3 ♘c6 10.♗a3 ♘e4 11.♖ad1 ♘a5 12.♕b4 b6 13.c5 ♗a6 14.cxd6 cxd6 15.♖fe1 ♖ac8 16.♖c1 ♖c4 17.♕b2 ♖c7 was very pleasant for Black in Aleksandrov-Kalinichev, Minsk 1987.

– most critical is perhaps 9.♗a3 ♘bd7 10.♘d2! c5 11.e4 fxe4 12.♘xe4 ♘xe4 13.♗xe4 ♖b8 (13... ♘f6!) 14.♕c2 ♘f6 15.♗g2 b6 16.♖ae1, as in Meulders-Short, Brussels 1987.

- 8...♕e8 9.♗a3 ♘e4 10.♕c2 ♕h5 11.♖ae1 ♘d7 12.♘d2 ♘xd2 13.♕xd2 ♘f6 14.f3 b6 15.e4 fxe4 16.fxe4 e5 17.c5 dxc5 18.dxc5 ♖e8 19.♗f3 ♗g4 was more than OK for Black in Barberi-Naumkin, Verona 1995.
- 8...♘e4 9.♕c2 ♘c6 10.♘d2 ♘xd2 11.♕xd2 e5 12.c5 e4 13.f3 exf3 14.♗xf3 dxc5 15.♗a3 ♘e5 16.♗xc5 ♘xf3+ 17.exf3 ♖e8 18.c4 b6 19.♗a3 ♗a6 20.♖ac1 ♕d7 ½-½, Naer-Riazantsev, Elista 2001.

9.♗a3

– Another game of Spassky's went 9.♕c2 e5 10.dxe5 ♘xe5 11.♘xe5 dxe5 12.♗a3 ♖f7 13.♖ad1 ♕e8 play is about equal, but the stronger player is slowly taking over 14.♕b3 e4 15.♖d4 b6 16.c5 ♗e6 17.c4 ♕c6 18.cxb6 axb6 Colon Romero-Spassky, San Juan 1969.

– 9.d5 ♘a5 10.dxe6 ♗xe6 11.♘d4 ♗xc4 12.♘xf5 ♕d7 13.♘e3 ♗e6 14.c4 ♖ae8 15.♕d4 ♗h3 and this non-typical game-position was won by Black in the end Beliavsky-Gulko, Tbilisi 1976.

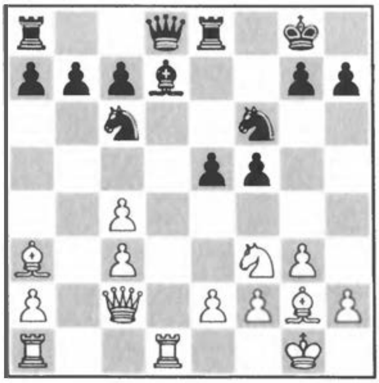
9...♖e8

I played 9...♘e4 against Pliester, as we saw above.

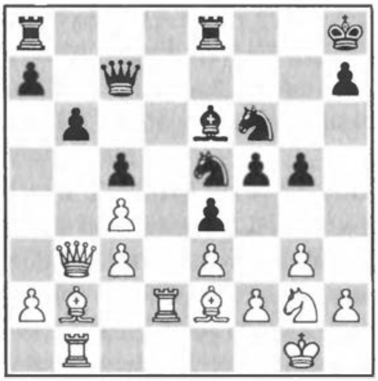
10.♕c2

After 10.♘d2 e5 11.e3 e4 12.♖b1 b6 13.♘b3 ♗a6 14.♘d2 ♘a5 15.♕a4 ♕d7 Black had gained the advantage in Tran Tuan Minh-Bui Vinh, Cao Lanh Dong Thap 2006.

10...e5 11.dxe5 dxe5 12.♖fd1 ♗d7



13.♘h4 ♕c8 Play is approximately equal here. **14.♗d5+ ♔h8 15.♖ab1 ♘d8 16.♗g2 e4 17.♗f1 ♗e6 18.e3 g5!? 19.♘g2 c5 20.♗e2 ♘f7 21.♕a4 ♘e5 22.♕b3 b6 23.♗b2 ♕c7 24.♖d2?**

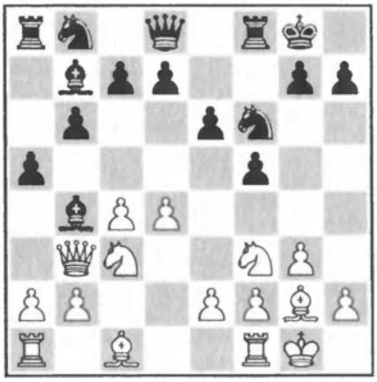


24...♗xc4! 25.♗xc4 ♘f3+ 26.♔h1 ♘xd2
And Black won.

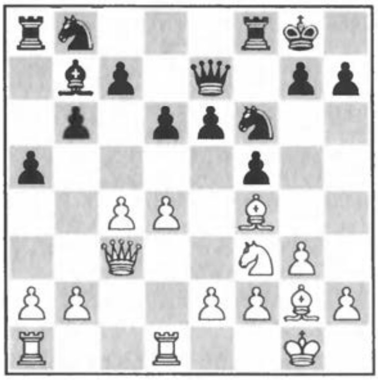
White can also try to avoid the doubled c-pawns by playing ♕c2 or ♕b3, but here Black is OK too. Again play develops along Indian lines.

☐ **Vladimir Georgiev**
■ **Igor Glek**
Halkidiki 2002

1.d4 e6 2.c4 f5 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♘f3 ♘f6 5.♕b3 a5 6.g3 b6 7.♗g2 ♗b7 8.0-0 0-0



9.♖d1
A previous game of mine went: 9.♗g5 ♘a6 10.♖ad1 ♗xc3 11.♗xf6 ♕xf6 12.♕xc3 d6 13.e3 ♖fd8 14.♖d2 e5 and Black already had a slight edge in Gross-Glek, Cuxhaven 1993.
Note that Nikolic followed a completely different strategy against Vyzhmanavin (Tilburg 1992): 9...♗xc3 10.♕xc3 h6 11.♗xf6 ♕xf6 12.♖ac1 d6 13.c5 bxc5 14.dxc5 ♕xc3 15.♖xc3 ♗xf3! 16.♗xf3 d5 17.c6 ♖a6 and Black has his eyes on White's advanced c-pawn.
9...♕e7
Moves like 9...♘a6, 9...♗xc3 and 9...♘e4 have all been tested in practice with satisfactory results.
10.♗f4 ♗xc3 11.♕xc3 d6



The bishop is not very well placed on f4. With his next move White tries to extend its range.
12.c5!? ♘d5∓ 13.cxd6 cxd6 14.♗g5
14.♕a3 ♘xf4 15.gxf4 ♘a6 16.♖ac1 was Nikitin-Iliushin, Smolensk 2000, when the players agreed to an early draw.
14...♕d7 15.♕e1 ♘a6 16.a3 h6 17.♗d2 ♘f6
Black has good control over the central white squares.
18.♕f1 ♘e4 19.♘e1 ♘c7 20.♘d3 ♘d5 21.♘f4 ♖ac8
Finkel has analysed 21...♘xd2!? 22.♖xd2 ♘xf4 23.gxf4 ♖ac8 when he gives 24.d5 exd5 25.♗xd5+ ♗xd5 26.♖xd5 ♖f6 as slightly better for Black.

22.♘xd5 ♗xd5 23.f3 ♘xd2 24.♖xd2 ♖c7 25.♖c1 ♖fc8 26.♖xc7 ♕xc7 27.e4 ♕c1

Black is playing for a slightly better ending.

28.♕xc1 ♖xc1+ 29.♔f2 ♗c4 30.d5!

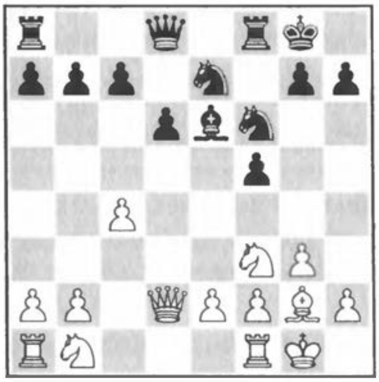
With this accurate move White was able to keep the draw which was agreed on move 48.

Variation II

5.♗d2

Alekhine used to retreat his bishop to e7 now, arguing that the bishop is slightly misplaced on d2 (it can no longer be developed to b2, pawn d4 is more vulnerable, and the d2-square is not available for a knight). This is certainly a worthwhile strategy, but it falls outside the scope of this article. I will focus on **5...♗xd2+ 6.♕xd2** (inferior is 6.♘xd2 as the knight belongs on c3 – Black would easily achieve the desired ...e5 advance).

Interestingly, in many games with the exchange on d2 Black tried to play d7-d6 and ♘b8-c6, preparing e6-e5. But this is an inferior strategy as after d4-d5 White's position is clearly preferable. A good example is Nikolic-Nogueiras (Leningrad 1987): 6...0-0 7.♘f3 d6 8.0-0 ♘c6 9.d5! ♘e7 10.dxe6 ♗xe6

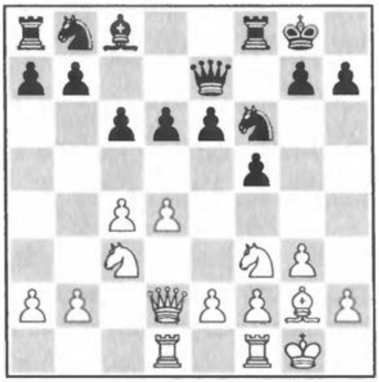


11.♘g5! ♗xc4 12.♕c2 ♗f7 13..♗xb7 ♖b8 14.♗g2 ♕d7 15.♘xf7 ♖xf7 16.♘d2 d5 17.♖ac1±.

So after 5...♗xd2+ 6.♕xd2 0-0 7.♘c3 d6 8.♘f3 the move 8...♕e7 looks very logical. Now after 9.0-0, the immediate 9...e5 is no good because of 10.dxe5 dxe5 11.♘d5. Instead I have played 9...c6 with the idea of e6-e5 (in Richter-Berelovich 9...♘c6 was tested successfully but I don't believe in this move). Now Ivan Farago played logically against me: 10.♖ad1 e5 11.dxe5 dxe5 12.e4!, and White is better at this stage, although I later managed to get a better endgame. It is instructive to see that realizing the ostensibly advantageous e6-e5 advance doesn't always solve Black's problems.

☐ **Ivan Farago**
■ **Igor Glek**
Bad Wörishofen 2001

1.d4 e6 2.c4 f5 3.g3 ♘f6 4.♗g2 ♗b4+ 5.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 6.♕xd2 0-0 7.♘c3 d6 8.♘f3 ♕e7 9.0-0 c6 10.♖ad1



10...e5 11.dxe5 dxe5 12.e4 fxe4

Or 12...♘xe4 13.♘xe4 fxe4 14.♘g5 ♗g4 15.♖de1 ♗f3 16.♘xe4 ♘d7 17.♕d6±.

13.♘g5 ♗g4

White also keeps a slight edge after 13...♗e6 14.b3 ♘a6 15.♕d6.

14.♕d6!

Play is unclear after 14.♖de1, and now:

– 14...♘bd7 15.♘cxe4 (15.h3 ♗f5

16.♘cxe4 ♘xe4 17.♘xe4 ♖ad8 18.♕d6 ♕f7∞) 15...♘xe4 16.♘xe4 ♖ad8 17.♕a5 ♗f5 (17...♘b6 18.b3) 18.♕xa7 ♕b4 19.♕e3.

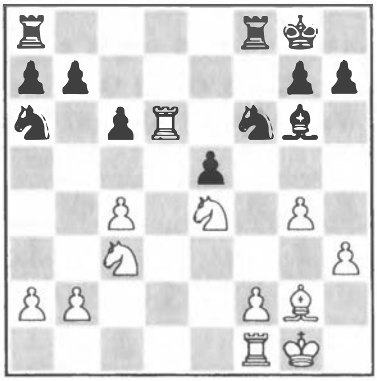
- 14...♘a6 15.♘cxe4 ♖ad8 16.♕e3 ♘b4 17.♕c5 ♕xc5 18.♘xc5 ♖d2.

14...♕xd6± 15.♖xd6 ♘a6 16.h3?!

Better is 16.♘gxe4 ♘xe4 17.♘xe4 when White keeps an annoying advantage:

- 17...♗e2 18.♖c1 ♖ad8 19.c5 h6 (19...♘b4 20.a3 ♘d5) 20.a3 ♗d3 21.♖d1 ♖xd6 22.cxd6 ♗xe4 23.♗xe4 ♘c5 24.♗g6±.
- 17...♗f5!? 18.♖fd1 (18.♖e1 ♖fe8) 18...♗xe4 19.♗xe4 ♘c5 20.♗c2 a5 21.b3 g6 22.h4 ♔g7 23.a3 ♖f7, and now either 24.♔g2± or 24.b4±.

16...♗f5 17.g4 ♗g6 18.♞gxe4



18...♗xe4! 19.♘xe4 ♘xe4 20.♗xe4 ♘c5 21.♖e1 a5 22.♗g2 ♖ae8∓

The game eventually ended in a draw on move 53.

In the next game Konstantinos Nikolaidis played 10.♖fe1. Now 10...e5 clearly doesn't work: 11.dxe5 dxe5 12.e4! is very powerful. So I found nothing better than to transfer the game into a Stonewall position with 10...d5. Please note that the loss of time is not important here: it is doubtful whether the rook is well-placed on e1 – often it is more useful on the f-file.

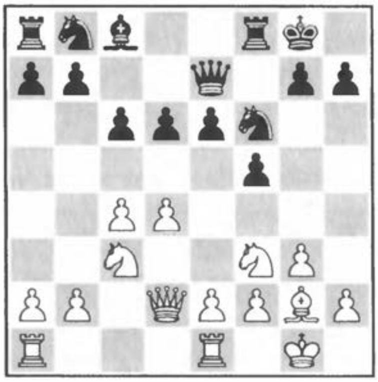
☐ **Konstantinos Nikolaidis**
■ **Igor Glek**
Korinthos 2000

1.d4 e6 2.c4 f5 3.g3 ♘f6 4.♗g2 ♗b4+ 5.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 6.♕xd2 0-0 7.♘f3 d6 8.♞c3 ♕e7 9.0-0

Later Igor Naumkin played 9.♖d1 against me, but I obtained a comfortable game after 9...c6 10.0-0 d5 11.e3 ♘bd7 12.♕c2 b6 13.♖fe1 ♗b7 (alternatives are 13...a5 and 13...♗a6) 14.♘e2 ♘e4 15.♘f4 ♖ac8 16.♕a4 a5 17.♖c1 ♖fe8 18.♘d3 ♗a6 19.♘de5 (19.b3 c5!? 20.♘fe5 ♘xe5 21.♘xe5 ♘f6; instead after 19.b3 ♕d6 White has 20.♘fe5, but 19...b5!? is also interesting) 19...♘xe5 20.♘xe5 ♗xc4! 21.♗xe4 (21.♕c2 c5) 21...fxe4 22.♘xc4 b5 23.♕xa5 bxc4 and Black was slightly better in Naumkin-Glek, Lido Estensi 2002.

9...c6 10.♖fe1

In the previous game we saw 10.♖ad1.



10...d5!

Bad is 10...e5? because of 11.dxe5 dxe5 12.e4 fxe4 13.♘xe4!± (13.♘g5±) and e5 is weak.

To similar positions as in the game leads 10...♘e4:

- 11.♕c2 d5 or 11...♘xc3 12.♕xc3 d5.
- 11.♕d3 d5 (11...♘xc3 12.♕xc3 d5 – 12...♘d7 13.e4 f4 14.e5±) 12.♖ac1 ♘d7 with unclear play.

The point of Black's d6-d5 is that the move ♖f1-e1 has certain downsides too. After an eventual exchange on e4 the rook is more useful on f1, protecting f2 and preparing f2-f3 to attack a black pawn on e4.

11.♕c2 ♘e4 12.♖ab1 ♘d7 13.b4

It's difficult to propose something better.

13...♘d6!

Controlling some important squares and forcing White to release the tension.

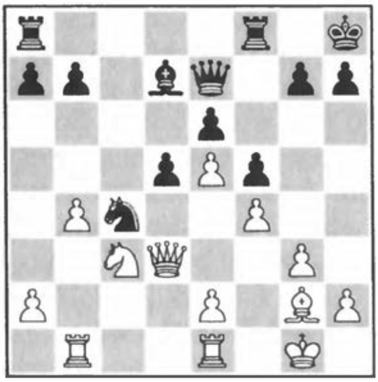
14.cxd5

14.c5 is not problematic for Black after: 14...♘c4 15.♕d3 and now either 15...e5 16.dxe5♘dxe5 17.♕d4♕f6 18.♘xe5♘xe5 19.♖bd1 ♗e6, or 15...b6 16.b5 ♗b7.

14...cxd5 15.♘e5 ♔h8

Also interesting was the immediate 15...♘xe5 16.dxe5 ♘e4 17.♘b5 ♗d7 18.♘d4 ♖ac8 19.♕b2 f4!?.

16.f4 ♘xe5 17.dxe5 ♘c4 18.♕d3 ♗d7∓



As so often in the Stonewall White's 'good' bishop is not better than Black's 'bad' one.

19.e4!? fxe4 20.♘xe4 ♗e8 21.♘c5 ♗g6 22.♗e4 b6

Black can claim a slight edge after 22...♘xe5 23.fxe5 dxe4 24.♕d7 ♕xd7 25.♘xd7.

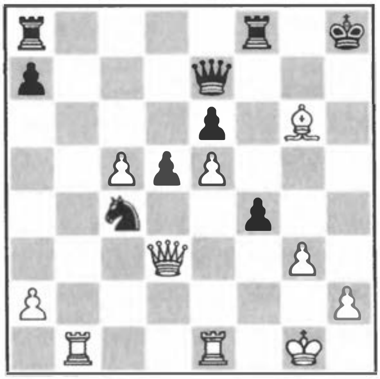
23.♗xg6 bxc5 24.♗xh7 g5!

This is stronger than 24...cxb4 25.♗g6 when White has counterplay.

25.♗g6 gxf4 26.bxc5?

Better is 26.gxf4 ♖xf4 27.bxc5 ♕xc5+ 28.♔h1 ♕f2 and now:

- 29.♖e2 ♕h4 30.♖b7.
- 29.♖f1 ♘xe5 30.♕a6 ♕e3 31.♕xe6 ♖af8 32.♖xf4 ♕xf4 33.♕h3+ ♔g7 34.♕h7+ ♔f6 35.♗c2 ♕f3+ 36.♔g1 ♕g4+ 37.♔h1 with an equal position.



26...f3! 27.♖f1

White also loses after 27.♔f1 ♕g7 28.♖b4 ♕h6.

27...♕xc5+ 28.♔h1 ♕e3 29.♖be1 ♕g5

Black is winning.

30.g4 ♕xg4 31.♖f2 ♕h4 32.♕c2 ♖ab8 33.♖ef1 ♘e3 34.♕d2 ♘xf1 35.♖xf1 ♖g8 36.♗c2 ♖g2

White resigned.

After winning this game I started analysing this line even more seriously, and I came to the conclusion that it is possible to enter the Stonewall immediately. Why play d7-d6 preparing e6-e5 when White can prevent the advance anyway – either with 10.♖fe1 as Nikolaidis played or with 10.♖ad1 as Farago did?

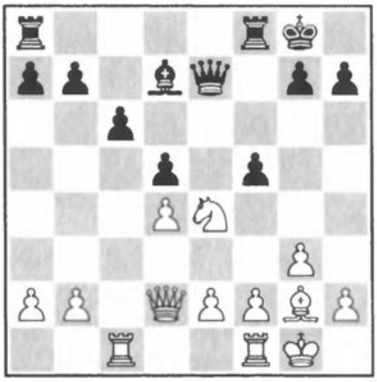
The common opinion under the majority of chess experts is that the exchange of the dark-squared bishops in the Stonewall is favourable for White. But I don't agree!

Indeed, in practically all my games in this Stonewall without dark-squared bishops (either after the immediate d5, or when I played d6 first and d6-d5 later) things were going my way in the opening. Maybe my advantage was not so big, but it is clear that Black should be satisfied with such opening results! I will substantiate my claim with a few more games from my own practice.

☐ **Veniamin Sergeev**
■ **Igor Glek**
Vladimir 2004

1.d4 e6 2.c4 f5 3.g3 ♘f6 4.♗g2 ♗b4+ 5.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 6.♕xd2 0-0 7.♘c3 d5 8.♘f3 c6 9.0-0

The game Tomescu-Glek, Porto San Giorgio 2001, went: 9.♘e5 ♘bd7 10.♘xd7 ♗xd7 11.cxd5 exd5 12.0-0 ♕e7 13.♖ac1 ♘e4 14.♘xe4

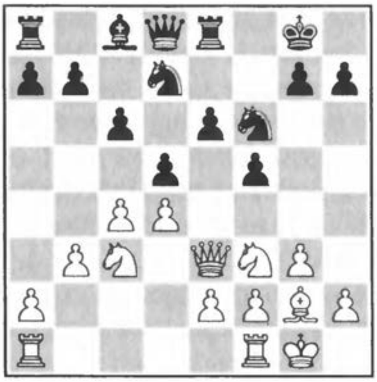


14...dxe4∓ (the correct way to take back here. After 14...fxe4!? White has 15.b4 or 15.f3!?) 15.f4 ♗e6 (stronger is 15...exf3! 16.♗xf3 ♗e6∓, or 16.exf3 f4) 16.a3 ♖fd8 17.♕c3 ♖d5 18.♖fd1 ♖ad8 19.b4, play is about equal by now.

9...♘bd7 10.♕e3 ♖e8

An interesting alternative for 10...♘e4.

11.b3



11...dxc4!?

This was the point of my previous move. The standard 11...♘e4 was still possible of course.

12.bxc4 e5 13.d5?

But this is a clear mistake. White should have played 13.dxe5 ♘g4 14.♕f4 ♘dxe5 with equal chances. Black can also opt for 13...♕a5 14.♖fd1 ♘g4 15.♕d4 ♘gxe5 16.♘xe5 ♕xe5 with unclear play.

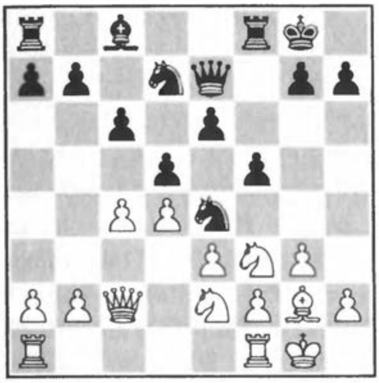
13...e4 14.♘d4 ♞e5 Black has a substantial edge. **15.♕g5 h6 16.♕f4 ♘xc4 17.♘xf5 ♗xf5 18.♕xf5 cxd5 19.♖fd1 ♖e5 20.♕f4 ♕a5 21.♕c1 ♖c8 22.♖b1 d4!** This combination wins material. White continued through inertia for a few more moves after losing the piece. **23.♖xd4 ♘b6 24.♖b3 ♘bd5 25.♕b2 ♘xc3 26.♗h3 ♖c7 27.♔g2 ♔h7 28.a4 ♕c5 29.♖d8 ♘xa4 30.♕a1 ♘c3**

White resigned.

☐ **Igor Khenkin**
■ **Igor Glek**
Germany Bundesliga 2007/08

1.d4 e6 2.c4 ♗b4+ 3.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 4.♕xd2 f5 Note the move order in this game! **5.♘c3 ♘f6 6.g3 0-0 7.♗g2 d5!?** The Stonewall, rather than 7...d6 8.♞f3 ♕e7.

8.♘f3 c6 9.0-0 ♘bd7 10.♕c2 This is more normal than 10.♕e3 from the previous game. **10...♘e4 11.e3** Or 11.♖ab1 ♕e7 12.b4♘d6. **11...♕e7 12.♘e2**



12...g5!?

Preventing the intended manoeuvre ♘e2-f4-d3. Black keeps equal chances after the standard 12...b6. For example: 13.cxd5 cxd5 14.♕a4 (14.♕c7 ♗a6) 14...♘df6 15.♘e5 ♗d7 16.♕a6 ♕b4 17.♘xd7 ♘xd7 18.♘f4 ♖fe8 19.♕b7 ♕e7 20.♖ac1 ♞d6 21.♕a6 ♘f6 22.♘d3 ♖ec8 23.♘e5 (23.h3 ♘fe4) 23...♘g4 24.h3 ♘xe5 25.dxe5 ♕b7 26.♕xb7 ♘xb7.

13.♖fc1

Another possibility was 13.♘e5!?. Black can take on e5 with 13...♘xe5 14.dxe5 g4!?, but he can also play 13...♕g7 14.f4 ♘xe5 (or 14...♞df6!? 15.b4♗d7 16.a4 ♖ac8) 15.dxe5 ♗d7 with dynamic equality.

13...a5 14.b3 b6 15.♕b2

Here Khenkin proposed a draw and I accepted. The final position is quite acceptable for Black.

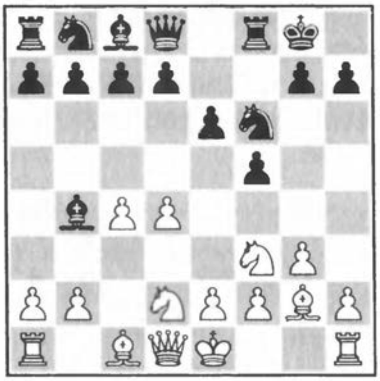
Variation III

5.♘d2

The third acceptable way to parry the check. In this line Black should argue that White's knight is slightly misplaced on d2, disturbing White's coordination. Traditionally, Black has played 5...0-0 6.♘f3 a5 which is how Larsen once beat Botvinnik (Leiden 1970). This is also how I used to play this line (see the game Spiess-Glek). However, by now you should not be surprised to learn that I have recently began to prefer 6...d5 here (as in Johannessen-Glek).

☐ **Günter Spiess**
■ **Igor Glek**
Bad Wiessee 2000

1.d4 e6 2.c4 f5 3.g3 ♘f6 4.♗g2 ♗b4+ 5.♘d2 0-0 6.♘f3



6...a5

In case of the immediate 6...b6 White has 7.♘e5 c6 8.0-0 ♗b7 9.♕b3 as in Tukmakov-Castro Rojas, Osuna 1991.

If White instead goes 7.0-0 ♗b7 8.a3 (8.♘b1!?±) 8...♗xd2 9.♕xd2?! (stronger is 9.♗xd2), then Black has 9...♘c6!? 10.b4 ♘e7 11.a4 (or 11.♗b2?! a6! 12.a4 b5! Makarichev) and now the strategical operation 11...a6! 12.♘e1?! ♗xg2 13.♘xg2 b5! gave Black a nice advantage after 14.cxb5 axb5 15.a5 ♘ed5! In Popov-Makarichev, Amsterdam 1974 (via transposition).

7.0-0 b6 8.♘e5

Magerramov-Eingorn, Riga 1980, saw: 8.a3 ♗e7 9.♘e5 ♖a7 10.e4 d6 11.♘d3 ♘xe4

12.♘xe4 fxe4 13.♗xe4 d5 14.cxd5 exd5 15.♗g2 ♗f6 16.♖e1 ♘c6 17.♘e5 ♗xe5 18.dxe5 ♗e6 with interesting play.

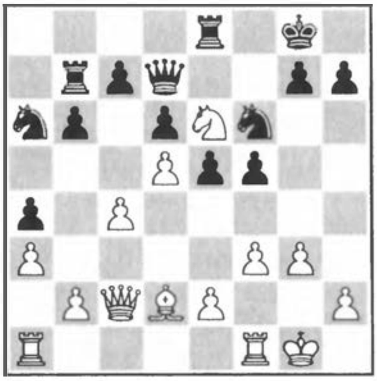
8...♖a7 9.♘d3

This is how Botvinnik also played against Larsen. I now regard Black's position with some suspicion because of both 9.d5!, and 9.♘b1!. After the knight retreat the game Gelfand-Knaak, Halle 1987, went 9...♗e7 10.♘c3 ♗b7 (10...d6 11.♘d3 c6 12.♕b3 d5 is slightly superior, but still no picknick) 11.d5 ♕c8 12.e4 fxe4 13.♘xe4±.

9...♗xd2

Larsen played 9...♗b7 which the Dane evaluates as equal. After 10.♘f3 ♗e7 11.b3 ♘e4 12.♗b2 ♗f6 13.a3 c5! he went on to win a long game, Botvinnik-Larsen, Leiden 1970.

10.♗xd2 ♗b7 11.♗xb7 11.f3 was also interesting. **11...♖xb7 12.a3 d6 13.♘f4 ♕d7 14.d5 e5 15.♘e6 ♖e8 16.f3 ♘a6 17.♕c2 a4**



In this unclear position the players agreed a draw.

☐ **Leif Erlend Johannessen**
■ **Igor Glek**
Kemer2007

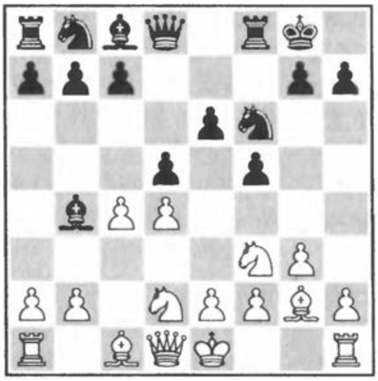
1.d4 e6 2.c4 f5 3.g3 ♘f6 4.♗g2 ♗b4+ 5.♘d2 0-0

Perhaps an immediate Stonewall with 5...d5, and after 6.♕a4+!? ♘c6 the position is at least quite interesting.

6.♘f3

Also possible is 6.a3 ♗xd2+ 7.♕xd2 d6 8.b3 (8.b4±; 8.♘f3 ♕e7 9.0-0 e5 10.b4 ♘c6 11.dxe5 dxe5 12.b5 ♘d8 13.a4 Euwe-Heidenfeld, Beverwijk 1953) 8...♕e7 9.♗b2 e5 10.dxe5 dxe5 11.♕c3 ♖e8 12.♖d1 c5!? (planning ♘b8-c6) 13.♗d5+!? ♘xd5 14.cxd5 ♘d7 15.♘f3 ♕d6 16.0-0 b5 (or simply 16...b6!? 17.♕c2 ♘f6) 17.♘h4 and now rather than 17...♘f6 Delemarre-Glek, Böblingen 2000, I should have played 17...♘b6 18.f4 ♘xd5 19.♕d3 ♗e6 20.♘xf5 (20.♗xe5 ♕b6 21.♕f3 c4+ 22.♗d4 ♕d6) 20...♕b6 21.fxe5 c4+ 22.♕d4 ♕xd4+ 23.♗xd4 cxb3 24.♘d6 ♖eb8 25.e4 ♘b6∓.

6...d5



I think that here too the best possibility is to go into the 'Stonewall'.

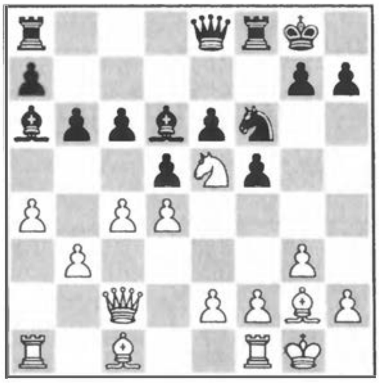
7.0-0 c6 8.♘e5

Hjartarson-Bischoff, Munich 1988, went 8.♕c2 ♘e4 9.♘e5 ♘xd2 10.♗xd2 ♗xd2 11.♕xd2 ♘d7. Actually, this is a position which is common for the line with 5.♗d2! Black shouldn't have any real problems.

8...♘bd7 9.♘df3 ♘xe5

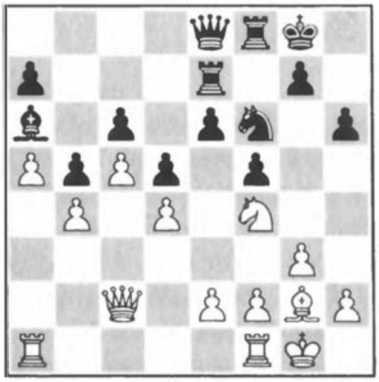
The exchange of knights frees Black's game.

10.♘xe5 ♗d6 11.b3 ♕e8 12.♕c2 b6 13.a4 ♗a6



The position looks like a good line of the Queen's Indian.

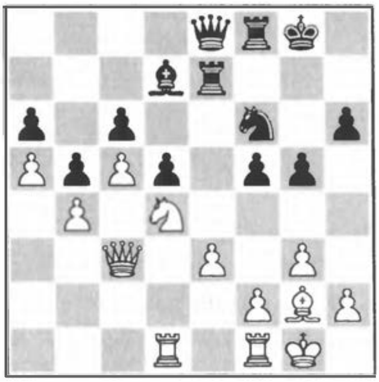
14.a5 14.c5!?. **14...b5 15.♗b2 ♖c8 16.c5 ♗b8 17.♘d3 ♖c7 18.♗c1 ♖e7 19.b4 h6 20.♗f4** Here 20.f4 was still enough for equality. **20...♗xf4 21.♘xf4** Maybe 21.gxf4 was safer. Now Black has a choice between: 21...g5, or 21...♕h5 22.♖a3 g5 23.fxg5 hxg5 24.♘e5 g4 25.♘xc6 ♖h7 26.h3 f4, or 21...♗c8 22.♘e5 ♘g4 23.♖a3 ♘xe5 24.dxe5 g5 25.♖h3 ♕g6 26.♖g3 ♖g7 27.♗f3.



21...e5!

21...g5 was OK for Black, but I wanted more, as my opponent had problems with the clock here.

22.dxe5 ♖xe5 23.e3 ♗c8 24.♘e2 a6 25.♘d4 ♗d7 It's difficult to believe that White is worse here, but it's clear that Black's play is much easier! **26.♖ae1 ♖e7** Planning the transfer of the knight to e5. **27.♕c3** Perhaps 27.h3!? to prevent ♘g4. **27...♘g4 28.♘f3** To prevent 28...♘e5. **28...g5 29.♖d1 ♘f6 30.♘d4**



30...h5!

In my opponent's time-trouble this was quite effective!

31.♖de1

Or 31.♕d3 ♕g6 (31...h4) 32.♔h1 ♖h7 (32...♔h7) 33.♖g1 h4 (33...♘e4 34.♕c2 h4) 34.gxh4 ♖xh4 with an attack.

31...h4 32.f3

Taking on h4 is dangerous: 32.gxh4 ♕h5 33.hxg5 ♘e4 34.♕b2 ♖h7 35.h4 ♕xh4 36.♘f3 ♕h5 37.♕e5 f4∓.

32...♕h5 33.♕c2

White has lots of problems to solve after 33.gxh4!? ♕xh4 34.♖e2 f4 35.e4 (35.exf4 ♖h7 36.h3 ♘h5) 35...♖h7 36.♗h1 g4 37.fxg4 ♘xg4 38.exd5 ♘e3 39.dxc6 ♖g7+ 40.♖g2. Or 40.♗g2 ♗h3 41.♖ff2 ♕g4 42.♘f3 ♖d8 43.c7 ♖d1+ 44.♘e1 ♖xc7∓.

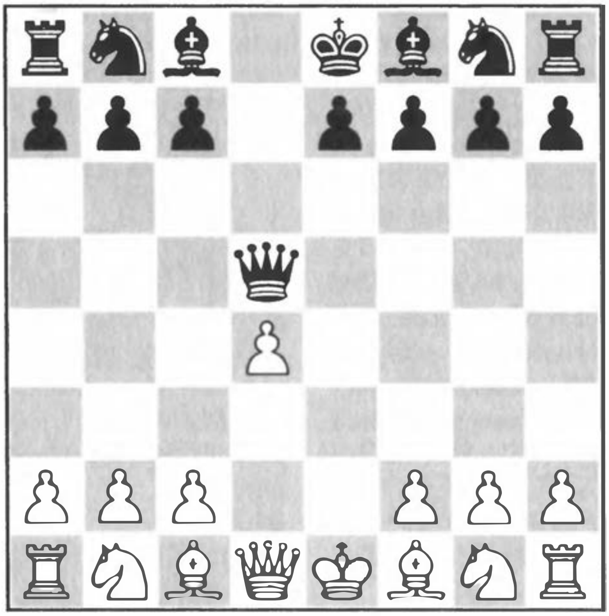
33...hxg3 34.hxg3

White lost on time here! His position is already quite bad as can be seen from: 34...♖h7 35.♖f2 (35.♔f2 ♘e4+!−+; 35.♖e2 ♕h2+ 36.♔f2 ♘h5 37.♖h1 ♕xg3+ 38.♔g1 – 38.♔f1 ♕e5 – 38...♖ff7 39.♖f2 ♕e5 40.♕d2 f4) 35...♕h2+ 36.♔f1 ♕xg3 37.♘xf5 ♗xf5 38.♕xf5 ♔g7 39.♖ee2 ♖h4∓.

CHAPTER 9

Sergey Tiviakov

Two replies to 3.d4 in the Scandinavian



Let's play 3...e5 or 3...♘c6

In Volume 6 of the SOS series the author wrote an article about the Scandinavian Defence with 3...♕d6.

[Editor's note: the present article is also relevant for SOS readers who prefer the Scandinavian with 3...♕d8. See SOS-4, Chapter 2 for Arthur Kogan's views on this queen retreat.]

One year has passed and not much has changed. The Scandinavian Defence still remains a very strong surprise weapon. Even when White is prepared he will not find it easy to achieve anything special.

For example, my opponent at the FIDE World Cup 2007 grandmaster Surya Shekhar Ganguly from India had two weeks to prepare for the Scandinavian Defence, but he failed to find something. Indeed, he obtained a worse position immediately out of the opening and eventually lost.

The positions arising after 3.♘c3 ♕d6 4.d4 ♘f6 5.♘f3 c6 and 5...a6 are popular now, even in tournaments of the highest level. That's why White sometimes tries other approaches on the third move, such as 3.♘f3 or 3.d4.

If Black reacts correctly to 3.♘f3 by 3...♗g4 4.♗e2 ♘c6 followed by ...0-0-0, he has no problem equalizing whatsoever. In case of 5.d4 0-0-0 we actually transpose to Variation B2 below. In my own practice I also encountered 5.♘c3, when after 5...♕d7 6.h3 ♗xf3

7.♗xf3 0-0-0 8.d3 e5 9.0-0 ♘d4 10.♖e1 ♗d6 11.♗e3 f5 12.♗xd4 exd4 13.♗d5 ♔b8 14.♕f3 c6 15.♗e6 ♕c7 16.♘e2 ♘e7 17.c3 ♗e5 18.♗c4 c5 19.cxd4 cxd4 20.♘g3 g6 21.♘f1 ♗d6 22.♘d2 ♘c6 the game Van den Doel-Tiviakov, Dresden 2007, ended in a draw on move 28.

In this article we shall look at another move – 3.d4 – after which Black has to play accurately to reach equality. The point is that if Black plays passively then White plays c2-c4 at some point acquiring a space advantage and a small plus.

After 3.d4 the strongest moves in the position are 3...e5 (variation A) and 3...♘c6 (variation B). The variations often transpose into one another, but it is important to understand that Black has to break White's centre by e7-e5, otherwise he ends up in a passive position.

Variation A

3...e5

White now has two possibilities: to take on e5 or to play 4.♘f3.

Variation A1

4.dxe5

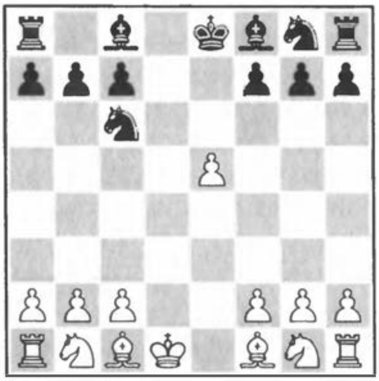
Now Black can sacrifice the pawn, exchanging the queens on d1 and aiming for quick development of his pieces.

4...♕xd1+

Please note that 4...♕xe5+ is also playable, since it is not so easy for White to exploit the central position of the queen. After 5.♗e2 (5.♘e2 is too passive, 5.♕e2 leads to an equal ending) Black can disturb White's development with 5...♗g4. Although more analysis is still required, Black's position looks OK to me.

5.♔xd1 ♘c6

White can now defend the e5-pawn in several ways.



- ● 6.♗b5 can be answered by 6...♗g4+ followed by 7...0-0-0, or by 6...♗d7, with excellent compensation in both cases.
- ● After 6.♗f4 Black has a choice between 6...♗c5, 6...♗f5, 6...♗g4+, 6...♗e6. Even 6...♘ge7 comes into consideration. Everywhere he has excellent play for the pawn.
- ● If 6.♘f3 then simply 6...♗g4 and castling will provide Black with excellent play.
- ● Finally, after 6.f4 Black plays 6...♗f5, then castles queenside and after opening up the centre by f7-f6 he has more than enough compensation for the pawn, as we can see in the game De Firmian-Granda Zuniga, Amsterdam 1996. Although White's play can be improved, generally Black's position is much easier to play.

☐ **Nick de Firmian**
■ **Julio Granda Zuniga**
Amsterdam 1996

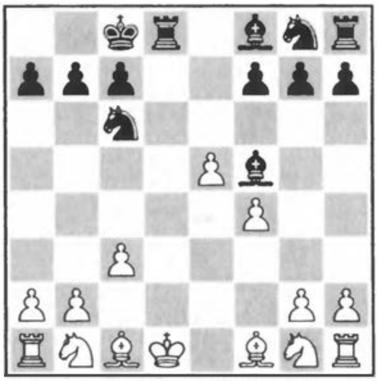
1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♕xd5 3.d4 e5 4.dxe5

After 4.♘f3 ♘c6 (not 4...e4? 5.♘e5!±) 5.♗e3! ♗g4 6.♗e2 exd4 7.♞c3 ♕h5 8.♘xd4 ♗xe2 9.♕xe2 ♕xe2+ 10.♘cxe2 ♘xd4 11.♘xd4 0-0-0 the ending is equal. See Variation A2.

4...♕xd1+ 5.♔xd1 ♘c6 6.f4

Holding on to the extra pawn on e5.

6...♗f5 7.c3 0-0-0+



With his edge in development Black clearly has sufficient compensation for the pawn.

8.♔e1?!

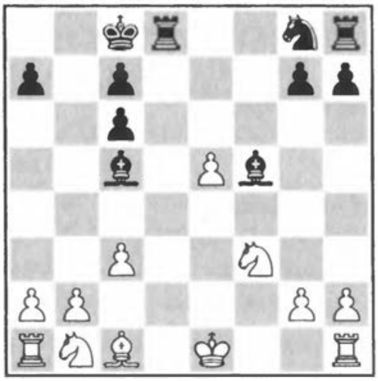
Here 8.♘d2 was better.

8...f6

Opening files against White's king.

9.♗b5 fxe5 10.♗xc6 bxc6 11.fxe5 ♗c5 12.♘f3?!

After 12.♘d2 ♗c2 13.b4 ♗b6 14.a4 ♘h6 15.♖a2! ♗g6 (but not 15...♗d3 16.a5 ♗e3 17.♘b3 ♘g4 18.♗xe3 ♘xe3 19.♘d4!±) 16.a5 ♗e3 17.♘b3 ♖d3 Black has good compensation for the pawn.



12...♘f6!

Exploiting the exposed central position of the white king, Black finishes his development in a spectacular way.

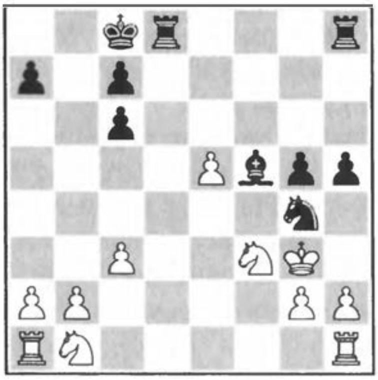
13.♗g5

Obviously 13.exf6 ♖he8+ wins for Black, but 13.b4 ♗b6 14.c4 was better, after which Black has the very strong 14...c5!! 15.exf6 ♖he8+ 16.♔f2 cxb4+ 17.♔g3 gxf6 18.h3 ♖e2, with a decisive attack according to Granda.

13...h6 14.♗h4

14.♗xf6 was better, although after 14...gxf6 15.♘bd2 fxe5 16.♘b3 ♗e7 Black has the advantage of the pair of bishops.

14...g5 15.♗f2 ♗xf2+ 16.♔xf2 ♘g4+ 17.♔g3 h5!



Now Black gets a very strong, probably, decisive attack.

18.h4

Black wins after 18.♘xg5 h4+ 19.♔f4 (19.♔f3 ♖hf8–+) 19...♖hf8.

18...gxh4+ 19.♘xh4

Black also wins after 19.♔xh4 ♘e3 and 19.♖xh4 ♖hg8 20.♘bd2 ♖d3! 21.♔f4 ♘e3 22.♖g1 ♗h7.

19...♗h7! The best move. **20.♘f3 ♖hg8 21.♖xh5?**

White is mated after 21.♘bd2? ♘e3+ 22.♔f2 ♖xg2+ 23.♔xe3 ♖d3+ 24.♔f4 ♖g4 mate. White also loses after the relatively best 21.♖e1 ♘e3+ 22.♔h2 ♖xg2+ 23.♔h1 ♖xb2 24.♖xe3 ♖d1+ 25.♖e1 ♖xe1+ 26.♘xe1 ♗xb1.

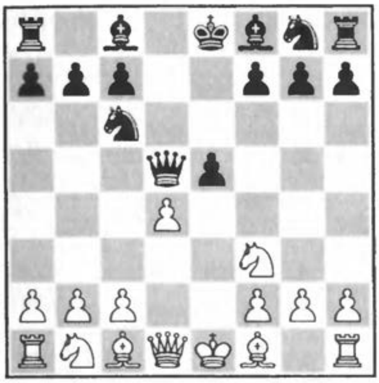
21...♘f6+ 22.♖g5 ♘e4+ 23.♔h4 ♘xg5 24.♘xg5 ♖d1 25.e6 ♖g1 26.♘d2 ♖xa1 27.♘df3 ♗e4 28.♘d4 c5 29.♘b3 ♖g1

and White lost on time.

Variation A2

4.♘f3 ♘c6

This is best as 4...exd4 5.♘xd4 gives White an edge in development.



Only four moves have been played and we are already outside the modern theory! No games were published in the Chess Informant, and there is almost nothing in the ECO, which just gives one game reference.

- **5.♗e3** ♗g4 6.♔e2 exd4 7.♘c3 (Kharashkina-Polovnikova, Elista 1998) 7...♕h5 8.♘xd4 ♗xe2 9.♕xe2 ♕xe2+ 10.♘cxe2 ♘xd4 11.♘xd4 0-0-0 with equal chances (Granda). Well, in my opinion, the easiest way to equalize is simply to exchange on d4 by 5...exd4 6.♘xd4 ♘xd4.
- **5.♘xe5** gives Black no problems to solve either after 5...♘xe5 6.dxe5 ♕xe5+.
- After **5.dxe5** similarly to line A1 Black has to sacrifice the pawn by 5...♕xd1+ 6.♔xd1 ♗g4 (both 6...♗c5 and 6...♗f5 also deserve serious attention) 7.♗f4 0-0-0+ (or 7...♗c5) 8.♘d2 ♗c5 (or 8...♘ge7, followed ♘g6) with excellent compensation for the pawn which is confirmed by the good statistics for Black here.
- After **5.♘c3** it is best for Black to give up his dark-squared bishop to secure the quick development of his pieces and control of the centre by 5...♗b4. After 6.♗d2 ♗xc3 7.♗xc3 (7.bxc3 which was once tried by Capablanca deserves attention, although it is far from clear how White can successfully develop his initiative if Black wins the pawn by 7...exd4 8.cxd4 ♘xd4) 7...e4 8.♘d2 ♘f6 Black reaches equality after both 9.♗c4 ♕f5 followed by 10...♗e6, and 9.♘c4 ♗e6.

Variation B

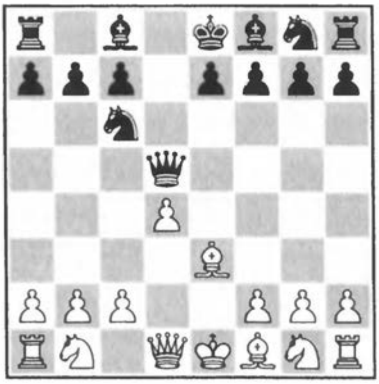
3...♘c6

This move is more flexible than 3...e5, since after 4.♘f3 Black has the additional possibility of 4...♗g4. Please note that the position arising after 4.♘f3 e5 has already been studied via the move order 3...e5 4.♘f3 ♘c6. After 3...♘c6 White has to play 4.♘f3, since after 4.♗e3 e5 Black seizes the initiative and it is White who has to play carefully in order not to find himself in a worse position. The game Drazic-Tiviakov, Trieste 2007, is a good example.

Variation B1

☐ **Sinisa Drazic**
■ **Sergey Tiviakov**
Trieste 2007

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♕xd5 3.d4 ♘c6 4.♗e3



4...e5! Trying to seize the initiative.

5.♘c3

5.c4 leads to the complex play with even chances after:

– 5...♗b4+ 6.♘c3 (or 6.♘d2 followed by d5 is unclear) 6...♕a5 (or 6...♗xc3+ 7.bxc3 ♕a5 unclear) 7.d5 ♘ce7 with unclear play.

– 5...♕a5+ 6.♗d2 ♗b4 7.d5 ♘d4 or 7...♗xd2+ planning ...♘d4.

5...♗b4 6.♕d2

Black has no problems against other moves either. For example: 6.a3 ♗xc3+ 7.bxc3; 6.dxe5 ♗xc3+ (6...♕xe5 and 6...♕xd1+ are also equal) 7.bxc3 ♕xe5; 6.♘e2 exd4; 6.♘f3 exd4; 6.♕f3 ♕a5 7.♘e2 ♘f6∓.

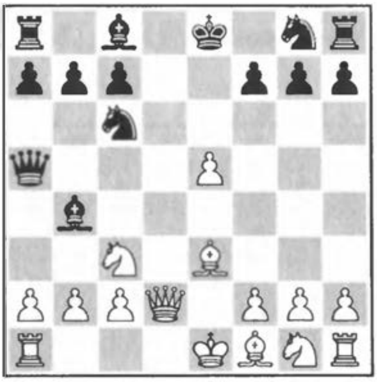
6...♕a5

Here 6...♗xc3 7.bxc3 ♘f6 is unclear, and 6...♘f6!? 7.♘xd5 ♗xd2+ 8.♗xd2 ♘xd5 9.dxe5 ♘xe5 is also playable.

7.dxe5

Other moves, such as 7.♘f3 ♘f6∓, 7.d5? ♘ce7 8.0-0-0 (8.♗b5+ ♕xb5 9.♘xb5 ♗xd2+ 10.♗xd2 ♘xd5 11.c4 a6∓) 8...♘f6∓, 7.♘ge2 ♘f6∓ and 7.♗b5 ♗d7∓ give Black the advantage.

Only 7.♖d1!? deserves serious attention. After which Black has a rich choice between 7...♗g4, 7...♗f5, 7...♘f6 and 7...♗e6.



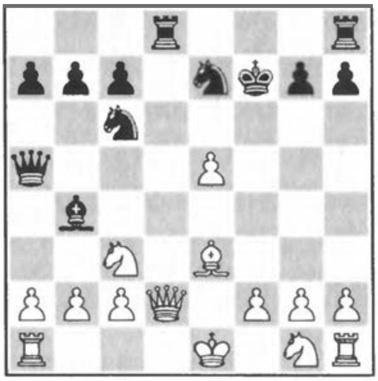
7...♘ge7!

After 7...♘xe5 8.0-0-0 ♗e6 9.a3 ♗xc3 10.♕xc3 ♕xc3 11.bxc3 ♘e7 play was equal in Illijin-Jeras, Kranj 1999. However 8.♗d4± is stronger.

8.a3

This move was new at the time.

● 8.♗c4 led to a quick loss in the game Akhundov-Kalantarian: 8...♗e6 (or 8...♘xe5 with advantage) 9.♗xe6 ♖d8 10.♗xf7+ ♔xf7



– 11.e6+ ♔g8 12.♕c1 ♗xc3+ 13.bxc3 ♕xc3+ 14.♔f1 ♘d5∓

– 11.♕c1 ♗xc3+ 12.bxc3 ♕xc3+∓ 13.♔f1 ♘f5 14.♘f3 ♖he8 15.♕b1 ♖d5 16.♕b3 ♕xa1+ 17.♔e2 ♘cd4+ 0-1, Akhundov-Kalantarian, Voroshilovgrad 1989.

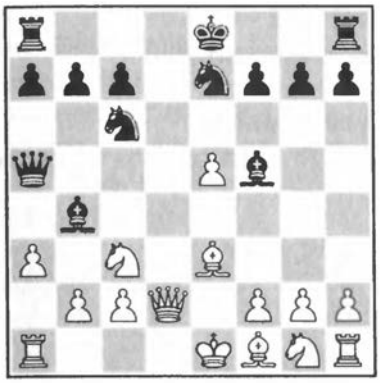
● 8.0-0-0 ♗g4!? (8...♗e6 9.a3 ♘d5 – 9...♗xc3 10.♕xc3 ♕xc3 11.bxc3 ♘xe5 equal – 10.♕xd5 ♗xd5 11.♖xd5 ♗xc3 12.♖xa5 ♗xa5 13.c4±; 8...♗f5 9.a3 see 8.a3 ♗f5 9.0-0-0) 9.f3 ♖d8 with an initiative is slightly better for Black.

8...♗f5

After other Black moves White is able to hold the balance.

E.g. 8...♘d5 9.♘ge2 ♗g4 (9...♗e6 10.♖c1 ♗xc3 11.♘xc3 ♘xc3 12.♕xc3 ♕xc3+ 13.bxc3 ♘xe5 with even chances) 10.♖c1 (10.♖b1 ♖d8 11.axb4 ♘dxb4 12.♕c1 ♘xc2+ 13.♕xc2 ♘b4 14.♕e4 ♘d3+ 15.♕xd3 ♖xd3 16.♘f4 ♖xc3 17.bxc3 ♕xc3+ 18.♗d2 ♕xe5+∓) 10...♗xc3 11.♘xc3 ♘xc3 12.♕xc3 ♕xc3+ 13.bxc3 ♘xe5 with equal play.

Or 8...♗e6 9.♖b1 ♗xc3 10.♕xc3 ♕xe5 11.♕xe5 ♘xe5 with an equal ending.



9.0-0-0?!

After this move White is worse. It was necessary to get rid of the pin by 9.♖b1:

- 9...♗xc3 10.♕xc3 ♕xc3+ (or 10...♕xe5 11.♕xe5 ♘xe5=) 11.bxc3 0-0-0 12.f4 ♗xc2 with an equal ending.
- 9...♖d8!? 10.axb4 ♘xb4 11.♗d3 ♘xc2+ 12.♕xc2 ♗xd3 13.♕c1 ♗xb1 14.♕xb1 ♕xe5 15.♘f3 with an unbalanced position.

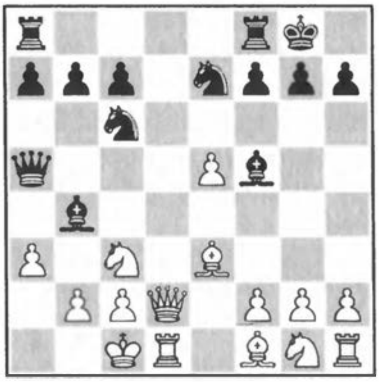
The ending after 9.♖c1 ♗xc3 10.♕xc3 ♕xc3+ 11.bxc3 ♘xe5 is slightly preferable for Black.

9...0-0

It was possible to sacrifice the bishop on a3: after 9...♗xa3!? 10.bxa3 ♕xa3+ 11.♔b1 ♘b4 (11...♕b4+=) 12.♗d3 0-0-0 13.♘ge2 ♖xd3 14.cxd3 ♗xd3+ 15.♕xd3 ♕b3+ 16.♔c1 (16.♔a1 ♘xd3 17.♖xd3 ♖d8∓) 16...♘xd3+ 17.♖xd3 Black is slighly better due to the huge pawn mass on the queenside.

Instead 9...♖d8 10.♗d3 ♘d5 (10...♗xd3 11.cxd3 ♗xc3 12.♕xc3 ♕xc3+ 13.bxc3 ♘xe5 14.♔c2=) 11.♘ge2 (not 11.axb4? ♕a1+ 12.♘b1 ♘dxb4–+) 11...♗xd3 12.cxd3 ♗xc3 13.♘xc3 ♘xe5 14.♗d4 promises no advantage.

After the text White is on the edge of the precipice. White cannot take the bishop as 10.axb4? ♘xb4 loses.



10.♗d3

Also bad is 10.♘f3?:

- 10...♗xa3 11.bxa3 ♕xa3+ 12.♔b1 ♕b3+ (12...♘b4 13.♗d3±) 13.♔c1 ♕a3+ is a perpetual.
- 10...♖ad8 11.♗d3 (11.♕e1 ♗xa3∓) 11...♘d5! 12.axb4 ♕a1+ 13.♘b1 ♘dxb4 14.♕e2 ♘a5 is bad for White.

Moreover, 10.f4? loses after 10...♗xa3! 11.bxa3 ♕xa3+ 12.♔b1 ♘b4, followed by ...♘ed5.

These variations illustrate the dangers of White's position.

10...♖fd8

Similarly as in the game the ending after 10...♗xd3 11.cxd3 ♗xc3 12.♕xc3 ♕xe5 is slightly better for Black.

While 10...♘d5 11.axb4 ♕a1+ 12.♘b1 ♘cxb4 13.♕e2 ♖fd8 is unclear.

11.♘ge2

Here 11.e6!? ♗xe6 12.♘ge2 (12.axb4 ♕a1+ 13.♘b1 ♗a2–+; 12.♘f3 ♘d5 13.axb4 ♕a1+ 14.♘b1 ♘dxb4–+) 12...♘d5 13.♔b1 is slightly worse for White.

11.axb4 is impossible for White. After 11...♘xb4 12.♕e2 ♖xd3! 13.cxd3 ♕a1+ 14.♔d2 (14.♘b1 ♖d8–+) 14...♕xb2+ 15.♔e1 ♕xc3+ 16.♕d2 ♘xd3+ 17.♔f1 ♕xe5 Black's advantage is huge.

11...♗xd3

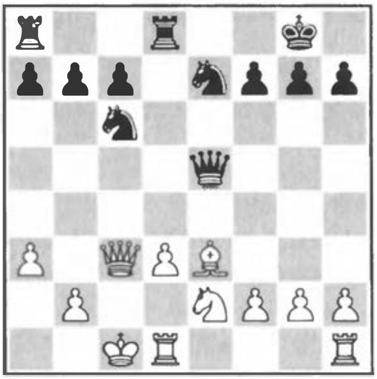
Not 11...♘xe5 12.axb4 ♕a1+ 13.♘b1 ♘xd3+ 14.cxd3 ♖xd3 15.♕xd3 ♗xd3 16.♖xd3±.

12.cxd3 ♗xc3 13.♕xc3

Better than 13.♘xc3 ♘xe5 or 13...♕xe5.

13...♕xe5

White has managed to avoid a direct loss in the middlegame. But now he has to suffer in a slightly worse ending arising after the exchange on e5.



14.h3?

Better is 14.♕xe5 ♘xe5 15.♔c2∓.

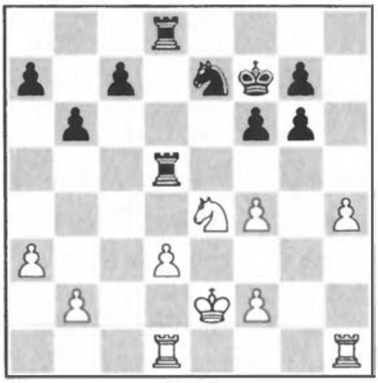
14...♕f5 15.♘g3 ♕g6 16.♖he1 ♘d5 17.♕c4 ♖d7∓

White has decided to keep the queens on, but it didn't make his life easier. Eventually he lost.

18.♕e4 ♖ad8 19.♕xg6 hxg6 20.♘e4 b6 21.♔c2 f6 22.h4 ♔f7 23.g3

This weakens square f3.

23...♘e5 24.♗c1 ♘f3 25.♖h1 ♘e7 26.♗f4 ♘d4+ 27.♔d2 ♘e6 28.♔e2 ♘xf4+ 29.gxf4 ♖d5



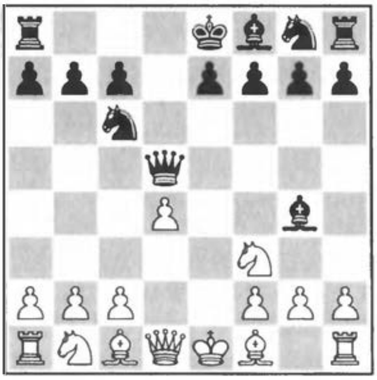
Black is winning because of White's horrible pawn structure.

30.♖h3 ♖f5 31.♘c3 ♖xf4 32.h5 gxh5 33.♖xh5 ♘f5

And I won on move 68.

Variation B2

After **4.♘f3 ♗g4** a very sharp position arises.



If White plays **5.♗e2** then we reach the position that usually arises after 3.♘f3 ♗g4 4.♗e2 ♘c6 5.d4, where Black has no problems at all after 5...0-0-0. Although some knowledge is required, since the lines can become really wild.

White also has other moves at his disposal, such as **5.c4** and **5.♘c3**.

After **5.♘c3** ♕f5 looks promising with the idea to meet 6.♗e2 by 6...0-0-0 (similar to the lines 3.♘f3 ♗g4 4.♗e2 ♘c6 5.d4 0-0-0 6.♘c3 ♕f5) or 6.♗d3 by 6...♗xf3 7.gxf3 ♕h3 8.♗b5 e6.

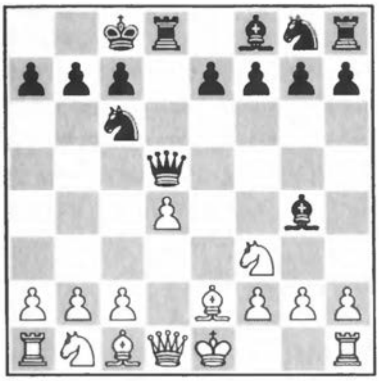
After **5.c4** ♕a5+ is interesting, with only one game played so far (Short-Wockenfuss, Germany Bundesliga 1986/87), there is plenty of space for creativity for both sides. But other moves, such as 5...♕d7, 5...♕f5 and 5...♕h5 are also playable and require further research.

I end this article with my game against Daan Brandenburg from the 2008 Dutch Championship with the main line after 4.♘f3 ♗g4 5.♗e2 0-0-0.

☐ **Daan Brandenburg**
■ **Sergey Tiviakov**
Hilversum ch-NED 2008 (5)

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♕xd5 3.♘f3 ♗g4 4.♗e2 ♘c6 5.d4 0-0-0

We have already noted the different move orders to reach this position.



6.c4

White moves his c-pawn, thus making good on his decision to omit 3.♘c3. Brandenburg had previously tried 6.♗e3 against me. After 6...e5 7.dxe5 ♗xf3 8.♗xf3 ♕xe5 9.♕c1 ♘d4 10.♘d2 ♘f5 11.♗g4 ♘h6 12.♗xf5+ ♘xf5 13.0-0 ♘xe3 14.♘f3 ♕e4 15.♕xe3 ♕xe3 16.fxe3 ♗c5 17.♖ae1 ♖he8 18.♔f2 f5 19.g3 g5 20.♖e2 h6 21.h4 f4 Black was better and won in Brandenburg-Tiviakov, Leeuwarden 2007.

A few rounds later in this same Dutch Championship Dimitri Reinderman opted for 7.♘c3 (so after 6.♗e3 e5), but the players soon agreed to a draw after 7...♕a5 8.♘xe5 ♗xe2 9.♕xe2 ♘xe5 10.dxe5 ♕xe5 11.♖d1 (11.0-0 ♗d6 12.g3 ♘f6 13.♕c4 ♕h5 is equal) 11...♖xd1+ 12.♔xd1 ♘f6 13.♕c4 ♕e6 14.♕xe6+ ½-½, Reinderman-Tiviakov, Hilversum 2008.

The text move 6.c4 leads to very concrete play.

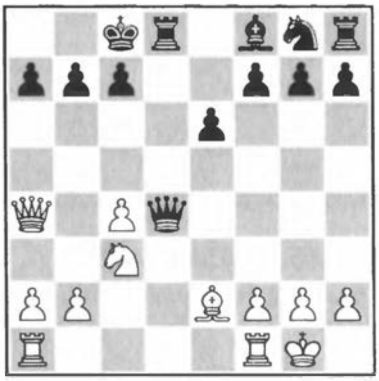
6...♕a5+ 7.♗d2 ♕f5

Black is moving his queen back and forth. Pawn d4 is the target.

8.♗e3 ♗xf3 9.♗xf3 ♘xd4! 10.♗xd4 ♕e6+

The point. Black wins back the piece by force.

11.♗e2 ♕e4 12.0-0 ♕xd4 13.♕a4 e6 14.♘c3



White has a lead in development in return for the pawn.

14...♕b6!?

An alternative is 14...♘f6, but better is 14...♗d6 15.♘b5 ♕e5 16.♘xd6+ cxd6 17.♗f3 although White has compensation.

15.♖ad1

After 15.b4 ♕xb4 16.♕xa7 ♕xc3 17.♗f3 Black should not play 17...♕xc4? 18.♕xb7+ ♔d7 19.♖ac1 and White was winning in Zeberski-Pfeiffer, Oberliga 2006/07, but 17...♗d6, when play could continue 18.♖fd1 ♕e5 19.g3 ♔d7 20.c5 ♔e8 21.cxd6 cxd6 22.♖ab1.

Interesting for future research are 15.♖ab1!? and 15.♖fd1.

15...♖xd1

Perhaps 15...♗d6!?.

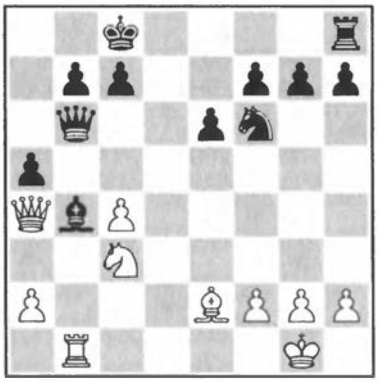
16.♖xd1 ♘f6 17.b4!

Not 17.♘e4 c6! 18.♘xf6 gxf6 19.b4 a6 20.a3∓.

17...♗xb4

Black is obliged to take as 17...c5 18.♘e4 ♕xb4 19.♕xa7 ♘xe4 20.♕a8+ ♔c7 21.♕d8+ ♔c6 22.a4 wins for White.

18.♖b1 a5 The only move.



19.a3 ♗xc3 20.♖xb6 cxb6

Black is doing well materially, but White can keep the balance by activating his bishop.

21.c5! bxc5 22.♗a6

Also good is 22.♗f3 ♖d8 (or 22...♘d5 23.♗xd5 exd5 24.♕g4+ f5 25.♕xf5+ ♔b8 26.♕xd5 ♖e8 with equal chances) 23.♗xb7+ (23.♕b5 ♘d5 24.♕xc5+ ♔b8=) 23...♔xb7 24.♕b5+ ♔c7 25.♕xc5+ ♔b7 with a perpetual.

22...bxa6 23.♕c6+ ♔b8 24.♕b6+

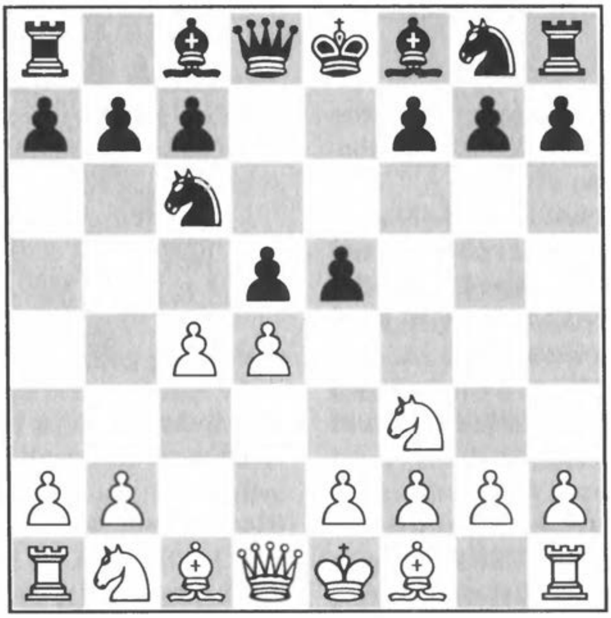
Draw.

The final conclusion: avoiding the main lines of the Scandinavian Defence by postponing 3.♘c3 doesn't pose any serious threat for Black. The best reaction is often an active one, attacking the centre by e7-e5. In this way Black not only solves his opening problems but also attempts to seize the initiative.

CHAPTER 10

Jeroen Bosch

This is not the Chigorin



1.d4 d5 2.c4 ♘c6 3.♘f3 e5!?

'This is not the nine o'clock news' used to be a popular British comedy show, where the comedians did their own version of the news – it was indeed nothing like the BBC news program that ran at nine o'clock. 'This is not a love song' was a hitsingle by the former frontman of the Sex Pistols. If you like you could interpret P.I.L.'s 'song' (the title was nearly all there was as far as lyrics were concerned) as a postmodern critique of the traditional pop (love) song.

Well, the diagram presents a position that is perhaps best dubbed 'this is not the Chigorin'! For, although it starts as a Chigorin (1.d4 d5 2.c4♞c6), in that opening all the knight lovers reply to 3.♞f3 with 3...♗g4– when 4.cxd5 ♗xf3 5.gxf3 ♕xd5 is a main line. So, for instance, in Morozevich' tome on the Chigorin (*The Chigorin Defence According to Morozevich*, New in Chess 2007) you won't even find a note on 3...e5.

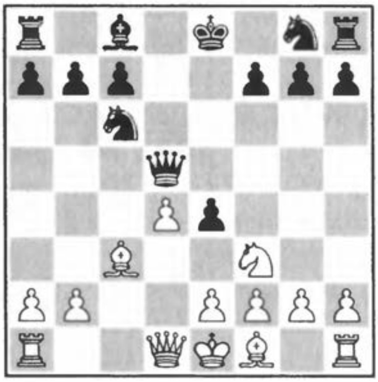
As if the regular Chigorin wasn't provocative enough, Black adds further fuel to the fire that is burning in the centre. Indeed, play resembles Albin's Counter Gambit, to which it would transpose after the most popular move 4.dxe5 and now 4...d4. Well, from our SOS point of view there is nothing wrong with the good old Albin of course, especially not in Morozevich' version of it – see SOS-2, Chapter 5.

But I do not intend to update that chapter here. For, we will look at 4...♗b4+!? 5.♗d2 dxc4 instead. This is the main subject of this article, which is covered in Variation II. We will briefly look at a few minor alternatives, before we move on to Variation I, which covers 4.♘xe5 – the other critical response to 3...e5.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 ♘c6 3.♘f3 e5!?

Such an audacious move requires an active response, but before we investigate the consequences of taking on e5:

- Definitely not critical is **4.e3 exd4 5.♘xd4 ♗b4+! 6.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 7.♕xd2 ♘xd4 8.♕xd4 ♘f6 9.♘c3 dxc4 10.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 11.♗xc4 ♔e7 12.♔e2 c6 13.♖ad1 ♗e6 14.♗xe6** and now rather than 14...fxe6 15.g4!? as in Borges Mateos-Davalos Prieto, Aguascalientes 2008, the simple **14...♔xe6** produces an equal ending.
- **4.♘c3** was once played by Ulf Andersson, but **4...exd4** (4...e4? 5.cxd5 exf3 6.dxc6 fxe2 7.♕xe2+ ♕e7 8.♘b5+– was Andersson-Esnaola, San Sebastian 1994) **5.♘xd4 ♘xd4 6.♕xd4 dxc4** gives Black an easy game. Dizdar-Barle, Celje 2003, went: **7.♕xc4 c6 8.♗e3 ♗e6 9.♕d4 ♕a5 10.g3 ♘f6 11.♗g2 ♘g4! 12.0-0 ♘xe3 13.♕xe3 ♗c5 14.♕f4 0-0 15.♘e4 ♗e7** with a plus for Black.
- **4.cxd5** of the minor alternatives this is the most serious move. **4...♕xd5** (play has transposed into an innocent version of the 3.cxd5 line versus the Chigorin: 1.d4 d5 2.c4 ♘c6 3.cxd5 ♕xd5 and now 4.e3 e5 5.♘c3 ♗b4 6.♗d2 is the main line, while 4.♘f3 e5 leads to the present position) **5.♘c3 ♗b4 6.♗d2** (6.dxe5 ♕xd1+ 7.♔xd1 ♗g4 followed by ...0-0-0 and ...♘e7-g6 is OK for Black; as is 6.e3 exd4 7.exd4 ♘f6 – or 7...♗g4 8.♗e2 ♗xf3 9.♗xf3 ♕c4 with a well-known position from the Göring Gambit Declined that is theoretically fine for Black – 8.♗d2 ♗xc3 9.bxc3 ♘a5 10.♕e2+ ♗e6 11.♘g5?! 0-0 12.♘xe6 ♖fe8! 13.♗e3 ♕xe6 14.♕d3 ♘d5 15.♗e2 c5, with a superior game for Black in Alber-Wisnewski, Heringsdorf ch-GER 2000) **6...♗xc3 7.♗xc3 e4!**



The bishop pair is counter-balanced by Black's control over the central squares d5 and e4.

Black should be fine after 8.♘d2?! e3! 9.fxe3 ♘f6 10.e4 (to break the blockade, White was better in Guliev-Etchegaray, Cappelle la Grande 2003, after 10.♕b3 ♗e6 11.♕xd5 ♗xd5 12.♖g1 0-0?! 13.g4! ♖fe8 14.g5 ♘e4 15.♘xe4 ♗xe4 16.♗h3, but on move 12 it was necessary to play 12...h5!) 10...♘xe4 11.♘xe4 ♕xe4 12.d5 ♘e7 13.d6 cxd6 14.♕xd6 0-0∓ Cajzler-B.Kovacevic, Bizovac 2001.

8.♘e5 e3!? (this is the main line but 8...♘ge7 and 8...♘xe5 9.dxe5 ♘e7 are also playable). A few examples:

– **9.f3** ♘xe5 10.dxe5 ♘e7 11.g3 (or 11.♕d3 ♕xd3 12.exd3 ♘d5 13.d4 ♗e6 14.g3 c5 15.♗b5+ ♔e7 Mont Reynaud-J.Watson, Kona 1998) 11...♗e6 12.♗g2 ♕xd1+ 13.♔xd1 0-0-0+ 14.♔c1 ♘d5 15.♗e1 h5 16.b3 h4 17.♔b2 h3 18.♗f1 g5 and White's position was in complete disarray. Heller-Zaragatski, Bundesliga B 2002/03.

– **9.♕b3** ♕xb3 10.axb3 ♘xe5 11.dxe5 exf2+ (11...♗e6! to keep White locked up

for the moment is better) 12.♔xf2 ♘e7 13.e4 Ginsburg-Zaragatski, Bundesliga B 2006.
– **9.fxe3** ♘f6 (9...♘xe5!? 10.dxe5 ♗e6 is suggested by Ward. Now 11.♕a4+ seems critical to me, when I would prefer White. Interesting is 10...♘e7!? 11.♕a4+ ♗d7 12.♕a3 ♕e6 13.0-0-0 0-0 14.g4 ♗c6 15.♖g1 ♖fd8 16.♗h3 ♘d5 17.♗d4 a5 18.♖d2 ♘b4 19.b3 ♗e4 with a huge advantage in Dobrev-Karpatchev, Marseille 2006) 10.♕b3! ♕xb3 11.axb3 ♘xe5 12.dxe5 ♘e4 13.g3 ♘xc3 14.bxc3 0-0 was about equal in Erdogan-Skembris, Antalya 2001.

Variation I

4.♘xe5

This is less popular in practice than 4.dxe5 (Variation II), perhaps because many white players do not want to be drawn into unknown territory and think that in that case Black is forced to transpose into the Albin Counter Gambit with 4...d4.

4...♘xe5 5.dxe5

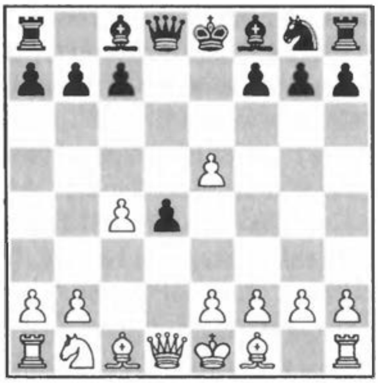
Black now has to make up his mind between two radically different set-ups. Black has had his ups and downs with both advancing the d-pawn and with taking on c4. So, this is actually a pretty tough decision, which is why I have decided to cover both. The experts don't seem to agree either. Al Modiahki and Williams have played 5...d4, while Miladinovic and Zaragatski (whose name you will encounter repeatedly throughout this article) have preferred 5...dxc4.

Subvariation A

5...d4

This is not the Albin Counter Gambit! Alternatively, you could call it an Albin Counter Gambit without knights on f3 and c6 (or g1 and b8 if you like).

On the whole this could favour White, who has several lines at his disposal:



- **6.e3 ♗c5** and Black has compensation for the pawn. He should not play 6...♗b4+ 7.♗d2 dxe3 though, for, the well-known Albin trap (with additional knights on g1 and c6) does not work here because of 8.♕a4+!.
- **6.♘d2 ♘e7 7.g3** (or 7.♘f3 ♘c6 8.g3 ♗e6 9.b3) **7...♘c6 8.f4 ♗f5 9.♗g2 d3!?** (a typically direct effort by Simon Williams. It works like a dream in the present game. Instead 9...♘b4 10.♗e4 ♗xe4 11.♘xe4 d3 was pretty direct too. Zhang-Al Modiahki, Wuxi 2005, went: 12.exd3 ♕d4 13.♔e2 0-0-0 14.♗e3 ♕xb2+ 15.♕d2 ♘xd3 16.♕xb2 ♘xb2 17.♖hc1±) **10.e3?!** (10.e4) **10...♘b4! 11.♔f2 ♘c2 12.♖b1 ♘xe3! 13.♔xe3 ♗c5+ 14.♔f3 ♕d7! 15.♕e1 ♗g4+ 16.♔e4 ♕d4** mate! Lötscher-Williams, Leukerbad 2007. Well, this is the reason why we all play chess, wouldn't you agree?
- **6.e4 ♘e7 7.f4** (let's not deny ourselves the pleasure of a great Keres game: 7.♗d3 ♘g6 8.f4 ♗b4+ 9.♗d2 ♘xf4! 10.♗xb4 ♘xg2+ 11.♔f2 ♕h4+ 12.♔g1 – or 12.♔xg2 ♕h3+ 13.♔f2 ♕e3+ 14.♔g2 ♗h3 mate – 12...♕g5 13.♕f3 ♘e1+ 14.♕g3 ♕xg3+ 15.hxg3 ♘xd3 16.♗a3 ♘xe5 with a winning position in Kibbermann-Keres, Tallinn 1935) **7...♘c6 8.♗d3 g5?!** (8...♕h4+ 9.g3 ♕h3 10.♗f1 ♕g4 11.♗e2 ♕h3 12.♗f1 ♕g4 13.♘d2 ♕xd1+ 14.♔xd1 ♗g4+ 15.♗e2 ♗xe2+ 16.♔xe2 0-0-0 17.♘f3 is a pawn up

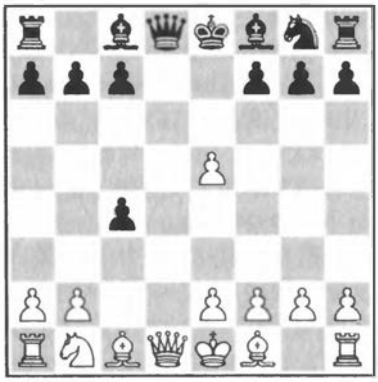
for White. A.Maksimenko-Barle, Geneva 1996) **9.0-0 ♗g7 10.♘d2 gxf4 11.♘f3 ♗h6** was very unclear in Pert-Al Modiahki, Port Erin 2003.

● **6.g3 ♘e7** (or 6...♗e6 7.♗g2 c6 8.♘d2 ♕d7 9.0-0 ♗e7 10.♘e4! ♗xc4 11.♗f4 ♗e6 12.♘d6+ ♗xd6 13.exd6 c5 14.b4! and Black's opening play has been a disaster. Crouch-Povah, London 1996) **7.♗g2** (or 7.♗g5 c6 8.♗g2 ♕a5+ 9.♘d2 ♘g6 10.0-0 h6 11.♗f4 ♘xf4 12.gxf4 c5 13.e3 and Black has nothing for the pawn. Rogozenco-Maahs, Hamburg 2001. Stronger was 7...h6!?) **7...♘c6 8.0-0** Making no effort to defend his extra pawn. **8...♘xe5 9.e3 d3?!** (Black had to play 9...dxe3 10.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 11.♗xe3 ♘xc4) **10.f4 ♘g4 11.♘c3 c6 12.h3 ♘f6 13.g4 g6 14.♖f2 ♗e6 15.b3 h5 16.g5 ♘d7 17.♘e4 ♗g7 18.♗b2 ♗xb2 19.♖xb2 f5 20.♘f2 ♘c5 21.b4 ♘a6 22.♕xd3** and Black resigned in Hebden-Williams, Hastings 2007/08, as 22...♕xd3 23.♘xd3 ♗xc4 24.♘e5 ♗f7 25.b5 is too horrible to contemplate.

While we saw some lovely (and early) Black wins, White clearly has his chances too after 5...d4. Black has to investigate the improvements mentioned in the text, before deciding between line A or B.

Subvariation B

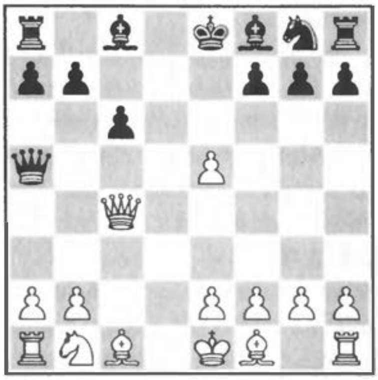
5...dxc4



Well, if anything this is not the Albin Counter Gambit, nor the odd Albin line 1.d4 d5 2.c4 e5 3.dxe5 dxc4?! that Miles used to favour in his school days. (See Tony Miles, *It's Only Me*, Geoff Lawton (ed.), Batsford 2003, p.283 – according to Lawton Miles called this 'The Queen-Pawn Miles Defence') In this case having exchanged a pair of knights actually favours Black who obtains a cramped position after 1.d4 d5 2.c4 e5 3.dxe5 dxc4.

6.♕xd8+

It should be clear that Black has no worries after 6.♕a4+ c6 7.♕xc4 ♕a5+



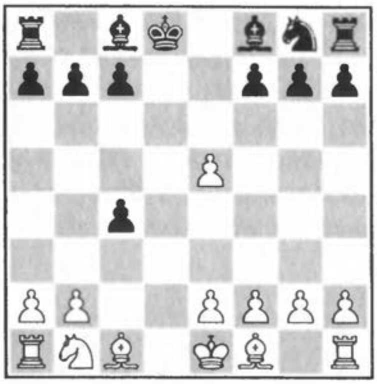
8.♗d2 (here 8.♘c3 ♕xe5 9.♗f4 ♕c5 10.e3 ♗e6 11.♕xc5 ♗xc5 is equal. Shainswit-W. Adams, Ventnor City 1943) 8...♕xe5 9.♗c3 ♕e6, and now Black gained the upper hand in two recent examples:

– 10.♕d3 ♘f6 11.♘d2 ♘d5 12.e4 ♘xc3 13.♕xc3 ♕h6 14.♗e2 ♗e7 15.0-00-0 16.f4 ♗d7 17.♖ad1 ♖ad8 18.e5 ♗f5∓ Lanchava-Zaragatski, Netherlands tt 2007/08.

– 10.e3 ♘f6 11.♕xe6+ ♗xe6 12.♗xf6 gxf6 13.♗e2 ♗d6 14.0-0 ♔e7∓, Rosenthal-Aplin, Singapore jr 2007.

6...♔xd8

If Black is given enough time to move his king to c7, then the ending is OK for him. The majority on the queenside counter-balancing White's central pawn mass. The 'if' is a big IF though, for Black needs an improvement after 7.e4 and 8.f4 (see below):



– **7.♘c3 c6 8.♗g5+ ♔c7 9.0-0-0 ♗e6 10.e3 h6 11.♗h4 g5 12.♗g3 ♘e7 13.h4?! ♘f5 14.♘e4 ♗d5?!** (14...♗e7 and 14...♞xg3 favour Black) **15.♘c3 ♗e6 16.♘e4 ♗d5 17.♘c3 ♗e6,** ½-½ Reinfeld-W.Adams, New York 1941.

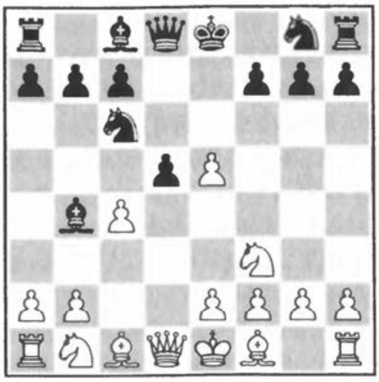
– **7.♗g5+ ♗e7 8.♗xe7+ ♘xe7 9.♘a3** (9.e3 ♘g6?! 10.f4 b5 11.a4 ♖b8? – 11...c6 – 12.axb5 ♖xb5 13.♘c3 ♖b4 14.0-0-0+± Moskalenko-Asis Gargatagli, Salou 2006. Apart from the improvement on move 11 Black also has 9...♘c6 10.f4 ♘b4!?) **9...♘g6 10.♖d1+** (10.♘xc4 ♗e6) **10...♔e7 11.♘xc4 ♗e6 12.e3 ♗xc4 13.♗xc4 ♘xe5 14.♗b3 ♖hd8** is a nearly equal ending. Gyimesi-Berenyi, Hungary 1993.

– **7.g3 ♗e6** (perhaps 7...f6!? or 7...♞e7) **8.♗g2 c6 9.0-0 ♗c5?!** (9...♔c7) **10.♘c3 ♔c7 11.♖d1 ♘e7 12.♘a4 ♖hd8!? 13.♗g5 h6 14.♘xc5 hxg5 15.♘xe6+ fxe6 16.♗h3±** Epishin-Naalden, Vlissingen 2001.

– **7.e4** This is critical I think. **7...♗e6** (7...b5? 8.a4 c6 9.♗e3 a6 10.axb5 cxb5 11.♘c3 ♗b7 12.♗e2± M.Kramer-Boey, cr 1984) **8.f4! g6 9.♘a3** (9.♗e3 f6? 10.♘c3 fxe5 11.0-0-0+ ♔c8 12.f5 ♗f7 – 12...gxf5 13.exf5 ♗xf5 14.♗xc4± – 13.fxg6 hxg6 14.♗e2 ♘h6? 15.♖hf1 ♗g7 16.♗xh6 ♗xh6+ 17.♔c2 ♗e6 18.♖f6 ♗d7 19.♖xg6 ♗c6 20.♗g4+ 1-0 Vorobiov-Turov, Tula 2001) **9...♗xa3 10.bxa3 f5 11.exf6 ♘xf6 12.f5! gxf5 13.♗g5 ♔e7 14.e5** and White wins a piece. A painful loss for a 2600-GM, Roussel Roozmon-Miladinovic, Nancy 2008.

Variation II

4.dxe5 ♗b4+



As mentioned above 4...d4 is a regular Albin. The check disrupts White's natural development and makes it possible for Black to take on c4.

5.♗d2

5.♘bd2 is less natural, after 5...dxc4 White has to retrieve the pawn by bringing his queen to c2. He can either do so immediately, or after inserting 6.a3 ♗a5.

● 6.♕c2 ♗e6 7.e3 ♕d5 8.♗e2 and White keeps an opening advantage after both 8...0-0-0 9.0-0 ♗xd2 10.♗xd2 ♘xe5 11.♗c3 and 8...♘ge7 9.0-0 ♗xd2 10.♗xd2. Instead of 6...♗e6 not holding on to the pawn with 6...♘ge7!? comes into consideration 7.e3 (perhaps 7.♕xc4) 7...♗g4 8.♕xc4 ♗xf3 9.gxf3 ♕d7 10.f4 0-0-0 11.♕c2 g5 12.a3 ♗xd2+ 13.♕xd2 ♕f5 14.♕c3 gxf4 15.♗d2 ♘d5, with a winning position in Candela Perez-Carretero Ortiz, Seville 2004.

● 6.a3 ♗a5

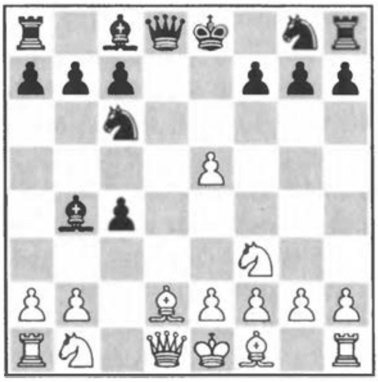
– Now 7.b4!? is too sharp: 7...cxb3 8.♕xb3 ♘ge7 9.e3 0-0 (9...♗g4!?) 10.♗d3 ♘g6

11.♗xg6 hxg6 12.0-0 when the forcing 12...♗xd2 13.♗xd2 ♗g4 gave Black plenty of play 14.♗c3 ♗xf3 15.gxf3 ♕g5+ 16.♔h1 ♕h5 (stronger was 16...♕f5! 17.♕d5 ♖ad8 18.♕e4 ♖d3) 17.♕d5 ♖fe8 18.f4 ♖ad8 19.♕e4 ♔h7?! (and here Black has all kinds of attractive moves 19...♕e2, 19...♕f5, and 19...♖d3!?. After the text he is worse) 20.♖g1, Izeta Txabarri-Schweiger, Cannes 1999.

– 7.♕c2 b5 (this is possible due to the insertion of 6.a3 ♗a5) 8.b3! (8.a4 a6) 8...♘d4 9.♘xd4 ♕xd4 10.♖b1 ♘e7 (10...♕xe5 11.bxc4 bxc4 12.♕xc4 ♗d7 13.g3 ♘f6 14.♗g2 ♖d8 15.0-0 0-0 is a tad better for White, Csonkics-Jamrich, Budapest 1998) 11.e3 ♕xe5 12.bxc4 ♗f5 13.♕b2 so far the stem game Fedorowicz-Boissonet, Buenos Aires 1991, in which Black now played 13...♕e4?!. According to Ftacnik Black should have played 13...♕xb2 14.♖xb2 bxc4 15.♗xc4±. However, your computer program will like 13...♕e6!?. This looks indeed appealing after both 14.♕xb5+ ♘c6 15.♖b2 0-0 and 14.♕xg7 ♖g8 15.♕b2 ♗xb1 16.♕xb5+ ♘c6 17.♕xb1 0-0-0.

Let us return to the main line after 5.♗d2.

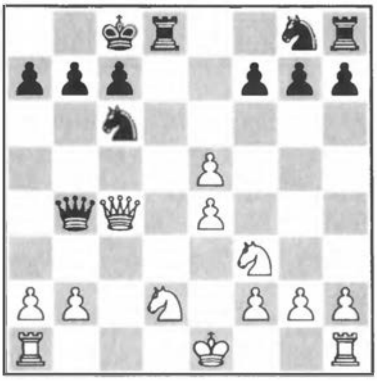
5...dxc4



6.e3

Most popular in practice and consequently it is our main line here. In practice many different moves have been tested though:

● 6.e4 ♗e6 7.♕c1 ♕e7! 8.♗xb4 (in case of 8.♗xc4 Black has 8...♕c5! 9.♘a3 ♗xa3 10.♗xe6 ♕xc1+ 11.♖xc1 ♗xb2 12.♖b1 fxe6 13.♖xb2 0-0-0 is an old analysis by Boey. While 9.♗xb4 ♘xb4 10.♘bd2 ♗xc4 11.♕xc4 ♕xc4 12.♘xc4 ♘c2+ (Welling) clearly favours Black) 8...♕xb4+ 9.♘bd2 0-0-0 10.♗xc4 ♗xc4 11.♕xc4 (11.a3 ♕a5 12.b4 does not work because of 12...♘xe5! Welling)

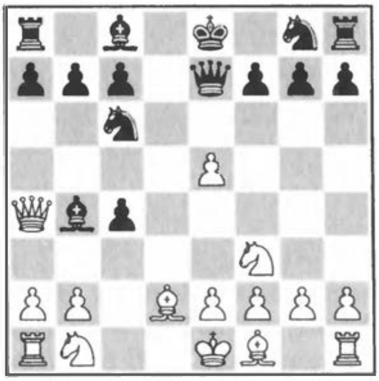


11...♘xe5! (an excellent surprise that gives Black an easy game) 12.♕xb4 ♘d3+ 13.♔e2 ♘xb4 14.♖hd1 (here 14.♖hc1 ♘e7 15.♘e5 ♖hf8 16.a3 ♘bc6 17.♘xc6 ♘xc6 18.♖c3 f5 is at least equal for Black. Stuart-Sarapu, New Zeeland 1987) 14...♘e7 15.♘g5?! (15.a3= Welling) 15...♖df8 16.f4 h6 17.♘gf3 (17.♘h3!? Vasiukov) 17...f5! 18.a3 (18.e5 g5 19.g3? gxf4 20.gxf4 ♘bd5–+ Welling) 18...♘bc6 (18...fxe4?! 19.axb4 exf3+ 20.♘xf3 a6?! 21.b5!) 19.g3 g5! and Black had confidently gained the upper hand in Vasiukov-Welling, Eindhoven 1986. This game was annotated by Welling in New In Chess Magazine 1986/3.

● 6.a3 ♗xd2+ (6...♗e7 7.g3?! ♗e6 8.♘c3 ♘d4 9.♘xd4 ♕xd4 10.♗g2 0-0-0 11.♕c2 ♕xe5 12.♗f4 ♕a5 13.0-0 ♘f6∓ Schulte-Zaragatski, Dresden 2002) 7.♘bxd2 c3! 8.bxc3 ♘ge7 9.e4 (9.♘b3 ♕xd1+ 10.♖xd1

♘g6 11.♘bd4 ♗d7 12.e6 fxe6 13.e3 ♔e7 14.♗d3 ♘ge5 15.♘xc6+ ♘xc6 16.♖b1 ½-½ Tishin-Korobkov, Mariupol 2003) 9...0-0 10.♗e2 ♘g6 11.0-0 b6 12.♘b3 ♘cxe5 13.♘xe5 ♘xe5 14.f4 ♕xd1 15.♖axd1 ♘g4 16.♖d2 c5 17.h3 ♘f6 18.♗f3 ♗b7 Hamilton-Solomon, Gosford ch-AUS 1988. To keep the balance White should now have played 19.e5.

● 6.♕a4 ♕e7



Now 7.e3 ♗e6 transposes to the main line, which is Black's best option as 7...♗d7?! 8.♗xc4 ♗xd2+ 9.♘bxd2 ♘xe5 10.♕b3! ♘xf3+ 11.♘xf3 is somewhat better for White, Lavrov-Bigaliev, Briansk 1995.

Likewise, 7.a3 ♗xd2+ 8.♘bxd2 ♗e6 (Black has the additional playable options of 8...a6 9.♕xc4 ♘xe5 10.♕c3 ♘xf3+ 11.♘xf3 ♘f6 and 8...♗d7 9.♕xc4 ♘xe5) 9.e3 a6 10.♗xc4 ♗xc4 11.♕xc4 ♘xe5 transposes to the main line. In view of Black's alternatives on move 8 this move order is less accurate for White.

Finally, 7.♘c3 ♗d7! 8.♘d5 ♗xd2+ 9.♔xd2 ♘xe5 10.♘xe7 ♗xa4 11.♘xe5 ♘xe7 favoured Black in Lillevold-Heim, Norway tt 2000/01.

● 6.g3 ♘ge7 7.♗g2 (historically interesting is 7.♕a4 ♗xd2+ - 7...♘d5!? - 8.♘bxd2 0-0 9.♗g2 ♘g6 10.♘xc4, Monticelli-Tartakower, San Remo 1930) 7...0-0 8.0-0 ♘g6 (8...♗e6) 9.♗xb4 ♘xb4 10.♘a3 ♕e7 11.♘xc4 ♘c6 12.♖c1 ♘gxe5 13.♘fxe5 ♘xe5 14.♘xe5 ♕xe5 was nearly equal in Lys-Omelka, Czechia tt 1998/99.

● 6.♘c3?! ♗e6 (6...♘ge7!? 7.e3 ♗e6 8.a3 ♗a5 9.♖c1?! 0-0 10.♕a4?! a6 11.♘g5 b5 12.♕c2 ♗f5! 13.e4 ♗c8 14.♖d1 ♘d4 15.♕b1 ♘ec6 with a big advantage in Miljkovic-Petronijevic, Nis 1997) and White can insert 7.a3 ♗a5 and then play 8.♕c2 or play the queen move immediately:

– 7.♕c2 ♕e7 8.g3 ♕c5 9.♗g2 0-0-0 10.0-0 ♘xe5 11.♘xe5 ♕xe5 12.♗f4 ♕a5 13.♕e4 c6 14.a3 ♗xc3 15.bxc3 ♘f6 16.♕e3 ♖he8 favoured Black in Hackel-Potapov, Mlada Boleslav 1995.

– 7.a3 ♗a5 8.♕c2 ♘ge7 9.0-0-0 0-0 10.♗e1 ♕c8 11.♘g5 ♘g6 12.g3 ♘cxe5 13.f4 ♘g4 14.♘xe6 Delemarre-Höffer, Deizisau 2007, and now, rather than 14...fxe6, Black should have gone for 14...♕xe6 15.f5 ♕c6 16.♘d5 ♗xe1 17.fxg6 ♔h8 when he has emerged from the complications with an edge.

● 6.♕c2 ♗e6 (6...♕e7) 7.♗xb4 (7.e3 is covered below) 7...♘xb4 8.♕a4+ ♘c6 9.♘c3 ♘e7 10.♖d1 ♕c8 11.e4 0-0 12.♗xc4 ♘g6 13.♗xe6 ♕xe6 14.0-0 ♘cxe5 15.♘xe5 ♘xe5 16.♘d5, when White had an unpleasant initiative in Loncar-Semrl, Bled 2000.

6...♗e6

Black protects the c-pawn and develops a piece. White again has to make up his mind.

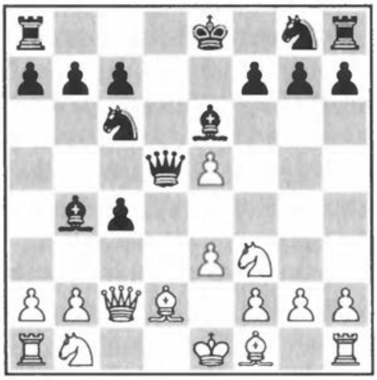
7.♕a4

Pinning the knight and thus forcing Black to do something about the threat of 8.♗xb4.

The quiet 7.♗e2 ♘ge7 8.0-0 0-0 9.♗xb4 ♘xb4 10.♘d4 ♕d5 was nothing special for White in Epishin-Zaragatski, Deizisau 2002.

Not very popular is 7.a3 ♗a5 (not 7...♗xd2+ 8.♘bxd2 b5 9.b3±) 8.♕c2 ♕d5 9.♗xa5 (9.♘c3!? ♗xc3 10.♗xc3 0-0-0 11.♖d1 ♕xd1+ 12.♕xd1 ♖xd1+ 13.♔xd1 Aldag-Schweiger, Passau 1999, and now 13...♘ge7 was correct) 9...♕xa5+ 10.♘bd2 0-0-0 11.♕c3 ♕xc3 12.bxc3 ♘ge7 13.♗xc4 ♗xc4 14.♘xc4 ♘g6, which was equal in Orgovan-Kapeller, Budapest 1991.

7.♕c2 is the main alternative for 7.♕a4. Now 7...b5!? has been recommended, but Black has done well in practice with 7...♕d5

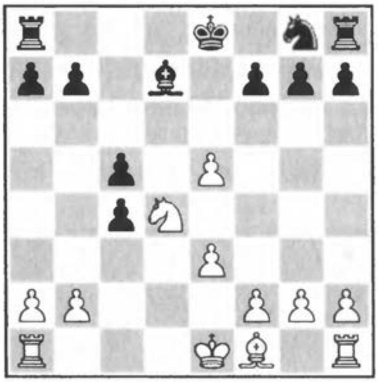


Now 8.♘c3 ♗xc3 (Slekys-V.Novikov, Vilnius ch-LTU 1994, saw 8...♕c5 9.a3 ♗a5 10.♕e4 – I would prefer 10.♘e4!? ♗xd2+ 11.♕xd2! – 10...0-0-0 11.♗e2 ♘ge7 12.0-0 ♘g6 13.♖fd1 ♘gxe5∓) 9.♕xc3 (perhaps 9.♗xc3 0-0-0 10.♗e2 ♘ge7 11.0-0±, Shumiakina-Galianina Ryjanova, Elista ch-RUS 1997) 9...♘ge7 10.♖c1 (or 10.♗e2 ♘g6 11.0-0 ♘gxe5∓ Milanovic-Petronijevic, Nis 1995) 10...b5 11.b3 cxb3 12.axb3 a6 13.b4 0-0 14.♗e2 ♖fd8 15.♕c5 ♕e4 16.♕c2 ♕g4 17.e4 ♗c4! gave Black nice counterplay in Vallifuoco-Sibilio, Chianciano ch-ITA 1988.

White usually plays 8.♗xb4 ♘xb4 9.♕a4+ ♘c6 and now the lines fork:

– 10.♘a3 is given as slightly better for White in ECO. 10...c3! 11.bxc3 ♕c5 12.♖c1 (12.♘b5 0-0-0 and in this unclear position chances are about equal, Scheeren-Boey, Willemstad 1980) 12...♘e7 13.♘b5 0-0-0 14.♗e2 (or 14.♘bd4 ♗d5 15.♘b3 ♕b6 16.e4 ♗e6 with chances for both sides in J.Roos-Taddei, France 2007) 14...♘g6 (alternatively there is 14...a6 15.♘bd4 ♘xe5) 15.0-0 was slightly better for White in Leitao-Vescovi, Americana 1997.

– 10.♘c3 ♕c5 11.♘d4 ♗d7 12.♕b5 ♕xb5 13.♘cxb5 ♘xd4 14.♘xd4 c5

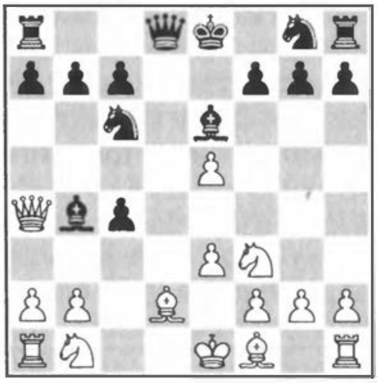


In this ending White will have the better pawn structure but Black has some dynamic chances. Two examples:

In Klinger-Polzin, Oberwart 1992, things went White's way at first: 15.♘c2 b5 16.a4 bxa4 17.♗xc4 ♖b8 18.0-0-0 ♗c6? (18...♘h6) 19.♖d6 ♘e7 20.♖hd1 0-0 21.e6±.

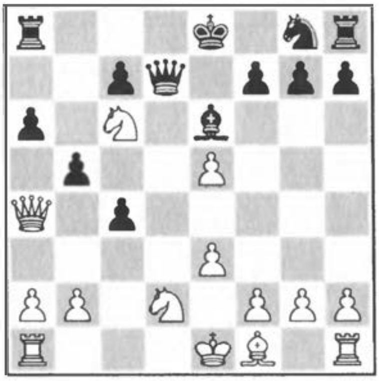
While Cvitan-Godena, Biel 1988, saw 15.♘f3 b5 16.a4 bxa4 17.♗xc4 ♔e7 18.♘g5 ♘h6 19.0-0-0 ♖ab8 20.♖d6? (20.♖d2) 20...♖b4! 21.♗a2 ♖hb8 22.♖hd1 ♗f5 23.e4 ♖xb2! 24.exf5 ♖xa2 25.♖d7+ ♔e8 26.♖xa7 a3 and Black had clearly taken over.

After 7.♕a4 Black has two fundamentally different options which both come into consideration.



7...♕e7

This is more solid than the enterprising 7...♗xd2+ 8.♘bxd2 a6 9.♘d4 b5 10.♘xc6 (10.♘xe6 fxe6 11.♕c2 ♕d5 12.♗e2 ♖d8 Tyomkin-Grondin, Montreal 2000. Both 11...♘ge7 and 12...♘ge7 look good for Black) 10...♕d7



It all depends on this position. If Black is all right here, then this is a good alternative for 7...♕e7.

White has tried a number of queen moves, as well as a nice intermediate move:

– 11.♕c2 ♕xc6 12.♗e2 ♘e7 13.♗f3 ♗d5 14.0-0 0-0 is fine for Black. Srebrnic-Barle, Bled 2005.

– 11.♕b4 ♕xc6 12.a4 contains more bite, but Black is more or less OK after 12...♘e7 13.axb5 axb5 14.♖xa8+ ♕xa8 15.♗e2 (15.♕xb5+? c6 16.♕b4 0-0! planning 17.♕xe7 ♕a1+ 18.♔e2 ♕xb2–+) 15...♕d5 Fluvia Poyatos-Ferron Garcia, Barcelona 2001.

– 11.♕a5 ♕xc6 12.a4 ♗d5 13.♘f3 ♗xf3 14.gxf3 ♖d8 15.axb5 axb5 16.b3 ♘e7 17.bxc4 bxc4 (17...0-0!) 18.♕a4 0-0 was slightly better for White in Hebert-Grondin, Montreal 2001.

– 11.♘b8! ♕c8 (11...♖xb8 12.♕c2 - 12.♕xa6- 12...♘e7 13.♖d1 0-0 14.♘f3 ♕c6 and Black's chances are to be preferred. Hager-Schweiger, Passau 1999). Now, after 12.♕c2 ♕xb8 13.b3 c5 14.bxc4 ♕xe5 15.♖d1 b4 16.♕e4 ♕xe4 17.♘xe4 ♘f6 18.♘xc5 a5 19.♗d3 ♔e7 Black had compensation for the pawn in Matamoros-Arencibia, Santa Clara 1996.

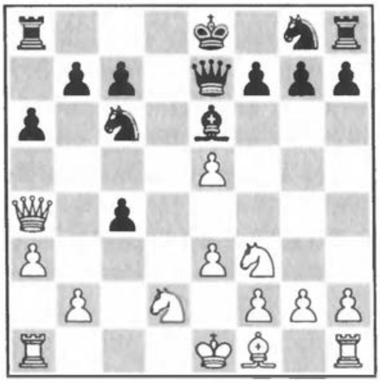
While after 12.♕a5 ♕xb8 13.b3 c6 14.♕c3 ♘e7 15.bxc4 0-0 16.♖b1 ♘g6 17.f4 ♕a7 18.♗e2 White had a slight edge in Delemarre-Zaragatski, Vlissingen 2007. However, 13...♘e7!? 14.bxc4 ♘c6 15.♕c3 b4 16.♕b2 0-0 17.♗e2 ♕b6 gives compensation.

Not tested in practice so far is 12.♕a3!?.

8.a3

Here 8.♘d4 is met by 8...♗d7 9.♘b5 (or 9.♘xc6 ♗xd2+ 10.♘xd2 ♗xc6 equal, Tabernig-Lazovic, Linz 1999) 9...♗xd2+ 10.♘xd2 ♘xe5! 11.♘xc4 (if 11.♘xc7+ then 11...♔f8 12.♕a5 ♖c8 13.♘d5 ♕c5 14.♕xc5+ ♖xc5) 11...♗c6 12.♕a5 ♘xc4 13.♗xc4 ♗xb5 14.♕xb5+ c6 15.♕b3 ♘f6 16.♖d1 0-0, with equality in Sebenik-Wieser, Schwarzach 1999.

8...♗xd2+ 9.♘bxd2 a6



This is necessary in order to exchange the c4-pawn for the e5-pawn.

10.♗xc4

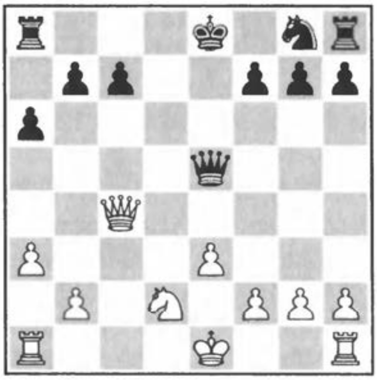
After 10.♘d4 ♗d7 11.e6!? fxe6 12.♕xc4 Black should play 12...♘f6 with equal chances rather than the weakening 12...e5?! 13.♘4b3 ♘f6 14.♘c5 as in Ikonnikov-Kovarcik, Toulon 1996.

10...♗xc4 11.♕xc4

Surprisingly, after 11.♘xc4 b5 White still has 12.♕b3 when he is not worse after something like 12...♖d8 13.♘cd2 ♘xe5 14.♘xe5 ♕xe5 15.♘f3.

Less surprisingly, non-silicon players just take with the queen on c4.

11...♘xe5 12.♘xe5 ♕xe5



White has a minor lead in development, which is why Black should still be careful. If he manages to complete his development than he will be fully equal.

13.♘f3

Not fundamentally different was 13.0-0 ♘f6 14.♘f3 ♕e7 15.♖fd1 0-0 16.b4 ♖fd8 17.♘d4 c6, with equal chances in Drozdovskij-Zaragatski, Germany Bundesliga B 2006/07.

13...♕e7 14.♖c1 c6 15.♘d4

White is making the most of his tiny initiative.

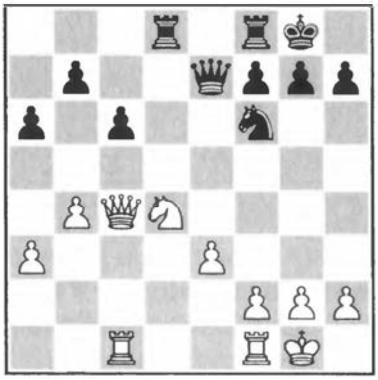
15...♖d8

Black has to tread carefully. Thus, 15...♘f6? is met by 16.♘xc6!, while 15...♖c8? 16.♘f5 ♕e5 17.♕g4! ♘e7 18.♘xe7 ♔xe7 19.♕b4+ c5 20.♕xb7+ was winning for White in K.Movsziszian-Nicolosi, Hamburg 1995.

16.0-0 ♘f6 17.b4

Not 17.♘f5 ♕e5 when 18.♘xg7+? ♔f8 loses a piece.

17...0-0



The game is now fully equal.

18.♖c2

Temirbaev-Nesterov, Zelinograd 1989, saw 18.♘b3 ♖d5 19.♖fd1 ♖fd8 20.♖xd5 ♖xd5, which does not change the verdict.

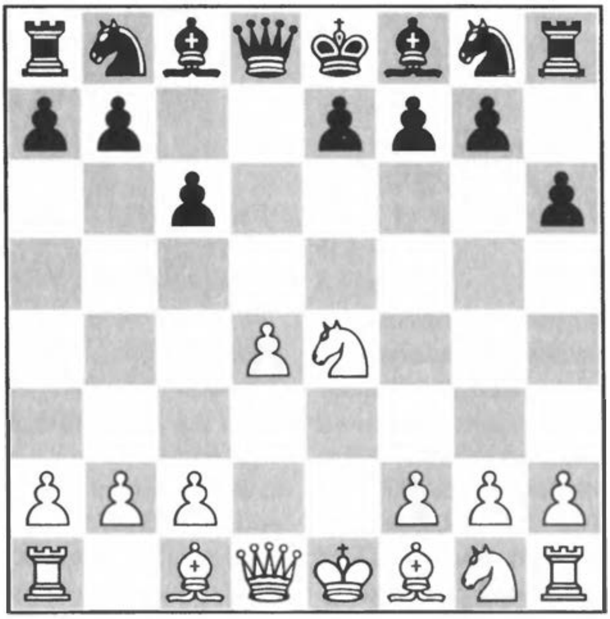
18...♖d5 19.h3

And a draw was agreed in W.Schmidt-Sarapu, Dubai 1986.

CHAPTER 11

Vladimir Burmakin

Caro-Kann: Bellon Variation



1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♘xe4 h6

I will not mince matters. In my opinion, 4...h6 is a move of dubious worth which largely counts on the surprise factor. Nevertheless, I have personally played this line repeatedly, and other regular devotees of 4...h6 include the GMs Deviatkin and Fontaine. It was first developed near the end of the 1980s by the creative Spanish GM Juan Manuel Bellon Lopez.

The main idea behind 4...h6 can be observed by looking at the highly theoretical 4...♗f5 line: after 5.♘g3 Black has to play 5...♗g6 first; and then, after 6.h4 h6, he later has to lose another tempo with ...♗h7. The downside of 4...h6 is clear too: Black does not develop a piece enabling White to try to seize the initiative immediately thanks to his lead in development.

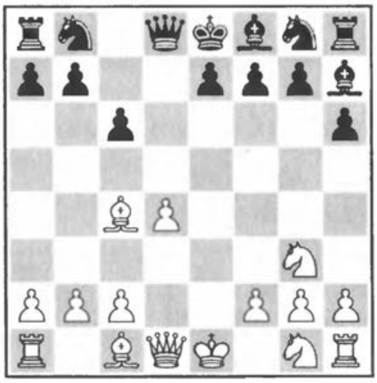
I will present you my personal view on 4...h6 mainly on the basis of my own games. Let us start with a rapid game against Alexander Grischuk.

☐ **Alexander Grischuk**
■ **Vladimir Burmakin**
Canada de Calatrava 2007

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♘xe4 h6 5.♗c4

In this position White has also played 5.♞f3, which we will examine later.

5...♗f5 6.♘g3 ♗h7



7.♘1e2

White has played in a non-standard manner, leaving himself the option of several plans, which he is ready to carry out depending on Black's play.

Hammer-Burmakin, Gausdal 2005, went 7.c3 e6 8.♕e2 ♘d7 9.f4 ♘e7 10.♘f3 ♘f5 11.♘xf5 ♗xf5 12.♘e5 ♗d6 13.0-0 ♕e7 14.♕f3 0-0 15.♗e3 ♘b6 16.♗b3 ♘d5 17.♖ae1 ♖ad8, and Sorokin-Deviatkin, Sochi 2006, followed a similar course: 7.f4 e6 8.♘f3 ♗d6 9.0-0 ♘e7 10.♘e5 0-0 11.♕e2 ♗c7 12.♗e3 ♘d7 13.♖ad1 ♘d5 14.♗c1 ♕e7 15.c3 ♖ad8 16.♔h1 ♖fe8. In both games Black did not have any weaknesses in his position, but White had an advantage in space.

7...e6 8.0-0 ♘e7

Here 8...♘f6 did not appeal to me because of 9.f4 with the idea of 10.f5. Instead the game Romero Holmes-Bellon Lopez, Terrassa 1989, went: 9.♘f4 ♗d6 10.c3 0-0 11.♖e1 ♖e8 12.♘gh5 ♘bd7 13.♕f3 ♘xh5 14. ♘xh5 ♗g6 15.♘f4 ♗f5 16. ♝d2 c5 with even chances.

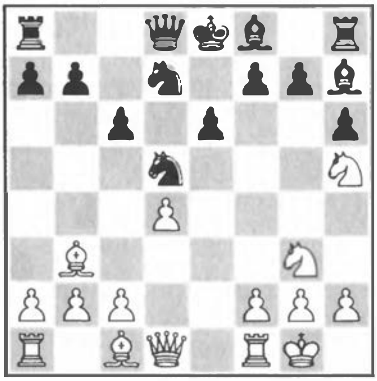
9.♗b3 ♘d7 10.♘f4

The immediate 10.c4 was an interesting possibility for White, with the idea of exploiting Black's retarded development by a subsequent breakthrough at d5.

10...♘d5

Black was afraid of the sacrifice on e6.

11.♘fh5



11...♘7f6?

11...♕h4 deserved serious consideration. Then the breakthrough with d5 leads to a weakening of Black's queenside, but thanks to the activity of his pieces he can hold this position: 12.c4 ♘5f6 13.d5 0-0-0 14.dxc6 bxc6 15.♘xf6 gxf6.

Black's move in the game was clearly bad, allowing White an enduring initiative which decided the outcome.

12.c4 ♘b6 13.♖e1

In this position Black must urgently evacuate his king from the centre, but on the queenside it immediately comes under attack..

13...♘xh5 14.♘xh5 ♕d7 15.a4 0-0-0 16.a5 ♘a8 17.a6 ♘b6

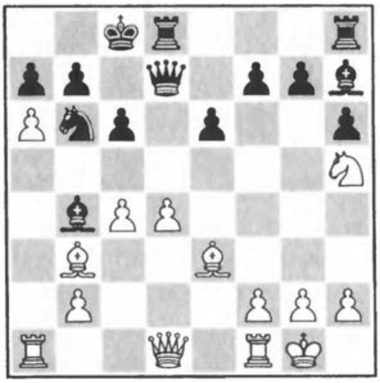
17...♗b4 was better, but in this case White still has a great advantage.

18.♗e3

White does not force events, although after 18.c5 he would have won quickly: 18...♘d5 19.♗xd5 exd5 20.♗f4, or 18...♘a8 19.♗f4.

18...♗b4 19.♖f1

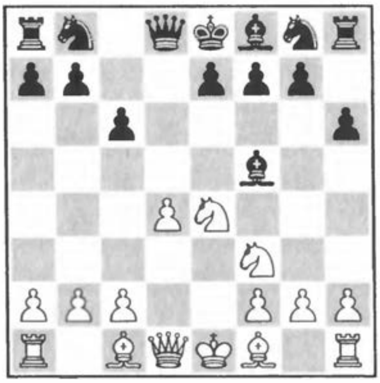
Black's position is terminally hopeless because of the weakness of his king's defences. It is a sheer pleasure to be playing White in such a comfortable position.



19...♗e7 20.♕f3 ♗g5 21.♖a5 ♗xe3 22.fxe3 ♗d3 23.♖fa1 ♗xc4 24.axb7+ ♔c7 25.♖xa7 ♖b8 26.♕f4+ ♕d6 27.♕xf7+ ♕d7 28.♕f4+ ♕d6 29.♗xc4 ♘xc4 30.b3 ♘b6 31.♘xg7 ♕xf4 32.♘xe6+ ♔d6 33.♘xf4 ♖h7 34.e4 ♖bxb7 35.♖7a6 ♔d7 36.♘d3 1-0

☐ **Alexander Delchev**
■ **Vladimir Burmakin**
Balaguer 2006

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♘xe4 h6 5.♘f3 White's most usual move. **5...♗f5**



6.♗d3

After 6.♘g3 ♗h7 7.♗d3 ♗xd3 8.♕xd3 White transposes into the Classical Variation of the Caro-Kann without his pawn on h5, but with an extra tempo.

Another possibility is 6.♘g3 ♗h7 7.♗c4 e6 8.0-0 ♘d7 9.♕e2 ♘gf6 10.♘e5 ♘xe5 11.dxe5 ♘d5 12.f4 ♗c5+ 13.♚h1, and Black equalized in Klimov-Deviatkin, St. Petersburg 2005.

6...e6 7.0-0 ♘f6

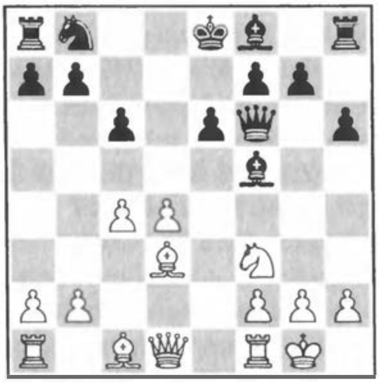
The game Zablotsky-Burmakin, Saratov 2006, went 7...♗xe4 8.♗xe4 ♘f6 9.♗d3 ♘bd7 10.♖e1 ♗e7 11.c3 0-0 12.♗c2 c5 13.♕d3 ♖c8 14.h3 ♕c7 and Black obtained an equal position: 15.♗e3 ♖fd8 16.♖ad1 ♘b6 17.♘e5 cxd4 18.♗xd4 ♗c5 19.♕e3 ♘bd5 20.♕e2 ♞f4 21.♕c4 ♗xd4 22.♖xd4 ♕xc4, ½-½.

8.♘xf6+

White could have played 8.♕e2 ♘xe4 9.♗xe4 ♗xe4 10.♕xe4 ♘d7 with slightly the better position.

Instead, he chooses a more active plan and, as in the previous example, he aims to exploit his lead in development by a breakthrough on d5.

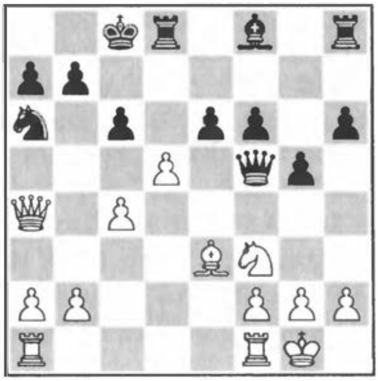
8...♕xf6 9.c4



9...♘a6

Black had an opportunity to transpose into quieter positions by 9...♗d6 10.♗e3 0-0 11.♕b3 ♗xd3 12.♕xd3 ♘d7±. The following variation does not work for White: 10.♖e1 0-0 11.♕b3 ♗xd3 12.♕xb7 ♗xc4 13.♕xa8 ♕e7, and he cannot rescue his queen without losing material. The move made in the game by Black leads to sharper positions.

10.♗xf5 ♕xf5 11.♕b3 0-0-0 12.♗e3 g5 13.♕a4 f6 14.d5



14...c5

An important moment in the game. Black could have played 14...exd5 15.♗xa7 dxc4 16.♘d4 ♕d5 17.♗b6 ♖e8 18.♖fd1 ♖h7 19.b3 c3, when White has only a minimal advantage.

15.b4

White opens up the black king's defences.

15...exd5 16.bxc5 ♕d7 17.♕c2 ♗xc5 18.cxd5 ♕xd5 19.♖ac1 b6 20.♖fd1

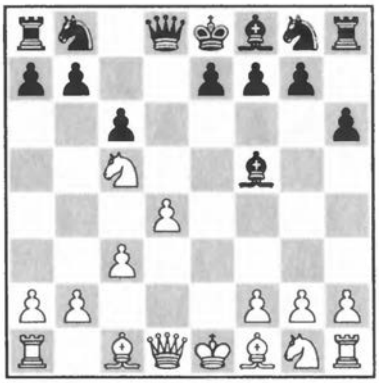
All the defects of Black's position have been disclosed: the weakness of his king and the weaknesses on the light squares, and these lead to his defeat.

20...♕e6 21.♘d4 ♕e5 22.♘c6 ♖xd1+ 23.♖xd1 ♕e6 24.♕a4 ♔c7 25.♕xa6 ♔xc6 26.♖c1 ♔d5 27.♗xc5 1-0

In both games at certain moments Black committed inaccuracies, which led to his defeat. In other games things went more favourably for me. In them White did not aim for an advantage in the opening, and Black was able to equalize.

☐ **Thomas Henrichs**
■ **Vladimir Burmakin**
Bad Wörishofen 2006

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♘xe4 h6 5.c3 ♗f5 6.♘c5



6...♕c8

Here 6...e5 came into consideration: 7.♘xb7 ♕e7 8.♘a5 exd4+ 9.♕e2 dxc3 10.bxc3 ♘f6 with equality.

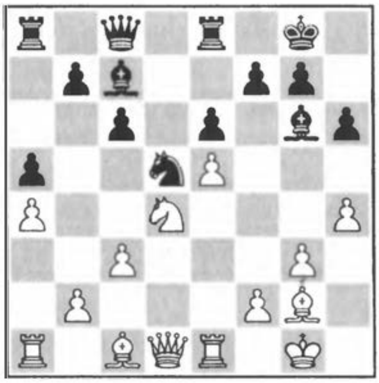
7.♘f3 e6 8.♘b3 ♘d7 9.g3

A rather dubious move. Usually White develops his bishop at g2 in variations of the Caro-Kann where Black's light-square bishop has been exchanged for a knight. White would have done better to play 9.♗f4 ♘gf6 10.♗d3 ♗xd3 11.♕xd3 ♗e7 12.0-0 0-0 with slightly the better position.

9...♘gf6 10.♗g2 ♗d6 11.0-0 0-0 12.♖e1 ♗c7 13.a4 a5 14.h3 ♖e8

A rather static position has been reached. Black provokes White into playing actively.

15.♘e5 ♘xe5 16.dxe5 ♘d5 17.♘d4 ♗g6 18.h4



White aims to exploit his spatial advantage, by trying to attack the black king.

18...♗b6 19.h5 ♗h7 20.♕g4 ♔h8 21.♗d2

White decides to complete his development, not having any radical resources for continuing his attack on the king.

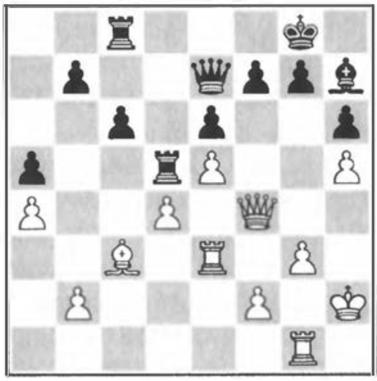
21...♖d8 22.♖ad1 ♗xd4!? 23.cxd4 ♖d7

Black aims to put pressure on the d4-pawn.

24.♖c1 ♕d8 25.♗xd5?

White gives up his light-squared bishop, allowing Black complete domination of the light squares. 25.♗c3 was better, with approximate equality.

25...♖xd5 26.♗c3 ♕e7 27.♖a1 ♖f8 28.♖e3 ♖fd8 29.♕f4 ♔g8 30.♔h2 ♖c8 31.♖g1



31...♕g5?

Black offers the exchange of queens, depriving himself of any opportunity to exploit the weakness of the light squares in White's position. An equal endgame is reached.

32.♕xg5 hxg5 33.g4 c5 34.dxc5 ♖cxc5 35.♔g3 ♗c2 36.b4 axb4 37.♗xb4 ♖c4 38.♗e7 ♗xa4 39.♗xg5

An inaccuracy by White. He could have delayed capturing the pawn on g5.

39...f6 40.♗h4 ♖xe5 41.♖xe5 fxe5 42.♖e1 e4 43.♖e2 e5 44.♗e7 ♗d1 45.♖e3 ♔f746.♗d6 ♔f6 47.f4

The decisive mistake. White goes in for tactical complications, which lead to his defeat.

47...exf3 48.♗xe5+ ♔g5 49.♗xg7 ♖xg4+ 50.♔f2 ♔xh5 51.♖e7 b5 52.♖d7 ♖g2+ 53.♔e1 ♗b3 54.♗d4 ♖e2+ 55.♔f1 ♗c4 56.♖h7+ ♔g6 57.♖g7+ ♔h6 58.♔g1 f2+ 0-1

- In this variation **5.♘g3** has also occurred, but in my opinion this move is dubious. White prevents the development of the black bishop at f5, but he loses his main advantage, which Black conceded to him with 4...h6 – his lead in development, as he loses time with his knight wanderings.

Black can transpose into variations similar to 4...♘d7. This was the course taken by the game Strugnell-Fontaine, Gonfreville 2007: 5.♘g3 ♘f6 6.♗c4 ♘bd7 7.♘f3 ♞b6 8.♗b3 e6 9.♕e2 a5 10.a3 a4 11.♗a2 ♗e7 12.♗d2 ♕c7 13.c4 c5 14.♗c3 0-0 15.0-0 and Black had equalized (and later won).

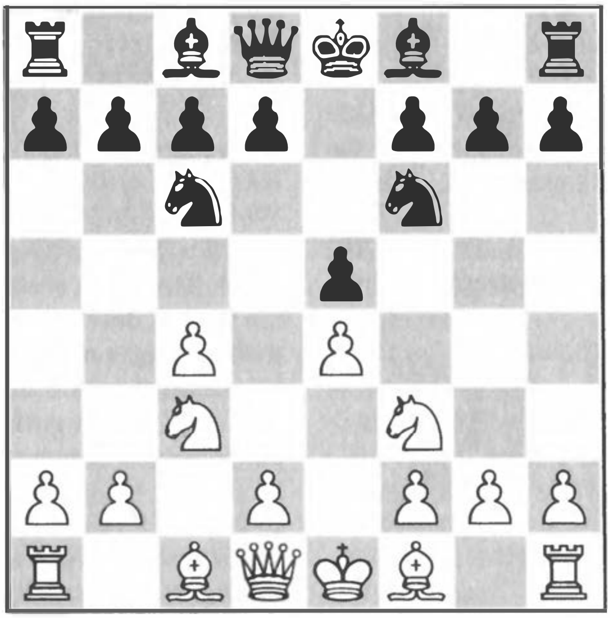
- **5.♗d3** has also occurred. Here, by playing 5...♗f5 6.♘f3 e6 Black can transpose into positions examined earlier. There is also the interesting move 5...♕xd4, but the win of the pawn is dangerous in view of Black's seriously retarded development. After 6.♘f3 ♕d8 7.♗e3 he has great problems in developing his pieces.

In my opinion, this line should not be adopted as a regular opening by Black. If White plays actively, Black has to fight for equality, which demands accurate play. On the other hand, 4...h6 can be used as a surprise weapon as the games of Deviatkin, Fontaine and myself demonstrate.

CHAPTER 12

Dimitri Reinderman

English: Nimzowitsch Variation



Four Knights with 4.e4

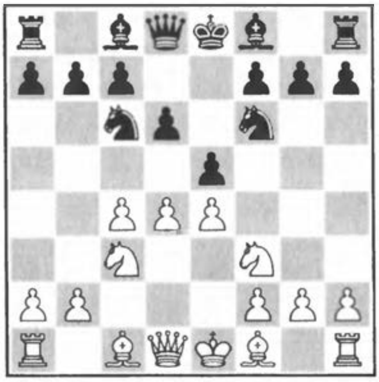
1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.♘f3 ♘c6 4.e4

White has a lot of possibilities on the fourth move in the English Four Knights. Indeed, since the position is a reversed Sicilian, moves which are playable in the Sicilian are good here too. Thus, 4.g3, 4.e3, 4.d3 and even 4.a3 (as Mikhail Gurevich demonstrated in SOS-3, Chapter 17) all give chances for an advantage. Against all these moves Black can opt for an open game with 4... d5 (just like in the Sicilian).

But what if you play 1.c4 because you prefer a closed game? Well, in that case you can follow Nimzowitsch and play 4.e4! With 4.e4 White first and foremost closes the centre. Next, he will develop (a kingside fianchetto is on the cards), and only later will he either open the centre (d4) or play on the kingside (f4). As opposed to most English Four Knight games, White rarely plays on the queenside.

An obvious disadvantage of 4.e4 is that square d4 is weakened, but White can play around this. The main replies to 4.e4 are **4...♗c5**, when White has the tactic 5.♘xe5! (see Game 1), and **4...♗b4**, when Game 2 features a plan with d4, while in Game 3 White is attacking on the kingside. If Black plays less actively after 4.e4 (for example 4...g6 or 4...♗e7) White will get a nice space advantage with 5.d4, but after **4...d6** things are less clear, so I will look at this move first.

4...d6 5.d4



The main line, but if you don't like to get doubled f-pawns, 5.g3 is a good alternative.

5...♗g4

5...exd4 6.♘xd4 g6 7.f3 ♗g7 8.♗e3 0-0 9.♕d2 leads to a position of the Sämisch King's Indian, which scores very well for White.

6.d5 ♘d4 7.♗e3

7.♗e2 ♘xe2 8.♕xe2 ♗e7 is just equal.

7...♘xf3+

In Bezman-Zaitsev, Moscow 1995, Black sacrificed a pawn with 7...♗xf3 8.gxf3 ♗e7 9.♗xd4 exd4 10.♕xd4 0-0 11.♖g1 ♘h5 and got some compensation after 12.♘e2 g6 13.f4 ♗f6 14.♕d2 ♗g7. An interesting try is 12.e5, since 12...dxe5 13.♕g4 is game over.

8.gxf3 ♗d7

Also possible is 8...♗h5 9.♖g1 ♗e7, with just a tiny edge for White.

9.f4!?

White can also first develop with 9.♕d2 and play f4 later.

9...♘g4 10.♗d2 exf4 11.♗xf4 g5!?

This gains a square on e5, but gives White a target.

12.♗g3 ♗g7 13.h4 h6 14.♗e2 ♘e5 15.hxg5 hxg5 16.♖xh8+ ♗xh8 17.♕b3 b6 18.0-0-0

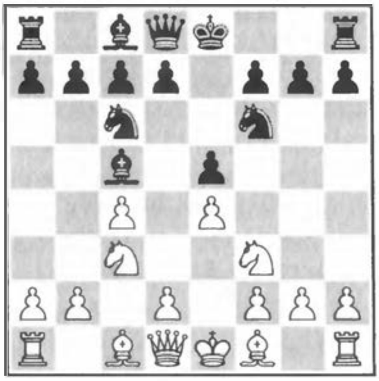
Panno-Savon, Petropolis 1973. Black's minor pieces are fine, but his king might become a problem, so I prefer White here. Now on to the games!

Game 1

☐ **Dimitri Reinderman**
■ **Sipke Ernst**
Hoogeveen 1998

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.e4 ♗c5

This is a good square for the bishop, controlling d4 and eying f2, so that 5.g3? ♘g4 would be bad for White. It does permit a small combination though.



5.♘xe5

The only move to fight for an opening advantage. But if you prefer a closed game then 5.♗e2 or 5.h3 are possible.

5...♘xe5

Not 5...♗xf2+ 6.♔xf2 ♘xe5 7.d4 which just gives Black a bad position.

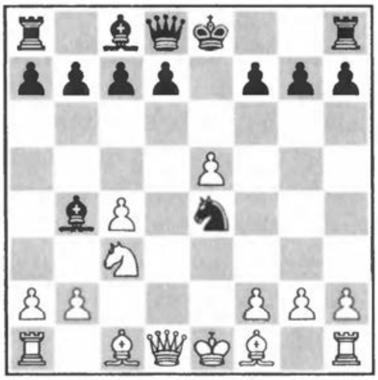
In one of the first games with 4.e4, Black sacrificed a pawn with 5...0-0 6.♘f3 ♖e8, but after 7.d3 d5 (7...♘g4 8.d4 ♗b4 9.♗d3 f5 10.♗g5 ♘f6 11.♗xf6 ♕xf6 12.0-0 ♗xc3 13.bxc3 fxe4 14.♖e1 will also give White an extra pawn) 8.cxd5 ♘xd5 9.♗e2 ♘f6 10.0-0 his compensation was not quite enough in Nimzowitsch-Yates, Dresden 1926.

6.d4 ♗b4

Instead 6...♘xe4 7.♘xe4 ♗b4+ 8.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 9.♕xd2 ♘g6 10.♘c3 0-0 11.0-0-0 c6 12.d5 was a little better for White in Reinderman-Pliester, Amsterdam 1994.

While 6...♗d6 7.c5 ♗xc5 8.dxe5 was just bad for Black in Nimzowitsch-Réti, Berlin 1928.

7.dxe5 ♘xe4



8.♕d4

A small trick is posed by 8.♕d3: if Black continues like in the game, White's queen will be on g3 instead of g4, which is a much better square. The disadvantage is that after 8...♘xc3 9.bxc3 ♗a5 10.♗a3 ♕g5 White would rather have his queen on d4. In Onischuk-Baklan, Germany Bundesliga 1998/99, White played his queen to d4 after all: 11.♕d4 d6 12.exd6 0-0 13.♗e2 ♖e8 14.♔f1 cxd6 15.♗xd6 ♕g6 16.♖d1 ♕c2 17.♕d2 ♕xd2 and a draw was agreed, although Black is better here.

8...♘xc3

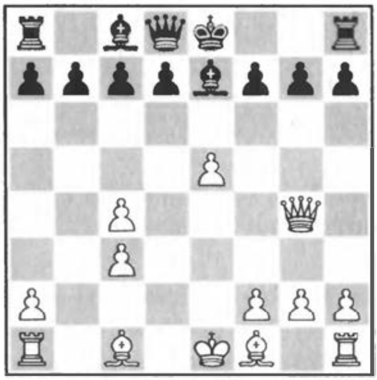
After 8...♘c5 the game Hollnack-Thiel, Wuppertal 1994, continued 9.♗e2 ♘e6 10.♕e4 d6 11.0-0 dxe5 12.♖d1 ♗d6 13.♗e3 ♗d7 and here 14.♕xb7 would have given White an advantage.

Neither does 8...f5 fully equalize after 9.exf6 ♘xf6 10.c5 ♕e7+ 11.♗e3 ♗xc3+ 12.bxc3 b6 13.♗c4, when White's bishops more than compensate for his pawn structure.

9.bxc3 ♗e7

9...♗a5 10.♗a3 d6 11.exd6 0-0 12.0-0-0 cxd6 13.♕xd6 ♕xd6 14.♗xd6 ♖e8 15.♔b2 gives White half a pawn more, and with good technique Kortchnoi managed to turn this into a point in his second match game against Hübner, Solingen 1973.

10.♕g4



10...g6

A rare move is 10...0-0. It is not that bad, though, after 11.♗h6 g6 12.♗xf8 ♗xf8 13.♕g3 d6 14.♗e2 ♕e8 Black had decent compensation in Reinderman-Van Wely, Wijk aan Zee blitz 1999.

The most common move is 10...♔f8, and it is difficult to crack. After for example 11.♕e4 d6 12.♗e3 dxe5 13.♖d1 ♕e8 14.♕xe5 ♗d6 15.♕h5 (15.♕xe8+ ♔xe8 16.♗d4 f6 17.c5 ♗e7 18.♗c4 gives White a tiny edge) 15...♗e5 16.♗e2 ♗xc3+ 17.♔f1 White had enough compensation for the pawn, but not more, McNab-Gormally, New Castle on Tyne 1998.

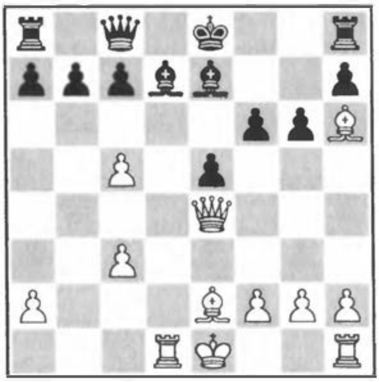
11.♗h6 d6 12.♕e4 dxe5

Better is 12...♕d7 13.♗d3 ♕c6 (13...dxe5 14.♗g7 f5 15.♕e3 ♖g8 16.♗xe5±) 14.♕xc6+ (14.♖b1!?) 14...bxc6 with a solid position for Black in McNab-Lobejko, Koszalin 1998.

13.♖d1 ♗d7 14.♗e2 ♕c8 15.c5!?

After 15.♕xe5 f6 16.♕e3 White would be a little better. However, I saw a nice idea involving an exchange sacrifice.

15...f6



16.♖xd7!

Since Black weakened his light squares with his last move, White removes the main defender of these squares.

16...♕xd7 17.♕xb7 ♖c8 18.♗a6

Attacking the rook, which cannot move because of 19.♗b5. What can Black do?

18...♗xc5??

Sipke didn't see it. Indeed, 18...♔f7 19.♕b3+ ♔e8 20.c6 ♕f5 21.♗xc8 ♕xc8 22.0-0 ♗f8 23.♖d1! ♗xh6 24.♖d7 ♕xd7 25.cxd7+♔e7 26.g3 is very good for White. However, with 18...♔d8 Black can defend. White still keeps some advantage after for example 19.c6 ♕e6 20.0-0 ♗d6 21.♕xc8+ ♕xc8 22.♗xc8 ♔xc8 23.♗g7 ♖g8 24.♗xf6 g5 25.h4 gxh4 26.♖e1, but Black should be able to draw this ending.

19.♕xc8+ ♕xc8 20.♗xc8 ♔f7 21.♗g4

Now White is a piece up and Black's initiative is easily neutralized.

21...♖b8 22.♗c1 ♖b1 23.0-0 ♔e7 24.♗e3 ♖xf1+ 25.♔xf1 ♗xe3 26.fxe3 c5 27.♗e2

With this game I won the beauty (or spectacle) prize of the tournament. I happily received the prize, a very heavy vase made of glass, courtesy of the local glass museum. However, carrying the prize home (by foot and by train) made me less happy.

Game 2

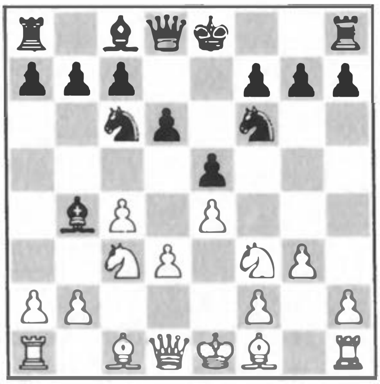
☐ **Dimitri Reinderman**
■ **Mikhail Kobalia**
Wijk aan Zee B 1998

1.c4 e5 2.♞c3 ♘c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.e4 ♗b4

After this move the position will stay closed (at least for a while), since 5.d4 is not possible. White will first develop and then play either f4 or d4 (or sometimes both) to gain more space. Black has three pawn-breaks: ...b5 (which normally means the bishop takes on c3), ...d5 (normally prepared by ...♘d4 and ...c6) and ...f5 (most likely prepared by ...♘e8). If he foregoes pawn-breaks then Black has a choice of playing against weak pawns (after ...♗xc3) or against a weak square (d4).

5.d3 d6 6.g3

Sometimes 6.♗e2 is played here, with the idea of castling and playing f4 one move quicker. A high level example: 6...h6 7.0-0 ♗c5 8.♘d2 ♘d4 9.♘b3 ♘xb3 10.axb3 0-0 11.♔h1 c6 12.f4 with about equal chances in Morozevich-Adams, Dortmund 2001.



6...♗c5

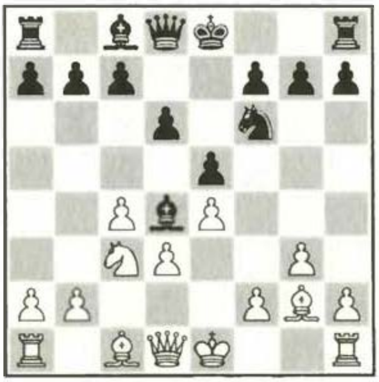
With this move Black takes firm control of d4 and doesn't have a specific pawn break in mind. For 6...♗g4 see the next game.
Black also has:

- 6...a6 Preparing b5. If Black takes on c3 before he plays ...a6 then a4 is a good idea. 7.♗g2 b5 8.0-0 ♗xc3 9.cxb5 axb5 (9...♗xb2 10.♗xb2 axb5 11.d4 gives a lot of compensation) 10.bxc3 0-0 11.d4 ♗g4 12.h3 ♗xf3 13.♗xf3 h6 14.♗g2 ♖a4 15.♗e3 ♖e8 16.♕d3±, Christiansen-Kindermann, Vienna 1991.
- 6...0-0 7.♗g2, and now:

– My game versus Timmermans in the Dutch league (2005/06) demonstrates how fast White's attack can develop against passive play: 7...♘e7 8.0-0 ♗xc3 9.bxc3 c5 10.♘e1 ♘e8 11.f4 f6 12.f5 ♗d7 13.g4 ♘c7 14.g5 ♗e8 15.♖b1 (this rook will be important) 15...♖b8 16.gxf6 gxf6 17.♗h6 ♖f7 18.♗f3 ♘c6 19.♖b2 ♔h8 20.♖g2 ♖d7 21.♔h1 and Black resigned: there is no good defence against the attack on the g-file.

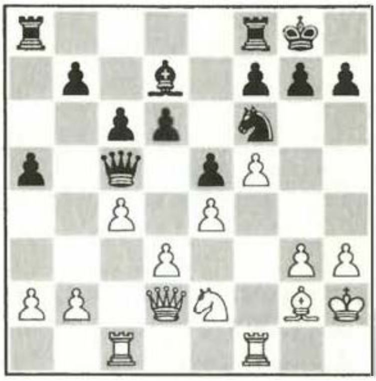
– 7...♘e8 (preparing ...f5) 8.0-0 ♗xc3 9.bxc3 f5 10.exf5 ♗xf5 11.♘h4 ♗e6 12.♖b1 ♖b8 13.f4 exf4 14.♗xf4 ♕d7 (14...g5? 15.♗xc6) 15.♕a4 and White was slightly better in Cifuentes-Groszpeter, Novi Sad 1990.

7.♗g2 ♘d4 8.♘xd4 ♗xd4



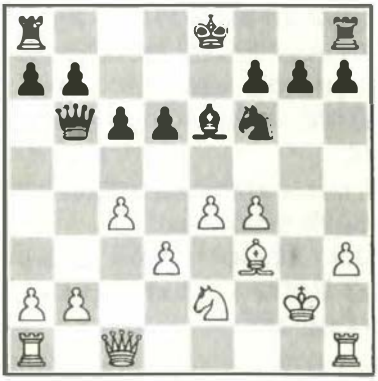
9.♘e2

Not long before this game, I had this position against Mikhail Gurevich in the second Bundesliga. This was also an interesting game, with typical play on the kingside and a Black counter on the other wing: 9.0-0 ♗g4 10.♕e1 c6 11.h3 ♗e6 12.♗e3 ♗xe3 13.♕xe3 ♘d7 14.♔h2 ♕b6 15.♕d2 a6 16.♘e2 a5 17.♖ac1 (preparing d4) 17...♕b4 18.♕c2 ♕c5, preventing d4, so White plays 19.f4 ♘f6 20.♕d2 0-0 21.f5 ♗d7



22.g4 and although the bishop on g2 is no hero, the attack on the kingside still gave White the initiative, Reinderman-Gurevich, Bundesliga II 1997/98.

A third option is 9.h3, which Kosten used to score a nice victory against Farago, Amantea 1992: 9...♗e6 10.f4 c6 11.♘e2 ♗c5 12.♗f3 ♕b6 13.♔f1 ♗e3 14.♔g2 exf4 15.gxf4 ♗xc1 16.♕xc1



And now 16...d5? backfired after 17.f5 dxe4

18.dxe4 ♗d7 19.e5 ♘g8 I will give the remainder of the game because of the attractive finish: 20.c5 ♕c7 21.e6! fxe6 22.fxe6 ♗xe6 23.♘d4 ♗d7 24.♕g5 ♘f6 25.♖ae1+ ♔f8 26.♖hf1 h5 27.♗d5 ♖h6 28.♕xh6! gxh6 29.♖xf6+ ♔g7 30.♖f7+ ♔g6 31.♗b3 ♕a5 32.♘f3 ♖e8 33.♖xe8 ♗xe8 34.♘e5+ ♔g5 35.h4+ ♔xh4 36.♘f3+ 1-0 (36...♔g4 37.♗e6 mate).

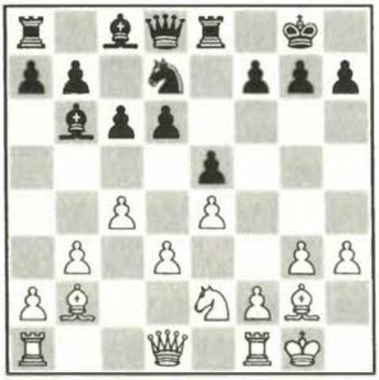
9...♗b6 10.h3 c6 11.0-0 0-0 12.b3

The plan with 12.♔h2 and 13.f4 is good here, but I wanted to play for d4 in this game.

12...♘d7

After 12...d5 White has 13.exd5 cxd5 14.♗g5, but I was concerned about 12...♖e8!, which prevents d4 and prepares ...d5.

13.♗b2 ♖e8



14.d4

Now White has an edge because of his space advantage.

14...♕f6 15.♕d2 ♕g6

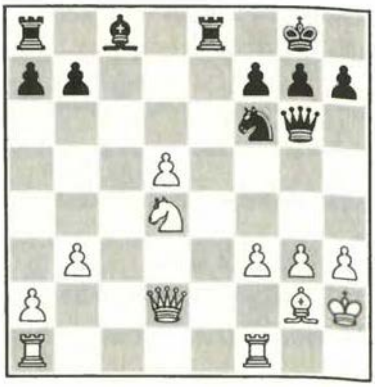
Probably Black thought about attacking h3, but this is not dangerous.

16.♔h2 ♘f6 17.f3

This defends e4, but also g4, which is important if Black would move his queen to h5. Now Black should just wait and see, since it is difficult for White to make progress in this position. White would like to play f4, but this leaves e4 undefended. Kobalia prefers an active defence, ignoring the fact that White is better developed.

17...exd4?! 18.♗xd4 d5 19.cxd5 ♗xd4 20.♘xd4 cxd5 21.exd5

With his better development, White doesn't mind opening up the position.



21...♗d7?

Black should have been consistent, by taking the pawn: after 21...♘xd5 22.f4 ♘e7 23.♖fe1 ♕b6 24.♖e2 ♗d7 25.♖ae1 ♘c6 26.♖xe8+ ♖xe8 27.♖xe8+ ♗xe8 28.♘f5 White is better, but it should be tenable for Black.

22.f4 ♕h5 23.♖ae1 ♘xd5

Otherwise Black is just a pawn down.

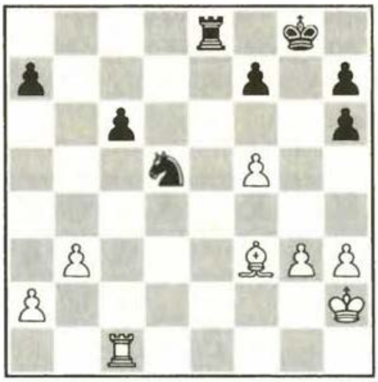
24.f5

Here 24.g4 wins a piece, when 24...♗xg4 25.♗xd5 ♗xh3 26.♗g2 ♗xg2+ 27.♔xg2 ♕g4+ 28.♔h2 ♕h4+ 29.♔g1 gives a position which will be good enough for a computer to win with white, but also complicated enough for a human to possibly screw up in time trouble.

The text-move is safer, leading to a good endgame for White.

24...♗c6 25.♗f3 ♕h6 26.♕xh6 gxh6 27.♖xe8+ ♖xe8 28.♘xc6 bxc6 29.♖c1

The bishop is stronger than the knight, and all the black pawns are weak, so it's easy to see that White is doing well here. Black does have active pieces, but White simply has more targets to attack, and it's very difficult for Black to avoid losing at least a pawn.



29...♘b4 30.♔g2 ♖e3

30...♞xa2 31.♖xc6 ♔g7 32.♗h5! is similar to the game.

31.f6

Threatening 32.a3 and 33.♖xc6.

31...♘xa2 32.♖xc6 ♖e8 33.♖a6 ♘c1

Not the best move, but a pawn is gone anyway.

34.♖xa7 ♘d3 35.♗d5 ♖f8 36.♔f3 ♘b4 37.♗e4

Suddenly the knight has no squares anymore!

37...♖e8 38.♖a4 ♖b8 39.♔e3 h5 40.♔d4 h6 41.♔c3

Winning the knight and the game.

Game 3

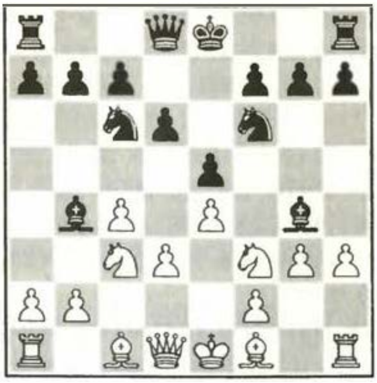
☐ **Vladimir Bukal sr**
■ **Paul van der Sterren**
Dortmund 1986

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.♘f3 ♘c6 4.e4

My database shows that IM Vladimir Bukal is one of the biggest adherents of Nimzowitsch's move: 39 games, played from 1977 to 2006. However, for the record only 34 of these games were played by senior, since his son IM Vladimir Bukal jr. also tried this variation in a few games in 1999...

4...♗b4 5.d3 d6 6.g3 ♗g4 7.h3

The most common move, although 7.♗g2 and even 7.♗e2 are also playable.



7...♗d7

This looks odd, but it's unclear whether the additional h2-h3 benefits White. The normal 7....♗xf3 was played in Bukal sr-Felgaer, Estensi 2003, and after 8.♕xf3 a5 (or 8...♘d4 9.♕d1 c6 10.♗g2 0-0 11.0-0 ♗c5 12.♔h2 a5 13.f4 b5 14.f5 b4 15.♘a4 ♘d7 Bu Xiangzhi-Bacrot, Turin 2006) 9.♗g2 a4!? 10.0-0 a3 11.♞b5 axb2 12.♗xb2 0-0 13.d4 ♕e7 14.♕b3 White had a slight edge.

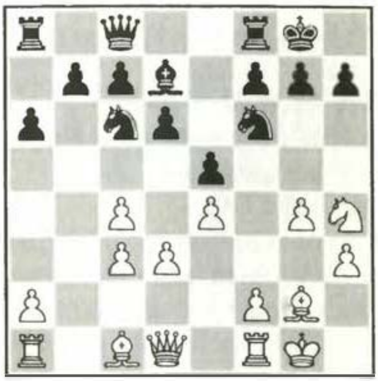
8.♗g2 ♕c8

That was the idea: White can't castle, at least not yet. White can start his kingside play though.

9.♘h4 0-0 10.g4 a6

Black tries to counter on the other wing.

11.0-0 ♗xc3 12.bxc3



12...b5

This is a common move for Black in the Nimzowitsch Variation. White sometimes plays a4 to prevent it (usually only after Black has taken on c3, because otherwise it weakens the dark squares). When White allows ...b5, he normally either takes on b5, or plays ♘d2. A third option is to sacrifice a pawn, as Bukal does in the game.

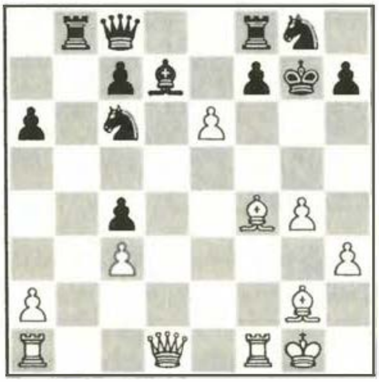
13.f4 exf4 14.♗xf4 bxc4 15.d4

White has more space, a mobile pawn centre and active pieces, which gives enough compensation for the pawn.

15...♔h8 16.e5 dxe5 17.dxe5 ♘g8 18.♘f5 ♖b8

I can imagine that Van der Sterren did not feel any danger here: his pieces are a bit passive, but his king looks safe. But Bukal proves otherwise.

19.♞xg7! ♔xg7 20.e6

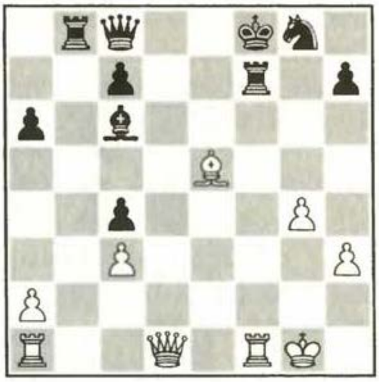


20...♗e8?!

After 20...fxe6 21.♗xc6 ♗xc6 22.♗e5+ ♘f6 23.g5 White wins the piece back, but he is only a little better then.

21.exf7 ♖xf7 22.♗xc6 ♗xc6 23.♗e5+ ♔f8?

It was better to return the piece with 23...♘f6 24.♕d2 ♔g8 when White is better but not winning.



24.♕d4??

Alas, having played so well, White throws it all away with one move. After 24.♖xf7+ ♔xf7 25.♕c2 White's attack is very strong, e.g. 25...♕e6 26.♕xh7+ ♔e8 27.♖e1 ♞e7 28.♝g3 ♕f7 29.♕h8+ ♕f8 30.♖xe7+ ♔xe7 31.♕e5+ ♔f7 32.♕xc7+ and White wins.

24...♕e6??

And Black returns the favour! After: 24...♕d8! 25.♖xf7+ ♔xf7 26.♕f2+ ♔e8 27.♖f1 ♕d5 28.♕f8+ ♔d7 29.♖f7+ ♔e6 30.♖f6+ ♔xe5 31.♖f5+ ♔e6 32.♕f7+ ♔d6 33.♖xd5+ ♝xd5 34.♕xh7 ♖b2 material is about equal, but Black is better because of the white king.

25.♗g7+ ♔e8 26.♖fe1

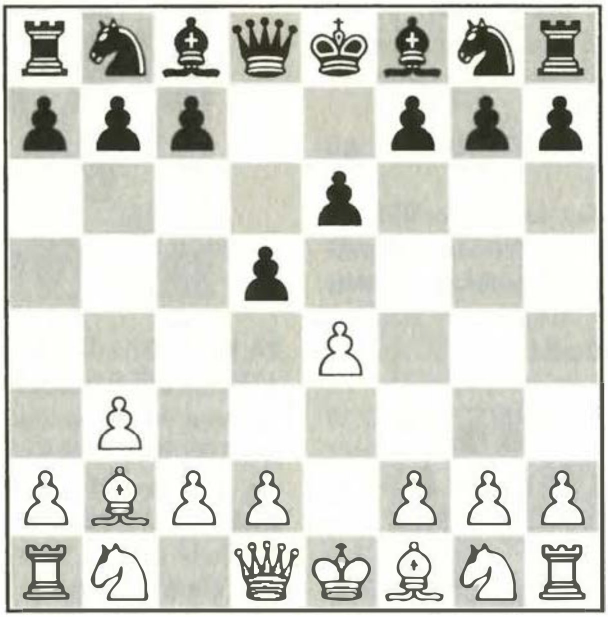
This wins the queen while keeping an active position, so Black is lost.

26...♗d7 27.♕a7 ♖d8 28.♕xa6 ♕e7 29.♗d4 1-0

CHAPTER 13

Alexander Finkel

Réti's Line against the French



1.e4 e6 2.b3 d5 3.♗b2

In the following chapter I'd like to draw your attention to a radical way to deal with the French Defence: 2.b3!?. This modest move is much more dangerous for Black than it may appear at first sight (in most cases positions with opposite castling emerge, demanding very precise play from both sides), so it could either serve as an excellent surprise weapon for occasional use, or simply as your main repertoire against the French. Don't get me wrong, I won't argue that 2.b3 should be sufficient to get an opening advantage against a well-prepared opponent (although this statement is equally correct about pretty much any line we can think of), but it leads to interesting and unexplored positions in which a better understanding of typical ideas could be a serious advantage. Surprisingly there is a lot of study material on 2.b3, so I was facing the difficult challenge to cover this line extensively enough and not to 'overload' the article with insignificant details which could prevent us from focusing on the most important aspects of White's play in this variation.

I will concentrate on 2...d5 in reply to Réti's 2.b3 because this is what 'French' players will play. Naturally there is not much wrong with moves like 2...b6!? or 2...c5!?. For the latter see Arthur Kogan's views on the Czerniak Attack in the Sicilian elsewhere in this book.

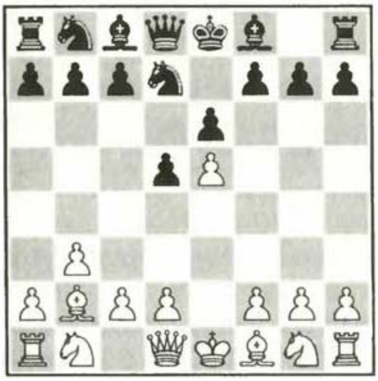
☐ **Sebastien Mazé**
■ **Anatoli Vaisser**
Val d'Isere 2004

1.e4 e6 2.b3 d5 3.♗b2 ♘f6

This move aims to keep play within a regular 'French structure'. However, White does have other options at his disposal.

The main move that we will study below is 3...dxe4.

4.e5 ♘fd7



5.♕g4!?

The idea behind this move is to refrain from pushing d4, in order not to allow Black typical counterplay against White's centre.

However, I do believe that a transposition into the Advanced Variation is more than acceptable for White, as the dark-squared bishop is well placed on b2. See 5.d4!? c5 and now:

- 6.♘f3 b6 (6...♘c6!?) 7.♗b5 ♗a6 8.a4 ♗xb5 9.axb5 a5 10.0-0 ♖a7 11.c4, Karasev-Zilberman, Cheliabinsk 1972.
- 6.c3 ♘c6 7.♘f3 cxd4 8.cxd4 ♗e7 9.♗d3 0-0 10.0-0 f6 11.exf6 ♘xf6 12.♘bd2 ♕e8 13.♖e1 ♘h5 14.g3±, Finkel-De Martelaere, Bratislava 1993.

5...c5 6.f4 ♘c6

White had an opening edge after 6...f5 7.♕g3 g5!? 8.♗e2 (8.fxg5!?) 8...♗h6 9.♘h3 g4 10.♘f2 ♗g7 11.h3 h5 12.hxg4 hxg4 13.♖xh8+ ♗xh8 14.♕h2, Mastrovasilis-Potkin, Halkidiki 2000.

7.♘f3 a6

The immediate 7...g6 also makes sense, as Black's prospects on the queenside are not perfectly clear. Let us see 8.♗e2 and now:

- 8...♗g7 9.0-0 ♘e7 10.♕h4 ♖b8 11.♘c3 a6 12.a4 b6 13.d4 ♗b7 14.♘d1±, Repkova-Macek, Rabac 2003.
- 8...h5 9.♕g3 ♗h6 10.0-0 ♘e7 11.♘h4 ♘f8 12.d4 ♕c7 13.♘a3 ♗d7 14.c4±, Houska-Levitt, London 2004.
- 8...♘b6 9.♘c3 a6 10.0-0 ♗d7 11.a4 ♕c7 12.♕g3±, Mastrovasilis-Stellwagen, Groningen 1999.

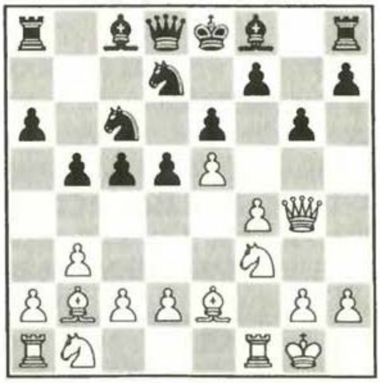
8.♗e2 b5

Or 8...♞e7 9.0-0 ♘f5 10.♕h3 g6 11.g4 ♘g7 12.♕g3 h5 13.h3±, Prins-Guimard, Buenos Aires Olympiad 1939.

9.0-0

Also interesting is 9.a4!? ♘b4 10.♗d1 ♗b7 11.0-0 g6 12.axb5 axb5 13.♖xa8 ♗xa8 14.♘a3 ♗c6 15.♗e2 ♕b6 16.♔h1, Repkova-Rozic, Krk 2004.

9...g6



10.d3?!

The knight has nothing to do on d2, so White should have preferred 10.♘c3!? ♗g7 11.♘d1 ♗b7 12.♘f2 0-0 13.♕h3 with excellent attacking chances.

10...♗g7 11.♘bd2 ♘e7 12.♖fe1 f5

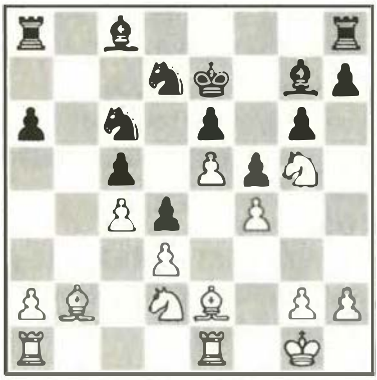
Although possible it made more sense to

open up the f-file eventually with ...f6: 12...♘f5 13.♘f1 f6 14.♘g3 0-0 15.♗f1?! (15.♘xf5exf5 16.♕g3=) 15...fxe5 16.♘xe5 ♘xe5 17.♗xe5 ♗xe5 18.fxe5 ♘h6.

13.♕h4 ♘c6 14.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 15.c4

White's chances are preferable in this queenless middlegame.

15...bxc4 16.bxc4 d4 17.♘g5 ♔e7



18.♗f3

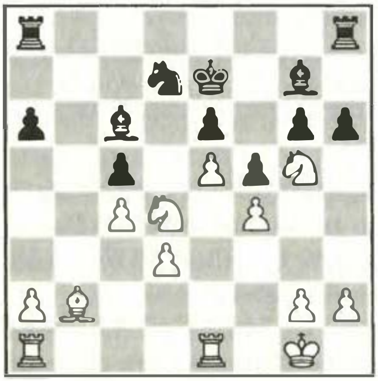
Not bad is 18.♗a3!? ♖b8 19.♖ab1 ♖xb1 (19...♘b4 20.♘b3 ♘c2 21.♗xc5+ ♘xc5 22.♘xc5+−) 20.♖xb1 h6 21.♘gf3 g5 22.♘b3 gxf4 23.♘xc5 ♘dxe5 24.♘xa6+ ♔f7 25.♘c5±.

18...♗b7?!

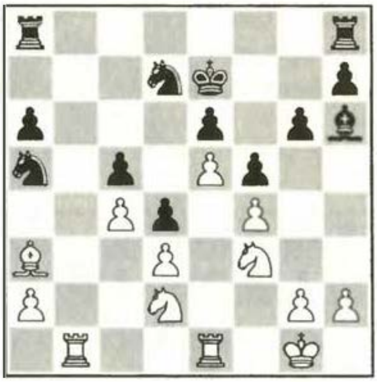
Stronger was 18...♖b8.

19.♗a3

White is unwilling to take risks, while after 19.♘b3!? h6 20.♗xc6 ♗xc6 21.♘xd4! 21...cxd4 22.♗a3+ ♔e8 23.♘xe6 ♗f8 24.♗xf8 ♖xf8 25.♘xd4 he could have posed Black quite a few problems.



19...♘a5 20.♗xb7 ♘xb7 21.♖ab1 ♘a5 22.♘gf3 ♗h6



23.g3

Once again refraining from rather promising actions in the centre: 23.♘xd4 ♗xf4 24.♘2b3 ♘b7 25.♘f3 ♔f7 26.d4±.

23...♔f7 24.♘b3 ♘xb3 25.♖xb3 ♖hb8 26.♖eb1 ♖xb3 27.♖xb3 ♖a7 28.h4 ♖c7 29.♔f2 ♔e8 30.♖b1

30.♘g5 ♗xg5 31.hxg5 ♔d8 32.♖b1 ♔c8 33.♔f3±.

30...♖c6 31.♔e2 ♗f8 32.h5 gxh5 33.♖h1 ♖b6

Now, finally, the chances are even.

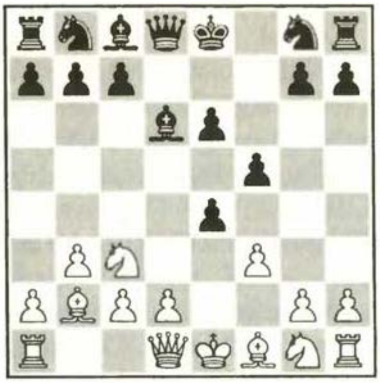
34.♔d2 ♔f7 35.♖xh5 h6 36.♖h1 ♔g6 37.♔c2 ♖b8 38.♘d2 ♖b7 39.♘b3 ♖b6 40.♘a5 ♗e7 41.♘b3 ♗f8 42.♘a5 ♗e7 43.♘b3 ♗f8 ½-½

☐ **Eva Repkova**
■ **Stefan Macak**
Slovakia tt 2004/05

1.e4 e6 2.b3 d5 3.♗b2 dxe4 4.♘c3 f5?!

This risky move is not very popular, but it won't harm you to know how to deal with it!

5.f3 ♗d6



6.fxe4!?

Entering interesting complications demanding precise play from both sides. Less committal is 6.g3!? exf3 7.♘xf3 ♘f6 8.♕e2 ♘c6 9.0-0-0 a6 10.d4 ♕e7 11.♗g2 with compensation for the pawn, Parikh-Barua, Atul 2006.

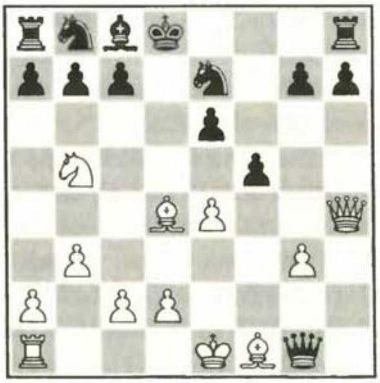
6...♕h4+ 7.g3 ♗xg3+ 8.hxg3 ♕xh1 9.♘b5 ♕xg1?

A serious mistake, leading to a difficult position. Better was 9...♘f6!? 10.♘xc7+ ♔d8 11.♘xa8 ♕xg1 12.♕f3 ♘xe4 and now rather than 13.♗xg7?! ♖g8 14.♗e5 ♘c6 15.♗c7+ ♔e7 with unclear play (Papaioannou-M.Gurevich, Korinthos 1998), correct was 13.0-0-0! ♕xg3 14.♕xg3 ♘xg3 15.♗e5! ♘xf1 16.♗xb8 ♗d7 17.♗e5±.

10.♕h5+ ♔d8

White wins after 10...♔f8 11.♕g5.

11.♕h4+ ♘e7 12.♗d4



Black's queen is trapped on g1!

12...g5 13.♕h3

Superior to 13.♕xg5?! ♕h1 14.♗xh8 ♕xe4+ 15.♔f2 though this is still better for White.

13...♕xd4 14.♘xd4 c5

Perhaps 14...h6!?.

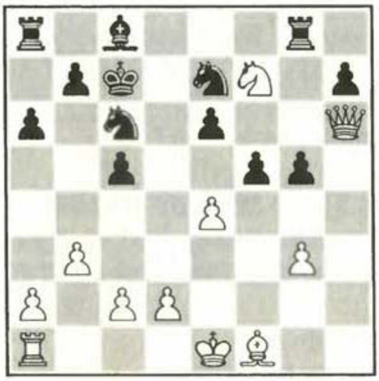
15.♘b5 ♘bc6 16.♕h6!

Black has too many weaknesses in his camp, so he is uncapable to defend them all.

16...a6 17.♘d6 ♔c7 18.♘f7

Here 18.♘xc8!? ♖axc8 19.♕xe6 fxe4 20.♕xe4 ♖ce8 21.0-0-0 should also win.

18...♖g8



19.♗d3?!

A bit artificial, but since White keeps a huge advantage it's hardly correct to call this move a mistake. Still, White wins after 19.♘xg5 ♖g6 20.♕h4 h6 21.♘f3 ♖g4 22.♕xh6 ♖xe4+ 23.♔f2.

19...♖g6 20.♕xh7 ♗d7 21.exf5 exf5 22.0-0-0 ♖ag8 23.♘h8

White is facing the consequences of his inaccuracy on move 19. Unclear is 23.g4 ♖6g7 24.♕h5 ♗e8 25.♗c4 f4.

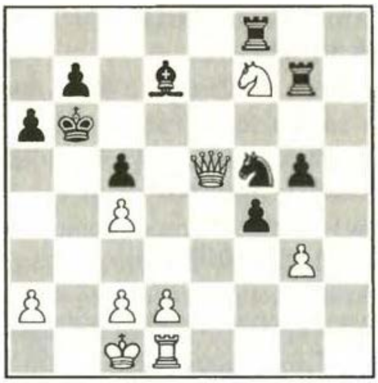
23...♖6g7 24.♕h6 ♘e5 25.♗c4 ♘xc4 26.bxc4 f4 27.♕f6

Black has counterplay after 27.gxf4 ♘f5 28.♕h2 g4.

27...♘f5! 28.♘f7

28.gxf4 ♖xh8∓.

28...♖f8 29.♕e5+ ♔b6



30.d4!

An excellent resource to change the course of the game and to remind Black that his king is danger. White has only a slight edge after 30.♘d6 ♖e7 31.♕b2+ ♔c7 32.♘xf5 ♖xf5 33.gxf4 ♖xf4 34.♕c3.

30...cxd4 31.c5+ ♔a7

31...♔c6 32.g4 ♖gxf7 33.gxf5.

32.c6! ♖gxf7 33.cxd7 ♖d8 34.g4 ♘g3

White is also winning after 34...♘e3.

35.♕xd4+ ♔a8 36.♕c5 ♖ff8 37.♖e1 ♖g8

37...f3 38.♕xf8+–.

38.♕d5 ♖gf8 39.♕d6

White has a forced win with 39.♖e6! ♔a7 40.♕c5+ ♔b8 41.♕xf8 ♖xf8 42.♖e8+.

39...♖g8 40.♕d5 ♖gf8 41.♕d6 ♖g8 42.♕c7 ♔a7 43.♕c4 f3 44.♔b2 ♘e2 45.♖f1 ♖gf8 46.♔b3±

It looks like White is nearly winning, so the final outcome of the game was probably influenced by team considerations.

½-½

☐ **Leonid Totsky**
■ **Alexander Zakharov**
Perm 1997

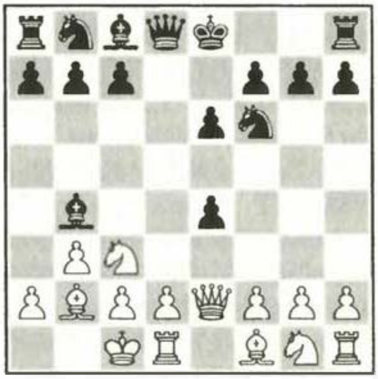
1.e4 e6 2.b3 d5 3.♗b2 dxe4 4.♘c3 ♘f6 5.♕e2

Dubious is 5.g4?!. In my opinion White has difficulties keeping the balance after 5...♗d7 6.♗g2 ♗c6 7.♕e2 h5! when 8.gxh5 ♖xh5 9.♞xe4 ♘xe4 10.♗xe4 ♗xe4 11.♕xe4 ♕d5 is slightly preferable for Black. While 8.g5 ♘d5 is also better for Black after 9.♘xe4 ♘f4 10.♕f3 ♕xg5! 11.♘xg5 ♘xg2+ 12.♔f1 ♗xf3 13.♘1xf3 ♘f4 14.♗e5 ♘d5 and 9.♘h3 ♘xc3 10.♗xc3 ♕d5! Gelashvili-Socko, Panormo 2001.

5...♗b4

This move is considered to be Black's safest option. For 5...♗e7 and 5...♘c6 see the next game.

6.0-0-0



6...♗xc3?!

More accurate is 6...♕e7, intending either to trade the dark-squared bishops or to gain a tempo compared to the game in case White opts for 7.♔b1.

– 7.♔b1 ♗xc3 8.dxc3 ♗d7 (8...b6?! 9.g4 ♗b7 10.♗g2 h6 11.h4 ♘bd7 12.g5 ♘d5 13.♘h3↑, Totsky-Tarasenko, Moscow 1995) 9.g4 h6 10.♗g2 ♘c6 11.♗xe4 ♘xe4 12.♕xe4 0-0-0 with equality, Kapnisis-Berelovich, Kavala 2002.

– 7.♘xe4 ♗a3 8.♘xf6+ ♕xf6 9.d4 ♗xb2+ 10.♔xb2 c5 (10...0-0 11.♘f3 ♖d8 12.♕e4 c5 13.♗d3 g6 14.♕e5 ♕xe5 15.dxe5 ♘c6 16.h4±, Tartakower-Keres, Parnu 1937) 11.♕f3! (11.♕e5 ♕xe5 12.dxe5 ♘c6 13.f4 ♗d7 14.♘f3 ♘e7 15.♗d3 ♗c6=, Glienke-Totsky, Pardubice 1999) 11...cxd4 12.♕xf6 gxf6 13.♖xd4 ♔e7 14.♘f3 ♘c6 15.♖d2±, Totsky-Legky, Orel 1994.

7.dxc3!? ♕e7 8.g4

White's plan is to win back the pawn on e4 after completion of his development. Then his dark-squared bishop on b2 might become an important factor in the position.

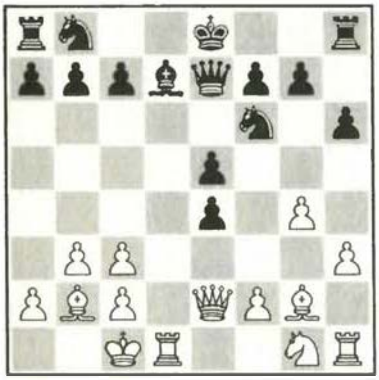
8...h6

Or 8...0-0 9.h4 (9.g5!?) 9...e5 10.♗h3 ♘e8 11.c4 ♕xh4 12.♕xe4 ♕h6+ 13.♔b1⩲, Kapnisis-Radjabov, Oropesa del Mar 1999.

9.♗g2 e5

Not 9...0-0 10.h4 with an attack.

10.h3 ♗d7



11.♕e3!? ♗c6 12.c4 ♘bd7 13.♘e2 0-0

Maybe it's safer to castle queenside.

After 13...a6 14.♘g3 0-0-0 15.♖he1 ♖de8 16.♘xe4 ♗xe4 17.♗xe4 ♘xe4 18.♕xe4± White didn't manage to get much in Borwell-E.Liebert, ICCF email 2004.

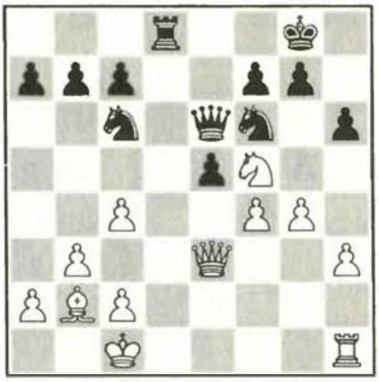
14.♘c3 ♘c5

Not so clear is 14...♕c5!? 15.♕xc5 ♘xc5 16.♗a3 b6 (16...♘fd7 17.b4 ♘a4 18.♘xa4 ♗xa4 19.b5!±) and now play is unclear after 17.b4 ♘a4 while 17.♗xc5 bxc5 18.♖he1 ♖ad8 19.♖xd8 ♖xd8 20.♗xe4 ♘xe4 21.♘xe4 ♗xe4 22.♖xe4 f6 leads to an equal rook ending.

15.♖hg1!? ♖fd8 16.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 17.♗h1 ♘e6 Or 17...♘fd7. **18.♘xe4 ♘d4?!**

Black should have traded the knights: 18...♘xe4!? 19.♗xe4 ♗xe4 20.♕xe4 ♕g5+ 21.♔b1 ♕f4, keeping reasonable counterchances.

19.♘g3!? ♗xh1 20.♖xh1 ♘c6 21.♘f5 ♕e6 22.f4!



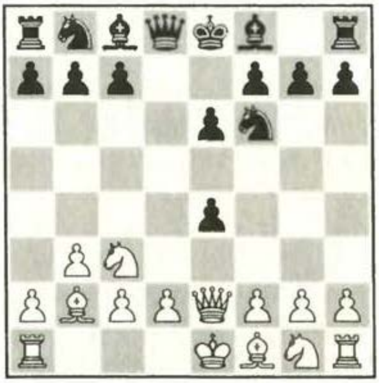
22...e4?

Missing White's reply. Correct was 22...♘d7!, but not 22...exf4 23.♕xf4 ♘e8 24.h4±.

23.♘xg7! ♔xg7 24.g5 ♖d7 25.gxf6+ ♔f8 26.f5 ♕d6 27.c5 1-0

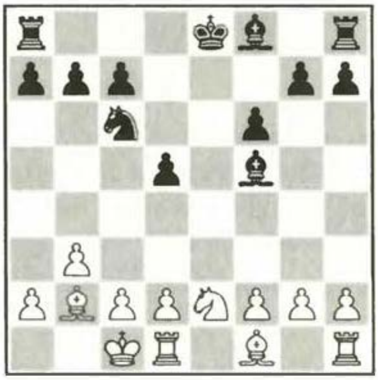
☐ **Eva Repkova**
■ **Iweta Rajlich**
Biel 2004

1.e4 e6 2.b3 d5 3.♗b2 dxe4 4.♘c3 ♘f6 5.♕e2



5...♗e7

An important alternative is 5...♘c6!? 6.♘xe4 ♘xe4 (6...♘d4 7.♕d3 c5 8.♘f3 ♘xf3+ 9.♕xf3 ♘xe4 10.♕xe4 ♕d5 11.♕e3 ♗d7 12.0-0-0±, Cherniaev-Nikolenko, Moscow 1996) 7.♕xe4 ♕d5, which leads to an endgame in which White's advantage is purely symbolic: 8.♕xd5 exd5 9.0-0-0 f6 10.♘e2 ♗f5!



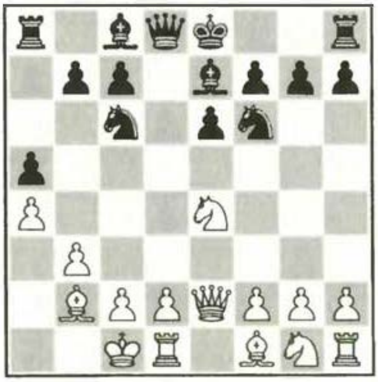
– 11.♘g3 ♗g6 12.♖e1+ ♔d7 13.a3 ♗c5, Gelashvili-Ramon Perez, Balaguer 2007.

– 11.g3 ♗d6 12.♗g2 ♘e7 13.♘d4±, Velimirovic-Timman, Sombor 1972.

6.0-0-0 a5!?

White obtained an attack along the diagonal in Luberti-l'Ami, Leeuwarden 2004, after 6...♗d7 7.g4 ♗c6 8.♗g2 0-0 9.h4 ♘d5 10.♘h3 f5?! 11.gxf5 exf5 12.♘xd5 ♕xd5 13.♘f4 ♕f7 14.♘h5.

7.a4 ♘c6 8.♘xe4



8...♖b8!?

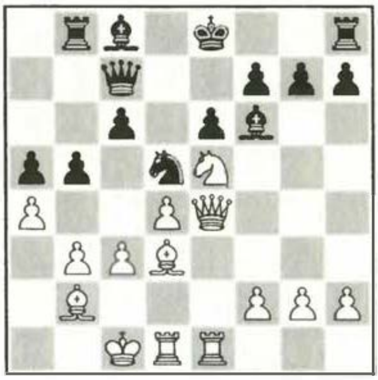
Black's idea is to play b5 at some point, so the rook is supposed to support the advance of the b-pawn.

8...♘xe4 9.♕xe4 ♗f6 10.d4 ♕e7 11.♘f3 ♗d7 12.♘e5 ♗xe5 13.dxe5 ♕c5 14.♗b5±, Tartakower-Lilienthal, Stockholm 1937.

9.♘f3 ♘b4

Keeping on with her preparations to launch the ...b5 break. If 9...0-0 then 10.♘xf6+ ♗xf6 11.d4 b6 12.♘e5 ♗b7 13.f4 keeps an edge.

10.♘e5 ♘xe4 11.♕xe4 ♗f6 12.d4 c6 13.c3 ♘d5 14.♗d3 ♕c7 15.♖he1 b5!?



16.♘xc6!

Correctly assuming that if White is going to be on the defensive anyway she'd better grab some material!

16...♕xc6 17.♗xb5 ♖xb5 18.axb5 ♕d7!

Not 18...♕xb5?! 19.c4 ♕xb3 20.♕xd5 0-0 21.♕b5 ♕xb5 22.cxb5 ♗d7 23.d5!±

19.c4 ♗b7 20.cxd5 ♕xb5 21.♕d3 ♕xd5 22.♔b1 0-0 23.f3±

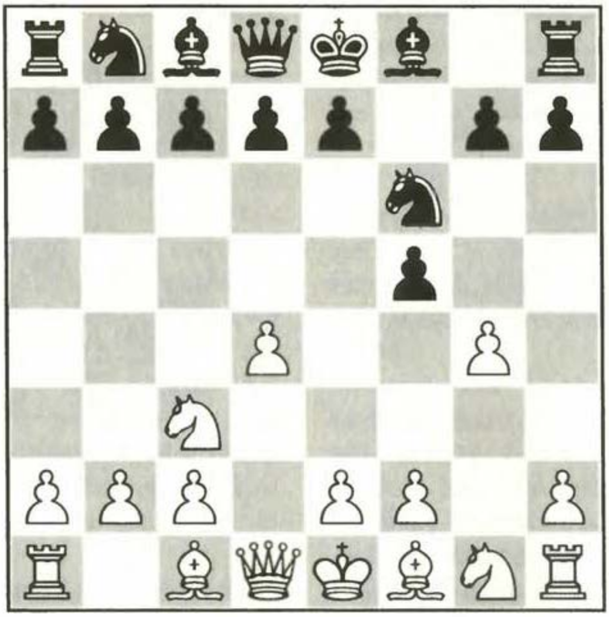
After mutual inaccuracies in the middle- and endgame White eventually managed to win.

In conclusion, objectively Black has sufficient resources to equalize against 2.b3. However, the resulting positions are always unusual and the surprise effect should give you a definite psychological edge.

CHAPTER 14

Adrian Mikhalchishin

Dutch: Bogoljubow Gambit



1.d4 f5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.g4!?

In the Dutch Defence Black is aiming to control the e4-square, and in a way the Dutch mirrors the Sicilian Defence perfectly.

However, there is an important difference: by moving his f-pawn Black weakens the a2-g8 and the h5-e8 diagonals which means that the position of his king becomes vulnerable. It is not for nothing that some trainers would love to glue the f7-pawn to the board to avoid some of the early mates that their not so-experienced pupils fall into. Against the Sicilian some intrepid souls will play the Wing Gambit to lure the c-pawn away from the centre. With more motivation (think of the king) we might be tempted to investigate g4 against the Dutch too. Unfortunately, 2.g4 lacks punch after 2...fxg4 3.h3 and now theory's recommendation of 3...g3! is OK for Black.

In SOS-1 the consequences of 2.♕d3 d5 3.g4 were investigated by Jeroen Bosch, while in SOS-8 Dimitri Reinderman analysed the audacious 1.c4 f5 2.e4 fxe4 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.g4!?. Apparently, the g-pawn is itching to get into play after Black has played f7-f5.

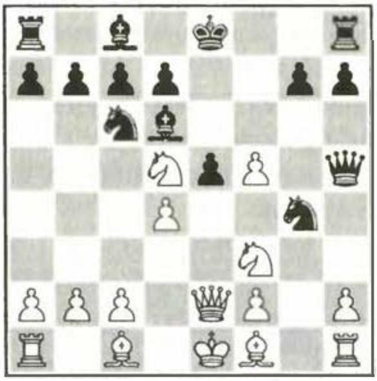
I recently came across the old game Bogoljubow-Wendel (Stockholm 1920) again and was struck by Bogoljubow's lightening quick attack. Could this be the right way to strike against the Dutch?

☐ **Efim Bogoljubow**
■ **Verner Wendel**
Stockholm 1920

1.d4 f5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.g4!? ♘xg4
In a way this is the most logical reply. Black keeps his structure intact and continues to control e4. However, the knight is hanging on g4, as Bogoljubow demonstrates with energetic play. The alternatives 3...fxg4 and 3...d5 are investigated below.

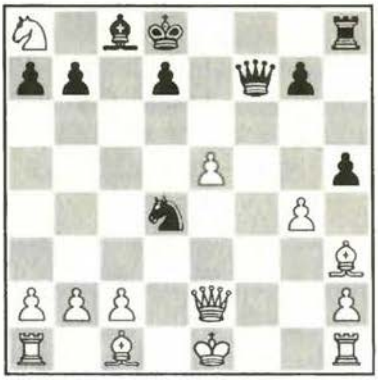
4.e4 e5?!
This is way too aggressive. Black should have played the modest 4...d6. Then 5.♗h3!? once again increases the pressure on g4. White has decent compensation after 5...e6 or 5...g6.

5.exf5 ♕h4?!
Black loses after 5...exd4? 6.♕xg4 dxc3 7.♕h5+. Possibly best is 5...h5, but after 6.h3 (6.♕e2) 6...exd4 (6...♘h6 7.♗xh6 ♖xh6 8.dxe5; 6...♕h4? 7.♕e2+−) 7.♕e2+ ♗e7 8.hxg4 dxc3 9.g5 Black is in dire straits.
6.♕e2 ♘c6 7.♘f3 White is gaining a tempo for his attack. **7...♕h5 8.♘d5 ♗d6**



9.♘xe5!
It turns out that with all his aggression Black has merely side-tracked his queen and placed her majesty in an uncomfortable self-pin.

9...♗xe5?
Stronger was 9...♘xd4, when 10.♘xg4+ ♘xe2 11.♘gf6+ gxf6 12.♘xf6+ was already indicated by Bogoljubow.
10.dxe5 ♕xf5 White also wins after 10...0-0 11.h3. **11.♗h3!** Black cannot avoid heavy material losses. **11...h5 12.f3 ♕f7 13.♘xc7+ ♔d8 14.♘xa8 ♘d4 15.fxg4**

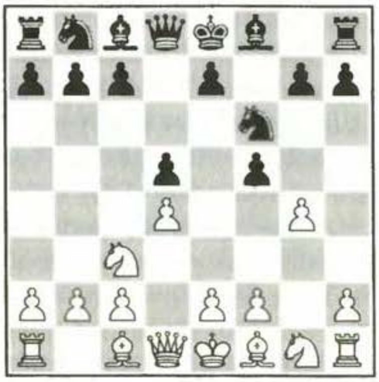


And Black resigned, as 15...♘xe2 loses after 16.♗g5+ ♔e8 17.♘c7+ ♔f8 18.♖f1.

☐ **Rudolf Spielmann**
■ **Jacques Mieses**
Berlin 1920

1.d4 f5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.g4
Spielmann had been in Sweden with Bogoljubow and immediately included the gambit into his repertoire.

3...d5



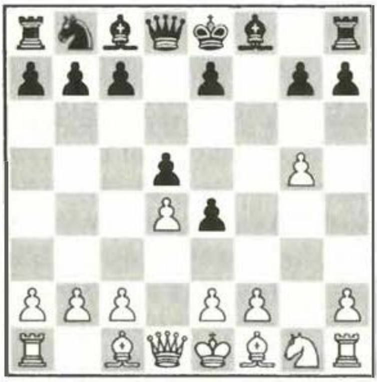
Black ignores the g-pawn and increases his control over e4. This is best according to theory, on the basis of the present game! Not everyone will be able to resist taking on g4 though.

4.g5?!

White should prefer any of the following moves:

- 4.♗g2!? g6 (4...fxg4 5.e4 e6 6.h3! can be very dangerous for Black) 5.gxf5 ♗xf5 6.♞xd5!? ♘xd5 7.e4 ♗e6 8.exd5 ♗xd5 9.♗xd5 ♕xd5 10.♕f3 ♕xf3 (10...e6) 11.♘xf3 ♘c6 12.c3 ♗g7 13.♘g5 and White has a slight advantage in the endgame, I.Gallagher-Bourne, England tt 2005/06.
- 4.gxf5 ♗xf5 5.♗f4 c5 6.e3 ♘c6 7.♗d3 e6 8.♘ge2 ♗g4 9.♗b5 ♗e7 10.♕d2 0-0 11.0-0-0 cxd4 12.exd4 ♗b4 13.♕e3 ♕a5 14.f3 ♗f5 15.♗xc6 bxc6 16.a3 ♗xc3 17.♕xc3, with a slight edge in Kaim-Issel, Barlinek 2002, is another serious option.
- Finally, 4.h3 was recommended by Taimanov.

4...♘e4 5.♘xe4 fxe4



6.f3

6.♗f4 was another serious try.

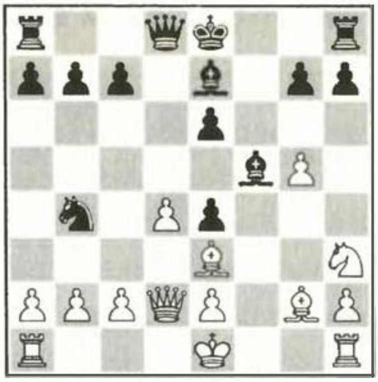
6...♗f5 7.♗g2

7.fxe4 ♗xe4 8.♘f3 e6 9.♗g2 ♗e7 10.h4 h6 is also OK for Black.

7...e6

Not 7...exf3 8.♘xf3 ♗e4?! 9.0-0 e6?! 10.♘e5!, with clear development advantage.

8.fxe4 dxe4 9.♗e3 ♗e7 10.♕d2 ♘a6 11.♘h3 ♘b4



12.c4

Stronger was 12.a3 ♘d5 13.c4 ♘xe3 14.♕xe3, immediately attacking the most important square e4.

12...c5! 13.dxc5 ♕a5 14.0-0 ♗xc5 15.♖ad1 0-0 16.a3

16.♗xc5 ♕xc5+ 17.♕d4 ♕xd4+ 18.♖xd4 ♘c2 19.♖d7 b6 20.♖c1 ♘e3 21.♘f2 was slightly better.

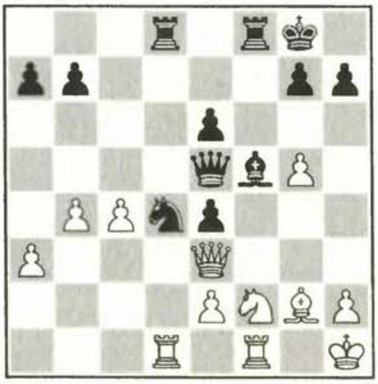
16...♖ad8

Or 16...♗xe3+ 17.♕xe3 ♘c2, with unpleasant threats.

17.♕c3 ♕b6?

17...♗xe3+! 18.♕xe3 ♘c2.

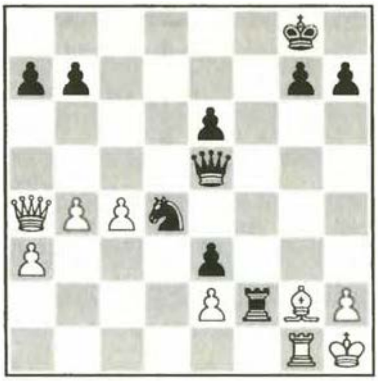
18.♗xc5 ♕xc5+ 19.♔h1 ♘c6 20.b4 ♕e5 21.♕e3 ♘d4 22.♘f2?!



22...♘c2! 23.♕b3

23.♕xa7 e3 is extremely dangerous.

23...e3 24.♘d3 ♗xd3 25.♖xd3 ♖xf1+ 26.♗xf1 ♖f8! 27.♖d1 ♖f2 28.♗g2 ♕xg5 29.♖g1 ♘d4 30.♕a4 ♕e5!



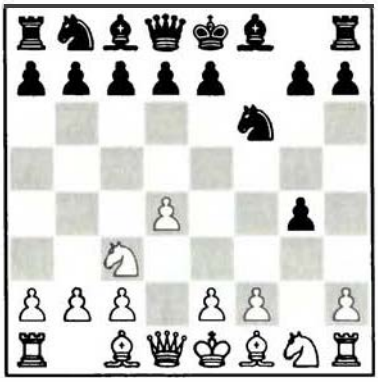
Decisive supercentralization.

31.♖d1 h6 32.♕xa7 ♖xg2

And White resigned, as 33.♔xg2 ♕e4+ 34.♔h3 ♕f5 mates.

☐ **Heiko Kerkmeester**
■ **Jan Brink**
Netherlands tt 1995/96

1.d4 f5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.g4 fxg4



4.h3

Opening files on the kingside. White can also play for central control with 4.e4. For example, 4...d6 5.♗g5 (5.h3) 5...c6 6.♕d2 ♕a5 7.0-0-0 ♗e6 8.d5 ♗f7 with compensation in Hübner-Bukacek, Ybbs 1968.

4...d6

4...d5 can be met by 5.♕d3 g6 6.hxg4 ♗xg4 7.♗h3, with very serious compensation.

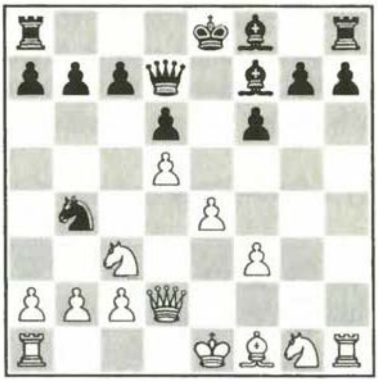
5.hxg4 ♗xg4 6.♕d3 ♘c6 7.♗g5 ♕d7 8.f3 ♘b4

Or 8...♗e6 9.e4, with obvious compensation for the pawn.

9.♕d2 ♗e6 10.♗xf6

Here too I would prefer White after 10.e4, which would create even more serious problems for Black than the text.

10...exf6 11.d5 ♗f7 12.e4



12...g6?

Black had to solve the problem of the knight. 12...a5 was mandatory, when White is better after both 13.♘ge2 and 13.0-0-0.

13.a3

Now White just wins a piece.

13...♘xc2+

13...♘a6 14.♗b5 c6 15.dxc6 bxc6 16.♗xa6.

14.♕xc2

White has won a piece and the rest is elementary.

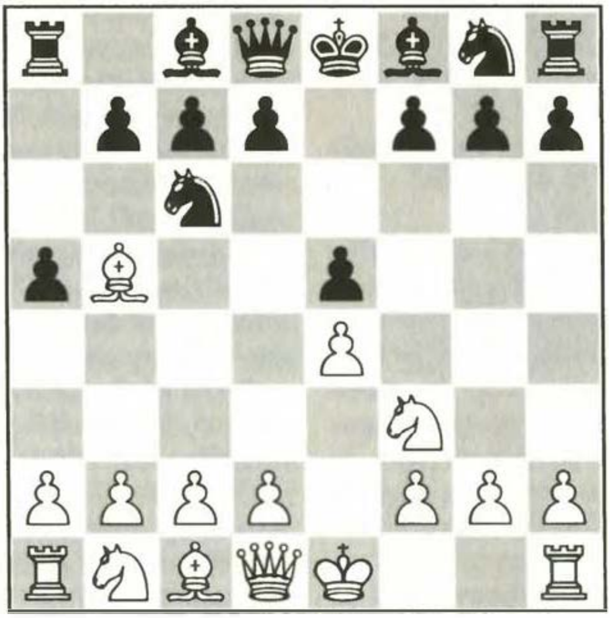
14...a6 15.♗h3 ♕d8 16.♘ge2

And White won.

CHAPTER 15

Jeroen Bosch

Ruy Lopez: the Popov Variation



3...a5 more than a Fingerfehler?

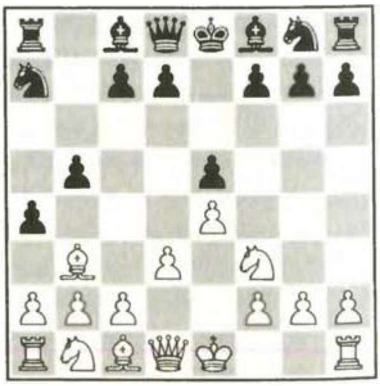
At New In Chess we like to set ourselves high standards for production, lay-out and proofreading. But as you can judge for yourself something went wrong in the diagrammed position. The pawn obviously mouse-slipped one square too far...

In fact, if your conclusion was that we had made a 'Fingerfehler' then you wouldn't be far from the truth! For, it was in the game Nikolov-Popov, Sofia 1990, that Black erroneously pushed his a-pawn one square too far – undoubtedly cursing himself inwardly once he had executed his move. However, lo and behold the game continuation:

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a5 4.d3 ♘a7! 5.♗c4?!

Now White is obliged to sacrifice a piece for nebulous compensation. To save the piece White had to play 5.a4.

5...b5 6.♗b3 a4



7.♗xf7+

No better is 7.♗d5 c6 8.♞xe5 cxd5 9.♘xf7, since Black has the accurate 9...♗b4+! to create a square for his king. As Popov has indicated, Black is much better after 10.c3 ♔xf7 11.♕h5+ ♔f8.

7...♔xf7 8.♘xe5+ ♔e7 9.♕f3 ♘f6 10.♘g4 ♗b7 11.♗g5 ♔f7 12.♕h3 ♕e8 13.♗xf6 gxf6 14.♕h5+ ♔e7 15.♕c5+ ♔d8 16.♕d4 ♗g7

And Black won in Nikolov-Popov, Sofia 1990.

Imagine Dr. Georgi Popov's surprise: after his fingerfehler he wins a piece and the game almost by force! Of course, 4.d3 deserves a question mark, but still he wondered if there could be more to the ugly 3...a5 than meets the prejudiced eye. Georgi Popov is a Bulgarian correspondence grandmaster and he started analysing 'his variation', deciding that after 4.0-0 Black can also play 4...♘a7!?, chasing the bishop and often gaining some sort of space advantage on the queenside (in much the same way as in, say, the Chigorin with 9...♘a5) with a subsequent ...b5.

Popov decided to give 3...a5 the benefit of the doubt and played it with considerable success in several correspondence games in the early 1990s. Subsequently, he wrote a few articles defending his brainchild.

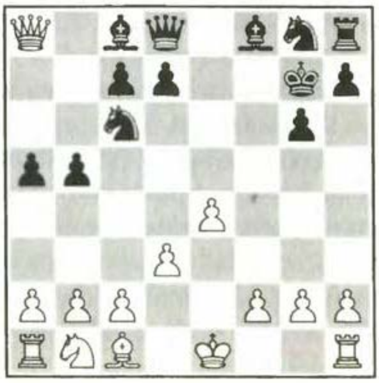
In this article I shall make use of his analysis, and correct it where necessary. I aim to show you some of the main ideas behind 3...a5. Or perhaps I should say, show you some ideas that turn 3...a5 into a semi-useful move, for, don't get me wrong: I do not think that Popov's 3...a5 is stronger than the traditional 3...a6. Indeed, I am convinced that 3...a5 is objectively the worse move and that it leads to a slightly inferior position for Black! However, it is also true that I have found no real refutation of advancing the a-pawn by two squares. So, the psychological advantage of 3...a5 is surely that your opponent will be provoked, which means that he can easily overreach and lose (like Nikolov did in the above example).

Clearly, 4.0-0 is the most natural move after Black has omitted to attack the Spanish bishop with his a-pawn and it is on this move that we will concentrate. Still, I would like to start by giving you some hints of how to proceed against other replies on move 4:

● Let us start with Nikolov's **4.d3** After **4...♘a7 5.♗c4 b5** we saw 6.♗b3 a4 7.♗xf7+ above. Practice has also seen the immediate **6.♗xf7+ ♚xf7 7.♘xe5+ ♚e7** Now the next games may not be perfect, but it is useful to investigate early ♗xf7+ sacrifices and see what kind of defensive mechanisms Black has at his disposal:

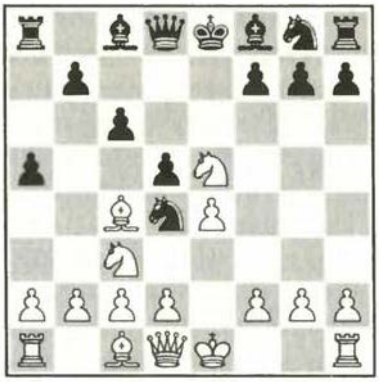
– **8.♘c3 c6** Bad is 8...♘f6 9.♘d5+ ♘xd5 10.exd5 ♕e8 11.♕f3 ♚d8 12.♗g5+ ♗e7 13.♘f7+ and White wins. **9.♗g5+ ♘f6 10.♕f3 d6 11.♘xc6+** Or 11.d4 ♔e8. **11...♘xc6 12.e5 dxe5 13.♕xc6 ♗d7! 14.♕d5 h6! 15.♕xe5+ ♔f7 16.♗xf6** Langschmidt-Nebel, Germany 2003/04. Now the easiest way to prove Black's advantage was 16...♕xf6! and White's three pawns are by no means sufficient. The bishop pair and the space advantage on the queenside ensure Black a huge edge. In case of 17.♕d5+ Black has 17...♕e6+ (check!).

– **8.♘f7!? ♔xf7 9.♕h5+ g6 10.♕d5+ ♔g7 11.♕xa8 ♘c6**



Material is about equal with two pieces against a rook and two pawns in a middlegame, but the fact that White's queen is trapped on the queenside speaks clearly against him. **12.0-0 ♘f6 13.♘c3 b4 14.♘b5 ♗c5 15.a3** To open files on the queenside – aiming to release the queen from her imprisoned state. **15...♘g4 16.h3** Black wins after 16.axb4 ♕h4 17.♗f4 ♗xf2+ 18.♔h1 ♘xh2!. **16...♘xf2 17.♖xf2 ♗xf2+ 18.♔xf2 ♕f6+?!** Black wins after the accurate 18...♕e7! and now the threat of 19...♕c5 check cannot be parried satisfactorily. **19.♔g1 ♖f8 20.axb4 ♕f2+! 21.♔h1 ♕b6 22.♗d2** 22.♘c3?? ♖f1+ 23.♔h2 ♕g1+ 24.♔g3 ♕f2+ 25.♔h2 ♘e5 and mate follows. **22...♕xb5 23.c4 ♕b6 24.♗c3+ ♔h6 25.bxa5 ♕e3 26.d4 ♕xe4 27.a6** White has enough counterplay owing to his a-pawn. **27...g5!?** 27...♖f2 28.♖g1 ♗xa6 29.♕xa6 ♕f4 is also about equal. **28.a7 g4 29.♖e1** 29.hxg4?? ♖f2 30.♖g1 ♕xg4 mates. **29...♕g6** 29...g3!?30.♖g1 d6 31.♕b8 ♘xb8 32.axb8♕ ♔h5 33.♗e1 ♗xh3 34.♕xf8 ♗xg2+ 35.♖xg2 ♕xe1+ 36.♖g1 ♕e4+ also draws. **30.hxg4 ♕xg4 31.♕xc6+ dxc6 32.a8♕ ♕h4+ 33.♔g1 ♕f2+ ½-½**
Fantoni-Caressa, The Climb email, 1999.

● **4.♘c3** is a very natural reply. Compared to the Spanish Four Knights Black has a pawn on a5 instead of a knight on f6. You'd expect this to be in White's favour. However, things are not that simple! Popov now recommends 4...♗b4 planning ...♘ge7, but I don't much like his suggestion after 5.♘d5. Instead I prefer **4...♘d4!?** when not having developed his g8-knight enables Black to swing his queen across to g5 in all sorts of lines. Thus 5.♘xe5? is strongly met by 5...♕g5!∓, and play is equal after 5.♘xd4 exd4 6.♘e2 ♕g5 7.♘xd4 ♕xg2 8.♕f3 ♕xf3 9.♘xf3. In case of 5.0-0 ♘xb5 6.♘xb5 c6 7.♘c3 d6 8.d4 ♕c7 White is a tad better. More interesting after 5.0-0 is 5...c6!? when 6.♗c4 b5!? provokes the piece sacrifice 7.♗xf7+ (7.♗d3 ♘xf3+ 8.♕xf3 ♘f6) 7...♔xf7 8.♘xe5+ ♔e6! when White's attack does not look so fearful. After **5.♗c4** Black plays **5...c6** when **6.♘xe5 d5**



Leads to complicated play favouring Black:

- 7.♗f1 dxe4 8.♗c4 ♕g5! 9.♗xf7+ ♔d8 wins for Black.
- 7.♘xd5!? cxd5 8.♗xd5 ♕g5! 9.c3 (9.♗xf7+ ♔e7 10.♗xg8 ♕xg2–+) 9...♕xe5 10.cxd4 ♕xd4 11.♕b3 ♗c5 12.♗xf7+ ♔f8 13.0-0 ♘f6∓.
- 7.exd5 ♕g5! 8.0-0 ♗h3 and Black is better.

● **4.c3** Against this move I would recommend the natural **4...♘f6** In practice Black has usually gone for 4...♘a7?! 5.♗a4 (5.♗c4) 5...b5 6.♗b3, but this strikes me as very dubious since 6...d6 is strongly met by 7.a4, while 6...a4 7.♗c2 ♘c6 8.0-0 d6 9.b3! is also worse for Black.

● **4.♗a4** is very prophylactic indeed – Black did not play 3...a6 and yet White still moves his bishop because of the threat of 4...♘a7? Black should play 4...♗c5!? or 4...♘f6 in my opinion when he is fine.

Popov has analysed 4...♖b8 instead, in order to threaten ...b5. Then he continues 5.♕e2 and gives some interesting lines after both 5...♘f6 and 5...♘ge7. However, I think that White should just allow ...b5 and simply play 5.c3 when I would favour the first player. Playing ...b5 too early in the Ruy Lopez usually just weakens the queenside and enables White to play a quick a4.

- **4.♗xc6** Somewhat illogically, White opts for the Exchange Variation even though his bishop is not attacked. Black can just play 4...dxc6 5.0-0 when in some lines it will favour Black to have his a-pawn on a5 (think of the Berlin Wall where Black often goes ...a5-a4 in the ending), whereas in other positions an early c6-c5 will weaken the b5-square.

Popov has argued that Black should go **4...bxc6** because with the pawn on a5 he has ...♗a6 at some point. One sample line runs 5.d4 exd4 6.♕xd4 ♗a6! 7.♘c3 ♕f6 with equality. In case of 5.0-0 Popov has proposed 5...f6 6.d4 ♗a6 7.♖e1 d6 8.dxe5 fxe5 as equal. He analyses the piece sacrifice 9.♘xe5 dxe5 10.♕h5+ ♔e7 11.♖d1 ♕c8 12.♕xe5+ ♔f7 13.♕f4+ ♔e8 14.♘c3 ♘e7 as better for Black. On move 11 I would prefer 11.♕xe5+!? when 11...♔f7 12.♕f4+ ♕f6 (12...♔e8!? 13.e5 gives compensation) 13.♕xc7+ ♘e7 should favour White who already has three pawns for the piece.

- **4.a3** occurred in the correspondence game Vekan-Popov. Black obtained a good position after 4...♘f6 5.0-0 ♗c5 6.c3 0-0 7.d4 ♗a7 8.♗g5 h6 9.♗h4 d6 10.♕d3 ♕e7 11.♘bd2 ♘d8! Black is OK. 12.dxe5?! (12.d5 ♔h8 13.♖fe1 ♖g8! 14.♘f1 g5 with chances for both sides.) 12...dxe5 13.♗g3 c6 14.♗a4 ♗b8 15.♖fe1 ♘h5 16.♘f1 g5 17.♘e3 ♘f4 18.♕c2 ♕f6 19.♖ad1 ♘de6 20.♗b3 ♘c5 21.♗a2 a4∓.

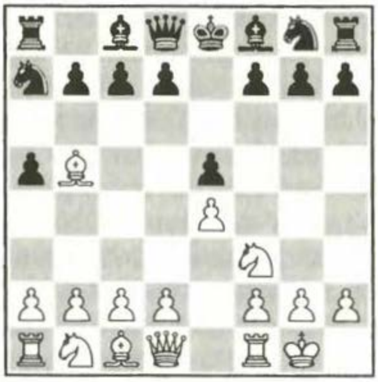
- **4.a4** is another prophylactic move that cannot be critical for the evaluation of 3...a5. Popov suggests 4...d6 5.c3 ♗d7 6.d4 ♘f6 7.0-0 ♗e7 8.♖e1 0-0 9.♘bd2 exd4! 10.cxd4 ♘b4 when Black has taken advantage of the weak b4 square. Play is equal after 11.♗xd7 (not 11.♗c4 d5) 11...♕xd7 12.♘f1 c5. I would prefer 5.d4 as White.

In practice you will mostly encounter

4.0-0

when the (accidental) point of 3...a5 is revealed after

4...♘a7!



Since 5.♗a4 runs into 5...b5 6.♗b3 a4 once again trapping the bishop (a line that we will investigate via the move order 5.♗c4), and 5.♗d3 is only for cheeky SOS-fans (5...d6 6.c3 ♘f6 7.♗c2 is the point) we will now analyse:

Variation I – 5.♗c4
Variation II – 5.♗e2

Variation I

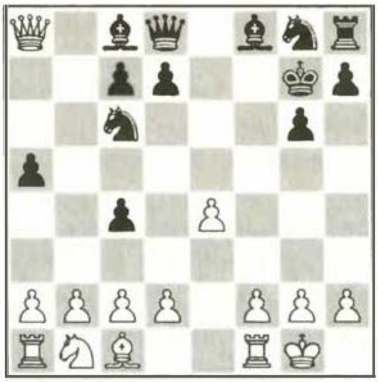
5.♗c4 b5

According to Popov 5...d6 6.a4 ♗e6 is also playable, but I would prefer White after 6.d4.

6.♗e2

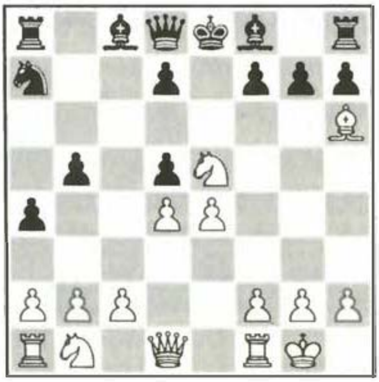
Popov feels that this is White's best. It is not illogical to play 5.♗c4 b5 6.♗e2 rather than the immediate 5.♗e2 because pawn b5 may well turn out to be a weakness. Whether or not the modest 6.♗e2 is best it certainly pays off to study the different sacrificial possibilities that White has after 5...b5. After all, didn't we decide on 3...a5 to provoke our opponent into sacrificing something?

- Dubious looks **6.♘xe5?! bxc4 7.♘xf7 ♔xf7 8.♕h5+ g6 9.♕d5+ ♔g7 10.♕xa8 ♘c6** when her majesty is locked in for the moment.



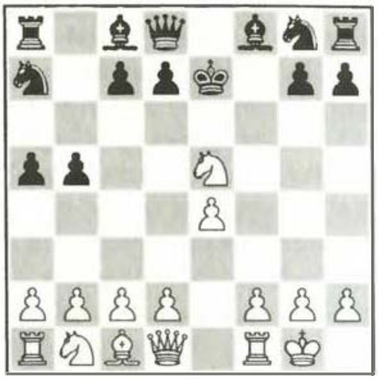
After 11.♘a3 Popov also analyses 11.b3 ♗e7! 12.bxc4 – 12.♗b2+ ♗f6 13.♘c3 ♘ge7 14.bxc4 ♕g8! 15.d3 ♕e6 – 12...♗f6 13.c3 ♘ge7 when White has a material advantage but Black is doing fine. **11...♗xa3 12.bxa3 ♘f6** Not 12...c3? 13.d4!±. **13.♗b2 ♖e8 14.♖fe1 ♕e7 15.d4** 15.♖e3 ♔g8 16.♗c3 ♘g4 17.♖g3 ♕h4 18.h3 ♘xf2! **15...cxd3 16.cxd3 ♕e6 17.♖e2 ♔f7 18.f4?! ♕d6 19.d4** Also bad for White are 19.♗xf6 ♕c5+! and 19.f5 ♘g4!. **19...♘d5** and White soon resigned in Krumov-Popov, cr 1993-1994. Instead of 19...♘d5 also very strong was 19...♘xd4.

● **6.♗b3 a4 7.♗d5** Not 7.♘xe5? axb3 8.♘xf7 bxc2 and Black wins; similar to the next line is 7.♗xf7+. **7...c6 8.♘xe5 ♘h6! 9.d4 cxd5 10.♗xh6**



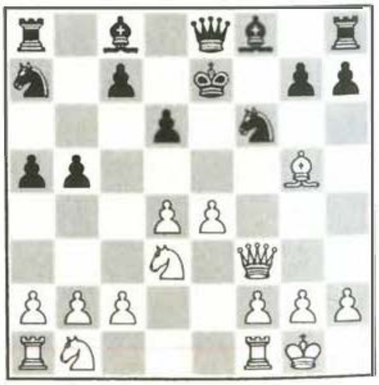
Popov now analyses 10...gxh6 11.♘xf7 ♔xf7 12.♕h5+ ♔g7 13.♕xd5 ♘c6 14.♖e1 ♗e7 15.♖e3 ♖f8 as winning for Black. However, instead of the knight sacrifice White has the powerful 11.♕f3!±. Therefore Black should play **10...d6!** when **11.♘xf7 ♔xf7 12.♕h5+ g6 13.♕xd5+ ♗e6 14.♕b7+ ♕e7** favours Black after either 15.♕xa8 ♗g7 16.♗g5 ♕d7 17.♕xh8 ♗xh8∓ or 15.♕xe7+ ♗xe7∓.

● **6.♗xf7+ ♔xf7 7.♘xe5+ ♔e7**



Popov gave 8.d4 d6 9.♗g5+ ♘f6 10.♘d3 h6 11.♗xf6+ gxf6 12.♘f4 ♕e8!∓ in his original analysis. I think that White should play more quietly on move 9 with 9.♘d3 when he has positional compensation for the piece after 9...♔d7! 10.d5 ♘f6.

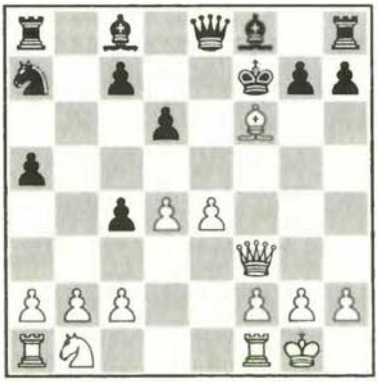
Instead of 8.d4 the game Krylov-Popov, cr 1991-1993, went: **8.♕f3 ♕e8 9.d4 d6 10.♗g5+ ♘f6 11.♘d3** In this complicated position White has other possibilities of course. Stefan Bucker has suggested the inventive 11.♘c4 to which we will return below.



After 11.♘d3 the dynamic chances of both sides appear to be about even. **11...♗b7 12.♕h3 ♕d7!** Black is in trouble after both 12...♕g6?! 13.f4 ♗xe4 14.♖e1 d5 15.♘c3 and 12...♔f7?! 13.e5!. **13.e5?!** According to Popov White should have settled for a repetition with 13.♕h5! ♕e8! 14.♕h3 – not 14.♕h4?! ♔f7 15.e5 ♕c6! – 14...♕d7. **13...♕xh3 14.gxh3 ♔f7 15.exf6 ♖g8 16.♗f4 gxf6+ 17.♗g3 h5 18.h4 ♘c6 19.c3 ♗h6** and Black had the initiative.

In an issue of *Kaissiber* Stefan Bücker suggested **11.♘c4**. In the Forum of Yearbook 56 Popov defended his brainchild and Bücker analytically responded in the same book. The main argument concentrated on 11.♘c4 bxc4 12.e5 c6 and now 13.exf6+ ♔d7, or Bücker's later suggestion of 13.♗xf6+ ♔d7 14.♗xg7 ♗xg7 15.♕g4+ ♔d8 16.♕xg7. I will not reproduce Popov's and Bücker's analysis here. Bücker very sensibly concluded that White's chances were favourable but that his analysis did not refute Popov's system, 'but I never claimed that in the first place'.

I think that Black should investigate **11...♔f7** more seriously in reply to 11.♘c4. After **12.♗xf6** Bucker only gave 12...gxf6 13.♘xa5±, which is certainly correct. In my opinion Black should take the other piece with **12...bxc4!**.



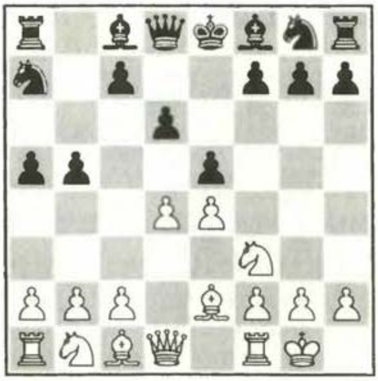
Here Black's defences seem to hold. For example:

- 13.♗d8+ ♔g8 14.♗xc7 ♘b5 15.♗b6 ♖a6 16.a4 ♖xb6 17.axb5 ♖xb5∓;
- 13.♕h5+ g6 14.♕f3 (14.♕d5+? ♗e6) 14...♗g7;
- 13.♘c3 ♔g8 14.♗g5 ♘b5!;
- 13.e5 ♘c6 14.♕h5+ (14.♗d8+ ♔g8 15.♗xc7 dxe5 16.dxe5 ♕d7 17.♗d6 ♗xd6 18.exd6 ♕xd6 19.♘c3 h6∓; 14.♘c3 ♔g8 15.exd6 cxd6 16.♖ae1 ♕f7 17.♕xc6 ♗b7 18.♕b5 gxf6∓) 14...g6 15.♕f3 ♗g7 16.♗xg7+ (16.d5 ♘d4 17.e6+ ♔g8 18.♗xd4 ♗xd4∓) 16...♔xg7 17.♕f6+ ♔g8 18.exd6 cxd6 19.♕xd6 ♕d7 20.♕xd7 ♗xd7 and although White has three pawns for the piece in the ending, it is rather Black who can play for the win.

I have devoted quite some space to all of these sacrificial lines. They are quite tempting for the first player after 3...a5, and it certainly pays off to be well-prepared when your king is stuck in the centre for some time!

Now we return to the more quiet 6.♗e2.

6...d6 7.d4



7...exd4

This is mandatory in my opinion. In practice Black has often played 7...♗g4 – possibly because 5...d6 6.d4 ♗g4 is Popov's main line after the immediate 5.♗e2 – but this strikes me as virtually unplayable with the pawn already on b5.

After 7...♗g4?! the game Simons-G.Welling, Eindhoven 1993, went 8.a4 b4 9.c3 which is very pleasant for White, but still stronger is 8.dxe5! ♗xf3 9.gxf3 (of course 9.♗xf3 also favours White) 9...dxe5 10.♕xd8+ ♖xd8 11.a4 with a clear positional edge for White. The correspondence game Alvarez-Lubrano, Martinez Acosta mem-B, 1995, instead went 10...♔xd8 11.♖d1+ (11.a4) 11...♗d6 12.f4 f6 13.♘a3 ♔e7 14.♘xb5 ♘xb5 15.fxe5 fxe5 16.♗xb5 and White won.

There are simply too many lines that lead to Rome after 7...♗g4?!.

With 7...exd4 Black gives up the centre, but he is playing some sort of Steinitz Variation where his knight may be oddly placed on a7 but he has a space advantage on the queenside and White's bishop is modestly placed on e2.

8.♘xd4 ♖b8

We are following Popov's original analysis. I would personally prefer the natural 8...♗d7 followed by ...♘f6, ...♗e7 and castles.

9.♘c3 ♗d7

Not 9...b4? 10.♘cb5 ♘xb5 11.♗xb5+ ♗d7 12.♘c6± (Popov).

10.♘d5

Popov also analyses 10.♗f3 ♘f6 11.♘f5 ♞c6 as decent for Black after both 12.a4 b4 13.♘d5 ♘e5, and 12.♗g5 h6 13.♗h4 ♘e5.

10...c6 11.♘e3 ♞f6

And now Popov investigates the forcing line **12.♘df5 ♘c8 13.a4 b4 14.♗a6 g6 15.♗xc8 ♗xc8 16.♘d4 ♕c7** concluding that Black has approximately equal chances after 17.♖e1 (17.♘c4!? ♗a6 18.♕d3 ♗g7, Bosch) 17...♗g7 18.♘c4 0-0 19.♗f4 ♘e8 20.♘b3 (20.e5! d5 21.♘xa5 ♕xa5 22.♘xc6 ♕b6 23.♘xb8 ♘c7 24.♗g5 ♕xb8, Bosch) 20...♗e6 21.♘xd6 ♗xb3 22.♗g3 ♕b6. In the final position Black can also play 22...♗xc2! 23.♘xe8 ♗xd1 24.♘xc7 ♗c2.

Anyway, this is clearly a case of too much analysis and too few practical examples. The main point is that I am certain that Black has to play 7...exd4 rather than 7...♗g4 when play can develop in all sorts of ways.

Variation II

5.♗e2

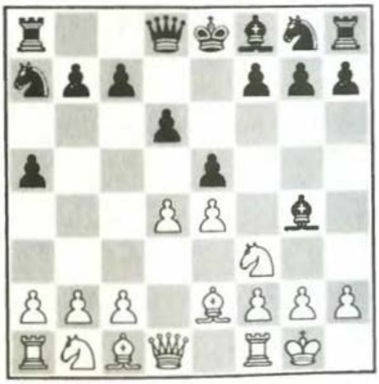
The bishop is not particularly well-placed on e2, but look who's talking – probably not that guy with a knight on a7?

5...d6 6.d4

The most direct move. Preparatory moves in Ruy Lopez style like 6.h3 and 6.c3 were also analysed by Popov. After 6.h3 he gave 6...f5! (his exclam). This strikes me as rather optimistic after 7.exf5 ♗xf5 8.d4. I would prefer the more cautious 6...♘f6.

After 6.c3 Popov gives the following natural line: 6...♘f6 7.h3 (or 7.d4 exd4 8.cxd4 ♘xe4) 7...♗e7 8.♖e1 0-0 9.♗f1 ♘c6 10.d4 exd4 11.cxd4 d5 12.e5 ♘e4 and Black is fine.

6...♗g4



This is how Popov tried to make sense of 3...a5. Black develops his queenside first holding on to his central stronghold – 7.dxe5 is met by 7...♗xf3 and 8...dxe5 keeping a pawn on e5.

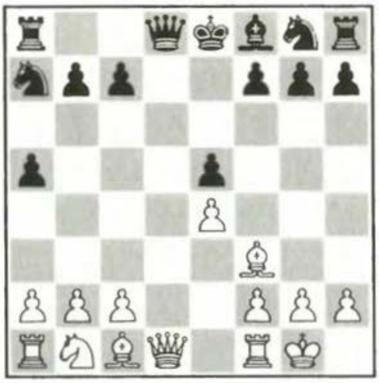
In my opinion, after his strategically dubious set-up Black will be forced to make a concession one way or the other. Usually, he will either have to hand White the bishop pair (by playing an early ...♗xf3) or give up the centre (with ...exd4).

Note that the immediate 6...exd4 (by analogy to Variation I) would give White a favourable Steinitz Variation. Without the pawn on b5 Black has no counterplay based on b5-b4, and the knight on a7 is as dim as Tarrasch pronounced it.

7.♘bd2

A sensible (typical Spanish) move that forces Black to play ...exd4.

- Not so popular in practice is **7.♘c3** when Black according to Popov should play 7...♗e7 8.♗e3 (8.dxe5 ♗xf3) 8...♘c6 9.♘b5 exd4 10.♘bxd4 ♘f6. The final position is not that bad for Black – Lasker used to play such positions with great skill. However, 9.d5! is better for White I think, which is why I guess that Black should settle for 8...♗xf3 9.♗xf3 ♘f6 10.dxe5 dxe5 11.♕e2 0-0.
- **7.dxe5 ♗xf3 8.♗xf3 dxe5**

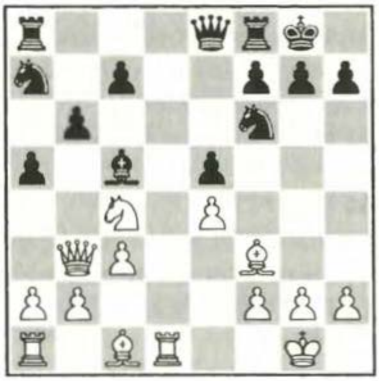


This position occurs by force after 6...♗g4 7.dxe5. Black is solidly placed, but White has a pair of bishops. Undoubtedly White holds some advantage, but it takes some skill to exploit such minimal edges:

– After 9.♕e2 ♘f6 10.♖d1 ♗d6 11.♘c3 0-0 12.♕c4 ♕e8 13.♗g5 ♕c6 White has no advantage according to Popov. Slightly stronger is 11.♘d2! 0-0 12.♘c4 ♘c6 13.c3 ♕e7 14.♘xd6 cxd6 15.♗g5 h6 16.♗xf6 ♕xf6 17.♖d3 ♖fd8 18.♖ad1, Peschardt-Lubrano, Martinez Acosta mem-B corr, 1995. And now Black ought to have sought some counterplay with 18...a4. (Although Black later did manage to win the game.) On move 9 ...♗c5 is worse because of 10.♖d1 ♕e7 11.♘c3 c6 12.♘a4! as in Aijälä-Lardot, Tampere 2001.

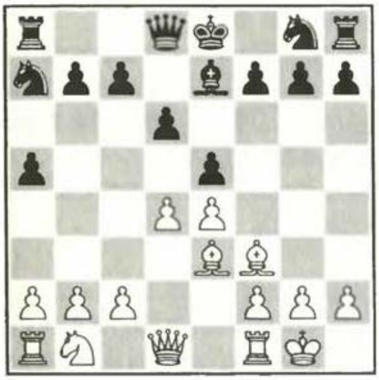
– 9.♕xd8+ ♖xd8 is very slightly better for White.

– 9.♘d2 was played in Kuczynski-Popov, match Poland-Bulgaria cr 1991. I will give the game to illustrate how successful Popov was with his line: 9...♘f6 10.c3 ♗c5 11.♕b3 b6 12.♖d1 0-0 13.♘c4 ♕e8!.



14.♗g5 (or 14.♘e3 ♗xe3 15.♗xe3 ♕c6 16.♕c2 ♘c8 planning ...♘d6 with equality, Popov) 14...a4 15.♕c2 ♕e6 16.♘d2 ♘g4 17.♗xg4?! (17.♗h4) 17...♕xg4 18.♘f3 f5 (Black has grasped the initiative) 19.♗e3 ♗xe3 20.fxe3 fxe4 21.♘xe5 ♕f5 22.♘c4 ♘c6 23.♖f1 ♕d5 24.♖xf8+ ♖xf8 25.♘d2 a3! 26.b4 (26.♕b3?! ♕xb3 27.axb3 ♖d8!) 26...♕d3 27.♕xd3 exd3 28.♘c4 ♖a8 29.♖d1 b5 30.♘a5 ♘e5 31.♘b3 g5 32.♘d4 g4! 33.♘xb5 c5 34.bxc5 (34.♘c7 cxb4!) 34...♖a5 35.♖b1 d2 36.♘d4 ♖xc5 37.♖d1 ♘c4 38.♔f2 (White has no satisfactory defence according to Popov) 38...♘d6 39.♘b3 ♘e4+ 40.♔f1 ♖f5+ 41.♔g1 ♖f2 42.c4 g3 43.h3 (43.hxg3 ♖e2) 43...♔f7 0-1.

● **7.♗e3** is a tricky move. 7...♗xf3 (bad is 7...exd4 8.♘xd4 ♗xe2 9.♕xe2 ♘f6 10.♘c3 c5? 11.♘f5 g6? 12.e5 dxe5 13.♗g5 ♗e7 14.♘xe7 1-0, Traut-Jaenisch, cr 1998. With such a last name Black had it coming after not playing 3...f5 of course) 8.♗xf3 ♗e7 (the point of 7.♗e3 is seen after 8...♘f6? 9.dxe5! dxe5 10.♕xd8+ and now Black has to take on d8 with the king) and now:



– 9.dxe5 dxe5 10.♕e2 ♘f6 11.♖d1 ♗d6 (perhaps 11...♕b8) 12.♘c3 (12.♘a3!?) 12...0-0 13.♖d2 h6 14.♖ad1 ♕e7 15.♕c4 ♘c6 16.♘b5 ♖fd8 17.c3± Riva-Lubrano, Martinez Acosta mem-B corr, 1995.

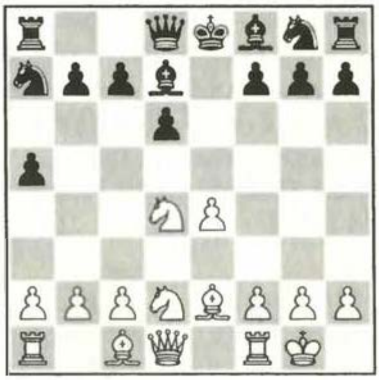
– 9.♘c3 ♘f6 10.♕e2 (or 10.dxe5 dxe5 11.♕e2) and now the game Dezagoire Limeres-Palencia, Sanxenxo 2006, went 10...0-0 11.dxe5 dxe5 12.♖ad1 ♕b8!? when White was still better. Black could have considered 10...exd4!? 11.♗xd4 ♘c6 12.♗e3 (12.♕b5 0-0) 12...♘e5 13.♕b5+ c6 14.♕xb7 ♖b8 15.♕a6 0-0 with decent counterplay.

After 7.♘bd2 White threatens to take on e5, and ...♗xf3 can be met by ♘xf3 still attacking e5. Therefore Black now has to take on d4. The upside is that in the resulting position White's knight would have been better off on c3 rather than on d2.

7...exd4 8.♘xd4 ♗d7

This retreat is forced as 8...♗xe2? 9.♕xe2 ♘f6 10.e5± is clearly worse for Black. For example: 10...dxe5 11.♕xe5+ ♗e7 12.♘e4 0-0 13.♗h6!? (or 13.♗g5 ♖e8 14.♘f5 ♘c6 15.♘xe7+ ♕xe7 16.♕xe7±) 13...♖e8 14.♖ad1 ♗f8 15.♘xf6+ ♕xf6 16.♕xf6 gxf6±.

White was winning after 9...♘e7 10.♘2f3 g6 11.♗d2 ♘ec6 12.♘xc6 ♘xc6 13.♕b5 ♕d7 14.♗c3 ♖g8 15.♕xb7 Roiz Baztan-Pascual Arevalo, Asturias 2001.



9.a4

Stopping further expansion on the queenside. In reply to 9.♘c4 Popov gives 9...b5! 10.♘xa5 c5 11.♘db3 c4∓.

In the Norwegian correspondence championship of 1997 Henning Hansen twice had this position as Black.

– In Andresen-Hansen there occurred: 9.♖e1 ♘e7 (9...♘f6) 10.♘c4 ♘ac6 11.♘xc6 ♘xc6 12.e5?! dxe5 13.♗f3 f6! 14.♗e4 ♗e6 15.♕h5+ ♗f7 16.♗xc6+ bxc6 17.♕e2 ♕d4! 18.♘e3 ♕e4 19.f3 ♕g6 20.♘c4 ♗b4! 21.♖d1 ♗c5+ 22.♔h1 0-0 23.♗e3 ♗xe3 24.♘xe3 ♖fb8!∓. White never got enough for his pawn (but managed to draw in the end).

– While Olsen-Hansen saw: 9.c3 ♘f6 10.♕b3 b5 11.♖e1 c5 (11...♗e7) 12.♘f5 g6 13.♘g3 ♗g7 14.♘df1 0-0 15.♖d1 ♗e6 16.♕c2 ♕b6 and Black had a very decent position.

9...♘f6 10.f4 ♘c6

Black has found the time to return his

ill-placed knight to its natural square.

11.c3 ♗e7 12.♗f3 0-0

Note that Black may have lost some time in the opening, but that White really cannot claim an edge in development

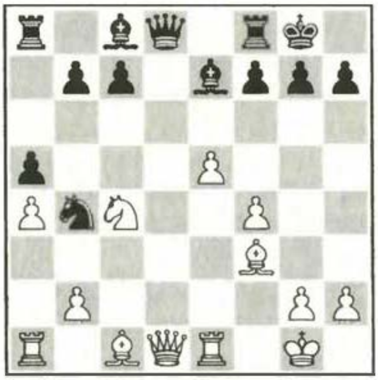
13.♖e1 ♗c8

Popov indicated 13...♘xd4! 14.cxd4 c6! 15.♕b3 ♕c7 16.♘c4 ♗e6 in his notes. In my opinion White has a slight edge after 17.f5.

14.e5?!

This is dubious, but as Popov indicated Black is equal after 14.♞f1 ♘xd4 15.cxd4 c6. In general, it looks as if Black is fine after 7.♘bd2 exd4 8.♘xd4 ♗d7. White should therefore prefer 7.dxe5 or 7.♗e3.

14...♘xd4 15.cxd4 dxe5 16.dxe5 ♘d5 17.♘c4 ♘b4!



Black has a clear stronghold on b4; with tongue-in-cheek you might see this as the ultimate justification of 3...a5. Chances are about equal.

18.♔h1 ♗e6 19.♘e3

Popov analysed 19.b3 ♘d3 20.♖f1 ♗xc4 21.bxc4 ♕d4 22.♖a2 ♖ad8 23.♗d5 ♗b4! 24.e6? (my question mark) 24...c6 25.exf7+ ♔h8 26.♗f3 ♕xc4 as better for Black. On move 24 White should play 24.♖e2 to keep the balance.

After the text Black is taking over.

19...♕xd1! 20.♖xd1 ♖ad8 21.f5 ♗c8 22.♗e4 ♗c5 23.g4 b6!? 24.♔g2 ♗a6 25.♔f3 ♗d3!

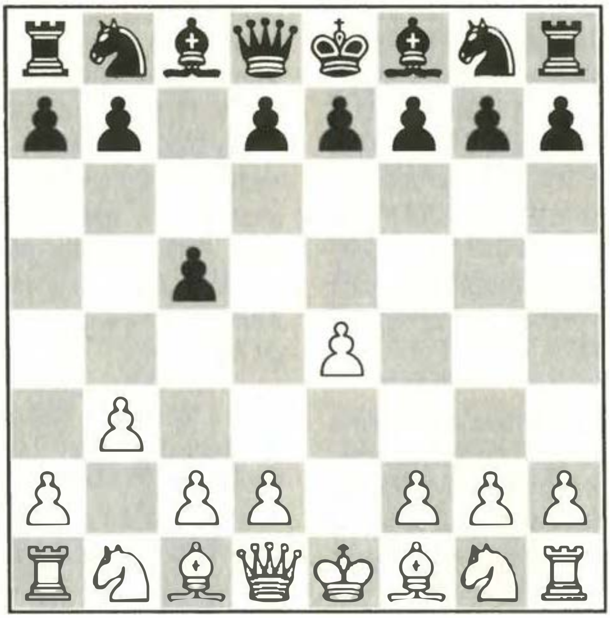
Backlund-Popov, Finland-Bulgaria cr 1992-1994.

Up to a certain level 3...a5 really is quite playable. White can obtain an advantage if he plays accurately, but this advantage is not so easily acquired as may be illustrated by Popov's correspondence games (in several of them it was Black who soon obtained a better position). Indeed, when you adopt this line you can be sure to draw a few smiling onlookers to your board, but if you are well-prepared then you could easily have the last laugh!

CHAPTER 16

Arthur Kogan

Sicilian: the Czerniak Attack



1.e4 c5 2.b3

The queenside fianchetto against the Sicilian was already tested by players such as Cochrane and Kieseritzky in the middle of the 19th century. Much later ex-World Champion Spassky regularly played it, while many other famous GMs – such as Short, Morozevich, and Aronian – used it as a surprise weapon. More recently, Georgian GM Tamaz Gelashvili employs it on a regular basis to score many nice wins with it.

However, special mention deserves the Israeli master Moshe Czerniak, who used it faithfully for more than twenty years of his career! That's why I call it the Czerniak Attack.

Since my childhood in Israel, I heard many stories about the legendary Moshe Czerniak. Mr. Czerniak, was a three times Israeli champion – 1936, 1938, 1955. He represented Israel in 11 olympiads, from Warsaw 1935 until Nice 1974. He played against seven world champions: Capablanca, Alekhine, Botvinnik, Smyslov, Petrosian, Spassky and Fischer. He did a lot for chess in Israel by teaching chess all around the country, writing many books, and perhaps most incredibly: he managed to get a chess show on the nation's only TV channel! Czerniak used to play 'out of the books', using his own brain and talent to create problems for his opponents from the first moves onwards. Here is one example with the 2.b3 line, which I hope you will enjoy as much as I did!

☐ **Moshe Czerniak**
■ **Miso Cebalo**
Zagreb 1969

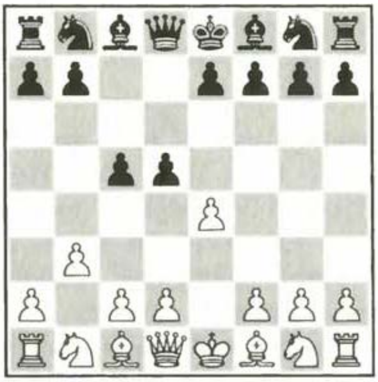
1.e4 c5 2.b3!

The start of the Czerniak Attack! Personally, I have more experience with 2.♘f3 e6 3.b3!?, but I now believe that 2.b3 is clearly not worse and perhaps an even more dangerous weapon! In any case, I always tried to play for f4 in most of my games, so why obstruct the f-pawn with 2.♘f3? One example from my own games is 3...d6 4.♗b2 ♘f6 5.e5 dxe5 6.♘xe5 ♗e7 7.f4 0-0 8.♗d3 ♗d7 9.0-0 ♘c6 10.♖f3, which brought me a nice win against a famous veteran GM in Kogan-Taimanov, Fürth 1999.

2...♘c6

An early ...d5 to exchange White's e4 pawn is also played. However, the price of losing tempi with the queen is generally too high. In this line White is usually happy to open files and diagonals to use his development advantage!

● 2...d5

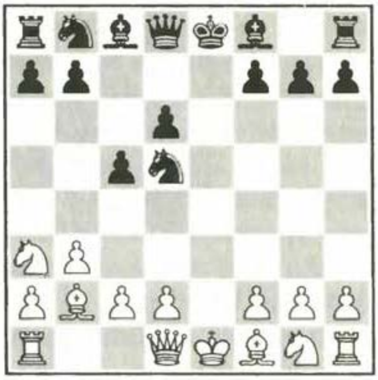


and now:

– Very original is 3.♘f3!? dxe4 4.♘e5!?. This sort of transposes to a line I analysed in SOS-8 (Chapter 7) for Black with a tempo up! I mean the Budapest with 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e5 3.dxe5 ♘e4 4.♘f3 b6!? 5.♕d5 ♗b7! etc. Here the trick seems to work as well after: 4...♕d4 5.♗b2! ♕xb2 6.♘c3 ♕a3 (or 6...♗e6 7.a4! with ♖a2! coming) 7.♗b5+ ♗d7 8.♘c4 ♕b4 9.♗xd7+ ♘xd7 10.a3! and the queen is trapped.

– 3.exd5 ♕xd5 4.♘c3 ♕d8 5.♗b2 ♘f6 6.♘f3 e6 7.♕e2!? (also not bad is 7.♗d3 to castle kingside, but Bauer's plan is even more direct!) 7...♗e7 (after 7...♘c6 White has 8.0-0-0 ♗e7 9.g4!, while 8...♘d4? is not a problem because of 9.♘xd4 cxd4 10.♘b5! ♗c5? 11.♕e5+–) 8.0-0-0 ♘c6 9.g4! h6 10.♖g1 a6 11.h4 ♘d7 12.g5 hxg5 13.hxg5 and it is clear that the black king will not find a safe haven, Bauer-Wirig, Nancy 2005.

● 2...♘f6 is also playable, but Moshe scored a nice win after 3.e5 ♘d5 4.♗b2 d6 5.exd6 exd6 6.♘a3!? (6.♘c3 ♘xc3 7.♗xc3 d5 8.d4±)

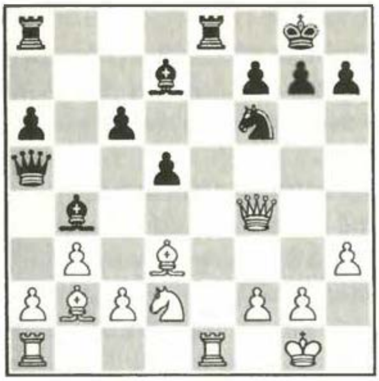


and now:

– 6...♕e7+ 7.♕e2 ♘c6 8.0-0-0 ♗f5 9.♖e1 0-0-0 10.♕xe7 ♘dxe7 (10...♗xe7 11.♗xg7) 11.♘f3 is a slight edge for White.

– 6...♘c6 7.♘c4 ♘f6 (7...♗f5 8.♕e2+) 8.♘f3 ♗e7 (8...d5 9.♘ce5) 9.d4 (9.♗d3) 9...0-0? (necessary was 9...d5 10.♘e3 ♘e4) 10.d5♘b4 11.♘e3 ♖e8 12.♗e2 ♗d7 13.0-0 with a clear space advantage in Czerniak-Constantinou, Lugano 1968.

● 2...e6 3.♗b2 a6 (planning d5) is also a common plan for Black. Here is a nice energetic example by Spassky: 4.♘f3 (the best way to meet Black's plan of d5) 4...d5 (Moro got a nice Sicilian set-up after 4...d6 5.d4 cxd4 6.♘xd4 ♘f6 7.♗d3 ♗d7 8.0-0 ♘c6 9.♘d2±, Morozevich-Grischuk, Moscow blitz 2004) 5.exd5 exd5 6.d4! ♘f6 7.♗d3 cxd4 8.0-0 ♗e7 9.♘xd4 0-0 10.♘d2± ♘c6 11.♖e1 ♖e8 12.♕f3 ♗d7 13.h3 ♗b4 14.♘xc6 bxc6 15.♕f4 ♕a5



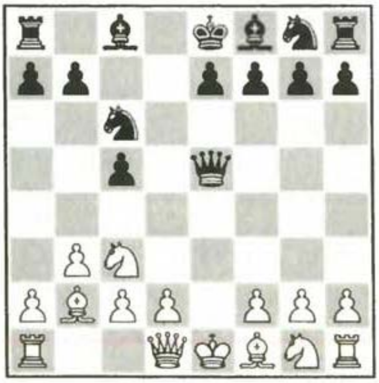
Now check out the neat finish of this game: 16.♗xf6! ♗xd2 17.♕h4 h6 18.♖xe8+ ♖xe8 19.♕g3 g5 20.♕f3 ♖e6 21.g3!± ♕c5 22.♖d1 ♗e1 23.♗d4! ♕e7 24.♗f5 ♖d6 25.♗c5 ♗xf5 26.♕xf5 ♕e2 27.♖d3! ♖e6 28.♖f3 1-0, Spassky-Wockenfuss, Germany Bundesliga 1981/82.

3.♗b2 d5

A logical move, fighting for the centre, but Black will lose time.

4.exd5 ♕xd5 5.♘c3 ♕e5+!

A clever decision, since it can be hard to use a development advantage without queens.



6.♕e2

Otherwise White's queen will stay out of play for some time, which will also make it very hard to use the development advantage. After 6.♗e2 ♗g4! 7.♘a4 (7.f3 ♗f5 is dubious, while 7.f4!? ♕e6 8.h3 ♗xe2 9.♘gxe2 0-0-0 10.0-0 ♘f6 seems unclear) 7...♘d4 8.♘xc5 ♕xc5 9.♗xd4 ♕xd4 10.♗xg4 ♘f6 11.♗f3 ♘e4! 12.♗xe4 ♕xe4+ 13.♔f1 g6 White is a pawn up, but Black seems to have some compensation because of the king on f1 and the open c- and d-files for his rooks. I guess it is a matter of taste which colour you prefer here. I for example believe in White's extra pawn!

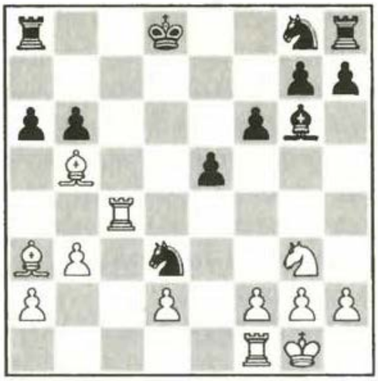
6...♕xe2+ 7.♘gxe2 ♗f5 8.♘g3!?

This looks logical and even the engine likes it, but objectively it was maybe simpler to play 8.0-0-0 followed by ♘g3, and just slowly increase the advantage. However, Czerniak is true to his dynamic style by opening more files and diagonals for his pieces!

8...♗xc2 9.♖c1 ♗g6 10.♘a4! e5 11.♘xc5 ♗xc5?

It is curious that the best chance for Black was the risky looking 11...0-0-0!, which the engine defends without any 'human fear'. For example after 12.h4 (12.♗b5 ♖d5! is an important detail) 12...h5 (12...h6 13.h5 ♗h7 14.♖h4!) 13.b4!? (13.♗e2 ♘f6 14.♗f3 ♘d5!) 13...♘xb4 14.♘e6+♘c2+ 15.♖xc2+ ♗xc2 16.♘xd8 ♚xd8 17.♗xe5 ♞e7! Black seems more or less OK: 18.♗c4 f6 19.♗f4 ♘f5 is equal.

12.♖xc5 Now White has a nice advantage owing to his two bishops and some dynamic options, but he must hurry before Black finishes his development and gets counterplay on the d-file. **12...f6 13.♗a6! ♘b4 14.♗b5+ ♔d8 15.0-0!** Usually it is not recommended to castle in endgames, but here there are concrete factors to consider. **15...b6** Or 15...♘e7 16.f4!. **16.♖c4 ♘d3 17.♗a3!** A new diagonal for this bishop which had nothing to do versus the f6 and e5 pawns! The threat is ♗f8. **17...a6** Not only attacking the bishop on b5 but also with the hidden idea to have ...♖a7 to defend g7!



18.♖a4! White is losing no time to run away with a well-placed bishop. **18...a5 19.♘e4!** 19.♗f8 ♖a7. **19...♘f4 20.♘d6** The knight is feeling so great on d6, but 20.d4! was also good. **20...♘e7 21.d4! e4** Black's last hope is to keep the centre closed and block the d-pawn with a knight on d5. So what to do now? **22.d5!!** A great move to regain piece harmony! Pawn e4 is under attack and the d-pawn will also make trouble if it will not be taken. **22...♖a7** After 22...♘exd5 23.♖d1! (23.♖d4 and 23.g3! also win) White has decisive threats against Black's knights and king, for example: 23...♔c7 24.♘xe4 ♗xe4 25.♖xe4 ♖ad8 26.g3 ♘g6 27.♖c4+! ♔b8 28.♖cd4. **23.♘xe4 ♘fxd5 24.♖d1 ♔c8 25.♖c4+ ♔b7 26.♗xe7** **1-0**

☐ **Shakhriyar Mamedyarov**
■ **Loek van Wely**
Wijk aan Zee 2008

Let us see how Mamedyarov obtained a promising position against Van Wely, someone who is usually well-prepared!

1.e4 c5 2.b3!

Was this a big surprise? Mamed played it in the past, but his main weapon is 1.d4.

2...d6

The most flexible move. In general Black would like to play ...e5 to block ♗b2.

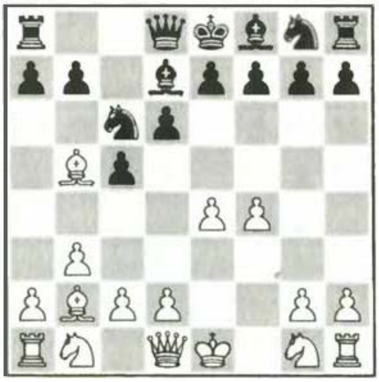
3.♗b2

Also playable are 3.f4 (once played by Morozevich) and 3.♗b5+ (which Spassky tried without particular success).

3...♘f6

● 3...a6 was played in another interesting game of Spassky's: 4.f4 ♘c6 5.♘f3 e6 6.g3!? (a solid approach – 6.♗d3 followed by castling would be my choice) 6...♘f6 7.e5 dxe5 8.fxe5 ♘g4 9.♗g2 h5 10.♕e2 ♞b4 11.♘a3 ♗d7 and now Spassky played 12.h3 against Hebert (Buenos Aires 1978) and won. Also interesting was 12.0-0-0!? ♘xa2+ 13.♔b1 ♘b4 14.♘h4 ♗c6 15.h3 ♘h6 16.♕xh5.

● 3...♘c6 is also normal, and here I would recommend a plan with ♗b5 and f4, creating pressure on Black's position. This looks similar to the Nimzo-Indian (with opposite colours and a pawn on e4 instead of e3 which should be in White's favour) or the Bird Opening. So let's see 4.♗b5 ♗d7 5.f4



and now:

– 5...a6 6.♗xc6 ♗xc6 7.♕e2 (7.d3 e6 8.♘f3

♘f6 9.0-0 ♗e7 10.♘bd2 0-0 11.♕e1 d5 12.♘e5 ♖c8 Gelashvili-Supatashvili, Tbilisi 2000, is also good if White continues with 13.♕g3! dxe4 14.♘xc6 ♖xc6 15.♘xe4 g6 16.♖ad1) 7...d5 (7...e6 8.♘f3 ♘f6 9.♘c3) 8.d3 (8.exd5!? is also playable) 8...e6 9.♘f3 ♘f6 10.♘bd2 ♗e7 11.♘e5 ♖c8 12.0-0 0-0 13.♖f3! (or 13.f5) 13...b5 and now rather than 14.♘xc6?! as in Belkhodja-Tissir, Casablanca 2002, 14.♖g3! was in my opinion the right way to keep the initiative.

– Another nice game by the expert 'Gela' went 5...e5!? 6.♘f3 (6.fxe5? ♕h4+) 6...♘f6 7.fxe5 ♘xe5 8.♗xd7+ (8.♕e2) 8...♘fxd7 9.0-0 ♗e7 10.♘xe5 dxe5 11.d3 ♗g5 12.♕e2 0-0 13.♘c3 ♘b6 14.♔h1 ♖c8 15.♖f3! ♖c6 16.♖af1 ♖f6 17.♖xf6 ♗xf6 18.a4! g6 19.♗a3 ♘d7 20.♘d5 ♗g7 21.b4!±, Gelashvili-Igla, Deizisau 2006.

● 3...e5 blocks the bishop on b2. Here 4.f4!? is not so strong in my opinion. Both 4...exf4 and 4...♘c6 5.♘f3 exf4 are fine for Black. 4.♗b5+ was successfully tried by Gela: 4...♗d7 5.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 6.♘e2 ♕g4 7.0-0! (a logical gambit) 7...♕xe4 8.f4! (White has full compensation thanks to his better development) 8...♘d7 9.fxe5 dxe5 10.♘a3!? (10.♘g3) 10...f6 11.♘c4, Gelashvili-Janahi, Dubai 2002.

However, in my opinion 4.♗c4! is the best way to fight for an advantage. White develops quickly and prepares f4. There is no need to hurry with unclear gambits: 4...♘c6 5.♘e2 g6 6.0-0 ♗g7 7.f4 ♘h6 8.♘bc3 0-0 9.♘d5 ♗e6 10.♘g3 ♗g4 11.♕e1 ♘d4? (11...exf4 12.♗xg7 ♔xg7 13.♘xf4±) 12.♗xd4 cxd4 13.f5! and wins Gelashvili-Burijovich, Internet 2004.

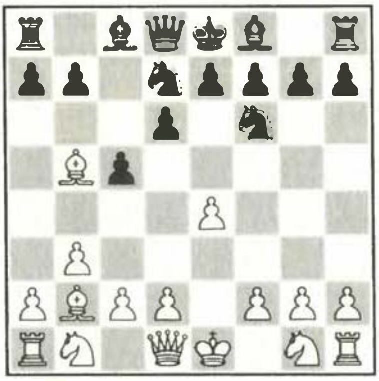
● Black was also unsuccessful with 3...♘d7 4.f4 e6 5.♘f3 b6 6.g3!? (I would recommend 6.♘c3 ♗b7 7.♕e2 followed by 0-0-0 and g4 with nice attacking chances) 6...♗b7 7.d3 ♘gf6 8.♘bd2 d5 9.♕e2 d4 10.c3 dxc3 11.♗xc3 ♗e7 12.♗g2 0-0 13.0-0 with a promising position for White in Gelashvili-Tosic, Yerevan 2000.

4.♗b5+

Czerniak also played 4.♘c3 when I think that 4...g6! is Black's best and the reason why 4.♗b5+ is more popular recently. Please note that 4.♘c3 ♘c6 5.♗b5 may transpose to a line below. There are other possibilities after 4.♘c3 which I won't go into for reasons of space. Following the example of Shak can't be all that bad after all!

4...♗d7

● 4...♘bd7 is another common and solid reply.



5.♕e2 didn't give White any advantage after 5...g6 6.f4 ♗g7 7.♘f3 0-0 8.0-0 a6 9.♗xd7 ♕xd7 10.♘c3 b5 11.f5 ♗b7 12.d3 e6 13.fxg6 fxg6 14.♖ae1 ♖ae8 15.a3 ♘h5! with the better chances for Black in Papaioannou-Gelfand, Istanbul 2000.

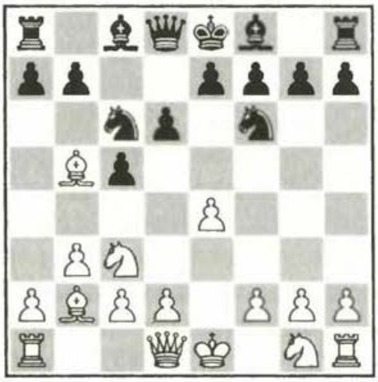
5.d3 is a move that Gelashvili uses very often, but not always with his usual success. Indeed, 5...g6! 6.♗xd7+!? ♗xd7 7.f4 ♗g7 8.♘f3 0-0 9.0-0 is OK for Black.

Therefore I would recommend 5.♘c3!. I think this is the best chance to fight for something, mainly against the solid fianchetto plan: 5...g6 6.♘d5 ♗g7 7.♘xf6+ exf6 8.♘e2 0-0 9.0-0 ♘b6, with ...f5 and ...d5 ideas. This appeared to be OK for Black in Gelashvili-Shengelia, Izmir 2002, but I think that White can still fight for the advantage with 10.♘f4!± d5 11.d4!, or 10...f5 11.♗xg7 ♔xg7 12.exf5 ♗xf5 13.♕f3!.

● 4...♘c6 is also a serious option for Black. Theory often cites 5.♗xc6+ bxc6 6.d3 (6.♕e2 e5) 6...e5 7.♘e2 ♗e7 (or 7...g6) 8.0-0 0-0 9.♘d2 (9.f4 c4!) 9...♘h5 10.f4 exf4 11.♘xf4 ♘xf4 12.♖xf4 f5 13.exf5 ♗xf5 14.♕f3 ♕d7 15.♕g3 ♗g6 16.♖af1 ♖xf4 17.♖xf4 and now Black equalized with 17...♖f8 Nikolaidis-Dvoiris, Cappelle la Grande 1999.

Unclear is 5.e5!? dxe5 6.♗xc6+ bxc6 7.♗xe5 ♘d5. Black plans ...f6 and ...e5. The question is whether White can use the doubled c-pawns after something like 8.♘e2 f6 9.♗b2 e5 10.0-0 ♗e7 11.♘a3.

I would prefer 5.♘c3



and now:

– 5...a6 6.♗xc6+ bxc6 7.f4 g6 8.e5 ♗g4 9.♘f3 dxe5 10.h3 ♗xf3 11.♕xf3 ♘d5 12.fxe5 ♗g7 13.♘a4 0-0 14.♘xc5 and White is better. Gurgenidze-Vitolinsh, Tbilisi 1979.

– 5...♗d7 6.f4 a6 7.♗xc6 ♗xc6 8.♕e2 d5 9.exd5 ♘xd5 10.♘h3 ♘xc3 11.♗xc3 ♕d5 12.0-0 0-0-0 13.♘g5 ♕f5 14.d3 e6 15.♖ae1 ♗d6 16.♘e4± ½-½ Navara-Bu Xiangzhi, Turin 2006.

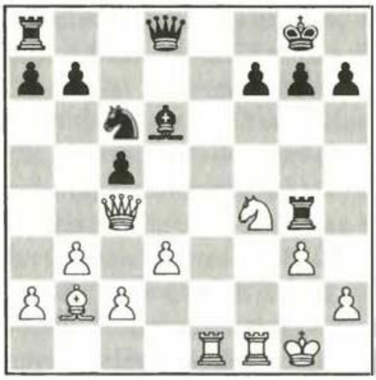
– 5...e5 6.f4! exf4 7.♕f3! (my recommendation here – 7.d4? a6 8.♗xc6+ bxc6 9.♘f3 ♘g4∓, Czemiak-Matanovic, Vratsa 1975) 7...g5? 8.h4!.

– 5...g6! 6.♘d5 ♗g7 7.♘xf6+ exf6 8.♘e2 0-0 9.0-0 ♖e8 10.d3 with unclear play.

Let us return to Van Wely's 4...♗d7.

5.♗xd7+ ♕xd7

5...♘bxd7 is not enough to equalize: 6.d3 e5 7.♘e2± (now White will prepare f4 to keep a nice positional edge) 7...d5!? 8.exd5 ♘xd5 9.0-0 ♗e7 10.♘bc3 ♘xc3 11.♘xc3 0-0 12.♘d5 ♗d6 13.♕f3 ♖e8 14.♖ae1 ♖e6 15.g3 ♘b8 16.♕g4 ♖g6 17.♕c4 ♘c6 18.f4! (finally, but it was just a question of time) 18...exf4 19.♘xf4 ♖g4



20.♘e6!! ♕h4 21.♖xf7! ♖xc4 22.♖xg7+ ♔h8 23.bxc4 ♕h3 24.♖g5+ ♘d4 25.♘xd4 ♗e5 26.♖exe5 h6 27.♖e7! hxg5 28.♘e6+ ♔g8 29.♖g7+ 1-0, Gelashvili-Gagunashvili, Batumi 2001.

6.d3

6.♗xf6!? was once tried by Spassky, but without real success: 6...gxf6 7.♕h5 ♘c6 8.♘c3 f5 9.♕xf5 ♕xf5 10.exf5 ♘d4 11.0-0-0 ♘xf5 12.♘f3 ♖d8 and a draw was agreed, Spassky-Hübner, Buenos Aires 1978.

6...♘c6

6...g6 was played in a interesting fight between two creative players 7.f4 ♗g7 8.♘f3 0-0 9.0-0 ♘c6 10.♕e1 ♖ac8 11.♘bd2 ♘b4 12.♕c1 b5 13.a3 ♘c6 14.♔h1 (14.a4 a6) 14...d5 Aronian-Morozevich, Monaco (blind)

2006. Now I would prefer 15.exd5! to the game continuation 15.e5. After 15...♕xd5 (15...♘xd5 16.♗xg7 ♔xg7 17.♘e4) 16.a4 a6 (16...b4 17.♘c4) 17.♖e1 White seems to have the slightly better chances. For example 17...e6 18.♘e4!.

7.f4

A very original game was 7.♘d2 d5 8.♘gf3 e6 9.0-0 ♗e7 10.e5 ♘g8 11.♖e1 g5 12.♘f1 h5 13.♘3d2 0-0-0 14.a3 g4 15.b4!, with complex play that finally led to a draw in Spassky-Bricard, Montpellier 1991.

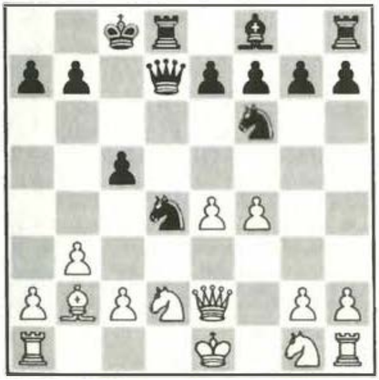
7...d5

Another nice game was: 7...e6 8.♘f3 ♗e7 9.0-0 d5 (9...0-0 10.♘bd2±) 10.♘e5 ♕c7 11.♘xc6 (11.♘d2) 11...♕xc6 12.e5 ♘d7 13.c4! dxc4 14.dxc4 0-0-0 15.♕e2 f5 16.exf6 gxf6 17.♘c3±, Gelashvili-Amanov, Dubai 2006.

8.♘d2 0-0-0 9.♕e2 dxe4 10.dxe4 ♘d4

As usual Loek is playing in the most direct and logical way to refute White's plans, but Mamedyarov rises to the occasion.

White holds the initiative after 10...e5 11.fxe5 ♘d4 (11...♘g4 12.♘c4) 12.♗xd4 ♕xd4 13.♖d1 ♕xe5 14.♘gf3 ♕c3 15.0-0 ♕xc2 16.♘g5.



11.♗xd4!

A surprise by Mamedyarov, giving up his important bishop! In this way he does not lose any time and is able to quickly finish his development. Indeed, 11.♕d3 ♕g4 is more than good for Black.

11...♕xd4 12.♖d1

At first sight Black seems to do well, but the plan of ♘f3 and castle will leave Black to face the threats of ♘g5 or ♘e5 and a possible counterattack vs his own king! That's why Loek can't resist the temptation to try and collect the fruits of his activity.

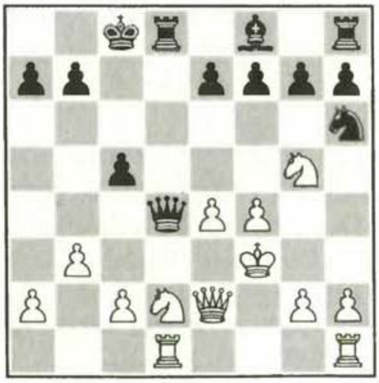
12...♕c3 13.♘f3

Many commentators commented that Black is OK, and even the engines think so, but I didn't find a way for him to equalize!

13...♕xc2

I analyse 13...♘g4 14.♘g5:

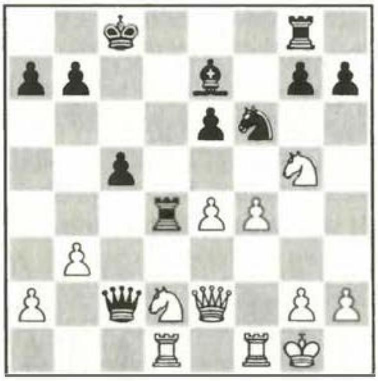
- and now 14...♘e3 was recommended but after 15.♘xf7 ♘xd1 16.♘xd8 ♕xc2 (16...♘e3 17.♘f7 ♘xc2+ 18.♔f2 ♖g8 19.♖d1±) 17.♘f3 ♕xe2+ 18.♔xe2 ♘c3+ 19.♔d3 ♘xe4 20.♔xe4 ♔xd8 21.♖d1+ with ♘e5 coming up, White is clearly better (despite his minus pawn), since he will get a rook to the seventh rank or he will win the e-pawn soon.
- 14...♘h6!. The best chance, but after the incredible 15.♔f2! (15.0-0 ♕xc2 16.♘gf3 e6) 15...♕d4+ (15...♕xc2 16.♘c4 ♕xe2+ 17.♔xe2 e6 18.♖xd8+ ♔xd8 19.♖d1+ with h3 and g4 ideas, so ♘h6 is stuck and White has nice pressure for only one pawn) 16.♔f3! with a superior position for White



For example:
– 16...e6 17.♘c4! ♕c3+ 18.♕e3 ♕xc2 (18...♕xe3+ 19.♘xe3 is clearly better for White) 19.♖xd8+ ♔xd8 20.♖c1 ♕xa2 21.♕c3!+–.
– 16...♕c3+ 17.♕e3 ♕xc2 18.♖c1! ♕xd2 19.♕xc5+ ♔b8 (19...♔d7 20.♕b5+ ♔d6 21.e5 mate) 20.♕c7+ ♔a8 21.♕c8+ ♖xc8 22.♖xc8 mate.

13...g6 is also logical, but White seems to get the better chances after 14.♘g5 (or 14.0-0 ♗g7 15.♘e5) 14...♖d4 (14...♗h6 15.0-0 ♖hf8 16.♘c4) 15.0-0 ♕xc2 16.♘xf7 ♖g8 17.♘g5 ♗h6 18.♘gf3 ♖xe4 19.♕b5!.

14.♘g5! ♖d4 Or 14...♖d3 15.♘xf7 ♖g8 16.♘e5. **15.0-0** On 15.♘xf7? Loek would surely play 15...♘xe4! 16.♘xh8 ♘c3 17.♕g4+ ♔b8 with counterplay. **15...e6 16.♘xf7 ♖g8** 16...c4!? was an interesting option, but 17.♖c1! (17.♘xh8 ♗c5 18.♔h1 c3) 17...♕xd2 18.♖xc4+ ♔d7 19.♕xd2 ♖xd2 20.♘xh8 b5 21.♖cc1 ♘xe4 22.h4 ♗c5+ 23.♔h2 ♖xa2 24.♘f7 is still better for White. **17.♘g5 ♗e7**



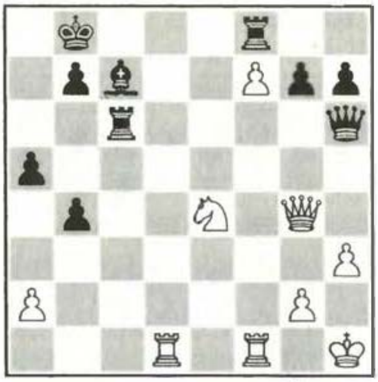
18.♘xe6! A nicely calculated combination, that gives White the better position by force. **18...♖xe4 19.♕f3 ♖xe6 20.♕h3!** This was the point! Black is losing the knight and simply gets an unpleasant position. **20...♘g4 21.♕xg4 ♕g6 22.♕h3 ♕h6 23.♕f3** Considering Loek's time-trouble it is clear that Mamedyarov was not satisfied with the endgame edge after 23.♕xh6 ♖xh6 24.♖fe1 ♗f6 25.♘f3 ♖d8 26.♖c1 ♖d5 27.g4±. **23...♗f6 24.♔h1 ♗d4 25.b4!** Opening a second front. **25...cxb4 26.♘e4?!**

I think that even better was 26.♕b3! ♗c3 27.f5! (27.♘e4 ♖ge8 28.♘xc3 bxc3 29.♕xc3+ ♔b8 30.f5 ♖e3 31.♕a5 b6) 27...♖ee8 28.♘e4 ♗e5 29.h3, and White seems to have a nice initiative, for example: 29...♕b6 30.♕c4+ ♔b8 31.♘c5! ♔a8 32.♘d7 ♕c7 33.♕xc7 ♗xc7 34.f6!±.

26...♗b6

In time-trouble Black misses his last chance after the dangerous looking 26...♖d8! 27.♘g5 (27.♕g4 ♔b8) 27...♖e7 28.♕g4+ ♔b8 29.f5 ♗b6! 30.♖xd8+ ♗xd8 31.♘e6 ♗c7 32.♘xc7 ♖xc7 33.♕xb4 ♖c1 34.♕f8+ ♔c7 35.♕f7+, and White has no more than a draw!

27.f5! Now White's initiative is unstoppable! **27...♗c7** 27...♖c6 28.♕g4! with f6 coming, will also end badly for Black: if 28...♔b8 29.f6 a5 30.f7±. **28.h3 ♖c6 29.♕g4 ♔b8 30.f6 a5 31.f7 ♖f8**



32.♕f5

32.♕d7 gives Black more counterchances after 32...♕h5! 33.♕e7 ♖xf7! 34.♕xf7 ♕e5. However, 32.♕g5! was probably simpler, since ♕e7 is a real threat. Black should play 32...♕xg5 33.♘xg5 but now ♘xh7 is the threat.

32...♕h4 32...♔a7 33.♘g5 ♗b6 34.♖d5 ♖c7 35.♖e5 ♕c6 36.♕xh7 ♕c4 37.♖ef5±. **33.♖d7 g6 34.♕d5± a4** A good way to end his suffering more quickly! **35.♕d4 b3 36.axb3 axb3 37.♕g7 ♖xf7 38.♕g8+ ♔a7 39.♕xf7 ♕xe4 40.♖xc7 b2 41.♖xb7+ 1-0**

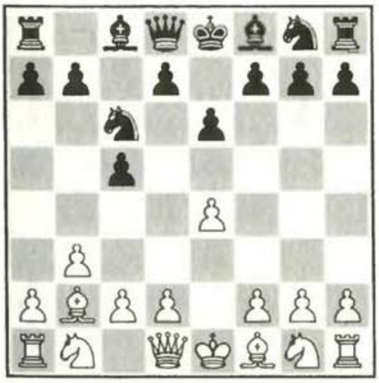
☐ **Nigel Short**
■ **Devaki Prasad**
Mumbai 2004

1.e4 c5 2.b3 ♘c6 3.♗b2 e5!?

This is a logical move to block ♗b2, but at the same time it weakens the d5 square and the c4-f7 diagonal, and it also increases the strength of the pawn break with f4. Now 3...d6 4.♗b5! will be analysed in Gelashvili-Reddmann below, while 3...♘f6 4.e5 is the subject of Short-Thorfinnsson.

● 3...a6 4.f4 e6 5.♘f3 ♘f6 6.d3!? (more critical in my opinion is 6.e5 ♘d5 7.g3±) 6...d5 7.♘bd2 ♗e7 8.g3 0-0 9.e5 ♘d7 10.♗g2 b5 11.0-0 Short-Topalov, Sarajevo 2000.

● 3...e6



Now 4.♘f3 will transpose to Sicilian with 2.♘f3 and 3.b3 lines. For example:

– 4...a6!? 5.♗e2 (5.♗d3!? would be my choice) 5...♘f6 6.e5 ♘d5 7.0-0 ♗e7 8.♘c3 ♘f4 9.♘e4 ♕c7∞ Short-Portisch, London 1982.

– 4...d5 5.♗b5 ♘f6 6.e5♘d7 7.♗xc6 bxc6 8.d3 ♗e7 9.0-0 0-0 10.♖e1±, Spassky-Giardelli, Buenos Aires 1978.

Also interesting is 4.♗b5 ♕c7 5.♘f3 ♘f6 6.e5 ♘d5 7.0-0 a6 8.♗xc6 ♕xc6 9.♖e1 b5 10.d3 ♗b7 11.♘bd2 ♗e7 12.♘e4±. White has more space and good piece coordination, Papaioannou-Dochev, Kavala 1999.

4.♗c4

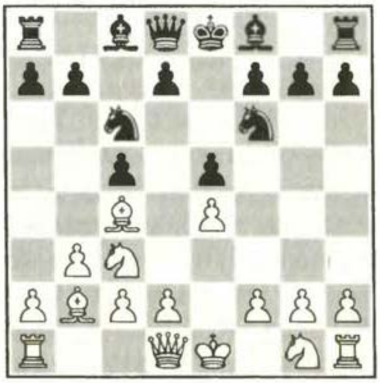
Or 4.f4!? in the spirit of the King's Gambit. It makes sense to open the diagonal for the bishop, but since it is hard for White to get a good centre with a pawn on d4, Black obtains enough counterplay, for example: 4...exf4 5.♘f3 ♘f6 (also not bad is 5...♘ge7!?) 6.♘c3 ♗e7 7.♗c4 0-0 8.♕e2 a6 9.e5 ♖e8! with ...d5 coming, this is very promising for Black, Todorov-Gharamian, France 2005.

4...♘f6

Or 4...d6 5.♘c3 ♗e7 6.♘ge2 ♗e6 7.0-0 ♕d7 8.f4! (8.♘d5 ♘f6) 8...exf4 9.♘d5!± ♗xd5 10.exd5 ♘e5 11.♘xf4 and White's advantage is evident: better development, better placed pieces and more space! Balashov-Iskusnikh, Moscow 1996.

5.d3

Balashov has played 5.♘c3 and now:



– 5...♗e7 6.d3 0-0 7.♘ge2 a6 8.a4! (before executing the f4 break, White is taking care of his bishop on c4) 8...♜b8 9.0-0 ♘h5?! (9...d6 10.f4±) 10.♘d5!± (improving the position but also with a nice trap in mind) 10...b5? 11.axb5 axb5 12.♗xb5! ♜xb5 13.♞ec3 (this is the point!) 13...♜b8 14.♛xh5 and with a pawn up and a better position, White didn't have any problem to convert his advantage in Balashov-Korobov, Elista 2001.

– 5...♘xe4 6.♘xe4 d5 7.♗d3 dxe4 8.♗xe4 is a better position for White. Although Black has pawns in the centre, e5 is under attack and sooner or later White will also execute the f4 pawn break and White's two bishops are very powerful! 8...♛c7 (8...♗d6 9.♛h5 ♛e7 10.♘f3 and Black can't castle without weakening his kingside) 9.♛h5 ♘d4 10.♘f3 ♗d6 11.♘xd4 cxd4 12.c3! g6 13.♛h6 ♗f8 14.♛h4 ♗e7 15.♛g3 dxc3 16.♛xc3 ♛xc3 17.♗xc3 f6 18.0-0 ♔f7 19.f4!±, Balashov-Schöllmann, Regensburg 1997.

5...d6 6.♘c3 ♗e7 7.♘ge2

Played with the f4 plan in mind! That's why we wait with the development of ♘g1 for so long!

7...0-0 8.0-0 a6 9.a4!

Avoiding b5, so ♗c4 feels at home on his diagonal for the important job of controlling d5 and pressing f7. This position is in fact quite unpleasant to play as Black, since after avoiding Black's threats with ...b5 or ...d5, White is the first to break in the centre with f4.

9...♘d4

After 9...♗d7 10.♛d2 ♘d4 11.a5! (an important move! Now ...b5 is avoided, and b7 can be a target as well!) 11...♗c6 12.f4! (Gelashvili-Valensi, Izmir 2003) Black has a very unpleasant position. He has no counterplay. White can build up an attack on the kingside or press in the centre, thanks to his better pieces and superior pawn structure.

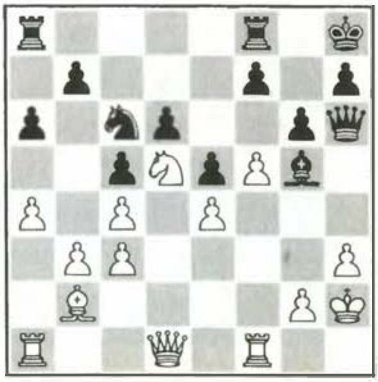
10.h3!?

A prophylactic move before playing f4, but probably White could also do without it and play 10.♞d5. Also good was 10.f4 ♗g4 11.♛d2! (11.h3 is also good, if 11...♗xe2 12.♘xe2±) with the idea of ♘g3. Perhaps Short was worried about something like 11...♛a5 (11...♗xe2 12.♘xe2 and 12...b5? doesn't work after 13.axb5 axb5 14.♘xd4 bxc4 – 14...cxd4 15.♝xb5 – 15.♜xa8 ♛xa8 16.♘f5+–) this looks annoying, but after 12.♘g3! (planning f5 to lock in the bishop) White is doing great. For example, 12...exf4 13.♛xf4! (13.♜xf4 ♗d7) 13...♘xc2 14.♘d5! winning!

10...♗e6 11.f4 ♘d7

If 11...♛d7 then 12.a5!±, but not 12.f5? ♗xf5! 13.exf5 d5.

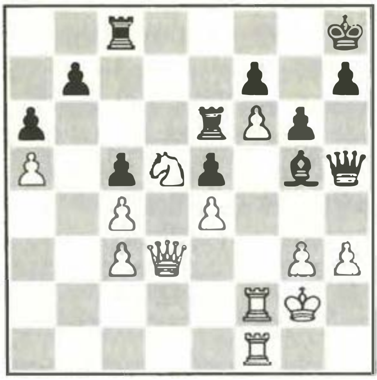
12.f5! It is in White's favour to exchange the light-squared bishops, since he will increase his control of d5, and ♗e7 will be on the wrong colour! **12...♗xc4 13.dxc4** 13.bxc4 was also in White's favour I guess, but Short wanted to keep the opportunity to attack d6 later on. **13...♗g5** 13...♘f6 14.♘g3! with the threat of ♞d5. **14.♘d5 ♘f6 15.♘ec3!** White must keep control of d5, later he will prepare c3 to kick away the black knight. **15...♔h8 16.♘xf6 ♛xf6 17.♘d5 ♛h6 18.♔h2 g6?** This helps White, but anyway Black's position was already hard to handle. **19.c3 ♘c6**



20.f6!

Nigel is simply locking in the bishop on g5 and the queen on h6!

20...♕h5 21.♖f3 ♖ae8 22.g3 ♖e6 23.♔g2 ♖c8 24.a5 ♘b8 25.♕d3 ♘d7 26.♖af1 ♗h6 27.b4! ♗g5 28.♗a3 ♗h6 29.♖3f2 ♗g5 30.bxc5 ♘xc5 31.♗xc5 dxc5



Just look at that knight on d5!

32.h4 ♗h6 33.♕e2

A simple and practical choice, since the position is easily won with or without queens. White also wins after 33.♖b2 g5 34.♖f5! ♕g4 35.♘e3.

33...♕xe2 34.♖xe2

Now b7, c5 or e5 will be under attack, and you can't defend them all!

34...g5 35.♔h3 gxh4 36.♔xh4 ♖g8 37.♖f5 ♖d8 38.♖b2 ♖d7 39.♖f1 ♖e8 40.♖fb1 ♖b8 41.♖b6 1-0

It might seem a bit early to resign, but since ♖xa6 is a threat and Black can anyway only sit and wait watching how he will lose all his pawns his decision is understandable.

☐ **Tamaz Gelashvili**
■ **Hauke Reddmann**
Hamburg 1999

1.e4 c5 2.b3 ♘c6 3.♗b2 d6 4.♗b5

Also logical is 4.f4:

- 4...e6 5.♘f3 ♘f6 6.♘c3 ♗e7 and now I like 7.e5! (rather than 7.g3 Short-Kosten, England tt 2001/02) as after 7...♘g4 (7...dxe5 8.♘xe5 ♘xe5 9.fxe5 ♘d7 10.♘e4) 8.♕e2 White castles queenside and has a nice initiative.
- 4...♘f6 5.e5!? (5.♕f3 ♕c7 6.♗b5 ♗d7 7.♘e2 a6 8.♗xc6 ♗xc6 9.♗xf6 gxf6 10.f5± was also better for White, who proved that his knights were stronger in Bauer-Birens, Metz 2005) 5...♘d5 6.♕f3 ♞db4 7.♘a3 dxe5 8.fxe5 ♘d4 (logical but not enough to solve the problems – 8...♗e6 and ...g6 is a possible improvement for Black) 9.♗xd4! ♕xd4 10.♗b5+ ♗d7 11.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 12.♘e2, and White is better developed and owing to his e5-pawn and the open f-file could build up a quick attack. Mamedyarov-Ghaem Maghami, Baku 2003.

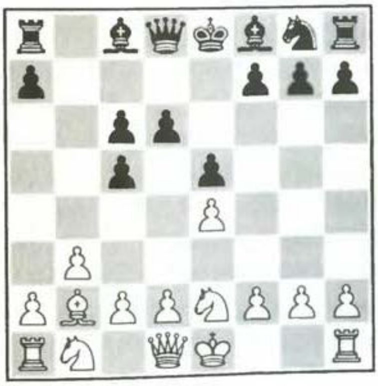
4...e5 5.♗xc6+!?

Playing for the concrete plan of f4 to press e5 and doubling the c-pawns to create other future targets as well, while it is hard for Black to activate his two bishops.

Still, 5.♘e2 also looks good: 5...♘f6 6.♘bc3 ♗e7 7.0-0 0-0 8.a4 ♘d4 9.♗c4 b6 10.♗d5 ♖b8 11.f4 a6 12.f5!±, Kulashko-Bacrot, Bled 2002.

5...bxc6 6.♘e2!

Typical for this line, f4 is the main idea to obtain an advantage!



6...f5

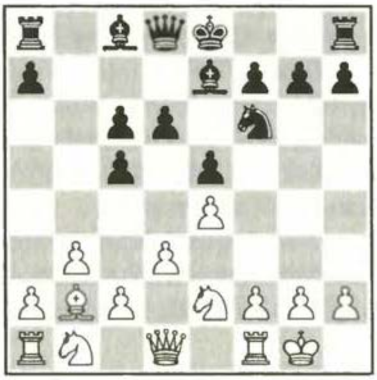
- 6...♘f6 7.d3 g6 8.0-0 ♗g7 9.♘d2 0-0 and now either 10.♕e1 ♖e8 11.f3 ♗e6 12.♕f2

Gelashvili-Delchev, Istanbul 2000, or 10.h3 ♘h5 11.f4 exf4 12.♗xg7 ♘xg7 13.♘xf4 Gelashvili-Zagrebelny, Patras 2001.

● 6...♕g5 is an interesting try, but was nicely refuted by GM Hansen after 7.0-0 ♗h3 8.♘g3 ♗e6 9.d3 h5?! 10.f4! exf4 11.♘e2 ♗e7 (11...♗g4 12.♕d2) 12.♘xf4 ♗f6 (12...♘f6 13.♘d2 0-0 14.♕e2 ♗g4 15.♕e3±) 13.♕c1! (13.♘xe6) 13...♗xb2 14.♕xb2 ♘f6 15.♘d2 ♘g4 16.♖ae1 ♘e5 17.♘xe6! fxe6 18.♘c4! S.B.Hansen-Meister, Berlin 2003.

● 6...♕h4 7.0-0 ♘f6 8.f4! ♗e7 9.♘bc3 0-0 10.♕e1 ♕h6 11.f5!, Reefat-Dao Thien Hai, Calcutta 2001.

● 6...♗e7 7.0-0 ♘f6 8.d3



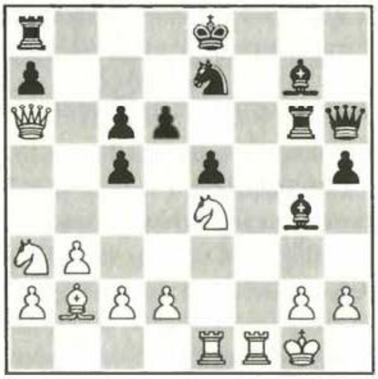
and now:

– 8...♘d7 9.f4 ♗f6 10.♘d2 exf4 11.♗xf6 ♘xf6 12.♘xf4 with a slight plus Gelashvili-Gal, Golden Sands 2000.

– 8...♘h5 9.d4 (9.♘d2) 9...cxd4 10.♘xd4 exd4 11.♕xh5 ♗f6 12.♖d1 ♕b6 13.c3 dxc3 14.♘xc3 ♕b4 15.♘a4 ♗xb2 16.♘xb2±, Nikolaidis-Khamrakulov, Glifada 2000.

– 8...0-0 9.♘d2 ♘h5! (an important improvement by Dvoiris – 9...♘g4 10.h3 ♘h6 11.f4 exf4 12.♘xf4 d5 13.♘h5 d4 14.♘c4 Gelashvili-Gasparian, Bad Wiessee 1999) 10.f4 (10.♘c4 f5) 10...exf4 11.♘xf4 ♘xf4 12.♖xf4 f5 13.exf5 ♗xf5 14.♕f3 ♕d7 15.♕g3 ♗g6 16.♖af1 ♖xf4 17.♖xf4 ♖f8 18.♖xf8+ ♗xf8 with equality, Nikolaidis-Dvoiris, Cappelle la Grande 1999.

7.exf5 ♗xf5 8.0-0 g5!? It seems that Black has managed to stop f4 but **9.f4!** In fact 9.d4! was also very strong: 9...cxd4 10.♘xd4! (Black is in trouble) 10...♕d7 11.♘xf5 ♕xf5 12.♘d2. **9...gxf4 10.♘xf4 ♕g5 11.♕e2 ♘e7 12.♘a3! ♖g8** Black is trying to use his activity on the open files, so White should take care. **13.♘h5!** With the knight on g3 the white king will feel safer. **13...♖g6** 13...0-0-0 14.♘g3 ♗g4 15.♕a6+ ♔b8 16.♘c4, heading for a5 with an attack; 13...♗g4? 14.♕xg4! ♕xg4 15.♘f6+ loses a piece. **14.♘g3 ♗g4 15.♕a6! ♗g7 16.♖ae1 h5 17.♘e4 ♕h6**



18.d4!! A great idea to use his advantage in development! **18...cxd4 19.♗c1!** This was the point of d4! The bishop did nothing on b2 and now it will help to kick away the important 'defender' ♘e7! **19...♕h8 20.♗g5 ♗c8 21.♕a5** ♘c4 is a big threat now! **21...d5 22.♕c7!+– ♗d7 23.♘d6+ ♖xd6 24.♕xd6 0-0-0** Too late, but a nice joke. **25.♕xe7** **1-0**

☐ **Nigel Short**
■ **Bragi Thorfinnsson**
Reykjavik 2000

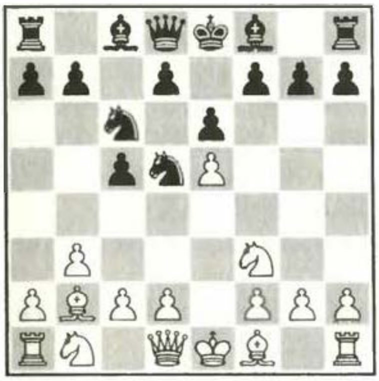
1.e4 c5 2.b3 ♘c6 3.♗b2 ♘f6!?
This move is similar to the Alekhine De-

fence. The aim is to provoke White to push his pawns and then attack them.

Alternatively, 3...e6 4.♘f3 d5 and now for example 5.♗b5 (5.exd5 exd5 6.♗d3!?) 5...dxe4 6.♘e5!.

4.e5 ♘d5 5.♘f3 d6

5...e6 transposes to 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.b3!?, and now after 3...♘c6 4.♗b2 ♘f6!? 5.e5 ♘d5 we have the same position.

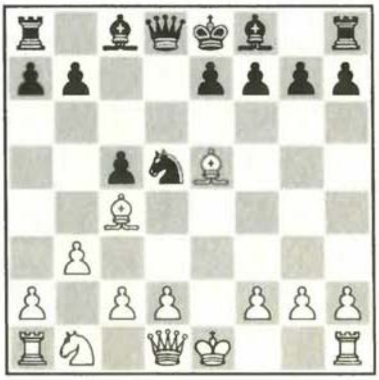


Here 6.♗b5 ♗e7 7.0-0 0-0 8.♗xc6 bxc6! (8...dxc6 9.d3±) 9.d3 f6! is OK for Black, as in Spassky-Hernandez, Buenos Aires 1978. While 6.♘c3 ♘xc3 7.♗xc3 has been played by Spassky and Short but Black is OK in my opinion.

Therefore I prefer 6.♗c4! ♘de7!? (preparing ...d5 or ...♘g6 to press the e5 pawn. After 6...♘b6 7.♗b5 the knight on b6 is misplaced, but ♗b5 is well placed to fight for control over the key squares e5 and d4) 7.♘c3. The knight is heading for e4 and I still don't show the direction of my king depending on Black's reply 7...d5 (7...♘g6 8.♘b5! or 8.♘e4 ♕c7 9.0-0 ♘gxe5 10.♘xe5 ♘xe5 11.♕h5) 8.exd6 ♘f5 9.♘e4! Sometimes we have more important things to do than to castle! 9...♗xd6 (9...♘xd6 10.♗d3) 10.♗b5! again concrete action to pin the ♘c6, get control of d4 and at the same time threatening to double the c pawns! 10...♕c7 11.b4!!. This was played in Kogan-Santo Roman in Salou 2001, and it was a move I was very proud of. The main idea is that I don't give Black time to relax, and if 11...cxb4? then 12.g4!± is crushing! After the game continuation 11...b6 I obtained the better position too: 12.bxc5 bxc5 13.♘xd6+ ♕xd6 14.♗e5 ♕d5 (14...♕d7 15.♗xg7♘xg7 16.♘e5) 15.0-00-0 16.c4 ♕d7 17.d4 cxd4 18.♘xd4 ♘fxd4 19.♗xd4, with a nice advantage for White.

6.♗b5

6.♗c4 is also logical and was played by none other than Spassky to win a famous game: 6...dxe5 (6...♘b6 7.♗e2± or 7.e6!?; 6...♘f4!? 7.g3 ♘h3 – 7...♘g6 8.exd6 – 8.♘c3 dxe5 9.♕e2 f6 10.♘e4 with compensation) 7.♘xe5 ♘xe5 8.♗xe5



After 8...e6 (8...f6 9.♗b2 e5 10.♕h5+ g6 11.♕f3±, 8...♘b4!? 9.♘c3! ♘c6 10.♕h5! is also better for White) 9.♘c3 ♘xc3 (9...f6 10.♗g3 ♘xc3 11.dxc3 ♕xd1+ 12.♖xd1 ♗e7 13.0-0 ♔f7 14.♗c7!, with the idea of 15.♖fe1 and 16.a4 will keep Black totally paralysed, 9...♗d6! was Black's best chance: 10.♗b5+! ♔f8 11.♕e2!±) 10.♗xc3 White's advantage is evident, just compare the bishops of both sides and the king safety! The game Spassky-Sosonko, Tilburg 1978, went 10...♗d7 11.0-0 (even better as mentioned by Ftachnik was 11.♕h5!) 11...♗d6? 12.♕g4± ♖g8 13.♖ae1 g6 14.f4! (again this plan is the key to success!) 14...h5 (14...♕c7 15.♕h4h5 16.f5!) 15.♕h3and White won.

6...♗g4 7.h3 ♗h5 8.♘c3!

White shouldn't lose time and eliminate, change or kick away the active black pieces to increase his advantage.

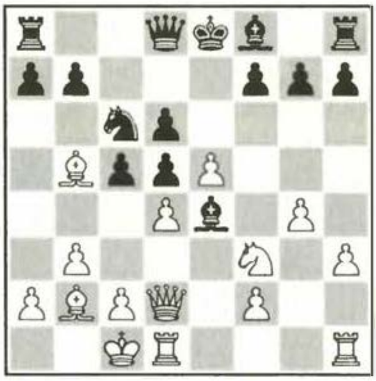
8...♘f4

8...♘xc3 9.♗xc3 keeps pressure on Black's position 'for free'!

9.g4!

9.g3 ♘e6 10.exd6 ♕xd6 and ...0-0-0 is OK for Black.

9...♗g6 10.d4 e6 11.♕d2 ♘d5 12.♘xd5 exd5 13.0-0-0 ♗e4



14.♖he1!! ♕b6

14...♗xf3 15.exd6+ ♔d7 (15...♗e4 16.dxc5! ♔d7 17.c4!! with a crushing attack!) 16.dxc5!! (this is the point! Only two pawns for the sacrificed piece, the rook on d1 is also ready to be sacrificed, but look at Black's king and the rest of his pieces, I think there's no need to explain why he is lost) 16...♗xd1 17.♕xd5!. This will give White an unstoppable attack, ♕f5 mate is the threat! A possible finish is: 17...♗xd6 (17...♔c8 18.♗xc6) 18.♗xc6+ bxc6 19.♕xd6+ ♔c8 20.♕xc6+ ♔b8 (20...♕c7 21.♕xa8+) 21.♗e5+ ♕c7 22.♕xc7 mate.

15.♗xc6+ ♕xc6 16.♘g5! h6 17.♘xe4 dxe4 18.d5 ♕a6 19.♖xe4

A pawn up and a big advantage. The rest is easy.

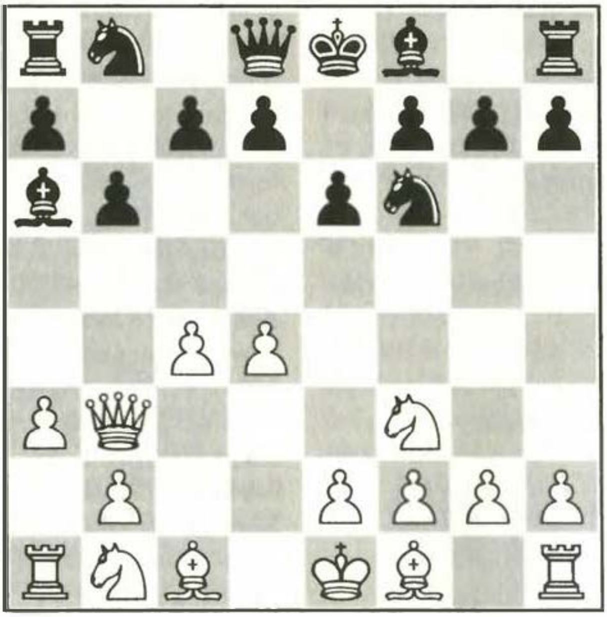
19...0-0-0 20.f4 dxe5 21.fxe5 ♗e7 22.♔b1 ♔b8 23.♕f2

No real point for Black to play on, so he resigned.

CHAPTER 17

Igor Lysyj

Queen's Indian: the Surprising 5.♕b3



A rare queen move

In the 7th round of the last European Championship my opponent Tornike Sanikidze surprised me with a rare variation of the Queen's Indian Defence:

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.a3 ♗a6 5.♕b3!?

Not without some luck, I managed to equalize and then gain a draw. This game forced me to take a closer look at the variation, and now I will probably take it up with white! There are various ways for Black to continue:

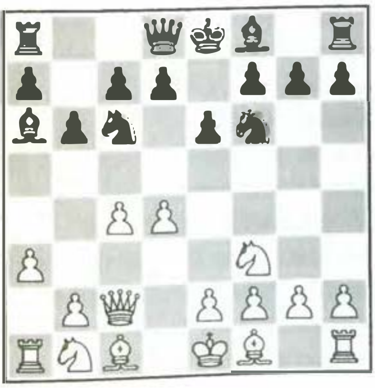
Variation A

If Black plays as in the variation 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.g3 (instead of 4.a3) 4...♗a6 5.♕b3, then after

5...♘c6

a very unpleasant surprise awaits him:

6.♕c2! (Weaker is 6.♕a4 ♗b7 7.♞c3 ♘e7 8.♗g5 ♘e4 9.♘xe4 ♗xe4 with unclear play.)



Now, in all variations White is able to seize control of the centre and gain a comfortable advantage:

6...b5

– 6...♘a5 7.e4 d5? (7...c5 8.d5 exd5 9.e5! ♘g4 10.cxd5 ♗xf1 11.♔xf1±) 8.b4! dxe4 9.♘e5± Kliun-Evchin, Kiev 2004.

– The tactical basis of 6.♕c2! is 6...d5? 7.cxd5 ♕xd5 8.e4+–.

7.cxb5 ♗xb5 8.♘c3 ♝a6 9.b4 ♗c4 10.e4 10.g3±. **10...♗xf1 11.♔xf1** Kizov-Rajkovic, Bajmok 2001

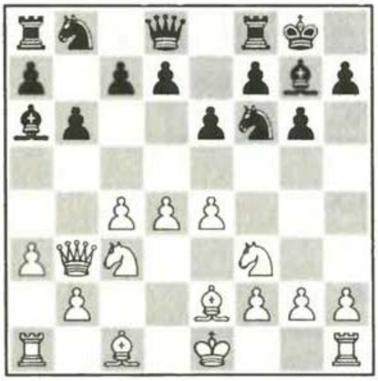
Variation B

There is a similar strategic conception after the rare move

5...g6

I think that after

6.♘c3 ♗g7 7.e4 0-0 8.♗e2



the position is rather more pleasant for White, although it remains quite complicated, Barlov-Sakaev, Budva 1996.

Variation C

There is an interesting transposition into Benoni-type structures after

5...c5 6.d5 exd5 7.cxd5 d6

– The eccentric development of the bishop at d6 can hardly be good: 7...♗d6 8.♞c3 0-0 9.e4 (9.♗g5!? ♖e8 10.♖d1 h6 11.♗h4 b5 12.e3 is also quite strong, Shirov-Oll, Wijk aan Zee 1993) 9...♕c8 10.♗xa6 ♕xa6 11.♘b5!, and White has a significant advantage. The dangers of going pawn-grabbing are excellently illustrated by the following game: 11...♘xe4 12.0-0 ♕b7 13.♘g5 ♞xg5 14.♞xd6 ♕c7 15.♘b5 ♕d8 16.♗xg5 ♕xg5 17.♞c7 c4 18.♕b5 ♘c6 19.dxc6 ♕xb5 20.♘xb5 dxc6 21.♘d6 and White won in S.Pedersen-Berg, Faaborg blindfold 2007.

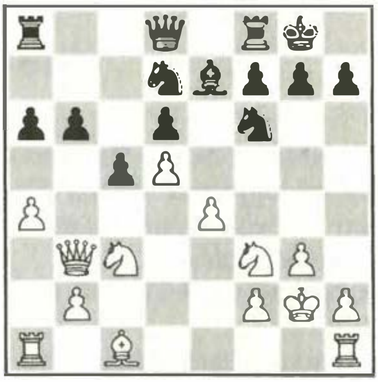
– Black also did not equalize after 7...g6 8.♘c3 ♗g7 9.e4 ♗xf1 10.♔xf1 0-0 11.e5 ♞g4 12.♗f4, Javakhishvili-Zhao Xue, Istanbul 2008.

8.♘c3 ♘bd7

8...♗e7 9.g3 (9.g4!? 0-0 10.g5 ♘h5 11.h4 ♖e8 12.♕c2 ♗f8 13.♗g2 g6 led to unclear play in the game Kozul-Justin, Slovenia 1994) 9...♕c8 10.♗g2 0-0 11.0-0 ♘bd7 12.h3±, Nestorovic-Bojovic, Vrnjacka Banja 2006.

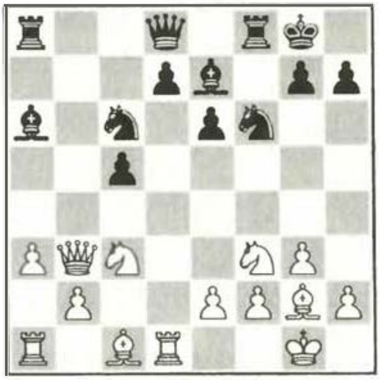
9.e4 ♗xf1 10.♔xf1 ♗e7 11.g3 0-0 12.♔g2 a6 13.a4±

Zimmerman-Sendur, Budapest 2001.



In my view, in the Modern Benoni it is much more logical to place the pawn on b6 when the queen's knight is developed via a6 to c7. Therefore I would judge that the positions arising in this branch are advantageous to White. Besides, players who prefer the Queen's Indian Defence will be unlikely to feel comfortable in Benoni structures.

The transposition into lines of the Blumenfeld Counter-Gambit deserves a separate analysis: (after 5...c5 6.d5) **6...b5!? 7.cxb5 ♗b7 8.dxe6 fxe6 9.♘c3 ♗e7 10.g3!?** (10.♗g5 0-0 11.e3 d5 12.♖d1 ♘bd7 13.♗e2 led to a complicated battle with chances for both sides, Kornev-Grigoriants, Krasnodar 2002) **10...a6 11.♗g2 axb5 12.♕xb5 ♗a6 13.♕b3 ♘c6 14.0-0 0-0 15.♖d1±**



Black undoubtedly has quite good compensation, but we should not forget that in the resulting positions White is a pawn up, and the occupation of the centre by d7-d5 will somewhat weaken the e6-pawn. Also not unimportant is the fact that by no means every expert on the Queen's Indian Defence has experience in playing the sharp Blumenfeld Counter-Gambit!

It is time to turn to the lines which have occurred most often in this relatively untried variation.

Variation D

Black can prepare for a battle in the centre by **5...c6 6.♘c3**

6.♗g5!? is a worthy alternative:

– 6...h6 7.♗xf6 ♕xf6 8.♘c3 d5 9.cxd5 exd5 10.e4±.

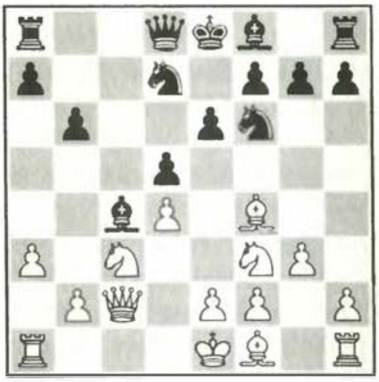
– 6...c5 7.♗xf6 ♕xf6 8.d5±.

– 6...d5 7.cxd5 cxd5 8.♗xf6 gxf6 9.♘c3 ♗g7 10.♖c1±, Kozul-Farago, Maribor 1994.

– 6...♗e7 7.♘c3 d5 8.cxd5 ♘xd5 9.♗xe7 ♕xe7 10.e4 ♘xc3 11.♕xc3 ♗b7 12.♗c4 and White gained an enduring advantage, which he later converted into a win in the game Gurevich-Chuchelov, Charleroi 2001.

6...d5 7.cxd5 exd5

Also in the event of 7...cxd5 8.♗f4 (8.♘e5 is unpromising: 8...♗e7 9.♕a4+ ♘fd7 10.♗f4 0-0=) 8...♗c4 (8...♗d6?! 9.♕a4+ b5 – 9...♚e7 10.♗g5! with the initiative – 10.♘xb5 ♗xf4 11.♘c7+ ♔e7 12.♘xa6 ♕b6 13.♘b4 ♖c8 14.e3 ♗d6 15.♗e2±) 9.♕c2 ♘bd7 (9...♗d6?! 10.♗xd6 ♕xd6 11.e4 dxe4 – 11...♗xf1 12.e5 ♕d8 13.♔xf1± – 12.♘xe4 ♘xe4 13.♗xc4 White has the advantage thanks to the weakness of the light-square complex on Black's queenside) 10.g3±.

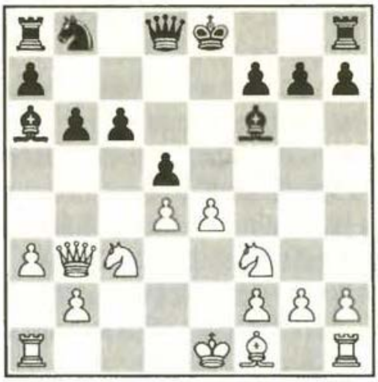


White retains the opening initiative, since it is not easy for the black bishop to reach its 'native' b7-square, and in the event of its potential exchange after ♘f3-d2, White can advantageously open up the game with e2-e4.

8.♗g5

8.g3!? looks tempting, when after 8...♗d6 9.♗g5 0-0 10.♗g2 ♖e8 11.♗xf6 ♕xf6 12.0-0 White has the advantage, since Black experiences problems in completing his development: 12...♘d7?! 13.♕a4 ♗b7 14.♘xd5 cxd5 15.♕xd7 ♗a6 16.♖fe1±.

8...♗e7 9.♗xf6 ♗xf6 10.e4!



One of the key positions of the entire variation.

10...♗xf1

– In the event of 10...dxe4 11.♘xe4 0-0, apart from transposing into the main line with 12.0-0-0, White has 12.♗xa6!? ♘xa6 13.0-0 ♖e8 (13...♘c7 14.♖ac1 ♖e8 15.♘xf6+ ♕xf6 16.♕a4 ♖e6 17.♖fe1±, Barlov-Cabrilo, Pljevlja 1989) 14.♘xf6+ ♕xf6 15.♖ac1±, Mihajlovskij-S.Zhigalko, Minsk 2007.

– The pawn sacrifice 10...0-0 has not justified itself: 11.♗xa6 ♘xa6 12.exd5 ♖e8+ 13.♔f1 c5 14.♖d1 ♕d7 15.h3 ♖ad8 16.g3 ♘c7 17.dxc5 ♗xc3 18.bxc3 ♘xd5 19.♔g2 ♕c6 20.c4 ♘c7 21.cxb6 axb6 22.♖xd8 ♖xd8 23.♖d1±, Dreev-Piket, Linares 1997.

11.♖xf1 dxe4 12.♘xe4 0-0 13.0-0-0 ♘d7

13...♗e7 14.♘e5 ♕d5 15.♕xd5 cxd5 16.♘c3 ♖d8 17.♔b1 leads to an unpleasant endgame for Black, typical of certain lines of the Queen's Gambit, Pedersen-Naiditsch, Germany Bundesliga 2004/05.

14.♖fe1

14.♘e5!? is also not bad: 14...♗xe5 15.dxe5 ♕e7 (15...♕h4 16.e6 and White has the initiative) 16.f4 ♘c5 17.♘xc5 and now:

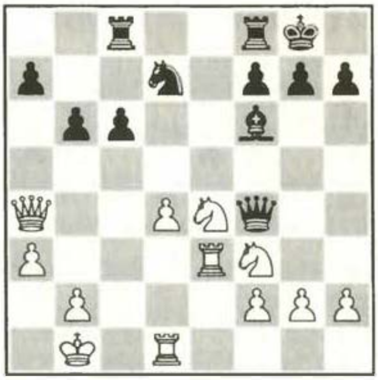
– 17...bxc5 18.♖f2±, Istratescu-Perunovic, Budva 2003.

– 17...♕xc5+ 18.♔b1 ♖ad8 19.♖c1±, Wells-Kalesis, Budapest 1994.

14...♕c7 15.♔b1 ♖ac8

Or 15...♖ad8 16.♕c2 ♖c8 17.h4 ♗e7 18.♘eg5 ♗xg5 19.hxg5 ♖fe8 20.♕f5±, Barlov-Sturua, Baden Baden 1991.

16.♖e3 ♕f4 17.♕a4



The dominating position of White's pieces in the centre and the weakness of the c6-pawn give him the better game.

Variation E

In my game against Sanikidze I chose

5...d5 6.cxd5 ♕xd5

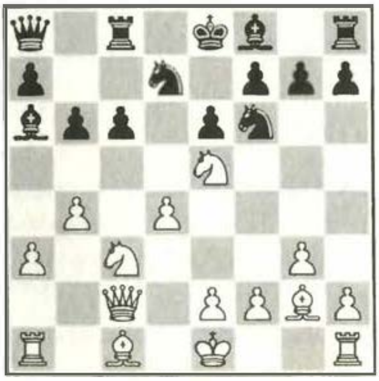
This is more critical than 6...exd5, after which White can transpose into positions from Variation D, and in addition he has another promising option: 7.♘c3 (or 7.♗g5 c6 8.♗xf6 ♕xf6 9.♘c3±) 7...♗e7 8.♗g5 (8.g3 is also attractive, with a promising variation of the Queen's Gambit; the slight weakness of the c6-pawn and the potential e2-e4 break ensure White the better game, Kozul-Steedman, Panormo 2001) 8...c6 9.♗xf6 ♗xf6 10.e4 and we reach the key position of Variation D.

7.♕c2!

In our game my opponent chose the much too conventional 7.♕xd5 exd5 8.♘c3 c6 9.♗f4 ♘bd7 10.e3♗xf1 11.♔xf1 ♗e7 12.♔e2and with the unexpected 12...0-0-0! I managed to equalize, Sanikidze-Lysyj, Plovdiv 2008.

7...c5

At the board I was counting on an original manoeuvre, which nevertheless proves insufficient for equality: 7...♘bd7 8.♘c3 ♕b7 (things are no easier for Black after 8...♕c6 9.e4 – weaker is 9.g3 ♖c8! 10.♗g2 ♕a8 11.0-0 ♗b7= – 9...♗xf1 10.♔xf1 and White's centre is more important than the temporary displacement of his monarch) 9.b4! and White is able to exploit the awkward placing of the black pieces: 9...c6 10.g3 ♖c8 (10...♗e7 11.♗g2 ♖c8 12.0-0 ♕a8 13.♘e5±) 11.♗g2 ♕a8 12.♘e5.



Black faces an unpleasant defence.

8.♘c3 ♕d7

8...♕b7 9.dxc5 bxc5 10.g3±, Dzevlan-Hultin, Sweden tt 2001/02.

9.♗e3!?

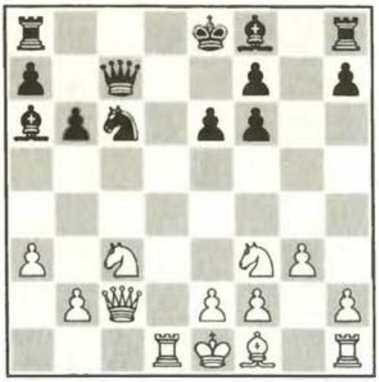
9.♗g5 is less dangerous for Black: 9...cxd4 10.♖d1 d3 11.exd3 ♗e7 12.d4 ♗xf1 13.♔xf1 0-0 with an unclear game, Farago-G.Kovacs, Szentgotthard 2002.

Black easily equalized in the elite game Shirov-Karpov, Linares 1993: 9.dxc5 ♗xc5 10.g3 ♗b7 11.♗g2 ♘c6 12.0-0 ♘d4.

9...cxd4

9...♘g4 10.♖d1 and White's significant lead in development allows him to view optimistically the outcome of the opening.

10.♗xd4 ♘c6 11.♗xf6 gxf6 12.♖d1 ♕c7 13.g3



This branch leads to a position typical of the Catalan Opening. Black's broken pawn structure on the kingside makes his king position rather insecure, which means that the white queen will cause Black considerable problems in the middlegame.

Variation F

Black's main continuation can be considered to be

5...♗e7 6.♘c3 d5

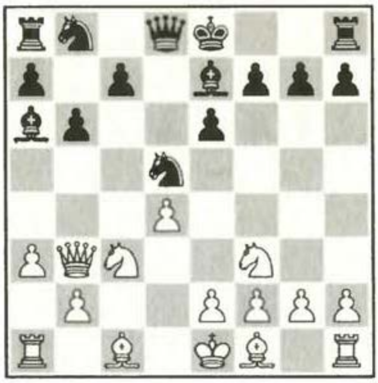
6...♗b7?! is dubious: 7.d5 exd5 8.cxd5 0-0 9.e4 (or 9.g3 ♘a6 10.♗g2 ♘c5 11.♕a2 with the better game) and the difference in the activity of the light-square bishops and White's spatial superiority give him the advantage.

After 6...♗b7?! 7.d5 Black can also play 7...c6 when after 8.e4 cxd5 9.cxd5 exd5:

– for those who like sharp play I can recommend 10.e5!? ♘e4 11.♘xd5 ♗c5 (11...♘a6 12.♗c4 b5 13.♗xb5 ♕a5+ 14.♗d2 ♘xd2 15.♘xd2 ♘c5 16.♕c3! ♕xc3 17.♘xc3±) 12.♗c4! ♗xf2+ 13.♔e2 ♗h4 14.♕c2 f5 15.exf6 ♘xf6 16.♕d2 with strong compensation for the minimal material deficit.

– 10.exd5 0-0 11.♗c4 ♘a6 12.0-0 ♘c5 13.♕a2 ♘ce4 14.♘xe4 ♘xe4 15.♖e1 ♘d6 16.♗d3 and Black has in fact not solved the problem of his bad light-square bishop.

7.cxd5 ♘xd5



8.e4

8.♗d2 is weaker. In games played with this line Black has obtained adequate counterplay after 8...0-0:

- 9.e4 ♗xf1 10.♖xf1 ♞xc3 11.♗xc3 ♘d7 12.0-0-0 c6 13.♖fe1 ♕c7 14.d5 ♘c5 15.♕c2 cxd5 16.exd5 exd5 17.♖xd5 ♖ad8 18.♖xd8 ♖xd8 19.♔b1, Dao Thien Hai-Hellsten, Turin Olympiad 2006.
- 9.♖d1 ♘xc3 10.♗xc3 ♘d7 11.g3 ♗b7 12.♗g2 ♗e4 13.0-0 ♕c8, Dreev-Gurevich, Dos Hermanas 2001.
- 9.0-0-0 ♗b7 10.♕c2 f5 11.e3 ♘d7, S.Pedersen-Berg, Faaborg blindfold 2007.
- 9.g3 ♘xc3 10.♗xc3 ♗b7 11.♗g2 ♗d5 12.♕c2 f5 13.0-0 ♘c6 14.♖fd1 ♗e4.

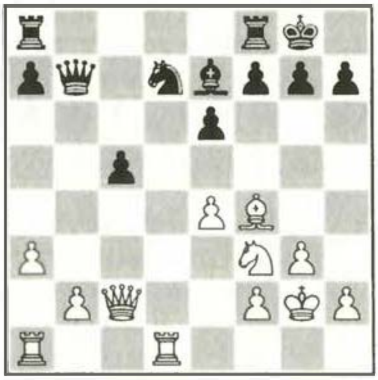
8...♗xf1 9.♖xf1

The capture with the king also comes into consideration: 9.♔xf1!? ♞xc3 10.♕xc3 0-0 (weaker is 10...♘d7 11.♕c6 0-0 12.g3 ♘f6 – 12...♖c8 13.♔g2 ♘b8 14.♕c4 c5 15.d5 exd5 16.exd5± – 13.♗g5! h6 14.♗xf6 ♗xf6 15.♔g2 and all the black pieces are catastrophically cramped) 11.g3:

- Black's problems are not solved by the aggressive 11...f5 12.♕b3 ♕c8 13.exf5 ♖xf5 14.♔g2 ♘c6 15.♖e1±, and the weakness of the e6-pawn gives White the advantage.

Likewise, after 11...f5 12.♕b3 the sharp 12...♕d7 also favours White: 13.♘e5 ♕d6 14.♗f4 g5 15.♘f7 ♕d7 16.♘xg5 ♗xg5 17.♗xg5 fxe4 18.♖e1! ♖f3 (18...♕d5 19.♕xd5 exd5 20.♖c1±) 19.♕c2 ♕xd4 20.♗e3 ♕e5 21.♗h6, when White regains his pawn and remains with the better pawn formation and bishop against knight in an open position.

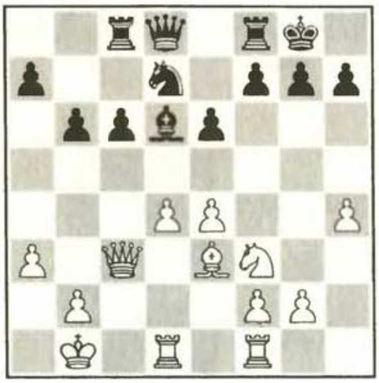
- 11...c5 12.dxc5 bxc5 (White gains a great advantage after 12...♗xc5 13.b4 ♗e7 14.♗b2 ♗f6 15.e5 ♗e7 16.♔g2 ♕c8 17.♖ac1 ♕xc3 18.♖xc3 ♘a6 19.♞d4 ♖fc8 20.♖hc1±) 13.♔g2 ♘d7 14.♖d1 ♕c7 15.♗f4 ♕b7 16.♕c2



White has an enduring initiative thanks to his somewhat better pawn structure.

9...♘xc3 10.♕xc3 0-0 11.♗e3

After lengthy hesitation I have given preference to 11.♗e3 as the main line of the analysis. But I am not sure that 11.♗f4!? is any weaker: 11...♗d6 12.♗e3 (the position becomes simplified after 12.♗g3 ♗xg3 – unconvincing is 12...c5 13.0-0-0 ♗xg3 14.hxg3 ♕e7 15.d5 exd5 16.exd5±, Javakhishvili-Xu Yuhua, Sochi 2008 – 13.hxg3 ♘d7 14.0-0-0 ♕e7 15.♖fe1 – 15.♔b1 c5= – 15...c5 16.d5 exd5 17.exd5 ♕d6 18.♘e5 ♘xe5 19.♕xe5 ♕xe5 20.♖xe5 ♖fe8 equal) 12...c6 (12...♘d7?! and now 13.e5 ♗e7 14.♕c6±, or 13.♕c6 e5 14.0-0-0±) 13.0-0-0 ♘d7 14.♔b1 ♖c8 15.h4



Exploiting his domination of the centre, White begins an attack on the opponent's king. 15...♘f6 (it is risky to create something for White to latch on to with 15...h6?!; I will give a variation illustrating White's attacking possibilities: 16.e5!? ♗e7 17.g4 b5 18.g5 h5 19.♘d2 ♘b6 20.♘e4 ♕d5 21.♘f6+! gxf6 22.gxf6 ♕e4+ 23.♔a1 ♘d5 24.♕d2; the direct 15...b5 leads to an inferior position after 16.♗g5 ♕b6 17.e5 ♗c7 18.♗e7 ♖fe8 19.♗c5±) 16.♕c2 ♞g4 17.♗g5 ♕d7 18.♖fe1± and White has complete control of the centre.

11...c6

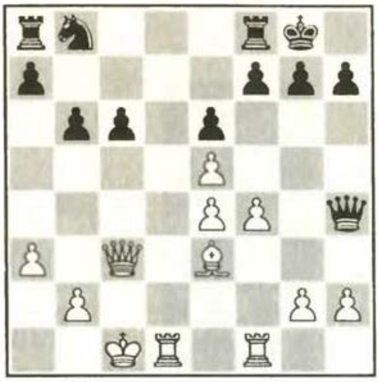
After 11...♘d7 12.♕c6! ♘f6 13.0-0-0 ♕e8 14.♘e5 ♗d6 15.♕xe8 ♖fxe8 16.f3, White seizes control of the key c6-point, with a clear advantage.

12.♘e5! Black has counterplay after 12.0-0-0 ♘d7 13.♔b1 ♖c8.

12...♗f6

After 12...♗d6 13.0-0-0 ♕h4 14.f4 ♕xh2 15.♕d2 White's attack is of course more important than the pawn.

13.0-0-0 ♗xe5 14.dxe5 ♕h4 15.f4



White has the advantage, thanks to his complete control of the only open file and the prospect of an attack on the black king. The greedy 15...♕xh2? loses quickly: 16.♕d2 ♕g3 (16...♘a6 17.♕f2+–) 17.♖f3 ♕h4 18.♖h3 ♕e7 19.♖dh1 h6 20.♖g3+–.

Let us briefly sum up:

With the original and little-studied development of his queen White sets Black perceptible problems. In a number of key positions White has several ways of fighting for the initiative, which is an indication of the variation's great potential. Also important is the psychological effect: in different lines of the variation Black encounters positions typical of the Queen's Gambit, the Catalan Opening, the Modern Benoni and even the Blumenfeld Gambit! 5.♕b3!? promises supporters of the variation a complicated strategic battle with the initiative on White's side.

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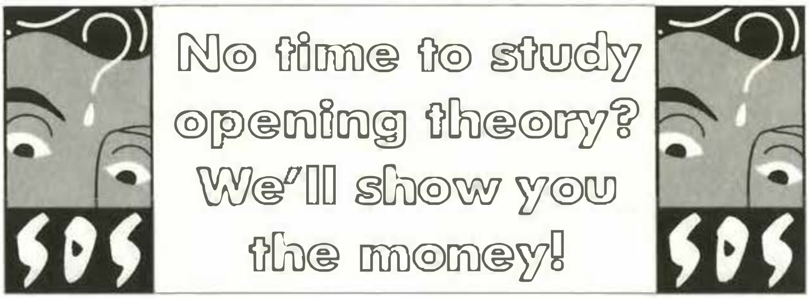
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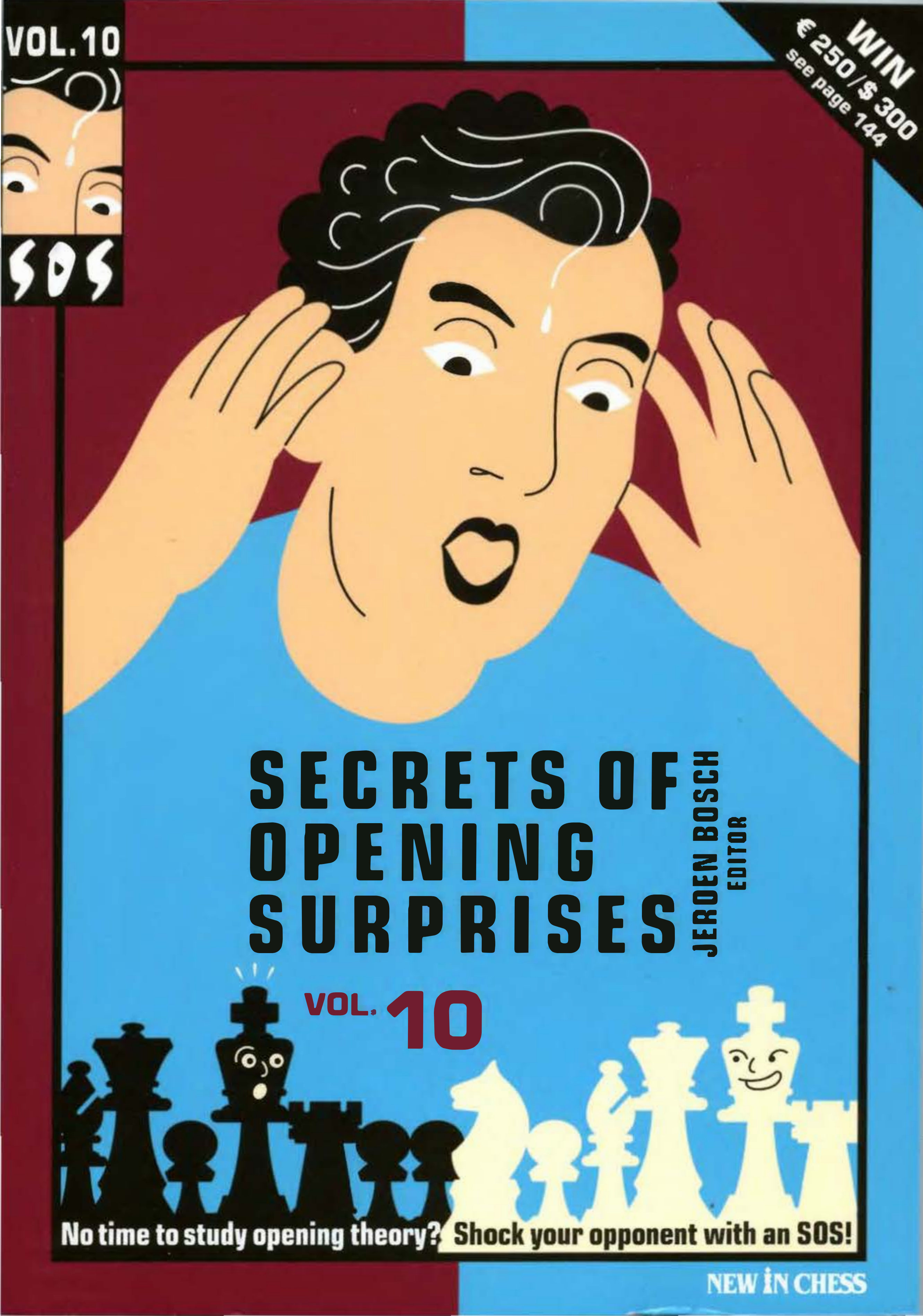

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SECRETS OF OPENING SURPRISES

JEROEN BOSCH
EDITOR

VOL. 10

No time to study opening theory? Shock your opponent with an SOS!

NEW IN CHESS

SOS – Secrets of Opening Surprises 10

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SECRETS OF
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10

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Igor Khenkin
Sergey Tiviakov
David Navara
Or Cohen
Jeroen Bosch

2009 New In Chess – The Netherlands

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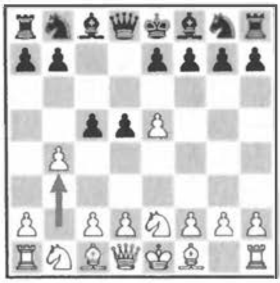
Jeroen Bosch

The SOS Files



Surtees-Houska after 4.b4!?

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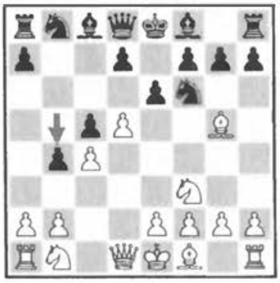
Dorian Rogozenco

The Blumenfeld Gambit



1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 c5 4.d5 b5 5.♗g5 b4

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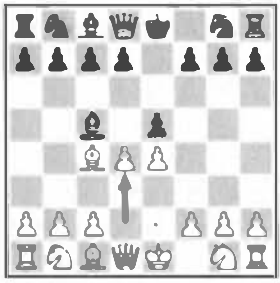
Jeroen Bosch

The Lewis Gambit



1.e4 e5 2.♗c4 ♗c5 3.d4

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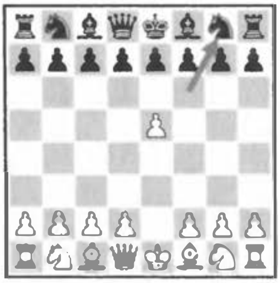
Dimitri Reinderman

The Retreat Variation



1.e4 ♘f6 2.e5 ♘g8!?

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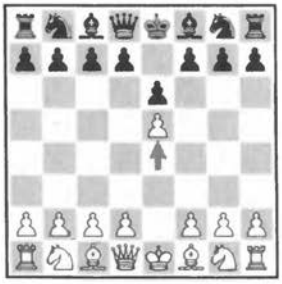
Adrian Mikhalchishin

Steinitz's Anti-French



1.e4 e6 2.e5

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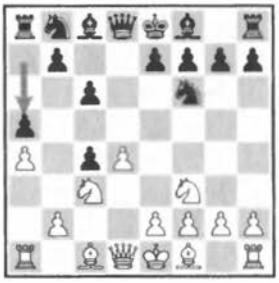
Arthur Kogan

Slav: the Bellon-Murey Variation



Why not echo 5.a4?

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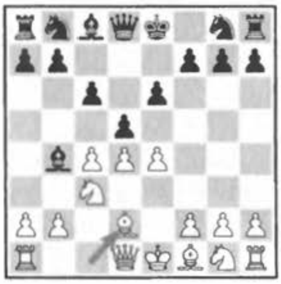
Jeroen Bosch

Slav: a Marshall Gambit of Sorts

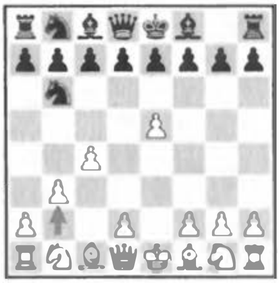


1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c6 4.e4 ♗b4 5.♗d2!?

CHAPTER 8 - page 60

Alexander Finkel

Queen's Fianchetto in the Alekhine



1.e4 ♘f6 2.e5 ♘d5 3.c4 ♘b6 4.b3

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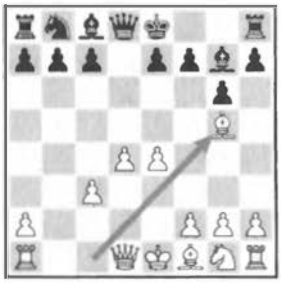
Igor Lysyj

Grünfeld Indian: Kruppa Variation



How about 7.♗g5!?

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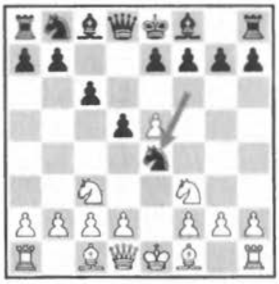
Igor Khenkin

SOS in a Flexible Caro-Kann



1.e4 c6 2.♘c3 d5 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘e4

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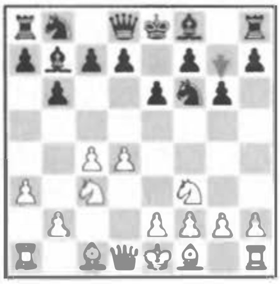
Sergey Tiviakov

Queen's Indian: Double Fianchetto



1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.a3 ♗b7 5.♘c3 g6

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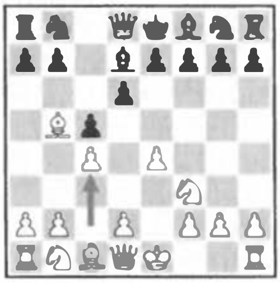
Adrian Mikhalchishin

Sicilian: Romanishin Variation



1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.♗b5+ ♗d7 4.c4!?

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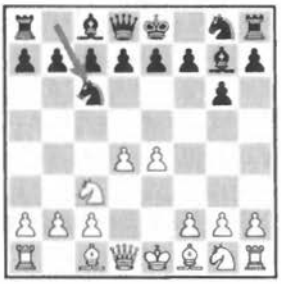
Jeroen Bosch

Modern Provocation



1.e4 g6 2.d4 ♗g7 3.♘c3 ♘c6

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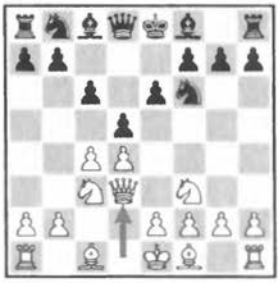
David Navara

Tricky Line vs the Slav



1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 e6 5.♕d3

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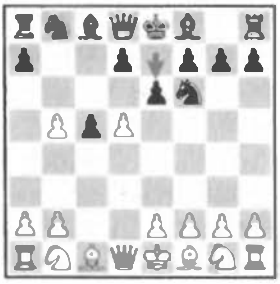
Alexander Finkel

Taking Chances in the Volga



1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5 4.cxb5 e6

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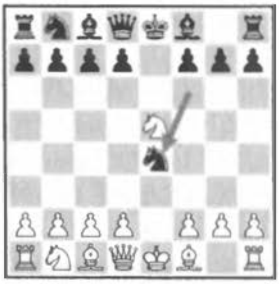
Or Cohen

Petroff for Beginners



Play the Damiano Gambit

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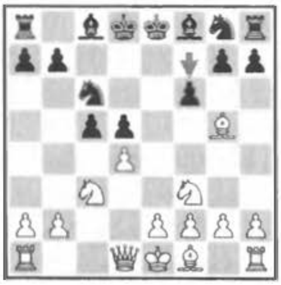
Jeroen Bosch

Winning Ugly in the Tarrasch



Gaining time with 6...f6

CHAPTER 1

Jeroen Bosch

The SOS Files

Readers Write – A Good Excuse

SOS-7, Chapter 3, p.25

We received a sympathetic letter from Wayne Gradl from the United States who paid a tribute to the late Dr Erich Marchand – an avid player of the O'Kelly Sicilian.
By referring to the game Hou Yifan-Movsesian, Wijk aan Zee 2008, he remarked that 6.♗g5 was worth looking at – directing us to the gem Shamkovich-Marchand of over three decades ago.

☐ **Leonid Shamkovich**
■ **Erich Marchand**
United States 1977

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 a6 3.♘c3 b5

3...e6 4.d4 cxd4 5.♘xd4 is the Kan Variation of the Sicilian – this was my recommendation in SOS-7 – thus demonstrating that 3.♘c3 is definitely not the refutation of the O'Kelly.

4.d4 cxd4

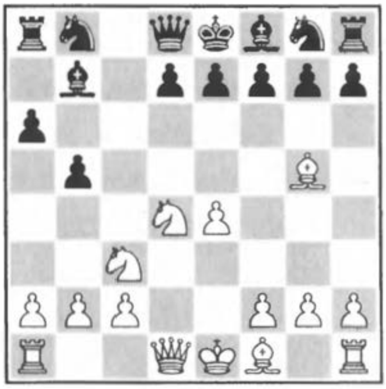
4...e6 is a speciality of Kurajica's – see SOS-7.

5.♘xd4 ♗b7

5...e6 would be my preference and that of Mr. Gradl's.

6.♗g5!?

Shooting into space and aiming to take on f6 should Black now proceed with 6...♘f6. 6.♗d3 e6 7.0-0 ♗c5 8.♘b3 ♝e7 9.e5 ♕c7 10.♖e1 f5!? was the afore-mentioned game Hou Yifan-Movsesian, Wijk aan Zee 2008.



6...♕a5?!

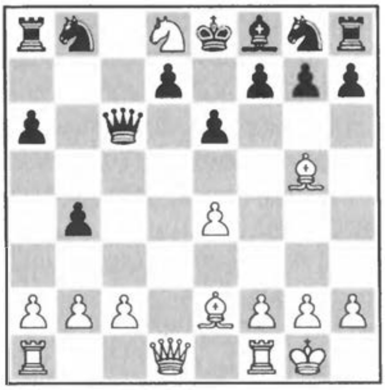
6...h6 7.♗h4 d6 is stronger (Sarwat-Csom, Cairo 1997) as Wayne Gradl remarked in his e-mail to us.
Csom had earlier tried the odd 6...f6?! 7.♗e3 e6 8.♕g4 ♘c6 9.♘xc6 ♗xc6 10.0-0-0 ♕a5 11.♔b1 ♘e7 12.♗d3±, Sax-Csom, Warsaw 1987.
6...g6 7.a4 b4 8.♘d5± is better for White according to an old analysis by Krnic and Cvetkovic.

7.♘b3 ♕b6 8.♗e2 e6 9.0-0 b4?

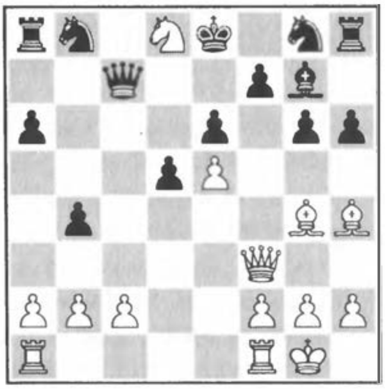
Trying to win material is very risky when so much behind in development.

10.♘a4 ♕c6 11.♘a5 ♕xa4 12.♘xb7 ♕c6 13.♘d8!

The star move! It is not often that a white knight ends up on d8 so early in the game to play havoc in the opponent's camp.



13...♕c7 14.♗h5!
Another lovely move. Shamkovich manages to coordinate his pieces perfectly.
14...g6 15.♕f3 d6
Or 15...f6 and now the prosaic 16.♗xf6 ♘xf6 17.♕xf6 gxh5 18.♕xh8 ♕xd8 19.♕xh7 is the easiest win.
16.♗g4! h6 17.♗h4 ♗g7 18.e5! d5



And now for the final onslaught:
19.♗xe6! fxe6 20.♘xe6 ♕b7 21.♘xg7+ ♕xg7 22.♕xd5 Black is helpless against the numerous threats.
22...♕a7 23.♖ad1 g5 24.e6 ♔f8 25.♕f3+
Intending to mate after 25...♔g7 26.♖d7+ ♘xd7 27.♕f7+. Black resigned.
Nowhere near the refutation of the O'Kelly, but Mr Gradl gave us the perfect excuse to show a lovely attacking game!

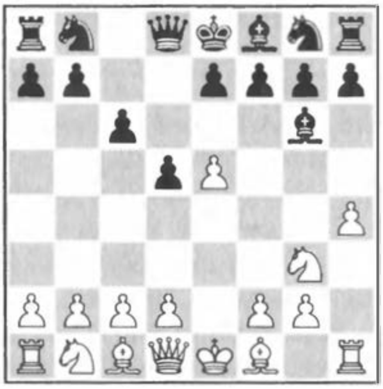
♕h5 in Short's Caro-Kann

SOS-8, Chapter 2, p.17

In SOS-8 Ruben Felgaer expressed his admiration for Nigel Short for playing 2.♘e2 versus the Caro-Kann. Short's contributions to the theory (and practice) of the Caro-Kann Advance, notably the 4.♘f3 line, are rather well-known. However, as Felgaer testifies, Short's games with 2.♘e2 are just as important for the evaluation of this SOS. The present game features one of the critical variations – notice the remarkable 8.♕h5. I have included a letter of on of our readers with an interesting suggestion for Black. By the way, see the end of this chapter for a great game with this 2.♘e2 Caro-Kann...

☐ **Ernesto Fernandez Romero**
■ **Keti Tsatsalashvili**
Los Llanos de Aridane 2008

1.e4 c6 2.♘e2 d5
2...♘f6!? was Hauchard's choice. Observe two players in their quest for originality: 3.♘bc3 (3.e5 ♘d5 4.d4 d6 and White's knight is a little awkward in what has become a type of Alekhine) 3...d6 (why not a Pirc or Philidor?) 4.g3 e5 5.♗g2 h5!? (more mundane were 5...g6 or 5...♗e7) 6.h3 h4 7.g4 g5!? 8.d4 ♘fd7 9.♗e3 ♗e7 10.♕d3 ♘f8 11.a4 (11.0-0-0) 11...♘g6 12.0-0 ♘a6 13.f3 ♘c7 14.♖fd1 ♘e6 15.d5 ♘ef4 16.♘xf4 exf4 17.♗d4 0-0 18.dxc6 bxc6 19.♕c4 ♕e8 20.♘e2 ♘e5 and play was about equal in Cornette-Hauchard, France 2008.
3.e5 c5
This is the main line, as the customary 3...♗f5 (after 2.d4 and 3.e5 that is) is customary believed to run into trouble after 2.♘e2.
However, let's have a look at **3...♗f5 4.♘g3 ♗g6 5.h4**



Now 5...h6 6.h5 ♗h7 7.e6! fxe6 8.d4 is one of the main ideas behind 2.♘e2.

However, our reader Christian Köpke wonders if **5...h5!** (the exclam is his) isn't stronger: 6.e6 fxe6 7.d4 ♕d6 8.f4 ♘h6 9.♗d3 (9.♘xh5 ♘f5 10.g4 c5!) 9...♘f5 and here Köpke observes that Black is much better off compared to the line starting with 5...h6, and wonders if White has enough compensation (referring to the game Petraki-Kadimova, Athens 2007). I agree with his verdict.

I would personally prefer 8.♗d3!? ♗xd3 (worse is 8...♗f7 9.0-0 ♘d7 10.♖e1 0-0-0 11.♕e2 g6 12.♘d2 ♗g7 13.♘f3, with typical compensation, Rohonyan-Zdebskaja, Kramatorsk 2002) 9.♕xd3, but admittedly Black can play 9...e5 here.

On move 6 alternatives for 6.e6 hardly seem to work either:

– Thus, 6.♗e2!? e6 7.♘xh5 (7.d4 c5 transposes to a line in the Advance Variation that is known to be equal) 7...♗xh5 8.♗xh5 g6 9.♗f3 ♖xh4 10.g3 ♖xh1+ 11.♗xh1 promises nothing for White.

– While, 6.♘c3!? e6 7.♘ce2 may be interesting, but 6...d4 7.♘ce2 ♕d5! looks much better – not 7...d3 8.cxd3 ♗xd3 9.e6!.

4.d4 ♘c6

4...e6 5.♘d2 ♘c6 6.♘f3 ♘ge7 7.c3 was Short-Lein, Hastings 1979/80. See SOS-8.

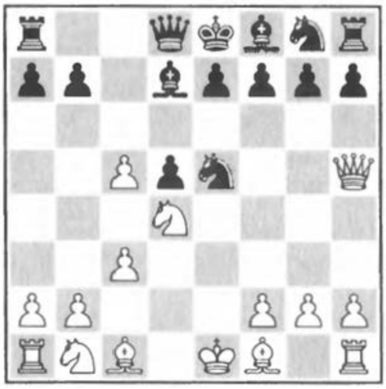
5.c3 ♗f5

5...cxd4 6.cxd4 ♗f5 7.♘g3 (7.♘bc3 e6 8.♗e3 ♞ge7 9.♘f4! was indicated by Felgaer as White's best way towards an advantage) 7...♗xb1 (7...♗g6) 8.♖xb1 e6 9.a3 f6 10.exf6 (10.♗d3) 10...♞xf6 11.♗e3 ♗d6 12.♗e2 0-0 13.0-0 ♕d7 14.♗d3 ♕f7 15.♖c1 ♖ac8 16.b4±, Chuprov-Ionov, Moscow 2008.

6.dxc5! ♘xe5

Here 6...e6 7.b4! a5 8.♞d4! axb4 9.cxb4 ♕c7 10.♗b5 was very good for White in Short-Gulko, Horgen 1995.

7.♘d4 ♗d7 8.♕h5!



The most ambitious move. White takes advantage of the fact that the bishop is on d7 leaving pawn d5 uncovered. 8.♗e2 e6 9.b4 was Short-Speelman, Chester 1979.

8...♘c6

8...♘g6 is also met by 9.♕xd5 (Vukovic-Markovic, Jahorina 2001). 8...♕c7?! 9.♘b5 ♕b8 10.♗f4 ♘d3+ 11.♗xd3 ♕xf4 12.♘d2 ♘f6 13.♕e2 a6?? 14.♘d6+ 1-0 was the rapid game Felgaer-Cuartas, Barcelona 2006.

9.♕xd5 ♘f6 10.♘xc6!?

White's idea is to transpose straight into a favourable ending (or queenless middlegame). Instead, 10.♕g5 e5 11.♘xc6 ♗xc6 was Felgaer-Annaberdiev, Turin Olympiad 2006. As Felgaer analyses in SOS-8, he could now have obtained a nice advantage with the greedy 12.♕xe5+.

10...♕c7

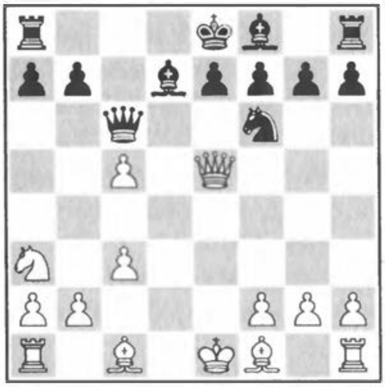
If 10...♘xd5 then 11.♘xd8 ♖xd8 12.♗c4±,

while 10...♗xc6 11.♕xd8+ ♖xd8 12.b4!? is also slightly better for White.

11.♕e5

The point is that Black must now take back on c6 with the queen. 11.♕g5!? ♗xc6 12.♗f4.

11...♕xc6 12.♘a3

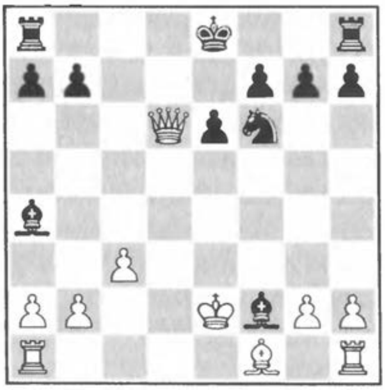


White is ready to gain more time. The position looks like a pleasant 2.c3 Sicilian.

12...♕e4+

White has a plus after 12...♘g4 13.♕g3 ♕xc5 14.h3.

However, 12...e6 13.♘b5 (13.b4) provides food for thought. See for example: 13...♗xc5 14.♘c7+ ♔e7 15.♘xa8 ♗xf2+ 16.♔d1 ♖xa8 17.♔c2. On move 14 in this line White can also try: 14.♗e3 ♗xe3 15.♘d6+ and now: 15...♕xd6 (15...♔f8 16.fxe3) 16.♕xd6 ♗xf2+ 17.♔d1 ♗a4+ 18.♔e2 (or 18.b3 ♖d8 19.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 20.bxa4 ♘d5 with great compensation) 18...♗b5+ 19.♔f3 ♗c6+ 20.♔e2 looks like a spectacular way to circumvent the Sofia rules if you are willing to draw quickly...



13.♕xe4 ♘xe4 14.♗e3

White has a very pleasant ending. Black might win back the pawn but it will cost him.

14...♖c8 If 14...e6 then 15.♘b5 or 15.c6 ♗xc6 – 15...bxc6 16.♘c4± – 16.♘b5!. **15.c6!? ♗xc6 16.f3 ♘f6 17.♗xa7** Now White is a sound pawn up. In the game Black quickly goes completely astray. **17...g5? 18.♗d4 ♖g8 19.♘b5 g4 20.f4** Playing it safe. Also possible is 20.♘a7 gxf3 21.gxf3. **20...g3? 21.♘a7 ♖d8 22.♘xc6 bxc6 23.a4** Here comes the passer. White is completely winning. **23...♘d5 24.hxg3 ♖xg3 25.♔f2 ♖g8 26.g3 f6 27.♖e1 ♖b8 28.b4 ♔d8 29.a5 ♖a8 30.♖xh7** And Black had enough. **1-0**

Updating Gajewski

SOS-8, Chapter 11, p.91

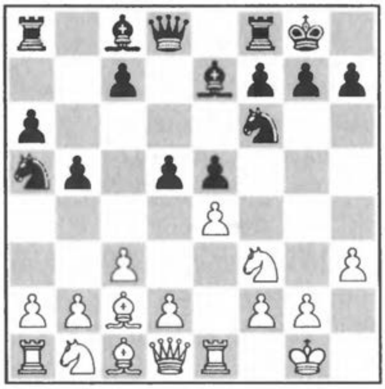
The 2008 Olympiad took place in Dresden and finished in a resounding victory for Armenia. This major event always produces great chess. I would like to take the opportunity to update Grzegorz Gajewski's amazing SOS-idea in the Ruy Lopez Chigorin: 10...d5!.

☐ **Sarunas Sulskis**
■ **Hrvoje Stevic**
Dresden Olympiad 2008

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♗e7 6.♖e1 b5 7.♗b3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.h3 ♘a5

9...♖b8!? is another idea from Gajewski – see SOS-6.

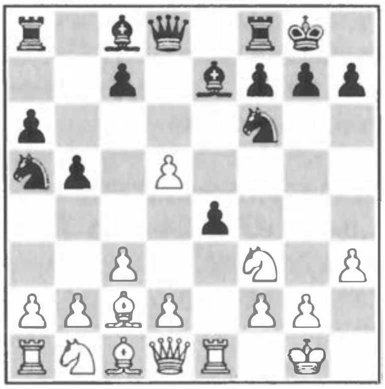
10.♗c2 d5!?



This is Gajewski's great find in a standard position where Black has always played 10...c5 automatically. Combining two respectable Ruy Lopez lines – the Marshall Attack and the more sedate Chigorin – is pretty outrageous and its inventor deserves the highest praise from a creative point of view. Gajewski first played it in 2007, and his idea immediately caught on, as I was able to report in SOS-8. The results are pretty good for Black and the popularity of 10...d5 has not waned in 2008. Croatian grandmaster Hrvoje Stevic is one of Gajewski's most loyal supporters.

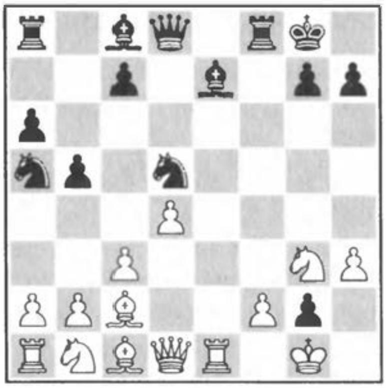
11.d4

Comparatively innocent are 11.d3 dxe4 12.dxe4 ♕xd1 13.♖xd1 and 11.♘xe5 dxe4.The text is critical, as is the acceptance of the gambit pawn with 11.exd5. After 11...e4! we are at a crossroads:



– 12.♗xe4 ♘xe4 13.♖xe4 ♗b7 14.d4 ♖e8!? (or 14...♗xd5 15.♖e1 ♗d6) 15.♗f4 ♘c4 16.b3 (16.♖e2 ♗xd5 was Adams-Carlsen, Khanty-Mansiysk 2007. Instead of 16...♗xd5, 16...♕xd5! 17.♘bd2 ♘xb2 18.♕c2 ♗a3! is given as unclear by Alexey Kuzmin in New In Chess Yearbook 88) 16...♘b6 17.c4 bxc4 18.bxc4 ♘xc4 19.♘c3 ♘b6!? (19...♘d6 20.♖e1 ♘b5 Kaplan-Ragger, Yerevan 2007) 20.♕b3 ♖b8 21.♖e5!? ♗a8 22.♘g5!? ♖f8!? was played in the fifth round of the Olympiad – Carlsson-Stevic, Dresden 2008. The game ended in a draw.

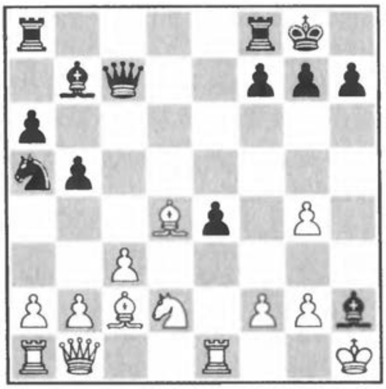
– 12.♘g5 ♘xd5 13.♘xe4 f5! 14.♘g3 f4 15.♘e4 f3 16.d4 fxg2 17.♘g3



17...g6!? (a novelty. Instead, 17...♕d6 was played in the stem game V.Kuznetsov-Gajewski, Pardubice 2007, see SOS-8 for an analysis, other alternatives on move 12 are also mentioned there) 18.♗e4 ♗xh3 19.♗h6 (White cannot win a piece with 19.♗xd5+ ♕xd5 20.♖xe7 because of 20...♖xf2! when White loses after, say 21.♔xf2 ♖f8+ 22.♔g1 ♖f1+ 23.♘xf1 gxf1♕+ 24.♕xf1 ♗xf1 25.♔xf1 ♕h1+ and so on) 19...♖f7 20.♕d3 (20.♗xg2 ♗xg2 21.♔xg2 ♗g5! should win for Black who is ahead in a development, but more importantly can easily get at White's weak kingside) 20...♕d6 21.♘d2 ♗f8 and Black was better in Dabo Peranic-Stevic, Bizovac 2008.

11...♘xe4

The alternative is 11...dxe4 12.♘xe5 c5 13.♗e3 (13.♗xe4 ♘xe4 14.♖xe4 ♗b7 and Black has a lot for the pawn. SOS-8 now covers 13.♗g5 ♗b7, which seems fine for Black) White's attention therefore later turned to 13.♗e3 which has received quite a few practical tests: 13...♗b7 14.♘d2 ♕c7 15.♕b1! (this is probably best. The alternative 15.♗f4 cxd4 16.♘xe4 ♘d5! 17.♗g3 f5 18.♘g6 ♕c6 19.♘xf8 ♖xf8 20.♕xd4 ♘c4! was very sharp in Z.Almasi-Stevic, Plovdiv 2008 – Black won) 15...cxd4 16.♗xd4 (16.cxd4 ♗b4 17.a3 ♗xd2 18.♗xd2 ♖fd8 is fine for Black, Smikovsky-Lavrov, Novokuznetsk 2008). The next few moves are forced: 16...♗d6 17.♘g4 ♘xg4 18.hxg4 ♗h2+! 19.♔h1



– Bad, now is 19...♕f4? 20.♘f1 losing the bishop, Baramidze-Dzhuraev, Gaziantep 2008.

– Gajewski himself has played the risky 19...f5!? 20.gxf5 ♗f4 21.♘f1 (21.♘b3) 21...♖xf5 22.♗xe4 ♖h5+ 23.♔g1 ♗h2+ 24.♘xh2 ♕xh2+ 25.♔f1 ♕f4 26.♗xb7 ♘xb7 27.♕d3 ♘d6, and Black was better but did not convert his advantage in Kononenko-Gajewski, Pardubice 2008.

– 19...♗f4 20.♘xe4 ♖fe8 21.g5 ♘c6! (21...♖e6? 22.♘c5! ♖xe1+ 23.♕xe1 ♗xg5 24.♘xb7 ♘xb7 25.♕e4 g6 26.♖e1 gave White a huge edge in Korneev-De Jong, Porto Mannu 2008) 22.♗e3 ♗xe3 23.♖xe3 ♘e5 and Black still has enough compensation for the pawn, as was borne out in the game Kotronias-Estremera Panos, Liverpool 2008: 24.♕d1 ♘c4 25.♖e2 ♘xb2 26.♕e1 ♖e6 27.f3∓ ♕f4? 28.♘f6+! gxf6 29.♖xe6 fxe6 30.♕xe6+ ♔f8 31.♖e1! and after 31...♕xg5 32.♕e7+ ♔g8 33.♕xh7+ ♔f8 34.♕e7+ White has a perpetual (but no more).

Note that even 11...c5 is playable: 12.dxc5 ♘xe4 13.♘xe5 ♗xc5 14.♘d3 ♗b6 15.♗e3 ♘c4 16.♗xb6 play is about equal and a draw was agreed in Kotsur-Meister, Satka 2008. The remarkable move order in the game was 9...♘a5 10.♗c2 c5 11.d4 d5!?.

Let us return to the capture on e4 with the knight, as played by Stevic in the game.

12.♘xe5 f6 13.♘d3

After 13.♘f3 ♘c4 14.♗xe4 dxe4 15.♖xe4 ♗b7 Black has typical ‘Marshall’ compensation for the pawn. In fact, after 16.♖e1 ♖e8 17.♘bd2 ♘b6 18.b3 ♕d7 White saw nothing better but to return the pawn with 19.c4 ♗xf3 20.♘xf3 bxc4 21.bxc4 ♘xc4 22.♕b3 ♕b5 23.♗f4 ½-½, Pavasovic-Stevic, Sibenik 2008.

13...♗d6 14.♗f4

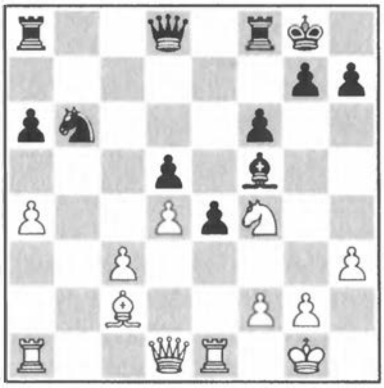
One round later Zoltan Almasi played 14.♘d2 here. After 14...♖e8 (one possible improvement is 14...♗b7!?, but not 14...♘xd2?! 15.♕h5! f5 16.♗xd2±) 15.♕h5 ♗b7 16.♘f1 ♕d7 (16...♘c4) 17.♗f4 ♘c4 18.♗xd6 ♕xd6 19.♘c5! ♗c6 20.b3! ♘a3 21.♗xe4 dxe4 22.♖ac1 g6 23.♕h6 a5 24.♘g3 f5 25.♘e2 White controls the darks squares, and has more influence in the centre, and was therefore clearly better in Almasi-Brunello, Dresden 2008.

14...♘c4 15.b3 ♘b6 16.♘d2!? ♗f5

White has compensation for the pawn after 16...♘xc3 17.♕f3.

17.♘xe4 dxe4 18.♗xd6 cxd6 19.♘f4 d5

White already has slight problems here. Black has a space advantage and pawn c3 could be weak.
20.a4 bxa4 20...♕d6!?. **21.bxa4**



21...g5!?
Grabbing even more space. The normal move was 21...♕d6.
22.♘e2 ♗g6 23.a5 ♘c4 24.♗b3 ♖c8
White now has to take the powerful knight.
25.♗xc4 ♖xc4 26.♖a4 ♖xa4! 27.♕xa4 ♗e8! 28.♕a3 ♗b5
Stevic has managed to keep control over square c4. Black has a pleasant game and won after a long game. I give the remaining moves with some light annotation:
29.♘c1 f5!? 29...♕c7. **30.♘b3 g4!** Playing for an immediate attack. 30...f4 was also playable. **31.hxg4 fxg4 32.♖e3 ♕h4 33.g3 ♕h3 34.c4!** The only defence – 34.♕c1 ♖f5 just mates. **34...♗xc4 35.♘d2 ♗b5** After 35...♖xf2 36.♔xf2 ♕h2+ 37.♔e1 ♕g1+ White grovels on with 38.♘f1 ♕xf1+ 39.♔d2. **36.♕c5! ♕h5 37.♖xe4** Now the chances are almost equal again. **37...♕g5 38.♕e7?! ♕xe7 39.♖xe7 ♖c8** After the exchange of queens only Black can win. **40.♘b3 ♖c2 41.♘c5 ♗e2! 42.♔g2 ♔f8 43.♖e3 ♔f7 44.♘d7 ♖d2 45.♘e5+ ♔f6 46.♔g1 ♔f5 47.f3 h5!? 48.fxg4+ hxg4 49.♘c6 ♗f3 50.♔f1 ♗e4 51.♔e1 ♖a2 52.♖b3 ♗f3 53.♖e3 ♗e4 54.♖b3 ♖g2 55.♘b4 ♗f3 56.♘xa6 ♖xg3 57.♘c5 ♖g1+ 58.♔d2 ♖d1+ 59.♔e3 ♖e1+ 60.♔f2 ♖e2+ 61.♔f1 ♖a2 62.♖e3 ♔f4 63.♖e7 ♖xa5** and Black won on move 78.

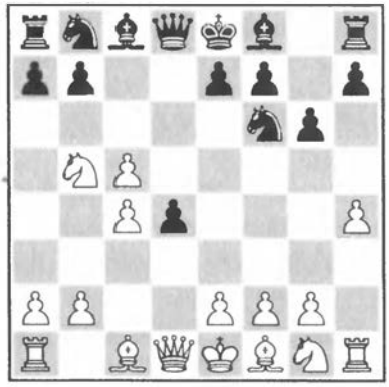
Flank Attack in Correspondence Chess

SOS-3, Chapter 3, p.28

We often receive letters from avid SOS readers. This time a letter from German International Correspondence Master Thomas Neuer drew our attention to a computer novelty in the 4.h4 Grünfeld.

☐ **Thomas Neuer**
■ **Michael Klengel**
Germany cr 2008

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.h4 c5 5.dxc5 d4 6.♘b5



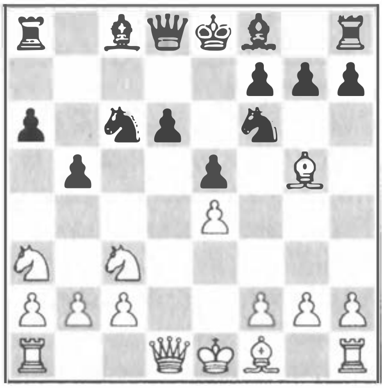
6...a6!? For 6...♘c6 see SOS-3. The text is a novelty that forces an ending. **7.♘xd4 e5 8.♘b3 ♕xd1+ 9.♔xd1 ♘bd7** This is perhaps slightly inaccurate. 9...♘c6 looks playable too. **10.c6!** To damage Black's pawn structure. **10...bxc6**

11.g3!? ♘e4 12.♗e3 ♘df6 13.♗g2 ♗f5 14.♔c1 0-0-0 15.♗xe4 ♗xe4?! Slightly dubious according to our correspondent, who prefers 15...♘xe4. **16.f3 ♗f5 17.♘h3 ♗e6 18.♗g5** and White managed to convert his slight endgame advantage. However, it is clear that 6...a6 deserves attention.

A Sveshnikov Sac

Another SOS-reader, Martin Rieger, has suggested a daring sacrifice in the Sveshnikov – adding several pages of analysis. After corresponding with Sveshnikov expert (and regular SOS author) Dorian Rogozenco we are not convinced of its correctness. But why not show you Rieger's idea?

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 e5 6.♘db5 d6 7.♗g5 a6 8.♘a3 b5



9.♘axb5 axb5 10.♗xb5 ♗b7! This is what Rogozenco considers the main option for Black. 10...♗d7 11.0-0 ♗e7 12.♗xf6 gxf6 (12...♗xf6! Bosch, planning 13.♕xd6 ♘d4) 13.♘d5 ♖b8 14.a4 was Rieger's main line. We will now follow Rieger's analysis: **11.♗xf6 ♕xf6 12.0-0 ♕d8 13.♕d5 ♖c8 14.a4 ♗e7 15.a5 0-0 16.a6 ♗a8 17.♗xc6** To advance with the queenside pawns. **17...♗xc6 18.♕d3** And now rather than Rieger's 18...♖b8 Rogozenco notes that Black has **18...f5! 19.exf5** 19.♘d5 fxe4 20.♕xe4? ♖f4 should win for Black. **19...d5** with an excellent game.

So Martin Rieger's idea doesn't work in the end, but remember: he who dares wins!

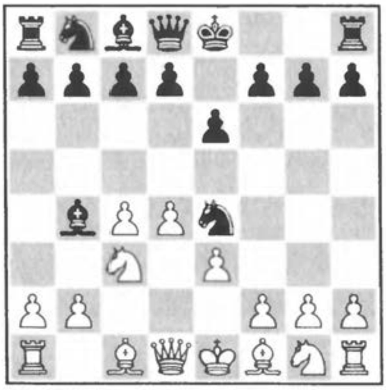
He who dares wins!

SOS-7, Chapter 6, p.57

The Rubinstein Variation is one of the most solid ways of fighting against the Nimzo-Indian. Yet, here too, it is possible to surprise your opponent with a SOS! – as Dorian Rogozenco demonstrated in SOS-7. Let's take a look at a few recent examples in this exciting line.

☐ **Artur Vasilov**
■ **Evgeny Shaposhnikov**
Kazan 2008

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.e3 ♘e4!?



Black moves the same piece twice in the

opening and thus sins against the rules of normal opening conduct. Yet, there is something profoundly logical too in increasing the pressure on c3 and occupying the e4-square. After White's best reply

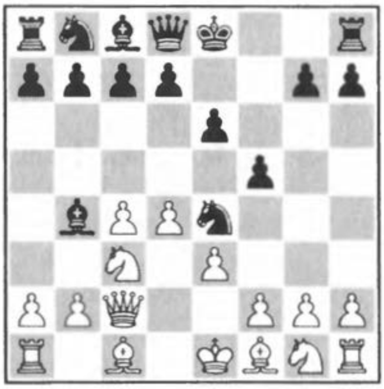
5.♕c2

Black faces an important choice. He can either try to preserve his knight with 5...f5 (when he must be ready to sacrifice a pawn in certain lines); or he can 'cash in' now by taking on c3, thus doubling White's pawns and obtaining the typical Nimzo-Indian structure without even relinquishing his dark-squared bishop.

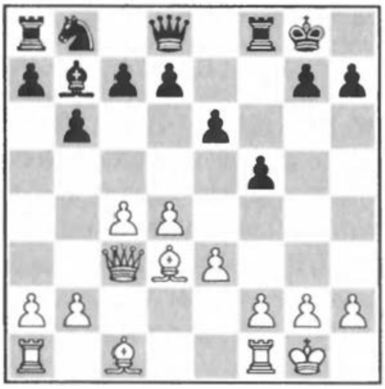
5...♘xc3!?

Did I tell you that this comes at a price too? Black loses time and is best-advised to retreat his bishop along the a5-e1 diagonal to the odd square a5. Meanwhile White has a strong centre and can freely develop his kingside. While this is clearly risky, strategically this is a very ambitious set-up for Black. For, if Black has the time to develop ...d6, ...♘d7, ...0-0, and can contain White's centre with ...c5, and possibly ...e5, then he may well be better.

Let's take a brief look at the alternative 5...f5 (see for all the details SOS-7)



6.♗d3 0-0 (6...♗xc3+ 7.bxc3 0-0 is a decent alternative. Note that 8.♗xe4 fxe4 9.♕xe4 is answered by 9...d5 10.♕d3 ♕g5!? with compensation due to the pressure on the light squares) 7.♘e2 (this is the best move. 7.♗xe4 fxe4 8.♕xe4 d5 9.♕d3 b6 again gives compensation along the light squares, while 8...♗xc3+ 9.bxc3 d5 transposes to the previous note. Black is fine after 7.♘f3 b6 8.0-0 ♗xc3 9.bxc3 ♗b7 as Rogozenco explains in SOS-7) 7...b6 8.0-0 ♗xc3 9.♘xc3 ♘xc3 10.♕xc3 ♗b7



– 11.♗d2 d6 12.♕c2 ♘d7 13.e4 ♕h4!? 14.♖ae1 ♘f6 15.exf5 ♗xg2! is a trick to remember – Black forces perpetual check: 16.♔xg2 ♕g4+ 17.♔h1 ♕f3+ 18.♔g1 ♕g4+ 19.♔h1 ♕f3+ ½-½ Verzhansky-Carron, Winterthur 2008.

– 11.f3 d6 12.b3 ♘d7 13.♗b2 ♕g5 14.♖ae1 ♘f6 15.♗c1 ♕h5 16.♕c2 ♖ae8 is a standard-type of position that is perhaps slightly better for White, Khairul-Sadorra, Kuala Lumpur 2007.

– For 11.b4 d6 12.♗b2 ♘d7 see SOS-7.

6.bxc3 ♗a5 7.♗d3

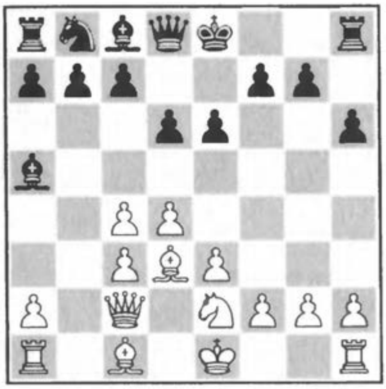
White chooses the most flexible set-up with ♗d3 and ♘e2.

In practice 7.♘f3 is also played. After 7...d6 8.♗d3 ♘d7 9.♗d2 (9.0-0 h6 10.♘d2 c5 11.f4 0-0 12.♘e4 ♗c7 remember this move it is part of Black's general plan–he wants to play ...b6 without cutting off his bishop, Rendboe-De Verdier, Borup 2008) 9...h6 10.e4 e5 (10...c5) 11.0-0 0-0 12.♗e3 c5

13.♘d2 (White prepares f4, but overlooks(?) a neat tactical trick) 13...♗xc3! 14.♕xc3 cxd4 15.♗xd4 exd4 16.♕xd4 ♕f6 17.♕xf6 ♘xf6 18.♖fb1 ♘d7 19.♗f1 ♘c5 with equal chances, Fish-Turov, Kallithea 2008.

7.♗a3 d6 8.♘f3 ♘d7 9.♖d1 ♕e7 10.♗d3 c5 11.0-0 ♗c7 12.♘d2 h6 13.f4 0-0 14.♖f3 b6 was Alexandrov-V.Popov, Moscow 2006. Black won, see SOS-7.

7...d6 8.♘e2 h6



This is always necessary before Black can castle.

9.0-0 ♘d7

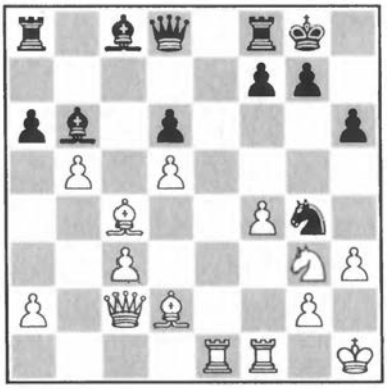
Inaccurate is 9...0-0?! 10.e4 c5 11.f4 ♘c6? 12.d5 ♘b8 13.f5 exf5 14.exf5 f6 15.♘f4 with a huge positional advantage in Korobov-Fier, Beijing rapid 2008.

10.f4

After 10.e4 Black should not play 10...e5?! (10...c5), when 11.f4 c5 12.h3 cxd4 13.cxd4 ♗b6 14.fxe5 ♘xe5 15.♔h1 ♘c6 16.♗b2 was clearly better for White in Cossin-Bruned, Cappelle la Grande 2008.

10...c5 This is the correct way to counter in the centre.

11.d5 11.e4!?. **11...♘f6 12.e4 ♗c7** The bishop belongs on c7, much like in the Snake Benoni, to prevent e4-e5. **13.♗d2 0-0 14.♖ae1 a6** Shaposhnikov seeks counterplay with ...b5. **15.♘g3** 15.♔h1. **15...b5!** With this flank action Black is able to release the pressure in the centre. **16.cxb5 exd5 17.exd5 c4!** Black opens the a7-g1 diagonal with tempo. **18.♝xc4 ♗b6+ 19.♔h1 ♘g4** 19...axb5. **20.h3** Black is fine after 20.♘f5 ♗xf5 21.♕xf5 ♘f2+, or 21...♕h4 22.h3 ♘f2+.



20...♘f2+

Black can force a draw if he wants to. The grandmaster wants to win of course. Inserting 20...axb5 does not help: 21.♗xb5 ♘f2+ 22.♔h2 ♘g4+. Best was 20...♕h4!, when White must play 21.♘f5 (21.♘e4 f5!–+; 21.♖f3 ♘f2+ 22.♔h2? ♘xh3!–+). After 21...♗xf5 (21...♞f2+ 22.♔h2 ♞g4+) 22.♕xf5 ♘f2+ 23.♔h2 Black now has the neat 23...g6 24.g3 (24.♕d7 ♖ac8 is complicated but somewhat better for Black; 24.♕c2? ♘g4+ 25.♔h1 ♕g3–+) 24...♕d8! 25.♕c2 ♕c8!, when h3 and bishop c4 are both under attack.

21.♔h2 ♘g4+ 22.♔h1 ♗f2?

Laudable as the attempt is to avoid the draw, objectively, this is too risky. Black could still play 22...♕h4!

23.♖xf2 ♘xf2+ 24.♔g1 ♘xh3+ 25.gxh3 ♕h4

For his sacrificed material Black has destroyed White's protective pawn shield. The minor pieces are strong though in this position.

26.♔f2 axb5 27.♗xb5 ♕xh3 28.♖h1 ♕g4 29.♝e2

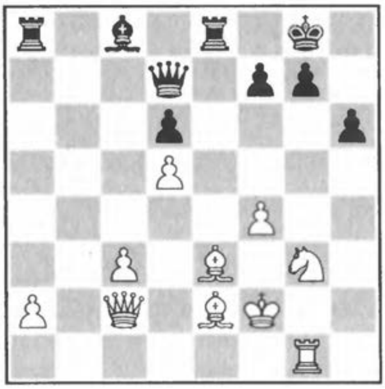
29.a4 was another very safe move, as

29...♗d7 is answered by 30.♕d1!.

29...♕d7 30.♖g1?

The idea to occupy the g-file is not bad. But with such a king it is important to have good piece coordination. This was most easily achieved with 30.♗e3 ♖e8 31.♗d4!.

30...♖e8 31.♗e3??



Ironically, White has only himself to blame. With bishop and rook on the same diagonal he is asking for: **31...♖xe3! 32.♔xe3 ♕a7+ 33.♔f3 ♕xg1** and White resigned after **34.♗b5 ♗b7 35.c4 ♖a3+ 0-1**

Spectacular Draw in Fianchetto Spanish

SOS-2, Chapter 16, p.121

Grandmaster Julian Radulski is a big expert in the Ruy Lopez fianchetto line starting with 3...g6. In the present game he spectacularly improves upon one of his own games to achieve – a draw!

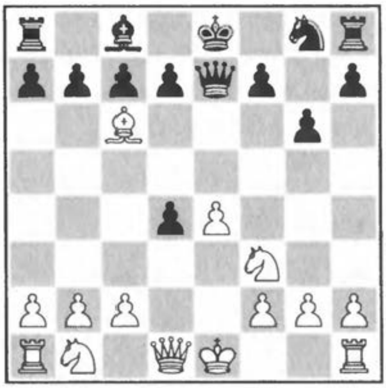
☐ **Vasil Spasov**
■ **Julian Radulski**
Borovets 2008

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 g6 4.d4

This is the most forcing line against 3...g6. See SOS-2 for other options.

4...exd4 5.♗g5 ♗e7 6.♗xe7 ♕xe7 7.♗xc6

7.0-0 ♘f6 8.e5 ♘h5! see The SOS-Files of SOS-3, p.14.



7...♕b4+!?

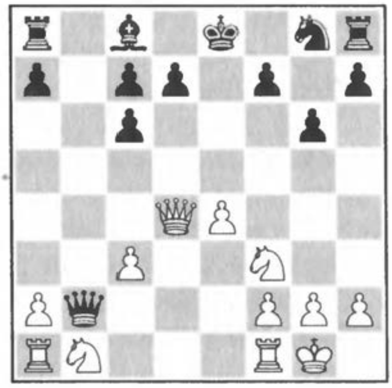
More interesting than 7...dxc6.

8.c3 ♕xb2 9.♕xd4 bxc6

Not 9...♕xa1? 10.0-0♘f6 11.e5! dxc6 12.exf6 with a killing attack – Flear.

10.0-0

But not 10.♕xh8?? as 10...♕c1+ 11.♔e2 ♗a6+ mates!



10...♕xa1!?

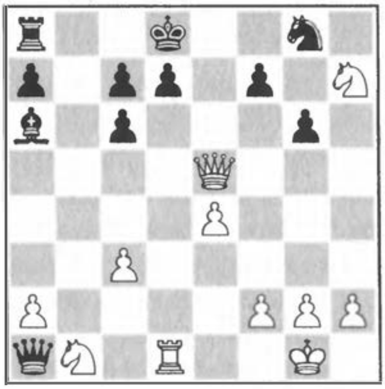
The latest development in this line. Instead, 10...♗a6 11.♕xh8 ♗xf1 12.♕xg8+ ♔e7 13.♕xa8 ♗d3! 14.h3 ♕xa1 15.♕xa7 ♗xb1 16.♕d4 ♗xa2+ 17.♔h2 ♗e6 was Zozulia-Radulski, Marseille 2004. In The

SOS Files of Volume 31 quoted Glenn Flear who had noted upon the publication of his article in SOS-2 that instead of 11.♕xh8 the improvement 11.♘bd2! is very strong for White.

11.♕xh8 ♔f8 12.♘g5

Nothing is promised by the other knight leap 12.♘e5 ♕xa2 13.♕xh7? (13.♘g4 ♗a6 14.♘h6 was the right way to hold the balance) 13...d6! 14.♘xc6?! (14.♘xg6+ fxg6 15.♕xc7 was the best chance) 14...a5! (14...♗a6? 15.♘b4) 15.f4 (15.♖e1 ♗d7 16.♘d4 ♖b8 wins on the spot) 15...♗a6 (or 15...♗d7) 16.♖e1 ♗d3 17.e5 ♗e4! 0-1, Bjarnason-Radulski, Le Touquet 2007.

12...♗a6! 13.♘xh7+ ♔e7 14.♕e5+ ♔d8 15.♖d1



15...♗e2!

Radulski's novelty which is superior to 15...♖b8 16.♕g7 ♔e7 17.♕e5+ ♔d8 18.♕g7 ½-½, Kulovana-Golcman, Znojmo 2006. For, instead of taking the draw, White can win with 17.♕d4! which threatens mate and protects the rook, so that White can develop his b1-knight. For example: 17...d6 18.♘a3 ♕b2 (18...♕xa2 19.♕xa7+−) 19.e5, with a winning attack.

16.♕g7

Now 16.♖e1 can finally be met by 16...♖b8 and White has to acquiesce into the repetition with 17.♕g7 ♔e7 18.♕e5+.

16...♔e7 17.♕e5+ ♔d8 18.♕g7 ♔e7 19.♖e1!? ♖b8! and the players agreed a draw after **20.♕e5+ ♔d8 21.♕g7 ♔e7 22.♕e5+ ♔d8 23.♕g7 ♔e7 24.♕e5+ ½-½**

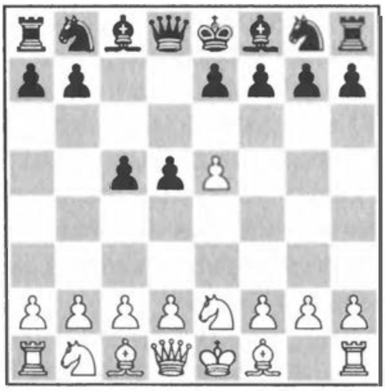
SOS Prize goes to ROT

SOS-8, Chapter 2, p.17

Mike Surtees is well-known in Great Britain for his idiosyncratic opening ideas. He has a name for those ideas as well: Revolutionary Opening Theory or ROT. The seventh round of the British Championship of 2008 saw Surtees combating the Caro-Kann with 2.♘e2. This SOS idea, championed by Nigel Short, was covered by Ruben Felgaer in SOS-8. In the hands of Mike Surtees this Caro-Kann line is a deadly weapon. Jovanka Houska fell victim to a terrible slugfest that rightly won the tournament's beauty prize – and the SOS Prize!

☐ **Mike Surtees**
■ **Jovanka Houska**
Liverpool 2008

1.e4 c6 2.♘e2 d5 3.e5 c5



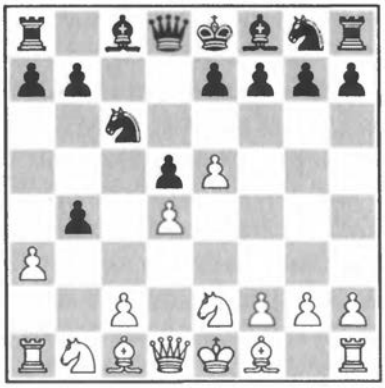
4.b4!?

4.d4 is covered extensively by Ruben Felgaer in SOS-8. I'd like to quote him on this Wing Gambit: 'I confess that on several occasions I was tempted to play 4.b4 and only due to 4...♘c6! I never played it.' Jovanka Houska probably wasn't aware of Felgaer's verdict – at least she accepted the gambit pawn with

4...cxb4 5.d4

White can also play the immediate 5.a3.

5...♘c6 6.a3



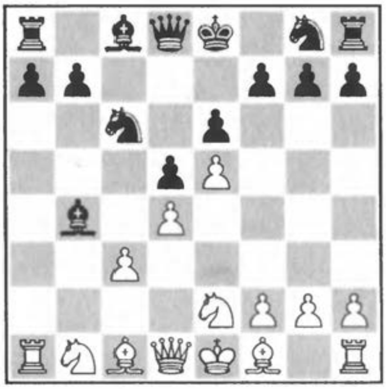
6...e6

Closing in her Caro-Kann bishop – the pawn structure is French now. So, we may compare this Wing Gambit to that against the French. Some SOS-readers will remember that 1.e4 e6 2.♘f3 d5 3.e5 c5 4.b4 was extensively covered in SOS-1. Black has lost a tempo in the present game (c7-c6-c5). On the other hand, White's king's knight is developed to g3 (two moves) and not to f3. While f3 is the natural square for the knight (overprotecting e5 and d4, as well as the important squares g5 and h4), as Surtees demonstrates the knight has opportunities on g3 too – h5 is a sunny pasture enabling jumps to the opponent's kingside.

It is worth investigating 6...♗f5, while 6...f6!?, as in the game Bertholee-Peelen, Amstelveen 1994, is also interesting and may lead to enormous complications.

Finally, 6...bxa3 7.c3 e6 8.♘f4 ♘ge7 9.♗xa3 (9.♗d3 ♘g6 10.♘h5) 9...♘g6 10.♘h5 ♗d7 11.♗d3 ♗xa3 12.♘xa3 0-0 13.0-0 was Surtees-Arkell, Bradford rapid 2002, White had enough for the pawn (but later lost).

7.axb4 ♗xb4+ 8.c3



8...♗a5

This is always a tough decision. On the one hand, the bishop is placed actively on the queenside, and, more importantly, enables Black to develop her kingside as quickly as possible. On the other hand, the bishop will be sorely missed on the kingside as a defender. Should Black retreat to e7, then her king is safer, but developing the king's knight and castling becomes a serious problem. It is one of those catch-22 situations where you can't seem to win. So, while with hindsight, in view of what happens in the game, you could easily criticize Houska here, I don't think that this would be fair – and it also wouldn't reflect the real dilemma that Black is facing here.

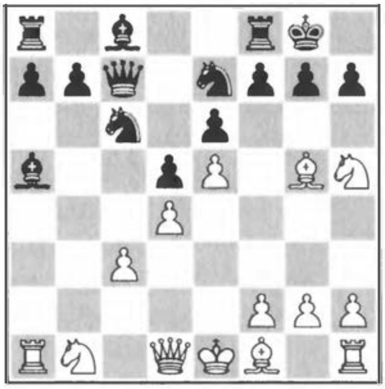
8...♗e7 and now practice has seen:

- both 9.♘f4 g6 10.♗d3 a6 11.0-0 ♚f8!?, Rosito-Hernandez, Trelew 1995, and
- 9.♘g3 ♗d7 10.h4 (10.♗d3!) 10...f5 11.♗d3 a6 12.♘d2 ♘h6! 13.♘f3 ♘f7, Richmond-Lee, England tt-2 1998/99.

9.♘g3 ♘ge7 10.♘h5

This is the big advantage of having the knight on g3 instead of on f3. The beast is attacking g7 (and f6). Houska now castles into it, which is perhaps an almost losing decision. However, if 10...♖g8 was forced here, then the blame really rests elsewhere (8...♗a5, 6...e6, 4...cxb4, or even 1...c6? – just kidding!) for 10...♖g8 is not a move that any human should consider.

10...0-0 11.♗g5! ♕c7



12.♖xa5!

Very imaginative! White gets rid of the annoying pressure along the a5-e1 diagonal, before he sacs his way into the kingside. It was also possible to play 12.♘xg7! when after 12...♔xg7 13.♗f6+ ♔g8 14.♗d3! (or 14.♕d2 ♖d8 15.♕g5+ ♔f8 16.♗b5) 14...♖d8 15.♗xh7+ ♔f8 16.h4 the h-pawn just marches on.

12...♕xa5 13.♘xg7! f5

This Trojan horse cannot be accepted: 13...♔xg7 14.♗f6+ ♔g8 15.♕g4+! ♘g6 16.♕h5! ♘xd4 17.♗d3! followed by ♕h6.

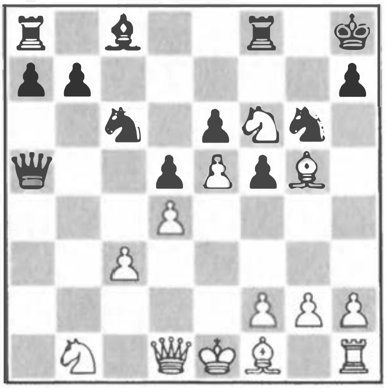
14.♘h5

14.exf6 was also much better for White, but Surtees is understandably tempted by a knight jump to f6.

14...♘g6

14...♕c7 was the best defensive try.

15.♘f6+ ♔h8?



Black had to take the knight. Now the beast continues on his prowl.

16.♘xh7! ♕c7

16...♔xh7 17.♕h5+ ♔g7 18.♕h6+ ♔f7 19.♕h7+ ♔e8 20.♕xg6+ ♖f7 21.♗e2 is a pretty straightforward line. White wins heavy material.

17.♘xf8 ♘xf8 18.♗f6+ ♔g8

By this stage White is of course completely winning. He is a pawn up with a huge positional advantage. Surtees finishes in style, by going all-out for the mate.

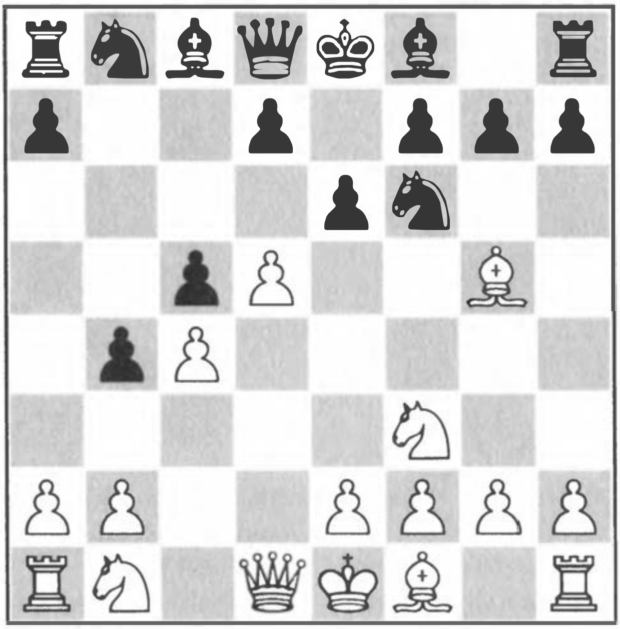
19.g4! f4 20.♗d3 b5 21.g5 b4 22.♕h5 ♘e7 23.g6

Black resigned.

CHAPTER 2

Dorian Rogozenco

The Blumenfeld Gambit



1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 c5 4.d5 b5 5.♗g5 b4

In the Blumenfeld Gambit Black offers a pawn sacrifice in order to quickly develop his pieces. Accepting the sac usually leads to sharp positions, requiring from White both theoretical knowledge and very precise play. Therefore declining the offer with the move 5.♗g5 became extremely popular in practice, since it helps White to achieve simple and clear positions. The point is that after the most frequent answers from Black, namely 5...exd5 6.cxd5 d6 7.e4 a6 8.a4, and 5...♕a5+ 6.♕d2 ♕xd2+ 7.♘bxd2 White has clear and simple play indeed – in most cases with a long-lasting and safe plus.

It's true that after 5.♗g5 Black cannot (by sensible means) keep the game as sharp as he would like, but with the move 5...b4 he has at his disposal a possibility to keep play strategically complex and complicated. From the statistical point of view 5...b4 is not very popular, which suits our SOS-purposes of course. However, I would like to stress that the advance of the b-pawn has some strong adherents, like GM Lev Alburt and IM Jean-René Koch and it has been played occasionally by several grandmasters.

The move 5...b4 is strategically deeper than one might think. First of all it takes away the natural square – c3 – from the white knight. Secondly, and even more importantly, Black intends to prove with 5...b4 that the white bishop went too early to g5 and is rather misplaced there. Apart from the fact that with the black bishop on e7 White will always have to watch out for the tactical possibility ♘f6xd5, Black is often happy to close the centre completely (with d7-d6 and e6-e5). After that Black can use the exposed position of the bishop on g5 to achieve the exchange of the dark-squared bishops, which in such pawn formations favours Black strategically.

In most of the games White answers 5...b4 almost inevitably with **6.e4** (Variation II). However, in his attempts to fight for an advantage White should probably try to change something in the pawn structure. The strongest players that were facing 5...b4 in practice preferred to advance the a-pawn quickly, therefore it is important to have a close look at **6.a3** (Variation I) as well.

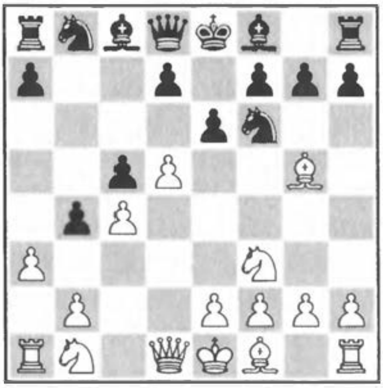
6.dxe6 fxe6 7.e4 looks like a reasonable option for White too, but this was played in practice only once. The game Chabanon-Koch, France 1998, continued 7...♕c7 8.e5 ♘g4 9.♗f4 ♘c6 10.♘bd2 g6 11.♘e4 ♘gxe5 12.♘xe5 ♘xe5 13.♗g3 ♗e7 14.♕d2 0-0 White doesn't have sufficient compensation for the pawn.

On move 10 it is probably better to play 10.h3 when after 10...♘h6 (10...♘gxe5? 11.♘xe5 ♘xe5 12.♕h5+) 11.♗d3 (after 11.♗xh6 gxh6 White loses pawn e5) 11...g6 12.0-0 ♗g7 13.♖e1 0-0 14.♗h2 ♝b7 15.♘bd2 ♘f5 White at least keeps the material balance, although his control over square d4 secures Black sufficient play here as well.

Variation I – 6.a3

☐ **Joel Lautier**
■ **Jean-René Koch**
Besançon 1999

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 c5 4.d5 b5 5.♗g5 b4 6.a3



6...h6 7.♗h4

In the correspondence game Chapman-Henri, 1987, White played more cautiously: 7.♗xf6 ♕xf6 8.♕c2 ♘a6 9.e4 ♗d6 10.♘bd2 ♖b8 11.♖b1, but Black obviously enjoys a pleasant position. The game continued 11...0-0 12.♗d3 e5 13.0-0 ♗c7 14.♘e1 d6 15.g3 bxa3 (I would prefer Black after 15...♝h3 16.♘g2 ♖b6) 16.bxa3 ♗a5 17.♖xb8 ♘xb8 18.♘b3 ♗xe1 19.♖xe1 ♗h3 20.♘d2 ♘d7 21.♖b1 ♖b8 22.♖xb8+ ♘xb8 23.♕a4 ♕e7 and a draw was agreed.

7...exd5

This concrete approach is the idea behind the previous move. Black isolates the pawn d5 and wants to win it (e2-e4 will be answered by g7-g5, unpinning the knight, followed by ♘xe4).

Nisipeanu's 7...a5 is hardly the most optimal decision: the advance of the a-pawn is not a priority for Black, while the drawbacks are obvious – 7...a5 doesn't contribute to Black's development and it weakens many squares. Ivanchuk used it in the following way: 8.axb4 cxb4 9.♘d4 ♗e7 10.♘b5 d6 11.c5 and the Ukrainian GM emerged victorious in the rapid game Ivanchuk-Nisipeanu, Khanty-Mansiysk 2007.

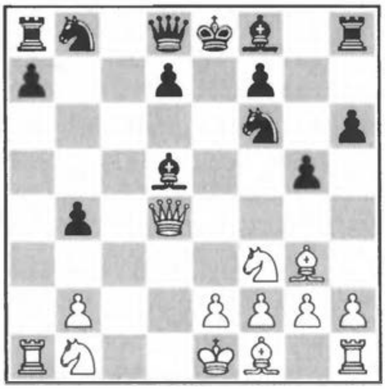
8.cxd5 ♗b7 9.axb4 cxb4 10.♕d4

Please note that 10.d6 doesn't save the pawn: 10...♕b6 11.♗g3 ♘e4.

10...g5 11.♗g3

An interesting alternative is 11.d6, threatening a check on e5. Then strong looks 11...♗d5 (another option is 11...♗g7 12.♗g3 0-0 13.♕xb4 ♗xf3 14.gxf3 ♘c6 15.♕d2 ♖e8 with compensation for the pawn) 12.♗g3 (12.♕e5+ now brings nothing, in view of 12...♗e6) 12...♘c6 13.♕e3+ ♗e6 14.♘d4 ♗g7 and if 15.♘f5 then 15...♘h5! 16.♘xg7+ ♘xg7 and Black will soon develop the initiative with ...♕f6, ...♘f5 etc.

11...♗xd5



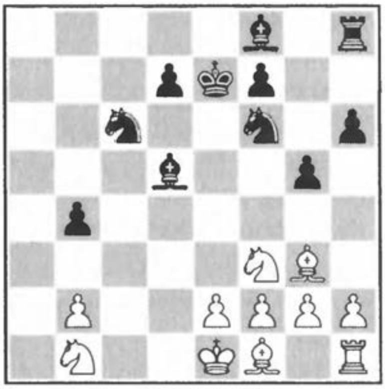
12.♖xa7

After this Black achieves a clear advantage. Other moves are:

- 12.h4 ♘c6 13.♕e3+ ♕e7 14.♕xe7+ ♔xe7 15.hxg5 ♘e4 16.♗f4 ♗g7 which is clearly in Black's favour as well.
- The best for White is 12.♘e5 ♘c6 13.♘xc6 dxc6 14.h4 and now Black can choose between 14...♖g8, with a complicated position, where Black's chances are by no means worse, or 14...♘e4, which leads to a draw: 15.♕xh8 (after 15.♕e5+ ♕e7 16.♕xh8 ♘xg3 17.fxg3 ♕e3 Black has a decisive attack) 15...♗b3, threatening mate on d1. White must repeat moves: 16.♕e5+ ♗e7 17.♕h8+ ♗f8.

12...♖xa7 13.♕xa7 ♘c6 14.♕e3+ ♕e7 15.♕xe7+ ♔xe7!

A surprise, the king remains in the centre!



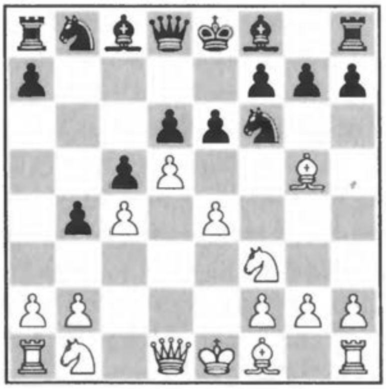
Now the bishop comes to the long diagonal, and everything works out perfectly for Black. White will soon give up material in order to complete development, but this won't help much: Black is already winning. I will give the remaining moves without notes.

16.e3 ♗g7 17.♘bd2 ♖a8 18.♗d3 ♖a1+ 19.♗b1 ♘e4 20.♔e2 ♘xd2 21.♘xd2 ♗xg2 22.♖d1 ♗xb2 23.♘b3 ♖a3 24.♘c5 ♗h3 25.♗e4 ♗c3 26.♗d6+ ♔e8 27.♖b1 ♗g4+ 28.f3 ♖a2+ 29.♔d3 ♘a5 30.♖d1 ♗h3 31.♗d5 ♖f2 32.♗g3 ♖f1 33.♖xf1 ♗xf1+ 34.♔c2 ♘c4 35.♗f2 ♘b6 36.♗b3 d5 37.e4 d4 38.♗g3 ♘c4 39.♗f2 ♘a3+

White resigned.

Variation II – 6.e4

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 c5 4.d5 b5 5.♗g5 b4 6.e4 d6



Subvariation A – 7.♘bd2

☐ **Pavel Tregubov**
■ **Jean-René Koch**
Belfort 2002

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 c5 4.d5 b5 5.♗g5 b4 6.e4 d6 7.♘bd2

In M.Gurevich-Alburt, Philadelphia 1989, White played 7.a3 here. Then 7...h6 8.♗xf6 (after 8.♗h4?! g5 9.♗g3 ♘xe4 White must sweat a lot to prove compensation for the pawn) 8...♕xf6 9.♕c2 ♘d7 10.axb4 cxb4 11.c5 (White correctly tries to use the weaknesses of opponent's queenside, otherwise he can easily end up being worse) 11...exd5 12.♗b5 (Gurevich mentions that 12.exd5 dxc5 13.♗b5 ♗d6 leads to an unclear position) 12...dxe4 13.♕xe4+ ♕e7 14.♘bd2 d5 15.♕xe7+ ♗xe7 16.♗c6 ♖b8 and now instead of 17.0-0 ♗xc5 18.♖fe1+ ♔f8 19.♗xd5 ♗b7, which was equal and led to a draw, Gurevich indicated that White could have obtained an advantage with 17.♞b3. However, all this is irrelevant from our point of view, since instead of 12...dxe4 Black could transpose into the double-edged position mentioned by Gurevich with 12...dxc5, when White has nothing better than 13.exd5 ♗d6.

7...♗e7

Perhaps 7...h6!? is also worth exploring.

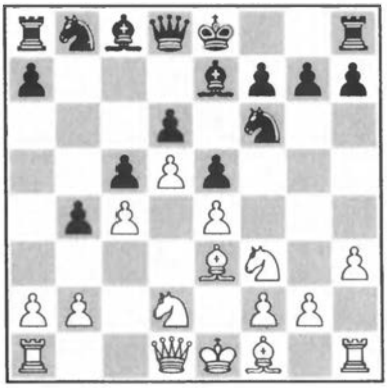
8.h3

Only with this move can White fight for an advantage: White prepares the retreat of the bishop to e3.

– 8.♗f4?! 0-0 9.♗d3 e5 10.♗g3 ♘h5 is more than Black can usually dream of in such structures, Orr-Conquest, Dublin 1991.

– 8.♗d3 e5 (8...♘xd5? is premature due to 9.exd5 ♗xg5 10.dxe6 fxe6 11.♘xg5 ♕xg5 12.♗e4 d5 13.cxd5 exd5 14.♘f3, winning) 9.a3!? (a positional pawn sacrifice. The alternatives are harmless: 9.♗e3 ♘g4∓; 9.♗xf6 ♗xf6=) 9...bxa3 10.♖xa3 0-0 11.♕a1 ♘xd5 (11...a6 as in Bonin-Alburt, Philadelphia 1989, is not really necessary. After 12.0-0 ♘xd5 13.cxd5 ♗xg5 14.♘xg5 ♕xg5 15.♘c4 ♕d8 16.♖b3 a5 17.f4! White succeeded to create an attack on the kingside, although he misplayed it and lost) 12.cxd5 ♗xg5 13.♖xa7 ♖xa7 14.♕xa7 ♗a6 (14...♘a6!?) 15.♗xa6 ♗xd2+ 16.♘xd2 ♕a5 17.0-0 ♕xd2 with equal chances.

8...e5 9.♗e3



9...a5

I am not sure about this advance of the a-pawn. The standard plan 0-0, ♘e8, g6, ♘g7 and f5 looks like a decent option. The move a2-a3 can always be met with ♘a6. For instance: 9...0-0 10.a3 ♘a6!? (10...bxa3 11.♖xa3 ♘a6 followed by ♕b6 might be even better) 11.♗d3 ♘e8 12.0-0 g6 13.♗h6 ♘g7, with a complicated strategical game.

10.♗d3 ♘bd7 11.♘f1 a4

11...♘h5!?.

12.♘g3

Black now made a bad positional mistake with **12...a3?**

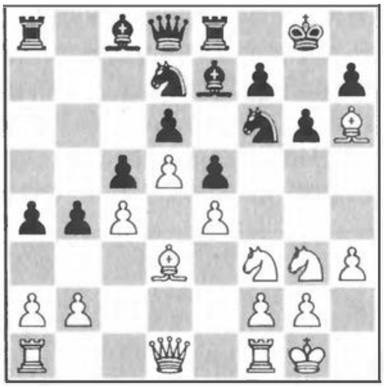
This allowed White to open the queenside conveniently: 13.bxa3 ♖xa3 14.♗c1 ♖a6 15.a3 g6 16.0-0 h5 17.♗d2 bxa3 18.♕c1 h4 19.♘e2 ♘h5 20.♖xa3 ♖xa3 21.♕xa3 0-0 22.♘c3 f5 23.♖e1, and here it became clear that Black has difficulties to create threats on the kingside.

Instead of 12...a3 I recommend:

12...g6 13.0-0 0-0

Black plans ...♘e8-g7, followed by f7-f5.

14.♗h6 ♖e8

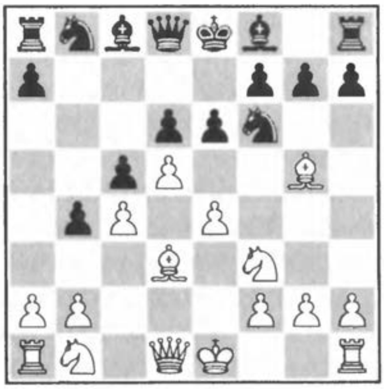


White can't open the queenside, while Black will prepare the advance f7-f5. 15.♗c2 is answered by 15...♘b6. Black plans next to continue ♗e7-f8, with reasonable chances in a strategically complex position.

Subvariation B – 7.♗d3

☐ **Natalia Zhukova**
■ **Atanas Kolev**
Athens 2008

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 c5 4.d5 b5 5.♗g5 b4 6.e4 d6 7.♗d3

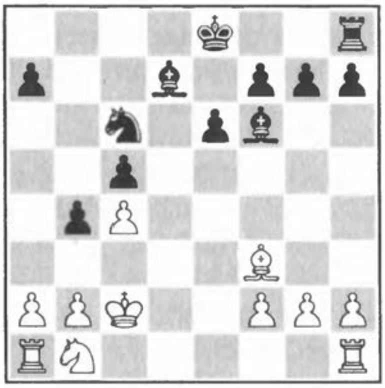


7...♗e7

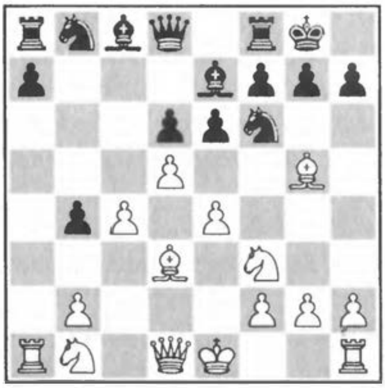
Notice that Black is not in a hurry to close the centre with 7...e5, which would be strongly met with 8.a3. It makes sense for Black to keep the tension for one or two more moves, since in case of an early a2-a3 it is sometimes useful for Black to have the possibility to open the centre.

8.dxe6

- In case of 8.e5 Black has an attractive exchange sacrifice: 8...dxe5!? 9.d6 ♛xd6 10.♗xf6 ♗xf6 11.♗e4 ♛xd1+ 12.♚xd1 ♗d7 13.♗xa8 e4 14.♔c2 (14.♘fd2? ♗xb2 15.♘b3 ♗a4) 14...exf3 15.♗xf3 ♘c6, with good compensation.



- Another important move is 8.a3. Then 8...0-0 9.axb4 cxb4



And now:

– after 10.0-0 the most accurate is 10...a5, and if 11.♘bd2, then 11...♘xd5 12.cxd5

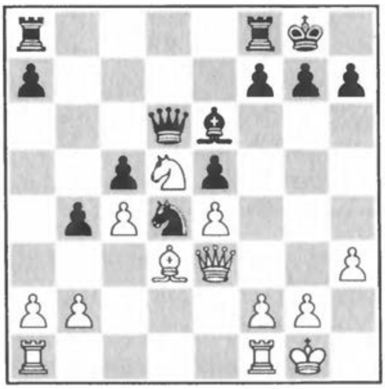
♗xg5 13.♘xg5 ♕xg5 14.♘c4 exd5 15.exd5 ♘d7 16.♘xd6 ♕f6 17.♘c4 ♘c5 with even chances.

– While 10.dxe6 ♗xe6 11.♘d4 ♗d7 12.♘d2 ♘c6 13.♘xc6 ♗xc6 14.0-0 ♘d7 15.♗e3 ♘c5 16.♘b3 a5 17.♘d4 ♗b7 18.♗c2 ♗f6 19.f3 ♗a6 was about equal in Chabanon-Koch, Bischwiller 1999.

8...♗xe6 9.♘bd2 ♘c6 10.h3 0-0 11.♘f1

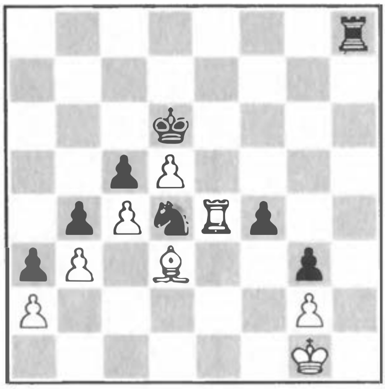
Zhukova wants to spare a tempo by transferring the knight to e3 before castling. This changes little: Black is well developed and his chances are already slightly preferable. The same holds for 11.0-0 ♘d7 12.♗e3 ♗f6.

11...♘d7 12.♗xe7 ♕xe7 13.♘e3 ♕f6 14.♕d2 ♘de5 15.♘xe5 dxe5 16.♞d5 ♕d8 17.0-0 ♕d6 18.♕e3 ♘d4



Both sides arranged their army almost identical, with the difference that Black can exchange his bishop for the opponent's centralized knight, while White can't do that. The Bulgarian grandmaster demonstrated in the course of the game that this factor is decisive. I will give the remainder without notes.

19.f4 ♗xd5 20.exd5 exf4 21.♕xf4 ♕xf4 22.♖xf4 f5 23.♖e1 g6 24.♖e7 ♖f7 25.♖e5 ♔f8 26.♖f1 ♖e8 27.♖xe8+ ♔xe8 28.♖e1+ ♔d7 29.♔f2 a5 30.♔g3 ♖f8 31.♔f4 h6 32.h4 ♔d6 33.♗b1 a4 34.♔g3 ♖a8 35.♔f4 g5+ 36.hxg5 hxg5+ 37.♔g3 a3 38.b3 ♖h8 39.♔f2 f4 40.♗d3 g4 41.♖e4 g3+ 42.♔g1



42...f3 43.gxf3 ♖h2 44.♖f4 ♖xa2 45.♗f1 ♖f2

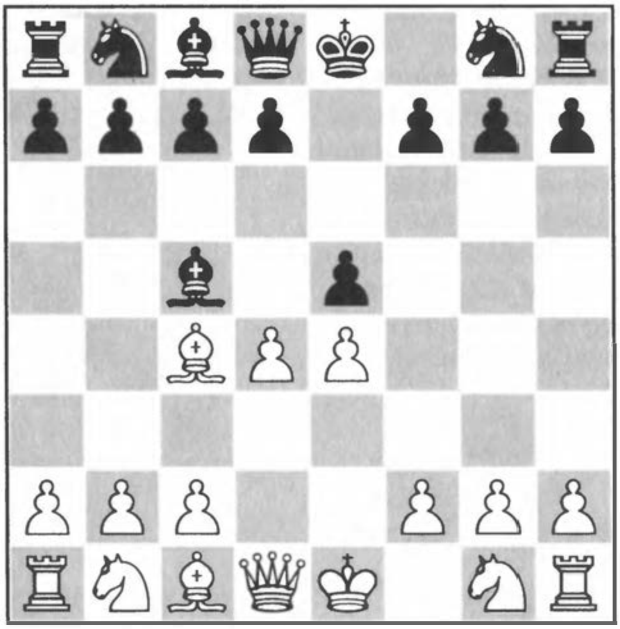
White resigned.

In conclusion, I believe that 5...b4 is a good way to meet 5.♗g5 in the Blumenfeld. It is played considerably less frequently than other moves and might catch your opponent unprepared. Another important factor is that in spite of its apparent simplicity the move 5...b4 leads to complicated and little analysed positions, which require from White a lot of energy and efforts to handle them well.

CHAPTER 3

Jeroen Bosch

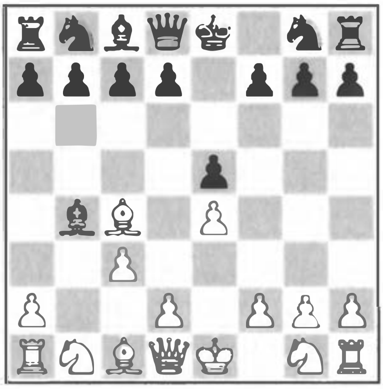
The Lewis Gambit



1.e4 e5 2.♗c4 ♗c5 3.d4

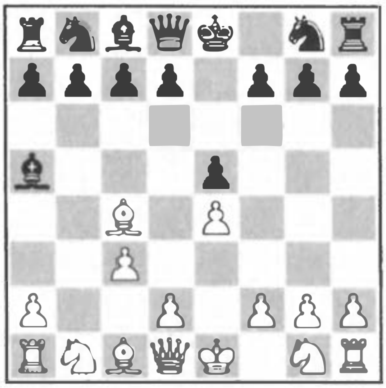
1.e4 e5 2.♗c4 ♗c5
This symmetrical defence is a pretty decent answer to the Bishop's Opening. Now 3.♘f3 ♘c6 transposes to the Italian Game, while 3.♘c3 leads to the Vienna. However, if you want to shock your opponent right from the start (and are willing to take a chance) then why not play
3.d4!?
There goes a valuable central pawn, you might think, but before you turn the page in disgust, please note that 3...exd4 allows 4.♗xf7+, while 3...♗xd4 is met by 4.♘f3, and White will get the bishop and an edge in development in an open position.
According to Benjamin and Schiller (in *Unorthodox Openings*, Batsford 1987) 3.d4 ought to be named after William Lewis (1787-1870) who was one of England's strongest players in that era. Clearly, White is wielding a double-edged sword, but his practical chances are really quite good.
Before we take a detailed look at 3.d4 I would like to present another great way to surprise your opponent, viz. the 'Evans move' 3.b4. Naturally, Black does not have to accept the challenge (we are no longer in the 19th century) and can play the solid 3...♗b6, but it makes sense to take the pawn.
After 3...♗xb4 4.c3 (the witty 4.f4 is known as the McDonnell Double Gambit. It is not to

be recommended because of the strong reply 4...d5!) we are at a crossroads.



Black has to decide where to put his bishop:

- 4...♗f8?! is a bit drastic. White obtains an edge with 5.♘f3 d6 6.d4 exd4 7.0-0 d3 8.♕b3 ♕d7 9.e5! ♘c6 (9...d5 10.♗xd5 c6 11.♗e4±) 10.♘g5! ♘h6 (10...♘xe5 11.♖e1+−) 11.e6! (or 11.♗xf7+ ♘xf7 12.e6), and White won in Kurenkov-Tishin, Tula 2003, after 11...fxe6 12.♗xe6 ♕e7 13.♖e1 ♔d8 14.♘f3 ♗xe6 15.♕xb7! ♖b8 16.♕xc6 ♗d7 17.♕a6 ♖b6 18.♕xa7 ♕f7 19.♕a8+ ♗c8 20.♗g5+ ♔d7 21.♕a4+ c6 22.♕d4.
- 4...♗c5 5.d4 exd4 6.cxd4 (White is not forced to take back. 6.♘f3!? ♘c6 leads to the classical main line of the Evans Gambit, which is certainly not Black's most attractive line of defence; also interesting is 6.♗xf7+!? ♔xf7 7.♕h5+, which had already been indicated by Staunton) 6...♗b4+ 7.♔f1 (7.♗d2?! ♗xd2+ 8.♘xd2 ♘f6 9.e5 d5 is fine for Black) 7...♗a5? (7...♕e7!) 8.♕h5! (8.♗xf7+ ♔xf7 9.♕h5+ should also favour White) 8...d5 9.♗xd5 ♕e7?! (9...♕f6) 10.♗a3 ♘f6 was MacDonnell-Boden, London 1869. Now MacDonnell could have obtained a winning position with 11.♕g5! instead of the game continuation 11.♗xf7+.
- 4...♗a5. Now we reach the main line in the regular Evans Gambit after 5.♘f3 ♘c6. However, note that 5...♘f6 and 5...d6 are also possible. The immediate 5.♕h5?! is no good because of 5...♕e7 6.♗xf7+ ♕xf7 7.♕xe5+ ♕e6 8.♕xa5 ♕xe4+.



This leaves White with two interesting options:

– 5.f4!? d6 (5...♘c6 6.♘f3 ♘f6 7.fxe5 ♘xe4 8.♕e2 ♘g5 9.0-0 0-0 10.d4 ♘xf3+ 11.♕xf3±, Heil-Podolnyy, Bad Wiessee 2003; 5...♕e7?! 6.♘f3 exf4 7.d4!? ♕xe4+ 8.♔f2 ♘f6 9.♘g5± was Macov-Stoilov, Bulgaria 1975) 6.♕b3 (or 6.♘f3 ♘c6 unclear) 6...♕d7 7.♘f3 ♘c6 is unclear, according to Minev in ECO.

– 5.d4 exd4 6.♕h5! d5 7.♗xd5 ♕e7 (7...♕f6 was already indicated by Schlechter as an improvement over 7...♕e7. In the correspondence game Jensen-Zagorovsky, 1991 there followed: 8.♘f3 ♗xc3+ – 8...♘e7!? 9.♗xf7+ ♕xf7 10.♕xa5 ♘ec6 is about equal – 9.♘xc3 dxc3 10.♘e5, with great attacking chances for White) 8.♗a3 ♘f6 is unclear according to ECO, but it seems to me that Black is better. Instead of 8...♘f6 the weaker 8...g6? was played in the correspondence game Dublin-Glasgow, 1874, when instead of 9.♗xe7? the Irish could have obtained a better game with 9.♕d1!. The old sources state that White is winning after the queen retreat, but the game is not entirely over after 9...c5 (9...♕f6 10.♕a4+ c6 11.♕xa5 cxd5 12.exd5 favours White) 10.♕a4+ ♕d7 11.♕c4, although White is clearly better.

Have you spotted 11.♕xa5? b6!, trapping the queen? A neat trick!

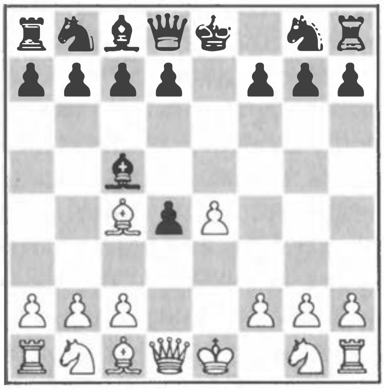
● 4...♗e7. This is indicated as best by no less a source than the ancient Bilguer. Now 5.♕h5?! g6 6.♕xe5 ♘f6 7.d4 ♘c6 8.♕f4 d5 is an old analysis by Keres that favours Black. Also insufficient is 5.d4, which is met strongly by 5...d5! 6.♗xd5 c6 7.♗b3 ♘f6. More interesting is 5.♕b3!?, when 5...♘h6 6.d4 ♗g5 (6...0-0) 7.♗a3 exd4 (7...♘c6) 8.cxd4 d6 9.♘f3 0-0 10.0-0 ♘c6 11.♘xg5 ♕xg5 12.f4 ♕d8 (12...♕f6 13.e5 ♕g6) 13.♕c3 gave White decent compensation in Siegel-Lehmann, Dotzheim 2002. However, Black has a lot of good alternatives along the way, as indicated in the notes.

Therefore White should probably settle for 5.♘f3 ♘c6, when we have reached a position from the Evans Gambit. 6.d4 ♘a5 7.♗e2 exd4 8.♕xd4 was (among many others) the famous game Kasparov-Anand, Riga 1995. Kasparov won in great style, but later improvements were found for Black. Thus 3.b4 could be used to trick Black into a defence that he is not familiar with.

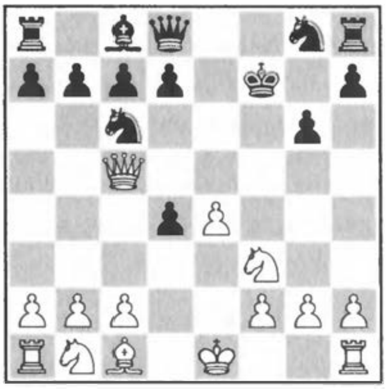
Let us return to the position after 3.d4.

3...♗xd4

The alternative is 3...exd4. This receives a question mark in Harding's old book on the Bishop's Opening, but things are not that clear.



4.♗xf7+! (this is better than 4.♕h5 ♕e7 5.♗xf7+ ♕xf7 6.♕xc5 ♘c6∓) 4...♔xf7 (4...♔f8 5.♗b3 ♕e7 6.♘e2 ♕xe4 7.0-0 ♘c6 8.♘d2 is of course very good for White. White will retrieve his pawn on d4 and Black's king is stuck on f8, Hebert-Dumesnil, Defi 1997) 5.♕h5+ g6 6.♕xc5 ♘c6 leads to an interesting position. The material is equal, White's queen has been developed rather early and Black's king is not entirely safe. Play could continue: 7.♘f3 (7.♘e2)

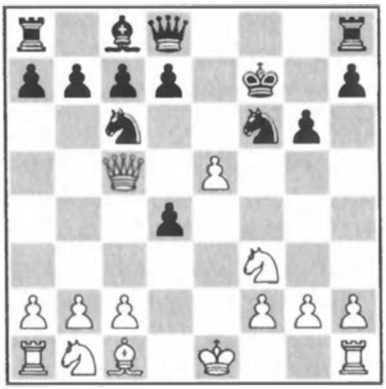


Well, at least this is a fun position to play. Best now is 7...♘f6! (7...d6 is met by 8.♕d5+! ♔g7 – 8...♗e6?? 9.♘g5+ – 9.♘xd4±; and 7...♕e7 8.♕c4+ ♔g7 9.0-0 is just better for White). Let's look at a few options now.

Not very promising is 8.♗g5 d6 9.♕c4+ d5 10.♕b3 ♖e8, or even better 10...♔g7! 11.exd5 ♖e8+. White can just take on d4, but after 8.♘xd4 ♘xe4 9.♕d5+ ♔g7 10.♘xc6 dxc6 11.♕e5+ ♘f6 (11...♔f7 12.♗h6) 12.0-0 ♖e8 Black's activity compensates for his slightly inferior pawn structure.

Very natural is 8.0-0 d6 (8...d5 is another option; 8...♖e8 can be met by 9.♗g5!? or by 9.e5 d6 10.exd6 ♕xd6 11.♕xd6 cxd6 12.♘a3 with a slight endgame advantage) 9.♕c4+, and now Black must find 9...d5! to reach an approximately equal position after 10.exd5 ♕xd5 11.♕xd5+ ♘xd5.

White can also play the immediate 8.e5, and now:

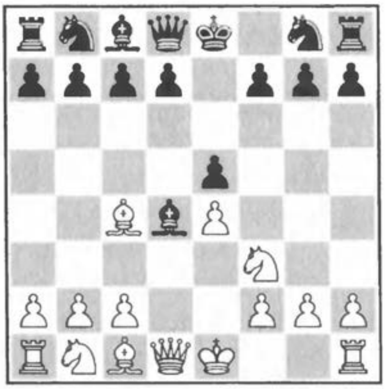


– 8...d6 9.♕c4+ (not 9.exd6 ♖e8+ 10.♔f1 cxd6∓) 9...d5 10.♕e2 ♘e4 11.♘bd2 ♗f5 12.♘xe4 (12.0-0 ♖e8 is unclear) 12...dxe4 13.♘g5+♔g7 14.♘xe4 ♕d5! 15.♘g3, equal.

– 8...♖e8 9.0-0 d6 10.exd6 ♕xd6 (10...cxd6 11.♕b5±) 11.♕xd6 cxd6 12.♘a3± reaches the same position as above after 8.0-0 ♖e8 9.e5 d6, etc. In case of 12...♖e2 13.♘b5 ♖xc2 14.♘bxd4 ♘xd4 15.♘xd4 White keeps a slight advantage in the ending.

Black certainly has chances to equalize after 3...exd4, but there are more than enough practical chances for White, and this is clearly not the refutation of 3.d4.

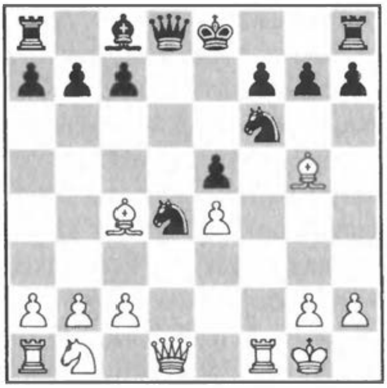
4.♘f3



4...♕f6

A 'romantic' line of defence. Black holds on to his pawn without caring about misplacing his queen or neglecting his development.

4...♘c6 is the natural move. White should now use the opportunity to transfer into the Max Lange Gambit (not to be confused with the Max Lange Attack) with 5.♘xd4 ♘xd4 (5...exd4 6.0-0) 6.0-0 d6 (or 6...♘f6 7.f4 d6) 7.f4 ♘f6 8.fxe5 dxe5 9.♗g5



This is a tabiya for the Max Lange Gambit. The regular move order is 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♗c5 4.0-0 ♘f6 (now 4...d6 is actually a good way to avoid the entire line!) 5.d4!? ♗xd4 6.♘xd4 ♘xd4 7.f4 d6 8.fxe5 dxe5 9.♗g5, and we have reached the diagrammed position. Mihail Marin feels that White has a strong initiative here, which is why he does not cover this line in his *Beating the Open Games* (a repertoire book for Black). He instead advises Black to go for 5...exd4 6.e5 d5, when 7.exf6 is the better-known Max Lange Attack. Not many black players will be familiar with the intricacies of the Max Lange Gambit (as it can be avoided via the regular move order), so reaching this position via the Bishop's Opening may certainly be considered a success. Such tricky move orders are typical of the opening weapons available to the modern player. In *Dangerous Weapons 1.e4 e5* (Everyman 2008) John Emms makes a case for this particular gambit, while it has also been covered by Lev Gutman and Stefan Bücker in *Kaissiber*. I am not going to analyse it deeply here, but let me indicate a few lines:

– 9...♗g4?! 10.♗xf7+! ♔xf7 11.♕xg4

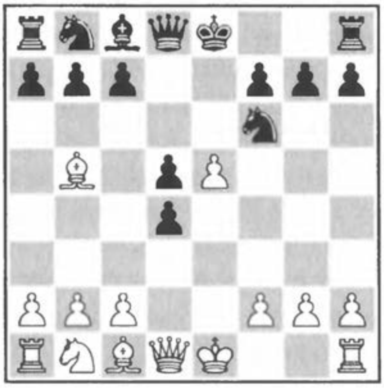
♘xc2 12.♕h5+ ♔e7 13.♘c3, and White has a winning attack.

– 9...♕e7 10.♘a3 ♗d7!? 11.♕d2 0-0-0 12.♕f2!, White has sufficient compensation.

– 9...♗e6 10.♘a3 ♕e7 11.c3 ♗xc4 12.♗xf6! gxf6 13.♘xc4, and White has obvious compensation. Both Emms and Gutman/Bucker eventually reach the conclusion that White is better.

Black has other moves at his disposal, and the lines are certainly more complicated than I have indicated above, but I do feel that this transposition into the Max Lange Gambit is an interesting way to make optimal use of 3.d4 in the Bishop's Opening.

If Black plays 4...♘f6 then 5.♘xd4 exd4 6.♕xd4 ♘c6 should be OK for Black, but 6.e5! d5 7.♗b5+ favours White.



7...♘fd7 and now, rather than taking on d4, White has 8.♕g4±. If Black plays 7...♗d7, then 8.exf6 ♗xb5 9.fxg7 ♕e7+ (9...♖g8 10.♕xd4 ♕e7+ 11.♗e3) 10.♗e3 ♖g8 11.♕xd4, and White is better.

5.0-0!?

For only one pawn White is ahead in development and has opened files and diagonals. Black is in obvious danger.

5.♘xd4 exd4 6.0-0 ♘c6 7.f4 d6 8.♗b5 ♗d7 is good for Black according to Schiffers. Clearly, 5.0-0 is a much cleverer move order.

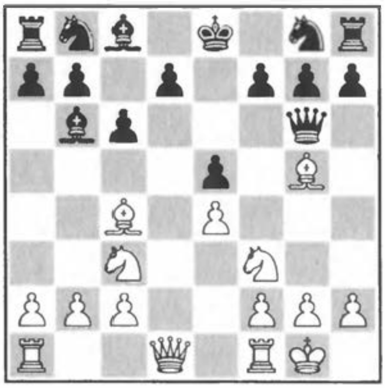
5...♗b6

5...♘c6 6.♘xd4 ♘xd4 (6...exd4 7.f4) 7.f4 ♘e6 8.♘c3 must be great for White. The first player also has his chances after 5...d6 6.♘xd4 exd4 7.f4!? (7.c3!? ♘c6) 7...♘c6 8.e5!?.

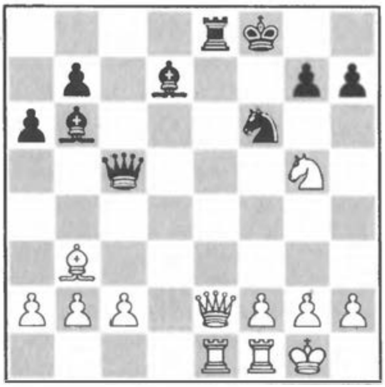
6.♘c3 c6?

Black understandably wants to protect the d5-square, but the difference in development will tell. Black had to play 6...♘c6 when 7.♘d5 ♕g6 8.♗e3 is really awkward for Black. Please note that White wins on the spot after 6...d6 7.♗g5 ♕g6 8.♘xe5!.

7.♗g5 ♕g6



Now White wins easily with **8.♘xe5! ♕xg5 9.♘xf7 ♕c5** and now **10.♗b3 d5 11.♘xh8 ♘f6 12.exd5 cxd5 13.♘xd5** White is completely winning, of course. **13...♘bd7 14.♕e2+ ♔f8 15.♖ae1 a6 16.♘xf6 ♘xf6 17.♘f7 ♗d7 18.♘g5 ♖e8**

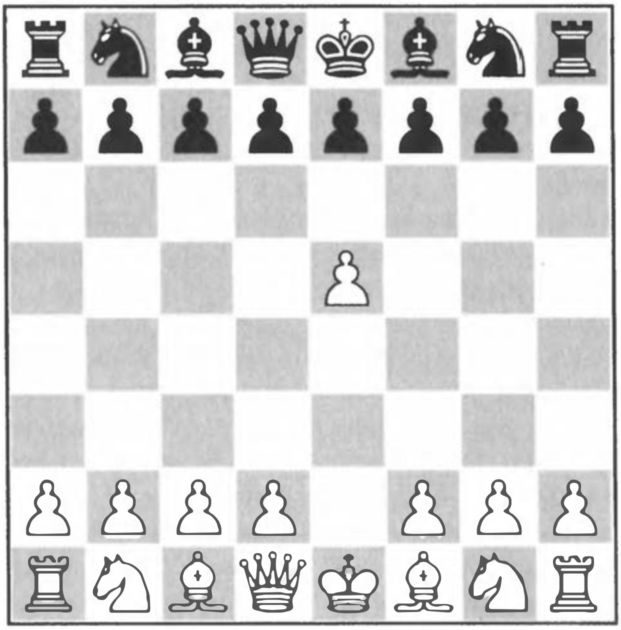


19.♕xe8+! ♘xe8 Or 19...♗xe8 20.♘e6+. **20.♘xh7** Mate!

CHAPTER 4

Dimitri Reinderman

The Retreat Variation



1.e4 ♘f6 2.e5 ♘g8!?

The diagrammed position comes about after 1.e4 ♘f6 2.e5 ♘g8 (called the Brooklyn Variation or Retreat Variation), and it looks like an improvement on the starting position for White. After all, he has gained space and influence in the centre, while his queen and bishop are free to move.

However, the pawn on e5 weakens square f5, turning that same pawn into a target for Black. Indeed, ...d6 is on the cards. Taking on d6 then involves a loss of space, while allowing Black to take on e5 might mean a weak pawn, that can easily be attacked by the black pieces. All this is quite similar to the regular Alekhine, which provokes the question: why retreat to g8 instead of playing 2... ♘d5?

In general, d5 is a better square for a knight than g8, but a knight on d5 is much more vulnerable to attacks. In the Alekhine the beast usually moves to b6, when redeploying it to e7 via c8 is not uncommon. But why go ♘g8-f6-d5-b6-c8-e7 if you can also go ♘g8-f6-g8-e7?

There is also a concrete difference. One of the main lines against the Alekhine is the system with ♘f3 en ♗e2, but after 1.e4 ♘f6 2.e5 ♘g8 3.d4 d6 4.♘f3 ♗g4 5.♗e2 dxe5 6.♞xe5 ♗xe2 7.♕xe2 Black can take the pawn on d4, which would not be possible with a knight on d5.

Of course the retreat to g8 is a form of 'undevelopment', and with normal moves

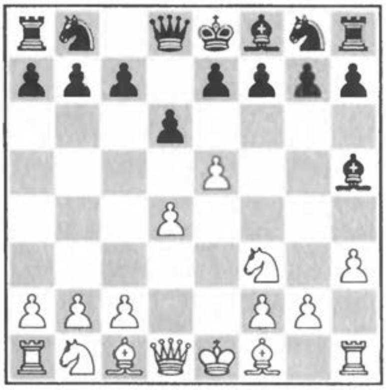
White should obtain at least a small advantage in development. And this advantage in development will give White the initiative. However, not everyone will be able to put this initiative to good use. After 2...♘g8 Black has the common advantages of a SOS: the surprise value, White will have to think for himself; and Black will have more knowledge of the variation (though you don't have to learn a lot of theory to play it). And maybe White will be provoked by getting the odds of two moves...

The normal continuation for White is 3.d4 and then Black has a choice. The most popular move is 3...d5, which leads to a position which could also arrive after 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c7 (yes, moving the pawn from c6 back, also 1.e4 ♘c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♘b8 gives the same position). Of course Black normally plays 3...♗f5 instead of the illegal c6-c7, when many top grandmasters play 4.♗e3 and Black is to move. The same position would arrive after 1.e4 ♘f6 2.e5 ♘g8 3.d4 d5 4.♗e3 ♗f5 (what else?), but then with a pawn on c7 and White to move! Surely this must be good for White. Therefore in this article I will stick with 3...d6, the choice of grandmaster Chanda Sandipan, who played the Retreat Variation in the 2008 Gausdal Classics.

☐ **Vasilios Kotronias**
■ **Chanda Sandipan**
Gausdal 2008

1.e4 ♞f6 2.e5 ♘g8 3.d4 d6 4.♘f3 ♗g4 5.h3 ♗h5

Black can also take the knight. The position after 5...♗xf3 6.♕xf3 c6 7.exd6 e6 reminds me of the so-called 'Fort Knox' Variation in the French, when Black plays 3...dxe4, 4...♗d7, and ...♗c6 eventually taking a knight on f3 or e4. If White doesn't take on d6, Black can take on e5 and attack the pawn.



However, Chanda's move is more ambitious and invites his opponent to play

6.e6!?

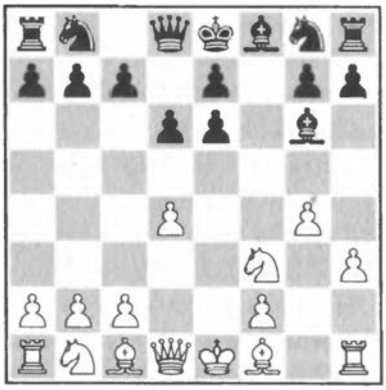
Just like in certain variations of the Alekhine, White sacrifices his e-pawn so that the bishop on f8 has problems developing. Also White can hope to get his knight from f3 to e6 via g5. Personally, I like the extra central pawn for Black.

A good alternative is 6.g4 ♗g6 7.♘c3, for example 7...e6 8.♗f4 d5 9.♗d3 c5 10.♗xg6 hxg6 11.♕d2 as in T.Ernst-Welling, Copenhagen 1988, when White has a big lead in development, though it's not so easy to do something with it.

For 6.♗e2, see the next game.

6...fxe6 7.g4 ♗g6

Instead 7...♗f7 8.♘g5 ♘h6 lets Black keep his extra pawn. White can prevent this possibility by playing 6.g4 ♗g6 7.e6.



8.♘g5

Natural enough but not the best move in my opinion.

– Black was fine in Gruchacz-Benjamin, New York 1980, after 8.♗d3 ♗xd3 9.♕xd3 ♘c6 10.♕b3 ♕d7 11.♕xb7 ♖b8 12.♕a6 ♘f6, but stronger is

– 8.♗c4!, when 8...d5?! 9.♗d3 is what White wants. Perhaps Black should play 8...♗f7 9.♘g5 (after 9.♕e2 ♘f6 10.♗xe6 ♗xe6 11.♕xe6 ♕d7 12.♕b3 b6 Black has weaknesses, but so has White) 9...d5 10.♗b5+ (to prevent a future ...♘c6. 10.♘xf7 ♔xf7 is not dangerous for Black) 10...c6 11.♗d3 ♘d7 12.♕e2 ♕b6 13.c3 ♘gf6, when White is just a little better (14.♘xe6 ♘e4).

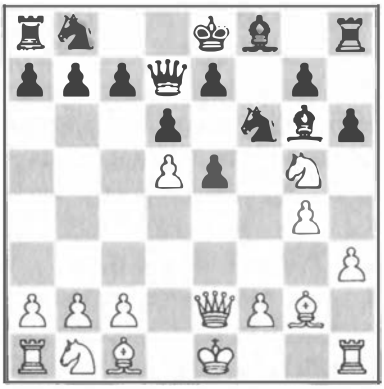
8...♕d7 9.♕e2

A nice variation is 9.♗d3 ♗xd3 10.♕f3!? (10.♕xd3 ♘f6 11.♕b3 c5 is unclear) 10...♕c6 (10...♗g6? 11.♕xb7 ♕c6? 12.♕c8 mate!) 11.♕f7+ ♔d7 12.♕xe6+ ♔d8 13.d5 ♕xc2 14.♘f7+ ♔e8 15.♕c8+ ♔xf7 16.♕e6+, with a draw by perpetual!

9...e5 10.d5

White wants to keep a bind, but he won't be able to if Black plays well. After 10.dxe5 dxe5 11.♗g2 ♘c6 12.0-0 0-0-0 13.♘c3 e6 chances would have been about equal.

10...♘f6 11.♗g2 h6?!



The main problem for Black in this position is square e6. Black plays h6 so his bishop can go to f7, but I would prefer 11...c6!? 12.♘c3 (12.c4 weakens d3, which is a problem for White after 12...cxd5 13.cxd5 ♘a6) 12...cxd5 13.♘xd5 ♘c6 and while Black is not yet threatening to play ...e6, he soon will (after ...♖c8 or ...♘d4 for example).

12.♘e6 c6 13.c4 ♗f7

Forcing White to take an undeveloped bishop.

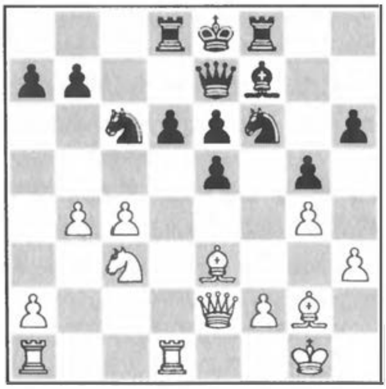
14.♘xf8 ♖xf8 15.♘c3 e6 16.dxc6 ♘xc6

Black has solved the problem of his space disadvantage and the weakness of e6 in particular. Now he has to attend to the position of his king though. He can go to the queenside, but White will get an attack with b4.

17.♗e3 ♕e7 18.0-0 g5 19.♖fd1 ♖d8

So Black decides to keep his king in the middle, at least for now. It is safe there at the moment, because of all the centre pawns, but things are rather crowded in Black's camp.

20.b4



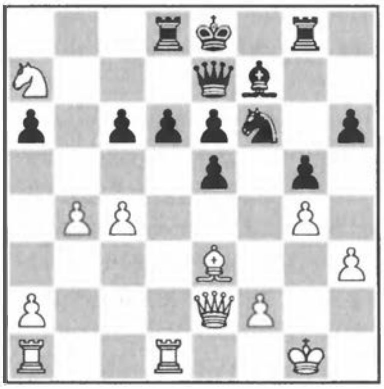
20...♖g8?

I suppose the idea of this move is to make room for the king to go to g7, but the rook was fine on f8, while the bishop is not so fine on f7.

So a better version of the same idea would be 20...♗g6. If White plays like in the game, the knight on f6 is defended, which is a big difference. White can win back a pawn with

21.b5♘d4 22.♗xd4 exd4 23.♖xd4, but after 23...e5 24.♖d2 ♔f7 White is just a tad better. Apart from that, Black can also consider 20...♘xb4 21.♗xa7 ♗g6 followed by ♔f7, when he still has the extra pawn.

21.♘b5 a6? 21...♘xb4 is still better. **22.♗xc6+! bxc6 23.♘a7!**

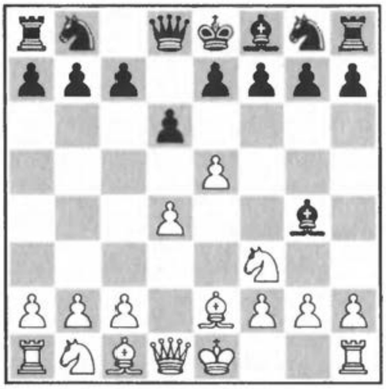


Surprisingly, Black has no good way to defend c6. **23...♕d7 24.♕f3 ♘d5!?** Trying to mess things up. After 24...♖g6 25.♕xc6 ♕xc6 26.♞xc6 ♖c8 27.♖xd6 ♘e4 28.♖ad1 ♘xd6 29.♖xd6 ♖f6 30.♘xe5 White is also winning. **25.cxd5 cxd5 26.♗b6 ♖b8 27.♖ac1! e4** The tactics work for White: 27...♖xb6 28.♖c8+ ♔e7 29.♖dc1 and wins. **28.♕e3 ♕a4 29.♗c7 ♖xb4 30.♗xd6 ♖c4 31.♘c8** Black resigned. A nice win for Kotronias, but Black was fine after the opening.

☐ **Christian Sandor**
■ **Stefan Wehmeier**
Munich 1993

1.e4 ♘f6 2.e5 ♞g8 3.d4 d6 4.♘f3 ♗g4 5.♗e2

White sensibly continues with his development as in the main line of the Alekhine. Surprisingly, he is now more or less forced to sacrifice a pawn!



5...dxe5!?

Schiller recommends 5...e6 6.0-0 d5 and says in his 1998 book *Unorthodox Chess Openings*: 'Black has every reason to be satisfied with this position, which resembles a French Defence except that Black's light-squared bishop has been developed outside the pawn chain.'

Probably that remark was written before 1998, because by then it was already known that these kinds of positions are not so easy for Black. For example, in Bosch-Van Mil, Wijk aan Zee 1998, Black was to move and had a pawn on c6, but still White obtained a good position from the opening. Instead of 6...d5, I would prefer 6...♘c6!?, putting pressure on e5.

6.♞xe5

Instead 6.dxe5 ♕xd1+ 7.♗xd1 e6 is fine for Black.

The pawn sacrifice is stronger, and White will have at least enough compensation for the pawn. However, Black can play for an advantage by trying to neutralize White's initiative.

6...♗xe2 7.♕xe2 ♕xd4 8.0-0

At first sight 8.♕b5+ looks strong, since 8...c6 9.♕xb7 ♕xe5+ 10.♗e3 wins for White, but Black has 8...♘d7 9.♘xd7 0-0-0! 10.0-0 ♕xd7, when chances are about equal.

8...♘d7 9.♞f3 ♕b6 10.♗e3 c5

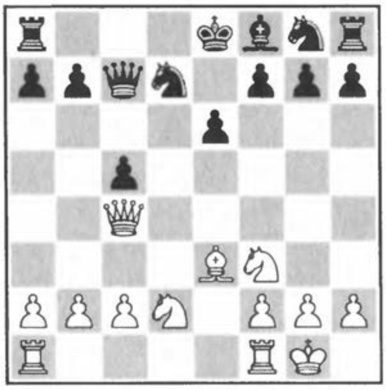
10...♕xb2 11.♗d4 ♕b4 12.♘c3 ♕a5

13.♖ab1 gives White a big lead in development.

11.♘bd2 ♕c7 12.♕c4

12.♘c4 ♘gf6 13.♖ad1 e6 14.♘fe5 ♗e7 15.♗f4 ♘xe5 16.♗xe5 ♕c6 17.♘d6+ ♔f8 is a plausible variation, which leads to a position where some players will prefer to have the extra pawn, and others the white initiative.

12...e6



13.♗f4 ♗d6

Here 13...♕c6 is a little more careful.

14.♗xd6 ♕xd6 15.♖ad1 ♘gf6?

Black should play 15...♕a6 After 16.♕xa6 bxa6 17.♘c4 ♘gf6 18.♖d6 ♔e7 19.♖xa6 ♘d5 White has a tiny advantage.

16.♘e4 ♕a6 17.♘d6+ ♔e7 18.♕h4?

18.♕f4 gives strong threats against f7, for example: 18...h6 19.♘xf7 g5 20.♘7xg5 hxg5 21.♘xg5, with a powerful attack.

18...h6 19.♖fe1 ♖hd8 20.♘g5 ♞e5

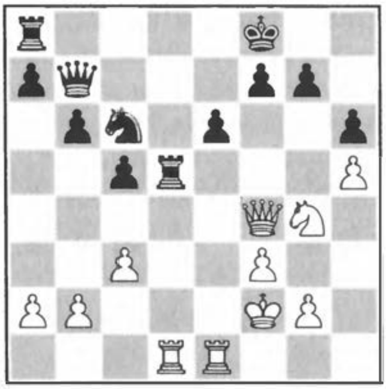
Now White's initiative slowly disappears, while Black keeps his extra pawn.

21.♘ge4 ♞g6 22.♕g3 ♘xe4 23.♘xe4 ♕c6 24.f3 b6 25.h4 ♔f8 26.h5 ♘e7 27.♘d6 ♖d7 28.♘c4 ♘f5 29.♕f4 ♘d4?

29...♖xd1 30.♖xd1 ♘d4 is better, as then there is no threat of a knight fork on e5 left.

30.♔f2 ♖d5 31.♘e5 ♕b7 32.c3 ♘c6 33.♘g4?

33.♖xd5 exd5 34.♕f5 (threatening 35.♕h7) will win back the pawn.



33...♖ad8? 33...♖xd1 34.♖xd1 ♖d8 keeps the extra pawn. **34.♖xd5 ♖xd5 35.♖xe6 ♕d7 36.♖g6?!** Here 36.♖xh6 gxh6 37.♕xh6+ ♔e7 38.♕f6+ ♔f8 39.♕h8+ gives a draw. **36...♖xh5 37.♕d6+ ♕xd6 38.♖xd6 ♘e5 39.♘xe5 ♖xe5 40.♖d7 a5 41.♖b7 ♖e6**

Black has a safe extra pawn in the rook ending, but because of the active white rook the position is closer to a draw than a win. The game eventually ended in a draw on move 69.

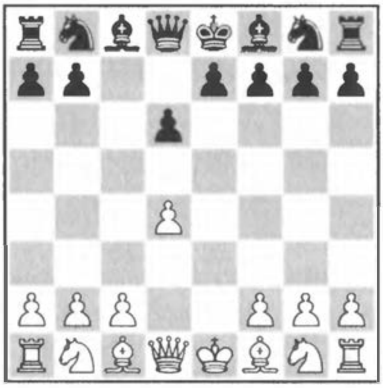
☐ **Laszlo Hovanecz**
■ **Ernö Dede**
Hungary tt-2 1992/93

1.e4 ♘f6 2.e5 ♘g8 3.d4 d6 4.exd6 cxd6

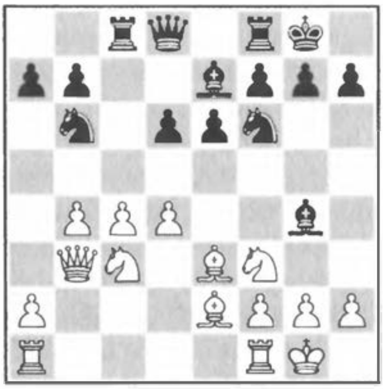
The other recaptures are also possible. After 4...exd6 5.♘c3 ♘f6 the position is the same as after 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♘xe5 d6 4.♘f3 ♘xe4 5.♘c3 ♘f6. White is a bit better, also if he would play with c4 before ♘c3.

4...♕xd6 5.♘c3 is a transposition to a favourite defence of Tiviakov, the 3...♕d6 Scandinavian. He wrote an article about it in SOS-6. It might actually be more correct to say that 4...♕xd6 transposes to 1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♕xd5 3.d4 ♕d6, when White still has the option to play c4, but again it's a position with just a small advantage for White.

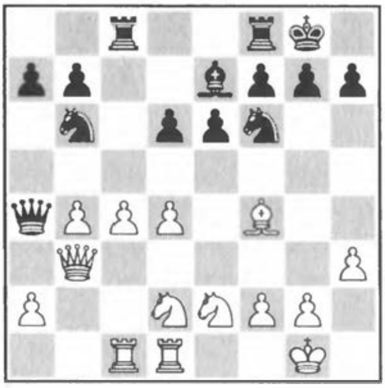
The choice of recaptures is just a question of taste.
4...cxd6 is the move if you prefer to have a asymmetrical pawn structure.



5.♘f3 ♗g4 6.♗e2 e6 7.0-0 ♘f6 8.c4 ♗e7 9.♘c3 0-0 10.♗e3 ♘bd7
A flexible middlegame position has arisen where White has more space, but it's not so easy for him to make progress.
11.b4?!
Better is 11.h3 (useful anyway) 11...♗h5 12.g4 ♗g6 13.♘h4. It looks weakening to play g4 with the king on g1, but it's more important that White gets the pair of bishops and keeps his space advantage.
11...♘b6 With the positional threat of 12...♗xf3. **12.♕b3 ♖c8**



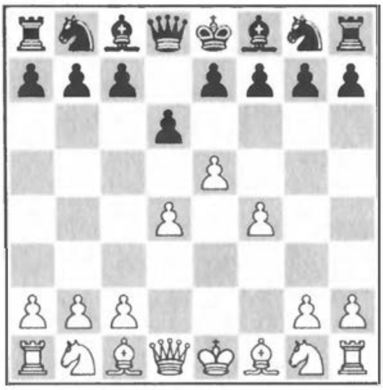
Now 13...♗xf3 14.♗xf3 ♖xc4 is an annoying threat. Black can be pleased with the outcome of the opening. We have a rich middlegame with about equal chances. What follows is anything but forced.
13.♘d2 ♗xe2 14.♘xe2 ♘g4!? 15.♖ac1 ♕c7?! 16.♗f4 ♕d7 17.h3 ♘f6 18.♖fd1 ♕a4?!
White should now play 19.b5: after 19...♕xb3 20.axb3 pawn a7 would be weak. He prefers to keep the queens on the board, but overlooks a tactic.



19.♕b2? ♘xc4 20.♘xc4 ♖xc4 21.♖xc4 ♕xd1+ 22.♔h2 ♕d3 23.♖c7 ♘d5 24.♖xe7? After 24.♖xb7 ♕a6 25.♖d7 ♖a8 26.b5 ♕c8 27.♖xe7 ♘xe7 28.♗xd6 ♘d5 White at least has a pawn for the exchange. **24...♘xe7 25.♗xd6 ♖e8 26.b5 ♘f5 27.♗e5 f6 28.♗c7 ♖c8** Black is winning easily now. **29.b6 axb6 30.♘f4 ♕e4 31.♕xb6 ♕c6 32.♘xe6? ♕xb6 33.♗xb6 ♖c6 34.♗c5 ♖xe6 35.g4 ♘e7** White resigned.

☐ **Desider May**
■ **Salo Flohr**
Bad Sliac 1932

Salo Flohr was one of the strongest players of the world in the 1930s. Desider May is an unknown player, but he would be a strong master or weak grandmaster by today's standards.
1.e4 ♘f6 2.e5 ♘g8 3.d4 d6 4.f4



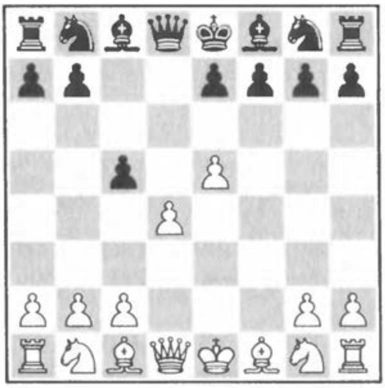
Similar to the Four Pawns Attack of the Alekhine (where the white c-pawn is on c4, and Black's king's knight on b6).

4...dxe5

There are other possibilities, like 4...♗f5, 4...g6 and even 4...h5. Flohr goes for the sharpest continuation.

5.fxe5 c5

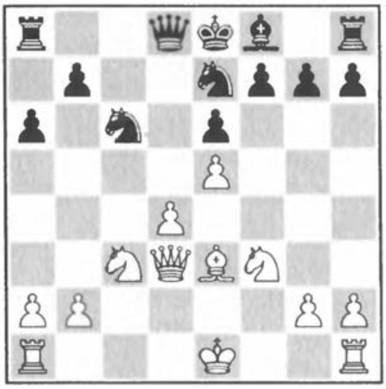
Again, 5...♗f5 is possible and probably better than 5...c5.



6.c3

Solid but unambitious. Stronger is 6.d5! e6 (threatening 7...♕h4+) 7.♗b5+ ♗d7 8.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 (8...♘xd7 9.♘f3 ♘e7 10.c4 exd5 11.cxd5 ♕b6 12.0-0 0-0-0 13.♘a3 is good for White) 9.c4 exd5 10.cxd5 c4 11.♘c3 ♗c5 12.♘f3 ♘e7. The question in a position like this is if White's central pawns are strong or weak. I think they are strong here and White is better, but Black also has realistic winning chances because the pawns might drop.

6...cxd4 7.cxd4 ♘c6 8.♗e3 ♗f5 9.♘f3 e6 Now Black has no problems. **10.♘c3 ♘ge7 11.♗b5 a6 12.♗d3 ♗xd3 13.♕xd3**



Black has the better bishop, but White has more space, so chances are still equal.

13...♘f5 14.♗f2 h5 15.♖d1 ♘b4 16.♕e4 ♘d5 17.♘xd5 ♕xd5 18.♕xd5 exd5 19.♔e2 ♗e7 20.♖c1 ♔d8

20...♔d7 would be more normal. Perhaps Flohr was afraid of some trick with e6+, though it doesn't work.

21.♖c2 ♖c8 22.♖hc1 ♖xc2+ 23.♖xc2 ♖h6 24.♗e1 g5 25.♔d3 Draw.

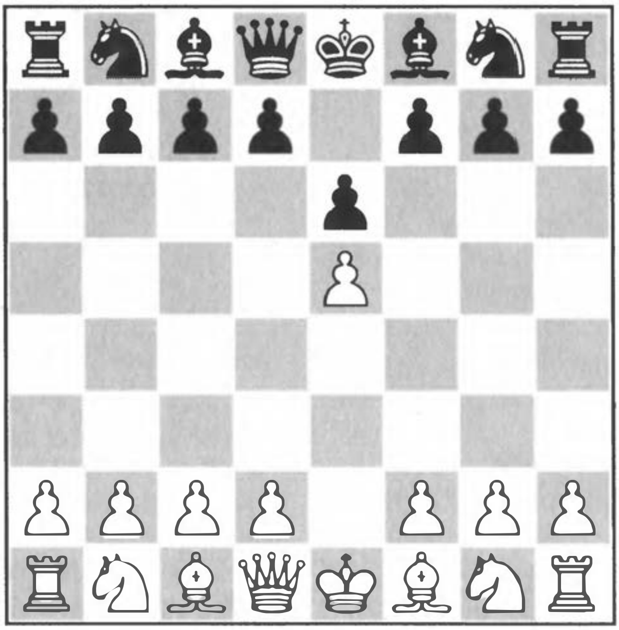
A little early to agree a draw: though the position is equal it is not dead equal, so I would have played on if I were Flohr.

Conclusion: objectively the Retreat Variation will often lead to a position with a slight advantage for White. However, this is hardly decisive and in my opinion the 'SOS-factor' is high: you don't have to know a lot of theory, while the opponent will feel surprised or even provoked. So if you want a surprise weapon against 1.e4: retreat!

CHAPTER 5

Adrian Mikhalchishin

Steinitz's Anti-French



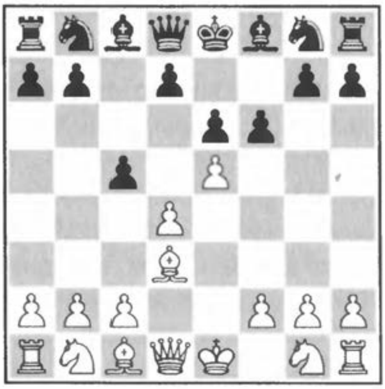
1.e4 e6 2.e5

All the great champions have been 'bitten' by certain ideas, i.e. their favourite reactions to particular openings, even though theory disapproves of them. The first world champion Wilhelm Steinitz had the idea after **1.e4 e6** of avoiding the classical French structures by **2.e5.** In general, the idea is rather simple – to avoid the closed structures, typical of the French Defence. Steinitz liked a more open game and I think that such a way of playing may be of interest to many players even today.

2...c5 Switching to 'semi-Sicilian' lines.

A few other logical plans should be mentioned:

● **2...f6** immediately attacking that cheeky pawn. 3.d4 c5 (3...d6 4.exf6 ♘xf6 5.♘f3 ♗e7 6.♗d3 0-0 7.♘bd2 b6 8.♕e2 Schwarz-Albin, Vienna 1890. White could also consider taking on d6 on the fourth move) 4.♗d3



– Now after 4...cxd4 5.♕h5+ g6 6.♗xg6+ hxg6 7.♕xh8 ♕a5+ 8.♘d2 ♕xe5+ 9.♘e2 ♘e7 10.♕h4 White has the advantage.

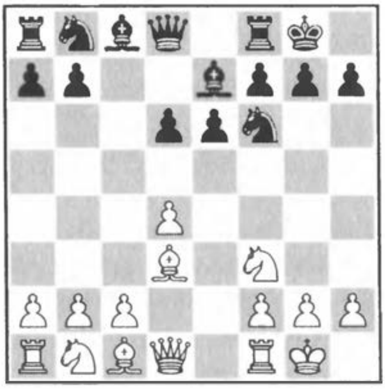
– 4...f5 5.g4!? cxd4 6.gxf5 ♕a5+ 7.c3 ♕xe5+ 8.♘e2 ♘c6 9.0-0 ♗c5 10.♖e1 ♕f6 11.♘d2! exf5 12.cxd4 ♗e7 13.♘f3 ♔d8 14.♗g5 ♕f7 15.♗xe7+ ♘gxe7 16.♕d2 h6 17.♘e5!, with the initiative for the sacrificed pawn, Pollock-Tarrasch, Hastings 1895.

● **2...b6** 3.f4 ♗b7 4.♘f3 f6 5.d4 ♘h6 6.♗d3 f5 7.0-0 ♗e7 8.c4 c5 9.d5! (an excellent 'pseudo-sacrifice' of a pawn) 9...exd5 10.cxd5 ♗xd5 11.♗xf5 ♗b7 12.♗d3 0-0 13.♕c2, with an obvious advantage, Steinitz-Blackburne, London 1883.

● **2...d5**

Perhaps most logical for a player of the French. Now 3.d4 transposes to the Advance Variation, while 3.♘f3 c5 4.b4 is the French Wing Gambit that was covered in SOS-1. Of course Steinitz' intention was to avoid 'French' structures with 3.exd6 when Black has two plausible replies:

– 3...cxd6 4.d4 ♘f6 5.♘f3 ♗e7 6.♗d3 0-0 7.0-0



In Gusev-Khasin, Moscow 1955, play continued 7...♘c6 8.♖e1 ♕c7 9.♘c3!? (9.c3) 9...a6 10.a3 ♗d7 11.♗g5 ♖fe8 12.♘e4 ♘xe4 13.♖xe4 f5 14.♖h4!?.

While, 7...b6 8.♖e1 ♗a6 9.♗xa6 ♘xa6 10.♕e2 ♕c8 11.c3 ♘c7 12.♘bd2 ♕a6 was Dumpor-Raicevic, Kladovo 1991, and here 13.♕xa6 ♘xa6 14.a4 ♖fc8 15.♘e4 would have been correct, with the more pleasant game for White.

– 3...♗xd6 4.d4 ♘f6 (if 4...♘d7 there can follow 5.♕g4 and Black is forced to weaken his dark squares with 5...g6; if he plays 4...♗d7, then after 5.♘f3 ♗c6 6.♘c3 ♘d7 7.♗b5! ♗xb5 8.♘xb5 ♘gf6 9.♘xd6+ cxd6 10.0-0 0-0 11.♗f4 ♕e7 12.c4 ♖ac8 13.c5! White has the advantage, Döring-Brychcy, Germany 1992) 5.♘f3 0-0 (also possible is 5...b6 6.♗b5+ c6 7.♗d3 0-0 8.0-0 ♗b7 9.♘c3 a6 10.♕e2 ♘bd7 11.♗g5 ♕c7 12.♖ad1 c5, with a complicated game) 6.♗d3 ♘bd7 (6...b6 is also not bad, as in the above variation) 7.0-0 c5 8.♘c3 cxd4 9.♘xd4 ♘c5 10.♗e2 a6 11.♗g5 ♗e5 12.♗e3!

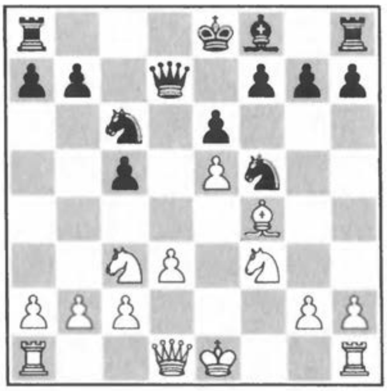
The game is complicated – f2-f4 and ♗e2-f3 is threatened.

3.f4

This is the most logical decision – here playing for d2-d4 is illogical.

3...♘c6

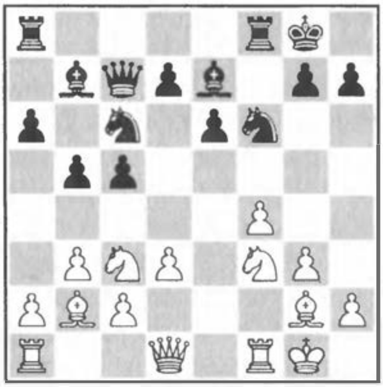
It is also possible to launch an attack on the centre by 3...d6 4.♘f3 dxe5 5.fxe5 ♘h6 6.♗b5+ (it is desirable either to exchange this bishop or else place it at g2 after 6.g3!?, which is also interesting) 6...♗d7 7.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 8.d3 ♘f5 9.♘c3 ♘c6 10.♗f4



The position is very interesting and needs testing in practice.

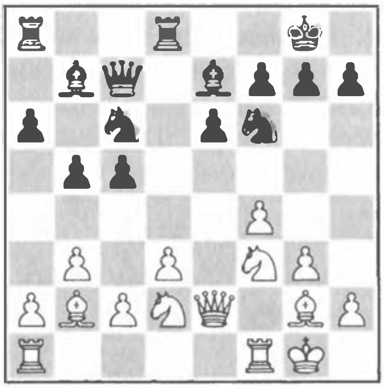
4.♘f3 b6

Here 4...f6 is also logical: 5.exf6 ♘xf6 6.g3 ♗e7 7.♗g2 ♕c7 8.0-0 0-0 9.♘c3 a6 10.b3 b5 11.♗b2 ♗b7 12.d3



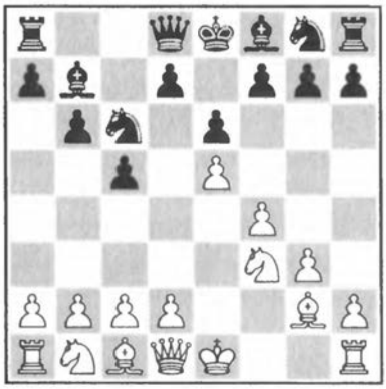
Black's position looks good, but he has an irreparable problem in his pawn structure – the d7- and e6-pawns, Steinitz-Winawer, Vienna 1882.

Another possibility is 4...a6 5.g3 d6 6.exd6 ♗xd6 7.♗g2 ♘f6 8.0-0 0-0 9.d3 ♕c7 10.♘bd2 b5 11.b3 ♗b7 12.♗b2 ♗e7 13.♕e2 ♖fd8



And here in the game Eliskases-Harum, Ebensee 1933, White chose the interesting 14.♗e5!? ♘xe5 15.fxe5 ♞d7 16.♖f2!, switching to an attack on the f-file.

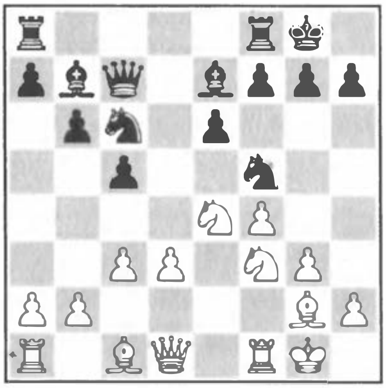
5.g3 ♗b7 6.♗g2



6...d5

Again Black can try 6...f6 7.exf6 ♘xf6 8.0-0 ♗e7, and here White can arrange his pieces as in previous variations by b2-b3, ♗c1-b2, d2-d3, ♘b1-d2 and ♕d1-e2, or simply play d2-d3, c2-c3, ♕d1-e2 and ♘b1-d2-e4.

7.exd6 ♗xd6 8.d3 ♘ge7 9.♘c3 ♘f5 10.♘e4 ♗e7 11.0-0 0-0 12.c3 ♕c7



Steinitz-Sellman, Baltimore m-3 1882.

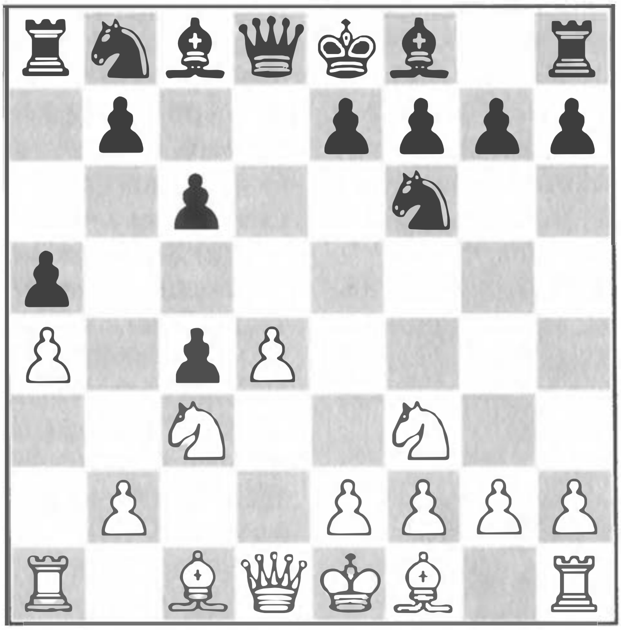
And here the correct set-up was 13.♕e2 ♖ad8 14.g4! ♞d6 15.♘g3 followed by ♗c1-e3 and ♖a1-d1.

In conclusions: Generally speaking, we cannot promise White an advantage here, but the most attractive feature for White is the possibility of taking the play into semi-open positions which are quite different to French structures.

CHAPTER 6

Arthur Kogan

Slav: the Bellon-Murey Variation



Why not echo 5.a4?

The original 5...a5 was often played by the creative GMs Murey and Bellon, so I would propose to call it the Bellon-Murey Slav. The idea of 5...a5 is not only to get firm control of the b4 square for Black's pieces, but also to wait for White to disclose his plans before developing ♗c8 – since on ...♗f5 or ....♗g4, White has ♘e5! with annoying ideas like f3, e4 or even g4.

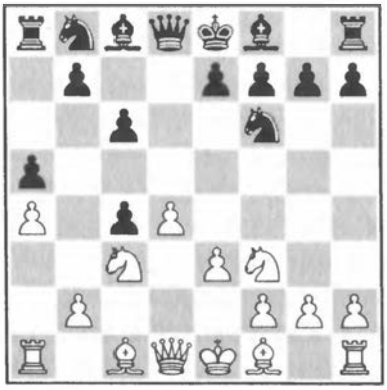
☐ **Goran Dizdar**
■ **Arthur Kogan**
Porec tt 1998

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 d5 3.c4 c6 4.♘c3 dxc4 5.a4 a5!?

This move was a surprise for my opponent, who usually likes to take his time.

6.e3

Other options are 6.e4 ♗g4! and 6.♘e5.



6...♗g4

Also playable is 6...♗f5!?, as tried by my 'amigo' Juan Bellon.

7.h3

In the next game we will study 7.♗xc4 e6.

7...♗h5 8.g4!?

This move is critical, White tries to demonstrate that Black has lost a tempo with 5...a5 in comparison to other Slav lines.

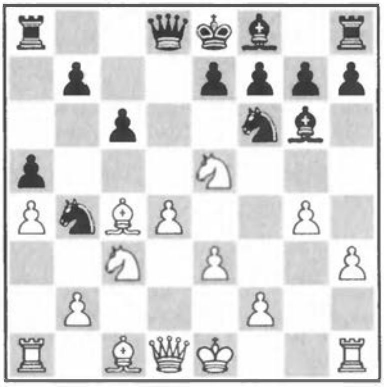
8...♗g6 9.♘e5

White is after the two bishops. Black should search for quick counterplay. I must say the weaknesses created by g4 gave me hope.

9...♘a6!?

Usually b4 is the place for the bishop in this line, but having the c2 square in mind inspired me for quicker action. Also playable is 9...♘bd7 10.♘xg6 (10.♘xc4 e6 11.♗g2 ♗b4) 10...hxg6 11.♗xc4 e6.

10.♗xc4 ♞b4



11.♔f1!?

Played because after castling kingside his king will never be safe with that pawn on g4. White wants to keep his rook on h1 to assist the h4+h5 or g5 plans.

- Interesting is 11.f4 e6 12.f5 (12.0-0 ♘d7!) 12...exf5 13.gxf5 ♗h5 14.♕b3, and now 14...♕c7! followed by ...0-0-0 looks very promising for Black.
- 11.0-0 e6 12.e4 (12.f4 ♘d7!) is the engine's idea to take the centre, but I like Black after 12...♞xe4 13.g5 ♗c2! 14.♕e2 (14.♕f3 ♕xd4) 14...♗f5! (14...♘d7 15.♘xf7; 14...♘fd5 15.♗xd5 cxd5 16.♕b5+±) 15.gxf6 gxf6, and with h3 hanging and ...♖g8 or ...♘c2 ideas in mind Black seems to have great play for his lost piece.

11...e6 12.♕f3

After 12.♔g2 ♕c7 Black prepares castling queenside and ♗d6. If 12.h4 then 12...♗c2 13.♕f3 ♗d6.

12...♗d6 13.♘xg6 hxg6 14.g5!

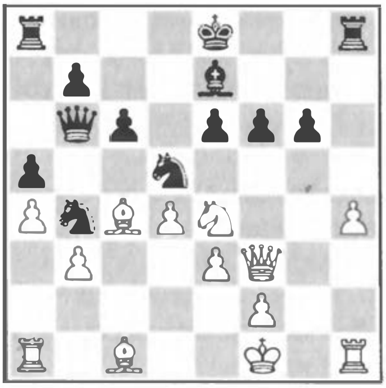
To obtain square e4, and hoping for a future h4+h5 plan to get an edge on the kingside. Other moves are worse: 14.e4? ♘c2; and 14.♔g2 ♗c7! prevents the important ♖d1 and e4 plan (not 14...♕e7 15.e4 ♘c2 16.e5) 15.♖d1 ♕d6!.

14...♘fd5 15.♘e4! Not 15.e4 ♘b6 16.♗b3 ♗e7!. **15...♗e7!?** Keeping in mind the important ...f5 or ...f6 break to kick this annoying knight. **16.h4 ♕b6** Time to castle soon! **17.b3**

Somewhere around here White offered a draw, but although the position was far from clear, I had only one result in mind!

On 17.h5 I planned something like 17...♘c2 18.♖a2 (18.♖b1 ♘a3) 18...gxh5 19.♖xh5 (19.b3 ♘cb4) 19...0-0-0! 20.♖xh8 (20.♕xf7 ♕b4! 21.♕xe6+ ♔b8–+) 20...♖xh8 21.♗d2 (21.♕xf7 ♕b4 22.♕xe6+ ♔b8–+) ♔b8 22.♕xf7 ♘cxe3+! and White is in trouble (23.fxe3 ♖f8).

17...f5! 18.gxf6 gxf6



19.♘c5!?

White sacrifices a pawn to open the position for his bishops, mainly ♗c1.

Also critical was of course 19.♕g4. However, after 19...0-0-0! 20.♕xe6+ (20.♕xg6 ♔b8) 20...♔b8, planning ...f5, Black seems to have the safer king and nice play for only one pawn!

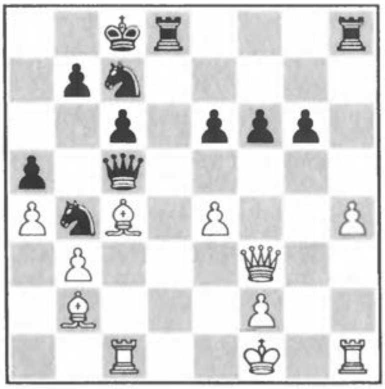
19...♗xc5 20.dxc5 ♕xc5 21.♗b2 0-0-0

21...e5 is the engine's choice, but 22.h5! g5 23.♕f5! seems no fun to this human!

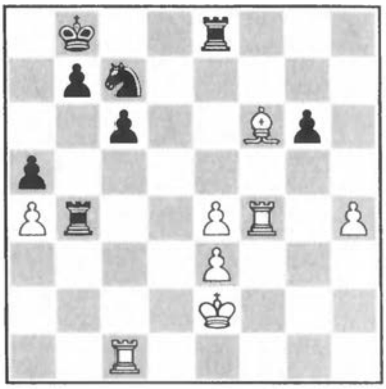
22.e4! ♘c7 23.♖c1

White has played in a dynamic and creative way to get nice play for the lost pawn, but his king is still not safe, so I am ready to give back material to get closer to him!

23.♗xf6 ♖hf8 24.♖c1 (24.e5 ♘cd5 looks like trouble for White) 24...♖d7 25.♔g2 ♖df7 26.♗xe6+ ♘xe6 27.♖xc5 ♖xf6 28.♕g4 ♖xf2+ 29.♔g1 ♖f1+ 30.♚g2 ♖1f2+ is a draw.



23...♚b8! For if 23...♕d6 then 24.♗xf6 ♖hf8 25.♖g1!. **24.♗xe6!?** White was short of time already. Better was probably 24.♗e2! ♕b6 25.♗xf6 ♖df8. **24...♕d6 25.♗c4 ♕d2! 26.♕e2** Preferable was 26.♖b1! ♞d3 27.♗xd3 ♖xd3 28.♕e2 ♖e8 29.♗xf6 ♕xe2+ 30.♔xe2 ♖d6. **26...♕f4 27.♕e3 ♕xe3** I also got short on time, so I couldn't clearly assess 27...♖xh4 28.♖xh4 ♕xh4 29.♕f3! ♖d6 30.e5!, which seems good for White. **28.fxe3 ♘d3!** Now Black has got the better chances since he has fewer weaknesses. **29.♗xd3 ♖xd3 30.♗xf6 ♖f8** 30...♖e8! was more precise. **31.♚e2 ♖xb3 32.♖hf1** Better was 32.♗d4!. **32...♖e8 33.♖f4** And here in a big mutual time-trouble, I saw a nice trap... **33...♖b4** 33...♘e6 34.♖g4 ♖b4 was maybe best, but contains no trap!



34.♖g1?

And he fell for it! Correct was 34.e5! ♖b3 (34...♖xf4 35.exf4 ♘d5 36.♗g5 ♔c7=) 35.♖g1 ♘d5 36.♖f3 (36.♖d4 ♘xf6 37.exf6 ♖exe3+ 38.♔d2 ♖f3 39.♖xg6 ♖b2+ 40.♔e1 ♖ff2) 36...♘c3+ 37.♔d2 ♘xa4 38.♖xg6 ♖b2+ 39.♔d3 ♘c5+ 40.♔c3 ♘a4+ equal.

34...♘d5!

Suddenly White loses material. Black's pieces coordinate well with all the pins!

35.♚f3 ♘xf4 36.exf4 ♖b3+ 37.♔g4 ♖xe4

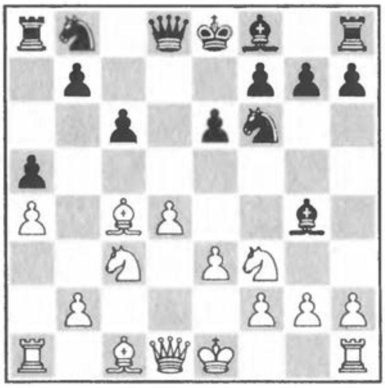
The rest is just technique, but I had to be careful until the time control.

38.♗e5+ ♚c8 Not 38...♔a7, as published in ChessBase. **39.♔g5 ♖ee3 40.♚xg6 ♖g3+** Now luckily there was extra time, so I could take a breath and calculate my win. **41.♖xg3 ♖xg3+ 42.♚f5 b5 43.♔e4 ♖h3 44.♗f6 bxa4 45.f5 a3 46.♗a1 ♖h1 0-1**

☐ **Mikhail Ulibin**
■ **Gerard Welling**
Port Erin 2002

Dutch IM Gerard Welling is another 'lover' of this line, here he won against an opponent rated about 200 Elo points higher. That's inspiring, right!

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 dxc4 5.a4 a5 6.e3 ♗g4 7.♗xc4 e6



8.h3

● 8.0-0 is also played. Here I would recommend the natural 8...♗b4. Black just wants to finish his development in a natural way, and his very solid position which has no weaknesses can't be underestimated.

– 9.♗e2 ♘bd7 10.♕c2 (10.♗d2 0-0 11.♘a2 ♗d6 12.h3 ♗xf3 13.♗xf3 e5 was OK in Blokh-Bykhovsky, Rishon-le-Zion 2004) 10...0-0 11.e4 (11.♘e1 ♗xe2 12.♘xe2 ♕e7 – 12...c5!∓ – 13.♘d3 ♗d6 14.f3 c5∓, Bialy-Stefanek, Biala Podlaska 1994) 11...♖c8 12.e5 ♗xf3 13.♗xf3 ♘d5 14.♖d1 ♔h8 15.♗e4 f5 16.exf6 ♘7xf6 was unclear in G.Buckley-Menadue, Swansea 1995.

– 9.♕e2 0-0 10.♖d1 ♘bd7 11.e4 and now 11...♕c7! is a good idea to avoid ♗f4 and prepare at the same time the ...e5 break. 12.♗g5 ♗h5 13.♖ac1 h6 14.♗xf6 ♘xf6 15.e5 (White got more space but the bishop on h5 or g6 has an important defensive role!) 15...♘d7 16.♘e4 ♖ae8 17.♘g3 ♗g6 18.♘h4 ♗h7 19.♕g4 ♕d8! 20.♘h5 (20.f4 ♔h8 21.f5 ♘b6 22.♗b3 ♕g5) 20...♕g5 21.♕xg5 hxg5 22.♘f3 ♗e7 23.h3 ♘b6 24.♗b3 ♖d8∓, Purdon-Menadue, Exmouth 2000.

● 8.♕b3 ♗xf3 (otherwise ♘e5 will be annoying, and anyway Black seems in time for counterplay, ♕b3 can be misplaced so far from the kingside) 9.gxf3 and here I would recommend 9...♗b4 10.♗d2 0-0 with ...♘bd7 and ...c5 in mind, Black seems in time to get nice play!

8...♗h5 9.g4

Another nice example was 9.0-0 ♗b4 10.♕e2 0-0 11.♘a2 ♗e7 12.♖d1 ♘e4 13.♕c2 ♗xf3 14.gxf3 ♘f6 15.♘c3 ♘a6 16.♗f1 ♕c7 17.f4 ♘d5 18.♗g2 ♘ab4 19.♕e2 f5 and Black controls the centre (and White's pair of bishops as well), Haimovich-Postny, Tel Aviv 1998.

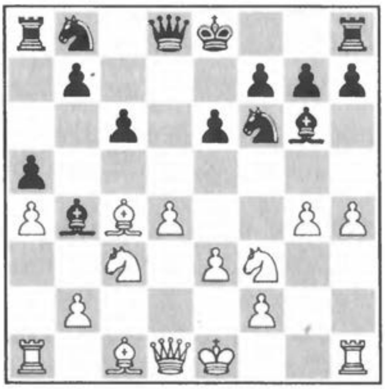
9...♗g6 10.h4

The most ambitious line, which leads to very sharp play.

10...♗b4

The e4 square must be under control to allow ...♗g6 an escape!

Not 10...h5? 11.♘e5 or 10...h6 11.♘e5 ♗h7 12.♕b3 (but not 12.g5 hxg5 13.hxg5 ♗c2!).



11.h5 ♗e4 12.g5 ♘d5 13.♗d2 ♘xc3 14.bxc3 ♗e7 15.♖g1

15.♖h4 was an interesting option: 15...♗xf3

(15...♗d5 16.♗d3!) 16.♕xf3 ♗xg5 17.♖g4 ♘d7 18.♖b1 ♖b8, White seems to have some compensation, but Black is OK, since it is hard to create direct threats.

15...♘d7 16.g6?!

A logical move, but it favours Black in the end. 16.h6!? ♖g8!? or 16...g6 17.♕e2 ♗xf3 18.♕xf3 ♗xg5 19.♖b1 is one direction to investigate.

Another thought is 16.♗b3 planning ♗c2. Play is unclear after 16...♗xf3 17.♕xf3 ♗xg5 18.♕g4 ♗h6.

16...hxg6 17.hxg6 ♗xg6 18.♗xe6 ♗e4!

Very important, and probably the only way to refute White's attack!

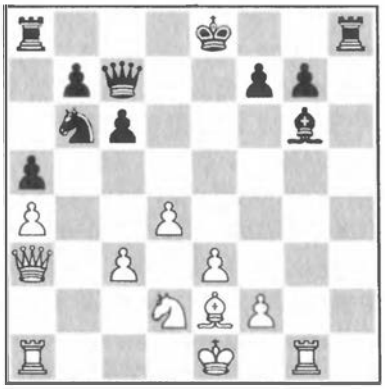
19.♗c4 19.♖xg7 fxe6. **19...♗f6** Even better looks 19...♖h3! 20.♗e2 ♔f8 21.c4 ♗h4! with big pressure on White's king. **20.♗c1 ♘b6 21.♘d2** 21.♗d3 ♕d5. **21...♗g6 22.♗a3 ♗e7?!**

22...♕c7∓ with ...0-0-0 to follow favours Black, who will have a safe king – compare it to White's king!

23.♕b3

23.♗xe7 ♕xe7 24.♕b3 ♘xc4 25.♘xc4 0-0-0 26.♕b6! seems dangerous for Black, but still unclear after 26...♖h5 27.♘xa5 ♖dd5! 28.♘c4 (28.♕b4 c5!) 28...♖dg5 29.0-0-0! ♕e6.

23...♗xa3 24.♕xa3 24.♖xa3 ♕c7. **24...♕c7 25.♗e2**



25...♘d5!

White has more pawns in the centre, but any push will give Black's knight a nice square on b4 or on f4.

25...0-0-0 26.c4! leaves the knight out of play.

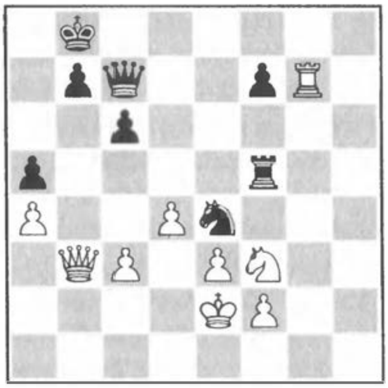
26.♘c4 0-0-0 27.0-0-0?

Correct was 27.♘e5 ♖h2 28.♗f3!, with a complex position.

27...♖h2

Now in this difficult position, White seems to face more problems than Black. I guess that the coming moves were influenced by time-trouble. Anyway, White is suffering a tough defence and he was the last to blunder.

28.♖d2 ♔b8 28...♘f6!. **29.♗f3 ♘f6 30.♞e5 ♗e4?!** 30...♘e4!. **31.♖xg7 ♗xf3 32.♞xf3 ♖h1+ 33.♖d1 ♖xd1+ 34.♔xd1 ♘e4 35.♕b3 ♖d5 36.♔e2 ♖f5**



37.♖g2??

A big blunder, but after such a tough game – mainly because of Black's original play – I would expect that anybody as White could lose his head somewhere.

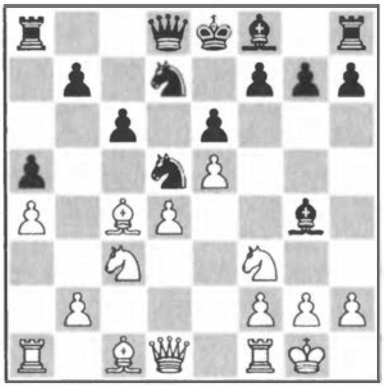
Meanwhile, objectively White is better after 37.♕c2 ♕e7 38.c4.

37...♖xf3! 38.♕c2 38.♔xf3 ♘d2+. **38...♖xf2+! 39.♖xf2 ♘xf2 40.♕f5 ♘h1 41.♕h7 ♞g3+ 42.♔d3 ♔a7 43.♕h3 f5 0-1**

□ **Lucien van Beek**
■ **Gerard Welling**
Belgium tt 2000/01

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 dxc4 5.a4 a5 6.e4 ♗g4 7.♗xc4

7.e5!? is also an important idea: 7...♘d5 8.♗xc4 e6 9.0-0 ♘d7 (9...♝e7 10.♘e4 0-0 or 10...♘a6 is fully playable).



– 10.h3 ♗h5 11.♘e4 (11.♘xd5 cxd5 is a good French for Black with his usual bad bishop on h5!) 12.♗b5 ♗e7 13.♗f4 0-0 14.♖c1 ♘b8! (an important idea! The knight belongs to c6 to press d4!) 15.g4 ♗g6 16.♘e1 ♘c6∓ 17.♗e3, ½-½ Fedorowicz-Schroer, Philadelphia 1997) 11...h6 (11...♗e7) 12.♗d3 ♘b4 13.♗b1 ♞b6 14.g4 ♗g6 15.♗f4 ♘6d5 16.♗g3 ♕b6 with unclear play in D.Ilic-Nisman, Belgrade 1989.

– 10.♘e4 ♕b6!? (10...♗e7 11.♗g5 f6, or 11...♗xg5 12.♘exg5 ♕xg5 13.♘xg5 ♗xd1 14.♖fxd1 ♔e7 15.♘e4 f6 both give Black no reason to complain either) 11.♗e3 ♗e7 12.♘g3 (12.h3 ♗f5 13.♘g3 ♗g6 seems very OK for Black) 12...h5!? (or 12...♖d8!) 13.♗xd5 (13.h3 ♘xe3 14.fxe3 h4 15.♘e4 ♗f5 16.♘d6+ ♗xd6 17.exd6 ♕b4) 13...cxd5 14.h3 ♗xf3 15.♕xf3 g6! (15...h4 16.♘h5) 16.♘e2 ♖c8 17.♖fc1 ♖c6 18.g4?! hxg4 (stronger is 18...♕b4! 19.♔g2 ♘b6) 19.hxg4 ♚f8 was equal in Lipinsky-Welling, Berlin 1999.

7...e6 8.0-0

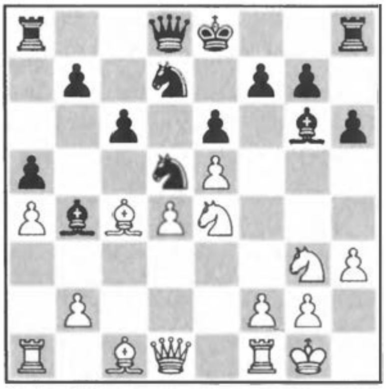
8.♗e3!? to protect d4 is another logical move, see the next illustrative game.

8...♗b4

8...♗xf3?! 9.gxf3 favours White.

9.♗g5

● I had to face 9.e5 in a critical last round of the Antwerp open, and somehow (morning was a good excuse!) I was outplayed, but by a strong player: Jeroen Piket! Let's see the course of that game: 9...♘d5 10.♘e4 (10.♘xd5 cxd5 11.♗b5+ ♘c6 12.♕d3 ♕b6 13.♗e3 ♗xf3 14.gxf3 0-0∓, Czerwonski-Tomaszewski, Lublin 1988) 10...♘d7 11.h3 (11.♗g5 ♕b6 12.♗e2 h6 13.♝c1 0-0-0 14.♗d2 f5!⇄ 15.exf6?!, Geller-Murey, Amsterdam 1986, 15...gxf6!) 11...♗h5 12.♘g3 ♗g6 13.♘g5!? (13.♕e2 h6!) 13...h6 (13...♘7b6) 14.♘5e4 and this was a critical moment where I went wrong, missing more than one good way to get nice play.



– 14...0-0 15.f4 f5!.

– 14...♕h4 15.f4 f5.

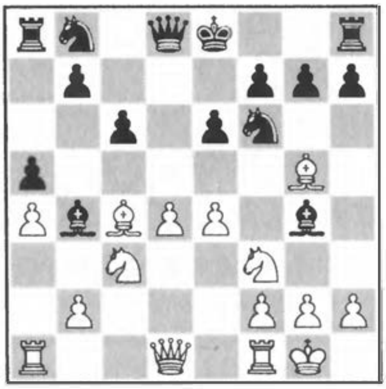
– 14...♘7b6 15.♗b3 0-0 16.f4 ♘e7! also seems very OK for Black.

– I played 14...f5?! and was clearly worse after 15.♗xd5! cxd5 16.♘d6+ ♗xd6 17.exd6 0-0 18.♗f4 ♘b6 19.♕b3 ♗e8 20.♖fc1 ♘c4 21.♖xc4! dxc4 22.♕xc4 ♕c8 23.♕b3, Piket-Kogan, Antwerp 1998.

● 9.♖e1 ♘bd7 10.♗f4 0-0 11.h3 ♗h5 12.g4

♗g6 13.e5 (13.♗d3 c5!?) 13...♘d5 14.♗xd5 cxd5 15.h4 ♗xc3 (15...h5 16.♘g5) 16.bxc3 f6 and White is in trouble, Bourne-Menadue, Exeter 1999. Great play by another expert in this line Menadue, he is an English player of about 2200, but he often plays this line like a GM!

- 9.♕d3 ♘bd7 10.e5 ♘d5 11.♘e4 ♘7b6 12.♗b3 ♗f5 13.♕e2 h6 seems very OK for Black, Franic-Vukelic, Porec 1998.



9...♗xf3 Logical, but also interesting is 9...h6 10.♗h4 ♗xf3.

10.gxf3

Or 10.♕xf3 ♕xd4 11.♖ad1 ♕e5! 12.♗f4 ♕h5 and White's compensation is not so evident. Bad is 11...♕xc4 12.♗xf6 gxf6 13.♕xf6 0-0 and now rather than settling for a draw with 14.♕g5+ ♔h8 15.♕f6+ White has 14.♖fe1! winning.

10...♗e7 11.♕b3 ♘bd7 12.♖ad1

In case of the greedy 12.♕xb7 Black plays 12...♖b8 13.♕a6 (13.♕xc6 ♖b6−+) 13...♕c7 14.♗e2 ♘g4 15.fxg4 ♗xg5.

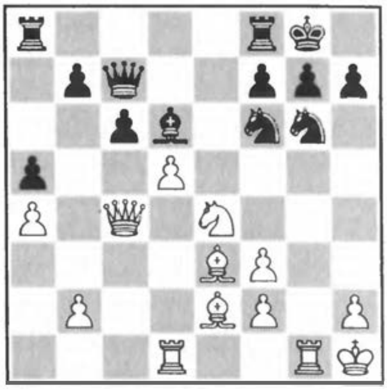
12...0-0 13.♔h1 ♘h5!

Black is almost always happy to exchange the dark-squared bishops in this line!

14.♗e3 ♕c7 15.d5 exd5 16.exd5 ♘e5 17.♗e2 ♘f6 18.♖g1 ♘g6

A very good square for this knight to block White's attacking chances and to control f4.

19.♕c4 ♗d6 20.♘e4



20...♘xd5!? An interesting exchange sacrifice. 20...♘xe4 21.fxe4 ♗xh2 22.♖g2 ♗f4 was also possible, I guess. **21.♘xd6 ♕xd6 22.♗c5 ♕e5 23.♗xf8 ♖xf8 24.b3?** Far from evident was the correct defence: 24.♕e4! ♕xb2 25.♖b1 ♕d2 26.♖xb7 ♘gf4 27.♕e5! g6 28.♖b2! ♕c3. **24...♖e8 25.♗f1 ♕b2! 26.♖g2 h6** Now Black has a clear advantage owing to his superior pieces, the knights are doing no worse than the white rooks for sure! **27.♕d4 ♕xb3 28.♗c4 ♕xf3 29.♗xd5 cxd5 30.♔g1 ♖e4! 31.♕a1 ♖g4 32.♖xg4 ♕xg4+ 33.♔f1 ♘f4 34.♕d4 ♕f3 0-1**

An impressive attack by Black!

☐ **Oleg Chernikov**
■ **Petr Haba**
Debrecen 1988

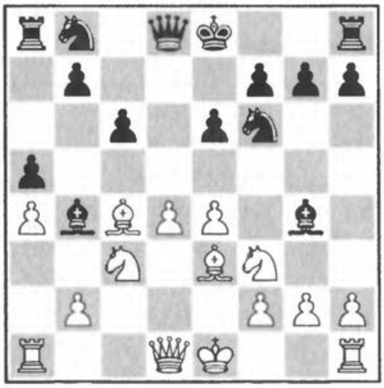
1.♘f3 d5 2.d4 ♘f6 3.c4 c6 4.♘c3 dxc4 5.a4 a5 6.e4 ♗g4 7.♗xc4 e6 8.♗e3

A logical move to defend the d4-pawn, and prevent ...♗xf3 ideas.

- 8.♕d3!? ♘a6! 9.♗e3 ♘b4 10.♕e2 ♗e7 11.♖c1 0-0 12.h3 ♗h5 13.0-0 h6 14.♖fd1, Lugovoi-Kir.Georgiev, Rethymnon 2003, and now Black should have played 14...♕c7! 15.d5 exd5 16.exd5 ♖ad8 17.dxc6 bxc6 18.♘b5 ♖xd1+ 19.♕xd1 ♕c8.

● 8.h3 ♗h5 9.g4 ♗g6 10.♕e2 ♗b4 11.0-0!? and now I accepted the pawn sacrifice with 11...♗xc3 12.bxc3 ♘xe4 and obtained a strong position after 13.♗a3 ♘d7 14.♖ac1 (14.♖fe1 was better but Black is OK after 14...♕c7) 14...h5! 15.♔g2 hxg4 16.hxg4 ♕c7 17.♖h1 0-0-0, Lerner-Kogan, Israel tt 2008.

8...♗b4



9.♕c2

– 9.♗d3 ♘bd7 10.0-0 0-0 11.e5 ♘d5 12.♘xd5 cxd5 13.♖c1, E. Robert Dehault-Andonov, Sautron 2002, and now 13...♘b8! would have given Black good play.

– 9.h3 ♗h5 10.♗d3♘bd7 11.0-0 0-0 12.♖c1 e5! 13.g4 exd4 14.♘xd4 ♗g6 15.f3 ♖e8 (15...♕c7!) 16.♗f2 ♘f8 was OK for Black in Farago-Hebbinghaus, Hamburg 1995.

9...♘bd7

It is important to avoid 9...♗xf3?! 10.gxf3 ♘bd7 11.♖g1 g6 12.f4! – that's why the queen on c2 is well placed here!

10.♗e2

After 10.0-0 0-0 11.♘e5 ♗h5 Black is OK, and a draw was agreed in Piket-I.Sokolov, Wijk aan Zee 1994.

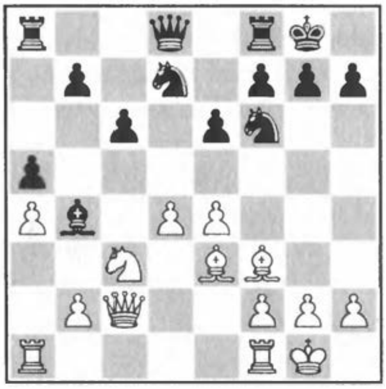
Critical is 10.♘e5, which leads to risky play for White after 10...♘xe5 11.dxe5 ♞d7 12.f4 g5! 13.fxg5 ♘xe5 14.♗f1 h6! 15.gxh6 ♖xh6! 16.♕d2 (16.♗xh6 ♕h4+ 17.♕f2 ♕xh6∓) 16...♕h4+ (16...♖h7!∓) 17.♕f2 ♕xf2+ 18.♔xf2 ♖h7 19.♘a2 ♗e7 20.♗d4 ♗d6 21.h3 0-0-0∓, Chabanon-Luce, Toulouse 1995.

10...0-0 11.0-0 ♗xf3!

An important idea using the fact that the bishop is not on c4, so f7 is no longer a target!

12.♗xf3

12.gxf3 c5! will start the fight for the centre and the f4-square.



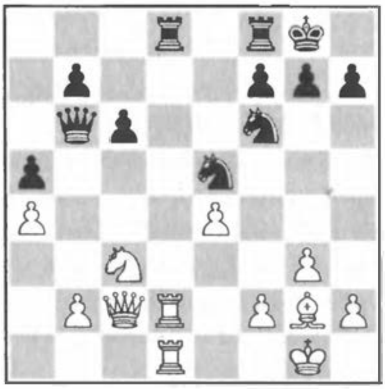
12...e5! Fighting for central control and – no less important – the black squares again! **13.♖fd1** White gets nothing either after 13.d5 ♗xc3 (13...♖c8!?) 14.bxc3 cxd5 15.exd5 e4 16.♗xe4 ♘xe4 17.♕xe4 ♘f6 18.♕d4 ♘xd5. **13...exd4 14.♗xd4 ♕e7** The best square for the queen: to control e5 and press e4. Not 14...♕c7? 15.♘d5±.

15.g3 ♖ad8 16.♗g2 ♗c5!

It is is important to exchange the best piece White has, so now the black squares get weaker, and Black's knights can start to party!

17.♗xc5?! 17.♘e2 ♗xd4 18.♘xd4 ♕b4.

17...♕xc5 18.♖d2 ♘e5 19.♖ad1 ♕b6

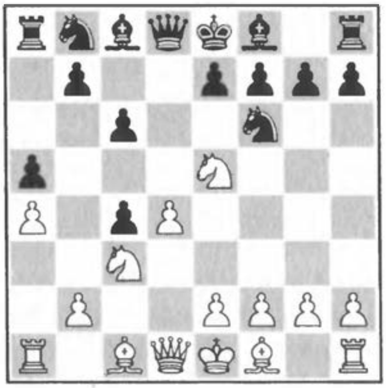


20.♘b1?! 20.♘e2 seems to give more chances to equalize, but 20...♖xd2 21.♖xd2 ♖e8 and Black retains the better chances. **20...h5! 21.♕c3 ♘fg4!** Black's initiative gets bigger and bigger. **22.♖d4 ♖xd4 23.♕xd4 c5! 24.♕c3 ♖d8** 24...c4!? with the idea of ...♘d3 is also not bad! **25.♖xd8+ ♕xd8** The rest of the game needs no comment, just to sit and enjoy the dance of his pieces, mainly the knights! **26.♗f3 ♕d6 27.♔g2 b6 28.♗e2 ♘c6 29.♗c4?** 29.h3∓ **29...♕d1 30.♕d3 ♕e1** Winning a pawn and the game. **31.♕f1 ♕xe4+ 32.♔g1 ♘ge5 33.♗e2 ♘d4 34.♘c3 ♘df3+ 35.♗xf3 ♘xf3+ 36.♔g2 ♕b7 37.♕c1 ♘h4+ 38.♔h3 ♕d7+ 39.♔xh4 ♕g4** Mate.

☐ **Pedro Lezcano Jaen**
■ **Alfonso Romero Holmes**
El Corte Ingles 1990

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 c6 3.d4 d5 4.♘c3 dxc4 5.a4 a5 6.♘e5

Another critical way to face 5...a5. In fact, it is not so easy to work out a playable line.



6...♗e6!?

Played in SOS-style! This original idea of GM Romero Holmes is extremely rare.

The common method is 6...♘bd7 7.♘xc4 and here there is a choice between the creative, but suspicious, 7...♕c7 and 7...♘b6. Murey has adopted both approaches, but I prefer 6...♗e6.

7.e4

7.e3 ♘bd7 8.♘xc4 g6 will be a comfortable version of the Grünfeld, where White has no reason to smile (nor has ♗c1).

7...♘bd7 8.♘xc4 ♗xc4

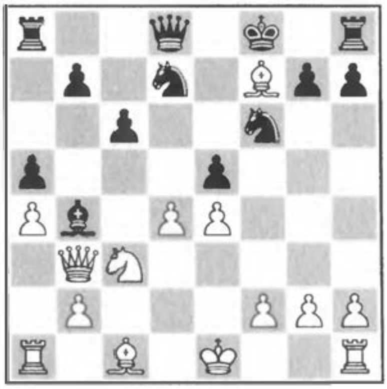
8...g6 seems too risky after 9.d5 cxd5 10.exd5 ♗f5 11.♘e3.

9.♗xc4 e5!

Again fighting for the centre, mainly for the black squares d4, c5 and e5!

10.dxe5

It is important that even the attractive looking 10.♕b3 ♗b4! gives Black dangerous counterplay after 11.♗xf7+ ♔f8, and now the complications are OK for Black:



– 12.dxe5♘xe5 13.♗c4 ♕d4 14.♗e2 ♘d3+ 15.♗xd3 ♕xd3, and White king seems weaker than Black's. Especially if he tries to defend his extra pawn with 16.f3? as Black has 16...♘xe4!! 17.fxe4 ♕xe4+ and the attack wins in all lines. Instead 16.♗e3 ♘xe4 17.♖d1 ♗xc3+ 18.bxc3 ♕xc3+ 19.♕xc3 ♘xc3 20.♖d7 b5, is a very complex position to assess; although White's compensation is evident, I guess that chances are about equal, for example: 21.axb5 cxb5 22.♗d4 b4 23.♗xg7+ ♔e8 24.♖b7 ♖d8!

– 12.♗e3 exd4 13.♗xd4 ♕e7 14.♗c4 ♕xe4+ 15.♗e3 ♘c5 16.♕a2 ♘d3+

(16...♘xa4 17.0-0!; 16...♕xg2 17.0-0-0 ♖e8∞) 17.♔f1 ♗xc3 (17...♕f5 18.♖d1 ♘f4∞) 18.♕a3+ (18.bxc3♞g4 19.♗d4 ♖e8 threatening mate on e1 gives Black good play) 18...♗b4 19.♕xd3 ♕xd3+ 20.♗xd3 ♘d5, Black has a promising endgame with his well-placed light pieces, soon ...♔e7 will bring his ...♖h8 to the party as well!

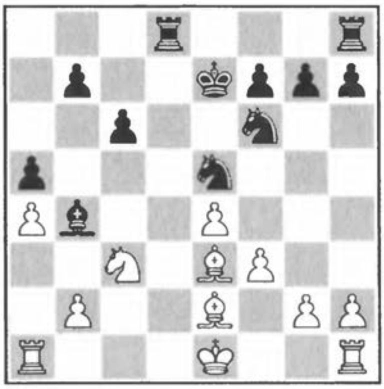
10...♘xe5 11.♕xd8+ ♖xd8

But here Black has not much to complain either, since although White has the pair of bishops and more centre, Black has nice squares for his pieces – mainly the bishop on b4 and the knight on e5 – and the fight for square d4 is still on!

12.♗e2 ♗b4 13.f3 ♔e7

We have a typical Slav endgame with about equal chances.

14.♗e3



14...♘fd7!?

Black is playing for a win. More solid seems 14...♖d6!? (with ...♖hd8 and a possible ...♘d3 this looks very OK for Black). After 14...♘d3+ 15.♗xd3 ♖xd3 16.♔e2 ♖d7 17.♗b6 ♖a8 play is equal.

15.f4! ♘g6 16.0-0-0 ♘c5 17.♔c2 f6

An important move that must be played to stop White's central pawn mobility!

18.g3 Now White should be better, but he needs to play accurately.

18...♘f8 19.b3

19.♘a2! was the only idea to fight for an edge! After 19...♘xe4 20.♘xb4 axb4 21.♗d3 f5 22.♗xe4 fxe4 23.♗c5+ White is better, therefore Black should go for 19...♘fd7 20.♞xb4 axb4 21.♖d4 b3+ 22.♚c3 ♖a8 23.♖a1±.

After 19.♖xd8 ♔xd8 20.♖d1+ Black plays 20...♔c7 21.♘a2 ♘fd7.

19...♘fd7 20.♗f3 ♘a6 21.♗e2 ♘ac5 22.♗f3 White is satisfied with a draw, but... **22...♘e6!** Black wants more! **23.♘e2 ♗c5! 24.♗xc5+**

A serious positional mistake. White needs his bishop to control the key black squares. Still, 24.♗c1 ♘b8 (24...g5!?) with ...♘a6 and ...♞b4 gives Black nice play.

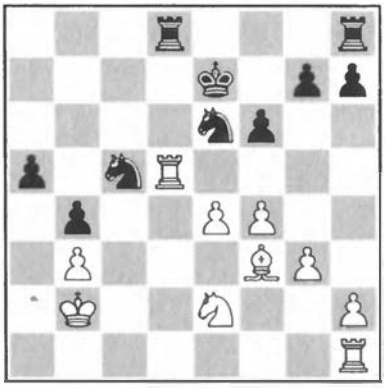
24...♘dxc5

No more problems for Black, he has great play for his knights, and White – with his bad bishop on f3 – might get in trouble quickly.

25.♔c3 b5! 26.axb5 cxb5 27.♖d5

It appears that Black forgot this one, but...

27...b4+ 28.♔b2

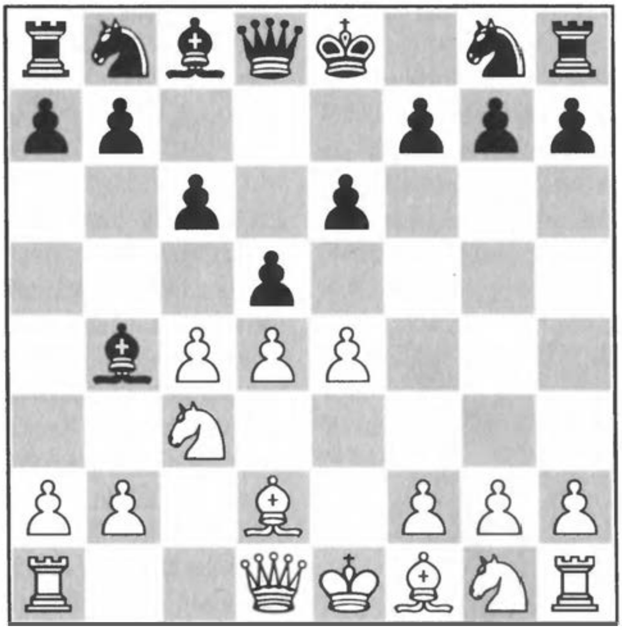


28...a4! Dynamic play by Black to use his knights! **29.bxa4 ♘xa4+ 30.♔b3** Winning a pawn? **30...♘ec5+ 31.♔xb4 ♖b8+** No, White is under a crushing attack on his king! **32.♔c4 ♖hc8! 33.♔d4 ♖b3!** Preventing the escape to e3! Now White's king is hopeless. **34.♗g4 ♖d3+ 35.♔c4 ♘b2+ 36.♔b5** And resigned without waiting for the mate after 36...♖b3+ 37.♔a5 ♞c4!.

CHAPTER 7

Jeroen Bosch

Slav: a Marshall Gambit of Sorts



1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c6 4.e4 ♗b4 5.♗d2!?

☐ **Vladimir Potkin**
■ **Pavel Govciyan**
Rohde2007

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c6 4.e4 ♗b4

This is not a bad line for Black if he wants to avoid the heavily analysed and dangerous main line of the Marshall Gambit 4...dxe4 5.♘xe4 ♗b4+ 6.♗d2 ♕xd4 7.♗xb4 ♕xe4+ and White obtains a dangerous initiative with 8.♗e2 (while 8.♘e2 is an alternative).

5.♗d2

An excellent surprise, aiming to trick the trickster into the main line of the Marshall Gambit again.

Quite possibly Black's best is now 5...dxe4 6.♘xe4 ♕xd4 7.♗xb4 ♕xe4+, transposing into the main line mentioned above.

In practice 5.e5 c5 (or 5...♘e7) 6.a3 ♗xc3+ 7.bxc3 ♘e7 and 5.cxd5 exd5 6.e5 are White's most popular responses to 4...♗b4. Play is of a strategical nature, and Black is not without chances in either line.

With 5.♗d2 White opts for tactics, something Black was actually trying to avoid with 4...♗b4!

5...dxc4

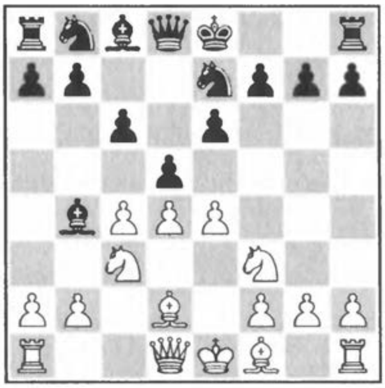
If Black does not want to transpose into the regular lines with 5...dxe4 (and that's what he doesn't want, otherwise he wouldn't have played 4...♗b4 in the first place) then accepting the pawn sacrifice with 5...dxc4 is the critical reply. Other moves look passive and ought to give White at least a comfortable opening edge.

Thus, 5...♘f6 6.e5 ♘fd7 7.♘f3 b6 8.cxd5 exd5 9.♗d3 ♗a6 10.♗xa6 ♘xa6 11.♕a4 ♗xc3 12.♗xc3 ♕c8 13.0-0 was very bad for Black in Conquest-Fowler, England tt 2008/09.

And after 5...♗xc3 6.♗xc3 dxe4 the move 7.♕g4 is uncomfortable for Black.

The main alternative for taking on e4 or c4 is **5...♘e7**, when White has two options. He can continue his development or immediately provoke the exchange on c3:

● 6.♘f3



And now:

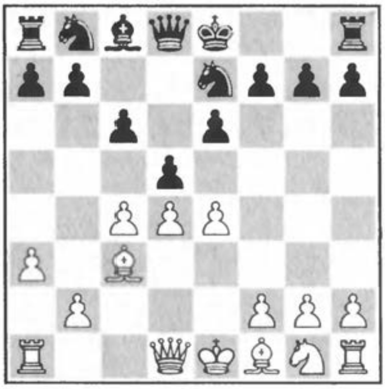
– 6...♗xc3?! 7.♗xc3 dxe4 8.♘g5.

– 6...♘d7 7.♗d3 dxc4 8.♗xc4 c5 9.a3 cxd4 10.axb4 dxc3 11.♗xc3 is much better for White – just look at that dark-squared bishop(!), B.Kovacevic-Godena, Solin 2005.

– 6...0-0 7.♗d3 c5 8.dxc5!? ♘a6 9.0-0 ♘xc5 10.♗e3!? ♘xd3 11.♕xd3 ♗xc3 (11...dxe4) 12.bxc3 b6 13.cxd5 exd5 14.♖ad1! ♗b7 15.e5 ♘g6 16.♖fe1 ♖e8 17.♗d4 was a slight edge for White in Miton-Kaidanov, Lubbock 2008.

● 6.a3 ♗xc3 (or 6...♗a5 and now 7.♘f3 after all, when White has the extra option to play b4 at some point) 7.♗xc3.

I like the centre and White's bishop pair.



Let's look at some practical examples:

– 7...♘g6 8.e5 b6 9.♘f3 ♗b7 10.h4 (10.cxd5 ♕xd5) 10...c5 11.dxc5 bxc5 12.h5 ♘e7 looks quite attractive for White, Gozzoli-Tregubov, Paris 2005. Pushing the h-pawn with 13.h6 is rather nice now.

– 7...dxe4 8.♕g4 ♘f5 9.♕xe4 ♘d7 10.♘f3 0-0 11.♗d3 (11.g4 ♘f6 12.♕f4 is Dautov's recommendation, which also looks good) 11...b5 12.b3 (12.g4? bxc4 13.♗c2 ♘f6 14.♕xc6 ♖b8 15.gxf5 ♗b7 16.♕xc4 ♗xf3∓, Danilov-Cosma, Bucharest 2001) 12...♗b7 13.0-0 ♖b8 14.♕f4, with a clear strategic edge in Erdös-Cosma, Predeal 2007.

6.♗xc4

This is clearly the most logical move, White takes back on c4 and sacrifices the d4-pawn for a huge lead in development. White is rather successful with the text, so there is no real need to investigate the alternatives. Yet, I do want to draw your attention to two other moves (especially the first seems interesting and has that extra special SOS flavour):

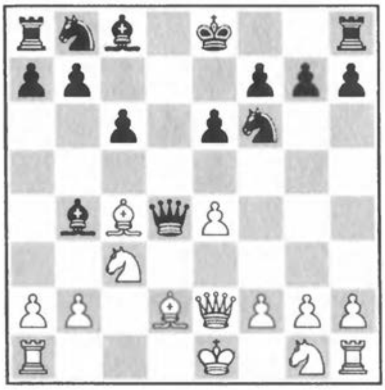
● 6.♕g4!? ♘f6 (this must be critical. 6...♗f8 7.♗xc4 ♕xd4 8.♕e2 ♕d8 9.♘f3 was Halkias-Mastrovasilis, Athens 2004. Compared to our main game White has won an additional tempo – the black bishop is on f8 instead of on b4. I am sure that in his days Paul Morphy would have considered White's enormous lead in development as decisive) 7.♕xg7 ♖g8 8.♕h6 ♖g6 (8...♕xd4 9.♘f3

♕d8 10.e5±) 9.♕e3 ♘g4 (more or less forced I suppose) 10.♕e2 ♕xd4 11.♘f3 ♕c5 12.a3 (12.h3) 12...♗a5 13.h3 ♘f6 14.e5!? (14.g4!?; 14.0-0-0) 14...♗xc3 (14...♘d5 15.♘e4) 15.bxc3 (15.♗xc3 ♘d5 16.♗d4 ♕a5+) 15...♘d5 16.♕xc4!? (16.h4!?) 16...♕xc4 17.♗xc4 ♖xg2 was D.Cramling-Matros, Sweden tt 1999/2000. Even though Black has managed to reach the endgame, White's lead in development, bishop pair and strong pressure on the dark squares more than compensate the minimal investment. In the game Dan Cramling now went wrong with 18.♘g5. Instead, 18.♗d3 would have emphasized that the ending is still very difficult for Black.

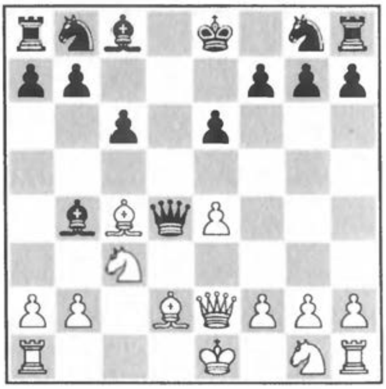
- 6.♘f3!? (White holds on to his central pawn) 6...♘f6 (6...b5 sets up a popular pawn formation in modern chess. White has good compensation after any of the next moves: 7.a4, 7.b3 or 7.♕c2. White is better after 6...c5 7.a3 ♗xc3 8.♗xc3) 7.e5 ♘d5 8.♗xc4 ♘b6 9.♗b3 (9.♗d3!?) 9...0-0 10.0-0 and White has a superior position, Pantioukhine-Rives, Le Grand Bornand 2007.

6...♕xd4

This is almost invariably played, although none other than Alexey Shirov has played the preliminary 6...♘f6 here, after 7.♕e2 (7.e5 ♕xd4; 7.♘f3 ♗xc3; 7.♘ge2!? ♗xc3 8.♘xc3 ♕xd4 9.♕e2 offers compensation, although Black is still solid of course) 7...♕xd4 we reach the diagrammed position. 8.♘f3 (here 8.e5! ♘d5 9.♘f3 ♕b6 10.0-0 planning ♘e4, is indicated as an improvement for White by GM Rustem Dautov) 8...♕d8 (8...♕c5 9.e5 ♗xc3 10.bxc3 ♘d5 11.0-0 ♘d7 12.♘g5 0-0 13.♕e4 g6 14.♕h4 h5 15.♘e4 ♕e7 – 15...♕a5 16.♗b3! – 16.♗g5 f6 17.exf6 ♘5xf6 18.♖ad1, with a winning positional advantage for White in Grant-MacDonald, Hamilton 2004) 9.0-0 ♘bd7 10.a3 (White can also leave the bishop on b4, and start by putting his rooks on the open files with 10.♖ac1 or 10.♖fd1) 10...♗e7 11.♖ac1 0-0 12.e5 ♘d5 13.♖fd1 b6, San Segundo-Shirov, Madrid 1996. White has sufficient compensation for the pawn at this stage. Shirov only won after a long and hard game. There are several interesting options for White along the way, so I conclude that Shirov's 6...♘f6 is quite dangerous for Black.



7.♕e2

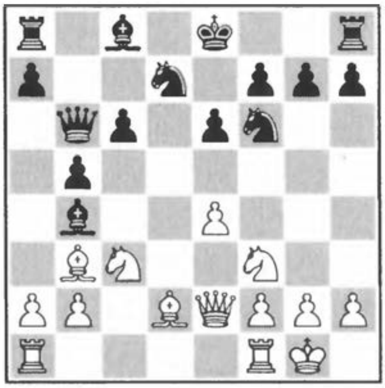


7...e5

This gives Black some space, enables his light-squared bishop to breathe more freely, and prevents a possible e4-e5. A clear disadvantage of the text, however, is that it weakens the diagonal a2-g8. This is an important crossroads, so it makes sense to study other moves as well:

- 7...b5. This may weaken the queenside, but it has several plusses as well: Black gains some space, he can hide his queen on b6 (after ♘f3), the bishop may be developed to b7 and it gains a tempo. Not bad for one move! Now worth looking at is **8.♗d3!?**. After 8...♘d7 9.♘f3 ♕b6 10.0-0 ♗xc3 (10...♘c5 also favours White 11.♘xb5– 11.♗c2; 11.a3 – 11...♘xd3 12.♕xd3 ♕xb5 13.♕xb5 cxb5 14.♗xb4; 10...♘gf6? is bad after 11.♘xb5!) 11.♗xc3 ♘gf6 12.a4 (12.b4!?) 12...b4 13.a5! ♕b8 14.♗d2 e5 15.♖ac1 with distinct pressure, Potkin-Vitiugov, St Petersburg 2005.

White usually plays **8.♗b3**, though. Play often goes 8...♘d7 (8...♘e7 9.♘f3 ♕b6 10.0-0 ♘a6 11.a4!? 0-0 12.axb5 ♗xc3 – 12...cxb5 – 13.♗xc3 cxb5 14.♗d4 ♕b7 15.♖a5 ♘c7 16.♕e3 a6 17.♖c1 f6 and a draw was agreed in Miljkovic-Mastrovasilis, Novi Sad 2002. Although he is a pawn down, White may consider to continue playing with 18.♕c3 ♘e8 19.♗c5 ♖f7 20.e5) 9.♘f3 ♕b6 10.0-0 ♘gf6

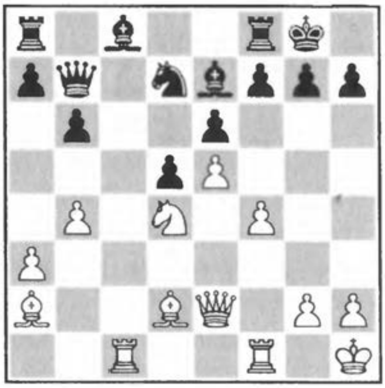


In practice White has now tried:

– 11.e5 forcing 11...♗xc3 12.bxc3 ♘d5 13.c4! bxc4 14.♗xc4 a5 15.♖ab1 ♕a7 16.♕e4 ♗a6 17.♗xa6 ♕xa6 18.♕g4 ♔f8 19.♖fc1 and the small material deficit notwithstanding, White had a slight edge in Comas Fabrego-Godena, Mondariz 2000.

– 11.♖fe1 ♗xc3 (11...0-0 12.e5±; 11...e5 12.♘xb5 ♗c5 13.♘c3±) 12.♗xc3 b4 13.♗xf6 ♘xf6 14.e5 ♗a6 15.♕c2 ♘d5 16.♕e4 ♖d8 (16...0-0 17.♘g5) 17.♖ac1 h6 18.h4 ♘e7 (18...0-0 19.♗c2 g6 20.h5) 19.♖ed1 0-0. Black can no longer postpone castling, but he still walks into an attack: 20.♗c2 g6 21.h5 ♘f5 22.♕f4 ♗e2 23.♗xf5! (23.♖xd8 ♕xd8 24.♗xf5 ♗xf3 25.gxf3 exf5 26.hxg6 ♕g5+ 27.♕xg5 hxg5 28.♖xc6±) 23...♗xf3 24.hxg6 fxg6 25.♕xh6 ♖xf5 26.♕xg6+ ♔f8 27.gxf3 and White won in Naer-Timofeev, Krasnoyarsk 2003.

- 7...♘d7 8.♘f3 ♕b6 9.0-0 ♘e7 10.♖ad1 ♘g6 11.e5 and White had typical compensation in Jimenez-Bertona, Alicante 2001. After 11...♗e7 12.h4! ♕c7 13.♖fe1 b5 14.♗b3 b4 15.♘e4 ♘gxe5 (15...♘dxe5 16.♘xe5 ♕xe5 17.h5) 16.♗f4 White was two pawns down, but the pin is causing Black some major headaches. Play continued: 16...0-0 17.♘xe5 ♘xe5 18.♘g5! f6 19.♗xe6+ (19.♘xe6!? ♗xe6 20.♗xe6+ ♔h8 21.♖d7 ♕b8 22.♖xe7 ♕d6! 23.♗xe5 fxe5 24.♖b7 ♕xe6 25.♕xe5 ♕xe5 26.♖xe5 is a superior double rook ending, that will be very hard to hold) 19...♔h8 20.♗xe5 (20.♘f7+! ♖xf7 21.♗xf7 should win) 20...fxe5 21.♘f7+ ♔g8! 22.♗xc8 ♖axc8 23.♘xe5 ♗d6 24.♕c4+, with a clear edge.
- 7...♕d8!? 8.♖d1 ♘d7 9.a3 (or simply 9.♘f3) 9...♗f8? (this is really very slow; 9...♗d6 10.f4 e5 11.♘f3 ♕e7 is given as unclear by Dautov) 10.f4 ♘gf6 11.♘f3 ♕c7 12.0-0 ♗c5+ 13.♔h1 0-0 14.♗a2!? (intending ♗b1 and e5, with a powerful attack) 14...b6?! 15.b4! (suddenly White can play on the queenside too!) 15...♗e7 16.♖c1 ♕b7 17.e5 ♘d5 18.♘xd5 cxd5 19.♘d4



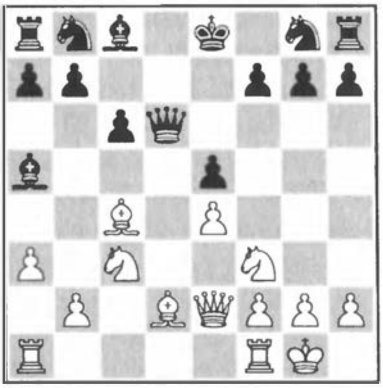
and White was nearly winning already in Aleksandrov-Mastrovasilis, Warsaw 2005. The problem is that he can hardly move his pieces – especially ♗c8 and ♖a8 are hard to introduce into the game, while White can play on both wings with confidence. In the game Black quickly lost after 19...♕a6? 20.♕e3 ♗b7 21.♗b1! and the queen was very awkward on a6.

8.♘f3 ♕d6 9.a3 ♗a5

If 9...♗c5 then 10.♘a4 ♗d4 11.♘xd4 exd4 (11...♕xd4 12.0-0-0 and the threat of ♗g5 decides the matter, for if 12...♕d8 then 13.♕h5 ♕c7 14.♗a5 b6 15.♘xb6!) 12.e5 ♕g6 (12...♕d8 13.♕f3 ♗e6 14.♗xe6 fxe6 15.♘c5 ♕d5 16.♕xd5 exd5 17.♘xb7±) 13.e6!? ♗xe6 14.♘c5 with a dangerous initiative after something like 14...♘e7 15.♗xe6 fxe6 16.♘xe6 d3! 17.♕e3 ♘d5 18.♕h3.

Also favourable for White is 9...♗xc3 10.♗xc3 ♘d7 11.0-0.

10.0-0



10...♗c7

To parry the threat of 11.♘b5. For example: 10...♘f6 11.♘b5 cxb5 12.♗xb5+ ♘c6 13.♗xa5±.

11.♘g5

Very direct play, but moving either rook to d1 would also have been very strong.

11...♘h6 12.f4 0-0

No better is 12...♗g4 13.♗xf7+ ♘xf7 14.♕xg4 (14.♘xf7? ♕d4+–+) 14...♘xg5 15.♕xg5 0-0 (15...♕xd2? 16.♕xg7 ♗b6+ 17.♔h1 ♖f8 18.♕xb7+–) 16.♖ad1.

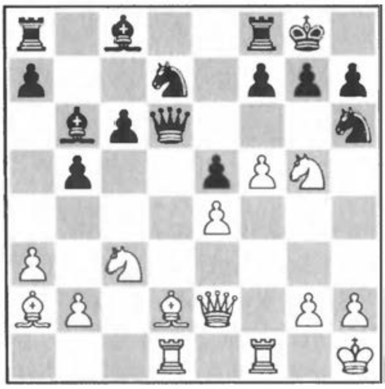
13.f5!

Played against the awkward position of the knight on h6.

13...♘d7 14.♖ad1

White is inviting all his friends to the party! The vis-a-vis along the d-file is unpleasant for her dark majesty.

14...b5 15.♗a2 ♗b6+ 16.♔h1



16...a5?

Black intends ...b4 and ...♗a6, but this is a bit naive. Necessary was 16...♕e7.

17.♘e6 fxe6 18.♗xh6 ♕e7 19.♗xe6+

Material is equal again, but White has a positional edge.

19...♔h8 20.♗xd7

A surprising exchange. White does not take into account the pieces that he is exchanging, but he rightly regards what pieces will remain. 20.♗e3 ♗xe3 21.♗xd7 (21.♕xe3 ♘c5=) 21...♗xd7 22.♕xe3 transposes.

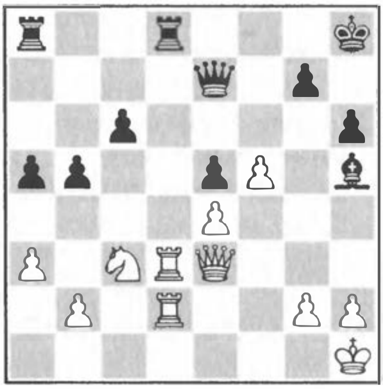
20...♗xd7 21.♗e3 ♗xe3

Or 21...♗c7 22.♗c5 and White gets his rook on the seventh rank after 22...♕xc5 23.♖xd7. On move 22 White can also play 22.♕g4 or 22.♕f2.

22.♕xe3 ♗e8

Passive, but Black is defending against the doubling of rooks on the d-file and the possible invasion of White's queen: 22...♖ad8 23.♕a7, and 22...♖fd8 23.♖d3.

23.♖d3 ♗h5 24.♖f2 ♖fd8 25.♖fd2 h6



26.h3!

An important little move. After the immediate (and seemingly powerful) 26.♕b6 there follows 26...♖xd3 27.♖xd3 b4! and now the tempting 28.♕xc6 is met by 28...♕f8!, when Black suddenly has major counterplay because of White's weak back rank.

26...b4?

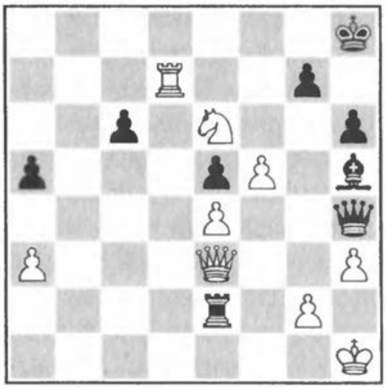
This increases White's positional advantage after

27.♘a4! bxa3 28.bxa3 ♖xd3 29.♖xd3 ♖b8 30.♘c5

White's trumps should now suffice to win.

30...♖b2 30...♗e8 was more stubborn.

31.♖d7 ♕h4 32.♘e6 ♖e2



White can win in all sorts of ways now. Potkin chose the very pretty

33.♕g3

and Black resigned!

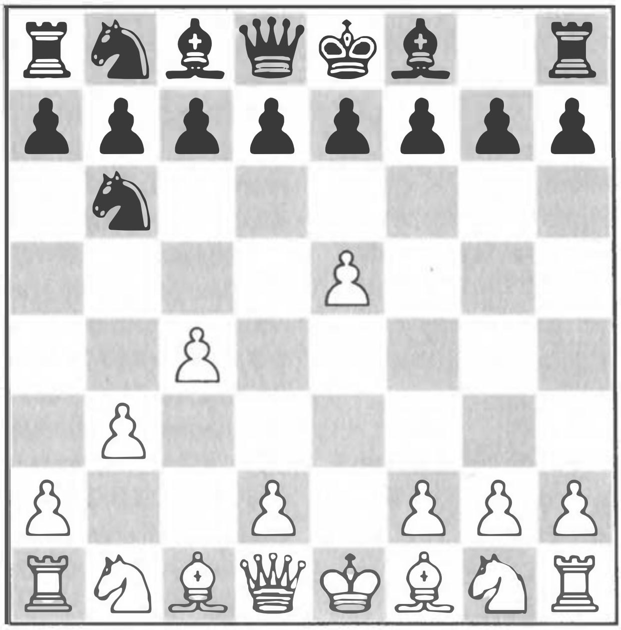
- He is mated after 33...♕xg3 34.♖d8+ ♔h7 35.♘f8+ ♔g8 36.♘g6+ ♔f7 37.♖f8+.
- White also wins after 33...♕f6 34.♖d8+ ♔h7 35.♘f8+ ♔g8 36.♕b3+ ♗f7 37.♕b8.
- Best was 33...♖e1+! 34.♔h2 ♕xg3+ 35.♔xg3 and now the same mate can only be avoided by playing 35...g5 when 36.♘g7 ♗d1 37.♘e8 (37.f6 ♗b3 38.♘f5) 37...♔g8 38.♔f2 ♖h1 39.♘f6+ ♔f8 40.♖h7 wins.

Instead of 33.♕g3 the more mundane 33.♕c5 ♕e1+ 34.♔h2 ♖xg2+ 35.♔xg2 ♕xe4+ 36.♔g3 ♕f3+ 37.♔h4 would also have won.

CHAPTER 8

Alexander Finkel

Queen's Fianchetto in the Alekhine



1.e4 ♘f6 2.e5 ♘d5 3.c4 ♘b6 4.b3

The Alekhine Defence might very well be regarded as some sort of a surprise weapon in itself. So by opting for a move like 4.b3!? White is using reversed psychology – instead of entering theoretical lines with which Black is thoroughly familiar, White forces Black to think for himself right from the very first moves. It is interesting to mention in this respect that the Lithuanian grandmaster Eduardas Rozentalis has rather successfully employed 3.g3 against the Alekhine for quite some time. True, 4.b3 has never been advocated by any of the top players (except for a single try by Ljubojevic some 30 years ago).

The point behind 4.b3 is quite simple and logical: White hopes to exploit a certain delay in the development of Black's kingside pieces, caused by the necessity to defend the pawn on g7, which is immediately attacked by White's dark-squared bishop.

The drawbacks of this move are also quite obvious – should White play d4 later on the bishop could be misplaced on b2, not to mention the fact that White voluntarily gives up on the opportunity to take control over the centre.

After 4.b3 Black has two options: 4...d6 and 4...g6; each leading to quite different types of positions. Also, after 4...d6 5.exd6 Black can re-capture on d6 in three different ways.

By nature the positions arising after 4.b3 are quite different from any other line of the Alekhine Defence, so it's hard to think of a better way to drag an opponent into unfamiliar territory. In many cases such an approach will pay off as most players tend to react rather poorly when confronted with an opening surprise.

☐ **Sergey Kalygin**
■ **Vahagn Hachatrian**
St Petersburg Petroff-mem 2000

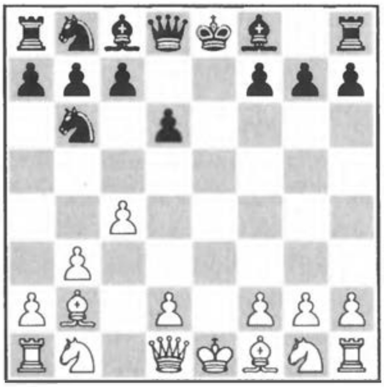
1.e4 ♘f6 2.e5 ♘d5 3.c4 ♘b6 4.b3!? d6

The most natural and popular reply. For 4...g6 see below the game Dutschak-Konopka, Deizisau 1997.

5.exd6 exd6

Black's most popular choice, even though I am not sure if it is any better than 5...♕xd6 or 5...cxd6 (see the next game).

6.♗b2



The bishop exerts strong pressure along the diagonal, and Black must now make up his mind how to continue his development.

6...♘c6

● 6...♘8d7?! 7.♕e2+! ♕e7 8.♕xe7+ ♔xe7 9.♘c3 ♘f6 10.♗e2 ♗f5 11.♘f3 c6 12.0-0 was a little awkward for Black in Gusev-Fedin, Soviet Union 1967.

● 6...d5 7.♘f3 and now:

– 7...c5!? 8.♗e2 d4 9.d3 ♘c6 10.0-0 ♗e7 11.♘bd2 0-0 12.♖e1 ♗f5 13.a3 ♖e8 ½-½, Knezevic-Rajkovic, Majdanpek 1976.

– 7...♘c6 8.♗e2 ♗e6 9.d3 ♗e7 10.♘bd2 0-0 White has his diagonal but Black's pieces are on healthy positions. Play is about equal, Theocharides-Dyachkov, Siofok EUch jr 1996.

7.♘f3 ♗g4

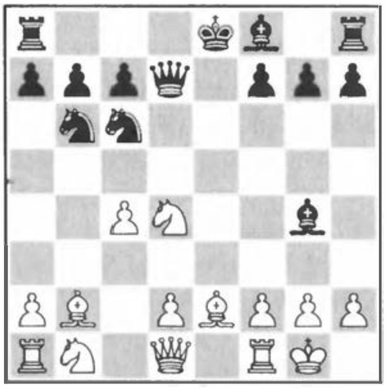
Preparing kingside castling would be rather problematic under the circumstances, so Black is planning to evacuate his king to the queenside.

Another possibility was 7...♗f5 8.♗e2 (this allows Black to develop his kingside, perhaps 8.♘a3?) 8...♗e7 9.0-0 0-0 10.d4 ♗f6 11.♕d2 d5 12.♘a3 ♖e8 13.♖fe1 ♗e4 14.♖ad1 ♕d7 with decent play for Black, Carvalho-Regan, Saint Vincent zonal 1999.

8.♗e2 d5 9.0-0 dxc4!?

This is obviously not forced. After 9...♕d7 10.♘a3 0-0-0 11.d3 dxc4 12.♘xc4 f6 and Black is fine.

10.bxc4 ♕d7 11.♘d4?!



11...♗xe2?!

Black may consider 11...♘xd4! 12.♗xg4 f5 13.♖e1+ ♔f7 14.♗e2 ♗c5.

12.♕xe2+ ♕e7 13.♕g4! Keeping Black's king in the centre. **13...♘xd4**

Dubious is 13...♘e5?! 14.♕g3 ♘bxc4?

(14...♘exc4? 15.♘f5!) 15.♗c3 0-0-0 16.d3 ♘d6 17.♖e1 ♖e8 18.f4 and wins.

14.♕xd4 ♖d8 15.♕f4

Not 15.♕g4?! ♕e6∓. After the text Black is in trouble.

15...♔d7

The king is trying to find shelter on the queenside. Worse are 15...♕e2? 16.♘a3 ♕xd2 17.♖fe1+ ♗e7 18.♕e5!?±, and 15...f6?! 16.♘a3 ♕d6 17.♕e3+ ♗e7 18.d4±.

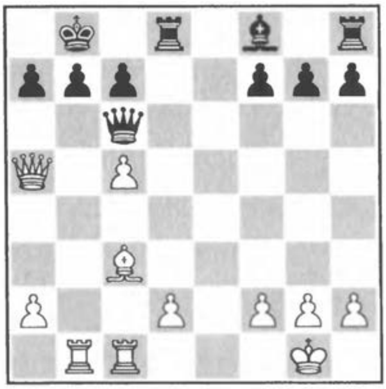
16.c5! ♘d5

If Black takes the pawn with 16...♕xc5 then 17.♖c1 ♖e8! (17...♕d6 18.♗e5±) 18.♘a3 ♕d6 19.♕xf7+ ♖e7 20.♕f5+ gives White a dangerous attack.

17.♕a4+ ♔c8 18.♖c1?!

White should have simply taken the pawn, thus 18.♕xa7 c6 (18...♕xc5 19.♕a8+ ♔d7 20.♕xb7 ♗d6 21.♕b3±) 19.♕a8+ ♔c7 20.♕a5+ ♔c8 (20...♔b8 21.♗e5+! ♘c7 22.♗d6! ♕d7 23.♗f4±) 21.d4 would have led to a position with superior chances for White. Now things are less clear.

18...♔b8 19.♘c3 ♘xc3 20.♗xc3 ♕d7 21.♕a5 ♕c6 22.♖ab1



22...♗e7?

After this move White develops a strong initiative, and Black proves to be helpless against it. It was necessary to play the sharp 22...♕xc5!? 23.♕xc5 ♗xc5 24.♗xg7 ♖hg8 25.♗f6 ♖d6 26.♗e7 ♗xf2+! 27.♔xf2 ♖xd2+ 28.♔f3 ♖gxg2 with an unclear position.

23.d4 ♗f6 24.♖b4

White's play over the b-file is just unstoppable.

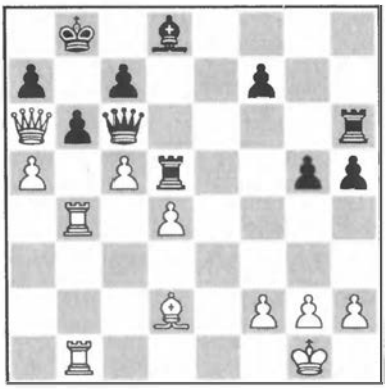
24...♖d5

Black loses after 24...♔a8?! 25.♖cb1 ♖b8 26.d5! ♕a6 (26...♕xd5? 27.♕xa7+! ♔xa7 28.♖a4 mate) 27.♕xa6 bxa6 28.♖xb8+ ♖xb8 29.♖xb8+ ♔xb8 30.♗xf6 gxf6 31.f4.

25.♖cb1 b6 26.♕a6 ♗d8 27.a4 h5 28.♗d2!

Taking h6 under control. Alternatively, White is also better after 28.a5 ♖h6 29.♖a1 (less clear is 29.axb6 cxb6 30.♖a1 ♖d7 31.cxb6 ♗xb6 32.♖c4 ♕b7) 29...♖d7 30.♗d2.

28...g5 29.a5 ♖h6



White plays and wins with the surprising **30.h4! ♖g6 31.axb6 cxb6 32.cxb6 ♗xb6 33.hxg5 ♕b7**

Or 33...♕d6 34.♖xb6+ axb6 35.♖a1! (35.♖xb6+ ♕xb6 36.♗f4+ ♕d6±) 35...♕c6 36.♗f4+ and wins.

34.♗f4+ ♔a8 35.♖xb6!

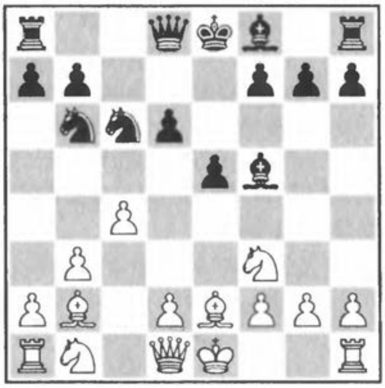
A nice blow ending Black's suffering.

☐ **Yudiana Hernandez**
■ **Sergio Estremera**
Mondariz 1997

1.e4 ♘f6 2.e5 ♘d5 3.c4 ♘b6 4.b3 d6 5.exd6 ♕xd6!?

This move is almost never an option in other lines of the Alekhine Defence, but after 4.b3 it makes perfect sense.

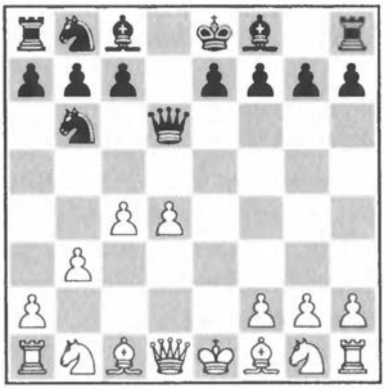
Another possible reply is 5...cxd6, with the idea to neutralize White's pressure on g7 by closing the long diagonal with ...e5: 6.♗b2 ♘c6 7.♘f3 ♗f5 8.♗e2 e5



9.d4 e4 10.♘fd2 ♕g5 11.g4!? ♗g6 and now rather than 12.♘f1 ♕h4 13.♘c3 0-0-0 14.♘g3 ♖e8 with unclear play, Rigo-Farago, Budapest 2000, White obtains a pleasant edge with 12.h4 ♕f4 13.h5 e3 14.fxe3 ♕g3+ 15.♔f1 ♗xb1 16.♕xb1 ♕xe3 17.♕d3.

6.d4

Otherwise Black may just play 6...e5, for example 6.♗b2 e5 7.♘f3 ♘c6 8.♘c3 ♗g4 9.♗e2 0-0-0.



6...c5!?

If Black is not looking for simplifications he may opt for 6...♘c6!?, leading to much more complicated positions: 7.♗b2 ♗f5 8.♗e2 ♕g6 9.♘f3 and now White has excellent play for the pawn after 9...♕xg2 10.♖g1 ♕h3 11.d5 ♘b4 12.♘a3. Stronger is 9...e6 10.♘h4 ♕f6 11.♘xf5 exf5 12.♗f3 0-0-0 13.♗xc6 bxc6 14.0-0 ♗c5 and both sides have their chances, Berg-Hansen, Copenhagen 1984.

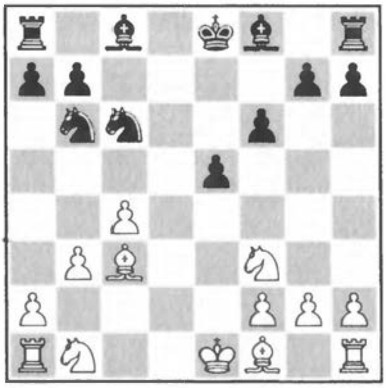
7.♗b2

White cannot avoid the exchange of queens:

- 7.♘f3 cxd4 8.♘xd4 (8.♕xd4 e6 9.♗b2 ♕xd4 10.♘xd4 ♗b4+=) 8...e5 9.♘b5 ♕xd1+ 10.♔xd1 unclear.
- 7.♗e3 cxd4 8.♕xd4 ♕xd4 9.♗xd4 transposes to the game.

7...cxd4 8.♕xd4 ♕xd4 9.♗xd4 ♘c6 10.♗c3 e5 11.♘f3 f6

Chances are even in this queenless middlegame. White has a queenside majority but Black has a central pawn and can't be worse. Also equal was 11...♗b4 12.♗xb4 ♘xb4 13.♘a3 f6 14.♗e2 ♗g4 15.0-0 0-0-0, Tovillas-Bulcourf, Buenos Aires 1991.



12.♗e2?!

A mistake that passes the initiative into Black's hands. The most radical way to deal with 12...♘b4 is 12.a3.

12...♘b4! 13.♘a3 ♘4d5!? 14.♗b2?!

White loses the thread of the game. He had to play 14.cxd5 ♗xa3 15.♖d1 e4 16.♘d2 (16.♗b5+?! ♔f7 17.♘g1 ♖d8∓) 16...♘xd5

17.♘xe4 ♘xc3 18.♘xc3 ♗b4 19.♖c1 ♗e6 20.0-0, even though there is no arguing that Black keeps a minimal advantage.

14...♗b4+ 15.♔f1 ♘f4

This is better for Black, but White doesn't have to lose the position in 10 moves as he did in the game after.

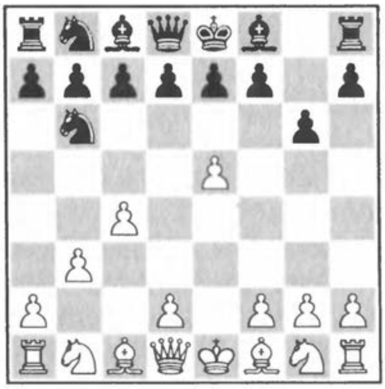
16.♞b5?!

Correct was 16.♘c2 ♗e7 17.♘e3 0-0 (17...♘xe2 18.♔xe2 ♗e6 19.♖hd1=) 18.h4 ♖d8 19.g3 ♘xe2 20.♔xe2 ♗e6 when Black is only a little better.

The remainder of the game is not interesting for our purposes.

☐ **Hauke Dutschak**
■ **Michal Konopka**
Deizisau 1997

1.e4 ♞f6 2.e5 ♘d5 3.c4 ♘b6 4.b3 g6



5.♕f3!?

Posing the first threat in the game (winning the knight with 6.c5)!

A more popular move is 5.♗b2 (although I prefer 5.♕f3), for example: 5...♗g7 6.d4 d6 7.f4 0-0 8.♞f3 dxe5 9.fxe5 c5 10.d5 ♗g4 11.♘bd2 e6 and Black has counterplay, Diaz-Marinkovic, Vrnjacka Banja 1988.

In Pyhälä-Mäki, Tampere 1992, White transposed into a kind of Hunt Variation (arguing that the inclusion of 4.b3 g6 favours him). Play was very unclear after 5.c5 ♘d5 6.♗c4 c6 7.♘c3 ♘xc3 8.dxc3 ♗g7 9.♕f3 0-0 10.h4 d5.

5...c5

This is a very unusual position, but it is even more unusual that the game deviates from the theoretical track as early as on move 6!

5...d6 6.exd6 cxd6 7.♗b2 e5 8.c5!? ♘6d7 (8...dxc5 9.♗xe5 ♕e7 10.♕f6 ♕xf6 11.♗xf6 ♖g8 12.♞f3 ♞c6∞) 9.♗c4 ♕f6 10.cxd6 ♕xf3 11.♞xf3 ♗xd6 12.♘c3±, Akotchik-Zuiderweg, Groningen 2004.

6.♗b2

The normal move. Too aggressive is 6.d4? cxd4 – intending 7.c5 ♕c7.

White was a little better after 6.a4?! a5 7.d4 cxd4 8.♘e2 (8.c5? ♕c7∓) 8...♞c6 (8...d6!?) 9.c5 ♗g7?! (9...♘b4 10.cxb6 ♘c2+ 11.♔d1 ♘xa1 12.♗b2 ♗g7 13.♘d2 ♗xe5∞) 10.cxb6 ♕xb6 11.♘f4, Reprintsev-Hudecek, Pardubice 1998.

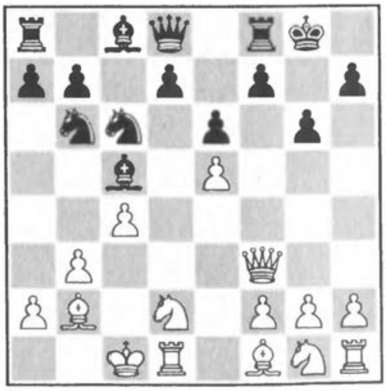
6...♘c6

Deserving of attention is 6...♗g7 7.d4 d6 8.dxc5 dxc5 9.e6!? 0-0 10.♝xg7 ♔xg7 11.exf7 ♖xf7 12.♕c3+ ♖f6 13.♘f3 ♘c6.

7.d4 e6?

More in the spirit of the position was the piece sacrifice 7...cxd4!? 8.c5 ♘xe5 9.♕d1 ♞c6 10.cxb6 ♕xb6 11.♗d3 e5 12.♘f3 ♗b4+ 13.♘fd2 d5 and Black has three pawns for the piece.

8.dxc5 ♗xc5 9.♘d2 0-0 10.0-0-0!?



Since White is threatening 11.♘e4 Black's next moves are forced.

10...d5 11.exd6 f5 12.♞e2

Bringing in your pieces is essential, viz. 12.h4?! ♕xd6 13.h5 g5 14.h6 g4 15.♕e2 ♖d8∓.

12...♕xd6 13.♕c3

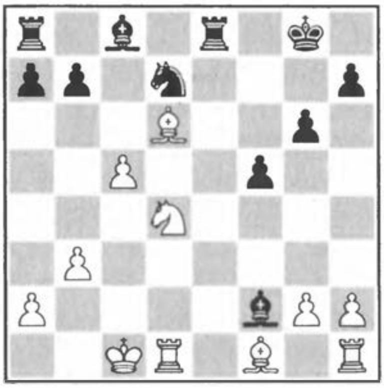
I guess the dark-squared bishop couldn't have hoped for more!

13...e5 14.♘f3!

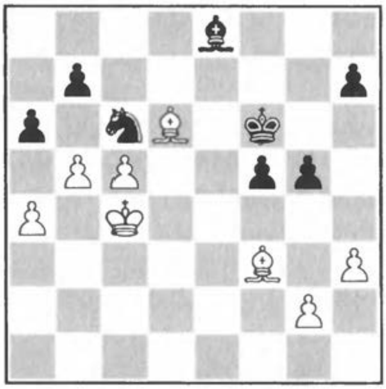
Correctly assessing the arising endgame as better for White.

Things are less clear after 14.♘e4 ♕xd1+! (14...♕e7 15.♘xc5 ♕xc5 16.f4±) 15.♔xd1 fxe4.

14...♕e7 15.♘xe5 ♕xe5 16.♕xe5 ♘xe5 17.♗xe5 ♗xf2 18.♗d6 ♖e8 19.c5 ♘d7 20.♘d4



The end of a forced sequence of moves initiated by 14.♘f3. **20...♘b8** Or 20...♘e5 21.♘b5 winning. **21.♗c4+ ♔g7 22.♖hf1** 22.♘b5 ♘a6. **22...♗xd4 23.♖xd4 ♘c6 24.♖d2 ♗e6 25.♗b5** The rest of the game is a classic example of the superiority of the bishop pair. **25...a6** 25...♖ac8. **26.♗e2 ♖ac8 27.♔b2 ♔f6 28.♗f3 ♘d8?!** Better is 28...g5. **29.b4 ♘c6 30.a3 ♖cd8 31.♖fd1 ♖d7 32.♔c3 g5 33.h3 ♖g7 34.♖e1 ♗d7 35.♖xe8 ♗xe8 36.♖e2 ♖g8 37.a4 ♗d7 38.♔c4!?** Also strong is 38.b5 axb5 39.axb5 ♘a7 40.♗e7+ ♔g6 41.♗xb7 ♘xb5+ 42.♔c4±. **38...♖e8?** Correct was the prophylactic 38...♖a8!. **39.♖xe8 ♗xe8 40.b5** Now White just wins.

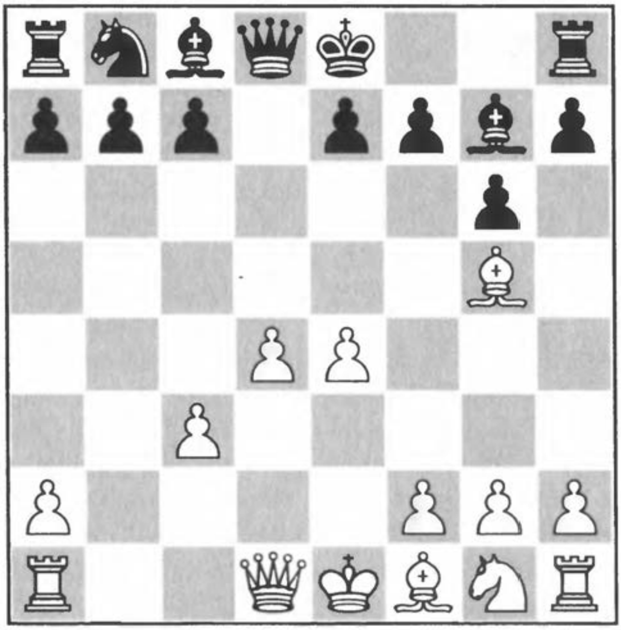


40...axb5+ 41.axb5 ♘a7 42.c6 ♘xb5 A desperate attempt to simplify. 42...bxc6 loses after 43.b6. While the same holds for 42...♘c8 43.♗c7 b6 44.♗d8+ ♔g6 45.♔d5 ♗f7+ 46.♔e5 ♗c4 47.g4!. **43.♔xb5 f4 44.♔c5 ♗xc6 45.♗xc6 bxc6 46.♔xc6 ♔e6 47.♗c7 h5 48.♔c5 ♔f5 49.♔d4 g4 50.♔d3 ♔g5 51.♗d8+ ♔f5 52.♔d4 g3** 52...f3 53.gxf3 gxh3 54.♗c7+-. **53.♔d3 f3 54.gxf3 g2 55.♗b6 ♔f4 56.♔e2 ♔g3 57.f4 ♔xf4 58.♗c7+ ♔g5 59.♔f2** Black resigned.

CHAPTER 9

Igor Lysyj

Grünfeld Indian: Kruppa Variation

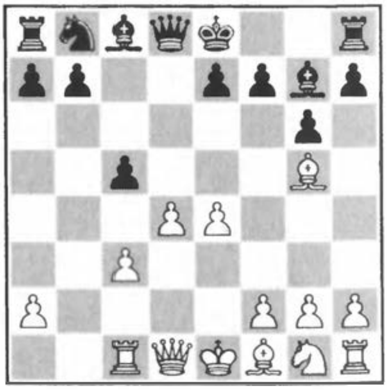


How about 7.♗g5!?

This variation of the Grünfeld has come into use thanks to the efforts of the Ukrainian grandmaster Yury Kruppa. In this line White has a strategically clear plan and quite good statistics. To my mind it is surprising therefore that 7.♗g5!? is not employed more often. As one of the supporters of this fairly new variation, I think that it deserves a better fate. In this article I will demonstrate improvements for White in a whole series of problematic lines (as compared to the work of Tibor Fogarasi in Yearbook 85).

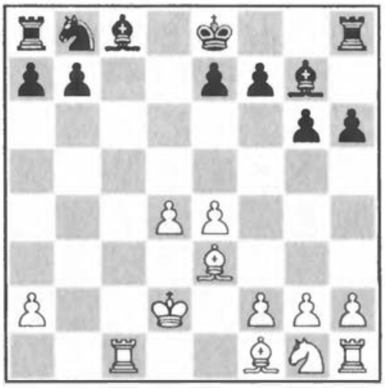
White's idea is to tie Black temporarily to the defence of the e7-pawn and succeed in advancing his pawn to d5. We will consider Black's possible ways to gain counterplay.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♞c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♞xd5 5.e4 ♞xc3 6.bxc3 ♗g7 7.♗g5 c5 8.♜c1

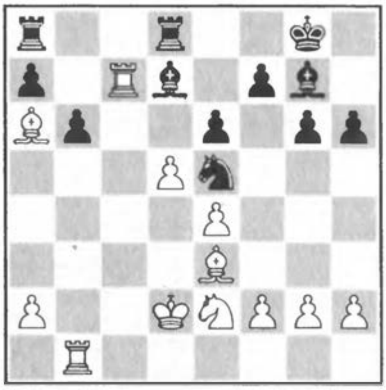


Black can now either continue his development with 8...0-0 (Variation II) or immediately attack with the characteristic 8...♕a5 (Variation I). Lesser alternatives are:

- 8...cxd4 this immediate attack on White's centre does not solve Black's problems 9.cxd4 ♘c6 (the problem is that the greedy 9...♗xd4 leads to a difficult position after 10.♖xc8 ♗xf2+ 11.♔xf2 ♕xc8 12.♘f3) 10.d5 ♘d4 11.♕d2 ♗d7 12.♗d3 (note that the immediate 12.d6 is too optimistic: 12...♖c8 13.♗c4 ♖c6 14.dxe7 ♕c7 15.♗d5 ♖xc1+ 16.♕xc1 ♕xc1+ 17.♗xc1 ♔xe7∓) 12...0-0 13.♘e2 ♘xe2 14.♗xe2, Plischki-Kalod, Ceska Trebova 2006. White's potential passed d-pawn promises him an enduring advantage.
- Interpolating 8...h6 9.♗e3 leads to an inferior endgame after 9...♕a5 10.♕d2 cxd4 (White is slightly better after 10...♘d7 11.♗d3 b6 12.♘e2 e5 13.d5±, Pantovic-Juric, Bar 2005) 11.cxd4 ♕xd2+ 12.♔xd2 (it is not clear where an improvement can be found for White in the following game: 12.♗xd2 0-0 13.♘f3 e6 14.♗b5 ♗d7 15.♗xd7 ♘xd7 16.♖c7 ♘f6 17.e5 ♘d5 18.♖xb7 ♖fb8 19.♖xb8+ ♖xb8 with good compensation for the pawn in Kruppa-Lupulescu, Bucharest 2006).



12...0-0 13.♗d3 ♖d8 14.♘e2 ♘c6 15.♖c4 ♗e6 (15...e6 16.♖b1±) 16.d5 (in the endgame the potential passed d-pawn acquires even greater strength) 16...♘e5 17.♖c7 ♗d7 18.♖b1 b6 19.♗a6 e6



White did not gain any advantage after 20.♔e1 ♗c8 21.♗xc8 ♖dxc8 22.♖xc8+ ♖xc8 in Milov-Howell, Ottawa 2007.

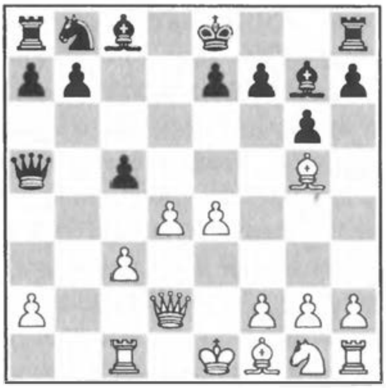
It is not obvious to me how White, after the recommendation of 20.♗d4 in Yearbook 85, can gain an advantage. For example: 20...♗c8 21.♗xc8 ♖axc8 22.♖xc8 ♖xc8.

I therefore propose the novelty 20.f4!? which makes the whole line unattractive for Black. An admittedly rather long sample line runs: 20...♘g4 21.♗b7 ♖ab8 22.♗d4 exd5 23.♗xd5 ♗xd4 24.♘xd4 ♗e6 25.♘c6 ♗xd5 26.♘xd8 ♗xa2 27.♘c6 ♗xb1 28.♘xb8 ♗xe4 29.g3 ♘xh2 30.♔e3 ♗h1 31.♖xa7 and White has excellent chances of tormenting Black in the resulting ending.

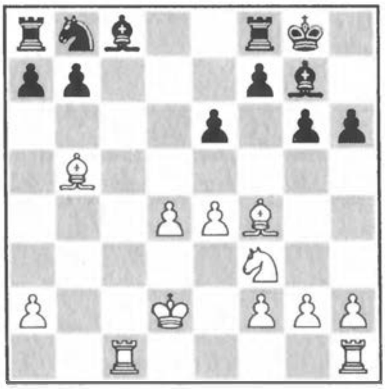
Variation I

8...♕a5 9.♕d2

Black is again at a cross-roads:



- In the event of **9...cxd4?! 10.cxd4 ♕xd2+ 11.♔xd2** he faces a depressing struggle for a draw: **11...♘c6 12.d5 ♘d4** (or 12...♘e5 13.♖c7 ♘d7 – 13...f6 14.♗f4 ♔d8 15.♖c2± – 14.♘f3 with the initiative for White) **13.♖c7 f6 14.♗e3 f5 15.e5!** (15.f3 fxe4 16.fxe4 a6 17.♗g5 0-0 led to unclear play in the game Kruppa-Smolen, Cappelle la Grande 2005) **15...♗xe5 16.♖c4 ♘b5 17.♖xc8+ ♖xc8 18.♗xb5+ ♔f7 19.♘f3** and White has an advantage sufficient for a win.
- **9...e6** will not do: **10.♘f3 h6 11.♗f4 cxd4 12.cxd4 ♕xd2+ 13.♔xd2 0-0 14.♗b5!±** (weaker is 14.♖c7 ♘c6 15.♔e3 ♖d8 16.♘e5 g5 17.♗g3 f5 as in Stocek-Ftacnik, Philadelphia 2008).



White prevents the knight from going to c6 and gains a significant advantage.

A

More chances of equalizing are promised by

9...0-0 10.♘f3

Bad is 10.♗xe7? ♖e8 11.♗xc5 ♖xe4+ 12.♗e2 ♘a6 with excellent compensation. And now the lines fork again:

A1

In the event of **10...♗g4** White carries out his main strategic idea with

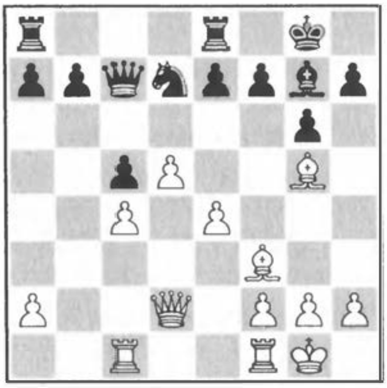
11.d5 ♘d7 12.c4

12.♗e2!? e6 13.♗e7 ♖fe8 14.d6 was slightly better for White in Kopylov-Turov, Salekhard 2006. Also sufficient for a small edge was 13.c4.

12...♕c7

12...♕a3 leads to an edge for White after 13.♗e2♘f6 14.♕c2e6 15.h3 ♗xf3 16.♗xf3 exd5 17.cxd5 ♘d7 18.0-0 ♗d4 19.♖b1.

13.♗e2 ♗xf3 Or 13...♘f6 14.♕c2±. **14.♗xf3 ♖fe8 15.0-0** But not 15.♗xe7? ♖xe7 16.d6 ♗h6 with equal chances.



and White has a pleasant edge.

A2

As is usually the case in this variation, going into an endgame condemns Black to an unpromising defence:

10...cxd4 11.cxd4 ♕xd2+ 12.♔xd2 e6

12...♘c6 is met by 13.d5 h6 14.♗h4 g5 15.♗g3±. Worse for Black is 14...♖d8 15.♔e3 g5 16.dxc6 gxh4 17.c7 ♖d6 18.e5 ♖b6 19.♗c4.

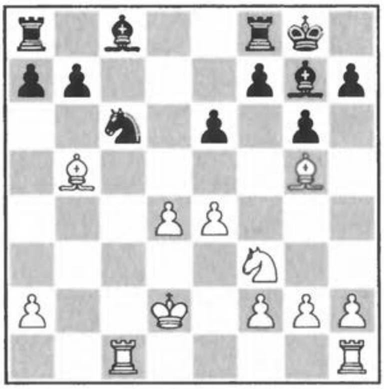
13.♗b5

Weaker is 13.♖c7 ♘c6 14.d5 exd5 15.exd5 ♘b4 16.♗c4 b5 17.♗b3 a5! unclear.

13...♘c6

After 13...a6 14.♗e2 Black obtains equal chances with 14...♘c6 15.d5 exd5 16.exd5 f6. Stronger therefore is 14.♗a4 b5 15.♗b3 a5 16.♖c5!.

After the text White has several ways of gaining a tangible advantage:



– 14.d5 wins an exchange for a pawn after 14...exd5 15.exd5 f6 16.♗f4 ♖d8 17.♔e2 ♖xd5 (17...♘b4 18.♖hd1±) 18.♗c4.

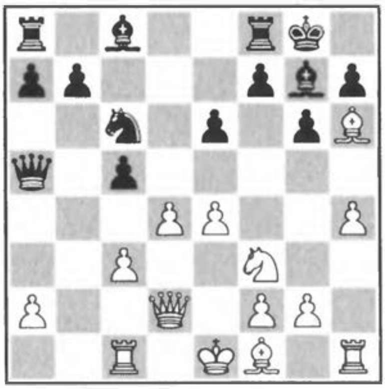
– 14.♗xc6 is also promising: 14...bxc6 15.e5±. However, note that 15.♔e3 is not so convincing after: 15...f6 16.♗f4 e5 17.dxe5 fxe5 18.♘xe5 ♖xf4 19.♔xf4 g5+ 20.♔xg5 ♗xe5, Volokitin-Moor, Mainz 2007.

– 14.♖hd1 f6 (14...h6 15.♗e3 f5 16.exf5 gxf5 17.♗xc6 bxc6 18.♗f4±; 14...♘xd4 15.♘xd4 ♗xd4 16.♗e7±) 15.♗e3 f5 16.exf5 gxf5 17.♗xc6 bxc6 18.♗f4 and only two results are possible.

A3

10...e6 11.♗h6 ♘c6 12.h4!

Weaker is 12.♗xg7 ♔xg7 13.h4 h5 14.♗c4 cxd4 15.cxd4 ♖d8 16.♕xa5 ♘xa5 17.♔e2 ♗d7 18.♔e3 ♖ac8 19.♗e2 ♗a4 with near equality in Lysyj-Rakhmanov 2008.



12...cxd4

It is extremely dangerous to play 12...♖d8 13.♗xg7 ♔xg7 14.h5 cxd4 15.hxg6 hxg6 16.♕h6+ ♔f6 17.♕h4+ g5 18.♕h6+ ♔e7 19.♕xg5+ ♕xg5 20.♘xg5.

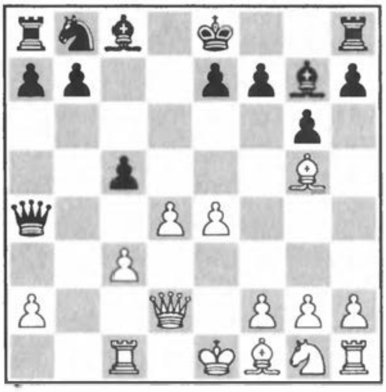
13.♗xg7 ♔xg7 14.cxd4 ♖d8 15.♕xa5 ♘xa5 16.♔d2 h5 17.♔e3 ♗d7 18.♗d3

With an extra tempo compared with the endgame from the Lysyj-Rakhmanov game (see the note to move 12).

So we see that 9...0-0 is a fairly safe choice, but even so it does not promise complete equality. We will now examine a more aggressive idea, aimed at immediate counterplay against White's centre.

B

9...♕a4!?



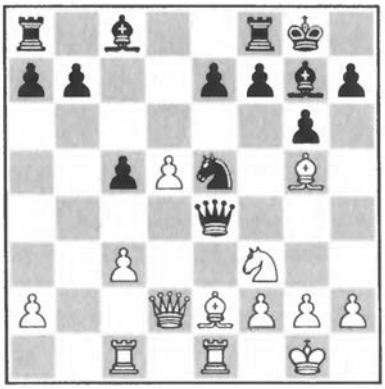
A highly original queen manoeuvre.

10.♘f3 ♘c6 11.d5!

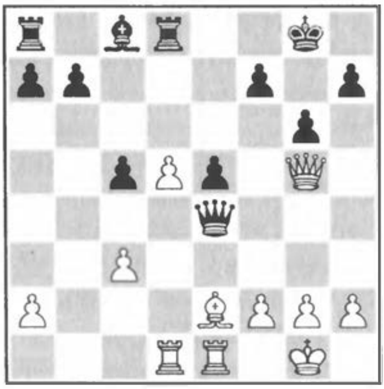
The author of 9...♕a4!? easily demonstrated its viability after 11.♗e2 in the game Obodchuk-Dvoiris, Salekhard 2006: 11...cxd4 12.cxd4 ♘xd4 13.♘xd4 ♕xd4 14.♗b5+ ♗d7 15.♕xd4 ♗xd4 16.♗xd7+ Kxd7 17.♖d1 e5 18.♗f6 and the massive exchanges led to a draw.

11.♗e3, recommended in Yearbook 85, does not promise White any advantage because of 11...♘a5! 12.♕c2 ♕xc2 13.♖xc2 ♗d7.

11...♘e5 12.♗e2 ♕xe4 13.0-0 0-0
Not 13...♗g4 14.♖fe1 and wins.
14.♖fe1



Despite his extra pawn, Black faces serious problems. White retains the initiative thanks to his lead in development and potential passed d-pawn.
14...♗f6
White is better after 14...e6?! 15.♘xe5 ♕xe5 16.♗f3. Even worse is 14...f6? 15.♘xe5 ♕xe5 16.♗f4 ♕f5 17.♗c4.
15.♖cd1! ♖d8
15...♘c4 is unsatisfactory after 16.♕c1 ♘d6 17.♗d3 ♕g4 (17...♕a4) 18.♖xe7 ♗xe7 19.♗xe7 ♕d7 20.♗xf8 ♔xf8 21.♖e1.
15...♗d7 loses immediately to 16.d6.
Or 15...♕f5 16.♗xf6 ♕xf6 17.♕e3 and White keeps his initiative.
16.♗xf6 exf6 17.♘xe5 fxe5 Or 17...♕xe5 18.d6±. **18.♕g5**



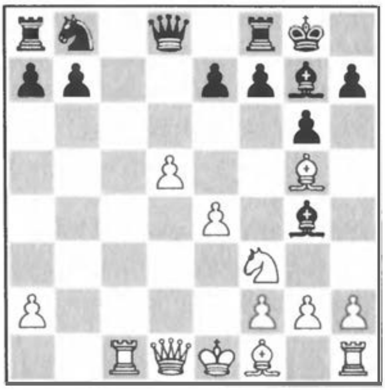
White will regain the e5-pawn, and he will retain a long-term initiative thanks to his passed d-pawn.
It should be mentioned that 18...♖xd5?? loses to 19.♗f1.

Variation II

8...0-0 9.♘f3
In the Premier League of the Russian Club Championship of 2008 I tried the interesting 9.d5!? against Emil Sutovsky, an acknowledged expert on the Grünfeld, but I think that the text move is nevertheless more promising.
It is important to realize that 9...♞c6 is not critical after 10.d5 ♘e5 11.♘xe5 ♗xe5 12.♕d2 with a pleasant edge. This is why Black should develop his bishop to g4, either immediately, or after the preliminary exchange on d4. We will start with the capture on d4.

A

9...cxd4 10.cxd4 ♗g4 11.d5



This position has often occurred in practice:
11...♕d6

- 11...h6 was played in one of my games: 12.♗e3 (12.♗f4 ♘a6 13.♕d2 ♖c8) 12...e6 (Black's problems are not solved by 12...♘d7 13.h3!? ♗xf3 14.gxf3 ♖c8 15.♖xc8 ♕xc8 16.♗e2 ♘e5 17.♕b3 g5

18.h4 g4 19.♖g1±. The ending after 12...♕a5+ 13.♕d2 ♕xd2+ 14.♘xd2 ♖c8 15.♖xc8+ ♗xc8 16.♗c4 is preferable for White) 13.♗c4 exd5 14.♗xd5 ♘c6 15.h3 ♗xf3 16.♕xf3 ♘b4 17.0-0 ♘xd5 18.exd5 ♕d7 19.d6! and the passed pawn brought White victory in the game Lysyj-Braun, Hengelo 2007.

- In the only elite game played with this variation there followed 11...♘d7 12.♗e2 ♘f6 (in this version the sharp 12...f5?! is dubious in view of 13.d6 ♕a5+ 14.♕d2 ♕xd2+ 15.♘xd2 ♗xe2 16.dxe7 ♖fe8 17.♔xe2 ♗f6 18.♗xf6 ♘xf6 19.♖c7 fxe4 20.♖xb7±) 13.h3 ♗d7 14.♗d3 h6 15.♗f4 e6 16.♗c7 ♕e8 17.d6 ♗c6 18.♕e2 ♘h5 and after 19.♕e3 White would have gained a great advantage. While 19.g3 e5 20.0-0 was only slightly better in Ponomariov-Svidler, Moscow 2006.
- 11...♗xf3 deserves consideration: 12.gxf3♘d7 13.♗h3 f5 14.exf5 gxf5 15.0-0 ♘b6!? (weaker is 15...♘e5 16.♖e1±, Shishkin-Lupulescu, Bucharest 2006), but after 16.♖e1 ♖f7 17.♕b3 ♕xd5 18.♖xe7 Black faces a difficult struggle for a draw.

12.♗e2

and now:

A1

12...h6 13.♗e3 ♘d7

Or 13...♕b4+ 14.♘d2 ♗xe2 15.♕xe2 ♘d7 16.0-0±, Farago-Rosino, Hockenheim 2007.

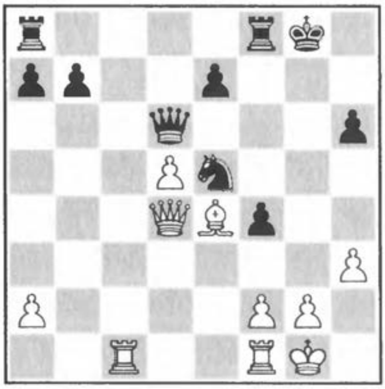
14.0-0 f5

If 14...♖ac8 then 15.h3 ♗xf3 16.♗xf3 f5 17.exf5 gxf5 18.♕b3 and White is much better.

15.exf5 gxf5

The alternative captures are no better: 15...♗xf5 16.♘h4 and 15...♖xf5 16.h3 ♗xf3 17.♗xf3 ♘f6 18.♕b3.

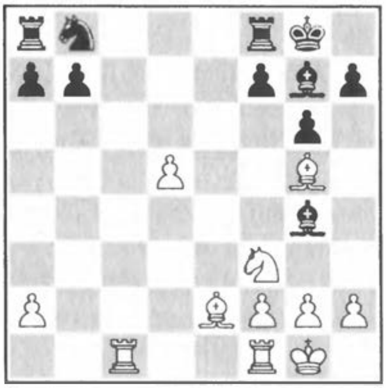
16.h3 ♗h5 17.♕d2 f4 18.♗d4 ♗xf3 19.♗xf3 ♗xd4 20.♕xd4 ♘e5 21.♗e4



The excessively open position of the black king is felt.

A2

12...e6 13.0-0 exd5 14.♕xd5 ♕xd5 15.exd5



Now White once again demonstrates the strength of his passed d-pawn:

15...♖e8 16.♗b5 ♗d7 17.♗xd7 ♘xd7 18.♖c7 Komarov-Swinkels, Eupen 2006. White's play is pretty straightforward.

A3

12...♘d7 Here too Black faces problems:

13.0-0 f5 14.♕b3 ♘b6

White wins after 14...fxe4 15.♗xe7 ♕f4 16.d6+ ♔h8 17.g3 ♕h6 18.♘g5 ♗xe2 19.♗xf8. Or in this line 15...♕xe7 16.d6+ ♕f7 17.♗c4 exf3 18.♖fe1.

15.h3 ♗xf3 16.♗xf3 fxe4 17.♗xe4

♕e5 18.d6+ ♖f7 19.♗xb7 ♖b8 20.d7 ♘xd7 21.♗e3

Again White has a clear edge.

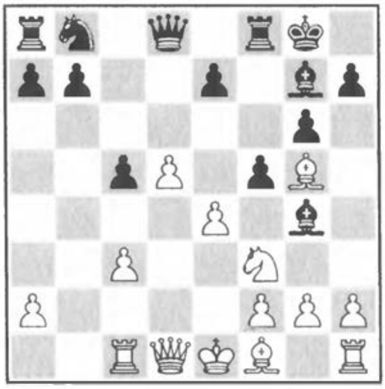
All in all, it can be concluded that after 9...cxd4 10.cxd4 ♗g4 11.d5, despite the great variety of possibilities, everywhere Black faces a difficult defence.

B

9...♗g4 10.d5 f5!?

In the event of 10...♘d7 11.♗e2 ♕a5 the following sample variation is possible: 12.0-0 (12.♕c2 is not bad, retaining all the strategic pluses of the position) 12...♗xc3 (12...e6 13.h3±) 13.♗xe7 ♖fe8 14.d6 ♗f6 15.♗xf6 ♘xf6 16.♗c4 ♖xe4 17.♕b3 and White keeps his edge after both

- 17...♗xf3 18.gxf3 ♖d4 19.♗xf7+ ♔h8 20.♕xb7 ♖d8 21.♕c7, and
- 17...♕b4 18.♗xf7+ ♔g7 19.♘g5 ♖d4 20.♕xb4 ♖xb4 21.f3 ♗d7 22.♗e6.



The text is the most critical continuation, first employed by Emil Sutovsky in a game against yours truly.

11.♕b3 ♔h8

White is preferable after 11...♗f6 12.♗h6 fxe4 13.♘g5.

12.♘d2!

On first encountering the idea 10...f5!?, I played extremely badly and lost after 12.♕xb7?!, Lysyj-Sutovsky, Moscow 2007.

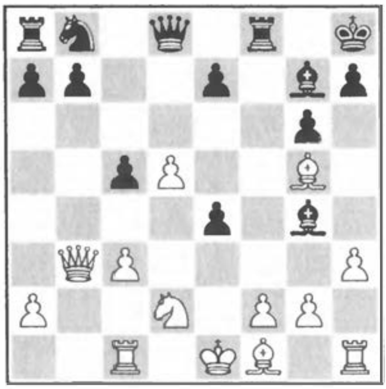
12...fxe4

After 12...f4 13.♕xb7 ♘d7 14.f3 h6 15.♗h4 White is just better.

White also gains the better game after 12...♘d7 13.f3 and now:

- 13...h6? 14.fxg4 hxg5 15.h4 gxh4 16.♖xh4+ ♔g8 17.d6+ e6 18.♕xe6+ ♖f7 19.♖h1.
- 13...♗h5 14.♗e2 (14.♕xb7!?±) 14...h6 15.♗e3 ♘f6 (15...f4 16.♗f2) 16.h3! fxe4 17.g4 ♘xd5 18.c4 ♘xe3 19.♕xe3 exf3 20.♗xf3 ♕d6 21.gxh5 gxh5 22.♔d1.

13.h3!



An important improvement compared to a recommendation in Yearbook 85. White forces the black bishop to determine its position.

13...♗c8

After 13...♗f5 White does not hurry to regain the pawn: 14.♗e2 h6 15.♗e3 and in view of the threat of g2-g4 he retains the advantage.

14.♘xe4 ♕c7 15.♗e3 ♘d7

Or 15...♕e5 16.♘g5 with a slight edge.

After the text Black's light-squared bishop is out of play and White can calmly complete his development.

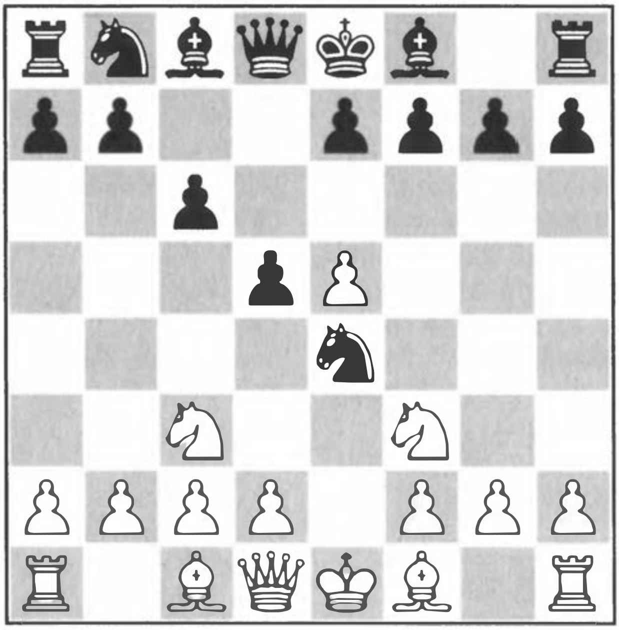
16.♗e2 ♕e5 17.♘g5 ♘f6 18.c4 ♘e4 19.♘xe4 ♕xe4 20.0-0

White's superior pawn structure guarantees him an enduring advantage.

CHAPTER 10

Igor Khenkin

SOS in a Flexible Caro-Kann



1.e4 c6 2.♘c3 d5 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘e4

In the 1990s I experienced some problems as Black versus this flexible set-up in the main line beginning with 3...♗g4. I then thought of 3...♘f6 and started analysing this line with GM Rustem Dautov. Together we found many interesting ideas.

The history of this variation begins with the old game Tarrasch-Réti, Vienna 1922. When Tarrasch met this new idea at the board, he probably decided not to enter some theoretical dispute unprepared and he simply took on d5. After 4...cxd5 5.d4 ♗g4 6.h3 ♗xf3 7.♕xf3 e6 8.♗d3 ♘c6 the game was even. Right after this game he must have realized that White can only pretend to get an opening advantage with 4.e5, and this is what Tarrasch played against the same opponent in Karlsbad 1923. However, after 4...♘e4 he reacted with 5.d3 ♘xc3 6.bxc3, when Black could have easily equalized with 6...♗g4. Nowadays 4.e5 is still the main line, but after 4...♘e4 White usually plays 5.♘e2, trying to attack Black's knight with d3. Note that 5...♗g4 is now effectively met by 6.♘fg1! When I was playing this line at the end of the 1990's, I was mostly analysing 5...♗f5, and after 6.♘ed4 e6 7.d3 ♘c5 I was perfectly happy when White exchanged on f5, because my knight was blocking the whole position from square e6. Unfortunately, I lost very painfully against Mischustov in 1999, when he came up with the novelty (after 6.d3

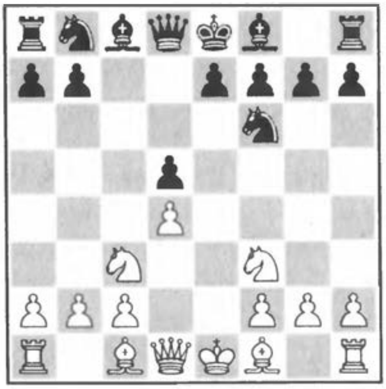
♘c5) 7.h3!, and after 7...e6 8.g4 ♗g6 9.♘f4 ♗e7 10.h4! I was already in big trouble and lost in the end.

I was very disappointed and decided not to play this line anymore. I now believe that this (emotional) decision was made too quickly. The line is still alive after 5...♕b6! which forces 6.d4 (thus giving the knight a much more comfortable place on e4). Black should probably continue with 6...e6 as 6...c5 is decidedly dubious after 7.dxc5 (as most famously played by Fischer against Olafsson in Bled 1959, but there is an earlier and much nicer game by Nezhmetdinov).

☐ **Michael Mischustov**
■ **Igor Khenkin**
Germany Bundesliga II 1998/99

1.e4 c6 2.♘c3 d5 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.e5

After 4.exd5 cxd5 5.d4



the stem game Tarrasch-Réti, Vienna 1922, went 5...♗g4 6.h3 (Black was already better after 6.♗e2 ♘c6 7.0-0 e6 8.♗f4 ♗e7 9.♘e5 ♗xe2 10.♘xe2 0-0 11.c3 ♘xe5 12.♗xe5 b5, Haznedaroglu-Rausis, Haarlem 2000) 6...♗xf3 7.♕xf3 e6 8.♗d3 ♘c6 9.♗e3 ♗e7 10.0-0 0-0 11.a3 a6 12.♘e2 b5 13.♗f4 ♕b6 14.c3 ♘a5 15.♖ad1 ♘c4 16.♗c1 ♕c6 17.♘g3 a5 with equal chances, although Tarrasch later won.

Black can also play 5...♘c6!? 6.♗f4 (6.♗b5 ♗g4 7.h3 ♗xf3 8.♕xf3 e6 is equal) 6...♗g4 7.♗e2 e6 8.0-0 ♗xf3, when after 9.♗xf3 ♗d6 10.♗e3 0-0 play is again even. Criminal is 9.gxf3?, as in Testa-Tocchioni, ICC 2007.

The meek 4.d3 can of course be met by 4...dxe4 5.♘xe4 ♘xe4 6.dxe4 ♕xd1+ 7.♔xd1 ♗g4, as in Pagalos-Kranas, Greece ch U12 2003.

However, more interesting is 4...e5!?, with the following possibilities:

- 5.♘xe5?? d4! 6.♘e2 ♕a5+–+.
- 5.exd5 cxd5 6.♕e2 ♗d6 7.♗g5 ♗e6 8.0-0-0 ♘c6∓.
- 5.g3 dxe4 6.♘xe4 ♘xe4 7.dxe4 ♕xd1+ 8.♔xd1 f6∓.

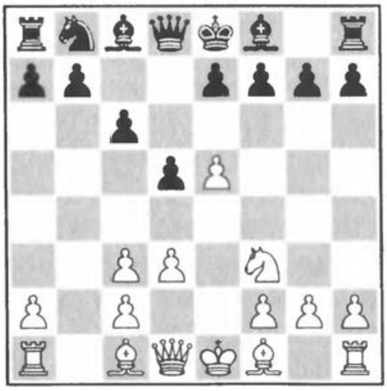
Clearly, 4.e5 is the only critical move. After 4...♘fd7 White has an excellent French of course (what is that pawn doing on c6?), quite apart from the fact that Boleslavsky's 5.e6!? may well be very strong.

However, if you are in the retreat mode (please read Reinderman's article elsewhere in this book) then you might consider Klaus Berg's 4...♘g8 5.d4 ♗g4.

I will limit myself to 4...♘e4.

4...♘e4 5.♘e2

The afore-mentioned game Tarrasch-Réti, Karlsbad 1923, continued 5.d3 ♘xc3 6.bxc3



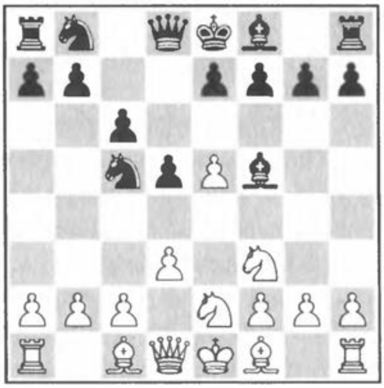
Réti now played 6...e6, and after 7.d4 (7.g3!?) 7...b6 8.♗e2 (stronger was 8.♗d3!

♗a6 9.0-0±) 8...♗a6 9.0-0 ♕c8 10.♘g5 h6 11.♗xa6 ♘xa6 12.♕h5 g6 13.♕h3 c5 the game ended in a draw on move 43.

From the diagrammed position Black has the strong 6...♗g4! 7.h3 ♗xf3 8.♕xf3 e6 9.♗e2 ♗e7 10.♕g3 g6 11.0-0 ♘d7 12.♖e1 ♕a5 13.d4 h5 with comfortable play, as in Pogrebyssky-Kholmov, Tbilisi 1949.

5.♘e2 is the acid test of Black's idea. For White's alternatives at this stage see the next game.

5...♗f5 6.d3 ♘c5



7.h3!

I rather like 7.♘ed4 e6 8.♘xf5 exf5 for Black, when after 9.♗e2 (or 9.g3 ♘e6 10.♗g2 ♗e7 11.0-0 0-0, Eck-Dautov, Bad Wörishofen 1998) 9...♗e7 10.0-0 ♘bd7 11.d4 ♘e6 play is unclear.

7...e6 8.g4 ♗g6 9.♘f4 ♗e7 10.h4

Black has big problems now and must play the ugly

10...h6 11.♘xg6 fxg6 12.g5! h5

Or 12...hxg5 13.♘xg5 ♗xg5 14.♗xg5 ♕b6 15.♖b1 ♘bd7 16.b4! ♘a4 17.♕g4 and White's chances are clearly preferable.

13.♘d4 ♘ba6 14.♗h3 ♘c7 15.♗e3

White has a nice positional edge.

15...a5 16.0-0 0-0 17.c3 a4 18.♘e2 ♘d7 19.d4 ♖e8 20.♕d3 ♘f8 21.♘f4 ♔f7

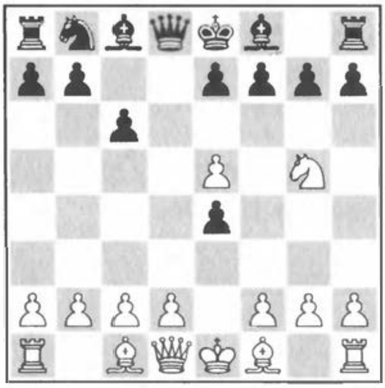
Black is suffering and lost on move 37.

☐ **Adrian Skelton**
■ **Igor Khenkin**
Lubniewice 1998

1.e4 c6 2.♘c3 d5 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘e4 5.d4

White does not avoid the exchange of knights and simply continues with his development. Here are some alternatives:

- After 5.♕e2 the correct response is 5...♘xc3 6.dxc3 ♗g4, when 7.h3 ♗xf3 8.♕xf3 e6 9.♗d3 ♘d7 10.♕g3 ♕c7 11.♗f4 ♘c5 was equal in Smyslov-Tipary, Budapest 1949.
- 5.♘xe4 dxe4 6.♘g5



is a sharp attempt. Black has 6...♕d5! 7.d3 (or 7.d4 exd3) 7...exd3, and now:

– 8.♕xd3 ♕xe5+ 9.♗e2 ♕f5 10.♕g3 h6 11.♘f3 g6 12.♗d3 ♕g4 13.♕e5 ♕e6 14.♗c4 ♕xe5+ 15.♘xe5 e6 16.♗f4 ♗g7 17.0-0-0 ♘d7 18.♘xd7 ♗xd7 and Black won in Isonzo-Dautov, Porto San Giorgio 1997.

– 8.♗xd3 ♕xe5+ (8...♕xg2 9.♗e4 ♕g4 10.♕d3 g6? – 10...h6 – 11.♕b3±, Mkrtchian-Bystryakova, Sochi 2005) 9.♗e3 gives compensation. Note that Black should avoid 9...g6? 10.♗c4! e6 11.♕d8+! ♔xd8 12.♘xf7+ ♔e8 13.♘xe5±, Rossolimo-Szabo, Hastings 1949/50.

- 5.♗d3 ♘c5!? (safer is 5...♘xc3 6.dxc3 ♗g4) 6.♗f1 d4 7.♘e2 d3 8.♘f4 ♗f5?!

(8...dxc2) 9.cxd3 ♘xd3+? 10.♗xd3 ♗xd3 11.e6!? (11.♕b3!? ♗a6? – 11...♗f5 12.♕xb7 ♘d7 – 12.♘g5! e6 13.♘xf7!+–) 11...f6 12.♕b3 ♗a6 13.h4 and in this complicated position White is better, but Black won, Cobb-Khenkin, Münster 1997.

- 5.♘b1!? ♕b6! 6.♕e2 ♗g4 7.d3 ♘g5!? (7...♘c5=) 8.♗xg5!? (8.♘bd2 ♘d7 9.h3 ♘xf3+ 10.♘xf3 ♗xf3 11.gxf3 e6∓, Klein-Muratoglu, Dresden 2008) 8...♕xb2 9.c3 ♕xa1 10.♕c2 ♗xf3 11.gxf3 and Black has problems evicting his queen, though he will be winning if he succeeds, Sanchez-Albarracin, Valencia 1990.
- 5.♗e2 is met by 5...♘xc3 6.dxc3 ♗g4 or 6.bxc3 ♗g4.

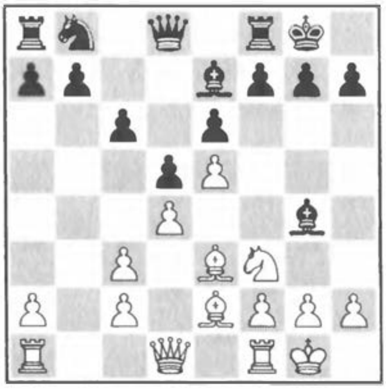
5...♗g4

Black keeps the tension. Also possible is 5...♘xc3 6.bxc3 ♗g4 7.c4 e6 8.cxd5 ♕xd5!? 9.c3 c5 10.♗e2 cxd4 11.0-0 d3! 12.♕xd3 ♕xd3 13.♗xd3 ♘c6, Durao-Lalic, Madrid 2001.

6.♗e2

More active is 6.♗d3 ♘xc3 7.bxc3 e6 8.0-0 ♗e7 9.♖b1 ♕c7 10.c4 0-0 11.h3 ♗h5 12.♕e2, Klovans-Khenkin, Hockenheim rapid 1997.

6...e6 7.0-0 ♗e7 8.♗e3 ♘xc3 9.bxc3 0-0



Black has a sound position. His pawn structure is healthy, his bishop is outside the pawn chain, and he has possibilities to attack the centre with ...c5. **10.c4 ♘d7 11.c5?! b6! 12.cxb6 axb6 13.a4 c5** This is already unpleasant for White. **14.♗b5?!** 14.c4! was best. **14...♕c7 15.h3?** 15.♖e1. **15...♗xf3 16.♕xf3 cxd4 17.♗xd4 ♘xe5 18.♕g3 ♗d6** and Black was just a pawn up and won.

The next game sees Black playing the dubious 6...c5. While I cannot recommend this move the game is really too great not to show it here.

☐ **Rashid Nezhmetdinov**
■ **Mikhail Kamishov**
Gorky 1950

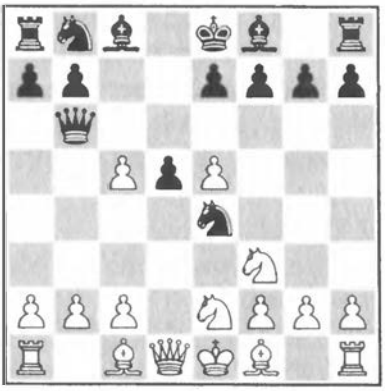
1.e4 c6 2.♘f3 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘e4 5.♘e2 ♕b6

Previously Nezhmetdinov had encountered 5...♗f5 6.d3 ♘c5 7.♘fd4 (7.h3! see Mischustov-Khenkin above) 7...e6 8.h4 h6 9.♘xf5 exf5 10.♘d4 g6 11.h5!± ♕e7 12.hxg6 fxg6 13.♘f3 ♘bd7 14.d4 ♘e4 15.♘h4?! ♕e6 16.♗d3 0-0-0 17.c3 ♗e7 18.f3?! ♘xe5! 19.dxe5? (19.fxe4) 19...♕xe5 20.fxe4 dxe4 and Black won in Nezhmetdinov-Grechkin, Tbilisi 1949.

6.d4 c5?!

Dubious is 6...f6?! 7.♘f4! ♗g4 8.♗e2 ♘d7? 9.e6!±, Felgaer-Azmaiparashvili, Dos Hermanas 2005. For 6...e6 see the next game.

7.dxc5



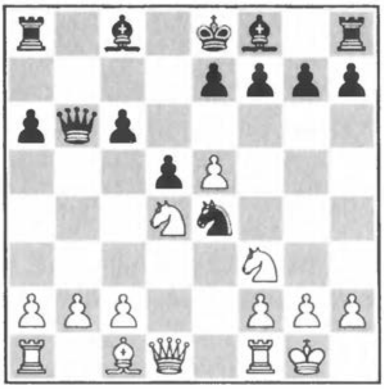
7...♕xc5

Safer is 7...♘xc5 8.♘f4 (or 8.♕xd5 ♘c6 with compensation) 8...e6 9.♗e2 ♗e7 10.0-0 0-0 11.c4 dxc4 12.♗xc4 ♘c6 13.♕e2, with a slight edge for White, which is an old analysis by Filip.

8.♘ed4 ♘c6

Practice also saw 8...♗g4 9.♗e2 (9.♗b5+!) 9...e6 10.0-0 ♕b6 11.♗e3 ♗c5 12.a3 (12.b4!) 12...♘c6∓, Bezler-Wach, Schaan 1998.

9.♗b5! White has to play it active. **9...♗d7** Or 9...a6?! 10.♗xc6+ bxc6 11.0-0 ♕b6 (11...♗g4 12.♗e3 ♕c4?! 13.c3 e6 14.b3!? ♕xc3 15.♖c1 ♕b2? – 15...♕a5 – 16.♖c2 ♕a3 17.♘xc6 and wins the queen is given by Nezhmetdinov).

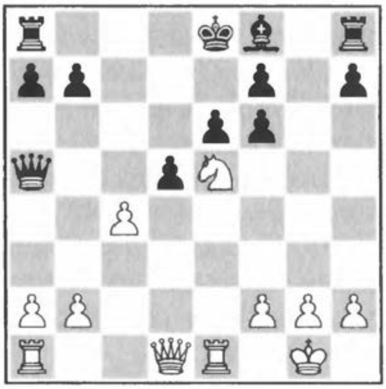


12.e6! fxe6 13.♗f4 (strong is 13.♘e5! c5 14.c4!?) 13...g6 14.♗e5 ♘f6?! (14...♖g8) 15.♘g5± ♗h6 16.♘dxe6 (16.♘gxe6!? ♔f7 17.♖e1 c5 18.♞c7 ♖b8 19.♝xf6 ♕xf6 20.♘de6 d4 21.♘xc5±) 16...♗xg5 17.♘xg5 0-0 18.♕d2 ♗f5 and Fischer won, although he holds only a small advantage here, Fischer-Olafsson, Bled/Zagreb/Belgrade 1959.

10.0-0! ♘xe5?

Winning a pawn but the price is too high. Safer was 10...e6.

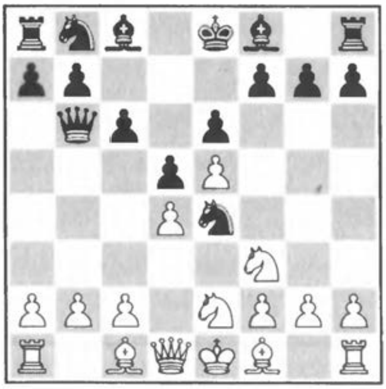
11.♘xe5 ♗xb5 12.♘xb5 ♕xb5 13.♖e1! ♘f6 Or 13...e6 14.c4 and wins! **14.♝g5 e6 15.c4! ♕a5** If 15...dxc4 then 16.♗xf6 gxf6 17.a4! and now Black must take on e5. **16.♗xf6 gxf6**



A classic example of how to play with an edge in development and the opponent's king in the centre. White to play and win: **17.♘xf7! ♔xf7 18.♕h5+ ♔e7 19.cxd5 e5 20.f4! ♕xd5 21.fxe5 f5 22.e6 ♔f6 23.h4!** Closing the net around Black's king. Mate or heavy material losses are unavoidable. **23...♗c5+ 24.♔h1 ♕xe6 25.♕h6+** Black resigned.

☐ **David Murray**
■ **Jessie Gilbert**
Coventry 2005

1.e4 c6 2.♘c3 d5 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘e4 5.♘e2 ♕b6 6.d4 e6



7.g3

Certainly not the only move at this stage. I analyse:

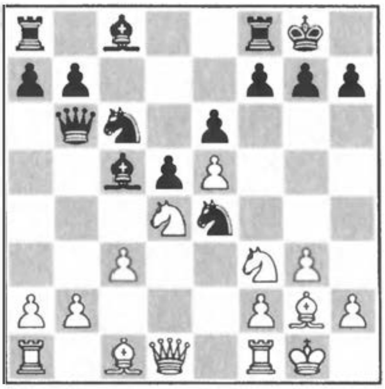
– 7.♘fg1!? h6 (correct was 7...f6! 8.f3 ♘g5 with unclear play) 8.h4 ♘d7 9.f3 ♘f2? (Black has compensation for the piece after 9...♘ec5! 10.dxc5 ♗xc5 11.♘h3 ♘xe5) 10.♔xf2 ♘xe5 11.c3 and White won in Lopez Batlle-Portero, Albacete ch 1991.

– 7.c3 c5 8.♖b1 (here 8.dxc5 ♗xc5 9.♘ed4 ♘c6 10.♗d3 ♗d7 was equal) 8...♘c6 9.♗e3 ♕c7 10.a3 cxd4 11.cxd4 ♕a5+ 12.♘d2 b5 13.♖c1 ♗d7 14.f3 ♘xd2 15.♕xd2 b4 16.axb4 ♗xb4 17.♘c3 ♕b6 18.♗e2 ♘a5 19.♖b1 0-0∓, Agupov-Grischenko, Kazan 2001.

– 7.♘g3 c5 8.♗d3 (or 8.♘xe4 dxe4 9.♘g5 cxd4 10.♘xe4 ♕a5+) 8...♘xg3 9.hxg3 cxd4 10.♘xd4 ♗c5 11.c3 ♘c6 unclear.

– 7.a4 c5 8.a5 ♕c7 is OK for Black.

7...c5 8.♗g2 cxd4 9.0-0 ♞c6 10.♘exd4 ♗c5 11.c3 0-0



Black appears to have a decent position.

12.♕d3 f6 13.exf6 ♖xf6 14.♗f4?!

But this is wrong. Correct was 14.b4!, when White is slightly better after 14...♘xd4 15.♘xd4 ♗xd4 16.♕xd4 ♕xd4 17.cxd4 ♗d7 18.♗f4.

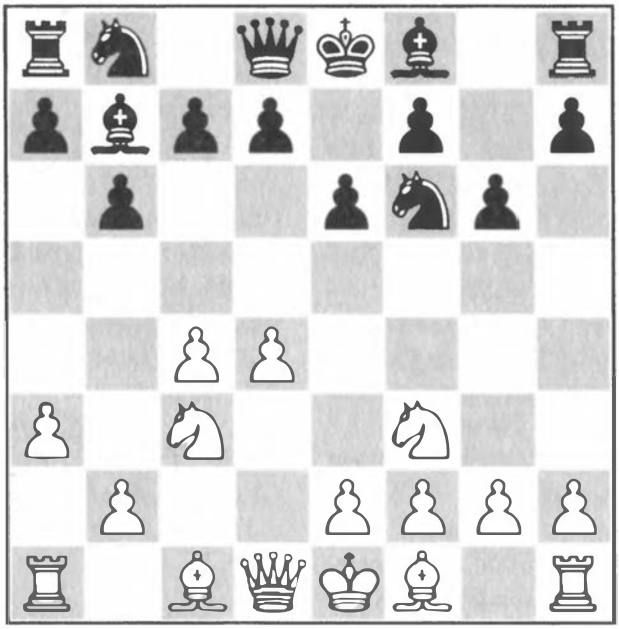
14...♕xb2 15.♖ab1 ♕xc3 16.♕xc3 ♘xc3 17.♘xc6 ♘xb1 18.♖c1 ♗a3

White resigned.

CHAPTER 11

Sergey Tiviakov

Queen's Indian: Double Fianchetto



1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.a3 ♗b7 5.♘c3 g6

The Queen's Indian Defence is one of the most popular openings. And the line with 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.a3 ♗b7 5.♘c3 still remains among the most frequently played. Studying it is a must for any Queen's Indian player! But with thousands of games played and loads of theory it is not an easy task... The main line is 5...d5, but with so much theory it is necessary to spend lot of time deeply studying all the lines.

In the present article we shall look at another move – 5...g6, which is not only positionally sound but also can serve as a surprise weapon. In comparison with the variation 5...d5 the arising positions are much more complex, thus 5...g6 is an excellent continuation to play for a win!

The only drawback of 5...g6 is that it is quite slow and gives White the possibility to try to occupy the centre (with d4-d5 and/or e2-e4 at some point). If White fails to do so then Black has no single problem whatsoever.

From the diagrammed position White has several possible moves. Let's start with a few minor alternatives:

● 6.e3 This move is too slow. After 6...♗g7 7.♗e2 (7.♗d3, planning to play e3-e4 as played by Eingorn a couple of times, deserves attention) 7...0-0 8.0-0 d5 9.cxd5 ♘xd5 Black has successfully solved all his opening problems. The chances are equal after either

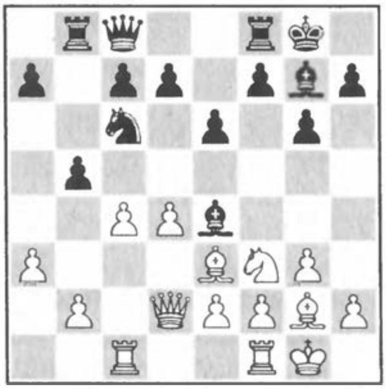
– 10.♕c2 c5 11.♘xd5 (11.dxc5 ♘xc3=) 11...♕xd5 12.dxc5 ♕xc5 (12...bxc5) 13.♕xc5 bxc5, or

– 10.♘xd5 ♕xd5 11.♘e1 e5!? (Geller).

● 6.g3 This favourite of the late Tony Miles is likewise too slow. Black effectively gains a tempo compared to 3.♘f3 b6 4.g3 g6!?. After 6...♗g7 7.♗g2 0-0 8.0-0 Black can reduce the pressure in the centre with the typical 8...♘e4. After 9.♘xe4 ♗xe4 10.♗g5 Black has a comfortable choice between:

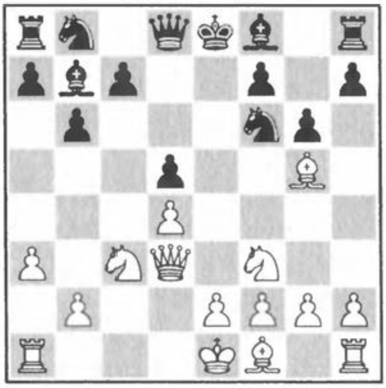
– 10...♕e8 11.♕d2 ♘c6 12.b4 ♖c8 13.♗e3 d5 14.cxd5 ♗xd5 15.♖ad1 a5 16.♗h6 axb4 17.♗xg7 ♔xg7 18.axb4 ♕e7 and a draw was agreed in the game Ubilava-Romanishin, Sochi 1984, and

– 10...♕c8 11.♕d2 ♘c6 12.♖ac1 ♖b8 13.♗e3 b5



when it turns out that all the black pieces are developed harmonically, and cooperate excellently with each other. Miles-Chuchelov, Cappelle la Grande 1994.

● 6.♕d3 Although rare, this move is interesting and deserves attention. The plus of this move is that White directly threatens to occupy the centre by e2-e4; and, as it also covers the f3-knight, it renders the exchange on f3 useless (6...♗xf3 is the main answer after 6.♕c2). After 6.♕d3 Black's answer is more or less forced – 6...d5 since it has been demonstrated that after 6...♗g7 7.e4 d5 8.cxd5 exd5 9.e5 White has the upper hand due to his strong centre. After 7.cxd5 exd5 8.♗g5



Black can choose between the development of the bishop to e7 and g7 (both equally good). Then the awkward position of the queen on d3 will play its role, allowing Black to equalize without many problems:

– 8...♗g7. In the ending arising after 9.♕e3+ ♕e7 10.♕xe7+ ♔xe7 Black has nothing to worry about, as the following game demonstrates: 11.g3 ♘d7 12.♖c1 h6 13.♗e3 c6 14.♗h3 ♖he8 15.0-0 ♔f8 and Black managed to beat his legendary opponent. Kortchnoi-Atlas, Pulvermühle 2006.

– 8...♗e7. I wanted to keep the pieces on the board, avoiding the ending. 9.g3 0-0 10.♗g2 ♘e4 11.♗xe7 ♕xe7 12.0-0 ♘d7 13.e3 a5 14.♕c2 f5 Black has no problems to solve, but playing for a win is also problematic. The game Vorobiov-Tiviakov, Moscow 2008, ended in a draw.

We will look more deeply at 6.d5, 6.♗f4, and, especially, 6.♗g5 and 6.♕c2.

Variation A – 6.d5

This move is much more straightforward! It was popular some time ago, but nowadays it is a rare guest in tournament practice since a convincing plan for Black has been found.

☐ **Yury Zeziulkin**
■ **Sergey Tiviakov**
Voronezh 1986

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.a3 ♗b7 5.♘c3 g6 6.d5 exd5

This is stronger than 6...♗g7 7.e4, since then after the exchange on d5 White obtains the extra possibility to take on d5 with the e-pawn.

7.cxd5 ♗g7 8.g3 0-0 9.♗g2 c5!

After 9...c6 Black must be ready for the complications after 10.d6!?

10.0-0 d6 11.e4 ♞bd7

Black has a favourable type of Indian Defence position where he can not only create enough counter-play on the queenside but also seize the initiative. Usually the presence of the bishop on b7 is a drawback for Black, but here the bishop can be very useful after being developed to a6, or attacking the d5-pawn (preventing all possible breaks in the centre with e4-e5).

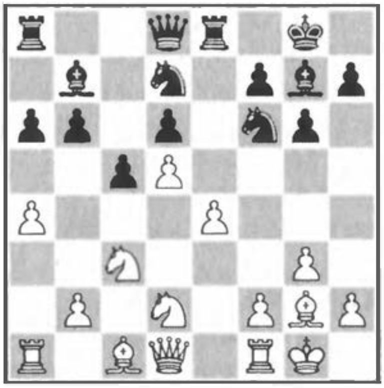
12.a4

12.♗f4 is answered by 12...♕b8, followed by ...♘h5, ...♗a6 and ...b5, with excellent play.

12...♖e8 13.♘d2

Or 13.♖e1 a6, followed by ...♕c7.

13...a6



14.f4?!

Better was 14.♘c4 ♘e5 15.♘xe5 ♖xe5 16.♗f4 ♖e8 (16...♖e7!?), with an approximately equal position.

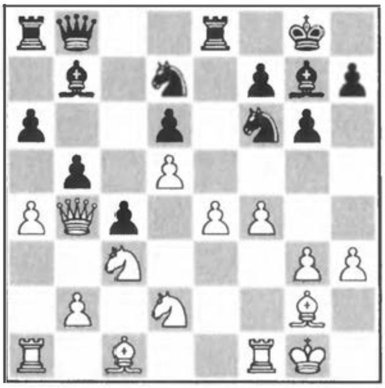
14...♕b8 15.h3?!

This is a loss of time. The immediate 15.g4 was better.

15...b5 16.♕b3

Again 16.g4 was better.

16...c4 17.♕b4



17...a5!

Now the queen is trapped, leading to material losses for White.

18.♕xb5 ♕a7+ 19.♔h2

Or 19.♖f2 ♗a6 20.♕xa5 ♘c5, with a huge advantage for Black.

19...♖ec8 20.b4 cxb3 21.♕xb3

21.♗b2 could prolong resistance, although Black should win after 21...♗a6 22.♕xb3 ♘c5.

21...♖xc3 22.♕d1 ♗a6 23.♖e1 ♕f2 24.♘f3

White resigned.

Variation B – 6.♗f4

This developing move isn't dangerous for Black since it doesn't contribute to the main strategic idea in the position – occupation of the centre by means of e2-e4 and d4-d5. Moreover, the bishop on f4 has few perspectives and must later be moved to h2 (after playing h3).

☐ **Zdenko Kozul**
■ **Sergey Tiviakov**
Plovdiv EUch 2008

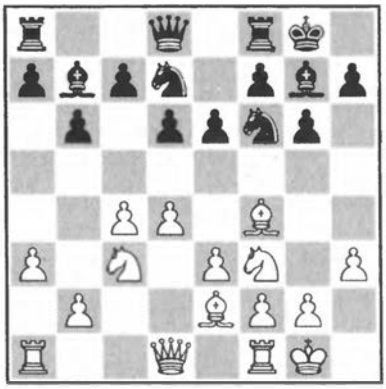
1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 b6 3.♘c3 ♗b7 4.d4 e6 5.a3 g6

Although I have played this move quite often it came as a surprise for my opponent who started thinking a lot.

6.♗f4 ♗g7 7.e3 0-0 8.h3

Here 8.♗d3!?, intending e4, is more promising for White.

8...d6 9.♗e2 ♘bd7 10.0-0



10...♘e4

Before I had played the more complex 10...♖e8, keeping more pieces on board. After 11.♕c2 e5 12.dxe5 dxe5 the position is equal, for example: 13.♗g3 e4 14.♘d2 a6 15.♖fd1 h6 Tjiam-Tiviakov, Groningen 2007.

In this tournament I was playing simple chess, exchanging a pair of knights.

11.♘xe4 ♗xe4 12.♗h2 ♕e7 13.♘d2

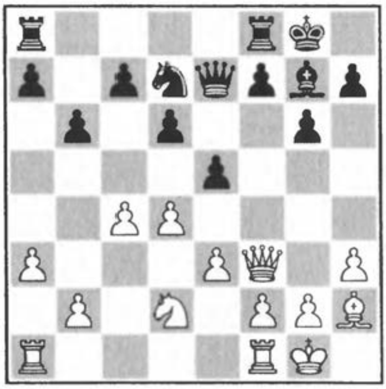
This move is new, but it doesn't change the evaluation of the position as equal:

- 13.♕a4 e5 14.♘d2 ♗b7 15.♗f3 ½-½, Soppe-Sunye Neto, Buenos Aires 1991.
- 13.b4 e5 14.♖c1 a5 15.♘d2 ½-½, Goornachtigh-Janssen, Sas van Gent 1998.
- 13.♖c1 ♖fd8 14.b4 c5 15.♕b3 a5 16.♖fd1 axb4 17.axb4 ♖a7 18.dxc5 ½-½, Bischoff-Langrock, Bad Zwesten 2004.

13...♗b7 14.♗f3 ♗xf3 15.♕xf3

Or 15.♘xf3 e5, with equal play.

15...e5



16.♕c6?!

Played too optimistically. Here risky play for a win is being punished severely. White gets a worse position.

White should have played carefully for a draw with 16.♖ae1 or 16.dxe5 ♘xe5 with equal chances.

Note that 16.d5?! e4 is slightly better for Black. The pawn on b2 is much more important than the black central pawn!

16...exd4 17.exd4 ♗xd4 18.♕xc7 ♗xb2

Or 18...♖fc8 with a plus, similar to the game.

19.♖a2

After both 19.♗xd6 ♕d8 and 19.♖ae1 ♕d8 20.♕xd6 ♘c5 Black is slightly better due to the pawn weaknesses on a3 and c4.

19...♖fc8 20.♕b7

White's desire to keep the queens on board is understandable, but here it was better to exchange the queens: 20.♕xd6 ♕xd6 21.♗xd6, with only a slightly worse ending.

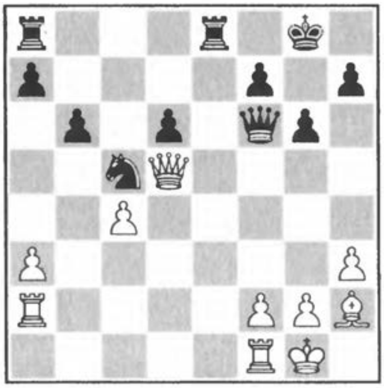
20...♗f6?!

Played without much thinking. I saw that after the text I get a better position with good winning prospects. However, I failed to calculate the main variation till the end. After

20...♗e5! 21.♗xe5 dxe5 22.♘e4 ♔f8! (as the Fritz analysis module indicates) followed by ♘d7-c5, Black keeps his extra pawn.

21.♘e4 ♘c5 22.♘xf6+ ♕xf6 23.♕d5 ♖e8

Black must take the e-file and stop thinking about defending the d6 pawn.



24.♖e2!

An excellent defensive resource! Both 24.♕xd6 ♕xd6 25.♗xd6 ♖ac8 and 24.♗xd6 ♖ad8 are good for Black.

24...♖ad8?!

A serious mistake, letting slip almost my entire advantage. I failed to notice that after 24...♖xe2 25.♕xa8+ ♔g7 White cannot take the pawn on a7 with 26.♕xa7?, because the queen is suddenly trapped after 26...♕d8!! followed by ...♖e2-e7.

25.♕xd6?!

Played too beautifully. This move allows Black to bring his king into the centre and then to the queenside where it defends the pawns a7 and b6 with decisive effect.

After the simple 25.♖xe8+ ♖xe8 26.♕xd6 (26.♗xd6 ♖d8 27.♖d1 ♕e6∓) 26...♕c3∓ (26...♕xd6 27.♗xd6 ♖c8∓), White would have kept good drawing chances.

25...♕xd6 26.♖xe8+ ♕f8!

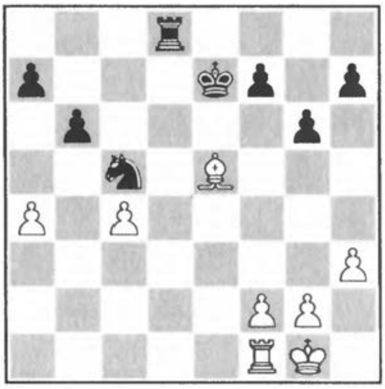
Simple but very strong!

27.♖xf8+ ♔xf8

Now because of the weaknesses on a3 and c4 White faces a very difficult task.

28.♗e5 ♔e7 29.a4?!

A mistake in a time-trouble. White is aiming to exchange one weak pawn. Unfortunately for him the pawn can be fixed one move later, where it will become an easy target for the black pieces.



29...♔e6!?

I was reluctant to put my pawn on f6, where it can be attacked by the white bishop, although Fritz likes 29...f6∓.

30.♗c3

After 30.♖e1 ♘d3 31.♗c7+ ♘xe1 32.♗xd8 ♘d3 Black obtains a winning ending.

30...a5!?

It was also possible to take the pawn on a4 by 30...♘xa4 31.♖e1+ ♔d7 32.♗f6 ♖a8!, with a winning position.

31.♖e1+ ♔d7 32.g4

After 32.♖a1 ♔c6 the pawns a4 and c4 will sooner or later fall. They cannot be defended by the bishop.

32...♘xa4 33.♗f6 ♖e8 34.♖d1+ ♔c6

The rest is very easy. White just played until the end of the time-trouble and then resigned.

35.♔g2 ♘c5 36.♔f3 ♘d7 37.♗a1 ♘e5+ 38.♔f4

After 38.♗xe5 ♖xe5 the passed pawn a5 decides.

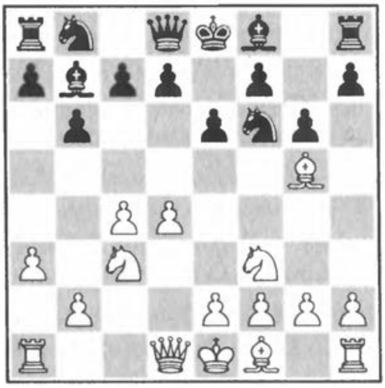
38...♘xc4 39.♔g5 ♖e2 40.♖d4 ♘d6 41.♖f4 Or 41.f3 b5–+. **41...♖xf2! 42.♗e5 ♖xf4 43.♗xf4 ♘e4+ 44.♔h6 ♘f2**
White resigned.

Variation C – 6.♗g5

The bishop on g5 is well-placed, since the f6-knight is pinned, thus supporting the advance e2-e4. An additional advantage is that after 6.♗g5 ♗g7 7.♕c2 ♗xf3 8.gxf3 ♘c6 9.e3 the bishop is already developed to g5, allowing speedy development and long castling. Please, compare this to 6.♕c2 ♗xf3 7.gxf3 ♘c6 8.e3 (Variation D) when the bishop is locked in on c1!

☐ **Alon Greenfeld**
■ **Sergey Tiviakov**
Kolkata 2007

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 b6 3.♘c3 ♗b7 4.d4 e6 5.a3 g6 6.♗g5

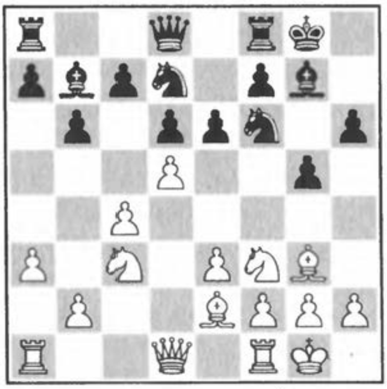


6...h6

This weakens the kingside structure too soon, limiting Black's options. It was more accurate to play 6...♗g7, and now:

– 7.♕c2 h6 8.♗h4 d6 9.e4 g5 10.♗g3 ♘h5 (typical play by Black, which is also seen in other lines of the Nimzo-Indian and Queen's Indian Defence) 11.0-0-0 ♘xg3 12.hxg3 g4 13.♘h4?! (13.♘g1 would have given White more possibilities to bring the knight back into play via e2-f4) 13...♘c6 14.♘e2 ♕d7 15.d5 ♘e7 16.dxe6 fxe6 17.♘d4 0-0-0 18.♗e2 ♖hg8 and Black was fine, and even clearly better after 19.c5? which unnecessarily gave up a pawn, Almeida-Tiviakov, Alajuela 2008.

– 7.e3 d6 8.d5 0-0 9.♗e2 ♘bd7 10.0-0 h6 11.♗h4 g5 12.♗g3



And now, rather than 12...♘h5 13.♘d4 ♘xg3 14.hxg3 I.Sokolov-Lobron, Groningen 1993, Black should play 12...♘c5. After 13.dxe6 fxe6 14.♘d4 ♕d7 15.f3 Gulko-Vaganian, Reggio Emilia 1991/92 Black should consider Gulko's 15...a5!? with unclear play.

7.♗h4 ♗g7 8.e3

Here 8.♕c2!? d6 9.e4 can lead to the same position as in my game against Almeida. While after 8.d5 exd5 9.cxd5 0-0 10.e3 Black can react with the characteristic 10...c5 when his chances are at least not worse. Sakaev-Tiviakov, Sochi 1986, went: 11.♕d2 d6 12.♗c4 ♘bd7 13.0-0 ♖e8 14.♖fe1 a6, with decent play.

8...d6 9.d5!? ♕e7 10.dxe6 ♕xe6

Black has to take the pawn with the queen, since 10...fxe6 is too dangerous because of the weakness of pawn g6.

11.♗e2 0-0 12.♘d4 ♕c8 13.♗xf6 ♗xf6

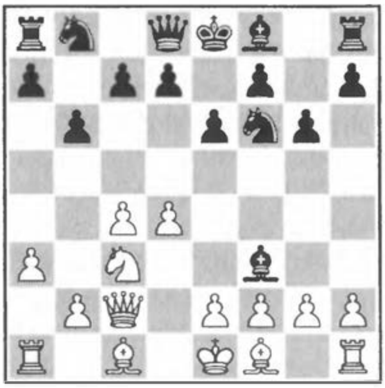
Although White is still slightly better, a draw was agreed here (Greenfeld had spent a lot of time in the opening).

Variation D – 6.♕c2

This move is the main reply to 5...g6. White threatens to play e2-e4. Black can prevent it in two ways: with 6...d5 or with our preference 6...♗xf3.

Please, note that 6...♗g7 7.e4 is considered to be extremely dangerous for Black, we shall not be looking at this line here. Another way for Black to react is 6...c5, but to mix different plans is usually not a good idea. After 7.e4 cxd4 8.♘xd4 ♗g7 9.♗g5 White is slightly better, the square d6 is weak and it is not easy for Black to play liberating d7-d5. Now to briefly consider 6...d5. This move is completely playable: it leads to a slightly worse but very solid position. There is not much theory here and play can develop according to the basic chess principles for this type of position. For example, 7.cxd5 exd5 8.g3 (or 8.♗f4 a6 9.e3 ♗g7 with a small plus for White) 8...♗g7 9.♗f4 0-0 10.♗g2 (10.♘b5 can be parried by 10...♞a6 after which it is impossible to take pawn c7 by 11.♗xc7? because of 11...♕d7 12.a4 ♖fc8 13.♘e5 ♖xc7∓) 10...♘a6 11.0-0 and here in the game Alexandria-Litinskaya, Malmö 1986, Black should have played 11...c5, with only a slightly inferior position.

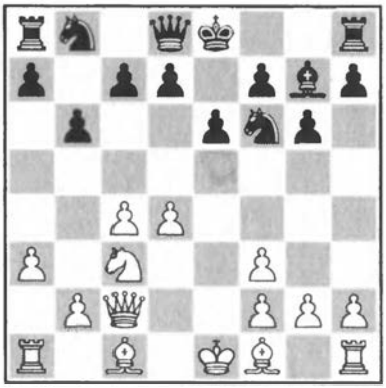
As I stated above, we will focus on the principled 6...♗xf3. Now White must decide whether to take the bishop with the e- or the g-pawn.



For 7.exf3 see the game Mkrtchian-Romanishin, while 7.gxf3 will be studied in Van Wely-Tiviakov.

☐ **Lilit Mkrtchian**
■ **Oleg Romanishin**
Solin2006

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.♘c3 ♗b7 5.a3 g6 6.♕c2 ♗xf3 7.exf3 ♗g7



8.♗g5

Please note that the immediate 8.d5 (preventing Black from playing ♘b8-c6) poses no danger for Black since the pawn can be undermined at some point by c7-c6. For example, 8.d5 0-0 9.♗e2 (or 9.♗g5 exd5 10.cxd5 ♕e8+ 11.♗e2 c6 with equal chances) 9...c6 10.dxe6 dxe6 with good play for Black.

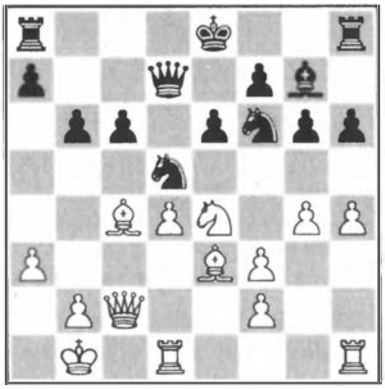
After 8.♗e3 (there is not much difference between this move and the text, the inclusion of ...h6 is fairly meaningless) 8...d5 (8...c6! 9.0-0-0 d5 is a more accurate move order, preventing White from exchanging on d5) 9.0-0-0 (White could have exploited Black's inaccuracy with 9.cxd5!, with a plus) 9...c6 10.g4 ♘bd7 11.h4. Black hasn't castled yet and can meet this move with 11...h5 stopping the development of White's initiative on the kingside. Black was OK after 12.cxd5 ♘xd5 13.♗g5 ♗h6 14.♘e4 hxg4 15.♗a6 ♕c7 in Bator-Nikolic, Panormo 2001.

In general, it is important to understand that Black should not be in a hurry to castle kingside where the king can be attacked quickly. He must be ready to keep the king in the centre as in the game Bator-Nikolic or castle queenside as in the present game.

8...h6 9.♗e3 c6 In this game Black chooses the correct move order. **10.0-0-0 d5 11.h4 ♘bd7 12.g4 dxc4**

12...h5 could have been played as well, which would have brought us to the same position as in the game Bator-Nikolic.

13.♗xc4 ♘d5 14.♔b1 ♘7f6 15.♘e4 ♕d7



In this complex position the chances of both sides are approximately equal.

16.♗c1 0-0-0 17.♗b3 ♔b8 18.♖he1 ♘e8 19.♖d3 ♖c8 20.♗a4 h5 21.♖h1 ♘d6 22.♕e2 ♘b5

An unusual place for the black knight, which will hop around for a bit more.

23.♕d1 ♔a8 24.♗g5 f5 25.♘g3 hxg4 26.fxg4 ♘d6 27.f3 ♘f7 28.♗c1 ♕d6

Black is fine, the game eventually ended in a draw after several mistakes from both sides.

☐ **Loek van Wely**
■ **Sergey Tiviakov**
Wijk aan Zee 1996

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.a3 ♗b7 5.♘c3 g6 6.♕c2 ♗xf3 7.gxf3 ♘c6

7...♗g7 allows White to play the useful 8.♗g5 meeting 8...♘c6 by 9.e3, winning extra time for his development.

With the text White's piece coordination is disturbed.

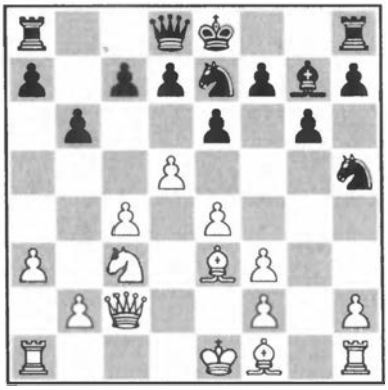
8.e3

8.d5 ♘d4 9.♕d1 c5 gives White no chances to fight for an advantage whatsoever.

8...♗g7 9.d5!

After 9.f4 the best way for Black to react is by 9...♘e7 with the idea to play ...c6 and ...d5, fixing White's pawn structure in the centre. If White plays 10.e4 then after 10...c6 11.e5 ♘h5 12.♘e4 ♘f5 Black gets sufficient counter-play.

9...♘e7 Here 9...♘e5 deserves practical tests. **10.e4 ♘h5** 10...0-0 11.♗g5 d6 is also possible. **11.♗e3**



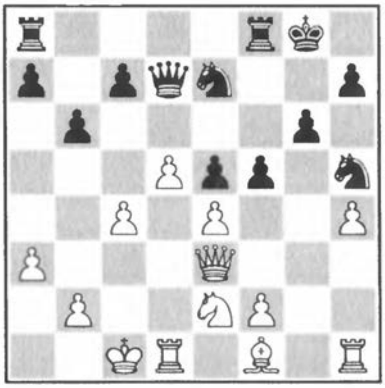
11...d6

After 11...e5!? 12.0-0-0 White is slightly better.

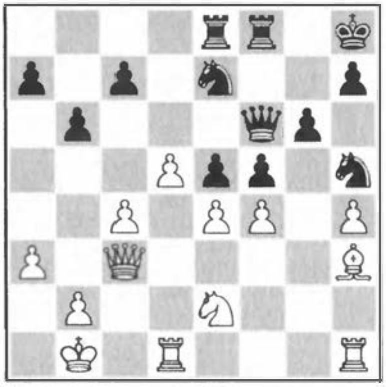
11...c6!? is a better move than the text, leading to an equal position after 12.♖d1 (both 12.d6 ♘c8, and 12.0-0-0 cxd5 13.cxd5 exd5 14.♗a6 0-0 15.♘xd5 ♘xd5 16.♖xd5 ♕f6 are unclear) 12...0-0 13.♗h3 (planning 14.dxe6 fxe6 15.♗e3) 13...cxd5 14.cxd5 exd5 15.♘xd5 ♘xd5 16.♖xd5 ♕f6 with equal chances.

12.f4!

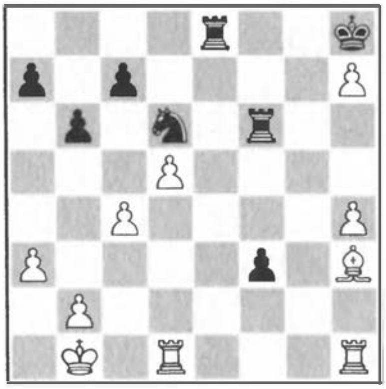
Now White seizes the initiative.
If 12.♗h3 then 12...♕d7!? (12...e5 13.0-0-0±) intending 13.dxe6?! fxe6 14.♘d5 0-0 15.♗g5♘c6 planning 16...♘d4. Black can also consider 15...♖ae8!? 16.♘xe7+ ♖xe7 17.♗xe7 ♕xe7.
Dubious is 12.dxe6?! fxe6 13.♗h3 ♕d7.
12...♗h6 13.♕d2 13.♘e2 e5 (13...0-0!?) 14.♕d2 transposes to the game. **13...e5** Not 13...0-0?! 14.♗e2 ♘g7 15.h4±. However, 13...♕d7!? deserved serious attention, planning to meet 14.♗e2 with 14...♘g7±.
14.♘e2 14.fxe5 ♗xe3 15.♕xe3 dxe5 is equal because of Black's control over square f4. **14...0-0** 14...♕d7 is met by 15.fxe5!? ♗xe3 16.♕xe3 dxe5 17.♗h3 (17.c5!?) 17...♕d6 18.b4!? planning c5. **15.0-0-0 ♕d7** White is better after both 15...f5!? and 15...exf4. **16.h4** 16.fxe5?! ♗xe3 17.♕xe3 dxe5 18.♗h3 ♕d6 is unclear. **16...f5 17.fxe5** If 17.♗h3 then 17...♕a4!?. **17...♗xe3 18.♕xe3 dxe5**



19.f3
Black has compensation after 19.exf5 ♘xf5 (19...♕xf5 20.♗h3) 20.♕xe5 ♖ae8. Instead 19.♗h3 ♕d6 (19...♕a4!?) 20.f3 transposes to the game.
19...♕d6 20.♗h3 ♔h8?!
Stronger were 20...♖ae8!?±, or 20...♕f6± (e.g. 21.♕c3 ♖ae8 22.f4 ♘c8).
21.♔b1?!
White fails to find the move which could have created serious problems for Black. Better was 21.♕c3± threatening f3-f4.
21...♕f6 22.♕c3?!
White loses the thread and commits another mistake. He could have kept the initiative with 22.c5!?±, or 22.♖c1!? followed by c5.
22...♖ae8 23.f4?
Here again 23.c5± or 23.♖df1!? was better.



23...♘c8!
Black is in time to meet White's advance. And suddenly the course of the game changes; it is now White who stands worse!
24.exf5 24.fxe5 ♖xe5∓.
24...♘xf4! 25.♘xf4 25.♘g3 ♘xh3 26.♖xh3 gxf5∓; 25.♖he1 ♘xe2 26.♖xe2 gxf5∓.
25...exf4 26.♕xf6+ ♖xf6
Black has the upper hand in the ending, which after a series of mistakes from both sides, finishes in a draw.
27.fxg6?!
Black is better after 27.♖de1 ♖xe1+ 28.♖xe1 ♘d6 29.fxg6 ♖xg6 or 29...hxg6. Stronger was 27.♖d4 gxf5 (27...f3 28.♖f4) 28.♖xf4 ♘d6 29.♖hf1∓.
27...♘d6! 27...hxg6 28.♗xc8 (28.♖de1 ♖xe1+ 29.♖xe1 ♘d6∓) 28...♖xc8∓.
28.gxh7 28.♖de1 ♖xe1+ 29.♖xe1 ♖xg6 with a strong passed pawn as in the game.
28...f3



29.♗e6 f2 30.♖hf1 ♘xc4?!

Better is 30...♘e4 31.♖d3 ♖e7! winning.

31.♖d3 c6 32.dxc6

Again Van Wely finds the only way to avoid an immediate loss: 32.b3 cxd5 33.bxc4 ♖exe6−+; 32.d6 ♖fxe6 33.d7 ♖d8 34.♖xf2 ♖e7!?−+.

32...♖fxe6

Here 32...♖exe6!? was another serious winning attempt. As this is an opening article I will not present my analysis of lines like 33.♖d8+ ♔xh7 34.c7 here.

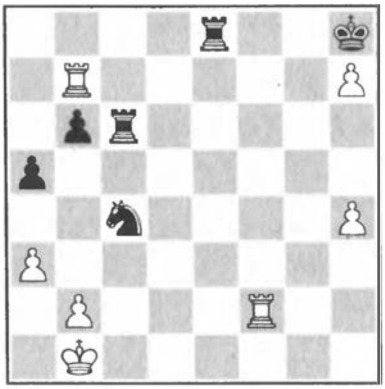
33.♖xf2 ♖xc6

Or 33...♘e5!?∓.

34.♖d7 a5

Perhaps 34...a6!? planning ...b5 was simpler, but in time trouble I lost the thread.

35.♖b7



35...♖ec8?!

Not 35...♘d6?! 36.♖f6, but 35...♖h6 36.♖f4 ♘d2+ 37.♔a2 ♘e4 was still good for Black.

36.♔a2 ♖h6

Now 36...♘d6!?∓ could have been considered.

37.♖c2! ♖hc6

37...♖xh7 38.♖xh7+ ♔xh7 39.♔b3 b5∓. Not 37...♖xh4? 38.b3 ♘d6 39.♖xc8+ ♘xc8 40.♖b8 ♖h2+ 41.♔b1 with a draw.

38.♔b3 ♘d6?!

38...♖c5∓/∓.

39.♖xc6 ♖xc6 40.♖a7 ♘f5?

The final mistake before the time control! 40...♘c4 or 40...♖c5 were correct.

41.♔a4

Now White can draw.

41...♖c2 42.b3

42.b4!? axb4 43.♔xb4 is also a draw.

42...♘e3

Black is in Zugzwang after 42...♘d6 43.♖d7 ♖c6 44.b4.

43.♔b5 ♖c3 44.b4

Even 44.♔xb6 ♖xb3+ would have led to a draw after 45.♔c5 ♖xa3 (45...♖c3+ 46.♔b5 ♘c4 47.a4=) 46.♔b5 ♖b3+ 47.♔a4. But not 45.♔xa5?? ♘c4+ 46.♔a4 (46.♔a6 ♖b6+ mate) 46...♖xa3+ winning.

44...♘c4

44...axb4 45.axb4 ♘d5 (45...♘c4 46.♖c7=) 46.♖d7 also draws.

45.bxa5 bxa5 46.a4 ♖c1 47.♖e7 ♖c2 48.♖a7

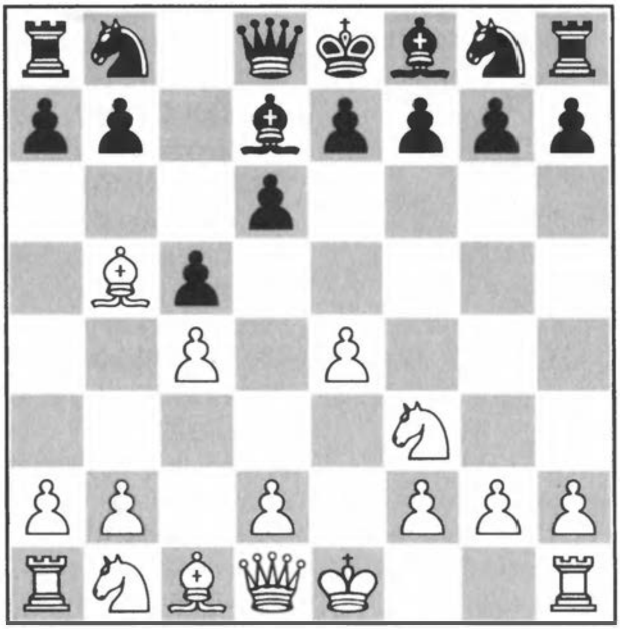
Draw.

The final conclusion: the variation with 5...g6 is an excellent surprise weapon in one of the most frequently played lines of the Queen's Indian Defence. While it is positionally sound, the arising positions are still very complex and difficult for an unprepared opponent; and even a prepared opponent will find it difficult to obtain an advantage. So, it is an excellent weapon to play for a win with the black pieces!

CHAPTER 12

Adrian Mikhalchishin

Sicilian: Romanishin Variation



1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.♗b5+ ♗d7 4.c4!?

Oleg Romanishin is renowned as one of the most 'intellectual' grandmasters. In the 1970s and 1980s he devised a number of important opening novelties. He arrived at 4.c4 (rather than the main line 4.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 5.c4) after studying the Lasker Variation 4.a4.

Romanishin's reasoning was as follows: if subsequently White sets up a Maroczy structure with c2-c4 and d2-d4, then – with his pawns on light squares – his light-squared bishop is a weak piece and its exchange should be advantageous to White.

Rather than helping Black to develop (4.♗xd7+), Romanishin leaves the bishop on b5 – maintaining the tension. Should Black exchange on b5 then his knight no longer has access to square c6. A negative factor is, of course, that after the c4-pawn has gone to b5, it is easier for Black to fight for the centre.

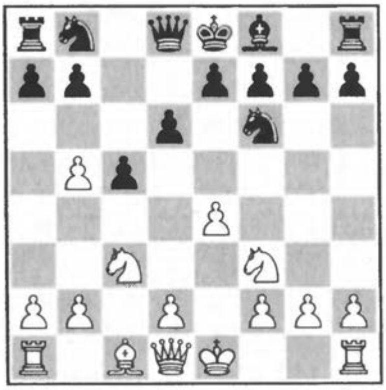
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.♗b5+ ♗d7 4.c4!?

In reply to White's plan Black has several possibilities:

I 4...♗xb5
II 4...♘f6
III 4...♘c6

Variation I

4...♗xb5 5.cxb5 ♘f6 6.♞c3

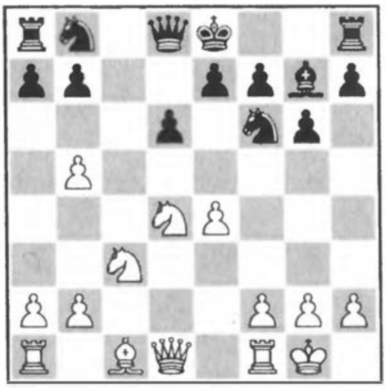


6...e5!?

This is an attempt to forestall White's play in the centre.

After 6...e6 7.0-0 ♗e7 8.a4 0-0 9.d4 cxd4 10.♘xd4 ♘bd7 11.♖e1 ♖c8 12.a5 a6 13.bxa6 bxa6 14.♕e2 ♘b8 15.♗d2 White has strong play on the queenside, Maier-Pucher, France 2006/07.

In the event of 6...g6 7.0-0 ♗g7 8.d4 cxd4 9.♘xd4 (very interesting is 9.♕xd4 0-0 10.♗d2 ♘bd7 11.♖fd1 ♘c5 12.♕e3, preparing b2-b4)



- If 9...0-0 then 10.♗e3 ♘bd7 11.f4 ♖c8 12.♕e2 ♘c5 13.♗f2 d5!? 14.e5 ♘fe4 15.♘xe4 ♘xe4 16.♗e3 e6 17.♘b3 f6!? 18.exf6 ♕xf6 19.♗d4 ♕h4 20.♗xg7 ♔xg7 21.♕e3 ♕f6! with a complicated game, Romanishin-Savon, Vilnius 1975.
- Or 9...♘bd7 10.♕e2 0-0 11.♖d1 and now:

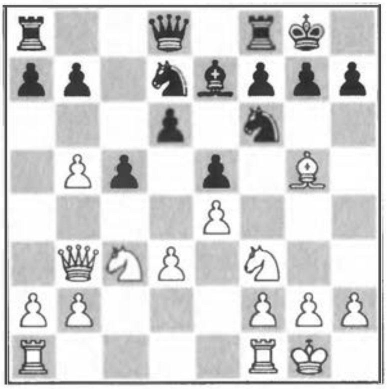
– After 11...♕c7 12.♗e3 ♘e5 13.♖ac1 ♖fc8 14.h3 ♕a5 15.♘b3 ♕d8 16.♗d4 White is slightly better, Romanishin-Kupreichik, Erevan zonal 1982.

– Likewise, 11...♖c8 12.♔h1 ♕c7 13.♗g5 h6 14.♗h4 e6 15.f3 d5 16.exd5 exd5 17.♗g3 ♕c4 18.♕d2 ♘b6 19.♖ac1 ♕b4 20.b3 promises White a minimal advantage, Moutousis-Macieja, Greece 2004.

7.0-0 ♗e7 8.d3 ♘bd7 9.♗g5

9.♘e1 is also interesting, with the idea of preparing f2-f4.

9...0-0 10.♕b3



With the further plan of ♘d2, ♗xf6, ♘c4 and ♘e3, occupying the powerful d5-square.

Variation II

4...♘f6 5.♘c3

Now in Romanishin-Pinter, Szirak 1986, Black forced the issue with 5...a6. After 6.♗xd7+ ♘bxd7 7.0-0 e6 8.b3 ♗e7 9.d4 cxd4 10.♘xd4 0-0 11.♗b2 ♖e8 12.♔h1 ♘c5 13.♕f3 ♕b6 14.♖ad1 ♖ed8 15.♖fe1 ♕c7 16.♕g3 ♘h5 17.♕e3 ♗f8 18.♕f3 ♘f6 19.h3 ♘cd7 Black sort of maintained the balance in this hedgehog. More common are 5...g6 or 5...e6.

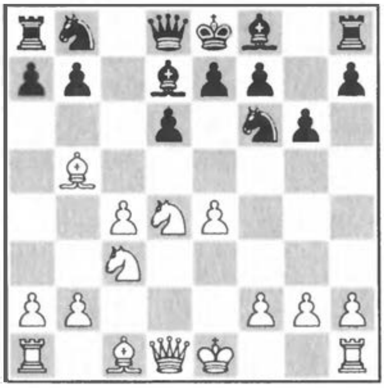
Subvariation A

5...g6 6.d4

After the critical 6.e5!? dxe5 7.♘xe5 ♗xb5

8.cxb5 ♘bd7 9.♘c4 ♘b6 10.d3 ♗g7 11.♕f3 ♘bd5 12.0-0 0-0 13.♗g5 ♘xc3 14.bxc3 ♘d5 15.d4 cxd4 16.cxd4 h6 Black has no problems, Shirazi-Tihonov, Avoine 2004.

6...cxd4 7.♘xd4



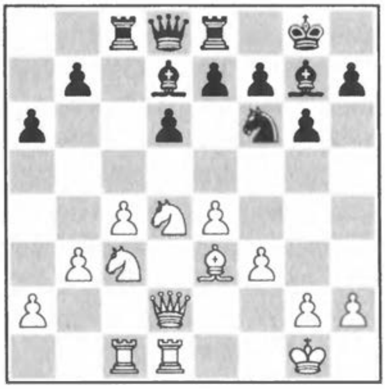
7...♗g7

Weaker is 7...♘c6 8.c5! ♘xd4 9.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 10.♕xd4 dxc5 11.♕xc5 ♗g7 12.0-0 0-0 13.♗f4 ♖fc8 14.♕e3 ♖c4 15.♖ad1 ♕e6 16.f3 a6 17.♖f2! and then ♖fd2, with advantage to White in view of his strong pressure on the d-file, Shirazi-Fressinet, Montpellier 2001.

8.0-0 0-0 9.♗e3 ♘c6 10.f3 ♖c8 11.♖c1 a6

Finally Black questions the bishop.

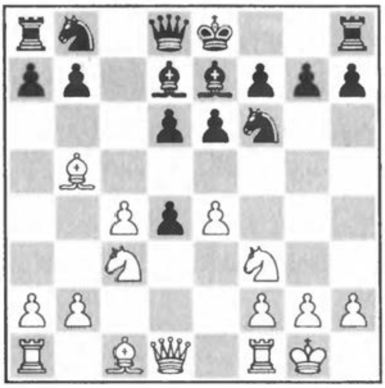
12.♗xc6 ♗xc6 13.♕d2 ♖e8 14.♖fd1 ♗d7 15.b3



Despite the bishop pair, White still has a slight plus; he has control of the centre and clearly more space.

Subvariation B

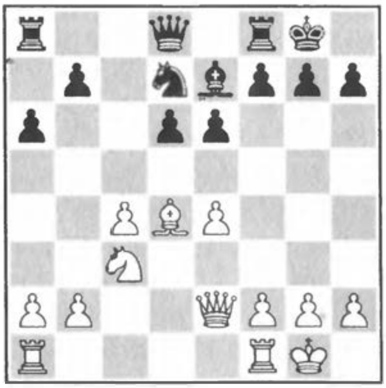
5...e6 6.0-0 ♗e7 7.d4 cxd4



8.♘xd4

8.♕xd4 is very interesting and requires testing in practice: 8...♘c6 9.♗xc6 (9.♕d3 0-0 10.♗f4!? may be better, with a minimal advantage) 9...♗xc6 (after 9...bxc6 there is the strong move 10.e5, breaking up Black's pawn structure) 10.b3 0-0 11.♗b2 ♕a5 12.♖ad1 a6 13.a3, and again it appears that White is slightly better.

8...0-0 9.♗e3 ♘c6 10.♕e2 ♘xd4 11.♗xd4 a6 12.♗xd7 ♘xd7



Despite the exchanges, White is slightly better. He has several possible plans, for example. 13.f4 with the idea of f4-f5, or

13.♖ac1, then b2-b3 and ♖fd1, with play in the centre. Although the first plan is undoubtedly the most critical and logical.

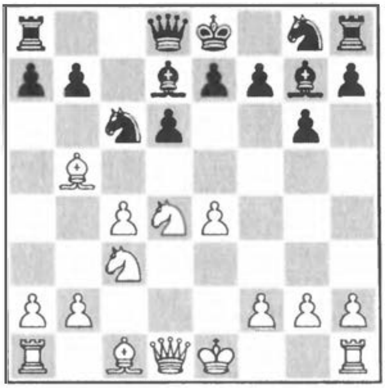
Variation III

4...♘c6 5.♘c3 g6

The closing of the centre by 5...e5 6.0-0 ♘f6 7.a3! a5 8.d3 ♗e7 9.♗g5 0-0 10.♗xf6 ♗xf6 11.♘d5 leads to a typical position, where White's control of the d5-point guarantees him the more comfortable game.

Subvariation A

6.d4 cxd4 7.♘xd4 ♗g7



8.♗xc6!?

Yudasin-De Firmian, Erevan Olympiad 1996, saw 8.♗e3 ♘f6 9.f3 0-0 10.♖c1 ♘xd4 11.♗xd4 ♗xb5 12.♘xb5 a6 13.♘c3 b5 14.cxb5 axb5 15.a3 ♕a5 16.0-0 b4 with equality.

8...bxc6

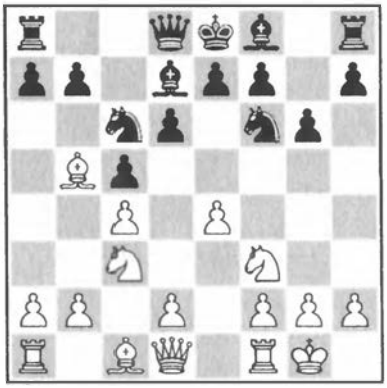
Or 8...♗xc6 9.♘xc6 bxc6 10.♕a4 with a small advantage for White.

9.c5! dxc5 10.♘b3 c4 11.♘c5

And for the pawn White has the initiative.

Subvariation B

6.0-0 ♘f6



7.d3!?

7.d4 transposes into Variation IIA above after 7...cxd4 ♘xd4 ♗g7 9.♗e3 0-0..

7...♗g7 8.♗g5 h6 9.♗e3 0-0 10.h3 e5 11.♘h2 ♘h5 12.♘d5 ♗e6 13.♕d2 ♔h7 14.g4 ♘f4!?

Not wanting to retreat to f6.

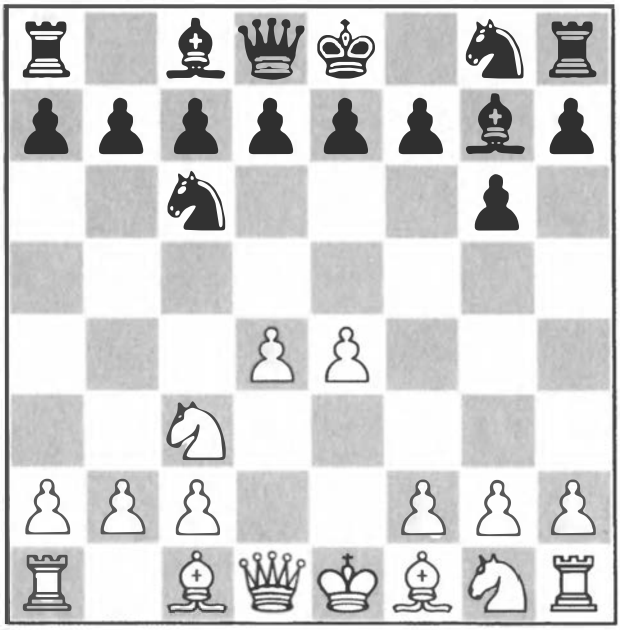
15.♗xf4 exf4 16.♗xc6 bxc6 17.♘xf4 ♖b8 18.♖ab1 ♕g5 19.♘f3

And Black's two bishops do not compensate for White's extra pawn, Romanishin-Tukmakov, Erevan 1971.

CHAPTER 13

Jeroen Bosch

Modern Provocation



1.e4 g6 2.d4 ♗g7 3.♘c3 ♘c6

☐ **Nikola Nestorovic**
■ **Milko Popchev**
Stara Pazova 2008

1.e4 g6 2.d4 ♗g7 3.♘c3 ♘c6

A surprising move that has all the characteristics of a typical SOS. Black seemingly forgets to make any pawn moves in the centre and provokes 4.d5 (not the most popular reply in practice). Bulgarian GM Milko Popchev is an ardent supporter, as is Danish IM Jens Ove Fries-Nielsen. Notably, 3...♘c6 has been adopted by American grandmaster Larry Christiansen. Adherents of the Modern Defence will usually play 3...d6. In practice both 3...c6 and 3...c5 are also played. More important for the subject under investigation here is the shocking 3...d5. I refer the reader to SOS-1, Chapter 13, p.106.

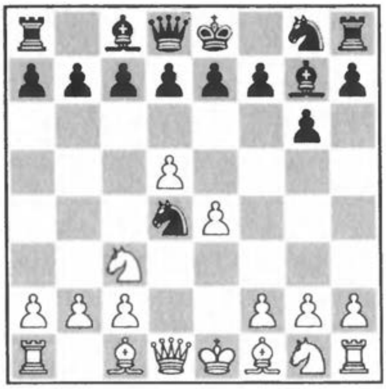
4.♗e3

This is most popular in practice. A serious alternative is **4.d5**.

Now the retreat **4...♘b8** is a favourite of Fries Nielsen. Black is apparently satisfied at having provoked d4-d5 at the cost of two tempi. Two sample games:

– 5.♘f3 d6 6.h3 ♘f6 7.♗c4 0-0 8.0-0 c6 9.a4 b6 10.♖e1 ♗b7 11.♗g5 ♘bd7 12.dxc6 ♗xc6 13.♘d4 ♗b7 14.♘d5 ♖c8 15.♗a2 ♘c5?! 16.♗xf6! exf6 17.♘c3?! f5! 18.exf5 ♕f6 19.fxg6 hxg6 20.♘de2±, Glek-Fries

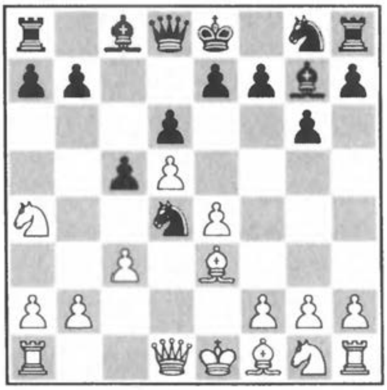
Nielsen, Germany Bundesliga 2004/05.
– 5.♗e3 d6 6.♕d2 c6 7.♘f3 ♘f6 8.a4 0-0 9.h3 a5 10.♗e2 ♘a6 11.0-0 gave White a typical space advantage in a Pirc-like position, Jansa-Fries Nielsen, Gausdal 1992.
It is more active after 4.d5 to play **4...♘d4**



● 5.♘b1!? is a tricky move to trap the knight 5...c6 (5...c5? 6.c3 ♕a5 7.♘a3 b5 8.♗d2 won a piece in Kasparov-Ramon Perez, Zaragoza simul 1986) 6.c3 (or 6.a4 cxd5 7.c3 ♘e6) 6...♘b5 7.♘f3 (7.♗xb5 cxb5 8.♗e3 d6 9.♗d4 ♘f6 10.♘f3 0-0 11.♘bd2 e5 12.dxe6 ♗xe6 13.0-0 a6 14.♖e1 is perhaps a tad better for White, Gullaksen-Fries Nielsen, Klaksvik 2005) 7...d6 8.♗xb5 cxb5 9.♗e3 ♘f6 10.♘bd2 0-0 is approximately equal, Lanc-Zyla, Loosdorf 1993.

● 5.♘ce2 ♘xe2 6.♗xe2 d6 7.♗b5+ c6! 8.♗c4 ♘f6 9.♕e2 0-0 10.♘f3 b5 11.♗b3 a5 12.dxc6 a4 13.♗d5 ♖b8 (13...♕c7!) 14.a3 ♕c7 15.0-0 e6 16.♗a2 ♕xc6 was OK for Black in Nisipeanu-Bartha, Odorheiu Secuiesc 1993.

● After **5.♗e3 c5** (perhaps the rare 5...e5!? 6.dxe6 – 6.♘b1 c6 – 6...♘xe6 7.g4?! c6 8.♗g2 h5 9.gxh5 ♖xh5 10.♘ge2 ♗h6 11.♗xh6 ♘xh6 12.♕d2 ♕g5 13.♕xg5 ♖xg5 14.♔f1?! b6 15.f4 ♖c5 16.♔e1 ♗a6 17.♔d2 0-0-0 18.a4 d5, which was better for Black in A.Smith-Hoi, Valby 2008) White has some advantage in such lines as 6.♘ge2 ♕b6 7.♖b1 d6 and 6.♕d2 ♘f6 7.f3 d6 8.♘ge2 ♘xe2 9.♗xe2 ♕b6 10.0-0-0 ♗d7 11.♗h6 ♗xh6 12.♕xh6 0-0-0 13.♔b1 ♔b8 14.♖he1 with a slight pull in London-Christiansen, New York 1989.
There is also a direct attempt at refuting Black's set-up: **6.♘a4!?**. The threat is 7.c3, while pawn c5 may fall as well in certain lines.
Now after 6...♕a5+?! 7.c3 the move 7...d6?? loses a piece after 8.b4! cxb4 9.♗xd4 1-0, Schäfer-Seehaus, Bensheim 1998. Stronger is 7...♘b5 which worked out well for Black after 8.♘xc5?! ♘xc3! 9.♕d2 b6 10.♘b3?! ♘xe4! 11.♕xa5 bxa5 12.f3 ♘d6∓, Fernandez Romero-Ortega Valle, Dos Hermanas 2001. However, a note of warning: 8.♗xb5 ♕xb5 9.♕b3 is surprisingly hard to meet, Black will lose a pawn.
Therefore Black plays **6...d6**, when after **7.c3**



Black appears to be in trouble:
– 7...b5 8.♗xd4 (8.cxd4 bxa4 9.♕xa4+ ♗d7 10.♗b5 is also better for White, while 8.♘xc5 dxc5 9.cxd4 cxd4 10.♗xb5+ ♔f8 11.♗d2 ♘f6 – 11...♖b8 – 12.♗d3 ♕b6 13.♘f3 ♘d7 14.b4 was winning for White in Skytte-Sivertsen, Holbaek 2001) 8...cxd4 9.♗xb5+ ♔f8 (or 9...♗d7 10.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 11.cxd4+–) 10.♘e2 dxc3 11.♘axc3 ♖b8

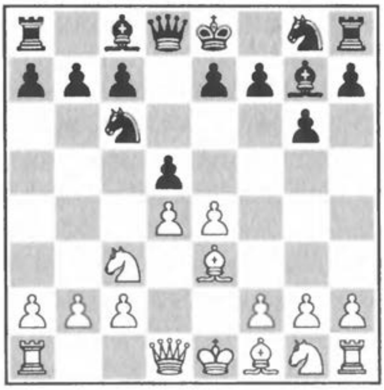
12.0-0 and Black was worse in Ciric-Raicevic, Belgrade 1991.

– The risky piece sacrifice 7...e5?! is hard to believe, but 8.cxd4 exd4 9.♗d2 ♘f6 10.f3 (10.♗d3) 10...0-0 11.♗d3 (11.b3 to have square b2 available for the knight, fails to 11...♘xe4! 12.fxe4 ♕h4+ 13.♔e2 f5! with tremendous play for the two sacrificed knights) 11...♕e8! 12.♗f4? ♘xd5 13.♗xd6 ♘e3 14.♕e2 ♕xa4 clearly favoured Black in De Firmian-Fries Nielsen, Farum 1993. Investigating 7...e5 could be worth your while. It certainly is hard to meet in practice.

In case of **4.♘f3** Christiansen plays 4...d6 For example: 5.d5 ♘e5 (some players like 5...♘b8 having provoked d4-d5, Black will continue with ...c6 and ...♗g4) 6.♘xe5 ♗xe5 7.♗d3 c6 8.0-0 ♗g7 9.♗f4 ♘f6 10.♕d2 ♕b6 11.dxc6 bxc6 12.e5 dxe5 13.♗xe5 0-0 14.♘a4 ♕d8 15.♖fe1 ♗f5 16.♖ad1 ♗xd3 17.♕xd3 ♕a5 18.b3 ♖ad8 and play was equal in Jansa-Christiansen, Germany Bundesliga 1988/89.

By analogy to our main game 4...d5?! looks dubious here because of 5.exd5 ♘b4 6.♗b5+. Still, 6...♔f8!? (6...♗d7) 7.a3 ♘xd5 8.♗c4 ♘gf6 9.0-0 h5 10.♗g5 ♘xc3 11.bxc3 ♘e4 12.♖e1 ♘xg5 13.♘xg5 e6 14.h4 ♗f6 15.f4 ♕d6 16.♕d3 ♔g7 17.♘e4 ♕d8 18.g3 was about equal in Alava-Norri, Helsinki 1990.

4...d5



This is a real shocker that makes for an excellent diagram! More common are 4...d6 and 4...e5.

5.♘f3

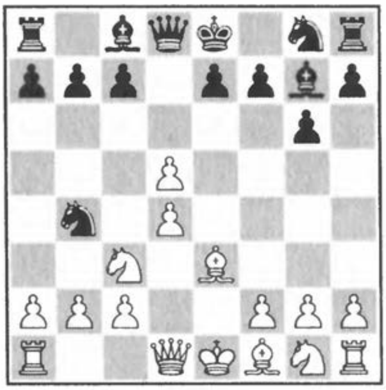
White sort of ignores Black's audacious central thrust and simply continues with his development. This is hardly the critical line though.

● Black is also fine after **5.♕d2** ♘f6!, for example: 6.e5 ♘g4 7.♗f4 f6! 8.e6 g5! 9.♘b5 gxf4 10.♕xf4 ♘ge5 11.dxe5 0-0 12.exf6 ♖xf6 13.♕xc7 ♖xe6+ 14.♗e2 ♕f8! 15.0-0-0?? ♗e5 0-1, Latorre-Fernandez, Spain 2006.

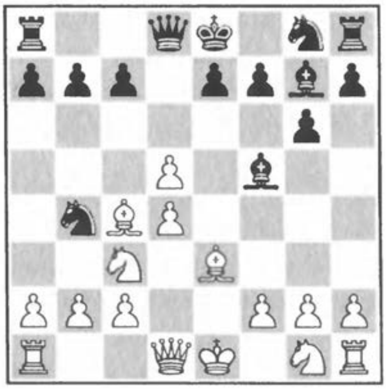
● After **5.♗b5** Popchev once played 5...♘f6?!, but 6.e5 ♘g4 7.♗f4 h5 8.♘f3 ♘h6 9.h3! a6 10.♗xc6+ bxc6 11.♘a4 ♖b8 12.b3 ♗f5 13.♘c5 ♕c8 14.♕e2 was excellent for White in Panajotov-Popchev, Plovdiv 2006. Stronger are both 5...e6 6.♕d2 ♘e7 7.♘f3 h6 8.0-0-0 a6 9.♗xc6+ ♘xc6 10.♖he1 ♘e7 11.♗f4 b5 with counterplay in Carruez-Fernandez, Aragon 1994. And 5...dxe4!? 6.d5 a6 7.♗a4 (7.dxc6 ♗xc3+ 8.bxc3 ♕xd1+ 9.♖xd1 axb5∓) 7...♗xc3+!? 8.bxc3 b5 9.♗b3 (9.dxc6 ♕xd1+ 10.♖xd1 bxa4∓) 9...♘a5 10.♕d4? ♘f6 11.♗h6 ♘xb3 12.axb3 ♕xd5 13.♗g7 ♕xd4 14.cxd4 ♖g8 15.♗xf6 exf6 and with two pawns up Black was winning in Brinck Claussen-J.Pedersen, Denmark 1994/95.

● If White takes with the knight then **5.♘xd5** e6 6.♘c3 ♘xd4 retrieving the pawn is the idea. After 7.♕d2 Black still has certain problems to solve (which should be possible with careful play): 7...c5 (7...e5 8.♘ge2; 7...♘e7 8.0-0-0 e5 9.♘ge2 ♘xe2+? –9...c5! – 10.♕xe2; 7...♘c6 8.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 9.0-0-0+ ♗d7 10.♘f3 h6 11.♝b5 ♘ge7 12.♖d2 ♔c8 13.♖hd1 favours White, Gomez-Fernandez, Aragon 2007) 8.0-0-0 ♗d7 9.♘ge2 e5 10.♘d5 ♗c6 (10...♘f6!) 11.c3 ♝xd5 (11...♘e6!) 12.exd5 ♘f5 13.♗xc5±, Socko-Fries Nielsen, Hamburg 1996.

● **5.exd5** is of course the acid test, 5...♘b4



6.♗b5+ (Black will get back his pawn after 6.♗c4 ♘f6 7.♘f3 0-0 8.0-0 ♗f5 9.♗b3 ♘bxd5 10.♘xd5 ♘xd5 11.♗g5±, Morris-Christiansen, Philadelphia 1989, or 7...♘bxd5 8.♘xd5 ♘xd5 9.♗g5 ♕d6 10.0-0 ♗e6 11.♗b3 0-0 12.♕d2 c6 13.♖fe1±, Neelotpal-Popchev, Marianske Lazne 2006) 6...♗d7 7.♗c4 (the intermediate check has made it as least a bit more difficult for Black to retrieve his pawn. Things are easy for Black after 7.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 8.a3 ♘xd5 9.♘xd5 ♕xd5 10.♘f3 ♘f6 11.h3 0-0 12.0-0 b5 13.♗f4 c5 14.dxc5 ♕xc5 15.♗e5 a5 ½-½, Sandler-Fries Nielsen, Lyngby 1990) 7...♗f5

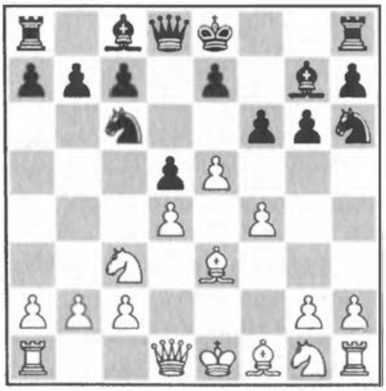


– 8.♗b3 ♘f6 9.♕e2 (9.♘ge2 ♘bxd5 10.♘xd5 ♘xd5 11.♘g3 and now rather than 11...c5?! 12.♘xf5 gxf5 13.♕f3 ♘xe3 14.fxe3 0-0 15.0-0-0, Nicevski-Kurajica, Zagreb 1970, Black should play 11...♗e6) 9...0-0 10.♘f3 ♘bxd5 11.♘xd5 ♘xd5 12.0-0 was about equal in Scarzello-Ruiz, Buenos Aires 2008.

– 8.♗b5+ This is obviously not critical as 8...♗d7 repeats moves. However the brave of heart will play 8...♔f8!? 9.♗a4 ♘xd5 (9...♘f6 10.♞f3 ♘bxd5 11.♘xd5 ♘xd5 12.♗d2c6 13.0-0h6 14.♖e1 ♗f6 15.c3 ♔g7 16.♘e5 h5 17.♗b3 e6 18.h3 planning g4 18...h4 19.♘g4 ♗xg4 20.♕xg4 ♖h5 and while White is a little better here it was Black who won after a long game Filev-Popchev, Plovdiv 2007) 10.♘ge2 ♘gf6 11.0-0 h5 12.♗b3 c6 13.♘xd5 cxd5 14.f3 ♖c8 15.♘f4 ♔g8 16.♘d3 ♗xd3 17.♕xd3 ♗h6 18.♗xh6 ♖xh6 19.♖fe1 e6 Black has a nice structure and won after a long game in De la Villa Garcia-Christiansen, New York 1989.

– 8.♖c1 ♘f6 9.♗b5+ ♗d7 10.♗c4 ♗g4 11.f3 ♗f5 12.♗b5+ and now again, rather than repeating moves with 12...♝d7 13.♗c4, Black could try 12...♔f8!?.

● White can win space with **5.e5** but Black is fine after 5...f6 (or 5...♘h6 6.f4 ♘g4 7.♕d2 ♗f5 8.♗d3 ♗xd3 9.cxd3 f6 10.♘f3 fxe5 11.fxe5 ♘xe3 12.♕xe3 e6, Vokarev-Pedersen, Pardubice 1997) 6.f4 (6.exf6 ♘xf6 is more than fine for Black) 6...♘h6



This position is quite satisfactory for Black: 7.♗e2 0-0 8.♗f3 (8.♕d2 fxe5 9.fxe5 ♘f5 10.♘f3 – 10.♗f2 ♗h6 – 10...♘xe3 11.♕xe3 ♗f5, Cid-Fernandez, Aragon 1992) 8...e6 9.♘ge2 (9.♕d2 ♘a5!? – 9...♘f5 – 10.b3 c5! 11.♘a4 cxd4 12.♗xd4 ♘c6 13.exf6 ♗xf6 favours Black, Marsal-Fernandez, Vilanova 1994) 9...♘f5 10.♗c1 (10.♗f2 fxe5 11.fxe5 ♘h4, and 11.dxe5 g5 or 11...♘h4) 10...fxe5 11.dxe5 (11.fxe5 ♘fxd4! 12.♘xd4 ♕h4+–+) 11...g5! 12.fxg5 ♘xe5 13.0-0 c6 with an excellent game, Garcia-Fernandez, Cala Galdana 1994.

Let us return to the game after 5.♘f3.

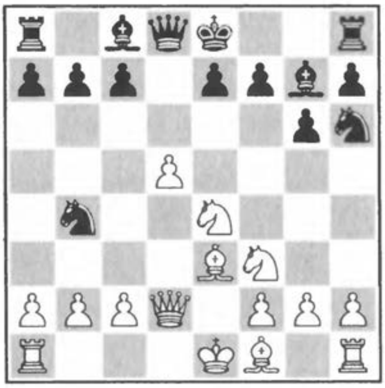
5...dxe4

Here 5...♘f6 is advantageously met by 6.e5 (6.exd5 ♘xd5 or 6...♘b4; 6.♗d3 dxe4 7.♘xe4 ♘b4) 6...♘g4 7.♗f4 f6 8.h3.

6.♘xe4 ♘h6?!

This is the most ambitious move, but it is very risky considering the vulnerable position of both knights after White's next two moves. Safer was 6...♘f6 and after 7.♘xf6+ ♗xf6 followed by castling Black has no specific problems and appears to have equalized.

7.d5! ♘b4 8.♕d2!



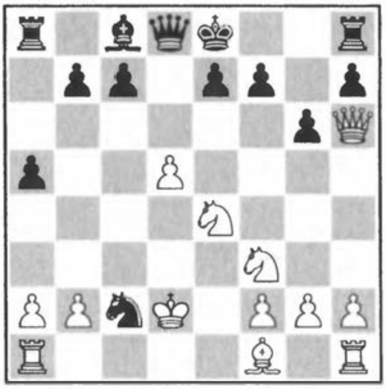
Play has become very concrete now.

8...a5

Covering the b4-knight, as the h6-knight is sort of protected by a counter threat on c2.

9.a3

This appears to win, but Black has a strong retort. After 9.♗xh6 ♗xh6 10.♕xh6 ♘xc2+ 11.♔d2



we reach a sharp position. After some time your engine will discover that 11...♘xa1 12.♗c4! favours White. Likewise, Golubev has indicated 11...♗f5 12.♗c4! ♗xe4 13.♕g7 ♖f8 14.♘g5, which is much better for White as 14...♗xd5 15.♔xc2! ♗xc4? fails to 16.♖ad1 when ♘xh7 is an unstoppable threat.

Therefore 11...♕xd5+ 12.♔xc2 ♗f5 appears to be forced when Black is two pawns down for two pieces, but he will retrieve one piece, while White's king is rather airy.

Bad now is 13.♗d3? ♗xe4 14.♗xe4 ♕xe4+ 15.♔c1 ♖a6. And 13.♕e3 ♗xe4+ 14.♔c3 ♗xf3 (Black should take, as 14...0-0-0 15.♗c4 ♕c6 16.♖ad1 b5? fails to 17.♘e5) 15.gxf3 ♕c6+ or 15...0-0 gives Black a lot of play.

Best is 13.♘d2! when 13...♗xe4+ 14.♘xe4 ♕xe4+ 15.♗d3 ♕c6+ 16.♔d2 ♕xg2 17.♕e3 0-0-0 18.♖ad1 gives Black three pawns for the piece – but White is a bit better I would say.

According to Golubev less clear is 9.0-0-0 ♘g4 10.a3 (or 10.♗b5+).

9...♕xd5!

This counter-attack saves the day.

10.axb4

Of course 10.0-0-0 fails to 10...♗xb2+! 11.♔xb2 ♕a2+ 12.♔c3 ♕xa3+ and Black wins.

10...♕xe4 11.♗d3 ♕e6 12.0-0-0?

White is deluded by a nice tactical trick. It was necessary to play 12.0-0 when 12...♘f5 13.♗xf5 ♕xf5 is about equal according to Golubev.

12...0-0!

White was hoping for something like 12...axb4? 13.♗b5+.

However, Black willingly sacrifices his knight for a strong attack.

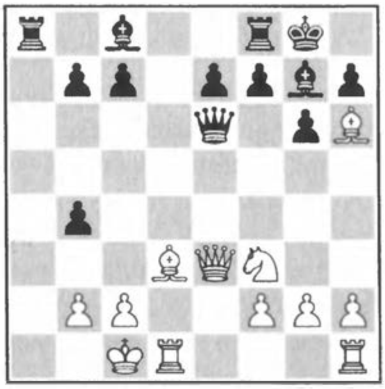
13.♗xh6

By now White may have realized what he was in for, but it is too late for 13.bxa5, since 13...♕a2 13...♘f5 and 13...♘g4 all favour Black, who has a free attack and a huge positional advantage.

13...axb4!

White escapes into an ending after 13...♕a2 14.♕f4! ♕xb2+ 15.♔d2 ♕xb4+ 16.♔e2 (but not 16.♕xb4?? ♗xh6+).

14.♕e3

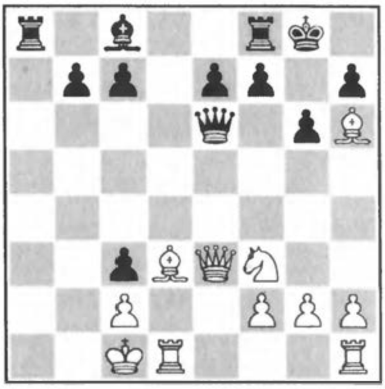


Black to play and win is what your book of combinations would say:

14...♗c3!

Cutting off the escape of White's king who now appears to be doomed.

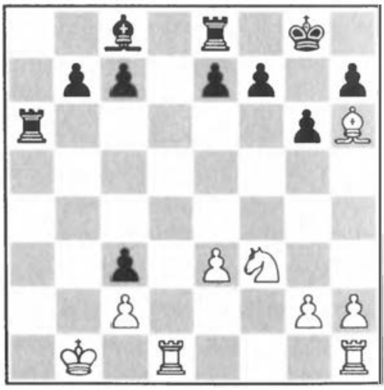
15.bxc3 bxc3



White plays the only defence: **16.♗a6! ♕xe3+!** Not 16...♖xa6? 17.♕xc3! and White wins.

17.♗xe3?!

White hopes to somehow take the c3-pawn after a subsequent ♗e3-d4, but meanwhile it was necessary to keep the f8-rook under attack with 17.fxe3, after 17...♖xa6 18.♔b1 Black must now spent a tempo on 18...♖e8! (18...♖b6+ 19.♔c1 ♗e6 20.♗xf8 ♗a2 21.♘d2! cxd2+ 22.♔xd2 ♔xf8 is somewhat better for Black. He has two pawns for the exchange. Still, a draw is the most likely outcome).



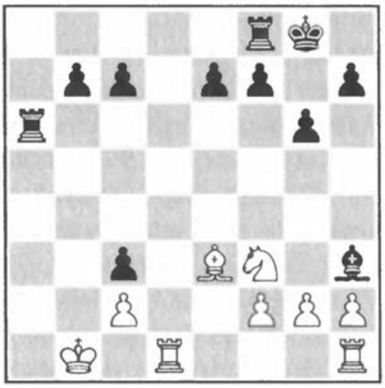
White still has no satisfactory defence. Black already has three pawns for the piece, and pawn c3 is a nail in White's coffin. A nail that is hard to remove as the following lines demonstrate:

– 19.♖d5 ♗d7! 20.♘d4 ♖ea8 21.♘b3 ♗e6 22.♖hd1 ♗xd5 23.♖xd5 ♖d6–+, Golubev.

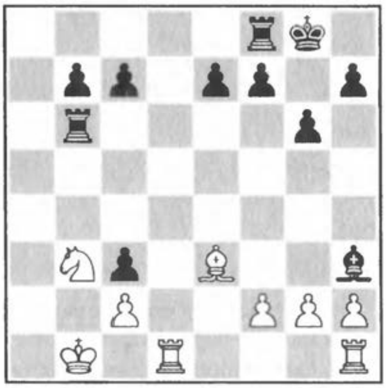
– 19.♘d4 ♗e6 20.♘b3 (20.♘xe6 ♖xe6 21.♖d3 ♖b6+ 22.♔c1 ♖a6) 20...♖ea8 planning ...c5-c4.

– 19.♖d3 ♗f5 20.♖xc3 ♖ea8 21.♖e1 to place the rook on a protected square: 21...♖a1+ 22.♔b2 ♖8a2+ 23.♔b3 ♗e6+ 24.♔b4 ♖a4+ 25.♔c5 ♖a5+ 26.♔d4 ♖d5+ 27.♔e4 ♖a4+ 28.♘d4 c5 29.♖d1 and Black will end up with two extra pawns. A long and forced line that your engine will reproduce.

17...♖xa6 18.♔b1 ♗h3!



Popchev continues in the same spectacular fashion! Meanwhile 18...♗f5 19.♗d4 ♖a3 was good enough as well (Golubev). **19.♘d4** Black also wins after 19.gxh3 ♖fa8 20.♖d8+ ♖xd8 21.♗d4 (21.♘d4 c5 22.♘b3 c4) 21...♖a3–+. **19...♖b6+ 20.♘b3** Or 20.♔c1 ♖a8 and wins.

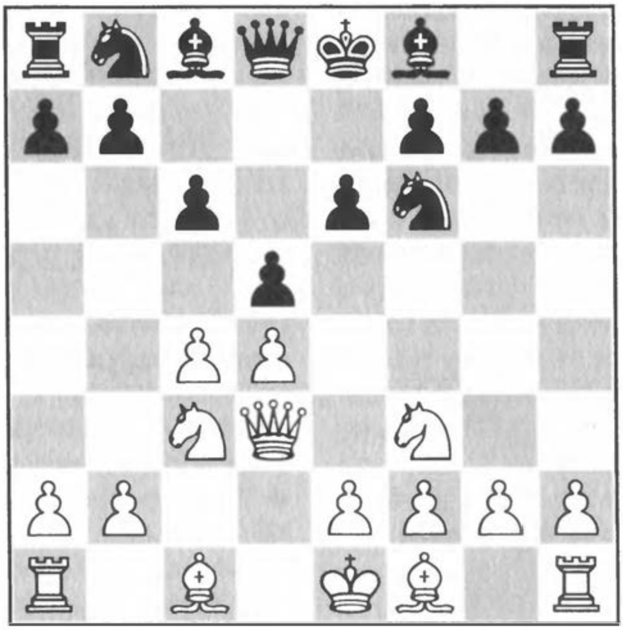


20...♖xb3+! Wow, what a game! **21.cxb3 ♗f5+ 22.♔c1 ♖a8** and White resigned. The only defence is 23.♖d8+ ♖xd8 but on the next move Black plays his rook to a8 again with the same threat of mate.

CHAPTER 14

David Navara

Tricky Line vs the Slav



1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 e6 5.♕d3

The Slav Defence is very popular nowadays. Many top players including the present World Champion show how difficult it is for White to achieve something tangible even in the most topical lines. Besides, not everybody is ready to sacrifice a pawn after 5.♗g5.

My pet line with 5.♕d3!? is objectively no better of course, but some accuracy is required and the resulting positions are not so widely known. These positions are often sharp and offer a lot of scope for further play. I managed to show in several games that one can successfully play this line even without a deeper knowledge of the theory which I am trying to convey in this article. I usually achieved promising positions, and my opening play in the remaining games could have been improved.

With 5.♕d3 White defends the c4-pawn and wants to play e2-e4 in one go. After this encouraging introduction I should warn you that this sideline can transpose into several others. When quoting the games, I mostly ignore the fact that the discussed position resulted from a different move order. Please do not feel puzzled by the fact that almost none of the quoted games started with 5.♕d3 and that the discussed position sometimes in fact appeared one move later (as in case of 5.e3 ♘bd7 6.♕c2 ♗d6 7.e4 dxe4 8.♘xe4 ♘xe4 9.♕xe4 ♗b4+).

If you want to play this system, you have to be at least partially acquainted with the continuation 5...dxc4 6.♕xc4 b5 (a brief look at my games raises some unpleasant questions in this respect). I decided to focus entirely on White's plans with e2-e4.

After 5...♘bd7 White can also continue with moves like 6.♗g5 and 7.e3, or 6.g3 and 7.♗g2, but here too I restrict myself to 6.e4 and ignored these lines, because the poor position of White's queen should allow Black to equalize.

I believe that this line can be very dangerous for a surprised opponent, and not just in rapid and blitz events.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 e6 5.♕d3!?

Black has many possible reactions to 5.♕d3. Variation A covers the less popular continuations – with 5...b6 as the main line. Another unusual reaction is 5...♗e7 (B) – the selected games are quite interesting.

The most common replies are 5...dxc4 (C), and 5...♘bd7 (D) – note that they can both transpose into another.

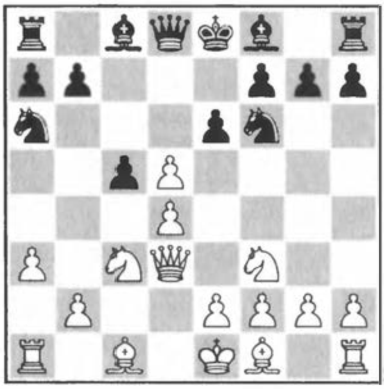
Variation A – The sidelines without 5...♗e7

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 e6 5.♕d3 b6!?

Black intends to play ...♗a6 and White should react aggressively if he wants to fight for an opening advantage.

● The move 5...♗b4 does not match with c7-c6 very well: 6.a3 ♗xc3+ 7.♕xc3 resembles the Nimzo-Indian Defence, the bishop pair gives White easier play.

● 5...♘a6 does not solve all the problems, because of 6.a3 (I used to think that White could ignore Black's threat and continue 6.e4, but Black gets a fine Bogo-Indian position after 6...♘b4 7.♕b1 dxe4! 8.♘xe4 ♘xe4 9.♕xe4 c5 10.a3 f5! 11.♕e2 ♕a5!) 6...c5 (6...♗e7 7.e4 dxe4 – 7...0-0 8.e5 dxc4 9.♕c2 ♘d5 10.♗xc4; 7...c5 8.cxd5 exd5 9.e5 – 8.♘xe4 0-0 9.♗e2 c5 10.0-0 cxd4 11.b4!±) happened in Romanishin-Ljubojevic, Groningen 1993. I can recommend 7.cxd5:



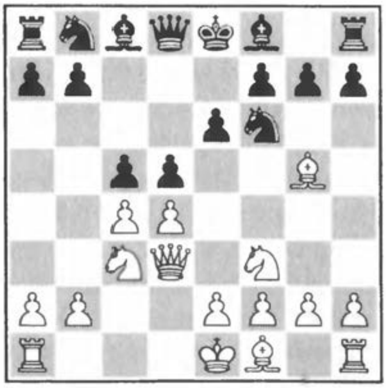
– 7...♘xd5 8.e4 ♘xc3 9.bxc3 cxd4 10.cxd4, when Black's knight is a bit misplaced.

– 7...exd5 8.♗g5.

– 7...cxd4!? 8.♕xd4 ♗c5 (8...exd5 9.♗g5±) 9.♕h4 exd5 10.♗g5 ♗e7.

● The game Miles-Lombard, Biel 1977, saw 5...c5 6.cxd5 ♘xd5 (6...exd5 7.♗g5) 7.♘xd5 exd5 (7...♕xd5 8.e4±) 8.g3 c4 9.♕c2 ♘c6. Black has equalized but White converted his 'advantage of a stronger player' later on.

I prefer 6.♗g5, for example:



– 6...dxc4 7.♕xc4;

– 6...♘c6 7.0-0-0!? ♘b4 8.♕d2 dxc4 9.e4± and Black is dangerously underdeveloped.

– 6...cxd4 7.♘xd4 (7.♕xd4 ♘c6 8.♗xf6 transposes to the brilliant game

Pillsbury-Lasker, Cambridge Springs 1904. White won, but Black's position should not be bad) 7...e5 (7...♗b4!? – White cannot give a check on a4 – 8.cxd5 ♕xd5 9.♗xf6 gxf6 10.0-0-0±; 7...dxc4 8.♕xc4) 8.♘db5. This reminds me of the game Fine-Yudovich, Moscow 1936, which saw 2...e6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 c5 5.♗g5 cxd4 6.♘xd4 e5 7.♘db5 – White's queen remained on d1, otherwise the position is the same – and Black won after 7...a6! 8.♘xd5 axb5 9.♘xf6+ ♕xf6!! 10.♗xf6 ♗b4+. Needless to say, with the queen on d3 this makes no sense and Black should play 8...d4 9.♘d5 ♘a6 and is only very slightly worse.

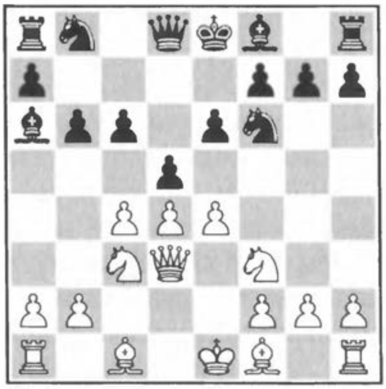
● 5...a6 6.e4 b5 7.cxd5 cxd5 8.e5 looks like a French Defence with 3.e5. The position of White's queen fails to impress, but on the other hand White managed to develop a knight on c3, which is not common in the French Defence.

6.e4 ♗a6

Alternatively, 6...dxc4 7.♕xc4 ♗a6 8.♕b3 ♗xf1 9.♔xf1 followed by g3, ♔g2 or 9.♖xf1 followed by ♗g5, 0-0-0 both look slightly better for White.

After 6...♗b4 7.e5 dxc4 (7...♘e4 8.♕c2) 8.♕c2! ♘d5 9.♗xc4 ♗a6 10.♗xa6 ♘xa6 it is an open question which minor piece belongs on g5, perhaps 11.0-0± could postpone the decision.

White is at a crossroads now.



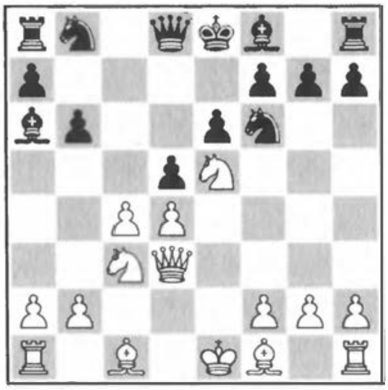
7.♕c2

Note that 7.b3?! ♗b4 is very good for Black, while 7.♘e5?! dxc4! 8.♘xc4? b5 even loses a piece.

7.exd5!?. This continuation might be more dangerous for Black.

After 7...exd5 8.♗g5 ♗xc4 (8...dxc4 9.♕e3+ ♕e7 10.♘e5) 9.♕e3+ ♕e7 10.♗xc4 ♕xe3+ (or 10...dxc4 11.♘e5 and White regains the pawn under favourable circumstances) 11.fxe3 dxc4 12.♗xf6 gxf6 13.♘d2 b5 14.a4 ♗b4 15.0-0, Black cannot defend his numerous weaknesses.

Therefore Black should reply 7...cxd5 when after 8.♘e5 we reach the diagrammed position



– 8...♗b4 9.♕f3 0-0 (9...♘bd7?! 10.cxd5 ♗xf1 11.dxe6) 10.♗g5 dxc4!? 11.0-0-0! ♗xc3 12.♕xa8 ♗xd4 13.♕f3, White is better thanks to the numerous pins.

– 8...♘bd7 9.♗g5 might transpose to 8...dxc4.

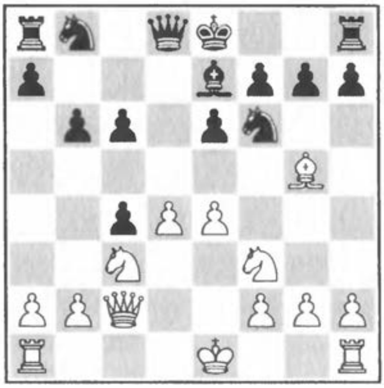
– 8...dxc4 9.♕f3 ♕xd4 (9...♘bd7 10.♗g5 ♖c8 11.♘xd7 ♕xd7 12.♗xf6 ♗b7!? 13.d5 gxf6 14.0-0-0 ♕e7 looks good for Black who threatens to consolidate after ...♗g7, ...0-0, but 11.0-0-0!? deserves serious attention) 10.♘xf7 ♔xf7 11.♕xa8 ♗b4 (11...♗c5?! 12.♗e3 ♕e5 13.♕xa7+ ♔g6 14.0-0-0) 12.♕f3 (12.♕xa7+ ♔g6 13.♗d2 ♖d8 is rather dangerous for White) 12...♘c6

13.♗d2! (13.♗e2? ♘e5 14.♕e3 ♘d3+ 15.♗xd3 ♗xc3+!) and 14.0-0-0. The position is very sharp and approximately equal.

7...dxc4

This position resembles some gambit lines like 5.♕c2. White lost one tempo by moving his queen twice, Black lost one tempo with his b-pawn. The moves ♕c2 and ...♗a6 can be useful in this type of position. White has sufficient compensation, but not more than that. Black should probably first develop his pieces and only then play b6-b5. White can play ♗e2, ♗g5, 0-0 and in some lines with b6-b5 also b2-b3, the position promises both sides mutual chances.

- 7...♗xc4 8.♗xc4 dxc4 9.♗g5 ♗e7 (9...h6!?) and now:



– 10.0-0 0-0 (10...b5 11.a4 ♕b6 looks dangerous for Black) 11.a4 and White recaptures the c4-pawn and has a slight edge.

– White can also insert 10.a4!?, for example 10...♘a6 (10...0-0 11.0-0) 11.♕e2 ♘b4 12.0-0 ♘d3 13.b3.

– 10.0-0-0 might be overly risky in view of the knight manoeuvre ♘b8-a6-b4-d3.

- 7...dxe4!? 8.♘xe4 ♗b4+ (8...♘xe4 9.♕xe4 ♗b4+ 10.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 11.♘xd2±) 9.♘c3!? (9.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 10.♘exd2 c5=) 9...c5 10.♗g5!? (the position might be equal, but at least it is sharp enough) 10...cxd4 11.♕a4+.

8.♗g5

White also has compensation after 8.♗e2 ♗e7 9.0-0 0-0 10.♗f4!? or 10.♗g5 ♘bd7.

8...♗e7

After 8...h6 9.♗h4 b5 I like 10.♗e2 rather than the pseudo-Botvinnik System in the Slav Defence – 10.e5 g5 11.♘xg5 hxg5 12.♗xg5 ♘bd7 13.exf6 (13.g3?! c5) 13...♘xf6 14.0-0-0 – but Black seems to be doing fine in both cases.

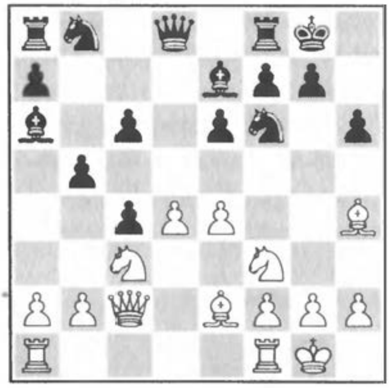
9.♗e2 b5

9...0-0 10.0-0 ♘bd7 is a safer move order as Black does not have to worry about the line 11.♕a4 ♗b5! 12.♘xb5 cxb5 13.♕xb5 ♘xe4 with equality.

10.0-0 h6

This is a double-edged move. It forces White's bishop to leave the c1-h6 diagonal, but the weakening of Black's king can sometimes be felt. Simply 10...0-0 was the alternative.

11.♗h4 0-0



12.b3!?

This move is by no means obligatory, but I cannot see how should White play actively otherwise.

12...♘bd7

Play is about equal after 12...b4 13.♘a4 c3 14.♗xa6 ♘xa6 15.a3. White has fine compensation in case of 12...cxb3 13.axb3 ♗b7 14.♗xf6!? ♗xf6 (14...gxf6!?) 15.e5 ♗e7

16.♕e4 – White threatens to take on b5 and at the same time wants to emphasize the drawback of the move h7-h6 by playing ♗d3.

13.bxc4 bxc4

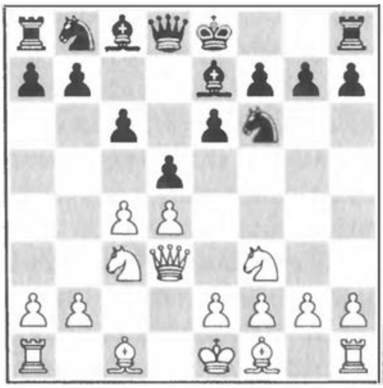
White's strong centre compensates for the missing pawn.

Variation B – 5...♗e7

☐ **David Navara**
■ **Oleg Korneev**
France team championship 2007

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 e6 5.♕d3 ♗e7

This move is rather rare but fairly logical. Black is waiting with the move ....dxc4, exploiting the fact that White usually does not play 8.e4 in case of 5...dxc4 6.♕xc4 b5 7.♕d3 ♗e7. Perhaps I should once more stress that the move 6.e4 is not obligatory here, but the alternatives 6.♗g5, 6.g3 and 6.♗f4 fail to impress me.



6.e4

I even considered 6.g4 0-0 7.g5 dxc4 8.♕xc4♘d5 but it looked too obscure to me and not without reason!

6...dxc4 7.♕xc4 b5

I guess that we both were out of our preparation around this moment.

8.♕d3 b4 9.♘a4

The alternatives were not very promising, e.g. 9.e5? bxc3 10.exf6 cxb2 11.fxg7 bxc1♕+ 12.♖xc1 ♖g8 13.♕xh7 ♗b4+ 14.♔d1 ♔e7.

9...0-0

I was more concerned about 9...♕a5 10.b3 ♗a6 11.♕c2 ♗xf1. I planned to recapture with the king, but Black equalizes rather easily after both 12...♕b5+ and 12...0-0 13.g3 (13.♗g5) 13...c5 14.♘xc5 ♖c8. The alternative 12.♖xf1 0-0 13.♗g5 ♘bd7 14.0-0-0 is sharper, but Black should generate sufficient counterplay after something like 14...c5 15.d5 (this is stronger than both 15.dxc5? ♘xc5 followed by 16...♖c8 which is probably bad for White, and 15.e5?! cxd4) and now Black should choose between 15...exd5 16.e5 c4, 15...c4!? and 15...♘b6, with mutual chances in all the lines.

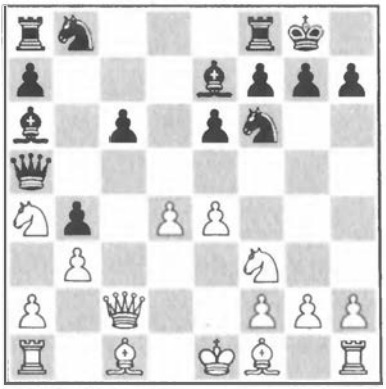
10.♕c2

10.♗g5 deserves some attention, but Black can probably play 10...♕a5 as 11.b3 ♗a6 12.♕c2 ♗xf1 13.♖xf1 (13.♔xf1 ♕b5+!=) 13...♘bd7 transposes to 9...♕a5.

10...♕a5 11.b3

Not 11.♘d2?! ♘xe4!? 12.♘xe4 b3+.

11...♗a6



12.♗xa6

White had many alternatives.

12.♗g5!? ♗xf1 13.♖xf1 deserves attention

(13.♔xf1 ♕b5+ 14.♔g1 ♘bd7 15.e5 – Rybka proposes 15.d5!?, the point is that 15...cxd5 16.e5 loses a piece – 15...♘d5 16.♗xe7 ♘xe7 17.♘g5 (Korneev) leads to a sharp and approximately balanced position). 12.♘e5 is also a serious alternative, White prepares the moves 13.♗xa6 and 13.♗g5 and can also consider playing ♘c4 at times. 12...♗xf1 13.♖xf1 ♘fd7 looks like the critical test.

12...♕xa6?!

Only after I made my move did I start to care about the recapture 12...♘xa6 seriously. I found something like 13.♘e5 c5 14.♘c6 ♕c7 15.♘xe7+ ♕xe7 16.♗g5 (16.dxc5 ♖ac8 17.♗e3 ♘g4; 16.♕c4 (Korneev) 16...♕b7=) but it fails to 16...cxd4! 17.♕c6 (17.e5 ♕b7!) 17...♘c7 18.e5 ♕d7.

13.♗g5 ♘bd7!

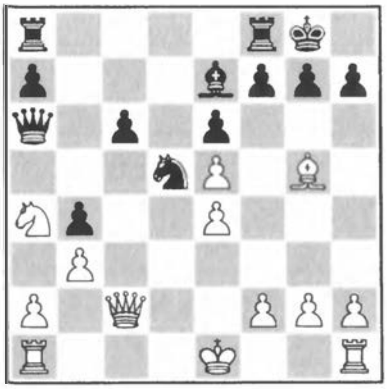
This is a principled choice.

Black correctly rejected 13...♖e8 14.♘e5 ♘fd7 15.♗xe7 ♘xe5 16.♘c5 ♕b5 17.♗d6.

14.♘e5

14.0-0-0 c5 is similar to some above-mentioned lines with White's rook on f1 and Black's queen on a5. The position remains sharp and balanced, 15.dxc5 is also possible.

14...♘xe5 15.dxe5 ♘d5



16.exd5

I considered several alternatives including 16.h4?! ♗xg5 17.hxg5 ♘f4 18.0-0-0, but Black is not obliged to take on g2.

More promising was the recommendation of GM Kiril Georgiev, namely 16.♗xe7 ♘xe7 17.♘c5 ♕b5 18.f4! (White relies on his powerful knight. 18.0-0-0? ♘g6) 18...♖fd8 (neither me nor my electronic co-authors can prove White's edge after 18...g5!?, for example 19.fxg5, or 19.g3!? – Kir. Georgiev – 19...♖ad8! and White cannot castle queenside) 19.♔f2 ♖d4 20.♖hd1 ♖ad8 21.♖xd4 ♖xd4 22.♖c1=/±.

16...♗xg5

I naturally wanted to play d5-d6 and to castle somewhere, but currently White cannot castle and 17.d6 allows Black to break White's centre after 17...f6 or 17...♕b5 18.♕e4 f6 19.f4 ♗h6, for example 20.exf6 ♖xf6 21.g3 e5!.

17.h4 17.dxc6 ♖ac8 does not look very good. **17...♗h6**

Otherwise White could castle queenside at some suitable moment. 17...♗f4? 18.♕e4.

18.g4

Black's bishop is in danger, 18...f6? 19.g5 does not solve the problem.

18...♕b5

Taking on d5 does not offer adequate compensation.

My opponent correctly rejected 18...♖ad8 because of 19.g5 ♖xd5 20.f4 ♖fd8 21.gxh6 ♖d3 22.♘c5 ♖e3+ 23.♔f2 (Korneev).

I expected 18...g6. The position is extremely unclear and approximately equal after both 19.d6 and 19.h5.

19.g5 19.♕xc6? ♕d3. **19...♕xd5 20.0-0**

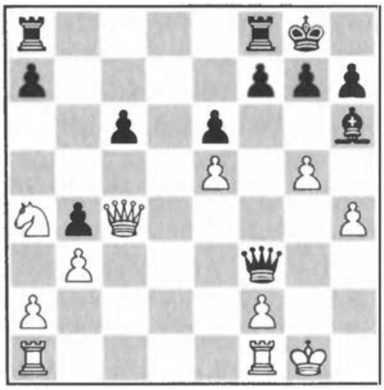
I managed to castle, but the 'preparatory moves' were far from usual. Black could have obtained three pawns for the missing piece, but White would have kept the edge owing to Black's pawn weaknesses. White's king is relatively safe.

20...♕f3?!

20...♗xg5 21.hxg5 ♕xe5 22.♕c5 ♕f4 23.♕e3 is better for White but the presence of queens promises Black some counterplay.

21.♕c4

The threat is ♖a1-e1-e3. 21.♕d1 ♕h3 22.♕d4 f6 23.gxh6 (23.exf6? gxf6 24.gxh6 ♔h8!) 23...fxe5 gives Black decent counterplay.



21...f5?

During the game I was afraid of 21...f6 but my opponent correctly rejected this because of 22.gxh6 gxh6 23.♔h2 ♔h8 24.♖g1!±, for example 24...fxe5 (Black can play better here or on the next move, but still remains with three weak pawns for a knight) 25.♖g2 ♖f4 26.♕xe6 ♖xh4+ 27.♔g1 ♕h5 28.♕f6 mate, Korneev.

21...♖ad8 22.♖ae1 ♖d3 23.♕e4 should also be bad for Black.

21...♗xg5 22.hxg5 ♕f5 23.♕h4 is certainly worse than 20...♗xg5.

22.♖ae1 f4

Being in a time-trouble, my opponent believed that he could force a perpetual. Black loses after 22...♔h8 23.♖e3 ♕h5 24.♕f4!.

23.♕xe6+ ♔h8 24.♔h2!

Black loses a piece and the game.

24.gxh6 ♖ae8 (24...gxh6 25.♔h2) 25.♕d7 (25.hxg7+? ♔xg7 26.♕d7+ ♖f7!) was also sufficient.

24...♕h5 25.gxh6 ♖f5 26.hxg7+ ♔xg7 27.♖g1+ ♔h8 28.♕e7 ♖f7 29.♕g5 ♕f3 30.e6 ♕xf2+ 31.♖g2

Black resigned.

This was the first game in which I tried this system. It is no wonder that I decided to repeat it!

☐ **Nikita Vitiugov**
■ **Vasily Gagarin**
Moscow Open 2008

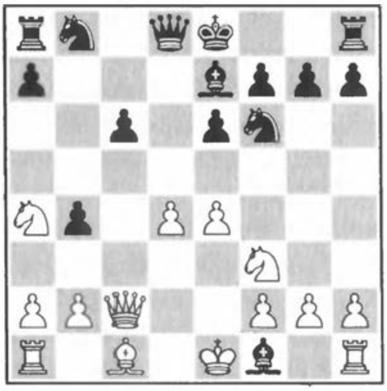
1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.♕d3 dxc4

5...♗e7 6.e4 dxc4 transposes to the game.

6.♕xc4 b5 7.♕d3 ♗e7 8.e4

Some other moves like 8.a3 are more common, here.

8...b4 9.♘a4 ♗a6 10.♕c2 ♗xf1



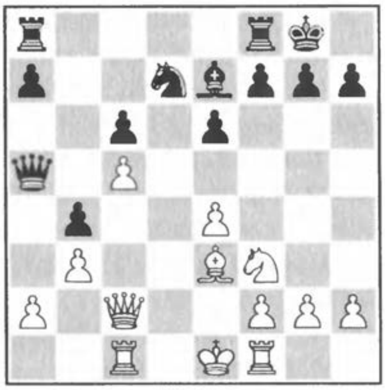
11.♖xf1

11.♔xf1 followed by 12.g3 and 13.♔g2 is presumably too slow on account of 11...♕a5 12.b3 (12.g3 ♘xe4!) 12...♕b5+!, when Black wins a tempo and probably succeeds to execute the liberating break c6-c5.

11...0-0 12.♗e3 12.♗g5!? **12...♘fd7?!** 12...♕a5 13.b3 ♘bd7 14.0-0-0 c5 gives Black decent play. **13.♘c5?!** 13.0-0-0 looks more natural to me, e.g. 13...♕a5 14.♔b1 ♘b6 15.♘c5±. **13...♘xc5 14.dxc5 ♕a5 15.b3?!** Play is unclear after both 15.♘d2 b3 16.♕xb3 ♘a6!? and 15.♕c4!? ♘d7 16.0-0-0 ♘xc5 17.♔b1.

15...♘d7 16.♖c1

The sacrifice 16.0-0-0 looks less appealing than after 15.♕c4.



16...♖ab8?!

Black plans to attack the c5-pawn, but White can sacrifice it. Knowing the further course of the game, it is easy to recommend 16...♖fd8!? (or 16...♖ad8) with the idea 17.♔e2 ♕a6+!?. This would have enabled Black to avoid problems. 18.♕c4 ♕xa2+ 19.♖c2 ♕a5 20.♖d1 with compensation.

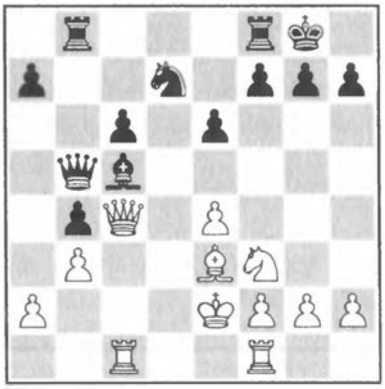
17.♔e2! ♕b5+

17...♕a6+ 18.♕d3 ♕xd3+ (18...♕xa2+? 19.♖c2; 18...♕b7 19.♖fd1 ♖fd8 20.♕c4) 19.♔xd3 and White is better – Black's queenside pawns might become weak.

17...♖b5 18.♖fd1 ♘xc5 19.♘d4 ♖b6 gives White strong pressure in return for the pawn. The calm 17...♖fd8 deserves attention.

18.♕c4 ♗xc5

18...♘xc5? 19.♕xb5 ♖xb5 20.♘d4 ♘xe4 (20...♖a5 21.♘xc6 ♖xa2+ 22.♚f3 loses a piece) 21.♘xb5 cxb5 22.♖c7±.



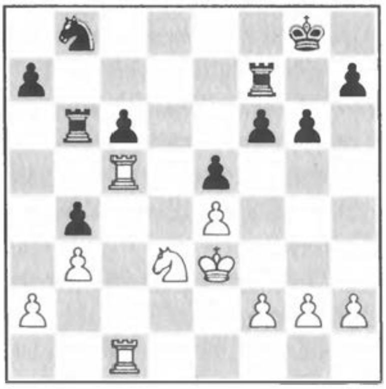
19.♕xb5 ♖xb5 20.♖fd1! ♗xe3 21.♔xe3 ♘b8

Otherwise White recaptures on c6 with a serious advantage owing to the control of the open lines. White has more than sufficient compensation thanks to numerous weaknesses in Black's camp.

21...♘e5 22.♘xe5 (22.♘d4 ♖a5) 22...♖xe5 23.♖xc6 and Black has to be very careful.

22.♖d2 e5 22...♖c8 23.♘d4 ♖b6 (23...♖a5 24.♘xc6 ♘xc6 25.♖xc6).

23.♘e1! g6 I do not quite understand this move. Did Black want to prepare f7-f5? Better are 23...f6 and 23...♖c8. **24.♖dc2 f6** 24...f5 25.♘d3. **25.♖c5 ♖b6 26.♘d3 ♖f7** The computer's proposal 26...♖c8 followed by ...♞d7 or ...♞a6 looks more reasonable, still Black has to be careful.



27.h4!

White prepares the advance f2-f4, but after g2-g3 Black could diminish its effect by playing g6-g5.

27...h5

27...h6!? 28.♖1c4 ♖fb7 29.g3 g5 30.f4!? exf4+ 31.gxf4 is also more pleasant for White.

28.♖1c4 ♖fb7 29.f3 29.g3 was also possible, but White does not have to hurry.

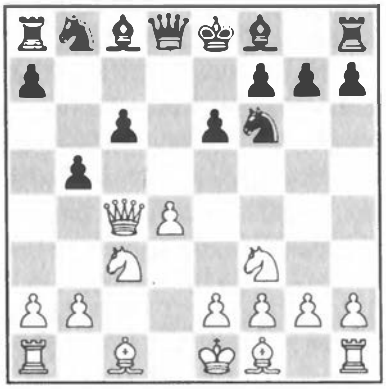
29...♔f8 30.g3 ♔e8 31.f4 exf4+ 32.gxf4 ♔d8?! The king should not have left the kingside. **33.f5! ♘d7 34.fxg6! ♘xc5 35.♘xc5 ♖e7** 35...♔e7 36.♘xb7

♖xb7 37.♖xc6+–. **36.g7 ♖e8** 36...♖xg7? 37.♘e6+ **37.♖d4+ ♔c8** 37...♔e7 38.♖d7 is a nice mate. **38.♖d7 ♖b5 39.♖f7 ♖xc5 40.♖f8 ♖c3+ 41.♔f4**

Black resigned. A very nice game!

Variation C – 5...dxc4

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 e6 5.♕d3!? dxc4 6.♕xc4 b5



7.♕d3

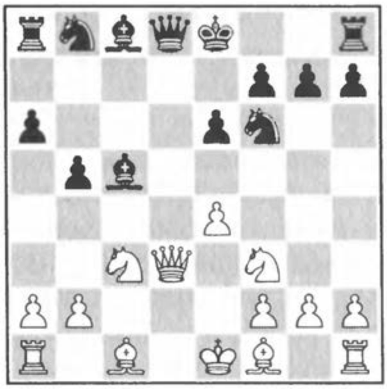
As far as I know, the other retreat does not pose Black any problems, for example 7.♕b3 ♘bd7 8.g3 (8.♗g5 h6) 8...♗b7 9.♗g2 a6 10.0-0 c5.

7...♘bd7

In case of 7...♗a6 8.♘e4 White has a slight edge.

A serious alternative is 7...a6 8.e4 c5 9.dxc5:

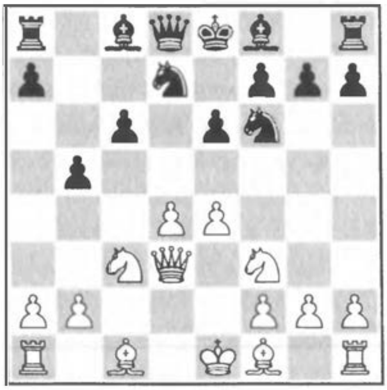
- Now 9...♕xd3?! 10.♗xd3 ♗xc5 11.e5 is slightly more pleasant for White. For example 11...♘fd7 12.♗e4 ♖a7 13.♗f4± (Atalik). The evaluation probably holds, but Black can try to disrupt White's pawn structure by playing 13...♗b4!? (as played in the blitz game Navara-Schlecht, Germany 2008) White can try 14.♖c1 (I played something much worse instead) 14...♖c7 15.♗d2 ♘c5?! 16.♔e2 (16.♘xb5 ♘d3+) with the threat of 17.♘xb5. White can consider 13.♔e2!? too.
- However, I should admit that I do not see any advantage after 9...♗xc5! as in Khalifman-Stefanova, Drammen 2004.



Now 10.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 is about equal. In the rapid game Navara-Kramnik, Prague 6th match game 2008, there now followed: 11.e5?! – this is consequent but rather risky – 11...♘g4 12.♗g5+ ♔e8 13.0-0-0? (stronger was 13.♘e4 ♗b4+ 14.♔e2!? which is equal) 13...♘d7 14.♘e4 ♗b7 15.♘xc5 ♘xc5 16.♗h4 ♘e4 Black soon won material and later converted his advantage.

Stronger is 10.e5!? ♘d5 (10...♘fd7 11.♗e2 ♗b7 12.0-0. White has easier play, for example 12...0-0? fails to 13.♘g5! g6 14.♕h3 h5 15.♗xh5) 11.♗e2 (White is probably not better here, but it is Black who has to care about equality) 11...♗b7 (11...♘xc3!? 12.♕xc3 ♘d7) 12.0-0 ♘d7 (12...♘xc3 13.♕xc3 ♘d7 might also suffice for equality) 13.♘e4, the position is equal but full of play.

8.e4



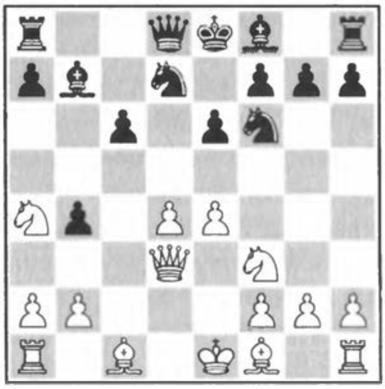
8.g3 ♗b7 9.♗g2 a6 10.0-0 c5 11.♗g5 is also an option, even though Black should be able to equalize.

8...b4

Black has a fresh alternative to this move, namely 8...♕a5. In the stem game Eingorn-Feller, Metz 2008, Black comfortably equalized after 9.♗d2 b4 10.e5 (10.♘d1 c5 11.♘e3 cxd4 12.♘c4 ♕c7 13.e5 ♘d5 14.♖c1± would be nice, but 11...♗b7 with the idea of 12.e5 ♘e4 equalizes) 10...bxc3 11.♗xc3 ♕b6 12.exf6 ♘xf6.

9.♘a4 ♕a5

Or 9...♗b7 and now:



– 10.♗e3 ♕a5 11.b3 – see Yakovenko-Karjakin, Sochi 2008.

– 10.e5 gives Black the additional option 10...♘d5 11.♗d2 ♘5b6!?.

– but 10.♗g5!? ♕a5 11.b3 c5 12.♗xf6 gxf6 (12...♘xf6 13.♕b5+±) 13.♗e2 0-0-0 14.0-0 leads to a complex position with mutual chances. The game Kir.Georgiev-Ivanisevic, Zlatibor 2006, continued 14...♔b8 15.d5 (now, as Black 'lost' a tempo with ♔b8, this move is playable) 15...♗d6 (15...♘b6!?) 16.dxe6 ♘b6 17.♘xb6 ♗xh2+? (17...♕xb6!∞) 18.♘xh2 ♖xd3 19.♘c4 ♕d8 20.e7! ♕d4 (20...♕xe7 is also unsatisfactory) 21.♗xd3 ♕xd3 22.♖ad1 ♕xe4 23.♖d8+ ♔c7 24.f3! ♕xe7 25.♖xh8 and White converted his advantage later on.

10.b3 c5 11.e5

For 11.♗e3 see the next game.

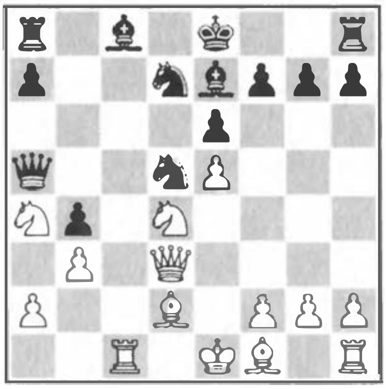
11.♗e2 ♗b7 12.e5 ♘e4 happened in the game Malakhov-Grischuk, Candidates Matches Elista 2007.

11...♘d5 12.♗d2 ♗e7

12...♘5b6 leaves White with many interesting options, for example 13.♕b5 ♕xb5 14.♗xb5.

The game Navara-Kasimdzhanov (mentioned below) in fact continued 12...cxd4!? 13.♖c1 (13.♘xd4 ♘xe5 14.♕g3 ♘d7 15.♘c6 ♕c7 16.♕xc7 ♘xc7 looks equal to me but both sides can deviate from this line) 13...♗b7 (13...♗e7 – see 12...♗e7) 14.♘xd4 ♗e7 (14...♘xe5!? looks possible even now).

13.♖c1 cxd4 14.♘xd4



14...♗b7

The complications arising from 14...♘xe5 are probably advantageous for White, for example 15.♕e4! 15...♗d6 (15...♘g6 16.♘c6) 16.f4 ♘d7 (16...♘g4 17.♗b5+ followed by 18.♕e2 is better for White – Zviagintsev) 17.♘c6 ♘5f6 (17...♘7f6 18.♕d4 ♕c7 19.♘xb4±) 18.♕xe6+ fxe6 19.♘xa5.

15.♕g3

It might be better to play 15.♕b5!? (Zviagintsev) 15...♕xb5 16.♗xb5 a6 17.♗c6 ♗xc6 18.♘xc6 f6 19.exf6 gxf6 20.♔e2.

15...0-0 16.♗h6!?

In the game Navara-Kasimdzhanov, Bundesliga 2007/08, I tried 16.♗b5 ♖fd8! (16...♘xe5? 17.♕xe5 ♗f6 18.♕e4 ♗xd4 19.♗d3+–) 17.0-0 (17.♗c6 ♗a6!? 18.♗xa8 ♖xa8 and White has problems with his king) 17...♘f8 18.♗c6 ♕a6 19.♗b5 (19.♗xb7 ♕xb7 20.♘c6 ♖dc8=) 19...♕a5 20.♗c6 ♕a6 21.♖c4 ♖ac8 22.♖fc1, but Black has no problems after 22...♘g6, for example 23.♗xb7 ♕xb7 24.♘c6 ♖xc6! 25.♖xc6 ♘df4! 26.♗xf4?! (26.♕f3 ♘xe5; 26.♕e3 ♕b5 27.♖6c4 ♕d5∓) 26...♕xc6!. The game continued with 22...♘b6 and finished with a draw on the 38th move.

16...g6 17.♗b5

The game Kortchnoi-Zviagintsev, Essen 2002, saw 17.♗xf8 ♗xf8 18.♗e2? (18.♗b5!= Zviagintsev) 18...♗h6 19.♖c2 ♘f4 20.0-0 ♗xg2 21.♕xg2!? ♘xg2 22.♘c6 ♘e3!!∓ and Black went on to win.

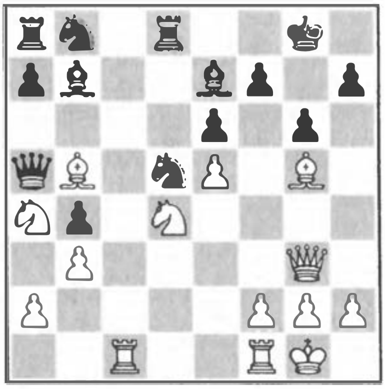
17...♖fd8

If 17...♖fc8! then 18.♖xc8+ ♗xc8 19.0-0 with equality. Worse is 18.♗xd7?! ♖xc1+ 19.♗xc1 ♕c7.

18.0-0 ♘b8

This is GM Zviagintsev's old recommendation. Black threatens to play 19...♘c7. 18...♖ac8 19.♖xc8 ♗xc8 looks safer for Black. I now propose

19.♗g5!?

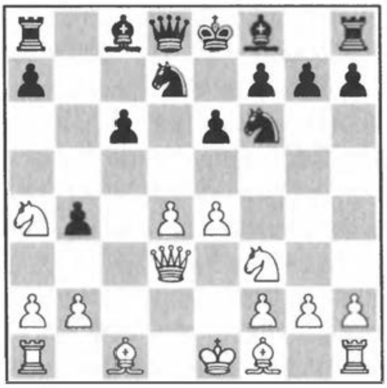


when Black's queen might face problems in view of the prospective threat ♖c5.

☐ **Dmitry Yakovenko**
■ **Sergey Karjakin**
Sochi 2008

I have made use of the excellent comments to this game by Igor Lysyj in an article on www.chesspro.ru.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.♕b3 dxc4 6.♕xc4 b5 7.♕d3 ♘bd7 8.e4 b4 9.♘a4



9...♕a5

9...♗b7 10.♗e3 ♕a5 11.b3 c5 transposes to the same line. Black can, however, postpone the liberating break c6-c5 by playing 11...♗e7!?, as in Aronian-Gurevich, Khanty-Mansiysk 2005, and he seems to be doing fine, for example 12.♖c1 ♖c8 (12...0-0 13.♘d2 e5!?) 13.♘d2 0-0.

10.b3 c5 11.♗e3 ♗b7

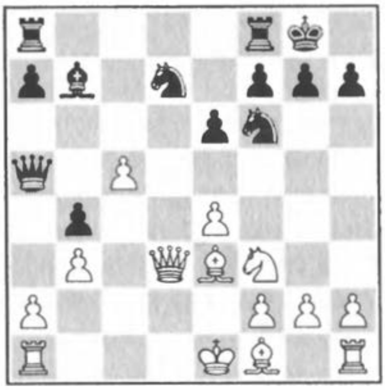
11...cxd4 12.♘xd4 ♗b7 (12...a6 13.♖c1 ♗b7 14.f3±) 13.♕b5 ♕xb5 14.♘xb5 ♔d8 15.f3±.

12.♘xc5 ♗xc5

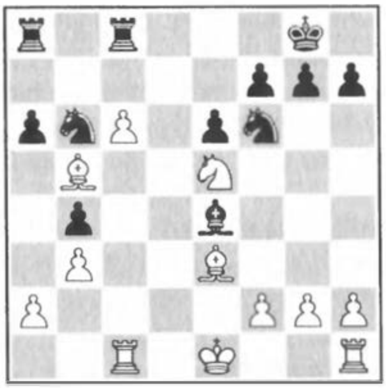
12...♘xc5?! 13.dxc5 forces Black to deal with ♕b5+. Not surprisingly, 13...a6 promises Black no easy life.

13.dxc5 0-0

White gains a slight edge after 13...♘xe4?! 14.♖c1! ♖c8 15.♕b5 ♕xb5 16.♗xb5 ♗c6 17.♗xc6 ♖xc6 18.♖c4 ♘exc5 19.♔e2 ♔e7 20.♖hc1 ♖hc8 21.♖xb4.



14.♕b5 ♕xb5 Not 14...♕c7? 15.♕xb4 ♘xe4 16.♖c1 which is better for White who has the bishop pair. **15.♗xb5 ♗xe4 16.♖c1 ♖fc8** Here 16...♖ac8? 17.c6 ♘b6? fails to 18.♗c5± attacking f8. White is also better after 17...a6 18.♗a4 ♗xf3 19.cxd7 ♖xc1+ 20.♗xc1 ♗xg2 21.♖g1 ♗e4 22.♗b2 ♗g6 23.♗e5. **17.c6 ♘b6 18.♘e5!?** 18.0-0 a6 19.♗e2 ♘bd5 (19...♘fd5) 20.♗d2 ♘c3 21.♗xc3 bxc3 22.♖xc3 with a slight edge owing to the queenside majority. **18...a6**



19.♗e2 19.♗f1 ♘bd5 (19...♘fd5 20.f3 ♘xe3 21.fxe4 ♖c7) 20.♗d2 ♘e7 21.f3 is slightly better for White thanks to his bishop pair: 21...♗xc6 (21...♗d5) 22.♗xb4 ♘fd5±. **19...♘bd5 20.♗d2 ♗xg2 21.♖g1 ♗e4** Play is very unclear. The game ended in a draw on move 57.

Variation D – 5...♘bd7

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 e6 5.♕d3!?

5.e3 ♘bd7 6.♕c2 ♗d6 7.e4 dxe4 8.♘xe4 ♘xe4 9.♕xe4 would almost have transposed to the game, but here White achieves the same position with the bishop still on f8.

5...♘bd7 6.e4 dxe4

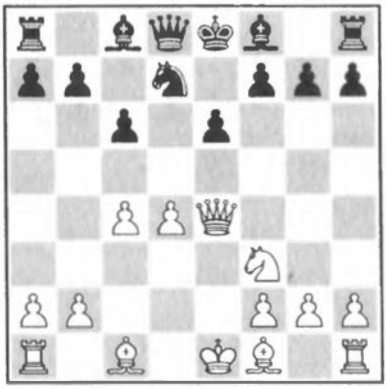
6...♗b4 7.e5 ♘e4 8.♗e2 ♘b6 (8...b6 9.♕c2 ♗a6?! 10.cxd5 ♗xe2 11.♔xe2! cxd5 12.♘xe4±) 9.♕c2 ♘xc3 10.bxc3 ♗e7 11.c5 (11.cxd5!? could promise White a slight edge according to GM Dolmatov) 11...♘d7 12.c4 dxc4 13.♕xc4 (13.♗xc4?! b6 14.cxb6 axb6= Dolmatov) 13...b6 14.cxb6 ♕xb6 (now the other recapture would have been connected with a loss of the c6-pawn) 15.0-0± Makarov-Dreev, Elista 1995 (Dolmatov). Note that 6...dxc4 7.♕xc4 is not good as Black cannot play 7...b5 now.

7.♘xe4 ♘xe4

7...c5 is a proposal of GM Igor Stohl. I discuss this position via the move order 7...♘xe4 8.♕xe4 ♘f6 (8...♕f6 9.♗g5 ♕g6 10.0-0-0±) 9.♕d3 c5.

8.♕xe4

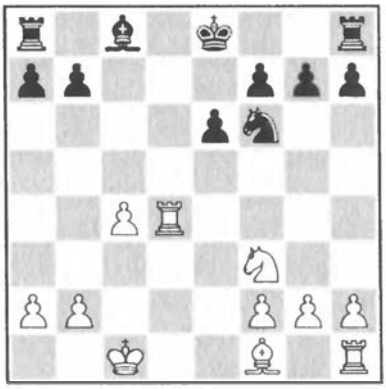
With the bishop placed on d6, Black has several options including 9...c5, 9...e5, 9...♗b4+ and 9...♘f6. In our position only the latter two make sense.



8...♗b4+

Or 8...♘f6 and now:

– 9.♕d3 c5 (now after 9...♗b4+ 10.♗d2 ♗xd2+ White can recapture with the queen. 11.♕xd2±) 10.♗e3 cxd4 (10...♕a5+ 11.♗d2 ♕b6 was another option. The pawn sacrifice 12.♗e2 looks interesting then, for example 12...cxd4 13.0-0 ♕xb2!? – 13...♗e7 14.♕xd4 ♕xd4 15.♘xd4 0-0 16.♗f4±; 13...♗c5? 14.b4! – 14.♘xd4 and now 14...♗b4!? seems to be critical test) 11.0-0-0 ♗c5 12.♗xd4 (12.♘xd4 0-0 or 12...♘g4 looks good for Black, whose king is placed safer than his counterpart; Fritz favours 12.♘e5!? but 12...♘d7!? 13.♗xd4 ♘xe5 14.♗xe5 ♕xd3 15.♗xd3 f6 should be equal) 12...♗xd4 13.♕xd4 ♕xd4 14.♖xd4



This happened in the 8th rapid match game Navara-Kramnik, Prague 2008. I published this game so many times that it would seem improper to mention it once more. White's pawn structure and slight lead in the development force Black to play a couple of accurate moves to equalize, for example 14...b6 15.♗e2 ♗b7 16.♖hd1 ♔e7 (16...♖c8!?) 17.g4! followed by 18.♘e5 is still not a dead draw.

– 9.♕h4 enables Black to try 9...♗b4+ 10.♗d2 ♕a5 (or even 10...♗xd2+ 11.♘xd2 g5!? as in Matros-Ziegler, Sweden 2000/01).

– Another possibility was 9.♕c2 c5 (by the way, this is another transposition, as the same position can appear after 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♕c2 e6 5.♘bd2 ♘bd7 6.e4 dxe4 7.♘xe4 c5 8.♞xf6+ ♘xf6) 10.♗e3 ♕a5+ 11.♗d2 ♕b6 12.♗c3 cxd4 13.♘xd4 and White could be better.

9.♗d2 ♗xd2+

9...♕a5 is also an option, 10.a3 ♗xd2+ 11.♘xd2 c5! 12.dxc5 ♕xc5 leads to an equal position discussed below. Therefore 10.♗d3 c5 11.0-0-0!? (Plachetka-Diesen, Odzaci 1978) deserves attention.

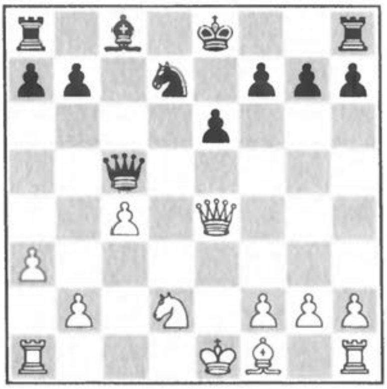
10.♘xd2 c5! Black threatens ♘f6. Inaccurate is 10...0-0 see Navara-Akopian below.

11.dxc5 ♕a5

Not 11...♘xc5? 12.♕e5. Schneider-Geller, Pardubice 2008 continued 11...♕f6 12.♗e2 ♘xc5 (12...♕xb2!? 13.♖b1 ♕e5) 13.♕e3 b6 14.♗f3 ♗b7 15.0-0-0 ♖d8 (with the threat of ♘d3+) and Black equalized. Frankly speaking, I cannot see any way to White's advantage as 12.0-0-0 ♕xf2 13.c6 bxc6 14.♕xc6 ♖b8 should not worry Black.

12.a3 For 12.♗e2! – see Ubilava-Kobalia.

12...♕xc5



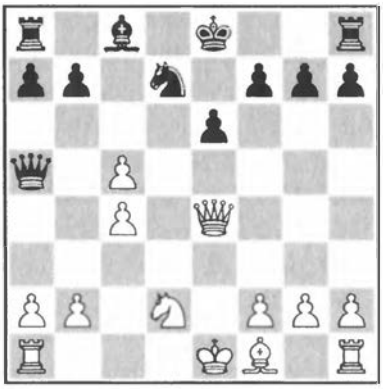
13.b4

I once tried 13.♗d3 but Black could even play 13...♕e5, for example 14.0-0-0 ♘c5! 15.♕f3? (15.♕e2) 15...♘a4! with mate to follow.

Now both **13...♕e7 14.♗d3 a5** (as in Kasimdzhanov-Nakamura, Corsica 2007) and **13...♕c7 14.♗d3 ♘f6 15.♕e2 b6!?** should suffice for equality.

☐ **Elizbar Ubilava**
■ **Mikhail Kobalia**
Torrelavega team championship 2007

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 c6 4.♕c2 ♘f6 5.♘bd2 ♘bd7 6.e4 ♘xe4 7.♘xe4 dxe4 8.♕xe4 ♗b4+ 9.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 10.♘xd2 c5 11.dxc5 ♕a5



12.♗e2

After 12.c6?! bxc6 13.♕xc6 ♖b8 White is poorly developed, but 12.0-0-0 might be playable.

12...0-0 13.♕e3

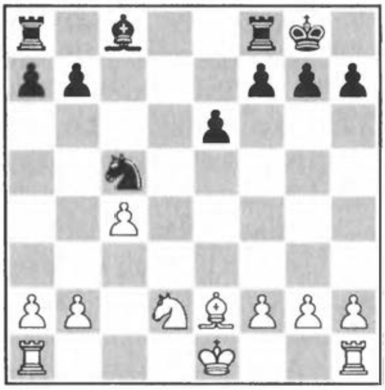
Unlike after 12.♕e3, White managed to lure Black's king away from the centre and queenside.

13...♕xc5

Losing is 13...♘xc5? 14.b4! ♕xb4 15.♖b1 ♕a5 16.♖b5. However, 13...♖d8 looks interesting: 14.0-0-0!? (14.a3 ♕xc5; 14.0-0 ♕xc5 – 14...♘xc5 15.♖fd1± with a renewed threat of 16.b4 ♕xb4 17.♖ab1) 14...♘xc5! (14...♕xa2 15.♞e4 or even 15.♞b3 is better for White) 15.♞e4 ♞xe4 16.♖xd8+ ♕xd8 17.♕xe4 ♕c7 and White only has a symbolic advantage.

14.♕xc5 ♘xc5

White managed to lure the black king away from the centre and his queenside majority and better development give him chances to fight for the advantage.



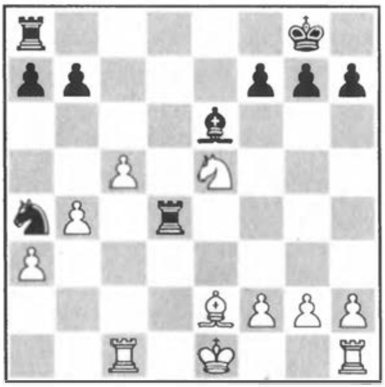
15.b4

Here Rybka's strange suggestion 15.♞b3!? looks worth trying, as 15...♞xb3 16.axb3 weakens the a7 pawn. The reply 16...♗d7 17.♗f3 ♗c6 18.♗xc6 bxc6 19.♔d2! does not solve all the problems.

15...♘a4 16.♖c1 e5

16...a5!? was not bad either, as 17.a3 (17.b5!? might be stronger) 17...axb4 18.axb4 ♞b2 activates Black's rook.

17.c5 ♖d8 18.♘c4 ♖d4?! 18...♗e6!? 19.♞xe5 ♗xa2=. **19.a3± ♗e6?!** 19...f6 20.♞d6 ♗d7?! (20...a5!?) 21.♘xb7 ♗c6 22.♘d6 ♗xg2 23.♖g1 ♗c6 24.♞f5 is bad for Black. **20.♘xe5**



20...♗d5

Now White consolidates, but the alternatives were not appealing, either.

20...♖e4!? 21.♘c4 (21.♘f3 ♘b2) 21...♗xc4 22.♖xc4 ♖e7 23.♖c2 ♖ae8 24.♔d1! ♖xe2

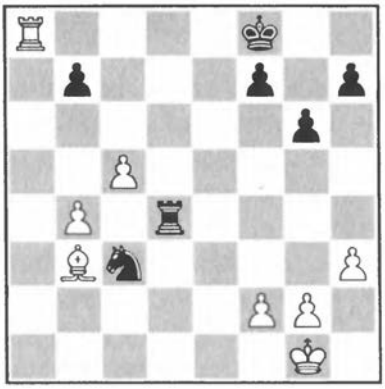
25.♖xe2 ♘c3+ 26.♔d2 and the endgame is grim for Black: 26...♖xe2+ (26...♘xe2 27.♖e1) 27.♔xc3 ♖xf2 28.♖d1±.

21.0-0 a5

21...♖e4 22.♗b5 ♘xc5 23.♖xc5 ♖xe5 leads to an unpleasant pin, 24.♖fc1! (24.♖d1 ♗b3) 24...g6 25.♗c4 wins material.

22.♘c4 22.♖fd1 ♖xd1+ 23.♗xd1± (23.♖xd1? ♘c3). **22...axb4 23.axb4±** Black has no compensation as his knight is misplaced.

23...♗e6 24.♖fe1 ♔f8 25.♗f1 ♖ad8 26.h3 ♗xc4 27.♖xc4 g6 28.♖a1 ♖xc4 29.♗xc4 ♖d4 30.♗b3 ♘c3 31.♖a8+



31...♔g7?!

It is a pity that Black did not play 31...♔e7, as the 'refutation' is very nice: 32.b5!! ♘xb5 (32...♖b4 33.c6 bxc6 34.bxc6 ♔d6 35.♗xf7 should be winning for White) 33.♖b8 ♘c7 (33...♖d7 34.♗a4) 34.♖xb7 ♔d7 – White should win but the game is far from finished.

32.♖b8 ♘e2+ 33.♔h2 ♘c1

After 33...♖xb4 (or 32...♖xb4) 34.c6 ♖xb3 35.c7 ♖c3 36.c8♕ ♖xc8 37.♖xc8 Black loses the b-pawn and consequently the game.

34.♗c2 ♖d7 34...♖xb4 35.c6 ♖c4 36.cxb7 ♖xc2 (36...♖b4 37.♗e4!+–) 37.♖c8+–. **35.♗e4 ♖d4 36.♗f3 ♘d3 37.♖xb7 ♘xb4 38.c6 ♖c4 39.c7**

Black resigned because of 39...♘a6 40.♗e2 ♖xc7 41.♗xa6.

☐ **David Navara**
■ **Vladimir Akopian**
Mainz rapid 2007

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 e6 5.♕d3 ♘bd7 6.e4 dxe4 7.♘xe4 ♘xe4 8.♕xe4 ♗b4+ 9.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 10.♘xd2 0-0?!

10...♘f6 11.♕h4 g5 might be playable for Black, but White can withdraw his queen to e3, f4 or e5 with a slight edge instead.

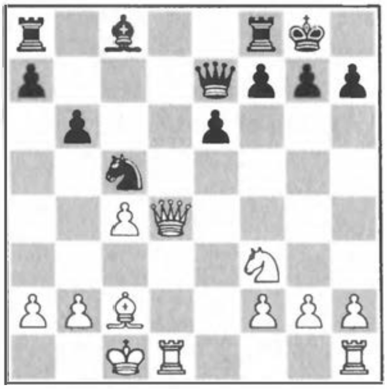
11.0-0-0 Weak was 11.♗d3 ♘f6 12.♕h4 e5. **11...c5**

11...♘f6 12.♕h4 ♕a5 13.♗d3! was played several times, 13...♕xa2 (13...♕h5±) 14.g4 is bad for Black.

12.♘f3 cxd4 13.♕xd4 ♕e7 14.♗d3 ♘c5 15.♗c2

This was a rapid game. My opponent had spent approximately around 5 minutes more than me by this moment.

15...b6!



Black wants to fianchetto the bishop. Should he succeed then he has decent chances as White cannot effectively attack on the kingside and the queenside pawn majority can be converted only in the endgame.

16.b4! 16.♕d6 ♕xd6 (16...♕f6? 17.♗xh7+!) 17.♖xd6 ♗b7=. **16...♘b7**

Otherwise the double attack 17.♕e4 would have decided.

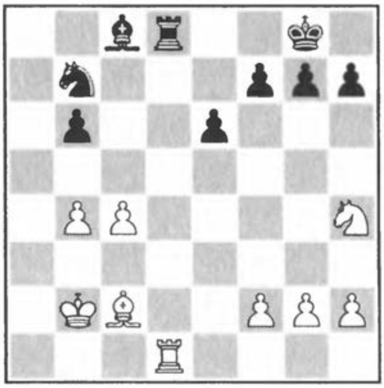
17.♕h4!±

But now Black's knight is misplaced.

17...♕xh4 18.♘xh4 a5

Interesting was 18...♘d8, White's pawns could become targets of attack (or defence) and 19.♖d6 ♗b7 is playable.

19.a3 axb4 20.axb4 ♖a1+ 20...♘d8 21.♖d6 ♖a1+ 22.♗b1 loses a pawn now. **21.♔b2 ♖xd1 22.♖xd1 ♖d8**



23.♖a1?!

Stronger was 23.♖xd8+ ♘xd8 24.♘f3 (or 24.♗e4 f5!? 25.♗a8±, Konopka) 24...f6 (24...♗b7?! 25.♘e5 ♗xg2 – 25...b5!? is also better for White whose passed pawn becomes dangerous – 26.b5! followed by 27.♘d7) White has some edge but it should not suffice for the win.

23...♘d6

Wrong was 23...♖d4?! 24.♗b3 ♖xh4? 25.♖a8 ♘d6 26.c5+–. **24.c5 bxc5 25.bxc5 ♘b5 26.♘f3 ♗b7 27.♖a5 ♘c7** 27...♗xf3 28.gxf3 should not worry White. **28.♘g5 h6** 28...♗xg2!?=. **29.♘e4 ♖a8** After 29...f5 30.♘d6 ♗xg2 White has a good compensation, but no more. **30.♖xa8+ ♗xa8 31.g3 ♘a6** 31...♗xe4!? 32.♗xe4 ♞a6 33.c6 ♔f8 34.♔c3 ♔e7 35.♔c4 ♚d6 36.♔b5 ♘c7+ 37.♔b6 is a dead draw. **32.♗d3 ♘b4?**

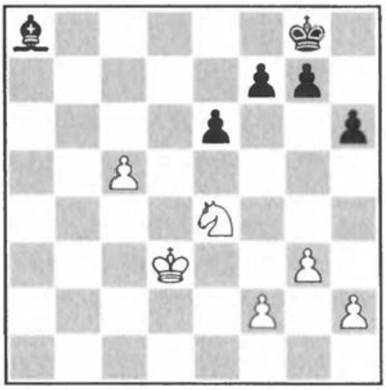
This move caused Black difficulties.

32...♗xe4 33.♗xa6 ♔f8 34.♔c3 ♔e7 should hold.

33.♔c3 ♘xd3

33...♘d5+ 34.♔d4 ♘b4± does not look very inspiring either.

34.♔xd3



Suddenly White is better again, the passed pawn is dangerous and Black would have had to give up a pawn to stop it. Black's moves looked natural.

34...♔f8

34...♗xe4+ 35.♔xe4 ♔f8 36.♔d4 ♔e7 37.♔c4! ♔d7 38.♔b5 ♔c7 39.c6 is probably winning for White, as Black might soon run out of moves. White's king will sooner or later reach b6 or d5.

34...g5 followed by the king's march on g4 and the sacrifice of the bishop for the passed pawn does not look very promising, as Black must also take care about the f7-pawn after 35.♘d6.

35.♘d6 ♔e7 36.♔c4 ♗c6

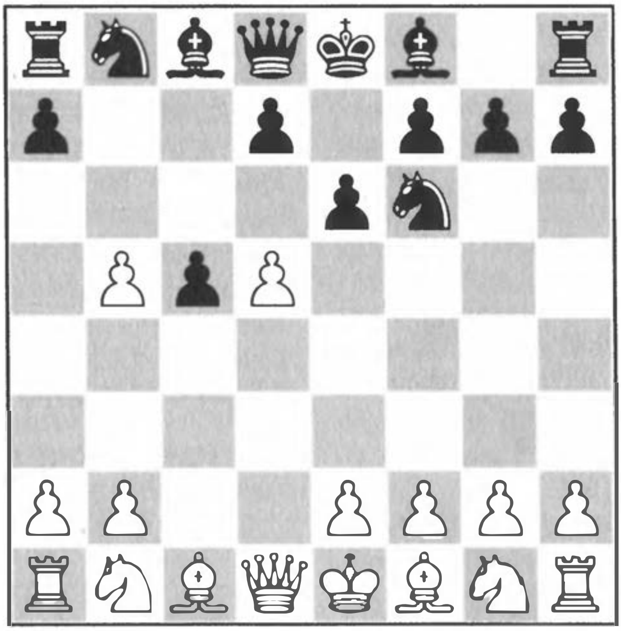
36...f6 37.♔b5 ♔d7 38.♔b6 is not a draw, for example 38...♗c6 39.♘c8!.

37.♔b4 e5 38.♔a5 ♔e6 39.♔b6 ♗g2 40.♘b5 ♔d7 40...♔f5 41.c6 should be lost. **41.♘a7!** White is winning, he only has to save his kingside pawns. **41...f5 42.c6+ ♗xc6 43.♘xc6 ♔d6 44.♘b4 e4 45.♔b5 ♔e5 46.♔c5 f4 47.♘c6+ ♔f5 48.♔d5 e3 49.f3 fxg3 50.hxg3 h5 51.♘d4+ ♔g5 52.♔e4 h4 53.gxh4+ ♔xh4 54.♘f5+** Black resigned.

CHAPTER 15

Alexander Finkel

Taking Chances in the Volga



1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5 4.cxb5 e6

As you may conclude from the title of this chapter this move is recommended to those of you who are willing to take risks in the opening -and are ready to face the consequences!

If White is careful enough and familiar with the theory, he is expected to emerge out of the opening with a better position. However, the middlegame arising from this line is sufficiently complex leaving Black a decent share of counterplay. Indeed, there are some solid positional grounds for Black's play (control of the centre, a strong bishop on the long diagonal, and often an advantage in development).

I will focus solely on the position arising after 5.♘c3 exd5 6.♘xd5 ♗b7. Of course, White also has 5.dxe6 at his disposal (even though it is quite rarely played compared to 5.♘c3, which is justly considered by modern theory as a more dangerous continuation for Black), but this transposes to the Blumenfeld Gambit (accepted), making it a subject for a different article.

After 6...♗b7 White's most popular reply is 7.♘xf6+, after which White may employ a plan involving a fianchetto development of the king bishop or a plan involving 8.e3 followed by 9.♗e2 or 9.♗d3. In both cases White can fight for an opening advantage. However, the most ambitious alternative is 7.e4!?, which seems to pose Black quite a few problems –

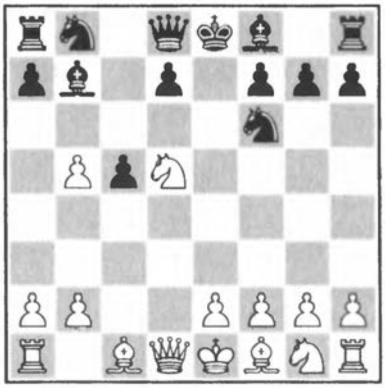
but, I have indicated some improvements for Black in Bischof-Philipowski.

☐ **Detlef Bischof**
■ **Robert Philipowski**
Dortmund 2001

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5 4.cxb5 e6 5.♘c3

As I already mentioned in the introduction, 5.dxe6 leads to a transposition to the Blumenfeld Gambit.

5...exd5 6.♘xd5 ♗b7



7.e4!?

The most challenging move, demanding very precise play from Black.

Note how the natural 7.♗g5? immediately leads to a very difficult position for White after 7...♗xd5 8.♗xf6 ♕xf6 9.♕xd5 ♕xb2 10.♖d1 c4! 11.f4 ♗b4+ 12.♔f2 0-0 13.♕xa8 c3∓, Kluss-Krivoshey, playchess.com 2004.

7...♘xd5

This is definitely Black's best choice, as other continuations lead to nothing but trouble.

- 7...♘xe4?! 8.♗c4. Control over square d5 promises White a very comfortable advantage without any further effort: 8...♗e7 9.♘f3 ♘d6

– In case of 10.♗b3?! Black has enough resources: 10...0-0 11.0-0 c4 12.♗c2 ♘xb5 13.♗f4 ♘a6 14.♘xe7+ (or 14.a4 ♘bc7 15.♘xe7+ ♕xe7 16.♗d6 ♗xf3 with counterplay) 14...♕xe7 15.♗xh7+ ♔xh7 16.♘g5+ ♔g8 17.♕h5 ♗e4 18.♘xe4 ♕xe4 19.♕xb5 ♕xf4 20.♕xa6 d5∓, Skomorokhin-Fedoseev, Nizhny Novgorod 1998.

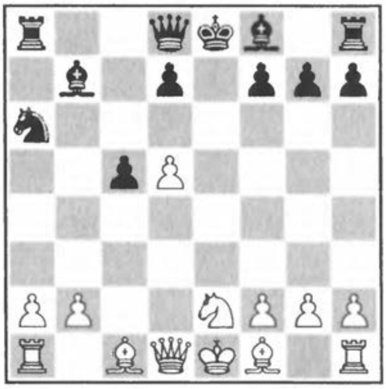
– However 10.♗e2!? 0-0 11.0-0 ♘e8 12.♗f4 d6 13.a4 with total domination is the problem, Schenk-Schmidt, Oldenburg 2001.

- 7...♗e7 8.♗c4 0-0 9.♘e2 ♘xe4 10.♗f4 ♗d6 11.0-0 ♗xf4 12.♘exf4 is also hardly satisfactory for Black, Goldin-Tate, San Diego 2006.

8.exd5 a6

Another possibility is 8...d6 9.♘e2 ♗e7 10.♘c3 0-0 11.♗e2 ♘d7 12.0-0 ♖e8 13.♗f4 ♘b6 14.♗f3±, Citak-Werner, Budapest 2007.

9.bxa6 ♘xa6 10.♘e2



The knight belongs on c3 to protect pawn d5 and the queenside.

10...♗d6!

This move is more accurate than 10...♗e7 followed by ♗f6, as it's better to reserve the f6-square for the queen.

An attempt to launch a direct assault on the kingside is just insufficient: 10...♕e7?! 11.♗e3 ♕e5 12.♘c3 ♗d6 13.g3 0-0 14.♗g2 f5 15.0-0 f4 16.♗xf4 ♖xf4 17.gxf4 ♕xf4 18.♕h5 and White had a winning position in Delemarre-Boidman, Wiesbaden 2001.

11.♘c3 0-0 12.♗e2 ♘c7

I believe that the knight would be better placed on b4, so I would prefer 12...♗e5!? 13.0-0 ♘b4 14.a4 ♖e8 and White is facing some problems to finish his development.

13.0-0 f5?!

Taking control over e4, but allowing White to regroup his pieces. In dynamic positions with material deficit a waste of a tempo can often mean the difference between getting sufficient counterplay and being on the verge of losing. Better was 13...♗e5.

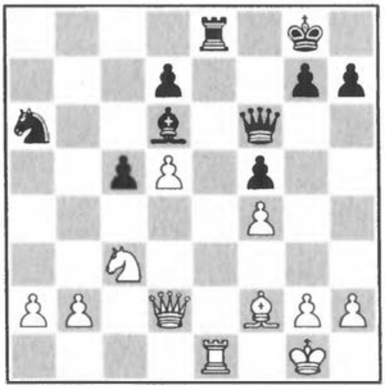
14.f4?!

Black wasn't really threatening to play ...f4 so the move in the game wasn't really called for. Stronger was 14.a4 ♕h4 15.f4 ♕f6 16.a5±.

14...♕f6 15.♗e3

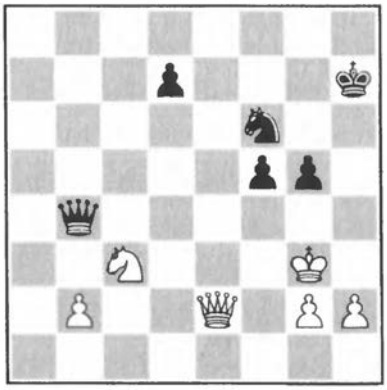
Completing development can't be wrong, but 15.a4!? is also interesting.

15...♖fe8 16.♕d2 ♖e7 17.♗c4 ♖ae8 18.♗f2 ♗a6 19.♗xa6 ♘xa6 20.♖ae1 ♖xe1 21.♖xe1



Black's pressure over the e-file has been neutralized and White has no serious weaknesses in his camp.

21...♖b8 22.♖c1 Serious attention deserved 22.b3, with the idea not just to stop Black from playing ...c4, but also to bring the knight to c4 via b2. **22...c4 23.♘d1 ♘b4 24.♖xc4** Nothing was promised by 24.a3?! ♘d3 25.♖xc4 ♘xb2 26.♘xb2 ♕xb2 27.♕xb2 ♖xb2 with even chances. **24...♘xa2 25.♗c5 ♗xc5+ 26.♖xc5 h6** I believe Black's chances to hold this position are higher than White's chances to win, but at this point it's hard to believe that White will lose. **27.♖c4** Better was 27.d6! ♘b4 28.♖c7 (28.♘e3 ♘c6 29.b4 ♘xb4 30.♘xf5 ♘c6 31.h3±) 28...♕e6 29.♘e3 ♘a6 30.♖c1±. **27...♕a6!** After White's inaccuracy on the previous move Black has sufficient counterchances. **28.♖d4 ♕b6 29.♔f1 ♘c1! 30.♕c3 ♘b3 31.♖c4** 31.♖d3 ♕b5! intending 32.♔g1? ♞c1!∓. **31...♕b5 32.♔f2 ♕xd5 33.♖c8+?!** Missing a chance to force a draw: 33.♘e3 ♕d2+ 34.♕xd2 ♘xd2 35.♖d4 ♘e4+ 36.♔f1 ♖xb2 37.♘xf5. **33...♖xc8 34.♕xc8+ ♔h7 35.♕c2 ♘c5** The position remains drawish, but due to the weakness of the white king Black is firmly in control. **36.♞c3** 36.g4!?. **36...♕d4+ 37.♔f3 ♘d3 38.♕d2 ♘e5+ 39.♔e2 ♕c4+ 40.♔f2 ♘g4+ 41.♔g3 ♘f6 42.♕e2 ♕b3 43.♔h4** 43.♔f3. **43...♕b4 44.♔g3 g5 45.fxg5 hxg5**



46.♕e5? A blunder which costs White the game. 46.♔f2∓. **46...♕h4+ 47.♔f3 ♕h5+! 48.g4 ♕xg4+ 49.♔f2 ♔g6 50.♘d5? ♘xd5 51.♕xd5 ♕f4+ 52.♔g1 ♕c1+ 53.♔f2 ♕xb2+ 54.♔g1 ♕c1+ 55.♔g2** And White resigned.

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■ **Yuri Boidman**
Germany Bundesliga B 2002/03

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5 4.cxb5 e6 5.♘c3 exd5 6.♘xd5 ♗b7 7.♘xf6+

The most popular continuation, which is, however, less challenging for Black than 7.e4.

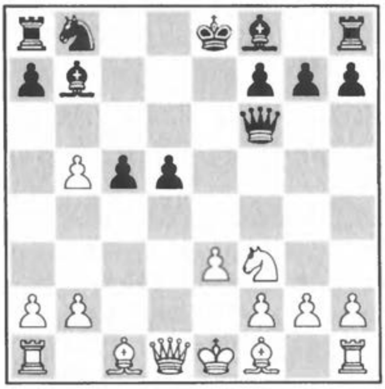
7...♕xf6 8.♘f3

The following example reveals some of the dangers awaiting White in this variation: 8.e3 a6!? 9.♘f3 ♗d6 10.bxa6 ♘xa6 11.♗c4 (the bishop very rarely feels comfortable on c4 in this line, as ♗xh2 followed by ♕h4+ is always in the air. 11.♗e2 ♘b4 12.a3 ♗e4 13.0-0 ♘c2 and Black can repeat moves) 11...♘b4 12.0-0 0-0 13.a3? ♗xf3 14.gxf3 ♗xh2+ 15.♔xh2 ♕h4+ 16.♔g2 ♕xc4 17.♖h1 ♖a6 with an edge, Kavalek-Rutka, Zlin 1958.

8...d5

Barely enough is 8...♗e7 9.e3?! (after 9.g3!? Black would have no choice but to switch to a regular set-up involving ...d5) 9...♕g6!? (temporarily keeping the white king in the centre) 10.♗d2 0-0 11.♗c3 ♗f6 12.♖c1 a6 13.bxa6 ♘xa6 14.a3! ♗xc3+ 15.♖xc3±, Akobian-Sevillano, Stillwater 2007.

9.e3



9...♗d6 10.♗e2

Due to the constant threat of ...d4 the bishop is better placed on e2 in this line, as the white knight deserves some additional protection.

In the following game White was tempted by a dubious exchange of two rooks for the black queen, which eventually led to Black's advantage. On a general note, it seems that White's queen has absolutely nothing to do on c2 in this line: 10.♗d3?! 0-0 11.♕c2 h6 12.0-0 ♘d7 13.b3? ♕xa1 14.♗b2 ♕xa2 15.♖a1 ♕xa1+ 16.♗xa1 ♖fe8, M.Ivanov-Boidman, Selestat 2008.

10...0-0 11.0-0 ♘d7 12.a4

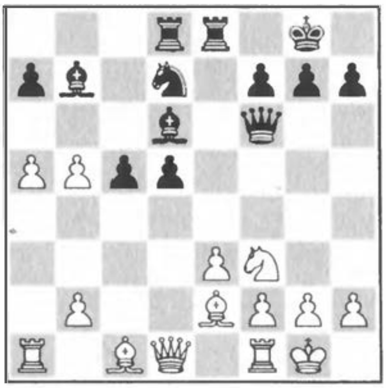
Black's chances are illustrated by 12.♕c2?! ♖fe8 13.♖e1?! d4! 14.♗d2 ♗e4 15.♕b3 d3 16.♗xd3 ♗xf3 17.gxf3 ♕xf3∓, as in the game Gnichtel-Boidman, Mehlingen 2000.

12...♖fe8 13.♖b1

The most straightforward approach – White is willing to return a pawn to get a grip on square d4.

A slightly different modification of the same idea occurred in the game Herndl-Trkulja below.

After 13.a5!? ♖ad8 practice saw:



- 14.♕c2?! h6 15.♗d2 d4! (once Black manages to push ...d4, which is a key motif in Black's play in this line, he has very little to worry about!) 16.b4 d3 17.♕xd3 ♘e5 18.♕c2 ♘xf3+ 19.♗xf3 ♗xf3 20.gxf3 ♕g5+ 21.♔h1 ♕h5∓, Ausmins-Capece, Bratto 2001.

– 14.♖a4!? ♗b8?! (14...♘e5!) 15.b4 c4 (15...d4 16.bxc5 d3 17.c6 dxe2 18.♕xe2 ♗xc6 19.bxc6 ♕xc6 20.♖d4 favours White) 16.♘d4?! ♕h6 17.g3 ♘f6 18.♗f3 ♘e4 19.♗xe4 dxe4 with compensation, Herndl-Trkulja, Vienna 1998.

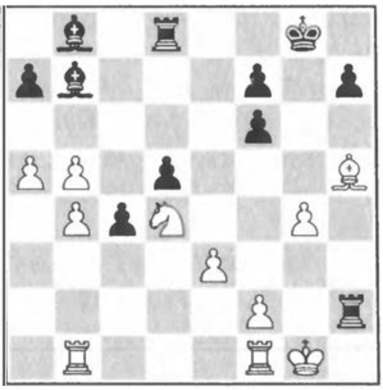
13...♖ad8

Instead 13...♘e5!? 14.♘xe5 ♕xe5 15.f4 ♕f6 16.♗f3 ♕f5 17.♖a1 ♖ad8 18.b3 is slightly better for White.

14.b4! c4

A quite reasonable choice. After 14...cxb4 15.♗b2 ♕g6 16.a5 White is also better.

15.♕d4 ♕g6 16.♗b2 ♗b8 Not 16...♘b6 17.a5 ♖e4 18.♕d2 (18.♕xg7+ ♕xg7 19.♗xg7 ♔xg7 20.axb6 axb6 21.♘d4 ♔f6±) 18...♘d7 19.♗d4 ♗b8 20.h3 with a clear edge. **17.♕h4** White is naturally willing to trade queens. **17...♘f6?** For some reason Black decided to help his opponent to carry out his plan! It was clearly better to play 17...h6!?, keeping the queens on the board. **18.♗xf6 gxf6 19.♘d4 ♖e4 20.♕h5 ♕xh5 21.♗xh5 ♖h4!?** Also after 21...♗xh2+ 22.♔xh2 ♖h4+ 23.♔g3 ♖xh5 24.f4 Black is on the ropes. **22.g4 ♖xh2 23.a5?!** Giving Black a chance to complicate matters. After the cold blooded 23.♘f3! ♖h3 24.♔g2 d4 25.♔xh3 ♗xf3 26.exd4 the game wouldn't have lasted another 50 moves!



23...f5!

Black is back in the game.

24.a6 ♗a8?!

With a bishop on a8 which can't move, Black is virtually playing with a piece down. Correct was 24...fxg4! 25.axb7 ♖xh5 26.♘c6 ♖e8 27.♖a1 ♖h6 28.♖fd1 ♖d6 when both sides have chances.

25.f4 ♖h3 26.♔f2

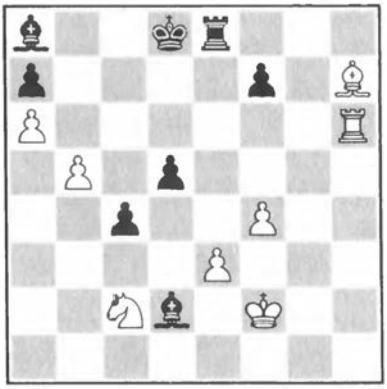
26.♘xf5 d4!? complicates matters.

26...♖e8 27.♖be1 ♗d6 28.♖h1 ♖xh1 29.♖xh1 fxg4 30.♗xg4 ♗xb4 31.♗f5 ♗d2 31...♗c5 32.♗xh7+ ♔f8 33.♗c2 ♔e7.

32.♗xh7+ ♔f8 33.♖h3 ♔e7

Black can be happy with his position, especially if we compare it to the position ten moves ago.

34.♖h6 ♔d8 35.♘c2



35...♖e6? Blundering a pawn – 35...♖h8 was correct. **36.♖xe6 fxe6 37.♗g8 ♔e7 38.♘d4 ♗c3 39.♘xe6 ♔d6 40.♔e2 ♗b2 41.♔d2 d4?** And another blunder decides the issue. 41...♗f6 42.♘d4 ♔c5 43.f5 (43.♔c3 ♗xd4+ 44.exd4+ ♔xb5 45.f5 ♔c6 46.f6 ♔d6=) 43...♔d6 44.♗e6±. **42.♘xd4** The rest is a matter of technique. **42...♔c5 43.f5 ♗e4 44.f6 c3+ 45.♔e2 ♔b6 46.♗b3 ♗a3 47.♗c2 ♗d5 48.♔d3 ♗d6 49.♔xc3** White is now clearly winning and won on move 79 (mating Black's king with bishop and knight).

☐ **Michael Hochstrasser**
■ **Hassan Abbasifar**
Golden Sands 2000

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5 4.cxb5 e6 5.♘c3 exd5 6.♘xd5 ♗b7 7.♘xf6+ ♕xf6 8.♘f3 d5 9.g3!?

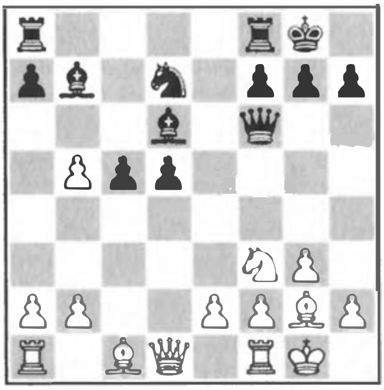
Another possible continuation, having its advantages and drawbacks compared to the more popular 9.e3. The main drawback is that in the arising positions Black easily pushes ...d4, obtaining counterplay against e2.

9...♘d7

The immediate 9...♗d6 may just lead to a transposition into the game, however Black may also proceed with 10.♗g2 0-0 11.0-0 a6 12.bxa6 ♖xa6 13.a3 ♖e8 14.♖b1 ♕f5 15.♗d2 ♗c6 16.♖e1±, Stanke-Meyer, Hamburg 2004.

Dubious is 9...♕b6?! 10.a4 (not 10.♗g2 ♕xb5 11.0-0 ♗e7 12.♗g5 ♗xg5 13.♘xg5 h6 14.♘h3 d4=, Solomon-Simpson, New York 2001) 10...♗e7 11.♗g2 ♗f6 12.0-0 0-0 13.♖b1 h6 14.b4±, Alatortsev-Ratner, Moscow 1945.

10.♗g2 ♗d6 11.0-0 0-0



12.♕c2

An interesting attempt was made in the following short encounter: 12.♘d2!? (threatening 13.e4 and 13.♘c4) 12...♘b6?! 13.e4 ♗e5 14.exd5 ♗d4 15.♘e4 ♕g6, and a draw was agreed in a position where White's chances are clearly higher, Grandelius-M.Ivanov, Ballerup 2008.

12.♖b1 ♕f5 13.♗d2 a6 14.bxa6 ♗xa6 15.♖e1 ♘f6 16.b4 ♗c4 17.bxc5 ♗xc5 with sufficient compensation, Bozinovic-Trkulja, Pula 1999.

12...♖fe8 13.♖e1

The pawn on e2 is the weakest spot in White's position, so it makes sense to protect it.

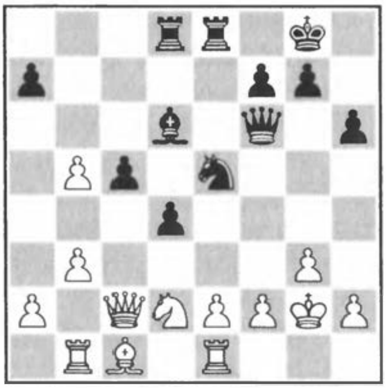
13...h6

Preparing 14...♖ad8.

14.♖b1 ♖ad8 15.b3 d4

Objectively speaking Black hardly has sufficient compensation, but the position is very complex, so White has to watch his steps!

16.♘d2 ♗xg2 17.♔xg2 ♘e5



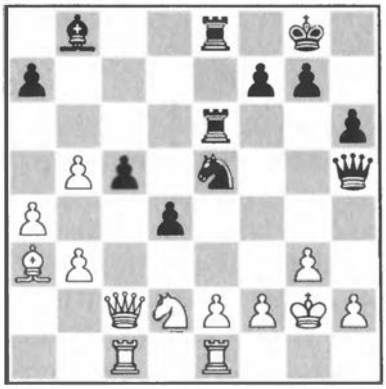
18.♗b2

Connecting the rooks is probably a good idea. In case of 18.♘c4 Black keeps the balance with 18...d3! 19.♕d2 ♘xc4 20.bxc4 ♕e6 21.♖b3 (21.♕xd3 ♗xg3! 22.♕xg3 ♕e4+ 23.♔f1 ♕xb1 24.♗xh6 ♕h7∓) 21...♗c7 22.♖xd3 ♕xc4. Of interest is 18.♗a3!?.

18...♖e6 19.♖bc1 ♕e7 20.a4 ♖e8 21.♗a3 21.b4!?. **21...♘g4 22.♘c4**

Not 22.h3? ♘xf2! 23.♔xf2 ♖xe2+ 24.♖xe2 ♕xe2+ 25.♔g1 ♕e3+ winning.

22...♗b8 23.♕d3 Or 23.♕d2 ♕f6 24.e3!? but not 24.f3 ♘xh2!. **23...♕g5** Of course Black is not interested in exchanging queens after 23...♖xe2. **24.♘d2 ♘e5 25.♕c2 ♕h5**

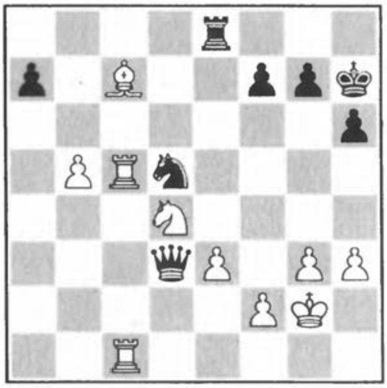


26.♕xc5

White should be able to hold after trading his queen for Black's rook and bishop.

However, the right way to treat the position was 26.♗xc5! and the arising complications are to White's advantage. 26...d3! (26...♘g4!? 27.♘f3 ♖e3 28.♗xd4 ♖xf3 29.h3 ♖xf2+ 30.♗xf2 ♘xf2 31.♔xf2 ♕xh3 32.♖g1±) 27.exd3 ♘g4 28.♘f3 (28.♖xe6 ♕xh2+ 29.♔f1 ♖xe6 30.♘e4 f5) 28...♘xh2 29.♕d1 (29.♖xe6 ♕xf3+ 30.♔xh2 ♖xe6∓) 29...♖e2! (29...♞xf3? 30.♖xe6 ♕h2+ 31.♔xf3 ♖xe6 32.♕h1+−) 30.♘d2±.

26...♗d6 27.♕xd6 ♖xd6 28.♗xd6 ♘g4 29.♘f3 ♕d5 29...♘xh2!?. **30.♗c7 ♕xb3 31.h3 ♘f6 32.♘xd4 ♕xa4 33.e3 ♕a2** The position is drawish, but Black has some practical chances. **34.♖c2 ♕a3 35.♖ec1 ♘d5 36.♖c5 ♔h7 37.♖1c2 ♕d3 38.♖c1?** 38.♔h2.



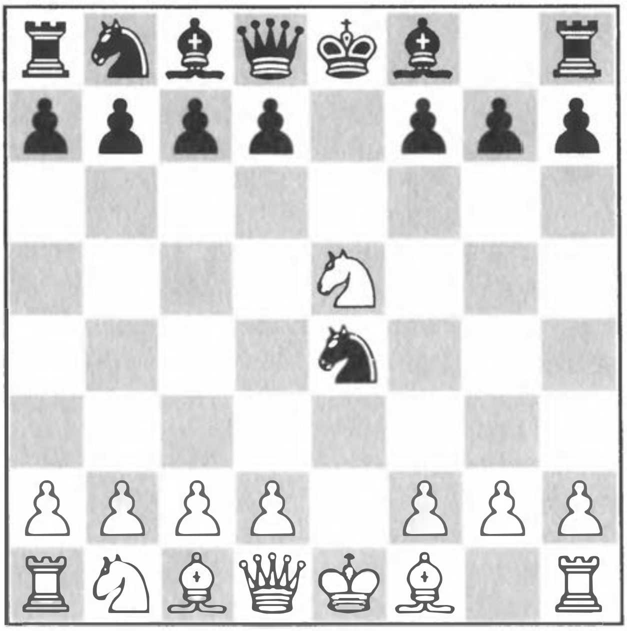
38...♘xe3+! 39.fxe3 ♖xe3 40.♗f4 ♖e4 41.♗e5 ♕d2+ 42.♔h1 ♖xe5

White resigned.

CHAPTER 16

Or Cohen

Petroff for Beginners



Play the Damiano Gambit

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♘xe5 ♘xe4

Is it really forbidden to copy your opponent? While 3...♘xe4 is certainly risky it is not the typical 'losing' mistake as it is so often presented in lectures for beginners. Reduced to a small note in the ECO, the aim of this article is to shatter the superficial evaluation of the Damiano Gambit. Indeed, with 3...♘xe4 Black sets many pitfalls for White, and if White plays accurately, he gets a slight edge at most, but certainly not a decisive one.

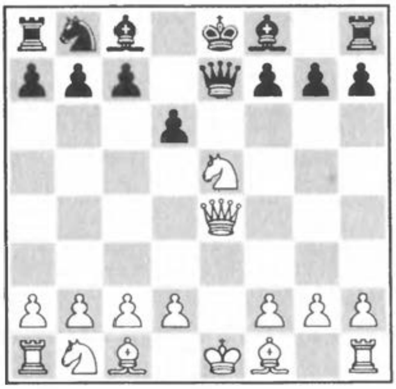
4.♕e2

If White crudely tries to divert the game into familiar territory with 4.d4, then Black has the luxury to choose his preferred version of the Petroff:

– 4...d5 5.♗d3 ♘d7

– 4...d6 5.♘f3 (not 5.♘xf7?? ♕e7!–+ – 5...♔xf7?? 6.♕h5++–) 5...d5 6.♗d3 ♘c6.

4...♕e7 5.♕xe4 d6



Black retrieves the piece and our analysis begins here.

6.d4

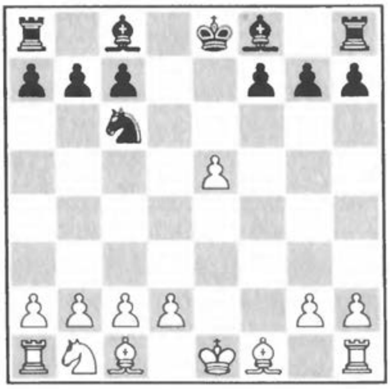
In practice, there are nearly no games of importance other than with 6.d4, although especially 6.f4 deserves to be mentioned.

6.♗e2 is a totally harmless move as is shown by 6...♕xe5 7.♕xe5+ (7.♕f3 ♘c6∓) 7...dxe5.

Likewise, 6.♘c3 will not cause Black any sleepless nights: 6...♕xe5 7.♕xe5+ dxe5 8.♗c4 (or 8.♘b5 ♘a6 followed by ...c6) 8...♗c5! (simple and harmonious although 8...♗f5 9.d3 ♘c6 10.♗b5 ♗d7 is also good) 9.d3 0-0 10.0-0 (10.♘b5 ♗b6 11.♗e3 a6 12.♘c3 ♗a5=) 10...♘c6. This short analysis demonstrates that White can create no problems by refusing to accept the gambit.

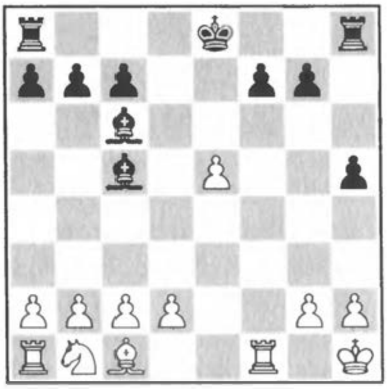
So, 6.f4 is the only serious try other than 6.d4. After 6...dxe5 White is at crossroads: keeping the queens and the extra pawn or rather trying to drag Black into a seemingly unpleasant endgame.

- 7.♕xe5 ♕xe5+ 8.fxe5 ♘c6



Now 9.♗b5 is White's only way to hold on to his extra pawn. In case of 9.♘c3 Black should not play 9...♘xe5? 10.♞b5! ♗d6 (10...♔d8±) 11.♘xd6+ cxd6 12.d4 with an endgame plus for White, but 9...♗d7!. This is a returning motif in this variation. Black is not in a hurry to get his pawn back, but rather focuses on good piece play. The quiet 9...♗d7 solves Black's development problems, as Black will proceed with 10...♘xe5 on the next move.

So, after 9.♗b5 play may continue 9...♗d7 10.♗xc6 ♗xc6 11.0-0 ♗c5+ 12.♔h1 h5!

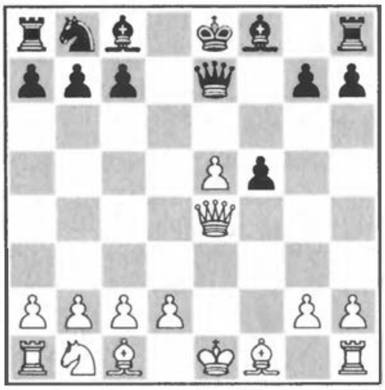


Owing to this aggressive move and his excellent piece coordination Black has more than enough for the pawn. To continue our analysis:

13.d3 (13.c3 h4 14.h3 ♗b5 15.♖f3 ♗e2 and ...♗d3 with an overwhelming advantage. Who could believe that this could arise from the mundane Petroff?) 13...h4 14.h3 ♖h5!, now the only reasonable move is 15.♘c3! (15.c3 ♖xe5! 16.d4 ♖e2; 15.♖e1 ♖f5 16.♘c3 ♖f2; 15.♗f4 g5 16.♗d2 g4) 15...♝d4!? (Black does not rush to take the pawn back; 15...♖xe5 16.♗f4 ♖e7 17.♗g5±) 16.♗f4 ♔d7!? 17.♖ae1 ♖e8 18.♗h2 f6!? – after the opening of the g-file, Black could harass White thanks to his mighty light-squared bishop. If White would attempt to simplify, Black still has resources thanks to his active rook on h5: 19.exf6 ♖xe1 20.♖xe1 gxf6 21.♗g1 ♗xc3 22.bxc3 ♖a5 with equal chances.

More ambitious is

- 7.fxe5 when Black has the surprising 7...f5!. This is the key move! Theory usually only covers 7...f6.

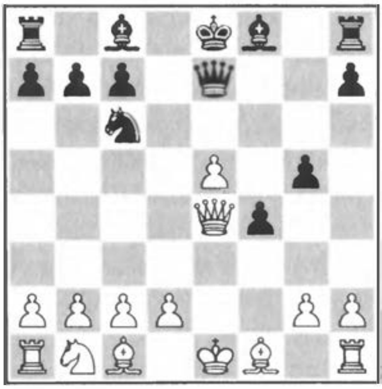


Now 8.♕e3?! ♘c6 9.♗b5 (9.d4 ♕h4+) 9...♗d7 gives Black good compensation after something like 10.0-0 ♕c5! 11.♕xc5 ♗xc5+ 12.♔h1 0-0-0.

8.♕f4 (This clever move takes in account Black's intention of ...♘c6 and ...♕h4+) 8...g5! there is no return. This Petroff Gambit is designed for the stout-hearted.

– 9.♕g3 f4 10.♕c3 ♘c6 11.d4 ♗g4! 12.♗b5 0-0-0! 13.♗xc6 bxc6 14.0-0 (14.♕xc6 ♖xd4∓) 14...c5 with nice play for the pawn.

– 9.♕e3. Play is less forcing here which is why this variation cannot be analysed in detail. Nevertheless, whoever intends to play this as Black must be familiar with some of the resources of this position: 9...f4 10.♕e4 ♘c6



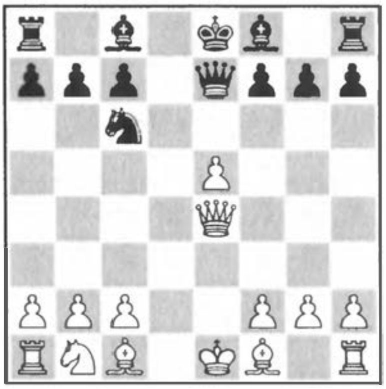
11.d4 (11.♗b5 ♗d7 12.d4?! ♘xd4) 11...♗g4 (11...♗e6 12.d5!) is a necessity, and now after 12.c3 (12.♗b5? ♕b4+ 13.♘c3 0-0-0 14.♗xc6 ♖xd4 15.♗xb7+ ♔b8∓) 12...0-0-0 we reach a highly atypical position. Black needs to be very careful, otherwise he could end up in a lost ending. On the other hand, White cannot easily simplify this position, and this fact promises a vivid struggle. The only move now is 13.♗e2 (after 13.♗c4 Black has the amazing 13...♕xe5!! 14.dxe5 ♖d1+ 15.♔f2 ♗c5+–+) 13...♗e6 14.0-0 h5 15.♘d2 ♕d7.

Having examined the consequences of 6.f4 in some detail we now return to our introduction after 6.d4.

6...dxe5 7.dxe5

This is the only test of Black's suspicious third move. For details about 7.♕xe5?!, see the game Livshits-Cohen.

7...♘c6



Here starts the real debate of this opening. White has four different moves to choose from.

8.♗b5

This is the main move according to theory. For more details, go over the game Shaw-Volkmann.

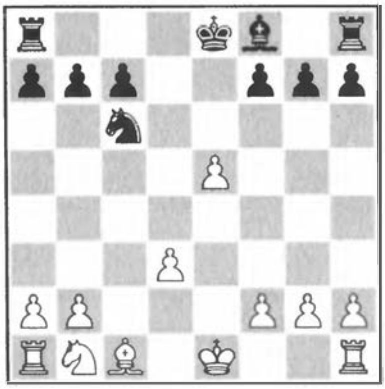
For 8.♗f4, see the game Baron-Cohen, while 8.f4 is covered in Grinkevich-Afromeev. Finally, 8.♘c3!? is the most solid and practical continuation for White. See the analysis of the game Nisipeanu-Varga.

☐ **Gaby Livshits**
■ **Or Cohen**
Israel League 2006/07 (2)

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♘xe5 ♘xe4 4.♛e2 ♛e7 5.♛xe4 d6 6.d4 dxe5 7.♛xe5 ♛xe5+ 8.dxe5 ♗f5 9.♘c3!

My opponent plays the most accurate move, after which Black is required to play precisely.

● 9.♗d3?! is a very common mistake in blitz games. I have already won dozens of game on ICC after this feeble move.
9...♗xd3 10.cxd3 ♘c6



– 11.♗f4? ♘b4 12.♔d2 0-0-0 13.♗g5 (13.♗g3 h5! 14.h4 ♘xd3 15.♔c2 ♗c5∓) 13...♖d7!∓, Black insists on taking on d3 with the knight!

– 11.f4 ♞b4 12.♞a3 ♘xd3+ 13.♔e2 ♘xc1+! (this is the move to be preferred; I always played 13...0-0-0 in blitz games, until someone found a very accurate continuation as White against me: 14.♞c4 ♘xf4+. I thought that after this move White struggles badly in this endgame, but: 15.♗xf4 ♖d4 16.♖ac1 ♖xf4 17.♖hf1! and White neutralizes Black's advantage) 14.♖axc1 ♗xa3 15.bxa3 0-0-0 with a slight plus.

● 9.c3 is a very materialistic move, 9...♞d7, and now:

– 10.f4 0-0-0 11.♗e3 (11.♘d2 f6 12.exf6 ♖e8+∓) 11...f6 12.♗xa7 (after 12.exf6 ♞xf6 13.♗xa7? ♖e8+ 14.♔f2 b6 15.♗a6+ ♔d7 16.♖d1+ ♔c6 17.b4 ♖a8 18.b5+ ♔c5 19.♘d2 ♖xa7 20.♘b3+ ♔c4 21.♖d4+ ♔xc3 White's attempts are futile and he finds himself simply a piece down) 12...fxe5 13.fxe5 ♘xe5 and due to his advantage in development Black is fine.

– 10.♗f4! 0-0-0 11.♘d2 ♖e8 12.♘c4 ♘xe5 13.♘xe5 (13.♗xe5 f6 14.0-0-0 fxe5=) 13...♗d6 14.0-0-0 ♗xe5 with even chances.

● 9.♗b5+ is a subtle move intending to improve on the primitive 9.♗d3. After 9...♘d7! (after 9...c6?! 10.♗d3 Black does not have the convenient ...♘c6) 10.0-0 (10.♗xd7+ ♔xd7 planning ...♗xc2 and ...♖e8) 10...♗xc2 11.♘c3 c6 12.♗c4 ♘b6 13.♗e2 ♗c5 Black stands completely fine.

9...♘d7!

Not 9...♘c6?! 10.♗b5!±.

10.♗f4

Nothing is promised by 10.♗g5 ♗b4 11.0-0-0 ♗xc3 12.bxc3 ♘xe5 13.♗b5+ c6 14.♖he1 f6 15.♗a4 ♔f7. White's bishop pair only compensates for his ruined pawn structure, but nothing more.

After 10.f4 0-0-0 (10...♗xc2?! – Black should not be too keen to retrieve the pawn – 11.♗e3 0-0-0 12.♖c1) White has:

● 11.♗e3 ♗c5 (again not 11...♗xc2? 12.♖c1 ♗f5 13.♞b5)

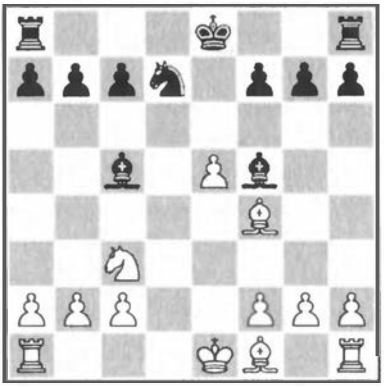
– 12.♘d5 ♘xe5! (a nice tactical blow; 12...♗xc2 13.♗xc5 ♘xc5 14.♘xc7 ♔xc7 15.♖c1± was White's intention) 13.♗xc5 ♖xd5∓.

– 12.♗xc5 ♘xc5 13.♗c4 (13.♖c1 ♖d4 14.g3 ♖hd8 is fine for Black) 13...♗xc2 14.♗xf7 ♘d3+ 15.♔d2 ♘xe5+ 16.♔xc2 ♞xf7 is equal.

● 11.♗d3. This time, White is much better prepared to play this move (in comparison to 9.♗d3 above). After 11...♗xd3 12.cxd3 ♘c5 13.♔e2 ♞xd3 14.♖d1 ♘xc1+ 15.♖axc1 ♗c5 White has a minimal space advantage, but nothing which Black cannot handle with some accurate moves.

10...♗c5

10...♗xc2 is again a grave mistake: 11.♖c1 ♗f5 12.♘d5.



11.0-0-0 ♗xf2

Now Black can afford to regain the pawn.

12.♘d5 ♗b6 13.♗c4

White is only a tad better after 13.♘xb6 ♘xb6 14.♗d3 ♗xd3 15.♖xd3 0-0 Gemste-Semaitite, Soviet Union 1979.

13...♗e6 14.♖hf1 ♘f8! 15.a3 ♘g6 16.♗g3 0-0-0 17.h4 c6

17...h5 might have been better.

18.♘xb6+ axb6 19.♗xe6+ fxe6 20.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 21.h5 ♖f8!

This move was missed by my opponent. He thought he was winning after 21.h5. Now after

22.♖d1 ♘f4 23.♗xf4 ♖xf4

The rook ending was drawn on move 37.

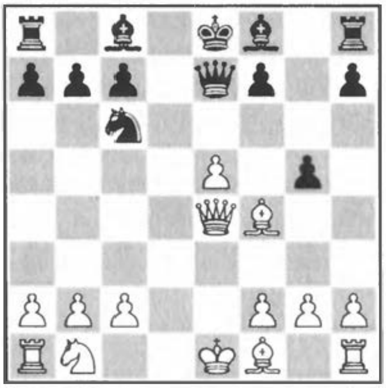
☐ **Tal Baron**
■ **Or Cohen**
Givataim 2007

This was my first experience with the Damiano Gambit. During a closed tournament for the IM title (in which I had started with ½/2), I decided I had to do something dramatic. I felt sick and tired of entering the Nimzowitsch Attack (1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♘xe5 d6 4.♘f3 ♘xe4 5.♘c3) once more.

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♘xe5 ♘xe4 4.♕e2

Indeed, 4.♘c3?! (White cannot force the Nimzowitsch Attack) 4...♕e7 5.♘xe4 ♕xe5 6.♕e2 ♘c6 is more than fine for Black.

4...♕e7 5.♕xe4 d6 6.d4 dxe5 7.dxe5 ♘c6 8.♗f4 g5!



9.♗d2

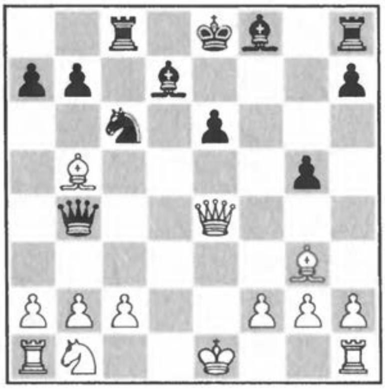
One of the many pitfalls for White is shown after 9.♗g3??. I won more than a dozen games on ICC against this blunder (this is part of what makes the Damiano Gambit so fun to play). This move looks so natural. White merely wants to protect his pawn and complete his development... but after 9...f5 Black wins a piece! – 10.♕e2 f4 11.♕h5+ ♕f7.

- 9.♗b5 is an attempt to complicate matters, but Black should not get too excited. 9...♗d7 and now:

– 10.♗d2 f5 11.♕e2 a6! (not 11...0-0-0 12.e6! ♕xe6 13.♕xe6 ♗xe6 14.♗xg5) 12.♕h5+ ♕f7 13.♗e2 (13.♕xf7+ ♔xf7 14.♗e2 ♘xe5 15.♗xg5 ♗c6≌) 13...g4 14.♕xf7+ ♔xf7 15.♗c3 ♗g7 16.f4 gxf3 17.♗xf3 ♔g6!? (17...♗xe5 18.♗xe5 ♘xe5 19.♗xb7 ♖ab8 20.♗d5+) and Black will eventually win the e5-pawn.

– 10.e6 fxe6 (10...♗xe6? 11.♗xc6+ bxc6

12.0-0± – and not 12.♕xc6+?? ♗d7+)
11.♗xc7 ♖c8 12.♗g3 ♕b4+



Remember this move. It's a key move in many variations. 13.♕xb4 ♘xb4 14.♗xd7+ ♔xd7 15.♘a3 ♘xc2+ 16.♘xc2 ♖xc2 is OK for Black.

● Finally, 9.♗e3 ♗g7 10.♗b5 ♗d7 11.♘c3 ♗xe5 with even chances is an old analysis by Pachman.

9...f5!?

Playing against White's active queen. Black is not in a hurry to retrieve the pawn.

10.♕e2

The game is equal after 10.♕e3 f4 11.♕e4 ♗g7 12.♗b5 ♗d7.

10...♖g8!

Both a prophylactic (vs. ♕h5+) and an attacking move.

11.♗c3

Protecting the pawn. 11.♘c3 seems much more natural for White. After 11...♗e6 12.0-0-0 0-0-0 White has

– 13.h4 gxh4 (suddenly the rook on g8 reveals itself and does not look silly at all) 14.f4♗h6 15.♕f2 (15.♕h5? ♖xd2 16.♖xd2 ♗xf4∓) 15...♖g4 16.♔b1 (16.♗e2? ♖xd2 17.♖xd2 ♖xf4 planning ...♖d4) 16...♖d4 17.♗e2 ♗xf4 18.♗xg4 ♗g3 19.♕e3 ♖xg4 with unclear play.

– 13.f4 gxf4 14.♗xf4 ♖xd1+ 15.♕xd1 ♗g7, regaining the pawn.

11...♗e6 12.♕h5+?!

12.♕d1 (aimed against ...0-0-0) was more prudent, when Black plays 12...♗d7!.

12...♖g6

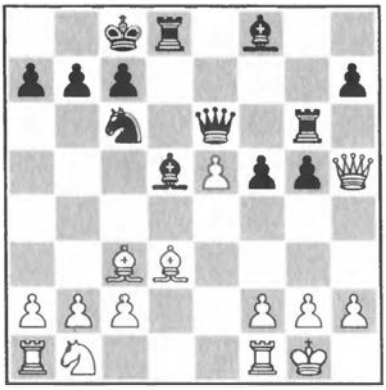
White was hoping for 12...♗f7? 13.♕xh7 ♖g6 14.♗d3.

13.♗b5 ♗d5 14.0-0?!

My opponent did not realize the potential danger of kingside castling.

Black has counterplay after 14.♗d3 ♗xg2 15.♖g1 ♗e4. Best looks 14.♘a3 0-0-0 15.0-0-0 ♕e6.

14...0-0-0 15.♗d3 ♕e6



The activity of Black's pieces and the prospects of a kingside attack are far more important than a pawn.

16.♘d2

16.♕xh7?! would give me the chance for a great strike: 16...♗xg2!! 17.♔xg2 ♖xd3 18.cxd3 ♖h6 and white's queen is trapped! White would have two rooks for it, but in such positions (in which one of the kings is not safe) the queen is superior.

16...♗c5 17.♖fe1

White played some natural moves, but they did not hinder Black's attack at all. It was necessary to combat against Black's active pieces much earlier.

No better are 17.♕xh7? ♖f8 (planning ...♖h6) 18.♕h5 ♖h6 19.♕d1 ♖fh8 20.h3 ♖xh3 21.gxh3 ♖xh3 22.♗e4 fxe4 winning, or 17.♘b3 ♗b6. The best chance was probably 17.♕e2!? g4 18.♔h1 h5.

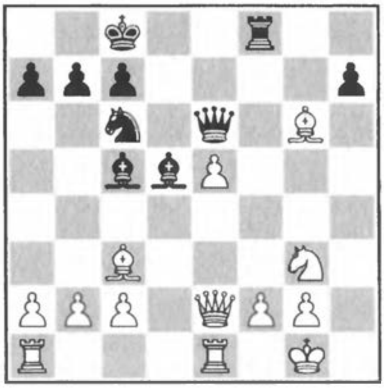
17...♖f8!

This is an important prophylactic move in the attack: preparing the advance of the g-pawn.

18.♕e2

White returns his queen to safety, but this only helps Black to proceed smoothly.

18...g4 19.♘f1 g3! Black has a winning attack. **20.hxg3** Or 20.♘xg3 f4 21.♗xg6 fxg3–+. **20...f4 21.♗xg6 fxg3 22.♘xg3** 22.♗e4 ♗xf2+ 23.♔h1 ♕h6+ 24.♘h2 ♕xh2 mate.



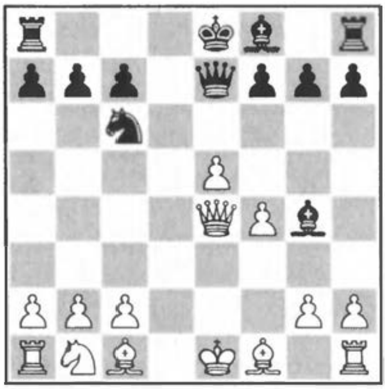
22...♕xg6!

White has simply no defence against all threats and he rightly threw in the towel. Less accurate would have been 22...♖xf2 23.♕xf2 ♗xf2+ 24.♔xf2 ♕xg6.

This game made me fall in love with the Damiano Gambit. Sometimes all we need is a little inspiration...

☐ **Sergey Grinkevich**
■ **Vladimir Afromeev**
Tula 2006

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♘xe5 ♘xe4 4.♕e2 ♕e7 5.♕xe4 d6 6.d4 dxe5 7.dxe5 ♘c6 8.f4 ♗g4!



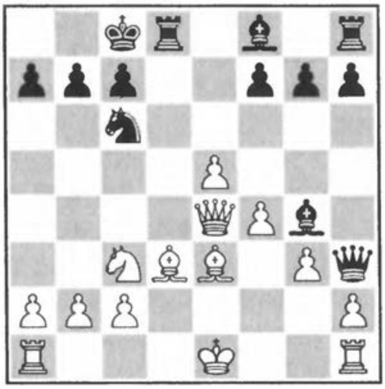
This may look odd, but, in fact, this is Black's only move, as otherwise White's centre crashes Black's hopes. Afiomeev is one of the great specialists of the Damiano Gambit.

9.♗d3

Let's analyse the alternatives:

- 9.h3?? (the point behind 8...♗g4 is that the bishop cannot be evicted so easily) 9...♕h4+ 10.♔d2 ♗b4+ 11.c3 0-0-0+ 12.♔c2 ♗d1 mate!
- 9.♗b5? 0-0-0 10.♘c3 (10.0-0 ♕c5+–+; 10.♗xc6 ♖d1+ 11.♔f2 ♖xh1 12.♗xb7+ ♔b8–+) 10...♘d4 11.♗d3 (11.0-0 ♘xb5 12.♘xb5 ♕c5+) 11...♕h4+ 12.g3 (12.♔f1 ♗e7 – intending ...f6 opening the game – 13.♗e3? ♗f5∓) 12...♕h3 13.♗f1 ♕h6 14.♗g2 ♕a6 planning ...♗f5 with a clear plus.
- 9.♗e3 0-0-0 10.♘c3 (10.♗d3 ♘b4) 10...♕b4 11.♕xb4 ♘xb4 12.♖c1 ♗f5 13.♔f2 a6! (13...♘xc2 14.♗xa7) 14.♗c4 ♘xc2 15.♖hd1 ♖xd1 16.♖xd1 ♘xe3 17.♔xe3 ♗c5+ 18.♔f3 h5 19.h3 ♗g6 and White's advantage is not significant at all.
- 9.♘c3 0-0-0 10.♗e2 (10.♗d3 ♘b4 11.0-0 ♘xd3 12.cxd3 f5! 13.exf6 – 13.♕c4 ♕d7 – 13...♕xf6 with compensation) 10...♗xe2 11.♕xe2 (11.♘xe2 ♕b4+! – the move ...♕b4 is a crucial resource in many variations – 12.♘c3 ♕xe4+ 13.♘xe4 ♘d4) 11...♘d4 12.♕e4 f5 13.♕d3 ♕e6 with nice play for the pawn.

9...♕h4+ 10.g3 ♕h3 11.♘c3 0-0-0 12.♗e3



12...♗b4

It seems that White did nothing wrong, but after 12 moves White finds his king in the centre with no opportunity to castle.

Instead of the text 12...f5! was even stronger: 13.exf6 (13.♕a4 ♕g2) 13...gxf6 14.♔f2 ♘b4 with excellent play for the pawn. Clearly, 8.f4 is insufficient after 8...♗g4! I will give the remainder of the game without notes.

13.♔f2 f6 14.♗f1 ♕h5 15.♗e2 ♗xe2 16.♘xe2 fxe5 17.c3 ♗d6

Material is equal, but Black is fully developed which decides the issue.

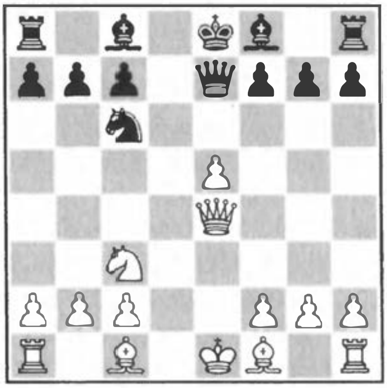
18.♖ae1 ♖hf8 19.♔g2 ♖de8 20.♕f3 ♕xf3+ 21.♔xf3 exf4 22.gxf4 ♘e5+ 23.♔g3 ♘d3 24.♗d2 g5 25.♘d4 ♗xf4+

White resigned.

☐ **Liviu-Dieter Nisipeanu**
■ **Zoltan Varga**
Baile Tusnad 2005

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♘xe5 ♘xe4 4.♕e2 ♕e7 5.♕xe4 d6 6.d4 dxe5 7.dxe5 ♘c6 8.♘c3

This solid move might dissuade some adventurers from trying Damiano's Gambit. However, it should be realized that playing like this as White does not fit everybody's style. Many 1.e4 players are not looking for a minimal advantage in a technical game.



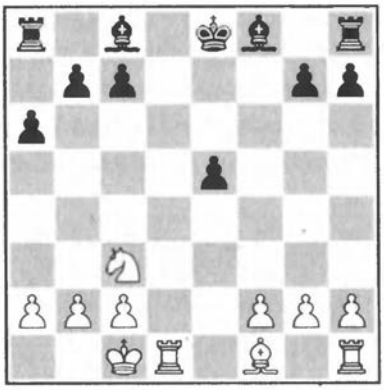
8...♕xe5 9.♕xe5+ ♘xe5 10.♗f4

Here 10.♘b5?! is tempting but poses no difficulties for Black after 10...♗b4+ 11.c3 ♗a5 12.♗f4 f6 13.0-0-0♗e6 14.♔b1 (14.b4 ♗b6 15.♗e3 ♔e7!? – 15...♖c8 – 16.♗xb6 axb6 17.♘xc7 ♖xa2) 14...0-0 15.♞d4 ♗f7 16.♗e2 ♖ad8 with an even endgame in Shlam-Cohen, Givataim 2008.

10...♗d6?!

After this move White gains an edge which is what most theoretical sources will tell you.

Stronger, in my opinion, is 10...f6!?. After 11.0-0-0 (after 11.♘b5 Black has 11...♗b4+ 12.c3 ♗a5, or 12.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 13.♔xd2 ♔d7 14.♖d1 ♔c6 with equality) 11...a6!?. Black has a suspicious but probably defendable position. With 11...a6 Black prevents White from playing 12.♘b5 and asks the question how could White take advantage of his huge development advantage? 12.♗xe5 (12.♖e1 ♗d6 13.♘e4 ♗e7, and now, unlike in the game, White has no ♗xe5 with ♖d5, winning the pawn under good conditions; 12.♗e2 ♗d6 planning ...♘d3+) 12...fxe5



– 13.♖e1 ♗d6 14.f4 (14.♗c4 ♖f8 15.♖hf1 ♖f4! aimed against f4) 14...♗e6 15.fxe5 ♗c5 This is ending does not look too bad for Black at all. Both bishops play a very important role. It is hard to see how White could win this endgame, considering the fact not even a pair of rooks is yet exchanged.

– 13.♗c4! ♗d6 (13...♗d7 14.♗f7+!) 14.♘e4 ♔e7 15.f4 (15.♖he1 ♖f8! – aimed against 16.f4– 16.♗d5 ♖b8 equal) 15...♗g4 16.♖de1 ♖hf8 17.fxe5 ♗b4 18.c3 ♗a5 (planning ...♗b6).

In my view, it is very hard to win this endgame as White. White's extra pawn cannot be easily protected in the long run. Note 19.♘c5?! ♗b6 20.♘xb7? ♗c8∓.

11.♗g3!

Now Black has to reckon with White's knight moving to e4 or b5.

11...f6

Vasiukov-Chekhov, Kishinev 1975, saw 11...♗d7 12.0-0-0 0-0-0 13.♘e4 ♗c6 14.♘xd6+ with a pleasant edge.

12.0-0-0 a6 13.♘e4 ♗e7 14.♗xe5 fxe5 15.♖d5!

White has a superior version of my analysis above.

15...♗f6 16.f4 ♗e6 17.♖c5 0-0-0 18.♘xf6 gxf6 19.fxe5 ♗d5 20.exf6 ♖hf8 21.♗d3 ♖xf6 22.♖d1 c6 23.♗xh7 ♗xg2 24.♖xd8+ ♔xd8 25.♖g5

With a sound extra pawn. White went on to win this game.

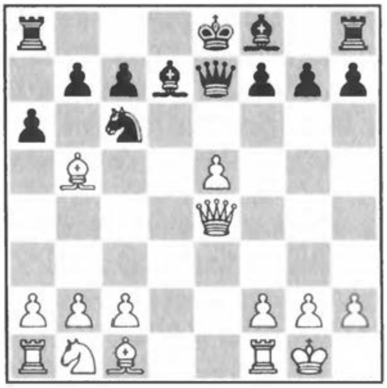
☐ **John Shaw**
■ **Friedrich Karl Volkmann**
Plovdiv 2003

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♘xe5 ♘xe4 4.♕e2 ♕e7 5.♕xe4 d6 6.d4 dxe5 7.dxe5 ♘c6 8.♗b5

This move, according to theory, is the refutation of the Damiano Gambit.

8...♗d7 9.♘c3

9.0-0 was tried by the legendary player Ratmir Kholmov. I believe Black should first play 9...a6 and not 9...0-0-0 as is customary played by Black.



- 10:♗d3 0-0-0 11.♖e1 ♖e8:

– 12.♗f4 g5 13.♗g3?? f5 14.exf6 (14.♕f3 f4 15.e6 ♗xe6 16.♗f5 ♘d8) 14...♕f7 and wins.

– 12.f4 f6 13.♘c3 fxe5 14.♘d5 ♕f7 is fine for Black.

- 10.♗c4 0-0-0 11.f4 (if 11.♖e1 then 11...g6, a patient approach intending ...♗f5 and ...♗g7) 11...♘d4! 12.♕xd4 ♗b5 13.♕e4 ♕c5+ 14.♗e3 ♕xc4 15.♕xc4 ♗xc4 16.♖e1 ♗b4 Black's compensation seems to be enough to hold the balance.
- 10.♗xc6 ♗xc6:

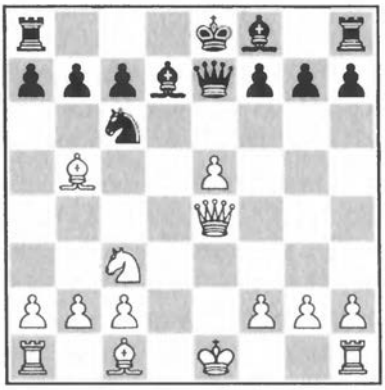
– 11.♕f5 (White tries to prevent Black from castling) 11...g6 12.♕h3 ♕xe5! (fearlessly) 13.♗d2 ♕f5 14.♖e1+ ♔d7! is equal.

– 11.♕d4 ♕e6 12.♗f4 (12.♘c3 ♖d8 13.♕h4 ♕g6) 12...♗xg2 13.♔xg2 ♕g4+ with a perpetual.

– 11.♕f4 0-0-0 12.♘c3 f6 13.exf6 gxf6 with compensation.

● 10.♗e2 ♕xe5 11.♕xe5+ ♘xe5 12.♗f4 ♗d6 (White cannot utilize the fact that Black has not castled yet) 13.♘c3 ♗f5 with even chances.

● 10.♗a4 here we see the benefits of 9...a6 – pawn a7 is not hanging after ♗e3. 10...0-0-0 11.f4 (11.♗e3 ♘xe5=; 11.♖e1 ♘xe5 12.♗xd7+ ♖xd7=) 11...f5 12.♕e2 ♘xe5! retrieving the pawn.



9...♕b4!

The key move for the whole variation. Previously only 9...0-0-0 was examined. It was first played in 2001 by the same Volkmann, who is, as you can see, another devotee of the Damiano Gambit. This moves utterly changes the evaluation of the Damiano Gambit. Surprisingly, this move is completely ignored in the books, including Khalifman's great series *Play like Anand*.

Please note that 9...♘xe5? is met by 10.♘d5 ♕d6 11.♗f4.

10.♗c4

This seems to be the best move for White.

● 10.0-0 ♕xe4 11.♘xe4 ♘xe5 12.♗xd7+ ♔xd7 (12...♘xd7? 13.♗f4 0-0-0 14.♘g5+–) 13.♗f4 ♘g6 14.♖ad1+ ♔c6 15.♗e3 ♖e8 is equal.

● 10.♗xc6 ♗xc6 11.♕xb4 ♗xb4 12.0-0 0-0-0. In exchange for the sacrificed pawn, Black achieves a remarkable version of the Berlin Wall Defence (the same pawn structure and White is bereft of the light-squared bishop. Black is much more organized in comparision to the genuine Berlin Wall. Of course, Black is a pawn down for all these privileges). It seems to me that White has no winning chances.

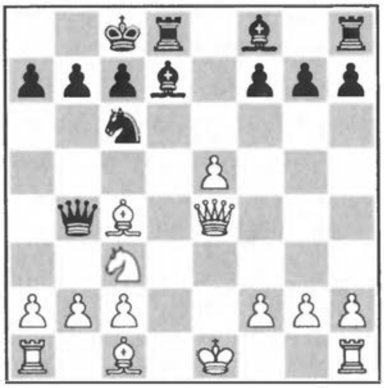
● 10.e6 ♕xe4+ 11.♘xe4 ♗xe6 12.♘g5! ♗d5 13.0-0 a6! (13...0-0-0? 14.c4) 14.♖e1+ ♗e7 15.♗xc6+ ♗xc6 16.♗f4 ♖c8 17.♖e3 ♔f8 (play is equal) 18.♘e4 ♗xe4 19.♖xe4 f5 20.♖e3 ♔f7 21.♖ae1 ♖he8 22.♔f1 ♗f6 23.♖xe8 ♖xe8 24.♖xe8 ♔xe8 25.b3 ♔d7 ½-½ Yagupov-Afromeev, Tula 2005.

● 10.♕xb4♘xb4 11.♗xd7+♔xd7 12.♔d1 ♔e6. This explains the basic idea behind Black's 9...♕b4. Black's king is much more conveniently and actively placed.

● 10.♕f4. This 'computer-like' move has not been tried yet in practice: 10...0-0-0 11.0-0 a6 12.♗d3 (12.♗xc6 ♗xc6 13.♕xf7 ♕g4 14.f3 ♕d4+ 15.♔h1 ♕xe5 16.♗f4 ♕e7 and again it would be highly difficult for White to convert his extra pawn into something tangible) 12...♖e8 13.♕xb4 (13.♖e1 f6 14.♖e4 ♘xe5!! A great resource. 15.♖xb4 ♘xd3 16.♕d2 ♘xb4 17.h3 ♗d6 18.♘e2 ♗c5 19.c3 ♗b5) 13...♘xb4 14.♗f4 ♘xd3 15.cxd3 ♗c5 16.♖fe1 ♗d4 17.♖e4c5. Maybe Black's compensation for the pawn is not completely sufficient, but can White be completely satisfied of his position (and this after 14 accurate moves in a row after Black's alleged blunder on move three)?

● 10.♗d2 ♕xe4+ 11.♘xe4 ♘xe5 12.♗xd7+ ♘xd7 13.0-0-0 f6! aimed against ♘g5, ½-½, Nedev-Volkmann, Leon 2001.

10...0-0-0



11.a3!

11.0-0 ♘xe5 shows that castling is not always best.

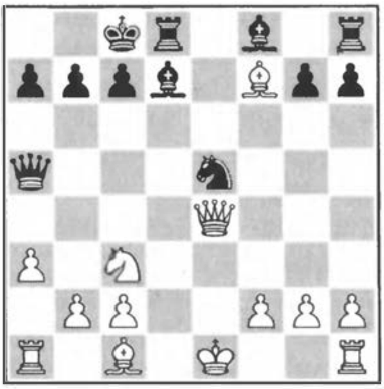
Tishin-Afromeev, Tula 2006, went 11.♗xf7?! ♕xe4+ 12.♘xe4 ♘xe5 13.♗b3 ♗b4+ (13...♗c6 14.f3±) 14.♗d2 (14.c3 ♘d3+ 15.♔e2 ♗b5 16.♗e6+ ♔b8 17.cxb4 ♘xc1+ 18.♔e3 ♘d3∓) 14...♗xd2+ 15.♘xd2 (15.♔xd2? ♗h3+) 15...♖he8 16.0-0?! (16.0-0-0 ♘g4 gives counterplay) 16...♗b5 17.c4 ♗c6 18.♘b1 ♘d3 with a slight edge for Black.

11...♕a5 12.♗xf7

After 12.♗f4 ♗b4 (12...♘xe5? 13.♗xe5 ♖e8 14.f4 f6 15.♗f7 ♖e7 16.b4+–) 13.0-0 ♗xc3 14.bxc3 ♗e6! 15.♗d3 (15.♖ab1!? ♕xc3 16.♗b5 ♖d5 with counterplay) 15...♕xc3 16.♖ab1 ♗a2! 17.♖bd1 ♔b8 18.♖fe1 h6 19.♗g3 ♖d4 20.♕e2 ♖hd8 Black was somewhat better, Nedev-Volkmann, Istanbul 2003.

Possibly 12.0-0! is the best continuation for White. It was never tried in practice yet, but, then again there is virtually no practice yet...! 12...♕xe5 13.♗xf7 ♕xe4 (13...♗d6 14.♕xe5 ♗xe5±; 13...♕f6!? if Black would like to speculate a little bit) 14.♘xe4 ♗f5 15.f3 ♘d4 16.c3 ♘e2+ 17.♔h1 ♘xc1 18.♖axc1 ♗e7. This offers White certain winning chances, but still, Black could always try to go into a opposite-coloured bishops which give him decent drawing chances.

12...♘xe5



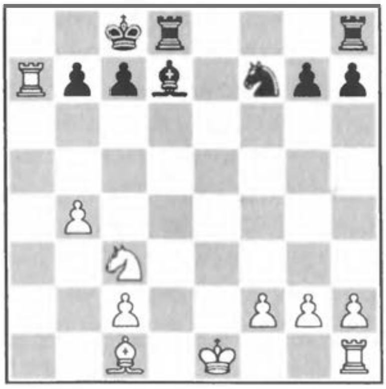
13.b4!

This intermediate move is best. Black has excellent compensation after 13.♗b3? ♗c6 14.♕f5+ (14.♗d5 ♖xd5 15.b4 ♗xb4) 14...♔b8 15.♕h3 (15.0-0?? ♘f3+) 15...♕a6 or 15...h5 16.0-0 ♗c5.

No better is 13.♗d5?! c6 (13...♘g4!? 14.0-0! ♘f6 15.♕e5 ♔b8 16.b4) and now:

- 14.♗b3? ♘d3+!!. The tactics work after 15.♕xd3 ♗g4 16.♗e6+ ♗xe6 and 15.cxd3 ♖e8.
- 14.0-0 ♗d6 15.♗b3 ♖he8 or 15...♘g4 16.♗f4 ♕c7 17.♗xd6 ♕xd6 18.g3 ♕h6. In positions where Black and White are castled on opposite wings, a pawn is much less significant. The question is who has the better attacking prospects? After 13.b4 we reach an ending by force.

13...♗xb4 14.♕xb4 ♕xb4 15.axb4 ♘xf7 16.♖xa7



16...♔b8!

Volkman deviates from an earlier game of his against Naiditsch.

- 16...♗f5, practice saw:

– 17.♖a2 ♔d7!? (17...♖d4!? Solak-Volkmann, Istanbul 2003) 18.0-0 ♖a8 19.♖d1+ ♘d6 20.♗a3 ♔c8! and Black is OK.

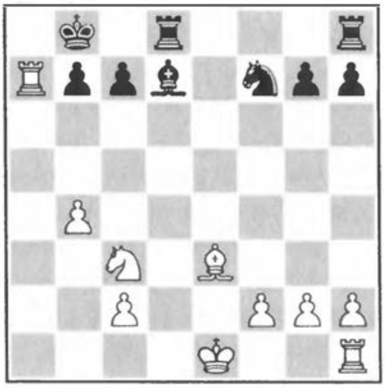
– 17.♖a8+ ♔d7 18.♖a2 ♖a8 19.♖xa8 ♖xa8 20.♔d1 ♘e5 21.♖e1 ♘c6 22.♘d5 ♖a2 23.♘e3 ♗g6 with equal chances.

– However 17.0-0! ♗xc2 18.♗f4! gives White the initiative in this ending. Although there are relatively few pieces left, White can cause Black's king trouble. 18...♖d4 and now rather than 19.♗g3?! as in Zaltz-Cohen, Israel League 2007/08, White should play 19.♗xc7! ♔xc7 20.♘b5+ ♔b6 21.♘xd4 ♔xa7 22.♘xc2±.

- 16...♖he8+ 17.♗e3 ♗f5 18.♖a2 ♖e6 19.♘b5 turned out to be not sufficient for Black (19.0-0! intending 19...♖c6 20.♘b5 ♖xc2 21.♖a8+ ♔d7 22.♖xd8+ ♘xd8 23.♘d4+– was even stronger) 19...♖d5 20.c4 (20.♖a5!?) 20...♖d3 21.♖a8+, Naiditsch-Volkmann, Istanbul 2003.

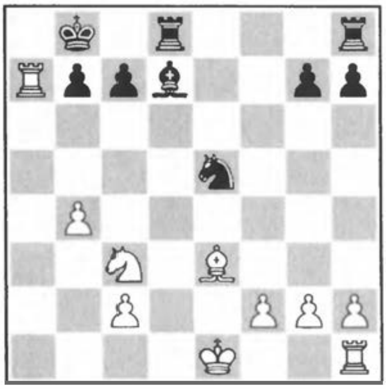
17.♗e3

Black has compensation after 17.♖a2 ♗e6 intending ...♗c4. Or 17.♖a3 ♖he8+ 18.♗e3 ♗f5 19.0-0 ♗xc2 20.♖fa1 ♔c8 and Black seems to be OK.



17...b6

This is not the best move. 17...♘e5!? is my improvement:



- 18.b5!? b6 (18...♘c4? 19.0-0 ♘xe3? 20.♖fa1+–) 19.♖a4 ♘f7 20.0-0 ♘d6:

– 21.♖fa1 ♗xb5 (21...♘xb5 22.♗f4!! ♘d6 23.♖a8+ ♔b7 24.♖8a7+ ♔c6 25.♗xd6 ♔xd6 26.♖d1+ ♔c6 27.♘d5) 22.♘xb5 ♘xb5, with only a minimal advantage for White.

– 21.♖d4 ♗f5 22.♗g5 ♖d7 (planning ...♖e8, ...♔b7) gradually improving the position.

- 18.0-0 ♘c6 19.♖a4 (19.♖a3 ♘xb4 20.♖fa1 ♘a6 21.♖b1 ♔c8 22.♘d5 ♖de8 23.♗d4 ♗e6 24.♘b4 ♘xb4 25.♖xb4 ♗d5 26.f3 ♖hg8 27.♖a8+ ♔d7 28.♖xe8 ♔xe8 equal) 19...♘d4 20.♖a2 ♗e6 21.♖b2 ♖he8, and White's rook on b2 is not exactly a lovely piece.

18.♖a1?

Shaw should have doubled rooks on the a-file with 18.♖a3! ♗f5 19.0-0 ♗xc2 20.♖fa1.

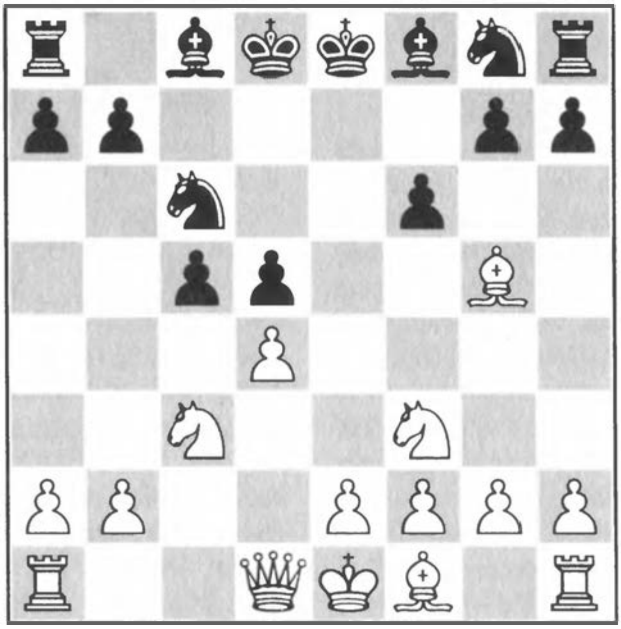
18...♗f5 19.0-0 ♗xc2 20.♖fc1 ♗d3 21.♗f4 ♖d7

Material is equal and the rest is not interesting for our purposes. The game was drawn on move 44.

CHAPTER 17

Jeroen Bosch

Winning Ugly in the Tarrasch



Gaining time with 6...f6

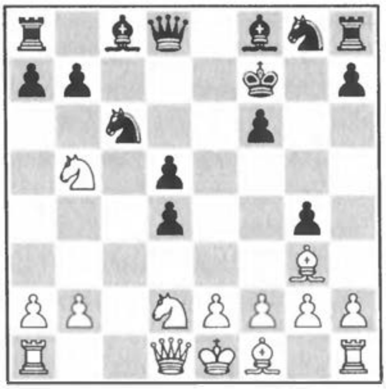
We reach the diagrammed position after **1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♘f3 ♘c6 6.♗g5 f6!?**. By the way, I would like to point out that this line has a little brother as well in the form of: 3.♘f3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♗g5 f6 – I will not analyse this line in the course of this chapter, though.

With 6.♗g5 White avoids the path recommended by theory: 6.g3 the Rubinstein Variation. Yet, 6.♗g5 can be quite annoying for Black. After 6...♗e7 7.♗xe7 ♘gxe7 8.e3 (8.dxc5 d4!) White tries to claim a slight edge in a relatively simple position. It may not be much, but Black will be reduced for some time to holding the balance. This line was recommended by Emanuel Lasker in the pioneering days of the Tarrasch Defence, and it has to be admitted that it bears some logic.

Black does not have to limit his ambitions to a sterile draw though. There is a way out: and it is the ugly 6...f6!?. This was first played (unsuccessfully) by David Janowski versus Frank Marshall in Paris 1905. Black is winning a tempo, but it comes at a price. He is weakening his kingside, as well as the diagonals a2-g8 and h5-e8, and, what is clearly the most serious drawback to 6...f6, the natural square f6 is no longer available to his knight – which endangers his central control and a speedy development of his kingside.

To understand why I would still recommend this is as an excellent SOS it is necessary to give a few moves:

– **7.♗f4** The main reply, but now Black unleashes all the latent energy in his Tarrasch set-up with **7...g5!? 8.♗g3** (we will discuss the alternatives later on) **8...g4!** and White loses his d4-pawn by force! Very unclear complications arise after the best moves from both sides now: **9.♘d2! cxd4!** (Janowski played 9...♘xd4 in the aforementioned game) **10.♘b5 ♔f7!**



With clearly a very exciting position!

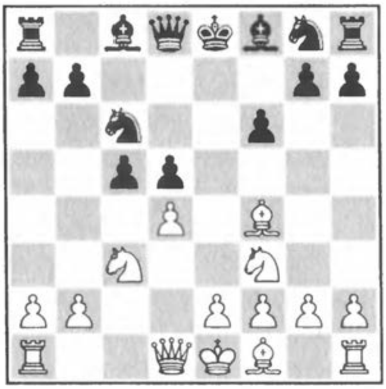
– **7.♗e3** Quite logically White strengthens square d4 and does not provoke Black into playing ....g5. A disadvantage is that the bishop is obstructing the e-pawn. Black should now transpose into a kind of structure that is known after 6.g3 c4 as the Swedish Variation. In that line ...f6 is not necessarily a drawback. After **7...c4 8.g3 ♗b4 9.♗g2 ♘ge7 10.0-0 0-0** Black really has an acceptable position, where he can play for the win as well.

– **7.♗c1!?** This paradoxical move condemns 6...f6 as a kind of 'original sin'. At the cost of two tempi (but one of them was 6...f6) White is arguing that almost nothing could be more detrimental to Black's position than moving the f-pawn by one square. However, tempi count for something in chess, and it is useful to remember that after **7...♗g4** We have reached a Panov Attack versus the Caro-Kann with colours reversed (1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.c4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♘c6 6.♗g5), and the additional ...f6.

By now I hope to have convinced you that 6...f6 does at least deserve some looking into. Let's look at some games!

☐ **Milos Kozak**
■ **Krzysztof Zolnierowicz**
Litomerice 1999

1.d4 e6 2.c4 c5 3.♘f3 d5 4.cxd5 exd5
We reach our subject via transposition.
5.♘c3 ♘c6 6.♗g5 f6 7.♗f4



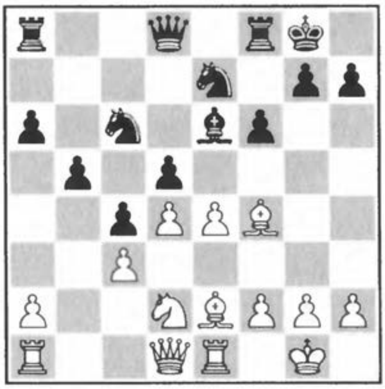
7...g5!

We will focus on the most aggressive move for Black here. Yet, I would like to point out that 7...♗e6 and 7...c4 are also played (and some strong grandmasters have been involved too):

● **7...♗e6** and now 8.e4!? dxe4 9.d5 exf3 10.♕xf3?! (10.dxe6) 10...♘d4 11.♕e4 ♗d6! 12.♗xd6 ♕xd6 13.dxe6 0-0-0 was more than satisfactory for Black in Bogoljubow-Stoltz, Dortmund 1951.

While, after 8.e3 c4:

– 9.♗e2 ♗b4 10.0-0 a6 11.e4 ♗xc3 12.bxc3 ♘ge7 (12...dxe4 13.♘d2) 13.♘d2 0-0 14.♖e1 b5 has been played a couple of times in practice. Both sides have their chances here.



– Of interest is 9.♗xc4!? dxc4 (9...g5!? 10.♗g3 h5 unclear) 10.d5 ♗xd5 11.♘xd5 ♕a5+ 12.♕d2 0-0-0 13.♕xa5 ♘xa5 14.0-0-0, which favoured White in Pelletier-Fridman, Essen 2000.

● **7...c4** Black immediately sets up the 'Swedish' formation. White should take advantage of the move order (his e-pawn is not restricted here) and play 8.e4! after 8...♗b4 (Harald Keilhack has recommended 8...dxe4 9.♘xe4 ♗f5 in his excellent book on the Tarrasch. It looks very risky, though, among others because of the Fritz-move 9.♘h4!). After 8...♗b4 theory gives:

– 9.♘d2 ♘ge7 (9...dxe4 10.d5 ♗xc3 is another suggestion of Keilhack's, 10.♗xc4! followed by castling refutes Black's play) 10.♘xd5 (10.exd5!? ♗xc3 11.bxc3 ♘xd5 12.♕f3± is an old analysis by Max Euwe) 10...♘xd5 11.♕h5+ g6 12.♕xd5 ♕xd5 13.exd5 ♘a5 14.0-0-0 favoured White in Borisenko-Furman, Moscow 1955, although Furman managed to hold onto to the draw in the end.

– However, very strong is 9.exd5! ♕xd5 10.♗e2 ♘ge7 11.0-0 ♗xc3 12.bxc3 0-0 13.♘d2! b5 14.♗f3 ♕f5 15.♗d6 ♕d7 16.♗xe7 1-0, Bontjer-Möller, Groningen 2004.

8.♗g3

For 8.♗e3 see the next game. Note that 8.♗c1 is ill-timed because of 8...g4!.

8...g4!

Black consistently pushes his g-pawn forward to win the d4-pawn. Arencibia has played 8...♗f5?! here, after 9.e3 (9.dxc5? d4 10.♘a4 ♕a5+ 11.♘d2 b5! 12.cxb6 axb6 13.b3 ♘b4 is excellent for Black (Ftacnik), but on move 13 White should investigate 13.e4! in my opinion) 9...c4 10.♗e2 ♗b4 11.0-0 ♘ge7 12.♘d2 0-0 13.e4 dxe4 14.♗xc4+ ♔g7 15.♘dxe4, Mascarinas-Arencibia, Manila Interzonal 1990, White had a slight but pleasant edge.

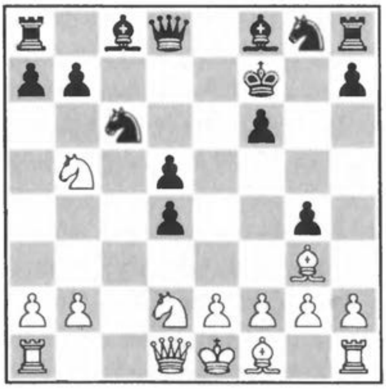
9.♘d2

As Keilhack has already demonstrated in *Die Tarrasch-Verteidigung* (1993) 9.♘g1? more or less loses after 9...cxd4 10.♘b1 ♕a5+ 11.♘d2 ♗h6∓ and now 12.a3 ♗f5 13.b4?? is met by 13...♘xb4 14.axb4 ♗xd2+.

9...cxd4!

This is clearly better than the course in the stem game: 9...♘xd4 10.e3 (10.e4!? dxe4 11.♗c4 has been suggested by Ftacnik) 10...♘c6 11.h3!? h5?! 12.hxg4 ♗xg4 13.♕b3 ♘b4 14.♗b5+ ♗d7 15.a3! c4 16.♘xc4!, Marshall-Janowski, Paris 1905.

10.♘b5 ♔f7



A crucial position for the evaluation of 7...g5 8.♗g3 g4. With Black's king on f7 and his pawns randomly placed across the board it bears resembles to the kind of positions one sometimes finds in the shop windows of non chess playing toy shop owners (albeit that the lower left corner square is dark here!). Let's try to find some method in the madness, and acknowledge now that White can force a draw by jumping to c7 and back with his knight.

11.♘c7

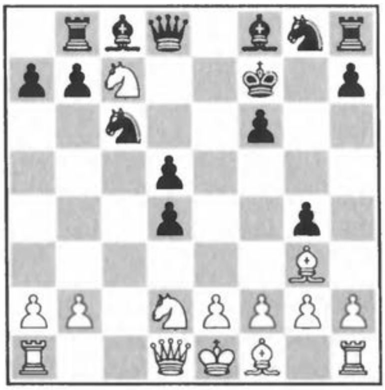
White plunges in. Practice has also seen:

– 11.e4 dxe4 (why not 11...dxe3?) 12.♗c4+ ♔g7 13.0-0 (13.♘c7 ♖b8 14.♘e6+ ♗xe6 15.♗xe6 ♘h6! is unclear) 13...♘e5 14.♗xg8 ♖xg8 Black can now hide his king on h8. He will probably return both of his (extra!) central pawns for material equality. The rapid game Polak-Orsag, Pribram rapid 1997, ended in a draw after 15.♘xe4 ♗d7?! (15...d3) 16.♘xd4 ♘g6 17.♕b3 ♕b6 18.♕d5 ♖d8 19.♖ad1 ♗e7 20.♕h5 ♔h8 21.♘c3 ♗c8 22.♘db5 ♖xd1 23.♖xd1 a6.

– 11.♕a4 ♗e6 (11...♗b4; 11...d3) 12.♘c7 ♖c8 13.♘xe6 ♔xe6 14.e3 ♗b4 (14...♘b4! favours Black) 15.0-0-0?, Albrecht-Fuchs, Berlin 2007, and now 15...♕a5 would have been strong.

Black is better after the following analysis of Keilhack: 11.e3 ♗f5 12.♘c7 ♘b4! 13.♖c1 (13.e4 ♖c8) 13...d3!? 14.♕b3 ♖c8 15.e4 ♗d6!. Finally, 11.♕b3 deserves attention.

11...♖b8



12.♕b3

Grandmaster Drasko indeed saw nothing better than 12.♘b5 ♖a8 13.♘c7 ♖b8 ½-½, Drasko-Stamenkovic, Niksic 1997.

12...♘e5!?

The textbook example is the old 12...♘ge7 when 13.e4?! (13.♘b5 is better) 13...dxe3 14.fxe3 ♘f5 15.♗f4 (15.♘xd5 ♘e5, and not 15...♗e6 16.♗xb8) 15...♗h6! produces a sharp game that favours Black, Vilerte-Fomina, Riga 1980.

13.♕xd5+ ♕xd5 14.♘xd5 ♗e6

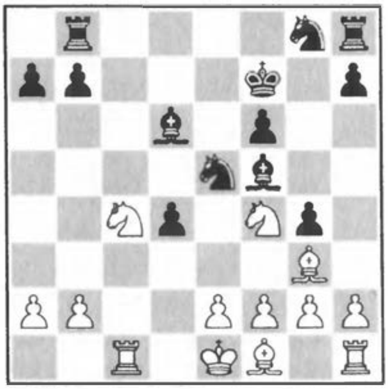
The ending should be OK for Black. His advanced d-pawn is restricting White, and he can easily develop his remaining pieces.

15.♘f4 ♗f5 16.♖c1 ♗d6?!

16...♘e7.

17.♘c4

17.e4 dxe3 18.fxe3 offers equal chances.



17...♗b4+?!

Correct was 17...♘xc4 18.♖xc4 ♗e5.

18.♔d1 ♘e7 19.♘xe5+?!

Returning the favour. White could have taken advantage of the small inaccuracies with 19.♘d3 ♘xd3 20.exd3±.

19...fxe5 20.♘d3 ♗xd3 21.exd3 ♗d6

Play is equal, or perhaps a tad better for Black.

22.h3 h5 23.hxg4 hxg4 24.♖xh8 ♖xh8 25.♗e2

Draw.

□ **Theo van den Tol**
■ **Gösta Stoltz**
Beverwijk 1946

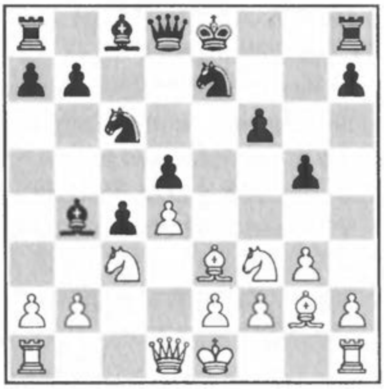
This old game was played in the first 'international' edition of the Hoogovens tournament. The Swede Gösta Stoltz finished as runner-up in this post-war tournament. The laurels for first place went to Belgian count Alberic O'Kelly. Stoltz, by the way, arrived only half an hour before the first game in Beverwijk (close to Wijk aan Zee where the tournament is now held). But let's move on to the game!

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♘c3 ♘c6 6.♗g5 f6 7.♗f4 g5 8.♗e3 g4

Again this is consistent. However, the fact that White has supported d4 with his last move (and has obstructed his own e-pawn) has led many players to adopt 8...c4 here instead.

● Interesting now is 9.♗d2 ♗e6 (9...♗f5 10.b3!; 9...g4 10.♘g1! f5 11.h3!?– 11.♗f4– 11...♗g7 – 11...g3 12.fxg3 ♗d6 13.♗f4 ♗xf4 14.gxf4 ♕h4+ 15.♔d2 ♕xf4+ 16.e3± – 12.hxg4 fxg4 13.e4 with an edge for White) 10.e4!? dxe4 11.♕e2 (11.♘xe4 g4! 12.♘g1 ♕xd4∓) 11...exf3 12.♕xe6+ ♕e7 13.♕xe7+ ♘gxe7 and Black is fine in the ending, Berkvens-Bosch, Dutch tt 2008/09.

● 9.g3 ♗b4 10.♗g2 ♘ge7

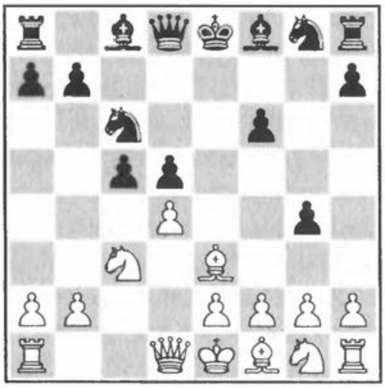


– 11.0-0 ♗e6 12.♘e1 ♕d7 13.♘c2 ♗a5 14.♗d2 ♗h3 was a pre-war effort by Stoltz. Frydman-Stoltz, Folkestone Olympiad 1933.

– 11.h4! g4 12.♘d2 ♗e6 (12...0-0) 13.0-0 ♕a5 14.♗h6 ♘f5 15.e4!? with crazy complications was Von Herman-Vandrey, Berlin 1993.

9.♘h4

I also like Black after 9.♘g1



and now:

– 9...f5 10.dxc5 (10.♕a4?! c4 11.g3 ♗b4 12.a3 ♗a5 13.♗g2 ♘f6, Tomeo-Koch, Ciudadela 2008) 10...d4 11.♗d2 and now not 11...dxc3? 12.♗xc3 but 11...♘f6!.

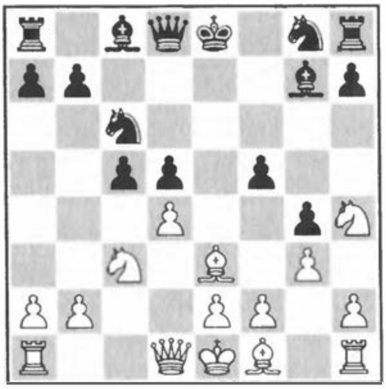
– 9...♗g7 10.♕d2 f5 is met by 11.♗g5!.

– 9...♘ge7 10.dxc5 (10.♕d2?? ♘f5 and White cannot avoid material losses: 11.♗f4 cxd4 12.♘b5 ♗b4–+, Ballo-Grafl, Ronneburg 1996) 10...d4 11.♘e4 ♘g6 12.♗d2 f5 and now for either side there is apparently nothing better than 13.♗g5 ♕a5+ (13...♕c7) 14.♗d2 ♕d8 15.♗g5 ♕a5+ 16.♗d2 ♕d8 ½-½, Muse-Michaelsen, Germany Bundesliga 1995/96.

– Finally, I can recommend 9...♘h6! planning ...♘f5, and if 10.♗xh6 ♗xh6 11.e3 then 11...cxd4 12.exd4 0-0 is at least a bit better for Black.

9...f5 10.g3 ♗g7!

Black is building up the pressure against d4 as he has done quite consistently throughout the game with 3...c5, 5...♘c6 and 8...g4. Because of the fork White must move his bishop and give up the central stronghold.



11.♗f4

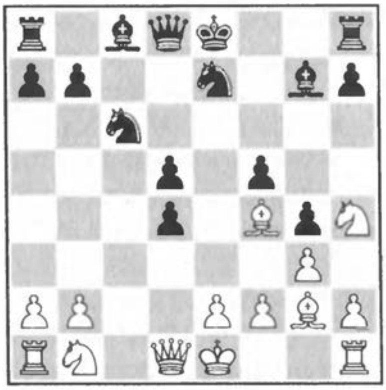
Worse is 11.♗d2 cxd4 12.♘a4 ♘f6 13.♘c5 ♘e4 14.♘d3 0-0 15.♘f4 and now 15...♘e5 as in Swiech-Judycki, Slask 1996, was not bad, but 15...♕b6 would have been more or less winning.

11...cxd4 12.♘b1

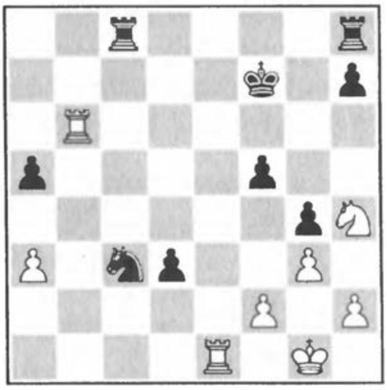
12.♞a4 ♘ge7 (12...d3! 13.exd3 – 13.♕xd3 ♕a5+–+; 13.♗g2 dxe2 14.♕xe2+ ♕e7 15.♕xe7+ ♘gxe7 – 13...♘f6 14.♗g2 ♘h5∓) 13.♗g2 0-0?! (13...♕a5+!? 14.♗d2 ♕b5) 14.0-0 b6 15.♕d2 ♗a6 and both sides had their chances in Zhu Chen-Zhukova, Groningen 1999.

12...♘ge7 Or the immediate 12...d3!.

13.♗g2



13...d3! 14.♕d2 dxe2 15.♘c3?! d4?! Better was 15...♕a5 16.♘xe2 ♕xd2+ 17.♗xd2 ♗xb2. **16.♘xe2 ♗e6 17.0-0 ♕a5 18.b4?** Too enthusiastic, White should have played 18.♕xa5 ♘xa5 with decent chances to hold. **18...♕xb4 19.♕xb4 ♘xb4 20.♖ab1 a5** 20...d3!. **21.a3 ♘bd5 22.♖fd1 ♖d8 23.♗g5 ♗c8 24.♖e1 ♔f7 25.♘f4 ♗f6!** By far the best move, now Black is winning. **26.♗xf6 ♔xf6 27.♘xd5+ ♘xd5 28.♖b5! ♘c3?** 28...♗e6 29.♖xa5 ♞c3. **29.♖b6+! ♔f7 30.♗xb7 d3** 30...♘d5! 31.♖b5 ♗xb7 32.♖xb7+ ♔f6 33.♖a7 ♖d6. **31.♗xc8 ♖xc8** 31...d2 32.♗e6+ ♔f8 33.♖f1 d1♕ 34.♖xd1 ♖xd1+ 35.♔g2 is also only a draw.



32.♖d6?? A blunder: 32.♖b7+! forces a draw because of 32...♔f6 33.♖b6+ ♔f7 34.♖b7+ ♔f6 35.♖b6+ as Black cannot play 35...♔g5 because of 36.f4+ gxf3 (36...♔h5 37.♘xf5+–) 37.♘xf3+ ♔h5 38.♖e5 ♖cf8 39.h3 and the mating attack will finally net White material after 39...♖hg8 40.g4+. **32...♖hd8** Now the passed pawn decides. **33.♘xf5 d2** White only has a few desperate checks. **34.♖e7+ ♔f8 35.♖f6+ ♔g8 36.♘h6+ ♔h8 37.♘f7+ ♔g7 38.♘xd8+ ♔xf6 39.♖e6+ ♔f5 40.♖d6 d1♕+**

White resigned.

☐ **Boris Chatalbashev**
■ **Stelios Halkias**
Cutro 2001

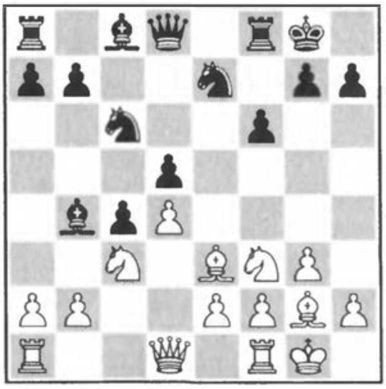
1.d4 e6 2.c4 d5 3.♘f3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♘c3 ♘c6 6.♗g5 f6 7.♗e3

White acknowledges the strength of ...g5 and is happy to defend d4, aiming for a logical set-up (as in the Rubinstein Variation) with a kingside fianchetto. Black has nothing better but to transfer the game into 'Swedish' waters with

7...c4 8.g3

Although it is not illogical to move the bishop once again after Black has released the central tension, 8.♗f4 does lose a lot of time – after 8...♗b4 9.e3 ♘ge7 10.♗e2 0-0 11.0-0 ♗f5 12.h3 a6 13.g4 ♗e6 14.♔h2 a typical position is reached with chances for both sides. The players agreed to an early draw in Melchior-Olsson, Sollentuna 1995.

8...♗b4 9.♗g2 ♘ge7 10.0-0 0-0



Both sides have developed logically. Black has chances on the queenside and on the light squares – a consequence of 7...c4. For the same reason, White is better placed in the centre and he would like to prepare e2-e4. The best way to implement this plan, is, in my opinion, the move that Chatalbashev now plays:

11.♘e1

To get a good feel of the position, here are a few practical examples:

– 11.♗f4 ♗e6 12.♘e1 (going for the same manoeuvre ♘e1-c2 as in the game) 12...♕d7 13.♘c2 ♗xc3!? 14.bxc3 ♖fe8 15.♖b1 b6 16.♖e1 ♘g6 (demonstrating the disadvantage of 11.♗f4) 17.♕d2 ♗f5 18.♘b4 ♗e4 19.♗xe4 ♖xe4 20.f3 ♖e7 21.♘xc6 ♕xc6 22.♗e3 ♖ae8 23.♗f2 f5 and Black is superior, Mastrokoukos-Graf, Hania 1993. A good example of how Black should play these positions.

– 11.a3 ♗xc3 12.bxc3 ♗f5 13.♗c1 b5 14.♘d2 ♕d7 15.e4 ♗g4! 16.f3 ♗e6 17.f4 f5 18.e5 a5 and with the centre blocked, Black is ready to advance on the queenside, Schebler-M.Haag, Wuppertal 1994.

– 11.♗d2 ♗e6 12.♖e1 (12.e3 ♗xc3!? 13.bxc3 ♕d7 14.♕e2 b5 15.♖fb1 ♖fb8 16.♘e1 ♗f5 17.♖b2 a6 was fine for Black, Hölzl-Sommerbauer, Tweng 2007) 12...♔h8 13.b3!? ♕a5 (13...cxb3) 14.♕c1 ♗a3 15.♕d1 ♕a6? (15...♗b4!) 16.bxc4 ♕xc4? 17.♗f1 ♞xd4? 18.♘xd4 ♕xd4 19.♘b5 was winning for White, although she only drew in Maric-Chelushkina, Becici 1994.

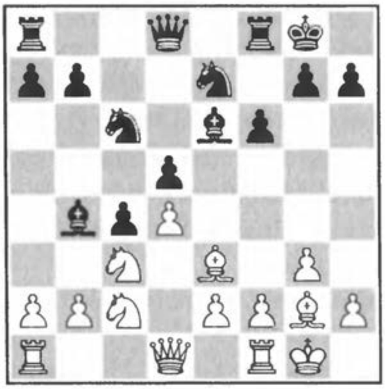
11...♗e6

There is nothing against the slightly more active 11...♗f5. Play more or less resembles our main game after:

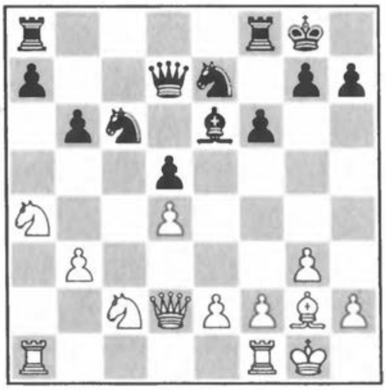
– 12.♞c2 ♗a5 13.f3 b5?! (or 13...♕d7 14.♗f2 ♗xc3 15.bxc3 b5) 14.♗f2 b4 15.♘a4 ♗b6. Both sides have their chances, but Lputian managed to outplay his opponent after: 16.e4 ♗e6 17.♖e1 ♖e8 18.♗f1 ♖c8 19.♖c1 ♗f7 20.exd5 ♕xd5? (20...♗xd5) 21.♘xb6 axb6 22.♘e3! ♕xd4 23.♘xc4 with a nearly winning advantage in Lputian-M.S.Tseitlin, Rimavska Sobota 1991.

– 12.f3 ♕d7 13.♗f2 ♖ad8 14.♘c2 ♗a5 (14...♗xc3) 15.e4 ♗xc3 16.bxc3 ♗h3 17.g4 ♗xg2 18.♔xg2 h5!? 19.h3 ♕e6! was also fine in Lucchi-Molina, Cesenatico 2000.

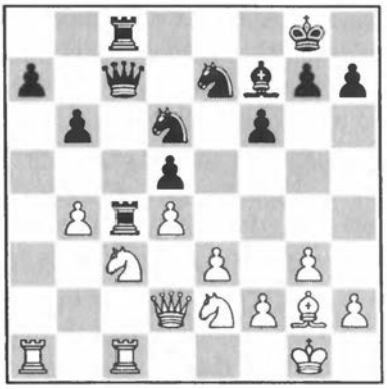
12.♘c2



12...♗a5
Black can also take on c3 to increase his control over the light squares. I actually prefer this to the text. 12...♗xc3 13.bxc3 ♕d7 14.♖e1 b5 Black is already advancing on the queenside. White needs a couple of preparatory moves before he can play e4. 15.♗d2 ♖fb8!? 16.♖b1 ♗f5 17.♖b2 a5 18.a3 b4 19.e4?! according to play, but it doesn't quite work here. 19...♗xe4 20.♗xe4 dxe4 21.♖xe4 ♘d5 with a clear edge for Black in Diotallevi-M.Haag, Arco 1999.
13.♗d2 ♕d7 14.♘a4!? b6!? 15.b4! cxb3 16.axb3 ♗xd2 17.♕xd2



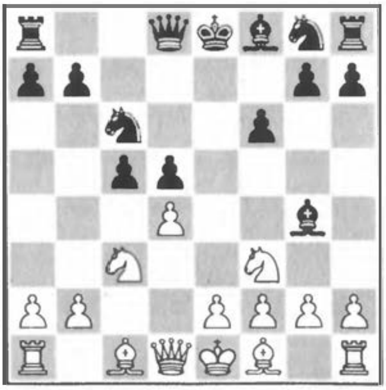
This type of position is always a bit better for White. If you like you can apply Euwe's ancient rule of the number of pawn groups here – the few the better. **17...♖fc8 18.b4 ♘f5 19.♖fc1 ♘ce7 20.♘c3 ♖c4 21.e3 ♖ac8 22.♘e1 ♘d6** 22...♖xb4 23.♘xd5 ♖xc1 24.♘xe7+ ♘xe7 25.♖xc1±. **23.♘d3 ♕c7 24.♘f4 ♗f7 25.♘fe2**



And after a long manoeuvring game, in which White always had a slight edge, Black managed to hold a draw.

☐ **Sergio Lopez**
■ **Enrique Arguinariz**
Buenos Aires 2002

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♘f3 ♘c6 6.♗g5 f6 7.♗c1 ♗g4!



As pointed out above, Black is playing a

Panov Attack with reversed colours and the additional ugly f7-f6. However, usually such an approach promises little for the first player in the way of an opening advantage. The present line is a case in point.

Black can also still play in 'Swedish' style, although in that case the bishop is perhaps better placed on c1 than on e3, where it was blocking the e-pawn:

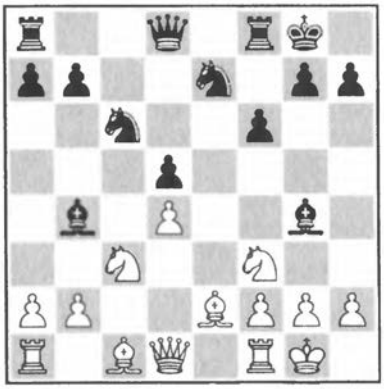
– 7...c4 8.g3 ♗b4 9.♗g2 ♘ge7 10.0-0 0-0 11.♘e1 ♗e6 12.♘c2 ♗a5 13.f3 ♖b8?! (13...♕d7) 14.♗f4 ♗c7 15.♗xc7 ♕xc7 16.e3 b5 17.♘e2 b4 18.b3 ♖fd8 19.♖f2 a5 20.♗f1 a4 and the queenside pawns carried the day in Blagidze-Mikenas, Palanga 1961.

– 7...♗f5 8.e3 c4 9.♘h4!? ♗e6 10.♗e2 ♗b4 11.0-0 ♘ge7 12.♗g4!? f5 13.♗e2 ♘c8 14.g3 0-0 was OK for Black in Oney-Sulypa, Istanbul 2003.

8.dxc5

White is trying to create something and sharpens the game. If Black now reacts to passively he will remain with nothing but static weaknesses in his position. Not surprisingly, given the focus on square d4 in the whole Tarrasch he has 8...d4! available.

The solid 8.e3 promises little after 8...cxd4 9.exd4 ♗b4! 10.♗e2 ♘ge7 11.0-0 0-0



– 12.h3 ♗h5 13.♕b3 ♔h8 14.♗e3 ♗a5 15.♖fd1 (15.♕xb7 ♖b8 16.♕a6 ♖xb2) 15...♗b6 16.♘h4?! (16.♘a4) 16...♗xe2 17.♘xe2 ♘a5 18.♕d3 ♘c4 and Black slowly outplayed his opponent in Nemet-Bluvshtein, Balatonlelle 2003.

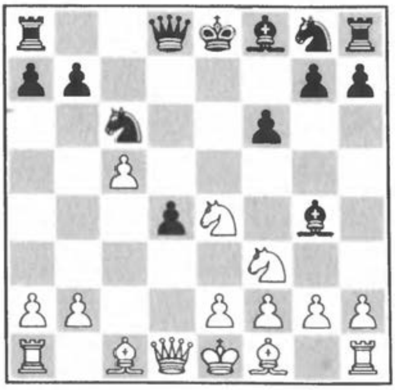
– 12.♕b3 ♔h8 13.a3 ♗d6 (13...♗a5 14.♕xb7?! – 14.♗e3 – 14...♖b8 15.♕a6 ♗xf3 16.♗xf3 ♘xd4) 14.♖d1 ♘a5 15.♕a2 ♖c8 16.♗d2 ♘c4 17.♗e1 ♖e8 18.h3 ♗e6 and Black was slightly better in Mascarinas-Cooper, Manila Olympiad 1992.

8...d4

This looks strong. However, Alexander Graf has played 8...♗xc5 which is also interesting. After 9.♘xd5 (9.♕xd5!? and now Black has certain compensation after 9...♘b4 10.♕b3 ♕d7) 9...♘ge7 10.e4 ♘xd5 11.exd5 (11.♕xd5 ♕b6 or 11...♕xd5 12.exd5 ♘b4) 11...♗xf3 (11...♗b4+!? 12.♗d2 ♕e7+) 12.gxf3 ♘d4 13.♗c4 b5 14.♗b3 0-0 15.♗e3 ♕b6 the players agreed a draw in Cherniak-Graf, Odessa 1991.

9.♘e4

After 9.♘a4 Black has the characteristic 9...b5! to obtain sufficient counterplay after 10.cxb6 axb6 11.b3 ♗b4+ 12.♗d2 ♘ge7 13.♗xb4 ♘xb4 14.♕d2 ♕d6 15.a3 ♘bc6 16.e3 ♗xf3 17.gxf3 0-0 18.f4 ½-½, Curtis-Halpin, Sydney 1990.



9...♕d5!

Already indicated by Keilhack in 1993 as the best move for Black. Still, Black was not exactly worse either after 9...♗xc5 10.♘xc5

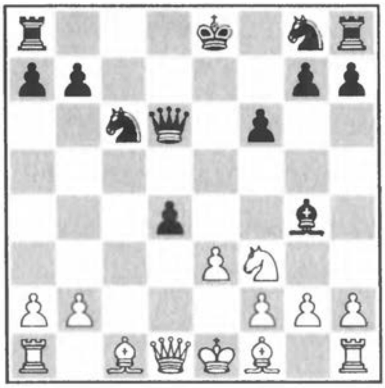
♕a5+ 11.♗d2 ♕xc5 12.♕b3 ♘ge7 13.e3 dxe3 14.fxe3 (14.♗xe3 ♕a5+) but now he should avoid 14...♕b6?! 15.♕xb6 axb6± Eisele-Beyer, Württemberg 1991/92.

10.♘d6+ ♗xd6 11.cxd6 ♕xd6

Black has an edge in development and his d4-pawn is restraining White's play. Yet, there is no need to lose as quickly as he does in the game.

12.e3

Perhaps 12.g3!?.



12...♖d8

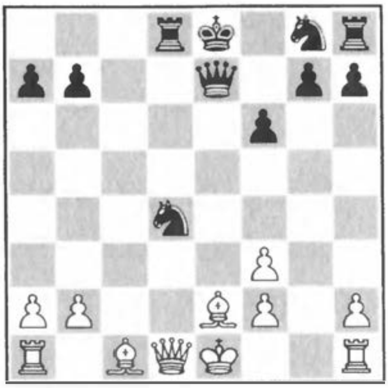
Here 12...0-0-0 also makes sense.

13.exd4 ♕e7+! 14.♗e2?!

Best was probably 14.♗e3 and now 14...f5!?. If 14.♕e2? then 14...♗xf3! 15.♕xe7+ ♘gxe7 16.gxf3 ♞xd4 17.♗d3 ♘xf3+ 18.♔e2 ♘d4+ 19.♔f1 ♘ec6 and White is suffering despite his pair of bishops.

14...♗xf3! 15.gxf3 ♘xd4

This has no further theoretical significance of course, because Black has emerged from the opening with the better chances.



16.♕a4+??

A blunder to finish the game. White had to try 16.♔f1 ♕e6∓ or 16.♕d3 ♕f7.

16...b5

And White resigned as he is losing his queen.

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JEROEN BOSCH
EDITOR

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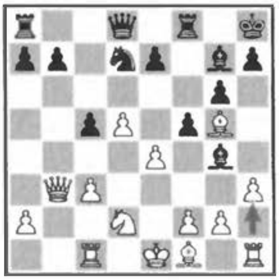
CHAPTER 1 - page 8

Jeroen Bosch

The SOS Files

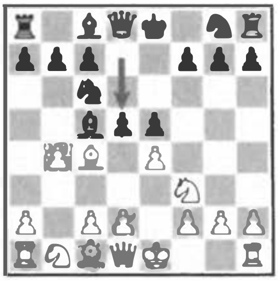


Catalino Sadorra-Kazhgaleev after 13.h3

CHAPTER 2 - page 27

Glenn Flear

Evans Above!

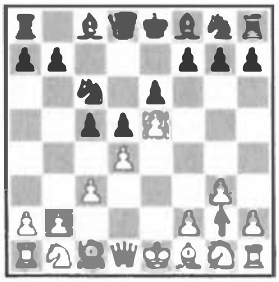


1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♗c5 4.b4 d5

CHAPTER 3 - page 35

Jeroen Bosch

Murey's Advance Variation in the French

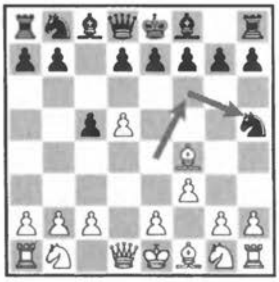


1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 ♘c6 5.g3!?

CHAPTER 4 - page 43

Stefan Löffler

A Trompowsky (K)nightmare

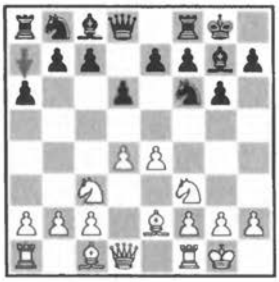


A Jumpy Knight

CHAPTER 5 - page 52

Alexander Finkel

A Non-Classic Way to Play the Classical Pirc

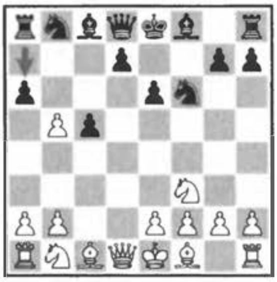


Let's play 6...a6

CHAPTER 6 - page 61

Dorian Rogozenco

Another Blumenfeld Surprise

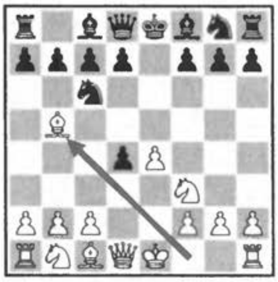


Opting for the rare 6...a6

CHAPTER 7 - page 68

Adrian Mikhalchishin

Combining the Spanish and the Scotch

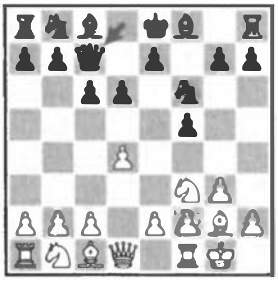


The Muzychuk Gambit

CHAPTER 8 - page 72

Dimitri Reinderman

Dutch: the Hort-Antoshin Variation

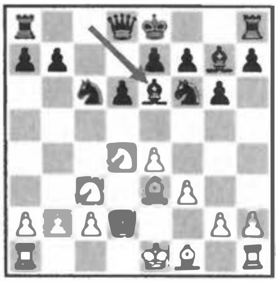


Playing for ...e5

CHAPTER 9 - page 78

Sergey Tiviakov

Sicilian Dragon: Avoiding the Main Line

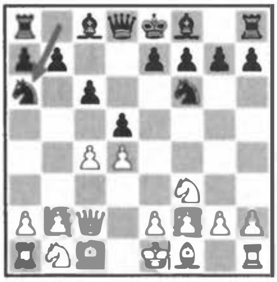


Let's play 8...♗e6

CHAPTER 10 - page 83

Arthur Kogan

Edgy Knight in the Slav

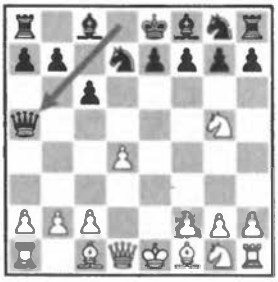


1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3. ♘f3 ♘f6 4.♛c2 ♘a6

CHAPTER 11 - page 89

Tibor Karolyi

Caro-Kann: the Karolyi Variation

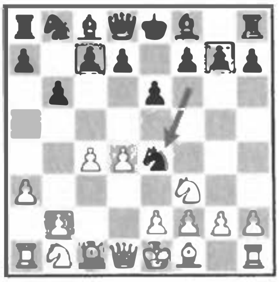


A surprise check:: 5...♛a5+!?

CHAPTER 12 - page 98

Jeroen Bosch

QI Petrosian: Centralize Your Knight

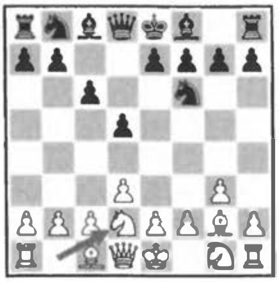


1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.a3 ♘e4

CHAPTER 13 - page 106

Adrian Mikhalchishin

King's Fianchetto: Kasparov's Blitz Weapon

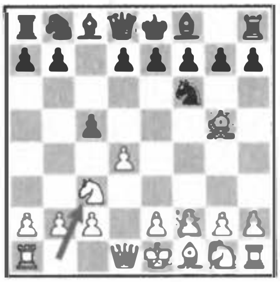


1.g3 d5 2.♗g2 c6 3.d3 ♘f6 4.♘d2

CHAPTER 14 - page 109

Alexander Finkel

Sicilian Motifs in the Trompowsky

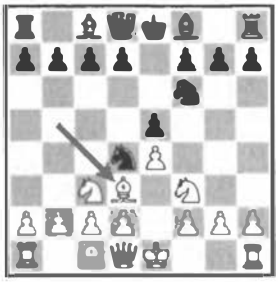


1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗g5 c5 3.♘c3

CHAPTER 15 - page 118

Jeroen Bosch

Surprise in the Spanish Four Knights

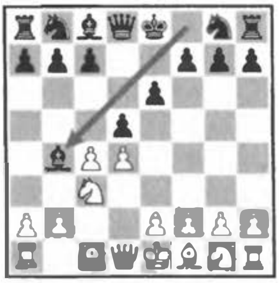


The bishop retreat 5.♗d3!?

CHAPTER 16 - page 125

Nikita Vitiugov

The Accelerated Ragozin

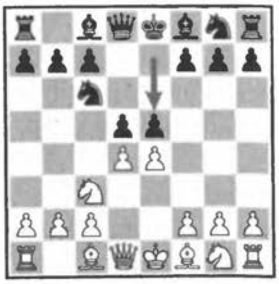


1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4

CHAPTER 17 - page 132

Jacob Aagaard

Nimzowitsch Opening: Exciting Symmetry



1.e4 ♘c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 e5

CHAPTER 1

Jeroen Bosch

The SOS Files

Short and Sweet

SOS-5, Chapter 13, p.107

The annual Sigeman and Co tournament was played in a different format this year. With 4½ out of 5 Nigel Short easily outran the other five participants. He won an attractive game versus the surprising runner-up Nils Grandelius with 6.♕f3 in the Najdorf.

☐ **Nigel Short**
■ **Nils Grandelius**
Malmö 2009

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♕f3

In SOS-5 I called this just another legal move versus the Najdorf, explaining that, while the early queen move is not mentioned in the standard works, it still has its technical merits. Admittedly, the main point is avoiding all theory! Especially, against Najdorf players (who will rely heavily on their knowledge) this is a good idea. Short is quite happy to just play chess right from the start. The American Andrew Karklins is the staunchest supporter of 6.♕f3, but GM Arthur Kogan regularly plays it too.

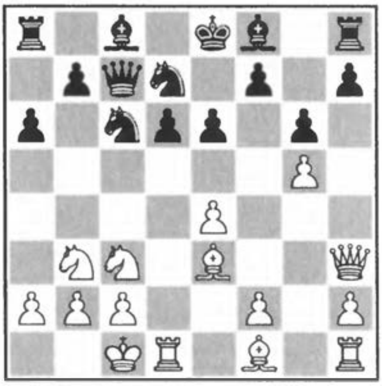
6...♘bd7

A normal Najdorf move, but Black loses the possibility to play ...♘c6. Set-ups with ...e6 or ...g6 make most sense.

● First it is important to note that the Najdorf move 6...e5?! is dubious after 7.♘f5 when it is clear that the queen is very useful on f3. White has a plus.

● Just bad is 6...b5? 7.e5 dxe5 8.♘dxb5! or 8.♕xa8 exd4 9.♘xb5 as I mentioned in SOS-5.

● More serious is 6...♕b6, when after 7.♘b3 e6 8.g4 ♘c6 9.g5 ♘d7 10.♗e3 ♕c7 11.♕h3 g6 12.0-0-0



the position is dangerous for Black as two games of Arthur Kogan testify:

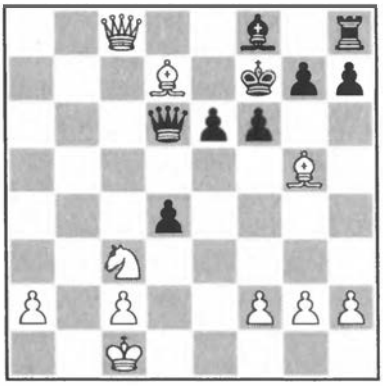
– 12...b5 13.f4 ♘c5 14.♘xc5 dxc5 15.e5 ♗b7 16.♘e4+–, Kogan-Yudasin, Jerusalem 1996.

– 12...♗g7 13.♘d4 0-0 14.♕g3 ♘a5 15.h4 b5 16.h5 b4 17.hxg6 hxg6 18.♕h4 ♖e8 19.♘f5! gxf5 20.exf5 exf5 21.♘d5 ♕d8 22.♗d4+–, Kogan-Jakovljevic, Ljubljana 1999 (via the move order 6...e6 7.g4 ♕b6 and so on).

● After 6...e6 there followed in Kogan-Zambrana, Sort 2006: 7.g4 ♘c6 8.♘xc6 bxc6 9.g5 ♘d7 10.h4 d5 11.h5 ♖b8 12.a3 ♗d6 13.♗h3 0-0 14.♕g2 ♗e5 15.0-0 ♘c5

16.♗e3 d4 17.♖ad1 ♕a5 18.♖xd4!? ♖xb2 19.♖c4 ♘d7 20.♘a4 ♖a2 21.g6 ♖xa3 22.gxf7+ ♔h8 23.♘c5 ♘b6? 24.♘b7! ♘xc4 (24...♗xb7 25.♖c5+−) 25.♘xa5 and White won.

- The Dragon is one of the most sensible set-ups after 6.♕f3. After 6...g6 White plays: 7.h3 ♗g7 8.♗e3 followed by g4 and castling queenside. Kogan and Romanian IM Corina Peptan have played this quite successfully.
- In reply to 6...♘c6 I recommended 7.♘xc6 bxc6 8.e5 (8.♗g5!? e5 9.♗c4 ♗e7 10.h4 0-0 11.♕g3 ♗e6 12.♗b3 ♕d7 13.h5 a5 14.h6 g6 15.♕h4 ♕d8 16.0-0-0 favoured White in H. van den Berg-Van Oosterom, Groningen 2007) 8...dxe5 9.♕xc6+ ♗d7 10.♕b7 in SOS-5. Things are certainly not entirely clear after 10...e6 Still the following game between two German amateurs demonstrates that you don't need to be a GM to play a nice game every once in a while: 11.♗g5 ♖b8 12.♕xa6 ♖xb2 13.0-0-0 ♕b8 14.♖xd7! ♘xd7 15.♗b5 ♖b4 16.♖d1 ♖d4 17.♖xd4 exd4 18.♕a4 f6 19.♗xd7+ ♔f7 20.♕c6 ♕d6?! 21.♕c8



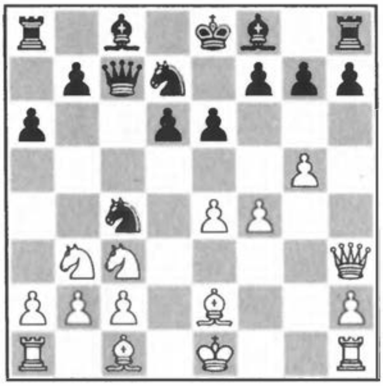
21...♕a3+? (21...♕e7) 22.♔d1 ♔g6 (22...♕e7 23.♗c1 dxc3? 24.♗a3+−) 23.♗d2+− ♗e7 24.♗e8+ ♔f5 25.g4+ ♔xg4 26.♕xe6+ f5 27.♕e2+ ♔h3 28.♕f3+ ♔xh2 29.♕g3+ ♔h1 30.♗c6 mate!, Saathoff-Seyb, Germany Bundesliga 2006/07.

7.♗e2

Or 7.♗e3 g6 8.0-0-0 ♗g7 9.♗e2 0-0 10.♕g3 ♕c7 11.h4 h5 12.♗g5 e6?! 13.♘b3 b5 14.a3 ♗b7 15.♕xd6 ♖ac8 16.f3, Karklins-Shabalov, Ledyard Foxwoods 2009, and White was a sound pawn up (but later lost).

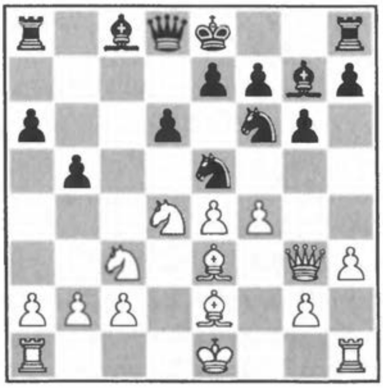
7...g6

Grandelius goes for the Dragon. The alternative is 7...e6 but White grasped the initiative in Van Veen-Van Oosterom, Amsterdam 2006, with 8.g4 ♕b6 9.♘b3 ♕c7 10.g5 ♘e5 11.♕h3 ♘fd7 12.f4 ♘c4



and now: 13.g6! ♘f6 14.gxf7+ ♔xf7 15.♖f1!? b5 16.e5! dxe5 17.fxe5 ♘xe5 (17...♕xe5 18.♗f4 ♕f5 19.♕g2 ♖a7 20.♗xc4 bxc4 21.♗b8±) 18.♗f4 ♗d6 19.♕g3 ♘c4 20.♗xc4 ♗xf4 21.♖xf4 ♕e5+ (21...bxc4 22.♖xf6+) 22.♗e2 1-0.

8.♗e3 ♗g7 9.h3 ♘e5 10.♕g3 b5 11.f4

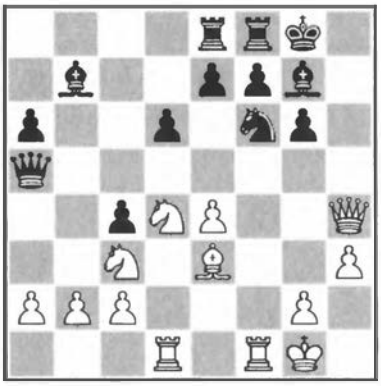


Short must have been pleased with his opening play. White is better developed and he still has the option of castling to either side. Note that the queen is very useful on the kingside.

11...♘c4 12.♗xc4 bxc4 13.f5!? ♗b7 14.♕h4 ♕a5 15.0-0

Why give Black counterplay by castling on opposite wings? White's king will be safe on the kingside – the same cannot be said for its counterpart.

15...0-0 16.♖ad1 ♖ae8 17.fxg6 hxg6



18.♘f5!

A brilliant concept. Black has to take the knight obviously.

18...gxf5 19.♖xf5

White has a winning attack. In most lines ♗h6 is decisive. After the exchange of the Dragon bishop the king is helplessly exposed.

19...d5!

The best defence.

– 19...♕b4 20.♗h6 ♗xh6 21.♕xh6 ♗xe4 22.♘xe4 ♘xe4 23.♖h5 and the attack crashes through.

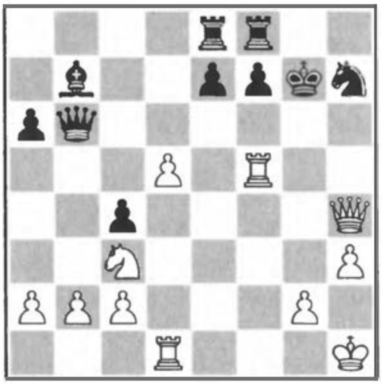
– 19...e5 20.♗h6 and White wins.

– 19...♕d8 20.♗h6 and wins.

20.exd5 ♕b4 21.♗h6! ♕b6+

21...♘h7 22.♗xg7 ♔xg7 23.♖d4 ♕b6 24.♔h1 transposes to the game.

22.♔h1 ♘h7 23.♗xg7 ♔xg7



24.♖d4 ♖h8 25.♖g4+ ♔f8 26.♕h5! ♗xd5 27.♘xd5 ♕e6 28.♘c7

Spurning a mate in three with 28.♖xf7+, but Grandelius threw in the towel after 28.♘c7 too. A great game by Nigel Short!

U.S. Title for Nakamura

SOS-9, Chapter 2, p.16

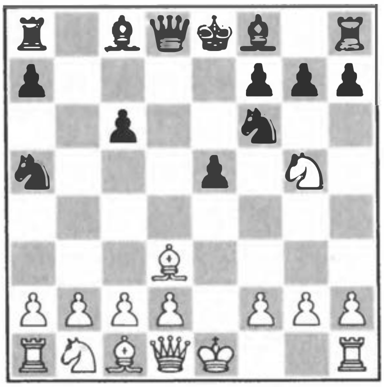
The U.S. Championship in St. Louis 2009 was a strongly contested event. It ended in a great success for Hikaru Nakamura who scored 7 out of 9 staying ahead of the surprising youngster Robert Hess and the seasoned Alexander Onischuk. Gata Kamsky and Varuzhan Akobian were a point behind the winner. In the final round Nakamura left his followers no chance by beating Joshua Friedel (who was in contention for a GM norm) with an interesting SOS from the ancient Two Knights Opening. Note that 8.♗d3 dates back to the days of World Championship Candidate Isidor Gunsberg! Congratulations to U.S. Champion Hikaru Nakamura, and hope you enjoy a lovely SOS miniature!

☐ **Hikaru Nakamura**
■ **Joshua Friedel**
St Louis US Championship 2009

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♘f6 4.♘g5

d5 5.exd5 ♘a5 6.♗b5+ c6 7.dxc6 bxc6 8.♗d3!?

The SOS alternative to the book line 8.♗e2.



8...♗e7

– 8...♘g4!? was first played by Lasker. After 9.♘e4 f5 10.♗e2 h5!, 11.h3!? gave both players an exciting game in Stellwagen-L'Ami, Maastricht 2008 (advanced chess match). See Stellwagen's notes in SOS-9.

– 8...h6. By far and away the most popular answer in practice. After 9.♘e4 ♘d5 10.0-0 ♗e7 11.♘g3! (11.♖e1 ♘f4 12.♗f1 c5 13.d3 ♘e6 14.♘bd2 0-0 15.♘b3 was also very pleasant for White in Shushpanov-Zhidkov, Peterhof 2008) 11...g6 (11...0-0 12.♗f5 ♗a6 13.d3 ♖e8 14.♖e1 ♗f8 15.c4 ♘e7 16.♗e4± Nadig-Nemcova, Gaziantep 2008) 12.♖e1 ♕c7 13.b3 (also good looks 13.a3 0-0 14.b4 ♘b7 15.♗b2 ♗f6 16.♘c3 ♗g7 17.♗a6!? f5 18.♘f1 ♘f4 19.♘e2 ♘e6 20.d3 ♘d6 21.♗xc8 ♖axc8 22.♘d2 ♖fe8 23.c4 and White kept a plus in Navara-Tomashevsky, Budva rapid playoff 2009, until he blundered his extra pawn) 13...0-0 14.♗b2±, Stellwagen-De Jong, Hilversum 2008. See SOS-9.

– 8...♗g4 9.♗e2 (9.f3!? followed by 10.♕e2 is also not bad) 9...♗f5 (9...♗xe2 10.♕xe2 ♗d6 11.♘c3 is better for White) 10.d3 h6 11.♘f3 ♗d6 12.♘c3 ♕c7 13.♗e3 ♖d8 14.♕c1 0-0 15.0-0 gave Black some compensation due to his space advantage, but White won with great ease in Groszpeter-Zsinka, Budapest 2008.

9.♘c3

9.0-0 is the most popular choice after 8...♗e7, but it is noteworthy that both Nakamura and Morozevich prefer 9.♘c3. I think that the reason is that were Black to continue with 9...h6 then White can retreat his knight to f3 and attack pawn e5 (while e5-e4 is not on). This is a little awkward for Black as the bishop is already developed to e7. Note that 9...h6 10.♘e4 ♘d5 11.♘g3 was the move order in Navara-Tomashevsky from a rapid playoff game in the 2009 European Championship in Budva. See the note on move 8 via 8...h6.

9...0-0

There is something to be said for 9...♘d5.

10.0-0 ♖b8

A new move that does not really bother Nakamura. Practice is obviously limited from this position. Karjakin has played: 10...h6 11.♘f3 ♗g4 (instead the game Petrenko-Kochetkova, St Petersburg 2006, went: 11...♗d6 12.♖e1 ♖e8 13.b3 ♗g4 14.h3 ♗d7 – 14...♗h5 15.g4!? ♗g6 16.♗xg6 fxg6 17.♘e4 – 15.♗b2 when White had obtained a clear edge) 12.h3 ♗h5 13.♗e2 (also playable were 13.♖e1 and 13.g4!? which looks very strong) 13...e4 14.♘e5 (double-edged is 14.♘h4!? ♗xe2 15.♕xe2) 14...♗xe2 15.♕xe2 ♕d4 16.♘g4 ♖fe8 17.d3 (17.b3 ♖ad8) 17...exd3 18.♕xd3 ♕xd3 19.cxd3 ♘xg4 20.hxg4 was Morozevich-Karjakin, Moscow blitz 2008. This is a very unattractive ending for Black.

The immediate 10...♗g4 11.♗e2 ♗f5 is another set-up.

11.h3!

A useful move that prevents a possible ...♗g4 (either annoying the queen or pinning the knight were it to retreat to f3).

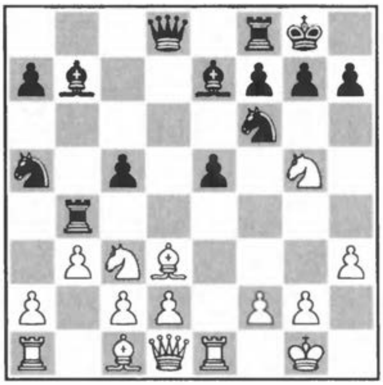
11...c5

The threat is c5-c4, but White wants to fianchetto his queenside bishop anyway.

12.b3 ♖b4

Imaginative play with the rook, but it doesn't work in the end. 12...c4 fails to 13.bxc4 (13.♗xc4? ♘xc4 14.bxc4 h6 15.♘f3 e4 and Black has excellent counterplay) 13...♕d4 (13...h6 14.♘f3 and 13...♗a6 14.♕e2 ♕c7 15.♘b5) 14.♘f3 ♕c5 15.♕e2. The best move was 12...♗b7.

13.♖e1 ♗b7



14.♗a3

Nakamura admitted later that he had spent quite some time calculating 14.♖xe5 ♗d6 15.♖e1 ♗b8 when White is two pawns up, but Black will create some threats on the kingside. He decided upon the text which is much simpler (and therefore stronger).

14...♖f4 15.g3 ♖d4 16.♘f3! ♖xd3?

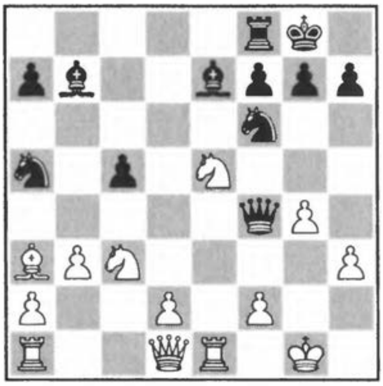
Now after 16...♖d7 17.♘xe5 the whole rook escapade would have been pointless. So Friedel decides upon a practically forced 'positional' exchange sacrifice.

16...♘c6 was a better try, when White will not take the exchange (although that should win as well) but goes 17.♘xe5 ♘xe5 18.♖xe5 ♕d7 19.♕f1 ♕c6 20.f3! ♗d6 21.♖e3 ♗xg3 22.♘e2 ♖xd3 23.♖xd3 ♗e5 24.♖e1 ♘d7. This long line was indicated by Nakamura in New In Chess 2009/4 as winning.

17.cxd3 ♕xd3 18.♘xe5 ♕f5 19.g4!

Excellent, Black is just lost.

19...♕f4



20.d4!

Very concrete play, Nakamura sees no ghosts and calculates well until the end. There is no need for 20.♘d3 ♕c7.

20...♖d8 21.♕e2! ♖xd4?

Losing to a neat bishop retreat, but there is no salvation anyway. 21...♕xd4 22.♘xf7! ♕xc3 23.♘xd8 ♗xd8 24.♖ad1 is a nice double threat: the bishop is hanging, and 25.♖d3 would trap the queen. 21...♕h6 is met by 22.♕e3.

22.♗c1! and her majesty is trapped! Black resigned.

Pawn Sac in the Spielmann Attack

SOS-8, Chapter 12, p.97

In SOS-8 Arthur Kogan explained why it is useful to have the 'Spielmann Attack' – which is how he dubbed 1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 c5 3.d5 d6 4.♘c3 ♗f5 – in your repertoire. White's main reply is 5.♘d2, to prepare e4 and chase away the bishop. However, Kogan indicates some other possibilities too. One of them is the immediate 5.e4 – a pawn sacrifice for which you must be ready. In a game from the 2009 Serbian Championship GM Nikola Sedlak lost without a fight. Don't let it happen to you!

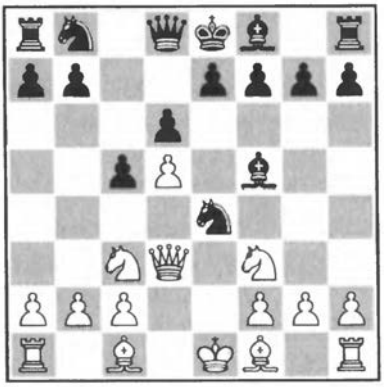
☐ **Sinisa Drazic**
■ **Nikola Sedlak**
Kragujevac ch-SRB 2009

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 c5 3.d5 d6 4.♘c3 ♗f5 5.e4!?

Very sharp, SOS-readers were warned by Kogan well in advance.

For 5.♘d2 g5! 6.e4 ♗g6 see the featured games in SOS-8: Roussel Roozmon-Kogan, Montreal 2005, and Grünfeld-Spielmann, Bad Pistyan 1922(!).

5...♘xe4 6.♕d3



6...♕a5?!

Bad is 6...♘g3? 7.♕b5+. After 6...♘xc3 7.♕xf5 g6 8.♕d3 ♘a4 9.♕b3 ♘b6 10.a4 White has some compensation for the pawn (Kogan). While 6...c4!? deserves attention, according to the Israeli GM.

7.♘g5! c4 8.♕f3!

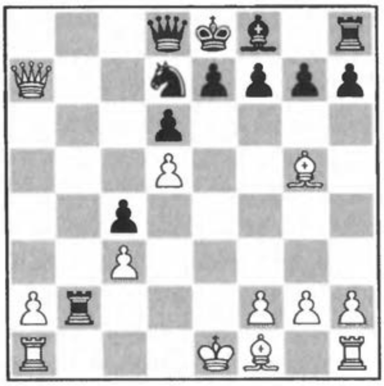
8.♕xc4 ♘xc3 is fine for Black.

8...♘xc3 9.♕xf5! ♘e4+

The only move in view of the threats on f7 and c8.

The following moves are forced.

10.c3 ♘xg5 11.♕c8+ ♕d8 12.♕xb7 ♘d7 13.♗xg5 ♖b8 14.♕xa7 ♖xb2



15.♗xc4

15.0-0-0 with an attack was indicated by Kogan, but Drazic' move is simpler. White's position is more or less winning. Black should especially investigate 6...c4 which looks like his best bet.

15...f6?! 16.♗e3 ♘e5 17.0-0 ♖b8 18.♗e2 g6

Black has difficulties finishing his development, he is a pawn down, and to make matters worse his opponent has the simple plan to push his a-pawn all the way.

19.♖fb1 ♖a8 20.♕b6 ♕xb6 21.♖xb6 ♔f7 22.a4 ♗g7 23.f4 ♘d7 24.♖b7 ♖hd8 25.♗b5 ♘c5 26.♗xc5! dxc5 27.♖e1 ♗f8 28.c4 f5 29.♖e6 ♖dc8 30.♔f2 ♖ab8 31.♖xb8 ♖xb8 32.a5 and Sedlak resigned in view of 32...♖a8 33.a6 ♗g7 34.♗c6 ♖a7 (34...♖xa6 35.♗e8+ ♔xe8 36.♖xa6) 35.♗b7.

Just a Cheap Trick?

SOS-3, Chapter 7, p.62

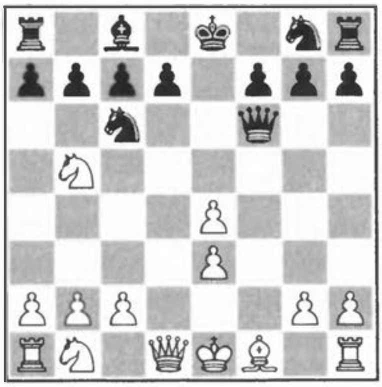
In his excellent *The Road to Chess Improvement* Alex Yermolinsky reveals that he is never happier when his opponents try to catch him off-balance by avoiding the main lines. The reason is that, though he may be surprised in the opening, he will, in return, obtain a good position. Interestingly, American master Michael Langer recently adopted his pet-line in the Scotch (the Blumenfeld Variation) against Yermolinsky and won quickly. Maybe, he caught Yermo on a bad day. Perhaps tricky lines can be hard to meet even for strong grandmasters. Or, arguably, you could say that this particular SOS line is hardly a way to avoid the main lines, as it has become very popular following publication in SOS-3. Langer, by the way, is an expert in this line, and he stubbornly entered a line that is thought to be good for Black following the game Wang Hao-Harakrishna, Taiyuan 2005 – see the SOS Files of SOS-4 (pp.14-16).

☐ **Michael Langer**
■ **Alex Yermolinsky**
Stillwater 2009

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 exd4 4.♘xd4 ♗c5 5.♗e3 ♕f6 6.♘b5

This is the Blumenfeld Attack. In return for isolated doubled pawns on the e-file White gets a dangerous initiative. We can see Langer's point in opting for this line against his much stronger opponent. Tactical complications galore – and if you forgive me the atrocious pun on the German name: the Blumenfeld is no bed of roses for Black.

6...♗xe3 7.fxe3



So, White has a terrible pawn structure, although, this needs to be qualified: the e-pawns control important squares and White's pieces may profit from these strongholds. Black faces a difficult choice as he has many tempting possibilities.

7...♕h4+

If you want to retreat the queen to d8, then it makes sense to make the check first, as Yermo does.

- After the immediate 7...♕d8 8.♕g4 g6?! (8...♔f8) 9.♕f4 d6 10.♗c4 ♘e5 11.0-0 Black is in trouble. (Whereas in our main game – after the interpolation of 7...♕h4+ 8.g3 – Black now has the powerful ...♗h3!.) 11...♕e7? (this is a common mistake in practice. Best is 11...♕d7! 12.♘1a3! a6 13.♘d4 ♕e7 14.♘f3 with strong play for White) 12.♘1c3 c6 13.♗xf7+ (13.♘xd6+ is also completely winning) 13...♘xf7 14.♕xf7+ ♕xf7 15.♘xd6+ ♔e7 16.♘xf7 and White won in Langer-Hendrick, Dallas 2002.
- Zuniga played 7...♔d8 against Langer (Dallas 2001). The game continued 8.♘1c3 ♘ge7 9.♕d2 (9.♕f3 is a decent alternative – see SOS-3) 9...a6 10.♘d4 ♘e5 11.0-0-0 d6 12.♗e2 and in SOS-3 I called this a balanced position. 12...♕g6 13.♘f3 ♘7c6 14.♘xe5 ♘xe5 15.♘d5 with a very decent position for White. Langer obtained a winning game later on, but lost when he allowed a mate in one.
- Bronstein's move 7...♕e5 is not very popular in practice. See SOS-3 for the details. After 8.♘d2 Black must take care: 8...a6? just loses to 9.♘f3 and Black might as well resign as he realized 3 moves later in Kislinsky-Mikkelsen, St Petersburg 2009: 9...axb5 10.♘xe5 ♘xe5 11.♗xb5 ♘e7 12.♗f1 1-0.

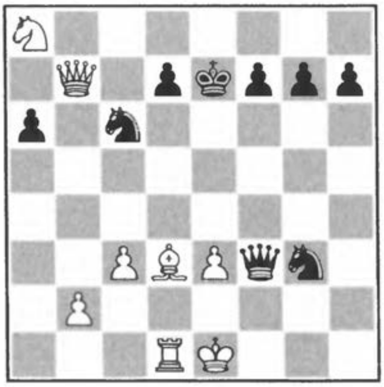
Correct is 8...♔d8 9.♗d3 ♘f6 10.0-0 d6 and now 11.♘c4? is a combination with a big hole in it: 11...♕xb5 12.♘xd6 ♕c5 13.♘xf7+ ♔e7 14.♘xh8 ♕xe3+ 15.♔h1 ♗g4 and

Black was better in Langer-Friedel, Las Vegas 2009. White should play 11.♘f3 instead.

8.g3 ♕d8

The main alternative is the crazy 8...♕xe4 9.♘xc7+ ♔d8 10.♘xa8 ♕xh1 when the position is a mess, and White faces a choice:

- **11.♕g4** ♕g1! Perhaps Langer would have taken the draw here against his illustrious opponent, as he had done against Kamberi in 2003: (11...♘ge7!? see SOS-3) 12.♕xg7 (White can play with 12.♕f4?! after 12...♘f6 13.♘c3 ♖e8 14.♔d2 ♕xh2+ 15.♗e2 ♕h6?! 16.♕xh6 gxh6 17.♖f1 ♖e6 18.♘c7! ♔xc7 19.♖xf6 ♖xf6 20.♘d5+ ♔d6 21.♘xf6 the ending was perhaps slightly better for Black in Langer-Tofte, Gibraltar 2008) 12...♕xe3+ 13.♗e2 ♕g1+ 14.♗f1 ♕e3+ 15.♗e2 ♕g1+ 16.♗f1 ♕e3+ ½-½ Langer-Kamberi, Oklahoma 2003.
- A recent attempt is **11.♘c3!?** ♕xh2?! 12.♕d6! ♘f6 13.♕c7+ ♔e7 14.0-0-0 ♕h5 15.♘b5! a6?? (now White wins material) 16.♘d6 ♕a5 17.♘xc8+ ♖xc8 18.♕xc8 ♕xa2 19.♕xb7. The remainder of the game deserves to be shown. White has to calculate accurately to haul in the win: 19...♕a1+ 20.♔d2 ♘e4+ 21.♔e2! (not 21.♔e1? ♕a5+! 22.c3 ♕f5! and White must return his extra rook to ward off the attack! 23.♖xd7+ ♕xd7 24.♕xd7+ ♔xd7 25.♗xa6 ♘xg3) 21...♘xg3+ 22.♔e1 ♕a5+ 23.c3 ♕f5 24.♗d3!? ♕f3

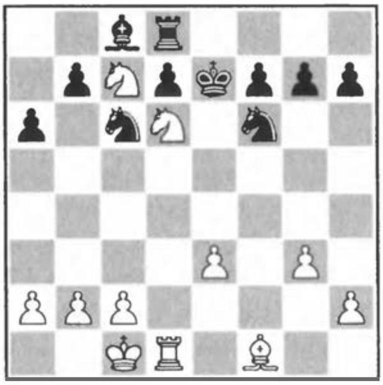


25.♕xd7+! ♔f8 (25...♔xd7 26.♗e2++−) 26.♕d6+ ♔g8 27.♕f4 ♕g2 28.♗f1 ♘xf1 29.♕b8+ with a lovely back rank mate to finish an impressive game (Rothuis-Coene, Bussum 2008).

- **11.♕d6 ♘f6** (11...♘ge7 12.♘d2 ♕d5?? 13.♕c7+ ♔e8 14.♕xc8+! ♘xc8 15.♘c7+ ♔e7 16.♘xd5+ and White had won a piece in Stimpson-Lang, England tt-3 2006/07. This trick often occurs in this line. In practice both sides have missed it surprisingly often – make sure you won't be next!) **12.♘c3** This is bad according to an old analysis by Keres because of 12...♕f3. Which is why White should prefer 12.♘d2. Perhaps things are not so straightforward though. So, according to Keres Black is better, but you could analyse this further on the basis of: 13.♔d2 ♖e8 14.♖e1!? (rather than 14.♕c7+ ♔e7 15.♗e2 ♘e4+ 16.♘xe4 ♕xe4 17.♖d1 ♔f8! 18.♕f4 d6 – 18...♕d5+ – 19.♘c7 ♖e7 20.♕xe4 ♖xe4 21.♗f3 ♖e5 22.♖f1 ♖c5 and now White should play 23.♘d5 with equal chances. Instead, 23.♗d5?? ♘d8 lost Langer a piece. White resigned, Langer-Kamberi, Dallas 2003). For example: 14...♕f2+ 15.♔d1 ♕f5 16.♘c7! ♖e7 17.♘7b5 ♕e5 18.♕xe5 ♘xe5 (18...♖xe5 19.♘d6±) 19.♘xa7 d5 20.♘xc8 ♔xc8 with an extra pawn in Sochacki-Lagarde, France 2005.

Instead of 12.♘c3 White can continue **12.♘d2**, as we noted. Now 12...♕d5?! (12...♘e8 13.♕f4 ♕d5 14.0-0-0! is good for White. Critical is 12...♘e4 13.♕c7+ ♔e7 14.0-0-0 ♘xd2 15.♗b5! ♕e4!, Gutman, who continued with 16.♗xc6 bxc6 17.♖xd2 ♕xe3 18.♕d6+ ♔d8 19.♕c7+ ♔e7 with a perpetual. See SOS-3 for more details) is bad for Black, but it has been played surprisingly often: 13.♕c7+ ♔e7 14.0-0-0! ♕e5 (14...♕xa2 15.♘b3 ♕a4 16.♕d6+ ♔d8 17.♕c7+ ♔e7 18.♗h3 ♕e4 19.♕d6+ ♔d8 20.♘d4 ♕xe3+ 21.♔b1 ♘xd4 22.♖xd4 ♕e1+ 23.♖d1 ♕a5? 24.b4! (this great move wins on the spot!)

24...♘e8 25.♕xd7+! ♗xd7 26.♖xd7+ ♔c8 27.♖c7+ ♔d8 28.♖c8+ ♔e7 29.bxa5 ♖f8 30.♘c7 ♘d6 31.♘d5 mate! Velcheva-Paulicka, Sunny Beach 2006) 15.♘c4 ♕xc7 16.♘xc7 ♖d8 (16...♔d8 17.♘b5 d5 18.♗g2 ♔e7 19.♗xd5 ♘xd5 20.♖xd5 ♗e6 21.♖c5 and White had won a pawn in Mihok-Vul, Budapest 2006) 17.♘d6. This was given in SOS-3 as better for White. Two more recent examples after 17...a6



and now:

– 18.♗h3 ♖f8 19.♘a8! (very funny, this return to the corner!) 19...♘a7 20.♘b6 ♖d8 21.e4! and White won more material in Sukharukova-Safonov, Voronezh 2008.

– 18.♗g2 ♘g4 19.♗h3 ♘ce5 20.♗xg4 ♘xg4 21.♘a8! (again, this is very strong!) 21...♘xe3 22.♖d3 and Black cannot avoid further material losses. Rensch-Ballantyne, Chicago 2006.

While Black may be OK after 8...♕xe4, it is not surprising that Yermolinsky avoids these lines. The complications are huge. White often has the draw in hand, and one mistake and the game is all over.

Let us return to 8...♕d8.

9.♕g4 g6

Langer also has a lot of experience with 9...g5!? and now:

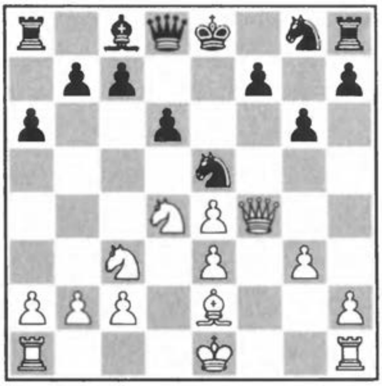
– 10.♘1c3 ♘e5 11.♕e2 a6 12.♘d4 d6 13.♕f2 ♗e6 (13...♕f6!? 14.♘d5 ♕xf2+ 15.♔xf2 ♔d8 16.h4 g4 17.♖d1 was about equal in T. Willemze-Jonkman, Wijk aan Zee C 2007) 14.♗e2 ♕f6 15.♘f5 ♗xf5 16.exf5 ♘e7 17.♖f1 d5 (17...0-0-0) 18.0-0-0 0-0-0 19.e4! c6 20.♕a7 ♕d6 21.f6! ♘g8 22.exd5 ♘xf6 23.♗xa6! (23.♖xf6!+–) 23...bxa6 24.♕xa6+ ♔c7 25.dxc6 ♕xc6 26.♕a5+ and White won in Langer-Santarius, Tulsa 2008.

– 10.♕h5?! ♘e5 11.h4 d6 (11...♘f6 12.♕h6 ♖g8 13.♘xc7+ ♕xc7 14.♕xf6 ♘g4! 15.♕f3 ♕xc2 16.♕xg4 ♕xb2 and Black won in Langer-Vaja, Stillwater 2007) 12.♗e2 a6 13.♘d4 c5!? 14.♘f5 ♗xf5 15.exf5 ♘f6 16.♕h6 (16.♕xg5 ♖g8 17.♕f4 – 17.♕h6 ♕e7 – 17...♕b6) 16...gxh4 (16...♘e4) 17.♕xh4 ♕e7 18.♘c3 0-0-0 19.0-0-0 ♖de8 20.♕f4 with a slight plus in Langer-Onischuk, Stillwater 2005. The stronger player won in the end.

Or 9...♔f8 10.♕f4 d6 11.♘1c3, and in SOS-3 I now mentioned 11...a6 as Black's best move. After 12.♘d4♘e5 13.0-0-0 play is about equal.

10.♕f4 d6 11.♗c4

Because of Harikrishna's novelty (12...♗h3! in the main game) White has been seeking alternatives. Practice has seen a few games with 11.♘1c3 a6 12.♘d4 ♘e5 13.♗e2



which is quite decent for White. For example: 13...♗h3 (13...♗e6 14.0-0-0 ♘f6 15.♖hf1 ♘fd7 has occurred several times)

14.0-0-0 ♘f6 15.♕h6 ♗g4 16.♖hf1 ♗xe2 17.♘dxe2 ♘fg4? (17...♘h5) 18.♕g7 ♖f8 19.♘d5 and White is clearly better and won in Stokke-Strand, Gjovik 2008, after 19...c6 20.♘f6+ ♘xf6 21.♖xf6 ♕b6? (21...♕e7) 22.♖dxd6 ♕xe3+ 23.♔b1 ♕c5 (23...♕xe2 24.♖fe6+ fxe6 25.♖xe6+ ♔d8 26.♕xf8+ ♔c7 27.♕d6+ ♔b6 28.♕d4++–) 24.♘d4 ♖c8 25.a3 ♖c7 26.♖fe6+ ♖e7 (26...fxe6 27.♖d8+ ♔xd8 28.♘xe6+ ♔e8 29.♘xc7+ ♔d8 30.♘e6++–) 27.♖xe7+ ♔xe7 28.♕f6+ ♔e8 29.♖d8 mate.

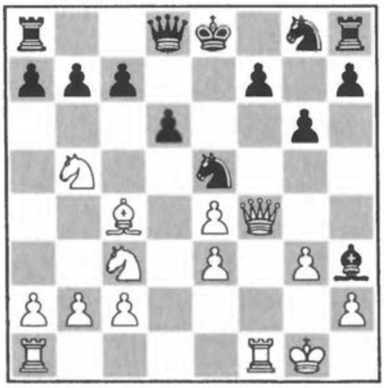
11...♘e5 12.0-0 ♗h3!

This was Harikrishna's novelty. It is interesting that Langer decided to repeat the whole line (he had played 11.♘1c3 previously) and got away with it!

- 12...♕e7 13.♘1c3 g5 14.♕f2 ♗e6? 15.♗xe6 fxe6 16.♘xc7+! ♔d7 17.♘xa8 and White won in Langer-Grubbs, Dallas 2000.
- 12...f6!? 13.♗xg8 ♖xg8 14.♕xf6 ♕xf6 15.♖xf6 c6! 16.♘d4 ♔e7 was also not bad for Black in Kalod-Lanc, Slovakia 2005/06, although the second player lost in the end.

13.♘1c3

For 13.♗xf7+ ♔d7 14.♘1c3 g5! see The SOS Files of SOS-4, the game Wang Hao-Harikrishna, Taiyuan 2005. Allowing White to take with check on f7 is what makes the Indian grandmaster's move 12...♗h3 so beautiful. With the text Langer is setting a trap.



13...♗xf1?

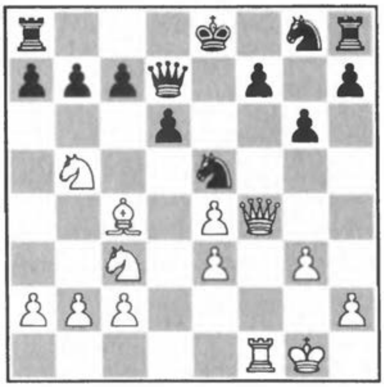
And Yermolinsky falls for it! After 13...♕d7! 14.♗xf7+ (14.♘d5 0-0-0!) 14...♘xf7 15.♘d5 0-0-0 16.♕xf7 ♗xf1 17.♕xf1 c6 18.♕c4 ♘h6 White does not have enough for the exchange, as Lubomir Kavalek notes in his column for the *Washington Post*.

14.♖xf1

White is an exchange down, but he has everything developed.

14...♕d7?

After this further mistake the game is lost. Here 14...♘e7 is met by 15.♗xf7+ ♔d7 16.♘d4!, when the most stubborn defence is 16...c6 (and not 16...♘xf7 17.♕xf7 ♔c8 18.♘e6).



15.♗e6! ♕c6

15...♕xe6 16.♘xc7+; 15...fxe6 16.♕f8 mate; 15...♕d8 16.♗xf7+ ♔d7 17.♘d5! and wins.

16.♘d4

And Yermolinsky resigned. He cannot avoid heavy material losses after, say 16...♕c5 17.♗xf7+ ♔d7 18.♗e6+.

Read SOS and Win, Part I

SOS-8, Chapter 16, p.124

Playing the Ruy Lopez with white, while arguably your best bet for an opening advantage, is tough because there are so many different lines that deserve serious attention. It is surely no coincidence that we have investigated quite a few Spanish SOS-lines for Black over the years. The present game (played at the 2009 Gibraltar tournament) is a case in point. Bulgarian grandmaster Antoaneta Stefanova adopts the so-called Cozio Defence to quickly grasp the initiative and win an attractive game. What is interesting is that until move 16 the whole game may be found in SOS-8 with the approval of Leonid Gofshtein. Gofshtein wrote an article on 3...♘ge7 – a line he personally started to adopt after being surprised as White by Murey!

☐ **Florian Armbrust**
■ **Antoaneta Stefanova**
Gibraltar 2009 (1)

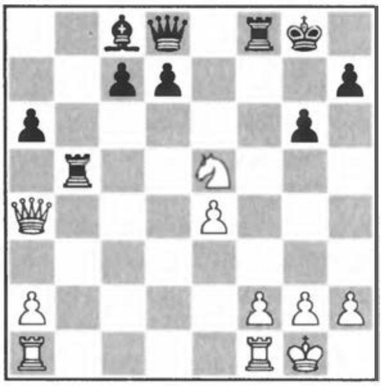
1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘ge7

Not a bad weapon against the Ruy Lopez. If you are considering to incorporate it in your repertoire (and who wouldn't after the present game) then apart from Gofshtein's article in SOS-8, you might also like to have a look at Glenn Flear's expose on 3...g6 in SOS-2. The lines 3...g6 and 3...♘ge7 combine particularly well, and this may confuse your future opponents even further!

4.♘c3

Not illogical, White is transposing to a kind of Spanish Four Knights with a black knight on e7 rather than on f6. The main alternatives are 4.c3 and 4.0-0.

● Another recent effort by Stefanova went: 4.c3 a6 5.♗a4 g6 6.d4 exd4 7.cxd4 ♗g7 8.d5 b5!? 9.dxc6 (or 9.♗c2 ♘a5 10.♘bd2 d6 11.♖b1 c5 12.a3 0-0 13.0-0 f5!?, Shamkovich-Murey, New York 1989. The whole game may be found in SOS-8 with Gofshtein's analysis) 9...bxa4 10.♕xa4 ♘xc6 11.♗g5 f6 (this also occurred in Butunoi-Gofshtein, Latschach 2007. According to Gofshtein, play is unclear) 12.♗f4 (12.♗d2 0-0 13.0-0 ♖b8 14.♗c3 ♕e8 15.♘bd2 ♔h8 16.♖fe1, Butunoi-Gofshtein, Latschach 2007) 12...♖b8 13.♘c3 ♖xb2 14.♘d5 ♘e5 15.0-0 0-0 16.♘xf6+! ♗xf6 17.♗xe5 ♗xe5 18.♘xe5 ♖b5!?



with perhaps a slight edge for White in Hammer-Stefanova, Gibraltar 2009 (9).

● 4.0-0 g6 5.c3 a6 6.♗a4 ♗g7 7.d4 exd4 8.cxd4 b5 9.♗b3 (for 9.♗c2 see SOS-8) 9...0-0 (9...d6) 10.♘c3 d6 11.h3 ♘a5 12.♗c2 c5 13.d5 as Gofshtein notes in SOS-8, Black often achieves positions in the style of the Benoni or the King's Indian. Here Black's game looks completely satisfactory. 13...♘c4 14.♖b1 h6 15.♘e2 ♕a5 (15...f5) 16.a3 and Black was OK in Rozentalis-Wohl, Queenstown 2009.

4...♘g6 5.h4

Because of the knight on g6 the h-pawn is itching to go to h5, while a Black ...h5 would seriously weaken the g5-square. After the conventional 5.d4 exd4 6.♘xd4 White does not achieve much: 6...♗c5 7.♘b3 (7.♗e3 ♗xd4 8.♗xd4 0-0 9.0-0 d6 10.f4 f5 was equal in Hracek-D'Amore, Manila Olympiad 1992) 7...♗b6 8.0-0 0-0 9.♘d5 and now 9...♘ce7! is the right way for Black as indicated by Gofshtein on the basis of the game Cheparinov-Berkovich, Andorra 2002.

Black was fine after 10.♘xb6 axb6 11.f4 f6!? 12.♕h5 d5!.

5...♘d4!?

This aggressive move (in the style of the Rubinstein Variation in the Spanish Four Knights – but with pawn e5 defended!) is the correct way to proceed. In reply to White's action on the flank, Black strikes in the centre.

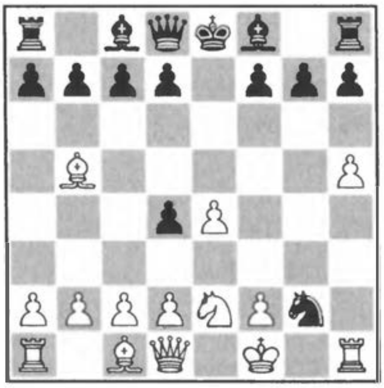
– 5...h5 led to a very unpleasant game for Black in Himeise-Ask, Stockholm 2008/09: 6.d3!? (6.g3) 6...♗e7 7.g3 d6 8.d4!? a6 9.♗e2 ♗g4?! (9...exd4 10.♘xd4 ♘xd4 11.♕xd4 ♗f6 was much better) 10.d5 ♗xf3?! 11.♗xf3 ♘d4 12.♗g2 ♗f6 13.♗e3 c5 14.♘e2 ♘f8 15.c3.

– 5...♗c5 6.h5 ♘f8 (6...♘f4!? 7.d4 ♘xd4 8.♗xf4 ♘xf3+ 9.♕xf3 exf4 10.0-0-0 c6 11.♗c4 was agreed drawn in Czebe-Berkovich, Budapest 1998, but it looks much better for White) 7.♘xe5! ♘xe5 8.d4 ♗d6 9.dxe5 ♗xe5 10.f4 was clearly better for White in Bologan-Arkhipov, Moscow 1995.

– 5...♗e7 6.h5 ♘h4 7.♘xh4 ♗xh4 8.♕g4 ♗g5 9.d4 ♗f6! 10.dxe5 ♗xe5 11.♗g5 f6 12.♗d2 0-0 13.0-0-0 d5 14.♕h4 also favoured White in Nepomniachtchi-Krstic, Ljubljana 2004.

6.♗c4

White retreats his bishop, but it is also possible to push forward with 6.h5!? ♘f4 7.♘xd4 (7.♘xe5 should favour Black after 7...♘xg2+ 8.♔f1 ♘f4 9.d3 ♕g5, but 7.♗f1!? is interesting) 7...exd4 8.♘e2 ♘xg2+ 9.♔f1



9...♘h4 (very strong is also 9...♕f6!) 10.♘xd4 c6 11.♕g4 g5 12.hxg6 hxg6 13.♗c4 ♗g7 14.♘f5 ♘xf5 15.♖xh8+ ♗xh8 16.exf5 d5 17.♕e2+ ♔f8 18.fxg6 ♗h3+ 19.♔e1 ♕g5 and Black was totally winning in Orsher-Csapo, Budapest 2001.

6...c6

In order to strike in the centre.

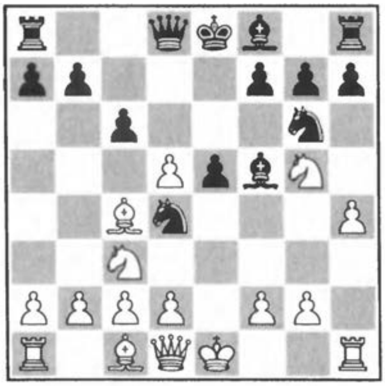
7.♘g5

Attacking the eternal weak spot in the Open Games, but Black is ready to grasp the initiative.

7.h5 ♘f4 looks OK again for Black.

7...d5!? 8.exd5 ♗f5!?

In view of White's alternatives on move 9 Black should seriously consider 8...b5 which appears completely fine for Black after, say 9.♗b3 b4 10.♘e2 ♘xb3 11.axb3 cxd5.



9.d3

If this is forced then Black can safely play 8...♗f5. However, there are two moves that need careful analysis: 9.dxc6 and 9.♘xf7.

– 9.dxc6 ♘xc2+ 10.♔f1 ♗d3+ (10...bxc6? 11.♘xf7! – 11.♗xf7+ ♔e7 12.♖b1 h6 13.♗xg6 ♗xg6 looks good for Black – 11...♕d4 12.d3 ♘xa1 13.♕f3 just wins) 11.♔g1 ♗xc4 12.cxb7 ♖b8 13.♕xc2 ♕d7 is very sharp and perhaps better for White.

– 9.♘xf7!? ♔xf7 (9...♘xc2+ 10.♕xc2! ♗xc2 11.♘xd8 ♖xd8 12.dxc6 bxc6 13.d3

♗xd3 14.♗xd3 ♖xd3 favours White. Black has too many pawn islands in the ending) 10.dxc6+ ♔e8 11.cxb7 ♖b8 (11...♘xc2+ 12.♔f1 ♖b8 13.♗b5+ ♔f7 14.♗c4+ ♔e8 is a draw by repetition) 12.d3 with an unclear position.

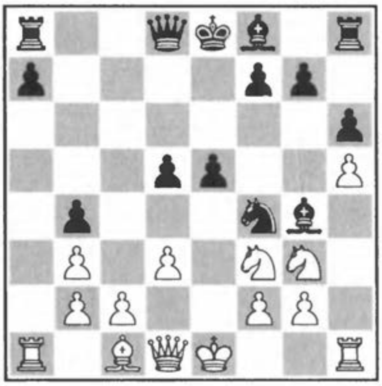
9...b5 10.♗b3 b4

Now everything is under control. Black will dominate in the centre.

11.♘ce4 h6 12.♘f3 ♘xb3 13.axb3 cxd5 14.♘g3 ♗g4

White has been forced into a passive position. If only his h-pawn would be on h2 then he could at least get rid of the pin. Now there is nothing better than to go forward:

15.h5 ♘f4



16.0-0

No better is 16.♗xf4 exf4 17.♘e2 ♗d6 and Black's chances are to be preferred Borocz-Berkovich, Budapest 1998. This may be found on page 132 of SOS-8 and is recommended by Gofshtein as Black's best option versus 5.h4.

16...♕f6!

Excellent play by Stefanova, who is very dangerous in such positions.

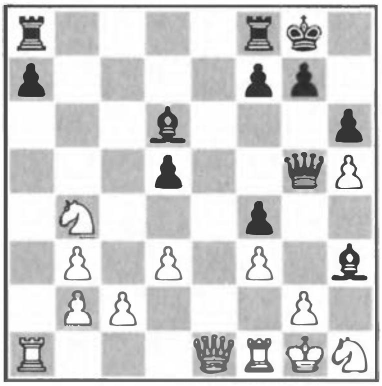
17.♗xf4 exf4 18.♕e1+ The only move.

18...♗e7 19.♘e5 ♗e6 20.♘h1

White has avoided the worst for the moment, but his knights are nowhere near as powerful as Black's bishops. Just look at that poor steed on h1!

20...0-0 21.♘c6?

With such bad pieces it is a bad idea to go pawn-hunting, but White was suffering anyway. Stefanova quickly finishes the game: **21...♗d6 22.♘xb4 ♕g5 23.f3 ♗h3**



24.♖f2 ♗c5 25.♔f1 ♖fe8! 26.♖e2 ♗xg2+! and White resigned.

Exit Evans

SOS-3, Chapter 15, p.117

Elsewhere in this book Glenn Flear advocates 4...d5!? versus the effervescent Evans. However, that does not mean that people no longer play our 'old' SOS recipe versus the Evans: the Stoneware Defence. In the present game from the 2009 European Championship, Volokitin beats a strong fellow-GM.

☐ **Tigran Petrosian**
■ **Andrey Volokitin**
Budva 2009

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♗c5 4.b4 ♗xb4

For 4...d5!? see Chapter 2.

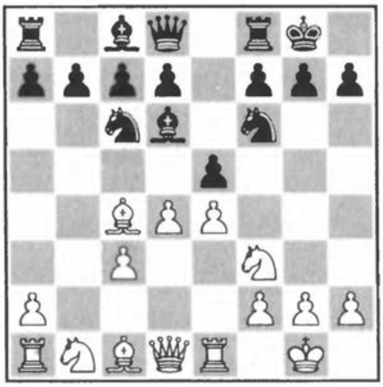
5.c3 ♗d6

The Stoneware Defence (an old favourite of

Pillsbury) became popular again after Alexander Grischuk used it to good effect in the European Team Championship in Plovdiv 2003 beating Baadur Jobava.

6.d4 ♘f6 7.0-0 0-0 8.♖e1

The main move. Quite innocent is 8.♗g5 ♗e7! 9.♕e2♘xe4 (9...exd4) 10.♗xe7 ♘xe7 11.♕xe4 d5 12.♗xd5 ♕xd5 13.♕xe5 with easy equality for Black in Nabaty-Petrosian, Kallithea 2008. Tigran Petrosian later lost, however. He is remarkably unsuccessful in the Stoneware Defence. Losing several games both with white and black.



8...h6

This was also Grischuk's choice. Less good is the alternative 8...b6 9.♗d5 ♘xd5 (9...♗e7 10.dxe5 ♘xd5 11.exd5 ♘a5 12.♘bd2 – 12.♕d3! Volokitin – 12...d6 13.c4 ♗g4, Petrosian-Jones, Plovdiv 2008, and now 14.♕c2 would have promised White a slight edge according to Volokitin) 10.exd5 e4 11.♘g5 ♘e7 12.♕h5 h6 13.♘xe4 f5 14.♘xd6 cxd6 15.♗a3 (15.c4!± Volokitin) 15...♖f6 16.♘d2 ♗a6 17.c4 b5 18.♕e2 ♘g6 19.cxb5 ♗b7 20.♘c4 ♗xd5 21.♘xd6 ♘h4!, Petrosian-Stefanova, Gibraltar 2008. See The SOS Files of SOS-9 (pp. 8-9) for this fine win of the Bulgarian grandmaster.

9.♘bd2

White should first develop. Bad is 9.♘h4?! exd4! and all lines favour Black:

– 10.♘f5 ♗c5 11.cxd4 d5! 12.exd5 ♗xf5 13.dxc5 ♘a5, Jobava-Grischuk, Plovdiv 2003.

– 10.♘g6 b5 11.♘xf8 bxc4 12.♘xd7 ♕xd7–+, Sidorenko-Golod, Ramat Aviv 2004.

– 10.cxd4 ♗b4 11.♗d2 ♘xe4!.

9...♖e8 10.♕b3

Quite logically attacking f7 the moment the rook has left f8. The alternative is 10.♗b3.

10...♖e7

Stronger than 10...♕e7 which has also been tried.

11.♘h4?

Just as in the comment to White's 9th move this aggressive move will not lead to the desired result. It was safer (but that is not why you play the Evans) to play 11.♗d3 b5?! 12.♗xb5 (12.♕xb5) 12...♖b8 13.♕a4 a6 14.♗xc6 dxc6 15.♘c4 (15.dxe5 ♗xe5 16.♘xe5 ♖xe5 17.♘f3 is slightly better for White and 15.♗a3 also looks good) 15...exd4 16.e5 ♗c5 17.exf6 ♖xe1+ 18.♘xe1 ♕xf6 (Black is consciously obscuring the game, but objectively he is clearly worse) 19.♘d3 ♗a7 20.♘ce5 dxc3 21.♗e3 ♗xe3 22.fxe3 ♖b5!. White must be better here, but lost after 23.♖c1?! ♗f5 24.♕d4? c2! 25.e4 (25.♖xc2 ♖xe5!) 25...♖b1? (25...♕h4!) 26.♕f2? (overlooking a spectacular reply: 26.exf5!±) 26...♕xe5! 27.exf5 ♕e4 28.♕f1 ♕e3+ 29.♔h1 ♕xd3! 30.♕e1 ♖xc1 0-1, Yang Kaiqi-Megaranto, Subic Bay 2009.

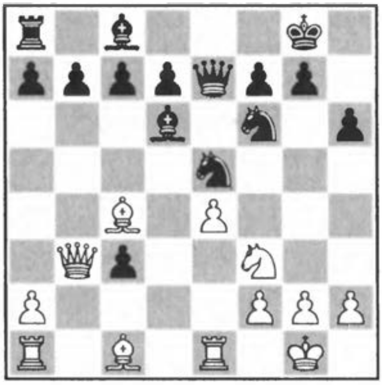
After 11.♗d3 Black can improve with 11...b6 when Volokitin argues that White is better after 12.♘c4 ♗a6 13.♘xd6 ♗xd3 14.♘f5!. At present this is a critical position for the Stoneware Defence.

11...exd4! 12.♘f5

12.cxd4 ♘xd4 13.♕d3 ♗c5 14.♗b2 d5 15.exd5 b5∓ had already been indicated by Lukacs in 2005.

12...dxc3 13.♘xe7+? 13.♘f3. **13...♕xe7**

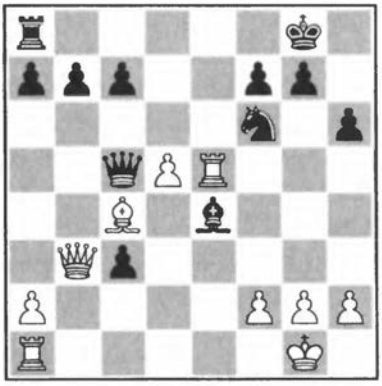
14.♘f3 ♘e5
14...♘g4! is more or less winning according to Volokitin.



This was given as unclear by Lukacs in an analysis for ChessBase. It would seem that Black has more than enough compensation for the exchange. Well, actually, what am I talking about: Volokitin is three pawns up at the moment!

15.♘d4 ♗c5! 16.♘f5 ♕f8!
The engines also like 16...♗xf2+?! 17.♔xf2 ♕c5+ 18.♘e3 ♘xe4+ 19.♔g1 ♘xc4 20.♕xc4 ♕xc4 21.♘xc4 d5 and Black has 5 pawns for a rook. The text is the sane human choice of course.

17.♗e3 d5? 17...♘fg4. **18.exd5** 18.♗xd5!. **18...♗xf5 19.♗xc5 ♕xc5!** Stronger than 19...♘f3+ 20.gxf3 ♕xc5. **20.♖xe5 ♗e4!**

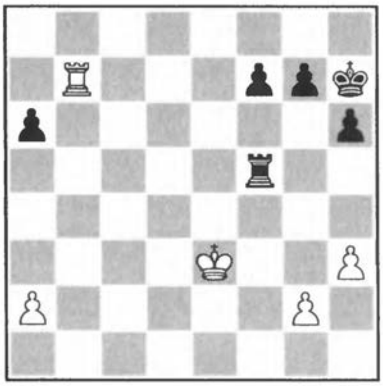


Black has completed his development and managed to exchange off White's attacking potential. The passed c-pawn is still on the board and a big nuisance for the first player.

21.h3 c2 22.♖c1 ♖d8 23.♗d3 ♕d4! 24.♖xe4 ♘xe4 25.♕xc2
In returning the exchange White has managed to win the c-pawn. Volokitin has seen that the tactics do not end here though:

25...♘xf2! 26.♗h7+ ♔h8 27.♕xf2 ♕xf2+ 28.♔xf2 ♔xh7 29.♖xc7 ♖xd5 30.♖xb7?
Correct was 30.♖xf7 with better drawing chances than in the game.

30...♖f5+ 31.♔e3 a6



The rook ending is nearly winning. Black is a pawn up and he has the more active rook. Petrosian resigned on move 66.

In Memoriam Hugh E. Myers

SOS-6, Chapter 5, p.39

Hugh Edward Myers (born 1930) passed away towards the end of 2008. A prolific writer on extravagant opening ideas, Myers was most well-known for his publication *The Myers Opening Bulletin*. He was not a bad player either as two games below will testify. Here we witness two 'SOS ideas' *avant la lettre*.

☐ **Hugh Myers**
■ **Juan Leon**
San Juan 1969

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.h4!?

A provocative method to combat the Hyper-Accelerated Dragon. John Donaldson and Jeremy Silman – two acknowledged specialists on the Accelerated Dragon – wrote an extensive article on this line for SOS-6.

3...♗g7 4.h5 d6 5.♗b5+

Another possibility is 5.♗c4 ♘c6 6.d3 ♘f6 7.h6 ♗f8 8.♗g5 e6 9.e5!? dxe5 (9...♘xe5? 10.♘xe5 dxe5 11.♗b5+ ♗d7 12.♗xd7+ ♔xd7 13.♕f3) 10.♗b5 ♕a5+ 11.♘c3 ♘d7 12.♗xc6 bxc6 13.♘xe5 with a slight edge for White in Skripchenko-Wojtkiewicz, New York rapid 2004.

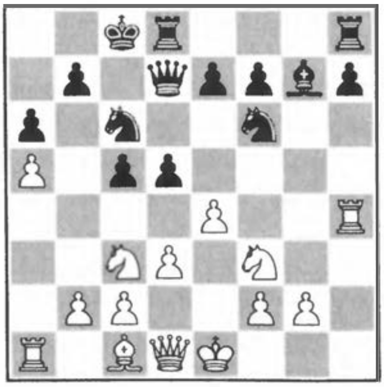
5...♗d7 6.a4 gxh5?!

Black can no longer stand the tension and worsens his structure. Normal was 6...♘c6.

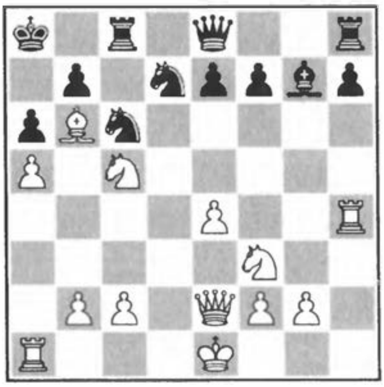
7.♖xh5 a6 8.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 9.d3 ♘f6 10.♖h4 ♘c6 11.♘c3 0-0-0 12.a5

Gaining a positional advantage on the other flank too. However, if not for Black's next 'active' thrust in the centre (the well-known recipe to playing on the flanks as Myers has permitted himself in this game) White would only hold a slight edge.

12...d5?



13.♘a4! ♔b8?! After 13...♕d6 14.♘g5 ♖hf8 both 15.♗f4 e5 16.♗e3 d4 17.♘b6+ ♔b8 18.♗d2 and 15.exd5 ♘xd5 16.♘e4 ♕e5 17.♔f1 favour White. **14.♗f4+ ♔a7 15.♘xc5 ♕e8?** 15...♕c8 would have prevented the next bishop manoeuvre. **16.♗c7! ♖c8 17.♗b6+ ♔a8 18.♕e2 dxe4? 19.dxe4 ♘d7**



White is ready to strike now:

20.♘xa6! bxa6

White also wins after 20...♗xb2 21.♖b1 ♗c3+ 22.♔f1 ♗xa5 23.♗xa5 ♘xa5 24.♕b5.

21.♕xa6+ ♔b8 22.e5!

To transfer the king's rook to the queenside. The rest is massacre:

22...♖c7 23.♗xc7+ ♔xc7 24.e6! fxe6 25.♘g5 ♕g6 26.♖c4! ♘b8 27.♕b6+ ♔d7 28.♖d1+ ♔e8 29.♕xb8+ And White mates after 29...♘xb8 30.♖c8+. A crushing win with an artistic flavour.

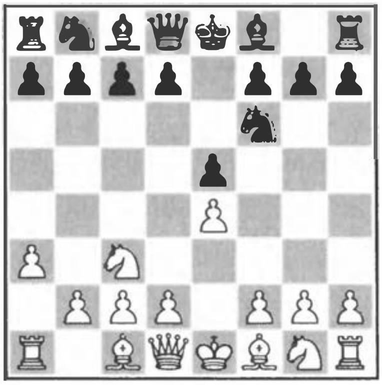
Myers and Mengarini

SOS-1, Chapter 1, p.10

Myers wrote a booklet on a3-lines in the Open Games – naming it Mengarini's Opening after the American chess player Ariel Mengarini. Mengarini loved to play 1.e4 e5 2.a3, but Myers preferred the Vienna Game move order.

☐ **Hugh Myers**
■ **Jose Salerno**
Hawkeye 1994

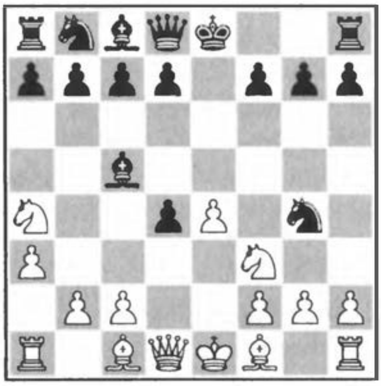
1.e4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.a3



3...♘c6

Myers was hoping for such lines as:

- 3...d5 4.exd5 ♘xd5 5.♕h5 and in this position from the Scotch reversed Black does not have 5...♘b4 because of that useful little extra move, and
- 3...♗c5 4.♘f3 ♘g4 The Two Knights Defence with reversed colours, when again after 5.d4 exd4 6.♘a4



Black has no access to square b4. However, as I wrote in SOS-1, in my opinion, 4...d6! is an easy equalizer.

4.♘f3

I refer you to SOS-1 for a detailed discussion of 'The Gunsberg Variation'.

4...♗c5?!

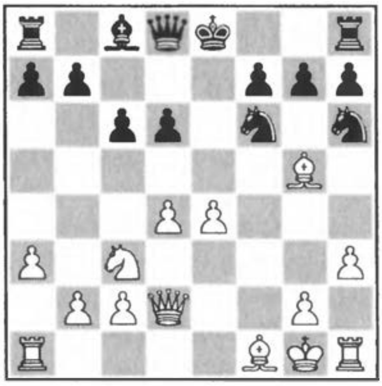
A logical move in the Open Games, but it is inaccurate here. Myers now demonstrates one of the tricky points of 4.a3.

5.♘xe5 ♗xf2+?!

The fact that White will no longer be able to castle is insignificant compared to the loss of the bishop pair and the extra central pawn that White has. Better was 5...♘xe5 6.d4 ♗xd4 (for 6...♗d6! 7.f4 ♘c6 8.e5 see SOS-1) 7.♕xd4 ♘c6 8.♕d3 ♕e7 9.♗g5 ♕e6? 10.♘b5! ♕e5 11.♗xf6 (the computer move 11.♕g3! was even stronger) 11...gxf6 12.0-0-0 with a clear advantage in Sengupta-Narayanan, Gurgon 2009.

The best move is actually the pawn sacrifice 5...0-0!.

6.♔xf2 ♘xe5 7.d4 ♘eg4+ 8.♔g1 d6 9.h3 ♘h6 10.♗g5 c6 11.♕d2



11...♕e7 12.♖e1 ♕f8? 13.e5 with 'logical' play (depending upon your view of 3.a3) Myers has obtained a winning position straight from the opening. The rest is curtains: **13...♘d5 14.♘xd5 cxd5 15.♗b5+ ♗d7 16.exd6+** 1-0.

Read SOS and Win, Part II

SOS-10, Chapter 9, p.66

We received a letter from IM Julio Catalino

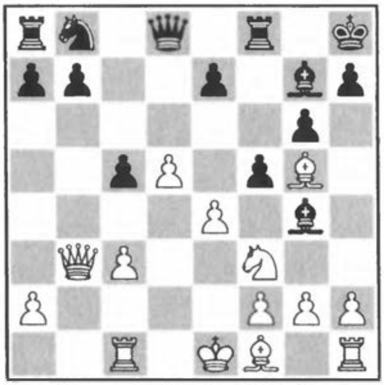
Sadorra, enthusiastically praising Igor Lysyj's article on the Kruppa Variation in the Grünfeld from SOS-10. The Philippine master had just beaten a strong GM employing one of Lysysj's suggested novelties. The SOS Prize goes to this avid reader of ours. We present the game here with notes by the winner.

☐ **Julio Catalino Sadorra**
■ **Murtas Kazhgaleev**
Subic 2009

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.e4 ♘xc3 6.bxc3 ♗g7 7.♗g5

This was a perfect surprise line to play against my opponent especially because he does not have any past experience with it, at least according to the database.

7...c5 8.♖c1 0-0 9.♘f3 ♗g4 10.d5 f5 11.♕b3 ♔h8



12.♘d2!

As given by Igor Lysyj in SOS-10. The game Lysyj-Sutovsky, Moscow 2007, had seen the inferior 12.♕xb7.

12...♘d7

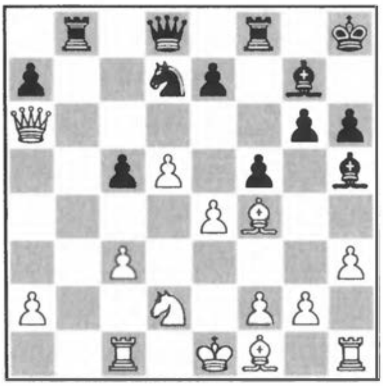
12...h6 13.h3 ♗h5 14.♗f4.

13.h3!?N

In my pre-game preparations, I remember seeing pushing away the bishop on g4 followed by the ♕b7 idea so I tried to work it out. In the end 13.h3 became more logical to me simply because it prevents ...fxe4.

In fact 13.f3 ♗h5 14.♕xb7!?± was recommended by Igor Lysyj.

13...♗h5 14.♕xb7 ♖b8 15.♕a6 h6 16.♗f4



16...fxe4?

Understandable. Seeing that almost all variations work against him, my opponent decided to drastically change the character of the game, forcing me to act with great care and precision.

After 16...♖b6 17.♕xa7 Black does not have enough compensation for the two pawns. I prepared to meet 16...♘e5 with 17.g4! fxg4 18.♗xe5 ♗xe5 19.hxg4 ♖b6 20.♕e2 winning.

17.♗xb8 ♕xb8

Editorial note: White is also winning after 17...e3 18.fxe3 ♕xb8 19.g4 ♕g3+ 20.♔d1 ♘f6 21.♗c4 and 17...♘xb8 18.♕e6 g5.

18.g4 ♕b2

18...♕f4 19.♕e2 ♘e5 20.♕e3 winning.

19.♔d1!

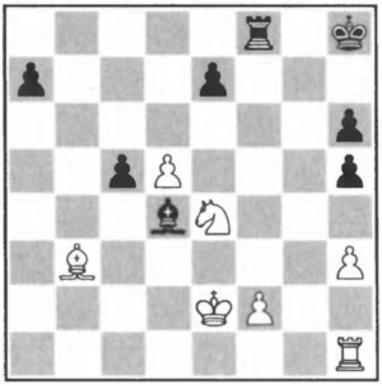
Both 19.♖b1 ♕c2 and 19.♖d1 ♗xc3 20.♗e2 ♘e5 give Black counterplay.

19...♘b6

Or 19...♖xf2 20.♘c4 (20.♘xe4 ♖f4 21.♘d2 ♗xc3 22.♕d3 ♗xd2 23.♕xd2 ♖d4 24.♗d3 ♕xd2+ 25.♔xd2 ♘e5 26.♖c3 c4 27.♔e3 ♖xd3+ 28.♖xd3 ♘xd3 29.gxh5 gxh5

30.♔d4+–) 20...♕b8 21.♗e2 (21.♕e6 ♕f4 22.♗e2 ♖xe2) 21...♕f4 22.♖c2 and wins.

20.♕b5 Giving back some material to 'put the fire out'. **20...♕xa2 21.♗c4 ♕a3 22.♔e2 ♘a4 23.♕b3 ♕xb3 24.♗xb3 ♘xc3+ 25.♖xc3 ♗xc3 26.♘xe4 ♗d4 27.gxh5 gxh5**



28.♖g1

28.♖b1 may objectively be better, but I preferred to keep my rook on the board, which allows me to attack Black's e-pawn more easily.

28...♖f4 29.♗c2 ♖f5 30.♗b3 ♖f4 31.♔d3!

Consistent with my 28th move. This makes a statement that my d-pawn is stronger than his h-pawns.

31.♗c2 ♖f5 32.♖g6? ♖xd5 33.♖xh6+ ♔g7 and every pawn exchange brings Black closer to a draw.

31...♖f3+ 32.♔c4 ♖xh3 33.♖g6 ♖h1

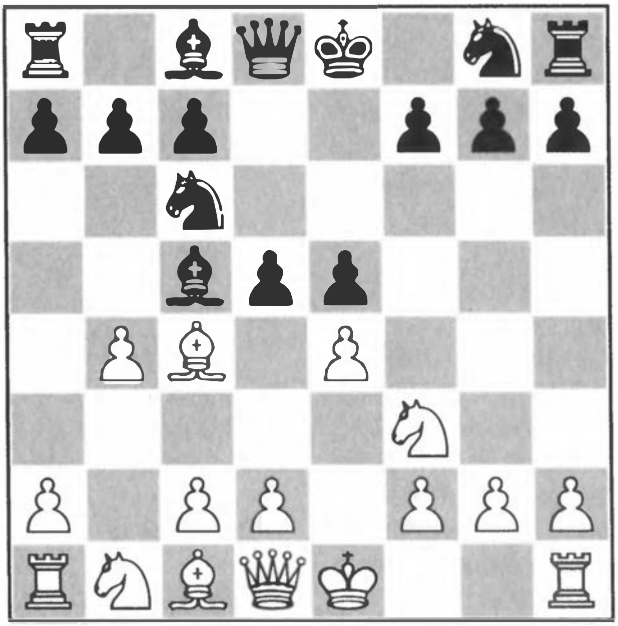
33...♖f3 34.♖e6 h4 35.♖xe7 h3 36.d6 h2 37.d7 and my d-pawn queens with mate!

34.♖e6 ♖c1+ 35.♔d3 ♖b1 36.♘d2 ♖a1 37.♖xe7 ♗xf2 38.d6 ♗h4 39.♘f3 c4+ 39...♗f6 40.♖f7. **40.♗xc4 ♖d1+ 41.♔e4 ♗f6 42.♘e5!** and Black resigns as he can't handle the passed d-pawn and the looming mate threats.

CHAPTER 2

Glenn Flear

Evans Above!



1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♗c5 4.b4 d5

If you meet 1.e4 with 1...e5, every so often some bright spark will wheel out the Evans Gambit. The most annoying aspect is that in the past that particular opponent has always played some dull line of the Giuoco Piano, but he has picked you out to hit with a dangerous gambit. Just your luck!

Worse than that, from the way he flashed out 4.b4 it's obvious he has prepared all morning. Evans above!

All however is not lost! If you hit back with 4...d5 you might just wipe that smug smile from his face!

So what is happening? Black meets a wing gambit with a central counter, earns some breathing space, and most significantly, refuses to play the types of position that White was seeking! So why has such a logical move been so unfashionable for the last century or so?

In my opinion there doesn't seem to be any way to refute this counter-attack. Surprised? Well, let's have a look at some typical lines and a few illustrative games.

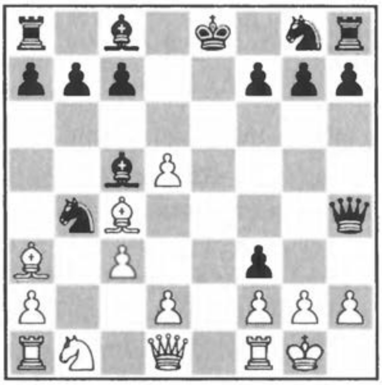
1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♗c5 4.b4 d5 5.exd5 The most natural and popular reply. An old analysis goes 5.♗xd5 ♘xb4 6.♗b3 ♘f6 7.♕e2 0-0 8.0-0 ♗g4 9.♗b2 ♕e7 10.h3= (*Handbuch*). See Game 2 for a more recent practical test.

If White chases a pawn with 5.bxc5 dxc4 6.♕e2?! Black can react with 6...♗g4

7.♕xc4?! (7.♗b2 ♘f6 8.0-0 0-0 9.♖e1 ♘d7 also looks promising for Black) 7...♗xf3 8.gxf3 ♕g5, with a very strong initiative.
5.♗b5 dxe4 6.bxc5 exf3 7.♕xf3 ♘e7 turned out to be better for Black in Game 1.

5...♘xb4 6.0-0

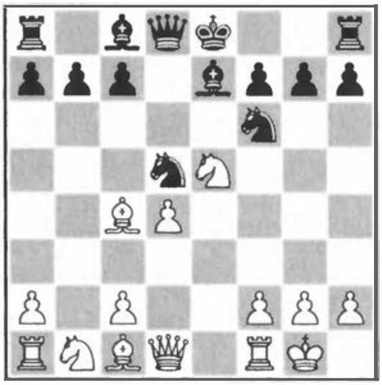
According to Harding and Botterill (1977), 6.♗a3 is 'more dynamic', a move they attribute to Keres, however it had in fact been played at least twice by Steinitz. Although they are confident in claiming that 'this is the move that will punish 4...d5' it seems that after 6...e4! (Steinitz's opponents didn't find this move) Black is better(!), e.g. 7.♗xb4 ♗xb4 8.♕e2 ♘f6 9.0-0 0-0 10.♘g5 ♗f5 with the bishop pair and better pieces.
Although 7.0-0 may then be White's best, he is only really fighting for equality: 7...exf3 8.c3 ♕h4!? (a combative option. Otherwise there is the safe-looking 8...♘a6 9.♗xa6 ♗xa3 10.♗b5+ ♔f8 11.♘xa3 ♕xd5 12.♖e1 ♘f6 13.♕xf3 ♕xf3 14.gxf3 ♗e6 which yields the superior pawn structure and thus a pull for Black)



9.d4! (Bachmann analyses the inferior 9.♗b5+ which is well met by 9...♔f8! 10.♕xf3!? a5! with advantage to Black) 9...♘e7! 10.♖e1 0-0 11.g3 (11.♕xf3? ♘c2) 11...♕g4!? (11...♕h3 12.♗f1 ♕f5= is again simpler) with a complex position. A plausible continuation being 12.♘d2 b5!? 13.♗xb4 ♗xb4 14.cxb4 bxc4 15.♖xe7 ♕xd4 16.♖xc7 ♕xd5 17.♘xc4 ♕h5 with chances for both sides.

6...♘f6 7.♘xe5 ♘bxd5 8.d4 ♗e7

An improvement on 8...♗d6, which is featured in Game 3.



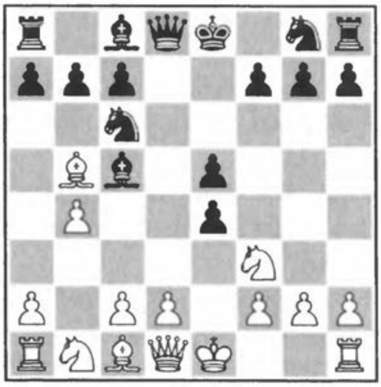
Black has achieved a solid-looking position which is more akin to a Petroff than the Evans. This position is examined in Games 4 and 5.

Game 1

☐ **Thomas Wilson Barnes**
■ **Johann Jacob Löwenthal**
London m 1856

This is only the second game that I found with 4...d5, the first being Urusov-Von Jaenisch, St Petersburg 1854.

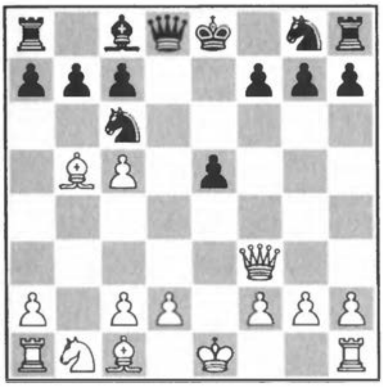
1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♗c5 4.b4 d5 5.♗b5?! dxe4



6.bxc5

There is little doubt that 6.♘xe5? is bad: 6...♗xf2+ 7.♔xf2 ♕d4+ 8.♔e1 ♕xe5 9.♗xc6+ bxc6 10.♘c3 ♘f6 11.♕e2 ♗g4 12.♕c4 0-0 13.♗b2 e3, Kipping-Löwenthal, Birmingham 1858, and Black was winning easily.

6...exf3 7.♕xf3



7...♘e7

The simplest move.

A more recent game continued with 7...♗d7 8.♕g3 ♕f6 9.♗b2 ♘ge7, and again Black was doing quite well: 10.0-0 ♘f5 11.♕b3 0-0 12.♕a4 a6 13.♗d3 ♖ad8 (13...♘fd4! would be better for Black. White's queen being distinctly vulnerable) 14.♕e4 g6 15.♘c3 ♗e6, and White was finally getting close to equality, J.Garcia Francisco-Ansola, Aragon 1998.

8.♗b2 0-0

Black has a superior structure and easier development and can already claim to be at least equal.

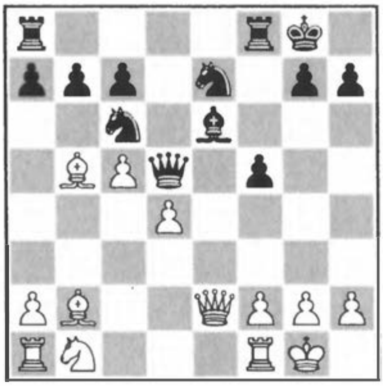
9.c3!?

Not that pretty, but White is probably right to aim for d2-d4.

9...♗e6 10.0-0 f5

It's understandable for Black to try and get things moving, but this proves to be slightly loosening. Instead, 10...♗d5 offers Black some advantage, e.g. 11.♕g4 (if 11.♕g3 ♘f5 12.♕g4 ♘h4 and then ...f5) 11...f5 12.♕h4 ♘g6.

11.♕e2 ♕d5 12.d4! exd4 13.cxd4



13...♖f6?

Correct was 13...♘g6! 14.♖d1 (14.♘c3? ♘xd4!) 14...♘f4 15.♕f1 ♕d7, with a solid blockade of the d5-square.

14.♖d1?

Missing 14.♘c3! ♕d8 15.d5 and White would seize the initiative, due largely to the fact that the rook on f6 is on the same diagonal as the bishop on b2, e.g. 15...♘xd5 16.♘xd5 ♗xd5 17.♗xf6 ♕xf6 18.♗c4, with advantage.

14...♖g6 15.f3 ♖d8 16.♘a3 f4! 17.♖d2 ♕h5 18.♗d3 ♖h6

Now Black's attacking chances do indeed seem quite serious, but there isn't a clear way through.

19.h3 ♘f5 20.♗c4

Sensibly exchanging a pair of pieces.

20...♘e3

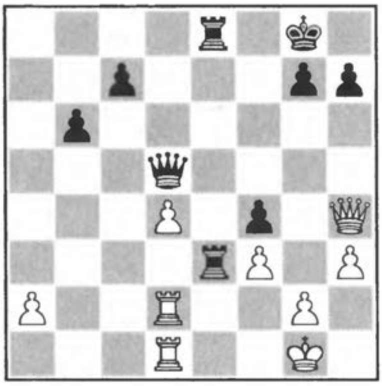
The knight outpost is a problem for White, but it doesn't 'win the game by itself'!

21.♗xe6+ ♖xe6 22.♘c2 ♕d5

A modern master would have been tempted by 22...♘e7 bringing the knight to d5 and ensuring a 'good knight versus bad bishop' scenario.

23.♘xe3 ♖xe3 24.♕f2 ♘e5 A strong-looking move but White struggles on...

25.♖ad1 ♘c4 26.♖c2 ♘xb2 27.♖xb2 b6 28.♖bd2 ♖de8 29.cxb6 axb6 30.♕h4



30...g5?!
Enthusiastic but self-weakening. In fact Black should proceed more cautiously with 30...♖f8!∓, as White's weaknesses on a2 and d4 aren't going away.

31.♕g4 ♔g7 32.h4 h6 33.♔h2 ♔g6 34.♔h3 ♕f5 35.d5
Freeing himself as d5-d6 is unstoppable.

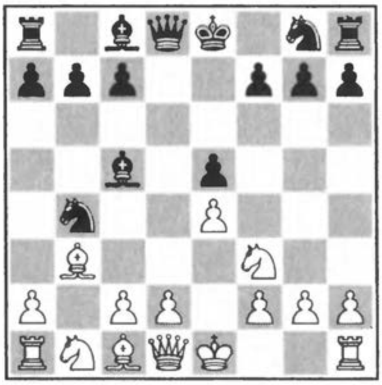
35...♖e2 36.d6 ♖xd2 37.h5+ ♔f6 38.♕xf5+ ♔xf5 39.♖xd2 cxd6 40.♖xd6 ♖e6 The ending is equal.

41.♖d5+ ♖e5 42.♖d8 ♖e6 43.a4 ♔f6 44.♔g4 ♖e2 45.♖f8+ ♔g7 46.♖b8 ♖xg2+!? 47.♔f5 g4 48.♖b7+ ♔g8 49.♔xf4 gxf3 50.♔xf3 ♖g5 51.♖xb6 ♖xh5
Draw.

Game 2

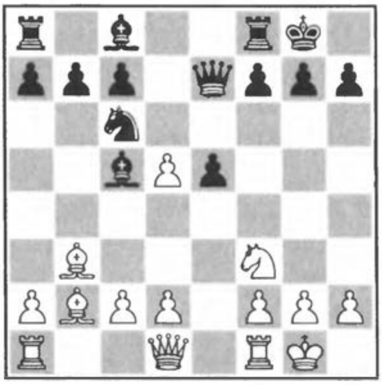
☐ **Klaus Peter Zuse**
■ **Wolfgang Riedel**
Germany Bundesliga-B 1996/97

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♗c5 4.b4 d5 5.♗xd5 ♘xb4 6.♗b3
Pawns are equal and neither side can really claim a lead in development.



6...♕e7
Interesting from a historical point of view is the following: 6...♘f6 7.♘c3?! 0-0 8.0-0 ♗g4 9.d3 ♘c6 10.♘e2?! ♘h5 11.♔h1 ♔h8? (11...♗xf3 12.gxf3 ♕f6 is clearly better for Black) 12.♘g5 ♘f4? (12...♘d4 13.f3 ♘xb3 14.axb3 ♗d7 still favours the second player) 13.f3!, and White was better and went on to win in Anderssen-Kolisch, Paris match 1860.

7.0-0 ♘f6 8.♗b2 ♘c6 9.♘c3 0-0 10.♘d5 ♘xd5 11.exd5



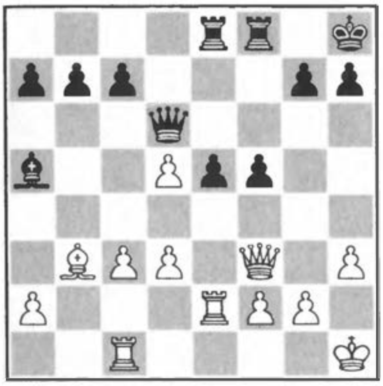
As White is unable to generate any significant play in the centre, this move just leads to a self-blocking of the a2-g8 diagonal. Safer is 11.♗xd5 as White's bishop retains a reasonable view, then chances would be about equal.

11...♘d4 12.♖e1
Objectively correct is 12.♘xd4 ♗xd4 13..♗xd4 exd4 14.♕f3, equal.

12...♗g4 13.♗xd4 ♗xd4 14.c3 ♗b6 15.h3 ♗xf3 16.♕xf3 ♕d6

Although there are opposite-coloured bishops Black has the slightly more active position (more dynamic bishop, flexible pawns).

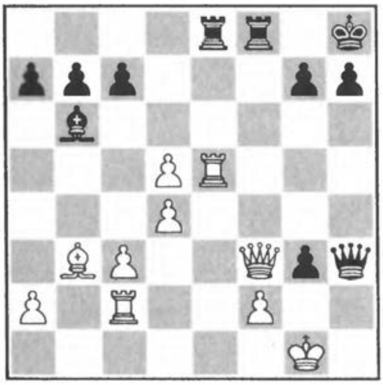
17.♖e2 f5 18.d3 ♗a5 19.♖c1 ♔h8 20.♔h1 ♖ae8



21.g3?? Allowing a simple fork.

21...♕h6 22.♖cc2 ♕xh3+ 23.♔g1 f4 24.♖e4 ♗b6 25.d4! The last chance.

25...fxg3 26.♖xe5



26...♕h2+

The far from obvious 26...♗c5! seems to be the way to win: 27.♕xg3 (27.♖xe8? ♖xe8 28.♖c1 ♕h2+ 29.♔f1 ♖f8; 27.dxc5 ♕h2+ 28.♔f1 g2+ 29.♕xg2 ♕xe5) 27...♕xg3+ 28.fxg3 ♖xe5 29.dxc5 h5, with an extra exchange.

27.♔f1 gxf2 28.♖xf2 ♕xf2+ 29.♔xf2 ♖xf3+ 30.♔xf3 ♖xe5 31.dxe5 g6

Although the ending may seem to be drawish, it still needs playing out.

32.♔e4 ♔g7 33.d6 cxd6 34.exd6 ♗d8 35.c4 b6 36.♔e5 h5 37.a4 a5 38.♔e6 g5 39.♔d7 ♗f6 40.♔c6 g4 41.♗d1

Aiming to slow down the black pawns.

41...♗d8 42.♔d7 ♗f6 43.♔c6 ♗d8 Although 43...g3 44.♗f3 h4 is possible, after 45.♗g2 ♗d8 46.♔d7 ♗f6 47.♔c6 ♗d8 there is nothing better than a repetition.

44.♔d7

Draw.

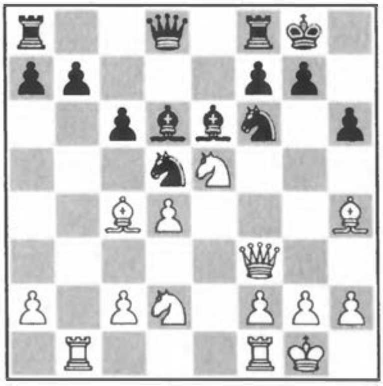
Game 3

☐ **Emanuel Stepanovich Schiffers**
■ **Harry Nelson Pillsbury**
Nuremberg 1896

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♗c5 4.b4 d5 5.exd5 ♘xb4 6.0-0 ♘f6 7.♘xe5 ♘bxd5 8.d4 ♗d6

The bishop is not so good here in my opinion, one reason being that White's next move is slightly annoying.

9.♗g5 c6 10.♘d2 0-0 11.♕f3 h6 12.♗h4 ♗e6 13.♖ab1



With an edge to White according to *ECO*, which looks reasonable enough.

13...♖b8 14.♘e4 ♗e7 15.♘xf6+ ♗xf6 16.♗g3 ♕c8 17.♗d3

I prefer 17.♖fe1, bringing up the reserves!

17...♘e7?

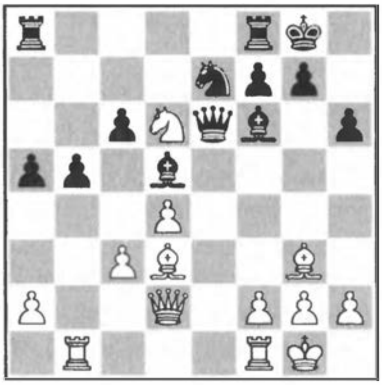
Black could liberate himself with 17...♘c3! 18.♖be1 c5, with equal play.

18.c3 ♖a8

Moving off the b8-h2 diagonal and indeed threatening the a2-pawn, but Black now struggles to get in the game.

19.♘c4 19.♖b2 is simpler.

19...♗d5 20.♕e2 b5 21.♘d6 ♕e6 22.♕d2 a5?!



23.♖fe1 ♕d7 24.a4! Breaking up Black's optimistic queenside advance.

24...b4 25.cxb4 axb4 26.♖xb4 ♖a7 27.♖eb1 ♗g5 28.♕e2 f5

Desperately seeking play, but further loosening his own position.

29.♗e5 f4 30.f3 ♕e6 31.♖b8 ♖a8 32.♖xf8+ ♖xf8 33.a5 ♘g6 34.♖b7 ♘xe5 35.dxe5 ♗d8 36.a6 c5 37.♗c4 ♗e7 38.♗xd5 ♕xd5 39.♕c4 ♕xc4 40.♘xc4 ♖a8 41.a7 ♗d8 42.e6

Black resigned.

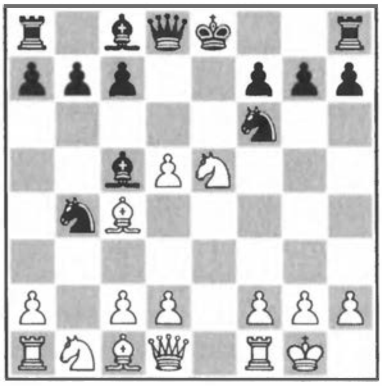
Game 4

☐ **German Della Morte**
■ **Juan Facundo Pierrot**
Buenos Aires tt 2004

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♗c5 4.b4 d5 5.exd5 ♘xb4 6.0-0

Possible is 6.c3, e.g. 6...♘xd5 7.♕b3 c6 8.♘xe5? (a more convincing continuation would be 8.0-0 e4!? 9.♖e1 ♘gf6 10.d3 0-0 11.dxe4 b5=) 8...♘gf6?! (Black can induce favourable complications with 8...♕g5! 9.0-0 ♘f4 10.g3 ♕xe5) 9.d4 ♗e7 10.0-00-0 11.a4 ♕c7 12.♗g5 (White now has some pressure) 12...♗f5 13.♖e1 ♖ad8 14.♖a2 ♗e6 15.♕c2 c5, and Black had equalized in Ulyashev-Konovalov, Kostroma 2008.

6...♘f6 7.♘xe5



7...♘bxd5

Here 7...0-0 will probably transpose.

Instead, a tempting move is 7...♗d4?!, which was 'played' in Dacquin-Aymard, cr 1999. White reacted correctly with 8.♘xf7! (possibly 8.♗a3!?, but the game move is strong enough) and then the game continued as follows: 8...♔xf7 9.c3 b5 10.♗xb5 ♗f5 11.♗a4♗d3 12.♖e1 ♗xf2+ 13.♔xf2♘bxd5 14.♕f3 ♕d6 15.♔g1! ♕f4 16.♕xd3 ♕xa4 17.c4, with advantage to White. I can't see any improvements for Black in this, so I'm concluding that 7...♗d4 is dubious.

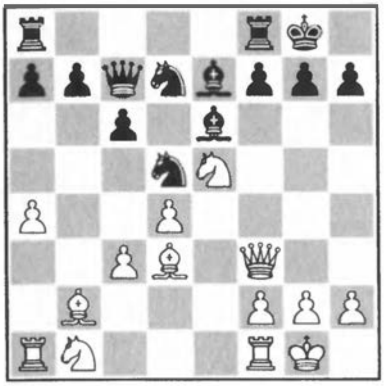
8.d4 ♗e7 9.♕f3 0-0 10.c3

White decides to consolidate the d4-pawn in order to continue with piece play, but this doesn't offer him anything special.

10...♗e6 11.♗d3 c6 12.a4 ♕c7

Not 12...♘xc3?? 13.♘xc3 ♕xd4, as after 14.♗f4 Black dare not recapture the piece with 14...♕xc3?? due to 15.♗xh7+.

13.♗b2 ♘d7



Calmly eliminating White's most active piece.

14.♖e1?!

14.♘xd7 ♕xd7 15.♞d2, equal, would have been more to the point.

14...♘xe5 15.♖xe5 ♗d6 16.c4!?

The more conventional move is 16.♖h5, but then after 16...f5 White's rook is hopelessly out of play.

16...♘f6

More convincing than 16...♝xe5, as after 17.cxd5 ♗xh2+ 18.♔h1 ♗xd5 19.♕h5 h6 20.♕xh2 White obtains two pieces for the rook and pawns.

17.♖g5 ♗f4

The h-pawn could have been taken first of all, but in either case this move rather embarrasses the rook. Now White just switches to desperation mode.

18.♖xg7+ ♔xg7 19.d5 ♗e5 20.♕e2 ♗xb2 21.♕xb2 cxd5 22.♖a3 d4 23.♕xd4 ♖fd8 24.♕h4 ♕e5

White resigned.

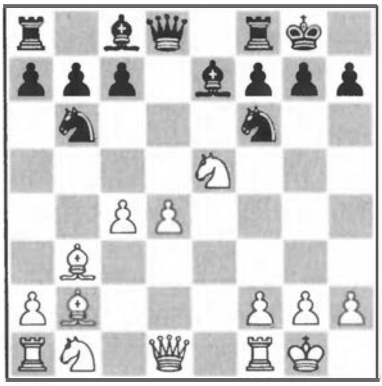
Game 5

☐ **Ruben Felgaer**
■ **Juan Facundo Pierrot**
Buenos Aires ch-ARG 2000

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♗c5 4.b4 d5 5.exd5 ♘xb4 6.0-0 ♘f6 7.♘xe5 ♘bxd5 8.d4 ♗e7! 9.♗b3

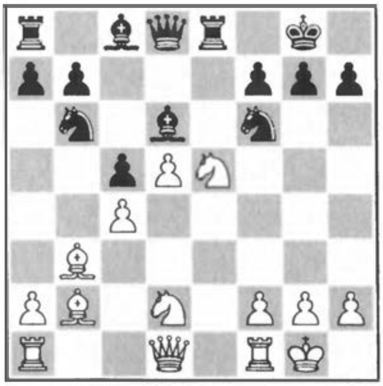
Playing for an early c2-c4. Pierrot had no problems as Black (against Della Morte, see Game 4) when White did without this move.

9...0-0 10.c4 ♘b6 11.♗b2



11...c6?!

A shade passive. Instead, I prefer 11...c5, when White will either have to allow broken pawns or commit himself to 12.d5, with a structure that has its pluses and minuses. White may have a protected passed pawn but Black has use of d6 as a handy blockading square, e.g. 12...♗d6 13.♘d2 ♖e8 (13...♗f5 looks natural but White has some pressure after 14.♕f3)



and now:

- 14.♘df3 ♕c7 15.♖e1 ♘g4 16.♘xg4 ♗xg4 17.♖xe8+ ♖xe8 18.h3 ♗h5 19.♕d3 ♗g6 20.♕c3 f6=, Asker-Miettinen, cr 1998.
- 14.♖e1 ♘bd7 15.f4 (if 15.♘ef3 Black

seems to be fine following 15...a6 – or 15...♖xe1+ 16.♕xe1 ♖b8 17.♗c2 ♘f8 – 16.♖xe8+ ♘xe8 17.♕e2 ♘df6 18.♖e1 ♗f5 but in both cases White retains the nominal advantage of having more space) 15...♕c7 16.♗a4 ♖e7! and with this move Black obtains equal chances. Square e5 is coming under serious pressure!

In any case, this is a clearly better try than 11...♗f5?! 12.♘d2 a5 13.♕f3 ♗c8 14.a3 a4 15.♝a2 c6 16.♖fe1, when White had strong pressure as Black had lost time, in Krantz-Szilagyi, cr 1988.

12.♘d2 a5 13.a4 ♗b4 14.♘df3

I prefer 14.♕c2 followed by ♖ae1, when White has the more comfortable development.

14...♗f5 15.♕e2 ♖e8 16.♘g5!? ♖e7

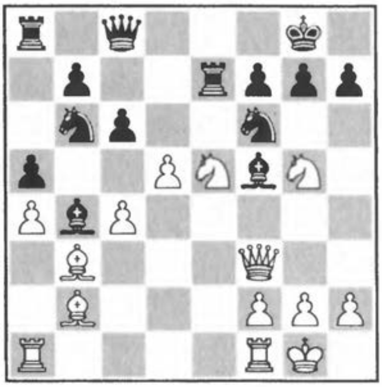
Not 16...♘g4?, which just loses the f-pawn: 17.♘gxf7 ♕h4 18.h3 and so on. In fact the most solid is perhaps 16...♗g4!? 17.♕c2 ♗h5.

17.♕f3 ♕c8

This never really seems an ideal way for Black to defend his bishop but it does give him the option of continuing with ...♗g4.

18.d5!?

The slower prophylactic approach 18.h3 is also worth an edge.



18...cxd5?

A better way to ease the pressure was with 18...♗g4 19.♘xg4 ♕xg4 when White's advantage would be within the bounds of acceptability.

19.cxd5 ♗g4 20.♕d3 ♗f5 21.♕b5

Ouch! Access to this square leaves Black in disarray.

21...♗d6 22.♘gxf7 ♖xf7 23.♞xf7 ♔xf7 24.♕xb6 ♗e4?? 25.♕xd6

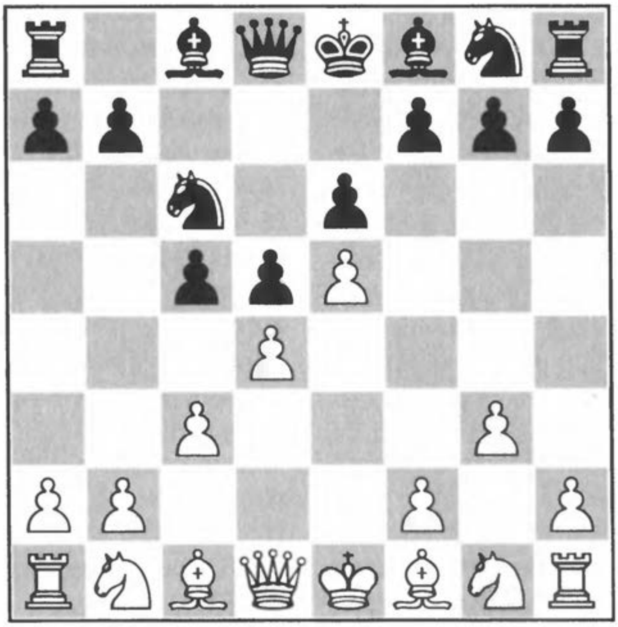
Black resigned.

Conclusion: more than half the games in my database are from the 19th century! However as the largely forgotten 4...d5 looks playable, maybe it's about due for a revival?

CHAPTER 3

Jeroen Bosch

Murey's Advance Variation in the French



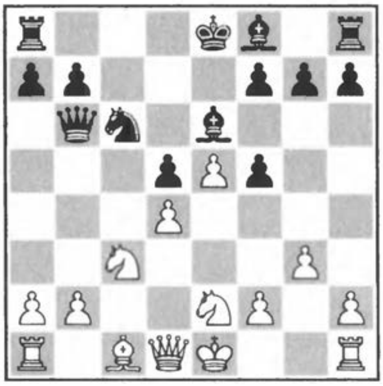
1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 ♘c6 5.g3!?

There can be no doubt that Jacob Murey is one of the most creative grandmasters in the world. He has invented numerous opening surprises with his original outlook on chess. See for instance SOS-8 (Chapter 16) for his interpretation of the Ruy Lopez with 3...♘ge7. A concept that inspired Leonid Gofshtein and made him write on this particular line. Murey's most famous opening surprise is undoubtedly in the Petroff, where after 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.d4 ♘xe4 4.♗d3 only a truly inspired man can come up with a move like 4...♘c6!? – a line that is still going strong for Black more than 15 years after its conception.

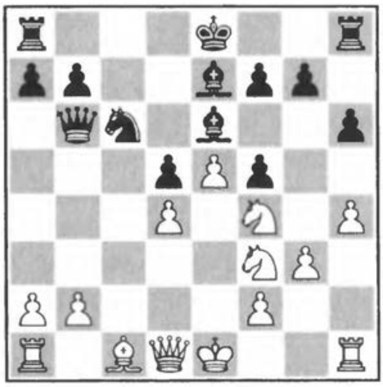
In his work on the opening Murey is not so much searching for one novelty that will temporarily change the verdict in a particular line, he is more like a conceptual artist. He is finding moves to match a whole positional concept.

His 5.g3!? in the French Advance Variation is a case in point. While the whole world is automatically playing 5.♘f3, Murey has thought out the moves that fit a well-known positional plan in the French. And, strange as it may sound, 5.g3 is an accurate move towards that particular scheme. Indeed, with 5.g3 Murey is not aiming for a fianchetto that will only bear down on Black's d5-stronghold. No, he is preparing ♗f1-h3 which may support the advance f4-f5 (remember Nimzowitsch's attack on the base of the pawn chain), but is mostly intended to exchange that bishop against the black knight that nearly always aims for square f5. In the resulting position pawns d5 and f5 obstruct Black's light-squared bishop, and a good knight versus bad bishop scenario is just around the corner.

A typical sequence is: 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 ♘c6 5.g3 ♕b6 6.♘e2 ♘ge7 7.♗h3 cxd4 8.cxd4 ♘f5 9.♗xf5 exf5 10.♘bc3 ♗e6



This really isn't all that far removed from those lines in the Advance Variation where White is making the exchange on f5 via ♗f1-d3. To give you one example from my own practice: 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 ♘c6 5.♘f3 ♘h6 6.♗d3 cxd4 7.cxd4 ♘f5 8.♗xf5 exf5 9.♘c3 ♗e6 10.h4 h6 11.♘e2 ♕b6 12.♘f4 ♗e7 13.g3, with a complex position that is perhaps slightly better for White, Bosch-Glek, Dutch tt 1995/96.



However, via the regular move order with 5.♘f3 Black has many opportunities to avoid such types of positions.

In Murey's line with 5.g3 the knight is flexibly placed on e2 – it protects d4 and can jump to f4 at an opportune moment, although, admittedly from e2 the steed does not overprotect e5. The set-up with 5.g3 and 6.♘e2 is also viable versus other move orders like 4...♕b6 or 4...♗d7.

Please note, though, that after 4...♘c6 it is less accurate to play 5.♘e2 (instead of 5.g3) as Black may respond with 5...f6 when 6.f4 is met by 6...fxe5 and White has to make an awkward choice between 7.fxe5 cxd4 8.cxd4 ♕h4+ 9.g3 ♕e4 and 7.dxe5 ♘h6 8.♘g3 ♗d7 9.♗e2 ♕b6 10.0-00-0-0 with an edge for Black, Romero Holmes-Kortchnoi Pamplona 1990/91.

With this cautionary remark on the move order we move on to the games.

☐ **Harmen Jonkman**
■ **Peter Wilschut**
Haarlem 2006

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 ♘c6 5.g3 ♕b6

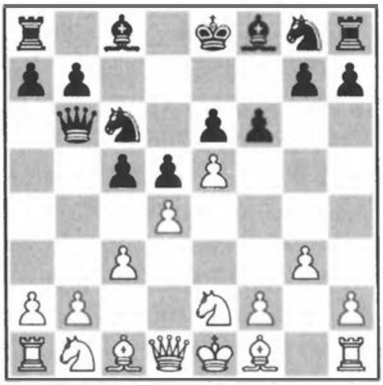
The most natural move for a player of the French. Black continues his plan to increase the pressure on the pawn chain.

In Murey-Haub, Metz 2008, Black opted for the non-standard 5...f5?!, thereby losing the option to attack the front of the pawn chain in the future with ...f6. After 6.♘e2 ♗d7 7.♗g2 (with the pawn on f5, g2 is the right square for the bishop) 7...♘ge7 8.♘a3 (8.0-0) 8...cxd4 9.cxd4 ♕a5+ 10.♕d2 (10.♗d2 ♕b6 11.♗c3 ♘g6 12.♘c2 ♘b4 is a typical French manoeuvre in the Advance Variation. Still, White must be a touch better here) 10...♕xd2+ 11.♗xd2 White had a slight edge in the queenless middlegame.

6.♘e2 ♗d7

Again Black is following the standard recipe. However, if Black continues as he does in the game, then 6...♗d7 is a slight mistake, for he is losing a tempo later on (having to play ...♗d7-e6). Compare this to the next illustrative game (Murey-Picard) where Black plays ...♗c8-e6 in one go. So, 6...♗d7 is only correct when Black does not continue with the manoeuvre ...♘e7-f5. Black has other possible set-ups too at this stage:

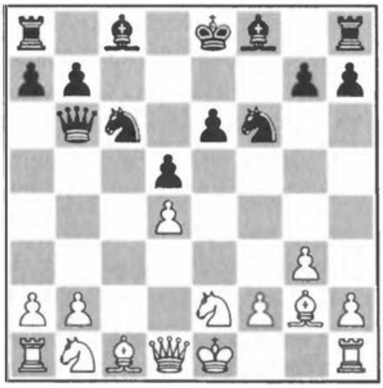
● 6...f6



Black attacks the front of the pawn chain:

– 7.f4 (Okhotnik plays for space, the danger is that White will overstretch himself) 7...♘h6 8.♗h3 ♗e7 9.a3 a5 10.♕d3 a4 (both 10...0-0 and 10...fxe5 11.fxe5 0-0 are decent) 11.♘d2 cxd4 12.cxd4 ♗d7 13.♖b1 ♕a6, with a good position for Black in Okhotnik-Madan, Torre del Greco 2006.

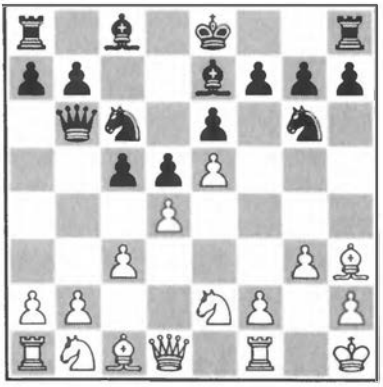
– 7.exf6 ♘xf6 8.♗g2 cxd4 9.cxd4



Now after 9...♗b4+ 10.♘bc3 ♘a5 11.0-0 ♗xc3?! 12.bxc3 ♘c4 Black has good control over the c4-square and several other light squares, but he has weakened his dark squares by the exchange on c3. I prefer White. 13.♘f4 0-0 14.♖e1 ♗d7 15.♘d3 ♖ae8 16.♘c5 ♗c8 17.♗g5 (White has a pleasant edge) 17...♕c6 18.♕d3 and now Black made a tactical mistake with 18...b6? when White obtained a superior position with 19.♕xc4 bxc5 20.♗xf6!? (20.♕xc5 is even better) 20...gxf6 21.dxc5 ♗d7 22.♕g4+ (22.♕d4 ♕a4 23.f4) 22...♔h8 23.c4 ♕xc5 24.cxd5 and White managed to convert his edge in Jorgensen-Hartung, Neubrandenburg 1998.

Simpler is 9...♗d6 10.0-0 0-0 11.♘bc3 ♗d7 and now play is about equal after either 12.♗g5 or 12.♘a4. White was worse after 12.♔h1 in Neretljak-Brynell, Rodeby 1998.

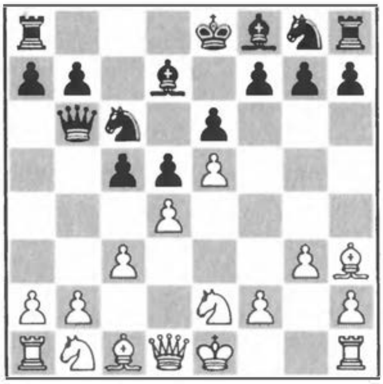
● 6...♘ge7 7.♗h3. Now 7...♘f5 8.♗xf5 exf5 transposes to the next game (Murey-Picard). While White is better in set-ups with ...♘g6. For example: 7...♘g6 8.0-0 ♗e7 9.♔h1



– 9...♗d7 10.f4 ♖c8 11.dxc5 ♗xc5 12.♕d3 d4?! 13.b4. Now Black is more or less obliged to sac something. White was better after 13...♗xb4 14.cxb4 ♘xb4 15.♕xd4 ♘c2 16.♕xb6 axb6 17.♗b2 ♘xa1 18.♗xa1 ♖c2 19.♘bc3, Paleologu-Taube, Tromsö 2008.

– 9...cxd4 10.cxd4 f6 11.f4 0-0 12.b3!? fxe5 13.dxe5 ♗d7 14.♗b2 ♖ac8?! (14...♕a6 planning ...♘b4 is better) 15.♘bc3 ♖cd8? and now White just wins material with 16.♘xd5! ♕a5 (16...exd5 17.♕xd5+ ♔h8 18.♗xd7 ♕a6! 19.♖fe1 ♘b4 20.♕b5 ♕xb5 21.♗xb5 ♘c2 was perhaps a better chance, although White is much better here too) 17.♘xe7+ ♘gxe7 18.♕e1, with an extra pawn in Hoang Phan Minh-Bui Dac Khuong, Vung Tau 2004.

7.♗h3



7...♘ge7

In my opinion this is inconsistent with his previous move. If Black intends to play his knight to f5, then the immediate 6...♘ge7 was better. In practice Black has tried several other moves:

– 7...h5!? 8.0-0 ♘h6 9.a4!? (Okhotnik intends 10.dxc5 followed by 11.b4, 12.a5 and 13.f4. The immediate 9.dxc5?! ♗xc5 10.b4 ♗e7 11.♗e3 ♕c7 12.f4 ♘g4 demonstrates why 7...h5 was useful. 9.♘a3 cxd4 10.cxd4 ♗xa3 11.bxa3±) 9...a5?! 10.♘a3 cxd4 11.cxd4 ♗e7 12.♘b5. White has a pleasant edge. After 12...g5 13.♘ec3 g4 14.♗xh6 (14.♗g2 ♘f5) 14...♖xh6 15.♗g2 ♘b4 16.♖c1 ♗xb5 17.♘xb5 ♘c6 18.f4! White was superior in Okhotnik-De Santis, Genova 2006.

– 7...cxd4 8.cxd4 ♖c8 9.0-0 ♘ge7 10.♘bc3 ♘a5 was not a very convincing set-up, after 11.b3 ♘g6 12.♔h1 ♗b4 13.♗b2 ♘e7 14.♖b1 0-0 15.a3 ♗xc3 16.♗xc3 ♗b5 17.♗b4 ♘ac6 18.♗c5 ♕d8 19.♖b2 b6 20.♗d6 ♖e8 21.a4 ♗xe2 22.♖xe2 the pair of bishops gave White a clear edge in Paleologu-Remensberger, Ascona 2007.

– 7...0-0-0 8.0-0 f6 and now, rather than 9.exf6 ♘xf6 10.a4?! e5 11.a5 ♕c7, Simeonov-Galunov, Borovets 2008, White should have played 9.dxc5 ♗xc5 10.b4 ♗e7 11.♗e3, with good prospects.

– Consistent with 6...♗d7 is 7...♖c8 to quickly develop the queenside. White should just castle kingside now, rather than play 8.a3?! (8.0-0!) 8...cxd4 9.cxd4 ♘a5 (interesting is 9...♘xd4!? 10.♘xd4 ♖xc1 11.♕xc1 ♕xd4 12.0-0 ♕xe5, when Black has two pawns for the exchange and a strong pair of bishops, but White has an edge in development) 10.b4 ♘c4 11.0-0 ♕a6 (attacking b4 and with nice pressure on the lights squares) 12.♕e1 ♘b6 13.♘bc3!? ♗xb4 14.♗d2 ♗f8, and White hardly has any compensation for the pawn, Brochet-Boukobza, Paris 2006.

8.0-0 cxd4

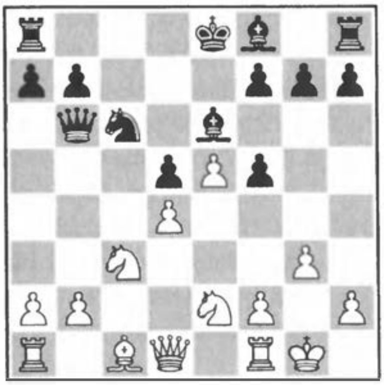
If Black postpones the exchange on d4 for too long, then White will take on c5 and play b4, controlling square d4 with his pieces, just like Nimzowitsch prescribed. Thus, 8...♘g6 9.dxc5! ♗xc5 10.b4 ♗f8 (10...♗e7) 11.♗e3 ♕d8 12.f4 is very pleasant for White, Paleologu-Flermoen, Tromsö 2008.

9.cxd4 ♘f5 10.♗xf5

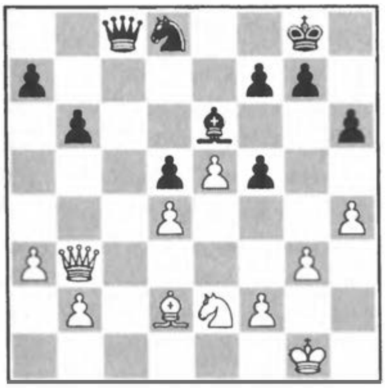
White has no choice, but as I explained in the introduction the resulting positions are very decent for the first player.

10...exf5 11.♘bc3 ♗e6

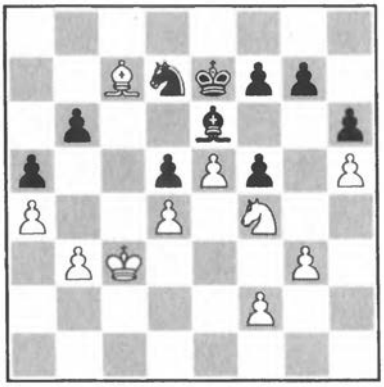
Black has lost a tempo, compare this to Murey's next effort. Theoretically, the present game may have lost its significance, but it is still a good illustration of what is going on in this type of position. Therefore, I urge you to play through the remaining moves. I have added only a few light notes.



12.♗e3 Also good are 12.♖b1 and 12.h4!?. **12...♗b4 13.♘a4 ♕d8 14.♖c1 0-0 15.♕b3** White can play both on the queenside and on the kingside. Other decent moves are 15.♘f4 and 15.a3. **15...♖b8 16.h4** 16.♘f4. **16...♗e7 17.♗d2?! h6 18.a3 ♕d7** Black connects the rooks, and prepares ...f6. White has been a bit slow and must now act. **19.♘c5 ♗xc5 20.♖xc5 ♖fc8** 20...f6 21.exf6 ♖xf6 was stronger. **21.♖fc1 b6 22.♖5c2 ♘d8** It is perhaps understandable that Black assumed that he could draw the position after the exchange of all the rooks along the c-file. This may have influenced his decision on move 20. However, despite the opposite-coloured bishops the position still favours White and the draw is not that easy to achieve. **23.♖xc8 ♖xc8 24.♖xc8 ♕xc8**



25.a4 ♕a6?! 26.♘f4 ♘c6 27.♗c3 ♘e7?! 27...♕b7 followed by ...♕d7 was more solid. **28.♕a3** In view of the unpleasant threat of 29.♕d6 Black now has to play the ugly **28...♘c8 29.♕b4 ♕b7 30.b3 ♕c6 31.♗b2 a5 32.♕c3 ♕xc3 33.♗xc3** The ending is unpleasant for Black despite the opposite-coloured bishops. **33...♘a7 34.h5!** Now pawn g7 is an additional weakness. **34...♘c6 35.♗b2 ♔f8 36.♔f1 ♔e8 37.♔e2 ♘e7 38.♗a3 ♘c6 39.♔d3** Nearly all of Black's pieces are tight-up. The bishop has to protect d5, the king has to protect square f8, and the knight must prevent White from entering on the queenside while it must also guard pawn b6. **39...♘b8 40.♗d6 ♘d7 41.♗c7 ♔e7 42.♔c3**



White is winning in view of the simple threat of 43.b4. Therefore Black tried the desperate **42...f6 43.exf6+** 43.♗d8+!? is a neat trick: 43...♔xd8 44.♘xe6+ ♔e7 45.♘xg7 fxe5 46.dxe5 ♘xe5 47.♘xf5+. However, 43...♔f7 44.exf6 ♘xf6 45.♗xb6 is rather similar – though even better than the game (the king is on f7). **43...♘xf6 44.♗xb6 ♘e4+ 45.♔b2 ♘xf2 46.♗xa5 ♘e4 47.♗b4+ ♔d7 48.♗f8 ♗f7 49.♗xg7 ♘xg3 50.♗xh6 ♘xh5 51.♘xh5 ♗xh5** Without the d-pawns this would be a draw. **52.b4 ♗d1 53.♔a3 f4 54.♗xf4 ♔e6 55.b5 ♔f5 56.b6**

Black resigned.

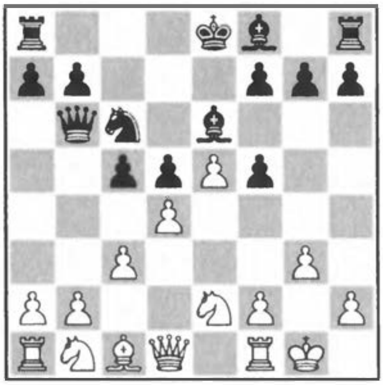
☐ **Jacob Murey**
■ **Romain Picard**
Paris 2006

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 ♕b6 5.g3 ♘h6

A non-standard move order, but the game will soon transpose. Most games cited in this section arrive at the position after Black's ninth move via: 4...♘c6 5.g3 ♕b6 6.♘e2 ♘ge7 7.♗h3 cxd4 8.cxd4 ♘f5 9.♗xf5 exf5.

6.♗h3 ♘c6 7.♘e2 cxd4

It is important to know if Black can postpone this exchange on d4. It would be very favourable for Black because interpolating 7...cxd4 8.cxd4 before playing the knight to f5 allows White to develop his queen's knight to c3. Let's have a look: 7...♘f5 8.♗xf5 exf5 9.0-0 ♗e6



Black has omitted the exchange on d4, and the question for White is how should he continue, for, how can he develop his queenside? First of all, we won't find the answer by looking at the limited practice of 5.g3. Indeed, after **10.♗e3** ♕xb2 11.♘d2 cxd4 12.cxd4 ♕a3 13.♘b3 ♗e7 14.♘c3 0-0 15.♘b5 ♕a4 16.♘c7 ♖ac8 17.♘xe6 fxe6 18.f4 b6 White had no compensation whatsoever, and Black was just winning in Makiaho-Holmsten, Kankaanpaa 1989.

A logical solution would be **10.dxc5** ♗xc5 11.b4 ♗e7 12.♗e3 ♕c7 13.f4. However, after 13...0-0 14.♘d2 (not 14.♘a3?! a5! 15.♘b5 ♕d7 and the un-protected knight on b5 does not allow White to consolidate: 16.a3 fails to 16...♘xe5), the pawn sacrifice 14...d4!? (14...f6 15.exf6 ♗xf6 16.♘f3) 15.♘xd4 ♘xd4 16.♗xd4 ♗d5 makes sense. Black will continue with ....b6 to keep the bishop on the long diagonal. That fact alone should guarantee Black sufficient compensation.

I quite like **10.a4!?**. This prepares dxc5 (followed by b4 and a5) as well as ♘a3, while the logical 10...cxd4 can now be met by 11.♘xd4! (11.cxd4?! ♗e7 transposes to the main game, but for the fact that White has played 11.a4 instead of the clearly more useful 11.♘bc3 as played by Murey), when 11...♘xe5?! (11...♗c5 12.a5!, best is 11...♗e7) 12.♖e1! is much better for White. Indeed, 12...♘d7 13.a5 ♕a6 14.b4! (even stronger than 14.♘xe6 fxe6 15.♕xd5 or 14.♘xf5) is unplayable for Black, especially after 14...♗e7? 15.b5 ♕d6 16.♗f4 ♕c5 17.♖xe6!, and wins.

8.cxd4 ♘f5

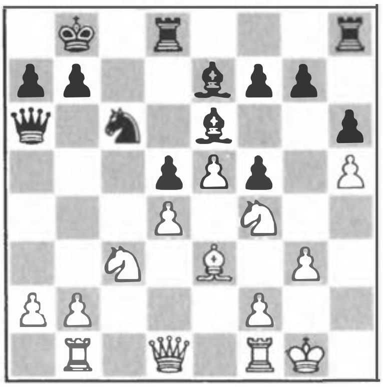
Simply bad is 8...♗d7 9.a3 a5 10.0-0 ♖c8 11.♞bc3 ♘e7 (11...g6) to prepare ...♘hf5 or ...♘ef5, but it is already too late. 12.♗xh6 gxh6 13.♕d2 ♗g7 14.♘f4! ♖c4 15.♘h5 ♗f8 16.♖fd1, with a superior position, A.Fontaine-Ibarra, Merida 2002.

9.♗xf5 exf5 10.0-0

Very natural of course, but so is 10.♘bc3. And albeit in a blitz game, this last move (postponing castling for some time) was preferred by Alexander Grischuk.

I am not in favour of analysing blitz games, but guys who are among the world elite have a knack of playing strong moves, so I would advise you to play through the following game: 10.♘bc3 ♗e6 11.♖b1!? (also not a bad example is 11.a3 ♗e7 12.b4 ♖c8 13.♗e3 0-0 14.0-0 ♕d8 15.♕d2, N.Hoiberg-

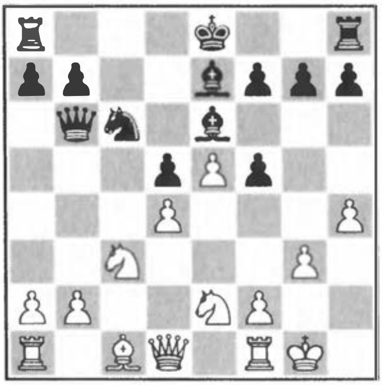
Buergin, Biel 1980) 11...♗e7 12.h4!? (increasing his control over the dark squares and gaining space – and should Black allow it – preparing to exchange bishops with ♗g5. Play would be about equal after 12.♗e3 0-0 13.0-0 ♖ac8 14.♕d2 ♕d8 15.♖fc1 f6 16.♘f4 and a draw was agreed in Gushuliak-Charter, Winnipeg 2002) 12...h6 13.♗e3 ♕a6 (13...0-0 14.0-0 looks slightly more pleasant for White) 14.h5 0-0-0!? 15.0-0 ♔b8 16.♘f4



16...♗g5 17.♘d3 b6 18.a4 (White is better, Gelfand now sacs a pawn to activate his light-squared bishop) 18...f4? 19.♘xf4 ♗xf4 20.♗xf4 g5 21.♗e3 ♕c8 22.f3!? a6 23.♖c1 ♕d7 24.b4!? ♘xb4 (24...♘xe5 25.dxe5 d4 26.♘e4 dxe3 27.♘d6+−) 25.♕b3 a5 26.♘b5 ♖c8 27.♘d6 ♖c4!? (27...♖xc1 28.♖xc1 and the simple 29.♗d2 will be hard to meet) 28.♗d2! f6?! 29.♕e3 fxe5?? 30.♘xc4 dxc4 31.♕xe5+ 1-0, Grischuk-Gelfand, Moscow 2007.

10...♗e6 11.♘bc3 ♗e7 12.h4!

Just like Grischuk in the previous comment, Murey also likes to expand on the kingside with h4. This is of course standard fare in the French. 12.♘a4 ♕d8 13.♗d2 0-0 14.♖c1 ♖c8 15.a3 ♕d7 16.b4 b6 was still quite acceptable for White in Keogh-Brady, Dublin 2003. However, the text is much more purposeful.



12...0-0-0

Black can also castle kingside of course. Another Murey effort went: 12...h6 13.h5! 0-0 14.♖b1 ♕d8 15.♗e3 (White's moves are natural, and he has an edge here) 15...♕d7 16.♘f4 ♗g5 17.♘fe2!? (repeating moves, since 17...♗xe3 18.fxe3 favours White) 17...♗e7 18.♘f4 ♗g5 19.♘d3!? ♗e7 20.b4 f6 (20...f4!? 21.♘xf4 ♗xb4) 21.♖e1?! (White is better after 21.exf6 ♗xf6 22.♘c5 ♕f7 23.b5 ♘a5 24.♖e1) 21...fxe5 (21...f4!) 22.b5 ♘d8 23.♘xe5 ♕e8 24.♘g6 ♖f6 and now 25.♕f3! would have been even stronger than 25.♕b3 ♖xg6 26.hxg6 ♕xg6 27.♘xd5 ♗b4!?, as in Murey-Peric, Le Touquet 2005.

13.♗g5 ♗xg5 14.hxg5

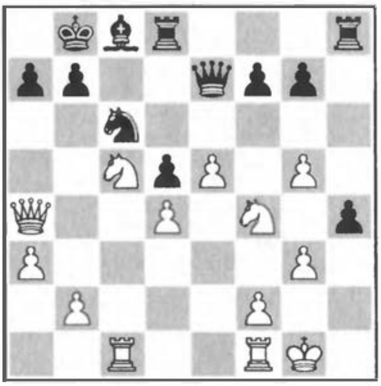
We are close to an ideal good knight versus bad bishop scenario. However, with castling on opposite sides there is always excitement of course. Black now decides to sac a pawn to activate the pawn – excuse me, bishop – one6.

14...f4!? 15.♘a4 ♕b4 16.a3 ♕e7 17.♘xf4

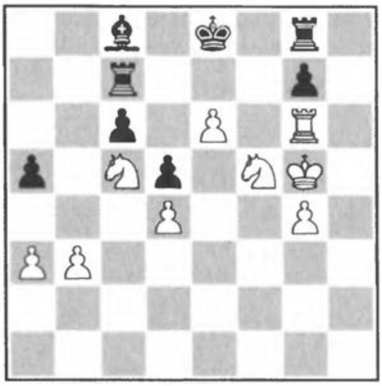
White has a clear edge. The rest requires no deep analysis:

17...h5 18.♘c5 ♔b8 19.♖c1 Murey does not take the exchange (he prefers to give one as we will soon see) on offer with 19.♘cxe6 fxe6 20.♘g6 ♕xg5 21.♘xh8 ♖xh8, when Black has some counterplay.

19...♗c8 20.♕a4! h4



21.♘a6+ Not 21.♖c3? ♕xg5 22.♘a6+ ♔a8 23.♘xd5? (23.♘c7+ ♔b8 24.♘a6+ is a repetition) because of 23...♖xd5 24.♘c7+ ♔b8 25.♘xd5 hxg3 26.♖xg3 ♕h5 and White is mated! **21...♔a8 22.♖xc6! bxc6 23.♕b4 ♕b7** Stronger was 23...♕xb4 24.♘xb4 ♔b7, although White has nice compensation, but at least the knight is further removed from the ideal c5-square. **24.♕xb7+ ♗xb7** And here 24...♔xb7 was stronger. **25.♘c5 hxg3 26.fxg3 ♗c8 27.g6! fxg6 28.e6! ♖he8 29.♖e1 ♖d6 30.♖e5** White is in control. **30...♔b8 31.♖g5 ♔c7 32.♖xg6 ♖e7 33.♖g5 ♖d8 34.♔g2 a5 35.b3 ♖g8 36.g4 ♔d6 37.♔g3 ♖a7 38.♖g6 ♖e7 39.♔h4 ♖ge8 40.♔g5 ♖g8 41.♘h5 ♖c7 42.♘g3! ♔e7 43.♘f5+ ♔e8**



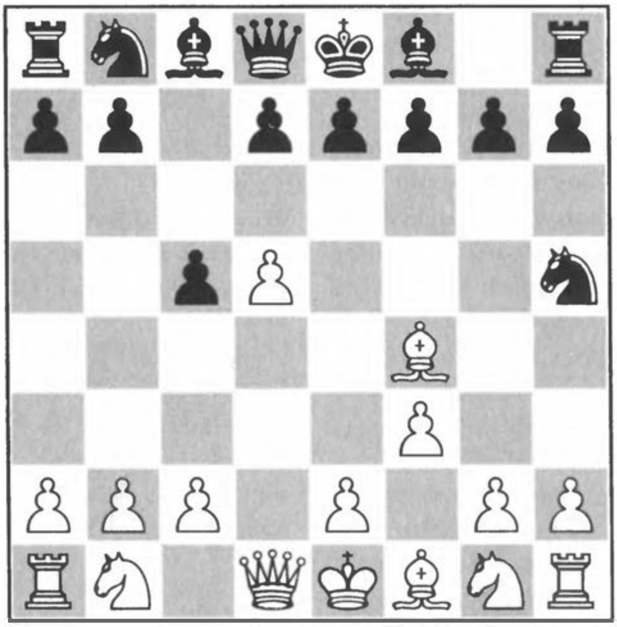
44.♔f4

And Black resigned. He is completely helpless against the invasion of White's king with 45.♔e5 and 46.♔d6.

CHAPTER 4

Stefan Löffler

A Trompowsky (K)nightmare



A Jumpy Knight

Trick question: How many moves were played in the diagrammed position? Counting only the obvious, one would guess that White had made four moves and Black only three. However, since the bishop is hanging it has to be White's move. Indeed, it turns out that in reality both players have already played five times. Black's knight having taken care of the lion's share – the steed has wandered off to e4 before taking up a position on the edge of the board.

Playing pieces back and forth, without actually repeating the moves, is not uncommon in the Trompowsky. Take, for example, the position after 1.d4♘f6 2.♗g5 ♘e4 3.♗f4 c5 4.f3 ♕a5+ 5.c3 ♞f6 6.d5 ♕b6 7.♗c1: White has all his pieces on the back rank, having advanced only three pawns, whereas Black has moved a pawn, a knight and his queen. Please remember that this is not some obscure sideline but a main variation, which was covered in some 14 pages by Peter Wells in his *Winning with the Trompowsky* (2003).

Ever since I took up the Trompowsky in my repertoire I have noticed an obvious increase in 1...g6 and 1...e6 in reply to my first move. Luckily, so far no one has prepared the present line featuring the audacious knight for me. I am sure I would have blundered into it blindly.

Indeed, it is pure coincidence that enables me to report on 5...♘h5 now. Until quite recently, I was unaware of its very existence! The Swiss newspaper *Tages-Anzeiger* requested me to analyse a game from the ongoing European Championship in Budva. Their regular commentator Beat Züger was playing in the event and therefore unable to do so. As we are talking about a Swiss newspaper I examined all the wins of the Swiss participants. There was one game that caught my attention – it was played by none other than the reporter I was replacing. Moreover, it was a win with black versus an opponent 220 Elo points his superior in a line against the Trompowsky that I had never seen before.

☐ **Ivan Ivanisevic**
■ **Beat Züger**
Budva 2009

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗g5 ♘e4

In reply to 2...c5 most Trompowsky-adherents prefer 3.♗xf6 over 3.d5. A good alternative is 3.♘c3 – see Chapter 14.

3.♗f4

Although Julian Hodgson scored some excellent results with the bizarre 3.h4!? he later came to mistrust it. If Black does not seek an outright refutation but is satisfied with a slight edge than he simply answers 3...c5 4.dxc5 h6! 5.♗e3 e6 6.♘d2 ♘xc5, Miladinovic-Svidler, Tivat 1995.

Equally unpopular these days is 3.♗h4, mainly because of 3...g5 (here 3...c5 4.f3 g5 5.fxe4 gxh4 transposes, but White can opt for 4.dxc5) 4.f3 (4.♗g3 is solid but unambitious) 4...gxh4 5.fxe4 c5 6.e3 ♗h6.

3...c5 4.f3

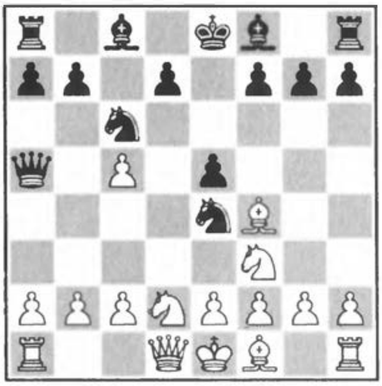
The most popular move.

- After 4.d5, 4...♕b6 is an annoying answer: White has insufficient compensation after 5.♘d2 ♕xb2! 6.♞xe4 ♕b4+ 7.♕d2 ♕xe4.

5.♕c1 leaves Black a pleasant choice between 5...e6, 5...g6 and 5...c4!? 6.e3 ♕a5+.

Finally, 5.♗c1, is well-met by 5...g6 6.f3 ♘d6 7.e4 ♗g7 8.♘c3 0-0 planning 9...f5 as frequently confirmed in practice, although more adventurous natures might like to have a go at 5...e6 6.f3 ♘f6 7.c4 and now either take the pawn with 7...♕b4+ 8.♗d2! ♕xb2 (too dangerous is 8...♕xc4 9.e4 ♕d4 10.♘c3) 9.♘c3 ♕b6, or sac one with 7...exd5 8.cxd5 c4 9.e3 ♗c5 10.♔f2 0-0 11.♗xc4.

- 4.dxc5 offers practical chances at best. The most ambitious reply is 4...♘c6 with the following neat point: 5.♘f3 ♕a5+ 6.♘bd2 e5

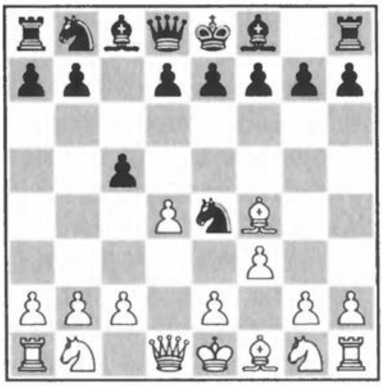


7.♘xe5 ♘xe5 8.♗xe5 ♘xf2 9.♔xf2 ♕xc5+ 10.e3 ♕xe5, Drazic-Grigore, Cesenatico 2000.

One of the earliest Trompovsky-games ever saw 5.♕d5!? f5! (5...♘f6 6.♕c4 b6!?) 6.♕xf5?! d5 7.♕h5+ g6 8.♕h4 ♘d4 9.♗e5 ♘xc2+ 10.♔d1 ♘xa1 11.♗xh8 ♕a5 12.♘c3 ♘xc3+ 13.♗xc3 ♕xa2, and Black crashed through in Tolush-Boleslavsky, Moscow 1945.

Safer is 6.e3 e6 7.♕d1 ♗xc5 8.♘d2 0-0 9.♘gf3 d5 10.♗e2 ♕e7 11.♘e5, Kogan-Miladinovic, Salou 2000, but if anyone then Black is a tad better.

Black also has a comfortable game after 5.♘d2 ♘xc5 6.e4 g6 7.♘gf3 ♗g7 8.c3 0-0.



4...♘f6

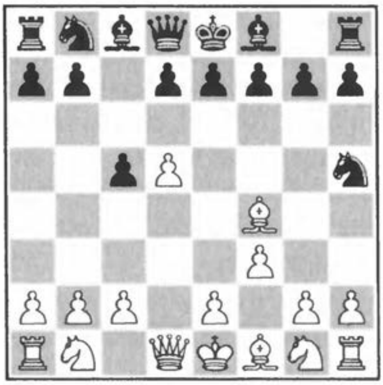
The most popular move here is 4...♕a5+ 5.c3. The main line runs 5...♘f6 6.♘d2 cxd4 7.♘b3 ♕b6 (7...♕f5 8.♗xb8 ♖xb8 9.♕xd4 b6 10.e4 offers White a clear edge in development in return for the bishop pair) 8.♕xd4 ♘c6 9.♕xb6 axb6 10.♘d4 e5 11.♘xc6. Black does not equalize after either 11...exf4 12.♘d4 d5 (12...g6!?) 13.e3 fxe3 14.♗b5+ followed by ♔e2xe3 nor after the pawn sacrifice 11...dxc6 12.♗xe5 ♗e6 13.a3 b5 14.♖c1.

5.d5

For 5.dxc5 see the next section. Before I saw the present game my knowledge was limited to '5...♕b6 6.♘c3 ♕xb2 7.♗d2 ♕b6 8.e4 with compensation'.

5...♘h5!

While it wasn't even attacked, the knight moves for the fourth time! What is more, it is particularly annoying for White as we will see. In my database the move was played for the first time in 1986 in a German correspondence game. Indeed, even Ivanisevic did not meet 5...♘h5 for the first time in this game. In 2006 he won a blitz game on the internet against Sutovsky after 6.♗c1 e5 7.♘h3 f5 8.d6 ♘c6 9.♘c3 ♘d4? 10.e3 ♗xd6 11.exd4 cxd4 12.♞b5 ♗e7 13.c3. Possibly, the result gave him the feeling that he need not concern himself with 5...♘h5. Nevertheless, the statistics favour Black with a score of over sixty percent.



6.♗e3

Obviously the bishop now obstructs the e-pawn, but is there a sensible alternative?

● 6.♗c1 e6 (stronger than Sutovsky's 6...e5, for 7.g3 d6 8.e4 gives White the slightly better chances) 7.dxe6 fxe6 and in this position, which is quite comfortable for Black, Anastasian-Fedorov, Abu Dhabi 2006, was agreed drawn. The same result could have been achieved 'in style' with 7...♕h4+ 8.g3 ♘xg3 9.exf7+ ♔d8 (9...♔xf7? 10.♕d5+ ♔g6 11.hxg3 ♕xh1 12.♘h3 with a mating attack) 10.hxg3 ♕xg3+ 11.♔d2 ♕d6+.

● 6.♗d2? e6 7.dxe6 ♕h4+ 8.g3 ♘xg3 9.exf7+ ♔xf7 10.♗g5 ♕xg5 11.♘h3 ♕e5 12.hxg3 ♕xb2 13.♘d2 d5 and despite his vulnerable king, Black is better because of his extra pawn and the pair of bishops.

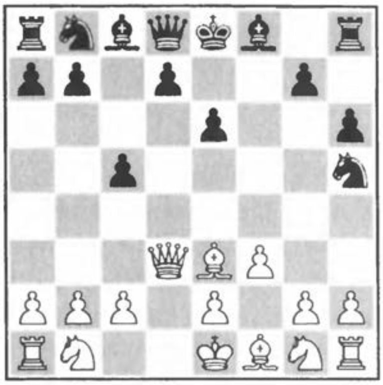
● 6.♗e5 d6 7.♗c3 e5 (7...e6 8.g3 exd5 9.♕xd5 ♘f6 10.♗xf6 ♕xf6 11.♘c3 ♘c6 12.e4 is OK for White) 8.g3 f5 and the bishop is badly placed on c3.

● 6.♗g5! h6:

– and now 7.♗h4?! ♕b6 8.♘d2 ♕xb2 9.e4 has been played a couple of times. After 9...d6 10.♗c4 ♕b6 11.♘e2 g6 12.0-0 ♗g7 13.♖b1 ♕c7 14.f4 White had compensation for the pawn in Rabinovich-Liss, Tel Aviv 1999. This was not the case, though, after the stronger 9...g5 10.♗f2 d6 11.a4 ♗g7 12.♖b1 ♕f6 13.♗b5+ ♘d7 14.♘e2 0-0, Tichy-Vacek, Czech tt 2007/08.

– If 7.♗c1 e6 8.dxe6 fxe6?! then Black must take 9.♕d3 into account. However, here Black does not have to settle for a perpetual after 8...♕h4+!, as the interpolation of ...h6 is useful for him.

– With 7.♗e3 e5 8.dxe6 fxe6 9.♕d3 White is hoping to take advantage from the weakening of square g6.



In the oldest game with 5...♘h5, Schlaugat-Kaiser, cr 1986, Black obtained the better game after 9...♔f7?! (9...♕f6) 10.♘c3 d5 11.0-0-0 ♘c6 12.♗f2 ♗e7 13.e3 ♘f6. However, 11.g4! ♘f6 12.g5 hxg5 13.♘h3 ♘h7 14.0-0-0 ♗e7 15.f4! looks good for White.

A solid alternative for Black is 7...d6 (compare this to our main game).

6...d6

● In the Database I found five games with 6...e5, which were all won by Black. So, superficially, it would seem that the interpolation of 6.♗g5 h6 7.♗e3 is stronger, but it must be said that the players of the white pieces did not maneuver in quite the best way after 6...e5. Indeed, natural is 7.♘c3 d6 8.g4 ♘f4 9.♗f2 ♗e7 10.h4.

And now White is threatening to win the knight with h5 and e3.

The first player is better after 10...h5 11.e3 ♘g6 12.g5 ♗f5 13.♘ge2, Jimenez Villena-Tyomkin, La Roda 2004.

In Kanep-Yemelin, Tallinn 2001, Black solved his problems after 10...f5 11.h5?! fxg4 12.e3 ♘h3 13.♘xh3 gxh3 14.♗xh3 ♗xh3 15.♖xh3 ♕d7 16.♖g3 (16.♖h2 0-0 17.e4 ♗d8 and ...♗a5) 16...0-0 17.♕e2 ♕f5 18.h6 g6. He would have suffered though after 11.gxf5 ♗xf5 12.h5 g6 13.hxg6 ♘xg6 14.♕d2 followed by 15.♗h3.

A similar idea was tried by Antoaneta Stefanova with 7.♕d2 d6 8.g4 ♘f4 9.h4. Again the threat is h5, ♗f2 and finally e3: 9...f5 10.♗xf4? exf4 11.gxf5 ♗e7?! (11...♗xf5) 12.♕xf4 ♕b6 13.♕a4+ ♘d7 14.♕b3 ♕d8 15.h50-0 16.e4 ♗h4+ 17.♔d1 resulted in a wild position in Stefanova-Gasimov, Tromsö 2007. Black later won by means of a destructive sacrifice on e4. Instead of taking the knight, White could have improved with 10.gxf5 ♗e7 11.♗f2 ♗xf5 12.h5! ♕b6 13.c4 ♗f6 14.♘c3.

● Black has two other options on move 6: First there is 6...♕b6. After the customary pawn sacrifice 7.♘c3 ♕xb2 8.♗d2 ♕b6 9.e4 Black can justify the knight jump to h5 with 9...e5 (and if 10.g3 then 10...g6). 7.♗c1? loses because of 7...♕b4+ and 8...♕h4+. This leaves 7.b3 e6 8.c4 (or 8.♘c3 ♕b4 9.♕d2 ♘f6 10.0-0-0 ♘xd5 11.♘xd5 ♕xd2+ 12.♖xd2 exd5 13.♖xd5 b6 with a comfortable game for Black) 8...exd5 9.cxd5 (or 9.♕xd5 ♕e6! 10.♕xh5? ♕f6, while the stronger 10.♕d2 is met by 10...b5) 9...♗e7 10.♘c3 0-0 with approximately equal chances.

● Finally, 6...e6 7.♘c3 (7.c4 ♕h4+ 8.♗f2 ♕xc4 9.♘c3 is playing with fire, but the solid 7...exd5 8.cxd5 d6 9.♘c3 f5 looks good for Black) 7...d6 8.♗f2 ♗e7 9.e4 0-0 also with an equal game.

7.♘c3

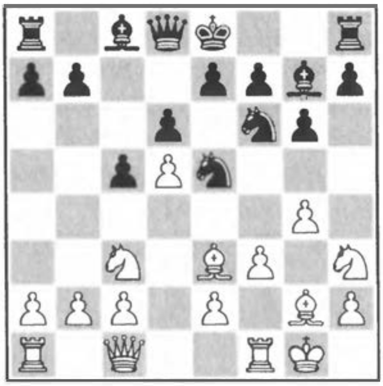
In Stefanova-Rajlich, Ekaterinburg 2006, White obtained a superior game after 7.g4 ♘f6 8.c4 e6 (8...b5!?) 9.♘c3 exd5 10.cxd5 ♗d7 11.♗f4 b5 12.e4 b4 13.♘b1 ♗e7 14.♘e2 g5?! (14...h5 15.g5 ♘h7 16.h4 f6) 15.♗xg5 h5 16.e5! ♘h7 17.♗xe7 ♕xe7

18.exd6 ♕xd6 19.♞d2 ♘g5? 20.f4 ♕xd5 21.♖g1.

7...♘d7 8.♘h3?!

Ivanisevic intends, after 8...g6, to keep the option of ♕c1 and ♗h6. More natural was 8.♗f2 g6 9.g4 ♘hf6 10.e4 ♗g7 11.♘ge2. Whenever White plays g4, then his knight belongs not on h3, but on g3. Beat Züger suggest 8.♗d2 and feels that White has a slight edge after something like 8...g6 9.e4 ♗g7 10.f4 0-0 11.♗e2 ♘hf6 12.♘f3.

8...g6 9.g4 ♘hf6 10.♗g2 ♗g7 11.0-0 ♞e5 12.♕c1



Provoking Black to grab a pawn with 12...♘c4 13.♗h6 ♗xh6 14.♕xh6 ♘xb2. However, in that case White obtains a dangerous initiative with 15.♘e4!. The initiative is something that Züger prefers to keep, thereby making use of the fact that pawn d5 is no longer protected by the white queen. In the comfort of his study, he later found that 12...h5! 13.g5 ♘fd7 was an even stronger continuation as White faces the unpleasant threat of 14...♘c4.

12...b5!? 13.♗h6

After 13.♘xb5 Black has 13...h5 14.g5 ♘xd5 15.f4 ♘xe3 16.♕xe3 ♘g4 17.♗c6+ ♗d7 18.♕e4 ♗xc6 19.♕xc6+ ♔f8, losing the right to castle is not so bad compared to the lack of coordination among White's forces.

13...♗xh6 14.♕xh6 b4 15.♘d1 e6

But not 15...♘xd5? 16.f4.

16.e4

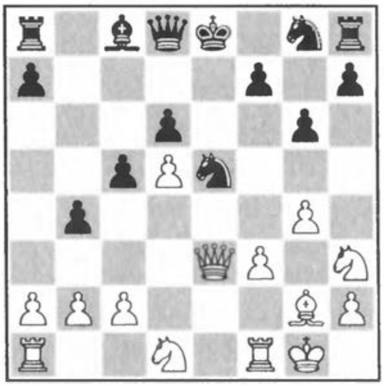
Black has the more harmonious game after 16.dxe6?! fxe6, but 16.♘e3 was a good alternative.

16...exd5 17.exd5 ♘g8

According to Züger 17...♘xd5? is too dangerous because of 18.♘df2.

18.♕e3

Exchanging queens with 18.♕g7 ♕f6 19.♕xf6 ♘xf6 would favour Black.



18...♔f8!? The natural move is 18...♘e7.

19.♘df2 h5 20.♘g5

Understandably, the Serbian grandmaster does not like to lose control over square f5 with 20.g5 ♘e7. His better development ought to justify the sacrifice of a pawn, especially when it opens both a file and a diagonal.

20...♘f6 21.h3 ♘xd5 22.♕e4 ♘b6 23.f4 ♘ec4

Better was 23...hxg4!, according to Züger, and he continues his analysis with 24.fxe5 ♕xg5 25.♘xg4 d5 26.♕f3 ♗e6 and Black has the slightly better chances.

24.♕e2 ♖b8

Züger also doubts White's compensation after 24...d5 25.♖ad1.

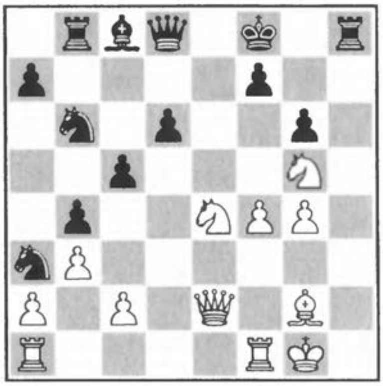
25.b3

More promising was 25.a3!, for example 25...hxg4 26.hxg4 bxa3 27.b3.

25...♘a3 26.♘fe4

In mutual timetrouble Ivanisevic decides to give it a (risky) shot. More solid is Züger's suggestion of 26.♖ad1 hxg4 27.♕e5 dxe5 28.♖xd8+ ♔g7 29.♖xh8 ♔xh8 30.fxe5 gxh3 31.♘fxh3.

26...hxg4 27.hxg4



27...f5!

The best move. If 27...f6? then 28.♖ad1! fxg5 29.♘xd6! is a very cool answer to obtain a decisive attack. 27...♗xg4 28.♕xg4 ♘xc2 fails to 29.♘xf7!. Likewise, 27...♕e7 28.♖ae1 d5 29.♘xf7! ♖g8 30.♘e5 dxe4 31.♘c6, and 28...f5 29.gxf5 gxf5 30.♘xd6! ♕xe2 31.♖xe2 ♗a6 32.♘e6+ ♔g8 33.♖e3 will not appeal the second player.

28.♘xc5?

This sacrifice should lose. Play remains unclear after 28.gxf5 gxf5 29.♘g3, a sample line is 29...♕f6 30.♖ae1 ♗d7 31.♘h5! ♕d4+ 32.♖f2 ♖e8 33.♕xe8+ ♗xe8 34.♘e6+.

28...dxc5 29.♖ad1 ♕f6 30.♖fe1

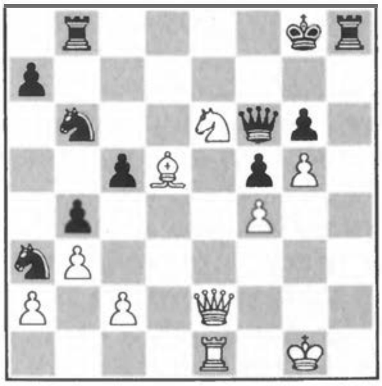
Züger adds a question mark here. In his opinion 30.♕f2 or 30.♕e3 were better tries to justify the piece sacrifice.

30...♗d7 31.♖xd7

Here Black can simply answer 31.♕f2 with 31...♖c8. Ivanisevic now throws an additional exchange at Black, to obtain what looks like a deadly discovered check.

31...♘xd7 32.♘e6+ ♔g8 33.♗d5 ♘b6 34.g5

In timetrouble it is possible to miss the winning 34...♕f7! with the deadly point of 35.♘d8 ♖h1+!!.



34...♕c3? 35.♘d8+?

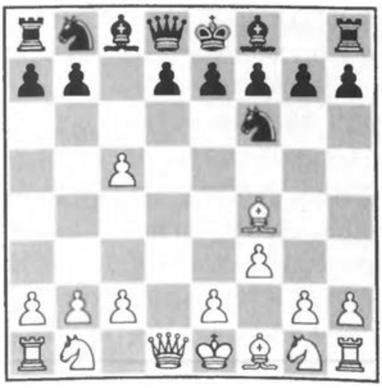
Ivanisevic returns the favour. It was not the rook but the queen that had to be barred by the discovered check with the knight: 35.♘d4+! ♘xd5 36.♕e6+ ♔g7 37.♕d7+ ♔f8 (but not 37...♔g8? 38.♖e8+ ♖xe8 39.♕xe8+ ♔g7 40.♘e6+ ♔h7 41.♕f7+) 38.♕d6+ ♔g7 39.♕d7+ with perpetual check.

35...♘xd5 36.♕e8+ ♔h7 37.♕d7+ ♕g7

White resigned.

For Beat Züger this was the start of an excellent tournament: 47 years young the Swiss player scored his third GM norm in Budva. However, what if White misses the chance to play 5.d5 and goes 5.dxc5 instead? Let us take a look.

5.dxc5

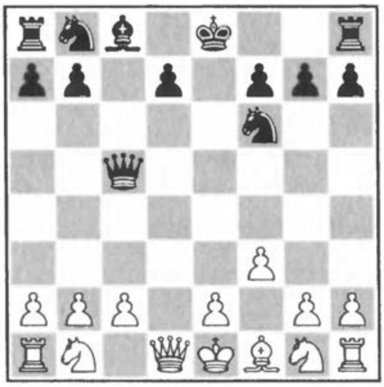


This is the recommendation of Peter Wells and the reason why 5...♘h5 isn't even mentioned in his excellent (but slightly biased) book on the Trompowsky. After 5.dxc5 it is White who is statistically superior with almost sixty percent. 5...e6? is obviously no good because of 6.♗d6. The odd 5...♘h5!? should perhaps not be rejected out of hand, but has received no practical outings according to my database research.

5...b6

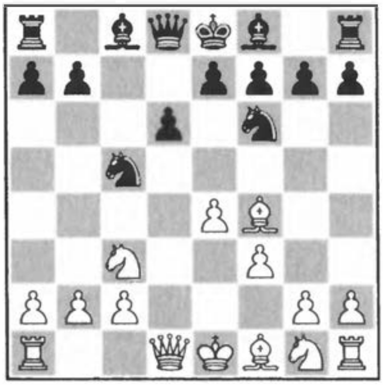
This is my suggestion for Black, and it scores relatively best. There are three other options:

- 5...e5?! 6.♗xe5 ♗xc5 7.♗d6 (more accurate than 7.♗d4, when apart from 7...♕b6, Black has the additional option of 7...♗xd4 8.♕xd4 d5 followed by...0-0 and ...♘c6) 7...♕b6 8.♗xc5 ♕xc5.



This is a dubious gambit. 9.♕d2 (in practice 9.♘c3 d5 10.e3 is customary, but this gives Black the additional possibility to play 10...♕xe3+ 11.♕e2, when, admittedly, he has chances for the draw but no counterplay. Of course 10...0-0 11.♕d2 would transpose) 9...d5 10.e3 0-0 11.♘c3 ♘c6 12.0-0-0 ♖e8 13.♘ge2 ♖xe3 14.♘xd5 ♘xd5 15.♕xd5 ♕e7? (better is 15...♕b6, although Black's compensation is negligible after 16.♘f4) 16.♕d6! ♕e8 17.♘c3 ♗f5 18.♗b5 and in Lajthajm-Djukic, Pancevo 2006, White had an extra pawn and won.

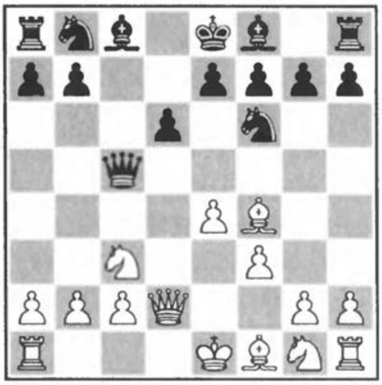
- 5...♘a6 6.e4 ♘xc5 7.♘c3 d6.



This does not appeal to me because of 8.e5 ♘e6 9.exf6 ♘xf4 10.♕d2 ♘e6 (perhaps 10...e5!? 11.♗b5+ ♗d7 12.fxg7 ♗xg7 13.g3 ♘e6 14.♕xd6 ♗xb5 15.♕xd8+ ♖xd8 16.♘xb5 e4 is playable) 11.♗b5+ ♗d7 12.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 13.fxe7 ♗xe7 14.♘ge2 0-0 15.♘d5, and only two results are possible, Kir. Georgiev-Relange, France tt 2006. By contrast, the more ambitious 8.♕d2 leaves Black more options, for example 8...e5 9.♗b5+ ♘cd7 10.♗g5 a6 11.♗xf6 ♕xf6 12.♘d5 ♕d8 13.♕c3 ♖b8 14.♘c7+ and White settled for a perpetual in Hodgson-Reinderman, Leeuwarden 1993, or 8...♗e6 9.♘ge2 a6 10.♘d4 ♗d7, Hauchard-Bacrot, French tt 1998, or even 8...a6 9.e5 dxe5 10.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 11.0-0-0+ ♔e8 11.♗xe5 ♗f5, Michna-Vozovic, Chisinau European Championship 2005.

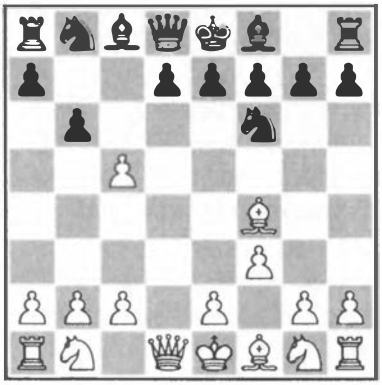
To avoid the simplifications after 7...d6 8.e5, Black has played 7...♘e6 8.♗e3 ♕a5 (after 8...d6 9.♗c4 g6 the white position plays itself: 10.e5! dxe5 11.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 12.0-0-0+ ♗d7 13.♗xe6 fxe6 14.♘h3 and so on) on several occasions. Still, after 9.♕d2 g6 10.0-0-0 ♗g7 11.♔b1 (or the immediate 11.g4) 11...d6 and now, not 12.♘ge2 b5, Curien-Groszpeter, Geneva 2003, but 12.g4 which leaves White the better chances.

– 5...♕a5+ 6.♕d2 (6.♘c3 is inaccurate after 6...e6 7.♗d6 ♘d5 8.e4 ♘xc3 9.♕d2 b6 10.♗xf8 ♖xf8 11.cxb6 axb6 12.♕xc3 ♕xc3+ 13.bxc3 ♗a6 14.♗d3 ♘c6 15.♘e2 ♘e5 and Black equalized easily in Vl.Kovacevic-Ftacnik, Hastings 1982/83) 6...♕xc5 7.e4 d6 (7...d5 8.♗e3 ♕d6 9.♘c3 dxe4 10.♕xd6exd6 11.fxe4 is slightly better for White) 8.♘c3



This is the most popular line after 5.dxc5, although White can boast excellent results here. In most case Black aimed for a kingside fianchetto. These positions may remind you of the Sicilian Dragon, albeit in a for White favourable version. A good example is 8...g6 9.0-0-0 ♗g7 10.♗h6 (10.e5? ♘h5 11.♘e4 ♗xe5, or 11.exd6 ♗xc3 12.bxc3 ♗e6) 10...0-0 11.h4 ♗e6 12.h5 ♘xh5 13.♗xg7 ♔xg7 14.g4 ♘f6 15.♕h6+ ♔g8 16.♘ge2 ♕f2? 17.e5! with a winning position in Adams-Leko, European Blitz Championship 1996. Even simpler is 9.♗e3 ♕a5 10.♘b5 and Black is already in trouble. That is why in Gallagher-Nedev, Saint Vincent 2005, Black tried 8...a6, but after 9.0-0-0 ♘bd7 10.g4 h6 11.h4 b5 12.♗e3 ♕c7 13.♘h3 ♘b6? 14.e5! b4 (14...dxe5 15.♘xb5 axb5? 16.♗xb6 ♕xb6 17.♗xb5+) 15.exf6 bxc3 16.♕d4 ♕c5 17.b4! White gained a decisive material advantage. To cut a long story short: I fail to come up with anything other than the warning to stay away from 5...♕a5.

In practice White has almost never accepted the pawn sacrifice implicit in 5...b6, for, after 6.cxb6 ♕xb6 7.♕c1 d5, it is clear that White can derive no pleasure from such a small material edge.



The main line now runs

6.e4 bxc5 7.♘c3

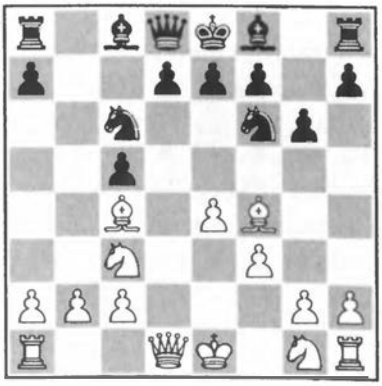
7.e5 ♕c7!.

7...♘c6 8.♗c4

8.♘d5 d6 9.♘xf6+ gxf6 10.♕d2 ♕b6 11.b3 f5 with a good game for Black in Pomes-Oms, Linares 1998.

8...g6

8...d6 9.e5! dxe5 10.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 11.0-0-0+ looks unpleasant for Black.



If Black would be able to play 9...♗g7, then he obtains a healthy position. This leaves White the option between two knight moves with entirely different objects:

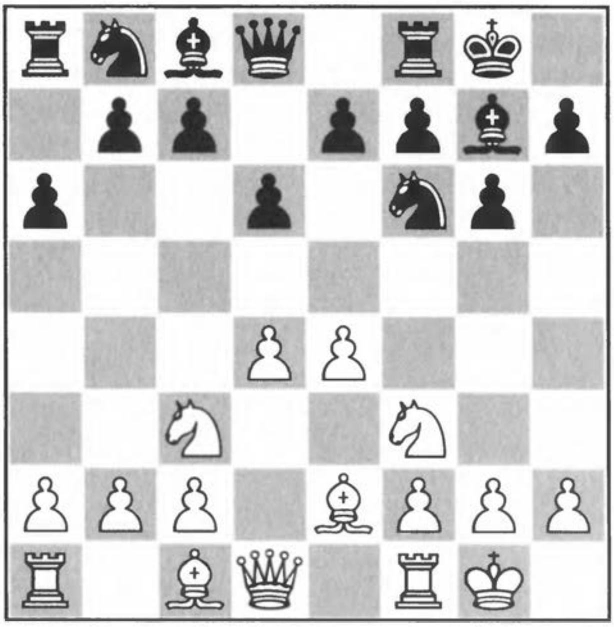
– 9.♘b5?! d6 10.e5 (the only way to justify his previous move) 10...dxe5 11.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 12.0-0-0+ ♘d7 13.♗e3 a6 14.♘c3 e6 15.♘e4 ♔c7! and White did not have enough for the pawn in Hodgson-Shirov, Groningen 1996, for 16.♞g5 h6 17.♘xf7 (17.♘e4 was the game) is a piece sacrifice for several pawns, that does not fully convince after 17...♖h7 18.♗xe6 ♘b6 19.♗b3 a5 20.a3 ♗a6 21.f4 c4 22.♗xc4 ♗xc4 23.♘xe5 ♘xe5 24.fxe5.

– More promising from White's viewpoint is 9.♘d5 ♘xd5 10.♕xd5 e6 11.♕d2 ♗g7, as played in Pfrommer-Zeier, Germany Bundesliga B 2004/05, for example, 12.c3 ♘e5 13.♗xe5 ♗xe5 14.f4 ♗g7 15.♘f3 ♗b7 when 16.e5? fails to 16...♗xf3 17.gxf3 ♗xe5 18.fxe5 ♕h4+, or 12.0-0-0 ♘a5!? 13.♗e2 (13.♗b5 0-0 14.♗d6 ♕b6 15.♗xf8 ♗xb2+!, or 15.c4 a6) 13...♕b6 14.c3 0-0 15.♗d6 ♖e8 followed by 16...♘b7. However, by now we have long since left the actual practice of this variation behind us.

CHAPTER 5

Alexander Finkel

A Non-Classic Way to Play the Classical Pirc



1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 g6 4.♘f3 ♗g7 5.♗e2 0-0 6.0-0 a6

I guess it is needless to mention that the main reason for which many players choose the classic set-up versus the Pirc is its solidity. In other words, White is satisfied with a minimal positional advantage (while in other lines he may poses Black more concrete problems), cutting to a minimum the risk of possible complications which may disrupt his comfortable play in this line.

That is why 6...a6!? confronts White with an unpleasant psychological dilemma: on the one hand Black is asking for trouble by 'wasting' time in the opening. On the other hand, 'punishing' him for that would require White to open up the game and play very energetically – something he has admittedly rejected by choosing a relatively quiet and unpretentious opening set-up.

Of course our recommendation to use 6...a6 is not just based on psychological factors. I believe it is perfectly playable and hardly worse than any of the other lines including 6...c6 and 6...♗g4.

It is proper to mention that in this article I did not cover all possible variations that may arise after 6...a6!?. I have limited myself to those lines which I believe are Black's most promising ones (and which I have personally tried). For that reason I have barely referred to lines with an early ...b6, which are way more popular than the lines with ...e6, which I advocate here.

The key word to define Black's set up after 6...a6 is 'flexibility' (some of the arising positions are quite similar to the Ujtelky set-up). He may vary his plans depending on White's response, however, in most cases Black develops his light-squared bishop to b7, the knight goes to d7 and the ...c5 break is always in the air.

☐ **Dmitry Schneider**
■ **Zhang Zhong**
Qingdao 2002

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 g6 4.♘f3 ♗g7 5.♗e2 0-0 6.0-0 a6 7.♗g5

A relatively rare reply. Much more popular are 7.a4 and 7.♖e1.

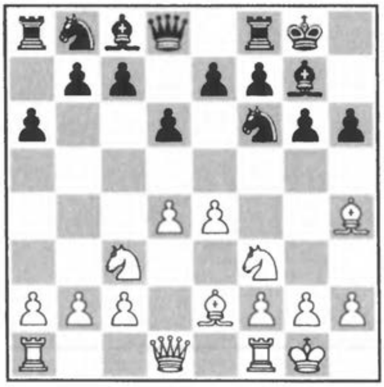
Play was unclear after 7.♗f4 b5 8.e5 ♘fd7 9.♖e1 ♘c6 10.♗f1 dxe5 11.dxe5 ♘c5 12.♕c1 ♗f5, Cifuentes-Van Laatum, Ostend 1991.

7...h6

7...b5!? 8.e5 b4 deserves attention, taking advantage of the fact that after 9...exf6 the bishop is hanging: 9.exf6 exf6 10.♗d2 bxc3 11.♗xc3 f5 12.♖e1 ♘d7 13.♘d2 ♘f6 14.♗f3 ♖b8 15.♘b3 d5, Yemelin-Tseitlin, Beer-Sheva 1998.

8.♗h4

8.♗e3 b5 9.a3 ♗b7 10.♘d2 ♘bd7 11.f3 c5 12.♘b3 ♕c7 13.♕d2 ♔h7 was equal in Budko-Cherniaev, St Petersburg 1997.



8...b5!?

A quite risky continuation, but it's not so easy for White to punish Black for it.

White didn't manage to prove any advantage after 8...g5, even though it appears to be rather risky: 9.♗g3 ♘h5 10.♕d3 (10.h4 ♘xg3 11.fxg3 gxh4 12.gxh4 e6 13.♕e1 ♘d7, Iskov-Hoi, Copenhagen 1984) 10...♘xg3 11.hxg3 ♘c6 12.d5 ♘b8 13.♘d2 e6 14.f4 ♘d7 15.♖ae1 ♕e7, Ovezov-Ali, Istanbul 2000.

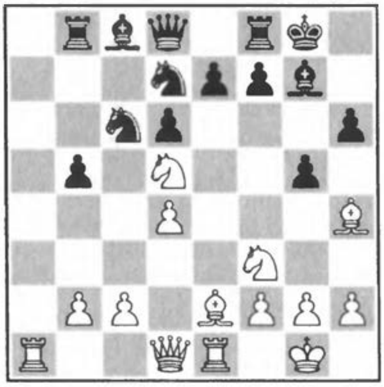
9.e5 ♞fd7

Once Black has played ...h6, the pawn structure arising after 9...dxe5 10.dxe5 ♘fd7 11.e6 fxe6 12.♖e1 is too vulnerable.

10.♘d5 ♘c6 11.a4 ♖b8 12.axb5 axb5 13.exd6 cxd6 14.♖e1 g5

Changing the character of the game.

14...♖e8!? was the alternative.



15.♘xg5!?

Accepting the challenge!

There was nothing wrong in retreating to g3: 15.♗g3 g4 16.♘d2 ♗xd4 (16...♘xd4?! 17.♗xg4) 17.c3 ♗e5 18.♗xg4 ♗xg3 19.hxg3 e6 20.♘f4, and White retains a minimal advantage.

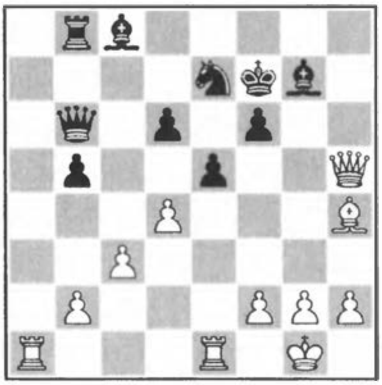
15...hxg5 16.♗xg5 f6 White is attacking after 16...b4 17.♗d3 ♖e8 18.♕h5 ♘f8 19.♖e3. **17.♗h4 e5 18.c3 ♘b6**

Deciding to give back some material in order to get rid of White's light-squared bishop.

Bad was 18...♘e7 19.♗f3 ♗b7? 20.♘xe7+

♕xe7 21.♗xb7 ♖xb7 22.dxe5 ♘xe5 23.f4±.

19.♗f3 ♖f7 20.♘xb6 ♕xb6 21.♗d5 ♘e7 22.♗xf7+ ♔xf7 23.♕h5+



23...♔f8

The position remains very complex, but due to his strong light-squared bishop Black has very decent counterchances.

24.♖e3 ♘d5 25.♖f3

25.♖g3 ♘f4 26.♕d1 ♗e6∓.

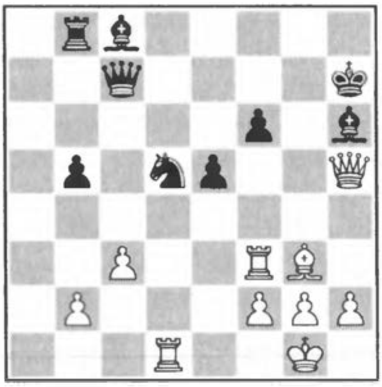
25...♕c7

Here 25...♘f4!? deserved attention: 26.♕h7 ♗b7 27.♖xf4 exf4 28.♕f5 ♕c6 29.f3 ♕d5 30.♕xf4 ♔f7 31.♗g3, with an unclear position.

26.dxe5 dxe5 27.♗g3 ♔g8

It is too dangerous to weaken the centre by 27...f5 28.♖d1 ♘f6 29.♕g6 f4 30.♗h4 ♖b6 31.♖fd3.

28.♕e8+ ♔h7 29.♕h5+ ♔g8 30.♕e8+ ♔h7 31.♕h5+ ♗h6 32.♖d1



32...♘f4

32...♗e6? didn't work: 33.♖xd5! ♗xd5 34.♖xf6 ♕g7 35.♕f5+ ♔h8 36.♖xh6+ ♕xh6 37.♕xe5+ ♔h7 38.♕c7+ ♔g6 39.♕d6+ ♔h7 40.♕xh6+ ♔xh6 41.♗xb8+−.

33.♗xf4 exf4 34.♖fd3 ♕g7 35.f3 ♗e6 36.♖d6 ♖g8 37.♖1d2 ♕a7+ 38.♖2d4 ♖g5

Black is not satisfied with a draw after 38...♕g7!?.

39.♕e8 ♗h3 40.♕e4+ ♔g7 41.g4 fxg3 42.hxg3 ♖e5 43.♕h4 ♗e6 44.♖xe6 ♖xe6 45.♕g4+ ♔f7 46.♕h5+ ♔e7 47.♔g2

Not 47.♕xh6? ♕a1+ 48.♔g2 ♖e2+ 49.♔h3 ♕h1+ 50.♔g4 ♕xh6−+.

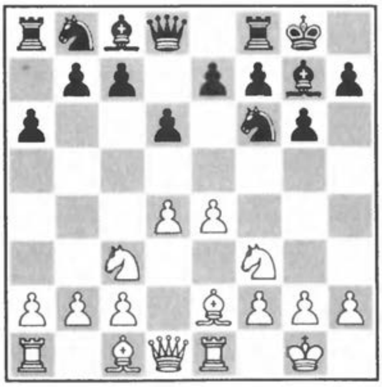
47...♕a1!? 48.♕c5+ ♔f7 49.♕h5+ ♔e7 50.♕c5+ ♔f7 51.♕h5+

Draw.

☐ **Vladimir Potkin**
■ **Maxim Turov**
Linares open 2001

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 g6 4.♘f3 ♗g7 5.♗e2 0-0 6.0-0 a6 7.♖e1

A cunning move aimed to support an advance of the e-pawn.



7...e6

In my opinion this move is Black's most accurate response.

The hasty 7...b5?! is well met by 8.e5! ♘fd7 (it is hard to believe that 8...♘e8 is any better, as the knight is rather passive on e8: 9.a4!? b4 10.♘d5 ♘c6 11.♗f4 ♗b7 12.c4?! bxc3 13.♘xc3 ♘b4 14.♖c1±, Westerinen-Gausel, Reykjavik 1998)9.a4! (9.e6 fxe6 10.♘g5 ♘f6 11.♗f3≅) 9...bxa4 10.e6 fxe6 11.♘g5 ♘f6 12.♗f3±, Ciric-Clausen, Copenhagen 1989.

An alternative is 7...b6!?.

8.♗f4

Since White is planning to push e5 it makes perfect sense to put the bishop on f4.

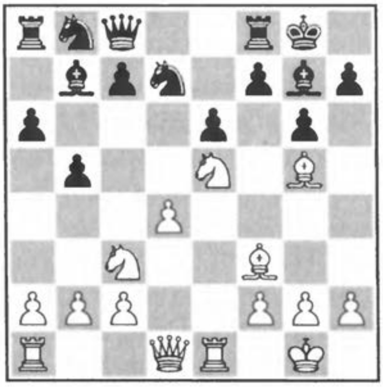
– 8.♗g5 h6 9.♗f4 b5 10.e5 b4 (10...dxe5 11.♘xe5±) 11.♘b1 ♘d5 12.♗d2 ♘d7 13.c4 bxc3 14.♘xc3 ♘xc3 15.bxc3=, Miles-Ermenkov, Aegina 1993.

– The immediate 8.e5!? also deserves attention, although White can't pose Black serious problems after 8...dxe5 9.♘xe5 ♘fd7!? 10.♘f3 c5 11.♗e3 (better is 11.d5! exd5 12.♕xd5 ♘c6 13.♘e4) 11...cxd4 12.♘xd4 (12.♗xd4 ♘f6 13.♘e5 ♕c7 14.♕d2 ♖d8∞) 12...♕c7 13.♕d2±, Zviagintsev-Bezold, Altensteig 1994.

8...b5

For 8...♘c6 see the next game.

9.e5!? dxe5 10.♘xe5 ♗b7 11.♗g5 ♕c8 12.♗f3 ♘fd7!



13.♗xb7

After 13.♘g4!? Black obtains decent counterplay with 13...h5 (13...c5?! 14.d5 exd5 15.♘xd5 ♘c6 16.♘gf6+ ♘xf6 17.♘xf6+ ♔h8 18.♘d7±) 14.♘e3 ♘f6 (14...c5 15.d5 e5 16.d6 ♘c6 17.♘ed5±) 15.♕e2 ♘bd7 16.♖ad1 c5 17.d5 ♘e5.

13...♕xb7 14.♘e4 f5

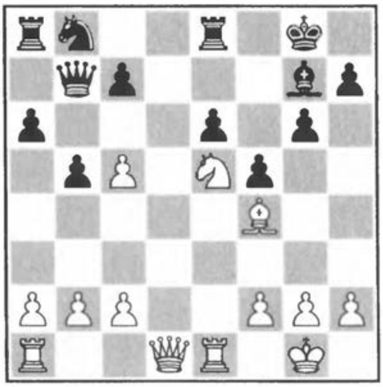
Black is not afraid to weaken the position, because the light-squared bishops are not on the board.

Not 14...♘xe5? 15.dxe5 ♗xe5 16.♘c5+–.

15.♘c5!?

The only chance to fight for the advantage. 15.♘xd7 ♘xd7 16.♘g3 e5 17.dxe5 ♘xe5 18.♗f4 ♖fe8 is equal.

15...♘xc5 16.dxc5 ♖e8 17.♗f4



17...a5

White also retains the slightly better chances after 17...♘c6 18.♕f3 ♘d8 19.♕g3!?(19.c6 ♕b6 20.♖ad1 ♗xe5 21.♗xe5 ♘xc6 – 21...♕xc6 22.♖xd8!+– – 22.♗f6≅) 19...♘c6 20.♖ad1±.

18.♕d3 ♘c6 19.♕f3 ♗xe5

19...♘d8 is the alternative.

20.♗xe5 ♖ab8 21.♗c3 ♘b4

Black should not be greedy: 21...b4 22.♗f6 ♕b5 23.♖ad1 ♕xc5 24.♖d7±.

22.♕e2 ♘d5 23.♗xa5

Perhaps 23.♗e5!?.

23...b4 24.a3 bxa3 25.bxa3 ♕b5 26.♗d2

26.c4? ♕xa5 27.cxd5 exd5 28.♕xe8+ ♖xe8 29.♖xe8+ ♔f7∓.

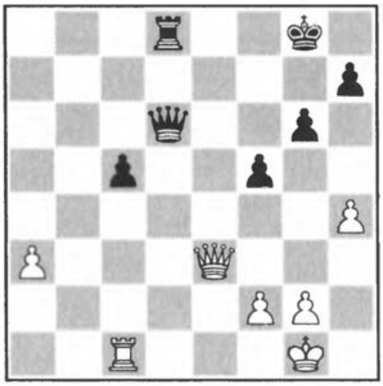
26...♕xc5 27.c4 ♖b2!?

The arising endgame is very close to a draw, but White has some chances due to the slightly exposed position of the black king. Black could have played the unclear 27...♘b6!?.

28.cxd5 ♕xd5 29.♖ad1 ♖d8 30.♕e3 ♖xd2 31.♖xd2 ♕xd2 32.♕xe6+ ♔g7 33.♕e7+ ♔g8 34.♕e6+ ♔g7 35.♕e7+ ♔g8 36.h4! ♕d6 37.♕e3 c5

37...♕d4 38.♕e6+ ♔h8 39.♕f7 ♕xh4 40.♕xc7 ♕f6 41.g3±.

38.♖c1



38...♕d4?!

It was better to keep the c-pawn on the board rather than to trade it for the white one on h4. 38...♖c8 39.♕b3+ ♔g7 40.♕c4 ♖c7=.

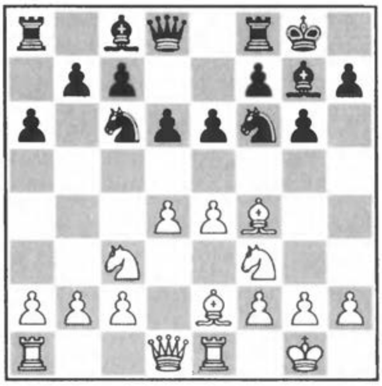
39.♕e6+ ♔h8?! 39...♔f8. **40.♖xc5 ♕xh4 41.♖c1 ♔g7?!** 41...♕d4. **42.a4 ♕e4** 42...♕f4 43.♕e7+ ♔h6 44.♖e1 ♕g5 (44...♖a8? 45.♖e3+−) 45.♕c7±. **43.♕b6 ♖d5?! 44.a5** 44.♕c7+ ♔h6 45.♕h2+ ♔g5 46.♕xh7 ♕xa4=. **44...f4?! 45.♕b7+** 45.a6!?. **45...♔h6 46.a6 f3 47.g3 ♕f5 48.♕e7! ♖a5?** The final chance was 48...♖d7 49.♕h4+ ♕h5 50.♕e4 ♕g5 51.♖b1±. **49.♕h4+ ♕h5** 49...♔g7 50.♖c7+ ♔f8 51.♕d8 mate. **50.♕f4+ ♕g5 51.♕f8+ ♔h5 52.♕xf3+ ♕g4 53.♕h1+ ♔g5 54.♕xh7**

Black resigned.

☐ **Yury Shabanov**
■ **Vitaly Tseshkovsky**
Gmünden 2007

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 g6 4.♘f3 ♗g7 5.♗e2 a6 6.0-0 0-0 7.♖e1 e6 8.♗f4 ♘c6!?

This move is less consistent than 8...b5, but it prevents White from taking on e5 with the knight after pushing e5.



9.♕d2

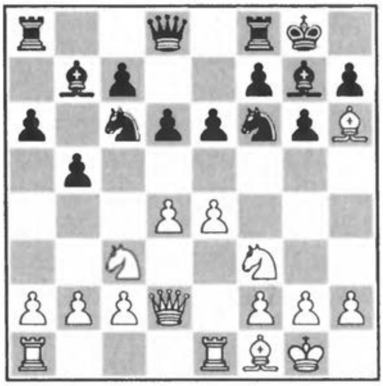
All White's pieces take comfortable positions, so he is definitely not committed to the plan involving e5, even though playing 9.e5 would be perfectly reasonable.

9.e5!? dxe5 10.dxe5 ♘d5 (also after 10...♕xd1 11.♖axd1 ♘d7 12.♗f1 Black is experiencing some problems) 11.♘xd5 ♕xd5!? (normally once a pair of knights is traded Black is more reluctant to enter an endgame. 11...exd5 12.♕d2±) 12.c3 ♕xd1 13.♖axd1 b6 14.♖d2 ♗b7 15.♖d7 ♖ac8, and Black is very close to equality.

9...b5 10.♗f1

Black has excellent compensation after 10.e5 dxe5 11.dxe5 ♕xd2 12.♗xd2 ♘d7 13.♗f4 ♘dxe5 14.♘xe5 ♘xe5 15.♗xb5 (after 15.♗xe5? ♗xe5 16.♗f3 ♗xc3 Black is just better) 15...♘f3+ 16.gxf3 axb5 17.♗xc7 b4 18.♘d1 ♗b7.

10...♗b7 11.♗h6



11...b4 12.♘d1 ♘e7 13.♗d3 c5 14.c3 cxd4 15.cxd4

White emerged out of the opening with a comfortable edge.

15...♖b8 16.♖c1 a5 17.a3?!

Black is better prepared for opening up the queenside, so White should've considered building up pressure on the other flank.

17...♔h8?!

It was more accurate to play 17...♗a8 right away in order to keep some play over the semi-open b-file.

18.h3?! 18.axb4!? axb4 19.h3±.

18...♗a8! 19.axb4 ♖xb4 20.♗xg7+ ♔xg7 21.♘c3 ♕b6 22.♖c2 ♖b8

Black is fine now.

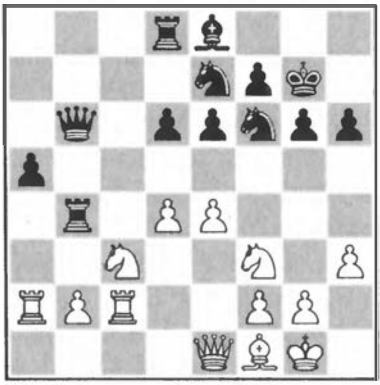
23.♖a1 h6

There was no reason to refrain from 23...♘c6!, as after 24.e5 (24.d5 exd5 25.♘xd5 ♘xd5 26.exd5 ♘d4∓) 24...dxe5 25.dxe5 ♘d7∓ White just has two weaknesses in his position. He is having problems to defend while he can't exploit the relative weakness of the dark squares around the black king.

24.♕e3 ♕d8

24...♖xb2?! 25.♖xb2 ♕xb2 26.♖b1 ♕xc3 27.♖xb8 ♗xe4 28.♗xe4 ♕xe3 29.fxe3 ♘xe4 30.♔f1 ♘d5 31.♔e2±.

25.♖a2 ♕b6 26.♘a4 ♕a7 27.♘c3 ♗c6 28.♕f4 ♖d8 29.♕e3 ♕b6 30.♕e1 ♗e8 31.♗f1



31...d5!?

An interesting attempt to break through.

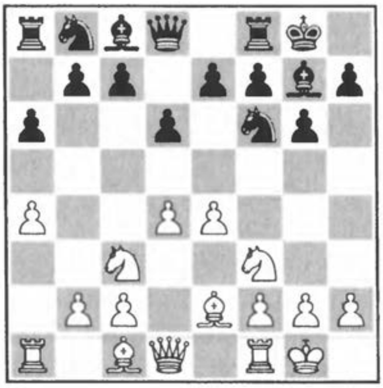
32.e5 ♘e4 33.♘xe4 dxe4 34.♕xe4 ♗c6 35.♕f4 35.♕h4 would be more to the point. **35...♘f5 36.♘h4 ♖bxd4 37.♘xf5+ exf5 38.♕e3 f4 39.♕c3 ♗e4 40.♖e2 ♗f5**

Black didn't succeed to make his 40th move on time, suffering a cruel loss in a position in which he is clearly better.

☐ **Yehuda Grünfeld**
■ **Alexander Finkel**
Israel tt 2002

1.e4 g6 2.d4 ♗g7 3.♘f3 d6 4.♗e2 ♘f6 5.♘c3 0-0 6.0-0 a6 7.a4

By far White's most popular reaction to 6...a6.



7...e6!?

A very rare move which I successfully tried on a couple of occasions. Once ...e6 has been played Black no longer has to worry about the break e5-e6.

Also playable is 7...b6!? and now:

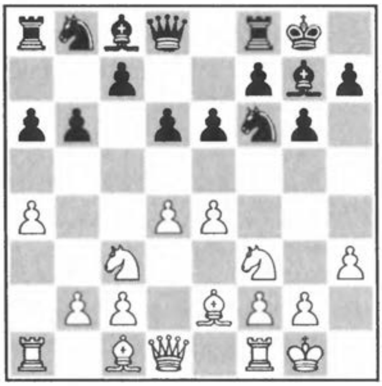
– 8.h3 ♗b7 9.d5 c6 10.♗g5 cxd5 11.exd5 ♘bd7 12.♗c4 ♖c8 13.♕e2 h6 14.♗h4 b5, Kushch-Finkel, Vilnius 1995.

– 8.♖e1 e6 9.♗f4 ♗b7 10.♗f1 ♘c6 11.♕d2 e5 12.dxe5 dxe5 13.♕xd8 ♖axd8 14.♗g5 ♘b4 15.♖ac1 h6 16.♗h4 ♖fe8 17.♗c4 ♖d6=, Malakhov-Tseitlin, Groningen 1994.

8.h3

8.♗f4 h6 9.h3 ♘c6 10.♕d2 ♔h7 11.♖ad1 ♘d7 12.d5 ♘e7 13.e5? ♘xe5 14.dxe6 ♘xf3+ 15.♗xf3 fxe6∓, Jenni-Pikula, Biel 2000.

8...b6



9.e5

White's most typical plan in the position, but under the circumstances 8.h3 turns out to be a waste of time. Play is unclear after:

– 9.♗g5 h6 10.♗e3 ♗b7 11.♗d3 ♘bd7 12.♘h2 c5 13.dxc5 ♘xc5 14.♘g4 ♔h7 15.♘xf6+ ♗xf6, Schneider-Werner, Regensburg 1996,

– and after 9.♖e1 ♗b7 10.♗f1 ♘c6.

9...dxe5 10.♘xe5

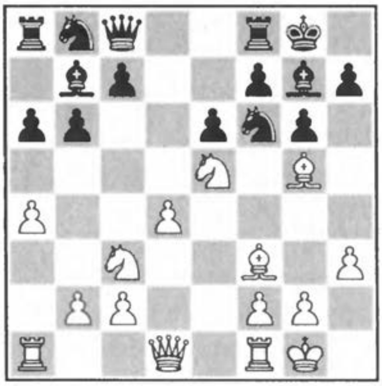
Black is great after 10.dxe5 ♕xd1 and now:

– 11.♗xd1 ♘fd7 12.♗f4 ♘c6 13.♖e1 ♗b7∓.

– 11.♖xd1 ♘fd7 12.♗f4 ♘c6 13.♖e1 ♘cxe5 14.♘xe5 ♗xe5 15.♗f3 ♗xc3 16.♗xa8 ♗xe1 17.♖xe1 e5 18.♗xe5 ♘xe5 19.♖xe5 ♗xh3∓.

10...♗b7 11.♗f3 ♕c8 12.♗g5!?

The most logical reply. Black is OK after 12.♗f4?! ♖d8. The same goes for 12.♕e2 c5 13.dxc5 bxc5 14.a5 ♘c6 15.♘xc6 ♗xc6 16.♘a4 ♘d7 17.♗f4 e5 18.♗xc6 ♕xc6, Dovliatov-Sturua, Batumi 2002.



12...♘fd7!

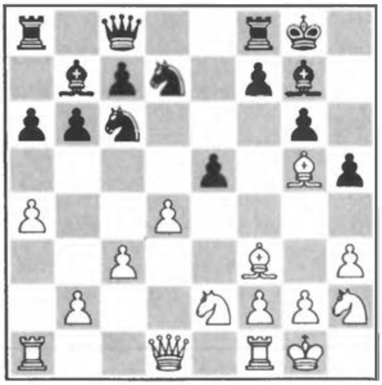
After this move White has to make a quite unpleasant choice: whether to take on d7 or to retreat to g4; in both cases Black gets a very comfortable position.

13.♘g4 Equal is 13.♘xd7 ♘xd7 14.♘e4 e5! 15.c3 exd4 16.cxd4 ♖e8 17.♖e1.

13...h5 14.♘h2

Nothing is promised by 14.♘e3 ♘c6 15.♘e2 e5 16.d5 ♘d4 17.♘xd4 exd4 18.♘c4.

14...♘c6 15.♘e2 e5 16.c3



16...exd4?!

16...♖e8!? deserved attention, keeping the pressure in the centre: 17.d5 e4 (17...♘e7 18.♘g3 ♘f6 19.c4 ♘f5) 18.dxc6 ♗xc6 19.♘d4 ♗xd4 20.cxd4 exf3 21.♘xf3 ♕b7 22.♖a3 unclear.

17.cxd4 ♘f6 18.♖c1 ♘e7 The knight is heading for d5. **19.♕c2 ♘ed5** 19...♗xf3?! 20.♘xf3 ♘ed5 21.♘f4±. **20.♘f4 ♕d7?! 21.♖fd1** Interesting is 21.♗xf6!? ♗xf6 22.♘xd5 ♗xd5 23.♕xc7 ♕xc7 24.♖xc7 ♖ad8!, but even in this case Black seems to hold. **21...♖ac8 22.♗xf6** Now this is only enough for equality. **22...♗xf6 23.♗xd5 ♗xd5 24.♘xd5 ♕xd5 25.♕c6 ♕xc6 26.♖xc6 ♔g7**

After a series of multiple trades almost all of the pieces have disappeared from the board, so the draw becomes inevitable.

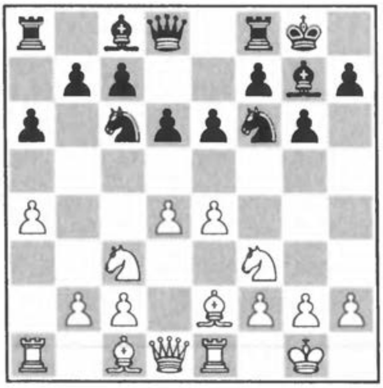
27.♘f3 ♖fd8 28.b3 ♖d5 28...♖d7 29.♔f1 ♖cd8 30.♖dc1 ♗xd4 31.♘xd4 ♖xd4 32.♖xc7=.

29.♔f1 ♖cd8 30.♖xc7 ♗xd4

Draw.

☐ **Yu Shaoteng**
■ **Zhang Zhong**
Moscow FIDE-Wch 2001

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 g6 4.♘f3 ♗g7 5.♗e2 0-0 6.0-0 a6 7.a4 e6 8.♖e1 ♘c6!?



9.h3

A harmless continuation promising nothing to White.

More chances to fight for the advantage offers 9.a5!? b5 10.axb6 cxb6 11.d5 exd5 12.♘xd5 ♗b7 13.♗g5 ♖e8 14.♗c4 ♘a5 15.♗a2 ♖c8 16.c3±, Arizmendi Martinez-Comas Fabrego, Spain tt 2004.

9...b6 10.♗f4

White succeeded to squeeze something out of the opening after 10.♗g5 h6 11.♗h4 ♗b7 12.♗f1 ♖e8 13.♕d2 e5 14.dxe5 dxe5?! (14...♘xe5!?) 15.♕xd8 ♘xd8 16.♖ad1 in Mirzoev-Movsziszian, Salou 2008.

10...h6 11.e5?!

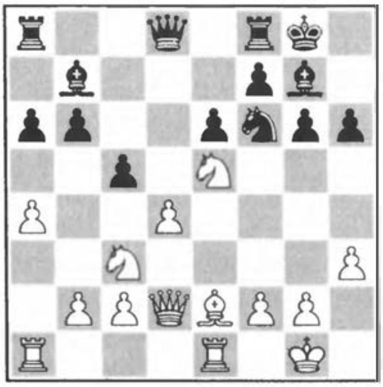
Moving the wrong pawn! It was much better to play 11.d5!? exd5 12.exd5 ♘e7 13.♕d2 ♔h7 14.♗c4 and White may look into the future with a great deal of optimism.

11...dxe5 12.♗xe5?!

The dark-squared bishop is a far too important piece to be given up that easily. After the text Black seizes the initiative and keeps on pressing till the end of the game.

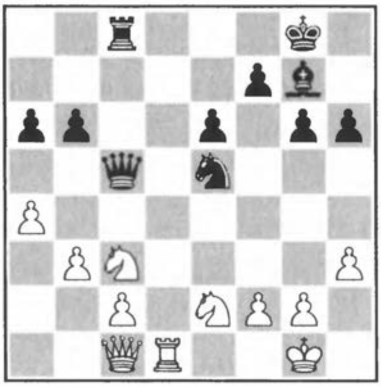
Correct was 12.dxe5 ♕xd1 13.♖axd1 ♘d7 14.♗c4 ♖d8.

12...♗b7 13.♕d2 ♘xe5 14.♞xe5 c5∓

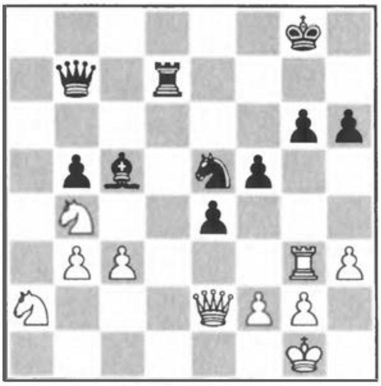


15.♗f3 ♗xf3 16.♘xf3 cxd4 17.♘xd4 17.♕xd4 ♘d5∓. **17...♕c7 18.♕e3 ♖fd8 19.♖ad1 ♘e8 20.♖d3** 20.♘e4? e5 21.♘b3 ♖xd1 22.♖xd1 ♕xc2∓. **20...♘d6**

21.♖ed1 ♘c4 22.♕c1 Unfortunately for White the fierce tactical slaughter after 22.♘xe6 ♖xd3 23.cxd3 ♘xe3 24.♘xc7 ♘xd1 25.♘xa8 ♘xb2 26.♘d5 ♘xa4 27.♘axb6 ♘b2∓ leads to a dull endgame a pawn down. **22...♖ac8 23.♘de2 ♖xd3 24.♖xd3 ♕c5 25.b3 ♘e5 26.♖d1**



26...f5?! Black is rightly refraining from 26...♘f3+ 27.gxf3 ♗xc3 28.♕xh6 ♗f6 29.♕e3 ♕xe3 30.fxe3 ♖xc2∓ and White has excellent chances to hold the arising endgame, but after 26...f5 White gets certain counterchances. **27.♘a2 b5 28.axb5 axb5 29.c3 ♘f7 30.♘f4 ♕a7 31.♕c2 ♕e7 32.♕e2 e5 33.♘d5** 33.♘xg6? ♕g5 34.♘xe5 ♘xe5 35.♕xb5 ♔h7∓. **33...♕b7 34.♘db4** 34.♘ab4 e4 35.c4 bxc4 36.bxc4 ♘e5 37.♖c1 ♗f8∓. **34...♖c5 35.♘d3 ♖c8 36.♘db4 ♗f8 37.♖d5?! ♗c5 38.♕d2 ♖c7 39.♖d3 e4 40.♖g3?** Better is 40.♖d5. **40...♖d7! 41.♕e2 ♘e5**

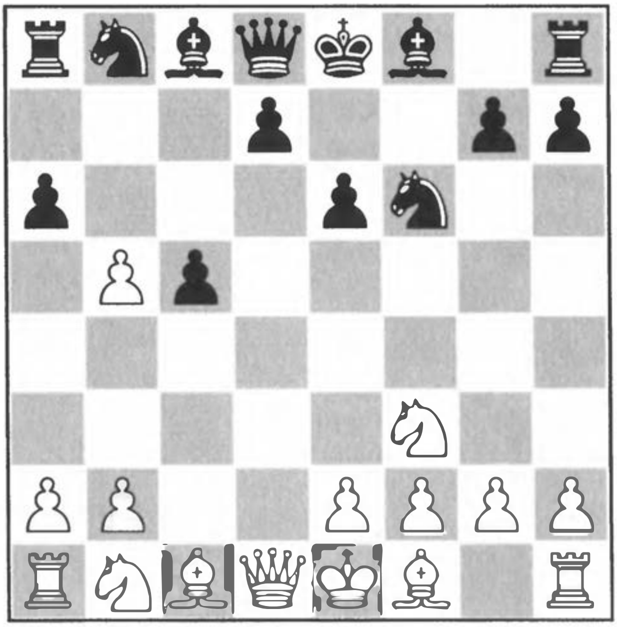


42.♖e3 There is no proper way to deal with the threat ...f4. **42...♔h7 43.♘c2 ♗xe3 44.♘xe3 ♘d3** and Black won on move 65.

CHAPTER 6

Dorian Rogozenco

Another Blumenfeld Surprise



Opting for the rare 6...a6

White has two main approaches to meet the Blumenfeld: one is to avoid taking the sacrificed pawn with 5.♝g5 (see SOS-10, Chapter 2), the other is to accept the pawn sacrifice with 5.dxe6 fxe6 6.cxb5 and then try to neutralize Black's initiative. The second way is the most testing for Black, and this usually indicates that White is well-prepared theoretically.

However, as a rule, Black is happy to get those typical Blumenfeld-like type of open positions with the initiative and attacking possibilities for the sacrificed pawn.

The drawback of the main continuation 6...d5 is that White has many options to choose from, and that he can arrange his pieces in several ways. His main possibilities are 7.e3, 7.g3, 7.♘c3, but also 7.♗g5 and 7.♗f4. For many players of the Blumenfeld the move 7.♘c3 followed by 8.e4 is especially unpleasant. Moreover, 7.♘c3 also scores best for White statistically.

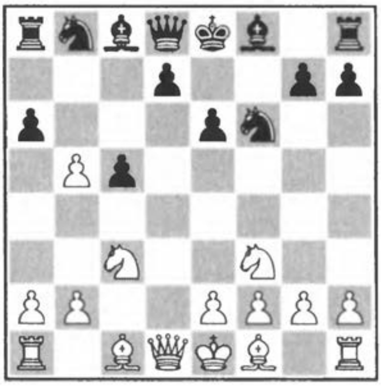
Does this mean that in the Blumenfeld it is always White who chooses the variation and the type of position? Not at all! You can still play the Blumenfeld the way you wish and at the same time surprise your opponent with a rare continuation a la Benko: 6...a6!? Then it is White who is faced with a different, new situation. Suddenly, he has fewer options than in case of 6...d5.

After 6...a6 White must solve the concrete problem of his b5-pawn: he cannot just allow Black to take back the pawn (in that case Black would simply have an advantage). Let's have a look at the variations:

I 7.♘c3
II 7.e3
III 7.bxa6

Variation I

7.♘c3



Defending the pawn with the knight is possible, but hardly problematic for Black. In the following example White was crushed in typical Blumenfeld Gambit style.

☐ **Ferenc Peredy**
■ **Mihai Suba**
Balaguer 2005

It must be mentioned that in this game the diagrammed position arose via a different move order: 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 a6 4.♘f3 (not bad, but the principled answer is of course 4.e4, after which the move 3...a6 looks like a loss of time) 4...c5 5.d5 b5 6.dxe6 (this is already an inaccuracy. Stronger is 6.e4 b4 7.e5 with advantage for White) 6...fxe6 7.cxb5 and we have reached the position from the diagram.

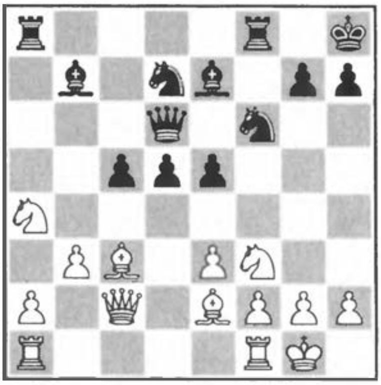
7...axb5 8.♘xb5 ♕a5+ 9.♘c3 ♗b7 10.e3 ♗e7

Owing to his lead in development and sufficient possibilities for active play Black has typical 'Blumenfeld-like' compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

11.♗d2 ♕b6 12.b3 0-0 13.♗e2 d5 14.0-0 ♘bd7 15.♕c2 ♔h8

A worthy alternative is 15...d4 16.♘a4 ♕d6 with good play in the centre.

16.♘a4 ♕d6 17.♗c3 e5



18.♖ad1 e4 19.♘d2

This is too passive. In order to avoid being worse White had to go for risky looking complications: 19.♘g5 ♘e5 (19...h6?! 20.♘h3 only creates an unnecessary weakness on g6) 20.f4! (in case of 20.♕b2 ♘eg4 21.♗xg4 ♘xg4 22.♗xg7+ ♔g8 White can't protect everything) 20...exf3 21.♗xf3 (21.gxf3 ♘g6 keeps the position double-edged) 21...h6 22.♗xd5! ♘eg4 (22...♗xd5? 23.♖xf6 and mate on h7) 23.♖f4 .♗xd5 24.♗xf6 hxg5 25.♗xe7 ♕xe7 26.♖xg4 ♕xe3+ 27.♔h1 ♖ad8, which is about equal.

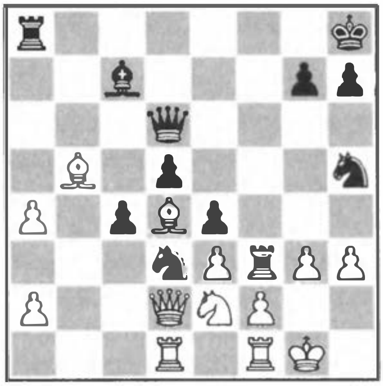
19...♕e6

Now Black is better. White has problems to bring his knight from a4 into play due to the fact that pawn a2 needs protection. Notice that the other knight on d2 isn't doing much better: the plan ♖fe1 and ♘f1 would leave pawn f2 without sufficient protection. The game continued:

20.♕b2 ♗c6 21.h3 ♗xa4 22.bxa4 ♖fb8!?

Suba is not interested in regaining the pawn.

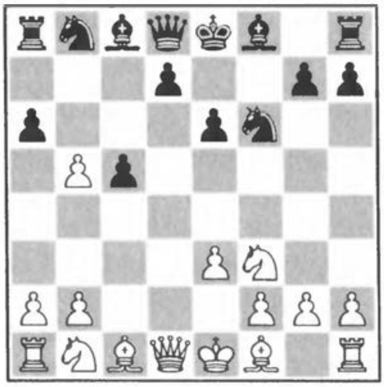
23.♗b5? c4! 24.♕c2 ♘c5 25.♗d4 ♘d3 26.♘b1 ♗d6 27.♘c3 ♗c7 28.♘e2 ♖f8 29.♕c3 ♘h5 30.♕d2 ♕d6 31.g3 ♖f3



White is completely paralysed. **32.♘f4 ♘hxf4 33.exf4 ♕e6 34.♗e5** 34.♔g2 ♘xf4+ 35.gxf4 ♕xh3+ 36.♔g1 ♕g4+ 37.♔h2 ♖h3 mate. **34...♗xe5 35.fxe5 ♕xh3 36.♕g5 e3** White resigned.

Variation II

7.e3



This is a better option than 7.♘c3, since now 7...axb5 8.♗xb5 helps White to develop a piece. Notice that Black achieves nothing by continuing 8...♕a5+ 9.♘c3 ♘e4 in view of the simple 10.♕d3.

Nevertheless a move like 7.e3 is a small concession. First of all it lacks flexibility: due to the fact that 7.e3 closes the diagonal for the dark-squared bishop, the bishop will have to be developed on b2 now, which has certain drawbacks (time-consuming, slightly weakening the queenside pawn structure plus the fact that Black knows how White is going to develop the queenside). Secondly, in the future the most efficient way for White to fight against Black's pawn majority in the centre is connected with the advance e2-e4. Now this advance will be connected with a loss of time.

On the other hand 7.e3 is a solid move and Black must play accurately.

7...♗e7

A flexible continuation. Black will decide later when (or whether) to play d7-d5, and where to place the bishop – on b7 or a6.

After 7...♗e7 White has three ways to continue his development: 8.♗e2, 8.♘bd2 and 8.♘c3.

Subvariation A

8.♗e2 axb5

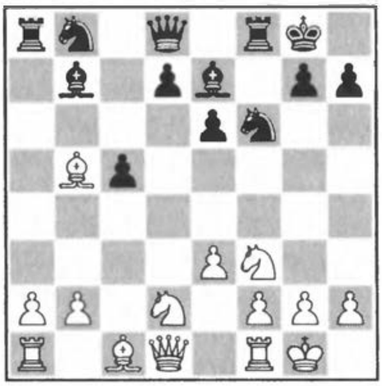
Now, after White has made a move with the bishop, taking on b5 makes perfect sense.

9.♗xb5 0-0

With an extra tempo the variation 9...♕a5+ 10.♘c3 ♘e4 comes into consideration, although without practical material it is difficult to say whether Black has full compensation. After 11.♕d3 a possible follow-up is 11...♘xc3 12.bxc3 ♗a6.

10.0-0 ♗b7 11.♘bd2 11.♘c3 transposes into 8.♘c3 see subvariation C below.

This position has never occurred in practice. White's plan is to finish development with b3 and ♗b2.



11...♕c7

There are many ways to develop pieces. The idea behind this move is to create the idea 12...♘g4 and provoke the next answer.

12.h3 ♘e8!?

Now Black prevents **13.b3**, which loses a pawn after 13...♗f6 14.♖b1 ♖xa2. After **13.e4** ♘d6 14.♗d3 ♘c6 Black enjoys sufficient activity thanks to the centralized position of his pieces.

Subvariation B

8.♘bd2 ♗b7 9.b3 0-0 10.♗b2

This somewhat risky strategy (to develop the queenside first) led to a disaster for White in the game Volke-Firman, Germany Bundesliga 2007/08 (where the move order was 7...♗b7 8.♘bd2 ♗e7):

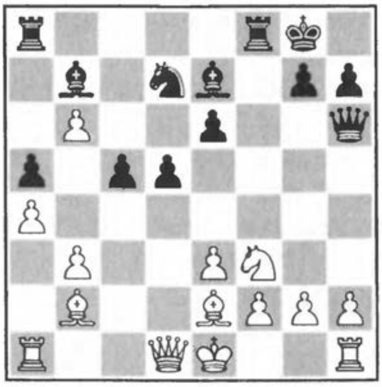
10...♕e8!? 11.a4 ♕g6 12.♘e5 ♕h6 13.b6 a5

Black defends against a possible advance a4-a5, but that was not really necessary, since, if, after 13...♘c6 14.♘xc6 ♗xc6, White plays 15.a5, then 15...♘d5 creates multiple threats against the white king.

14.♘df3

14.♗d3 was called for, not fearing 14...♗xg2 (safer is 14...♗d8 15.0-0 ♗xb6 with equality) 15.♖g1 with attacking prospects for White.

14...d6 15.♘c4 d5 16.♘ce5 ♘bd7 17.♘xd7 ♘xd7 18.♗e2



18...♗d6!

A strong move, preventing castling kingside. Next Black regains the pawn and remains with a clear advantage.

19.h4

19.h3 e5! is also very unpleasant for White.

19...♘xb6 20.♘g5 c4 21.bxc4 ♗b4+ 22.♔f1 ♘xc4 23.♗xc4 dxc4 Black is better. **24.♗d4 ♖f5 25.♕g4 ♖af8 26.e4 ♖f4 27.♕g3 ♗xe4 28.♗e5 ♖xf2+ 29.♕xf2 ♗d3+ 30.♔g1 ♖xf2 31.♔xf2 ♕g6 32.♘f3 ♗c5+ 33.♗d4 ♗xd4+ 34.♘xd4 ♕f6+ 35.♘f3 e5 36.♖ab1 ♗xb1** White resigned.

Subvariation C

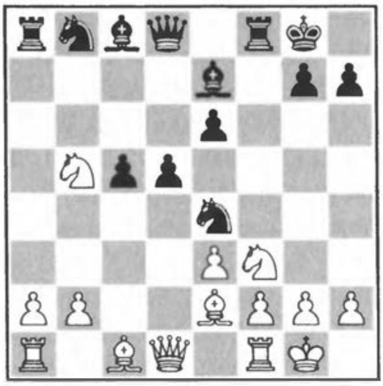
8.♘c3 0-0 9.♗e2

In case of 9.♗d3 Black can underline the exposed position of the bishop by continuing 9...axb5 (9...d5 10.0-0 c4 is another reasonable option) 10.♘xb5 ♘c6 11.0-0 d5 12.b3 e5, with strong pressure in the centre.

9...axb5 10.♘xb5

10.♗xb5 ♗b7 11.0-0 ♕c7 12.h3 (12.b3? loses due to 12...♘g4) 12...♘e4!? (this is not forced, of course, but shows how Black can switch to queenside play by transferring the bishop to the b1-h7 diagonal) 13.♘xe4 ♗xe4 14.♗e2 d5 followed by ...♘c6, ...♗f6, ...♖fb8 and so on.

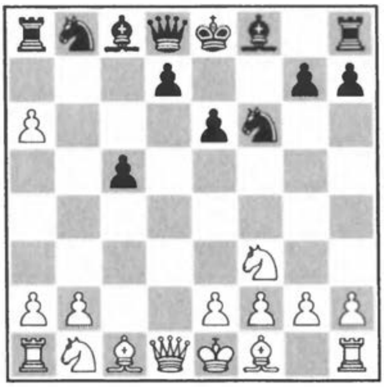
10...d5 11.0-0 ♘e4 11...♘c6 12.b3 ♗a6 13.♗b2 ♘e4 is a decent alternative.



Black's plan is to continue ...♘c6, ...♗a6, and if necessary ...♘d6. The last move is designed to prevent White from completing development with 12.b3, which is bad again in view of 12...♗f6 and 13...♖xa2. Without any practical examples it is impossible to make a final assessment at such an early stage of the game, but it looks like Black has reasonable play for the sacrificed pawn.

Variation III

7.bxa6



This is the most frequent answer to 6...a6.

7...♗e7!?

Here we reach an important moment. With 7...♗e7 Black continues his initial strategy to achieve little-known positions. However, he can also play 7...d5 instead, which actually makes a lot of sense. In the few available games White inevitably answered 7...d5 with 8.g3, when after 8...♗d6 the game transposes into the main line of Blumenfeld – 6...d5 7.g3 a6 (or 7...♗d6 and then ...a6). The point is that by playing 6...a6 and 7...d5 first Black avoids the unpleasant line 6...d5 7.♘c3 from the main Blumenfeld. And this is quite an achievement! The inclusion of the moves 6...a6 7.bxa6 makes the plan with ♘c3 and e4 considerably less effective. Look for yourself: 6...a6 7.bxa6 d5 8.♘c3 d4 9.♘a4 ♖xa6 (a tempting move, threatening a check on a5) 10.♗d2 (in case of 10.b3 highly unpleasant for White is 10...c4, threatening a check on b4) 10...♘e4 11.e3 ♘xd2 12.♘xd2 dxe3 and White must give back the extra pawn, fighting for equality. 13.fxe3 doesn't work in view of 13...♕h4+ 14.g3 ♕xa4 and after 15.♕xa4+ ♖xa4 16.♗b5+ ♗d7 17.♗xa4 ♗xa4 Black is obviously better.

If after 7...d5 White tries 8.e3 (never played in practice), then we have an amazing transposition to the Benko Gambit: 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5 4.cxb5 a6 5.bxa6 e6 6.dxe6 fxe6 7.e3 d5 8.♘f3. White's last three moves are by far not his best options. The game Gigerl-Ochoa de Echaguen, Groningen 1974/75, continued 8...♗d6 9.♗b5+ ♗d7 10.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 11.♘c3 0-0 12.0-0 ♘xa6 13.b3 ♘c7 14.e4 dxe4 15.♘g5 ♕c6 16.♕e2 ♗e5 17.♗b2 h6 18.♘h3 ♗d4 19.♖fe1 ♘a6 20.♘a4 ♘b4, with advantage for Black, who soon won convincingly.

Let's return to 7...♗e7.

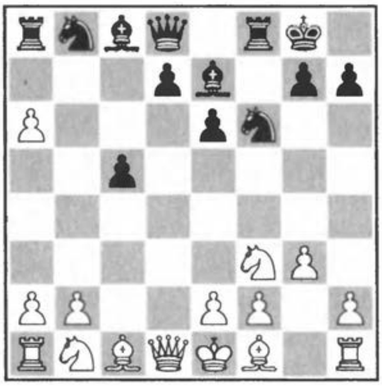
8.g3

8.♘c3 changes little. After 8...♗xa6 9.g3 0-0 it transposes to the main variations below.

In order to improve our understanding of these positions, I must mention that 8...d5 is also quite possible, since here 9.e4 0-0 is not problematic for Black, who will continue ...♘c6 and ...♗xa6 with good development. Then 10.e5 brings White nothing due to

10...♘h5 and the knight has square f4. The point is that in the variation 6...d5 7.♘c3 and 8.e4, if Black plays ...a6 then White would never hurry to take on a6.

8...0-0



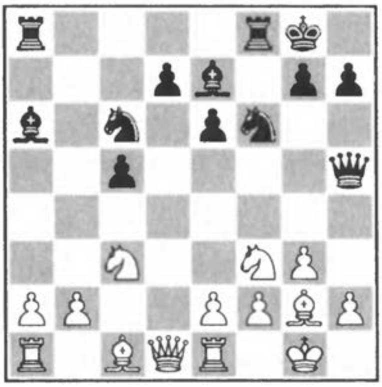
White can now choose between 9.♗h3 and 9.♗g2. It must be mentioned that in some games below the move order was slightly different.

Subvariation A

9.♗h3 ♗xa6 10.0-0 ♘c6 11.♘c3 ♕e8 12.♖e1

12.♗f4 ♕h5 13.♗g2 d5 14.a4 e5 15.g4 ♕xg4 16.♗xe5 ♖ad8 left White with a broken kingside, which he wasn't able to protect in Gyimesi-P.Horvath, Balatonlelle 2004.

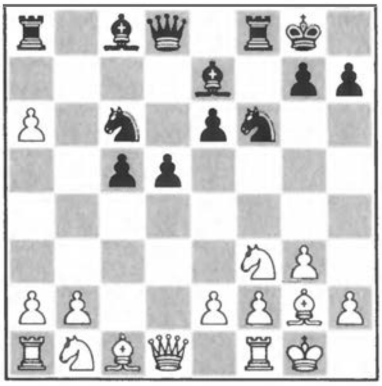
12...♕h5 13.♗g2



Now the game Beliavsky-T.Horvath, Austria 2007/08, continued **13...♖ad8 14.e4 ♘b4 15.h3 ♘d3 16.♖e3 c4 17.♕a4 ♘c5 18.♕c2 ♘d3 19.♖e2 ♘e8 20.♘d4** and after the strange **20...g6 21.♗e3** the experienced Beliavsky slowly outplayed his opponent. The general impression is that Black had a good position until 20...g6, with multiple options along the way, but the very first question is: why not play 13...d5 instead of 13...♖ad8? Then 14.e4 d4 15.♘a4 ♘b4 looks great for Black. Perhaps White must play 14.h3 (instead of 14.e4), but in any case Black is well developed and controls a fair share of the board. He can continue for instance with the useful 14...h6. In the complications Black's chances are no worse.

Subvariation B

9.♗g2 d5 10.0-0 ♘c6

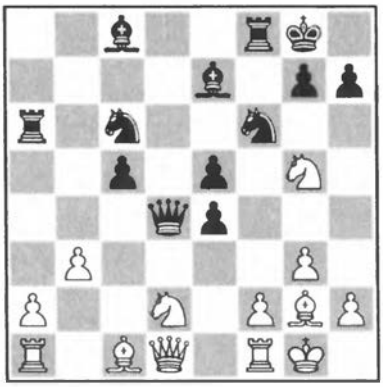


This is a typical Blumenfeld middlegame. The difference with the main Blumenfeld is that Black has the bishop on e7 instead of on d6. On e7 the bishop is less active, but there are also some advantages, the main one being that sometimes the bishop can be transferred onto the long diagonal. Let's have a look at some possible continuations:

– **11.b3** allows Black to demonstrate the advantage of developing the bishop on e7 instead of on d6: 11...♘e4! 12.♗b2 ♗f6 13.♕c1 ♗xa6 14.♖e1 ♘d4 15.♘xd4 cxd4, with a strong initiative along the c-file.

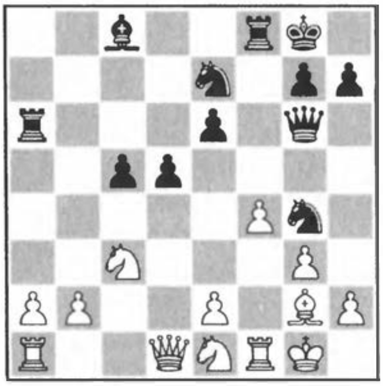
– In Hasecic-Kountz, Walldorf 2006, White played **11.♗f4** ♖xa6 12.♘e5 ♘xe5 13.♗xe5, and now Black could have achieved great play with 13...♘g4 14.♗f4 ♕b6.

– **11.♘bd2** ♖xa6 (11...e5 is premature in view of 12.e4 dxe4 13.♘g5, but 11...♗xa6 is a reasonable alternative) 12.b3 (12.e4 weakens square d3. Then 12...♘b4 13.a3 ♘d3, with compensation. Or 12.♖e1 c4!, and the bishop will be very strong on c5) 12...e5!? 13.e4 dxe4 14.♘g5 ♕d4.



The tactical complications will end in a draw. The main line is 15.♘dxe4 (worse for White is 15.♖b1 e3) 15...♕xa1 16.♘xf6+ gxf6 17.♗d5+ ♔g7 18.♘xh7 ♕d4 19.♕h5 ♕xd5 20.♗h6+ ♔xh7 21.♗e3+, with a perpetual.

– **11.♘c3** ♖xa6 12.♗g5 (Black has compensation after 12.♗f4 d4 13.♘b5 ♘d5 14.♗d2 ♗d7) 12...♕e8 13.♘e1 ♕g6 14.f4 ♘g4 15.♗xe7 ♘xe7



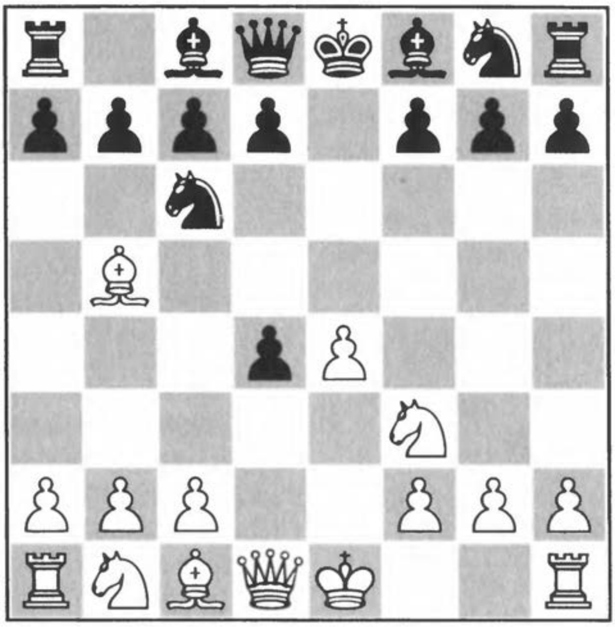
This double-edged position was reached in Lematschko-Maksimovic, Kishinev 1995. Black enjoyed a long-lasting initiative: 16.♕d3 ♘f5 17.♗h3 d4 18.♗xg4 ♕xg4 19.♘d1 ♗b7 20.b3 ♖fa8 21.a4 ♗d5 22.♖a3 h5 23.e4 dxe3 24.♘xe3 ♘xe3 25.♕xe3 h4 26.♘g2 hxg3 27.♕xg3 ♕e2. The game ended in a draw after another 20 moves.

In conclusion, 6...a6 should suit all Blumenfeld players. It has a certain surprise value, it leads to little-studied positions, and sometimes Black has the option to transpose into well-known theoretical variations – thereby avoiding certain unpleasant lines of the main Blumenfeld.

CHAPTER 7

Adrian Mikhalchishin

Combining the Spanish and the Scotch



The Muzychuk Gambit

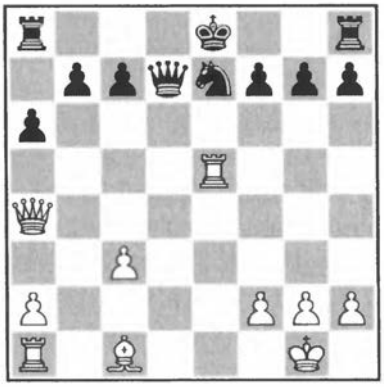
1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 exd4 4.♗b5!
A cunning idea – now Black has to decide how to play this 'Spanish' position, since if 4...♘f6 there follows 5.e5, and this type of position does not appeal to everyone, especially not to lovers of the Ruy Lopez.

It is very interesting that this gambit is an important weapon of two young lady players – the grandmaster sisters Anna and Mariya Muzychuk. This is why I have baptized this line the Muzychuk Gambit. The American master Eric Schiller has also played this gambit in the past, in his publications he calls it the Relfsson Gambit, by the way.

In general, for Black it looks logical to bring out his bishop either to c5, or to b4 with check. I have divided this article into these two main lines. Please note that Black can interpolate 4...a6 5.♗a4 if he so wishes, as 5.♗xc6 would lead to an innocent version of the Ruy Lopez Exchange. Before we move on to 4...♗c5 and 4...♗b4+ a few remarks on 4...a6 and 4...♘f6:

- While the Spanish interpretation of 4...a6 5.♗a4 b5 6.♗b3 ♗b7 7.0-0 is possible, it looks dangerous for Black in my opinion – after the best move 7...♘a5 play transposes into a not very successful variation, once a favourite of Spassky and Taimanov.
- After 4...a6 5.♗a4 Black can play 5...♗b4+ which is fairly similar to the lines we examine below. After 6.c3 (here 6.♗d2!?

is interesting too) 6...dxc3 7.♘xc3 (or 7.0-0) 7...d6 8.0-0 ♗xc3 9.bxc3 ♗d7 10.♖e1 ♘ge7 (if 10...♘e5 11.♘xe5 dxe5 12.♗a3 ♗xa4 13.♕xa4+ ♕d7, Malmdin-Rosino, Dresden 2008, then here after 14.♕b4 ♘f6 15.♖ad1 Black has problems) 11.e5! dxe5 12.♘xe5 ♘xe5 13.♖xe5 ♗xa4 14.♕xa4+ ♕d7



And now 15.♖xe7+!! ♔xe7 16.♗a3+ and White wins.

- If 4...a6 5.♗a4 ♗c5 then White can play in the same style as after 4...♗c5: 6.0-0 ♘ge7 7.♘g5 (I prefer this to Schiller's 7.b4?!), and now 7...0-0 is inaccurate because of 8.♕h5 h6 9.♘xf7 Kindler-Zeis, Ketsch 1978, or even better 8.♘xh7!.
- After 4...♘f6 5.e5 ♘e4 6.0-0 Black has a choice between 6...a6 and 6...♗e7. After the former White must exchange on c6 and can retrieve his pawn on d4. Against the latter taking on d4 is not very promising: 7.♘xd4 0-0 8.♘f5 d5! 9.♗xc6 bxc6 10.♘xe7+ ♕xe7 with very satisfactory play for Black, Rasmussen-Morgado, cr 1976.

White should prefer 7.♖e1 or 7.♕e2 as played by several grandmasters.

Variation I

4...♗b4+

This offers White a choice. I have taken the preference of the Muzychuk sisters as my main line.

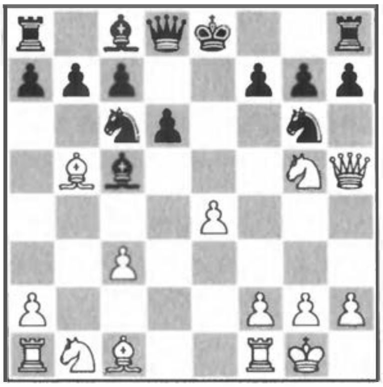
5.♗d2!?

Sharp and typical play results from 5.c3 dxc3 6.0-0:

– 6...a6 (6...d6 7.♕d4) 7.♗c4 b5 8.♗b3 c2 9.♗xc2 ♗b7 10.e5 ♘ge7 11.a3 ♗c5 12.♖e1 (or 12.♘c3), Portyanko-Demyak, Lviv 1997, and here White has some compensation for the pawn. It is difficult for Black to castle – if ...0-0 and ...♘g6 White plays ♘c3, then ♕d3, and attacks the knight by h2-h4. In general, this type of position has not been studied much in practice.

– Excessively risky is 6...cxb2 7.♗xb2 f6 8.♕b3 ♗e7 9.♘c3 ♘h6 10.♖fd1 ♘e5 11.♘d4 c6 12.♖ac1 (12.♘e6!?) 12...cxb5? 13.♘cxb5 ♘c6 14.♘e6 and White won in Batista-Da Costa, Brazil 2001.

– Black followed a different course in the following game: 6...♘ge7 7.bxc3 ♗c5 8.♘g5 d6 9.♕h5 ♘g6



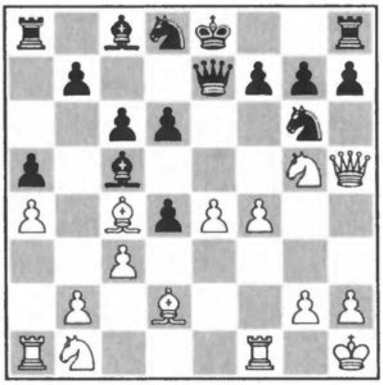
10.e5!? (10.♔h1 and then f2-f4 is more natural for this variation) 10...♘xe5 11.♖e1 ♕e7 12.♗f4 ♗g4 13.♕h4 ♗d7 14.♘d2 0-0-0 Kholmov-Shianovsky, Baku 1961, and White is nevertheless two pawns down and lost.

Let us return to 5.♗d2!? which is an interesting idea – White wants to exchange, with the aim of developing rapidly.

5...♗xd2+

The avoidance of the exchange 5...♗c5 6.0-0

♘ge7 7.♘g5! d6 8.♕h5 ♘g6 9.f4! ♕e7 10.♗c4! ♘d8 11.♔h1 c6 12.a4 a5 13.c3!



gives White a serious initiative, A.Muzychuk-Makropoulou, Sheki 2005.

6.♕xd2 ♘ge7

In the rapid game M.Muzychuk-Kostiuk, Evpatoria 2007, there followed 6...♘f6 7.e5 ♘e4 8.♕f4 d5 9.exd6 ♘xd6 10.♗xc6+ bxc6 11.♕e5+ ♕e7 12.♕xe7+ ♔xe7 and White won the ending, although at present she holds no advantage.

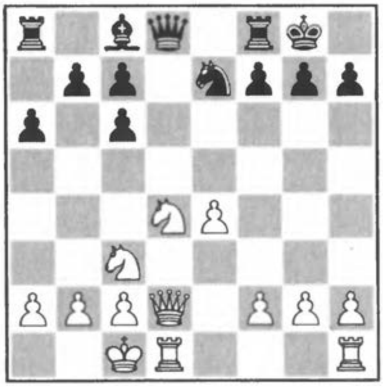
7.♘xd4 0-0 8.♘c3 a6 9.♗xc6

White also gains an advantage after 9.♗e2.

9...dxc6

Or 9...♘xc6 10.0-0-0 ♘xd4 11.♕xd4 d6 12.f4 with a slight edge in A.Muzychuk-Melekhina, Heraklio 2004.

10.0-0-0



10...c5 11.♘de2 ♕xd2+ 12.♖xd2 f6 13.♘f4 when although the advantage is slight, Black still has problems with his bishop on c8.

Variation II

4...♗c5 5.0-0 ♘ge7

In the event of 5...♘f6 6.e5 ♘d5 7.c3 White obtains a strong centre. While 5...a6 6.♗a4 transposes to our comments after 4...a6.

6.♘g5

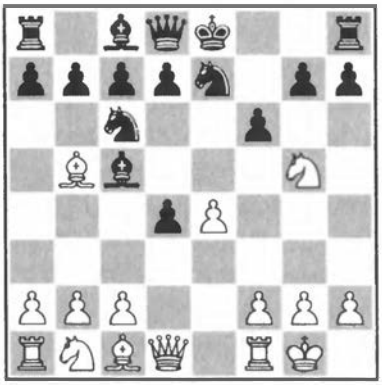
Another possible way of developing is 6.♗g5 0-0 7.♘bd2 d6 8.♘b3 f6 9.♗h4 ♘g6 10.♗g3 ♕e7 with a complicated game.

Less good is the natural 6.♘bd2 0-0 7.♘b3 ♗b6 8.♘bxd4 ♘xd4 9.♘xd4 d5! 10.e5 c6 11.♗e2 ♘g6 (11...♘f5 is also good) 12.f4 f6 13.exf6 ♕xf6 Solovtsov-Em.Lasker, Moscow simul 1896.

The gambit 6.c3 is sharper (but dubious): 6...dxc3 7.♘xc3 0-0 8.♗g5 f6 9.♗h4 d6 10.♖c1 a6 11.♗a4 ♔h8 12.♘d5 ♗g4 13.h3 ♗xf3 14.♕xf3 ♘xd5 15.exd5 ♘d4 16.♕d3 ♕e7 and Black has an excellent game Westerinen-Zuidema, Havana 1966.

6...d6

Here 6...f6 is sharp and interesting.



after 7.♕h5+ g6 8.♕h4 fxg5 9.♗xg5 d6 10.f4 h6 11.♗f6 ♖h7 12.f5 gxf5 13.♕h5+ ♔f8 14.exf5 ♕e8 White's play has come to a standstill Krnic-Batinic, Omis 2005. However, the 'trick' 7.♘f7! ♔xf7 8.♕h5+ and

9.♕xc5 is stronger, with the initiative.

7.f4

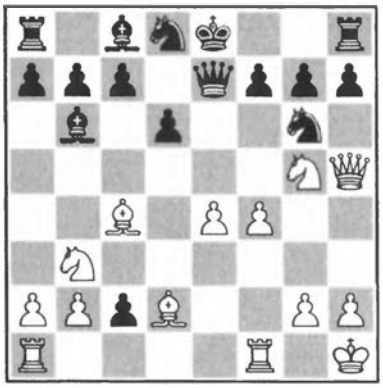
7.♕h5 is weaker: 7...g6 (Kilicaslan-E.Atalik, Istanbul 2006), and here if 8.♕h6 there is the pretty 8...♘g8! 9.♕g7 ♕f6, advantageously exchanging the queens. Also unsatisfactory is 8.♕h4 ♘g8 9.♕f4 ♕f6 10.♕d2 (as given by Jonasson) after Schiller's natural 10...♗d7.

7...♘g6 8.♕h5 ♕e7 9.♗c4 ♘d8

After 9...♗e6 10.♗xe6 fxe6 11.f5 exf5 12.exf5 Black has the surprising 12...d3+ (instead of 12...0-0-0? as in Malmdin-Lardot, Skelleftea 2001) 13.♔h1 ♕e2! and Black wins.

Instead of 10.♗xe6, White gains an edge after 10.♘xe6.

10.♘d2 d3+ 11.♔h1 dxc2 12.♘b3 ♗b6 13.♗d2

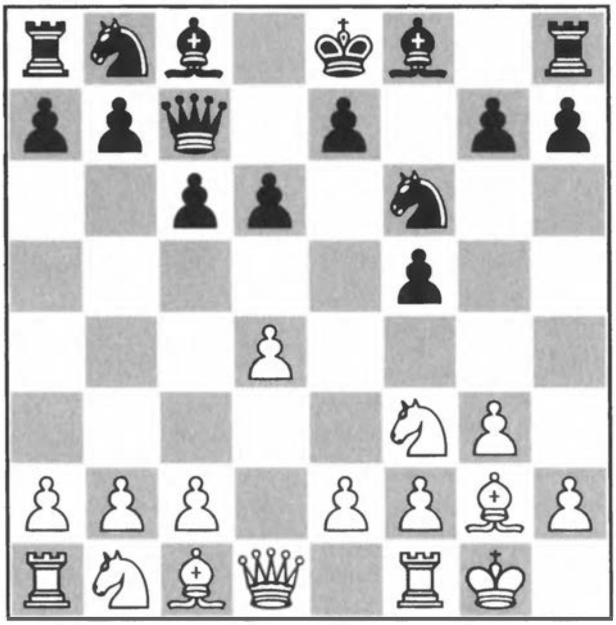


Followed by ♖ae1, with interesting compensation for the pawns.

CHAPTER 8

Dimitri Reinderman

Dutch: the Hort-Antoshin Variation



Playing for ...e5

Why do you start to play a certain opening? Often your inspiration will be an opening book or an article, it can also be an impressive game by a strong player. Sometimes it might be the suggestion of a coach. It could even be the result of self-reflection, for example: 'I am good in closed positions, so I will start playing the French'.

However, it can also be the name of an opening. This was my personal reason for playing the Dutch. After all, I am Dutch. Moreover, the Leningrad Variation happens to fit my style, and I have been playing this variation for eighteen years already, with good results. In the Leningrad Black develops his bishop to g7, castles, and then he will try to play ...e5. Often White tries to combat this central advance by playing d5 and ♘d4. Indeed, if Black succeeds in playing ...e5 with the white pawn still on d4, he often gets a good position. That made me wonder: is it possible to try and play ...e5 before developing the king's bishop?

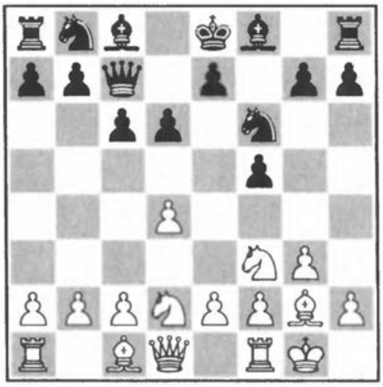
In writing this article I would like to answer this question in the affirmative. For, as Vlastimil Hort (one of the best players of the world in the seventies) and Vladimir Antoshin (a leading Soviet grandmaster in the sixties) had discovered before me: Black can play ...d6, ...c6 and ...♛c7 to prepare ...e5 immediately! (Note that Antoshin also adopted this development scheme with white, playing Bird's opening.) In playing like this Black must of course take his piece development into account. However, not bothered by such details, I started playing this variation as an alternative for the Leningrad.

☐ **Vladimir Akopian**
■ **Dimitri Reinderman**
Oakham 1992 (4)

1.d4 f5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.g3 c6 4.♗g2 d6 5.0-0 ♕c7 6.♘c3

White wants to play e4 as fast as possible, a logical plan, since 6...d5 7.♗f4 is unattractive for Black. Other set-ups without c4 are possible too.

- In practice 6.♘bd2 has not done so badly for White. Indeed, 6...e5 7.dxe5 dxe5 8.♘c4 ♘bd7 9.b3 ♗c5 10.♗b2 e4 11.♘g5 is bad, while 6...g6 7.♖e1 ♗g7 8.e4 0-0 9.c3 fxe4 10.♘xe4 ♘xe4 11.♖xe4 is a good Leningrad for White, and finally 7...d5 8.c4 ♗g7 9.♘e5 0-0 10.♘df3 ♘e4 11.♗f4, as in Gheorghiu-Tal, Moscow 1971, gives White an excellent Stonewall. I would like to suggest two novelties:

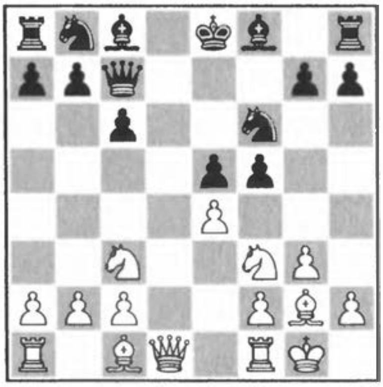


– 6...h6!? 7.♖e1 g5 8.e4 fxe4 9.♘xe4 ♘xe4 10.♖xe4 ♗g7. The pawns are better on h6 and g5 than on h7 and g6, as Leningrad players will confirm. So this is an improved version of the 6...g6 variation and only a little better for White.

– 6...e6 7.♖e1 (7.c4 e5!? 8.dxe5 dxe5 9.e4 fxe4 10.♘g5 ♗g4 11.♕c2 ♘a6 12.♘dxe4 ♘b4 13.♕a4 ♗e2 is messy) 7...d5 is a better version of the Stonewall than Gheorghiu-Tal.

- 6.b3 is another plausible move, since b3-systems are popular against the Leningrad, but here after 6...e5 7.dxe5 dxe5 8.♗b2 e4 9.♘d4 ♗e7 10.♘d2 a6 11.e3 0-0 12.f3 c5 13.♘e2 exf3 14.♗xf3 ♘c6 Black had no problems in Gligoric-Kavalek, The Hague 1966.

6...e5 7.dxe5 dxe5 8.e4



8...♗d6

This looks like a solid move, but actually there is a tactical refutation. So Black should play 8...fxe4! 9.♘g5 ♗g4 10.♕e1 ♘bd7 11.♘gxe4 ♗e7, when he is fine.

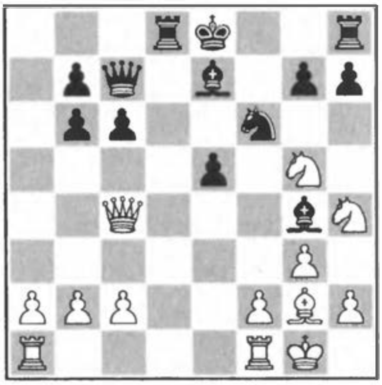
9.exf5

A good positional move, but stronger is 9.♗h3! fxe4 10.♗xc8 exf3 11.♗xb7 ♕xb7 12.♕xd6, with a clear advantage for White.

9...♗xf5 10.♘h4 ♗g4 11.♕d3 ♘bd7 12.♗e3 ♖d8

I was not really playing well here. Better would have been 12...♘c5 13.♗xc5 ♗xc5 14.♘e4 ♘xe4 15.♗xe4 ♕d7 16.♗xh7 0-0-0, or 12...0-0-0 13.♗xa7 ♘c5 14.♗xc5 ♗xc5 15.♕c4 ♗a7, and in both cases Black has enough compensation for the pawn.

13.♘e4 ♗e7 14.♘g5 ♘b6 15.♗xb6 axb6 16.♕c4



Now White is clearly better, since the black king is stuck in the centre.

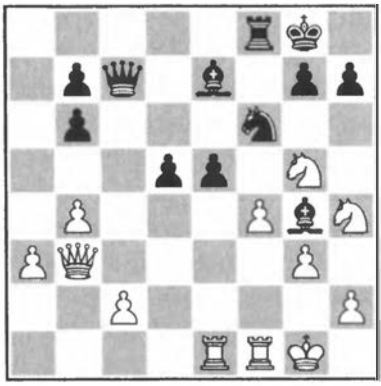
16...♗c5 17.♖ae1 ♖d4 18.♕b3 ♖b4 19.♕c3 0-0

The king has finally left the centre, but the price is high.

20.a3 ♖d4 21.b4 ♗e7 22.♕b3+

Winning material. I was hoping to get some compensation with my pair of bishops and the pawn centre, but Akopian played really well and gave me no chance.

22...♖d5 23.♗xd5+ cxd5 24.f4



24...♗d6 25.fxe5 ♗xe5 26.♘f5 ♖e8 27.♕d3 ♕d7 28.♘d4 h6 29.♘gf3 ♗b8 30.♖xe8+ ♕xe8 31.♖e1 ♕h5 32.♘d2 ♗d7 33.♕e2 ♕g6 34.♕d3 ♕g4 35.c3 h5 36.♕e2 ♕g6 37.♘4f3 ♗g4 38.♕e3 ♗c7 39.♘e5 ♗xe5 40.♕xe5 h4 41.gxh4 ♕c2 42.♕e3 ♗f5 43.♘f3 ♗e4 44.♕d2 ♕b3 45.♘g5 ♗g6 46.♕f4 ♔h8 47.♕b8+ ♘g8 48.♕c7 ♕c2 49.♘e6 ♗e4 50.♕xg7

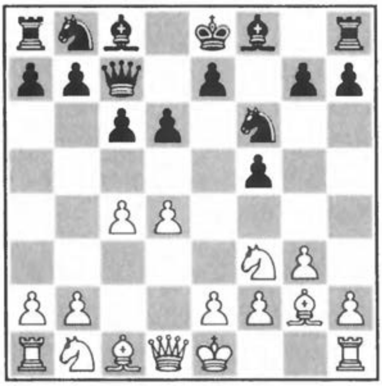
Mate.

☐ **Herman Grooten**
■ **Dimitri Reinderman**
Wijk aan Zee 1993 (3)

1.d4 d6 2.c4 f5 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.g3 c6

After my debacle against Akopian, I stubbornly decided to repeat this line some months later in the third round of the Hoogovens 'open' tournament (normally Hoogovens/Corus has closed grandmaster groups, but in 1993 they experimented with knockout matches and a swiss tournament). This time the Hort-Antoshin gave me more joy!

5.♗g2 ♕c7



6.0-0

Note that the 'Leningrad move' 6.d5 would lose a pawn here after 6...cxd5 7.cxd5 ♘xd5, although it is true that White isn't worse after 8.0-0 ♘f6 9.♘c3.

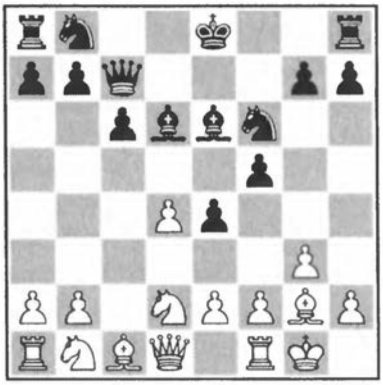
6...e5 7.c5

My opponent probably knew this idea from the King's Indian Defence, where it can be very strong. In this position it doesn't give an advantage though.

The same can be said about 7.dxe5 dxe5 8.♕c2, Romanishin-Antoshin, Cienfuegos 1977, which is well-met by 8...e4!, as

Botvinnik has pointed out. For 7.♘c3 – the main line – see the next game.

7...e4 8.cxd6 ♗xd6 9.♘fd2 ♗e6



10.b3

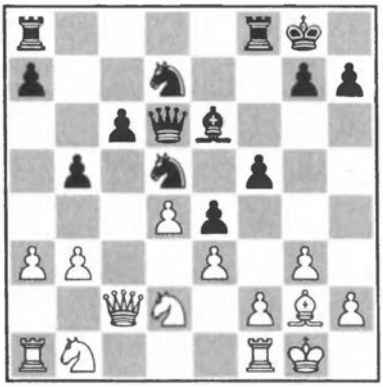
In this kind of position, there are two plans for White: either attack the strong pawn on e4 with f3, or try to get counterplay on the queenside using the semi-open c-file.

As 10.f3 e3 11.♘b3 f4 would be good for Black, White tries the other plan, but the e4 pawn gives Black a good position anyway.

10...b5 11.e3 0-0 12.♗a3?!

In this position 12.f3 is possible and the best move. Of course in similar positions exchanging the bad bishop is a good idea, but here White will remain with passive pieces.

12...♘d5 13.♗xd6 ♕xd6 14.a3 ♘d7 15.♕c2



15...a5?!

Black is better developed and has more space, so he should have tried to open up the position with 15...c5!.

16.♖c1 ♖fc8 17.♘c3 g6 18.♘xd5 ♗xd5 19.♗f1 ♔f7 20.a4 b4 21.♗c4 ♘b6 22.♕b2 ♕e6 23.♖c2 g5

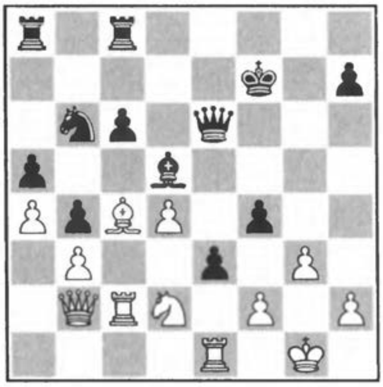
Preparing ...f4 is a logical plan for Black, especially after the white bishop has left the kingside. However, it is double-edged, since it leaves e4 weak and the black king becomes more vulnerable.

24.♖ac1 f4 25.exf4 gxf4 26.♖e1

Threatening 27.♖xe4 ♘xc4 28.♖xf4+.

26...e3?!

Risky, though it works out well in the game. Safer is 26...♕f5, followed by centralizing the rooks.



27.♘f3??

This is a miscalculation. Strong is 27.♗xd5! ♘xd5 28.fxe3 fxe3 29.♘c4, when Black won't have enough compensation for the pawn he loses.

27...♘xc4 28.♘g5+ ♔f6?

Correct was 28...♔g8 29.bxc4 exf2+ 30.♔xf2 fxg3+ which wins easily for Black.

29.bxc4 ♔xg5?!

Stronger was 29...exf2+ 30.♔xf2 fxg3+ 31.hxg3 ♕f5+ 32.♔g1 ♕xg5, with a big advantage for Black.

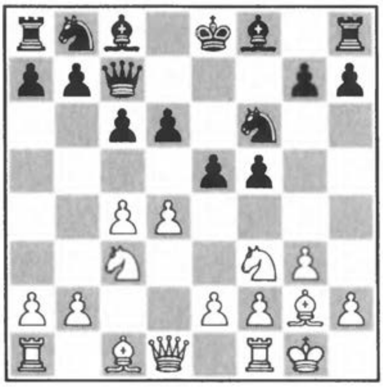
30.fxe3 fxe3?! 31.cxd5?

31.♖ce2! ♖e8 32.cxd5 cxd5 33.♖xe3 ♕xe3+ 34.♖xe3 ♖xe3 35.♕f2 draws, since there is no good way to escape a perpetual.

31...cxd5 32.♕b3 The difference is 32.♖ce2 ♖c3, keeping the pawn. **32...♖xc2 33.♕xc2 ♔h6 34.♕c7 ♖f8** Black is a pawn up and has a better position, so the rest was not difficult. **35.♖e2 ♖f7 36.♕c2 ♔g7 37.♕d3 ♖e7 38.♔g2 h5 39.h3 ♕e4+ 40.♕xe4 ♖xe4 41.♔f3 b3 42.g4 hxg4+ 43.hxg4 ♔g6 44.g5 ♖e6 45.♖e1 e2** White resigned.

☐ **Viktor Gavrikov**
■ **Lev Psakhis**
Riga ch-URS 1985 (19)

1.♘f3 f5 2.g3 ♘f6 3.♗g2 d6 4.d4 c6 5.0-0 ♕c7 6.c4 e5 7.♘c3



7...e4

Black gains space and also prevents White from opening up the position with moves like c5 or dxe5 and e4. However, the pawn on e4 can be attacked with f3, when Black is more or less forced to take (since with the queen on c7 the move ...d5 is unattractive). If you don't like the position for Black after 7...e4, you can just develop with 7...♗e7, though White has a promising pawn sacrifice: 8.c5!? e4 9.cxd6 ♗xd6 10.♘e5 ♗e6 11.f3 ♗xe5 12.dxe5 ♕xe5 13.fxe4 fxe4 14.♗f4 ♕c5+ 15.♔h1 ♘bd7 16.♖c1, which gave White good compensation in Udovcic-Lombardy, Zagreb 1969.

8.♘g5

From here the knight can go to f4 via h3, or even to e6 if the e-file is opened. It can also try to reach f4 via e1, but this puts less pressure on Black: 8.♘e1 ♗e7 9.f3 exf3 and now:

- 10.♗xf3 0-0 11.♘g2 ♘bd7 12.♗f4 ♖f7 13.b4 ♘f8 14.b5 ♘g6 15.bxc6 bxc6 was OK for Black in Kortchnoi-Antoshin, Moscow 1961.
- 10.exf3 0-0 11.♘d3 ♗e6 12.b3 ♗f7 13.♗h3 ♘a6 14.♗b2 ♕d7 15.♕d2 b5!? 16.cxb5 cxb5 17.♘f4 ♘c7 was Zinser-N.Littlewood, Havana Olympiad 1966. The position is equal, but Leningrad players might prefer black.

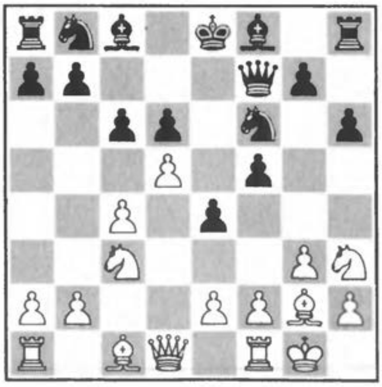
8...h6

In K.Danov-Knezevic, Skopje 1967, Black played 8...♗e7 9.f3 exf3 10.exf3 0-0 11.♖e1 ♘a6 12.a3 ♖e8 13.b4 h6 14.♘h3 ♗d7 15.♕d3 ♗f8, with equality according to Botvinnik, but here even most Leningrad players would prefer White.

9.♘h3 ♕f7

This is a good move. After 9...g5 10.f3 exf3 11.exf3 ♗g7 12.♖e1+ White is better, and the same holds for 9...♗e6 10.d5 ♗f7 11.f3 cxd5 12.cxd5 ♕c5+ 13.♔h1 exf3 14.♗xf3!. Instead of the last move 14.exf3 ♘xd5 15.♖e1+ ♗e7 16.♘a4 ♕c7 17.♘f4 ♘xf4 18.♗xf4 0-0 19.♖xe7 ♕xe7 20.♗xd6 ♕d8 21.♗xf8 ♕xf8 was equal in Razuvaev-Mamatov, Frunze 1979.

10.d5



10...g5

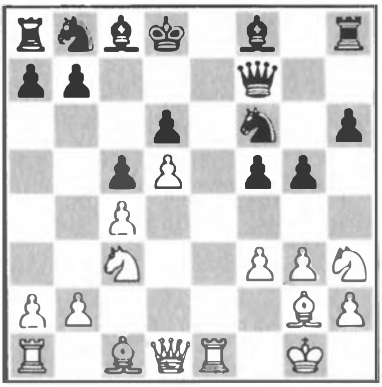
An ambitious move which gains space on the kingside and a nice square for the king's bishop on g7. But it's risky with the king in the middle and Black still needing a lot of moves to finish development.

A safe alternative is 10...♗e7 11.f3 exf3 12.exf3 cxd5 13.cxd5 0-0, when White is a little better.

11.f3 exf3 12.exf3

And now 12...♗e7 might be best, but not consistent. Instead, Black closes the position, hoping to get his bishop on the long diagonal (12...♗g7 13.dxc6 would lose a pawn of course).

12...c5 13.♖e1+ ♔d8



I really like the set-up of Psakhis. It is true that he has only one piece developed, against the four of White, and with the king on d8 he will probably not manage to connect his rooks. But while he understood the bad things about his position, he (I hope) nevertheless believed in his game, and saw its prospects too: White's bishops and the knight on h3 are not active, while the bishop on g7 will be great. Of course the objective truth is important, and White must be better here. But it's also important to enjoy your position, and I believe that Psakhis did!

14.b4

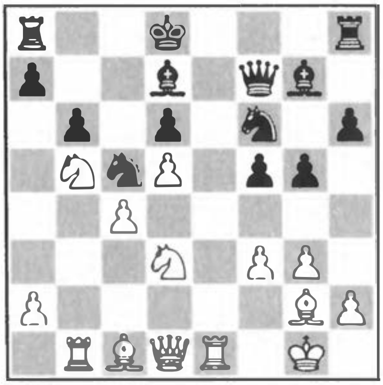
A natural move, since White wants to open the position.

14...♘a6 15.bxc5

But here I prefer 15.a3. This keeps the knight on a6, and while White can prepare bxc5 with ♞f2-d3, sometimes b5 might be strong too.

15...♘xc5 16.♘f2 ♗d7 17.♖b1 ♗g7 18.♘d3 b6 19.♘b5

It's better to take on c5 here. Black has to take with the d-pawn, but a timely d6 might be annoying for him. The piece exchanges in the game benefit Black.



19...♗xb5 20.♖xb5 ♘fd7 21.f4 g4 22.♗e3 ♘xd3 23.♕xd3 ♖e8 24.♖bb1 ♖c8

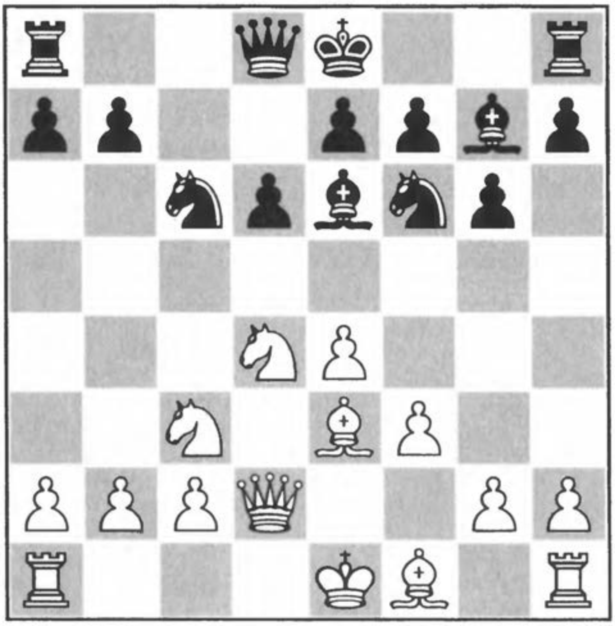
Draw agreed in a position that would have been interesting to play on. White has the safer king, and pawn f5 might become weak, but Black has more active pieces. It's not unlikely that a position with bishops of opposite colour will appear, when both sides will have their chances.

As these three games have shown, the Hort-Antoshin Variation leads to interesting positions, but it will not be everyone's cup of tea. However, if you are a Leningrad player, I think it's a good idea to add this variation to your repertoire as a surprise weapon. After all, you are already familiar with most of the ideas!

CHAPTER 9

Sergey Tiviakov

Sicilian Dragon: Avoiding the Main Line



Let's play 8...♗e6

Nowadays the Dragon Variation goes through an unexpected revival, and has become fashionable again. When the author of these lines stopped playing the main lines of the Dragon some years ago it was difficult to imagine that at some point world top players (like Carlsen and Radjabov) would add it to their repertoires. But they did and not without success!

Well, what can I say, if for me the main answer to 1.e4 during the last four years has remained the Scandinavian Defence. [Editorial note: see SOS-6 and SOS-9 for Tiviakov's take on the Scandinavian.]

Of course, the Dragon remains dubious; there are various ways for White to exploit his advantage. And there is so much theory (least of all the home analysis of top players, yet to be tried in tournament practice).

However, there are also ways for Black to avoid the theoretical discussions.

One of these possibilities is to postpone castling, first finishing the development of the pieces on the queenside and trying to create some counter-play there, leaving the black king in the centre. The most well-known option (after 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♞c3 g6 6.♗e3 ♗g7 7.f3 ♘c6 8.♕d2) is 8...♗d7 9.0-0-0 ♖c8. Having played some 20 games in this line, I have an impressive of score of winning 15, drawing 4 and losing only 1 game. Meanwhile, here too theory has caught up with practice and there is a lot to study, therefore another plan, with 8...♗e6, will be the subject of the present article.

Over a decade ago I was fond of experimenting with both colours sometimes choosing very unusual moves early in the opening (like, for example, 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 g6 5.c4 ♗h6!? in the Sicilian Maroczy – see SOS-1, Chapter 6, p.57).

In two games played in Groningen in December 1997 I experimented with 8...♗e6, making 2 draws against the strong Romanian grandmasters Nisipeanu and Istratescu. The main idea behind the early bishop move is, of course, to avoid the theory in the main theoretical lines after 8...0-0 9.♗c4 and 9.0-0-0.

Playing 8...♗e6 Black is preparing ♖a8-c8 and ♕d8-a5, creating pressure on the queenside. There is only one drawback to this move, but it is an obvious one – after the exchange on e6 White can play ♗f1-c4 attacking the pawn on e6 with tempo. Clearly, White has some initiative. It remains to be seen though whether White can get a substantial advantage after this exchange (in my opinion 9.♘xe6 is not so dangerous for Black). Let's have a look at my games against Istratescu and Nisipeanu.

☐ **Andrei Istratescu**
■ **Sergey Tiviakov**
Groningen 1997 (5)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 g6 6.♗e3 ♗g7 7.f3 ♘c6 8.♕d2 ♗e6!?

This is the first game in which I played the early bishop move, and it ended in a short draw. That was a satisfactory result for me with black in a strong Open. White's next move is not critical in my opinion. When the black queen is still on d8 the exchange does not give Black too many problems to solve as pawn e6 can be easily covered by her majesty from the squares d7 or c8.

9.♘xe6

Please note that 9.g4 0-0 transposes to the well-known line 8...0-0 9.g4 ♗e6, where Black has no problems whatsoever.

For 9.0-0-0, see my game against Nisipeanu.

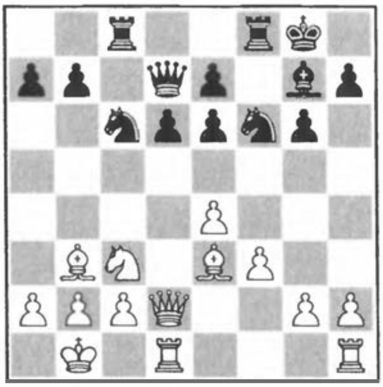
Black was fine in Kasperek-Latas, Myslenice 1987, after 9.♗b5 ♕c8 10.♗h6 0-0 11.♗xg7 ♔xg7 12.♗xc6 bxc6 13.h4 ♖b8 14.0-0-0 c5 15.♘xe6+ ♕xe6 16.h5 ♔g8 17.♕h6 ♕e5.

9...fxe6 10.0-0-0

After 10.♗c4 Black has a good choice between 10...♕d7 11.0-0-0 ♖c8, transferring into the line after 10.0-0-0, and 10...♕c8 11.♗b3 ♘e5, with good play. The queen on c8 is placed excellently, covering square c4, making a quick exchange on c4 possible.

After 10.♗c4 ♕c8 11.0-0-0 Black should play 11...0-0 planning ♘e5-c4.

10...♖c8 11.♗c4 ♕d7 12.♗b3 0-0 13.♔b1



Here the players agreed to a draw. After 13...b6, followed by ...♘a5 or ...♘e5 (in both cases planning ...♘c4) Black has a good position.

Draw.

☐ **Liviu-Dieter Nisipeanu**
■ **Sergey Tiviakov**
Groningen 1997 (11)

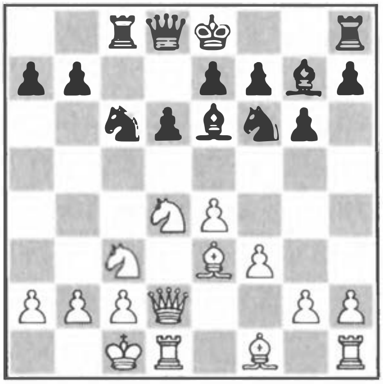
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 g6 6.♗e3 ♗g7 7.f3 ♘c6 8.♕d2 ♗e6!? 9.0-0-0

Keeping the tension is a good option for White, promising better chances than 9.♘xe6.

9...♖c8

Here 9...♘xd4 10.♗xd4 0-0 transposes to 8...0-0 9.0-0-0 ♘xd4 10.♗xd4 ♗e6. If this line is part of your repertoire then you may consider our present SOS simply as a move order weapon (avoiding 9.♗c4).

Bad is 9...a6?! as it weakens square b6 at a crucial moment: 10.♘xe6 fxe6 11.♗c4♕c8 12.♘a4! ♘e5 13.♗b3 ♘c4 14.♕e2 White is simply better and kept his huge positional plus after 14...b5 15.♗xc4 bxa4 16.a3 d5 17.♗a2 ♖b8 18.♗d4 Czerniak-Stahlberg, Buenos Aires 1945.



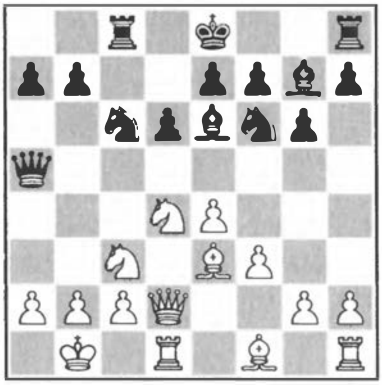
10.♔b1

10.♘xe6 fxe6 transposes to our previous game and is therefore still too early. The text is a useful prophylactic move. Nisipeanu only wants to take on e6 after the black queen has moved to a5 and can no longer protect pawn e6 from d7.

10.h4 h5 11.♔b1 ♘e5 12.♘xe6 ½-½, Hazai-Varga, Hungary 1989.

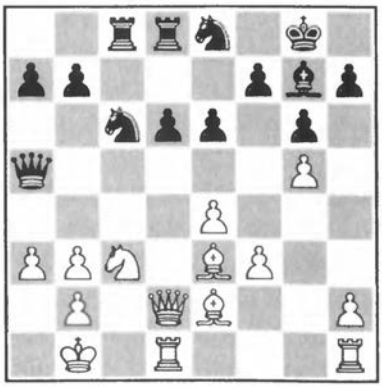
10...♕a5

Giving the whole line independent meaning. The position after 10...♘xd4 11.♗xd4 0-0 usually appears after 8...0-0 9.0-0-0 ♘xd4 10.♗xd4 ♗e6 11.♔b1 ♖c8. Another theoretical position occurs after 10...0-0.



11.♘xe6

11.♘b3!? is a worthy alternative to the text, also promising White a slight advantage, although with a different pawn structure. After 11...♗xb3 12.cxb3 0-0 (or 12...♘d7 13.a3±) 13.g4 (13.♗e2!? ♖fd8 14.f4 deserves attention) 13...♖fd8 14.♗e2 e6 15.g5 ♘e8 (15...♘d7!? is interesting) 16.a3 a very complex position has appeared on the board. Although White is slightly better, Black has his own chances to seize the initiative thanks to the pawn majority in the centre.



16...♖d7 17.f4 d5 18.b4 (18.exd5 ♘e7 gives nice counterplay) 18...♕d8 19.e5 d4 (19...a5 20.b5 ♘e7 21.♗g4, with slightly better chances for White was a serious alternative to the game continuation. Unclear is 21.♘a4 d4) 20.♘e4 ♖d5?! (after this move Black lands into trouble. 20...a5 21.b5 ♘e7± was better) 21.♗f2. Now White has a large advantage which was later converted into a full point, Ye Jiangchuan-Kudrin, Beijing 1998.

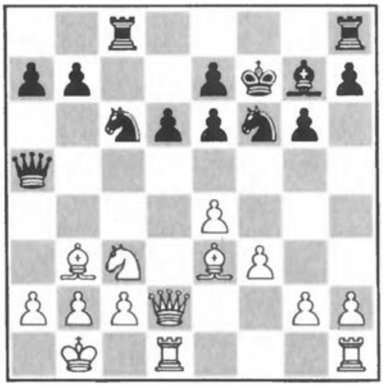
11...fxe6 12.♗c4 ♔f7

There is nothing wrong with 12...♘d8. For example: 13.♗b3 (13.♗b5+ ♘c6 is OK for Black; 13.♗d3 ♘d7 14.♘e2 ♕xd2 15.♖xd2 a6±) 13...♘d7 (forcing the exchange of the queens) 14.♘e2 ♕xd2 15.♖xd2 ♘c5 with a solid position.

In fact, I should have preferred 12...♘d8 to the text since the king on f7 is too exposed, not only with the queens on the board but also in the ending.

13.♗b3

The ending arising after 13.♘e2 ♕xd2 14.♖xd2 ♘a5 15.♗d3 a6 is only marginally better for White.



13...b5

13...♘d7 is another option after which White has to play energetically to exploit the exposed position of the black king in the centre:

– 14.♗xe6+ ♔xe6 15.♕d5+ ♕xd5 16.exd5+ ♔f7 17.dxc6 bxc6 is equal.

– 14.♘e2 ♕xd2 15.♖xd2 ♘a5 16.c3 (16.♗xa7? ♘xb3∓ planning ...b6) 16...♘xb3 17.axb3 a6 promises no advantage either.

– 14.f4 ♗xc3 15.bxc3 ♘f6 (15...♘c5 16.♗xc5 ♕xc5 17.f5±) 16.♕d3 ♖hd8 17.♗d2 (17.f5 ♘e5 18.♗xe6+ ♔g7 19.♕d4 ♖xc3 unclear) 17...♕h5 (17...d5 18.c4±) 18.f5 gxf5 19.exf5 d5 20.c4 with the initiative.

14.♘e2

Or 14.♕e2 a6 with a slightly better position for White.

14...♕xd2 15.♖xd2 a5?!

15...♘a5? 16.♗xa7± loses a pawn, but 15...a6 16.♘f4 ♘d8 would have kept Black's position solid.

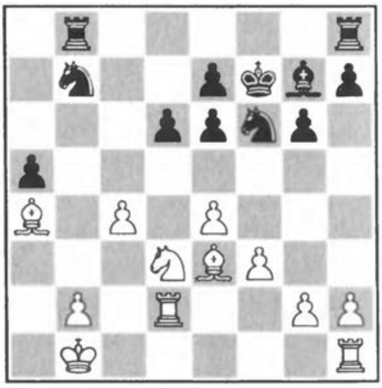
16.♘f4 ♘d8 17.a4

17.a3 ♘d7.

17...bxa4 18.♗xa4 ♖b8

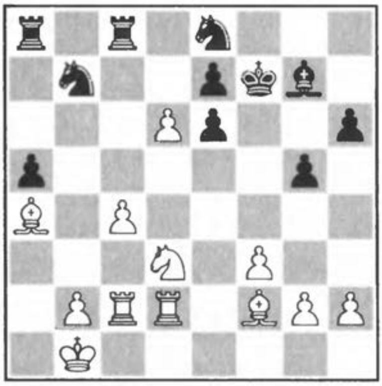
Releasing the tension in the position, exchanging several pieces was not better. After 18...♗h6 19.♗b3 ♔e8 20.♖e1 e5 21.♘d5 ♗xe3 22.♘xf6+ exf6 23.♖xe3 ♔e7 White is much better in the ending because of the weak pawn a5.

19.♘d3 ♘b7 20.c4



Now Black's position becomes uncomfortable and he has to play carefully in order not to find himself in serious trouble.

20...♖hc8 21.♖c1 Or 21.e5 with advantage. **21...♘e8 22.♖cc2** Again 22.e5 was strong. **22...h6 23.♗a7 ♖a8 24.♗b6 g5 25.e5 ♖a6 26.♗f2 ♖aa8 27.exd6?!**



After this move White loses the biggest part of his advantage. With accurate play in the rest of the game Black managed to make a draw without any problems.

27...exd6 28.c5 dxc5 29.♘xc5 ♘xc5 30.♖xc5 ♘f6± 31.♖dc2 ♖xc5 32.♖xc5 ♘d5 33.♖b5 ♗e5 34.g3 ♔f6 35.♗e1 ♘b4 36.♗xb4 axb4 37.♖xb4 ♖b8 38.♖xb8 ♗xb8 39.♗e8 ♔e5 40.♔c2 ♔d4 41.♔d2 ♗d6 42.♗f7 e5 43.♗g6 ♗c5 44.♔e2 ♔c4 45.♗f7+ ♔d4 46.♔f2 e4

Draw.

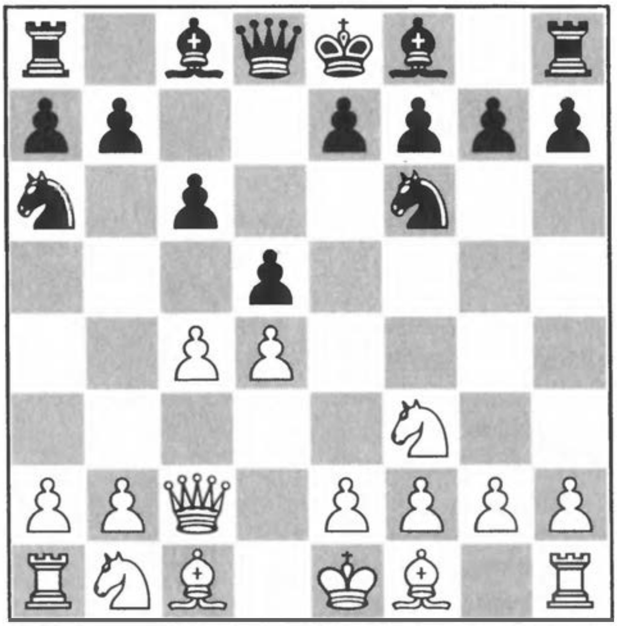
The final conclusion: the variation with 8...♗e6 is an excellent surprise weapon! As early as move 10 the players find themselves on unexplored territory – something which is very unusual for the Dragon. Although White keeps a slight advantage after 8...♗e6 (please, tell me where in the Dragon White has no edge?!) Black's position remains solid, and full of chances to seize the initiative when the time has come. Moreover, even with deep analysis it is not possible for White to refute 8...♗e6 directly!

I would predict that after the publication of this SOS-article we'll see much more games played with it in tournaments of all levels.

CHAPTER 10

Arthur Kogan

Edgy Knight in the Slav



1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♕c2 ♘a6

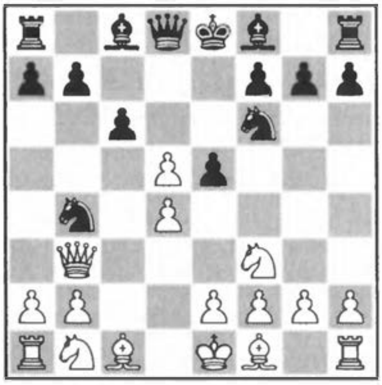
The Slav with 4.♕c2 has become very popular recently, and I must confess that I played it myself a few times with white as well. The main advantage of 4.♕c2 is its flexibility. White doesn't block his bishop on c1 with e3, and thus intends to be nice to both his bishops! Black usually replies 4...dxc4 versus the early queen move, but experience has shown that it is not that easy to obtain equal chances. White has a solid positional option with a kingside fianchetto, and White's two central pawns give him the better chances in the long term. Indeed, positional players are often attracted to the solid nature of 4.♕c2.

These days nearly all players are-well prepared in the opening. So it is just natural that a few creative players (I modestly consider myself among them) want to surprise their opponent as soon as possible to force them to use their own brain! Thus they cannot play twenty moves from memory and will end up in time trouble.

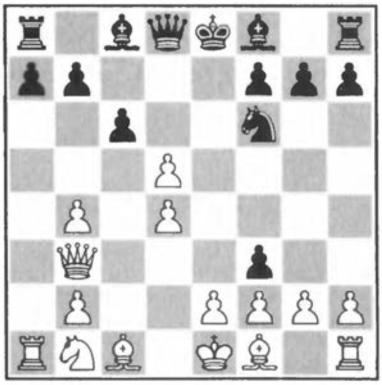
With such devious intentions in mind I would like to present you with an excellent weapon against this solid Slav: 4...♞a6. This may sin against Tarrasch's most famous dictum, but I can assure you that the knight is itching to leave the edge of the board as soon as possible. By means of a quick ...♘b4 Black intends to embarrass her majesty, and, in combination with ...♗f5, this aggressive knight-jump can be quite hard to meet. Another advantage of 4...♘a6 is that it prepares ...c5 (in combination with a Grünfeld set-up with ...g6 and ...♗g7).

☐ **Juan Borges Mateos**
■ **Arthur Kogan**
Solsona 2003

1.♘f3 d5 2.d4 c6 3.c4 ♘f6 4.♕c2 ♘a6!
At the time this was over-the-board inspiration. I just wanted to surprise my experienced opponent with a new set-up.
5.a3!?
This is not a bad move, although it lends credence to my 'silly' knight-move. Needless to say that my opponent took a long time before deciding on this prophylactic measure.
Let's have a good look at some other logical moves:
● 5.cxd5?!. This logical move makes sense if Black should now take back on d5 with the pawn. In that case, the knight on a6 would be misplaced in a kind of Exchange Slav. However, Black has 5...♘b4!, when after 6.♕b3 he has a choice.
The solid **6...♘bxd5** is fine.
– Now after 7.g3 Black has 7...♕b6 (he has another interesting option available in the form of the Grünfeld-like 7...g6!?) 8.♗g2 (8.♕c2 ♘b4) 8...♕xb3 9.axb3 ♘b4!?, and with the threat of ...♘c2 and ...♗e6, Black seems at least OK.
– After 7.♘c3 ♕b6! Black's piece play compensates for White's central control. The game Litinskaya-Buturin, Lvov 1997, was, for some hidden reason (maybe because it was not played in Sofia), agreed drawn after 8.♕xb6 axb6. Black is doing very well here.
However, after 6.♕b3 Black also has an aggressive gambit available in the form of the incredible **6...e5!?**.



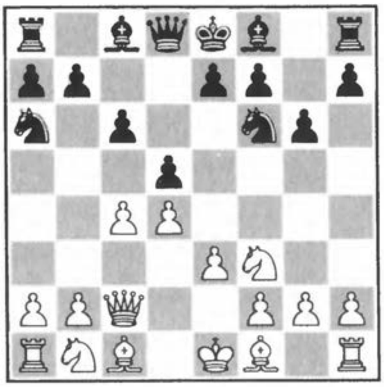
Imagine the look on your opponent's face now!
– First of all, 7.dxe5 ♕xd5 8.♕xd5 ♘fxd5 seems to give Black decent compensation after 9.♘a3 ♗c5 or 9...♗e6.
– 7.a3 doesn't seem so clear after 7...e4 8.axb4 exf3



9.gxf3 (or 9.dxc6 ♕xd4) 9...♕xd5 and Black has compensation.
– In the game Hebden-Kinsman, Plymouth 1989, White was at least artistically up to the task and played 7.e4. However, after 7...♘xe4 8.dxc6 ♘xc6 9.♗c4 (other options also seems good for Black, for example 9.d5 ♘b4 10.♗c4 ♘c5!, or 9.dxe5 ♗b4+ 10.♘c3 ♗e6 11.♕c2 – 11.♗c4? ♘c5 – 11...♕a5! which is too dangerous for White) 9...♗b4+ 10.♘c3 0-0 (10...exd4 was also critical, for example 11.0-0 – 11.♗xf7+ ♔f8 12.0-0

dxc3 or 11.♗d5 ♘c5 – 11...dxc3 looks good for Black after 12.♗d5! 0-0 13.♗xe4 ♗e6 14.♕c2 f5 15.♗xc6 bxc6 16.bxc3 ♗d6∓) 11.0-0 ♗xc3 12.bxc3 ♘a5 13.♕c2 ♘xc4 14.♕xe4 exd4 15.♘g5 f5 16.♕d3 ♕d5 17.♖e1 ♗d7 18.♗f4 h6 19.♘f3 ♗c6 20.♕xd4 g5 21.♗e5 ♖ae8 22.♕xd5+ ♗xd5∓, and later on White was lucky toescape with a draw.

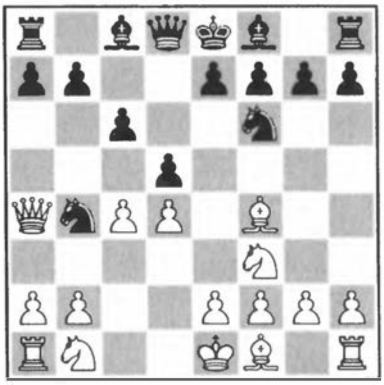
● 5.e3 g6! not only preparing a fianchetto, but also ...♗f5.



6.♗e2 (after 6.♘c3 ♗f5 7.♕b3, Black has 7...♕b6!, with ...♘b4coming)6...♗g7 7.0-0 (if7.♘c3, then not 7...c5 8.cxd5, but 7...♗f5 8.♕b3 ♕b6! which seems good for Black – again the ...♘b4 idea will be annoying for White) 7...0-0 8.♘c3 ♗f5 9.♕b3 ♕b6! 10.♗d2 (10.cxd5 ♕xb3 11.axb3 ♘xd5 12.♗xa6 bxa6, and Black seems very OK, because the exchange sac after 13.♖xa6 ♗d3 14.♖xc6 ♘b4! seems too risky for White) 10...dxc4 11.♗xc4 ♕xb3 12.♗xb3 ♘e4 (Black has a simple equalizing plan. Other options to fight for counterplay are 12...♖ad8 or 12...c5) 13.♘xe4 ♗xe4 14.♗c4 ♘c7 15.♗b4 ♗d5 16.♗e2, and in this equal position a draw was agreed in Alterman-Sherbakov, Jurmala 1989.

● 5.♗f4 is a logical, but surprisingly risky move after 5...♘b4! (solid is 5...dxc4 6.♕xc4 ♕b6 7.♕c1 ♗f5).

Now White has two logical queen moves. After 6.♕a4



Black can play 6...dxc4, when 7.♕xb4? e5 8.♕xc4 exf4 is much better for Black, while after 7.♗d2 ♘bd5 8.♕xc4 both 8...♕b6 and 8...♘e4!? come into consideration.

However, from the diagrammed position Black also has 6...♗f5!? as in Vidit-Abhishek, Nagpur 2008: 7.♕xb4 e5 8.c5 (8.♕xb7 ♖b8 9.♕xc6+ ♗d7 10.♕a6 exf4 11.c5 was probably a more critical test of Black's gambit play, but the game is far from clear after 11...♖xb2, as having a rook on the second is always dangerous for White) 8...exf4 9.♘bd2 (9.♕xb7 ♕b8! 10.♕xb8+ – 10.♕xc6+?? ♗d7 11.♕a6 ♕xb2–+ – 10...♖xb8 11.b3 and now 11...♘d7! preventing ♘e5 and preparing ...g6 with ...♗g7, or ...♗e7 and ...♗f6, seems to give decent compensation for the pawn) 9...♕c7 10.♕a4h6! 11.♖c1 g5 12.♘e5 ♗g7 led to a slightly better position for Black.

The other queen move is 6.♕b3, when the dynamic 6...e5! (or 6...dxc4 7.♕xc4 ♘bd5 followed by ...♕b6 which is another interesting way to fight for the initiative) 7.dxe5 ♗f5! 8.♘a3 ♕a5 (I think that 8...♘e4 followed by ...♗c5 is also very promising for Black) 9.♗d2 ♘e4 10.cxd5 cxd5 11.e3 ♗d7! led to a surprising draw for the black player, who had almost 200 Elo points less than

White, Ilyushin-Gal, Golden Sands 2000.

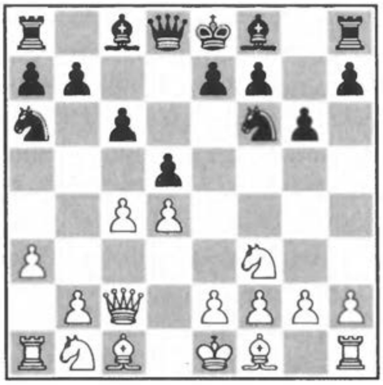
● Slightly passive is 5.♘bd2 which has not occurred in practice, and anyway it is high time to return to our main game after 5.a3.

5...g6

A bishop on g7 works well with a ...c5 pawn-break, while Black also prepares ...♗f5 of course.

Another option is 5...dxc4!?, which was tried by Spanish IM Pomes:

6.♕xc4 (play is unclear after 6.e4 ♗e6! – 6...b5 7.b3! – 7.e5 ♘d7 8.♗xc4 ♗xc4 9.♕xc4 ♘b6 10.♕c2 ♘c7) 6...♕b6!? (6...♗e6 7.♕c2) 7.♘g5 e6 8.♘c3 ♗e7 9.b4?! (Black has counterplay after 9.e4 0-0 10.♗e2 ♖d8 11.♘f3 c5!) 9...♘d5 10.♘a4 ♕d8 11.♘f3 and now 11...♘axb4! led to Black's advantage: 12.♘c5 (12.axb4 b5) 12...b5 13.♕b3 ♘a6 14.♘xa6 ♗xa6 15.e4 ♘f6 16.♗d3, and White has some compensation for the lost pawn, but Black eventually won: 16...♕b6 17.0-0 c5 (17...0-0) 18.dxc5 ♗xc5 19.a4 ♖d8!∓, Fernandez Aguado-Pomes Marcet, Castellar 1995.



6.e3

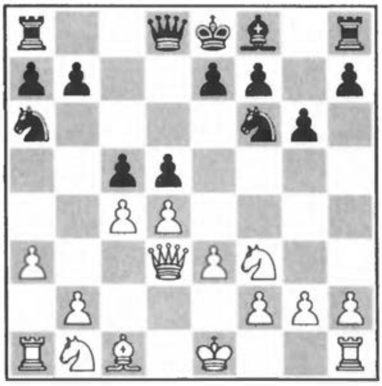
6.cxd5! is probably the best chance to fight for something: 6...cxd5 7.♘c3 ♗g7 (7...♗f5 8.♕b3 ♕b6 9.♕xb6 axb6 10.♗f4± ♘b4? 11.♖c1±) 8.♗f4 0-0 9.e3 ♘h5! (this was my idea during the game, and it is probably a better way to fight for counterplay than 9...♗f5?! 10.♕b3 ♕b6 11.♕xb6 axb6 12.♗e5 e6 13.♘a4 ♘d7 14.♗xg7 ♔xg7 15.♗b5±, Sjodahl-Boidman, Germany tt 1997/98) 10.♗e5 (10.♗g5 ♘c7 unclear) 10...f6 11.♗g3 ♘xg3 12.hxg3 ♘c7 and with ...e5 coming Black should have a good game. The same can be said of 6.♗f4 ♗f5 7.♕b3 ♕b6!.

6...♗f5! 7.♗d3

7.♕b3 ♕b6 8.♕a4! dxc4 9.♗xc4 ♘c7 10.♘c3 and now Black should perhaps play 10...e6!? as 10...♗g7 can be met by 11.♘g5 0-0 12.e4.

7...♗xd3 8.♕xd3 c5!?

Black is also OK after 8...♗g7 9.♘c3 (9.b4 ♘c7) 9...0-0, planning ...c5, but I wanted to create more practical problems for White.



9.♘c3!

The right decision, played after thinking for a long time.

My main idea was to use the fact that the white king is still in the centre after a line like 9.cxd5 cxd4! 10.e4 (10.♕b5+ ♕d7 11.♕xd7+ ♔xd7 12.exd4 ♘xd5 13.♘c3 ♘ac7∓; 10.0-0 ♗g7 11.e4 ♘c5 12.♕b5+ ♘fd7∓) 10...♘c5! 11.♕b5+ (11.♕xd4 ♘cxe4) 11...♕d7! 12.♘xd4 (12.♕xc5? ♖c8–+) 12...♗g7!∓, and Black will win back at least one pawn and is better developed as well!

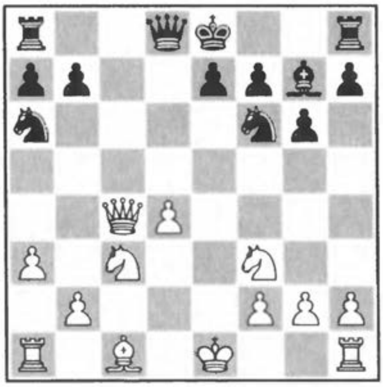
9...cxd4

9...dxc4 looks better for White after 10.♕xc4♘d7 11.e4 ♗g7 12.d5.

10.exd4 dxc4

After 10...♗g7 11.c5 White is slightly better.

11.♕xc4 ♗g7



In this isolated pawn structure Black has good chances to get control of the key square d5 with his knights, but White is still active enough to have his own chances. In any case, at this point I already had around one hour more on the clock, which is no less important in a practical game, and it was clearly due to my SOS weapon 4...♘a6!

12.♕b3!?

Both players have about equal chances after 12.♗f4 0-0 13.♕b3 ♕b6 14.♕xb6 axb6 15.0-0 ♖fc8, planning ...♘c7.

Instead, 12.0-0 0-0 13.♖e1 e6 (13...♘c7 14.♕b4!) 14.♗f4 ♕b6 (14...♘b8!?), with ...♖c8 and ...♘c7 coming seems fine for Black.

12...♕d6!

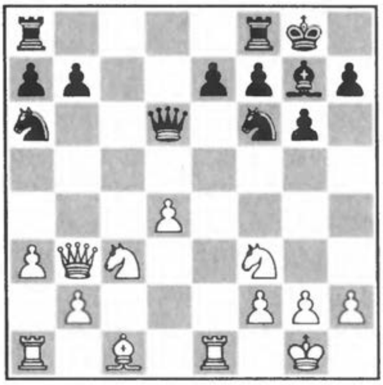
A good, concrete move.

13.0-0

13.♕xb7 ♖b8! 14.♕xa7 0-0 is too risky for the white queen: 15.♗f4 ♕e6+ 16.♔f1 ♖xb2.

13...0-0 14.♖e1

Not 14.♗g5 ♘c7! 15.♕xb7?? ♖fb8 and the queen is trapped.



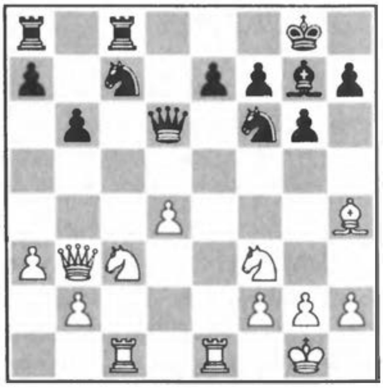
14...♘c7!

Due to the queen on d6, Black is in time to achieve a harmonious position, and solve his main problem of the badly placed knight on a6!

15.♗g5 15.♕xb7?? ♖fb8–+. **15...b6!?** 15...♘e6 was objectively better: 16.♗xf6 ♗xf6 17.♘e4 ♘xd4! 18.♘xf6+ exf6 19.♘xd4 ♕xd4, but it looked too drawish after 20.♖e7.

16.♖ac1 16.♗h4 ♘cd5. **16...♖fc8!?** Taking care of the c6-square and preparing a possible exchange of pieces that will favour Black who has less space. Alternatives are 16...♘fd5 and 16...♖ac8.

17.♗h4 17.♘e5 ♘e6! 18.♗xf6 ♗xf6 (18...exf6 19.♘b5) 19.♖cd1 ♖d8! 20.♘e4 ♕d5∓.



17...♘cd5?

I played this too quickly in my opponent's time-trouble. Bad idea! 17...♘fd5 was a better option, for example: 18.♗g3 ♕d7 19.♗e5♘xc3 20.bxc3 b5!.

Play is equal after 17...e6 18.♗xf6 ♗xf6 19.♘e4 ♕d8 20.♘xf6+ ♕xf6 21.♖c6 ♕d8.

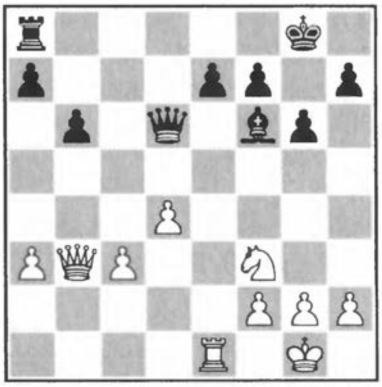
18.♗xf6?!

White could have taken advantage of my mistake with 18.♘b5! ♕d7 (18...♕d8 19.♖xc8! ♖xc8 20.♘xa7 ♖c7 21.♘b5±) 19.♖xc8+ (19.♘e5 ♖xc1 20.♖xc1 ♕d8 21.♖c6 ♘e8 22.♘c3±) 19...♖xc8 20.♘e5 ♕b7 21.♗xf6 ♗xf6 22.♘xa7! ♕xa7 23.♕xd5 e6 24.♕f3 (24.♕b5 ♕a5) 24...♗xe5 25.dxe5 ♖c2 and Black has compensation, but cannot dream of winning.

18...♘xc3! 19.♖xc3

19.bxc3 ♗xf6 20.a4 is equal and 19.♗e5 ♘e2+ is the tactical point.

19...♖xc3 19...♗xf6. **20.bxc3 ♗xf6**



Now Black has the better chances in this hanging pawn structure.

21.♘d2 ♗g7 22.♘e4 ♕d7 23.a4

23.d5 ♖d8 24.c4 b5 25.cxb5 ♕xd5 26.♕b4 ♕b7.

23...♖d8 24.a5!?

In time trouble White is losing his patience. 24.f4! e6∓ is still no fun for White, when c3 and a4 are targets.

24...bxa5!

The only way to fight for an advantage!

25.♘c5

25.♕a3 ♕c7 26.♕a4 h6 (26...e5 27.d5) 27.♖d1 e5 28.d5 f5∓.

25...♕c7!

White simply missed the plan of a pawn break with ...e5! This will shake his outpost for the knight on c5, and the break in the centre will give life to the bishop on g7.

26.♘e4 ♕c6

Now 26...e5 was less accurate, because of 27.d5. 26...h6!?.

27.g3?

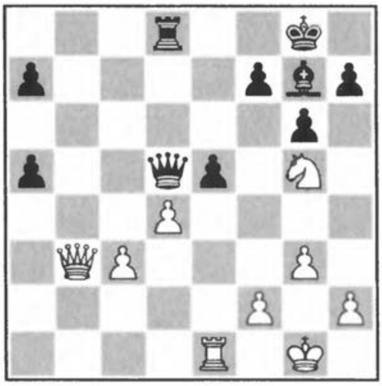
27.♕a3 e5! 28.♕xa5 ♕b6 29.♕xb6 axb6 30.dxe5 ♗xe5∓; 27.f4 a4 28.♕a3 ♗f8!.

27...e5!∓

Now the rest is just 'technical work'.

28.♘g5 28.dxe5 ♗xe5 29.♕a3 ♕c7∓.

28...♕d5



An important detail!

29.♕xd5 ♖xd5 30.♘f3 exd4 31.♖e8+ ♗f8 32.♘xd4 a4! 33.♔f1

33.♖a8 a5, and the pawn runs for 'touchdown' without anybody stopping him!

33...a3 34.♖e2 ♖c5 35.♖c2 ♗g7 36.♘e2 ♖b5! 37.♖a2 ♖b1+ 38.♔g2 ♖b2 39.♘c1 ♗h6!–+ 40.♖a1 ♖c2 41.♘a2 ♗d2

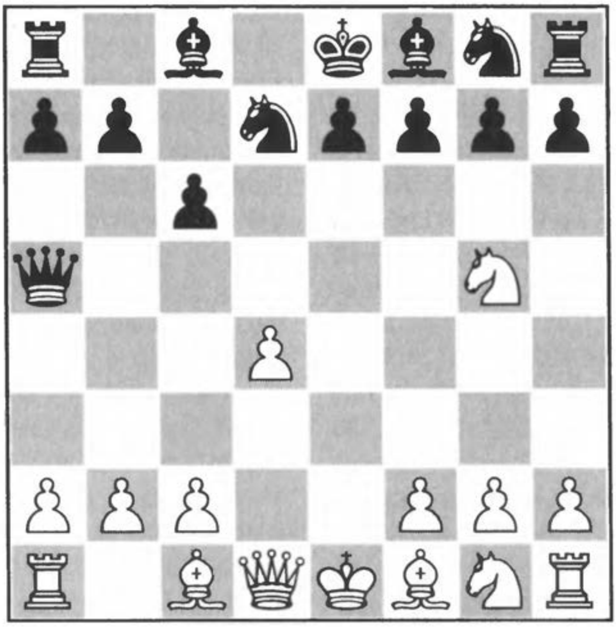
With the unstoppable plan of ...f5 and the black king walks to b3.

White resigned.

CHAPTER 11

Tibor Karolyi

Caro-Kann: the Karolyi Variation



1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 dxe4 4.♘xe4 ♘d7 5.♘g5 ♕a5+!?

As I was preparing for a young Dutch opponent in the 2009 Cafe Batavia tournament in Amsterdam, I noticed that against the Smyslov Variation in the Caro-Kann he exclusively played 5.♘g5. Generally, I find it hard to believe that White's best move after 4...♘d7 is to move the knight yet again without any provocation. So, I decided in favour of the Caro-Kann in order to adopt the variation that I had first devised in 2002 (and recommended in *Yearbook* 62).

In the beginning, that is just after the birth of the 5.♘g5 variation, I prepared the whole Caro-Kann with Gabor Kallai. At that time it was not clear in which direction the line would develop, so we looked at several options. The main line is of course 5...♘gf6, while 5...♘df6 is also played. A well-known mistake is 5...h6? 6.♘e6!.

Before we move on to the main subject of this article – 5...♕a5+!? – I would like to show you a few other interesting ideas. Kallai and I looked at 5...e5?. However, White can attack the f7 pawn, which confuses Black's pieces: after 6.♗c4! ♘h6 7.♘1f3 the first player obtains the best chances. Black has a better pawn move at his disposal than 5...e5:

● 5...c5. Usually, it requires some preparation to carry this out, here it can be played at once. White can hope for small edge only:

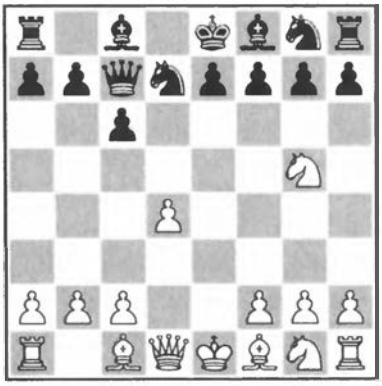
– 6.♕h5 can be met by 6...g6 7.♕f3 ♘gf6 8.♗c4 e6, equal.

– Developing the bishop with 6.♗d3 offers little: 6.♗d3 cxd4!? (6...♘gf6) 7.♘xh7 ♘gf6 8.♘xf8 ♔xf8 9.♘f3 ♘c5 (or 9...♕a5+ 10.♗d2 ♕d5) 10.♗f4 ♕a5+ (10...♕b6 11.♗e5) 11.♕d2 (11.♔f1 ♗g4) 11...♘xd3+ 12.cxd3 ♕d5 with counterplay.

– 6.dxc5 ♘gf6! (Black develops, and stops ♘e4) 7.♗c4 (7.b4 h6 8.♘5f3 a5 9.c3 e6 10.♗d2 ♘e4 offers compensation, while 7.♗d3 ♘xc5 is equal) 7...e6 8.b4 h6 9.♘5f3 a5 10.c3 axb4 11.cxb4 b6 12.c6 ♗xb4+ with equal chances.

– Best for White is 6.♗c4! ♘h6 (6...e6 7.d5 favours White) 7.♘1f3! ♘b6 (not 7...a6 8.dxc5! e6 9.0-0) 8.♗e2 (8.♗b5+ ♗d7 9.a4 ♗xb5 10.axb5 e6 11.0-0, and White has a slight edge) 8...cxd4 (8...e6 9.0-0 ♕c7) 9.0-0 a6 (9...e6 10.♘xd4) 10.♘xd4 e5 11.♘df3 f6, and Black should be able to live with his position.

● Very interesting and in line with our present subject is 5...♕c7!?. According to the MegaBase this simple move was not played. It is quite logical though: the queen clears the d8-square for the king, and anyway her majesty is often developed to c7 in the 4...♘d7-Caro-Kann.



– 6.♕f3 can be met by 6...♘gf6.

– 6.♗d3 (again developing in this way offers little) 6...♘gf6 7.♕e2 (7.♘1f3 h6 8.♘e6 fxe6 9.♗g6+ ♔d8 10.g3 b5 11.♗f4 ♕b6 12.♕e2 ♘d5 13.♘e5 ♘xe5 14.♗xe5 ♗d7 15.0-0 ♗e8∓) 7...h6 8.♘e6?! (now the sacrifice is not effective, as White can't play ♗f4 easily. Play is equal after 8.♘e4 ♘xe4 9.♕xe4 ♘f6 10.♕e2 ♗f5 11.♗xf5 ♕a5+) 8...fxe6 9.♗g6+ ♔d8 10.♘f3 (10.g3 e5) 10...♘d5 (10...b5 11.g3 ♕d6 12.c3 ♘d5 13.♘e5 ♘xe5 14.dxe5 ♕c5∓) 11.g3 ♕d6! 12.c4 e5! 13.♗b1 exd4 14.cxd5 ♕xd5, and White has little play for two pawns.

– 6.♗c4 e6 7.♕e2. Now 7...♘e7 provokes sacrifice on e6 and f7. Safer is 7...♘df6 8.♘1f3 (8.♘5f3 ♗d6 9.♘h3 ♘e7 10.♗g5 h6 11.♗xf6 gxf6 and Black has nothing to worry about) 8...h6 9.♘e4 ♘xe4 10.♕xe4 ♘f6 and Black has a pleasant game.

Finally, after 6.♗c4 e6 7.♕e2, Black can also get rid of the problem on e6 in the traditional way with 7...♘b6. Chances are equal after 8.♗d3 ♘f6! 9.♘1f3 h6 10.♘e4 ♘xe4 11.♕xe4 c5 (11...♗d6 12.0-0 ♘d5 13.c4 ♘f6 14.♕h4 b6±) 12.0-0 c4 13.♗f4 ♗d6 14.♗xd6 ♕xd6 15.♗e2 ♕d5.

So, should 5...♕a5+ become too popular after the publication of this article then you can always surprise your opponent with 5...♕c7!?.

Back in 2002, I devised 5...♕a5+ to free the d8-square for the king. This reduces the chance of the otherwise extremely dangerous ♘e6-idea. Even the greatest opening expert ever, Garry Kasparov, could talk about the effectiveness of such a sacrifice! (Editorial note: Karolyi is referring to the final game of the 1997 match Deep Blue-Kasparov, when Kasparov notoriously allowed the sacrifice 8.♘xe6! after 5.♘g5 ♘gf6 6.♗d3 e6 7.♘1f3 h6?). Meanwhile my invention has done really well, and its main supporter is Bosnian grandmaster Emir Dizdarevic.

Before we look at two of his games, I would like to show you my game against Stefan Kuipers. He played the not so critical 6.c3, but the game still became quite exciting!

☐ **Stefan Kuipers**
■ **Tibor Karolyi**
Amsterdam 2009

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 dxe4 4.♘xe4 ♘d7 5.♘g5 ♕a5+!? I was really happy to be able to play my line! **6.c3**

I had not anticipated this quiet move. I faced it in a few blitz games only, but I never analyzed it seriously. It made me play the opening a bit slowly. Later my opponent told me, he did not feel like sacrificing a pawn after 6.♗d2 ♕b6. I would have played 6...♕d5 as we will examine below.

6...h6

The sacrifice on e6 is not really a question here, so it is nice to send back the knight.

7.♘5f3

Play is equal after 7.♘e4 ♘gf6 8.♗d3 ♘xe4 9.♗xe4 ♘f6 10.♗d3 ♗f5.

7...♘gf6 8.♗d3 e6

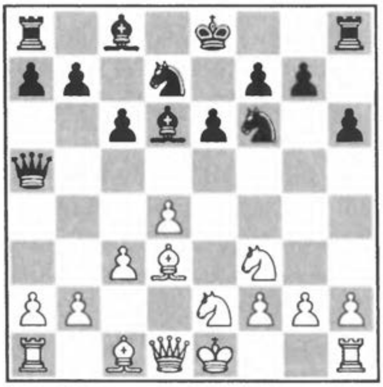
After 8...e5 9.♘xe5! ♘xe5 10.♕e2 ♗g4 11.♕xe5+ ♕xe5+ 12.dxe5 ♘d7 13.f4 0-0-0 14.♗e2 Black fails to obtain enough compensation.

9.♘e2

After 9.♕e2 ♗d6 White can't get his knight to the e5-square.

9...♗d6

I considered the retreat 9...♕c7 as well, but I did not voluntarily want to move the queen again.



10.♘d2!? ♕d8

Black keeps the two bishops. Our post mortem showed that Black does all right after 10...♕h5 as well, but during the game I was worried that her majesty could come under fire, or might even get trapped.

11.♘c4 ♗c7

Black has a stable game and the knight is not too active on e2.

12.♗f4 ♗xf4

12...♘b6 13.♗xc7 ♕xc7 14.♘e5, Black can live with the knight on e5 but there is really no need.

13.♘xf4 ♕c7

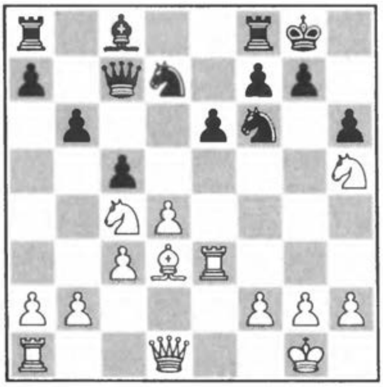
To keep an eye on e5. Black has solved his opening problems.

14.♘h5 0-0 15.0-0 b6

Or the immediate 15...c5!?.

16.♖e1 c5 17.♖e3

After the game Stefan admitted that he had been too optimistic about his attacking chances.



17...cxd4

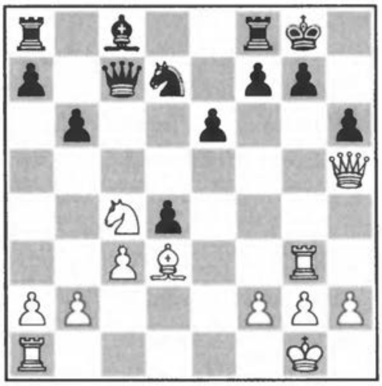
17...♗a6, pinning the c4 knight, crossed my mind. Played at once it has a slight drawback: 18.♖g3! ♘xh5 19.♕xh5 ♔h8 20.♕g4! ♖g8 21.♕e4! ♘f6 22.♕e5, and Black must be careful.

The position is even after 17...♘xh5 18.♕xh5 cxd4 19.cxd4 ♗a6.

18.♖g3?

This is going too far objectively. After 18.cxd4 ♗b7 19.♖g3 ♘xh5 20.♕xh5 ♕f4 Black is safe and can soon start exerting pressure on the d4-isolanus.

18...♘xh5 19.♕xh5



19...♘c5?!

I was already quite short of time. And somehow I felt my opponent had missed this move. He did indeed, and I do stop the attack in this way, but still there was a better move available.

I saw 19...♘f6!, with the point of 20.♕xh6? ♕xg3. However, I wrongly assumed that the game continuation was even stronger. After 19...♘f6 20.♕h4 dxc3 21.♖e1 (21.bxc3 ♗a6 and White has no play for the pawn. Not 21.♕xf6? ♕xg3) 21...cxb2 22.♘e5 (other moves are easy to meet: 22.♘xb2 ♔h8 – 22...♗b7 23.♘c4 ♖fd8 – 23.♘c4 ♗a6 24.♖f3 ♖fd8, and Black wins; or 22.♖ee3 ♖d8 23.♕xh6 b1♕+, and wins) 22...♕c1! 23.♖f1 ♔h8, and White's attack soon runs out of steam.

20.♕g4?

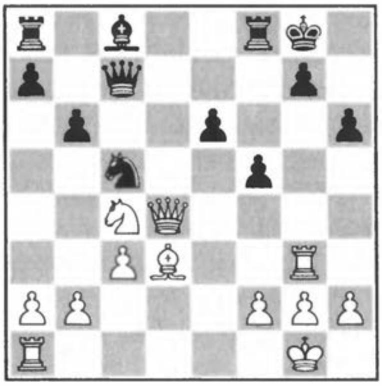
Correct was 20.♘e5 ♘xd3 21.♖xd3 dxc3 (21...f6?! 22.♘g6 ♖d8 23.cxd4 ♕f7, and Black has a small edge, but no more) 22.♖xc3. During the game I stopped here, thinking that White is just a pawn down, but White has enough compensation to hold after 22...♕e7 23.♖d1.

20...f5

Or 20...f6 21.♗e2 dxc3, and White has very little for the pawn.

21.♕xd4

With relatively little time on the clock I had missed this move!



21...♘xd3

I wanted to simplify because I had maybe less than two minutes for 20 moves.

I felt Black has a win after 21...f4!, but missed some tactical shots:

– 22.♖g6 ♗a6 23.♗f1 ♖ad8 24.♕e5 ♕f7 25.♕h5 ♗xc4 26.♗xc4 ♔h7 27.♖g5 ♖d2, and Black invades. Also good is 22...♗b7 23.♗c2 ♖ad8 24.♕e5 ♕xe5 25.♘xe5 ♖d2 26.b4 ♖xc2 27.bxc5 ♖f5, and Black wins.

– 22.♖h3 e5 (I miscalculated this during the game. After 22...♘xd3 23.♖xd3 ♗a6 Black's chances are also better than in the game) 23.♘xe5, and now after the fantastic 23...♗e6! White collapses, as he is too tied up in the centre. After 23...♗xh3 24.gxh3 ♘xd3, 25.♕d5+! is a nice intermediate move that holds the position.

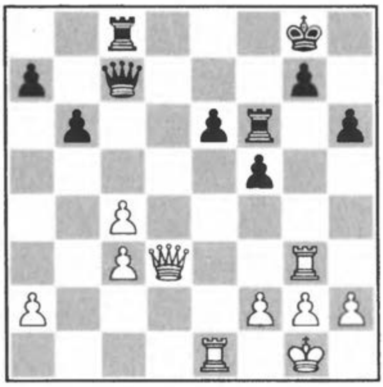
22.♕xd3 ♗a6 23.b3 ♖ac8?!

Stronger was 23...♗xc4 24.bxc4 ♖ad8 25.♕e2 e5, with difficulties for White.

24.♖e1 ♗xc4 25.bxc4 ♖f6?

Black wants to protect everything, but this is too ambitious. After 25...♖fd8 26.♕e3 f4 27.♕xe6+ ♕f7 28.♕xf7+ ♔xf7 29.♖f3

♖xc4 Black can at least squeeze White. And after 25...e5 26.♕d5+ ♖f7 Black also has chances.



26.c5!!

This is a great move. It confuses Black's pieces and creates good counterplay for the pawn.

26...bxc5

At this point I had roughly 30 seconds left, so I just played the next moves instantly. After 26...♕xc5 27.♕d7 ♖f7 28.♕xe6 the position is equal.

Considering my time-trouble there is little sense in analysing the remaining moves all too deeply.

27.♕c4 ♕c6 28.♖ge3 ♖e8 29.♖e5 ♖g6?! 30.g3 ♔h7 31.♖xc5 ♕f3 32.♖e3

32.♖c7! ♖b8 33.♕e2, and White has the upper hand.

32...♕d1+ 33.♔g2 ♖f6 34.♕f4 ♖d8 35.♕c4 ♖d6 36.♖ce5 ♖b6?!

In time-trouble I wanted to play actively.

37.♖e1

37.♖xe6 ♖fxe6 38.♖xe6 ♖b1 39.♖e8 ♕g1+ 40.♔h3 ♕f1+ 41.♕xf1 ♖xf1 42.♔g2 ♖c1 43.♖a8 ♖xc3 44.♖xa7 Black objectively can hold this tough position.

37...♕d6 38.♔g1 ♖c6 39.♕b4 ♕c7 40.♖1e3 ♕c8 41.♖b5 ♖c4 42.♕b3 ♕c6 43.♖b4 ♖c5 44.♖b7 e5

Only here did I knew that I had made the time-trouble. This move frees Black's position.

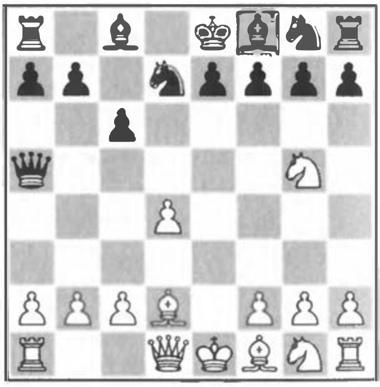
45.♖xa7 e4 46.♕b7 ♕xb7 47.♖xb7 ♖d6 48.♖b2 ♖d1+ 49.♔g2 ♖c1

Draw.

Now let's look at the more ambitious 6.♗d2.

☐ **Darmen Sadvakasov**
■ **Emir Dizdarevic**
playchess.com 2003

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 dxe4 4.♘xe4 ♘d7 5.♘g5 ♕a5+ 6.♗d2



6...♕d5!

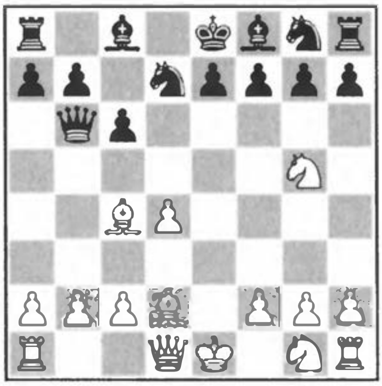
I prefer this move to the winning of a pawn with 6...♕b6.

True, after 7.♘1f3 Black obtains an easy position with 7...h6 8.♘e4 ♘gf6 9.♗d3 ♘xe4 10.♗xe4 ♘f6 11.♗d3 ♗g4.

While after 7.♗d3 ♘gf6!? (not 7...h6?? 8.♘xf7+–, 7...c5 8.♗c4 ♘h6 is a possibility, 7...♘df6 8.♞1f3 ♕xb2 9.♘e5 ♘h6 Black must suffer, but he has an extra pawn) 8.♘1f3 (8.♗c3 h6 9.♘5f3 ♘d5=) 8...h6 9.♘e6!? (9.♘e4 ♘xe4 10.♗xe4 ♘f6 11.♗d3 ♕xb2 is unclear, and 11...♗g4 looks equal) 9...fxe6 10.♗g6+ ♔d8 11.0-0 (11.♗f4 ♘d5 12.♗g3 e5 – 12...♕b4+!? – 13.♘xe5 ♘xe5

14.♗xe5∓) 11...♛c7, it is difficult to judge how much compensation White has for the piece.

The most dangerous move after 6...♛b6 is 7.♗c4.



Now 7...♘h6?! (the drawback is that Black can no longer chase away the g5-knight) 8.♘1f3 ♛xb2 9.0-0 gives White very dangerous compensation for only a pawn.

I also distrust Black's position after 7...e6 8.♛h5 g6 9.♛f3 ♘gf6 10.0-0-0. Indeed, 10...♗g7 11.♛a3 is unpleasant, 10...♛xd4 11.♗xe6 fxe6 12.♘xe6 ♛d6 13.♛e2 ♔f7 14.♘f3 gives White a lot of compensation, and so does 10...h6 11.♘xe6 fxe6 12.♗xe6.

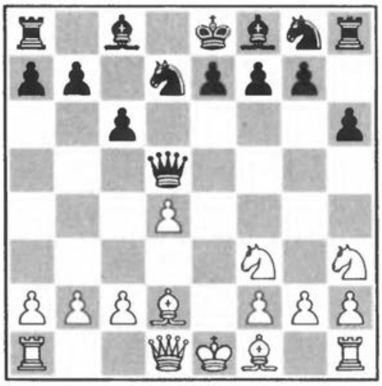
7.♘1f3

We will encounter 7.♗d3 below. So far nobody has played 7.♘5f3 yet. Black may consider 7...♘b6!? (perhaps the simplest method to solve the problem of the c8-bishop) 8.♛e2 ♘f6 9.c4 ♛e4 10.♗e3 ♗f5 and play is unclear. Black could also consider 10...e6.

7.♘5f3 can also be met by 7...♘gf6 8.c4 (unclear is 8.♗d3 c5 9.c4 ♛d6 10.d5 e6 – 10...b5!? – 11.♛e2 ♘b6) 8...♛e4+ (8...♛d6!?) 9.♗e2 e5 10.dxe5 (10.♘h3 exd4 11.♘hg5 ♛e7 12.0-0 ♛d6) 10...♘xe5 11.♘xe5 ♛xe5 12.♗c3 (12.♘f3 ♛xb2 13.0-0 ♗c5∓) 12...♛e6 13.♘f3 ♘e4 and Black equalizes.

7...h6 8.♘h3

The game is equal after 8.c4 ♛f5 9.♘h3 g5.



8...g5!

If Black can keep the knights under control by ...g5 then he obtains good practical chances. Not 8...♘b6 9.♘f4.

9.♗e2

Here 9.c4 ♛e4+ (9...♛d6!?) 10.♗e3 e5 is equal, if 11.♗d3 then 11...♛g4, when 12.0-0? fails to 12...e4.

9...♗g7 10.c4 ♛d6

Instead 10...♛f5!? was also worth taking into consideration.

This game was played between two strong players, but it was a blitz game. I think that blitz games should only be seriously investigated in very special cases. Therefore, I give the remaining moves with hardly any notes.

11.c5 ♛e6

Black has a slight edge after 11...♛c7.

12.0-0 ♘gf6 13.♖e1 ♛f5 14.♛b3 ♘d5 15.♗d3 ♛g4 16.♖e4 ♛h5 17.♖ae1

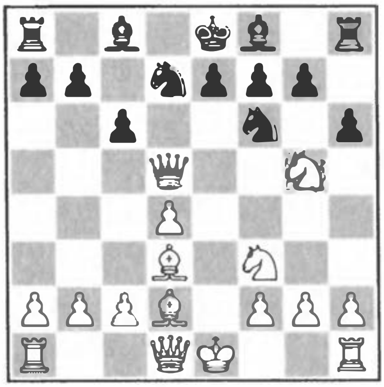
17.g4 ♘xc5 18.dxc5 ♗xg4 19.♛xb7 0-0∓.

17...♘7f6 18.♖e5 ♗xh3 19.♛xb7 0-0 20.♗e2 ♗g4 21.h3 ♗xf3 22.♗xf3 ♛g6 23.♛xc6 e6 24.♛a4 a5 25.♖5e2 h5 26.♗xa5 g4 27.hxg4 hxg4 28.♗xd5 ♘xd5 29.♖e4 g3 30.fxg3 ♛xg3 31.♛b5 ♘f4 32.♛f1 ♘h3+ 33.♔h1 ♘f2+ 34.♔g1 ♘xe4

White resigned.

☐ **Miguel Illescas**
■ **Emir Dizdarevic**
Plovdiv Ech-tt 2003

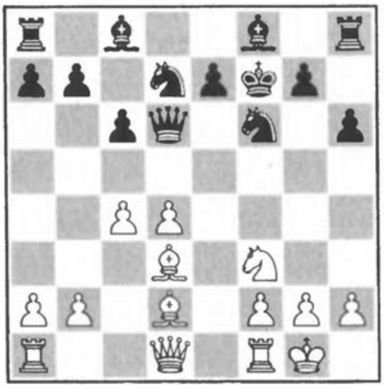
1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♘xe4 ♘d7 5.♘g5 ♕a5+ 6.♗d2 ♕d5 7.♗d3 ♘gf6 8.♘1f3 h6



Black is virtually forcing White to sacrifice the knight if he wants to fight for an advantage.

9.c4 ♕d6 10.♘xf7
Or 10.♘e4 ♘xe4 11.♗xe4 ♕e6 (11...♘f6 12.♗d3 ♗g4 13.0-0 e6 14.♗e3 ♗e7, and Black is doing alright here as well) 12.♕e2 ♘f6 13.♗d3 ♕xe2+ 14.♔xe2 g6, and the endgame should be not too problematic for Black.

10...♔xf7 11.0-0



11...g5
Logical, but not the only defensive try:

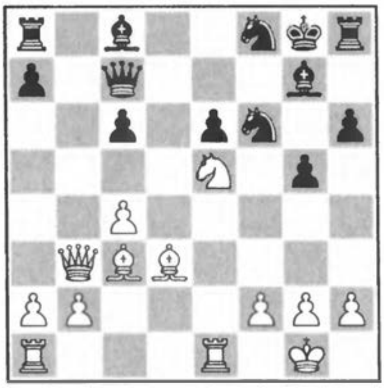
– 11...c5 12.d5 (12.♗c3 cxd4 13.♘xd4 ♘c5) 12...b5 13.b3, and White has some compensation.

– 11...e5 12.c5 ♕e6 13.♖e1 e4 14.♗c2 ♕e8 15.♕b1 ♔g8, and Black's position looks safe enough.

12.♗c3 ♗g7
Here 12...♔g7!? or 12...c5!? are also interesting.

13.♘e5+ ♔g8 14.♖e1 ♘f8 15.♕b3 ♕c7 Not 15...♘e6 16.♗g6. **16.d5**
After 16.♖ad1 ♗e6 Black will have to work hard to get rid of the bind that he is in, yet White is a piece down.

16...e6 17.dxc6 bxc6



18.♗g6?
This is a mysterious move, especially for such a strong player. White voluntarily exchanges his strong bishop, and loses part of his grip on Black's king.

18...♘xg6 19.♘xg6 ♖h7 20.♖ad1?
Illescas allows another exchange for free. 20.h3! (White should stop the simplification ...♘g4), and now:

– 20...♘d7 21.♘e7+ ♔f7 22.c5 ♘f8 (22...♘xc5? 23.♕c2! and Black is in trouble) 23.♘f5, and Black must be careful, but objectively he should be OK.

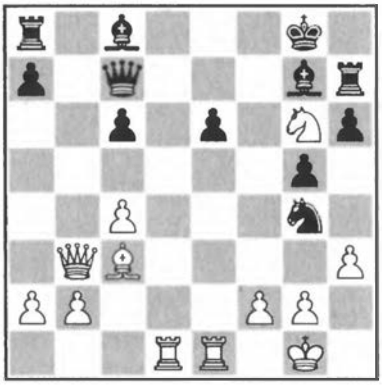
– 20...♘e8 21.♘e5 ♘d6 22.♖ad1 ♘f7 23.♘g6, and the g6-knight is unpleasant and gives White some compensation.

– 20...♕f7 21.♘e5 ♕e8 22.♖ad1, and Black should have an advantage and slowly get out of White's grip.

20...♘g4!

Out of the blue Black can start a raid on White's king!

21.h3



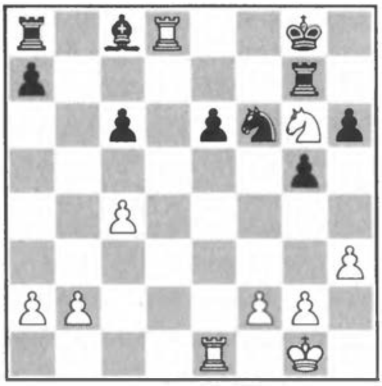
21...♗xc3?

Dizdarevic is only thinking of easing the white attack, and misses a golden opportunity: 21...♕h2+! 22.♔f1 ♕h1+ 23.♔e2 ♕xg2 24.♘e7+ (24.♗xg7 ♕xf2+ 25.♔d3 ♔xg7, and Black wins) 24...♔f7 25.♘xc8 ♗xc3! (25...♕xf2+? 26.♔d3 – now Black has no time to take on c3) 26.hxg4 (26.♕xc3 ♕xf2+) 26...♕xg4+ and Black wins.

22.♕xc3 ♖g7 23.♕d3

Or 23.hxg4 ♖xg6 24.c5 ♗d7, and the piece should count in the end.

23...♘f6 24.♕d8+ ♕xd8 25.♖xd8+



25...♘e8!

A witty way to play for a win. 25...♔f7 26.♘e5+ ♔e7 27.♘xc6+ ♔f7 28.♘e5+ is an unusual perpetual. And after 25...♔h7 26.♘f8+ ♔h8 27.♘xe6+ ♖g8 28.♖d6 White also has good chances to survive.

26.♖ed1?!

After 26.♖xe8+ ♔f7 27.♖xc8 ♖xc8 28.♘e5+ ♔e7 29.♖d1 ♖c7 the win is not at all easy for Black.

26...♔f7

Black ought to win after 26...♗b7 27.♖xa8 ♗xa8 28.♖d8 ♗b7.

27.♘e5+ ♔f8 28.♖1d3

28.♖1d6 ♗b7 29.♖xa8 ♗xa8 30.♖xe6 and White has chances to survive.

28...♗b7 29.♖xa8?

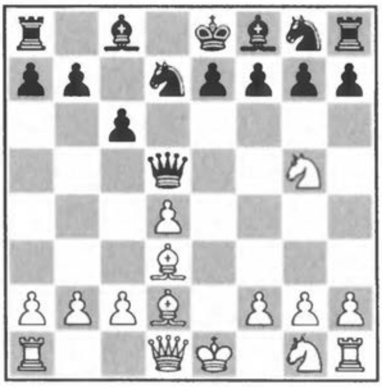
29.♖8d7 c5 30.♖xg7 ♘xg7 31.♖d7 ♗e4 32.♖c7 and White is still kicking.

29...♗xa8 30.♖d8 ♗b7 31.♖b8 ♖c7

Finally Black has got rid of most of White's compensation. Still, the game only ended in a draw (on move 48).

☐ **Henrik Danielsen**
■ **Gudmundur Kjartansson**
Reykjavik 2008

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 dxe4 4.♘xe4 ♞d7 5.♘g5 ♕a5+ 6.♗d2 ♕d5 7.♗d3



7...♕xd4!?

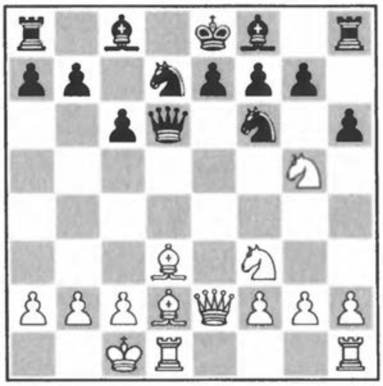
Black grabs a pawn. A dangerous thing to do in the opening, but Black's position is solid. We saw 7...♘gf6 in the previous game.

8.♘1f3 ♕d6 9.♕e2

If 9.♘e4, then 9...♕c7 10.♕e2 ♘gf6 11.0-0 ♘xe4 12.♗xe4 ♘f6 and Black is safe.

9...♘gf6 10.0-0-0 h6

Perhaps 10...e6 11.♖he1 (11.♗c3 ♘d5 12.♗e5) 11...♗e7 12.♗c3 ♘d5, and Black is at least not worse.



11.♘xf7?

This sacrifice is too optimistic.

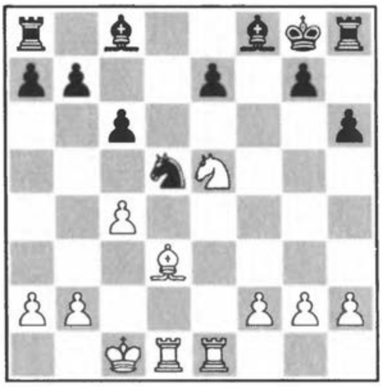
After the retreat 11.♘e4 the position should be balanced, but both sides must play carefully. The lines are relevant to the 7...♕xd4 pawn-grab: 11...♘xe4 (11...♕c7 12.♖he1 e6 13.g3 ♘xe4 14.♗xe4 ♗d6 15.♘d4) 12.♗xe4 ♕c7 (12...♘f6 13.♗a5 ♕f4+ 14.♔b1 ♗g4– 14...♗f5 15.♕d3 e6 16.♗xf5 ♕xf5 17.♕xf5 exf5 18.♖he1+ is dangerous for Black – 15.♖d4 ♘xe4 16.♖xe4 ♗xf3 17.gxf3 ♕f5 – Black is living dangerously) 13.♖he1 ♘f6 14.♔b1 ♗e6 15.♗c3 ♘xe4 16.♕xe4 ♗d5 17.♕g4 ♕d7, and if White avoids the exchange of queens then Black can castle.

11...♔xf7 12.♗c3 ♘d5 13.♗e5

13.♖he1 ♘xc3. **13...♕e6 14.♖he1 ♔g8 15.c4 ♘xe5 16.♕xe5**

After 16.♘xe5 ♘f4 17.♕e4 ♘xd3+ 18.♕xd3 ♕f6 Black is just a piece up.

16...♕xe5 17.♘xe5



17...♘f6

Quite possible is 17...♘f4!? 18.♗g6 ♗e6 19.♖d4 ♘xg6 20.♘xg6 c5 21.♖f4 ♗d7 – and this is it.

18.♗g6 ♗e6 19.h3 h5 20.f4 ♖h6 21.f5 ♖xg6 22.fxg6 b5

Here 22...♖c8! looks much simpler.

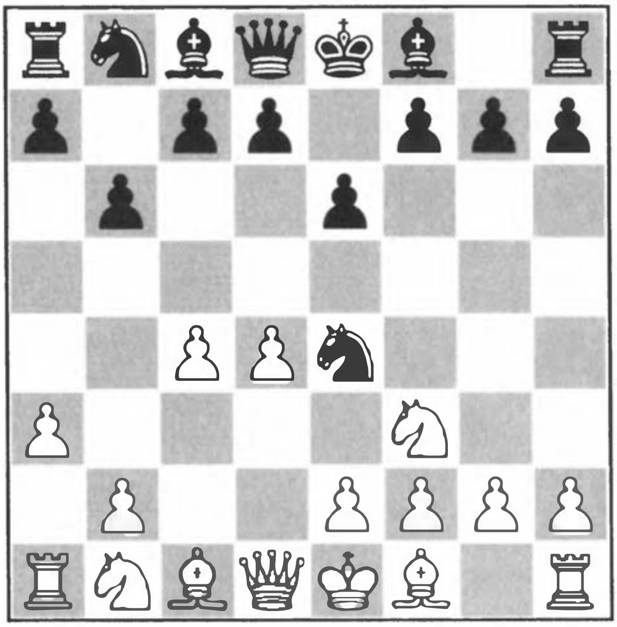
23.♘xc6 ♗xc4 24.♘xe7+ ♗xe7 25.♖xe7 ♗xa2 26.♖xa7 ♖c8+ 27.♔d2 ♗e6 28.♖c1 ♖d8+ 29.♔e1 ♘d5 30.♖c5 b4 31.♔f2 ♔f8 32.♖b5 ♘f4 33.♔g3 ♘xg6 34.♖xb4 ♖d3+ 35.♔h2 ♗d7

Black won on move 65.

CHAPTER 12

Jeroen Bosch

QI Petrosian: Centralize Your Knight



1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.a3 ♘e4

In SOS-6 Adrian Mikhalchishin wrote on the Döry Defence 1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 ♘e4!? (Chapter 8, p.68). In addition, he noted that one move later (after 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 ♘e4) the knight manoeuvre was played successfully by a reigning World Champion (Alekhine in 1938). The original idea of Baron Ladislaus Döry is somewhat dubious perhaps. One move later it is not exactly respectable, but certainly playable.

Now what if White were to throw in another tempo with an insipid little move like, say, a3? Doesn't that sound appealing? Now surely an early ...♘e4 is justified?

Interestingly enough, White gives you the opportunity to centralize your knight in one of the most popular lines of the Queen's Indian: the Petrosian Variation. So, here we are to make a case for 4...♘e4 in reply to 4.a3.

□ **Primos Soln**
■ **Bojan Kurajica**
Bled 2002

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.a3

Indirectly I called this move 'insipid' in the introduction, which is of course highly disrespectful. The variation that is named after World Champion Tigran Petrosian is in fact a truly ambitious line that was regularly adopted by one of his later successors Garry

Kasparov. By preventing ...♗b4, White is preparing ♘c3 to fight for the all-important e4-square. Accepting the strategic necessity of 4.a3 may logically lead to the insight that occupying that central square (and preventing ♘c3) is positionally justified. This in turn should then be more important than the well-known rule of thumb that you should not play twice with the same piece in the opening.

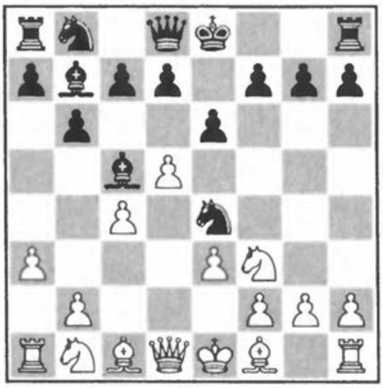
4...♘e4

The Benoni-like 4...c5 5.d5 ♗a6 6.♕c2 is an important variation, but clearly 4...♗b7 5.♘c3 d5 is the main line. For our purposes it is interesting to note that 5...♘e4!? has also been played on the highest level: 6.♘xe4 ♗xe4 7.♘d2! ♗g6 (7...♗b7 8.e4) 8.g3! leaves White with the better chances as in Kasparov-Andersson, Tilburg 1981.

Let us return to our bold knight move. White should now either take up the gauntlet by 5.♘fd2: this immediately questions Black's set-up and is given a stamp of approval in those rare theoretical sources were 4...♘e4 is mentioned. Alternatively, the first player should ignore his opponent's latest quirk and simply continue his development with a kingside fianchetto. We reserve 5.g3 for the next game, while 5.♘fd2 together with all minor alternatives are covered in the present game.

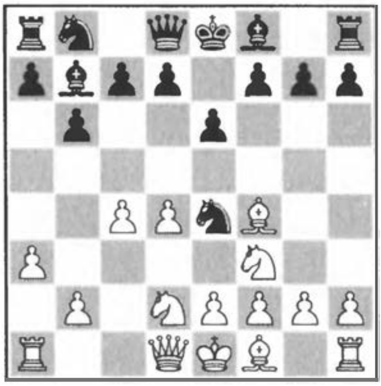
5.♘fd2

- 5.d5 ♗c5 6.e3 ♗b7



looks very decent for Black. After 7.♘c3?! ♘xc3 8.bxc3 ♕f6 (8...0-0 or 8...f5 are playable too) 9.♗b2 d6 10.e4?!, Jahn-Vega Granillo, Germany 1988/89, the move 10...♕g6! would have been quite uncomfortable for White.

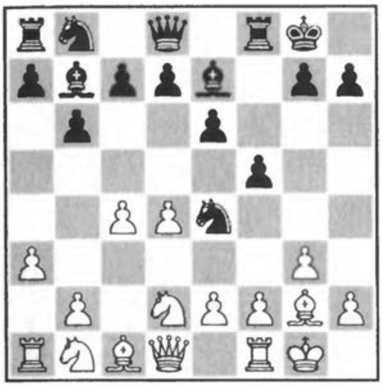
- 5.♗f4 is in itself not a bad move, one move earlier it is the so-called Miles Variation. Still, Black should be fine after 5...♗b7 6.♘bd2



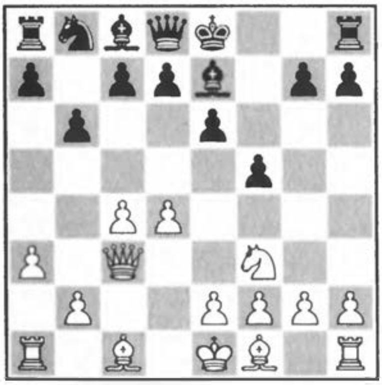
6...f5 (this decent 'Dutch' move is the sane choice, but computer engines also like 6...♗d6 which is actually not bad) 7.e3 ♗e7 (7...♗d6) 8.♘xe4 fxe4 9.♘d2 now castling leads to a normal position, where White may hope for an opening edge. In Ryskin-Smirnov, Minsk 1993, Black did not fare well after 9...c5? (9...0-0 10.♕g4) 10.d5! exd5 11.cxd5 ♗xd5 12.♗c4! ♗xc4 13.♘xc4 d5, and now 14.♕h5+ g6 15.♕e5 0-0 16.♖d1 gave the first player a tremendous position.

- 5.♘bd2 is less accurate than 5.♘fd2, as Black has 5...f5 (5...♗b7 6.♘xe4 ♗xe4 7.♘d2 would transpose to the Kasparov-Andersson game that was mentioned in the notes on the fourth move) 6.g3 ♗e7 7.♗g2 0-0 8.0-0 ♗b7, Franssila-Hintikka, Jyväskylä 1994.

That Black is completely OK here becomes immediately obvious when one compares the diagrammed position to that most classical of Queen's Indians: 4.g3 ♗b7 5.♗g2 ♗e7 6.0-0 0-0 7.♘c3 ♘e4, and so on.

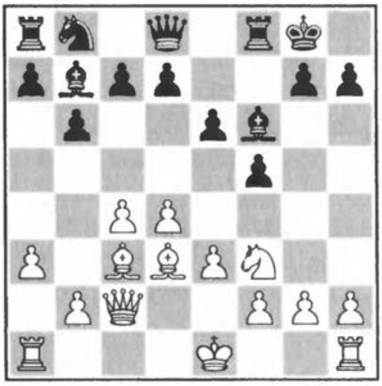


- Another logical move – fighting for e4 – is 5.♕c2 when after 5...f5 (5...♗b7 6.♘c3 ♘xc3 – 6...d5 – 7.♕xc3 ♗e7) 6.♘c3 ♘xc3 (6...♗b7 7.d5) 7.♕xc3 ♗e7



White should play the standard 8.g3 rather than 8.h4?! 0-0 9.♗g5 d6 10.e3 ♘d7 11.♗xe7 ♕xe7 12.♗e2 ♗b7 13.0-0-0 ♘f6 14.♗d3 ♘e4 15.♕c2 c5, with an excellent game in Urios Hernandez-Marin Corresa, Valencia 1996.

- 5.e3 is a bit tame in combination with 4.a3, but it is difficult to go completely wrong in 1.d4 openings: 5...♗b7 6.♗d3 f5 7.♘bd2 ♗e7 8.♕c2 ♘xd2 9.♗xd2 0-0 10.♗c3 ♗f6



Now the position is about equal. In Bustamante-Zavala, Isla Margarita 1998, White now preferred to unbalance the game with a mysterious rook move: 11.♖g1?! c5 12.0-0-0 ♗xf3!?, justifying White's 11th move. Yet, Black obtained the better chances after 13.gxf3 cxd4 14.♗b4? (14.exd4 ♕c7) 14...♗e7. On move 12 Black could also have omitted to exchange on f3 with the immediate 12...cxd4.

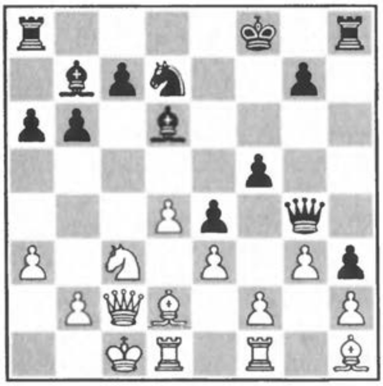
5...♘xd2

Indeed, not 5...♗b7 6.♘xe4 ♗xe4 7.♘c3 which is clearly better for White after 7...♗b7 8.e4. Yet, the text also appears slightly illogical – why trade the outpost? – but it is not so obvious how White should take back on d2, and I would therefore prefer this to 5...d5 which leads to slightly static positions. Combining the Queen's Gambit (...d5) and the Queen's Indian (...b6) is usually not a good idea, although the Tartakower Variation of the Queen's Gambit springs to mind as a very notable exception! After 5...d5:

– 6.♘xe4 dxe4 7.♘c3 ♗b7 8.♗f4 ♗d6! 9.♗xd6 ♕xd6 10.e3 0-0 11.♗e2 ♘d7 12.♕c2 f5 13.0-0-0 ♕e7 gave Black easy equality in Cebalo-Kurajica, Pula 2000. Kurajica, who regularly adopts 4...♘e4, later won.

– However, the older 6.e3! ♗b7 7.cxd5 is stronger. The game Glek-Rozentalis, Lvov

1985, went 7...exd5 (taking back with either the queen or the bishop comes into consideration here) 8.♘xe4 dxe4 9.♘c3 ♗d6 (9...♘d7 10.♕c2) 10.♗b5+! ♔f8 (not a very pleasant move to make in the opening. 10...♘d7 11.♕g4! is very bad for Black, and 10...c6 11.♗c4 is also awkward) 11.♕c2 ♕g5 12.g3 a6 13.♗f1 f5 14.♗g2 h5!? (to dissuade White from castling kingside). The game actually looks quite unclear, and it really takes some outstanding play from Igor Glek to prove White's advantage. I give the remainder of the game for you to enjoy: 15.♗d2 ♘d7 16.0-0-0 h4 17.♖hf1 h3 18.♗h1 ♕g4



Exercise: White to play and to gain a significant advantage:

19.f3! exf3 20.♖f2 g6 21.♖df1 ♔g7 22.♖xf3! ♖hf8 (22...♘f6 23.♖xf5!; 22...♖ab8 23.e4, or 23.♖f4 ♗xf4 24.♖xf4 ♕g5 25.♗xb7 ♖xb7 26.e4!) 23.♖f4! ♗xf4 24.♗xb7 ♗h6 25.♗f3! ♕g5 26.♗xa8 ♖xa8 27.♘d5 ♖c8 28.♕c6 ♕d8 29.♗c3 (29.g4 or 29.♔b1 were even better) 29...♕e8 30.♔d1 ♔f7 31.♘xc7 ♖xc7? 32.♕xc7 ♕e6 33.♔c2 ♕d5 34.♔b1 b5 35.♔a1 ♗g5 36.e4 1-0.

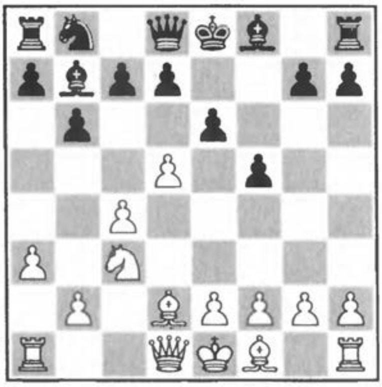
6.♗xd2

Developing a minor piece and reserving the knight for its natural c3-square as has been the intention of 4.a3 all along. Still, it is important to note that after 6.♘xd2 Black should not play 6...♗b7 (instead of 6...♗b7 the 'Dutch' 6...f5 is correct) when 7.e4 is slightly better for White – this position is known in theory (albeit one move later) via 4...♗b7 5.♘c3 ♘e4 6.♘xe4 ♗xe4 7.♘d2 ♗b7 8.e4.

Black can be satisfied after 6.♕xd2 ♗b7 7.♘c3 f5.

6...d5

I like this move which stresses that the bishop is not all that well-placed on d2. Yet, there is perhaps nothing wrong with 6...♗b7 which was condemned in some theoretical sources: 6...♗b7 7.♘c3 f5 was met by 8.d5 in the game Browne-Spiller, Chicago 1989.



After 8...e5? (8...♗d6 is quite playable, which means that Black is doing fine after 6...♗b7 too) 9.e4! ♕f6 10.exf5 ♕xf5 11.♗e3 ♗c5 12.♗d3 ♕f7 13.0-0 ♘a6 14.b4 ♗e7 15.f4 White was already winning. This game (as well as the above-mentioned Glek-Rozentalis) is partly responsible for the inferior reputation of 4...♘e4. In Browne-Spiller Black can do much better on move 8, as we have seen, and it seems hardly justifiable to write off 4...♘e4 on the basis of this one game.

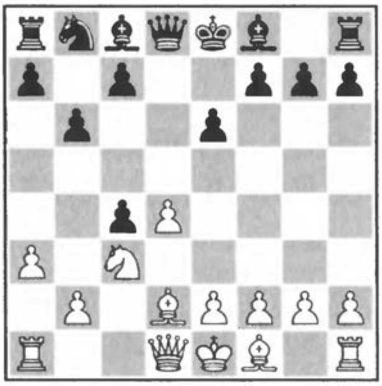
7.♘c3

Instead, 7.cxd5 exd5 8.♘c3 c6 is nothing special for White. 9.♗f4, for example, is met by 9...♗d6.

7.e3 locks in the dark-squared bishop. Black has several possibilities depending upon your own style; you will certainly find one that suits you: 7...dxc4 (7...♗b7 8.cxd5 ♕xd5!? 9.♘c3 ♕d7, 7...♗a6 and 7...c6 are also good) 8.♗xc4 (8.♕f3?! ♕d5 9.♗xc4 ♕xf3 10.gxf3 ♗b7) 8...♗b7 9.0-0 ♗e7.

7...dxc4!

7...♗b7 8.cxd5 exd5 is worse compared to the comment on the previous move. The light-squared bishop does not belong on b7 here.



8.♗f4

Ambitiously moving the bishop outside the pawn chain. However, Black wins another tempo with his next move, and White should not forget that he needs to win back c4 at some point. The alternatives promise no advantage either:

- After 8.e3 there is 8...♗b7 or 8...♗a6.
- Black is also OK after 8.♕a4+ ♕d7 9.♕xc4 ♗a6!?.

8...♗d6 9.♗g3

After this move Black's chances become preferable. 9.♗xd6 (9.e3 ♗a6!?) 9...cxd6 10.♕a4+ ♕d7 11.♕xc4 ♗a6 12.♕a4 and White has managed to equalize!

9...0-0 10.e4

10.e3 ♗a6!, but not 10...♗b7 11.♗xc4 ♗xg2 12.♖g1 ♗b7 13.♕g4 and White has compensation for the pawn.

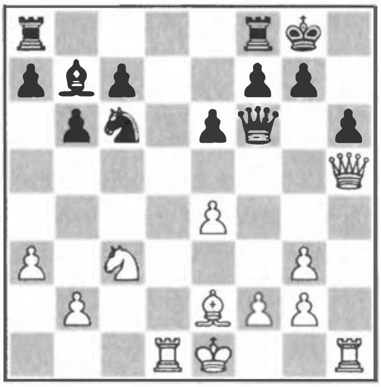
10...♘c6

10...♗a6 is also good, but the text is simply better for Black without any complications.

11.♗xc4 ♗xg3 12.hxg3 ♕xd4

Black has won an important pawn. The 'attack' along the h-file is easily parried. The game has lost its theoretical significance by now. The remaining moves were:

13.♕h5 h6 14.♗e2 ♗b7 15.♖d1 ♕f6



16.♖d7 Otherwise 16.0-0 ♖ad8 is a sound pawn up.

16...♖ac8 17.f4 Black was threatening to kick back the rook with 17...♘e5.

17...♖fd8 18.e5 ♕g6 19.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 20.♕h4?

Making things very easy. 20.♕xg6 fxg6 21.♗f3 a6 was a better defensive try.

20...♕c2 21.0-0 ♕xb2 22.♗f3 ♕xc3 23.♗xc6 ♕d4+!

and White resigned.

☐ **Vladislav Vdovichenko**
■ **Piotr Korobkov**
Odessa 2007

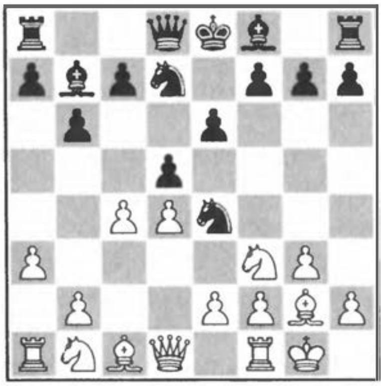
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.a3 ♘e4 5.g3

White relinquishes the thought of refuting Black's audacious play, and just continues in sensible classical style.

5...♗b7 6.♗g2 g6!?

The modern choice! Played by Kurajica, Nikolic and Korobkov (a Ukrainian GM).

● The more classical 6...d5 is perhaps playable, but not much fun and therefore not in accordance with the SOS-spirit. 7.0-0 ♘d7 (7...♗e7)



– and now 8.♗f4 g5!? 9.♗e3 f5 does not look entirely correct, but Black was successful with this joyous approach in yet another Soln-Kurajica game (also Bled 2002): 10.♕a4 c6 11.♘c3 ♗e7 12.♘xe4?! dxe4 13.♘e5 ♘xe5 14.dxe5 ♕c7 15.♖ad1 0-0 16.c5 ♖f7 17.♗d4 (an exchange sacrifice in the style of Botvinnik: 17.♖d6!? comes into consideration here) 17...bxc5 18.♗c3 ♗f8 19.g4 ♖e8 20.f4 (20.♕c4 ♕c8!) 20...gxf4 21.♖xf4 ♗h6 22.♖ff1 ♗e3+ 23.♔h1 ♗d4! 24.♗xd4 cxd4 25.♕xd4 c5 (Black has defended well and is at least equal) 26.♕d6? ♕xd6 27.♖xd6 (27.exd6 f4∓) 27...fxg4 28.♖xf7 ♔xf7 and Black had a clear edge in the ending and won.

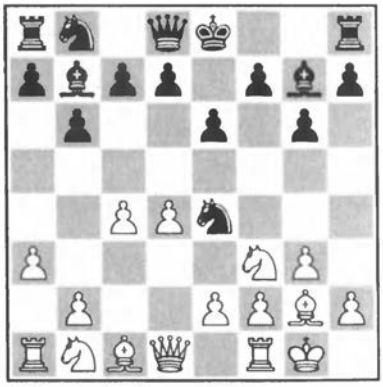
– 8.♘bd2 ♘xd2 9.♗xd2 ♗e7 (9...dxc4 10.♕a4 ♗d5 11.♘e5) 10.cxd5 exd5 (10...♗xd5 is better) 11.b4 demonstrates why 6...d5 is not too attractive. After 11...c6 12.a4 0-0 13.♕c2c5 14.bxc5 bxc5 15.dxc5 ♖c8 16.♕b2 ♘xc5 17.♗c3 ♗a8 was a clever trick, however after the correct 18.♗e5! (18.♗xg7? ♖b8 19.♕c3 – 19.♕d4 ♘e6; 19.♕e5 f6 - 19...♘e4 20.♕e5 ♗d6 21.♕d4 ♗c5 22.♕e5 ♖e8) 18...f6 19.♗d4 Black was clearly suffering in Psakhis-Browne, Las Palmas Interzonal 1982.

● After 6...♗e7 Black should prefer set-ups with ...f5 in my opinion, rather than play ...d5 when it is clear that only White can be better.

– 7.♕c2 d5 8.♘fd2 ♘f6! 9.0-0 0-0 10.♖d1 ♕c8 is not so clear. White's queenside is cluttered up somehow. In Chernin-Rozentalis, Sverdlovsk 1984, Black first obtained a lost position only to stubbornly defend later to split the point.

– 7.0-0 0-0 8.♕c2 d5?! (8...f5) 9.♗f4 c5 10.cxd5 exd5 11.dxc5 bxc5 12.♘e5 ♘f6 13.♘c3 ♕c8 14.e4 (14.♕b3!) 14...dxe4 15.♘xe4 ♘bd7 16.♘xd7 ♕xd7 17.♖ad1 gave White a positional edge in Timman-Ardiansyah, Luzern Olympiad 1982.

7.0-0 ♗g7



Black's position is quite flexible. Indeed I should mention now that there are clear similarities with Sergey Tiviakov's article in SOS-10 (Chapter 11, p.78) on 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.a3 ♗b7 5.♘c3 g6 and then specifically the note starting with 6.g3 (p.79).

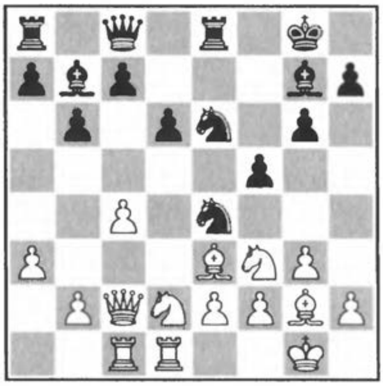
8.♕c2

Grandmaster practice has also seen 8.♘fd2 ♘d6! 9.♗xb7 ♘xb7 10.♘f3 when the

Bosnian grandmaster continued quite creatively with 10...c5 11.d5 0-0 12.e4 d6 13.♗g5 ♕e8!? 14.♘c3 ♗xc3!? 15.bxc3 f6 16.♗h6 and in this original position the players agreed to a draw in Khenkin-Nikolic, Germany Bundesliga 2002/03.

8...f5

Black will hardly do without the advance of the f-pawn. Kurajica's opening play in the following fragment is not to be faulted: 8...0-0 9.♖d1 f5 10.♗f4 ♕c8 11.d5 d6 12.dxe6 ♘c6! to take back on e6 with the knight. Compare this to the Leningrad Dutch where this is standard fare. Black had a very decent game after 13.♗e3 ♖e8 14.♘bd2 ♘d8 15.♖ac1 ♘xe6



in Dreev-Kurajica, Sarajevo 2002.

9.♖d1 d5?!

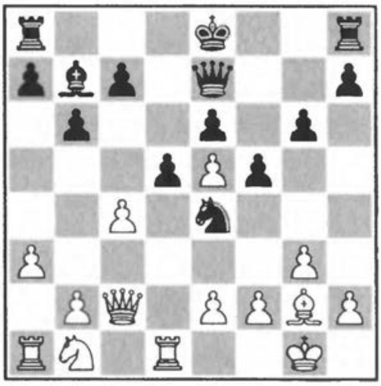
9...0-0 transposes to the previous comment, and is actually much more normal than this Stonewall set-up.

10.♗f4 ♘c6 11.♘e5

This does not quite work out in the way that White may have wanted. White keeps the tension (and the better chances) with 11.♘c3 or 11.cxd5 exd5 12.♘c3.

11...♘xe5 12.♗xe5 ♗xe5 13.dxe5 ♕e7

All the exchanges have eased Black's game, and what is more important: e5 is no longer a weak square, but a potentially weak pawn!



14.♕a4+ c6 15.e3 0-0 16.♘d2 c5!? 17.♘f1?!

Although Black already had the better chances, this passive move does not improve matters. Black now grasps the initiative.

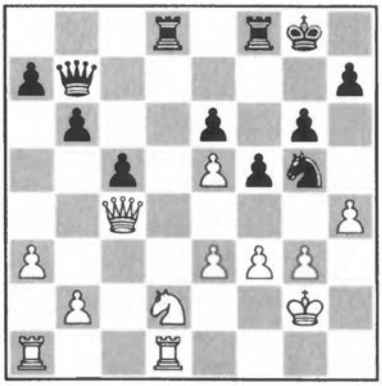
17...dxc4! 18.♕xc4 ♘g5! 19.♘d2

The knight retreats to the square it just left. The alternatives are worse though:

– 19.♕f4 ♗xg2 20.♔xg2 ♘f7 21.h4 (21.♘d2 g5) 21...♕c7 and Black wins a pawn.

– 19.h4 ♘f3+ 20.♗xf3 ♗xf3 21.♖d6 ♗d5 and Black's bishop is clearly superior to White's knight.

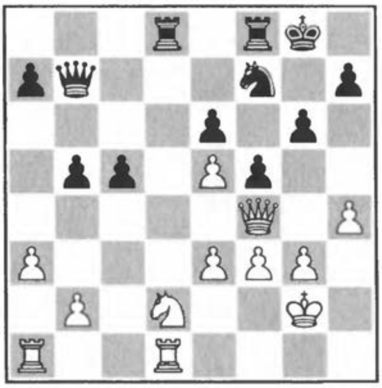
19...♗xg2 20.♔xg2 ♕b7+ 21.f3 ♖ad8 22.h4



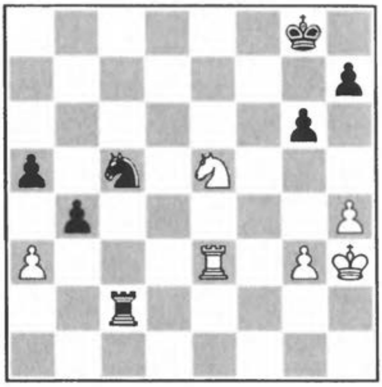
22...b5!

22...♖xd2+ 23.♖xd2 ♕xf3+ 24.♔h2 ♕xe3 25.♖e2 ♕d4 is a good ending for Black, but the text is stronger.

23.♕f4
Not 23.♕xc5? ♖xd2+ 24.♖xd2 ♕xf3+ 25.♔h2 ♘e4 and Black wins.
23...♘f7



Black is virtually a pawn up, his pieces are more active and his kind is safer. I give the rest with a few light notes.
24.♘b3 ♖d5 25.♖ac1 ♖c8 26.♘a5 26.e4!? ♖xe5 27.♘a5 ♕c7 and White cannot take advantage of the position of the rook. **26...♕d7 27.♖xd5 ♕xd5 28.e4 ♕xe5** Now Black is a sound pawn up. **29.♕xe5 ♘xe5 30.♘b3 ♘d3 31.♖c3 fxe4 32.fxe4 c4 33.♘d4 a6 34.b3 e5 35.♘c2 ♘c5! 36.bxc4 ♘xe4 37.♖e3 ♖xc4 38.♘b4 a5 39.♘d3 ♖c2+ 40.♔h3 ♘c5! 41.♘xe5 b4**

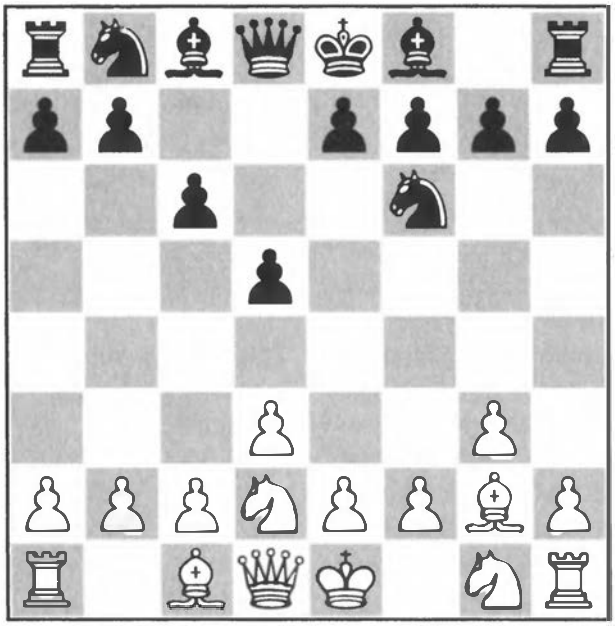


Black has returned one pawn for a passed b-pawn that will decide the matter. **42.axb4 axb4 43.♘f3 b3 44.♖e8+ ♔g7 45.♖b8 b2 46.♘e5 ♔f6 47.♘g4+ ♔e6 48.♘e3 ♖e2 49.♖b6+ ♔f7 50.♘c4 ♘d3 51.♖b7+ ♔f6 52.♖b6+** The best practical chance was 52.♘xb2. **52...♔f5 53.♖b5+ ♔e4 54.♔g4 h6 55.♘d6+ ♔d4 56.h5 gxh5+ 57.♔f5 ♖e1** and White resigned.

CHAPTER 13

Adrian Mikhalchishin

King's Fianchetto: Kasparov's Blitz Weapon

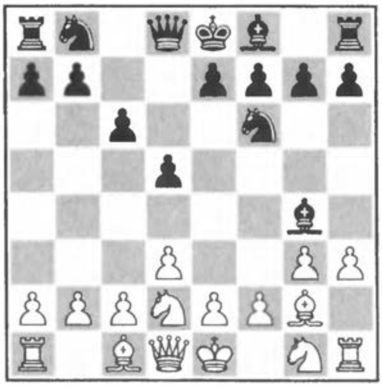


1.g3 d5 2.♗g2 c6 3.d3 ♘f6 4.♘d2

In Volume III of his *My Great Predecessors* series (Everyman 2004) Garry Kasparov writes about the World Champions Tigran Petrosian and Boris Spassky and their contemporaries. When discussing the immensely talented Leonid Stein, he also recalls how he himself learned from Stein an interesting opening set-up. A line which the young Kasparov employed in numerous blitz games with grandmaster Vladimir Bagirov.

This particular line works well against a popular Black set-up versus the Réti Opening. However, what if White leaves his king's knight undeveloped for the time being?

1.g3 d5 2.♗g2 c6 3.d3 ♘f6 4.♘d2 Cunningly avoiding the development of the knight on f3. **4...♗g4** This is a very common set-up for Black, but usually there is a knight on f3. White can take advantage of this by harassing the bishop with **5.h3**

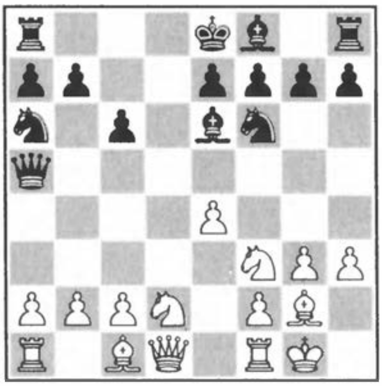


Now Black has two moves with his bishop – to f5 and h5.

Variation I

5...♗f5 6.e4 ♗g6

In the source game Stein-Böök, Tallinn 1969, Black played the weaker 6...dxe4, and after 7.dxe4 ♗e6 8.♘gf3 ♘a6 9.0-0 ♕a5



10.♘d4 0-0-0 11.♘xe6 fxe6 12.♕e2 g6 13.♘c4 ♕c7 14.♗f4 White obtained a strategically won position.

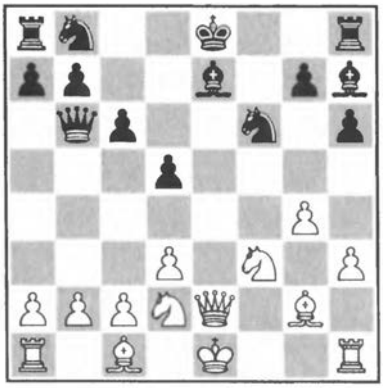
7.f4 e6 8.♕e2 ♗e7 9.g4 h6 10.♘gf3 ♕b6 11.f5

Seemingly logical, but it leaves White's pawn structure slightly hanging. Therefore 11.♘e5 ♗h7 12.♘b3 0-0 13.g5 hxg5 14.fxg5 ♘fd7 15.♘xd7 ♘xd7 16.♗e3 looks quite good.

11...♗h7 12.fxe6 fxe6 13.exd5

Here too 13.e5 ♘fd7 14.♘b3 is possible.

13...exd5



14.♔d1

This is a very subtle move, with the idea of placing the rook on e1. An unexpected idea!

14...c5 15.♖e1 ♘c6 16.g5

Tseshkovsky stubbornly does not want to play 16.♘b3 and develop his queenside.

16...hxg5 17.♘xg5 ♗g6 18.♘c4!?

18.♘e6!? was very good, with advantage to White.

18...♗h5 19.♘xb6 ♗xe2+ 20.♖xe2 axb6 21.c3 ♔d7 22.♘e6 ♖h7

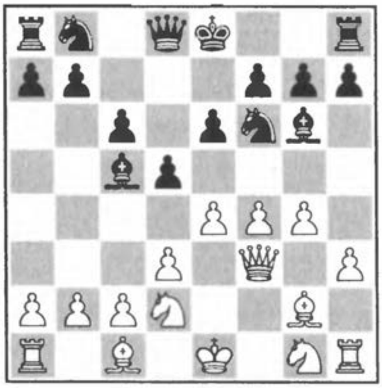
We have been following Tseshkovsky-Kosteniuk, Hastings 2002/03, and here White's advantage would have been consolidated by 23.♗f4.

Variation II

5...♗h5 6.f4!

This is the point of the entire variation. After setting up a kind of semi-Leningrad Dutch structure, White begins play against Black's light-square bishop.

The immediate 6.g4 ♗g6 7.f4 e6 8.e4 (this usually transposes and is how the young Kasparov played in his blitz games versus Bagirov) 8...♗c5 9.♕f3! is also quite possible:



After 9...dxe4 10.dxe4 h6 11.♘e2 practice has seen:

– 11...♘bd7 12.♘g3 a5 (after 12...♕a5 13.c3 ♕a6 14.♗f1 White has the advantage) 13.a4 ♕b6 14.♘b3 ♗b4+ 15.♔f1 0-0-0 16.♗e3 (Minasian-Bobras, Warsaw 2005), and here after 16...♕a6+ 17.♕e2 ♕xe2+ 18.♔xe2 the endgame is clearly better for White.

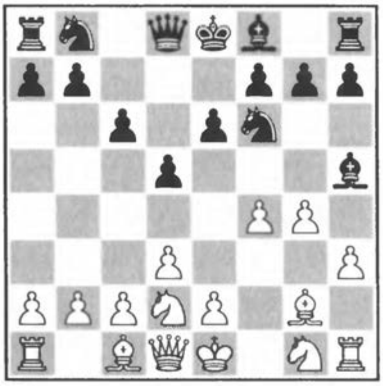
– 11...♘a6 12.a3 ♕e7 13.b4 ♗b6 14.♘g3 0-0-0 15.♗b2 ♖d7 16.0-0-0 ♖hd8 17.♘c4 ♖xd1+ 18.♖xd1 ♖xd1+ 19.♕xd1 ♗c7 20.♗e5!, with a great spatial advantage for White in Minasian-Jobava, Batumi 2003.

6...e6

White also has good play after 6...♗g6 7.e4 dxe4 8.dxe4 e6 9.♕e2 ♗e7 10.♘gf3 ♘a6 11.0-0 ♘b4 12.♘e1 ♕b6+ 13.♔h2 h5 14.a3 ♘a6 15.♘c4 ♕c7 16.f5 ♗h7 17.♗f4 ♕c8 18.♘d6+ ♗xd6 19.♗xd6, Azmaiparashvili-Kosyrev, Internet Cup 2004.

7.g4

It is rather illogical to play 7.♘gf3 ♗xf3 8.♘xf3 ♕b6 9.e3 ♘bd7 10.0-0 ♗d6 11.d4 ♘e4 12.g4 h5 13.g5 f6, when the game is totally unclear, Norwood-Anilkumar, Calcutta 1993. Why allow Black to trade his light-squared bishop?



7...♗g6 8.e4 dxe4 9.dxe4 h6

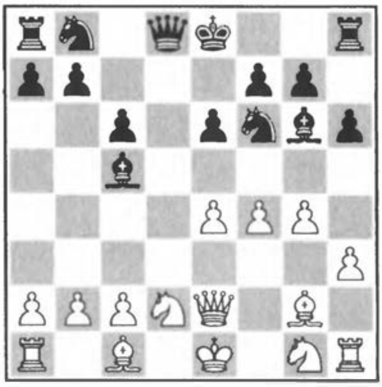
After 9...♗c5 10.♕e2 (for 10.♕f3 see the commentary after 6.f4) 10...0-0 11.♘b3 (clearly not 11.f5? exf5 12.exf5 ♗xf5 13.gxf5 ♖e8) 11...♗b6? (11...♘a6 12.♗d2 ♘d7 13.0-0-0 is preferable, although White still has the advantage) 12.♗d2 a5 13.a4 ♖e8 14.0-0-0 ♕c7 15.♗f3! c5 16.♕c4 h6 17.♘e2 White has a large positional advantage, Zarnicki-Rojas, Villa Martelli 1998.

10.♕e2

This is a slight deviation from Minasian's idea (he plays his queen to f3), but the idea is the same – to combat the bishop on g6.

10...♗c5

After 10...♗e7 11.♘gf3 (11.♘c4 is also possible) 11...♘bd7 12.0-0 0-0 13.♔h1 ♖e8 14.♘e1! ♗f8 15.♘d3 b5 16.a4 a6 17.♖e1! ♕c7 18.♕f1! White prepares f4-f5, Mandl-Schmidt, Germany 1993.



11.♘b3

Again White can play 11.♘gf3 0-0 12.♘e5 ♗h7 13.♘d3 ♗e7 14.h4 ♘fd7 15.g5 c5 16.♘f3 ♘c6 17.c3 b5 18.♘f2 ♖b8 19.gxh6 gxh6 20.f5! with an attack, G.Horvath-Hajnal, Zalakaros 2001.

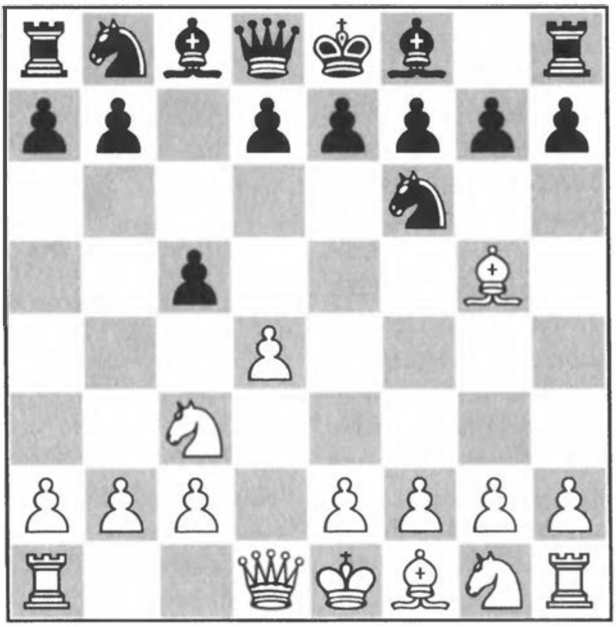
11...♗b6 12.♗d2 0-0 13.0-0-0 ♕e7 14.f5!? exf5 15.exf5 ♕xe2 16.♘xe2

With advantage to White in the ending, Middendorf-Skutta, Germany Bundesliga B 1989/90.

CHAPTER 14

Alexander Finkel

Sicilian Motifs in the Trompowsky



1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗g5 c5 3.♘c3

In this chapter we will deal with a rather interesting attempt to avoid the Benoni-like structure typically arising after 1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗g5 c5. By opting for an early 3.♘c3 White strives to open up the position and to create active piece play rather than to define the pawn structure and get some space advantage (as in the case of 3.d5 or 3.♗xf6 gxf6 4.d5).

Playing 3.♘c3!? requires some knowledge from White of the opening theory. In the arising position Black has quite a few different options, some of which are leading to transpositions to other popular variations, while the others form a unique theoretical basis of our topical line.

Speaking of possible transpositions, it is important to mention that after 3...♕b6 White is pretty much forced to reply 4.d5, transposing to a very sharp and interesting line usually emerging after 1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗g5 c5 3.d5 ♕b6 4.♘c3!?. Even though this line by itself is a stand-alone (and rather fascinating) subject, I decided to briefly refer to it in the games I picked up for the article. After learning these games you should have enough tools to deal with 3...♕b6 when confronted with it over the board.

Another highly important transposition occurs after 3...d5; we find ourselves in one of the main lines of the Veresov opening, which is far more common to emerge after 1.d4

♘f6 2.♘c3 d5 3.♗g5 c5. Just as in case with 3...♕b6, it is impossible to cover this variation, but I do give some recommendations which, I hope, you will find useful. [Editorial note: avid SOS readers can simply refer back to SOS-2 (Chapter 7, p.52) for Rogozenco's coverage of this opening.]

Nevertheless, the most popular way to meet 3.♞c3 is also the most natural move Black has at his disposal – 3...cxd4, after which White has to recapture with 4.♕xd4. In the arising position Black may choose between 4...♘c6 and – far less popular, but nevertheless quite playable – 4...e6.

After 4...♘c6 5.♕h4 the position resembles the Rauzer Variation of the Sicilian Defence (even though the position of the white queen on h4 at such an early stage of the game most certainly effects the plans of both sides), which means that Black will have his share of counterchances too in most cases.

To sum things up, by playing 3.♘c3 you give Black a variety of options to choose from, but regardless of Black's choice, the arising positions will always offer White rich piece play.

□ **Evgeny Miroshnichenko**
■ **Alexander Kovchan**
Kharkov ch-UKR 2007

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗g5 c5 3.♘c3 ♕b6 4.d5

As I previously mentioned White doesn't really have any choice, but to sacrifice the pawn on b2.

4...♕xb2 5.♗d2 ♕b6 6.e4

The first critical position of the variation.

6...d6

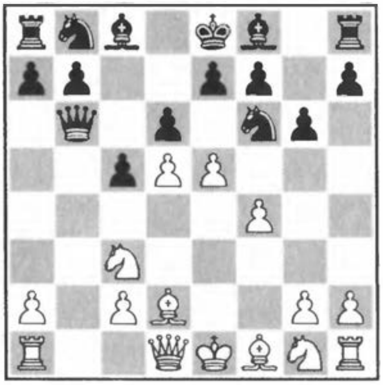
This is Black's most popular reply. However, most players prefer to opt for 7...e5 rather than to develop a bishop to g7 (or h6). For 6...e5 see the next game.

7.f4 g6!?

A risky try, allowing White to dominate in the centre.

8.e5

Very direct and stronger than 8.♘f3 ♗g7 9.♖b1 ♕d8 10.e5 dxe5 11.♗b5+ ♘fd7 12.fxe5 a6 13.♗xd7+ ♘xd7 14.♕e2 0-0 15.a4 ♕c7 16.♗f4 g5!∓, Carlsen-Short, Reykjavik 2004.



8...♘fd7 9.♖b1 ♕d8 10.♘f3 ♗h6

Taking g5 under control. The difference between the move in the game and 10...♗g7 is best seen in the following game: 10...♗g7 11.e6 fxe6 12.♘g5! ♘b6 13.♗b5+ ♔f8 14.dxe6 ♘c6 (14...a6!?) 15.♗xc6 bxc6 16.f5!, and White had a crushing attack in Karttunen-Saastamoinen, Tampere 2007.

11.♗d3

After 11.exd6 exd6 12.♕e2+ ♔f8 13.♘e4 ♘f6 14.♘xf6 ♕xf6 15.♘g5 ♗g7∓ Black would eventually accomplish the development of his pieces by the means of ...h6, ...♔f8-g8-h7 etc, keeping an extra pawn.

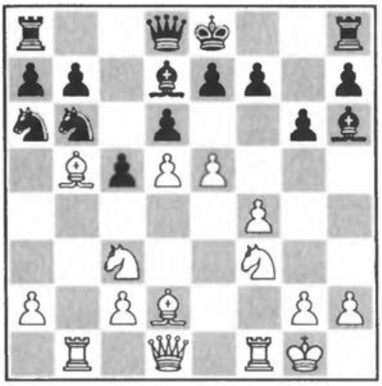
11...♘b6 12.0-0

It appears that White has excellent compensation for the pawn, but it always comes down to concrete lines.

12...♘a6

I guess not many players would've castled into a direct attack – 12...0-0!? – but it's probably playable. After 13.f5 ♗g7 14.e6 fxe6 15.fxg6 hxg6 16.♘g5 White has the initiative.

13.♗b5+ ♗d7



14.f5!

Trying to get to the black king as quickly as possible.

White is naturally not interested in restoring the material balance by 14.♗xa6 bxa6 15.exd6 exd6 16.♕e2+ ♕e7 17.♕xa6 0-0 18.♖be1 ♕d8 19.♘g5 ♗g7 20.♕d3 ♖b8 when Black has counterplay.

14...♗xd2 15.♕xd2 ♗xb5 16.♘xb5 dxe5 17.d6 ♘c4!

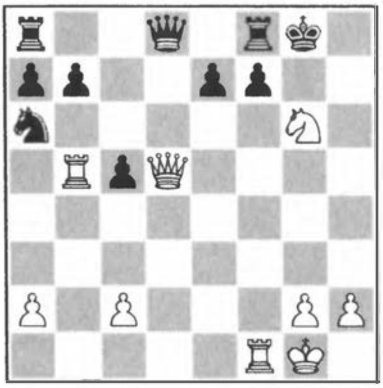
Of course not 17...0-0? 18.♕h6 and Black is helpless against ♞g5.

18.♕d5 ♘xd6 19.fxg6 hxg6 20.♘xe5 0-0!

The awkward looking 20...♖h7?! would run into 21.♘xf7! ♘xf7 22.♕xb7 ♕c8 23.♕xa6 ♕xa6 24.♘c7+ ♔d7 25.♘xa6 ♔c6 26.♖fe1.

21.♘xg6 ♘xb5 22.♖xb5!

A blunder is 22.♕g5? ♕d4+ 23.♔h1 fxg6.



22...e6??

Throwing away a well played game in one move. After the correct 22...♕xd5! 23.♘xe7+ ♔g7 24.♘xd5 ♖ad8 25.c4 ♖d7 26.♖b3 Black should be able to keep the arising endgame, although White is still better.

23.♕xd8??

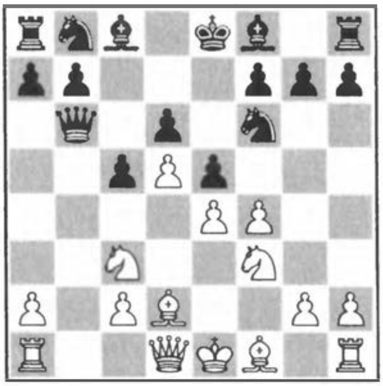
Returning the favour. Winning is 23.♕e4! ♕d4+ (23...fxg6 24.♕xg6+ ♔h8 25.♖xf8+ ♕xf8 26.♖xb7+–; 23...♖e8 24.♖xb7+–) 24.♕xd4 cxd4 25.♘xf8 ♔xf8 26.♖xb7.

23...♖fxd8 24.♘e7+ ♔g7 25.♖xb7 ♖db8 26.♖d7 ♖d8 27.♖b7

Draw.

☐ **Lazaro Bruzon**
■ **Friso Nijboer**
Wijk aan Zee B 2004

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗g5 c5 3.d5 ♕b6 4.♘c3 ♕xb2 5.♗d2 ♕b6 6.e4 e5 7.f4 d6 8.♘f3



8...♘bd7

Unclear is 8...exf4 9.♗xf4 ♗e7 10.♖b1 ♕a5 11.♗d2 0-0 12.♗c4 a6 13.0-0 ♕c7 14.a4 ♖e8, Karhanek-Michenka, Ostrava 2002.

9.fxe5

Depriving Black the chance to get the e5-square for his minor pieces. On the other hand Black gets the d6-square for his knight. Worse is 9.♖b1 ♕d8 10.♗e2 a6 11.a4 g6 12.0-0 ♗g7 13.♗d3 0-0 14.fxe5 dxe5 15.♕c1 ♘e8 16.♘e2 ♘d6∓, Goguadze-Gaprindashvili, Tbilisi 2002.

9...dxe5?!

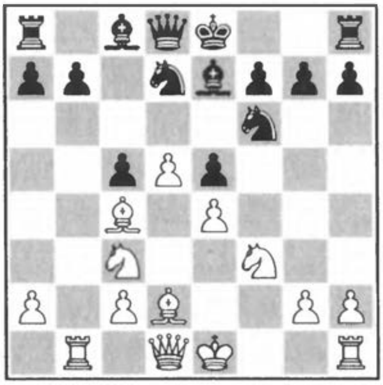
In my opinion it was better to play 9...♘xe5!?, trading a pair of knights and getting some breathing space: 10.♘xe5 dxe5 11.♖b1 ♕d8 (11...♕c7 12.♗b5+ ♗d7 13.♗g5 a6 14.♗xd7+ ♘xd7∓) 12.♗c4 ♗e7 13.0-0 0-0 14.♕f3 ♘e8.

10.♗c4 ♗e7

Or 10...a6 11.a4 ♕d6 12.0-0 g6 13.♕e1 ♗g7 14.♕h4 h6 15.♔h1 ♘h5 16.♖ab1 0-0 17.a5±, Cech-Mrva, Czechia 1997.

11.♖b1 ♕d8

After 11...♕d6!? 12.♘h4 (12.♘b5?! ♕b8 13.d6 ♗d8 – 13...♗xd6? 14.♗a5! ♔e7 15.♘g5+– – 14.♘g5 0-0 15.♕f3 ♘b6∓) 12...g6 13.♘b5 ♕b8 14.d6 ♗d8 15.0-0 things look pretty dangerous for Black, even though the position remains highly unclear.

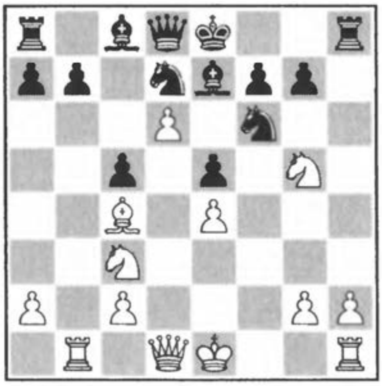


12.♗g5! h6?

The decisive mistake. It's clear that Black underestimated the consequences of White's 14th move.

Instead 12...♘g4 13.♗xe7 ♕xe7 14.d6 ♕f6 15.♕d2 0-0 16.0-0 also favours White. It makes sense to investigate 12...♕a5 and 12...♗d6!?.

13.d6! hxg5 14.♘xg5



The point of White's play. The black king is in grave danger.

14...0-0

If 14...♖f8, then 15.dxe7 and now:

– 15...♕xe7 16.♘b5 ♔d8 17.♗xf7! ♖xf7 18.♘d6 ♖f8 19.♘f5 ♕e8 20.♕d6+–

– 15...♔xe7 16.♕e2 ♘b6 17.♖d1 ♗d7 18.0-0 with an attack.

15.0-0! ♘b6

15...♕e8 16.dxe7 ♕xe7 17.♕e1 just loses.

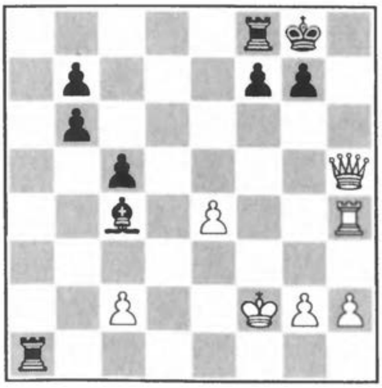
16.dxe7 ♕xe7 17.♖xb6! axb6 18.♘d5 ♘xd5 19.♕h5 ♕xg5

After 19...♘f6 20.♖xf6 White wins.

20.♕xg5 ♘f4 21.♕xe5 ♗e6!

21...♘e6.

22.♖xf4 ♗xc4 23.♕h5 ♖xa2 24.♖h4 ♖a1+ 25.♔f2



25...f5?

Throwing up a game in a position in which White still had a lot of work to do to get the whole point.

More stubborn was 25...f6 26.♕h7+ ♔f7 27.♖g4 ♖g8 28.e5 ♖f1+ 29.♔e3 ♗e6±.

26.♕h7+ ♔f7 27.exf5

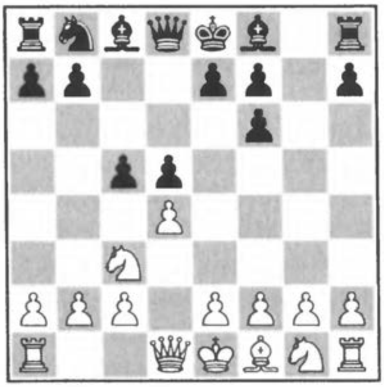
Black resigned.

☐ **Frode Olav O. Urkedal**
■ **Kjetil A. Lie**
Hamar ch-NOR 2007

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗g5 c5 3.♘c3 d5 4.♗xf6

As mentioned in the introduction we have transposed from the Trompowsky into the Richter-Veresov. Taking on f6 is White's only try to fight for an opening advantage. To quote Rogozenco from his article on the Richter-Veresov in SOS-2: 'given the opportunity White should stick to the initial idea and break the opponent's pawn structure by taking on f6'.

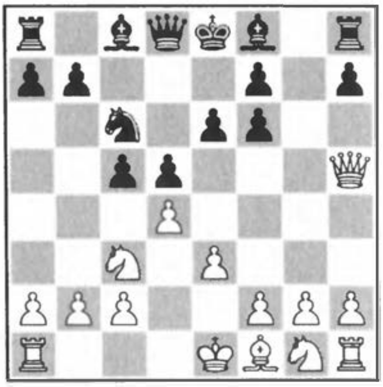
4...gxf6



5.e4!?

A rather aggressive approach to the position that is perhaps taking things too far. At least remember that the sword that White is wielding now is double-edged.

More 'solid' is 5.e3, although the arising positions are still rather tricky for both sides: 5...♘c6 6.♕h5!? (6.♗b5!? e6 7.♘f3 ♗d7 8.0-0 a6 9.♗xc6 ♗xc6 10.dxc5 e5 11.♕e2 ♕d7 12.b4 0-0-0 with mutual chances, Zhang Pengxiang-Naiditsch, Fügen 2006) 6...e6



and now two 'random' sample games (you will find other examples in SOS-2):

– 7.♘ge2 b5 8.♘f4 a6 9.dxc5 ♗xc5 10.0-0-0 ♘e5 11.♗e2 ♗d6 12.♕h6 ♗f8 13.♕h5 f5 (13...♗d6) 14.e4!, Lindberg-Inarkiev, Fügen 2006.

– 7.0-0-0 cxd4 8.exd4 ♗d7 9.f4 f5 10.♘f3 ♕f6 11.♘e5 ♘xe5 12.dxe5 ♕h6 13.♕f3 with chances for both sides, Bosch-Werle, Dutch tt 2008/09.

5...dxe4 6.dxc5 f5 7.♗b5+

After 7.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 8.♖d1+ ♗d7 9.♗c4 e6 White has to play very precisely not to get into trouble: wrong is 10.g4? fxg4 11.♘xe4 ♔e7∓, Vasilev-Krasenkow, Kavala 2001.

7...♘c6

Black has quite a few decent alternatives on barely every move. Thus, possible is 7...♗d7!? 8.♘ge2 (8.♕d5!?) 8...♘c6 9.♕d2 e6 10.0-0 ♖g8 11.♖ad1 ♗xc5 12.♘a4 ♗b4∓, Miladinovic-Smagin, Montreal 2000.

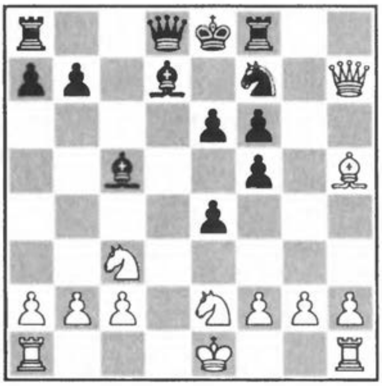
8.♕d5 e6 Or 8...♗d7. **9.♕e5 f6**

Perhaps 9...♖g8!?.

10.♕g3 ♗xc5 11.♕g7 ♖f8 12.♗e2 ♘e5 13.♕xh7 ♗d7 14.♗h5+ ♘f7

15.♘ge2

With a very complex position in which White's chances are definitely not worse.

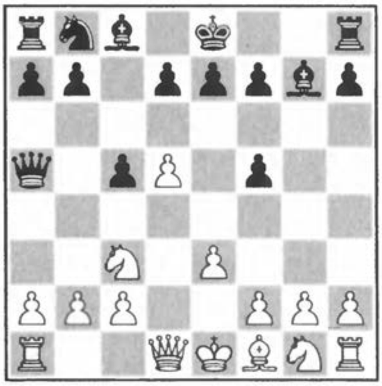


☐ **Sergey Arkhipov**
■ **Jozsef Horvath**
Sochi 1985

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗g5 c5 3.♘c3 ♕a5!?

Another possible reaction to 3.♘c3.

4.♗xf6 gxf6 5.d5 f5 6.e3 ♗g7



7.♕d2

More typical is to develop the knight to e2, but White's plan in the game has some appeal.

7.♘e2 d6 8.g3 ♘d7 9.♗g2 ♘e5 10.0-0 h5 11.h4 ♗d7 12.a3 a6 13.♖b1 ♘c4 14.♕d3 ♘e5 15.♕d1 ♘c4 16.♕d3 ♘e5 ½-½, Knaak-Hall, Germany Bundesliga 2002/03.

7...♘a6

Or 7...d6 8.♘ge2 (8.♘f3!?) 8...♘d7 9.♘f4 ♘b6 10.♗b5+ ♔f8 11.♗e2 ♕b4 12.♘d3 ♕a5 unclear, Plachetka-Ftacnik, Frenstat ch-CSR 1982.

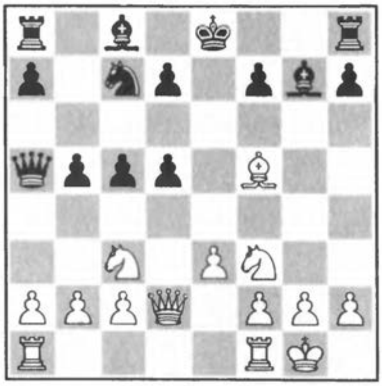
8.♘f3 ♘c7

It's not clear how White would prove an advantage after 8...d6 9.♗b5+ ♔f8 10.♗e2 ♘c7 11.0-0 ♖g8.

9.d6!? exd6 10.♗d3 b5?!

More in the spirit of the position was 10...♗xc3 11.bxc3 d5 12.♗xf5 d6 13.♗xc8 ♖xc8 14.0-0 ♕a4, intending to transfer the queen to the kingside.

11.♗xf5 d5 12.0-0



12...♗b7?!

I am not sure whether the move in the game was a blunder or the result of a wrong judgment, but Black ends up a pawn down without any visible compensation for it.

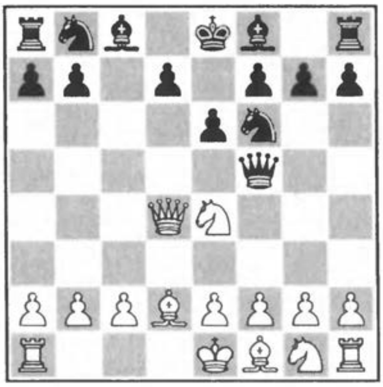
It's true that after 12...♗xc3 13.bxc3 d6 14.e4! White gains the initiative, but Black's defensive resources remain rather significant.

13.♘xd5! ♕xd2 14.♘xc7+ ♔d8 15.♘xd2 ♔xc7 16.♖fd1 d5 17.c3±

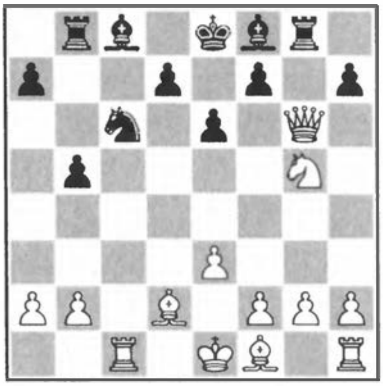
And White managed (after some adventures) to capitalize on his material advantage.

☐ **Alexander Rabinovich**
■ **Alon Greenfeld**
Ramat Aviv tt 2000

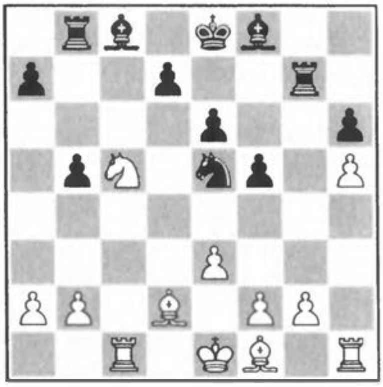
1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗g5 c5 3.♘c3 cxd4
This is Black's main option.
4.♕xd4 e6!?
Compared to 4...♘c6 (see the next game) this is comparatively rare.
5.♘e4!?
Trying to make immediate use of the pin, but this is not at all forced of course. 5.0-0-0 ♗e7 6.♘f3 d5 7.e4 dxe4 8.♕xd8+ ♗xd8 9.♘xe4 ♗e7 10.♘d6+ ♗xd6 11.♖xd6±, Puranen-Kiviaho, Helsinki 1993.
5...♕a5+ 6.♗d2 ♕f5!



Basically that's what the 3.♘c3-variation is all about – it is hard to think of another line in which after just six moves it is possible to reach a completely unexplored position!
7.♘xf6+ gxf6
Also 7...♕xf6 is fine for Black: 8.♕xf6 gxf6 9.♗c3 ♗e7 10.e4 ♘c6 11.0-0-0 b6 12.♘f3 ♗b7 with unclear play.
8.e3
8.e4 ♗c5 9.exf5 ♗xd4 10.c3 ♗c5 11.♘f3 ♘c6 reaches an unclear endgame.
8...♘c6 9.♕a4 ♖b8!? Preparing b5. **10.♘f3 b5 11.♕h4 ♕xc2 12.♕xf6 ♖g8 13.♖c1 ♕e4**
Both sides have their chances after 13...♕g6 14.♕xg6 hxg6 15.e4!? ♗g7 16.♗c3 ♗xc3+ 17.♖xc3.
14.♘g5 ♕g6 15.♕xg6



15...♖xg6?!
After this active move only White can hope for an advantage.
Correct was 15...hxg6 16.♘e4 ♗e7 17.♗c3 e5 18.♗d2 f5 19.♘c3 a6 20.♘d5 ♗b7.
16.h4
But not 16.♘xh7 ♗e7 17.f4 f6 18.g3 ♖g7 19.♗d3 ♗b7 20.♖f1 ♔f7∓.
16...h6 17.♘e4 f5 18.h5!? ♖g7 19.♘c5 ♘e5



20.e4!?
Finding the weak spot in Black's position.
20...d6 20...♖f7 is interesting. **21.♘b3 fxe4 22.♗xh6 ♖h7 23.♗xf8 ♔xf8 24.♗xb5!? ♖xb5 25.♖xc8+ ♔g7 26.♔e2!?**

Nothing is promised by 26.♖c7+ ♔h6 27.♖xh7+ ♔xh7 28.♔d2 a5 29.♔c3 a4 30.♘d4 ♖c5+ 31.♔d2 ♖d5 32.♔c3.

26...♘d3 27.g3!? ♖hxh5

27...a5 28.♖c7+ ♔h6 29.♖xh7+ ♔xh7 30.♔e3 d5 31.f3 a4 32.♘d4 ♖xb2 33.♘xe6 ♖xa2 34.fxe4 ♘f2 is equal.

28.♖xh5 ♖xh5 29.♔e3 d5 30.♘c5!? d4+

A more accurate way to draw was 30...♘xc5!? 31.♖xc5 ♔f6 32.♖c7 a5 33.♖a7 ♖f5 34.b3 ♖f3+ 35.♔e2 d4 36.♖xa5 d3+ 37.♔e1 e3 38.fxe3 ♖xe3+ 39.♔d2 ♖xg3.

31.♔xd4 ♖d5+ 32.♔c4 ♘xc5 33.♖xc5 ♖d2 34.♖e5

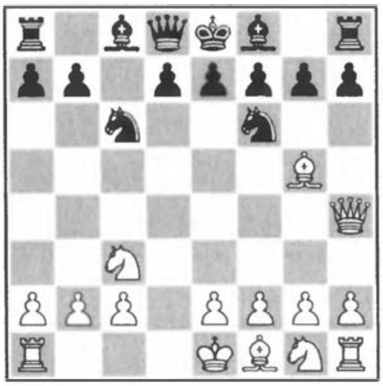
The only chance to fight for a win was 34.♖c7+!? ♔f6 35.♖xa7 ♖xf2 (35...♖xb2 36.♔d4 ♖xf2 37.♔xe4 ♖g2 38.♔f3 ♖b2 39.♖a6±) 36.b4 ♔e5 37.a4 ♖c2+.

34...♖xb2 35.♖xe6 ♖xa2 36.♖xe4

Draw.

☐ **Igor Miladinovic**
■ **Jan Gustafsson**
Fürth 2002

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗g5 c5 3.♘c3!? cxd4!? 4.♕xd4 ♘c6 5.♕h4



The arising position is highly interesting and sharp. Just as in many lines of the Sicilian Defence White intends to castle queenside, following by an advance of the pawns in the centre. In the meantime Black is looking to launch some play on the queenside in order to attack the white king once White has castled on that side.

5...e6

Another equally popular option is 5...d6, e.g.: 6.e4 ♗e6 7.♗d3 ♖c8 8.♘ge2 ♘e5 9.f4 ♘xd3+ 10.cxd3 ♕b6 11.f5±, De la Villa Garcia-Miezis, Elgoibar 1995.

6.e4 ♗e7

Interesting is 6...h6!? 7.f4 ♖g8!? 8.0-0-0!?. Also worthy of investigation is 6...♗b4!?.

7.f4

White has a slight plus after 7.0-0-0!? ♘d5 8.♗xe7 ♕xe7 9.♕xe7+ ♘dxe7 10.g3. After 7.♘f3 ♕a5 8.♗b5 d6 9.0-0 ♗d7 (9...0-0!?) 10.♖fe1 a6?! (10...0-0!?) 11.♗xc6 ♗xc6 12.e5! White held the initiative in Conquest-Garcia, Havana 1996.

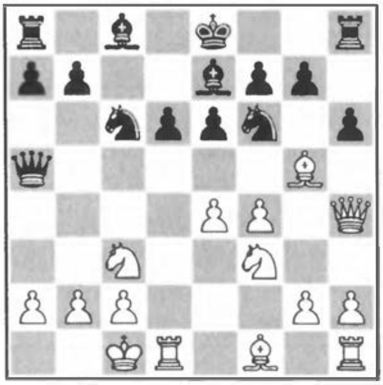
7...d6

7...♕b6!? 8.0-0-0 ♕e3+ 9.♔b1 ♘xe4 10.♘xe4 ♕xe4 11.♗d3 ♗xg5 12.♕xg5 ♕d4 13.♘f3 ♕f6 14.♕h5 with compensation, Ochoa de Echaguen-Browne, New York 1989.

8.0-0-0 ♕a5 9.♘f3

Quite a few games have been played from this position, and it seems that Black's defensive resources are sufficient to sustain White's direct attack.

9...h6



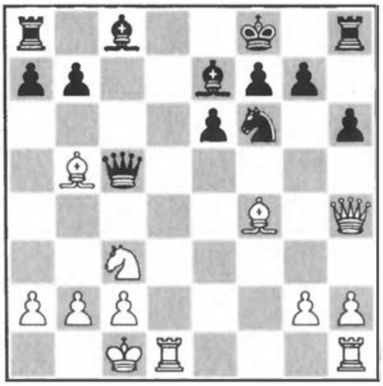
10.e5

By sacrificing a pawn White gets quite a strong initiative.

10...dxe5 11.fxe5 ♘xe5 12.♘xe5 ♕xe5 13.♗b5+ ♔f8 14.♗f4

After a series of forced moves we have reached a position that is not so easy to assess. Black is obviously experiencing serious problems to finish the development of his queenside pieces and to find shelter for his king. White may exert quite unpleasant pressure over the f-file, so Black has to be careful with moving his g-pawn.

14...♕c5!?



The best square for the queen.

15.♕e1!?

It seems that White's queen had nothing more to contribute on h4, so he regroups his pieces.

15...a6 16.♗d3

16.♗a4?! b5 17.♗b3 ♗b7∓.

16...♗d7 17.♖f1 ♗c6 18.g4 ♖d8

In another game Black opted for 18...b5 and very soon reached a significant advantage: 19.♔b1 ♖d8 20.♕g3 b4 21.♘e2 ♘d5 22.♗xa6? ♖a8 23.♘d4 ♔g8 24.♕d3 ♘xf4 25.♖xf4 ♗d5∓, Grönn-Fossan, Sandnes 2005. However, stronger was 22.♗c1!?.

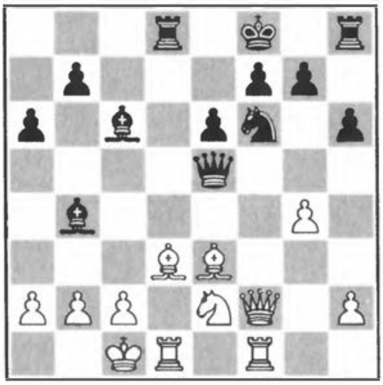
19.♗e3

Opening up the f-file.

19...♕e5!

19...♕a5?! 20.♕f2.

20.♕f2 ♗b4!? 21.♘e2



21...♖d7!

Useful prophylaxis as well as a direct threat to take on g4.

22.h3 ♔e8 23.♗d4

White can consider 23.♔b1!? ♘e4 24.♗xe4 ♖xd1+ 25.♖xd1 ♕xe4 26.♗b6 ♗e7 27.♘c3 with compensation.

23...♕d5

23...♕g5+ 24.♔b1 ♘e4 25.♗xe4 ♗xe4 26.♘f4 e5 27.♕e2±.

24.♗xf6 gxf6 25.♔b1!?

Stronger than 25.♕xf6? ♕g5+ 26.♔b1 ♕xf6 27.♖xf6 h5∓.

25...♗e7 26.♘f4 ♕c5!

Dubious is 26...♕g5?! 27.♘h5 f5 28.♘g3 ♗d6 29.♘xf5! exf5 30.♗xf5 ♖d8 31.♗e4 ♖f8 32.♗xc6+ bxc6 33.♕a7.

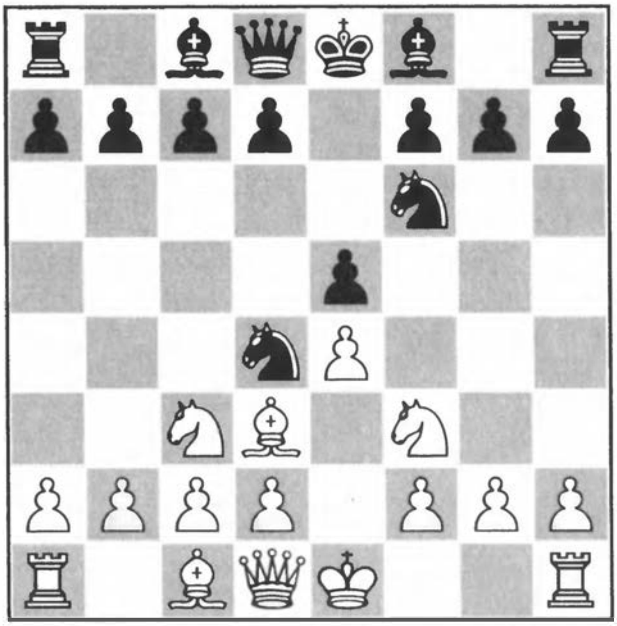
27.♕xc5

Draw.

CHAPTER 15

Jeroen Bosch

Surprise in the Spanish Four Knights



1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗b5 ♘d4 5.♗d3!?

After **1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗b5 ♘d4** Rubinstein's aggressive knight move is a respectable way to gain equality versus the Spanish Four Knights. The other main line is of course 4...♗b4, while I have advocated 4...♗d6 as a weapon for Black as early as SOS-1.

The main reply to 4...♘d4 is **5.♗a4**, when Black has two different pawn sacs at his disposal to gain powerful counterplay: 5...♗c5 6.♘xe5 0-0 7.♘d3 ♗b6 8.e5 ♘e8 9.♘d5, and 5...c6 6.♘xe5 d6 7.♘f3 ♗g4. **5.♗c4** is the alternative bishop move, that promises nothing according to theory. Dead equality arises after **5.♘xd4** exd4 6.e5 dxc3 7.exf6 ♕xf6 8.dxc3 (this was actually an important reason for me to promote 4...♗d6 for Black). Giving up the bishop with **5.0-0** ♘xb5 6.♘xb5 c6 7.♘c3 gives White a slight space advantage after 7...d6 8.d4 ♕c7 but still no more than equality. Finally **5.♘xe5** is considered 'dubious' by theory, but is obviously more interesting than that epithet suggests: viz. Nigel Short's quick win over Erwin l'Ami at Wijk aan Zee 2009.

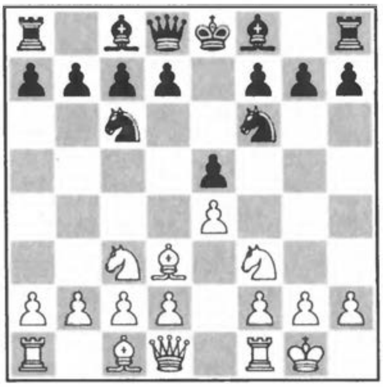
As this brief overview suggests it is not easy for White to achieve anything against Rubinstein's 4...♘d4 which is why I would like to suggest **5.♗d3** as a surprise weapon. This odd-looking bishop move is a favourite of Hungarian grandmaster Zoltan Varga. The main idea is that, apart from removing the bishop, pawn e4 is now well-protected which should enable White to safely take the e5-pawn should it remain on offer for one more move.

We will first investigate 5...♗c5 (which is an acceptable pawn sac versus both 5.♗a4 and 5.♗c4), and then in the next game we will look at the safe 5...♘xf3+.

Analysis (Certic-Carnic, Belgrade 1994)
1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗b5 ♘d4 5.♗d3 ♗c5

Black continues just as he would against other bishop moves. Yet, with pawn e4 protected he will find it harder to gain enough counterplay for the pawn. Let's have a look at a few alternatives:

● 5...♘c6?! is followed by the verdict 'equal' in my edition of the Encyclopaedia Volume C (presumably because of the 'forced' repetition after 6.♗b5). This is certainly a witty reply, but must be considered a bad joke after 6.0-0



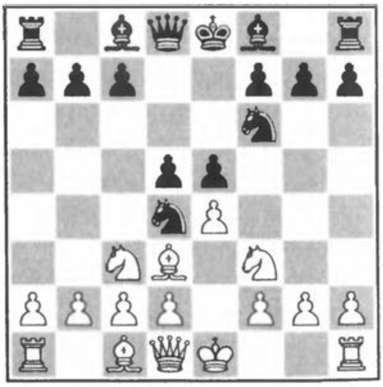
And White is slightly better whatever Black plays:

- 6...♗b4 7.♘d5
- 6...♗c5 7.♗b5
- 6...d6 7.♗b5
- 6...d5?! 7.exd5 ♘xd5 8.♘xd5 ♕xd5 9.♖e1
- 6...♗e7 7.♗b5
- 6...g6 7.♗b5

● 5...d6 does not look very ambitious, especially considering his previous move, but Black reasons that the bishop on d3 will have to be moved again at some point. 6.♘xd4 exd4 7.♘b5 c5 8.c3 a6 9.♘a3 dxc3?! (9...d5 or 9...b5) 10.dxc3 d5 11.exd5 ♕xd5 12.0-0 with a tiny edge for White in Batsanin-Shulga, St Petersburg 1997. But Black can improve on move 9.

White should therefore also consider to retreat the knight to e2 on move 7: 7.♘e2 d5 8.e5 (8.exd5 ♕xd5 is fine for Black) 8...♘g4 9.f4 ♗c5 (here 9...♕h4+ 10.g3 ♕h3 11.♘g1! ♕g2 12.♕f3 ♕xf3 13.♘xf3 favours White; 9...c5 10.♗b5+ ♗d7 11.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 12.0-0 leads to an interesting position) 10.b4!? ♗xb4 11.♘xd4 (11.c3!? looks better when White has a slight edge) 11...c5 12.♗b5+? (again the intermediate 12.c3 was stronger) 12...♔f8 13.c3 ♘e3 and Black is doing fine, Johnson-Kelson, Las Vegas 2002.

● Quite aggressive is 5...d5!?



If **6.♘xd4** then 6...exd4 7.♘xd5 ♘xd5 8.exd5 ♕xd5 9.0-0 ♗e6 10.♖e1 0-0-0 11.♗e4 is a very natural sequence, after 11...♕d7 12.d3 Black's space advantage should not be underestimated. Practice has seen: 12...♗g4! (12...♗d5 13.♗d2?! Reichel-Berreth, Schney 1993. Stronger is 13.♕f3!? ♗xe4 14.♖xe4±) 13.♗f3 ♗xf3 14.♕xf3 ♗b4 15.♖e4 f5 16.♖e5 ♖he8 and with his energetic play

Black has achieved comfortable equality, Batsanin-Asauskas, Mureck 1998.

6.♞xe5 is dangerous here:

– after 6...♗d6 7.♘f3 ♗g4 8.♗e2 ♘xe2 9.♕xe2 0-0 10.d3 Black has enough compensation for the pawn.

– 6...♕e7?! is less good after 7.f4 dxe4 8.♘xe4 ♘xe4 (8...♗f5 9.♘f2) 9.♗xe4 f6 10.c3.

– the main continuation is 6...dxe4 7.♘xe4 and now 7...♘xe4 8.♗xe4 ♕e7 9.f4 f6 10.c3 could be good for White, but the complications after 7...♕d5!? 8.♘xf6+ gxf6 9.♘g4 (9.♘f3 ♗g4 10.♗e2 ♘xe2 11.♕xe2+ ♔d7 12.d3 ♖e8 13.♗e3 f5 with dangerous counterplay – Black is better) 9...♕xg2 10.♘xf6+ ♔d8 11.♗e4 ♕g5 12.c3 (12.♘d5 ♕h4!) 12...♕xf6 13.cxd4 favour Black whose king is safer. While Black, if he is looking for a safer way can also play 7...♗f5 8.♘xf6+ (8.♘g5 ♗xd3; 8.c3 ♘xe4 9.♕a4+ ♘c6 10.♘xc6 ♕xd3 11.♘e5+ ♗d7 12.♘xd7 0-0-0 13.♘e5⩲) 8...♕xf6 9.0-0 ♗xd3 10.♘xd3 0-0-0 with compensation.

White should therefore research **6.exd5!?** with the idea of 6...♗g4 7.♗e2, and 6...♘xd5 7.0-0!?.

6.♘xe5

Picking up the gauntlet. There can of course be no question of anything resembling an opening advantage after 6.0-0 d6 7.♘xd4 ♗xd4 8.♗c4 0-0 9.d3 ♗g4 10.♕e1 c6, Shabanov-I.Zaitsev, Satka 2004. After all, 5.♗d3 only makes sense when White considers 6.♘xe5 to be a threat.

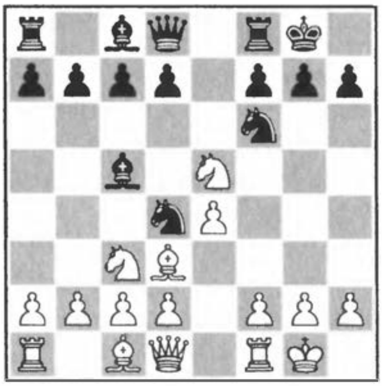
6...0-0

Black quickly castles before opening up the centre to take advantage of White's cluttered position.

Of course, 6...d6 7.♘f3 ♘g4?! 8.0-0 ♕f6? is way too artificial. White was winning in Tissir-Isaev, Yerevan 1996, after 9.♘d5 ♕h6 10.h3 ♘e5 11.♘xe5 dxe5 12.c3!? (avoiding the complications after 12.♘xc7+ ♔d8 13.♘xa8 ♗xh3) 12...♘e6 13.♗b5+ c6 14.d4 and so on.

After 6...♕e7 White should play 7.♘g4!. Instead, after 7.♘f3 d5 8.0-0?! (better was 8.♘xd4 ♗xd4 9.0-0) 8...♗g4 9.e5? (9.exd5 0-0-0 or 9...♗xf3 10.gxf3 0-0-0 also favour Black) 9...♗xf3 10.exf6 ♗xd1 11.fxe7 ♗xc2 12.♗xc2 ♘xc2 13.♖b1 c6 and White was worse in Lejlic-Ingbrandt, Norrköping 1997.

7.0-0



7...d5

This is Black's best. Here we can see an important advantage of 5.♗d3 over 5.♗a4 – the bishop can still return along the diagonal to e2 to neutralize a pin on the f3-knight. Thus after 7...d6 8.♘f3 ♗g4 9.♗e2 Black has not a trace of compensation for the pawn. After 9...♘xe2+ 10.♕xe2 ♖e8 11.d3 d5 12.h3 dxe4 (12...♗h5 13.♗g5) 13.hxg4!? exf3 14.♕xf3 c6 15.♗g5 White is a sound pawn up and won in Certic-Pantos, Niksic 1997.

8.♘xd5

The only way to prove an advantage for White. 8.♘f3 ♗g4 9.♗e2 ♘xe2+ 10.♕xe2 ♖e8 11.d3 ♗d4 gives Black sufficient compensation for the pawn as IM Branimir Certic noted in *Informant* 61.

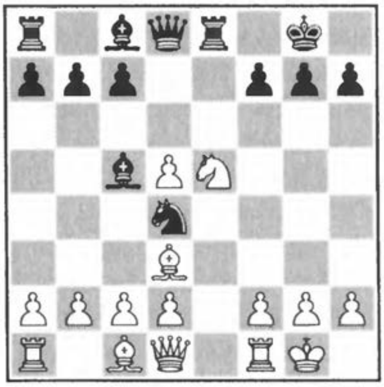
Too dangerous is 8.exd5, after 8...♖e8 9.♖e1 Black has the powerful 9...♗g4!. An attractive sample line runs: 10.♘xg4 ♖xe1+ 11.♕xe1 ♘xg4 (Black has a winning attack – just look at White's queenside) 12.♘e4 f5!

13.♘xc5? ♕d6! 14.f4 ♕xc5 15.♔h1 ♘e2 and White suffers heavy material losses.

8...♘xd5

In sharp positions such as these, 'natural' moves are not always adequate. Thus, 8...♖e8 fails to the surprising 9.♘xf7! ♔xf7 10.♘xf6 and because of the hanging bishop on c5 (♕h5+) Black must take back on f6 with the king when something like 10...♔xf6 11.c3 ♘c6 12.♕f3+ ♔e7 13.♗b5 followed by d4 gives White a raging attack – and with three pawns for the piece he has no material complaints either. However, there is also no reason for White to avoid the 'simple' 9.♘xf6+ ♕xf6 10.♘g4 ♕f4 11.♘e3 ♗d6 12.g3 ♘f3+? 13.♔h1 ♕f6 14.♘d5 ♕g5 15.♕xf3 and wins, Curdo-Sansing, New Hampshire 2000.

9.exd5 ♖e8!



Black correctly plays for the initiative.

Inadequate is 9...♕g5 10.♘f3 ♕xd5 11.♘xd4 ♗xd4 12.♗e2 and White is just a pawn up.

Likewise, 9...♕xd5 10.♖e1 cannot be advised, as White will easily disentangle himself with moves like ♗e4 (or ♗c4), and c3 and d4.

10.b4!

A creative defence found by IM Certic in his game against Carnic (Belgrade 1994).

Tempting is 10.♗xh7+!? ♔xh7 (10...♔f8!?) 11.♕h5+ ♔g8 12.♕xf7+ ♔h7 13.♕h5+ which was given as equal by Certic in Informant 61. The computer likes to continue after 13...♔g8 14.c3!? and why not?

Wrong is 10.♖e1 ♕f6 which gives Black the kind of attack (and in this case a clear advantage) that he was playing for all along.

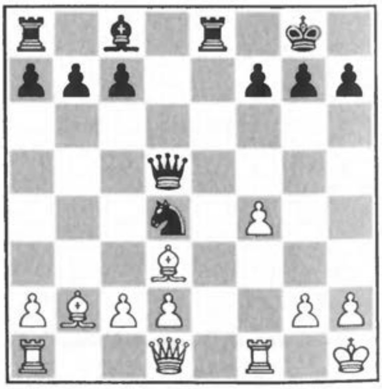
10...♖xe5

Indicated by Certic as best.

- 10...♗b6? 11.♘c4 ♕g5 (11...♕xd5) 12.♘e3+– was the afore-mentioned game Certic-Carnic, Belgrade 1994. By now it is clear that Black has nowhere near enough compensation for two pawns.
- 10...♗xb4?! encourages the bishop sac on h7: 11.♗xh7+ ♔xh7 12.♕h5+ ♔g8 13.♕xf7+ ♔h7 14.♕h5+ ♔g8 15.c3 ♘c2 (Certic also analyses 15...♗c5 16.cxd4 ♗xd4 17.♘f7 ♕e7 18.♘g5 ♗f5 19.♗a3! ♕d7 20.♖ae1 planning 20...g6 21.♕f3+–) 16.cxb4 ♘xa1 17.♗b2 and White wins back his sacrificed material with considerable interest.
- 10...♕xd5 11.bxc5 ♕xe5 (11...♖xe5 transposes to the main line) 12.c3 (12.♗b2) 12...♘e2+ (12...♕xc5? 13.cxd4 ♕xd4 14.♕c2! ♕xa1 15.♗b2+–; 12...♘c6 13.♕c2±) 13.♗xe2 ♕xe2 14.♕xe2 ♖xe2 15.d4 and the opposite-coloured bishops give Black some hope for the draw.

11.bxc5 ♕xd5 12.f4! ♖e8 13.♗b2 ♕xc5 14.♔h1 ♕d5

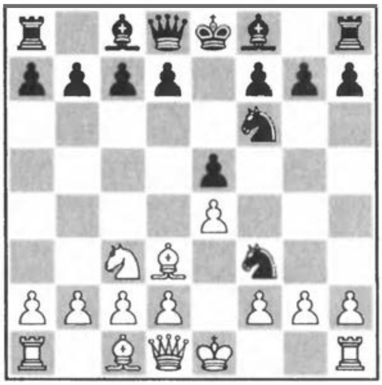
Planning ...c5 is slightly better for White according to Certic.



Indeed, 15.c4!? followed by f5 or ♕h5 gives White play against Black's king.

☐ **Zoltan Varga**
■ **Friedrich Volkmann**
Austria tt-2 2004/05

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♘c3 ♘c6 4.♗b5 ♘d4 5.♗d3 ♘xf3+



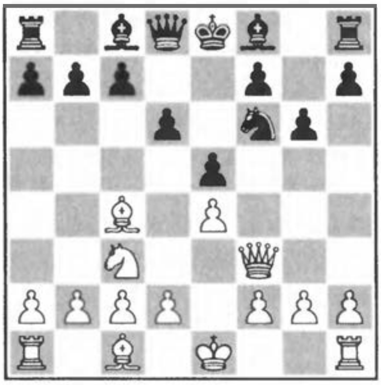
Black exchanges his active knight (a possibility that gives White a slight plus after 5.♗a4). He reasons that White will have to spend another tempo on removing the bishop from d3 (how should he otherwise finish his development?). The constant moving around of the bishop along the f1-a6 diagonal should justify Black's own ♘b8-d4-f3 manoeuvre.

6.♕xf3 d6

Again the most solid choice. Black retains some flexibility too – not having decided whether the dark-squared bishop will go to e7 or g7.

● Black can also play 6...g6 7.♗c4 ♗g7 8.d3 c6 9.♗g5 (both 9.0-0 and 9.h3 make more sense here) 9...h6 10.♗e3 0-0 11.h3 b5 12.♗b3 a5 13.a4 (13.a3 would prevent Black from playing ...d5 for the moment) 13...b4 14.♘e2 d5 with equal chances in Trapl-Kozak, Czechia 1995.

After 6...g6 7.♗c4 Black can also play 7...d6 when we reach the diagrammed position.



– standard now is 8.d3 when Curdo-Grechikhin, Manchester 1999, went 8...♗g4 (8...♗g7) 9.♕g3 ♕d7 10.h3 ♗e6 11.♕f3!? ♗g7 12.♗g5 ♘h5 13.g4!? ♘f4 14.0-0-0 ♗xc4 15.dxc4 0-0 16.♗xf4 exf4 17.♘d5 ♕a4 18.♕b3 ♕a5? (18...♕xb3 19.cxb3 c6 is about equal) 19.♔b1 ♗e5 20.♕b5!±.

– However, the move 8.d4!? in S.B.Hansen-L.B.Hansen, Reykjavik 1995, was a sharp attempt to make use of Black's move order. The idea is that 8...exd4 is met by 9.♗g5 ♗e7 10.♗xf6 ♗xf6 11.♘d5 ♗e7 (11...♗g7 12.♘b6or 11...♗e5 12.♘b6) 12.0-0-0!? (but not 12.♘b6? cxb6!–+).

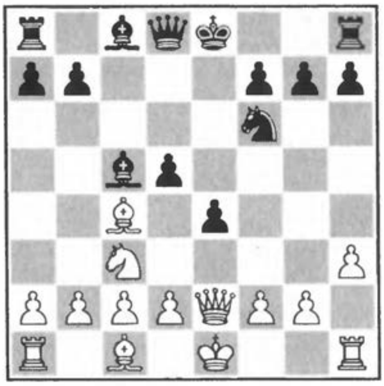
The game went instead 8...♗g4 9.♕d3 exd4 10.♕xd4 ♗g7 11.♘d5!? (11.♗g5) 11...0-0 12.♗h6 ♖e8 13.0-0 ♗e6 14.♗xg7 ♔xg7 15.♖fe1 c6 with equal chances.

● 6...♗c5 is a natural move, when practice has seen:

– 7.0-0 0-0 8.h3 c6 9.♗c4 b5 10.♗b3 a5 11.a4 b4 12.♘e2 d6 (12...d5 13.d3) 13.d3 ♘e8 14.♗e3 ♗xe3 15.♕xe3 (or 15.fxe3 followed by ♘g3 with a slight pull) 15...♕e7 16.♖ad1 (16.f4 is normal) 16...♘f6 17.♘g3 (17.d4 is met by 17...♗a6, but 17.f4 was better) 17...♗e6 18.d4?! exd4 19.♖xd4 c5 20.♖dd1 c4∓ Lejlic-Bellin, Gausdal 1996.

– 7.h3!? is Varga's favourite move, after 7...c6 8.♗c4 the natural 8...0-0 9.d3 with a slight edge for White was not to Black's liking in Varga-Van den Doel, Plovdiv 2003.

However, the ambitious 8...d5?! 9.exd5 e4 10.♕e2 cxd5 backfired after



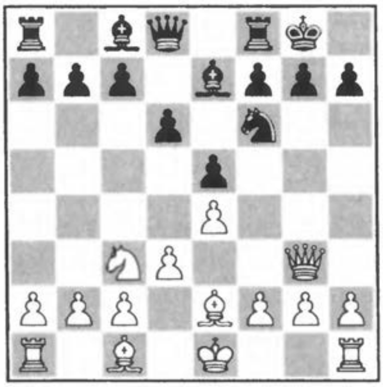
11.♗xd5! 0-0 (11...♘xd5 12.♕b5+! ♗d7 13.♕xc5±) 12.♕c4!? (12.♗xe4) 12...♗b6 13.0-0 ♗f5? (13...♗c7 14.♗xe4 ♕d6; 13...♘xd5 14.♕xd5 ♕xd5) 14.♗xb7 ♖b8 15.♗xe4 ♖c8 16.♕a4 ♗d7 17.♕b4 ♗c5? (17...a5 18.♕d6 ♘xe4 19.♘xe4 ♖xc2) 18.♕b3 ♖e8 19.♗f3 a5 20.d3 and White won.

7.♗c4

Moving the bishop to the a2-g8 diagonal where it is most actively placed. In practice White has also gone for the modest 7.♗e2!? to prepare a quick f4.

After 7...g6 White obtained an edge with 8.d3 ♗g7 9.♕g3 ♗e6 10.f4 exf4 11.♗xf4 0-0 12.d4 ♕d7 13.♖d1 d5 14.e5 ♘e8 15.0-0 in N.Kosintseva-Wang Yu, Goa 2002.

Black can continue with the equally modest 7...♗e7 and now 8.♕g3 0-0 9.d3 occurred in both Shabanov-Nizamov, Pardubice 1998, and in Lejlic-Hellsten, Limhamn 1998. It cannot be much, but, on the other hand, White's queen is more actively placed than Black's and White will be able to advance his f-pawn more easily than Black. So, in practice White should be slightly more comfortable.



7...♗e7

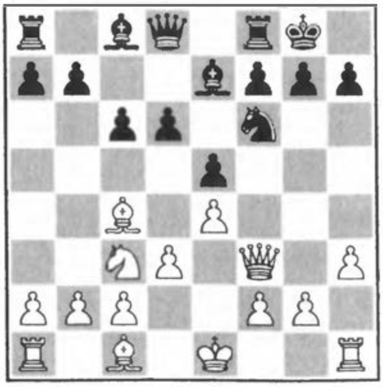
Serious attention deserves 7...♗e6 8.d3 ♕d7 when 9.h3 (9.0-0) 9...♗e7 10.♗e3 c6 11.♗b3 0-0 12.g4?! was well-met by 12...d5! 13.g5 ♘xe4! 14.♘xe4 (14.dxe4 d4 15.0-0-0 ♗xb3 16.cxb3 ♕e6 17.h4 was a better option when Black is comfortable but no more) 14...dxe4 15.♕xe4 ♗d6 16.0-0-0?! (16.♗xe6) 16...♗f5 17.♕g2 a5 and Black won in a direct attack in Varga-Gyimesi, Kazincbarcika 2005.

8.d3 0-0 9.h3

Varga clearly has a preference for this set-up. He plays h3 not as a prophylactic measure but to prepare a pawn storm with g4. In conjunction with the queen on f3 and the bishop on c4 such a plan can be dangerous for Black. Obviously playing for an early g4 is always double-edged.

Still, I prefer Varga's 9.h3 to 9.♖g1?! ♗g4 10.♕e3 ♘h5 11.h3 ♗e6 12.♕f3 g6 13.♗h6 ♘g7 14.♕e3 c6 15.♗xe6 fxe6 16.g3?! d5 and Black was doing well (but lost) in Katalymov-Nebolsina, Tomsk 2001.

9...c6



10.g4

Here he goes again. White has hardly a trace of an advantage after 10.0-0 b5 11.♗b3 a5 12.a3 (12.a4 b4 13.♘e2 ♗e6 is equal, and better than 13...d5 14.♘g3) 12...♗e6 13.♗xe6 fxe6 14.♕e2 ♔h8 15.f4 exf4 16.♗xf4 e5 17.♗d2 Pallesen-Nordenbaek, Taastrup 2002, (via the move order 7.0-0 ♗e7 8.♗c4 0-0 9.d3 and so on).

10...b5

Understandably Black wants to gain some space on the queenside. This is perfectly fine, but so is the sound 10...♗e6.

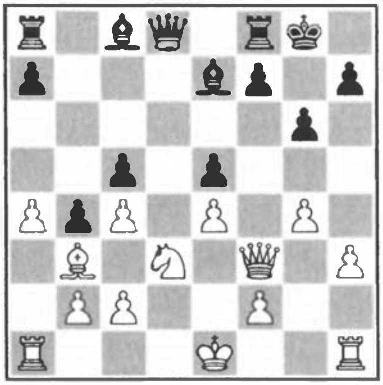
11.♗b3 ♘d7

Black regroups his knight and prepares to take control over the dark squares. Also good was 11...a5.

12.♗e3 ♘c5 13.♗xc5 dxc5 14.a4 c4!?

With this pawn sacrifice Black blunts his opponent's attacking bishop and takes control over the dark squares. Still, White obtains some chances in the game. Black is afraid that after 14...b4 15.♘e2 ♗e6 16.♗c4 he might end up in a good knight-bad bishop scenario, but objectively he is still fine in this position.

15.dxc4 b4 16.♘e2 g6 17.♘c1 c5 18.♘d3



White is slightly better.

18...♗b7 19.0-0-0 ♕c7 20.♖he1 ♖ad8 21.♕g3 ♖fe8 22.g5 ♖d4 23.f3 ♗f8 24.♘f2

24.h4 or 24.♔b1 were possible too.

24...h5

Black must prevent ♘g4 when both square f6 and square d5 (via e3) are tempting pastures for the steed.

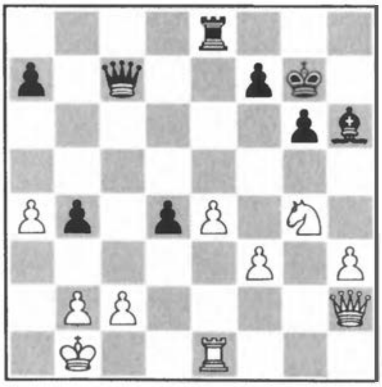
25.gxh6 ♗xh6+ 26.♔b1 ♔g7 27.♖xd4?!

27.♘d3! followed by h4 favours White.

27...cxd4 28.♘d3 ♗a6! 29.♕h2

This looks clever. Varga hopes to prevent ...♗xc4 in this way (because pawns e5 will fall), but it turns out that Black has more than enough activity for the pawn in the resulting ending. The alternative was 29.♘xb4 ♗xc4 30.♗xc4 ♕xc4 31.♘d3 ♕xa4 with chances for both sides.

29...♗xc4! 30.♗xc4 ♕xc4 31.♘xe5 ♕c7 32.♘g4



The point of his 29th move. However, Black is fine after

32...♕xh2 33.♘xh2 ♗f4 34.♖h1

The game is equal after 34.♘g4 f5 35.♘f2 ♗g3.

34...f5 35.♔a2 d3!

This demonstrates that Black is no worse.

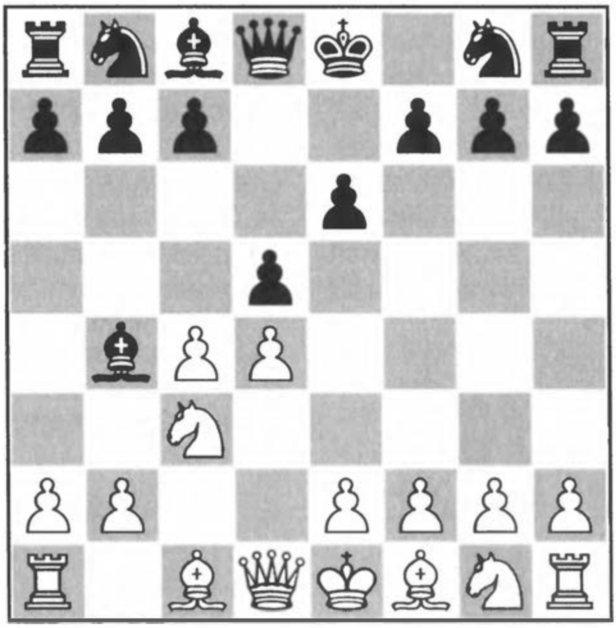
36.cxd3 ♖d8 37.♔b3 ♖xd3+ 38.♔xb4 ♖d2 39.♘f1

Draw.

CHAPTER 16

Nikita Vitiugov

The Accelerated Ragozin



1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4

When you first look at the diagrammed position, you feel like asking – what is this? Is Black playing the Slav Gambit or the Winawer Variation of the French? Indeed, Black usually brings out his bishop to b4 at such an early stage in order to fight actively for the e4-point. Almost certainly he will have to part with his bishop – what then does he have as compensation?

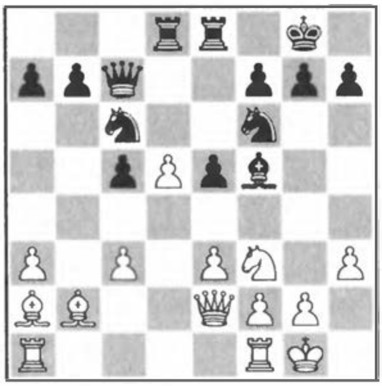
Here too Black is playing for the e4-square, and the main idea is close to the Nimzo-Indian. I would pick out two main reasons why some players (including Alekseev, Jobava and Aleksandrov) sometimes begin the game in this unusual way:

1. Black normally plays the Nimzo-Indian Defence (transposing into the Ragozin Defence in the event of 4.♘f3), but for this specific game he wants to avoid the variation with 4.♕c2.
2. White has begun the game with 1.c4, but Black wants at all costs to develop his bishop at b4 and he replies 1...e6 2.♘c3 d5 3.d4 ♗b4.

I will say at the outset that this article will only examine the replies by White which are of independent significance. Thus after 4.♘f3 Black should play 4...♘f6, leading to the Ragozin Defence – an opening which deserves a separate book. Subsequently too the game may transpose into various lines of the Ragozin Defence, but we are interested only in independent variations. 4. g3 leads after 4...♘f6 to a Nimzo-Indian/Catalan hybrid, while after 4.e3 the game transposes into the classical variation of the Nimzo-Indian Defence. A good and recent example on this theme is the following game.

☐ **Rustam Kasimdzhanov**
■ **Evgeny Alekseev**
Elista FIDE Grand Prix 2008

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.e3 c5 5.♘f3 ♘f6 6.♗d3 0-0 7.0-0 ♘c6 8.a3 ♗xc3 9.bxc3 ♕c7 10.♗b2 dxc4 11.♗xc4 e5 12.h3 ♗f5 13.♗a2 ♖ad8 14.♕e2 ♖fe8 15.d5



15...♖xd5 16.♗xd5 ♘xd5 17.♖fd1 ♘b6 18.a4 a6 19.c4 a5 20.♗c3 f6 21.♘d2 ♘b4 22.♗xb4 cxb4 23.♖dc1 ♖d8 24.c5 ♗d3 25.♕e1 ♘d5 26.♘b3 h6 27.♖a2 e4 28.♖aa1 ♖a8 29.♘d4 ♖c8 30.♕d2 ♔h7 31.f4 ♘c3 32.♘b3 ♘e2+ 33.♔f2 ♘xc1 34.♖xc1 ♕d7 0-1

My experience of the variation in question reduces to the following game.

1 – 4.♕b3

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♕b3

A premature development of the queen, although outwardly it looks very active.

4...c5 5.a3

5.cxd5 exd5 6.dxc5 ♘c6 7.a3 and now either 7...♗a5!? 8.♗f4 ♘f6 9.e3 0-0 10.♘e2 ♘e4, or 7...♗xc5 8.♕xd5 ♕b6 9.e3 ♘f6 with powerful compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

5...♗a5

5...♗xc3+!? is a worthy alternative.

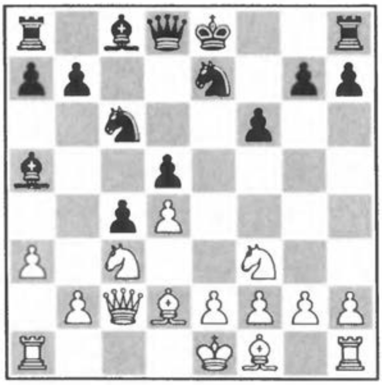
6.cxd5 exd5 7.♘f3

7.♕b5+?! ♗d7 8.♕xc5 ♘e7 and White has problems with his queen: 9.♕d6 ♘bc6 10.♕f4 0-0 and Black is so far ahead in development that he simply must have good compensation.

7...♘c6 8.♗g5

8.e3 c4 9.♕c2 ♘ge7!? with excellent prospects.

8...f6 9.♗d2 c4 10.♕c2 ♘ge7



It can be seen that as a result of the opening only White has problems.

11.e4 ♗xc3 12.♗xc3

12.bxc3 dxe4 13.♕xe4 ♗f5 with the initiative.

12...b5 13.♗e2 0-0 14.0-0 dxe4 15.♕xe4 ♗f5 16.♕h4 16.♕f4 ♕d7∓. **16...♘d5 17.♖fc1? ♖e8** with a winning double threat. After

18.♗f1 ♖e4

White resigned in Moen-Vitiugov, Kallithea European Club Cup 2008.

The next, slightly more active continuation for White, is 4.♕a4+.

II – 4.♕a4+

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♕a4+ ♘c6 5.e3 ♗d7

The conservative 5...♘f6 6.♘f3 also makes sense, leading to a position from the Ragozin Defence.

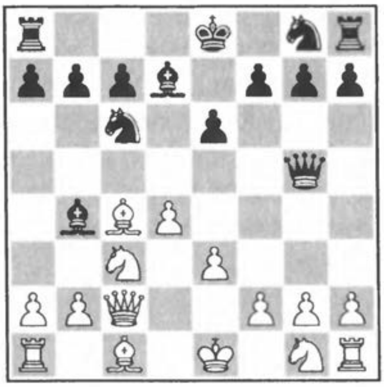
6.♕c2

Here Black has an unexpected and very concrete resource.

6...dxc4!? 7.♗xc4 ♕g5

Only seven moves have been played, and already White has to solve new problems!

In practice Black has also tried 7...e5 8.♘f3 exd4 9.exd4 ♘f6 10.a3 ♕e7+ 11.♗e3 ♗xc3+ 12.bxc3 ♘g4 13.♕e2 with an equal game, Malakhatko-Barsov, Dresden 2008. The text is my personal analysis.



8.f4

The less resolute 8.f3 does not promise White any advantage. Black can choose between the sharp 8...e5 and the blockading 8...♕g6 9.♗d3 f5!?.

8...♕h4+

Provoking a further weakening.

9.g3

9.♕f2 ♕xf2+ 10.♔xf2 ♘f6 with an excellent endgame for Black.

9...♕h5 10.a3

Chasing the black queen does not bring White any benefits: 10.♗e2 ♕g6 11.♗d3 f5 with unusual play.

10...♗xc3+

The most critical move, although 10...♗e7 11.♗d2 ♘f6 is unclear and also possible.

11.bxc3 ♘f6

The immediate 11...f5 could also be tried.

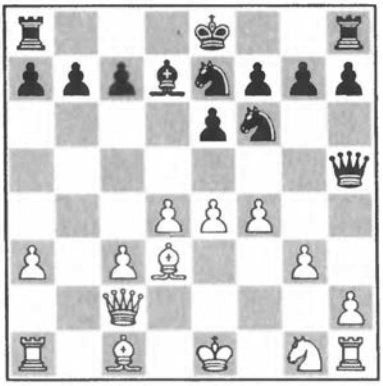
12.♗e2

The hasty 12.e4 is met by 12...♘e7, when White's pawn centre is under threat.

12...♕f5 13.♗d3

13.♕xf5 exf5 and Black has no problems.

13...♕h5 14.e4 ♘e7



The activity of Black's pieces compensates for the opponent's pawn centre.

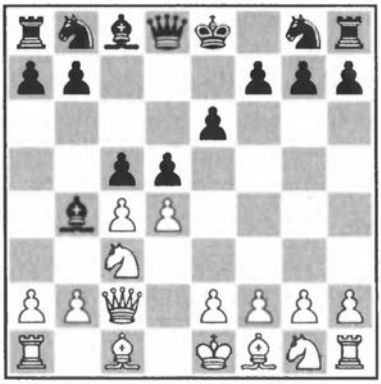
Now for the final logical queen move. Let us see what happens if White nevertheless tries to transpose into the Nimzo-Indian Defence and plays 4.♕c2.

III – 4.♕c2

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♕c2 c5

In my view, the greedy 4...dxc4 5.e3 b5 6.a4 c6 7.axb5 cxb5 is not in the spirit of the variation. Here White can try either 8.b3!?, or else the creative 8.♕e4 ♕d5 9.♕g4 ♔f8 10.♗d2 ♗xc3 11.♗xc3 ♗b7 12.♗b4+ ♘e7 13.♘e2

♘c6 14.♘c3 ♕d8 15.♗c5 with an attack in Markos-Dizdar, Seefeld 2008.



5.cxd5

5.a3 ♗xc3+ 6.bxc3 (or 6.♕xc3 cxd4 7.♕xd4 ♘f6) hardly promises White anything, since his queen is completely misplaced. And the beauty of the possibilities concealed in the position is demonstrated by this non-essential variation: 5.♗e3?! e5!! 6.0-0-0 ♗xc3 7.bxc3 cxd4 8.cxd4 ♘e7.

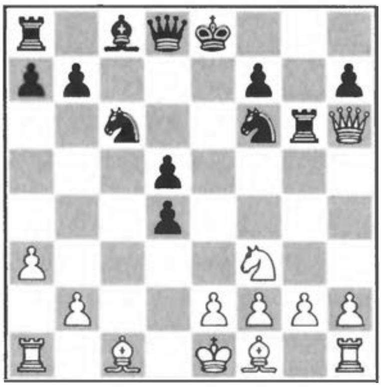
5...exd5

5...♘f6 can be strongly recommended, after which play transposes into a semi-correct gambit, first tried in the game Bareev-Topalov, Monaco 2005, via the move order 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♕c2 d5 5.cxd5 c5!?. But there is nevertheless one difference with that Nimzo move order – here White is deprived of the capture en passant and therefore he cannot play dxc6!. The game Pelletier-Carlsen, Biel 2005, went 6.dxc5 ♘xd5 7.♗d2 ♗xc5 8.♘xd5 ♕xd5 9.e4 ♕d4?! 10.0-0-0 ♘d7 11.♗b5 0-0?? 12.♗c3 ♕xf2 13.♕xf2 ♗xf2 14.♗xd7 ♗e3+ 15.♔c2.

6.dxc5

Instead 6.♘f3 ♘f6 looks totally insipid for White.

6.a3, an attempt to exploit the fact that the g8-knight is undeveloped, is met by a counter-sacrifice of a pawn after 6...♗xc3+ 7.♕xc3 cxd4 8.♕g3 ♘f6! (8...♕f6!?) 9.♕xg7 ♖g8 10.♕h6 ♘c6 11.♘f3 (completely weak is 11.♗g5? ♖g6 12.♕h4 ♕a5+ 13.♗d2 ♕b6∓) 11...♖g6



12.♕f4 ♖g4 13.♕d2 (possibly White should prefer 13.♕h6, with a repetition of moves) 13...♘e4 14.♕d3 (14.♕d1 ♕a5+ 15.♗d2 ♕b6↑) 14...♕a5+ 15.♗d2 ♕b6↑.

6...♘c6

Dubious is 6...d4?! 7.a3 ♗xc5 8.♘b5 ♕a5+ 9.b4 ♕xb5 10.e3!.

7.♘f3 ♘f6 8.♗g5 h6 9.♗xf6 ♕xf6 10.e3 ♗e6 11.0-0-0

Or 11.♗e2 (11.♗b5 0-0 12.0-0 ♗xc5) 11...0-0 12.0-0 ♗xc5 13.♘xd5 ♗xd5 14.♕xc5 ♕xb2 15.♕xd5 ♕xe2 and the game Bareev-Short, Novgorod 1994, soon ended in a draw.

11...♗xc3 12.♕xc3 ♕xc3+ 13.bxc3 ♖c8 14.♔d2 ♘a5 with an equal position.

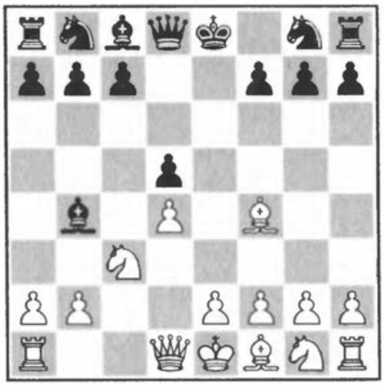
The following line for White is not very popular, although it is perfectly playable.

IV – 4.cxd5

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♗f4

In this way White tries to obtain a favourable variation of the Queen's Gambit with the black bishop badly placed on b4. If Black tries to play along the lines of the Ragozin

Defence, White will have the possibility of developing his knight at e2.

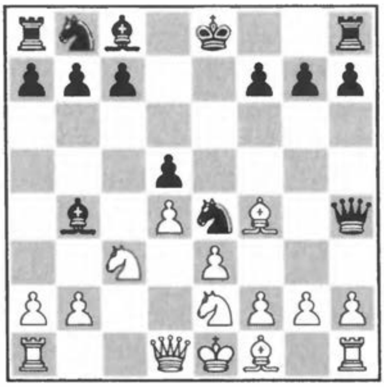


5...♘e7!?

An interesting decision. Black exploits the fact that only with his bishop on b4 is he able to deploy his pieces in this way.

In my view, it looks more harmonious to play 5...♘f6 6.e3 and now either:

- 6...c5 7.dxc5 (7.♗d3 ♘c6) 7...♘c6 8.♗d3 ♗xc5 9.♘ge2 0-0 10.0-0 d4 11.exd4 ♘xd4 12.♘a4 ♘xe2+ 13.♗xe2 ♘d5 14.♗g3 ♗e7 15.♗f3 ♗e6 with equality, Lautier-Sosonko, Lyon 1991.
- Or, for those who like adventures 6...♘e4!? 7.♘e2 (7.♕b3 ♘c6!?; 7.♖c1 g5 8.♗g3 h5 9.f3 ♘xg3 10.hxg3 c6 unclear) 7...♕h4

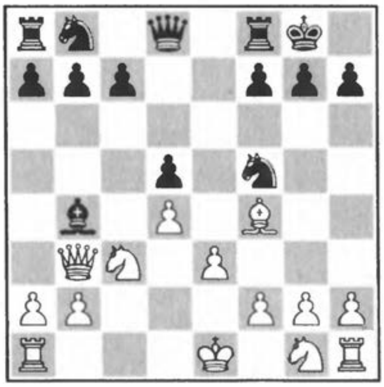


8.g3 (8.♕a4+ ♘c6 9.♗g3 ♘xg3 10.♘xg3=; 8.♗g3 ♘xg3 9.♘xg3 c6=) 8...♕e7 9.f3 ♘xc3 10.bxc3 ♗a5 11.h4 0-0 12.♗g2 b6 13.0-0 ♗a6 14.♖e1 ♘d7 with unclear play.

6.e3 0-0 7.♗d3 ♗f5

This is the point of developing the knight at e7 – Black solves the problem of his queen's bishop.

8.♗xf5 ♘xf5 9.♕b3



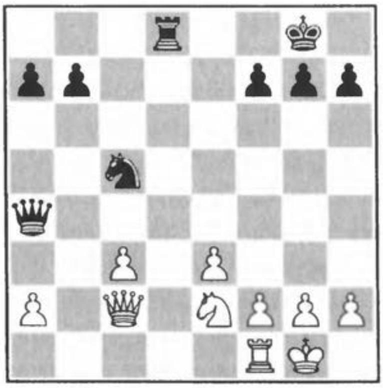
9...c5

9...♗xc3+!? looks to be in the spirit of the variation: 10.bxc3 (10.♕xc3 ♘h4) 10...b6 11.♘f3 ♘c6 12.c4 ♘a5 13.♕c2 ♘e7 14.cxd5 ♘xd5 15.♗g5 f6 16.♗h4 c5 17.0-0 ♖c8 with equality, S.Ivanov-Greenfeld, St Petersburg 1999.

10.dxc5 ♘a6 11.♖d1 ♕a5 12.♘e2 ♖fd8

12...♘xc5!? 13.♕c2 ♘e7 would also have equalized, but simple ways are not for Vadim Zviagintsev.

13.♕c2 ♗xc3+ 14.bxc3 ♘e7 15.♗d6 ♘c8 16.♖xd5 ♘xd6 17.♖xd6 ♘xc5 18.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 19.0-0 ♕a4



and Black had excellent compensation for the pawn in Speelman-Zviagintsev, Altensteig 1994.

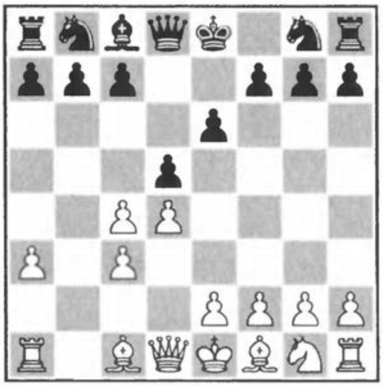
And, finally, we have reached the most problematic line in the entire variation – 4.a3.

V - 4.a3

1.c4 e6 2.♘c3 d5 3.d4 ♗b4 4.a3

I should immediately mention that 4.cxd5 exd5 5.a3 is a slight inaccuracy. Why this is so will become clear a little later.

4...♗xc3+ 5.bxc3

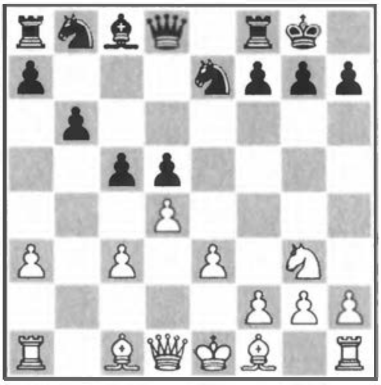


5...c5

The other way of developing is 5...♘e7. At e7 the knight is more flexibly placed than at f6. In any case White's plan in this structure comprises a pawn offensive in the centre and on the kingside. But with his knight on e7 Black, firstly, has the restraining resource f7-f5, and secondly, the knight itself will not come under attack when the opponent's pawn centre advances.

In my view, since the time of the well-known game Botvinnik-Capablanca, AVRO Tournament 1938, this pawn structure has been somewhat overrated for White. Of course, he has the easier game, but Black too has his trumps.

6.cxd5 (6.e3 0-0 8.♘f3 is another decent set-up) 6...exd5 7.e3 0-0 8.♘e2 (8.♗d3 ♗f5!?) 8...c5 9.♘g3 b6.



Black is intending to exchange the light-square bishops via a6, and so White assiduously saves a tempo. 10.♖a2!? ♗a6 (weaker is 10...♖e8?! 11.♗b5! ♘ec6? – 11...♗d7 12.♗d3± – 12.0-0♗a6 13.a4 ♕d7 14.dxc5 bxc5 15.♗a3 c4 16.♖d2!+–, Tomashevsky-Jobava, Budva 2009) 11.♗xa6 ♘xa6 12.0-0 ♕d7 13.f3 ♖fd8 with complicated play.

6.e3 ♕c7!?

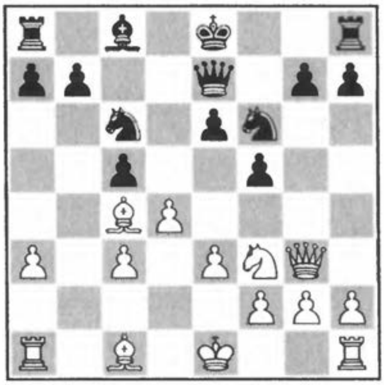
If 6...♘f6 White should play 7.cxd5 exd5 8.f3, as in the game Kasparov-J.Polgar, Tilburg 1997.

7.cxd5

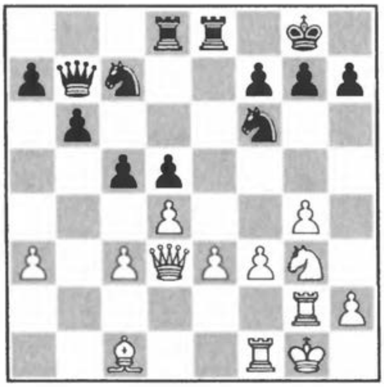
7.♕g4!? (White has this possibility only without the exchange on d5. See the note on move four) 7...f5 8.♕g3 ♕e7 9.♗d3 (A different type of position arises after 9.cxd5!? exd5 10.♕e5; in the endgame White apparently retains some advantage, but Black will also have his own play) 9...♘c6 10.♘f3.

Now the game Lutsko-Aleksandrov, Saratov 2006, went 10...♘f6 11.♘e5 0-0 12.0-0 ♘e4 13.♗xe4 fxe4 14.♘xc6 bxc6 15.a4!±.

Instead of 10...♘f6, 10...dxc4!? 11.♗xc4 ♘f6 should evidently be recommended. The position becomes less closed, which is probably to Black's advantage, despite the opponent's two bishops.

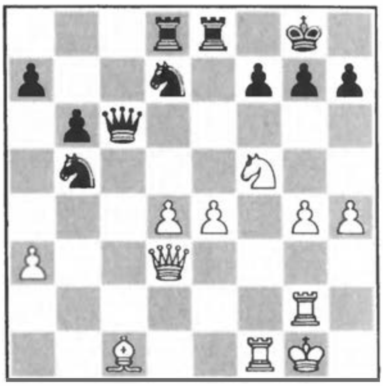


The bishop is developed at b7, the knight will aim for e4, and there is the idea of advancing e6-e5 – in a word, Black has a whole range of strategically interesting ideas.
7...exd5 8.♖a2!? Tomashevsky's favourite move. Not 8.♗d3? cxd4!. **8...♘f6** Subsequently the game is very instructive as regards the strategic ideas demonstrated by the two sides. I think that Black should act as in the game, but place his knight on e7. For example, 8...♘e7 9.♗d3 0-0 10.♘e2 b6 11.0-0 ♗a6 12.♗xa6 ♘xa6 13.♕d3 ♕b7 14.f3 f5!?, with chances for both sides.
9.♗d3 0-0 10.♘e2 b6 11.0-0 ♖e8 12.f3 ♗a6 13.♗xa6 ♘xa6 14.♕d3 ♕b7 15.g4!? ♖ad8 16.♘g3 ♘c7 17.♖g2



The two sides have practically completed the mobilization of their forces. The crisis is imminent.

17...♕c6 Interesting is 17...♕a6 18.♕xa6 (18.♕d1 ♕c4) 18...♘xa6 19.g5 ♘d7 20.e4 ♘c7. **18.h4 ♘d7 19.♘f5 ♘b5 20.e4!?** The classical breakthrough in the centre. **20...dxe4 21.fxe4 cxd4 22.cxd4**



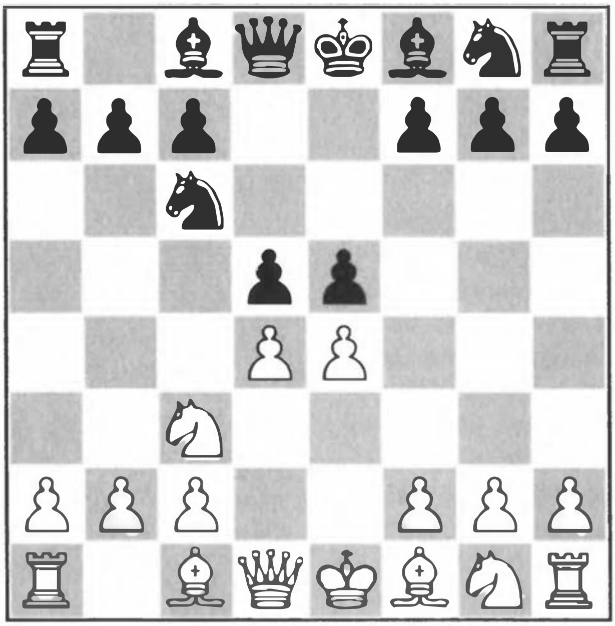
22...♘d6? Black's only possibility, one difficult to find, was 22...♖xe4 23.♕f3 (23.d5 ♕c5+! 24.♗e3 ♕c4∓; 23.a4 ♘c7 24.♗a3) 23...♖de8 24.♘g3 ♘f6 25.♘xe4 ♖xe4 26.♗b2 ♕e6 with compensation.
After the text White seized the initiative with **23.e5** and converted his advantage into a win in Tomashevsky-Aleksandrov, Moscow Aeroflot Open 2006.

Summing up, I should mention that, in my view, the reputation of this variation (I would call it the Accelerated Ragozin) is worse than it is in actual fact. Complicated, strategically intricate play arises in all variations. The main difference compared with the classical Ragozin is that often it is more advantageous for Black to develop his knight at e7 than at f6. And a special feature compared with the Nimzo-Indian is that in many lines Black manages to play both d7-d5 and c7-c5. Of course, Black's position should not be idealized – there are also difficulties here, as in any other opening. But if you want to surprise your opponent in the opening and play deep and interesting chess – this variation is for you.

CHAPTER 17

Jacob Aagaard

Nimzowitsch Opening: Exciting Symmetry



1.e4 ♘c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 e5

Introduction

1.e4 ♘c6

I think there is probably nothing as SOS as this move, so when I by accident decided to check if an idea that fascinated me twenty years ago is actually playable, it was natural for me to think of New in Chess and the SOS series.

2.d4 d5 3.♘c3

If there is a refutation of the Nimzowitsch Opening, this is the move.

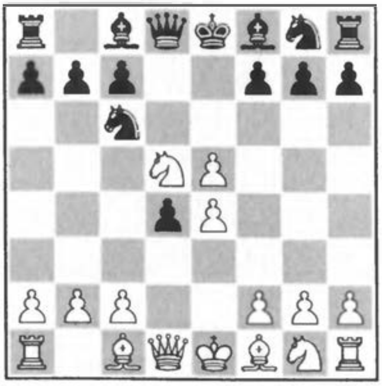
3...e5!

This is the idea; perfect symmetry! The move includes a pawn sacrifice.

4.dxe5!

The critical move for sure. We shall also look at 4.♗b5 and 4.♘xd5, but this is the one that shall worry us.

4...d4 5.♘d5



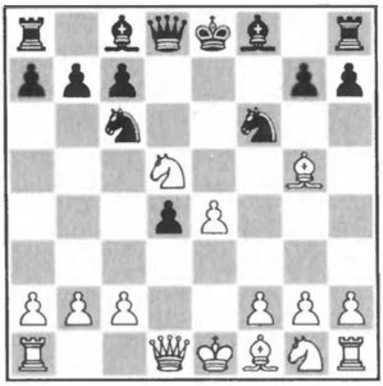
● **5...f5!?**

This move fascinates me as much today, as it did in 1988.

6.exf6 ♘xf6

Black has classic compensation for the pawn, so if White wants the advantage, he has to push on fully. It seems that the fascinating lines which we shall look at, are not objectively OK, but this is not always necessary for them to work in practice.

7.♗g5!



Here the original idea was:

7...♘xd5 8.♗xd8 ♗b4+ 9.♔e2 ♘f4+ 10.♔f3 0-0 with compensation for the queen.

Who would not love this idea at 15? Or at 35? It turns out that the sacrifice is not sufficient, neither in this version, nor after 7...♗e6, as White does not have to play 8.♗c4?!, where 8...♘xd5! leads to equality, but 8.♗xf6!, when White is better.

For this reason I also analysed

● **5...♘ge7!**

and found that it is probably fully playable (see page 138 and following). I hope you will enjoy this idea as an amusing SOS.

Sacrificing the Queen – 7...♘xd5?

1.e4 ♘c6 2.d4

2.♘f3 is of course possible. Here 2...e5 would lead to the main roads, while 2...d5!? is a popular variation, especially on the Internet.

2...d5 3.♘c3

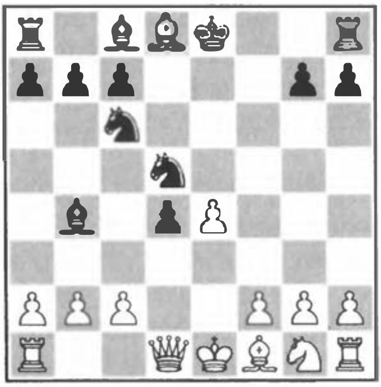
Quite innocent is 3.exd5 ♕xd5 which has been covered by Tiviakov in SOS 9 (Chapter 9, p.70) – via the Scandinavian move order 1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♕xd5 3.d4 ♘c6.

3...e5 4.dxe5 d4 5.♘d5 f5 6.exf6 ♘xf6 7.♗g5 See the diagram in the left column.

7...♞xd5?

It is with great sadness that I have to admit that this sacrifice does not work.

8.♗xd8 ♗b4+



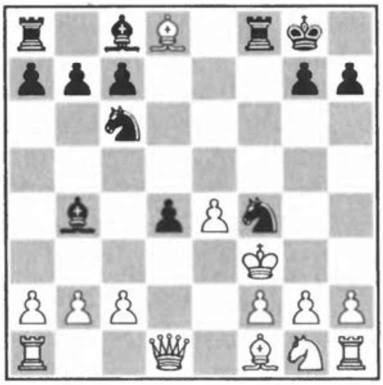
9.♔e2?

This appears to be too materialistic. The refutation of this line is probably 9.c3!? dxc3 10.exd5!, where Black has two highly unsatisfactory paths to walk down:

- 10...♗g4 11.♗g5! cxb2+ 12.♗d2 ♗xd1 13.♖xd1! (13.♖b1? ♗a4!=) 13...0-0-0 14.♖b1! ♖he8+ 15.♗e2 ♗xd2+ 16.♔xd2 ♖xd5+ 17.♔c3 and there is most likely far from enough compensation for the piece.
- 10...c2+ 11.♕d2 ♗xd2+ 12.♔xd2 ♘xd8 13.♖e1+ ♔d7 14.♔xc2 ♔d6 15.♘f3 and White is close to winning.

However, 9.♕d2! ♗xd2+ 10.♔xd2 ♔xd8 11.exd5, as in Dos Santos-Fiorito, Lomas de Zamora 1995, might be the simplest refutation. White is a pawn up for probably very little.

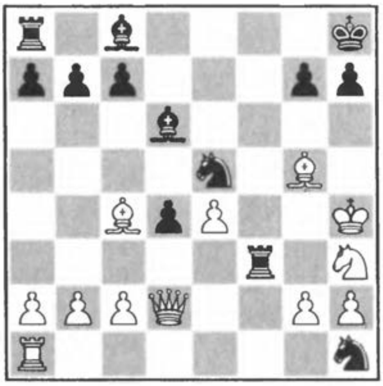
9...♘f4+ 10.♔f3 0-0



I was only sixteen. It might sound sad, but to me this position was as exciting as girls in miniskirts; and what is even sadder, at thirty six it seems even more so!

11.♗h4?

● 11.♔g3 is a winning move according to my soulless superior, but if we move the pieces about for a while, he gets terribly grumpy. Here is such an experiment: 11...♗d6 12.f3 ♘h3+ 13.♔h4 ♘f2 14.♕d2 ♘xh1 15.♗c4+ ♔h8 16.♗g5 ♘e5 17.♘h3 ♖xf3!

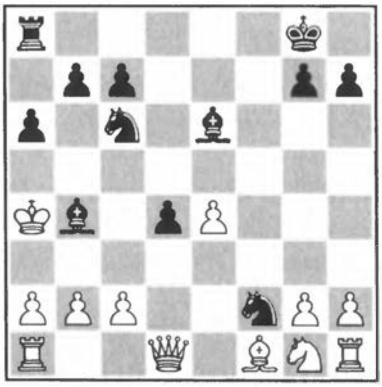


Oops! You have suddenly had a change of heart, my dear friend. The evaluation has dropped with about 6 points over the last three moves! 18.♖f1 (18.gxf3 ♘xf3+ 19.♔h5 g6+ 20.♔h6 ♗f8 mate is very romantic) 18...♖xf1 19.♗xf1 ♘g6+ 20.♔h5 ♗xh2 21.♗h4 ♘e5 22.♗e1 ♘g3+ 23.♗xg3 ♗xg3, and Black wins. The main idea is 24...g6+, 25...♔g7 and 26...h6 mate.

● 11.♗xc7!? ♘h3+ 12.♔e2 ♘xf2 13.♕c1 ♗e6 14.♘f3 ♘xh1 is the critical position for evaluating the position after 10...0-0, but as the whole line is flawed, I have not found the impetus to investigate it closely. My initial brief inquiry did suggest that Black was in the game, but nothing clearer than that.

11...♗d6?

Here Black misses his chance for immortality. The winning combination was 11...♘h3+! 12.♔e2 (12.♔g3 ♘xf2 wins in one go, because of the threats of ...♘xd1, ♘xe4 mate, ...♘xh1 mate and ...♗d6+) 12...♖xf2+!! (a powerful reloader; the attacking moves are played in exactly the right order. The following moves indicate best play by both parties) 13.♗xf2 ♗g4+ 14.♔d3 (14.♘f3 ♘f4 mate is pretty) 14...♘xf2+ 15.♔c4 ♗e6+! 16.♔b5 a6+ 17.♔a4



17...d3! 18.♗xd3 ♘xd3 19.♕xd3 b5+ 20.♕xb5 axb5+ 21.♔xb5 ♖b8+ 22.♔xc6 ♗d6 23.♘f3 ♖b6 mate.

12.g4 12.h3!? might be stronger.

12...♘e5+ 13.♔g3 ♘h5+ 14.gxh5??

After both 14.♔h3 and 14.♔g2, Black only has perpetual check, now it is just mate.

14...♘f3+! And White resigned, Foulger-Dijon, Orange 1994.

Sacrificing the Queen – 7...♗e6

1.e4 ♘c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 e5 4.dxe5 d4 5.♘d5 f5 6.exf6 ♘xf6 7.♗g5 ♗e6

Now White can easily go wrong. He has a choice between:

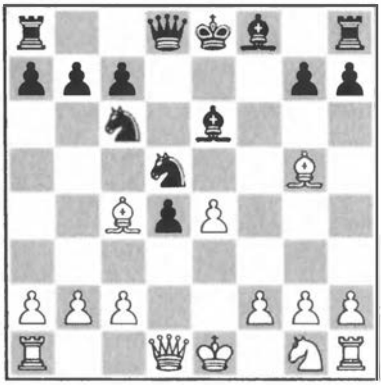
I 8.♗c4?!

II 8.♗xf6!

Variation I

8.♗c4?! ♘xd5

Our familiar queen sacrifice.



9.♗xd8

Instead, 9.♕h5+!? is tricky, but probably not a huge problem: 9...g6 10.exd5 ♗b4+ 11.♔f1 gxh5 12.♗xd8 ♗xd5 (I think Black can improve with 12...♖xd8! 13.dxe6 ♘e5 14.a3 ♘xc4 15.axb4 a6≌) 13.♗xd5 ♖xd8 14.♗xc6+ bxc6 15.♖d1 0-0 16.♘f3 ♗a5!N (16...♖fe8 was played in Bryson-Sek, cr 1986-1988. Here White should probably try 17.♖g1!±) 17.♔e2 c5 18.♔d3 ♖f4.

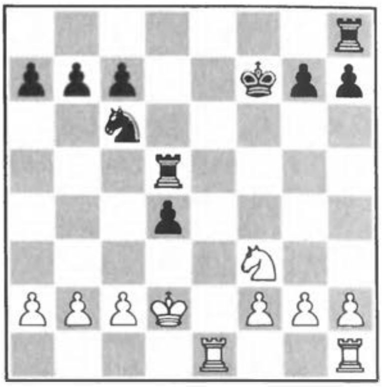
9...♗b4+ 10.♔e2!?

This is of course the most entertaining move. I am however surprised by the number of players who have found the risk worth it.

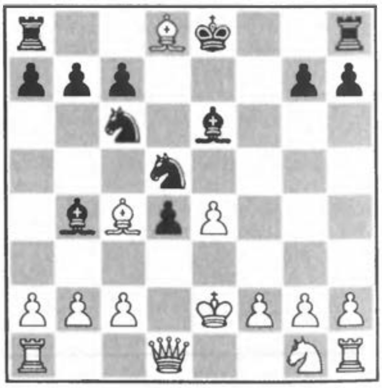
● 10.♔f1? looks suspicious, and is indeed very risky. 10...♞e3+ 11.fxe3 ♗xc4+ 12.♘e2 ♖xd8 13.b3 ♗a6 14.♔g1 dxe3 15.♕c1 ♗d2 16.♕b2 0-0 17.c4 ♖f2 18.♘g3 ♗b4 19.♕xf2 exf2+ 20.♔xf2 ♖d2+ 21.♘e2 ♘d4 22.♖ae1 ♖xa2 0-1 Cremer-Sicker, Halle 1996.

● 10.c3 dxc3 11.exd5 c2+ 12.♕d2 was Monninger-Albers, Cologne 2004, and here the obvious move is the improvement: 12...♗xd2+!N 13.♔xd2 ♗xd5 14.♖e1+ ♔f8 with equality.

● 10.♕d2 ♗xd2+ 11.♔xd2 ♖xd8 12.exd5 ♗xd5 13.♖e1+ ♔f7 14.♗xd5+ ♖xd5 15.♘f3.



You can reach this position in many different move orders after 10.♕d2, and certainly many have occurred in practice. One commentator optimistically called this a clear edge for White. This is not true, although practice has favoured him. The objective evaluation is '=', or dead equal, but Black has to play decently to prove this. He has to combine sensible defensive moves, like ...h6 at the right moment, with active rook moves, preventing White from seriously insulting the pawn on d4. You get this kind of scenario in many openings, the position is equal, but Black has to prove it.



10...♘c3+!

This appears to be the most dangerous approach, although it is hard to be sure that it is the best move.

10...♘f4+!? is also fully playable: 11.♔f3 ♗xc4 (this position is very sharp and should be analysed deeper) 12.♗xc7!? (12.♔xf4 0-0+ reminds of the 10...♞c3+ line, only the pawn is on b2) 12...♘e6 13.b3 (the computer's choice. 13.g3 ♘xc7 14.♔g2 0-0 was unclear in Veres-Yaschenko, cr 1991) 13...♗a6 14.♗f4 ♖f8 15.g3 g5 16.♔g2 gxf4 with a highly entertaining, and unclear, position.

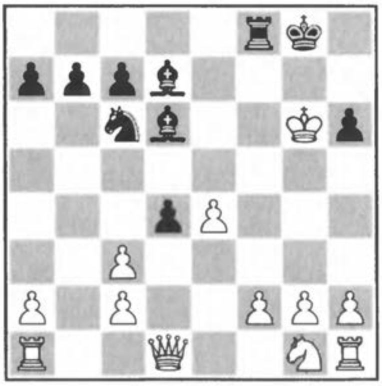
10...♘e3? 11.♗xe6!+−, Leisebein-Michna, e-mail 1999.

11.bxc3 ♗xc4+ 12.♔f3

12.♔d2 ♗xc3+ 13.♔c1 ♖xd8 14.♖b1 0-0. I am in no way sure about the objective evaluation here. The computer favours White. I just don't believe that your human opponent would survive a practical game!

12...0-0+ 13.♔g4 ♗e6+ 14.♔h4!

14.♔h5? looks very bad. See only this fantastic effort: 14...g6+ 15.♔g5 ♗d6! (15...♖xf2!? 16.cxb4 ♖xg2+ 17.♔f4 ♖xd8 18.♔f3 ♖g4⩱) 16.♗f6? (the computer move, but White has no defence hereafter. But already the position looks very dodgy) 16...h6+! 17.♔xg6 ♖xf6+! 18.♔xf6 ♗d7! 19.♔g6 ♖f8!



– 20.♕h5 ♘e5+ 21.♕xe5 ♗xe5 22.♘h3 ♗e8+ 23.♔xh6 ♗f6 and there is no defence against: ...♗e7 followed by either ...♖f7 or ...♔h8 and ...♖g8, both mating.

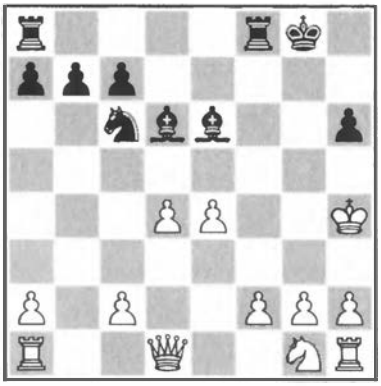
– 20.♕c1 ♘e5+ 21.♔xh6 ♘g4+ 22.♔h5 ♔f7 23.e5 ♗xe5 24.♕h6 ♘xh6 25.♘f3 ♗f4 26.♘g5+ ♔g7 0-1, Chamorro-Hellbing, cr 2002.

14...♗d6! Not 14...♖f4+?! 15.g4 ♗xc3 16.♗xc7 ♖xg4+ 17.♕xg4 ♗xg4 18.♖b1 ♗e6 19.♘e2±.

15.♗g5 h6 16.♗xh6

Black was slightly better after 16.♞h3 hxg5+ 17.♘xg5 ♖f4+ 18.g4 ♗e7! 19.h3 dxc3 20.♖b1 ♖d8 Weber-Welz, cr 1992.

16...gxh6 17.cxd4



17...♘xd4!N

Without this move the line does not work for Black, and he would have to go back to move 10 for an improvement.

The alternatives do not really work:

– 17...♖f4+ 18.g4 h5 19.h3! (19.f3 hxg4 20.fxg4 ♔f7 21.e5 ♘xe5 22.dxe5 ♗xe5 23.♔g3 ♖xg4+ 24.♔f3 and now rather than 24...♔e7? 25.♘e2±, Wacker-Sicker, cr 1993, Black equalizes after 24...♖d4 25.♕c1 ♗d5+ 26.♔f2 ♗xh1) 19...hxg4 20.hxg4 ♔f7 21.♘h3 ♖h8+ 22.♔g3 ♖xg4+ 23.♔f3 ♔e7 24.♔e3 and White wins.

– 17...♗e7+ 18.♔g3 ♗d6+ 19.e5 ♞xe5 20.f4! ♘g6 21.♘f3 ♘xf4 22.♔f2±.

18.♕xd4

It proves that the two pieces can be very dangerous for White, if he does not take on the challenge.

– 18.♘h3 is probably no better, rather, it looks worse once you scratch under the surface: 18...♖ad8! (the most flexible move) 19.f4 (19.♖b1 ♖f7! with 20...♖g7 and 21...♗e7 looks very dangerous for White) 19...♔h7 (19...♖f7!?) 20.♕h5 ♗e7+ 21.♔g3 ♗f7! 22.♕a5 ♖g8+ 23.♔f2 b6 24.♕a4 ♗c5∓.

– 18.f3 ♖ad8 looks fine too.

18...♖f4+ 19.g4 ♖xg4+

19...♗e7+?! is poor, the king is badly placed on the rim, like a short legged horse: 20.♔g3 ♖xg4+ 21.♔f3 ♖f8+ 22.♔e3 ♗g5+ 23.♔d3 ♗f6 24.♕xa7 ♗xa1 25.♔e3, Black does not have enough compensation.

20.♔h5 ♖g2!

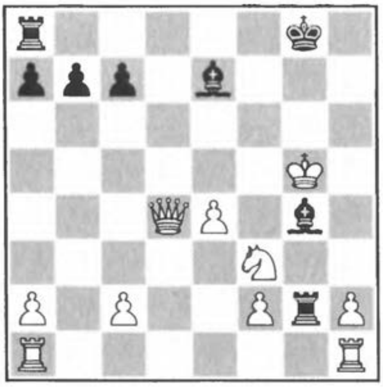
Only this move equalizes.

20...♖f8?! 21.♘e2 ♖f3 22.♕d3 ♖f7! 23.♖hg1 ♖fg7 24.♕d5!!±.

21.♘f3

White also needs to be careful: 21.♕f6 ♖e8 22.♖e1 ♗g4+ 23.♔h4 ♗e7 24.♕xe7 ♖xe7 25.f3 ♗e6∓.

21...♗g4+ 22.♔xh6 ♗f8+ 23.♔g5 ♗e7+



White should now settle for a repetition. The attempt to play on with **24.♔f4!? ♖f8+ 25.♔e5 ♗f6+ 26.♔d5 ♖d8+ 27.♔c5 b6+ 28.♔c4 ♗e6+ 29.♔c3 ♖xd4 30.♘xd4 c5** favours Black slightly.

Variation II

8.♗xf6! gxf6

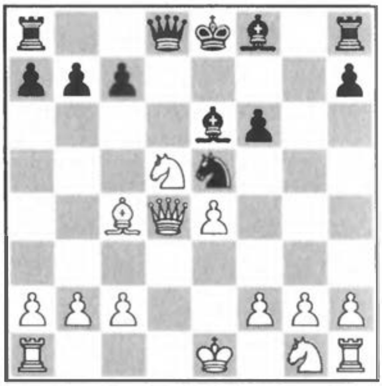
The tactical character of Variation A certainly does not disfavour Black as we have seen. With 8.♗xf6 White opts for a more positional approach. It makes sense now to continue strategically with 9.♕h5+ (B) rather than to invite new complications with 9.♗c4 (A).

Subvariation A

9.♗c4?! ♘e5 10.♕xd4

This is best met with allowing White to follow through with his plans.

10.♗b3 c6 11.♘f4 ♕a5+! 12.♔f1 ♗g4 13.♘ge2 0-0-0 with sufficient compensation for the pawn.



10...c6!!

Ignoring the threat.

11.♘c7+ ♕xc7 12.♗xe6 ♖d8 13.♕e3

We have been following Lacoste-Dacquin, cr 1999. Black should now play

13...♗b4+!N 14.♔f1

14.c3?! weakens the d3-square significantly. 14...♗c5! 15.♕e2 ♘d3+ 16.♔f1 ♘f4 17.♕c4 ♕e7 18.b4 ♗b6 19.♗g4 ♕g7 20.♗f3 ♖d2∓.

14...♕d6!!

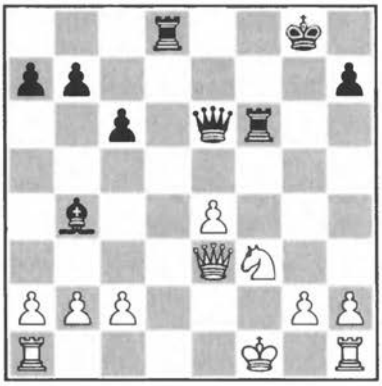
This is the great point of Black's 10th move.

15.f4! 15.♗b3?? ♕d1+ 16.♖xd1 ♖xd1+ 17.♔e2 ♖e1 mate.

15...♕xe6 16.fxe5 0-0!?

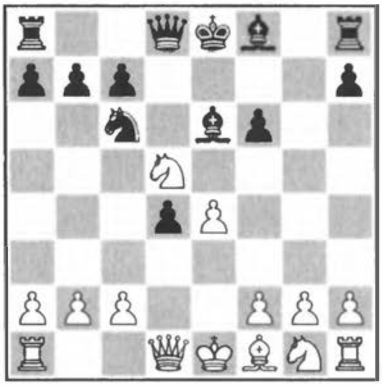
You can also take the pawn immediately, of course, but why not tempt White into considering:

17.exf6?? ♖xf6+ 18.♘f3 when we have:



18...♖xf3+!! 19.gxf3 ♕h3+ 20.♔g1 ♔h8 21.♔f2 ♖d2+ Winning.

Subvariation B



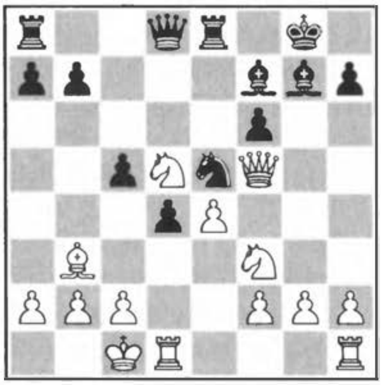
9.♕h5+!

This is the refutation of the pawn sacrifice with 5...f5.

9...♗f7 10.♕f5 ♗g7!N

An improvement is sadly needed at this point, even if it is not quite enough. After 10...♗xd5? 11.exd5! ♗b4+ 12.♔d1 ♘e7 13.♕h5+ ♔d7 (13...♔f8!? 14.♗c4! ♕d6 15.♘f3±) as in Marcotulli-Hellbing, e-mail 2003, White can now play 14.♕g4+!N ♔e8 15.♗c4, with a winning position.

11.♘f3 0-0 12.0-0-0 ♖e8 13.♗c4 ♘e5 14.♗b3 c5

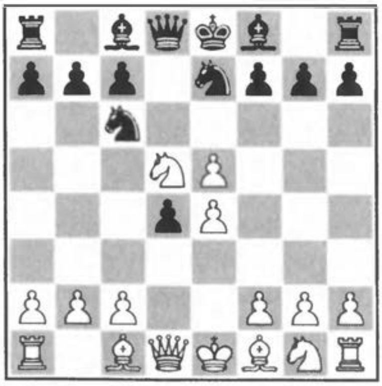


Black has some counterplay, but to be honest, I do not trust his position.

All in all, we must conclude that 5...f5 is not completely trustworthy. At the same time we have seen that this line contains numerous pitfalls for White, so in practice you might score well with it (and have a lot of fun too). However, if you are unwilling to take this kind of gamble then the next section is for you!

The Sober 5...♘ge7

1.e4 ♘c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 e5 4.dxe5 d4 5.♘d5 ♘ge7!

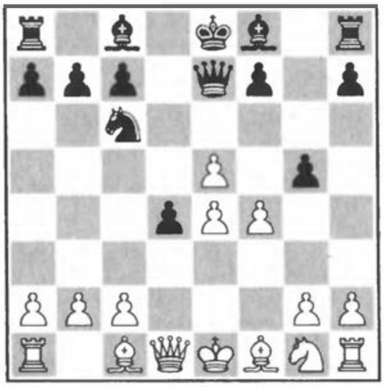


6.♗g5

Rather than supporting the knight on d5, this puts the bishop in a pin. There are two other options:

– 6.♗c4 ♗e6 7.♘xe7 ♕xe7 8.♗xe6 (8.♗b5? ♕b4+) 8...♕xe6 9.f4 (9.♘f3 0-0-0 10.0-0 h6∞ with the idea of ...g5-g4) 9...0-0-0 10.♘f3 ♗b4+!? (10...f6 11.♕e2 fxe5 12.f5 ♕d7=) 11.♗d2 (11.♔f2 ♗c5=∞) 11...♕g6 12.♕e2 ♗xd2+ 13.♘xd2 d3!.

– 6.♘xe7 ♕xe7 7.f4! (this is of course the critical move. There are some analysis in an old *Informant* with 7.♗b5, but let us have a glance at 7...♕b4+ and move on! 7.♘f3 ♗g4 8.♗e2 ♗xf3 9.♗xf3 has been played twice. After the simplest move, 9...♕xe5 Black is no worse, of course) 7...g5! (the SOS-spirit! 7...f6 8.exf6 ♕xe4+ 9.♔f2 gxf6 10.♗d3±)



8.♘f3 (8.fxg5 ♕xe5 9.♗d3 was played in Topchy-Shukurov, Ukraine cr 2002. The position is not to anyone's favour. After 9...♗e6 10.♘f3 ♕d6 11.0-0 ♗g7 with the idea ...♗e5 in reply to ♘h4, White has to play well to prove an advantage) 8...gxf4 (8...♗g4 9.h3 ♗xf3 10.♕xf3 gxf4 11.♗xf4 0-0-0 12.0-0-0 Kovacs-Szakony, Hungary 2002/03. Now 12...♘xe5 equalizes) 9.♗xf4 ♗g4 10.c3 (10.h3!? ♗xf3 11.♕xf3 0-0-0 transposes to 8...♗g4; 10.♗e2?! ♗xf3 11.♗xf3 ♗h6! 12.♗xh6 ♕h4+ 13.g3 ♕xh6 14.♕d2 ♕xd2+ 15.♔xd2 ♘xe5∓ Lybin-Shushpanov, cr 1991) 10...0-0-0! 11.♗g5 ♕xg5 12.♘xg5 ♗xd1 13.♖xd1 dxc3 14.♖xd8+ ♘xd8 15.bxc3 ♗g7 with equal chances.

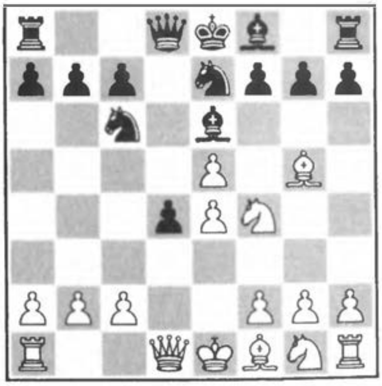
6...♗e6

I do not fancy the black position after 6...h6?! 7.♗xe7 ♗xe7 8.♗b5!.

7.♘f4!

– 7.♘xe7 ♗xe7 8.♗xe7 ♕xe7 9.♕d2 0-0-0 10.f4 g5∓ is standard stuff, Shavtvaladze-Zakarian, Thessaloniki 2003.

– 7.c4!? is an interesting move, but although it has some venom, Black should be fine: 7...dxc3 (7...♘xe5 8.♕xd4±) 8.♘xc3 h6!? (8...♘xe5 9.♕a4+ ♕d7 10.♕xd7+ ♘xd7 11.♘f3±) 9.♗e3 (9.♗h4 ♘xe5 10.♕a4+ c6 11.♖d1 ♕b6) 9...♘xe5 10.♘f3 (10.♕a4+ ♘7c6 11.♖d1 ♗d6) 10...♘xf3+ 11.gxf3 (11.♕xf3 ♘g6 12.♖d1 ♗d6) 11...♘c6 12.♗b5 ♕xd1+ 13.♖xd1 ♗d7! (no weaknesses, please) 14.♘d5 0-0-0, and Black appears to be fine, although he is still under a bit of pressure.



The lines now fork:

I 7...♘xe5

II 7...♕d7

Variation I

7...♘xe5 8.♘xe6 fxe6

After analysing for some time, I have come to the conclusion that Black cannot fully equalize here, but that the position is interesting enough to attempt in practical play.

9.f4

Also good is 9.♘f3!? ♘xf3+ 10.♕xf3 ♕d6 11.0-0-0 0-0-0 12.♕f7!?±.

9...♘f7 10.♘f3 ♘xg5 11.♘xg5 ♕d6 12.♕d2!

A more dangerous move than the apparently active 12.♕g4 as played in Wemer-Hallmann, Unterkochen 2003: 12...h5! 13.♕xe6 ♕xf4∞ 14.♗b5+ (14.h4? ♖h6!∓) 14...c6 15.♘h3 ♕e3+ 16.♗e2 ♖h6 17.♕b3 ♖d8 equal.

12...h6!N

An important move. 12...♘g6?! (Boronka-Nepper, e-mail 2000) 13.0-0-0! ♗e7 (13...♕xf4 14.♘xe6±) 14.f5 ♗xg5 15.♕xg5 ♘e5 16.c3±.

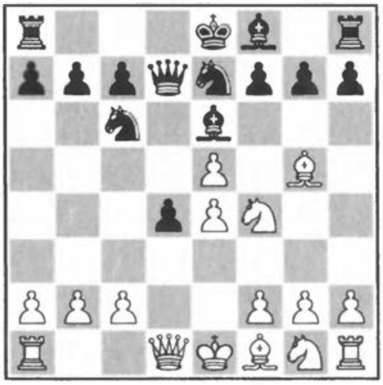
13.♘f3 ♘c6 14.♗b5 0-0-0 15.0-0-0 g5!?±

White should be better, but his knight does not occupy a stable spot, so the position remains muddy.

Variation II

7...♕d7

This is better, the d-pawn is an asset.



8.♗b5!

The most dangerous move by far.

– 8.♘f3 allows Black to create his own play: 8...h6! (8...0-0-0?! 9.♗b5! is very unpleasant) 9.♗xe7 (9.♘xe6 ♕xe6 10.♗xe7 ♗xe7 11.♘xd4 ♕xe5 12.♘xc6 bxc6 13.♗d3 ♖b8 14.0-0 ♖xb2=, Joecks-Jaeckle, Germany 2001/02) 9...♗xe7 10.♗b5 ♗b4+ now practice has seen 11.♘d2 a6 12.♗xc6 ♕xc6 13.0-0 0-0-0, Murariu-Zolotukhin, Odessa 2007. Play is also unclear after 11.♔f1 0-0-0 12.♕d3 g5 13.a3 ♗e7 14.♘xe6 ♕xe6 and now either 15.♗c4 ♕g6 16.h3 h5, or 15.♗xc6 ♕xc6 16.♘xd4 ♕b6 17.c3 c5 18.♕h3+ ♔b8 19.♘f5 ♕xb2 20.♖e1 ♖he8.

– 8.♘xe6 ♕xe6 9.♘f3 0-0-0 10.♗d3 h6 11.♗d2 ♘g6 12.♕e2 ♘gxe5 13.♘xe5 ♘xe5 was equal in E.Rodrigues-Delpech, France 2003/04.

8...a6 9.♗a4

9.♘xe6 fxe6 10.♗xc6 ♘xc6 11.♘f3 h6 12.♗h4 g5 13.♗g3 0-0-0 14.0-0 ♗e7!≌, the bishop on g3 is poor, and Black has a real target in it.

9...♘g6!?

This is the only move that gives a fully playable position.

9...h6? 10.♗xe7! ♗xe7 11.♗xc6 is maybe just over.

9...b5 is strongly met with 10.♗b3! (10.♘xe6 ♕xe6 11.♗b3 ♕xe5 12.♕g4 f5 13.♕h5+ g6 14.♕h4 ♗g7∞, Kreuzholz-Jaeckle, Germany 1998/99) 10...♘xe5 (10...♗xb3 11.axb3 ♘xe5 12.♘f3 ♘xf3+ 13.♕xf3 h6 14.♗xe7 ♗xe7 15.♘d5±) 11.♘xe6 fxe6 12.♕h5+ ♘7g6 13.0-0-0±, the black position is not stable.

10.♘ge2!

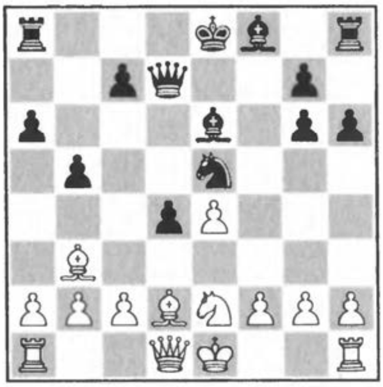
10.♘xg6 hxg6 11.♘f3 ♗b4+ 12.♗d2 ♗e7 and the extra e-pawn is not an obvious asset. White has problems finding good spots for his pieces.

10...h6! 10...b5 11.♗b3 ♗xb3 12.axb3 ♘gxe5 13.♘d5 ♗c5 14.♗f6!±.

11.♘xg6 fxg6

Black is happy with this exchange. He is playing around the white e-pawns.

12.♗d2 b5 13.♗b3 ♘xe5



14.0-0

14.♘xd4 is poor in view of 14...♗g4 15.♘e2 0-0-0 16.♗e3 ♕e8 17.♕c1 ♗b4+ 18.♔f1 ♖f8∓. And 14.♗xe6 is met with 14...♕xe6 15.♘xd4 ♕c4!, with a risky set-up for White.

14...♗c5 15.♗xe6 ♕xe6 16.♘f4 ♕c6 17.♘d5 0-0 18.♗f4 ♖ae8 19.♗xe5 ♖xe5 And Black is not worse here.

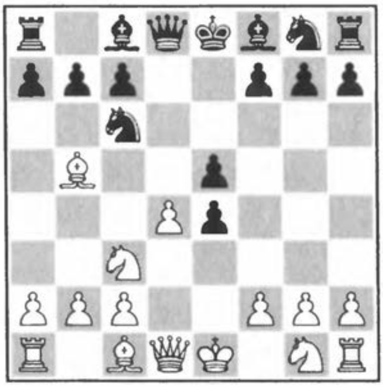
Although 4.dxe5 is the critical move, White has two other serious tries as well, which we want to look at.

The sharp-looking 4.♗b5

1.e4 ♘c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 e5 4.♗b5

This move looks sharp, but it is not really dangerous.

4...dxe4



5.d5?!

This is the critical approach, but it might very well be simply bad. White has a few other options as well:

- 5.♘ge2 ♗b4 6.0-0 ♗xc3 7.bxc3 ♘e7 8.♗a3 (Novotny-Zolotukhin, Pardubice 2005) 8...a6!?= 9.♗a4 ♗e6 10.♘g3 f5 11.dxe5 ♕xd1 12.♖axd1 ♔f7∓.
- 5.♘xe4 (Sicherl-Sicker, Germany 1997/98) 5...♕xd4 6.♕xd4 exd4 7.♘f3 ♗d7∓.
- 5.♗xc6+ bxc6 6.dxe5 ♕xd1+ 7.♘xd1 ♘e7=, A.Horvath-Tengely, Hungary 1994/95.
- 5.dxe5 ♕xd1+ 6.♘xd1 ♗d7∞ 7.♗xc6 ♗xc6 8.♘e2 ♗c5, Hartio-Heinola, cr 1985.

5...a6 6.♗a4

6.dxc6 ♕xd1+ 7.♔xd1 axb5 8.♘xb5 ♗g4+ gives Black a close to winning advantage. White is too underdeveloped. Martynova-Usmanov, St Petersburg 2008.

6...b5 7.♘xb5?

After this move I have not been able to find anything close to equality for White.

Better is 7.♗b3, but also here Black has easy play. The knight might be better at a5, as it cannot be challenged as easily, and Black thus can delay taking on b3, but as Black played in the game where they had this position, he is doing fine too. 7...♘d4 8.♘xe4 ♘f6 (8...♗b7! 9.♘f3 ♘xb3 10.axb3 ♕xd5∓) 9.♗g5 ♗e7 10.♗xf6 gxf6!? 11.♘e2?! ♘xb3 12.axb3 f5∓, Dietrich-Vingerling, Germany 2005/06.

7...axb5 8.♗xb5 ♞e7 9.♗g5?!

A poor move in a poor position.

- 9.a4 ♗b7 10.dxc6 ♕xd1+ 11.♔xd1 0-0-0+ 12.♔e2 ♘xc6∓, Raubal-Teske, Austria 1999/2000.
- 9.dxc6 ♕xd1+ 10.♔xd1 ♘f5∓ has been played a few times. Black is absolutely OK here, and maybe a bit more.
- 9.♗e3? ♖b8 10.a4 ♖xb5 11.axb5 ♘b4–+, Schalkx-Renette, Belgium 2006/07.
- 9.♘e2? as in for example Longson-Briscoe, West Bromwich 2002/03, is bad because of 9...♖a5!∓.
- 9.c4 ♗d7 10.dxc6 ♘xc6 11.♘e2 ♘b4∓, Kazantsev-Wiezer, cr 1990.

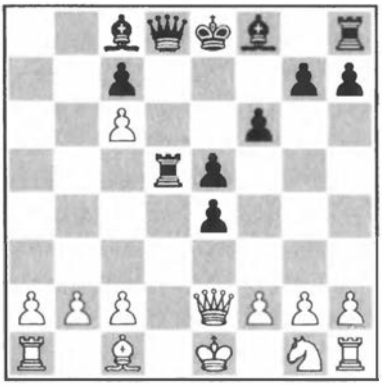
9...f6! 10.♗c1

This retreat was successfully employed in G.Antal-Lupulescu, Szatmarnemeti 1996. However, Black missed a direct win!

– 10.♗xf6 is not frightening: 10...gxf6 11.♕h5+ ♘g6 12.♗xc6+ ♗d7–+ Schulz-Suhl, Berlin 1995.

– 10.♗e3 ♖b8 11.a4 (11.♗xc6+ ♘xc6 12.dxc6 ♕xd1+ 13.♔xd1 ♖xb2∓) 11...♖xb5 12.axb5. This ended in a draw in Ulibin-Mohr, Voskresensk 1990. Black was more or less winning in the game, but an improvement here is 12...♘b4!, and it looks just over.

10...♖a5! 11.♗xc6+ ♘xc6 12.dxc6 ♖d5 13.♕e2



13...♗a6!! 14.♕xa6 ♖d1+ 15.♔e2 ♖f1!!

Winning the house.

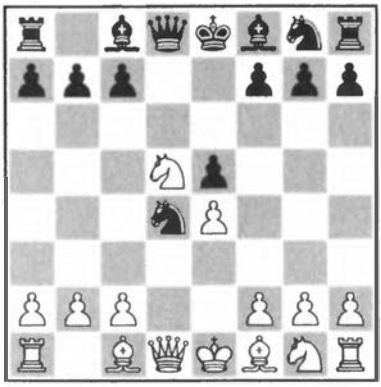
The boring 4.♘xd5

1.e4 ♘c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 e5 4.♘xd5

This is not a very testing way to play, but as the position remains symmetric, White can still play for a small pull.

4...♘xd4

The only sensible move. 4...exd4 would allow 5.♗b5. Here White has many options. As they are all pretty simple to understand, I will just give them without much explanation. The only point I want to make, is that in order to control either d4 or d5, the knights are best placed at e6 and e3.



5.♗g5!

I like this energetic move. As it is too optimistic to think that the knight will be trapped in the corner, Black only has one reasonable answer.

– 5.♗e3 c6 6.♘c3 (Licardo-Bozinovic, Zadar 1998) 6...♕b6!? 7.♖b1 ♘f6 8.♘ge2 ♗g4 9.h3 ♗xe2 10.♗xe2 0-0-0∓.

– 5.c3 ♘e6 6.♘f3 c6 7.♘e3 ♕xd1+ 8.♘xd1 f6 9.♗d3 ♘c5=, Lipski-Fiedler, Rowy 2006.

– 5.♘f3 ♘xf3+ 6.♕xf3 c6 7.♘c3 ♘f6 8.♕g3 (Escobar-Ippolitti, Buenos Aires 1992) 8...♕a5! 9.♗d2 ♗e6 10.♗d3 0-0-0!? 11.♘d5 ♕c5 12.♗e3 ♕d6! 13.♘c3 ♘h5 14.♕f3 ♘f4∓.

– 5.♗f4?! ♗d6 6.c3 ♘e6 7.♗g3 ♘f6=, Drexel-Teske, Germany 1999.

– 5.♘e3 (Neyens-Baer, e-mail 1993) 5...♗e6!=.

5...f6 6.♗d2! 6.♗e3 c6 7.♘c3 (Jutte-Kruimer, Netherlands 1996) 7...♕b6! 8.♘ge2 ♕xb2 9.♗xd4 exd4 10.♖b1 ♕a3 11.♖b3 ♕c5 12.♘xd4 ♗d6=.

6...c6 7.♘e3

Maybe White has a little something to play for, Drexel-Teske, Wattens 1999.

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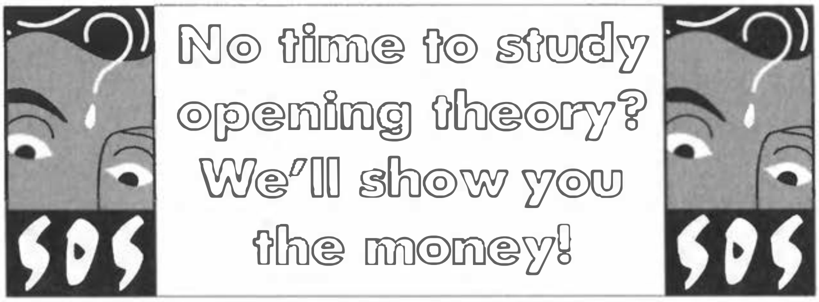
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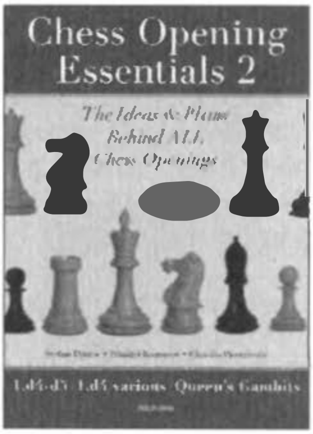
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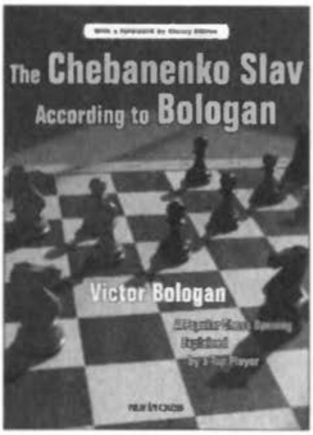
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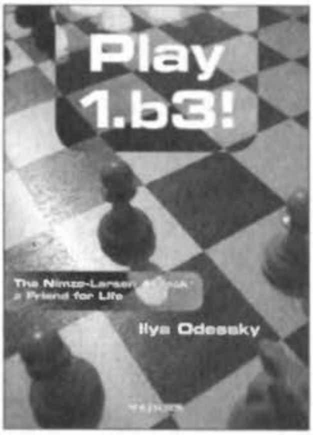
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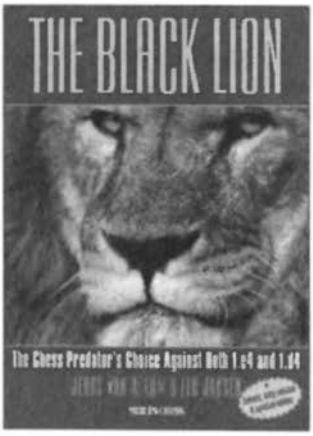
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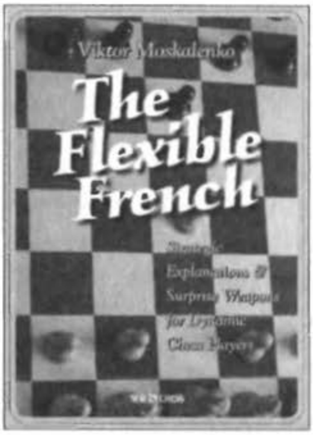
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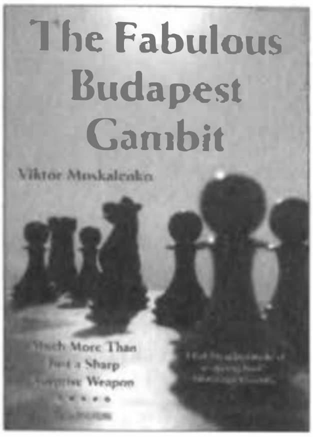
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SECRETS OF OPENING SURPRISES

JEROEN BOSCH
EDITOR

VOL. 12

SOS – Secrets of Opening Surprises 12

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SECRETS OF OPENING SURPRISES

12

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2010 New In Chess – The Netherlands

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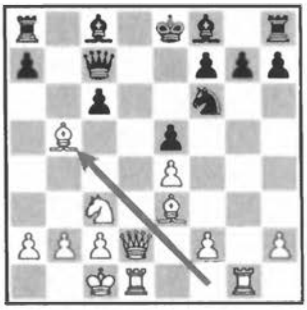
Jeroen Bosch

The SOS Files

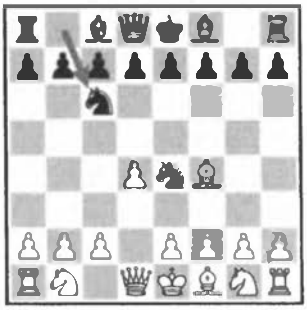


Van Kampen-Plukkel after 12.♗xb5!

CHAPTER 2 - page 20

Dimitri Reinderman

Trompowsky: the Cinema Variation

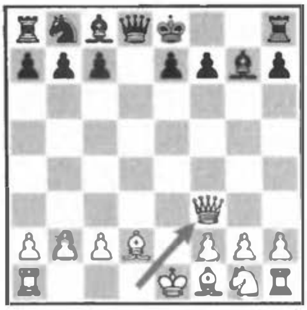


1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗g5 ♘e4 3.♗f4 ♘c6

CHAPTER 3 - page 27

Jeroen Bosch

Alekhine: Hector's Way

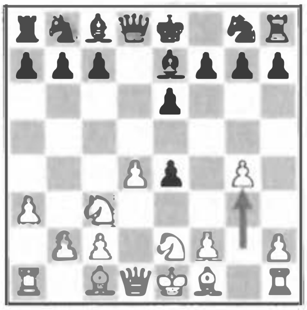


Let's play 7.♕f3!?

CHAPTER 4 - page 34

Alexander Finkel

The French à la Hector

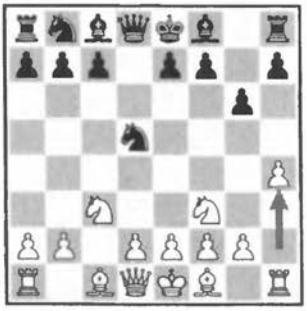


Winawer: 4.♞e2 dxe4 5.a3 ♗e7 6.g4!?

CHAPTER 5 - page 41

Sebastian Siebrecht

Anti-Grünfeld with 5.h4

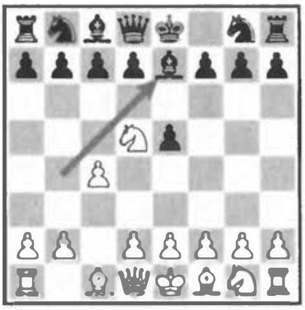


1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.h4

CHAPTER 6 - page 48

Nikita Vitiugov

English: Shirov's Pet Line

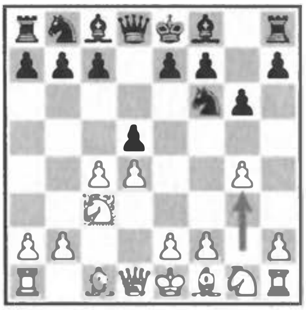


1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♗b4 3.♘d5 ♗e7

CHAPTER 7 - page 56

Adrian Mikhalchishin & Jeroen Bosch

Bayonet Attack in the Grünfeld

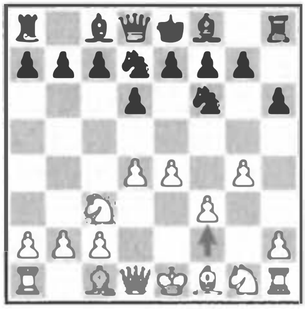


1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♞c3 d5 4.g4!?

CHAPTER 8 - page 62

Willy Hendriks

Taking the Lion by its Throat

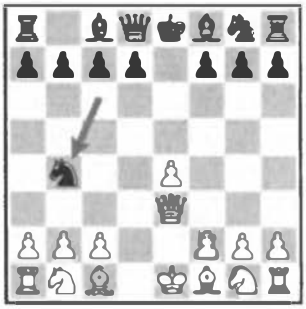


1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♞f6 3.♘c3 ♘bd7 4.g4 h6 5.f3

CHAPTER 9 - page 70

Jeroen Bosch

The Centre Game: A Romantic Weapon

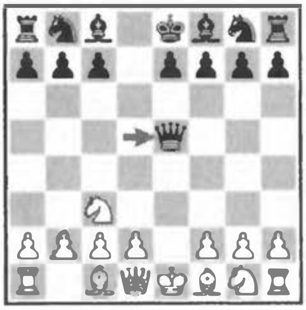


Lashing out against c2 with ...♘b4

CHAPTER 10 - page 77

Dimitri Reinderman

Check Like a Patzer in the Scandinavian

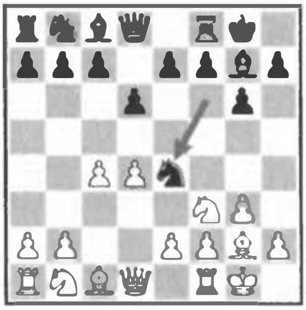


Let's play 3...♕e5+ (or 3...♕e6+)

CHAPTER 11 - page 84

Dorian Rogozenco

King's Indian: A Dutch-KID?

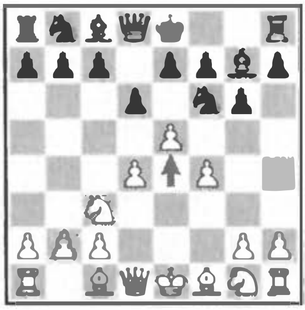


The knight jump 6...♘e4

CHAPTER 12 - page 88

Alexander Finkel

Pirc for Endgame Lovers

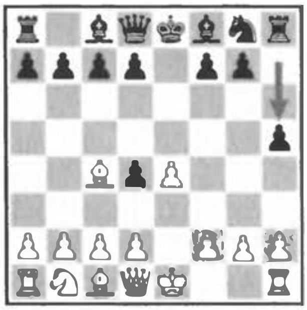


1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 g6 4.f4 ♗g7 5.e5!?

CHAPTER 13 - page 95

Glenn Flear

The Bird's Defence According to Bird

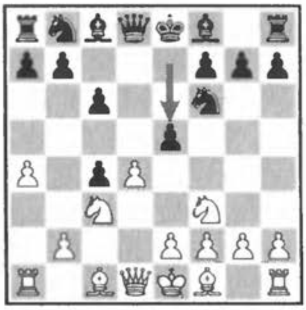


Bird with 5.♗c4 h5 and 5.0-0 h5

CHAPTER 14 - page 105

Arthur Kogan

The Mouse Sleep Slav Gambit

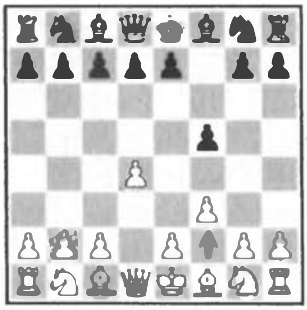


The 'crazy' 5...e5!?

CHAPTER 15 - page 113

Jeroen Bosch

Dutch: Preparing the Staunton Gambit

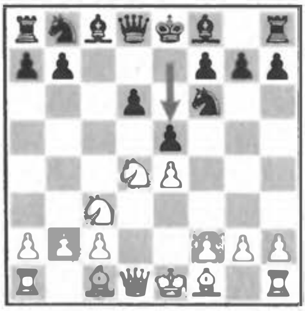


1.d4 f5 2.f3!?

CHAPTER 16 - page 122

Igor Glek

Sicilian: the Intrepid 5...e5

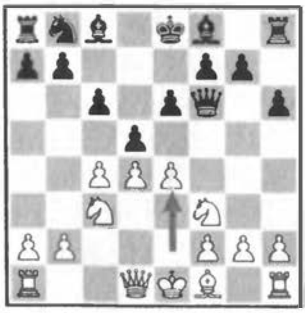


Is 6.♗b5+ ♗d7 really that bad?

CHAPTER 17 - page 133

Sipke Ernst

Moscow Variation: A German Speciality



The immediate 7.e4!?

CHAPTER 1

Jeroen Bosch

The SOS Files

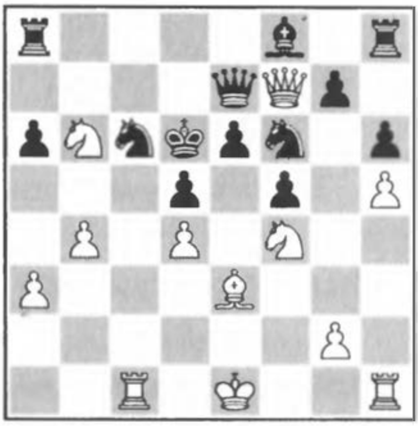
Read SOS and Go for Mate

SOS-8, Chapter 2, p.17

A regular contributor to the SOS-series is Dimitri Reinderman. That the Dutch GM also takes a keen interest in what his fellow-authors write is obvious from the next game. Ruben Felgaer wrote on Short's 2.♘e2 versus the Caro-Kann. Enjoy the commentary by Reinderman, and can you spot the lovely combination at the end?

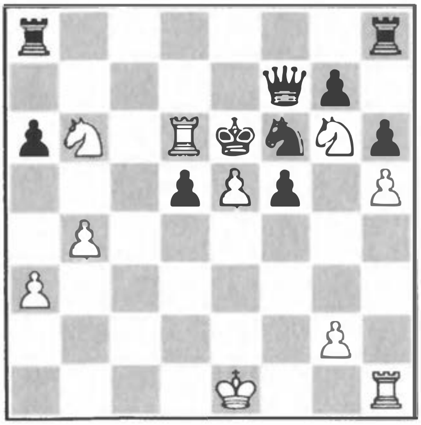
☐ **Dimitri Reinderman**
■ **Sybolt Strating**
Hilversum 2009

1.e4 c6 2.♘e2 d5 3.e5 ♗f5 More common is 3...c5 because of the game continuation. **4.♘g3 ♗g6** It is hard to believe in the artificial 4...♗d7 and 4...♗e6 which are also mentioned by Felgaer. **5.h4 h6** The SOS Files of Volume 10 mentions 5...h5 as an improvement. **6.h5 ♗h7 7.e6** The point of White's set-up. White is locking in Black's bishop. **7...fxe6** Black does not have to accept the pawn. Playable is 7...♕d6. **8.d4 ♕d6** Black can return the pawn with 8...e5 9.dxe5 e6, although it isn't pretty. **9.f4** With a clear advantage according to Felgaer. I am less sure about the objective value, but in a practical game I was quite happy to reach this position! **9...♘f6 10.♗d3 c5 11.c3 cxd4 12.cxd4 ♘c6 13.♘c3 ♕b4 14.♘e2 ♘e4?!** The knight has to return soon. Black should have castled. **15.a3 ♕a5 16.♗e3 a6** Both here and subsequently Black could have defended better. However, then the lovely mate would never have occurred. **17.b4 ♕d8 18.♕b1 ♘f6 19.♗xh7 ♖xh7 20.♕g6+ ♔d7 21.♘a4 b6 22.♖c1 ♖h8 23.f5** Rybka indicates 23.♘g1! as winning, but the text suffices. **23...exf5** 23...♔c7 24.♘f4 ♔b7 25.♘xe6 ♕e8 was the toughest defence. **24.♘f4 e6 25.♕f7+ ♕e7 26.♘xb6+ ♔d6**



White to play and win.

27.♘g6!! The newspapers wrote that White could have won here with 27.♕xe7+ ♗xe7 28.♘xa8 ♖xa8 29.♘xe6, but things are not so clear after 29...♔xe6 30.♖xc6+ ♔d7. **27...♕xf7 28.♗f4+ e5 29.♗xe5+** At first, I calculated 29.dxe5+, when Black has 29...♔c7 with advantage. Then I spotted the text. **29...♘xe5** My opponent wanted to resign here, but I asked him to continue. He kindly acquiesced. **30.dxe5+ ♔e6 31.♖c6+ ♗d6** So the bishop finally made a move in this game. **32.♖xd6** mate!



Turgenev or Ragozin – amateur vs professional

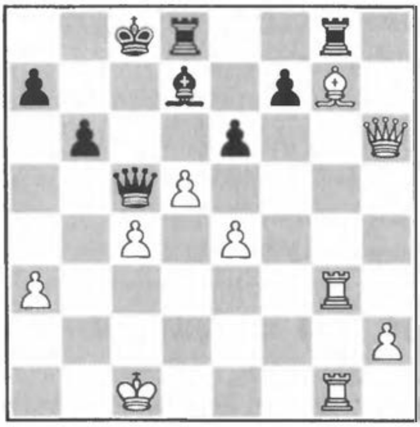
SOS-11, Chapter 16, p.125

We receive many interesting letters from readers all over the world. Thus Aaro Jalas from Finland found Nikita Vitiugov's suggestions in the Accelerated Ragozin quite instructive, but he felt that more alternatives on move 4 could have been included. (He particularly mentions 4.♗d2 and even 4.e4.) Indeed, he goes on to raise the important general point that opening manuals often do not discuss ‘second-rate’ alternatives, concentrating as they do on the variations chosen by GMs and IMs. He ends his argument with a request that we will take to heart: ‘Please, write practical books for us low-level club players – books, where “amateur variations” are seriously considered!’

For historical interest, but also to illustrate his point, Mr Jalas kindly sent us a game by Russian writer Ivan Turgenev as cited in the Estonian book *Caissa Riik ja ruutlid* (1984). We can understand why Mr Jalas enjoyed this particular game where the strong amateur player Turgenev gave the Polish professional player Matsuski (or Maczuski, as his name is given elsewhere) a good drubbing in the Café de la Régence.

☐ **Ladislas Maczuski**
■ **Ivan Turgenev**
Paris 1861

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 ‘Is this the first Accelerated Ragozin?’ asks Mr Jalas, played as it is before the birth of both Nimzowitsch and Ragozin? **4.f3** A serious reply. Vitiugov discusses 4.a3. **4...c5 5.a3 ♗xc3+ 6.bxc3 ♕a5** Here 6...♘f6 transposes to the 4.f3 Nimzo-Indian. **7.♗d2 ♘f6 8.♕c2 ♗d7?! 9.e4! dxe4 10.fxe4 cxd4?! 11.cxd4 ♕h5 12.♘f3 ♕g6 13.♗d3!? ♕xg2 14.♖f1 ♘c6 15.0-0-0 ♘g4 16.♖de1 h6 17.d5?! ♘ce5 18.♘xe5 ♘xe5 19.♖g1 ♕f3 20.♖e3 ♕f6** White has enough for the pawn, but not more. **21.♗c3 ♘xd3+?!** 21...♕f4 **22.♕xd3 ♕e7?! 23.♗xg7** Now Black is in trouble. **23...♖g8 24.♖eg3 0-0-0 25.♕e3 b6 26.♕xh6?! ♕c5**



27.♗d4? A flashy but faulty combination, but the precautionary 27.♔b2 is not the type of move you would associate with the Café de la Régence. **27...♕xc4+** 27...♕xd4 28.♖xg8 ♕xc4+ 29.♔b2 ♕d4+ should end in a perpetual. **28.♖c3 ♖xg1+ 29.♔d2 ♕xc3+ 30.♔xc3 ♖g4 31.♕h5 ♖f4 32.♕e5 ♖f3+ 33.♔b2 ♖g8!** Now the rooks are much stronger than the queen. Turgenev does not let his opponent escape: **34.♗c3 ♗a4 35.♕d4 ♖g2+ 36.♗d2 ♗d7! 37.h4 ♖ff2 38.♔c3 ♖xd2 39.♕h8+ ♔b7 40.h5 exd5 41.exd5 ♖xd5 42.h6 ♗f5 43.♕f6 ♖c2+ 44.♔b4 a5+ 45.♔a4 ♖c7 46.♔b3 ♖b5+ 47.♔a4 ♗d7!** And White resigned.

This was Turgenev's only victory in a 6-game match against Matsuski, according to *The Even More Complete Chess Addict* (1993).

French or Caro-Kann: Why Worry?

SOS-9, Chapter 13, p.102

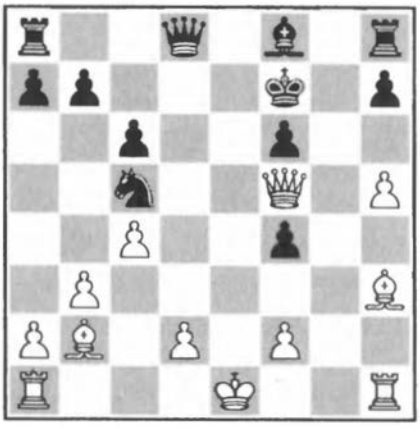
Réti's line against the French 1.e4 e6 2.b3 d5 3.♗b2 was covered by Alexander Finkel in SOS-9. Clyde Nakamura from Honolulu, Hawaii, directed our attention to a similar line against the Caro-Kann. Vasiukov employed 1.e4 c6 2.b3 d5 3.♗b2 in the 1961 Soviet Championship to beat none other than David Bronstein. I found the following game also quite entertaining.

☐ **Dragutin Sahovic**
■ **Patrick Daumin**
Orange open 1990

1.e4 c6 2.b3 d5 3.♗b2 dxe4 4.♘c3 ♘f6 5.♘ge2 ♗g4

Instead, 5...♗f5 6.♘g3 e6 7.♕e2 ♘bd7 8.♘cxe4 ♗xe4 9.♘xe4 ♕a5 10.♗c3 ♕b6 11.♘xf6+ ♘xf6 was about equal in Vasiukov-Bronstein, URS-ch Baku 1961.

6.h3 ♗h5 7.g4 ♗g6 8.♗g2 ♘bd7 9.g5 ♘d5 10.♘xe4 e5 11.h4 f6?! 12.gxf6 gxf6 13.h5 ♗f5 14.c4!? ♘f4? 15.♘xf4 exf4 16.♕e2 ♔f7 17.♗h3 17.0-0-0 **17...♗xe4 18.♕xe4 ♘c5 19.♕f5**



19...♕e7+

Black cannot win the bishop: 19...♘d3+ 20.♔e2 (20.♔f1 ♘xb2?? 21.♕e6+ ♔g7 22.h6+ ♔xh6 23.♗f5+ also mates) 20...♘xb2?? (correct is 20...♕d6 21.♗xf6 ♕xf6 22.♔xd3 and White is a pawn up) 21.♕e6+ ♔g7 22.h6+ ♔xh6 23.♗f5+ ♔g7 24.♖ag1 mate!

20.♔d1 ♖e8 21.f3 ♗h6 22.♔c2 ♗g5 23.♖ae1 White is completely winning by now. **23...♕d6 24.♖xe8 ♔xe8 25.♕c8+** Or 25.d4. **25...♕d8 26.♖e1+ ♔f7 27.♕f5** Black resigned.

Bashing the Grünfeld

SOS-3, Chapter 3, p.28
SOS-6, Chapter 2, p.16

Volume 12 of the SOS-series continues where the others have left off. Adrian Mikhalchishin and Jeroen Bosch analyse 4.g4 against the Grünfeld proper (see Chapter 7), while Sebastian Siebrecht favours 5.h4 via an English move order (see Chapter 5).
First a note of warning:

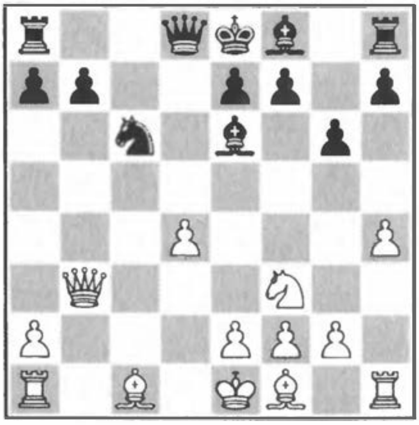
☐ **Miso Cebalo**
■ **Alexander Riazantsev**
Biel 2009

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.h4 Following SOS-3 this line was enthusiastically taken up by GM Cebalo who later wrote a Survey for the New In Chess Yearbook. **4...c5** This must be the critical move.

5.dxc5

5.cxd5 ♘xd5 6.♕b3!? is a suggestion of Yearbook editor Peter Boel. He continues with 6...♘xc3 7.bxc3 cxd4 8.cxd4 ♘c6 9.♘f3 ♗g7 10.e3 0-0 11.h5. See the Forum section of Yearbook 93 (p. 22).

Rather than 9...♗g7 Black has 9...♗e6



Now after 10.♕xb7 ♗d5 11.e3 Black has both 11...♖b8 12.♕a6 e5, and 11...♘xd4 12.♕b2 ♘xf3+ 13.gxf3 a6!? (13...f6 14.e4) 14.♕xh8 (14.e4 ♖g8) 14...♗xf3 15.♗b2 ♗xh1 16.♖d1 ♕a5+ 17.♗c3 ♕c5 18.♗g7 ♕b4+ 19.♖d2 e6 20.♗xa6 ♗c6 which is about equal. Obviously there is room for creativity in these suggested lines.

5...d4 6.♘b5 e5 7.e3

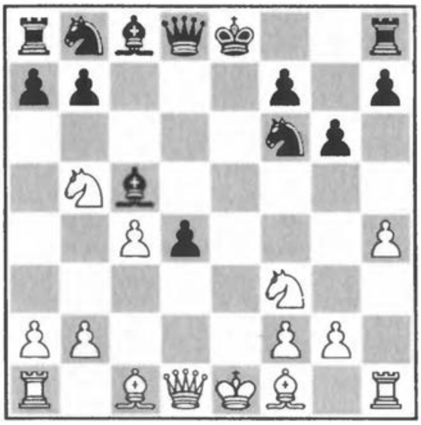
Other moves do not improve:

– 7.♘f3 ♗xc5! (not 7...♘c6 8.♗g5! ♗e7 9.♗xf6 ♗xf6 10.♘d6+±) 8.♞xe5 a6 9.♕a4 0-0 10.♘d3 which is unclear according to Thomas Neuer in the Forum of Yearbook 89.

– 7.♗g5 ♗xc5 8.♗xf6 ♗b4+ was given by Glenn Flear on www.chesspublishing.com. 9.♘c3 ♕xf6 10.a3 ♗a5 11.b4 dxc3 12.bxa5 ♗f5 and White is in trouble (Boel, Yearbook 93).

– 7.♘d6+ ♗xd6 8.cxd6 ♕xd6 9.e3 is Flear's attempt to equalize with white, Boel gives 9...♘c6 10.exd4 ♞xd4 as better for Black.

7...♗xc5 Or 7...♞c6 8.exd4 ♘xd4, Cebalo-Sibenik, Pula 2004. **8.exd4 exd4 9.♘f3**



Now Black is very OK after **9...0-0! 10.♗e2** No improvement is 10.♘bxd4 ♕a5+ 11.♗d2 ♕b6 12.♗e3 ♘g4, Flear. Or 12...♕xb2. **10...♘c6 11.♗f4 ♗f5! 12.♗d3 ♗xd3 13.♕xd3 a6 14.♘c7?!** 14.♘a3 ♖e8+ is no fun either. **14...♖c8 15.a3 ♖xc7 16.♗xc7 ♕xc7 17.b4 ♖e8+ 18.♔f1 ♗f8 19.♖d1 a5 20.b5 ♘e5 21.♘xe5** Or 21.♕xd4 ♘eg4. **21...♕xe5 22.♖h3 ♗xa3! 23.♕xd4 ♕e2+ 24.♔g1 ♗c5!** White resigned.

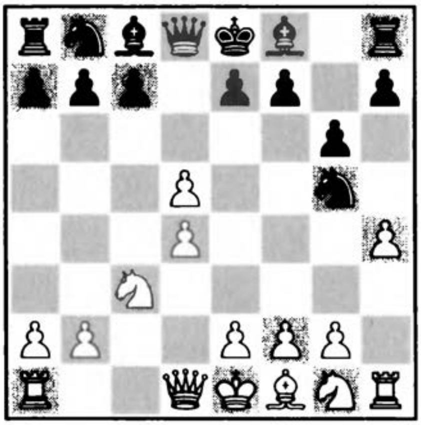
In an entertaining article called 'Triple Trouble for the Grünfeld', Ian Rogers offers three wonderful suggestions in the 4.♗g5 line.

A game from the 2010 World Team Championship between Turkey and Russia:

☐ **Mohamed Ezat**
■ **Dmitry Yakovenko**
Bursa 2010

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.♗g5

♘e4 5.cxd5!? Rogers also covers 5.♕c1!? and 5.h4!?. **5...♘xg5** 5...♘xc3 6.bxc3 ♕xd5 7.♘f3 and White possibly saves a tempo on the main line that starts with 5.♗h4. **6.h4** Already played by Euwe in 1923, against Van Hoorn.



6...♘e4 See SOS-6 for the alternatives 6...e6, 6...c6, and 6...♘e6. **7.♘xe4 ♕xd5 8.♕d3** A new attempt. 8.f3 ♗g7 9.e3 ♕a5+ 10.♔f2 ♘c6 was Goldsmith-Kagan, Melbourne 1993. The sound option, according to Rogers, is the ending that IM Voloshin has successfully played: 8.♘c3 ♕a5 9.♘f3 ♗g7 10.♕a4+ ♕xa4 11.♘xa4. **8...♗g7 9.♘f3 ♘c6 10.♘c3 ♕a5 11.e3 0-0 12.♕b5! ♕b4** 12...♕xb5 13.♗xb5 ♗d7?! (13...♘b4 14.0-0-0 ♗e6) 14.♘d5!. **13.♕xb4** 13.h5!?. **13...♘xb4 14.0-0-0 c6 15.h5 a5 16.a3 ♘a6 17.♘a4?! b5 18.♘b6 ♖b8 19.♘xc8 ♖fxc8 20.♔b1 a4 21.hxg6 hxg6 22.♗e2 c5** with equality (Black won after a long game).

SOS vs the Grünfeld on Top-level

SOS-10, Chapter 9, p.65

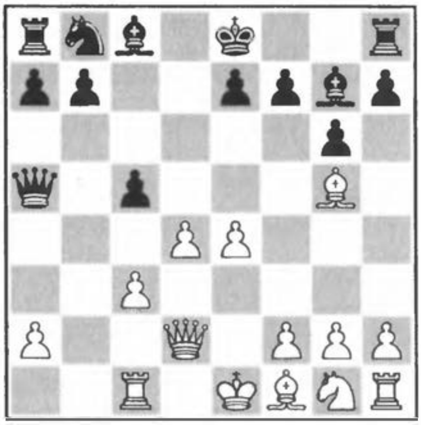
In the World Cup 2009 in Khanty-Mansiysk Tomi Nybäck managed to upset the experienced Peter Svidler with a SOS line versus the Grünfeld. This line (the Kruppa Variation) has been steadily gaining in popularity, which is why its theoretical workload is increasing. Let's take a look!

☐ **Tomi Nybäck**
■ **Peter Svidler**
Khanty-Mansiysk World Cup 2009

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.e4 ♘xc3 6.bxc3 ♗g7 7.♗g5 This characterizes the so-called Kruppa Variation. SOS-author Igor Lysyj was extremely positive about White's chances in his article for SOS-10.

7...c5 8.♖c1 0-0

8...♕a5 is the big alternative to 8...0-0. After 9.♕d2



the lines fork:

- 9...♘d7 was played by Grünfeld expert Ftacnik: 10.♘f3 e5 11.dxe5 (much stronger looks 11.♘xe5! ♘xe5 12.dxe5, as 12...♗xe5?! is met by 13.♗b5+ and the bishop cannot be taken because of mate on d8!) 11...0-0 12.♗c4 ♘xe5 13.♘xe5 ♗xe5 14.f4 (14.0-0 ♗e6 15.♗d5) 14...♗g7 15.0-0 ♗e6 16.♗xe6 fxe6 17.e5 ♖f7 and Black was OK in Polak-Ftacnik, Prievidza 2009.
- 9...h6 10.♗e3 cxd4 11.cxd4 ♕xd2+ 12.♔xd2 0-0 13.♘f3 ♘c6 14.d5 ♖d8 15.♔e1 ♘a5 16.♗f4 and the ending is very pleasant for White, Erdös-Agopov, Berlin 2009.

– 9...♕a4 10.♗e2!?(10.♘f3 ♘c6 11.d5 ♘e5 12.♗e2 ♕xe4 is the move order in SOS-10) 10...♘c6 11.d5 ♘e5 12.♘f3 f6 (12...♕xe4 13.0-0 0-0 14.♖fe1 is analysed by Lysyj in some detail) 13.♗e3 (13.♘xe5?! fxg5) 13...♘c4 14.♕d3 ♘d6 (14...♘xe3 15.♕xe3 0-0 16.0-0±) 15.♗xc5 ♕xe4 16.0-0 ♗f5 17.♕d2 and White had an obvious edge in Nybäck-Negi, Wijk aan Zee 2010.

– 9...0-0 10.♘f3 (10.♗xe7? ♖e8 11.♗xc5 ♖xe4+ 12.♗e2 ♘a6 favours Black) 10...cxd4 11.cxd4 ♕xd2+ 12.♔xd2 e6 13.♗b5! a6 (13...♘c6 also fails to equalize, see SOS-10) 14.♗a4 b5 15.♗b3 ♗b7 (15...a5 is met by 16.♖c5! as indicated by Lysyj) 16.d5 exd5 17.exd5 a5 18.♖c7 a4 19.♖xb7 axb3 20.axb3 with an extra pawn in Vovk-Bezemer, Dieren 2009.

9.♘f3 cxd4

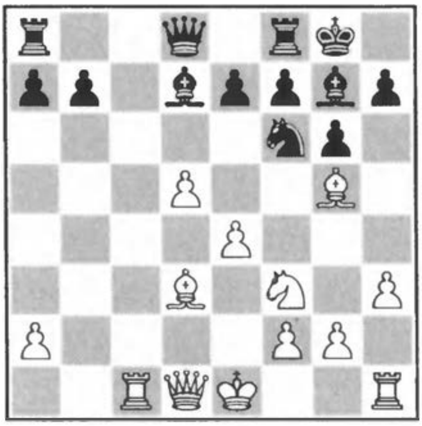
Black is not obliged to take on d4. Instead, he can try 9...♗g4 Indeed, this was Svidler's choice in a rapid tie-break game (yes he won the second game in the match!) versus Nybäck in Khanty-Mansiysk. After 10.d5 Black has:

– 10...f5, which was called critical by Lysyj in SOS-10. See the SOS Files of volume 11 for the SOS Prize winning game Sadorra-Kazhgaleev, Subic Bay 2009.

– 10...♘d7 11.♗e2 f5 is answered by 12.d6, when after 12...♗f6 13.♗xf6 exf6 14.0-0! ♖e8 15.h3 ♗xf3 16.♗xf3 fxe4 17.♗xe4 White won with straightforward play. Prohaszka-Shankland, Budapest 2009.

– 10...♕d6 was Svidler's choice. 11.♗e2 (White was better after 11.♕b3 b6 – 11...♗xf3!? – 12.♘d2 ♗c8 13.♗e2 ♗a6 14.♗xa6 ♘xa6 15.0-0 ♘c7 16.♘c4 ♕d7 17.♗f4 ♖fe8 18.♘e5 ♕d6 19.♘xg6 ♕xg6 20.♗xc7 ♕xe4 21.c4, Noiroux-Konguvel, La Fère 2009) 11...♘d7 12.h3 (12.0-0) 12...♗xf3 13.♗xf3 b5 14.c4 b4 15.0-0 a5 and Black had equalized in Nybäck-Svidler, Khanty-Mansiysk rapid 2009.

10.cxd4 ♗g4 11.d5 ♘d7 12.♗e2 ♘f6 12...f5 13.d6! ♕a5+ 14.♕d2 ♕xd2+ 15.♘xd2 ♗xe2 16.dxe7±. **13.h3 ♗d7 14.♗d3**



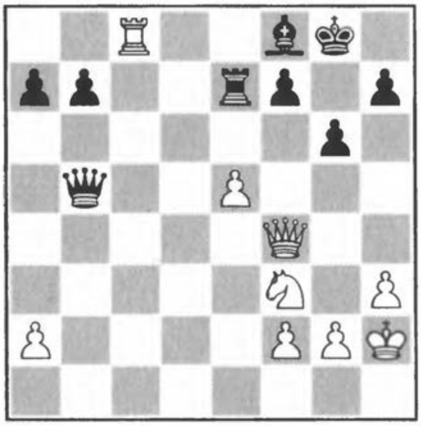
14...♕a5+

Svidler is the first to vary and with reason: 14...h6 15.♗f4 e6 16.♗c7 ♕e8 17.d6 ♗c6 18.♕e2 ♘h5 was Ponomariov-Svidler, Moscow 2006. Pono now kept a slight edge with 19.g3, but Lysyj opines that White's advantage is quite substantial after 19.♕e3!.

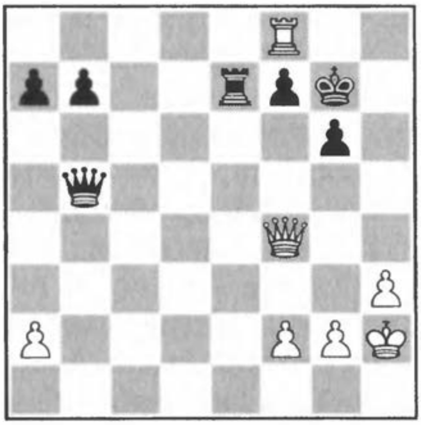
15.♕d2 ♕a4!? 15...♕xd2+ 16.♔xd2 is a familiar pleasant ending. **16.♖c4 ♕a3 17.0-0 ♖ac8**

Keeping a pair of rooks on with 17...♗b5 does not really help: 18.♖c3 ♕a5 19.♗xf6 ♗xf6 20.e5 ♗g7 21.♗xb5 ♕xb5 22.♖c7 ♖ad8 23.♖d1 still favours White, for example 23...♖d7 24.d6.

18.♖fc1 ♖xc4 19.♖xc4 ♗b5 19...♖c8 20.♖xc8+ ♗xc8 21.♕c2 is no picnic either. **20.♖c3 ♕a5 21.♗xf6** Forced, in view of the threats on the rook. **21...♗xf6 22.e5 ♗g7 23.♗xb5 ♕xb5 24.♖c7** Despite the exchanges Nybäck has kept the advantage. Svidler is forced to keep the d-pawn at bay. In return White obtains chances along the seventh rank. **24...♖d8 25.♖xe7 ♗f8** The only move. 25...♕xd5?? loses to 26.♖e8+, and 25...♖xd5? to 26.♕f4. **26.♖c7 ♖xd5** It was safer to give up a pawn to defend actively in the ending after 26...♕xd5 27.♕xd5 ♖xd5 28.♖xb7 ♖a5. **27.♕f4 ♖d1+ 28.♔h2 ♖d7 29.♖c8! ♖e7**



30.e6!? Perhaps not the best move, but a good practical shot. **30...♖xe6** It is not so easy to find the right defence: 30...♕f5! is what the engines like. **31.♘g5** Now White's attack is decisive. **31...♖e7** Or 31...♕d7 32.♖d8! winning. **32.♘xh7! ♔xh7 33.♖xf8 ♔g7**



Material is equal, but White has a winning attack. Well-calculated by Nybäck! **34.♕h4! g5** 34...♔xf8?? 35.♕h8 mate! **35.♕h8+ ♔g6 36.f4! ♔f5** 36...gxf4? 37.♖g8+ ♔f5 38.♕h5++–. **37.♖d8 f6 38.♖d6 ♕b2** 38...♖f7 39.♕h5 ♖e7 40.♕h6 ♕b2 41.♕f8 ♖c7 42.♖d5++–. **39.♕h5 ♕e2** 39...♖e2 40.♕g4+ ♔g6 41.♕xg5++–; 39...♕f2 40.♕g4+ ♔e4 41.fxg5+ ♕f4+ 42.♕xf4+ ♔xf4 43.gxf6+–. **40.♖d5+ ♔xf4 41.♕g6** Black resigned.

A Kortchnoi Favourite

SOS-1, Chapter 4, p.40

The Spanish Four Knights is well-countered by 4...♗d6 as we know from the very first volume of the SOS-series. This is actually a Kortchnoi favourite; out-of-the-box thinking is of course a trademark of the great fighter.

The present game was played in one of the lower leagues of the Dutch team competition (Kortchnoi's team is aiming to go up into the highest division) and will not find its way into the database by its own accord. So as a special treat here it is.

☐ **Richard Hendriks**
■ **Viktor Kortchnoi**
Netherlands tt 2009/10

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗b5 ♗d6 5.d3

Natural, but it offers White nothing special.

– 5.a3 This useful waiting move is covered in the SOS Files of volumes 2 and 5. 5...0-0 6.d3 ♘e7?! (6...♖e8) 7.♗g5 ♘g6 8.h4!? c6 9.♗c4 ♗e7? 10.h5! ♘h8? 11.h6! (not 11.♘xe5 d5! with good counterplay) 11...g6 12.d4 exd4 13.♕xd4 d6 14.0-0-0 ♗e6 15.e5 and Black resigned in Roy Chowdhury-Laxman, New Delhi 2010.

– 5.0-0 0-0 6.d3 ♘e7?! (6...♖e8; 6...h6) 7.♘xe5 ♗xe5 8.d4 d6 (8...♗xh2+ 9.♔xh2±) 9.dxe5 dxe5 and White was slightly better due to his pair of bishops in Michiels-Stefanova, Antwerp 2009.

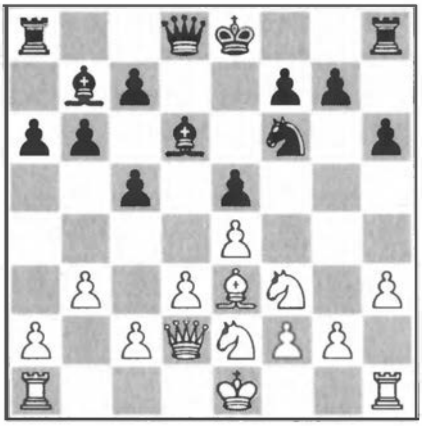
– 5.a4 0-0 6.d3 ♖e8 7.♗c4 h6 8.g4 ♗b4! 9.g5 d5! was the energetic course of Böhnisch-Kortchnoi, Dresden 2006. See the SOS Files of Volume 5.

– 5.g4 a6 6.♗c4 ♗c5 7.♘g5 d5! was Sammalvuo-Gausel, Turin Olympiad 2006. See the SOS Files of Volume 7.

5...h6 Or 5...0-0. **6.h3 a6 7.♗xc6 dxc6 8.♗e3**

After the game the players concluded that 8. d4 was stronger. For example 8.d4 exd4 9.♕xd4 c5?! (with the help of his engine Hendriks later found the improvement 9...♕e7!, when Black is a tad better) 10.♕d3 and Kortchnoi's verdict was that White is better. The problem is that Black cannot prevent e5 all that easily.

8...c5 9.♕d2 b6 10.♘e2 ♗b7 11.b3?



A very bad move according to both players. Still, it takes someone of the level of Kortchnoi to demonstrate why weakening the a1-h8 diagonal is so bad.

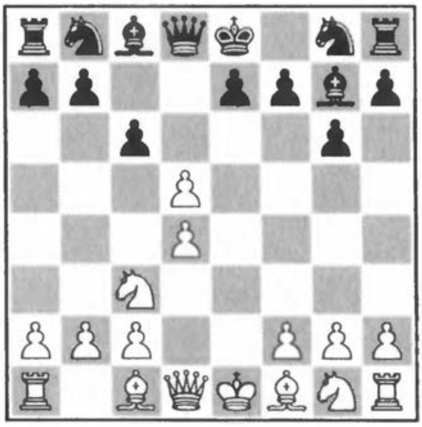
11...♘h5! 12.c4 f5! Where did he find the recipe for eternal youth? With dynamic play Kortchnoi has grabbed a considerable edge. **13.exf5?** Hendriks indicates 13.♕c2 as the only move. **13...♕f6 14.♘c3 ♗xf3 15.gxf3 ♕xf5 16.0-0-0 ♕xf3** and Black is a pawn up, and won easily after **17.♘e4 0-0-0 18.♔b1 ♗e7 19.♕c2 ♘f6! 20.♘c3 g5 21.♘a4?! e4 22.dxe4 ♘xe4 23.♖he1 ♗f6 24.b4** A desperate attempt. **24...♖xd1+ 25.♖xd1 b5 26.cxb5 axb5 27.♗d2 bxa4 28.♕xa4 ♕d3+ 29.♔c1 ♕c4+ 30.♔b1 ♔b7** White resigned.

One Step Beyond In the Modern

SOS-1, Chapter 13, p.106

In SOS-1 I investigated 1.e4 g6 2.d4 ♗g7 3.♘c3 d5!?, with the idea to regain the pawn after 4.exd5 ♘f6, obtaining a structure that resembles certain lines from the Alekhine or the Scandinavian. Here is a contribution from Or Cohen (who wrote on the Petroff with 3...♘xe4 in SOS-10) who argues that Black can go one step beyond and actually gambit the pawn after 4.exd5 with 4...c6.

1.e4 g6 2.d4 ♗g7 3.♘c3 d5 4.exd5 4.♘xd5?! offers limited chances for an advantage after 4...c6 and Black retrieves the pawn. **4...c6!?**



5.dxc6

5.♗c4!? transposes to a theoretical continuation (1.e4 g6 2.d4 ♗g7 3.♘c3 c6 4.♗c4 d5 5.exd5). White has chances for an advantage here. However, it seems strange not to accept the gambit.

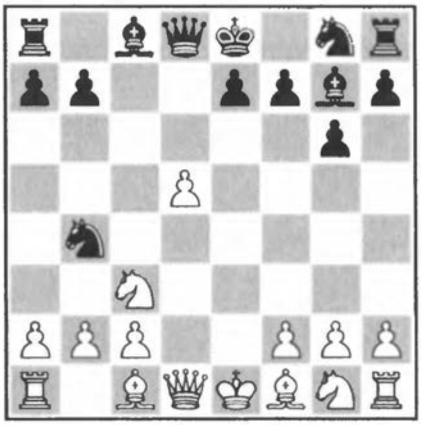
5.♗f4!? could be the choice of some practical players, wishing to avoid all preparation. This is a viable option. This position could arise after 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 g6 4.♗f4 ♗g7 5.exd5. Even so, as Mikhail Botvinnik demonstrated in 1959 – Black's prospects after 5...cxd5 are fine:

– 6.♘f3 (other attempts are quite harmless) 6...a6!? (an important prophylactic move) 7.h3!? (7.♕d2 ♘c6 8.0-0-0 ♘f6 and White is looking for trouble, as his pieces are far from ideally deployed) 7...♘c6 8.♗e2 ♘f6 9.0-0 0-0 10.♘e5 ♗f5 with equal chances.

– 6.♘b5 (this is the justification of 5.♗f4) 6...♘a6 7.♕e2 (this is White's trick in this position) 7...♘f6 8.♘d6+ ♔f8 (Black should not be too disturbed by the fact that he is denied from castling) 9.♘xc8 (9.♘b5 ♗d7) 9...♖xc8 10.c3 and now a sample line runs: 10...♘c7 11.♘f3 ♘e6 12.♗e3 ♕b6 13.g3 ♘e4 14.♗g2 ♗f6!? 15.0-0 ♔g7.

5...♘xc6 White can now only keep the pawn by pushing it forward.

6.d5 ♘b4



7.a3!?

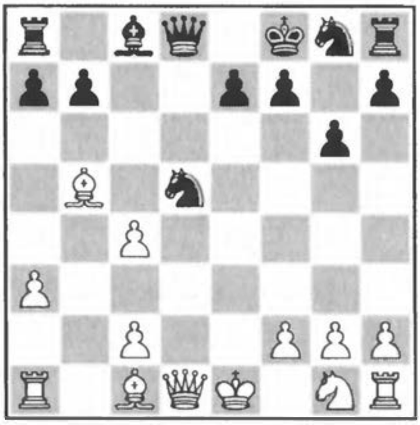
This is the critical continuation as mentioned by Khalifman. White forces Black to give up his important dark-squared bishop. Let us look at some alternatives:

– 7.♘f3 ♗f5!? 8.♗b5+ ♔f8 9.♗a4 ♗xc3+ 10.bxc3 ♘xd5 11.♕d4 ♘gf6 12.0-0 ♔g7 13.♗b3 ♖c8 with some counterplay.

– 7.♗c4 ♗f5 (worse is 7...♕c7?! 8.♗b3 ♗xc3+ 9.bxc3 ♕xc3+ 10.♗d2 ♕e5+ – 10...♕c5? 11.♗e3 ♕c3+ 12.♔f1!± Black is in a terrible state – 11.♘e2 ♘xd5 12.c4 ♘df6 13.0-0 ♗g4 14.f3 0-0-0 15.♕e1 with a slight edge) 8.♗b3 ♘f6 9.♘f3 ♕a5 10.0-0 ♖d8 and Black has some compensation for the pawn.

– 7.♗b5+ ♗d7 8.♗c4 (an inferior version of 7.♗c4 – 8.♗xd7+ ♕xd7=) 8...♕c7 9.♗b3 ♗xc3+ 10.bxc3 ♕xc3+ 11.♗d2 ♕c5 12.♘f3 (12.♗e3 ♕c3+ 13.♔f1?! ♗b5+ illustrates the difference between 7.♗b5+ and 7.♗c4. A perpetual is more or less forced: 14.♘e2 ♘f6 15.♗d4 ♗xe2+ 16.♔xe2 ♘bxd5 17.♗xd5 ♘xd5 18.♗xh8 ♘f4+ 19.♔f1 ♕c4+ 20.♔g1 ♘e2+ 21.♔f1 ♘f4+=) 12...♘xd5 and Black has a pawn for which White has some compensation.

7...♗xc3+ 8.bxc3 ♘xd5 9.♗b5+! The point! Black must lose the right to castle. **9...♔f8 10.c4**



10...♘gf6!

Black's surprising reply that justifies the existence of this line.

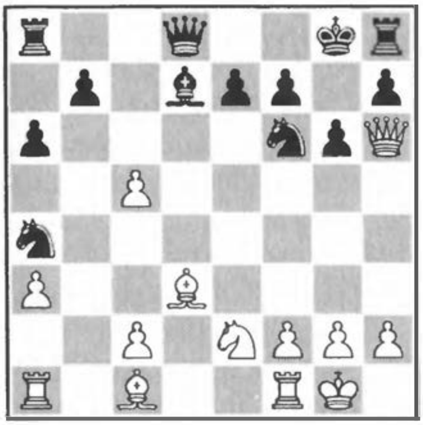
11.♘e2 Not 11.cxd5? ♕a5+. **11...♔g7** Here Khalifman claims that 12.♕d2 promises White a big plus. However, I don't think that matters are that simple.

12.♕d2 ♘b6! Khalifman only mentions 12...♘c7 13.♕h6+ ♔g8 14.0-0 ♘xb5 15.cxb5 ♗f5 16.♗b2±. **13.♕h6+ ♔g8**

And suddenly the bishop on b5 is awkwardly placed, Black plans ...a6.

14.0-0 Play is unclear after 14.♗b2 ♗g4 15.f3 ♗e6 16.0-0 ♗xc4 17.♖fd1 ♕c7.

14...a6 15.c5 ♗d7!? 16.♗d3 ♘a4



This position requires practical tests. Black will win the c5 pawn, but White surely has compensation. Who is willing to try this?

SOS Prize for Shirov's Line

SOS-7, Chapter 5, p. 50

An important new idea in Shirov's Philidor (5.g4!) was demonstrated by Dutch talent Robin van Kampen in the 2010 Corus C tournament. It is this volume's well-deserving winner. Enjoy the tactics below!

☐ **Robin van Kampen**
■ **Sjoerd Plukkel**
Wijk aan Zee 2010

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 ♘bd7

3...e5 4.♘f3 ♘bd7 is another way to reach the Philidor under investigation here. In this move order 4.g4, almost forcing 4...h6, is a very interesting option. See Chapter 8 by Willy Hendriks in this book!

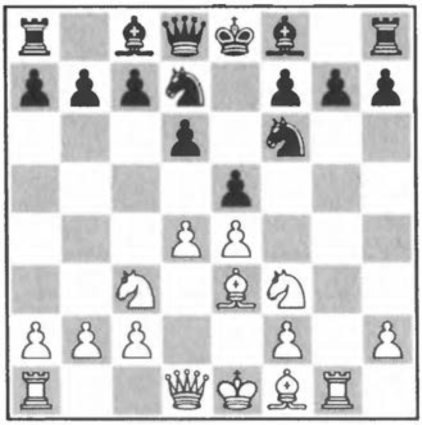
4.♘f3 e5 5.g4

Shirov's astonishing idea as first played by him against Azmaiparashvili in 2003. Friso Nijboer reported on this line for SOS in the 7th volume.

5...♘xg4

The only way to refute a gambit is to accept it, however, it seems that this is also the way to lose quickly. For the alternatives to the pawn snatch see SOS-7.

6.♖g1 ♘gf6 7.♗e3!?



This is fairly new. On the highest level we could mention a rapid game by Mamedyarov from 2008. Of course Shirov always plays 7.♗c4 and this has almost exclusively been played so far.

7...c6 8.♕d2

White insists on postponing the development of the king's bishop, and he does so for a reason (or more than one actually).

Firstly, the bishop cannot be attacked by ...b5 or ...♘b6.

Secondly, the bishop might go to h3.

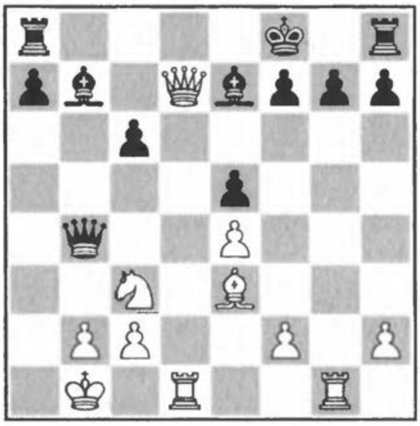
Thirdly, White will castle one move sooner – which may be useful for all sorts of tricks on the d-file. And finally, White might save a tempo: see the game!

8...♕c7

8...b5 9.a3 ♗b7 (9...a6 as played in Teran Alvarez-Strikovic, Seville 2009, spends a tempo on preventing any funny business on b5) 10.0-0-0 and now:

– 10...g6 11.♗h3 ♗e7 12.♗h6 a5 13.dxe5 dxe5 14.♗g7 ♖g8 15.♕h6 ♕c7 16.♖xd7?! (correct was the prosaic 16.♗xd7+ ♘xd7 17.♕xh7 0-0-0 18.♗h6) 16...♘xd7 17.♕xh7 ♖xg7 18.♕xg7 ♗f6 19.♕h7 (White had presumably overlooked 19.♗xd7+ ♔e7!, when Black is OK. Although this would still have been the lesser evil) 19...♘f8 was slightly better for Black in Priyadharshan-Al Sayed, Subic Bay 2009.

– 10...♕a5 11.♔b1 b4 12.axb4 ♕xb4 13.dxe5 ♘xe5 (13...dxe5 14.♗h3 ♕e7 15.♗g5 with very strong pressure) 14.♘xe5 dxe5 15.♗h3 (15.f4!?) 15...♗e7? (15...♕e7) 16.♗d7+ ♘xd7 17.♕xd7+ ♔f8



Until so far the rapid game Mamedyarov-Agrest, Ajaccio 2008. Mamedyarov won fairly quickly after the sober 18.♕c7. He could have won forcefully with the lovely: 18.♖xg7!! ♖d8 (18...♔xg7 19.♖g1++–) 19.♗h6!! ♖xd7 20.♖g8+ ♔xg8 21.♖g1+ ♗g5 22.♖xg5 mate!

9.0-0-0 b5?

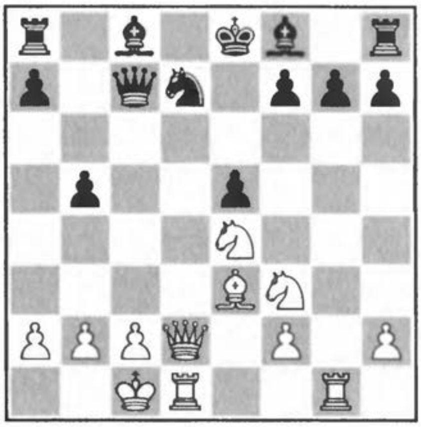
Very logical, but wrong, as Van Kampen convincingly demonstrates.

10.dxe5!

The right moment to open the position.

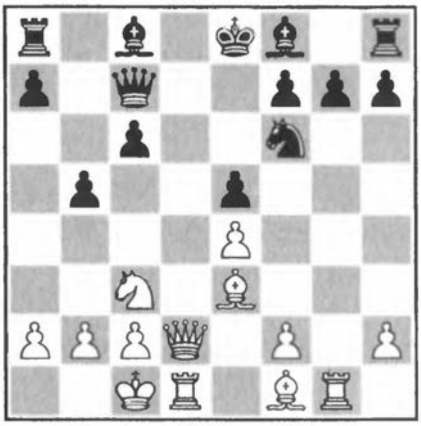
10...♘xe5

After 10...dxe5 11.♗xb5! ♘xe4? (11...cxb5 12.♘xb5 ♕c4 13.♕a5 favours White) 12.♘xe4 cxb5



White again has a spectacular rook sacrifice on g7: 13.♖xg7! (13.♘d6+? ♗xd6 14.♕xd6 ♕xd6 15.♖xd6 was slightly better for Black in Fernandez Andrade-Baltar Iglesias, Ourense 2007) 13...♗xg7 (13...♕c6 14.♘xe5 ♕xe4 15.♖g5!+–) 14.♘d6+ ♔f8 15.♕d5+– and White just wins. Apparently, ♖xg7 is a standard sac in this line. Or is it the only logical consequence of 5.g4 ♘xg4 6.♖g1?

11.♘xe5 dxe5



12.♗xb5!

Right, so White has saved a tempo: the bishop is 'developed' to b5 in one go!

12...♗e6

Black cannot accept this very Greek gift: 12...cxb5 13.♘xb5 just wins: 13...♕e7 14.♕c3.

13.♗a4

Now 14.♘d5 is an unpleasant threat, so Black pins the knight, but this means allowing ♖xg7 (this time not even a sac!).

13...♗b4

13...♘d7 was probably best, but material is equal again and White has everything developed. It's not difficult to decide on which side you should put your money.

14.♖xg7 ♘xe4

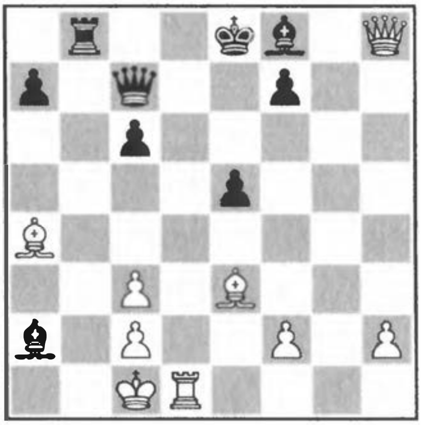
The point, Black at least inflicts some damage on White's queenside structure. Van Kampen has accurately calculated that his king is safe enough though.

15.♕d3 ♘xc3 16.bxc3 ♗f8

16...♗a3+ 17.♔b1 and White always has ♗b3, which suffices.

17.♖xh7! Simple but effective. **17...♖xh7 18.♕xh7 ♗xa2?** 18...♖d8 was best, but White is a passed pawn ahead.

19.♕h8 Now it's all over as Black cannot defend against ♗c5 or ♗h6 without letting go of c6. **19...♖b8** Or 19...♗e6 20.♗c5 winning.

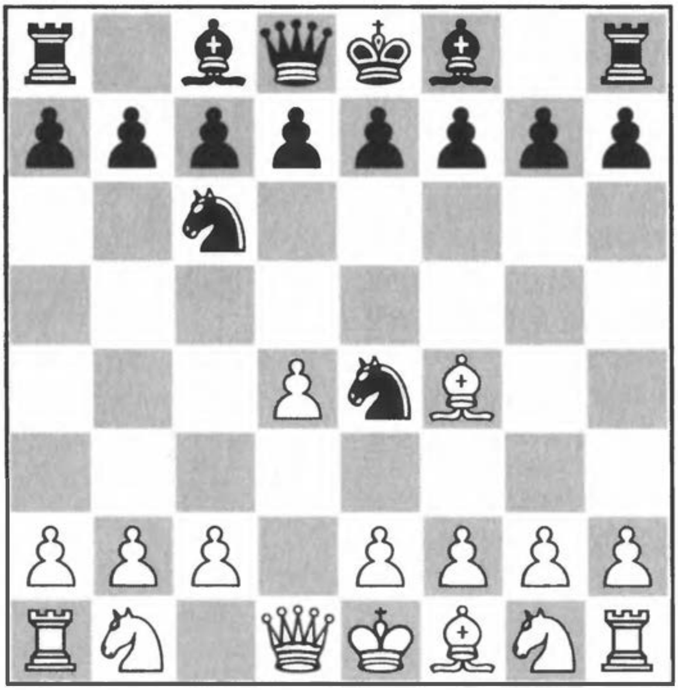


20.♗xc6+ ♔e7 Nothing is changed by 20...♕xc6 21.♕xe5+ ♗e6 22.♕xb8+. **21.♗g5+ ♔e6 22.♕f6** checkmate!

CHAPTER 2

Dimitri Reinderman

Trompowsky: the Cinema Variation



1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗g5 ♘e4 3.♗f4 ♘c6

I often go to the cinema. One time, not too long ago, the movie hadn't started yet and they showed some trailers. Now I do like to see trailers, but not when I've seen them ten times already (the disadvantage of going to the cinema too often!), so my mind started wandering, calculating strange variations from the starting position. This is something I do more often when I am bored. Now, you dear reader might think that I am some kind of Ivanchuk, not quite in touch with the reality of the world. And, well, maybe you're right!

Anyway, I calculated 1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗g5 ♘e4 3.♗f4 ♘c6 4.♘d2 g5 5.♗e5 ♘xe5 6.♘xe4 ♘c4 7.♘xg5 ♘xb2 8.♕c1 and then first variations with 8...♘c4 9.♕f4 f6, which looked a bit suspicious, but then I found 8...♗h6 and this looked fine. By this time the movie started, but I remembered the variation, so, when I came home, I started checking whether my fantasy could survive the hard reality of Rybka. And to my surprise it did! And what is more, there were many more interesting variations, like 4.f3 e5!?.

My database only gives 48 games with 3...♘c6, including a lot of games by unrateds, lowly rateds, and games where Black plays secondary continuations. So in writing this article, I mainly had to trust on my own (computer checked) analysis. As the above fantasy variation illustrates, one of the ideas of 3...♘c6 is to play ...g5. After 3...g5 White might play 4.♗e5, but he probably won't do this when knight takes bishop is possible. Another idea is the move ...e5, as a (probably temporary) sacrifice in the style of the Budapest Gambit (or simply as a good answer to 4.d5). And Black develops, so it's not out of the question to continue with moves like ...d5 and continue in Chigorin Defence style.

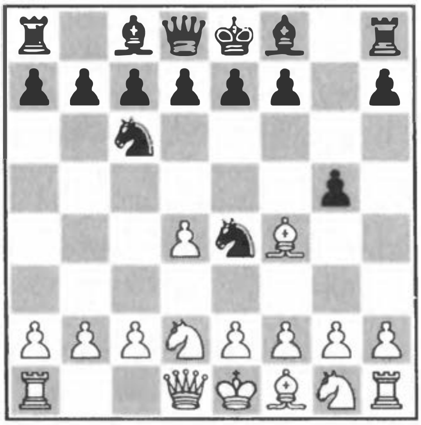
I will show you examples of how to continue after 4.♘d2, 4.f3 and other moves, like 4.e3 and 4.♘f3, but first a warning. Often with an SOS you not only have the advantage of surprise, but also of knowledge. You play your (SOS) book moves, while your opponent has to think on his/her own. But if you intend to play 3...♘c6, you have to realize that you will probably be out of book fairly quickly too. The variations that I will give are plausible continuations, but there are many alternatives that I don't cover. It is also important to realize that variations like 3...♘c6 4.♘d2 g5 will give unusual positions, which means that both players will have to make concrete decisions early on (instead of just developing their pieces and/or rely on their opening knowledge), and so that time-trouble will be very likely. If your clock handling is bad, this is not a good variation for you. The reverse holds as well: if your opponent's clock handling is bad, 3...♘c6 will bring him very near to the abyss.

Variation I – 4.♘d2

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗g5 ♘e4 3.♗f4 ♘c6 4.♘d2 g5!?

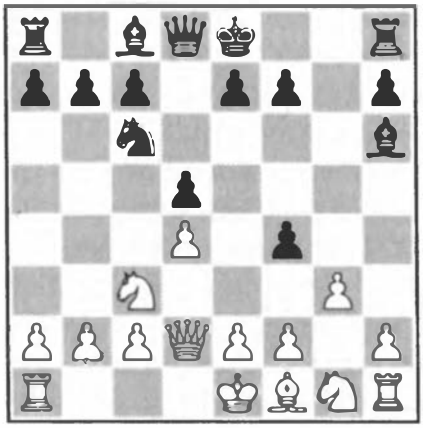
According to my database, this move has never been played. While I don't think that this move is better than the normal 4...♘xd2, it's certainly more entertaining, and a good choice if you want to avoid a draw. If you take on d2 that is not so easy, for example 5.♕xd2 d5 6.e3 ♗f5 7.♘f3 e6 8.♗b5 ♗d6 9.♘e5 ♗xe5 10.♗xe5 0-0 11.♗xc6 bxc6 12.0-0 and now you will be happy not to play under the Sofia Rules...

After 4...g5, White immediately has some problems to solve. So many possibilities, what to choose?



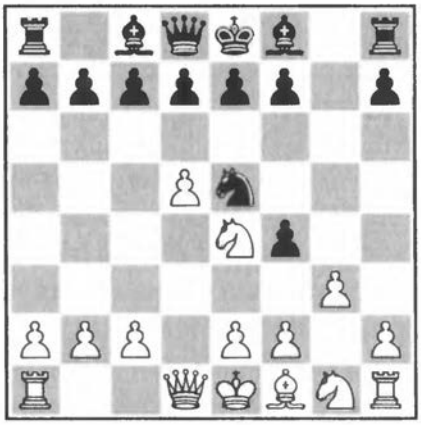
5.♗e5

● 5.♘xe4 gxf4 6.♕d2 (after most other moves Black will also play 6...d5. For 6.d5 ♘e5 see 5.d5) 6...d5 7.♘c3 ♗h6 (the only good move to defend the pawn, but defending it is not essential! For example 7...h5!? 8.♕xf4!? ♗h6 9.♕g3 ♘xd4 10.♕e5 ♘xc2+ 11.♔d1 ♘xa1 12.♕xh8+ ♗f8 is a very interesting position. Difficult to evaluate also, but probably having an unsafe king is worse than having a knight in the corner) 8.g3 (again the most forcing move)



8...♗f5!? (8...♗g7) 9.gxf4 (9.♘f3 ♗e4!? 10.♗g2 e6 11.gxf4 ♖g8 12.♘xe4 dxe4 13.♘g5 ♗xg5 14.fxg5 f5 15.h4 ♕xd4 is equal, but what happens when White is materialistic?) 9...e5! 10.dxe5 d4 11.♘a4 (11.♗g2 is an interesting counter-sacrifice) 11...♗e4 (or 11...♕h4, if you prefer to win back your pawns quickly) 12.♘f3 ♕e7 13.b3 (13...b5 was a threat) 13...0-0-0 14.♘b2 ♘xe5, and Black will win an exchange. Okay, this variation probably won't happen in a real game, but one can dream!

● 5.d5 gxf4 6.♘xe4 ♘e5 7.g3 (with this move White hopes that a more compact pawn structure will compensate for Black's pair of bishops)



7...c6!? (7...fxg3 8.hxg3 c6 is fine, but sacrificing pawns is fun!) 8.gxf4 ♘g6 9.e3 ♕b6 (9...♕a5+ is also good) 10.♖b1 (a Trompowsky player is used to sacrifice b2, but in this position Black would really enjoy eating this pawn) 10...♕b4+ 11.♘c3 ♗g7 12.♘f3 (12.♘e2 ♘h4! 13.♗h3 d6 14.♗xc8 ♖xc8 with compensation) 12...♗xc3+ 13.bxc3 ♕xc3+ 14.♕d2 ♕xd2+ 15.♔xd2 cxd5. Suddenly Black is a pawn up! And now White is the one with compensation.

● 5.♗xc7 ♘xf2 6.♗xd8 ♘xd1 7.♖xd1 ♔xd8. This endgame is about equal, but not drawish: both sides have their advantages.

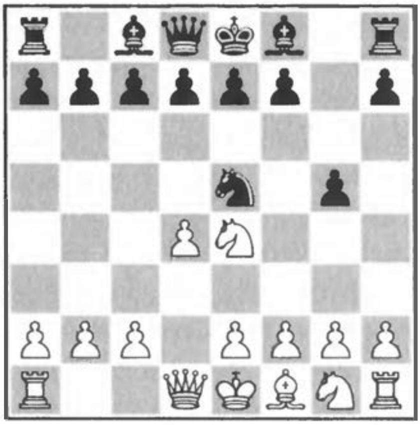
● 5.♗e3 ♘xd2 6.♕xd2 ♗g7 7.c3 h6 8.0-0-0 ♘a5!? 9.b3 d5, with again an original and about equal position.

● 5.♗xg5!? (yes, this is possible!) 5...♘xg5 6.d5 h5 (6...♘b8 7.h4 and White wins back the piece) 7.h4 ♘h7 8.dxc6 bxc6, and with two bishops and a lot of central pawns Black can be happy.

● 5.♗g3?! ♘xg3 6.hxg3 ♘xd4 wins a pawn, when White doesn't have enough compensation.

5...♘xe5 6.♘xe4

After 6.dxe5 ♘c5 a possible continuation is 7.e3 ♗g7 8.♕h5 ♗xe5 9.0-0-0 e6 10.h4 d5 11.hxg5 ♗g7, with again an interesting position, where chances are about equal.



6...♘c4

Here the computer comes with the unbelievable 6...♘c6. Can't White just take the pawn? But it thinks the position is equal after 7.♘xg5 e5 8.♘5f3 exd4 9.♘xd4 ♗g7 10.♘xc6 bxc6 11.c3 ♖b8 12.♕c2 ♕f6. White looks solid here, but it's not so easy to develop, so perhaps Black does have full compensation for the pawn. The same goes for 7.d5 ♘e5 8.♘xg5 c6 9.dxc6 bxc6.

Anyway, 6...♘c4 is the main line of my Cinema Variation.

7.♘xg5

Can White claim to be better after 7.e3 ♘xb2 8.♕b1 ♘c4!? 9.♗xc4 d5 10.♗d3 dxe4 11.♗xe4 c6? The g5 pawn looks out of place, but every disadvantage has an advantage, and perhaps Black can continue as if ...g5 is part of a plan: 12.♘e2 h5!? 13.0-0 h4.

7...♘xb2

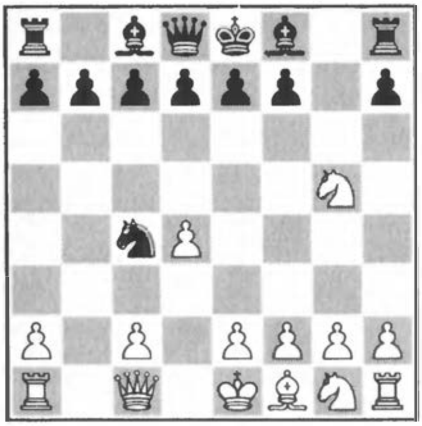
There are other options here, but this must be the best move.

8.♕c1

White has a trick here: 8.♕d2 h6 9.♘xf7!? ♔xf7 10.♕b4, but after 10...c5! 11.♕xb2 ♕a5+ 12.♔d1 cxd4 Black has two bishops, the centre, open files, a safer king; in short, everything he dreams of!

8...♘c4

As said in the introduction, 8...♗h6 is fine for Black, but 8...♘c4 actually works!



9.♕f4?!

9.e4 d5 10.♗xc4 dxc4 is better, and then for example 11.♘e2 ♗h6 12.♕f4 f6 13.♕f3, hoping for 13...♗xg5 14.h4, though a brave black soul plays this anyway, otherwise 13...0-0 14.♘h3 e5 is fine. Some weaknesses, but two bishops can do a lot.

9...♘d6!

Here Black is already better, according to the computer, but it's not so easy to explain why. Well, I can make an educated guess: White's dark squares are weak, especially since there is no bishop to cover them, and ♕a5(+) and ♗h6 are potentially annoying moves.

Let's try both a forcing, and a quiet, variation for White:

– 10.e4 c6 11.e5 ♕a5+ 12.♔d1 h6 13.♘5f3 ♘b5 14.♗xb5 ♕xb5 sees Black undeveloped, but his bishops will be strong in the future.

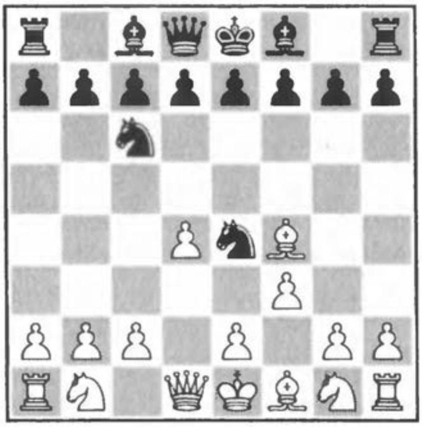
– 10.c3 c6 11.♘e4 ♘xe4 12.♕xe4 ♕a5 13.♕c2 c5 14.e3 b6 15.♗e2 cxd4 16.exd4 ♗b7 17.♗f3 ♗d5 and White still has some problems to solve.

Okay computer, I might be wrong, but I believe you. It really seems that the Cinema Variation is good for Black!

Variation II – 4.f3

☐ **Wolfgang Gerstner**
■ **Stephan Giemsa**
Germany Bundesliga 1989/90

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗g5 ♘e4 3.♗f4 ♘c6 4.f3



4...e5!?

Sharp but risky. The alternative is 4...♘f6 5.e4 d6 6.♗b5 (6.♗c4 e5 7.dxe5 ♘h5 8.♗e3 ♘xe5 or 6.♗e3 g6 should suit KI/Pirc players) 6...a6 7.♗xc6+ bxc6 8.♘e2 ♖b8 9.b3 e6 10.0-0 ♗e7 11.c4 ♘d7 12.♘bc3 c5 13.d5 e5 14.♗e3 ♗g5 15.♕d2 h6 and a draw was agreed in Brumen-Zaja, Zagreb 2007.

Not good is 4...g5 5.♗c1, since Black will lose pawn g5.

5.dxe5

The only good move; White should try to keep his dark-squared bishop.

5...g5

Black chases the bishop to a square where it doesn't defend e5 and gains the possibility of fianchettoing with tempo.

There is a disadvantage too, of course: 5...g5 gives White an object to attack with h4.

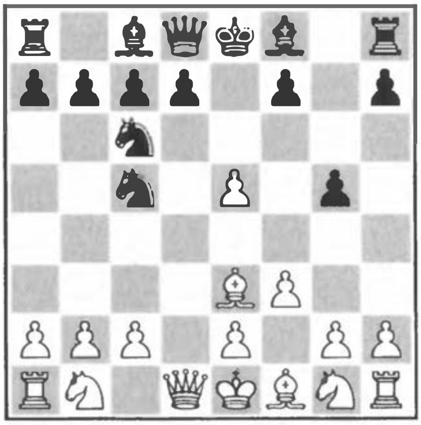
6.♗e3

White will want to keep his bishop, but then he either has to block his e-pawn, or undevelop with 6.♗c1. After 6...♘c5 7.e4 there are two different set-ups for Black:

– 7...♗g7 8.♗e3 ♘e6 9.♘c3 ♗xe5 10.♘ge2 d6 11.♕d2 ♗d7 12.0-0-0 ♕f6 is Offinger-Härtig, Germany 2006/07, but now 13.h4! is strong.

– But Black can consider neglecting his development and leave the bishop on f8 to defend d6: 7...♘xe5 8.♘c3 d6 9.♗e3 ♘e6 10.♕d2 c6 11.0-0-0 b5!?, with counterchances, but it's very provocative!

6...♘c5



7.♕d2

This is (in the few games with this position) the most popular move.

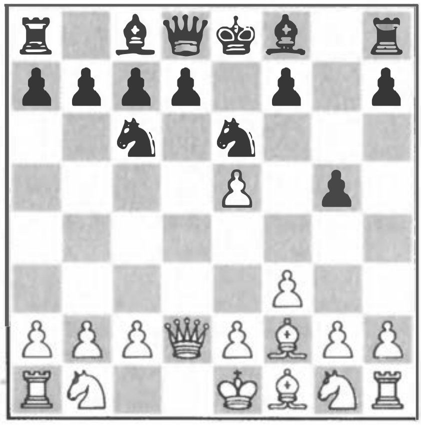
Hodgson, in *Secrets of the Trompowsky*, gives as the main line:

– 7.♕c1 (so as not to be bothered by ...♘c4) 7...♘e6 8.h4 ♘xe5 9.hxg5 d5 10.♗f2 ♗g7 11.c3 ♕e7 12.♕d2 c6 13.♘a3 ♘xg5 14.♗h4 f6 15.0-0-0 ♗f5 16.e4 dxe4 17.f4 with advantage for White in Helbig-Seyb, Germany 1993/94. However, chances were about equal till Black slipped up with 15...♗f5.

– 7.h4 is a forcing move: 7...g4 (7...gxh4 8.♘c3 ♘xe5 9.♗d4 f6 10.f4 ♘f7 11.♕d2 is good for White) 8.♘c3 ♘xe5 9.♕d4 (9.♗d4 f6 10.f4 is less convincing now, since after 10...♘c6 11.e3 White doesn't threaten ♕h5+) 9...f6 10.0-0-0 c6 11.f4 ♘f7, and it's difficult to label positions like this, but there is no obvious advantage for one side (though perhaps there is an obvious disadvantage for both sides...).

– 7.♕d5 must be mentioned, because it hangs on to the pawn. But it doesn't worry Black: 7...♕e7 8.h4 (otherwise Black will just take on e5) 8...♘b4 9.♕xc5 (9.♕d2 ♕xe5 attacks b2 and e3!) 9...♕xc5 10.♗xc5 ♗xc5 11.♔d2 d6 with good compensation for the pawn.

7...♘e6 8.♗f2



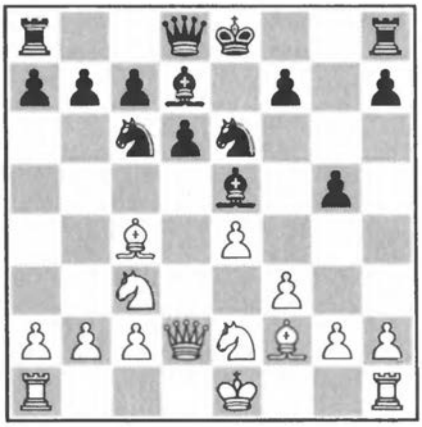
8...♗g7

Putting the bishop here can't be too bad, but there is an alternative: 8...♘xe5 9.♘c3 c6 10.e4 b5!?. Who needs development when you can attack?

9.♘c3 ♗xe5

9...♘xe5 10.e4 d6 11.0-0-0 h5 12.h4 g4 13.♗e3 was played in Multhauf-Schirmer, e-mail 2001, but it's not easy to find a safe place for the black king here.

10.e4 d6 11.♗c4 ♗d7 12.♘ge2



White's position is easier to play here, especially since Black has difficulties with his king. With the pawn on g6 short castling would be fine, but now it would be asking for 'it' (which in this case is a white attack). The upside of the pawn on g5 is heightened control of the dark squares. It's a bit similar to the variation of the Advanced Dragon where Black plays ...g5, ...h5-h4 and keeps the king in the middle, hoping to get a nice blockade. But here White can try to prepare g3 and f4. Still, Black has a very playable position. However, he shouldn't play

12...♖b8?

Black hopes to get b5 in, but gives up on castling queenside. A normal move here would be 12...♕f6, and after 13.0-0-0 0-0-0 14.♔b1 ♕g7 15.g3 ♚b8 16.f4 ♗f6 there is no dark square blockade anymore, but the battery on the long diagonal is nice.

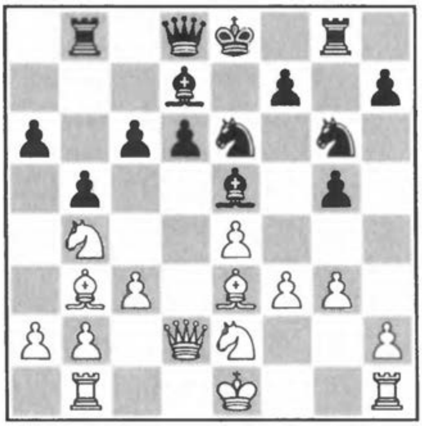
13.♗e3

After 13.h4 h6 14.0-0-0 ♕f6 15.♗e3 the main difference with the variation above is that the king is stuck in the middle (and the black rooks are not connected). This means White is clearly better.

13...♖g8 14.♖b1

Planning 15.♖g1 perhaps? Anyway, there was no reason to be afraid of a black attack: 14.0-0-0 a6 15.h4 h6 16.hxg5 hxg5 17.♘d5 b5 18.♗d3 ♘e7 19.g3 and White will be the one attacking.

14...a6 15.♘d5 b5 16.♗b3 ♘e7 17.c3 ♘g6 18.g3 c6 19.♘b4



19...♖a8

In chess, as in life, one must not be afraid to admit one's mistakes. But in this case there was no concrete need, since after 19...c5 White won't take on a6.

20.♖f1 ♘ef4?

It's true that White was threatening to win a piece, and Black gets some counterchances after giving up a piece voluntarily. But Black can get the same counterchances while keeping his piece: 20...c5 21.♘d5 ♗g7 22.f4 gxf4 23.gxf4 c4 24.♗c2 ♘c5, and while White is better, with both kings feeling insecure anything can happen.

21.gxf4 gxf4 22.♗f2 ♘h4 23.♘g1 ♖g2 24.♘d3 ♖xh2 25.♘xe5 dxe5 26.♕d6 ♘g2+ 26...♕e7 is best, but not enough. **27.♔e2 f6 28.♖fd1 ♘e3 29.♗e6** Winning more material. **29...♘xd1 30.♖xd1 ♖a7 31.♗xd7+ ♖xd7 32.♕e6+ ♕e7 33.♕g8+** Black resigned.

Variation III – 4.e3 and others

☐ **Alef Boer**
■ **Rob Bertholee**
Groningen 2000

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗g5 ♘e4 3.♗f4 ♘c6 4.e3

Hodgson writes: 'I quite like the look of the solid 4.e3 followed by 5.♗d3, but then I am getting rather old!'

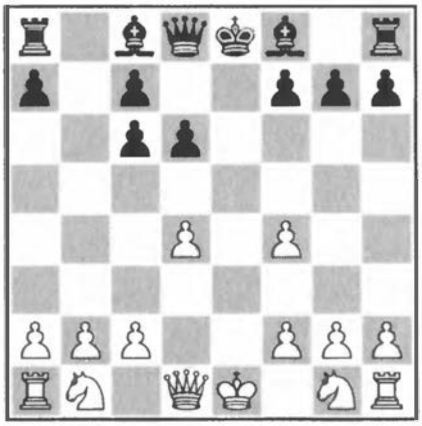
– 4.♘f3 is also a normal move, and there have been some grandmaster games with it: 4...e6 5.♘bd2 d5 6.♘xe4 (6.c3 ♗d6 7.e3 0-0 8.♗d3 f5= Kovacevic-Planinec, Zagreb 1975) 6...dxe4 7.♘e5 ♘e7 (7...♗d6 8.e3 0-0 9.♗g3 ♗xe5 10.dxe5 ♕g5 11.♕d2 ♘xe5 12.0-0-0 ♘c6 13.♕c3 e5= Hort-Planinec, Ljubljana 1975) 8.e3 f6 9.♘c4 ♘d5 10.♗g3 ♗d7 11.♘d2 f5 12.c4 ♘f6 13.♗e2 c5 14.dxc5 ♗xc5, with an equal position in Jakab-Beliavsky, Hungary 2003.

– As explained before, Black is fine after 4.d5 e5.

4...d6

Of course 4...d5 is also possible, as is the wild 4...g5!? 5.♗g3 h5.

5.♗d3 e5 6.♗xe4 exf4 7.♗xc6+ bxc6 8.exf4

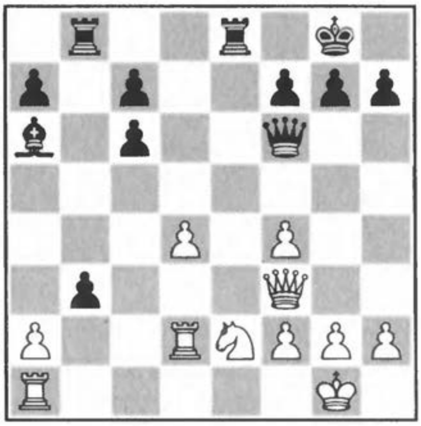


We have a familiar theme: Black has two bishops, but for a price, in this case a pawn.

8...♗a6 9.♕f3 d5 10.♘e2 ♖b8 11.b3 ♗d6 12.0-0 0-0

The bishops are clearly more active than White's knights, so Black's compensation is enough.

13.♖e1 ♖e8 14.♘d2 ♕e7 15.♔f1?! ♕f6 16.c4 ♗b4 Winning back a pawn. **17.♖ed1 ♗xd2 18.♖xd2 dxc4 19.♔g1 cxb3**



20.♘c3? b2

Now Black even is a pawn up.

21.♖b1 ♖b4 22.h3 ♖eb8 23.♕e3 g6 24.♘d1 c5? 25.dxc5 h5 26.♕e5 ♕xf4 27.♕xf4 ♖xf4 28.♖bxb2 ♖xb2 29.♘xb2 ♖e4

Black lost the pawn, but is still a bit better.

30.♔h2 ♖e5 31.♖d8+ ♔g7 32.♖a8 ♖xc5 33.♖xa7 ♗e2 34.a4 ♖c2 35.♖b7 ♗a6 36.♖a7 ♗e2 37.♖b7 ♔f6 38.a5 h4 39.♘a4 ♖c4 40.♘b2 ♖c2 41.♘a4 ♗a6 42.♖b4 ♔e5 43.♖xh4 c5 44.♖h7 ♗b5 45.♘xc5 ♖xc5 46.♖xf7 ♗c4

This ending should be a draw, but eventually White lost rook-bishop against rook.

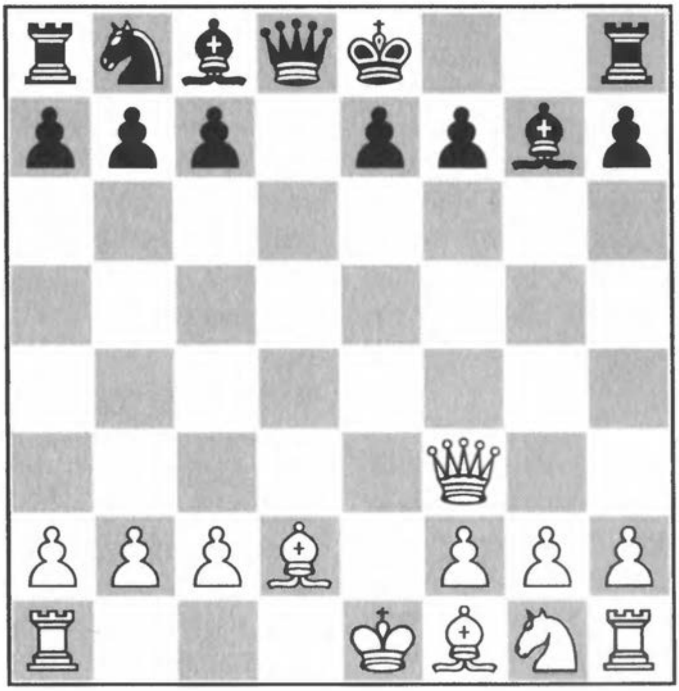
47.♖a7 ♗d5 48.♔g3 ♖c3+ 49.f3 ♖c2 50.♖g7 ♔f5 51.a6 ♖a2 52.a7 ♗c4 53.♔h4 ♔f6 54.♖d7 ♗e6 55.♖c7 ♗d5 56.♖d7 g5+ 57.♔g3 ♗c4 58.h4 ♗f1 59.hxg5+ ♔xg5 60.♖d5+ ♔f6 61.♖d2 ♖xa7 62.♔f2 ♗c4 63.g4 ♗e6 64.♖d3 ♔e5 65.♔g3 ♖a1 66.♖e3+ ♔f6 67.♖c3 ♗d5 68.♖c5 ♔e5 69.f4+ ♔e4 70.f5 ♖g1+ 71.♔h3 ♔f3 72.♖c3+ ♔f4 73.♔h4 ♖xg4+ 74.♔h5 ♔xf5 75.♖c5

White resigned.

CHAPTER 3

Jeroen Bosch

Alekhine: Hector's Way



Let's play 7.♕f3!?

In my opinion, to achieve a theoretical opening advantage against the Alekhine the correct way to proceed is 2.e5 ♘d5 3.d4 d6 4.♘f3, the so-called Modern Variation. However, if the Vienna or the Four Knights Opening (remember the Gunsberg Variation 4.a3?) is on your repertoire in the Open Games, then 2.♘c3 is an excellent choice against the Alekhine. Apart from 2...e5 Black may also play 2...d6 to enter the Pirc (while 3.f4 c5 is a Sicilian Grand Prix Attack), but Alekhine players will usually opt for 2...d5 to try and direct the course of play. Here you can surprise your opponent with Jonny Hector's favourite weapon.

1.e4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 d5 3.e5 d4

Theoretical works on the Alekhine often argue that this leads to an equal ending, but this SOS will prove them wrong! Here 3...♘fd7 might lead to a French Defence – certainly not your opponent's cup of tea or he would have gone for 1...e6 in the first place. More distinctive is 3...♘e4, but this is fairly dubious after 4.♘ce2!. After the text both sides grab some material with

4.exf6 dxc3 5.fxg7 cxd2+ 6.♗xd2

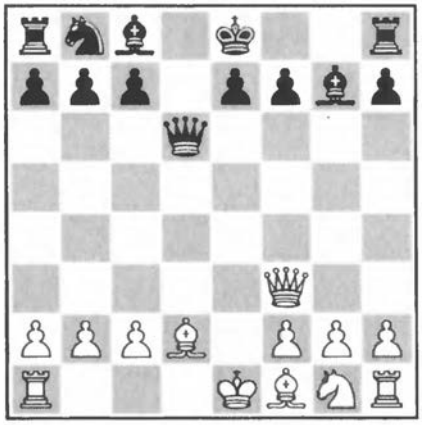
Combined with White's next move this is the SOS way to combat this line. The equal ending that I was referring to above arises after 6.♕xd2 ♕xd2+ 7.♗xd2 ♗xg7 8.0-0-0 ♘c6.

6...♗xg7 7.♕f3!?

Attaboy! This is the way to play! White prepares to castle queenside. He is willing to exchange the dark-squared bishops via square c3. Black's queen might get into trouble following a vis-à-vis with the rook along the d-file. And last but not least, Black's king is a little vulnerable – he usually castles kingside, but with the g-pawn missing this is not entirely safe. All this sounds almost too good to be true. Well, if I would have to mention a downside: it is that White has kept pawn b2 hanging. However, we all know about grabbing on b2, don't we? Let's look at some illustrative games.

☐ **Jonny Hector**
■ **Matej Grujic**
Limhamn 1998

1.e4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 d5 3.e5 d4 4.exf6 dxc3 5.fxg7 cxd2+ 6.♗xd2 ♗xg7 7.♕f3 ♕d6



Black is preparing ...♕f6. The fact that Black is taking so much trouble to exchange queens should strengthen us in the idea that 7.♕f3 is correct – why ease Black's task with 6.♕xd2?

I like the text better than 7...♕d4, when Hector-Blees, Kecskemet 1987, went 8.♗c3 ♕g4 9.♗xg7 ♕xg7 10.0-0-0 when White is slightly better. After 10...♞c6 11.♕f4 (11.♕g3) 11...e5 12.♕h4 0-0, Hector went all-out with 13.♖d3!? ♗f5 14.♖g3 ♗g6 15.f4. Now 15...exf4 16.♕xf4 ♕e5 would have been better than the game continuation 15...f5? 16.♘f3 with advantage.

8.0-0-0

Also worthy of attention is 8.♗c3 ♗xc3+ 9.♕xc3 ♖g8 10.♗d3!? ♕c6!? 11.♕d2! ♕xg2 12.0-0-0 ♘c6 (12...♕xh1?? 13.♗e4+–) 13.♘e2 ♕g5 (13...♕xf2 14.♖hg1!?) 14.f4 ♕c5 15.♖hg1 and White has a dangerous attack for only one pawn.

After 8.♗c3 e5 White has 9.♖d1! ♕f6 10.♕xf6 ♗xf6 11.♘f3 ♘c6 12.♗b5 with a slight edge.

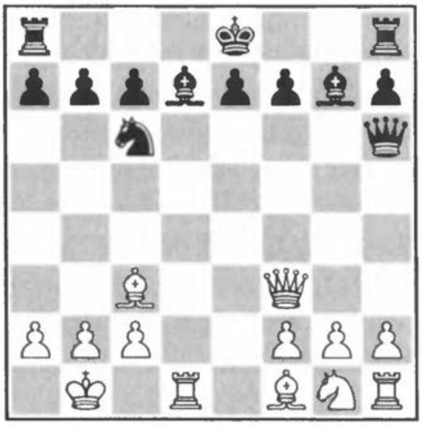
8...♘c6

8...♕f6 is an important move, but White has several ways to claim an edge.

The ending after 9.♕xf6 ♗xf6 10.♗f4 is slightly better for White. White can also avoid the exchange of queens for the moment with 9.♕a3 ♕d6 10.♗b5+!? ♗d7 (10...c6?! 11.♕xd6 exd6 12.♗d3) 11.♕b3 ♗xb5 12.♕xb5+ ♕c6 13.♕e2!? ♕b6 14.c3 ♘d7 15.♘h3 with an edge, Hector-Cadei, Geneva 1990.

9.♗c3 ♕h6+ 10.♔b1 0-0

There is something to be said for 10...♗d7 in order to castle queenside.



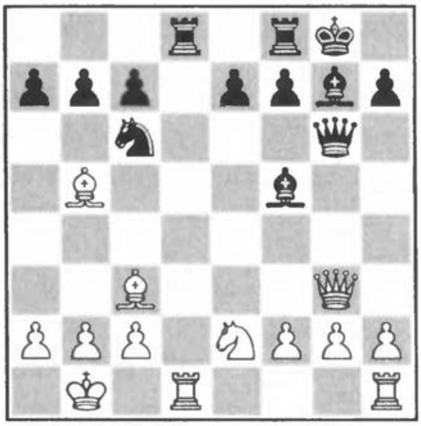
At first sight it looks as if White can strike immediately with 11.♖xd7.

However, after 11...♗xc3 (not 11...♔xd7? 12.♕g4+) White has nothing better but to return to d1, since 12.♖xc7 ♕d2! draws. And 12.♖d1 ♗g7 13.♗b5 0-0 was OK for Black in K.Lutz-Diaz, Germany 1989.

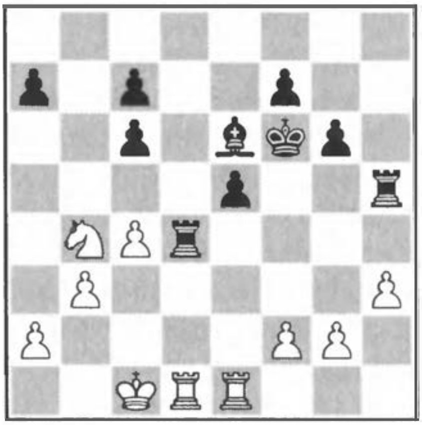
After 11.♗c4 ♖f8 (11...0-0-0! is correct) is worse because of 12.♖xd7! ♗xc3 (12...♔xd7 13.♕g4+ ♔e8 14.♗xg7) 13.♖xc7 ♕d6 14.♖xc6 ♕xc6 15.♕xc3 ♕xg2 16.♗b5+ ♔d8 17.♕h3! with a winning position.

11.♕g3 11.♗b5!? is probably more accurate. **11...♗f5 12.♗b5 ♖ad8** 12...♕g6 13.♕xg6 hxg6 14.♗xg7 ♔xg7 15.♗xc6 bxc6 16.♘e2 is quite similar to the game.

13.♘e2 ♕g6



The best move, but Hector now goes for a slightly better ending which is unpleasant to defend. **14.♕xg6 hxg6 15.♗xg7 ♔xg7 16.♗xc6 bxc6 17.♘d4** A knight is strong versus a fractured pawn structure such as Black has here on the queenside. **17...♖d6 18.♔c1** 18.♘xf5+ gxf5 is nothing special. **18...♔f6 19.♖he1 e5 20.♘b3! ♖d5 21.c4 ♖d6** This loses time. Correct was 21...♖xd1+ 22.♖xd1 ♖h8 23.h3 ♖h4 24.♘a5 ♖e4 with enough activity for the structural weaknesses on the queenside. **22.♘a5 ♖h8 23.h3 ♖h4 24.b3 ♗d7?! 25.♘b7! ♖dd4 26.♘c5 ♗e6 27.♘d3 ♖h5 28.♘b4**



Hector sure likes to dance around with his knight. After a few inaccuracies Black's position has become very unpleasant. White won on move 61.

☐ **Jonny Hector**
■ **Edvins Kengis**
Haninge 1992

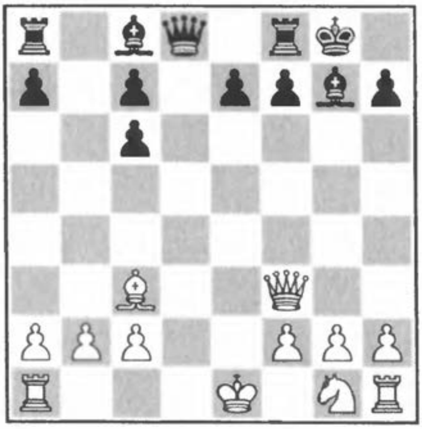
1.e4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 d5 3.e5 d4 4.exf6 dxc3 5.fxg7 cxd2+ 6.♗xd2 ♗xg7 7.♕f3 ♘c6 8.♗b5

Equally good is 8.0-0-0 ♕d6 9.♗c3 ♕h6+ 10.♔b1 which has occurred a few times in practice and is pleasant for White. The same holds for 8...♗d7 9.♗c3.

8...♕d6

Kengis also puts the queen on d6. Other options include:

- 8...0-0 9.♗xc6 bxc6 10.♗c3



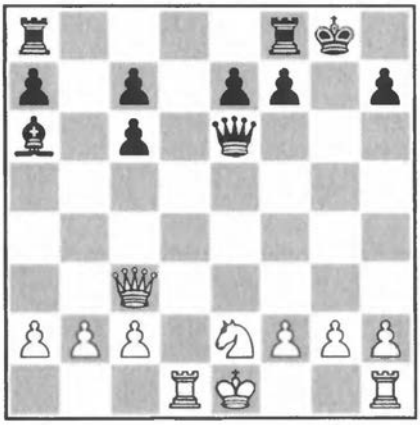
White is playing for a positional advantage. For example: 10...♗xc3+ 11.♕xc3 ♕d5 12.♖d1! ♕e4+ (12...♕xg2 13.♖d3! is the point, White is much better after 13...♗g4 14.♖g3 ♕e4+ 15.♔f1 f5 16.f3) 13.♘e2 ♗a6 14.♖d2 ♖ad8 15.f3 ♕e6 16.♔f2 Hector-Daillet, Cannes 1989. White's main advantage lies in the fact that he has two pawn groups, while Black has four. Hector won fairly effortlessly.

- 8...♗d7 9.♗c3 (9.0-0-0) 9...♘d4 10.♗xd4! ♗xd4 11.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 Bröhl-Klotz, Porz 1994/95. Now White should have played 12.0-0-0, with an edge.
- If Black did not take on b2 on the previous move then it is hard to believe that he will do so now: 8...♗xb2 9.♖b1 ♗f6 10.♘e2 ♕d6 11.0-0 provides sufficient compensation, as does 9.♖d1 ♕d6 10.♘e2.

9.♗c3 0-0 10.♗xc6

Again Hector is playing for knight versus bishop and fractured pawn structure. Black can only survive such positions if he manages to create dynamic counterplay.

10...♗xc3+ 11.♕xc3 bxc6 12.♘e2 ♗a6 13.♖d1 ♕e6



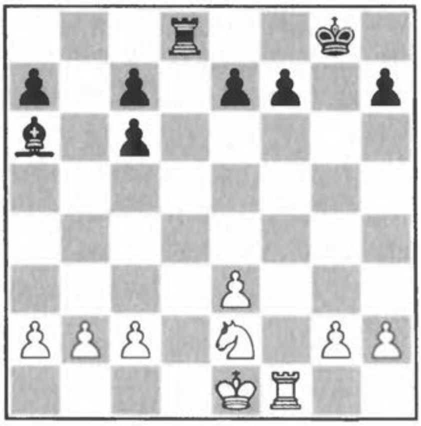
14.♕e3!

This more or less forces the queens off, when despite the isolated pawn on e3 White keeps his endgame edge.

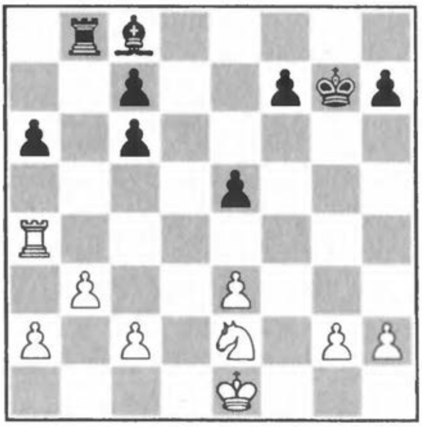
14...♕xe3

The tactical point was 14...♕xa2? 15.♕g3+! ♔h8 16.♕c3+ f6 17.b3!, and with neat geometrical play White will win material (either the queen or the bishop on a6).

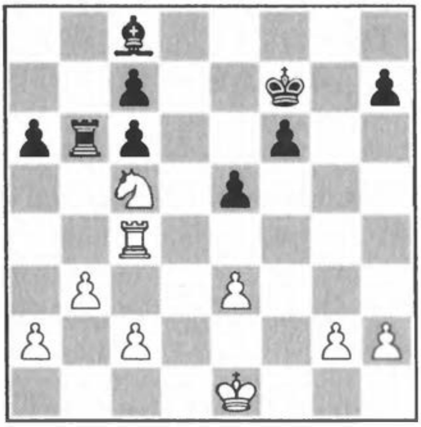
15.fxe3 ♖fd8 16.♖xd8+ Keeping it very simple. Black has counterplay after 16.♔f2 ♖d5. **16...♖xd8 17.♖f1**



I am not going to make a detailed analysis of this ending. Hector makes the technical phase look easy, and please don't forget that his opponent in this game is a strong grandmaster. **17...e5 18.♖f5 ♖e8** Now note the next rook manoeuvre to the queenside: **19.♖g5+** Gaining a tempo. **19...♔f8 20.♖h5 ♔g7 21.♖h4! ♖b8 22.b3 ♗c8** With such a queenside the rook ending after 22...♗xe2 23.♔xe2 is also unattractive. In a way this was preferable, though, as the knight is superior to the bishop. **23.♖a4 a6**



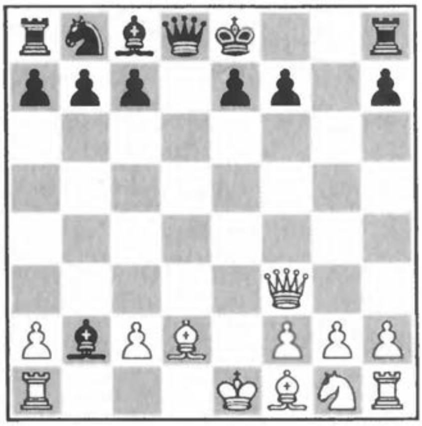
The time has come for the knight to seek greener pastures: **24.♘c1 f6 25.♘d3 ♖b5 26.♖c4 ♖b6 27.♘c5 ♔f7**



And the first pawn drops off: **28.♘a4! ♖b7 29.♖xc6 ♖a7 30.♘c5** Domination. Kengis resigned on move 49.

☐ **Yury Balashov**
■ **Georgy Timoshenko**
Moscow 1989

1.e4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 d5 3.e5 d4 4.exf6 dxc3 5.fxg7 cxd2+ 6.♗xd2 ♗xg7 7.♕f3 ♗xb2



This is the acid test. White has left pawn b2 hanging in his desire to keep the queens on. Not only does Black actually win a pawn, he also destroys White's hopes of castling queenside. Yet, 7...♗xb2 is not too popular in practice and this is not only because of the proverbial misdemeanour of grabbing b2. White gains time to develop a serious initiative and, while his own king can still castle kingside, his opponent's king will be stuck in the middle for some time to come.

8.♖d1

Clearly the most popular move. Of course the rook has to be placed on d1 and not on b1. Yet, curiously White is not obliged to move the rook, but he can interpolate 8.♗c4 with the threat of mate. This is actually a serious option which you might well find worth investigating.

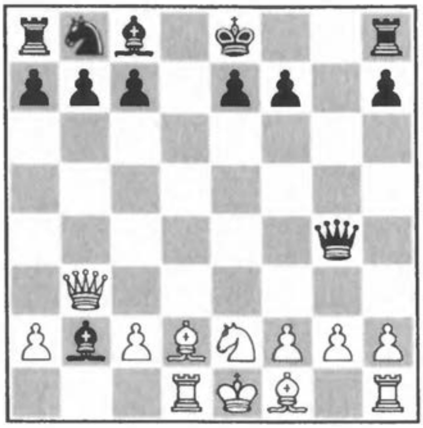
8...♕d6

However, as we are accustomed to by now, there are two queen moves to investigate. Fifteen years earlier Balashov had encountered **8...♕d4** versus Alburt, and we have to study this into some detail, 9.♘e2:

– 9...♕f6?! 10.♕b3 ♗e5 11.f4! ♗d6 12.♗c3 e5 13.♖d5! ♕h4+?! (13...♕h6) 14.g3 ♕e7 15.fxe5 ♗c5 and White won in E.Heinemann-Engel, Schöppenstedt 1993, following 16.♘f4. Immediately decisive would have been 16.♕b5+! ♘d7 17.e6! fxe6 18.♖xc5.

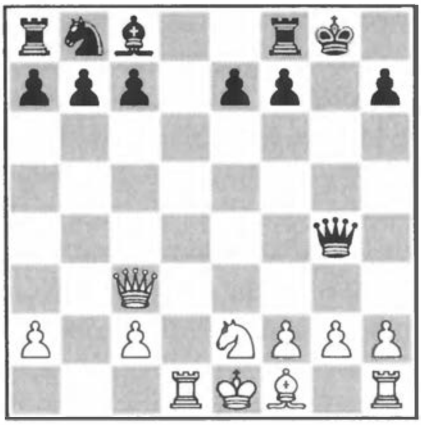
– 9...♕c4?! 10.♘f4 ♕xa2?? is too greedy. White wins after 11.♘d5 ♗e5 12.♗c3 ♘c6 13.♗xe5 ♘xe5 14.♘xc7+ ♔f8 15.♕c3 1-0, Hennings-Birnbaum, Germany 1995.

– 9...♕g4 (there is no real substitute for this forcing sequence) 10.♕b3



So far so good. White is better developed, but Black still has his pawn. He now has to make up his mind where to move the bishop to: e5, f6, or g7?

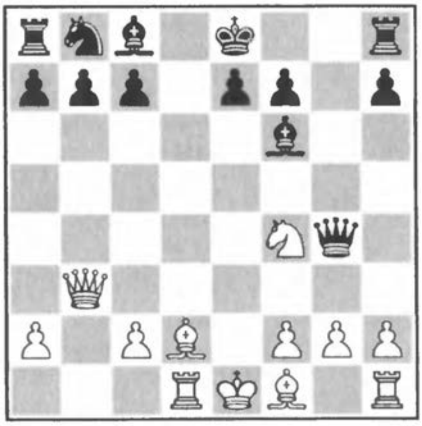
First let's move it to e5: **10...♗e5** can be met by 11.♗c3 when 11...♗xc3+ (you should study the consequences of 11...♕e6 and 11...♕g7) 12.♕xc3 0-0 suddenly loses after 13.♖d3!.



Secondly, there is **10...♗g7**.

Now 11.♗c3? ♘c6 12.♖d3 ♗xc3+ 13.♕xc3 ♕b4∓ is an old analysis by Bronstein and Lepeshkin. However, in practice White has fared better with 11.♘f4.

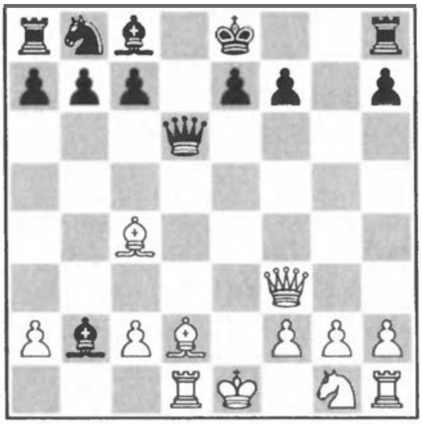
Finally, there is Alburt's choice of **10...♗f6** 11.♘f4:



– 11...♖g8 12.♗e2 ♕f5 13.0-0 ♗e5 14.♕d5?! (14.♗d3) 14...♗xf4 15.♗b5+ (15.♗xf4) 15...♔f8 16.♕xf5 ♗xf5 17.♗xf4 ♘c6 18.c3 was about equal in Van Haastert-Kuiper, Netherlands tt 1994/95.

– 11...♘c6 12.♗e2 ♕f5 13.♘d5 ♗e5 14.♗c3 ♖g8 15.f4!? (15.♗xe5 ♕xe5 16.f4) 15...e6 (15...♗d6 16.0-0 ♗d7) 16.0-0! exd5 17.fxe5 Balashov-Alburt, Leningrad ch-URS 1974. White is much better now, although Alburt managed to escape quite miraculously with a draw.

9.♗c4 Again this move, which shows how serious we should take it on the previous move as well.



9...♗f6

This looks like the best move.

After 9...♕g6 10.♘e2 ♘c6 11.♕b3 ♗e5 12.0-0 ♗d7 13.♘f4 White has compensation, Nozdrachev-Ivanov, Tula 2004.

After 9...♕f6 10.♕b3 ♗e6? (10...♗e5 11.♘f3) White should play 11.♕xb7 0-0 12.♕xa8 ♗xc4 13.♕e4±, rather than 11.♘e2 ♗xc4 12.♕xc4 ♕c6!, De Sio-Fucito, Napoli 1994.

10.♘e2 ♘c6 11.♗c3?! ♗xc3+ 12.♕xc3 ♕b4

Timoshenko manages to trade queens while keeping the pawn. Curiously, White still has some compensation. His edge in development remains unpleasant.

12...♕e5 was also playable.

13.♗b5!? ♕xc3+ 14.♘xc3 ♗d7

So as not to allow ♗xc6, but this is passive. Perhaps just 14...♗e6 and Black is OK.

15.♘d5 ♖c8

Not 15...0-0-0? 16.♗xc6 ♗xc6 17.♘xe7+ ♔b8 18.♘xc6+ bxc6 19.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 20.♔e2 and White is a pawn up on the kingside.

16.0-0 ♘b8

This is too passive. 16...a6 was correct, when Black is slightly better.

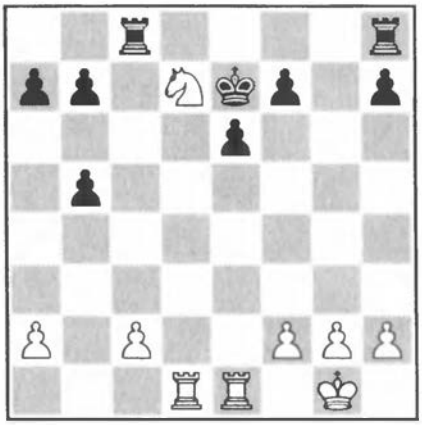
17.♖fe1! e6

Probably Timoshenko had missed 17...♗xb5 18.♘xe7 and wins.

18.♘f6+ ♔e7 19.♘xd7

White wins a piece, but there are considerable technical difficulties ahead.

19...c6 20.♘xb8 cxb5 21.♘d7



21...f6?

Trapping the knight, but in the end the beast cannot be won. Stronger was 21...♖hd8 22.♘e5 ♖xd1 23.♖xd1 ♖xc2 24.♖a1±.

22.♖e3 ♖hg8

Or 22...♖xc2 23.♖g3 ♔f7 (23...♖xa2 24.♖g7++–; 23...e5) 24.♖f3!.

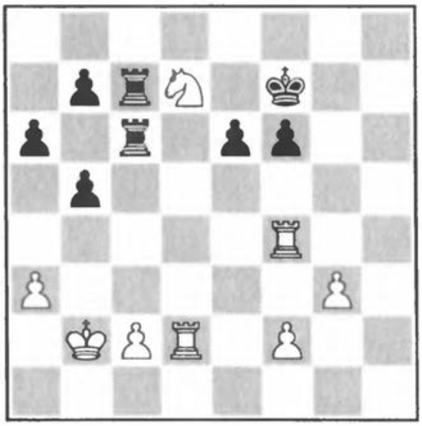
23.♖h3! ♖g7 24.♖a3 a6

The point of Balashov's rook manoeuvre was 24...♖c7 25.♖xa7 ♖xd7? 26.♖xd7+ ♔xd7 27.♖xb7+.

25.♖d2 Now Balashov has more or less consolidated his position. White won after **25...♖c7 26.♖ad3 ♖g5 27.a3 h5 28.g3 h4 29.♔g2 hxg3 30.hxg3 ♖h5 31.♖d4 ♖g5 32.♔f1**

The start of a plan to defend pawn c2 (his weakness) with the king, to free the rook.

32...♖h5 33.♔e2 ♖g5 34.♔d1 ♖h5 35.♔c1 ♖g5 36.♔b2 ♖h5 37.♘b6! ♖hc5 38.♖h4 ♔f7 39.♘d7 ♖5c6 40.♖f4

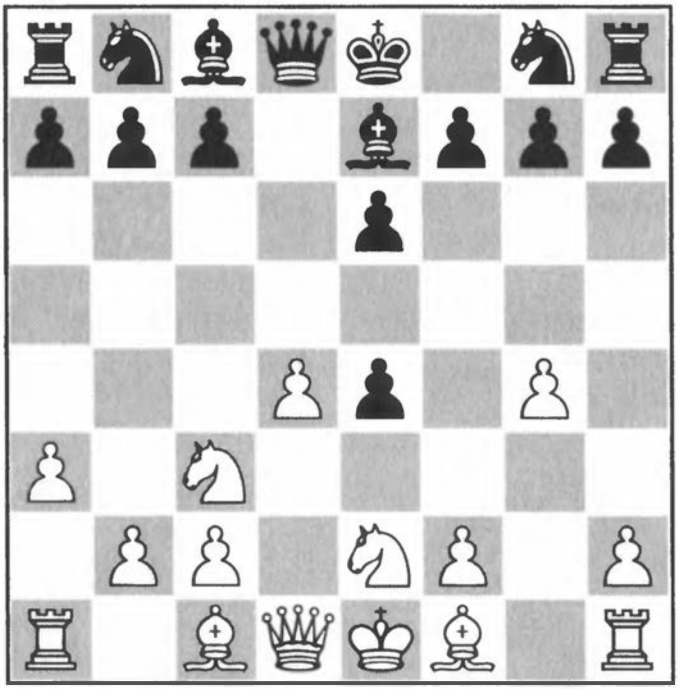


And now the knight finally escapes from its cage. Black resigned.

CHAPTER 4

Alexander Finkel

The French à la Hector



Winawer: 4.♘e2 dxe4 5.a3 ♗e7 6.g4!?

The Winawer Variation is steadily gaining back the popularity it enjoyed some ten years ago, so we thought that offering you some sort of a getaway line might be quite handy.

It would be too pretentious to claim that our topic is equally dangerous for Black as the main line (4.e5 c5 5.a3 ♗xc3+ 6.bxc3), and I certainly do not purport to do so. However, considering the effort required to master this SOS line as White (little effort is required), the character of the emerging position, and the possible benefit of its future employment you will find studying this favourite of Hector's (in my sincere opinion) a very good time investment.

Of course things are not that simple. After 5.a3 another option for Black is capturing on c3, followed by 6...♘c6. However, since it is hardly possible to present both of these subjects seriously within the limits of a single article we shall cover it in the next issue of SOS.

As to the original idea to push g4 in this kind of positions, it belongs to no one else but the great Alexander Alekhine, who used it in a World Championship's match versus Euwe more than 70(!) years ago (the 7th match game of 1935, even though he played it after 6.♘xe4 ♘c6). Swedish GM Jonny Hector later took it up and employed it very successfully on numerous occasions. It is interesting to mention that Hector had shaped this line almost exclusively, so all we need to do is to properly study some of his games.

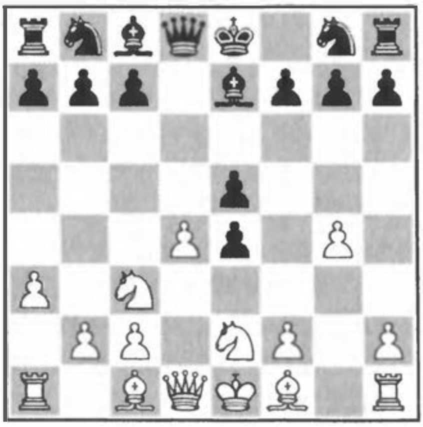
Basically, the idea behind 6.g4 is to disrupt the regular development of Black's kingside. In the event that Black meets 6.g4 with 6...e5, the space gained on the kingside, and the restraining of Black's light-squared bishop promise White excellent chances in the endgames typically arising after 7.h3 exd4 8.♕xd4. The drawback of 6.g4 is also quite clear, as Black may either push ...h5 immediately, or do so after the preliminary 6...e5 7.h3, getting a fair amount of counterplay in both cases. On the other hand, if Black refrains from pushing ...h5 White gets very comfortable play by simply developing his pieces.

☐ **Jonny Hector**
■ **Martin Voigt**
Germany Bundesliga 2001/02

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♘e2 dxe4 5.a3 ♗e7 6.g4!?

Earlier Hector's approach had been more modest: 6.g3 ♗d7 7.♘xe4 ♗c6 8.f3 f5 9.♘d2 ♗f6 10.c3 e5 11.dxe5 ♗xe5 12.♗g2 ♕d3 13.0-0 ♘d7 14.a4 ♘e7 15.♘b3±, Hector-Vallejo Pons, Aceimar 1995.

6...e5!?

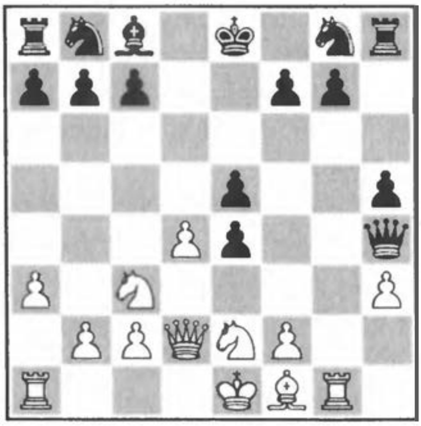


This natual move immediately attacking the pawn on g4 is Black's most popular reply to 6.g4, however both 6...h5 (which is explored in more detail in the game Hector-Karlsson below) and 6...♗d7 are hardly any worse (6...♗d7!? 7.♘g3 ♗c6 8.♗g2 e3 9.♗xc6+ ♘xc6 10.♗xe3 ♘f6 11.h3 ♕d7 12.♕d3 0-0-0 13.0-0-0 h5 14.g5 ♘d5 15.♘ge4 g6 was about equal in Turova-Matveeva, Istanbul 2003).

7.h3 exd4?!

I believe this move is an inaccuracy, after which White gets excellent chances in the forthcoming play.

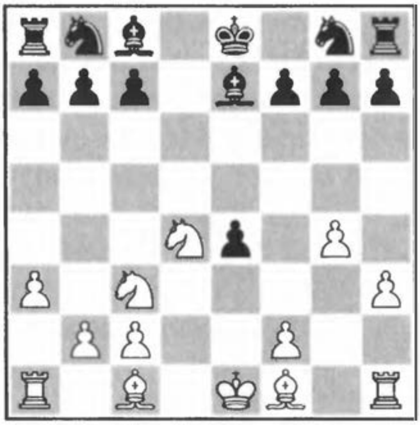
Apparently Black should respond 7...h5!?, practically forcing White to sacrifice a pawn on g5: 8.g5 ♗xg5 9.♗xg5 ♕xg5 10.♖g1 ♕h4 11.♕d2! (11.♘d5 ♕d8 12.dxe5 ♘c6 13.♕d2 ♗e6∓)



It seems that White should have sufficient compensation to keep the balance, but I doubt he's got more than that: 11...♘e7 12.0-0-0 0-0 13.dxe5 ♘bc6 14.♘d5?? (missing Black's defence, correct was 14.♕g5 with unclear play) 14...♘xd5 15.♕h6 ♗g4! 0-1, Libiszewski-Krivoshey, Salou 2008.

8.♕xd4 ♕xd4 9.♘xd4

Despite its seeming simplicity, the arising position is not so easy for Black. White is better developed and this turns out to be a very important factor.



9...a6

9...♗f6?! 10.♘db5 ♗xc3+ 11.♘xc3 ♘f6 12.g5 ♘fd7 13.♘d5 ♔d8 14.♗f4±.

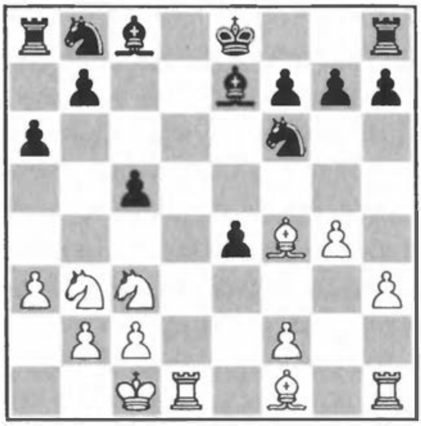
9...c6 was tested more often, but in all of the games Black experienced considerable difficulties:

– 10.♗e3 ♘f6 (10...h5 11.g5 g6? 12.♘xe4 ♘d7 13.0-0-0 ♘c5 – 13...♘b6 – 14.♘b5!+– cxb5 15.♘xc5 a6 16.♗g2, Hector-Hultin, Gothenburg 2004) 11.0-0-0 0-0 12.♗g2 ♞a6 13.♘xe4 ♘d5 14.♗d2 f5 15.gxf5 ♗xf5 16.♘xf5 ♖xf5 17.b4±, Hector-Larsson, Sweden 2005/06.

– 10.♗g2 ♘f6 11.g5 ♘d5 12.♘xe4 0-0 13.c4 ♘c7 14.0-0 ♘ba6 15.♗e3 ♖e8 16.b4±, Hector-Djurhuus, Sweden 2005/06.

10.♗f4 c5 11.♘b3 ♘f6 12.0-0-0

White's idea is just to play ♗g2 and take on e4.



12...♗e6?!

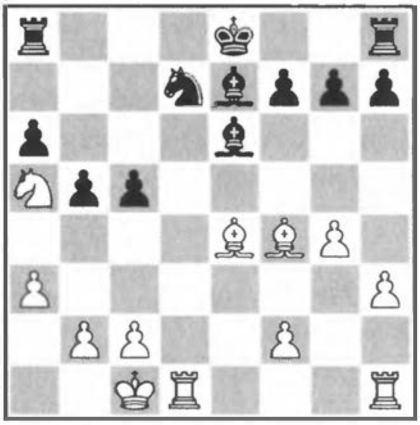
After this careless move Black finds himself under severe pressure. It was necessary to trade a couple of minor pieces on e4, which would've allowed Black to build a solid defensive set-up.

12...b6!? 13.♗g2 ♗b7 14.♖he1 0-0 15.♘xe4 ♗xe4 16.♗xe4 ♘xe4 17.♖xe4 ♘c6±.

13.♘a5! b5?!

13...b6 14.♘c4 ♘bd7 15.♘d6+ ♗xd6 16.♗xd6 h6 17.♗g2±.

14.♗g2 ♘bd7 15.♘xe4 ♘xe4 16.♗xe4



Despite the material balance Black's position is nearly lost, mainly because of the huge difference in the strength of minor pieces.

16...♖d8 17.♘b7! ♖c8 18.♘d6+ ♗xd6 19.♗xd6

Or 19.♖xd6!?, I guess it's just a matter of taste!

19...♘b8 20.♗b7 ♖d8 21.♗xc5 ♖d7 22.♗e4 ♔d8 23.f4

Black could've resigned at this stage, but he tries to escape an inevitable fiasco.

23...♔c8 24.f5 ♖xd1+ 25.♖xd1 ♗d7 26.♗d4 f6 27.g5!

Creating another weakness.

27...♖e8 28.gxf6 gxf6 28...♖xe4 29.f7+–. **29.♗d3 ♖f8 30.♖g1 ♘c6 31.♗f2 ♘e5 32.♗e4 ♔c7 33.♗c5 ♖e8 34.♗f2 ♘c4 35.♖g4 ♖e7 36.b3 ♘d6?!** 36...♘e5. **37.♗g3 ♗c6 38.♗d3 ♗d5**

39.c4 bxc4 40.bxc4 ♖e3 41.♗xd6+ ♔xd6 42.♖d4

Black resigned.

☐ **Igor-Alexandre Nataf**
■ **Sergey Shipov**
Montreal 2005

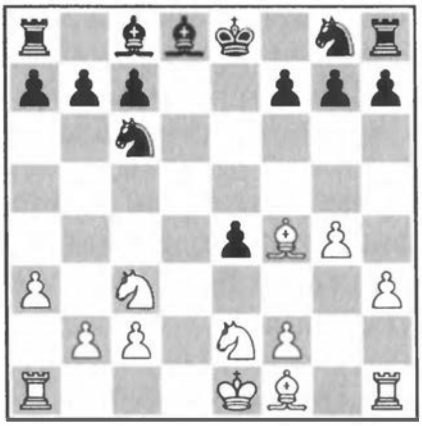
1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♘e2 dxe4 5.a3 ♗e7 6.g4 e5 7.h3 exd4 8.♕xd4 ♘c6!?

In case White chooses to trade the queens on d8 Black is the one to benefit comparing to the immediate capture on d4, since White fails to find a good square for the knight on e2.

9.♕xd8+?!

I believe White has more chances to fight for an advantage after 9.♕xe4!?: 9...♘f6 (9...f5!?) 10.♕g2 0-0 11.♗d2 ♗e6 12.0-0-0 ♕c8 13.♘f4±, Hector-Heika, Hamburg 2005.

9...♗xd8 10.♗f4



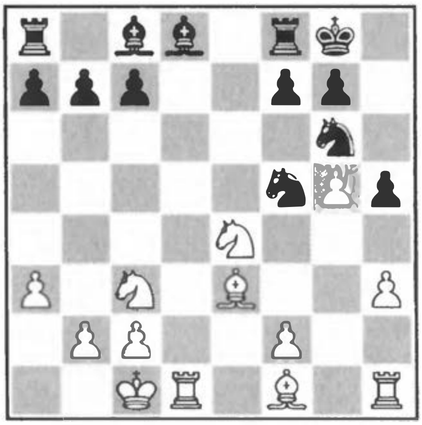
10...h5!?

A useful move securing square f5 for one of Black's knights. However, Black may try to take over the initiative by means of the energetic 10...g5! 11.♗e3 h5 12.♘xe4 (12.gxh5 f5∓ is hardly an option on White's part) 12...hxg4 13.0-0-0 gxh3 14.♘xg5 ♗xg5 15.♗xg5 ♗g4∓, Hector-Sjödahl, Sweden 2004.

11.g5 ♘ge7 12.♘g3?!

It was better to suspend the capture on e4 in order to put a knight on f4: 12.0-0-0 ♘g6 13.♗e3 ♘ce7 14.♘xe4 ♘f5 15.♗d2 0-0 16.♘f4±.

12...♘g6 13.♗e3 ♘ce7 14.♘gxe4 0-0 15.0-0-0 ♘f5



Black's knights are perfectly placed on the kingside, completely neutralizing White's minimal development advantage.

16.♗c5

16.♗d2!?.

16...♖e8 17.♗c4 ♗e6

17...c6!? 18.♖he1 ♗e6 19.♗xe6 ♖xe6 20.♗xa7♘f4 21.♗e3♘xh3 22.♗d2 ♗c7∓.

18.♗xe6 ♖xe6 19.♖d5 ♘fe7 20.♖d2 c6! 21.♖d7

This move is more accurate than 21.♖hd1 (21...♘d5 22.♘xd5 ♖xe4 23.♘c3 ♖e8 24.♗e3 ♗a5∓), but maybe 21.f3 deserved attention, intending to retreat with the bishop to f2.

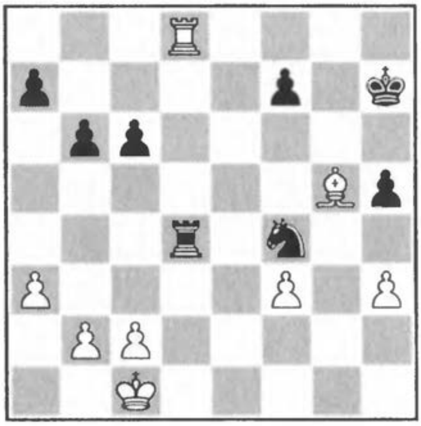
21...b6 22.♖hd1 ♘d5 23.♘xd5 ♖xe4 24.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 25.♘f6+!

Much worse is 25.♘e7+ ♘xe7 26.♖xd8+ ♔h7 27.♗xe7 ♖xe7 28.♖d6 ♖e2 29.f4 ♖f2 30.♖xc6 ♖xf4 31.♖c7 ♔g6∓ and Black is better prepared for the pawn race.

25...gxf6 26.♖xd8+ ♔h7 27.♗e3 fxg5 28.♗xg5 ♘f4 29.f3?!

White should not have too many difficulties to hold the endgame arising after 29.♗xf4 ♖xf4 30.♖d7 ♖xf2 31.♖xa7.

29...♖d4!∓



30.♖a8?

Missing an opportunity to keep the balance: 30.♖c8! ♘xh3 31.♗e3 ♖d6 32.♖c7 ♖f6 33.♖xa7 b5 34.♔d2 ♖xf3 35.b3.

Not 30.♖xd4? ♘e2+ 31.♔d2 ♘xd4 32.f4 ♔g6 and wins.

30...♘xh3 31.♗e3 ♖d7

Now Black is just a pawn up, so the rest is a matter of technique.

32.♖c8 f6!

32...c5 33.♖c6.

33.♖xc6 ♔g6 34.♖c4 ♘g5 35.♖f4

Better is 35.♖h4.

35...♖h7 36.♗d4 f5 37.♗e3 h4 38.♖c4 h3 39.♖c6+ ♔h5

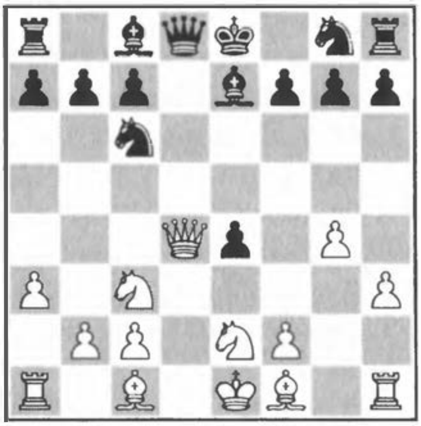
White resigned.

☐ **Jonny Hector**
■ **Martin Heika**
Hamburg 2005

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♘e2 dxe4 5.a3 ♗e7 6.g4 e5

Interesting is 6...c5!?. Now play is unclear after 7.♘xe4 ♘f6 (7...cxd4 8.♕xd4 ♕xd4 9.♘xd4 a6 10.♗f4 f6 11.♗e3±) 8.♘xf6+ ♗xf6 9.dxc5 ♘d7 10.♗g2 0-0. Stronger looks 7.dxc5 ♕xd1+ 8.♔xd1 ♗d7 9.b4 ♘f6 10.g5 ♘g4 11.♘xe4 ♗c6 12.♘2g3 and White is slightly better, Vavra-Nguyen Chi Minh, Prague 2009.

7.h3 exd4 8.♕xd4 ♘c6



9.♕xe4!

White's plan is just to play ♗d2, 0-0-0, ♕g2, ♘f4 and ♗d3, followed by the advance of the g-pawn.

9...♘f6

Black's main problem after this move is the development of the light-squared bishop. As a result Black fails to get sufficient counterplay against White's actions on the kingside.

Black is also in trouble after 9...f5?! 10.♕c4! ♗f6 11.g5!? ♗xg5 12.♗xg5 ♕xg5 13.♘b5. Perhaps 9...h5!?.

10.♕g2 0-0

10...♘e5 11.f4 ♘c4 12.♘g3 ♘d6 13.♗e3±.

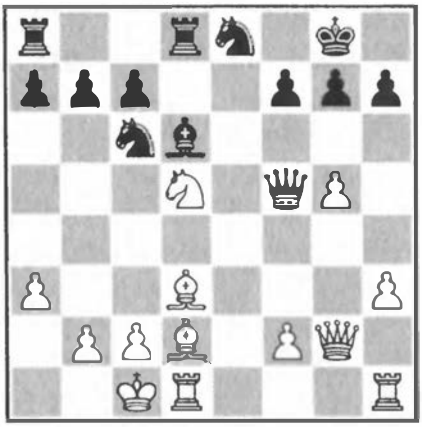
11.♗d2 ♗e6 12.0-0-0 ♕c8?!

It was absolutely necessary to take the chance to trade the bishop, even though after 12...♗c4!? 13.♘g3 ♗xf1 14.♖hxf1 ♖e8 15.g5 ♘d7 16.♘f5 White is well in control.

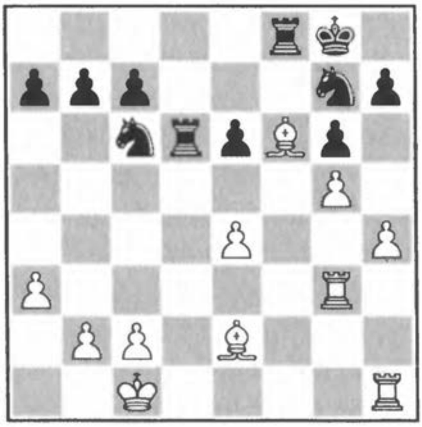
13.♘f4 ♖d8 14.g5 ♘e8 15.♘cd5!

White is not satisfied with 15.♘xe6 ♕xe6 16.♗b5 ♗c5 17.♖he1 ♕f5 18.♗xc6 bxc6 19.♕xc6±.

15...♗d6 16.♘xe6 ♕xe6 17.♗c4 ♕f5 18.♗d3



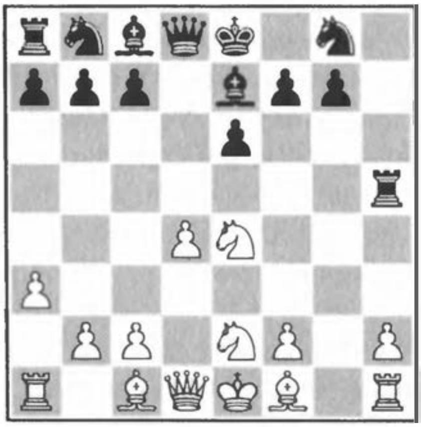
18...♕d7 Or 18...♕e6 19.f4 ♗f8 20.c4±.
19.♕e4?! A minor inaccuracy, allowing Black to put up rather tough resistance. Better was 19.♗c3 ♘e7 (19...♗e5 20.♗xe5 ♘xe5 21.♘f6+ gxf6 22.gxf6+ ♔h8 23.♖hg1+–) 20.♘xe7+ ♕xe7 21.h4 c6 22.♖he1 ♕c7 23.♕e4 g6 24.♔b1±.
19...g6 20.♗c3 ♕e6 21.♕xe6
21.♘f6+ ♘xf6 22.♗xf6 ♖e8 23.♖he1±.
21...fxe6 22.♘e3
The endgame is also clearly better for White, but Black's defensive task would have definitely been more difficult had the queens stayed on the board. 22.♘f6+ ♘xf6 23.♗xf6 ♗e7 24.♗xe7 ♘xe7 25.♖he1 ♔f7±.
22...♗f4 22...♗e5!? 23.♗d2 ♘d6 24.♘g4 ♗g7. **23.h4 ♘e5 24.♗e2 ♘d6 25.♖d4! ♗xe3+ 26.fxe3 ♘c6 27.♖g4 ♘f5 28.♗f6 ♖d6 29.e4 ♘g7** 29...♘fd4 30.♗d1 e5 31.h5+–. **30.♖g3 ♖f8**



31.♖b3! b6 32.♖c3 ♖f7 33.♖d1 ♖xd1+ 34.♗xd1 White is just winning. **34...♘b8** 34...♘a5 35.♗g4 c5 36.b4 ♘b7 37.♖d3+–. **35.♗e5 ♘d7 36.♗xc7 ♘e8 37.♗g3 ♘c5 38.♖c4 ♖f1 39.b4 ♘a4 40.♗e5 b5 41.♖c8 ♔f7 42.♖a8 ♖e1 43.♖xa7+ ♔g8 44.♖e7 ♔f8 45.♖xe6 ♔f7 46.♖c6 ♖xe4 47.♗h8 ♔g8** 47...♖xh4 48.c4+–. **48.♗a1 ♖e3 49.♗d4 ♖xa3 50.♗e2**
Black resigned.

☐ **Jonny Hector**
■ **Lars Karlsson**
Linköping ch-SWE 2001

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♘e2 dxe4 5.a3 ♗e7 6.g4!? h5!?
The most straightforward attempt to deal with 6.g4!?.
7.gxh5
Black is better after 7.g5?! ♗xg5 8.♗xg5 ♕xg5 9.♖g1 ♕h6 10.♘xe4 ♗d7.
7...♖xh5 Dubious is 7...f5?! 8.♘f4 ♘f6 9.♖g1 ♖h7 10.♗c4, but 7...♘f6!? 8.♘g3 c5 is an alternative.
8.♘xe4



8...♖h4!?
Putting some pressure on the d4 pawn.
9.♕d3
Nothing is promised by 9.♗g2 ♗d7 10.♘c5?!

♗c6 11.♘xb7 ♕c8 12.♗xc6+ ♘xc6 13.♘c5 ♘xd4 14.♘xd4 ♗xc5∓.

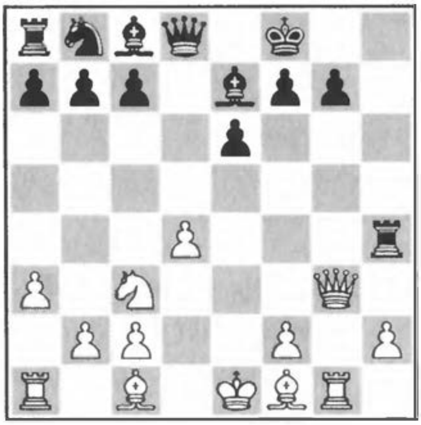
9...♘f6 10.♘4c3 ♘d5?!

Passing the initiative into White's hands. Better looks 10...♗d7!?.

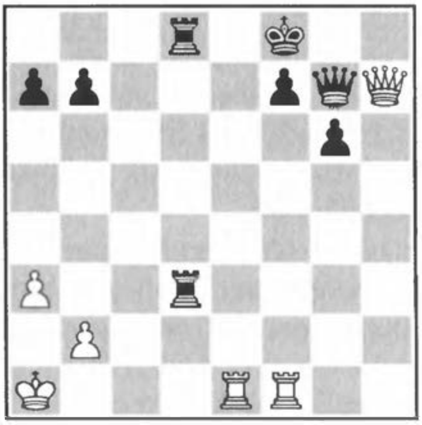
11.♖g1 ♘xc3 12.♘xc3 ♔f8

White has good compensation after 12...g6 13.♗e3 ♖xh2 14.0-0-0 ♘d7 15.d5.

13.♕g3



13...g6 14.♗f4 ♗d6 14...♕xd4 15.♗e5 ♗d6 (15...♕b6 16.0-0-0 ♘a6 17.♗xa6 ♕xa6 18.♗xc7±) 16.♗xd6+ cxd6 17.♖d1 ♕f4 18.♖xd6 ♘c6 19.♗g2. **15.♗xd6+ cxd6 16.♗d3?!** White has an edge after 16.0-0-0. **16...e5!? 17.0-0-0 exd4** Very bad is 17...♖g4? 18.♕e3 exd4 19.♕h6+ ♔g8 20.♘e4, and White has an extremely dangerous attack. **18.♘d5 ♘c6 19.♔b1** Wrong is 19.♗xg6? ♖g4 20.♕f3 ♕g5+ 21.♘e3 ♘e5! 22.♖xg4 ♗xg4–+. **19...♘e5!? 20.f4 ♖h3 21.♕f2 ♘xd3 22.cxd3 ♗e6∓ 23.♕xd4 ♗xd5?!** Losing his advantage again, correct was 23...♖c8∓. **24.♕xd5 ♕f6** Play is equal after 24...♖xh2 25.♖h1 ♖xh1 26.♖xh1 ♕f6 27.♕xb7. **25.f5!? ♕xf5 26.♕xd6+ ♔g8 27.♔a1!?** The position is absolutely equal, but White keeps on playing for a win. 27.♖gf1 ♖f3 28.♖xf3 ♕xf3 29.♖c1 ♖e8=. **27...♖f3 28.h4 ♖f2 29.h5 ♕xh5** 29...♕f6? 30.♕b4. **30.♖h1 ♕f3 31.♖b1 ♕f6** 31...♖e8∓. **32.♕d7 ♖d8 33.♕h3 ♖f3** 33...♖f5 34.♕h7+ ♔f8∓. **34.♕h7+ ♔f8 35.♖be1 ♖fxd3** 35...♖dxd3? 36.♕h6+ ♕g7 37.♖e8++–. **36.♖hf1 ♕g7**



37.♖xf7+!

A lucky escape!

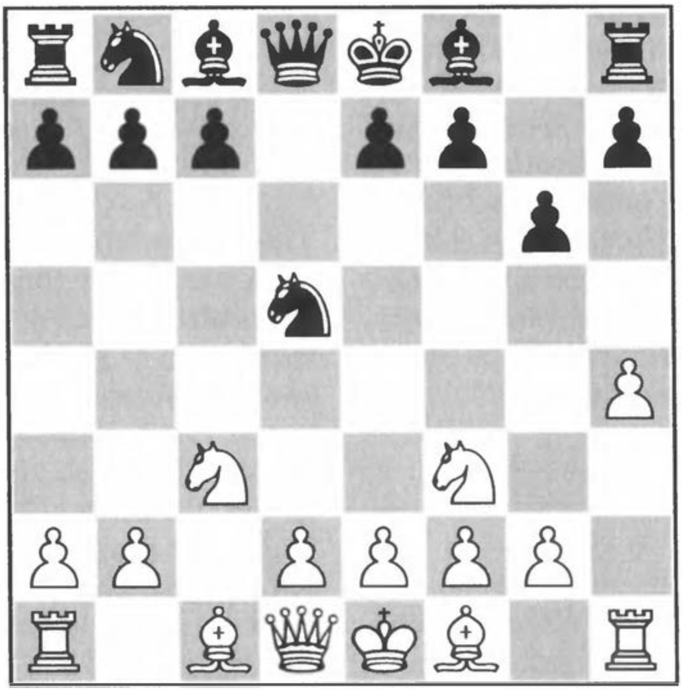
37...♕xf7 38.♕h8+ ♕g8 39.♕f6+ ♕f7 40.♕h8+ ♕g8

Draw.

CHAPTER 5

Sebastian Siebrecht

Anti-Grünfeld with 5.h4



1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.h4

The Grünfeld Indian is often played by those who know their theory inside out, and are capable of reproducing long lines down to an equal ending. During a tournament in 2009 in Reykjavik I was following the games of my Bundesleague team via the Internet. In front of my enchanted eyes I saw a surprising opening idea as played by my friend and teammate Stelios Halkias. Thus, the idea for tomorrow's game was born!

I have done some further research for this SOS article, and I must say that I like the idea even better. According to the database this line was First played in 1952 by Jozsef Szily. In 1979 it was none other than super GM Bent Larsen who adopted it in Buenos Aires. At the start of the 1980s grandmaster Ribli played it, as well as some of the top Czechoslovakian players Stohl, Ftacnik, Plachetka and Pekarek. In 2000 Jeroen Piket's win over Peter Svidler during the Kasparov Chess Grand Prix caught the attention of the chess world. After that game other grandmasters followed suit: Peter Wells, Pavel Eljanov, Alexander Morozevich and Levon Aronian.

An interesting feature of 5.h4 is that White's sword is not at all that double-edged as it looks. In fact, White often has a choice between a slightly better ending (by taking back on c3 with the d-pawn), or a more adventurous path (by taking with the b-pawn). 5.h4 is a great weapon that will surely surprise your opponent. Naturally, having thought for 10-30 minutes, he decides upon his next move, only to lose without a chance. Hm, all right I will be more serious. Still, the march of the h-pawn is extremely annoying for someone who wants to develop his bishop on g7. Grünfeld players, in contrast to Pirc, KI, or Modern players, are often not adapted to such a direct confrontation without sufficient theoretical knowledge to back them up. See for yourself how you like the following illustrative games.

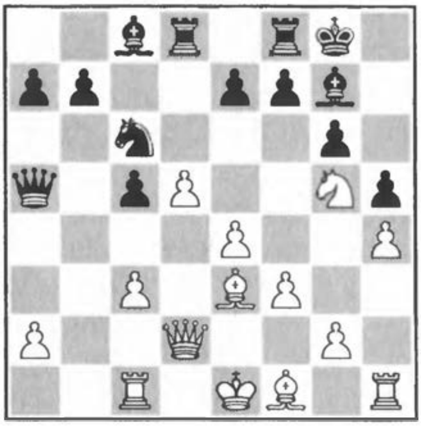
How should Black reply to White's cheecky move? We will investigate the main replies: 5...h6, 5...h5, 5...♗g7 and 5...♘f6. Clearly, nothing has been researched here into a drawn ending: let the games begin!

☐ **Sebastian Siebrecht**
■ **Uri Zak**
Reykjavik 2009

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.h4!? h6

To stop the march of the opponent's h-pawn, for, if 6.h5, then 6...g5 is strong. The idea of 5...h5 is similar.

An earlier high-level game in Moscow had seen: 5...h5 (blocking the intrepid White h-pawn. However, it weakens the dark squares surrounding Black's king, and square g5 may be used to good effect by the white pieces. Moreover, the h5-pawn creates a target. Let's look at a game by that creative genius, Alexander Morozevich:) 6.e4 ♘xc3 7.bxc3 (7.dxc3 ♕xd1+ 8.♔xd1 is always a pleasant alternative for White) 7...♗g7 8.d4 (or 8.♗c4 0-0 9.♘g5!?, with pressure. White can always play ♕b3 followed by castling kingside and f4, f5) 8...c5 9.♗e3 ♘c6 10.♕d2 ♗g4 11.d5 ♕a5! (a useful interpolation, characteristic of the Grünfeld) 12.♖c1 ♖d8 13.♘g5! (occupying the strong square g5) 13...0-0 14.f3 ♗c8



15.♗c4?! (I would prefer 15.♗e2, after the text Black can free his game. The bishop on c4 only looks good) 15...e6! (15...♘e5 16.♗e2) 16.♗b3 exd5 17.♗xd5 c4! 18.0-0 ♘e7! (with a lovely manoeuvre Black has obtained a satisfactory game) 19.♖fd1 ♘xd5 20.exd5 ♗f5 21.♘e4 ♖fe8 (21...♗xe4 22.fxe4 ♖fe8 23.♕c2 f5! 24.♗g5 ♖xe4 25.♗xd8 ♕xd8 26.g3 ♖g4! – this is difficult to find, but it looks as if Black has a decisive attack here. Probably Black had too much respect for the dangerous d-pawn) 22.♗g5 ♖d7 23.♘f6+ ♗xf6 24.♗xf6. In the subsequent course of the game White had an attack on the kingside in return for losing the passed d-pawn. The game eventually ended in a draw. Morozevich-Mamedyarov, Moscow blitz 2007.

6.e4 ♘xc3

Black can also avoid the exchange:

- 6...♘b6 7.d4 ♗g7 8.♗e3 ♗g4 9.♕d2 and now:
  - 9...♘c6 10.d5 is very pleasant for White.
  - 9...c6 10.♗e2 ♘8d7, and White can even contemplate to castle queenside.
  - Or see how simple chess can be: 9...♗xf3 10.gxf3 e6 11.0-0-0 ♘c6 12.♗b5 ♕f6 13.♕e2 a6 14.♗xc6+ bxc6 15.h5 g5 16.♖hg1 0-0 17.♖g3 ♖ad8 18.♖dg1 ♔h8 19.f4 gxf4 20.e5 ♕f5 21.♖xg7 fxe3 22.♕xe3 ♕xh5 23.♕g3 1-0, Larsen-Franco Ocampos, Buenos Aires 1979.
- 6...♘f6 7.♗c4 ♘c6 8.d4 (White may also

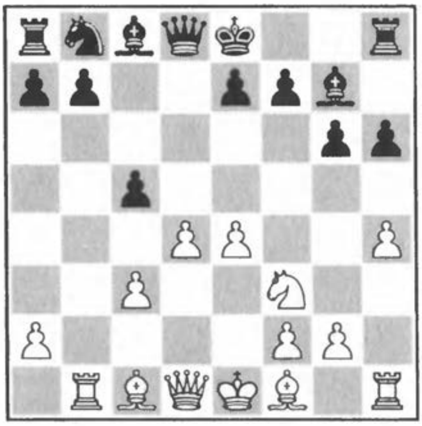
try the forceful 8.e5, and now 8...♘g4 9.d4 ♗g7 10.h5 g5 11.0-0) 8...♗g7 9.0-0 0-0 10.♗f4 ♗g4 11.d5 ♘a5 12.♗e2 c6 13.♖c1 (13.b4?! ♘h5 14.♗d2 ♗xf3 15.gxf3 e6! 16.bxa5 ♕xh4∓) 13...cxd5 14.exd5 (14.♘xd5) 14...♖c8 15.♕d2 ♗xf3 16.♗xf3 ♘c4 17.♕e2 ♕a5 with an unclear game.

7.bxc3

Alternatively, if this suits your style or mood, White can also opt for a pleasant ending, e.g.: 7.dxc3 ♕xd1+ 8.♔xd1 ♗g4 9.♔c2 ♘d7 10.♗e3 ♗xf3 11.gxf3 e5 12.♗h3 ♗d6 13.h5 g5 14.♖ad1 ♔e7 15.♖d2 ♖hd8 16.♖hd1 ♘f6 17.♗g4 b6 18.a4 ♗c5 19.♗xc5+ bxc5 20.♖xd8 ♖xd8 21.♖xd8 ♔xd8 22.♔d3 ♘d7 23.a5 c6 24.♗xd7 and White won the pawn ending in Eljanov-Sutovsky, Netanya 2009.

7...♗g7 8.d4 c5 9.♖b1

Just like the 8.♖b1 variation, but interpolating h4-h6 favours White.



9...♘c6

● If Black castles, then White has a choice, 9...0-0:

– 10.♗e2 ♘d7 11.0-0 e5!? 12.h5 (12.d5 ♘f6) 12...exd4 13.hxg6 fxg6 14.cxd4 cxd4 15.♘xd4 ♘c5, and White had a slight edge in Ribli-Smejkal, Novi Sad 1982, after 16.♗e3. Stronger was 16.♗c4+ ♔h8 17.♗d5 ♘xe4 18.♗xe4 ♗xd4 19.♗xh6 ♖xf2 20.♖xf2 ♗xf2+ 21.♔xf2 ♕h4+ 22.♔g1 ♕xh6 23.♕d8+ ♔h7 24.♕e7+ ♕g7 25.♕d6±.

– 10.♗e3 ♘c6 11.♕d2 cxd4 12.cxd4 ♗g4 13.♘h2! (13.♖xb7 ♗xf3 14.gxf3 ♘xd4∓) 13...♗c8 14.d5 ♘e5 15.f4 ♘d7 16.♘f3, with a nice space advantage and an easy game for White. With ideas like h5, or simply ♗e2 and castles.

● 9...cxd4 10.cxd4 0-0 11.♗e2 ♕a5+ 12.♗d2 ♕xa2 13.0-0 ♘c6 14.d5 ♘a5 15.♗b4 ♗d7 16.♕d2 ♕xd2 17.♘xd2 b6 18.♗xe7 ♖fe8 19.♗b4 ♘b7 20.♖fc1 with a clear edge in Halkias-Gauglitz, Bundesliga 2008/09.

10.d5! ♘e5

Or 10...♗xc3+ 11.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 12.♕xd2 ♘d4 (12...♘b8 13.♗b5+ ♗d7 14.♗e2 ♕c7 15.♕b2±) 13.♘xd4 cxd4 and now 14.h5 g5 15.♗b5+ ♗d7 16.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 17.♕xd4 0-0 18.0-0 with a slight advantage.

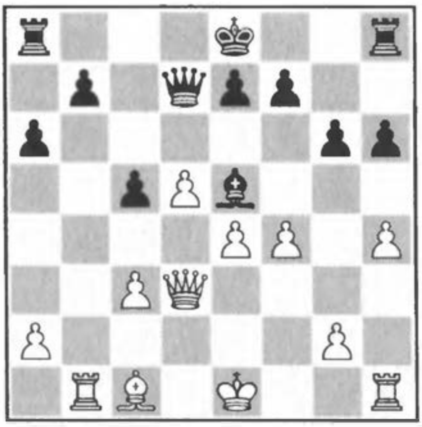
11.♗b5+

Or 11.♘xe5 ♗xe5 12.♕d2 ♗g7 13.♗e2 h5 14.c4 e5 15.♖b3 ♕d6 16.♗b2 b6 17.f4 0-0 18.f5 gxf5 19.♖g3 f4 20.♕xf4 and White won in Pekarek-Jasnikowski, Polanica Zdroj 1986.

11...♗d7 12.♘xe5 ♗xe5 13.♕d3 a6

Castling is obviously wrong because pawn h6 is hanging.

14.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 15.f4



15...c4?

Overlooking White's next move. If 15...♗g7 then 16.c4 followed by 17.♗e3, and subsequently White will castle with a space advantage and the better game.

16.♕h3!

The game is already over. Black loses a pawn while White's initiative continues unabated.

16...♗g7 16...♕xh3 17.♖xh3 ♗g7 18.♖xb7 winning. **17.♕xd7+ ♔xd7 18.♖xb7+ ♔c8 19.♖xe7 ♗xc3+ 20.♗d2 ♗d4 21.♔e2 ♔d8 22.♖xf7 ♖c8 23.♖b1 c3 24.♗c1 ♖e8 25.♔d3 ♗c5 26.♖bb7 ♖e7 27.♖f8+ ♖e8 28.♖xe8+ ♔xe8 29.e5**

Black resigned.

☐ **Jeroen Piket**
■ **Peter Svidler**
KasparovChess GP g/60 Internet 2000

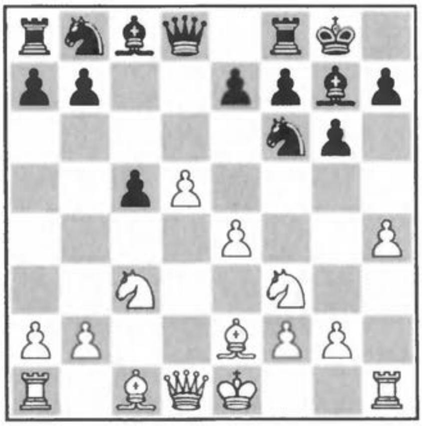
1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.h4!? ♘f6

Black wants to stop the h-pawn without weakening his own structure. It costs a tempo, but it isn't stupid. It took Svidler 15 minutes (from a total of 60) during the game to find this idea.

6.d4

Of course White should now occupy the centre, for, otherwise Black would love to play c5 and ♘c6.

6...♗g7 7.e4 0-0 8.♗e2 c5 9.d5



Since White wants to attack on the kingside, he should try to keep the centre closed!

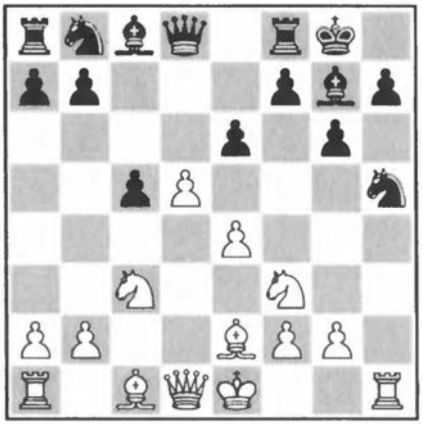
9...e6

9...b5 is stronger, as Rybka also indicates. Black plays it like a Benoni to undermine pawn e4: 10.e5 (10.♗xb5 ♘xe4 11.♘xe4 ♕a5+ 12.♘c3 ♗xc3+ 13.bxc3 ♕xb5 is surely OK for Black) 10...♘g4 11.♗xb5 (the alternative is 11.h5 ♘xe5 12.hxg6 hxg6 13.♘xe5 ♗xe5 14.♗xb5 to play for a different structure) 11...♘d7! (Black goes for development) 12.e6 fxe6 13.dxe6 ♘de5 14.♕xd8 ♖xd8 15.♘xe5 ♘xe5 16.0-0 a6 17.♗e2 ♗xe6 18.♖e1 ♗f7 19.♗f4 ♘c6 20.♗f3 ♖ac8 21.♗g4 ♖a8 22.♗f3 ♖ac8 23.♗g4. In this exciting position the players agreed a draw. As compensation for his weaknesses Black has an active game along the d-file. Zviagintsev-Najer, Moscow 2003.

10.h5

Attaboy!! Let's go for the king!

10...♘xh5



11.g4?!

Energetic, but White had the even more powerful 11.♘g5! when he obtains strong pressure against h7! For example: 11...exd5 (11...♘f6 12.e5 ♘xd5 13.♘xd5 ♕xd5 14.♘xh7) 12.♗xh5 gxh5 13.♕xh5 h6 14.♘f3 and Black's kingside falls apart: 14...♖e8 15.♗xh6 ♗xc3+ 16.bxc3 ♖xe4+ 17.♗e3! and even if Black will get some counterplay with 17...♕f6 White ought to win.

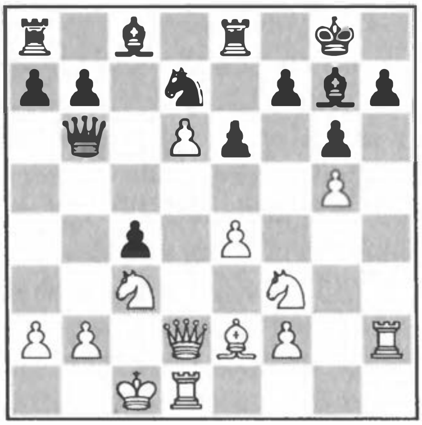
11...♘f6 12.♗g5 ♕b6?!

Clearly stronger was 12...♕a5!: 13.♗xf6 ♗xf6 14.e5 ♗g7 15.d6 ♖d8.

13.♗xf6 ♗xf6 14.♕d2 ♗g7 15.0-0-0 ♘d7 16.g5 c4?

Again 16...♕a5 planning ...♗xc3 was correct.

17.♖h2 ♖e8 18.d6



White closes the centre and starts a direct attack on the kingside.

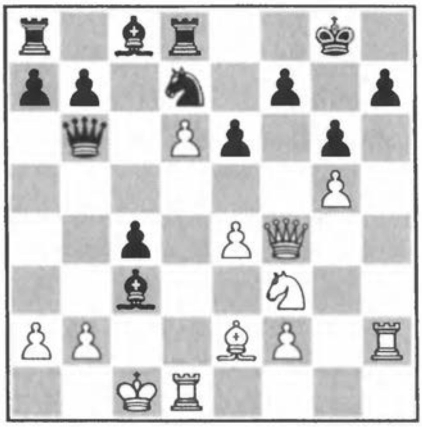
18...♖d8 19.♕f4

Now White threatens to take on h7. As after the subsequent ♕xf7 Black cannot prevent a deadly check from h1.

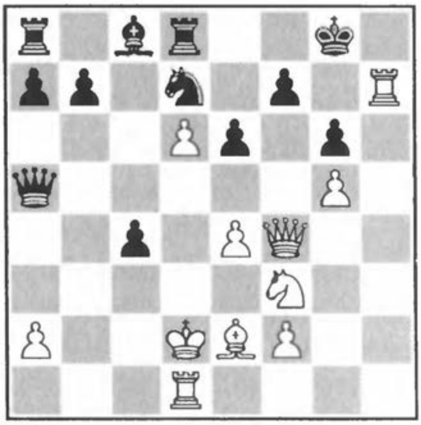
19...♕a5?

Too late. Black should have got rid of his bishop by taking on c3.

19...♗xc3!. In this way Svidler could at least have posed Piket some complex questions. Let's see:



20.bxc3 ♕a5 21.♖xh7! (21.♔b2 e5 22.♕h4 ♘f8±) 21...♕xc3+ 22.♔b1 ♕b4+ 23.♔c2 ♕a4+ 24.♔d2! (White must not be frightened here) 24...♕a5+! (24...♕xa2+ 25.♔e1!! ♔xh7 26.♕xf7+ ♔h8 27.♔f1! ♖f8 28.♕xg6 ♖xf3 – 28...♕b2 29.♕h6+ ♔g8 30.♕xe6+ ♖f7 31.♗xc4 ♕g7 32.g6+– – 29.♗xf3 ♕b2 30.♕h6+ ♔g8 31.♕xe6+ ♔g7 32.♕h6+ ♔g8 33.e5!+–)



25.♔e3! and the king goes walkabout:

- 25...♕a3+ 26.♗d3! ♕c5+ 27.♔e2! (27.♘d4? ♕xd4+! 28.♔xd4 e5+ 29.♕xe5 ♘xe5 30.♖dh1 ♘f3+ 31.♔e3 ♗h3!!) 27...cxd3+ 28.♔f1 ♖f8 (28...♔xh7? 29.♕xf7+ ♔h8 30.♔g2) 29.♕h4 ♕c3 30.e5+–.
- 25...♕c5+ 26.♘d4 f5 27.♕h2 ♕a3+ 28.♗d3 f4+ 29.♕xf4 ♖f8 30.♕h2+–.
- 25...♕c3+! 26.♗d3! f5! (26...♖f8 27.♕h4 cxd3 28.♖h1! d2+ 29.♔f4+–) 27.gxf6 ♕xf6 (27...♘xf6? 28.♖h6!; 27...♔xh7? 28.♕h6+! ♔xh6 29.♖h1 mate) 28.♖dh1!? ♕xf4+ 29.♔xf4 ♘f8 30.♖h8+ ♔g7 31.♗xc4 ♖xd6 32.e5 and the attack goes on.

20.♖xh7!

Now it's all over!

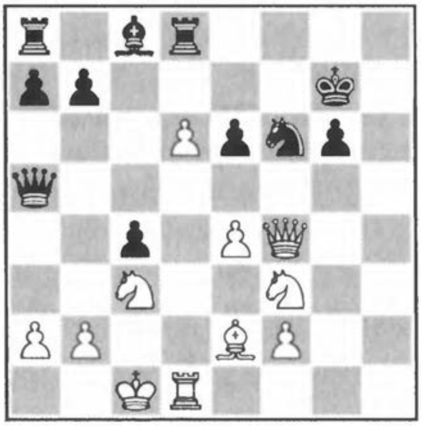
20...f5 20...♖f8 21.♖dh1 ♗xc3 22.e5! ♗xb2+ 23.♔b1! ♗xe5 24.♕xe5! and mate in seven. 20...♔xh7 21.♕xf7.

21.gxf6 ♘xf6

21...♔xh7 22.♖h1+ ♔g8 23.fxg7+–;

21...♗xf6 22.♖xd7 ♖f8 23.♕h6!? ♗xd7 24.♕xg6+ ♗g7 25.♖g1 ♖f7 26.♘g5+–.

22.♖xg7+! ♔xg7



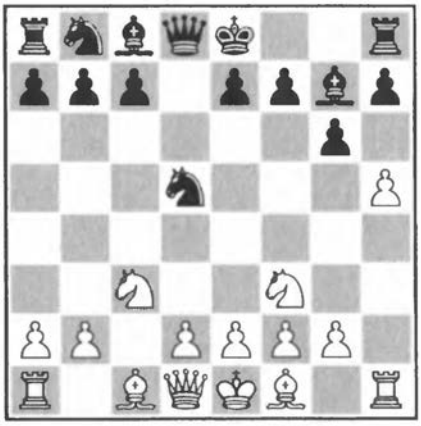
23.e5

Lovely. It all fits together perfectly! Black is either mated or he loses the house.
Black resigned.

☐ **Pavel Eljanov**
■ **Maxim Turov**
Kharkov 2001

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.h4 ♗g7 6.h5

Marching on! And why not indeed, if Black does not prevent h4-h5. Go for it!



6...♘xc3

● Again it was Piket who won a quick attacking game in the Melody Amber Tournament in Monaco! 6...♘c6 7.g3 ♗g4 8.h6 ♗xc3 (giving up on both his bishops. See for yourself how you feel about this. The alternative is 8...♗f6) 9.bxc3 ♗xf3 10.exf3 ♕d6 11.♗e20-0-0 12.♕b3 f5 13.a4(a strange position. But isn't that exactly what we love!) 13...e5 14.a5 e4 15.f4 ♘f6 16.0-0 ♘g4 17.♗a3 ♕xd2 (losing immediately. Better was the less impulsive 17...♕d7) 18.a6! ♘a5 19.axb7+ ♔b8 20.♕b5 e3 21.♗c5 exf2+ 22.♖xf2 and Black is going to pieces. 1-0, Piket-Shirov, Monaco 1998.

● 6...0-0 this helps White: 7.hxg6 hxg6 8.♕a4 (the start of a nice manoeuvre towards the kingside) 8...e5 9.♘xd5 ♕xd5 10.♕h4 (as planned. Alright it's not mate yet, but see how it continues) 10...♖e8 11.e4 ♕d8 12.♕h7+ ♔f8 13.♗c4 ♗e6 14.d3 ♗xc4 15.dxc4 ♕d3 (does this mean that Black has counterplay? Oh no! Black is already dead and gone!) 16.♗h6 ♕xe4+ 17.♔f1 ♗xh6 18.♕xh6+♔e7 19.♘xe5! ♘d7 20.♕g5+ ♔e6 21.♖e1 ♕xe5 22.♖xe5+ ♘xe5 23.♖h3 f6 24.♕f4 ♖h8 25.♕e4 ♖xh3 26.gxh3 ♔d6 27.♕d5+ 1-0, Sumets-Moldovanenko, Odessa 2001. So simple is playing chess with 5.h4!

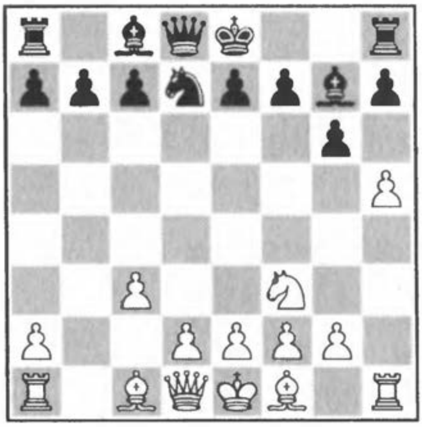
7.bxc3

7.dxc3 is of course less strong here than in the other lines. However, it is still playable even here.

7...♘d7

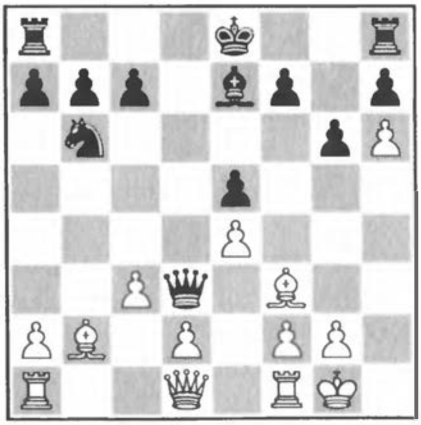
– 7...c5 looks more to the point: 8.♕a4+ ♕d7 9.♕h4 (I would prefer 9.♕c4 b6 10.♘g5) 9...♗f6 10.♕f4 ♕f5 11.g3 g5 12.♕e3 ♘c6 13.♗g2 ♗d7 14.h6 ♖c8 with a completely unclear game. Aronian-Kamsky, Nice (blindfold) 2009.

– 7...e5? is no good, as the following game demonstrates: 8.e4 ♗g4 9.♕b3!± ♗xf3 10.♕xb7 ♗xg2 11.♗xg2 ♘d7 12.♗a3 ♖b8 13.♕d5 ♘b6 14.♕c6+ ♕d7 15.♕c5 ♖d8 16.hxg6 fxg6 17.♖d1 with a clear edge in Wells-Salimbeni, Torquay ch-GBR 2009.



8.e4 e5 9.♗a3 ♘b6 10.♗e2 ♗g4 11.h6 ♗f6 12.0-0 ♗e7 13.♗c1 ♗f6 14.♗a3 ♗e7 15.♗b2!? ♗xf3 16.♗xf3 ♕d3

It was on this move that Black had counted. He aims for play on the d-file. Blocking on d3 should stop White from using his bishop pair to good effect.



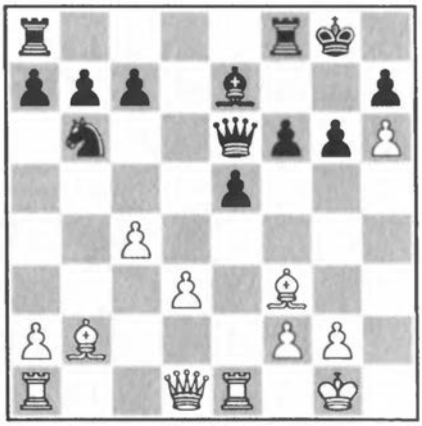
17.♗e2! ♕xe4 18.♗f3 ♕c4

Black probably did not like the position after 18...♕d3!? 19.♗xb7 ♖d8 20.♗c6+ (20.♖e1!?) 20...♔f8. This does not look so bad to me.

19.d3!

Great! White does not want to win back the pawn. He wants to use his bishops.

19...♕e6 20.c4! 0-0 21.♖e1 f6



22.a4!

Not only a pair of raking bishops, the knight on b6 becomes a problem piece as well.

22...c6 23.a5 ♘d7 24.a6!

Loosening Black's position.

24...b6 25.d4!

Excellent! Great piece cooperation.

25...♖fd8

25...♕xc4 26.♖c1 ♕xa6 (26...♕a2 27.♖e2 and the black queen is in big trouble) 27.♕b3+ ♔h8 28.♕e6. And White is on his way to the pub.

26.d5 ♕d6 27.dxc6 ♘c5 28.♗d5+ ♔h8 29.♕f3 ♖f8 30.♖e2 ♕c7 31.♕g3 ♗d6 32.♖ae1 ♖ae8 33.f4

White is obviously winning by now.

33...♘e6 34.♔h1 ♖f7 35.fxe5 ♗c5 36.♖d1 f5 37.♖ed2 ♔g8 38.♕h4 ♗e7 39.♕g3 ♗b4 40.♖f2 ♕e7 41.♖f3 ♗c5 42.♗c1 ♔f8 43.♖df1 ♕c7 44.♗g5 ♘xg5 45.♕xg5 ♖xe5 46.♗xf7 ♔xf7

46...♗e7 also loses: 47.♕g3 ♔xf7 48.♖xf5+ gxf5 49.♖xf5+ ♔e6 (49...♖xf5 50.♕xc7 ♖h5+ 51.♔g1 +−) 50.♖xe5+ ♕xe5 51.♕xe5+ ♔xe5 52.c7 and White wins.

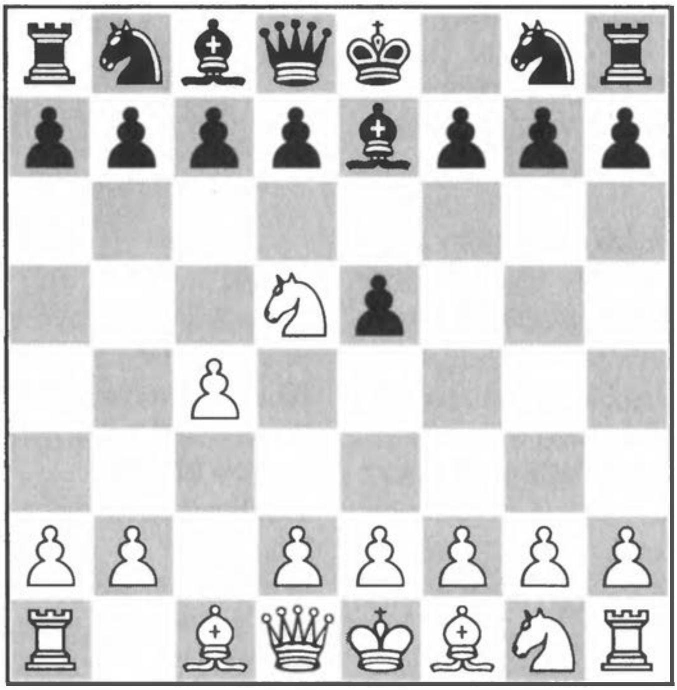
47.♖xf5+

And now we see how useful a pawn on h6 can be!

CHAPTER 6

Nikita Vitiugov

English: Shirov's Pet Line



1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♗b4 3.♘d5 ♗e7

Many times I have heard the following opinion expressed by strong grandmasters: if you have White and don't feel in your best form, play the English Opening and you are guaranteed a quiet, comfortable game. Is this really so? In chess there are no universal prescriptions.

But if you are in the mood for initiating complicated and lively play from the very first moves in this opening as Black, I can recommend this article to you.

So, 1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♗b4!?. Black's plan is simple – to double the white c-pawns and demonstrate their weakness in the subsequent manoeuvring battle. In the given instance this familiar motif may take on rather a new aspect:

☐ **Bu Xiangzhi**

■ **Vadim Zviagintsev**

Ergun China-Russia 2006

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♗b4 3.g3 ♗xc3 4.bxc3 f5

An interesting moment. White has allowed the capture on c3. Since the knight has not yet come out to f6, Black can advance his f-pawn, after which the position acquires certain specific features.

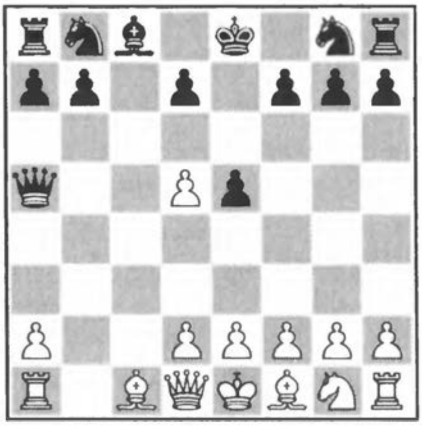
5.♗g2 ♘f6 6.♖b1 ♘c6 7.♘f3 0-0 8.0-0 ♕e8 9.c5 b6 10.♗a3 bxc5 11.♗xc5 d6 12.♗a3 e4 13.♘d4 ♘xd4 14.cxd4 ♗e6

And the players agreed a draw.

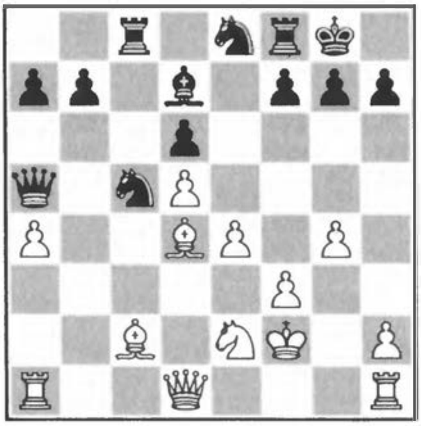
Not surprisingly, the main way of fighting for an advantage is considered to be the natural 3.♘d5, after which Black has a choice of as many as five continuations. However, most of these are of an experimental nature, for example:

☐ **Joel Lautier**
■ **Vasilios Kotronias**
Halkidiki 1992

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♗b4 3.♘d5 ♗a5?!
A sharp continuation, which, however, leads to a stable advantage for White.
4.b4 c6 5.bxa5 cxd5 6.cxd5 ♕xa5



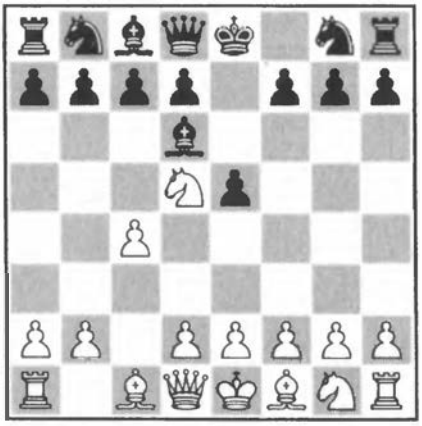
7.e4
Not so clear is 7.♕b3 ♘f6 8.♘f3 d6 9.♗a3 ♘e4! 10.e3 ♘d7 11.♖c1 0-0, Kramnik-Kharlov, Kherson 1991.
7...♘f6 8.♗d3
Probably the most forceful. 8.f3 0-0 9.♘e2 d6 10.a4 ♘a6 11.♘c3 ♘c5 12.♗a3 ♘h5 13.♗c4 ♗d7 14.♕b1 f5 was unclear in Illescas-Psakhis, Novi Sad Olympiad 1990.
8...♘a6 9.f3 d6 10.♗b2! ♘c5 11.♗c2 ♗d7 12.a4
The structure of the position has clarified. Black is held in a positional vice, from which it will be not at all easy to escape.
12...0-0 13.♘e2 ♖ac8 14.♗c3 ♕a6 15.d4 exd4 16.♗xd4 ♕a5+ 17.♔f2 ♘e8 18.g4!



And subsequently White converted his advantage into a win.

☐ **Valery Salov**
■ **Vladimir Kramnik**
Linares 1993

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♗b4 3.♘d5 ♗d6?!
A very artificial move, which White exploits by active play.

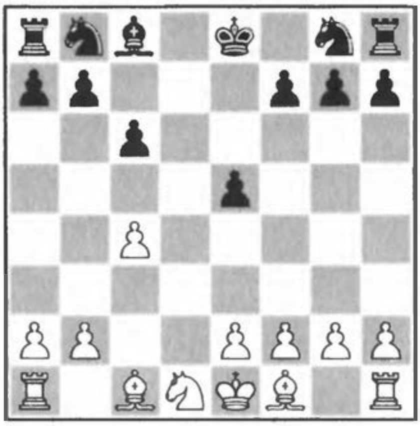


4.d4! c6
4...♘c6?! is altogether too novel: 5.♘f3 e4 6.♘g5 f5 7.c5! and Black's position is critical.
5.dxe5 ♗xe5 6.♘f3 d6 7.♘xe5

The alternative is 7.♘c3!?

7...dxe5 8.♘c3 ♕xd1+ 9.♘xd1

In the resulting endgame White has a stable, although not very big advantage.



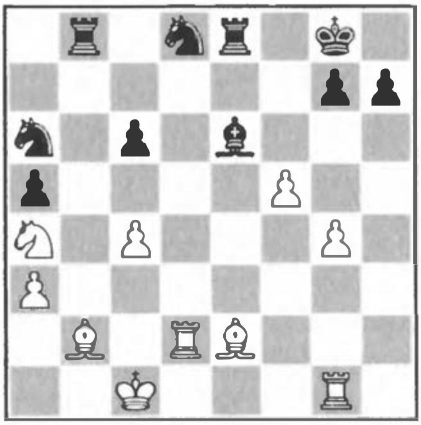
9...♗e6 10.b3 a5 11.♗b2 f6 12.♘c3 ♘a6 13.0-0-0 ♘h6 14.h3 ♘f7 15.e3

On White's side is a long-term factor in the form of the two bishops, and so he unhurriedly strengthens his position.

15...0-0 16.♗e2 ♘b4 17.f4 b5!?

In the given instance passive defence is not good, and so Black initiates counterplay. However, with accurate play White extinguishes the opponent's activity.

18.g4 exf4 19.exf4 bxc4 20.bxc4 f5 21.a3 ♘a6 22.♘a4! ♖ab8 23.♖hg1 fxg4 24.hxg4 ♖fe8 25.♖d2 ♘d8 26.f5



White has a big advantage.

Thus by trial and error Black arrived at the present-day main reply 3...♗e7, which is the real subject of this article. Here White still has to demonstrate a clear-cut way to gain an advantage.

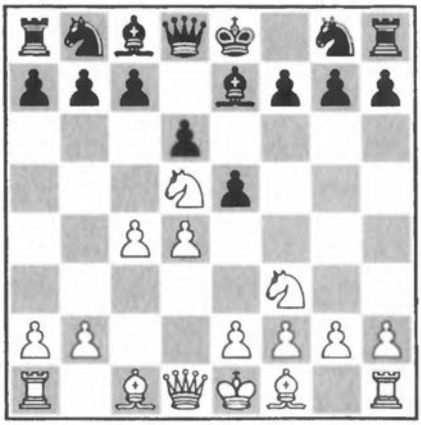
Initially a popular plan involved attempts to demonstrate the power of White's dark-squared bishop, which has been left without an opponent, but it lost its dangers for Black, thanks to the efforts of Alexey Shirov.

☐ **Yasser Seirawan**
■ **Alexey Shirov**
Biel Interzonal 1993

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♗b4 3.♘d5 ♗e7 4.♘f3

Here the move order does not play any particular role – White can begin with either 4.♘f3, or 4.d4.

4...d6 5.d4



5...e4!

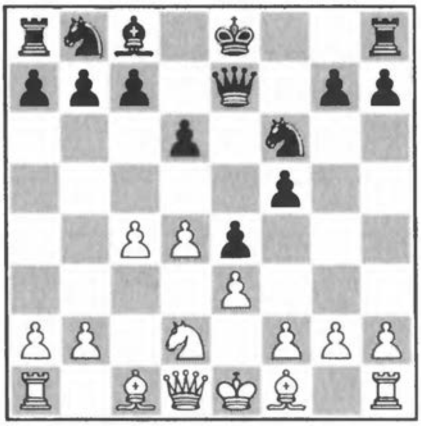
The critical and correct approach. Since White himself does not want to occupy the centre, why shouldn't Black exploit this?

White obtained somewhat the better game after 5...♘c6 6.e3 e4 7.♘g1 ♗g5 8.h4 ♗e7 9.♘e2 f5 10.♘ef4 ♘f6 11.♘xf6+ ♗xf6 12.♘d5 0-0 13.♗d2 ♘e7 14.♘xf6+ ♖xf6 15.d5 in Gelfand-Shirov, Moscow 1992.

6.♘d2 f5 7.e3

7.f3 c6 8.♘xe7 ♕xe7 and Black is alright.

7...♘f6 8.♘xe7 ♕xe7



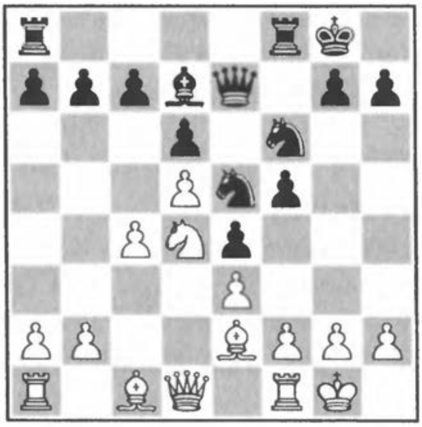
9.d5

This structurally correct decision proves in the given instance to be very risky – the black knights obtain the e5-point, which plays a key role in the subsequent play. However, 9.♗e2 can be met by 9...c5!?, while in the event of 9.b3 another central set-up is possible: 9...0-0 10.♗b2 c6 11.♗e2 d5 with counterplay.

9...0-0 10.♗e2 ♘bd7 11.0-0 ♘e5 12.♘b3

With a heavy tread the knight heads for d4. White could have had the advantage, were it not for dynamic factors in the form of Black's better development.

12...♗d7 13.♘d4



13...♘fg4!?

Exploiting the fixing of the centre, Black sets his sights on the white king.

14.h3 ♖f6!

Alexey Shirov remains true to himself, even when playing such an outwardly tedious and prosaic opening as the English.

15.g3

It looks extremely risky to play 15.hxg4 fxg4 16.g3 ♖af8, with a deadly initiative.

15...♖h6

Not a single step back. Possibly 15...♘h6 would have been positionally more correct.

16.♔g2 ♖xh3

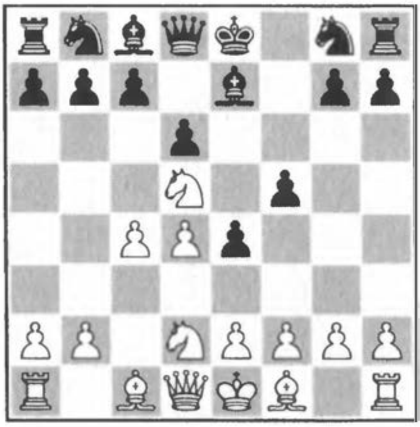
The rook's fate was decided on the previous move, since after 16...♘f6 17.♖h1 ± White comfortably defends his weaknesses.

17.♔xh3 f4

And in the subsequent mind-boggling struggle Black went on to win.

☐ **Joël Lautier**
■ **Alexey Shirov**
Tilburg 1996

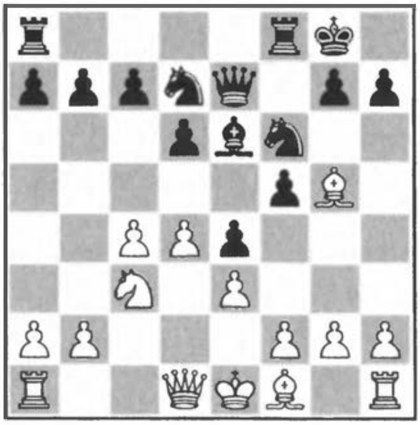
1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♗b4 3.♘d5 ♗e7 4.d4 d6 5.♘f3 e4 6.♘d2 f5



7.♘b1

Joël Lautier chooses a different approach – at the cost of a couple of tempi White prefers to develop his bishop outside the pawn chain.

7...♘f6 8.♘xe7 ♕xe7 9.♘c3 0-0 10.♗g5 ♗e6 11.e3 ♘bd7



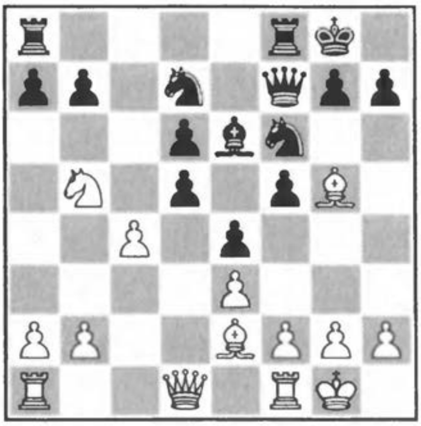
12.♗e2

As was also the case earlier, 12.d5 is not altogether in the spirit of the position: 12...♗f7 13.♘b5 h6 14.♗h4 g5 15.♗g3 ♘e5 and thanks to his piece grouping in the centre, Black is alright.

12...c6 13.0-0 ♕f7 14.d5

After his restrained play in the opening, White suddenly launches himself at the opponent. 14.b3!? d5 15.c5 was a worthy alternative, with a different type of game.

14...cxd5 15.♘b5



15...♘e5!

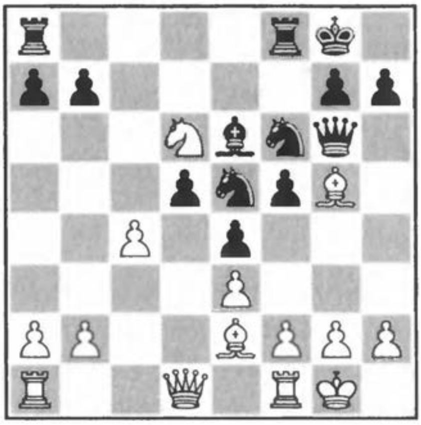
Naturally, Black answers in kind. The inert 15...dxc4?! was weak: 16.♕xd6! ♖fc8 (16...♖ac8 17.♘xa7!?±) 17.♘d4 ♘c5 18.♖ac1, with strong compensation for the pawn.

16.♘xd6

Play is equal after 16.♗xf6?! ♕xf6 17.♘c7 ♖ac8 18.♘xd5 ♕f7.

16...♕g6

And here in the game there followed:



17.♗xf6

Meanwhile, there was an interesting resource available to White: 17.♗f4! ♘xc4 18.♘xb7! ♘xb2 19.♕d4 ♘c4 20.♘c5=∞.

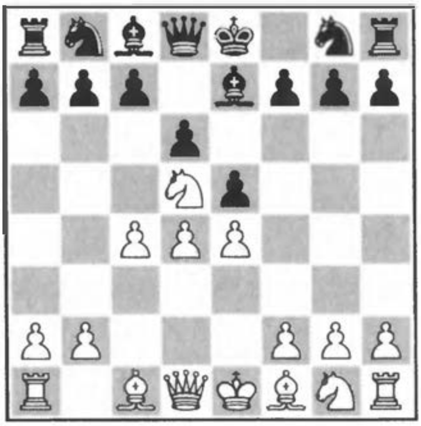
17...♖xf6 18.cxd5 ♗d7 19.♘c4 ♘xc4 20.♗xc4 f4

and after an outburst of complications the game came to a peaceful end.

In the end, White has had to adopt a more ambitious set-up, involving the complete occupation of the centre. But the price for this – his lag in development – forces him to act with extreme care and accuracy.

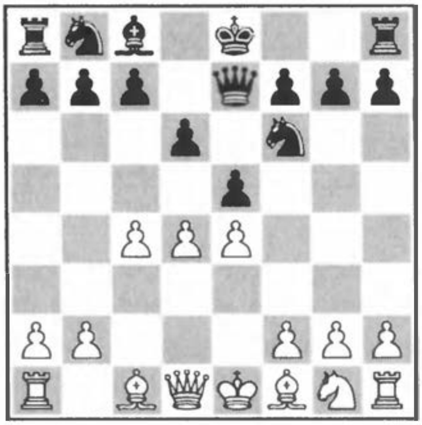
☐ **Curt Hansen**
■ **Ivan Sokolov**
Groningen 1995

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♗b4 3.♘d5 ♗e7 4.d4 d6 5.e4



When you first look at this position, you may think that White has made incredible progress over the first five moves – he has occupied the centre, he has established his knight at d5, and he is not behind in development. However, it transpires that Black too has his trumps.

5...♘f6 6.♘xe7 ♕xe7



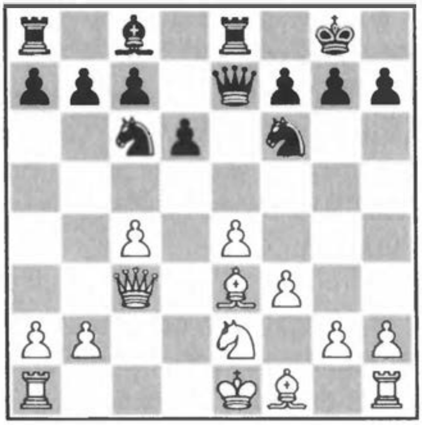
7.f3

It appears that the transformation of the situation has merely consolidated White's position. But in the immediate future his fine-looking pawn centre may become a good target.

7...exd4 8.♕xd4 ♘c6 9.♕c3 0-0 10.♗e3

White is hardly promised any advantage by 10.♗g5 ♖e8 11.♗xf6 ♕xf6 12.♕xf6 gxf6, and on the next move Black gets rid of his weakness on f6.

10...♖e8 11.♘e2



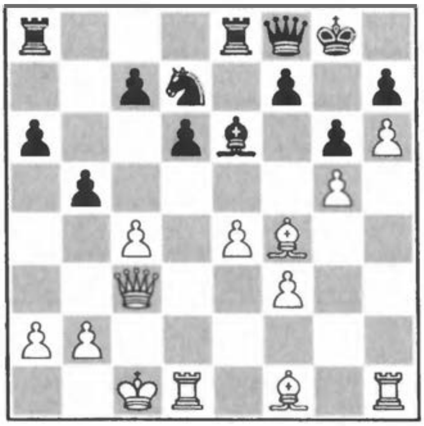
11...♘e5

Black's slow handling of the game gradually places him on the verge of defeat. 11...♘h5!? was an interesting attempt, with the idea after 12.g4 of sacrificing a piece by 12...♗xg4 13.fxg4 ♘f6 14.♖g1 ♘xe4 15.♕a3, and in this position Black has a wide choice of continuations. For example, 15...♘e5 16.0-0-0 ♘xc4 17.♕b3 ♘c3! 18.♕xc3 ♘xe3 19.♖d2 ♕e6 with sharp play. 11...a5!? was another critical continuation.

12.♘f4 ♘g6 13.0-0-0 ♘xf4 14.♗xf4

White has a stable advantage, and Black has no way of opposing his initiative on the kingside.

14...a6 15.h4 ♗e6 16.g4 ♘d7 17.g5 b5 18.h5 ♕f8 19.h6 g6



20.♖xd6! The game is decided. **20...b4 21.♕d4 ♖ad8**

And here White suddenly deviated from the correct course and gave away the greater part of his advantage.

22.♖xd7? There was a straightforward win by 22.♖xa6 ♘c5 23.♕f6 ♘d7 24.♕g7+! – perhaps White missed this subtlety?

22...♗xd7 And the battle flared up with renewed strength.

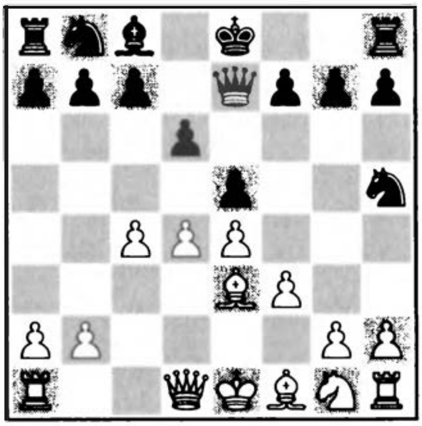
In this, seemingly a sideline of the English Opening, the theoretical disputes are continuing to this day. One of the main drivers of theory in this variation for Black, Alexey Shirov, is still prepared at a convenient moment to again resort to his old and well-tested counter to the English Opening.

☐ **Levon Aronian**
■ **Alexey Shirov**
Morelia/Linares 2008

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♗b4 3.♘d5 ♗e7 4.d4 d6 5.e4 ♘f6 6.♘xe7 ♕xe7 7.f3 ♘h5!?

A move which Shirov had already employed earlier in a game against Lautier.

8.♗e3

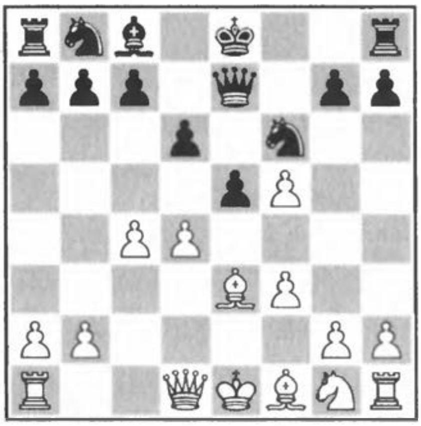


8...f5

And here is an important novelty. Earlier Alexey played 8...0-0, after which in his comments he himself indicated the way to gain an advantage: 9.d5! (not so clear is 9.♘e2 f5 10.exf5 exd4 11.♕xd4 ♘c6 12.♕d2 ♗xf5, Lautier-Shirov, Las Palmas 1994) 9...f5 10.exf5 ♘f4 (10...♗xf5 11.g4 ♗xg4 12.fxg4 ♕h4+ 13.♔d2 ♘g3 14.hxg3 ♕xh1 15.♗h3!± intending g5) 11.g4±, and if 11...b5 12.cxb5 ♗b7 13.♗c4! ♘g2+ 14.♔f2 ♘xe3 15.♔xe3 (Shirov).

9.exf5 ♘f6

This quiet retreat is the point of Black's novelty. 9...exd4 10.♕xd4 ♘c6 11.♕d2 ♗xf5 12.g4 0-0-0 is excessively sharp, since White has the strong resource 13.0-0-0! d5 14.♗g5 ♘f6 15.gxf5 dxc4 16.♖e1, when he remains a piece up.



10.♘e2

By responding in this way, White can possibly hope for some pressure from the opening, but not an advantage.

Of course, 10.g4!? was more reckless and critical, after which the play can develop roughly along the following lines: 10...h5 11.g5 ♘h7 12.dxe5 ♕xe5 13.♕d2 ♗xf5 14.0-0-0 0-0 with chances for both sides. This continuation still has to be tested in practice.

10...exd4 11.♗xd4 ♗xf5 12.♕d2 ♘c6 13.0-0-0 0-0-0

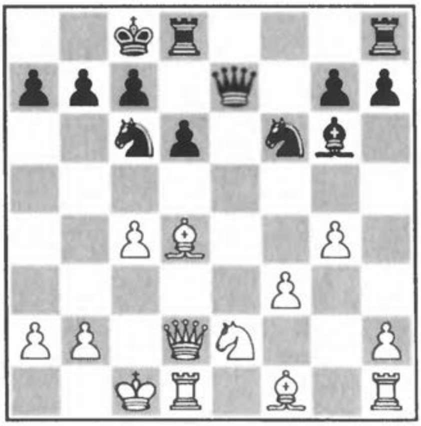
13...0-0?! is risky in view of 14.♗c3, when White's potential pawn storm on the kingside may be very dangerous.

14.g4

Probably the only possibility of setting Black problems from the opening was 14.♗c3, trying to retain the bishop pair.

However, here too Black would have had adequate counter-chances.

14...♗g6



15.♘f4

Now 15.♗c3? runs into the highly unpleasant 15...♘e4!

15...♘xd4 16.♕xd4 ♔b8 17.h4 ♗f7 18.♗d3

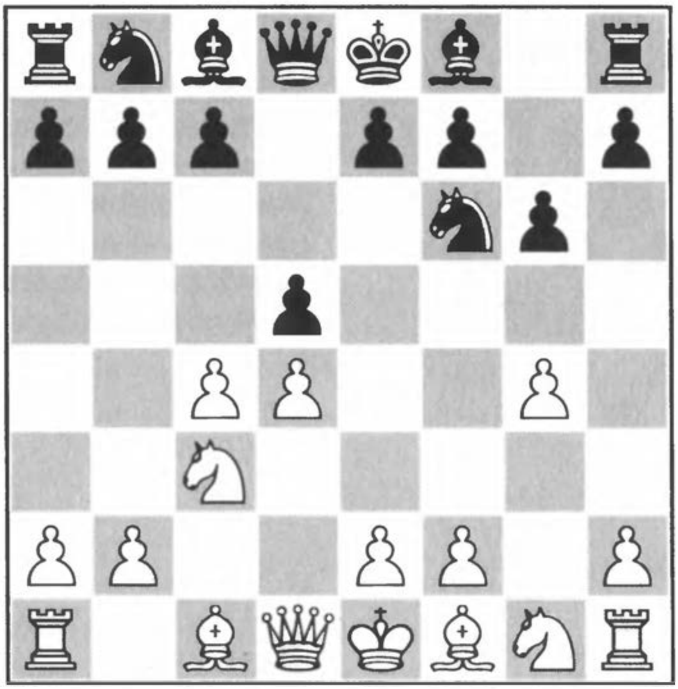
And peace was concluded on White's proposal.

To sum up, I can say that in the as yet insufficiently explored expanses of the English Opening, the variation with an early ♗b4 appears to be an interesting way of quickly taking the play along lines familiar to you. Here you are guaranteed interesting play with a wealth of possibilities.

CHAPTER 7

Adrian Mikhalchishin & Jeroen Bosch

Bayonet Attack in the Grünfeld



1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.g4!?

The Grünfeld is a dynamic, hypermodern opening that makes for attractive chess. Unfortunately, the theoretical workload is also of the highest order. It is perhaps for this reason that an unusual high number of SOS-articles have already appeared on Grünfeld byways. Is it the nature of the Grünfeld that invites creative and early deviations from the main lines? Perhaps many white players expect that it will pay off to surprise an opponent who is obviously not averse to spending huge amounts of his time on opening study? Do we see so many sidelines because the main lines don't promise White much? Whatever the reason, the present subject clearly falls into the SOS category: an early deviation, little theory, a lot of fun, and, in this case a quite eccentric starting move.

Avid SOS-readers will perhaps be reminded of our coverage of 4.h4 in SOS-3 (Chapter 3, p.28). Paradoxically, it turned out that 4.h4 – although a flank action – was in fact motivated by a wish to dominate in the centre. This is most obvious from the continuation 4...♗g7 5.h5 ♞xh5 6.cxd5 and White has the better chances. With 4.g4 White also aims to gain influence in the centre (obviously 5.g5 and 6.cxd5 is a threat). This may be illustrated by 4...♘xg4?! 5.cxd5 and 4...♗xg4 5.♕b3 intending 6.cxd5 after 5...♗c8. This should be sufficient philosophical background for us to embark on our 4.g4 adventure.

Let us start with an appetizer: the game Pantaleev-Radev, Bulgaria 1979 (all is new that is long forgotten!).

☐ **Dimitar Pantaleev**
■ **Nikolai Radev**
Bulgaria 1979

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.g4!?

Pantaleev was not the first to play this audacious move. Already in 1975 this idea had sprung from the fertile mind of Yacov Murey (Murey-Napolov, Cheliabinsk 1975, is the earliest game we could find featuring 4.g4).

4...dxc4

4...♘xg4 5.cxd5 is a fairly obvious point. In the same year Pantaleev also faced 4...♗xg4 when his game against Grancharov went 5.♕b3 ♗c8 6.cxd5 ♗g7 7.e4 c6 8.♗g2 0-0 9.♘ge2.

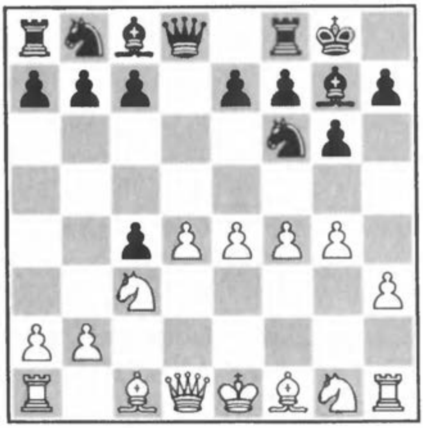
5.h3

See Variation III B for the alternative 5.g5.

5...♗g7

5...♘d5 6.e4 ♘b6! is what Jonathan Rowson recommends in his *Understanding the Grünfeld*. In *Informant* 29 (which featured Pantaleev's game) Minev only mentions 6...♘xc3 7.bxc3 ♗g7 8.♗xc4 c5 9.♘e2 which he calls unclear – a fair enough verdict given that White's space advantage on the kingside cuts both ways.

6.e4 0-0 7.f4!?



7.♗xc4 c5 is simply good for Black, as the only suitable positional reply 8.d5 fails to 8...b5 9.♗xb5 ♘xe4 10.♘xe4 ♕a5+ 11.♘c3 ♗xc3+ 12.bxc3 ♕xb5 and Black's chances are preferable.

7...c6

I don't like this passive move – although, admittedly, Radev is playing with a natural idea in mind. Why not the typical Grünfeld lever 7...c5.

8.e5

Obviously not 8.♗xc4 because of 8...b5 9.♗b3 b4 and pawn e4 falls. This is the point of Radev's 7...c6.

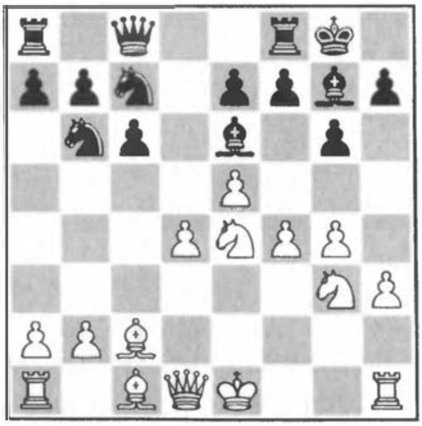
8...♘d5 9.♗xc4 ♗e6 10.♗b3 ♘d7

10...♘xc3 11.bxc3 ♗d5 12.♘f3 b5 was given by Minev, but White can be happy with his space advantage after 13.0-0.

11.♘ge2 ♘7b6 12.♘e4

This avoids the exchange of pieces, thus emphasizing Black's lack of space. Without the Grünfeld lever ...c5 Black is suffering.

12...♕c8 13.♘2g3 ♘c7 14.♗c2



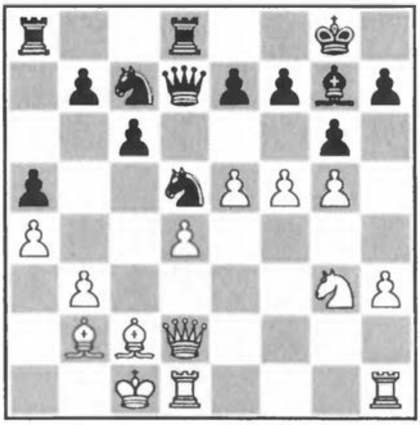
Again avoiding the exchange of pieces. The bishop will be very useful in the coming kingside attack.

14...♖d8 15.b3 ♘b5 16.♗b2 ♘d5 17.♕d2 ♗h6

Finally, Black is doing something positive: attacking a pawn and provoking the 'ugly' 18.g5. However, as it turns out Black lacks the means to take advantage of this advance – he cannot really control square f5. Minev analysed 17...♗xg4 to see if Black could get out of his cramped position with brute force. His line continues 18.hxg4 ♕xg4 19.♕e2 (19.♘e2 is safe – Black has no real compensation) 19...♕xf4 20.♗c1 and wins. However, this is wrong because Black can continue with 20...♘xd4! 21.♗xf4 ♘xe2 22.♘xe2 ♘xf4 23.♘xf4 ♗xe5 when he is winning back material with the better prospects.

18.g5 ♗g7 19.♘c5 Gaining control over f5. **19...a5** 19...♗xh3 is met by the crushing 20.f5 ♗g4 21.♕h2 as Minev correctly pointed out.

20.♘xe6 ♕xe6 21.f5 ♕d7 22.a4 ♘bc7 23.0-0-0



Pantaleev finally castles – but on the queenside not a common sight in the Grünfeld! He has an overwhelming position. **23...e6 24.fxg6** Correctly opening the position. **24...fxg6 25.♘e4 b5 26.♘f6+ ♗xf6 27.gxf6 bxa4 28.bxa4 ♘b4 29.♗e4** Pantaleev needs this bishop for the attack. The position is messy, but White should get there first. **29...♔h8?**

29...♖ab8 was much stronger to gain counterplay. Black plans ...♘cd5, ...♘a2+ and an eventual ...♕b7. White needs to take more care than in the game by combining attack and defence with 30.♖hg1 ♔h8 31.♖g3.

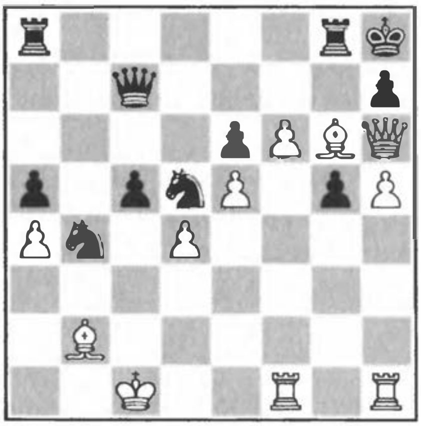
30.♕h6 ♖g8 31.h4 ♘cd5 32.♗b1

To defend against an annoying check on a2, but 32.h5 was also strong as 32...♘a2+ is met by 33.♔b1 ♘ac3+ 34.♗xc3 ♘xc3+ 35.♔c2 ♘xe4 36.hxg6 and wins.

32...c5 33.♖df1 ♕f7? 34.h5

Crashing through the defences.

34...g5 35.♗g6 ♕c7

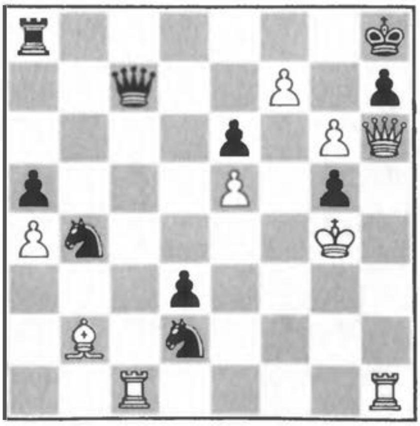


36.♔d2!

Black is still alive after 36.f7 cxd4+ 37.♔b1 ♖xg6! 38.f8♕+ ♖g8.

36...cxd4 37.♖c1 ♘c3 38.f7 ♖xg6

38...♖g7 39.♖hf1 ♖f8 40.♗xh7 is the 'prosaic' finish. **39.hxg6 ♘e4+ 40.♔e2 d3+ 41.♔f3 ♘d2+ 42.♔g4**



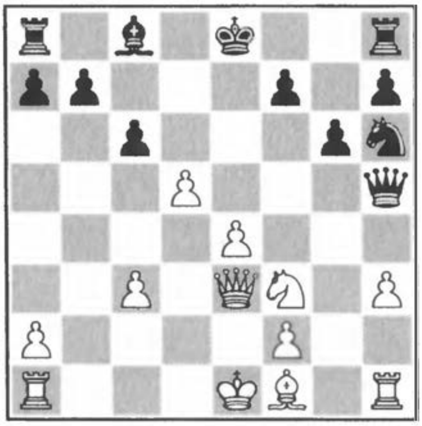
Black resigned.

Hopefully this game has whetted your appetite to take a look at the variations below.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.g4!?
The gambit of a great eccentric, grandmaster Yacov Murey. Black has many different strategies, involving both accepting the sacrifice and refraining from pawn-grabbing.

Variation I

4...♘xg4
There are other moves that deserve more tests than they have received in tournament practice: 4...c5, 4...c6 and perhaps even 4...h6 (although 5.cxd5 ♘xd5 6.e4 feels natural).
5.cxd5
Clearly worse is 5.♘xd5 c6 6.♘c3 e5! 7.d5 ♕h4 8.♘e4 ♗b4+ 9.♗d2 ♘e3, Niemela-Sidorkov, Jyväskylä 1991.
5...c6 6.e4 e5
Not 6...cxd5 7.♗b5+.
7.h3 ♕h4 8.♕f3! ♘h6 9.dxe5 ♗g7 10.♗f4 ♘d7 11.♕e3
Or 11.♗g3 ♕e7 12.d6 which is also good.
11...♘xe5 12.♗xe5 ♗xe5 13.♘f3 ♗xc3+ 14.bxc3 ♕h5



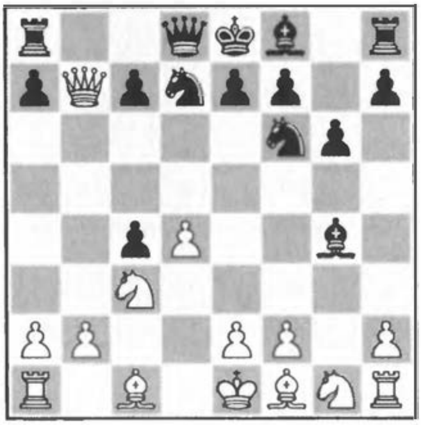
This is Cziszar-Szekeres, Gyöngös 2003, and here, instead of the game continuation 15.♗g2, White had a couple of interesting possibilities: 15.♗e2 and 15.♖d1.

Variation II

4...♗xg4 5.♕b3
Or 5.♗g2!? when White also play for the pawn.

Subvariation A

5...dxc4 6.♕xb7 ♘bd7



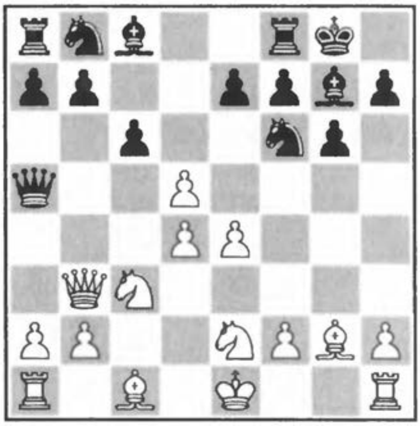
7.♘b5
7.♗g2!? is interesting when Duckworth-Burg, Los Angeles 1991, favoured White after 7...♘b6 8.♘b5 ♖c8 9.♗c6+ ♗d7 10.♘xa7 ♖b8 11.♗xd7+ ♘fxd7 12.♕f3.
7...♖c8 8.f3 Dangerous is 8.♗f4 e5!? 9.dxe5 ♗b4+ 10.♘c3. **8...♗e6 9.e4 c6 10.♘a3 ♘b6 11.♗e3 ♖c7 12.♕a6 ♗g7 13.♘e2 0-0 14.♗g2** White has the advantage, Cairou-Rodier, France 2002/03.

Subvariation B

5...♗c8 6.cxd5 ♗g7
If 6...c6 7.♗g2 ♕b6 8.♗f4 ♕xb3 9.axb3 cxd5 10.♘b5 ♘a6 11.♖xa6 bxa6 12.♘c7+ ♔d8 13.♘xa8 ♗b7 14.♘c7 e6 15.e3 with a big advantage, Taffijn-Van Belle, cr. 2002.
7.e4
A fairly high-level game (Plaskett-Fedorowicz, London 1987) saw 7.♗g2 0-0 8.♘f3 c6 9.e4 cxd5 10.e5 ♘e4 11.♕xd5 ♘xc3 12.♕xd8 ♖xd8 13.bxc3 ♗e6 14.♘g5 ♗d5 and Black was OK in the ending.
7...c6 8.♗g2 0-0 9.♘ge2

As mentioned in our appetizer above.

9...♕a5



And now 10.0-0 cxd5 11.e5 leads to an advantage for White.

Variation III

4...dxc4

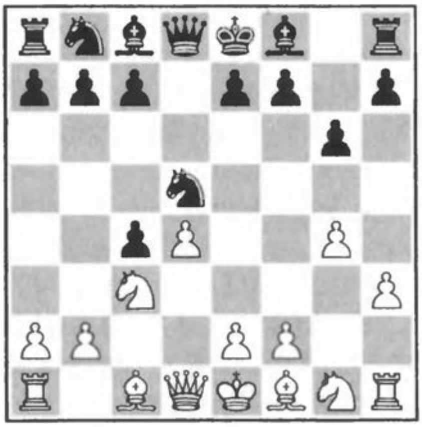
Here White has a choice.

After the excessively gambit-like 5.e4 ♗xg4 6.f3 ♗c8 7.♗xc4 ♗g7 8.e5 ♘fd7 9.♘ge2 (stronger is 9.f4, which needs testing in practice) 9...c5!? 10.e6 fxe6 11.♘f4 ♘b6 12.♗xe6 ♕xd4 White has no compensation for the two pawns, Pietrasanta-R.Bagirov, Le Touquet 1998.

Subvariation A

5.h3 is more positional.

5...♘d5 For 5...♗g7 see our appetizer.



6.♗g2

6.e4 ♞xc3 7.bxc3 is worth considering, as here the compensation is very decent. However, as we noted above Rowson has argued that 6...♘b6 is stronger.

Black has a good game after 6.♕a4+ ♗d7 7.♕xc4 ♗c6 8.♘f3 ♗g7 9.♗g2 0-0 10.0-0 ♘xc3 11.bxc3 ♘d7 12.♕d3 e5!, Send-Albrent, Dortmund 1999.

6...♘b6 7.♘f3 ♗g7 8.♗f4 ♘c6 9.♕d2 h5! 10.♘b5 ♘d5 11.e4 ♘xf4 12.♕xf4 e5! 13.dxe5 ♗e6 14.♖d1 ♕e7 15.0-0 hxg4 16.hxg4 a6 17.♘c3 ♕c5 18.♘d5 0-0-0 with an excellent game for Black, Gervasio-Djuric, Cannes 1999.

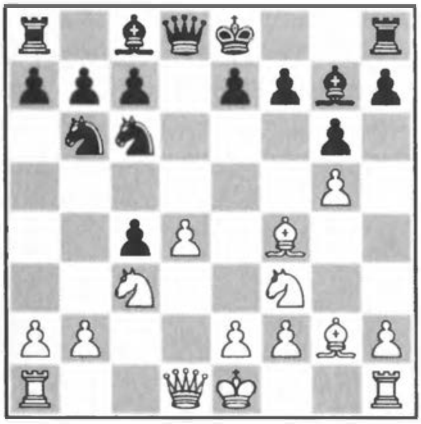
Subvariation B

5.g5 is the logical continuation:

5...♘d5 6.♗g2

Weaker is 6.e4 ♘b6 7.♗e3 h6! 8.f4 hxg5 9.fxg5 ♗g7 10.♕d2 ♘c6 11.♘ge2 ♗g4, Moravcik-Pribyl, Sala 1995.

6...♘b6 7.♗f4 ♗g7 8.♘f3 ♘c6



9.d5

The quiet 9.e3 is also possible.

9...♘b4

It is clear that Black should have seriously considered 9...♗xc3+ 10.bxc3 ♕xd5 11.♗xc7 ♗g4, with an excellent game.

10.♘e5 0-0 11.a3 ♘a6 12.♕d4 So as not to allow ♘a6-c5-b3.

12...♘d7 13.♖d1 ♕e8 14.h4 b5 15.♕e3 with a complicated game, Murey-Napolov, Cheliabinsk 1975.

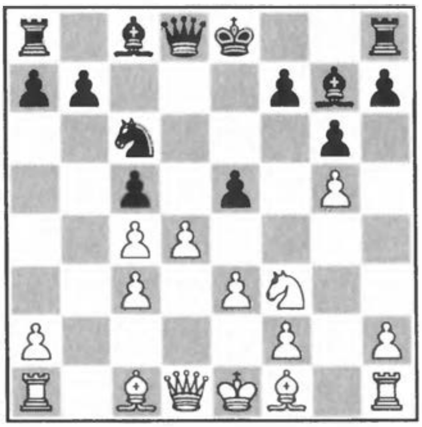
Variation IV

4...♗g7 5.g5

Here 5.h3 and then 6.♗g2 is possible and not at all bad, playing a kind of extended fianchetto.

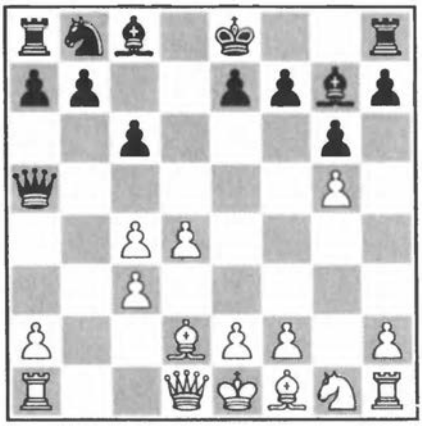
5...♘e4 6.♘xd5 c6

Or 6...e6 7.♘c3 ♘xc3 8.bxc3 c5 9.♘f3 ♘c6 10.e3 e5!?



11.d5 e4 12.♘d2 ♗xc3 13.♖b1 ♘e5 14.♕c2 ♘f3+ 15.♔d1 ♗xd2 16.♕xe4+ ♕e7 17.♕xe7+ ♔xe7 18.♗xd2 ♘xg5 19.♗g2 with advantage to White, Krausser-Jergler, Austria 1999/2000.

7.♘c3 ♘xc3 8.bxc3 ♕a5 9.♗d2



Black has sacrificed a pawn and he now tries to attack White's centre.

9...c5 10.♕b3!?

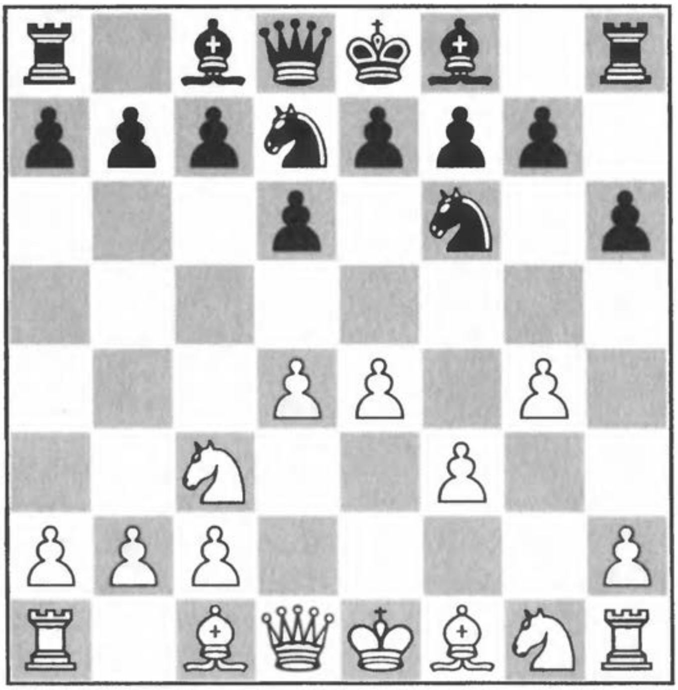
10.e3 cxd4 11.exd4 0-0 is dangerous, as the white king is too exposed.

10...♘d7 11.e4 cxd4 12.cxd4 ♕b6 13.♕xb6 ♘xb6 14.♗e3 with a sound pawn up in Maatoug-Ris, St. Lorrain 2001.

CHAPTER 8

Willy Hendriks

Taking the Lion by its Throat



1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 ♘bd7 4.g4 h6 5.f3

In this article I will have a look at a set-up with g4 and f3 (in that order!) against an opening that in my homeland is known as 'the Lion' ('de Leeuw'). In other countries this opening (1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 ♘bd7) is known as ... Well, I actually don't know, does this opening have a name?

So let's stick to this name. After all, the publisher of the SOS-series has also released a book called 'The Black Lion: the Chess Predator's Choice Against Both 1.e4 and 1.d4'.

To give some history on this name: two Dutch chess amateurs, Jerry van Rekom and Leo Jansen, did a lot of work on this system and published their findings in 1997 in a Dutch language edition. They called their system 'the Lion'. This 1997 Dutch edition was later expanded and translated, resulting in the publication mentioned above.

For their work the authors were both praised and criticized. Some stronger players looked upon them as dilettanti, and claimed that players of club level are not able to write a decent opening book.

Be that as it may, the book was quite successful and it added to the popularity of this opening. So every 1.e4 player will meet the Lion now and then, maybe more often at club level than at top level (and probably more often in the Netherlands than in the rest of the world).

After 1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 ♘bd7 the most popular choice is 4.♘f3, when play can transpose into a 'normal' Philidor (the so-called Hanham Variation). Second choice is 4.f4. From the alternatives the move 4.g4 has become quite popular in recent years and it is scoring very well. After 4...h6 White usually continues with 5.h3, followed by moves like ♗g2, ♘ge2, and (most often) castling short. In this article I propose the move 5.f3, with the set-up ♗e3, ♘ge2-g3, ♕d2 and castling long in mind. Transposition via 4.♗e3 is of course possible, but I will explain below why 4.g4 and 5.f3 is more accurate.

Is this set-up a surprise?

I have to admit, a set-up with f3, ♗e3, ♕d2 and 0-0-0 cannot be called highly original. However, in the position after 4...h6, in the 116 games in my database the move 5.f3 was only played five times (scoring 100% by the way). Two more games reached this set-up via 5.♗e3.

We actually do get some more games via the move-order 4.♗e3 e5 5.f3, if Black responds to a subsequent g4 by White with the move ...h6. But that is by no means a forced reaction, whereas the direct 4.g4 almost always is answered by 4...h6.

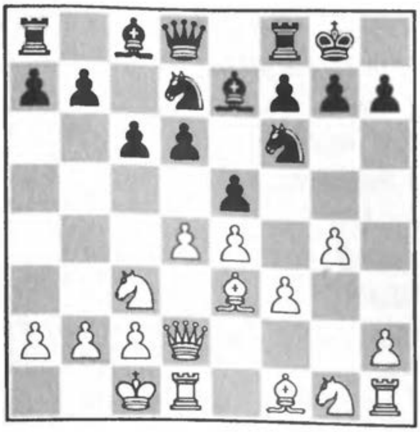
Is this set-up a weapon?

Yes it is!

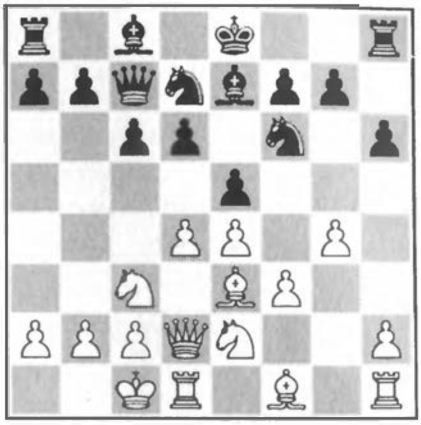
Let's illustrate a vital point of this move-order. After 4.g4 Black is almost forced to play 4...h6. But if you start with 4.f3 and only later on play g4, then Black will not always be so kind to play h6.

For example in the position after 4.♗e3 e5 5.f3 ♗e7 6.♕d2 c6 7.0-0-0 0-0 8.g4 (see the first diagram in the next column).

Black doesn't play the silly 8...h6, but continues his own play with 8...b5. In case of 9.g5, Black has good squares for his knight on h5 and e8.



Now compare the above diagram with this position.



Here, with ♘e2 and ...h6 included, 9...0-0 would of course be suicide! Not only because White can open files with g5, but also because of the ♗xh6 sacrifice.

So for those players who simply want to follow their course with ...0-0, you have something in store.

Dealing with the Lion on autopilot

Our set-up is also a weapon against the players of what might be called 'the Lion on autopilot'.

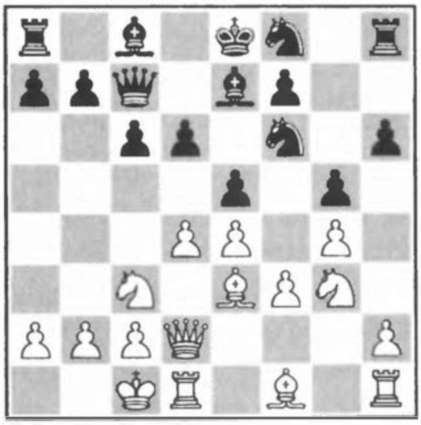
If you look at the website of the authors of *The Black Lion* (www.vanrekom.nl/thelion), you will see the main plan of their system visualized. On a board with only black pieces, the moves d6, ♘f6, ♘bd7, e5, h6, c6, ♗e7,

♕c7, ♘f8, g5, ♘g6, ♘f4, ♖g8 are played (over and over again). As an advantage of playing the Lion, this website states that: 'You play your own game. Your play doesn't depend on the moves your opponent does.' (Sic!)

In their book the authors give the line 4.♗e3 e5 5.f3 ♗e7 6.♕d2 c6 7.0-0-0 and then they advise the move 7...♕c7, 'mainly to keep playing according to the standard plan'.

I think this whole attitude is ill-advised. Playing a good opening depends on having a multitude of strategical and tactical ideas, not on repeating a standard scheme regardless of what the opponent does!

If you meet an opponent who blindly follows this advice, the idea presented in this article will be very effective. Continuing the line after 7...♕c7 with 8.g4 h6 (now we are in our set-up by transposition) 9.♘ge2 ♘f8 (looks dubious to me) 10.♘g3 g5 (given a !? by the authors) you reach the following position:



Here you can start to think about ways to demolish Black's position: 11.h4 is a nice start, but first 11.dxe5 dxe5 and then 12.h4 might be even stronger.

Van Rekom and Jansen give the above position as the result of a main line for Black. But it is easy to see that Black is in a terrible state, so their handling of this line gives some ammunition to those who claim that the average club player should not write an opening book.

Serious opposition

Let's move on to some serious opposition by Black. After all, we cannot expect all our opponents to simply castle into our attack or to play like an automaton that only knows one tune.

I divide the material in two parts: the main line with 4.g4 h6 5.f3 e5, and set-ups without a quick ...e5.

In the main line Black should start his queenside play with ...c6 and ...b5 as soon as possible. A move like ...♕c7 is not necessary, and even the move ...♗e7 can be delayed.

Black must always keep his eye open for a counterblow in the centre, for example, after ♘c3 has been driven away by ...b5-b4, ...d6-d5 can be very effective.

A more quiet approach for Black is the idea ...♘h7 followed by ...♗e7-g5.

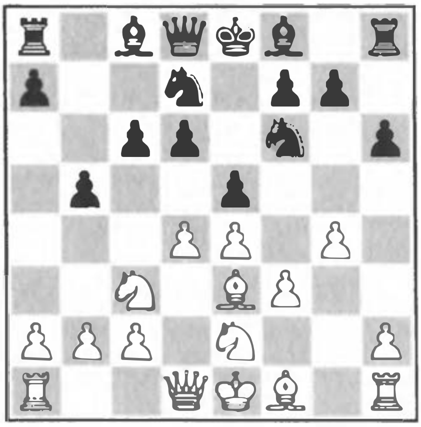
Other set-ups include playing ...c6 and ...b5 without first ...e5 (Game 4), and trying to transpose into Sicilian-type positions with ...c5 (Game 5).

Move orders

Black and White can play their standard moves in different orders, and that gives room for subtleties in play.

White, for example, can start with ♕d2 and 0-0-0 (Game 1) and then decide on how to continue, but starting with ♘g1-e2-g3 (Games 2 and 3) is also an attractive idea. White then immediately brings ♘f5 in the position, posing Black some problems to solve.

Black can also be subtle with his move order. For example, directly starting queenside play leads to the following important position: after 5...e5 6.♗e3 c6 7.♘ge2 and now 7...b5.



A difficult question for White is how to deal with Black's 'threat' of playing ...b4.

Simply continuing 'normal play' with 8.♕d2 is no good: after 8...b4 9.♘d1 d5! Black is doing fine. White can play 8.♘g3 to make room for the other knight on e2, but even then Black may consider 8...b4 9.♘ce2 d5!?.

With 8.a3 White stops ...b4 for the time being, but this might make it less attractive to castle long in the future. A final interesting alternative is 8.d5. White must always consider this push carefully, because it can easily lead to a strategically inferior position.

Don't fear the Lion

In conclusion, I think that with 4.g4 and 5.f3 White can fight for an advantage on relatively unexplored grounds.

The illustrative games cover the most important lines and ideas. The first three games cover the main line, the last two Black's sidelines.

Incidentally, all five games are crushing victories for the white player. For this lion, a fearful attitude is not advised.

☐ **Marc Dutreeuw**
■ **Thierry Manouck**
Paris 2006 (9)

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 ♘bd7 4.♗e3 e5 5.f3 c6 6.♕d2 b5 7.g4 h6

By transposition we have reached our main line. Now White faces an important choice.

8.0-0-0

On 8.♞ge2 Black can play 8...b4 9.♘d1 d5, with a good position. Interesting is 8.d5 cxd5 (the pawn sacrifice 8...b4 9.dxc6 bxc3 10.cxd7+ ♗xd7 11.♕xc3 gives some chances) 9.♘xd5 ♘xd5 10.♕xd5 ♖b8 11.0-0-0 a6, and in this Sicilian-like position, White is maybe a bit better.

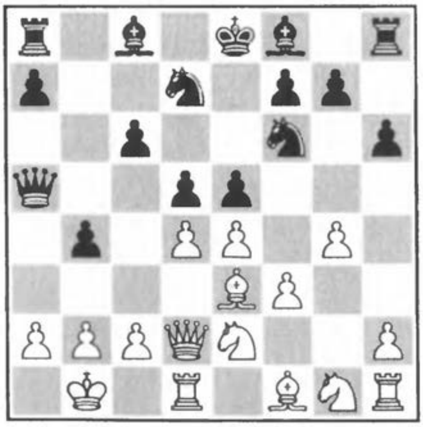
8...b4

Continue development with 8...♗e7 is a good possibility, because ...b4 is even more annoying if White would play 9.♘ge2. After 9.d5 (9.h4!?) Black can again go for the messy compensation after the pawn sacrifice 9...b4 10.dxc6 bxc3 11.cxd7+ ♗xd7 12.♕xc3.

9.♘ce2 ♕a5

The immediate 9...d5 led to a great success for Black after 10.exd5?! ♘xd5 11.f4?! ♕a5 12.♔b1 exf4 13.♗xf4 ♘7f6 14.♘c1 ♗e6 15.♘b3 ♕b6 16.♗d3 a5, and Black later won in Abrahamyan-Akobian, Los Angeles 2003. However, 10.dxe5 ♞xe5 11.♘f4 is a better try.

10.♔b1 d5



11.♘g3 dxe4 12.♗c4! ♘b6

Better was 12...♗e7, because then, after 13.dxe5, Black simply plays 13...♘xe5, an option he misses after the game continuation.

13.♗b3 ♗e7 14.dxe5 ♕xe5 15.♗d4 ♕d6 16.fxe4?!

With 16.♕e2!? White keeps the attack, not giving Black the opportunity to try to force the exchange of queens, as with his next move in the game.

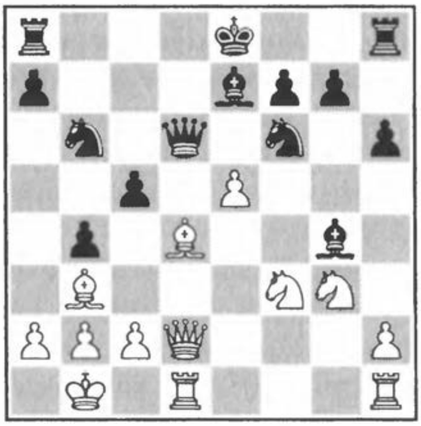
16...c5! 17.♘f3!

17.♗xf6 ♕xd2 18.♖xd2 ♗xf6 promises White nothing.

17...♗xg4?

After 17...♘xg4! White should fish in muddy waters with 18.e5, for, after 18.♗xg7 ♕xd2 19.♘xd2 ♖g8 Black is doing fine.

18.e5



Now White has a very strong attack. **18...♕d7?!** 18...♕c6 19.exf6 gxf6 20.♗xc5 ♗xc5 21.♖de1+ ♔f8 22.♘h4 and White's attack is very powerful. **19.exf6 ♗xf3** The ugly 19...gxf6 was Black's last chance, but after 20.♕f4 ♗xf3 21.♕xf3 cxd4 22.♘f5 White must be winning. **20.♖he1 gxf6 21.♗xf6 0-0 22.♕xh6 ♕xd1+ 23.♖xd1 ♗xf6 24.♕xf6**

Black resigned.

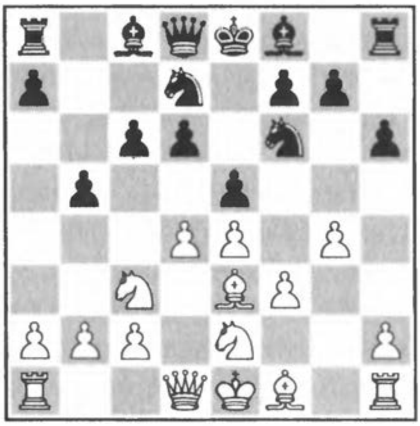
☐ **Vitezslav Rasik**
■ **Kieran Smallbone**
Tatranske Zruby 2002

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 c6 4.f3 ♘bd7 5.g4 h6 6.♘ge2 e5 7.♗e3 b5

As in our first game (with ♕d2 instead of ♘ge2) Black immediately lashes out with his queenside attack.

More modest is 7...♗e7. Then 8.♕d2 is of course possible. After 8...♕c7 (8...b5!?) 9.0-0-0 b5 10.♖e1 (this looks a bit strange, there is no obvious drawback to 10.♘g3) 10...b4 11.♘d1 c5 12.d5 a5 a complex struggle developed in Hamdouchi-Campora, Santo Antonio 1999.

More enterprising is 8.♘g3, which forces Black to start thinking about the threat ♘f5. If 8...g6 then 9.♕d2 poses new problems for Black.



8.♘g3

I discussed this position in the introduction. White has a difficult decision to make.

As mentioned, 8.♕d2 is not so good, because of 8...b4 9.♘d1 d5.

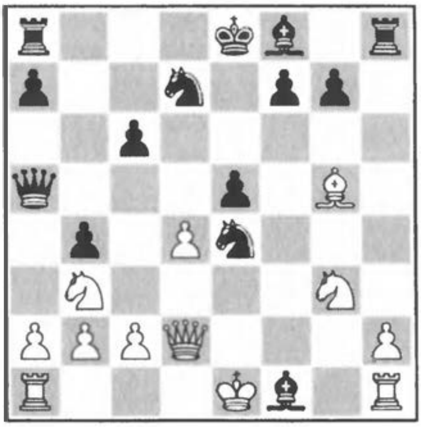
Interesting is 8.a3, just to 'buy' some time.

8.d5 leads again to complex positions, resembling those you nowadays often see in the Sicilian Najdorf. After 8...♗b7 (8...b4 is hardly playable with the knight on e2, after 9.dxc6 bxc3 10.cxd7+ ♗xd7 11.♘xc3 White has simply won a pawn) 9.dxc6 ♗xc6 10.♘g3 b4 (10...♘b6!?) 11.♘d5 ♗xd5 12.exd5 ♕a5 13.♗c4 ♘b6 14.♗xb6 ♕xb6 15.♕d3 White is a bit better.

8...b4 9.♘ce2 d5!

This standard break in the centre gives Black nice play.

10.g5 hxg5 11.♗xg5 dxe4 12.fxe4 ♕a5 13.♕d2 ♗a6 14.♘c1 ♗xf1 15.♘b3!? ♘xe4!?



Things are getting very complicated now. 15...♕a6 16.♖xf1 0-0-0 was a decent alternative.

16.♘xe4 ♕d5 17.0-0-0 ♗c4 18.♖he1 f6 19.dxe5 ♗xb3?!

Best probably was 19...♕xd2+ 20.♘bxd2 fxg5 21.♞xc4, although White is clearly better. After 19...fxg5 20.♕g2! White retains a strong attack.

20.exf6 ♕xd2+ 21.♖xd2

Even stronger was 21.♞xd2+ ♔f7 22.fxg7 ♗xg7 23.♖e7+ ♔g6 24.♞xb3 ♞e5 25.♗f4.

21...♗e6?

With 21...♞xf6 (indeed, not a pleasant move to make) 22.♘xf6+ ♔f7 23.axb3 gxf6 Black could continue the fight.

22.fxg7

1-0. After 22...♗xg7 23.♘d6+ ♔f8 24.♖xe6 White has a pawn and the attack.

☐ **Willy Hendriks**
■ **Djurre den Heeten**
Dieren 2009

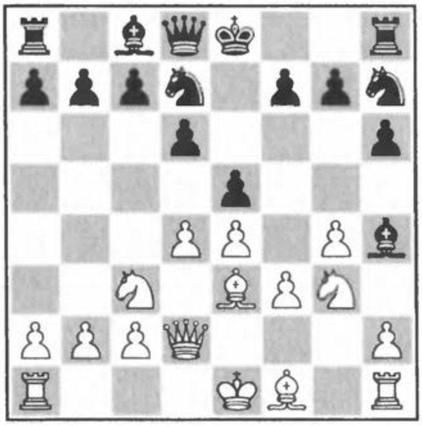
1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 ♘bd7 4.g4 h6 5.f3 e5 6.♗e3 ♗e7 7.♘ge2 ♘h7

Black wants to play ...♗g5 (or ...♗h4 first) but this plan is a bit time-consuming; 7...c6 is the normal move.

8.♕d2 ♗h4+

After 8...♗g5 9.0-0-0 (9.f4!?) 9...♗xe3 10.♕xe3 White is better, on 10...♕g5 White avoids the endgame with 11.f4.

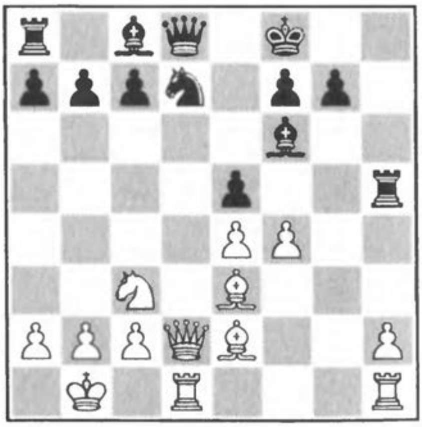
9.♘g3



9...h5?

This is nonsense. For a very small positional gain (exchanging his h-pawn for White's g-pawn), Black wastes a lot of time. With the knight on g3 it makes more sense to play 9...♗g5. After 10.0-0-0 ♗xe3 11.♕xe3 ♕g5 12.♕xg5 hxg5 White is only slightly better.

10.gxh5 ♘hf6 11.0-0-0 ♘xh5 12.♘xh5 ♖xh5 13.♔b1 ♔f8 14.f4 ♗f6?! 14...exf4 15.♗xf4 ♗g5 offers Black some hope to survive. **15.dxe5 dxe5 16.♗e2**



16...♖h4 17.fxe5 ♗xe5 18.♗g5 ♗f6 19.♗xh4 ♗xh4 20.♗g4 ♔e8 21.♕g2 ♕g5 22.♕h3

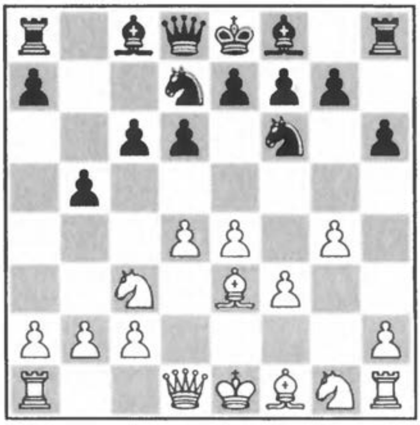
Black resigned.

☐ **Zaven Andriasian**
■ **Georgios Dalaklis**
Kalamaria 2008

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 ♘bd7 4.g4 h6

White is doing well after 4...e5 5.g5.

5.f3 c6 6.♗e3 b5



A sound idea, starting queenside play first and keeping the option of ...e5.

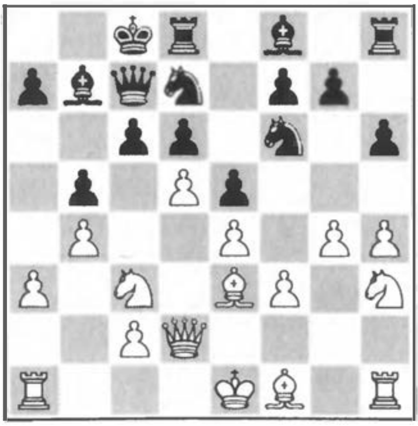
7.♕d2 ♕a5 8.h4 ♗b7?!

In conjunction with the next move a wrong plan. Transposing to the main set-up with 8...e5 was the alternative.

9.♘h3 0-0-0 10.a3!

White changes plans and goes for an attack on the black king.

10...e5 11.b4! ♕c7 12.d5!



Black has no counterplay, while his king will be exposed very soon.

12...a6 13.dxc6 ♗xc6 14.a4 bxa4 15.♗xa6+ ♔b8 16.b5 ♘c5 17.bxc6 ♘xa6 18.♖b1+ ♔c8 19.♘b5

Black resigned.

☐ **Robert Ris**
■ **Djurre den Heeten**
Wijk aan Zee 2007

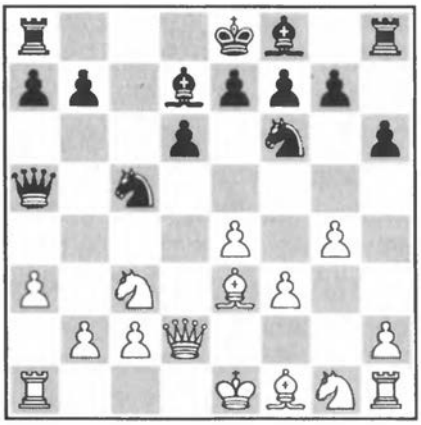
1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 ♘bd7 4.g4 h6 5.f3 c5!?

A radical departure from the set-ups with ...e5.

6.dxc5

Transposing into a Sicilian structure. Playing in Benoni style with 6.d5 was also possible, as well as 6.♗e3 and 6.♘ge2, keeping the tension.

6...♘xc5 7.♗e3 ♕a5 8.♕d2 ♗d7 9.a3!

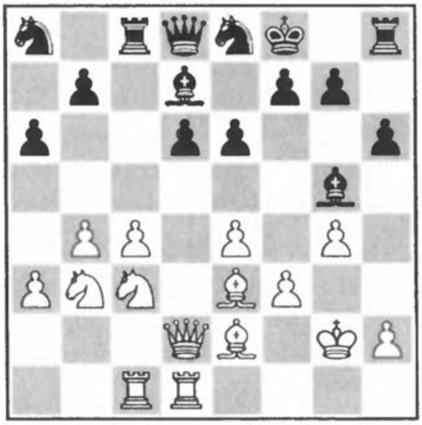


This game shows a clash between two different strategies: White goes all out, pushes all his pawns forward and hopes to strangle his opponent. Black has a solid position and hopes to show that White has overextended by breaking through at some moment. The white strategy prevails in this game!

9...♘e6 10.b4 ♕d8 11.♘d5 ♘c7 12.c4 e6 13.♘c3 ♗e7 14.♘ge2 ♔f8?! 15.♘d4 ♞fe8

Black starts to lose his coordination.

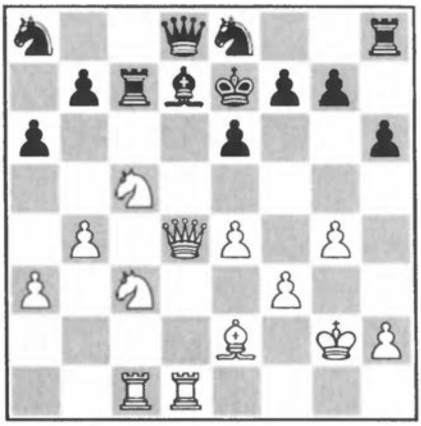
16.♗e2 ♗h4+ 17.♔f1 ♗f6 18.♔g2 ♖c8 19.♖ac1 a6 20.♘b3 ♘a8 21.♖hd1 ♗g5



22.c5!

All the white pieces are perfectly placed to start the action.

22...♗xe3 23.♕xe3 dxc5 24.♘xc5 ♖c7 25.♕d4 ♔e7



26.♘xb7!?

White correctly goes for the brilliancy prize, although 'normal' moves would also have sufficed.

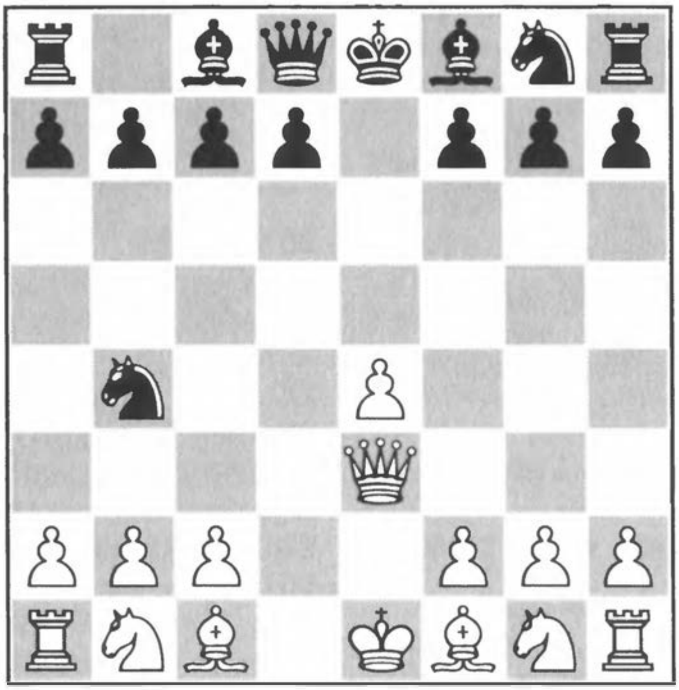
26...♖xb7 27.♕c5+ ♔f6 28.e5+ ♔g6 29.♗d3+ f5 30.gxf5+ exf5 31.e6 ♕g5+ 32.♔h1 ♖c7 33.♗xf5+! ♕xf5 34.♖g1+ ♔f6 35.♘d5+ ♔xe6 36.♕e7+ ♔xd5 37.♖gd1+ ♕d3 38.♖xd3

Mate. A fine game by White!

CHAPTER 9

Jeroen Bosch

The Centre Game: A Romantic Weapon



Lashing out against c2 with ...♘b4

In this chapter we will enjoy a 'romantic' surprise weapon against the Centre Game. Now you may wonder whether we need a SOS against the Centre Game. 'Can't I just play 3...♘c6 (gaining a tempo) and take it from there?' is a reasonable question. My answer would be: 'Perhaps in the past you could. However, I am afraid that these days, almost anything ends up in the theoretical realm, and this has certainly happpened to the Centre Game.' Let it be a warning: a sizeable chunk (100 pages!) of *Dangerous Weapons: 1.e4 e5* (Everyman, 2008) is taken up by Andrew Greet's expose on this early queen outing.

In *Dismantling the Sicilian: A Complete Repertoire for White* (New in Chess, 2009), Jesus de la Villa proposes an interesting philosophy for his suggested repertoire: 'Against main lines, play main lines; against secondary lines, play secondary lines; against unsound lines, play the refutation.' In his view it will be difficult to reach something against a secondary line by employing a main line, simply because your opponent will almost always have spent more time on it (at home and in the tournament hall).

For all non-professionals this is sound advice and I intend to follow it with regard to the Centre Game, which falls in de la Villa's second category I would say (after all the Scandinavian is almost respectable these days as well). Actually the best is still to come. The secondary line I propose against the Centre Game is delightfully direct. After 3...♘c6 White plays 4.♕e3 and now either the immediate 4...♘b4!?, which would be my personal preference, or 4...♘f6 5.♘c3 ♘b4!?.

Rather crude, you say?

Well perhaps, but just look at the featured games: what wouldn't you give for playing such a game in the true style of Morphy and Anderssen! Sitting behind the black pieces are Mark Hebden and Rashit Ziatdinov.

☐ **Throstur Thorhallsson**
■ **Mark Hebden**
Cappelle la Grande 2005

1.e4 e5 2.d4 exd4 3.♕xd4 ♘c6 4.♕e3 ♘b4

Moving twice with the same piece in the opening. A well-known 'sin'. However, in this case it falls under the category 'an eye for an eye'. White after all has committed (the cardinal?) sin of moving twice with her majesty in the opening. The point of the knight move is not just the threatened fork, but rather the fact that White now has to make an uncomfortable defensive move.

5.♘a3

White develops and defends against the fork. Still, the knight is awkwardly placed on a3.

While 5.♗d3 also protects c2 and develops, it is completely innocuous. Black can take on d3 or postpone this. One example: 5...b6 6.♗d2 ♗c5 7.♕g3 ♘xd3+ 8.♕xd3 (8.cxd3 ♘e7 when White cannot take – 9.♕xg7? – as 9...♖g8 10.♕xh7 ♗d4! 11.♗c3 ♖h8 traps the queen! – 12.♕xh8+ ♗xh8 13.♗xh8 ♘g6 followed by 14...♘f4) 8...♕f6 9.♘f3 ♕xb2 and Black won in Van de Linde-Rinemberg, Buenos Aires 2001.

Best is 5.♕e2! according to Andrew Greet (his exclam). He suggests that this will transpose to 4...♘f6 5.♘c3 ♘b4 6.♕e2. However, it seems to me that Black can do better than play 5...♘f6 and should try either 5...♗c5 (which Greet gives in a note) or 5...b6. It is for this reason that I would recommend 4...♘b4 rather than 4...♘f6 5.♘c3 ♘b4 when 6.♕e2 gains in strength.

Thus, 5.♕e2 and now:

– 5...♗c5 6.♘c3 ♗d4!? 7.♘b5 (perhaps 7.♘f3 ♗xc3+ 8.bxc3 ♘c6 9.e5 or 9.♗a3) 7...♗b6 8.c3 ♘c6 9.♘f3 ♘ge7 10.♗g5 was Litz-Buchmann, cr 2003, and now Greet gives 10...d6 rather than the game continuation (10...f6?!) 11.0-0-0 as marginally preferable for White, which is probably a matter of taste. Black also has fair chances after 11...0-0 in the upcoming struggle.

– 5...b6 6.♘c3 (6.♘f3 ♗a6 7.c4 ♘c6 and having provoked c4 Black will gain some influence over the dark squares) 6...♗a6 7.♕d1 ♗xf1 8.♔xf1 ♗c5 with interesting play.

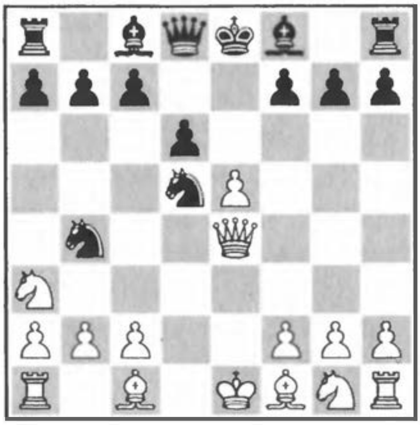
5...♘f6

The most natural move, and considering the previous moves that is perhaps surprising in itself! Grandmaster Jozsef Pinter has essayed both 5...b6 and 5...♕e7. Both look eminently playable:

– 5...b6 6.♗d2 ♗b7 7.♗c4 ♕e7 8.0-0-0 0-0-0 9.f3 d5!? 10.♗xb4 ♕xb4 11.♗xd5 ♗xd5 12.♖xd5 ♖xd5 13.exd5 ♘f6 14.♘e2 ♗c5 15.♕d3 ♕a5 16.♘c3?! ♗xa3 17.bxa3 ♕xa3+ 18.♔b1 ♖d8 19.♕c4. The game Papp-Pinter, Balatonlelle 2006, is about equal at this stage. Pinter won after a long fight.

– 5...♕e7!? 6.c3 ♘c6 7.♘b5 d6 8.♗d3 g6 9.f4 ♗g7 10.♘f3 ♘f6 11.h3 0-0 12.0-0 ♖e8 13.♖e1 ♕d8 14.♕f2 b6 15.c4?! ♗b7 16.♗d2 a6 and Black was very harmoniously placed in Ivic-Pinter, Sibenik 2007.

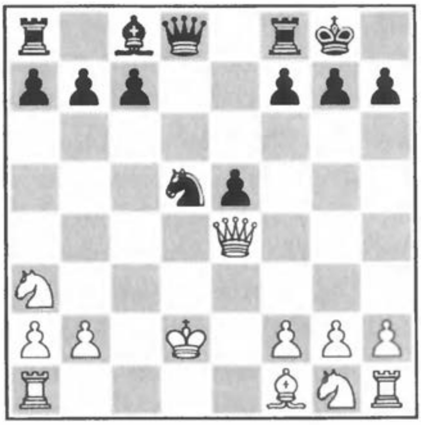
6.e5 ♘fd5 7.♕e4 d6!



8.c3

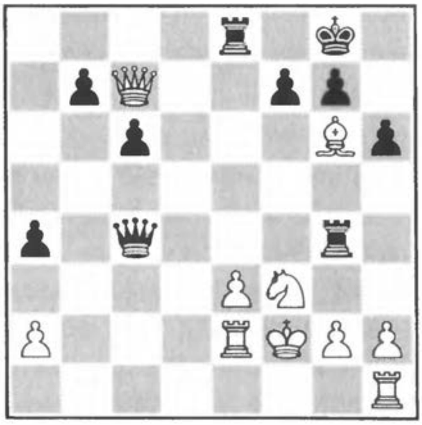
Instead 8.exd6+ ♗e6 9.dxc7 ♕xc7 10.♘f3 0-0-0 provides excellent compensation, as Andrew Greet also notes in *Dangerous Weapons: 1.e4 e5*. White must have counted on the text: he 'wins' a piece, but Hebden has accurately seen that after

8...dxe5! 9.cxb4 ♗xb4+ he has more than enough for the piece. Black has two pawns already, while White's king is unsafe. Not a bad deal! **10.♗d2** 10.♔e2 0-0 is terrible too. **10...♗xd2+ 11.♔xd2 0-0!**



Black is clearly on top. I am not going to analyse the remainder too deeply. Suffice to say that while play was certainly not faultless the final result is a fair reflection of how we should evaluate the diagrammed position. White should definitely avoid this!

12.♔e1 c6 13.♗e2 ♕f6 14.♘c4 ♖e8 15.♘e3 ♗e6 16.♘f3 ♖ad8 Hebden just manoeuvres patiently as if material is of no concern. It is true that the mere fact that White has lost his right to castle is a long term disadvantage here. **17.♕xe5 ♕g6 18.♔f1** 18.♕g5. **18...♗f5 19.♕g3 ♕f6 20.♖e1** 20.♘xf5 ♕xf5 and ...♕c2 and ...♘f4 are hard to meet. For example: 21.♘d4 (21.♖c1 ♘f4–+; 21.♗c4 ♕c2 22.♘e5 ♘f4 23.♗xf7+? ♔h8–+) 21...♕e4 22.♖d1 ♘f4–+. **20...♘xe3+ 21.fxe3 ♕xb2** Ironically disaster now strikes from the other side. **22.♕f4 ♗g6 23.♔f2 ♖e4 24.♕c7?!** 24.♕g5 ♖d5? 25.♖b1!. **24...♖de8 25.♔g3 ♕b4 26.♗d1 h6 27.♗b3 a5 28.♖e2 a4 29.♗c2 ♖g4+ 30.♔f2 ♕c4 31.♗xg6?!**



31...♖xg2+! 32.♔xg2 ♕xe2+ 33.♔g3 fxg6 The pawns are worth more than the knight. Note that Black's king is entirely safe. **34.♖e1 ♕xa2 35.♖d1 ♕e6 36.♕xb7 ♕f6 37.♖c1 ♖xe3 38.♕xc6?** 38.♕b8+ ♔h7 39.♕f4. **38...♖xf3+! 39.♕xf3 ♕g5+ 40.♕g4 ♕xc1** The queen ending is winning. **41.♕xa4 ♕g1+ 42.♔h3 ♔h7 43.♕d7 h5 44.♕e6 ♕f1+ 45.♔g3 g5 46.♕e7 ♕g1+ 47.♔f3 ♕g4+ 48.♔f2 ♕f4+ 49.♔g2 g4 50.♕e8 ♕f3+ 51.♔g1 g3 52.hxg3 ♕xg3+** White could have safely resigned here. **53.♔h1 ♕f3+**

54.♔g1 ♕f5 55.♔h2 ♕g6 56.♕d8 ♔h6 57.♕d2+ ♕g5 58.♕d6+ ♕f6 59.♕b8 g5 60.♔g2 h4 61.♕e8 ♕b2+ 62.♔g1 ♕d4+ 63.♔h1 ♕d5+ 64.♔g1 ♔g7 65.♕e7+ ♔g6 66.♕e8+ ♔f5 67.♕c8+ ♔f4 68.♔h2 ♕e5 69.♔g2 ♕e2+ 70.♔h1 g4 71.♕c1+ ♔g3 72.♕e3+ A final stalemate trick. **72...♕f3+** White resigned.

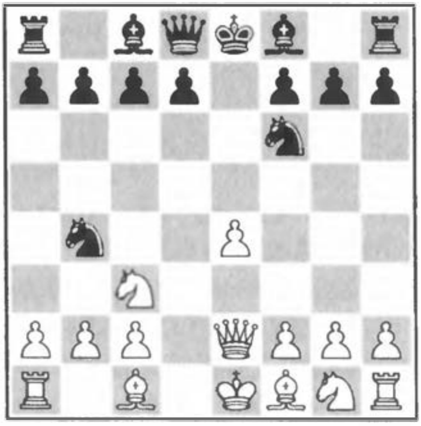
☐ **Rudolf Meessen**
■ **Rashit Ziatdinov**
Moscow 2009

1.e4 e5 2.d4 exd4 3.♕xd4 ♘c6 4.♕e3 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♘b4

This is clearly related to 4...♘b4 and therefore deserves to be incorporated. Note that 5...♗b4 6.♗d2 0-0 7.0-0-0 is the main line. Black is theoretically OK, but he must be well-prepared to prove it. The problem in meeting such lines usually is that your opponent will have a lot of over the board experience (and more theoretical knowledge) to find his way in the complications that will certainly follow. Thus one of the main lines continues: 7...♖e8 8.♕g3 ♖xe4! 9.a3! – don't try this at the board without having done so at home!

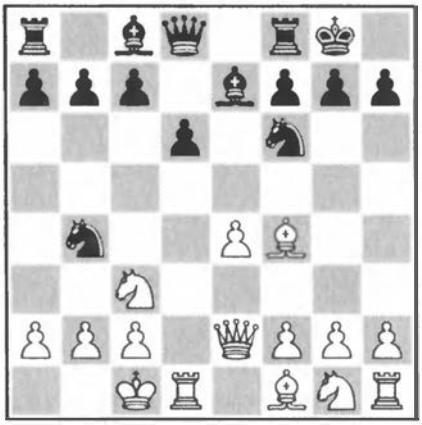
6.♕e2

For 6.♗d3 see the next game.



6...b6

This is more logical than the passive 6...d6 7.♗f4 ♗e7 8.0-0-0 0-0



when 9.e5 gives just the type of position that those playing 3.♕xd4 aim for.

– 9...♘e8 10.a3 ♘c6 11.♘f3 ♗g4 12.h3 ♗xf3 13.♕xf3 ♗g5 14.exd6♘xd6 favoured White slightly in A.Smith-Gormally, England tt 2003/04. However, Andrew Greet correctly points out that 10.♕e4! a5 11.a3 ♘c6 12.♘f3 ♗e6 13.h4!? 'with decent attacking chances' is even stronger.

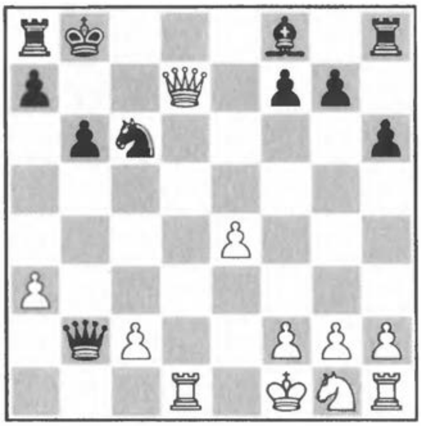
– 9...♘d7 10.exd6 ♗xd6 11.♗xd6 cxd6 12.♖xd6 ♖e8 offers Black some compensation. For example: 13.♕d2 ♕a5 14.♔b1 (14.♗c4) 14...♘xa2! 15.♘xa2?! ♖e1+ 16.♘c1 ♕xd2 17.♖xd2 ♖xf1. However, 12.a3! is awkward to meet. 12...♖e8 13.♕d2 ♘c6 14.♕xd6 and now 14...♕b6? just loses after 15.♘d5 ♕xf2 16.♘h3 ♕h4 17.♘c7.

7.♕d1

● 7.♗g5 ♗a6 8.♕d2 ♗xf1 9.♔xf1 ♗e7 10.a3 (10.♘f3 0-0; but 10.e5 ♘g4 11.♗xe7 ♕xe7 12.a3 ♘c6 13.♘d5 ♕d8 14.♘f3 0-0 15.♕f4 must be somewhat better for White) 10...♘c6 11.♖d1 (11.e5!? ♘xe5 12.♖e1) 11...d6 12.♘ge2 0-0 is about equal, Sena-Lewis, New York 1999.

On move 9 Black can improve with 9...h6!? 10.♗xf6 ♕xf6 11.a3 ♘c6 12.♘d5 (otherwise Black has no problems whatsoever)

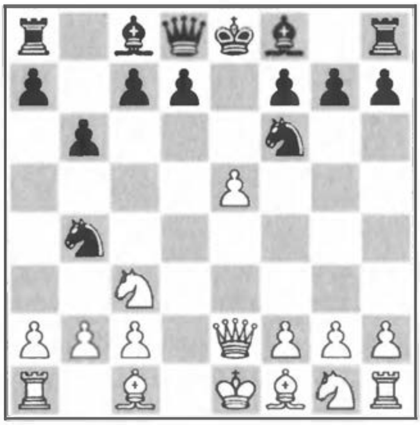
12...♕xb2 13.♘xc7+ ♔d8 14.♖d1 ♔xc7 15.♕xd7+ ♔b8



16.♕xc6 (16.♕e8+ ♔b7 17.♕d7+ repeats, while 17.♖d7+♔a6 18.♕xa8 ♕c1+ 19.♔e2 ♕xc2+ wins for Black) 16...♗c5!? and Black appears to be alright in this position. He is regaining his pawn on c2. And while his king may be anything but safe, White's kingside is completely undeveloped:

- 17.♖d7? ♕c1+ 18.♔e2 ♕xc2+ forces a shameful retreat 19.♖d2.
- 17.♕d5 ♕xc2 18.♘e2 ♖e8.
- 17.♕a4 ♖c8 or 17...b5.

● 7.e5!? is Andrew Greet's recommendation for White.

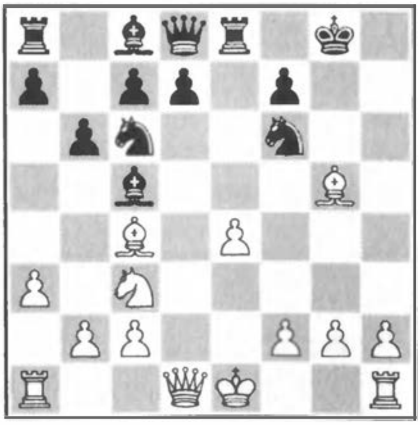


7...♘fd5 (7...♗a6 8.♕d1! ♗xf1 9.♔xf1 ♘g8 10.♘f3 'with some initiative' (Greet) looks like the lesser evil) 8.♘e4! ♗a6 (8...♗b7 9.a3) 9.c4 'leading to a most peculiar position, somewhat reminiscent of a Scotch. I think I would prefer Whites chances as Black's knights are rather clumsily placed and are likely to be driven backwards in the near future.' (*Dangerous Weapons: 1.e4 e5*, p.324). Indeed, I agree with Greet's assessment, because although after 9...♘c6 the hasty 10.♘d6+ leads to equality after 10...cxd6 11.exd6+ ♗e7, White can improve with 10.a3! ♘de7 11.♘f3 (11.♘f6+ gxf6 12.exf6 d5) 11...♘g6 (11...♘f5 12.♘f6+ gxf6 13.exf6+) 12.♘f6+ (12.♘d6+ ♗xd6 13.exd6+ ♔f8 14.♗g5 f6 15.♗e3 ♘ce5 16.♘xe5 ♘xe5) 12...gxf6 13.exf6+ with superior chances. Let me reiterate that 7.e5 is the reason why I would prefer 4...♘b4 to 4...♘f6 5.♘c3 ♘b4.

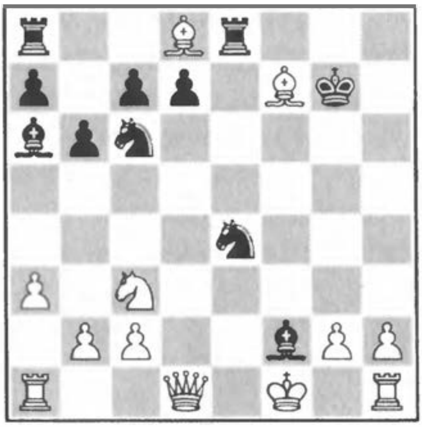
7...♗c5 8.a3 ♘c6 9.♗g5?! If 9.♘f3? then ♘g4, or 9.♗d3 0-0. **9...h6 10.♗h4 0-0**

Black is very comfortable. He is considerably ahead in development. Not surprising considering the fact that the white queen went from d1 to d4-e3-e2 back to d1!

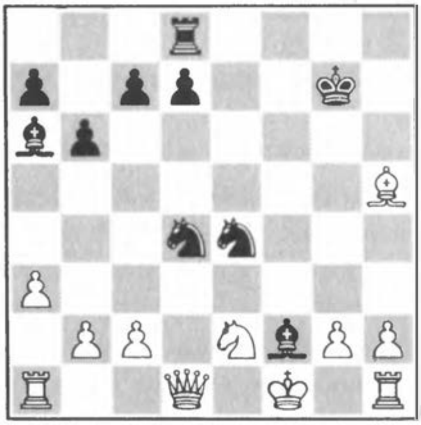
11.♘f3 ♖e8 12.♗c4 g5 More or less forcing White to sac a piece, but risky. **13.♘xg5** 13.♗g3 ♘xe4 14.♗xf7+ ♔xf7 15.♕d5+ ♔g6 16.♘xe4 ♕e7. **13...hxg5 14.♗xg5**



14...♘xe4!? Played in great style! **15.♗xf7+! ♔g7 16.♗xd8 ♗xf2+!?** Ziatdinov did not intend to go down in a worse ending after 16...♘xc3+ 17.♗xe8 ♘xd1 18.♖xd1 ♘xd8 19.♗xd7. **17.♔f1 ♗a6+**



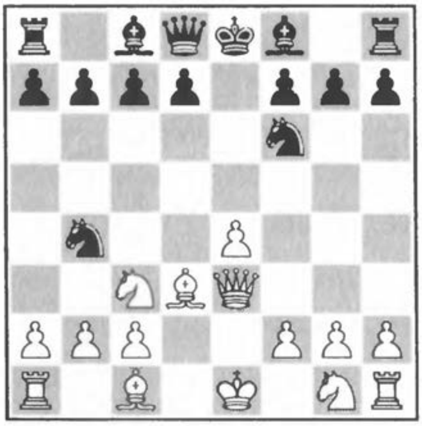
18.♘e2
The crazy computer reply 18.♘b5! objectively refutes Black's romantic 14th move. But we don't go scrutinizing Morphy's games with computer engines either or do we? 18...♗xb5+ (18...♖axd8 19.♗d5 ♗xb5+ 20.c4) 19.c4+−.
18...♖axd8 19.♗xe8 ♘d4! 20.♗h5
Considering his opponent's inspired efforts so far, the forcing 20.♕d3!? ♗xd3 21.cxd3 ♖xe8 22.dxe4 ♖xe4 23.♘g3 ♗xg3 24.hxg3 was advisable and White can at least not lose (he is better but not winning).



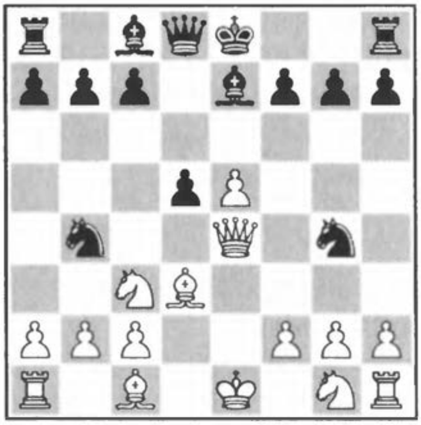
20...♘f5 21.♕c1 ♖h8! Black has knight and bishop for queen, rook and pawn, but he insists on the initiative. 21...♘e3+?! 22.♕xe3 ♗xe3 23.♔e1. **22.g4 ♘e3+ 23.♕xe3 ♗xe3 24.♔g2 ♘f2?!** 24...♗b7!. **25.♔f3?** 25.♖hf1!. **25...♗c5** Black is better now. He still has a slight material disadvantage but his pieces cooperate in a marvellous way. **26.♖he1 ♖f8+ 27.♔g3?** 27.♘f4 ♘h3∓. **27...♘e4+ 28.♔g2 ♖f2+ 29.♔h3 ♗xe2** And White resigned. He is powerless against Black's numerous attacking ideas.

☐ **Albert Sanfeliu Fabregas**
■ **Mark Hebden**
La Pobla de Lillet 2005

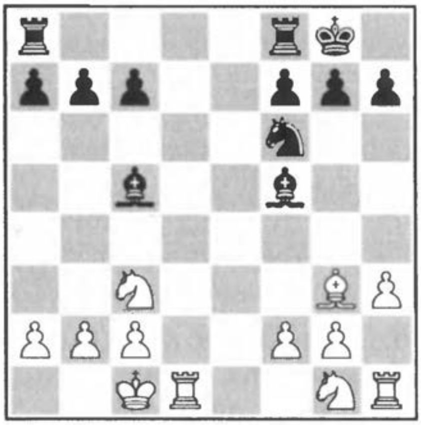
1.e4 e5 2.d4 exd4 3.♕xd4 ♘c6 4.♕e3 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♘b4 6.♗d3



6...♗e7
6...♘xd3+ is playable but not too ambitious. However, 6...d5 is also strong, after 7.♘xd5 (7.exd5+ ♕e7 8.♘ge2 ♕xe3 9.♗xe3 ♘fxd5 10.♘xd5 ♘xd5 11.♗d2 ♘b4 was equal in Ashby-Tebb, Hastings 1995. Also good was 7...♗e7) 7...♘fxd5 8.exd5+ ♕e7 (8...♗e7 9.c4 0-0 10.♘e2 ♗c5! 11.♕g3 ♗d6 12.♗f4 ♗xf4 13.♘xf4 ♖e8+ 14.♘e2 ♗g4! – 14...♕e7! – 15.♗xh7+ ♔xh7 16.♕xg4 ♘c2+ 17.♔d2 ♘xa1 and Black won in R.Schmidt-Karim, Malaga 2009) 9.♗e4 f5 10.a3 ♕xe4 (10...fxe4 11.axb4 ♕xb4+ 12.♗d2 ♕xb2 13.♕xe4+ is also fairly equal) 11.axb4 ♗xb4+ 12.c3 ♗c5 13.♕xe4+ fxe4 14.♗e3 ♗xe3 15.fxe3 0-0 with even chances. Barrionuevo-L.Bronstein, Tres de Febrero ch-ARG 2003.
7.e5 White takes up the gauntlet. **7...♘g4 8.♕e4 d5!**

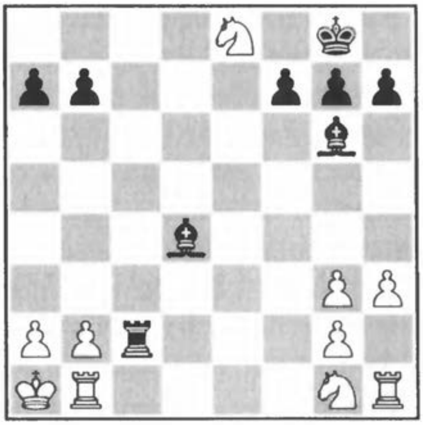


9.exd6 ♕xd6 Black is slightly better at this stage. **10.♗f4?! ♕c5 11.♗g3 ♘xd3+ 12.♕xd3 0-0 13.♕b5 ♗f5 14.h3 ♘f6 15.♕xc5 ♗xc5 16.0-0-0**



Black has superior chances in this ending (queenless middlegame) owing to his pair of bishops. One would now expect the grandmaster to grind away and slowly overcome his opponent. However, that's not how Mark Hebden plays such a position:

16...♖fe8 17.♘d5?! Erroneously ignoring his undeveloped kingside. 17.♘f3. **17...♘e4! 18.♘xc7 ♘xg3 19.fxg3 ♗e3+ 20.♔b1 ♖ac8!** 20...♖ec8 21.♖d5! ♗e4 22.♖e5. **21.♖f1 ♗g6?!** 21...♖e5!−+. **22.♘xe8 ♖xc2 23.♔a1 ♗d4 24.♖b1?** 24.a4

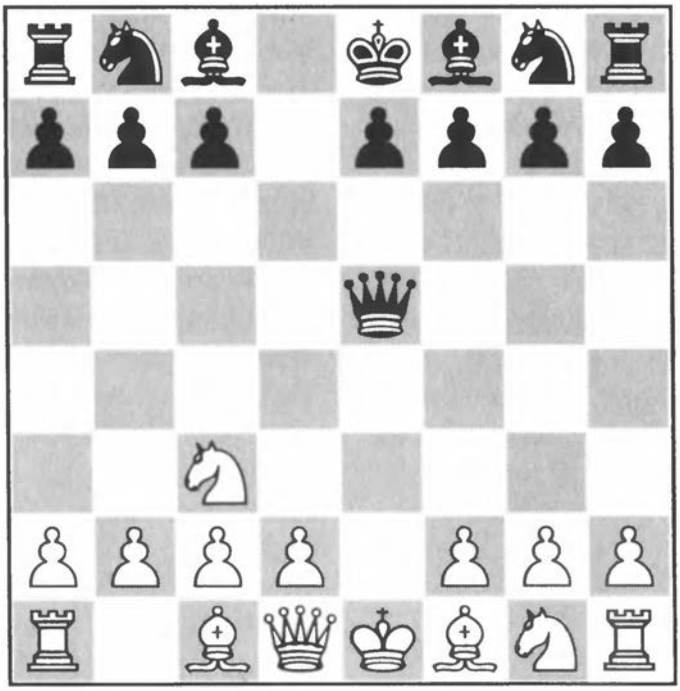


24...♗xb2+ and mate follows. White resigned.

CHAPTER 10

Dimitri Reinderman

Check Like a Patzer in the Scandinavian



Let's play 3...♕e5+ (or 3...♕e6+)

One time, when I was still a boy, I was watching a game between two players in a bar. The player with black played the Scandinavian Defence and immediately gave a check on his third move. I told him that this was not such a good move, but he clearly had his own ideas. At the time I didn't appreciate that in a 'coffeehouse game' people care not only about the result, and that he probably just enjoyed giving a check. But I did understand that making many moves with your queen is not a good idea in the opening, so I was right in condemning 3...♕e5+. Or was I?

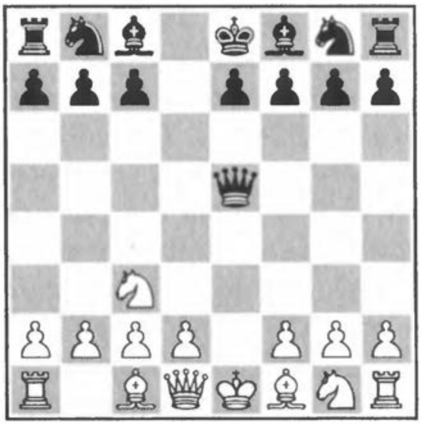
There are actually arguments in favour of this patzer move. It is true that the queen on e5 will have to move again, so Black must lose another tempo. However, from a5 (3...♕a5 is the traditional main line) the queen normally also has to move again, because of a threat by ♗d2. Currently the most popular move is 3...♕d6 (as reported by Tiviakov in SOS-6) but there the queen is vulnerable to an attack too, for example by ♘c4 or ♗f4. And while after Kogan's favourite retreat 3...♕d8 (see SOS-4) the queen is rather safe, she is also standing on a square where a rook wants to go. In general, a good place to 'hide' your queen in the Scandinavian is c7, and Black can go there just as fast from e5 as from a5, d6 or d8. In fact, there is an advantage in going to c7 via e5: this forces White to put a piece on e2, which interferes with White's normal plan of ♘f3 and ♗c4 (or ♗d3).

Of course 3...♕e5+ is not the panacea which guarantees you a good position with black. Statistics suggest the opposite – White is scoring very well after this move. Yet, the first game of this article, McShane-Becker, will demonstrate that the check does deserve some respect: the top-GM quickly found himself in a worse position after playing some natural moves with white.

Now if you really like the obscure of the obscure, the secret surprise of SOS, the move that even Basman, Bücker and Welling never tried, go to the second game of this article, Cernousek-Popchev, and meet 3...♕e6+. I didn't expect this move to be more than just a legal move allowed by the FIDE rules of chess, but to my surprise I discovered that it has its hidden points.

☐ **Luke McShane**
■ **Marc Becker**
France tt 2005

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♕xd5 3.♘c3 ♕e5+



4.♗e2

The best move. Other possibilities:

– 4.♘ce2. Equality on move 4 with black, yeah!

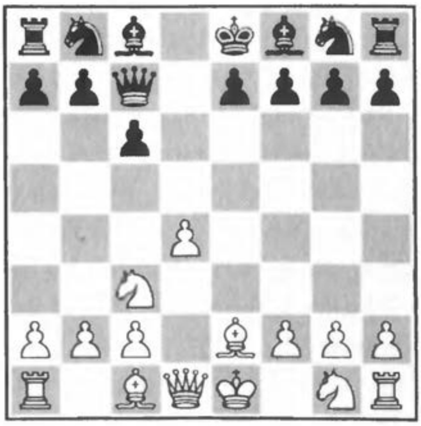
– 4.♕e2 ♕xe2+ (Black can also try 4....♕a5, since the white queen is not better placed on e2 than it was on d1) 5.♗xe2 ♘f6 6.♘f3, and now most accurate might be 6...a6 since it's useful to prevent ♘b5 (or ♗b5), though 6...g6 and 6...♗f5 are also fine. White still has a slight lead in development in this endgame, but it will be difficult to transform it into anything tangible.

– 4.♘ge2. After this move I suggest to play a Scandinavian with ...♕a5, giving White ♘ge2 as an extra move. That could be useful for White after a quick ...♗f5, since he has ♘g3 and f4 then, a well-known plan in this opening. So Black should refrain from ...♗f5 as long as White can play ♘g3. With the bishop on c8, ♘g3 is not so dangerous (Black can continue with ...g6, ...♗g7, ...0-0, ...♖d8 etc.), so White will probably play g3, as he did in Rasmussen-Madsen, Obro 2006: 4...♘f6 5.d4 ♕a5 6.g3 c6 (here 6...♗f5 7.♗g2 ♘c6 is an interesting plan, and even 6...h5 might be good) 7.♗g2 ♗f5 8.♗d2 e6 (8...♕a6 is safer) 9.d5 ♕b6 10.dxe6 fxe6 11.0-0 ♘bd7 12.♗e3 and now, instead of 12...♗c5? 13.♘a4±, 12...♕a6 would not have been so bad for Black.

4...c6

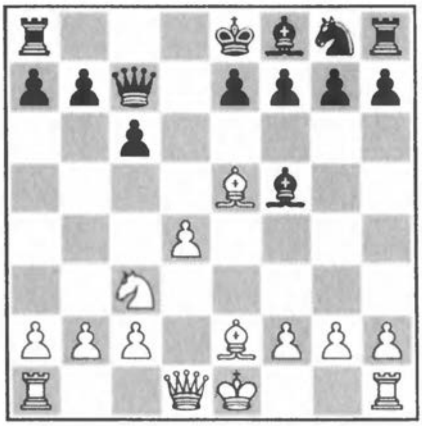
Black players have sometimes played 4...♗g4 5.d4 ♗xe2 6.♘gxe2, but this doesn't really help in the tempo department.

5.d4 ♕c7



6.♗g5

Played, either with very aggressive intentions, or to discourage Black from developing his bishop to g4. The 'main line' (if there is one) goes 6.♘f3 ♗f5 7.♘e5 (here 7.0-0 e6 8.♗e3 ♘d7 9.♕d2 ♘gf6 10.h3 ♗d6 11.♘h4 ♗g6 12.♘xg6 hxg6 gave Black a solid position in Cheparinov-Garcia Ortega, Andorra 2002, while 7.d5 ♘f6 8.♘d4 ♗d7 9.0-0 a6 10.♗f3 cxd5 11.♖e1 ♘c6 12.♗g5 0-0-0 13.♗xf6 exf6 14.♘xd5 was clearly better for White in Fedorchuk-Oussama, Villeneuve Tolosane 2006 – this is the most dangerous variation for Black – 11...♗c6 is a clear improvement, but so is 11.♗g5) 7...♘d7 (7...e6 8.g4 ♗g6 9.h4 is clearly good for White) 8.♗f4 ♘xe5 9.♗xe5, and now:



– 9...♕b6 10.♘a4 ♕a5+ 11.c3 f6 12.b4 ♕d5 13.♗g3 0-0-0 (13...e5 14.dxe5 ♕xg2 15.♗f3 ♕h3 16.♕e2 ♔f7 17.0-0-0 is a bit messy but still good for White, for example 17...a5 18.♖d4! threatening 19.♖h4; 13...♕xg2 14.♗f3 ♕h3 15.♘c5 e5 16.♘xb7 e4 17.♗e2) 14.0-0 e5 15.dxe5 fxe5 16.♕b3 b5? 17.♘c5 ♗xc5 18.bxc5 ♘f6? 19.c4 and White won in Shaw-Zeidler, Plovdiv 2003.

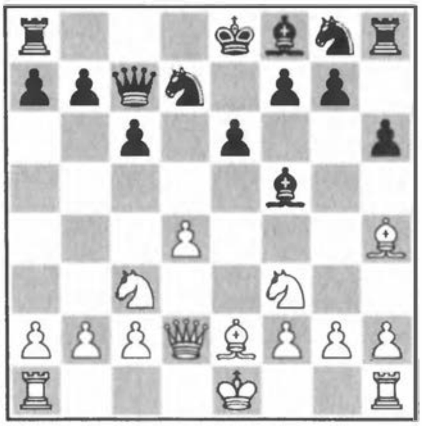
– 9...♕a5 10.0-0 e6 11.a3 a6 12.b4 ♕d8 13.♘a4 ♘f6 14.♘c5 was good for White in Baklan-Ermenkov, Balaguer 2005.

– I think that the untried 9...♕d7 is best here, for example 10.d5 (10.♕d2 f6 11.♗g3 e6 – 11...h5!? – 12.0-0-0 0-0-0±) 10...f6 11.♗g3 0-0-0 12.0-0 e5 13.dxe6 ♕xe6 14.♗d3 ♗xd3 15.cxd3 ♗d6 16.♖e1 ♕d7 17.♗xd6 ♕xd6, when White has attacking chances but Black has a structural advantage.

6...♗f5 7.♕d2 e6

7...♘f6 8.♘f3 e6 9.♗xf6 gxf6 10.♘h4 ♗g6 11.f4 f5 12.0-0 ♘d7 13.a3 ♗g7 14.♖ad1 0-0 15.♔h1 ♖ad8 gave an equal position in Conquest-Spain, New Zealand 1999.

8.♘f3 h6 9.♗h4 ♘d7



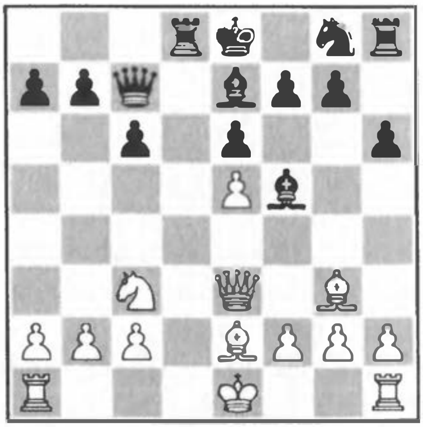
10.♘e5

This doesn't give an advantage, but otherwise Black just develops with ...♗d6, ...♘gf6 and castles.

10...♘xe5 11.dxe5 ♗e7 12.♗g3

This looks logical, since 12.♗xe7 helps Black develop, but it is wrong for concrete reasons.

12...♖d8 13.♕e3



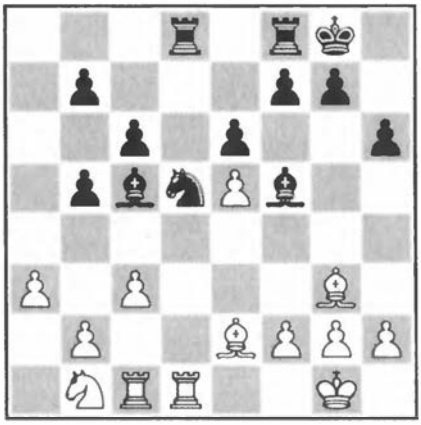
13...♕b6! 14.♕xb6

After 14.♕c1 ♗g5 15.f4 ♗e7 16.♗f2 ♗c5 White also has some problems to solve.

14...axb6 15.♖c1 ♗b4 16.0-0 ♘e7

Black's pieces are more active, so White has to fight for equality here.

17.♘b1 b5 18.c3 ♗c5 19.♖fd1 0-0 20.a3 ♘d5

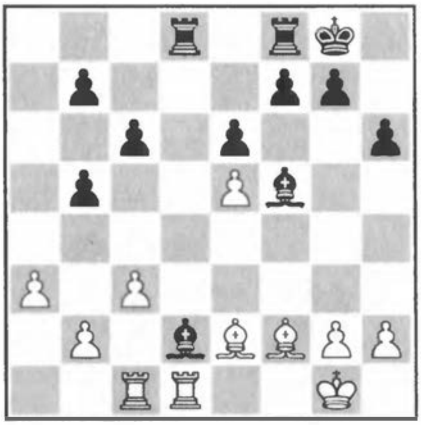


21.♘d2?

A blunder. After 21.c4 bxc4 22.♖xc4 ♗a7 23.♖cc1 White's position is still defensible.

21...♘e3! 22.fxe3 ♗xe3+ 23.♗f2 ♗xd2

Black is a pawn up, with active pieces, so he should win now.



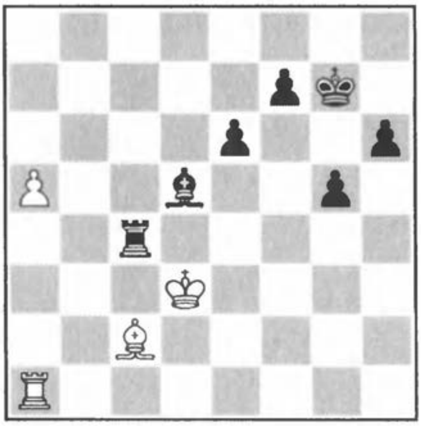
24.♖a1 ♗c2 25.♖f1 ♖d5 26.♗d4 ♗b3

26...♖xd4! 27.cxd4 ♗e3+ 28.♔h1 ♗xd4 is easily winning for Black.

27.♗f3 ♖d7 28.♔f2 ♗g5 29.♔g3 ♗e7 30.♗e4 ♖a8 31.♔f2 ♖a4 32.♗f3 ♖a8 33.g3 ♗d8 34.♖ae1 ♗c7 35.♖g1 ♖ad8 36.g4

36...c5! was the threat. White could have prevented this with 36.♖g2, when there is still a lot of work for Black to do.

36...♗d5 37.♗e2 ♗c4 38.♗f3 c5! 39.♗xc5 ♖d2+ 40.♔g3 ♖8d3 41.♖e3 ♖xe3 42.♗xe3 ♗xe5+ 43.♗f4 ♗xf4+ 44.♔xf4 ♖xb2 Now it should be easy. **45.♖d1 g5+ 46.♔e5 ♔g7 47.♗xb7 ♖xh2 48.♖a1 ♖h3 49.♗e4 ♗e2 50.♔d4 ♗xg4 51.c4 bxc4 52.a4 c3 53.a5 ♗f3 54.♗d3 ♗d5 55.♗c2 ♖h4+ 56.♔xc3 ♖c4+ 57.♔d3**



57...♖xc2

A totally unnecessary sacrifice. Probably Becker missed that White can escape to a queen ending.

58.♔xc2 h5 59.♖g1 ♔g6 60.♖d1 h4 61.♖xd5 exd5 62.a6 h3 63.a7 h2 64.a8♕ h1♕ Fortunately for Black he is still winning. **65.♕g8+ ♔f6 66.♕d8+ ♔f5 67.♕c8+ ♔f4 68.♕c7+ ♔g4 69.♕xf7 ♕e4+ 70.♔b2 ♕e5+ 71.♔a3 ♕e3+ 72.♔a2 d4 73.♕d7+ ♔g3 74.♕d6+ ♕f4 75.♕g6 g4 76.♕c2 ♕f2 77.♔a1 ♕f1+ 78.♔a2 d3 79.♕c3 ♔g2 80.♔a3 ♕e2 81.♕c4 ♕f3 82.♔a4 d2 83.♕c2 ♕e2 84.♕c6+ ♔g1 85.♕b6+ ♔f1 86.♕f6+ ♕f3 87.♕a6+ ♔g2**

White resigned.

☐ **Lukas Cernousek**
■ **Milko Popchev**
Brno 2006

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♕xd5 3.♘c3 ♕e6+

Both Emms and Plaskett mention 3...♕e5+ in their books about the Scandinavian, and analyse it seriously (as opposed to most other books about the opening), but even for them 3...♕e6+ is a bridge too far, or at least they ignore the move, like all authors do. I can't blame them – e6 is a stupid square for a queen, especially with the pawn still on e7.

However, again there is a point to the patzer check: Black will attack the pawn at g2, and defending it will cause some slight inconvenience for White.

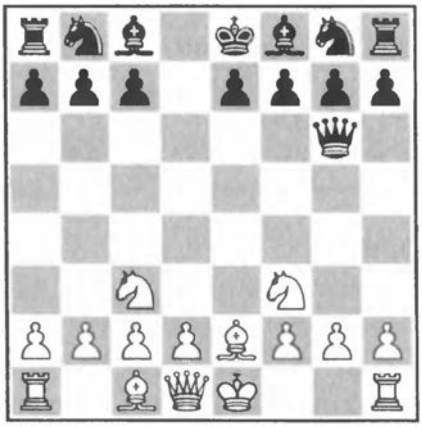
4.♗e2

4.♕e2 ♕xe2+ is the same as after 3....♕e5, though in this case 4...♘f6 looks fine too.

4.♘ge2 has not been played in any rated game. Now, leaving the queen on e6 for a while is not so stupid: a sensible continuation is 4...♘f6 5.d4 g6 6.g3 ♗g7 7.♗g2 0-0 8.0-0 ♖d8 and Black can be happy with his position.

4...♕g6 5.♘f3

In Pessoa-Laurent, email 2005, White was a little better after 5.♗f3 ♘f6 6.d4 c6 7.♘ge2 ♗g4 8.♗xg4 ♕xg4 9.0-0.



5...♕xg2

This looks a bit like the Poisoned Pawn Variation of the Najdorf. Just like there White obviously has good compensation, but he still has to prove it.

Of course there is a difference too, say a hundred pages of theory in Nunn's Najdorf volume on 6.♗g5.

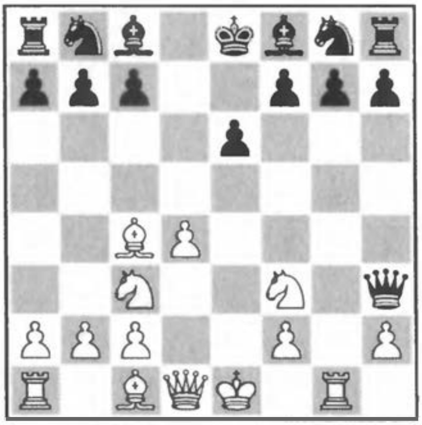
6.♖g1 ♕h3 7.♗c4

Threatening to take on f7. In Lupulescu-Andonov, Vrnjacka Banja 2004, an interesting position arose after 7.d4 ♕d7 8.♘e5 ♕d8. Probably Steinitz, who believed in the strength of the starting position, would have liked to be Black here. He had a point, but there are limits, and even though the game ended in a draw in 22 moves, instead of repeating this I recommend the solid 7...c6.

7...e6

7...h6 8.d4 c6 is more careful, preventing a lot of knight moves.

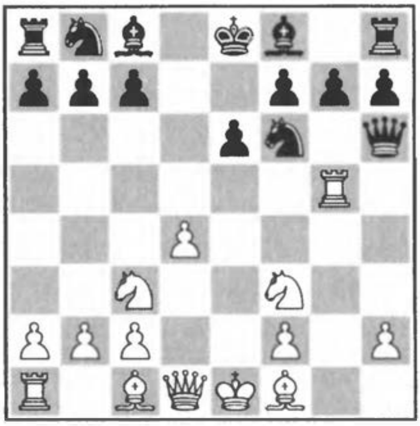
8.d4



8...♘f6?!

Now Black's queen will be in an awkward position. This also holds true for 8...c6 9.♗f1 ♕h5 10.♖g5 ♕h6 11.♖f5! ♕g6 12.♘h4 ♕g1 13.♖xf7! ♔xf7 14.♘f3 ♕h1 15.♘e4 ♘d7 16.♘g3+–, which leaves 8...h6, when 9.♘b5 ♘a6 10.♗f4 ♕f5 11.♘xc7+ ♘xc7 12.♗xc7 ♗d7 is only a little better for White.

9.♖g3 ♕h5 10.♖g5 ♕h3 11.♗f1 ♕h6



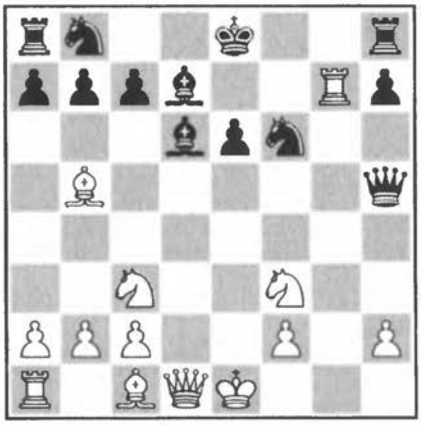
12.d5?!

Cernousek could have taken a draw by repetition here, but he rightly wanted more. One option would be to win back the pawn with 12.♖c5 ♕g6 13.♖xc7 ♘bd7, but this is not so bad for Black.

White has something stronger: 12.♖e5 ♕g6 13.♗g5!, when 14.♗d3 will be hard to meet.

12.d5 opens the position, but loses some time, which Black uses to catch up in development.

12...♗d6 13.♗b5+ ♗d7 14.dxe6 fxe6 15.♖g4 ♕h5 16.♖xg7



White has won back the pawn, but lost the initiative.

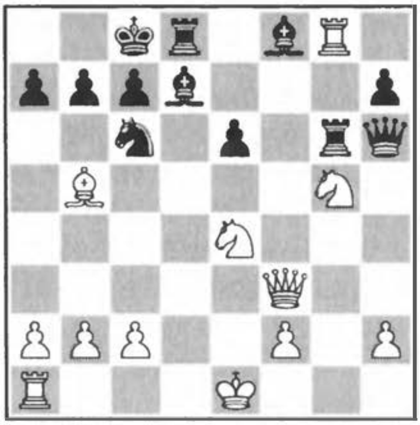
16...♘c6 17.♗g5 ♖f8 18.♗xf6 ♖xf6 19.♘e4 ♖g6?!

Instead 19...♖f7 is equal.

20.♖g8+ ♗f8 21.♘fg5

The forcing variation 21.♖xg6 ♕xg6 22.♕xd7+ ♔xd7 23.♘e5+ ♔e7 24.♘xg6+ hxg6 25.♗xc6 bxc6 26.c3 gives White a nice endgame.

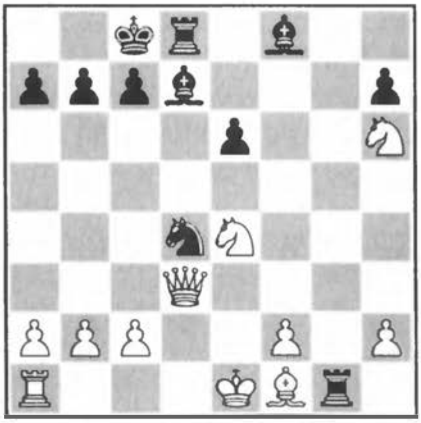
21...♕h6 22.♕f3 0-0-0



23.♘f7?

Now Black's pieces become very much alive. White had to swap the rooks, with an equal positon.

23...♖xg8! 24.♘xh6 ♖g1+ 25.♗f1 ♘d4 26.♕d3



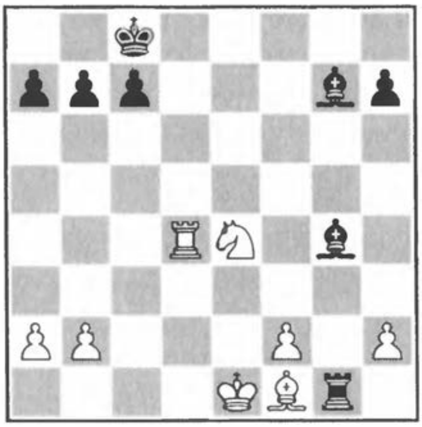
26...♗xh6?

Probably played without much thinking, otherwise Black might have gone for 26...♗a4! 27.b3 ♗b5 28.c4 ♗b4+ 29.♘d2 ♗e8! and there is no defence anymore.

27.♖d1?

Here 27.♞d6+! cxd6 28.♕xd4 holds.

27...e5 28.c3 ♗g4 29.cxd4 ♖xd4 30.♕xd4 exd4 31.♖xd4 ♗g7



This endgame with two strong black bishops and the annoying pin on f1 is very hard to defend for White.

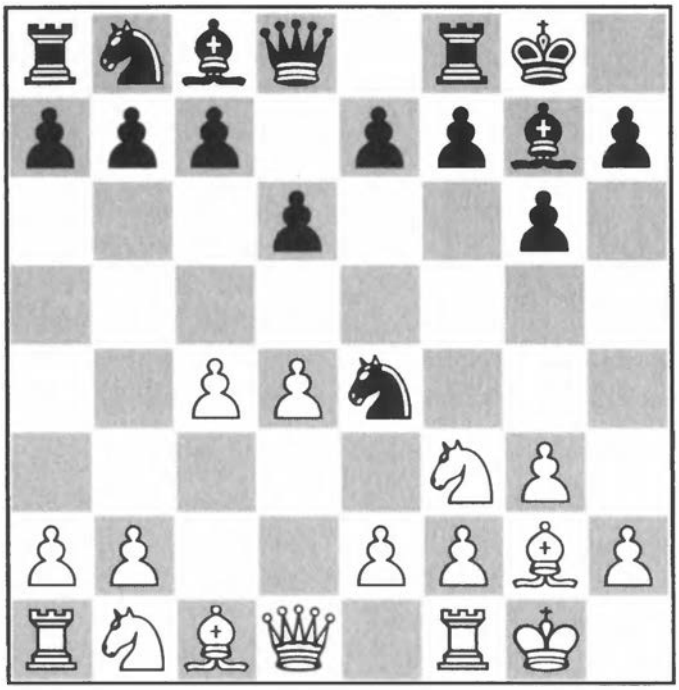
32.♖d2 ♗e5 33.♘g3 ♗f3 34.♖d3 ♗g2 35.♔e2 ♗xf1+ 36.♘xf1 ♗xb2 37.♖h3 ♖g7 38.f4 ♖f7 39.♔e3? ♗c1+
White resigned.

In conclusion, while 3...♕e5+ is a patzer move, it is certainly playable, and in our main game it posed problems to a strong grandmaster. The best try for White to get more than a slight advantage seems to be the variation with 7.d5.
The check on e6 looks even more peculiar, but might be preferable. You have to be willing to defend the position after 5...♕xg2, but if you're careful you might remain with a safe extra pawn or obtain a counterattack. Now, isn't that a real Viking raid?

CHAPTER 11

Dorian Rogozenco

King's Indian: A Dutch-KID?



The knight jump 6...♘e4

In a recent tournament after the moves 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘f3 ♗g7 4.g3 0-0 5.♗g2 d6 I wanted to continue automatically with the standard short castle (6.0-0, which is by far the most popular continuation), but suddenly a strange thought crossed my mind: what if my opponent will play 6...♘e4? (Isn't this a clear influence of the SOS-series?) Having failed to find a quick refutation of the knight jump, I started to get a bit nervous. Actually the whole situation of thinking too long at such an early stage was somewhat annoying. I certainly knew that the position after 6.0-0 was played thousands of times, but I didn't recall ever seeing the answer 6...♘e4. Just in case, I decided to prevent 6...♘e4 by playing 6.♘c3, although I was conscious that 6.♘c3 can limit White's choice in some variations.

At home I discovered that the move 6...♘e4 had indeed been played a few times in practice. More importantly, I discovered that 6...♘e4 is by no means a bad move, especially considering its surprise value! I am now ready to share my findings with you.

In a way 6...♘e4 is designed to 'punish' White for not developing his knight to c3. Of course, White may later exchange the opponent's knight (by playing at some moment ♘c3, ♘bd2 or ♘fd2), but generally the exchange of a pair of knights should be favourable for Black. For instance, in the King's

Indian there are variations where Black plays ...♗f5 in order to prepare the exchange of knights with ♘f6-e4.

Another idea of 6...♘e4 is the preparation of e7-e5. After all, the knight jump to e4 has opened the long diagonal and Black doesn't need the usual preparatory moves (...♘bd7 or ...♘c6) in order to advance the e-pawn to e5.

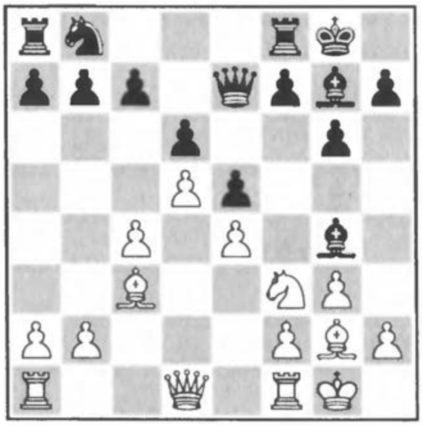
Finally, after 7.♕c2 Black must support its centralized knight with the f-pawn. In that case we have a Dutch Leningrad-like pawn structure, yet, there are no direct transpositions to any major variation from the Dutch Defence – mainly because in the Dutch Black is rarely allowed to play ♘f6-e4 so quickly.

7.♕c2

A logical answer – White is trying to use the instability of the knight on e4. Other moves:

● 7.♘c3 ♘xc3 8.bxc3 c5 is certainly not problematic for Black.

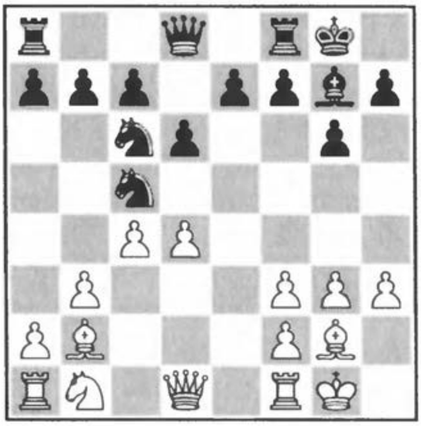
● 7.♘bd2 ♘xd2 8.♗xd2 e5 (a reasonable alternative is 8...c5) 9.♗c3 ♕e7 10.e4 ♗g4 11.d5 and a draw was agreed in Paunovic-Peev, Pancevo 1989.



Black can either continue with 11...f5, or with 11...a5; in both cases he has a normal KID-like position.

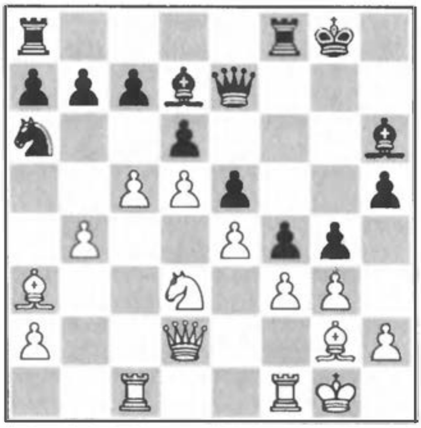
● 7.b3 ♘c6 8.♗b2, and now:

– A game between two Soviet masters took an interesting course: 8...♗g4 9.h3 ♗xf3 10.exf3 ♘c5



11.♘a3 d5!? 12.♖b1 ♘d7 13.f4 ♘f6 14.♘c2 e6 15.♕e2 ♘e7 16.g4 ♖e8 17.♖fd1 c6 18.♘e1 a5 19.c5 ♘d7 20.♘d3 a4 21.♗c3 axb3 22.axb3 ♘c8 23.♕d2 ♘a7 24.♗a5 ♕e7 25.♘e5 ♘b5 26.b4 ♘xe5 27.fxe5 f6 28.♖e1 fxe5 29.dxe5 ♖f8 and it turned out that strategically Black had completely outplayed his opponent, Zaid-Petrushin, Cheliabinsk 1975.

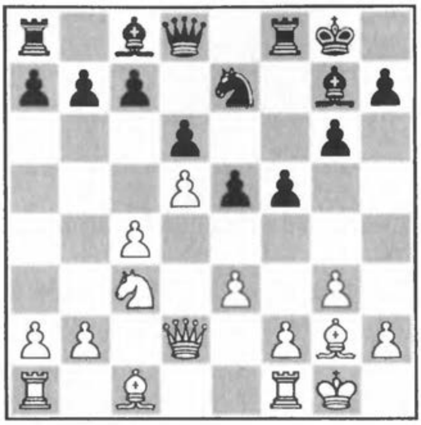
– A much more recent example saw 8...f5 9.♘bd2 ♘xd2 10.♕xd2 e5 11.d5 ♘b8 12.♖ac1 ♕e7 13.♗a3 ♘a6 14.b4 f4 15.e4 g5 16.♘e1 ♗d7 17.f3 h5 18.♘d3 ♗h6 19.c5 g4



20.c6 (Black is also better after 20.fxg4 hxg4 21.c6 bxc6 22.dxc6 ♗e6 23.b5 ♕f6! 24.bxa6 f3) 20...bxc6 21.dxc6 gxf3 22.♗xf3

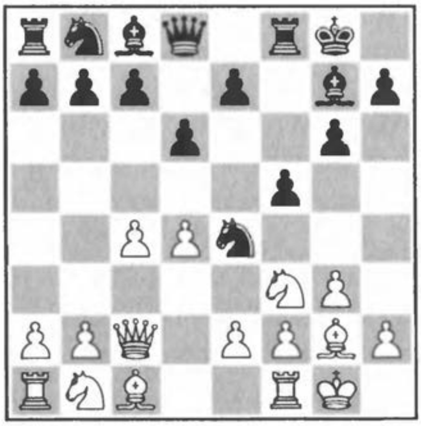
♗h3 23.♗g2 ♗xg2 24.♕xg2 f3 25.♖xf3 ♗xc1 26.♗xc1 ♕e6 27.b5 ♘c5 28.♘xc5 dxc5 29.♖d3 ♖ad8 30.♕d2? (a blunder in a difficult position) 30...♕f6 and White resigned in Bartel-Jakubiec, Ustron 2007.

● 7.♘fd2 ♘xd2 8.♕xd2 ♘c6 9.e3 e5 10.d5 ♘e7 11.♘c3 f5



The position should be about equal. Now the game Kamilov-Makarov, Moscow 2006, continued 12.f4 e4 13.h4 a6 14.b3 h6 15.♗b2 ♕e8 16.b4 ♗d7 17.♖fd1 g5 18.hxg5 hxg5 19.♔f2 ♕g6 20.♖h1 ♔f7 21.♘e2 ♖h8 22.♗xg7 ♕xg7 23.♖ac1 ♖ag8 24.♖xh8 ♖xh8 25.♘g1 gxf4 26.exf4 ♘g8 27.♖c3 ♘f6 and Black's attack soon decided the issue.

7...f5



This position belongs to the Dutch Defence (Leningrad Variation) rather than to the King's Indian Defence, although a knight on e4 at such an early stage makes the position unique in a way.

8.d5

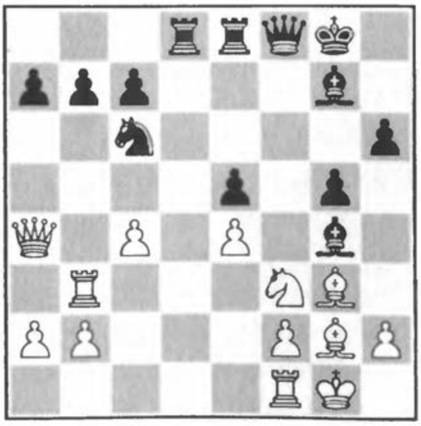
White can try several other moves:

– 8.b3 ♘c6 9.♗b2 e5 is equal.

– 8.♖d1 ♘d7 9.♘e1 e5!? 10.dxe5 ♘xe5 11.♗xe4 fxe4 12.♕xe4 ♕f6 with compensation for the pawn.

– 8.♘c3 ♘xc3 9.bxc3 (strangely enough, this recapture is considered by my computer as the best option, and it was also played by a GM. On the other hand, with the white pieces I would be rather skeptical about damaging my pawn structure like this. 9.♕xc3 e5 leads to approximate equality, since 10.dxe5 dxe5 11.♘xe5 ♘d7 12.f4 ♕e7 favours Black) 9...e5 10.dxe5 dxe5 11.♗a3 ♖e8 12.e4 (White's initiative is short-termed) 12...♘c6 13.♖ab1 ♕f6 14.♕e2 and the draw was agreed in Neelotpal-Singh, Mumbai 2009. Black is better after 14...f4.

– 8.♘bd2 ♘xd2 9.♗xd2 e5 10.dxe5 dxe5 11.♗b4 (safer is 11.♖ad1 ♕e7 12.♗g5 ♗f6 13.♗xf6 ♕xf6 14.♕c3, and a draw was agreed in Salo-Vakeva, Espoo 1998, 14...♘c6=) 11...♖e8 12.♖ad1 ♕f6 13.e4 f4 14.gxf4 ♕xf4 15.♕a4 ♞c6 16.♗d2 ♕f8 17.♗g5 h6 18.♗h4 ♗g4 19.♖d3 g5 20.♗g3 ♖ad8 21.♖b3



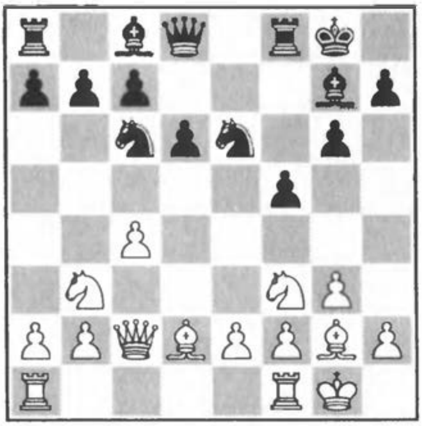
Here in the game Gabriel-Pfeifer, Stuttgart 1993, Black unnecessarily sacrificed the b7 pawn. After the simple 21...♗c8 Black's position would have been preferable.

8...e5

The alternatives 8...♘a6 and 8...♘d7 look perfectly playable too.

9.♘e1

Aiming for a closed position. White can also take. After 9.dxe6 ♘c6 10.♘bd2 ♘c5 11.♘b3 ♘xe6 12.♗d2 (or 12.e3 a5 with counterplay) we reach the diagrammed position.



Now the best way for Black to continue is 12...a5 13.♗c3 a4 14.♘bd2 ♕e7 15.e3 ♗d7 with a complicated, double-edged position.

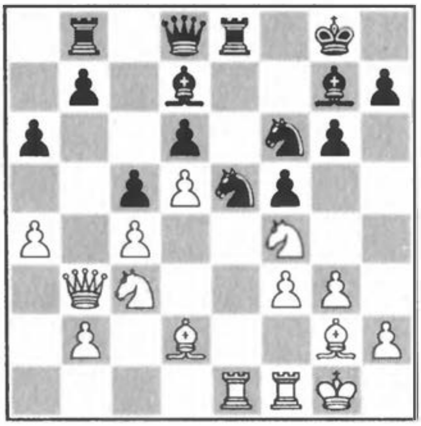
9...♘f6

Deserving of attention is 9...♘c5 10.b4 ♘cd7 11.♗b2 a5 12.a3 e4, and, although it may look like Black lost some time with the knight, in fact White's knight on e1 is also misplaced, while the early advance of White's queenside pawns may offer Black targets for an attack.

10.♘c3 ♘bd7 11.♘d3 e4 12.♘f4 ♘e5 13.♕b3

If 13.b3 Black simply answers 13...♕e7. After the queen move let's continue our analysis with a few more plausible moves:

13...c5!? 14.f3 exf3 15.exf3 ♖e8 16.♗d2 ♖b8 17.♖ae1 a6 18.a4 ♗d7

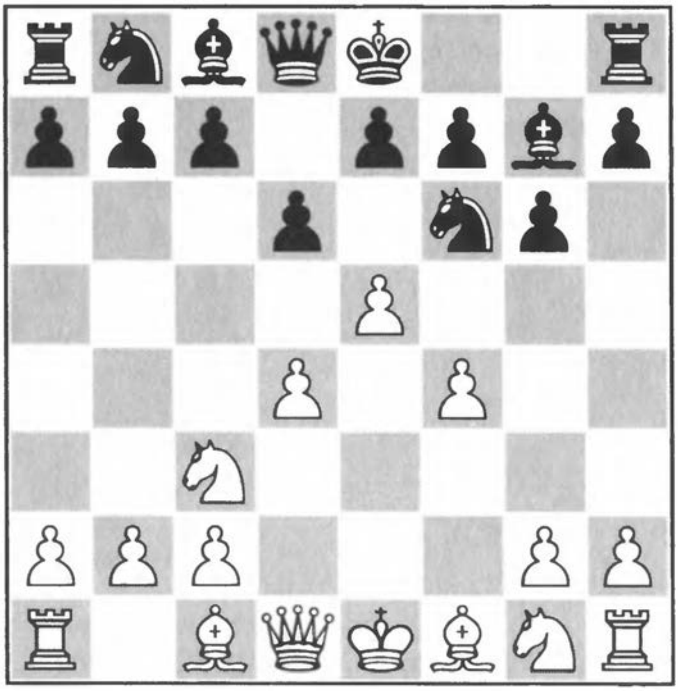


Such a position is difficult to evaluate without practical material. It is clear that both sides have their chances. Due to the fact that White's position contains sufficient weaknesses, I believe that Black should always be able to find some counterplay in any kind of complications. Notice that after 19.♞e6 ♗xe6 20.dxe6 Black can take the pawn with 20...♖xe6, since, after 21.f4, he has 21...♘c6 22.♖xe6 ♘d4.

CHAPTER 12

Alexander Finkel

Pirc for Endgame Lovers



1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 g6 4.f4 ♗g7 5.e5!?

Usually when White adopts the Austrian Attack versus the Pirc he is in for a sharp game (see for example our SOS line with 5.a3 in SOS-1, Chapter 2, p.22). In this article I will concentrate on a different approach, for after 5.e5 dxe5 6.dxe5 ♕xd1+ 7.♔xd1 ♘g4 we seem to skip the middlegame and enter right from the opening into a (slightly favourable?!) ending.

At first sight, White's attitude appears to be quite odd: not only does he initiate an early trade of queens, but he is also willing to give up the right to castle and waste an additional tempo on 8.♔e1 to deal with the ...♘f2 threat. However, White's strategy is built on solid positional ground: Black's knight usually ends up on h6, restricted by White's pawns on h3 and g4; the dark-squared bishop is (temporarily) rather passive on g7; and the same applies to the other bishop on c8. At the same time all White's minor pieces are destined to be developed on active and comfortable positions, while his king finds a safe haven on f2. Sounds like a paradise for endgame lovers, doesn't it?

By the way, it is remarkable that this line has been played by such attackers as David Bronstein, Dragoljub Velimirovic and Jonny Hector.

Unfortunately, Black also has some trumps up his sleeve: after 5.e5 he may just calmly retreat with the knight to d7, and White probably has nothing better than to switch to a hyper-aggressive mode with 6.♘f3 0-0 7.h4. This is a highly interesting line which I hope to cover in one of the next issues of SOS, but is not our cup of tea within the framework of this article.

☐ **Aleksei Holmsten**
■ **Marat Dzhumaev**
Ubeda 2000

1.e4 g6 2.d4 ♗g7 3.♘c3 d6 4.f4 ♘f6 5.e5!?

Despite the fact that, objectively, this line promises White no opening advantage, White's results in it are quite impressive. So, we may conclude that Black's task to reach equality is much more difficult than it appears at first sight.

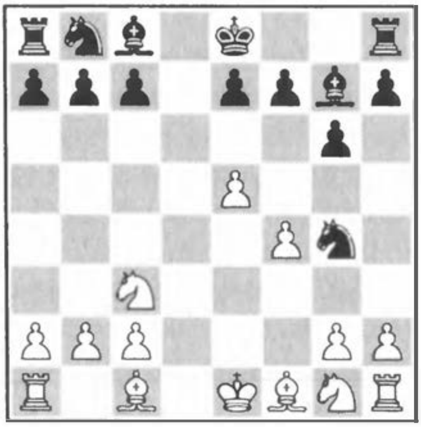
5...dxe5 6.dxe5

Avoiding the ending with 6.fxe5?! is dubious. In Dolzhikova-Borzov, Alushta 2006, Black was slightly better after 6...♘d5 7.♗c4 ♗e6 8.♕f3 c6 9.♘ge2 0-0 10.♘xd5 ♗xd5 11.♗xd5 ♕xd5 12.0-0 ♕xf3 13.♖xf3 c5.

6...♕xd1+ 7.♔xd1 ♘g4

An active knight move, rather than the passive 7...♘fd7?! 8.♘f3 c6 9.♗e3 ♘b6 10.♗d3 0-0 11.♔e2 f6 12.exf6 ♗xf6 13.g3 ♗e6 14.♘e4 ♘8d7 15.♘xf6+ exf6 16.♖he1, Gagunashvili-Spasov, Izmir 2002.

8.♔e1



8...c6!?

Covering the squares b5 and d5. For 8...♘c6 see the next game.

Another reasonable option is to push 8...f6 right away, intending to put the knight on c6: 9.h3 ♘h6 10.exf6 exf6, and now:

– 11.g4 ♗e6 12.♘f3 ♘c6 13.♗b5 0-0-0 14.♗xc6 bxc6 15.♔f2±, Velimirovic-Rukavina, Bela Crkva 1983.

– 11.♔f2 f5 12.♗d2 ♘f7 13.♘b5 ♔d8 14.♗c4 ♘d6 15.♘xd6 cxd6 16.♘f3 ♘c6 17.c3±, Ivanovic-Popchev, Stara Pazova 1988.

9.h3

Another move order is possible too: 9.♘f3 0-0 10.h3 ♘h6 11.g4 f6 12.♗c4+ ♘f7 13.exf6 exf6 14.♔f2 ♘d7 15.♗e3 ♖e8 16.♖he1 with a slight edge for White in S.H. Nielsen-Hoi, Copenhagen 1995.

9...♘h6 10.g4

The advance of the g-pawn is an integral part of White's plan, so there is no real point to postpone g4.

Yet, 10.♔f2 f6 11.exf6 exf6 12.♗c4 ♔d8 13.g4 ♖e8 14.♘f3 ♘d7 15.♖d1 b5 16.♗b3 ♔c7 17.♗e3 was also slightly better for White in Filipovic-Shvartz, Bratislava 1993.

10...f6 11.exf6 exf6 12.♗c4 f5

It makes perfect sense to open up the long diagonal for the bishop.

Black obtained counterplay in Konjevic-Govedarica, Yugoslavia tt-2 1994, after 12...♘d7 13.♖h2 ♔d8 14.♗e3 b5 15.♗f1 ♖e8 16.♔d2 ♗b7.

13.g5 ♘f7 14.♘f3 0-0

The move 14...♘d6?! feels dubious after 15.♗b3 ♔d7 (15...♘a6 16.♗e3 ♗xc3+ 17.bxc3 c5 18.♖d1 ♔e7 19.♘e5±) 16.h4 ♔c7 17.h5 gxh5 18.♖xh5 ♘e4 19.♘xe4 fxe4 20.♘e5 ♗f5 with quite unclear play in the game Bronstein-Tseshkovsky, Moscow 1981.

15.♗e3 ♖e8 16.♔f2 ♘a6?!

The drawbacks of this move are far more obvious than its advantages, so it made more sense to trade the light-squared bishops rather than allow White to trade his bishop for the black knight.

Still, White has a slight edge after 16...♗e6 17.♗xe6 ♖xe6 18.♗d4 ♘d7 19.♗xg7 ♔xg7 20.♖ad1.

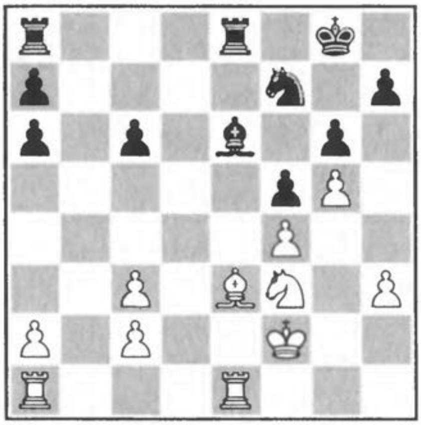
17.♖he1

Or already here 17.♗xa6!?.

17...♗e6?

Not surprisingly the position after 18.♗xa6! is rather unpleasant for Black, so 17...♘c7 was called for.

18.♗xa6! ♗xc3 19.bxc3 bxa6



20.♗c5!

A huge difference in the strength of the respective knights makes Black's defensive task very challenging.

20...♗d5 21.a3!? ♗e4

White wins after 21...♖ad8 22.♖xe8+ ♖xe8 23.♖b1 ♘d8 24.♖b8 ♗xf3 25.♔xf3 ♔f7 26.♖a8 ♘e6 27.♖xa7+.

22.♖ab1! ♖ad8

After 22...♗xc2 23.♖xe8+ ♖xe8 24.♖b7 ♘d8 25.♖b8 Black is completely tied up.

23.♖b7 ♖d5 24.♗d4!± ♖ed8

Or 24...♘d6 25.♖g7+ ♔f8 26.♖xh7±.

25.♗f6 ♖8d7? 26.♖b8+ ♘d8 27.c4

White is winning.

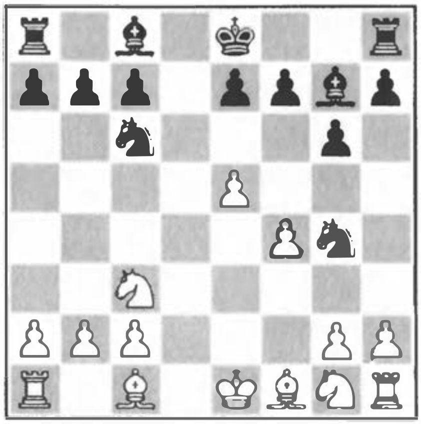
27...♖5d6 28.♘e5 ♖d2+ 29.♖e2 ♖b7 30.♖xd2

Black resigned.

☐ **Andrey Lukin**
■ **Mark Tseitlin**
Leningrad ch 1972

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 g6 4.f4 ♗g7 5.e5 dxe5 6.dxe5 ♕xd1+ 7.♔xd1 ♘g4 8.♔e1 ♘c6!?

This move is far less popular than the more solid 8...c6, but things are not entirely clear after 8...♘c6 either.



9.h3!?

Compared to the game Gavrilakis-Arduman below White gains the important option to move the king to f2 after ...♘xc2+, which makes quite a difference.

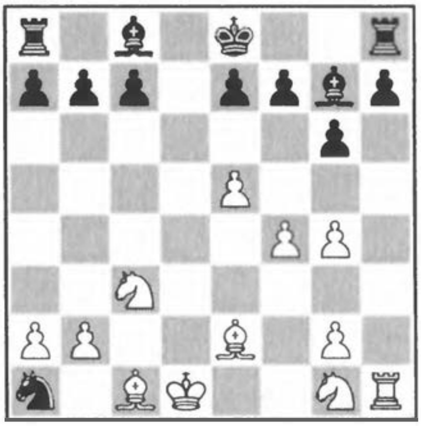
Thus, 9.♘d5 ♘d4 10.♘xc7+ ♔d8 11.♘xa8 ♘xc2+ 12.♔e2 ♘xa1 13.h3 ♘h6 14.g4 ♘c2 15.♔d1 ♘b4 16.♖h2 ♗e6 17.♗e3 b6 18.♖d2+ ♔c8 was better for Black in Gavrilakis-Arduman, Athens 1989.

9...♘h6?

The following forced sequence of moves appears to be quite crucial for the evaluation of the entire line with 8...♘c6:

9...♘b4! 10.hxg4 (10.♗b5+ ♗d7 11.♗xd7+ ♔xd7 12.hxg4 ♘xc2+ 13.♔d1 ♘xa1 14.♗e3 is unclear) 10...♘xc2+ 11.♔d1 ♘xa1 12.♗e2, and here Black has quite a few options at his disposal, however, in all of them White seems to get grip on Black's knight on a1.

The big question is whether it will promise him any opening advantage...



– After 12...♗e6 13.♗e3 f6 14.exf6 ♗xf6 15.♔c1 ♗xa2 16.♘xa2 ♗d4 17.♗xd4 ♘b3+ 18.♔b1 ♘xd4 19.♗d1 White is indeed slightly better.

– Stronger is 12...0-0 13.♗e3 f6 14.♔c1 fxe5 15.fxe5 ♗xe5 16.♔b1 ♗xg4 17.♘f3 ♗f4 18.♗f2 ♖ad8, and it seems that Black gets a very comfortable position by rather straightforward play.

– 12...h5!? is another interesting possibility.

10.♘d5

Not the only way to gain an advantage here: 10.g4 ♗e6 11.♗b5 0-0-0 12.♗xc6 bxc6 13.♗e3 f6 14.exf6 exf6 15.♘ge2±, Vasiukov-Kuzmin, Moscow 1981.

10...♘d4?!

Accepting the challenge. It should be mentioned that after 10...♔d8 11.♗e3 ♘f5 12.♗f2 h5 13.♖d1 ♗d7 14.♘f3 White enjoys a comfortable edge.

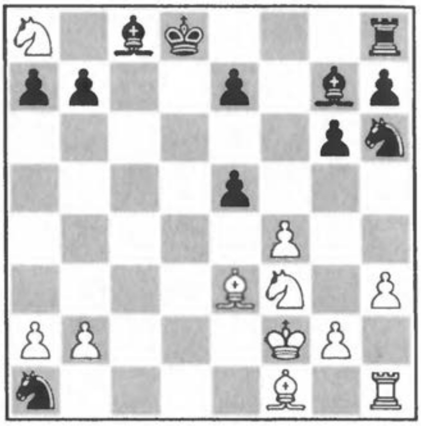
11.♘xc7+ ♔d8 12.♘xa8 ♘xc2+ 13.♔f2 ♘xa1 14.♗e3

In many lines Black king gets slaughtered under a direct attack of White's pieces.

14...f6

The following line may serve as a good illustration of the previous thesis: 14...b6 15.♘xb6! axb6 16.♗xb6+ ♔e8 17.♘f3 ♘c2 18.♗b5+ ♗d7 19.♖d1! and wins.

15.♘f3 fxe5



White to play and win:

16.♗b5! ♘f5 17.♗xa7 17.♖d1+ ♘d6 18.fxe5 ♗d7 19.exd6 ♗xb5 20.♗g5+–. **17...♗d7 18.♗xd7 ♔xd7 19.♘b6+ ♔c6 20.♖xa1 exf4 21.♖c1+ ♔b5 22.♘d5 ♔a6 23.♗c5 e5 24.♘c7+ ♔a5 25.♘d2 ♘e3 26.♘b3+** 26.♖c4 ends in mate. **26...♔a4 27.♗xe3 fxe3+ 28.♔e2 b5** Black resigned.

☐ **Jonny Hector**
■ **Ilia Smirin**
Oslo 1994

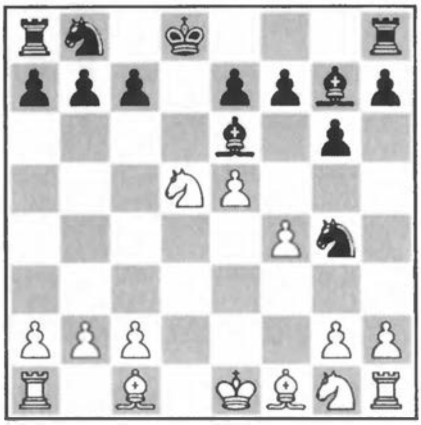
1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 g6 4.f4 ♗g7 5.e5 dxe5 6.dxe5 ♕xd1+ 7.♔xd1 ♘g4 8.♘d5

The idea behind this move is to force Black to give up on castling, however it's hardly sufficient to pose Black any problems.

So, 8.♔e1 from the two previous games is my personal preference.

8...♔d8 9.♔e1 ♗e6

After 9...c6 10.♘c3 (nothing is promised by 10.♘e3 f6 11.♘f3 fxe5 12.♘xg4 ♗xg4 13.♘xe5 ♗e6 14.♗e3 ♘d7 15.♖d1 ♗xe5 16.fxe5 ♖f8 17.g3 ♔c7 18.♗g2 ♘b6, Bosboom-Clausen, Copenhagen 1985) 10...f6 11.h3 ♘h6 12.♘f3 ♘d7 13.♗c4 ♖f8 (intending 14...♘f7) 14.exf6 exf6 15.♔f2 White keeps a small plus, Chernov-Marin, Rumania tt 1999.



10.♘c3

Weaker is 10.♘b4?! f6 11.h3 ♘h6 12.♘f3 c5 13.♘d3 b6 14.g4 ♗d5 15.♗g2 ♘c6 16.♗d2 ♔c7∓, Cueto-Belli, Lima 2002.

10...♘c6 11.♘f3 f6

After 11...♘b4 12.♘d4 ♗f5 13.h3 ♘h6 14.g4 c5 15.♘xf5 gxf5 White should continue with 16.♖h2!± rather than with 16.g5? ♘xc2+ 17.♔d1 ♘xa1 18.gxh6 ♗xh6∓, Iskov-Lekander, Eksjö II 1982.

12.h3 ♘h6 13.♗b5!

Indirectly protecting the pawn on e5.

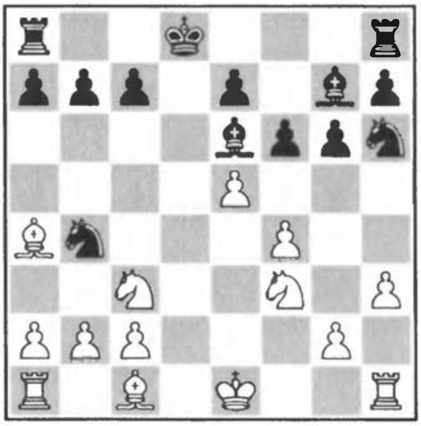
13.♗e3? ♘f5 (correct is 13...fxe5 14.fxe5 ♘f7∓) 14.exf6 exf6 15.♖d1+ ♔e8 16.♗f2 ♔f7 17.♘b5 ♖ac8 18.g4 ♘fe7 19.♗e2 a6 20.♘c3±, Vozniak-Halamay, Rodatychi 2006.

13...♘b4

Not 13...fxe5?! 14.fxe5 ♘f7 15.♗xc6 bxc6 16.♗f4 ♗d5 17.♘xd5 cxd5 18.e6 ♗xb2 19.♖d1±, Melnikov-Zakharchenko, St.Petersburg 2006.

14.♗a4!

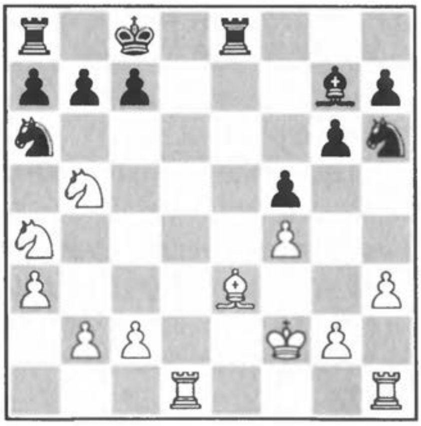
This move is more precise than the immediate 14.♘d4 ♗d7 (14...♗f5 15.exf6 ♗xf6 – 15...exf6 – 16.♘xf5 ♘xf5 17.♗a4 unclear) 15.♗xd7 ♔xd7 16.e6+ ♔c8 17.♘ce2 ♖d8, and the white pawn on e6 is more of a weakness than a strength.



14...♗f5 15.exf6 exf6 16.♘d4 ♗d7 17.a3 ♗xa4 18.♘xa4

Equality is the outcome after 18.♘e6+ ♔e7 19.axb4 ♔xe6 20.♘xa4 ♗f8 21.♗d2 ♗d6 22.♔f2 ♖ad8.

18...♖e8+ 19.♔f2 ♘a6 20.♗e3 f5 21.♖ad1 ♔c8 22.♘b5±



White has emerged out of the opening with a certain advantage due to the rather passive position of Black's knights on a6 and h6.

22...b6 23.c4 ♖e7 24.c5?!

The start of a wrong plan, which eventually leads to an advantage for Black.

After the correct 24.♖he1 ♔b7 (24...♘g8 25.♗d4 ♗xd4+ 26.♘xd4 ♔b7 27.♖xe7 ♘xe7 28.♘e6±) 25.♘ac3 ♖ae8 26.g3 White would keep all the benefits of his position.

24...♔b7 25.♖d3?!

And here 25.b4! was stronger.

25...♘f7 26.♖c1 c6

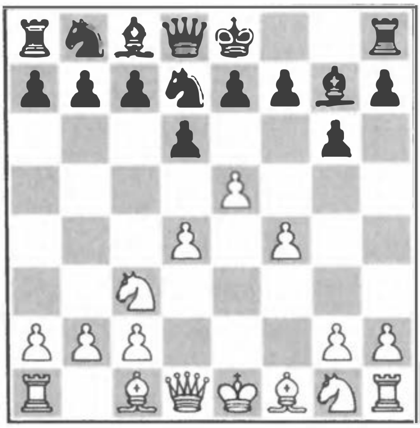
All of a sudden White's queenside pawns are very vulnerable. To be more specific, in many lines White is having problems to protect the pawn on c5.

27.♘d6+ 27.♖cd1 cxb5 28.♖d7+ ♖xd7 29.♖xd7+ ♔c6 30.♖xf7 ♗h8 31.♘c3 ♘xc5∓. **27...♘xd6 28.♖xd6 b5 29.♘c3 ♖ae8 30.♖d3?** The decisive mistake, which is being immediately exploited by Black. 30.b4! had to be played. **30...♖xe3! 31.♖d7+ ♔b8 32.♖xg7 ♘xc5 33.♔g1 ♘d3 34.♖d1** 34.♖c2. **34...♖e1+ 35.♖xe1 ♖xe1+ 36.♔h2 ♘xb2–+ 37.♖xh7 ♖e3 38.♘a2 a5!** White resigned.

The following game is by no means an example of how White should be handling this position in case Black refrains from entering an endgame. I just wanted to demonstrate that avoiding well-known theoretical lines may also backfire if such a deviation is not based on solid positional and tactical grounds.

☐ **Sahbaz Nurkic**
■ **Federico Manca**
Marostica 1993

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 g6 4.f4 ♗g7 5.e5 ♘fd7



6.♘e4?!

This move may not be especially recommended for White, although he can retain equal chances after the text. I guess there is no choice but to play 6.♘f3, when 6...0-0 7.h4 c5 8.h5 cxd4 9.hxg6 (9.♕xd4) 9...dxc3 10.gxf7+ ♖xf7 11.♗c4 and so on, is an extremely sharp line normally arising after the move order 5.♘f3 0-0 6.e5 ♘fd7.

No better is 6.♗c4?! c5 7.exd6 0-0 8.dxc5 ♘xc5 9.dxe7 ♕xe7+ 10.♕e2 ♖e8 11.♕xe7 ♖xe7+ 12.♔f2 ♗xc3 13.bxc3 ♘e4+ 14.♔f3 ♘xc3∓, Voitsekhovsky-Gipslis, Pardubice 1994.

6...c5 7.c3 0-0

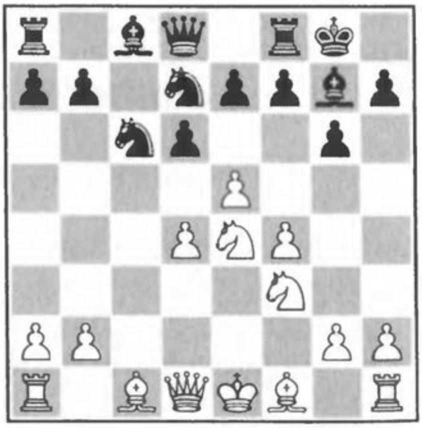
Black equalizes after 7...cxd4 8.cxd4 ♕a5+ 9.♕d2 ♕xd2+ 10.♗xd2 ♘c6 11.♘f3 ♘b6 12.♗b5 ♗f5 13.♘f2 0-0 14.♖c1 ♖ac8 15.0-0 ♗e6, Carretero-Fluvia, Sevilla 2004.

8.♘f3

Borgo-Vancini, Chianciano ch-ITA 1989, was equal after 8.♗e3 cxd4 9.cxd4 ♘b6 10.♘f3 ♘d5 11.♗d2 ♘c6 12.♘c3 dxe5 13.dxe5 ♗f5 14.♘xd5 ♕xd5 15.♗e2 ♘d4 16.♘xd4 ♕xd4.

8...cxd4 9.cxd4 ♘c6

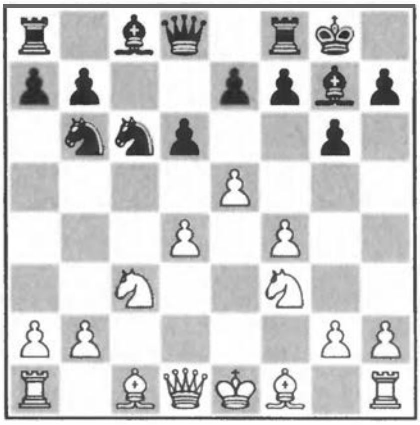
Black also has sufficient counterchances after 9...♘b6 10.♗e2 ♘c6 11.0-0 ♗f5 12.♘c3 ♖c8 13.d5 ♘b4 14.a3 ♘c2 15.g4 ♗xg4 16.♕xc2 ♘xd5 17.♕e4 ♘xc3 18.bxc3 ♖xc3 19.♕d4 ♖c8, Bronstein-Ermenkov, Wijk aan Zee II 1992.



10.♘c3

White held an edge after 10.♗e3 ♘b6 11.♘c3 ♗g4? 12.h3 ♗xf3 13.♕xf3 ♖c8 14.♖d1! d5 15.h4, Moen-Eikseth, Norway tt 1994. Correct was 11...♘b4 with unclear play.

10...♘b6



11.d5?!

This move is the source of White's future problems. However, also after the correct 11.♗e3 ♘b4 12.♗e2 ♗f5 13.♖c1 ♘4d5 14.♗d2 Black has a very comfortable position. Both sides have equal chances after 11.♗e2 dxe5 12.dxe5 ♕xd1+ 13.♗xd1 ♗e6.

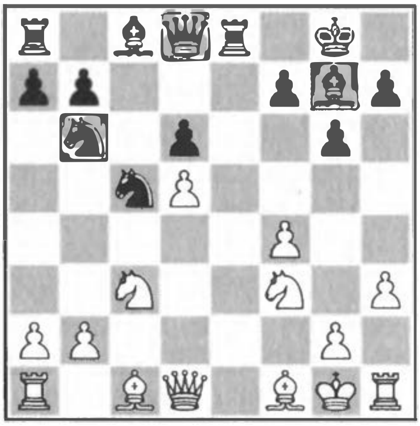
11...♘b8 12.h3

White would have to capture on d6 sooner or later as the pawn on e5 cannot be protected. 12.♗e2 ♗g4!? (12...dxe5 13.fxe5 ♗g4 14.♗f4 ♘8d7 15.♘g5 ♗xe2 16.♕xe2 ♕c7∓) 13.0-0 (13.e6 fxe6 14.♘g5 ♗xe2 15.♕xe2 ♕c8 16.♕xe6+ ♕xe6+ 17.♘xe6 ♗xc3+ 18.bxc3 ♖c8∓) 13...♗xf3 14.♗xf3 dxe5 15.♕e2 ♘8d7∓.

12...♘8d7 13.exd6 exd6 14.♔f2?!

The lesser evil was 14.♗e2 ♖e8 15.0-0 ♘c5 16.♖e1 ♗f5∓

14...♘c5 15.♔g1 ♖e8



Black's pieces are excellently placed, while the white ones lack coordination.

16.♔h2 ♗d7 17.♗d2 ♘ca4

Going after pawn d5.

18.♕b3 ♘xc3 19.bxc3

Black wins after 19.♗xc3 ♗xc3 20.bxc3 ♖c8 21.♕b4 (21.c4 ♕f6–+) 21...♕f6.

19...♗f5 20.♗b5?

After this move White may not play c4 in the future as the bishop gets trapped on b5. Stronger was 20.♖e1 ♖xe1 21.♗xe1 ♖c8 22.c4 ♕e7 23.♗f2∓.

20...♖e7 21.♖ae1 ♗e4 22.♖xe4

Equivalent to resignation. It was still possible to put up some resistance with 22.♘g5 ♗xd5 23.c4 ♗c6 24.♗c3 d5 25.♗xg7 ♔xg7 26.♗xc6 bxc6 27.♖xe7 ♕xe7 28.♕c3+ ♔g8 29.♖e1 d4∓.

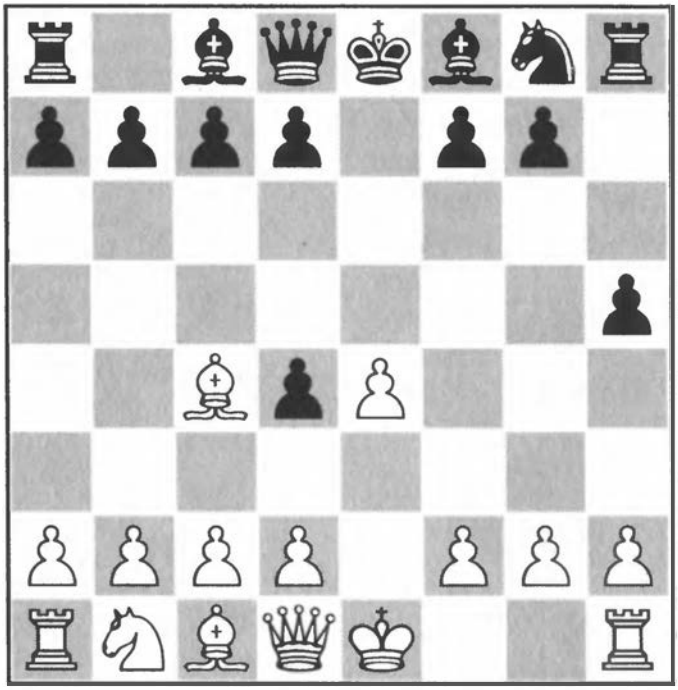
22...♖xe4 23.♗d3 ♖e8 24.c4 ♘d7

White resigned.

CHAPTER 13

Glenn Flear

The Bird's Defence According to Bird



Bird with 5.♗c4 h5 and 5.0-0 h5

Bird's Defence is in itself slightly offbeat, but when Black follows up with an early ...h5 the game takes on a distinctly eccentric look.

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘d4 4.♘xd4 exd4 5.♗c4

and now: **5...h5!** deserves a diagram.

What can Black be doing? After the initial shock, your opponent will perhaps understand that with the centre fairly closed and him having spent a tempo on moving an already developed piece, Black can start to pump up his potential on the kingside.

Where did this idea come from?

It seems that pushing the h-pawn early is an idea as old as the ark. Here's one of the earliest examples against Noa...

☐ **Josef Noa**
■ **Henry Bird**
Vienna 1882

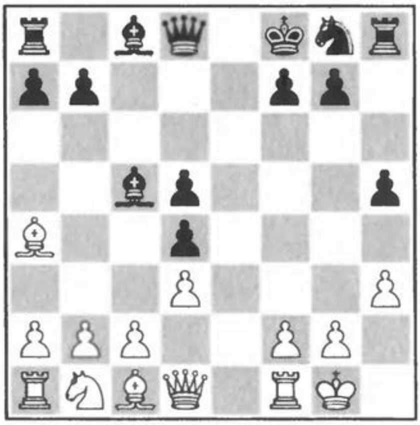
1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘d4 4.♘xd4 exd4 5.c3 ♗c5 6.♗c4 h5 7.d3 c6 8.♕c2?! b5 9.♗b3 ♗b6 10.♕e2 d6 11.h3 ♕f6 12.♗d2 ♘e7 13.♘a3 ♘g6 14.0-0-0 a5

with a queenside initiative for Black.

A little history never did anyone any harm. In my database, the first Bird's Defence game I have is from 1856 (Staunton). Henry Bird first played the Bird's in 1866, but it was only twelve years later that he introduced the idea of playing 5...h5 in the following encounter...

☐ **Simon Winawer**
■ **Henry Bird**
Paris 1878

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘d4 4.♘xd4 exd4 5.0-0 h5 The first game in my database with 5...h5, this time against 5.0-0. **6.d3 ♗c5 7.h3 c6 8.♗c4 d5 9.exd5 cxd5 10.♗b5+ ♔f8 11.♗a4**



11...g5?! Slightly wild. The more restrained 11...♘e7 12.♖e1 ♕b6 13.♗b3 transposes to Ringoir-Flear, played 130 years later! **12.♖e1 ♗e6 13.f4 b5?** Very wild! **14.♗xb5 ♕a5 15.♗c6 ♖c8 16.♖xe6!** 16.f5 was also possible. **16...fxe6 17.♗d7 ♖d8 18.♗xe6 ♖e8 19.f5** and White went on to win.

Here's another example of our hero in action.

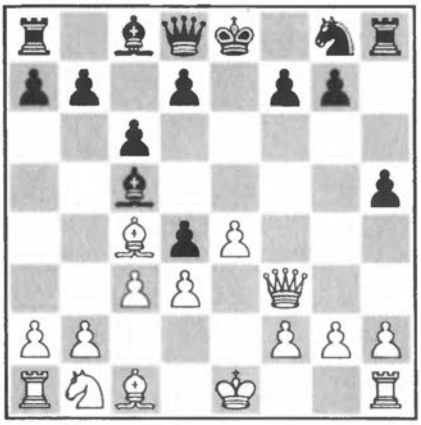
☐ **Max Judd**
■ **Henry Bird**
New York 1889

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘d4 4.♘xd4 exd4 5.d3 h5 6.c3 c6

Three years later Henry Bird refined his move order: 6...♗c5 7.0-0 c6 8.♗a4 d6 9.♕e1 ♕f6 10.♔h1 ♘h6 11.f3 h4 12.♗c2 ♗d7 13.cxd4 ♗xd4 14.♘c3 0-0-0, Blackburne-Bird, Belfast 1892, with reasonable play for Black.

Bird beat his distinguished opponent in this game, and in later years Blackburne himself played the Bird's, that is, with ...h5 of course!

7.♗c4 ♗c5 8.♕f3



8...♕e7

Evgeny Najer can be attributed with starting the modern day mini-revival. He varied with the offer of the exchange of queens in Zagrebelny-Najer, Moscow 1995, and soon fully equalized: 8...♕f6 9.♘d2 d6 10.0-0 ♗g4 11.♕xf6 ♘xf6 12.♖e1 0-0 13.h3 ♗e6 14.♗xe6 fxe6 15.cxd4 ♗xd4 16.♘f3 ♗b6 17.e5 dxe5 18.♖xe5 ♖ad8.

9.0-0 d6 10.h3 ♗e6 11.♘d2 g5

Optimistic! However Bird seemed to like playing on the flanks!

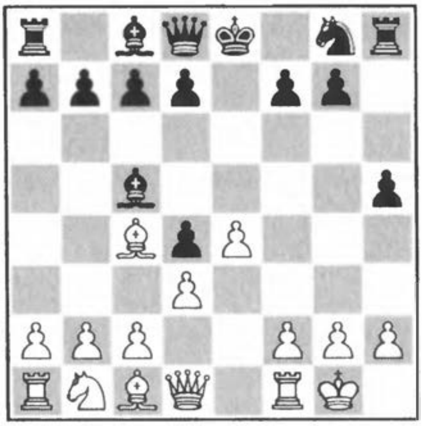
12.♗xe6 fxe6 13.♘b3 g4 14.♕g3 gxh3 15.♕xh3 dxc3 16.bxc3 ♗b6

Here White should perhaps have played 17.a4, with a slight advantage.

Finally to round off developments in the 19th century, we note that Bird tried out his idea in a famous tournament.

☐ **Georg Marco**
■ **Henry Bird**
Hastings 1895

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘d4 4.♘xd4 exd4 5.♗c4 h5 6.d3 ♗c5 7.0-0



7...d6
Losing a tempo as things turned out!
8.f4 c6 9.f5 d5 10.exd5 cxd5 11.♗b3 f6 12.♕f3 ♘e7 13.h3 a5 14.a4 ♔f8 15.g4 hxg4 16.hxg4 ♖a6 17.♗f4 g6
and Black had equalized.

In these four game references Henry Edward Bird's opponents tried four different fifth moves and yet an early ...h5 seemed to be a valid try in each case.

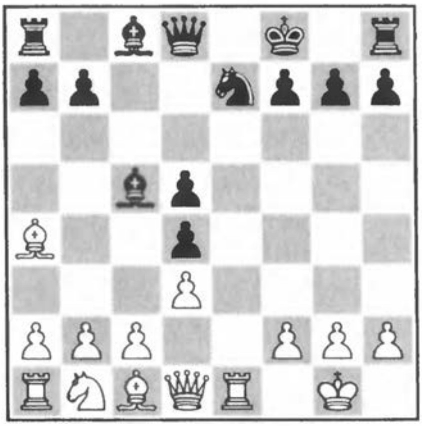
Indeed, although I was originally going to write about the diagram position above (after 5.♗c4 h5), there doesn't seem to be that much difference with 5.0-0 h5 and it almost invariably transposes.

The timing of ...h5 in the Bird's is a matter of taste, but the SOS approach is definitely to play it on move five and then win plenty of time on your clock as your opponent wonders if you just touched the h-pawn by accident or not!

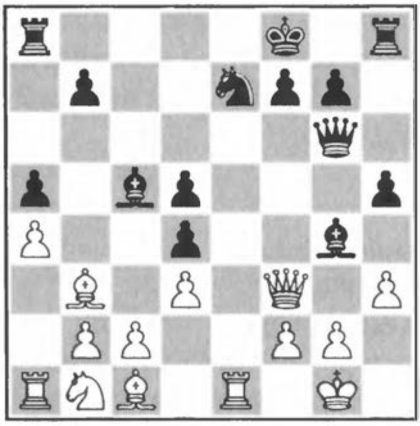
Here is a game by yours truly to show that ...h5 can be quite effective even if in this particular game I didn't play this flank thrust quite that early.

☐ **Tanguy Ringoir**
■ **Glenn Flear**
Chamalières 2008

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘d4 4.♘xd4 exd4 5.0-0 ♗c5
Bird, Blackburne, Najer and Morozevich have played 5...h5 here. Can you be persuaded to add your name to the list?
6.d3 c6 7.♗c4 d5 8.exd5 cxd5 9.♗b5+ ♔f8 10.♖e1 ♘e7 11.♗a4



11...♕b6!?
More to the point could be 11...h5 immediately:
– 12.♗g5 f6 13.♗d2 ♗g4 14.♕c1 ♖c8 15.a3 ♕b6 16.♗b3 a6 17.♗f4 g5 18.♗d2 ♗e6, Kosteniuk-Najer, Moscow 1996, and White was very restricted.
– 12.h3 a5 13.♗f4 ♖a6 14.♞d2 ♖g6 15.♔h1 ♗d6 16.♗xd6 ♕xd6 17.♘f1 ♕f6, Nikhilesh-Jirka, Goa 2002, and Black was fine.
12.♗b3 h5
Better late than never!
13.h3 a5 14.a4 ♕g6 15.♕f3 ♗g4!



I couldn't resist!

16.hxg4 hxg4 17.♕g3

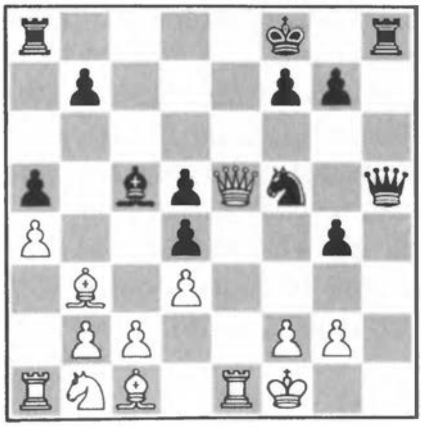
The best chance is 17.♕f4! ♗d6 18.♕xd4, but even here after 18...♕h5 19.♔f1 ♖e8 Black has plenty of compensation for his piece as White's king will be in for a rough ride.

Incidentally, 18.♕xd4 is better than 18.♕g5 ♕h7 19.f4 gxf3 20.♔f2 ♕h2 as Black then seems to be winning e.g. 21.♘d2 fxg2 22.♖g1 ♗f4 23.♘f3 ♗xg5 24.♘xh2 ♗xc1 etc.

17...♘f5 18.♕e5

18.♕c7 is downed by 18...♕h5! 19.♕xc5+ ♔g8 20.♔f1 ♕h1+ 21.♔e2 ♖e8+ 22.♗e3 ♕xg2 23.♔d1 ♘xe3+ 24.fxe3 ♕f3+ 25.♔c1 ♖h1 and so on.

18...♕h5 19.♔f1



19...♘e3+

Even better was 19...♗d6 20.♕xd5 ♕h1+ 21.♔e2 ♘g3+! 22.♔d1 ♕xe1+! forcing mate.

20.♖xe3 dxe3 21.♕xh5 ♖xh5

So White survives to play a few more moves even if they are not particularly joyful ones!

22.♗xe3 d4 23.♗f4 ♖h1+ 24.♔e2 ♖e8+ 25.♔d2 ♖he1 26.♗e3 dxe3+ 27.fxe3 ♖8xe3 28.♔c3 ♖3e2 29.♔c4 ♗b4

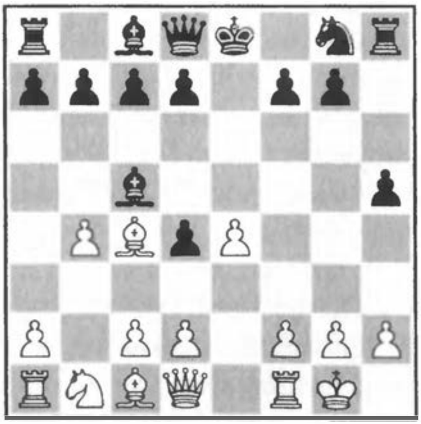
White resigned.

So let's look at some of White's attempts against 5...h5.

☐ **Evgeny Romanov**
■ **Pavel Potapov**
Moscow 2007

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘d4 4.♘xd4 exd4 5.♗c4 h5 6.0-0 ♗c5 7.b4!?

Feeding a pawn to the Bird's?!



7...♗b6

Declining, in order to avoid White obtaining a gambit initiative.

However the principled move must be 7...♗xb4! e.g. 8.c3 ♗c5 9.♗b2 ♕f6 10.e5 ♕b6 (10...♕f4 11.g3 favours White) 11.♕b3 (if 11.♗b3, Black should get on with his development: 11...♘e7 12.♕f3 0-0

13.♕xh5 d3 14.♕f3 d6 with a reasonable game) 11...♕xb3 12.axb3 and even after the exchange of queens White probably has enough compensation e.g. 12...dxc3 13.♘xc3 ♘e7 with a solid but slightly passive position. (13...♗d4?! 14.♘d5! ♗xb2 15.♘xc7+♔d8 16.♘xa8 ♗xa1 17.♖xa1 and the knight will soon hop to b6. In any case Black's ...h5 is virtually useless in this particular line.) 14.♘b5 ♗b6 15.d4 a6! and Black is fine.

8.a4 a5 9.bxa5

Here 9.b5 has its points: White gains space and can develop his bishop with ♗a3.

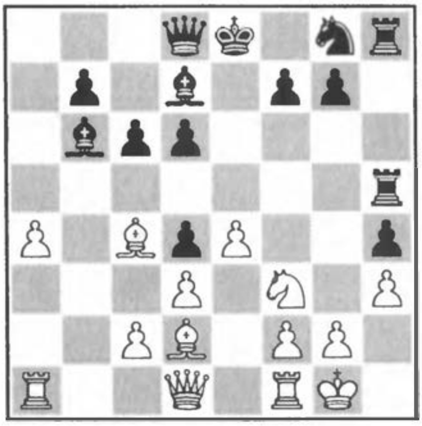
9...♖xa5 10.d3 d6 11.♘d2 ♗d7 12.♘f3 h4!?

Here chasing a pawn isn't quite satisfactory: 12...♖xa4 13.♖xa4 ♗xa4 14.♗b2 c5 15.♕b1 ♗c6 16.c3 and again White obtains long-term pressure for his investment.

13.h3 c6 14.♗d2

14.♗b2 ♕f6 15.♖b1! looks quite promising for White e.g. 15...♘e7 16.♗a1 ♘c8 17.♖xb6! with excellent play for White.

14...♖ah5!?



An original manoeuvre.

15.♖b1 ♘f6 16.♗g5 ♕c7

Does White really want to open the g-file?

17.♕c1

Black's position doesn't inspire confidence at this point.

17...♘h7!

Best practical try. If White captures the h-pawn then Black's rooks may really come into their own.

18.♗xh4 ♗c5 19.♗g3 ♕c8!

With some chances of landing a combination against White's king.

20.c3 dxc3

Going all in with 20...♗xh3 21.gxh3 ♕xh3 22.♘h2 dxc3, looks a little optimistic after the calm 23.♕f4!.

21.♕xc3 ♘g5 22.♘xg5 ♖xg5 23.d4

Blocking the a7-g1 diagonal.

23...♗a7 24.f4!?

I prefer 24.♕f3 as the threat against the f7 pawn obliges Black to make some sort of concession.

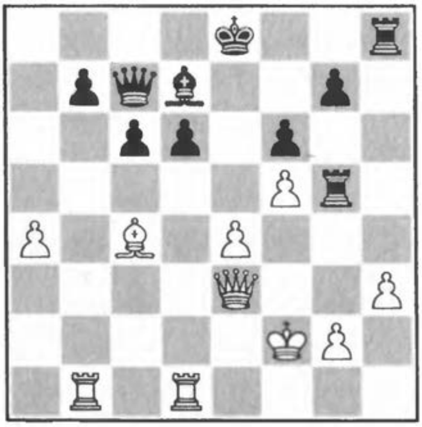
24...♗xd4+ 25.♕xd4 ♖xg3 26.f5

Best could be 26.♖b3! ♖hxh3 (if 26...♖g6, then 27.f5 ♖f6 28.♕a7) 27.♖xg3 ♖xg3 28.♕xd6 which favours the first player. Black's king is vulnerable and Black's lone rook isn't dangerous.

26...♕c7 27.♔f2

Instead after 27.♖fd1 Black can save himself with 27...♖h4 28.♕xd6 ♕xd6 29.♖xd6 ♖xe4 30.♖xb7 ♖xc4 31.♖dxd7 ♖c2.

27...♖g5 28.♕e3 f6 29.♖fd1



White has consolidated and has the more active outfit.

29...♔d8!? 30.♔g1 ♖h4 31.a5 d5!

Not the sort of move you want to face when short of time!

32.♗xd5?

A crazy move. The natural 32.♗d3 was forced e.g. 32...♖g3! 33.♕a7! (33.♕f2 ♖hxh3 34.exd5 ♖xg2+! is dangerous for White) 33...♖hxh3 34.♗f1 ♖g5 35.♖xb7 ♕h2+ 36.♔f2 ♕f4+ 37.♔g1 with a draw.

32...cxd5 33.♖bc1 ♕e5 34.♕b6+ ♔e8 35.♖e1 ♖xe4

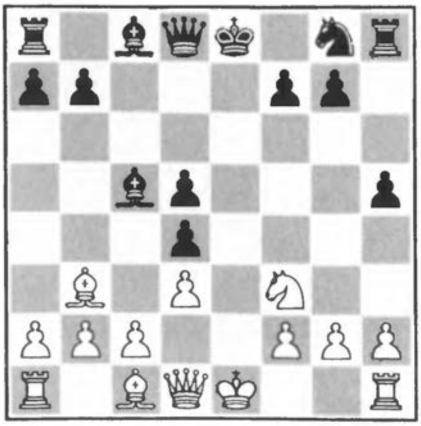
White has nothing for his piece. White resigned.

☐ **Amador Rodriguez**
■ **Walter Arencibia**
Cienfuegos 1996

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘d4 4.♘xd4 exd4 5.♗c4 h5 6.d3

Delaying this move is possible: 6.c3 ♗c5 7.cxd4 ♗xd4 8.♘c3 c6 9.♘e2 ♗b6 10.♕b3 ♕e7 (White has avoided d2-d3 but this 'gain of time' doesn't lead anywhere) 11.0-0 ♘f6 12.♕g3? (more sensible here is 12.e5! ♕xe5 13.♗xf7+ ♔f8 14.♗g6 d5=; but note that 12.♘c3?! could be met by 12...♘g4! with chances for an attack) 12...h4 13.♕g5 (if 13.♕xg7 then 13...♖g8 14.♕h6 h3! with a strong attack) 13...h3 and Black was clearly on top already, Shmuter-Najer, St Petersburg 1993.

6...♗c5 7.♘d2 c6 8.♘f3 d5 9.exd5 cxd5 10.♗b3



The alternative 10.♗b5+? ♔f8 leaves the white bishop in danger.

10...♕e7+

Black was also perfectly fine after 10...♘e7 11.0-0 0-0 12.♖e1 a5 13.a4 ♖a6 14.♖e5 g6 15.h3 f6 16.♖e1 ♘f5 in Fogarasi-Potapov, Budapest 2006.

11.♕e2 ♕xe2+ 12.♔xe2 ♘e7 13.♗a4+

Nor does 13.♖e1 f6 14.♔f1 ♔f7 15.c3 dxc3 16.bxc3 ♗f5 give White anything.

13...♗d7

In middlegames moving the king is often the right idea keeping the tension. It's then that White's light-squared bishop often proves to be the inferior piece to its black counterpart: 13...♔f8!? 14.h3 (14.♘e5?! ♗d6!) 14...f6 15.♗d2 ♔f7 16.♖he1 wouldn't be that clear.

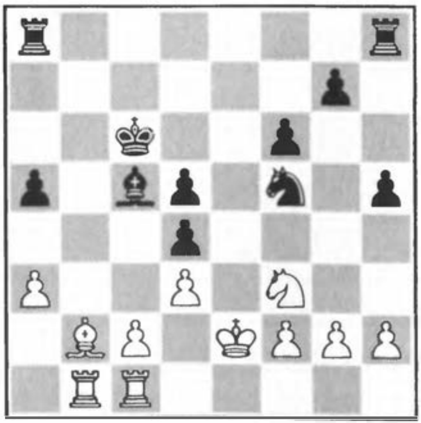
14.♗xd7+ ♔xd7

These endgames aren't really a problem for Black as his central pawns can't be easily attacked.

15.b4 ♗xb4 16.♖b1 a5 17.a3

Rodriguez later preferred 17.♗b2 ♘c6 18.♘xd4 ♖he8+ 19.♔d1 with equality.

17...♗c5 18.♖xb7+ ♔c6 19.♖b1 f6 20.♗b2 ♘f5 21.♖hc1



Intending c2-c3 competing for space.

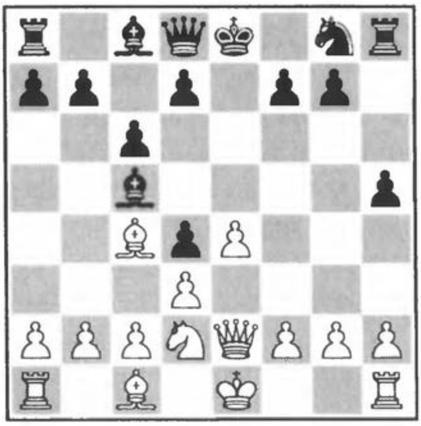
21...♖he8+

Perhaps Black can keep some chances of an edge with 21...♖hb8 22.c3 dxc3

23.♖xc3 ♔d6 24.♖cc1 a4! fixing the pawn on a dark square. **22.♔f1 ♔d6 23.a4** Draw.

☐ **Artyom Timofeev**
■ **Jiri Jirka**
Goa2002

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘d4 4.♘xd4 exd4 5.♗c4 h5 6.d3 ♗c5 7.♘d2 c6 8.♕e2



8...d6?!

Again, just as we saw in Marco-Bird, this move can lose time as Black's best counter is often ...d5. Jirka decided to play ...d7-d5 in one go a year later: 8...♘e7 9.e5 (9.♘f3 d5 gives Black a tempo more than in the main game) 9...d5 10.exd6 ♗xd6 11.♘e4 ♗g4 12.f3 ♗f5 13.♗d2 0-0 14.g4 ♗g6, Stehno-Jirka, Luhacovice 2003, with unclear play.

9.♘f3 ♘e7 10.0-0 d5 11.♗b3

Keeping the tension seems a good idea.

11...a5 12.c3 ♗g4 13.a3 a4 14.♗a2 ♔f8!?

What else to do with the king?

15.h3 dxe4

15...♗xf3 16.♕xf3 ♕d6 17.♗d2 would allow White a comfortable edge due to his bishop pair.

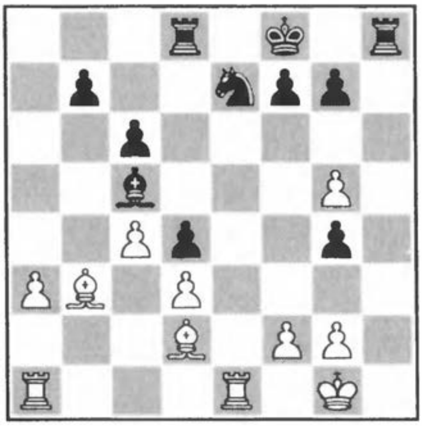
16.hxg4!? exf3 17.♕xf3 ♘d5 18.g5

I prefer White after 18.gxh5! as regaining the pawn is no trivial matter.

18...♕d7 19.♗d2 ♖d8 20.♖fe1

White has a pull due to the fact that Black's rook on h8 isn't participating, so exchanging queens (followed by ...g6 to link rooks) looks normal.

20...♕g4 21.♕xg4 hxg4 22.c4!? ♘e7 23.b4 axb3 24.♗xb3



24...g3?!

Despite the damage to White's structure... a pawn is a pawn. Instead, Black should be fine after 24...♘g6 25.♗b4 ♗e7, or even 24...g6 aiming to link rooks.

25.fxg3 ♗d6 26.♗f4

White's pawns are tripled but are there on the board, and as you'll see Black doesn't seem to be able to break up the kingside grip.

26...c5 27.♗d1 ♘f5 28.♖b1

Ensuring an advantage.

28...g6 29.♖xb7 ♔g7

29...♘xg3 is the lesser evil but White is still better following 30.♗xd6+ ♖xd6 31.♖b8+ ♔g7 32.♖xh8 ♔xh8 33.♗g4.

30.♗f3 ♗xf4

It's too late for 30...♘xg3 due to 31.♗xd6 ♖xd6 32.♖ee7 ♖f8 33.♗d5 etc.

31.gxf4 ♘e3 32.♖b5 ♖c8 33.a4 ♖h4 34.a5 ♘c2 35.♖eb1 ♘b4 36.♖1xb4 cxb4 37.a6 ♖xf4 38.a7 ♖xf3 39.♖b8 ♖xb8 40.axb8♕ ♖xd3 41.♕xb4

Black resigned.

☐ **Alexander Morozevich**
■ **Evgeny Najer**
Moscow 1992

One of Najer's earlier efforts.

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘d4 4.♘xd4 exd4 5.♗c4

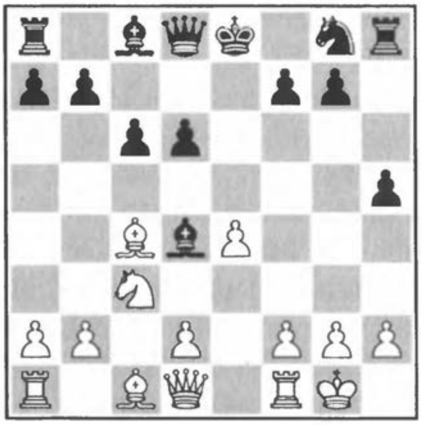
Spending a tempo to place the bishop on a more active square.

5...h5

Gaining space on the kingside! Why not, if White is playing so slowly! Morozevich was obviously convinced enough to play this move himself as Black against 2700 opposition – see the next game.

Black really has to avoid 5...♗c5? 6.♗xf7+ ♔xf7 7.♕h5+.

6.0-0 ♗c5 7.c3 c6 8.cxd4 ♗xd4 9.♘c3 d6?!



Not best in my opinion. Morozevich, playing Black a decade later, decided on 9...♘f6! against Leko.

10.d3?!

White later improved with 10.♘e2! ♗b6 11.♕b3 ♕e7 12.d4 (taking the centre) 12...♗g4 (12...h4 13.h3 ♕xe4 14.♗xf7+ ♔f8 15.♗c4 is messy but probably favours White) 13.♗e3 ♘f6 14.♘c3 0-0 15.♖ae1, and White consolidates his central advantage, Aitbayev-Potapov, Vung Tau 2008.

10...♘f6 11.♗e3 ♗xe3 12.fxe3 d5!?

Here 12...h4 could be thrown in, especially if White has nothing better than 13.h3.

13.exd5 cxd5 14.♗b5+ ♔f8

Black's slower development and misplaced king don't seem to lead to any serious problems. In these cases you need to persuade yourself that once one has played ...h5, the rook is already semi-developed on the h-file!

15.♕d2 ♕b6 16.♖f4 ♗e6 17.♗a4 ♘g4 18.♖e1 g5

Played in the spirit of Henry Bird!

19.♖d4 ♕d6 20.g3 h4!

Now the point behind 5...h5 becomes clear!

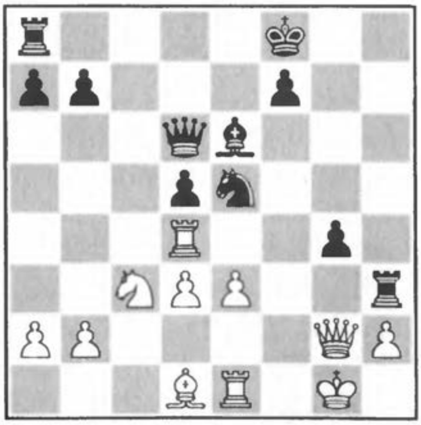
21.♗d1 ♘e5 22.♕f2

Or 22.g4!?, closing the wing, and then 22...♘c6 23.♖a4 and, although Black's attack is stymied, the resulting position is still hard to judge.

22...hxg3 23.♕xg3 ♖h3

Now the rook is fully developed.

24.♕g2 g4!?



25.♘e4?

Maybe 25.♗xg4!? ♗xg4 26.♖xg4 ♖xh2! 27.♔xh2! ♘xg4+ 28.♔g1 when White shouldn't be worse.

25...♕e7 26.♘g3 ♖c8 27.♗xg4?

Similar to the previous note but in the mean time things have deteriorated for White. The superior 27.♖f1 would keep White in the game.

27...♗xg4 28.♖xg4 ♖xh2 29.♖g8+

Alternatives just lose: 29.♕xh2 ♘f3+; or 29.♔xh2 ♘xg4+ 30.♔g1 ♖c1!.

29...♔xg8 30.♔xh2 ♕h4+

30...♕g5! might be even stronger.

31.♔g1 ♘g4 32.♘f1 ♖c6 33.♕g3 ♕xg3+ 34.♘xg3 ♖c2

Black has a clear advantage.

35.d4 ♖xb2 36.e4 dxe4 37.♖xe4 ♘f6 38.♖e7 ♔f8 39.♖c7 ♘d5 40.♖d7 ♘e3 41.♘e4 f5 42.♘c5 ♖xa2 43.♖xb7 a5 44.♖a7 ♔e8 45.♘e6 a4 46.♘f4 a3 47.d5 ♘c4 48.♘g2 ♖d2 49.d6 a2 50.d7+ ♔e7

White resigned.

☐ **Peter Leko**
■ **Alexander Morozevich**
Moscow 2002

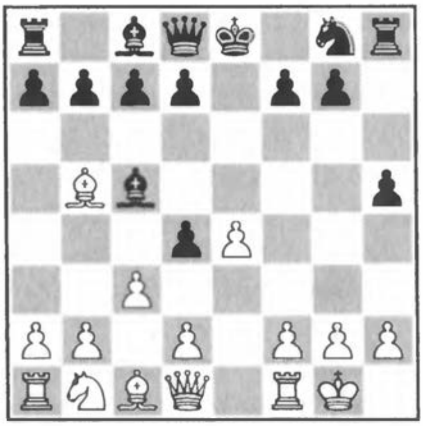
1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘d4 4.♘xd4 exd4 5.0-0

Castling into it!?

5...h5

Flexing his muscles. If Black can indeed play like this it's because his d-pawn cramps White's development, so Leko decides to eliminate that pawn.

6.c3 ♗c5

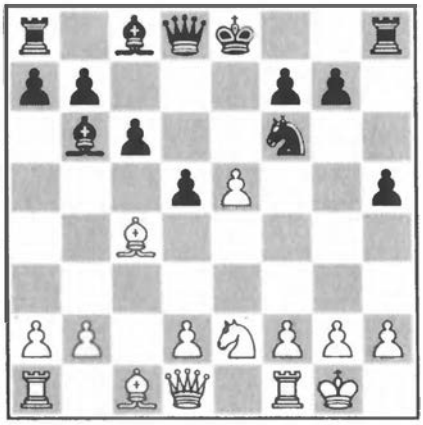


7.cxd4

It seems natural for White to play for an open centre with Black having played the outrageous wing thrust ...h5!

After 7.d3 c6 8.♗c4 d5 9.exd5 cxd5 10.♗b5+ ♔f8 11.♕e1, as in Saltaev-Najer, Moscow 1995, I like 11...♘e7! when 12.cxd4 ♗xd4 13.♕b4 ♗f6(=) 14.♗f4 a6 15.♗a4 h4 16.h3 offers Black several playable possibilities such as 16...g5, 16...g6, and 16...b5 17.♗c2 ♗e6.

7...♗xd4 8.♘c3 c6 9.♗c4 ♘f6! 10.♘e2 ♗b6 11.e5 d5!



12.♗b3

The alternative 12.exf6 dxc4 13.fxg7 ♖g8 14.♘f4 ♗g4 15.♕e1+ ♕e7 16.♕xe7+ ♔xe7 17.h3 ♗f5 18.♘xh5 ♗d4 should give enough pressure even with a two pawn deficit.

12...♘g8

I think that Black could have reacted more actively here: 12...♘e4! 13.d4 (after 13.d3 Black competes for space with 13...♘c5 14.♗c2 d4) 13...h4! and it's more difficult than in the game for White to maintain control.

13.d4 ♗g4 14.f3 ♗e6 15.♗c2

ECO judges White to be slightly better. Certainly he has more space and White's right-side majority could prove to be a handful, but the game continuation wasn't that convincing.

15...♘e7 16.♗g5 ♕d7 17.♗xe7

Not wishing the knight to install itself on f5.

17...♕xe7 18.♕d2 0-0-0 19.♔h1 ♔b8 20.f4 ♗g4 21.♘g1 f6 22.♖ae1

Khalifman prefers White here, but again I'm not buying it. Was he influenced by the result or the fundamentals of the position?

22...fxe5 23.dxe5

Otherwise 23.fxe5?! ♖df8 would instead suit Black. The d-pawn is then likely to remain a long-term weakness.

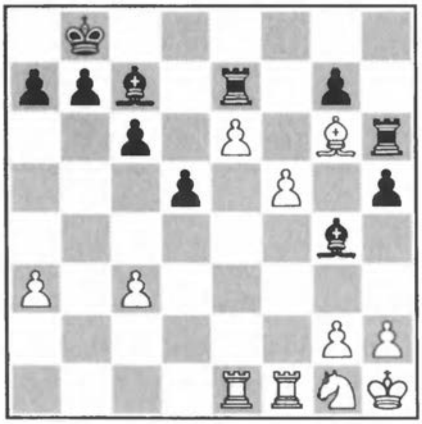
23...♕c5 24.a3 ♕d4 25.♕c1 ♖de8

Or here 25...c5!? 26.f5 c4 would be unclear.

26.♗g6 ♖e6 27.♗f7 ♖e7 28.e6 ♕f6 29.f5 ♗c7

Why not 29...♗d4! 30.b4 ♗c3, which again looks highly unclear. Black's minor pieces being more influential than White's.

30.♕c3 ♖h6 31.♗g6 ♕xc3 32.bxc3



32...h4?!

Better is 32...♗a5! 33.♖e3 (or 33.♖c1 ♖xg6! 34.fxg6 ♗xe6 with enough for the exchange) 33...♗b6 34.♖d3 (34.♖e5 ♗c7 35.♖ee1 ♗a5=) 34...♗c5 35.h3 ♗xf5 36.♗xf5 g6.

33.c4! h3?!

Only around here does White finally obtain the advantage.

With 33...dxc4! 34.♖e4 ♗h5 35.♖xh4 (nor does 35.♗xh5 ♖xh5 36.♖xc4 ♗d6 37.a4 ♔c7 look that clear) 35...♗xg6 36.♖xh6 gxh6 37.fxg6 ♗e5 38.♖f7 ♖xe6 39.g7 ♗xg7 40.♖xg7 ♖e3, Black has a likely draw.

34.g3 ♗d6 35.cxd5 cxd5 36.♘f3 ♗xf3+

Now 36...♖xg6 37.fxg6 ♖xe6 38.♖xe6 ♗xe6 39.♘d4 would be strongly favourable for White; and for that matter 36...♗xa3 37.♘e5 ♗h5 38.♗xh5 ♖xh5 39.♖d1 offers White a clear advantage.

37.♖xf3 ♖h8 38.g4 ♖c7 39.g5! ♖c2 40.♖g3 ♗xg3 41.hxg3

The central pawns are impossible to stop.

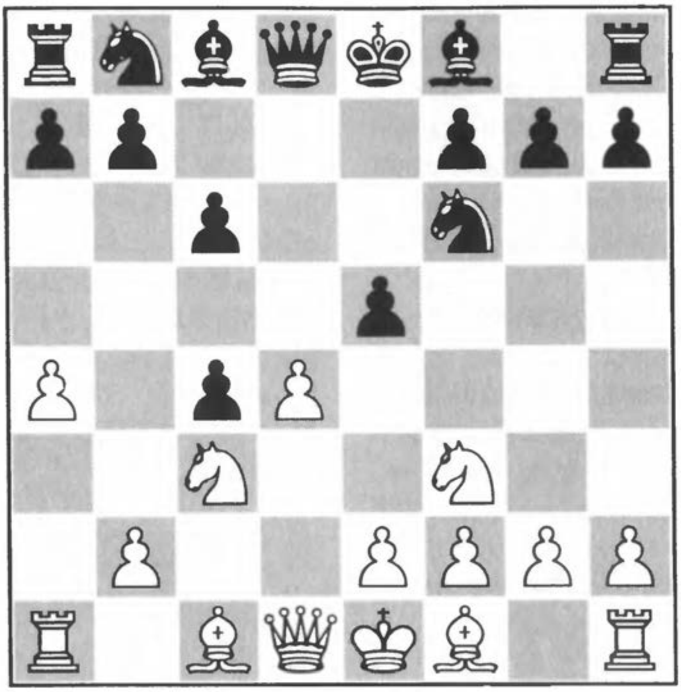
41...♖c3 42.f6 gxf6 43.gxf6 ♖xg3 44.e7 ♖xg6 45.f7 ♖gg8 46.e8♕+ ♖xe8 47.♖xe8+ 1-0

Conclusion: I don't see anything dramatic for White after either 5.0-0 h5 or 5.♗c4 h5. Indeed against the latter of these (5.♗c4) there is a possibility that 5...h5 is Black's best move. Two other points come to mind: my computer is clueless about judging the resulting positions and 19th century thinking can at times be relevant today.

CHAPTER 14

Arthur Kogan

The Mouse Sleep Slav Gambit



The 'crazy' 5...e5!?

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 dxc4 5.a4 e5!?

The diagrammed position features the Mouse Sleep Slav gambit! I played this a few months ago in an online ICC blitz game. From time to time I play 2 or 3 games before going to sleep. To be honest I was planning to try the fairly popular (and solid) line starting with 5...e6, but being a bit sleepy I had a mouse slip... or as I usually call it: a mouse sleep! ☺

Surprisingly, the game went quite well for me, and I managed to obtain a nice attack. So I was curious to see if this gambit had been played before in a normal game. Interestingly, I found that Morozevich had already tried it against Bacrot in a rapid game in Cannes 2001. I also discovered that the original Canadian (ex-Russian) master Khassanov plays this gambit quite regularly. As it is played mainly by Russians, maybe this gambit has a name in Russia. Do mail us if you know!

Anyway, since I saw that Moro lost his game in a convincing way, I was not sure whether 5...e5 is playable. That is until recently, when I saw an attractive game between two strong Russian women players (no 'chess macho' views here! As an experienced women trainer I know that women often play much more aggressively and more creatively than men).

□ **Alina Kashlinskaya**
■ **Valentina Solovjova**
St Petersburg 2009

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 dxc4 5.a4 e5!?

And here we go! A real SOS style idea that will surely surprise your opponent! In fact Black follows my Olalachess principle of Anti-Gambit play: rather than defending your extra pawn and suffer for it, it is better to return it to quickly finish development. Make your pieces smile and be first to get the initiative!

6.♘xe5

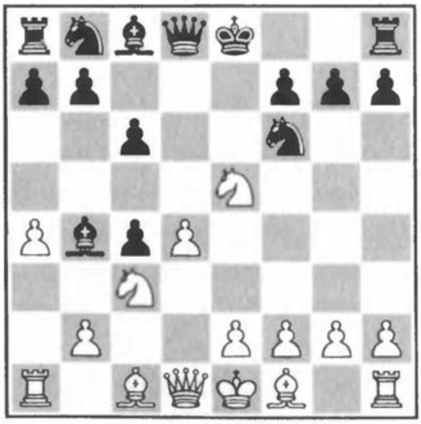
Other moves will not concern Black, for example:

– 6.dxe5 ♕xd1+ 7.♔xd1 ♘g4 8.♔e1 ♘a6! and knight will come to b4 with very annoying pressure: 9.♗f4 (9.h3? ♘b4!–+) 9...♘b4 10.♖c1 f6! and Black is at least OK!

– 6.e3 exd4 7.♘xd4 (7.exd4 ♗e6) 7...♗d6 8.♗xc4 ♕c7! with an initiative for Black, for example: 9.h3 0-0 10.0-0 ♖d8.

6...♗b4

6...♗e6 is worse because of 7.e4!.



7.♘xc4

A natural move, but it gives Black a serious advantage in development for the pawn.

– 7.f3 is a typical idea to prepare e4, but is also risky, since Black is better developed. I would suggest 7...♘d5! (7...0-0 8.e4 ♘bd7 9.♘xc4 ♘xe4) 8.♕d2 Already the only move! (8.♗d2? ♕h4+ 9.g3 ♕xd4∓; 8.♕c2? ♕h4+ 9.g3 ♕xd4–+) 8...b5 (8...f5!?) 9.e4 ♘c7 10.♗e2 0-0 (10...f6 11.♘g4 ♘e6 12.d5 ♘c5 13.dxc6 ♗xg4 14.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 15.axb5 ♘b3 16.♖a4! seems too dangerous for Black) with a very sharp position and mutual chances, for example: 11.0-0 f6 12.♘g4 ♗xg4 13.fxg4 ♘e6! 14.axb5 cxb5 15.♖d1 ♕b6 16.♕e3 ♘c6 17.♘d5 ♕b7 18.♕f2 a5.

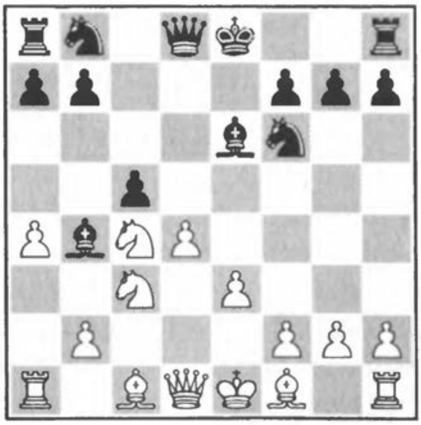
– 7.♗g5 ♗e6 8.e4 ♘bd7 9.♘xc4 h6! 10.♗xf6 (10.♗h4 g5 11.♗g3 ♘xe4∓) 10...♘xf6 11.f3 ♕e7! followed by castling queenside or ...♖d8 and White is in big danger on the dark squares: e.g. 12.♗e2 0-0-0! 13.0-0? ♖xd4–+.

For the main line 7.e3 see the next two games.

7...♗e6

Here 7...0-0 8.e3 c5! is also possible.

8.e3 c5!



9.♗e2

Other tries also offer Black compensation:

– 9.dxc5 ♕xd1+ 10.♔xd1 0-0 11.♘d6?! ♗xc5 12.♘xb7 ♗b4 and White's knight on b7 is in trouble.

– 9.♘e5 0-0 10.♗e2 cxd4 11.exd4 ♘c6 12.♘xc6 bxc6 13.0-0 ♗d6 or 13...♖b8 provides very decent compensation for a small (well-controlled) pawn.

9...♘c6 10.dxc5

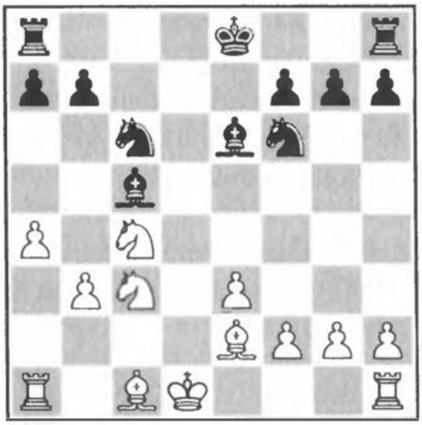
In principle, being a pawn up, White is trying to exchange queens. However, Black keeps a very active position! After 10.0-0?! cxd4 11.exd4 ♘xd4 it is White who has to think about equalizing.

10...♕xd1+ 11.♔xd1 ♗xc5

Maybe even more accurate is 11...0-0-0+ 12.♔c2 (12.♔e1 ♗xc4 13.♗xc4 ♘e4∓) 12...♗f5+ (12...♗xc5 13.b3 ♘b4+ 14.♔b2 ♘d3+ 15.♗xd3 ♖xd3) 13.♔b3 ♗xc5 14.f3 ♗e6 when White is in danger.

12.b3

12.♔e1 with the idea of f3 and ♔f2 is a better try, but Black still keeps good compensation after 12...0-0-0 (12...♘b4 13.♔f1) 13.f3 ♘b4 14.♔f2 ♘d3+ 15.♗xd3 ♖xd3 16.♘e5 ♖dd8 (but not 16...♖d6 17.b4! ♗xb4 18.♘b5±).



12...♖d8+!?

Another surprise! It seems that this was Black's main strategy in this game!

My olala choice (the basis of Olalachess is Harmony – make all your pieces smile!) would be 12...0-0-0+!. So now ♖h8 will also smile soon: 13.♔c2 (13.♗d2? ♗b4∓) 13...♘b4+ 14.♔b2 ♘g4 (14...♘d3+ 15.♗xd3 ♖xd3 16.♘e5 ♖d6) 15.♘e4 (15.♗xg4 ♗xg4 16.♘e5 ♗h5) 15...♗e7 16.f3 (16.h3 f5) 16...f5!.

13.♔c2 ♗f5+?!

Stronger is 13...♘b4+ 14.♔b2 ♘g4 (14...♘d3+ 15.♗xd3 ♖xd3) 15.♗xg4 ♗xg4 16.f3 ♗e6 and Black has better development and more smiling pieces; that's worth at least a pawn!

14.♔b2 ♘b4

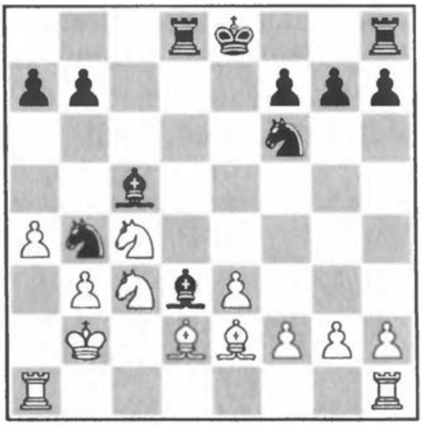
Not 14...0-0 15.f3!.

15.♗d2?!

It is not easy to defend well, when you have been surprised as of move 5! ☺

The best defence was 15.f3! ♗d3! (15...♘d3+? 16.♗xd3 ♗xd3 17.e4±) 16.♖d1! 0-0 (16...♔e7 17.♗xd3! ♘xd3+ 18.♔b1 with ♗a3, and White will finish her development) 17.♗xd3 (17.e4 ♗xe2 18.♖xd8 ♖xd8 19.♘xe2 ♘d3+ 20.♔b1 – 20.♔a2 ♘b4+ repeats – 20...♘e1!) 17...♘xd3+ 18.♔b1 (18.♔c2 ♘b4+ 19.♔b1 ♖xd1 20.♘xd1 ♖d8) 18...♘f2 19.♖xd8 ♖xd8 20.♗a3! and eliminating Black's threats White's extra pawn provides a tangible advantage.

15...♗d3!



Being surprised on almost every move, White has spent a lot of time on the clock, and finally she lost control...

16.♖ad1??

16.♗e1 was the best chance: 16...0-0 when Black has nice compensation, but we are still a long way from a win.

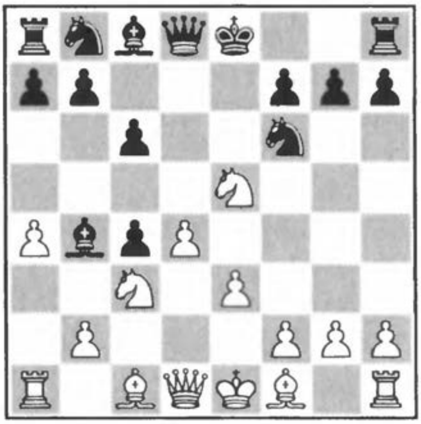
16...♗xe2 17.♘xe2 ♘d3+ 18.♔c2 ♘xf2–+ 19.♖hf1 ♘xd1 20.♖xd1 ♘e4 21.♘c3 ♘xd2 22.♘xd2 ♗xe3

White resigned.

☐ **Jean Hébert**
■ **Marat Khassanov**
Montreal 2004

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 dxc4 5.a4 e5!? 6.♘xe5 ♗b4 7.e3

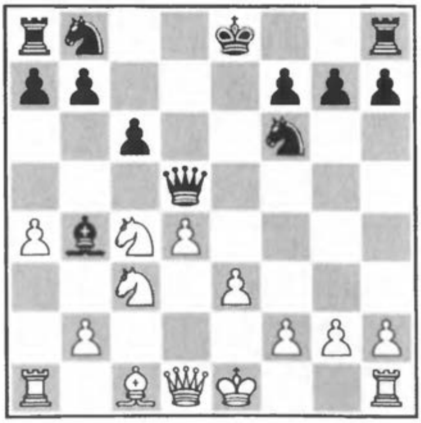
White intends to win the pawn without neglecting his development.



7...♗e6!

This is correct, after the natural 7...c5?!, 8.♗xc4 0-0 9.0-0 leaves White a pawn up with pressure on f7 to boot.

8.♗xc4 ♗xc4 9.♘xc4 ♕d5!



So Black will win back a nice, tasty pawn on g2! If you see how natural White's moves were after 5...e5 than perhaps it does not surprise you to hear that this occurred in more than one game! I suspect that in this game White, who is a strong IM, simply missed this rare kind of fork! Something that often happens when you are confronted with a SOS. Luckily for White, the position is still unclear!

10.♕b3!

Another critical test for the gambit! 10.♘e5 ♕xg2 11.♕f3 ♕xf3 12.♘xf3 0-0 13.♗d2 a5 (I would suggest the improvement 13...♘a6!? to obtain a harmonious game with ...♖e8, ...♖d8 and the ...c5 break! After 14.♘e5 ♖fe8 with ...♗d6, ...c5 and ...♘b4 ideas the position favours Black) 14.♘e5 ♘bd7 15.♘d3 ♘b6! and Black was preferable in Gremeda-Chavez, Elista Olympiad 1998. According to the MegaBase this is the first game in history with 5...e5. However, I thought that calling it the Chavez Variation might be too controversial! ☺

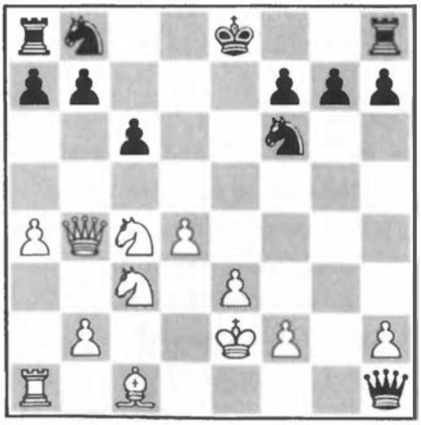
10...♕xg2

There is no alternative but to plunge in. Not 10...a5? 11.0-0+–, nor 10...♗xc3+? 11.bxc3 ♕xg2 12.♘d6+!+–.

11.♕xb4!

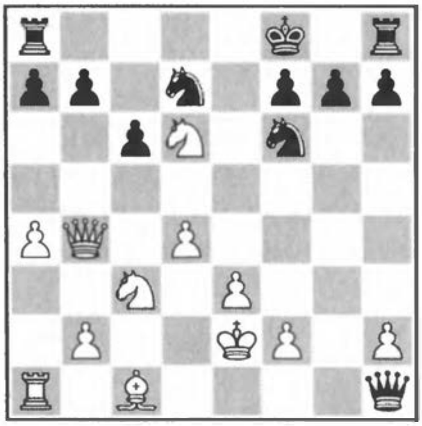
Wow, a surprising counterattack! Maybe Hébert didn't miss 9...♕d5 after all?!

11...♕xh1+ 12.♔e2



12...c5?!

Not the best move in my opinion. Also unsatisfactory is 12...b6?! 13.♘d6+ ♔f8 14.a5!.
I would suggest 12...♘bd7! 13.♘d6+ (13.♕xb7? 0-0∓) 13...♔f8! (not 13...♔e7 14.♘xb7+).



The only problem for big fighters is that White can probably force a draw with 14.♕b3. After 14...♔e7! 15.♘f5+ with a repetition (but not 15.♘xf7? ♖hf8∓). In case Black wants to play he can try the risky 14...♘d5. However, after 15.♕xb7 (15.e4 ♕xh2! 16.♕xb7 ♕h5+) 15...♖d8 16.e4! ♕xh2! 17.exd5 ♕xd6 18.dxc6 ♕xd4 19.cxd7 ♖xd7 20.♕c8+ ♖d8 21.♕c7 ♖d7 22.♕c8+ the players still have to repeat moves.

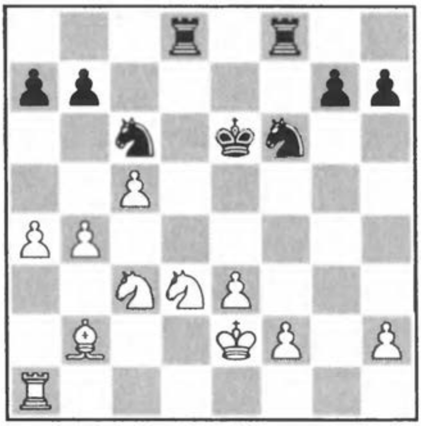
Some alternatives for 14.♕b3:

- 14.♘xb7+? ♔g8∓ and on h7 Black's king is much safer than White's, and his h8-rook will smile too!
- 14.♕xb7 ♖b8 15.♕xa7 ♕xh2 attacks the knight. As Black is ready to go to h5 with check if necessary this favours Black who has at least a draw in his pocket.
- 14.e4!? ♕xh2 15.♕xb7 ♖b8 16.♕xc6 ♕h5+ 17.♔d3 (17.f3 ♕h2+ 18.♔d3 ♕h3 19.♔e2 ♕g2+ 20.♔e3 ♕g1+ repeats) 17...♕f3+ (17...♔g8!? with the idea of ...h6 and ...♔h7) 18.♗e3 h5! and the position will be very complicated. Both sides have their chances, White surely has some nice compensation for the exchange, but with your superior SOS preparation your opponent will probably be out of time by now, right? ☺

13.♕xc5

13.♘d6+! ♔d7 (13...♔f8 14.♕c4+–) 14.dxc5± is more dangerous for Black.

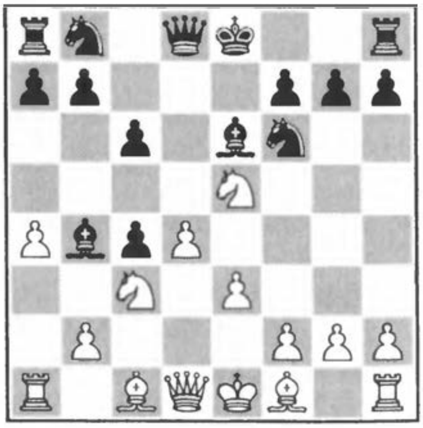
13...♕c6 14.♘d6+ ♔d7 15.♘xf7 ♕xc5 16.dxc5 ♖f8 17.♘e5+ ♔e6 18.♘d3 ♘c6 19.b4 ♖ad8 20.♗b2



And in this ending White has the slightly better chances. In the end a draw was agreed. **20...♖f7 21.♘b5 ♘e8 22.♘d4+ ♘xd4+ 23.♗xd4 g5 24.b5 ♘c7 25.♖c1 ♔f5 26.♖c4 ♖e7 27.♗c3 ♖e4 28.♖xe4 ♔xe4 29.b6 axb6 30.cxb6 ♘e6 31.f3+ ♔d5 32.♗d2 ♔c4 33.♘e5+ ♔d5 34.♘d3 ♔c4 35.♘e5+ ♔d5** Draw.

☐ **Viktor Kortchnoi**
■ **Marat Khassanov**
Montreal 2004

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 dxc4 5.a4 e5!? 6.♘xe5 ♗b4 7.e3 ♗e6!



8.♗e2!

This is not so natural, but I consider it the best option to fight for an advantage, although I am sure that not many of your opponents will find it.

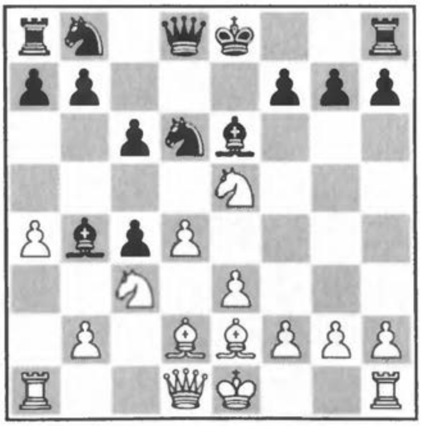
Instead 8.♘xc4 c5! will transpose to our game Kashlinskaya-Solovjova from above. Worse is 8...♘e4?! 9.♗d2 (9.♕c2!?±) 9...♘xd2 10.♘xd2 0-0 11.♗e2 c5 12.dxc5 ♘d7 13.♘de4 f5 14.♕d4! a5 15.♗c4! and White was better in Voskanyan-Khassanov, Montreal 2004. Our gambit lover still managed to draw though.

Against other moves Black should use similar ideas as in the game, trying to open the centre with ...c5 to use his activity and development advantage. For example 8.♗d2!? 0-0 9.♘xc4 (9.♗xc4 ♗xc4 10.♘xc4 ♗xc3= 11.♗xc3 ♕d5!) 9...c5! 10.dxc5 ♕e7! 11.♗e2 ♖d8!.

8...c5!

Black has to play dynamically to compensate for the pawn!

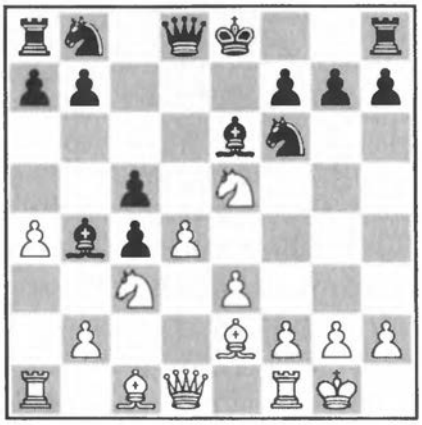
8...♘e4?! was Moro's logical choice, but I consider it dubious: 9.♗d2 (9.♕c2 is also good for White) 9...♘d6 (or 9...♗xc3 10.♗xc3 ♘d6 11.0-0±)



10.♘e4! ♘xe4 11.♗xb4 c5 12.♗c3 ♘c6 13.♘xc6 bxc6 14.♗f3 ♗d5 15.♗xe4 ♗xe4 16.♕g4 ♕d5 17.dxc5 h5 18.♕xg7 0-0-0 19.♕d4 ♗xg2 20.♕xd5 ♗xd5 21.♖g1 and White was better in Bacrot-Morozevich, Cannes rapid 2001.

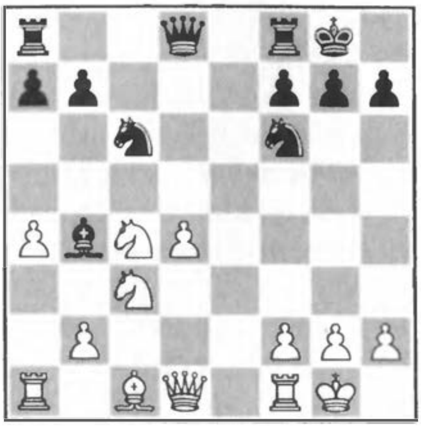
9.0-0

Black is OK following 9.♗f3!? cxd4! 10.exd4 (10.♕xd4 ♕e7! with nice compensation; 10.♗xb7? ♕c7! 11.♗xa8 dxc3 12.0-0 ♕xe5∓) 10...♘d5 11.0-0 0-0.



9...♘c6! 10.♗xc4 ♗xc4 11.♘xc4 cxd4 12.exd4 0-0

Here we have arrived at a critical position. White has managed to finish his development and to keep the pawn. However, Black remains active and remember that the extra pawn is a weakness on d4 especially if it gets blocked. Black has very good practical compensation, and if (at least for the moment!) this is the worst you can get from our Mouse Sleep Slav Gambit – then why not give it a try?

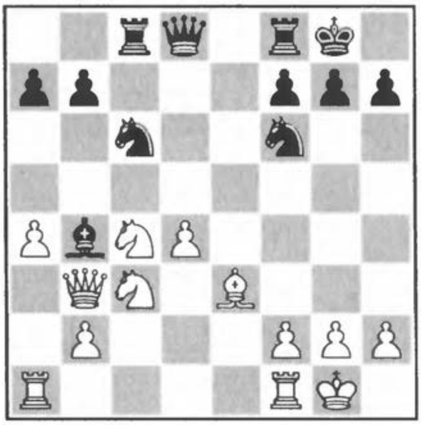


13.d5!?

13.♗e3 was tried by two strong GMs in St. Petersburg 2004:

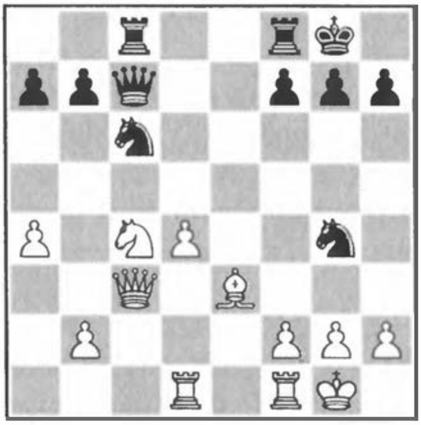
Now 13...♘a5!? 14.♘xa5 ♕xa5 15.♕f3 ♖fd8 16.♕xb7 ♖ab8 17.♕f3 ♗xc3 18.bxc3 ♕xc3 19.♖fc1 would still keep decent winning chances for White. Interesting are 13...♖e8!? and 13...♘d5!?.

In practice Black has only tried 13...♖c8 14.♕b3



– 14...♗xc3 is not enough if White plays accurately: 15.bxc3 ♕d5 16.♖fc1 ♘g4 17.♕b5 ♘e7 18.♘d2 ♕e6 (18...♕d6 could be an improvement: 19.♘f3 ♘xe3 20.fxe3 ♘d5 21.♕xb7 ♖b8 – 21...♕e6 – 22.♕xa7 ♕g6! with ...♖b2 coming! Black seems to have decent chances) 19.♘f1 f5 20.♕xb7 ♘d5 21.♗d2 ♖b8 22.♖e1 ♕d6 23.♕xa7 ♖fc8 24.c4 ♖xc4 25.♖e6! ♕d8 26.♗g5!+–, Riazantsev-Solovjov, St Petersburg 2004.

– 14...♘g4!? 15.♖ad1 ♗xc3 16.♕xc3. Now the game went 16...♕d5 17.b3 ♖cd8 18.f3 ♘f6 19.♗f2 ♕g5 20.♕d2 ♕h5 21.♖fe1 ♘d5 22.♘e5 ♘cb4 (it is hard to improve White's position, since his extra pawn moves nowhere) 23.♖e4 ♕f5 24.♘c4 ♘c6 25.♗g3 h6 26.♗f2 ♕g6 27.♖g4 ♕f5 28.♖e4 ♕g6 29.♖de1 ♕g5 And probably tired of trying, White agreed to a draw after 30.♖d1 ♕g6 draw, Alekseev-Yevseev, St Petersburg 2004. Instead Black has 16...♕c7 as another good option



– 17.f4? ♘a5! (17...♘e7 18.b3) 18.h3 (18.♕xa5 ♕xa5 19.♘xa5 ♘xe3∓) 18...♘xe3 19.♘xe3 ♕xc3 20.bxc3 ♖xc3∓.

– 17.♘e5 ♘cxe5 18.♕xc7 ♖xc7 19.dxe5 ♘xe3 20.fxe3 ♖e8 with equal chances.

– 17.g3 ♘e7 18.b3 ♕c6!? and Black has good counterchances on the light squares. In fact 18...♖fd8 and 18...♘f6!? are decent too.

13...♘a5!

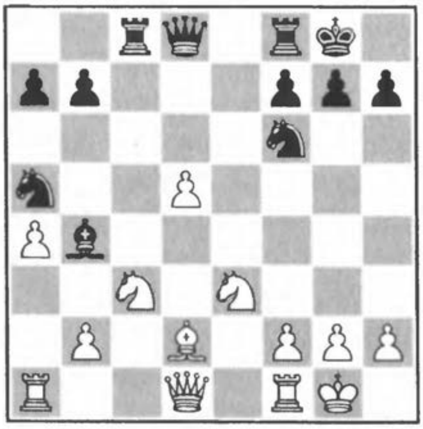
Correct, as 13...♘e7 is bad in view of 14.d6 ♘f5 15.♗f4±.

14.♘e3

The only way for White to try to keep his extra pawn.

After 14.♘xa5 ♕xa5 followed by ...♖d8, Black will easily win back the pawn with possibilities to fight for more than a draw.

14...♖c8 15.♗d2



15...♕d7

I would suggest 15...♕b6, when Black easily mobilizes his pieces, with nice play for the pawn. It is hard for White to keep his pawn and coordinate his misplaced pieces. 15...♖e8 followed by ...♕d7 is also worth considering. After the text there is a concrete opportunity.

16.♖c1

After 16.♘e4! ♗xd2 (16...♘xd5? 17.♗xb4+–) 17.♘xf6+ gxf6 18.♕xd2 ♘b3 19.♕b4 ♘xa1 20.♖xa1 White has nice compensation for the exchange.

16...♖fd8 17.♘e4 ♘xd5 18.♘xd5 ♖xc1 19.♗xc1 ♕xd5 20.♘f6+ gxf6 21.♕g4+ ♔h8 22.♕xb4

After a forcing sequence Kortchnoi has inflicted some structural damage. Khassanov still has active piece play though.

22...♖g8

Black also has counterplay after 22...♘c4 23.b3 (23.♕e7 ♔g7) 23...♖g8 24.f3 ♘e5 25.♕c3 h5.

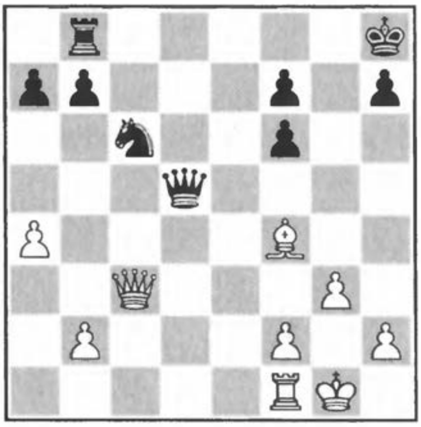
23.g3

23.f3.

23...♖b8

Equality arises after 23...♘c6! 24.♕b5 (24.♕xb7 ♖b8) 24...♕xb5 25.axb5 ♘d4.

24.♗f4 ♘c6 25.♕c3



25...♘e5

With 25...♘d4! Black could have reaped the efforts of his courageous opening play. After 26.♖e1 ♘f3+ 27.♔f1 ♘xh2+ 28.♔g1 ♘f3+ Black has a draw, but probably not more.

26.♗xe5 fxe5 27.♖c1

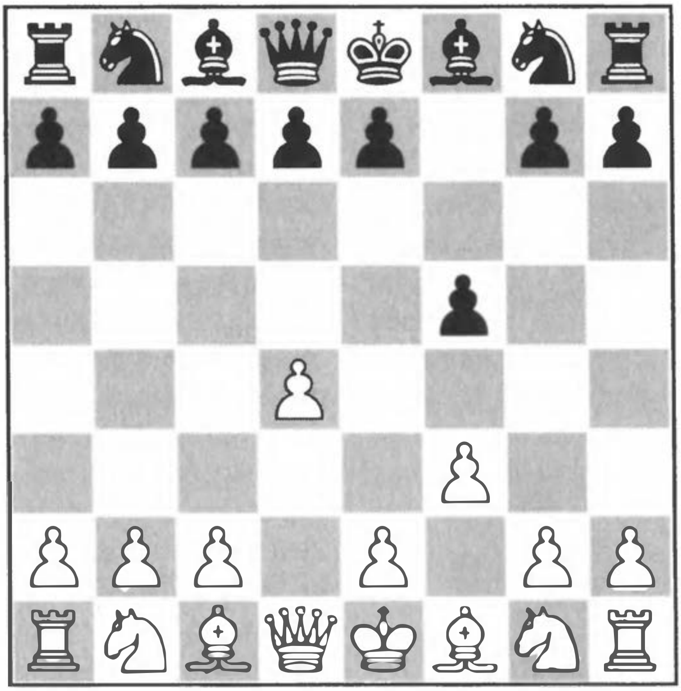
In this ending with only heavy pieces White is slightly better. Kortchnoi won on move 56.

I hope you enjoyed this article, and that you will find the courage to try this SOS weapon!

CHAPTER 15

Jeroen Bosch

Dutch: Preparing the Staunton Gambit



1.d4 f5 2.f3!?

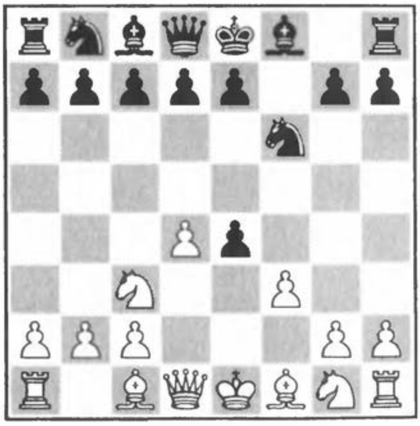
☐ **Pascal Vandevoort**
■ **Marco Santo Roman**
Paris 2003

1.d4 f5 2.f3!?

In the King's Pawn Openings the Sicilian Defence boasts an excellent reputation. Indeed, the Sicilian is solely responsible for the statistical superiority of 1.d4 over 1.e4, and the nomenclature is particularly inaccurate here: surely the Sicilian is a Counter-Attack and not a Defence? Its logical counterpart in the Queen's Pawn Openings is the Dutch Defence. Curiously, the reputation of the Dutch cannot hold a candle to the Sicilian, while its strategical objective (controlling the central square next to the pawn that has just been advanced) is essentially the same. This may seem unreasonable, but of course a case can be made for arguing that f7 is a critical weakness in the initial position and that therefore f7-f5 in the opening can never be correct – especially not when played on the first move. However that may be, the consequence is that lots of people go berserk when faced with the Dutch. Thus, lines like 2.g4, 2.h3, 2.e4 are not really frowned upon, while such moves as 2.♗g5 (developing a bishop into space attacking nothing) and 2.♘c3 (in front of the c-pawn) are completely respectable. I love playing the Dutch as Black (perhaps partly for the same reason as Dimitri Reinderman –

see SOS-11) and yet, I had never seen (let alone taken seriously) the move that is the subject of this article: 2.f3.

Now I am sure that most readers will forgive me this lack of erudition, and some will undoubtedly feel that it is even laudatory. And, yet, if you think about it briefly is 2.f3 really that stupid? Yes, it takes away the square of the knight, but with 1...f5 Black has indicated that square e4 is central to his whole opening strategy. Moreover, by analogy to the Sicilian 2.f3 is what Alapin's 2.c3 is against the Sicilian, isn't it? Coming back to the Dutch Defence and the ways in which it is met: 2.e4 – the Staunton Gambit – is perhaps theoretically not the most dangerous line for Black, but it is popular on an amateur level, and it is always given a fair amount of space in all repertoire books on the Dutch. One of the main lines in the Staunton Gambit runs 2...fxe4 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.f3



So, why not 2.f3 to prepare a kind of Staunton Gambit?

I own quite a few books on the Dutch, and yet I never saw the move 2.f3 mentioned – until quite recently that is. In Gambit's 2009 publication *Win with the Stonewall Dutch* by Sverre Johnsen and Ivar Bern (and a contribution by Simen Agdestein) the authors mention 2.f3 as an alternative move order weapon to reach the Staunton Gambit, adding that it contains some independent points as well. Now, these authors deserve credit for having the guts to mention such an ugly move, and they deserve praise for making these points (I think for the first time). In this article I will augment their argument and indeed extend it – the Norwegian authors were of course unable to devote a lot of space on 2.f3 in a full-bodied work on the Stonewall.

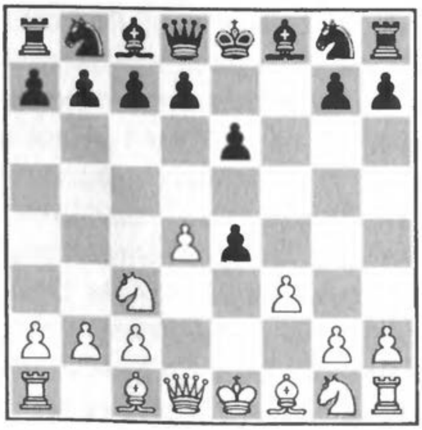
2...♘f6

The most natural reply and perhaps the move you will most often encounter in practice when you decide to take up this SOS. Indeed, now 3.e4 fxe4 4.♘c3 is an immediate transposition to the Staunton Gambit – and going back to standard theory will certainly appeal to your SOS-shocked opponent. Especially, since the Staunton is no longer the frightful weapon it was in the 19th and early 20th century. However, as we will see White has another, far stronger, option.

Of course there are plenty of other moves that we should investigate after 2.f3. Some of them will lead to superior versions of the Staunton Gambit – for White that is, others will lead to obscure and little-investigated positions. All of them fun to play:

● 2...e6 does nothing to prevent White's plan, or does it? After 3.e4 fxe4 White cannot take back on e4 because of the check on h4. So, there is a point behind 2...e6, but we can be more clever still by turning 3.e4 into a real sacrifice.

Let us first consider **4.♘c3**



In most lines White is now much better off than in a regular Staunton Gambit. A few examples:

After **4...exf3** 5.♘xf3 White obtains dangerous compensation:

– 5...♗b4 6.♗d3 ♘f6 7.♗g5 0-0 8.0-0 ♗xc3 9.bxc3 ♕e8 10.♕d2!? b6?! 11.♘e5 d6 12.♗xf6 gxf6 (12...♖xf6 13.♖xf6 gxf6 14.♖f1) 13.♕h6! ♕e7 14.♖f3 dxe5 15.♖g3+ and Black resigned, as 15...♔h8 16.♗xh7 is fatal, in Rivera-Esposito, Fuerteventura 1992.

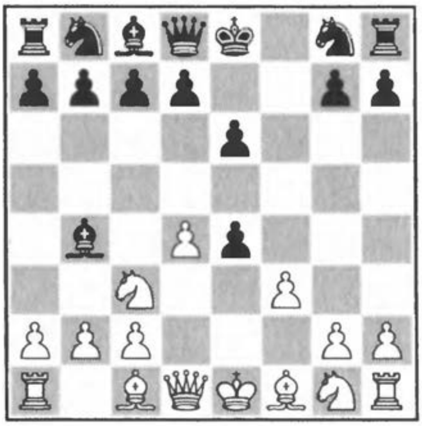
– 5...♘f6 6.♗d3 ♘c6 7.0-0 ♗d6 (7...♗e7) 8.♗g5 0-0 9.♕e1 h6?! 10.♗xf6 ♖xf6 11.♕e4 gave White superior chances in Schmitt-Kühn, Giessen 1991. This example illustrates the type of chances that White has when Black accepts the pawn.

Returning the pawn with **4...e3** also does not solve Black's problems. 5.♗xe3 and now:

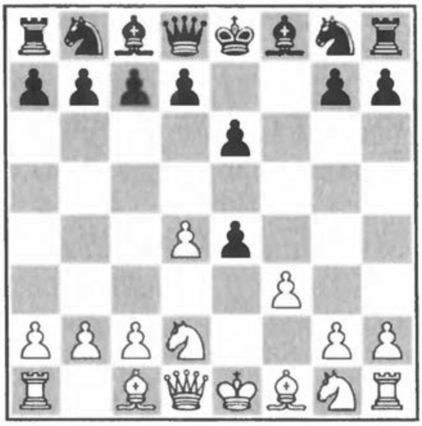
– 5...d5 6.♗d3 (6.f4!? is also good) 6...c5 7.dxc5 ♘d7 8.♗b5 ♘e7 9.♗g5 (9.f4! ♘f5 10.♗f2 is clearly better for White) 9...h6 10.♗e3 ♘c6 11.f4 ♕f6 12.♗d3 ♘xc5 13.♕h5+ ♔d8. While White has missed some opportunities to keep it simple, he could now still have played 14.0-0-0 with a dangerous attack. Instead he went 14.♗xc5? ♗xc5 15.♘ge2 ♗d7 16.0-0-0 ♖c8 17.♔b1 ♘e7 18.♖hf1 ♔c7 19.♗b5 (19.♘e4! dxe4 20.♕xc5+ ♔d8 21.♕a5+ b6 22.♕xa7 exd3 23.♖xd3 with compensation) 19...♗xb5 20.♘xb5+ ♔b8 and the famous author on pawn structures won in Vilardebo Picurena-Kmoch, Prague 1931.

– 5...♘f6 6.♗d3 ♗e7 (6...♘c6; 6...♗b4; 6...d5?! 7.f4) 7.♕d2 b6 8.♘h3 ♗a6 9.0-0-0 ♗xd3 10.♕xd3 ♘c6 11.♘f4 ♘b4 12.♕e2 0-0 13.♔b1 ♕c8 14.a3 ♘bd5 15.♘cxd5 exd5 16.g4 and White obtained a strong attack in Kotov-Poliak, Moscow vs Ukraine 1937.

Best after 4.♘c3 is **4...♗b4!** and if you like this is the real point of 2...e6. I am not sure that White has sufficient compensation here.



So, if White wants to avoid 4.♘c3 ♗b4 he may consider **4.♘d2!?**.

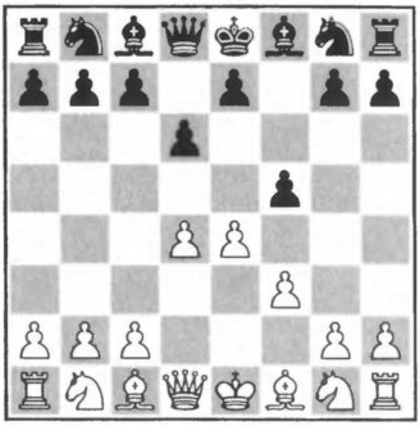


Now, White will obtain good compensation for the pawn after 4...exf3 5.♘gxf3 ♘f6 6.♗d3 ♗e7 (old practice saw 6...c5 7.0-0 cxd4 8.♘g5!? d5 9.♗xh7 which favoured White in Denker-Dake, Syracuse 1934) 7.0-0. While 4...♘f6 5.fxe4 is just better for White. Of course Black can try returning the pawn with 4...e3 when 5.♘c4 ♘f6 6.♗xe3 ♘c6 leads to interesting play.

4...♘c6!? is perhaps the critical reply. When rather than 5.♘xe4 ♘f6 I would prefer 5.c3 exf3 6.♘gxf3 ♘f6 7.♗d3 ♗e7 8.0-0 0-0, now 9.♘e4 ♘xe4 10.♗xe4 d5 11.♗c2 e5 equalizes, but any reasonable queen move

(9.♕c2, 9.♕e2, 9.♕e1) provides compensation for the pawn.

● With 2...d6 Black makes no effort to prevent e4, so White should just go ahead and play it: 3.e4



White has achieved his aim, and Black is suffering:

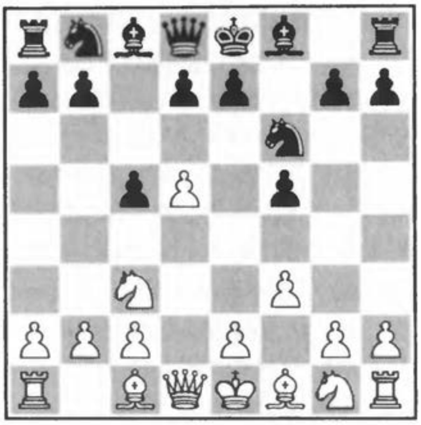
– 3...♘f6 4.♗d3 (4.♘c3) 4...fxe4 5.fxe4 ♗g4 (after 5...e5 White may consider the pawn sacrifice 6.♘f3 exd4 7.0-0!? ♘c6 8.c3) 6.♗e2! ♗xe2 7.♕xe2 ♘c6 8.♘f3 e5 9.d5 ♘d4 (otherwise White is simply much better) 10.♘xd4 exd4 K.Müller-Hjorth, Bad Zwesten 1999. And now 11.♕b5+ looks good;

– 3...fxe4 4.fxe4 e5 5.♘f3 exd4 6.♕xd4 (6.♗c4!?) 6...♘c6 7.♗b5 ♗d7 8.♗xc6 ♗xc6 9.♘c3 ♘f6 10.♗g5 ♗e7 11.0-0-0 0-0 12.e5 and White's chances are to be preferred. Toth-Dovzik, Sarospatak 2000;

– 3...e5 4.♘c3 (the easiest way to achieve an advantage is 4.dxe5 fxe4 5.♘c3!, while 5.♗e3 exf3 6.♘xf3 ♘c6 7.♗c4 was also good for White in Larsen-Christiansen, Copenhagen 2007) 4...c6 5.♗c4 b5 6.♗b3 b4 7.♘ce2 ♘f6 8.♗e3 ♗e7 9.♕d2 a5 10.exf5 ♗xf5 11.♘g3 ♕d7 12.dxe5 dxe5 13.♘xf5 ♕xf5 14.♘e2 with an obvious advantage in Gromovs-Corvi, Campobasso 2006.

● 2...c5 3.d5 ♘f6 4.♘c3

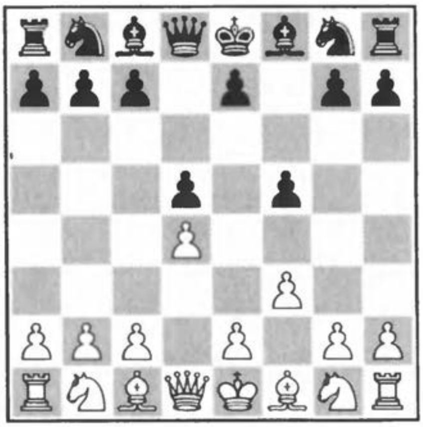
Now we have transposed into the so-called Dutch Benoni, or the Clarendon Court Defence as it was dubbed by English GM Jonathan Levitt. According to Jaan Ehlvest 1.d4 c5 2.d5 f5 may certainly be met by 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.f3!? as in Izoria-Ehlvest, Batumi 2002. Ehlvest wrote an article on 1.d4 c5 2.d5 f5 in SOS Volume 4 (pp. 41-48).



In the afore-mentioned game Izoria-Ehlvest White had a huge positional advantage after 4...g6?! 5.e4 d6?! (5...fxe4 6.fxe4 d6 was better. In the game White is allowed to take on f5) 6.♗b5+ ♗d7 7.exf5 gxf5 8.♘h3 and Black is clearly suffering positionally.

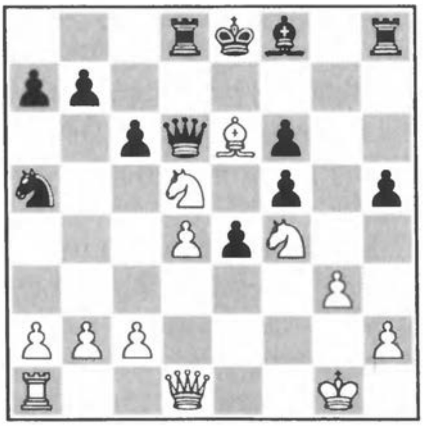
Instead, 4...e5 5.e4 fxe4 (5...f4 6.g3± or 6.♘h3 ♘h5 7.d6 ♕h4+ 8.♘f2 ♘c6 9.g3! ♕f6 10.g4 Ehlvest-J.Williams, Las Vegas 2003) 6.fxe4 a6 7.♘f3 d6 8.a4 and with square e6 still weak Ehlvest prefers White. Ehlvest felt that Black ought to try 4...e6 5.dxe6 d5!?. True, after 4...e6, 5.♗g5 can be met by 5...h6, but 5.e4 looks natural and good. Now 5...♗d6?! 6.♘b5 ♗c7 7.♘xc7+ ♕xc7 8.d6 ♕b6 9.e5 ♘d5 10.c4 ♘b4 11.f4 was much better for White in Kaputtze-WindPower, Internet 2006.

● 2...d5 is logical – Black increases his control over e4 – and endorsed by Bern and Johnsen in their Stonewall book. Mind you, players of the Ilyin-Zhenevsky or the Leningrad will not be so eager to create a big hole on e5.



Now it is important to realize that **3.e4** fxe4 4.fxe4 dxe4 5.♘c3 (5.♗c4 ♘f6 6.c3?! takes 'advantage' of our 2.f3 move order, but Black has the better game after 6...e5! 7.♕b3 ♗d6 Meessen-Froeyman, Antwerp 2000) 5...♘f6 merely transposes to the Staunton Gambit.

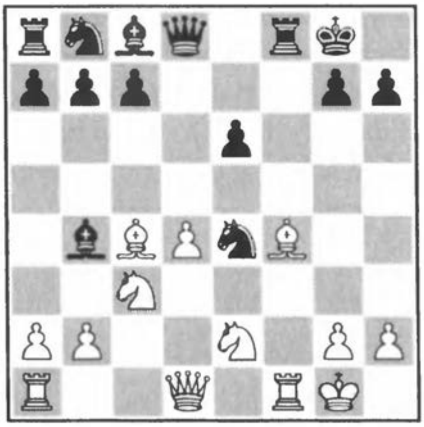
I don't want to keep the following spectacular grandmaster draw from you: 6.♗g5 ♗f5 7.♗c4 ♘c6 8.♘ge2 e6 9.0-0 ♘a5 10.♗d5!? ♕d7 11.♖xf5! exf5 12.♗xf6 gxf6 13.♘f4 h5 14.♗e6 ♕d6 15.g3 ♖d8 16.♘cd5 c6



17.♕xh5+! ♖xh5 18.♘xf6+ ♔e7 19.♘g8+ ½-½, Predojevic-Sedlak, Nova Gorica 2008. Bern and Johnsen point out that White might like to try **3.c4!?**.

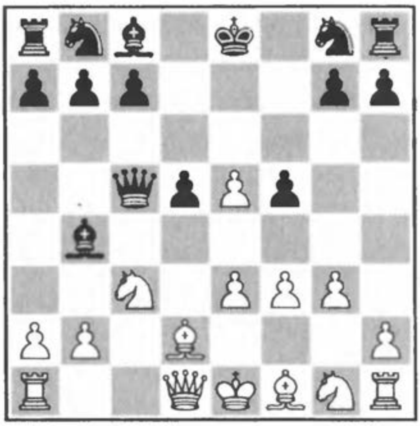
Now this is completely untested, and therefore ideal to wrong-foot your opponent. With no practical material available I will hint at few possible directions. Clearly, you don't need chess 960 to avoid the well-trodden paths. Do try this at home, at your local club, on the internet and in the tournament hall!

– 3...e6 4.♘c3 ♘f6 (4...dxc4 5.e4; 4...c6 5.cxd5!? – 5.e3 will transpose to normal theoretical schemes where White develops with ♕c2, ♗d3 and ♘ge2 – 5...exd5 6.♗f4 and play is about equal) 5.♗f4 (5.e3; 5.cxd5 ♘xd5! rather than 5...exd5 6.♗f4) 5...dxc4!? (other possibilities include 5...♗d6 and 5...♗e7 6.e3 0-0) 6.e4 fxe4 (or 6...♘c6 7.♗xc4 ♘xd4 8.♘ge2 with compensation for the pawn) 7.fxe4 ♗b4 8.♗xc4 0-0 (8...♘xe4 9.♘ge2!? is interesting while 9.♕h5+ g6 10.♕e5 ♘f6 11.♕xc7 ♕xc7 12.♗xc7 ♘d5 13.♗xd5 exd5 is equal) 9.♘ge2 ♘xe4 10.0-0



and White has compensation because of his lead in development and the weak pawn on e6.

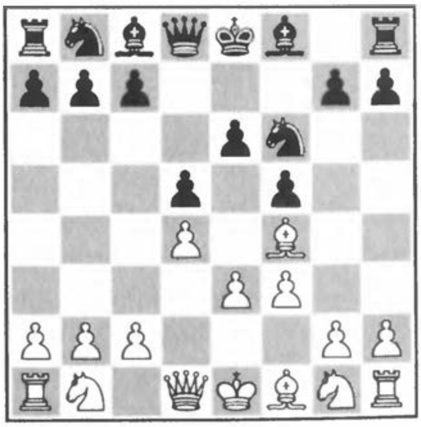
– 3...e5!? (very exciting!) 4.dxe5 ♗b4+ (4...d4 is a weird Albin Counter Gambit with pawns on f3 and f5; 4...♕h4+ 5.g3 ♕xc4 and now the quiet 6.e3 promises White a plus, while 6.e4 ♕b4+ 7.♘c3 dxe4 8.a3 ♕c5 9.fxe4 is sharper and more enterprising) 5.♗d2 ♕h4+ 6.g3 ♕xc4 7.e3 (7.e4 ♕d4!) 7...♕c5 8.♘c3 leads to an obscure position where Black has a healthy pawn structure.



However, White's edge in development and his passed pawn on e5 should give him a decent plus.

– 3...c6 4.cxd5 (4.e3 e6 5.♘c3 ♘f6 6.♕c2) 4...♘f6!? (4...cxd5 5.♘c3 ♘f6 6.♗f4±) 5.♘c3 (5.dxc6 ♘xc6 6.e3 e5, with compensation) 5...♘xd5 6.e4 ♘xc3 7.bxc3 e5 is another position that deserves practical tests.

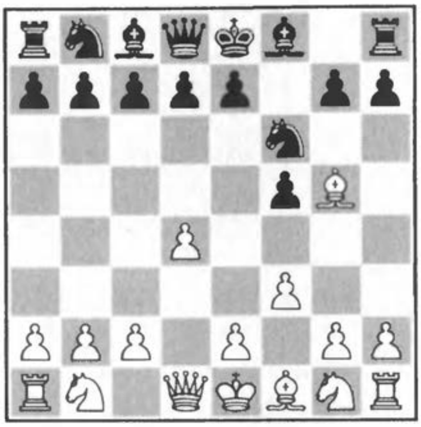
After 2...d5 the natural **3.♗f4** is quite playable of course, although I don't think that White has an edge. Stonewall-players are usually not that worried about the hole on e5, but not all lovers of the Dutch will be happy here. A normal continuation would be: 3...♘f6 4.e3 e6



and now White will soon have to make up his mind about his c-pawn. Will it move to c4 or c3?

3.e4

Preparing e4 is of course the main idea behind 2.f3 and nothing could be more logical than playing it immediately. Yet, some players have preferred not to sacrifice a pawn here by starting with 3.♗g5!?



– 3...d6 4.♘c3 ♘c6 5.e4 a6 6.♘ge2 g6 7.♕d2 h6 8.♗e3 e5 9.0-0-0 ♕e7? 10.♘d5 with a substantial edge in De Santis-Zacco, Milano 2007;

– 3...g6 4.c4 (4.♘c3!?) 4...♗g7 5.♘c3 0-0 6.♕d2 is fine for Black, but White soon obtained a superior position in Belaya-Kharashkina, St.Petersburg 2001: 6...c5 7.d5 ♕b6?! 8.0-0-0 e5 9.e4 d6 10.♗d3 fxe4 11.♗xe4 a6 12.h4 ♕a5 13.♗xf6!? ♗xf6 14.h5 g5 15.h6 ♕c7? (15...b5!) 16.g4±;

– 3...e6 4.e4 has not occurred in practice yet;

– Critical is 3...h6 4.♗xf6 exf6 5.e4, and now 5...d5!?;

– 3...d5 would lead to familiar positions after 4.♘c3 (2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.♗g5 d5 4.f3 has been played by strong GMs – according to Kindermann Black is well-advised to play 4...♘c6 now to prevent e4) but White is by no means obliged to place his knight in front of the c-pawn.

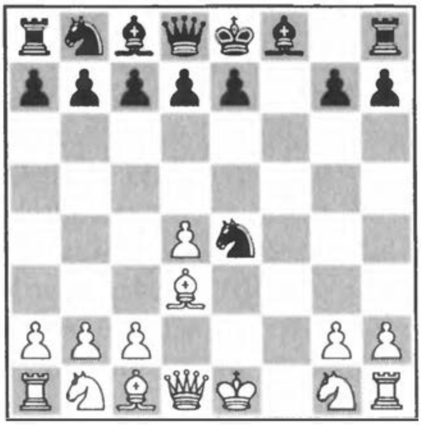
3...fxe4

Black must be ready to accept the pawn after 2...♘f6. Here 3...d6 transposes to 2...d6 3.e4 ♘f6 above.

4.fxe4 ♘xe4

The only other move that comes into consideration is 4...e5. However after 5.dxe5 ♘xe4 White has 6.♕d5 (6.♘f3 d5 is OK for Black, but not 6...♗c5? 7.♕d5+−) 6...♘c5 (6...♕h4+ 7.g3) 7.♘c3 when he appears to have an edge.

5.♗d3



5...d5

Black preserves his knight in the centre at the cost of weakening square e5. Retreating the knight with 5...♘f6 6.♘f3 e6 7.0-0 is similar to positions investigated above after 2...e6. White has obvious compensation for the pawn.

6.♘f3 ♘c6 7.0-0

This must be a good move. Although the alternative 7.♘bd2 is suggested by Bern and Johnsen in *Win with the Stonewall Dutch* as fairly promising for White.

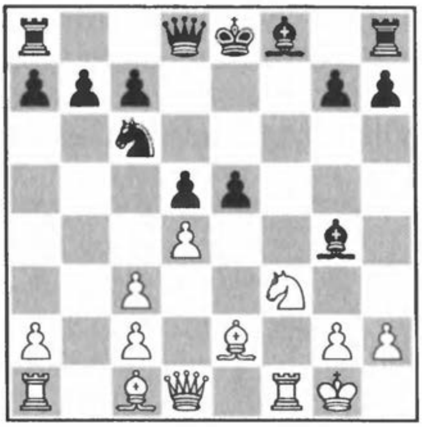
7...♗g4

Santo Roman is developing his queenside in order to be able to castle. The kingside certainly doesn't look like a safe hiding spot for the king. The pin on the knight also increases Black's control over square e5.

8.c3

A 'solid' move. Pawn d4 is protected and if Black castles queenside he must fear b4-b5.

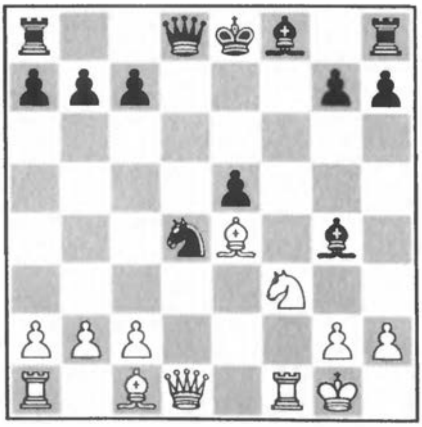
White can try to use his edge in development with 8.♘c3!? after 8...♘xc3 9.bxc3 e5!? 10.♗e2! (the problem was 10.dxe5?! ♗c5+ 11.♔h1 0-0 and Black is better)



– White has two raking bishops after 10...♗xf3 11.♗xf3 ♕d6 (11...e4 12.♗g4) 12.♗g4, or 12.♖b1 0-0-0 13.♖b5 e4 14.♗g4+ ♔b8 15.♗f4, and

– 10...e4 11.♘g5 ♗xe2 12.♕xe2 ♕d7 13.♘f7 ♖g8 14.♖b1 really looks very suspicious for the second player.

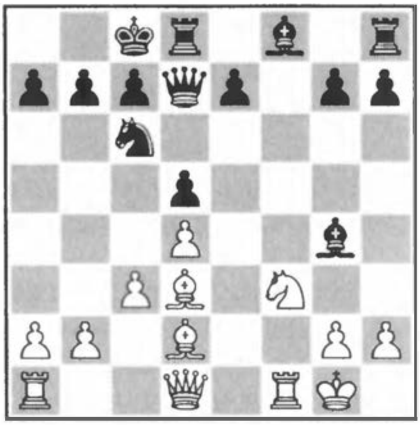
Therefore the immediate 8...e5!? is stronger. Now 9.♘xe4 dxe4 10.♗xe4 ♘xd4 (not 10...exd4? 11.♗xc6+ bxc6 12.♖e1+ ♗e7 13.♗g5 winning) leads to the next diagram.



– Here 11.♗xb7 ♖b8 12.♘xd4!? is spectacular but it does not lead to an advantage after, say 12...♗xd1 (12...♖xb7 13.♕xg4 ♕xd4+ 14.♕xd4 exd4) 13.♗c6+ ♔e7 14.♗g5+ ♔d6 15.♗xd8 exd4;

– Better is 11.♗e3 ♘xf3+ (11...♗c5 12.♔h1) 12.gxf3 ♕xd1 13.♖axd1 ♗d7. Black has managed to exchange queens and knights, while White is still a pawn down. In view of White's pressure a draw is the most likely result.

8...♕d7 9.♘bd2 ♘xd2 10.♗xd2 0-0-0



Black has managed to get his king into relative safety, and he has an extra pawn. White is the first to start the middlegame though. After Vandevoort's next I would definitely feel more comfortable sitting behind the white pieces.

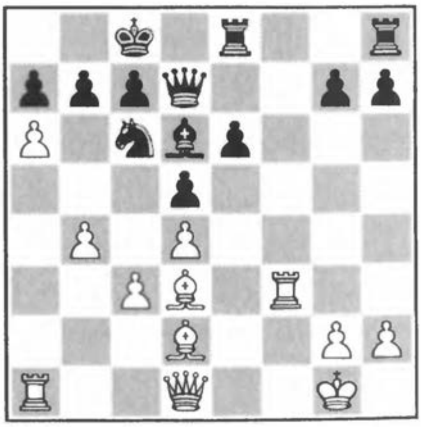
11.b4 ♗xf3

11...e5 does not really work after 12.b5 ♘xd4 13.cxd4 e4 14.♕a4!.

12.♖xf3 ♖e8 So that the knight can retreat to d8 if necessary.

13.a4 13.b5!? ♘d8 14.♕a4 ♔b8.

13...e6 14.a5 ♗d6 15.a6



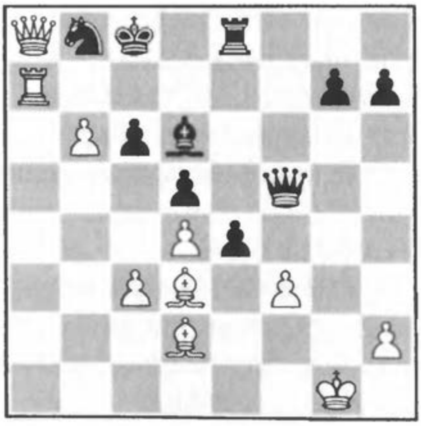
White has got there first.

15...♘b8 15...b6 16.♗b5 is a very annoying pin.

16.axb7+ ♔xb7 17.b5 ♖hf8 18.♕a4!? This is very powerful. White does not need to fear the weakening of his kingside (he is already too far ahead on the queenside). However, missing some immediate wins further on, it is precisely because of his weak kingside that the game will end in a draw. 18.♖xf8 ♖xf8 19.♕a4 was also good, and the safe way to win was 18.c4.

18...♖xf3 19.♕xa7+ ♔c8 20.gxf3 e5?! Objectively Black is now completely lost after White's next, but since Santo Roman manages to save half a point it is hard to criticize the practical value of this move. It is likely that both players were under time pressure here.

21.b6! c6 22.♕a8! e4 23.♖a7 ♕f5

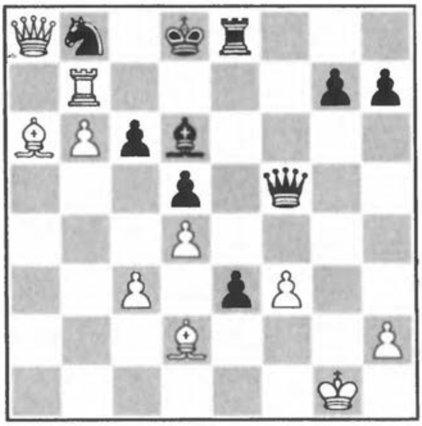


24.♗a6+?

In time trouble it is easy to think that this wins a tempo by giving a free check with a piece that is under attack. However, it was more important to combine queen and rook into a joint attack. Leaving the king on c8 enables White to check on b7 with the queen. Thus, winning are 24.♖xg7! since 24...exd3? will lead to mate after 25.b7+ ♔d8 26.♕a5+, and 24.♕b7+ ♔d8 25.♕xg7 was also game over.

24...♔d8 25.♖b7 e3

Here 25...exf3 26.♖xb8+ ♗xb8 27.♕xb8+ ♔e7 28.♕c7+ ♔f6 29.♔f2 wins for White.



26.♗e1?

This throws away the win, as does 26.♗xe3? ♖xe3 27.♖xb8+ ♗xb8 28.♕xb8+ ♔e7 29.b7 ♕xf3 30.♕c7+ ♔f6 31.♕e5+! ♖xe5 32.dxe5+ ♔g5 33.b8♕ ♕e3+ with perpetual check. White was still winning with 26.♖xb8+! ♗xb8 27.♕xb8+ ♔e7 28.♕c7+ ♔f8 29.♗e1.

26...♕g5+ 27.♔h1

Unclear is 27.♔f1 ♕f4 28.♔e2 ♕xh2+ 29.♔d1. After 27.♗g3 ♗xg3 28.hxg3 ♕xg3+ Black must take the perpetual.

27...♕f4 28.♗g3 ♕xf3+ 29.♔g1 ♗xg3 30.hxg3 ♕xg3+ 31.♔h1

And the game ends in perpetual check. And what a game it was!

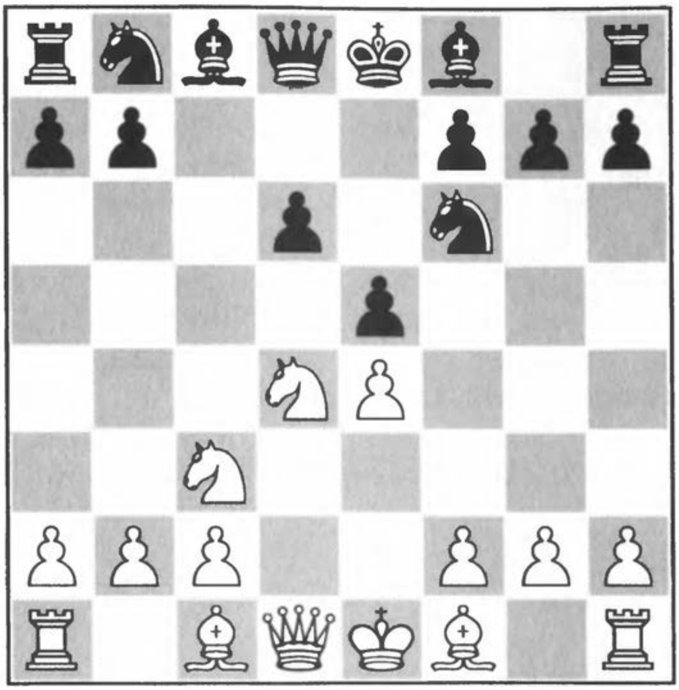
31...♕h3+ 32.♔g1 ♕g3+ 33.♔h1 ♕e1+ 34.♔h2 ♕f2+ 35.♔h1 ♕f3+

Draw.

CHAPTER 16

Igor Glek

Sicilian: the Intrepid 5...e5



Is 6.♗b5+ ♗d7 really that bad?

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 e5!?

An audacious move: Black immediately plays e7-e5, without any preparation! Now the advance of the e-pawn is well-known in the Sicilian but usually only after the preparatory 5...a6 (many lines in the Najdorf) or 5...♘c6 (as in the Boleslavsky system after 5...♘c6 6.♗e2 e5). Of course the positions that we obtain may also have some similarities with the Sveshnikov (or Cheliabinsk) Variation.

After the immediate 5...e5 it does not make much sense to play natural moves like 6.♘b3 or 6.♘f3 because Black will obtain a position typical of the Najdorf Variation, where he may justifiably hope to find a more useful move than ...a6.

Therefore theory universally acknowledges 6.♗b5+ to be the principal move. The exchange of the bishops of the light squares (for my intention is 6...♗d7) is generally thought to be good for White, but, in my opinion, Black will get compensation.

First of all, he gains time (Black can occupy the all-important Sicilian c-file more quickly).

Moreover, the exchange of a set of pieces normally does not hurt the second player in the opening.

6.♗b5+ ♗d7

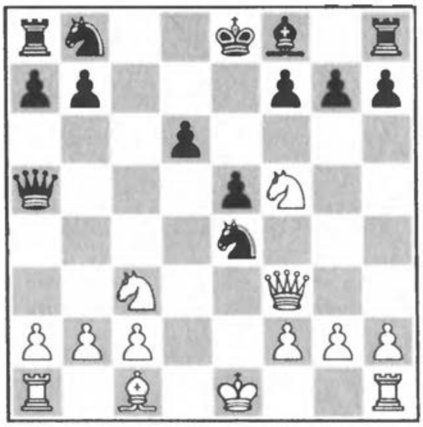
Actually 6...♘bd7 (7.♘f5!) is far more common. It has often been played by Viktor Kupreichik and some other GMs. But it's just another story.

I first started to play 6...♗d7 as a young master candidate in the 1970s – it was still in Soviet times.

7.♗xd7+

It is important to note that 7.♘f5?! doesn't work here (as it does after 6...♘bd7): 7...♗xb5 8.♘xb5 ♕a5+! (but not 8...♘xe4? 9.♕d5 ♕d7 10.♗e3 ♘f6 11.♘bxd6+ ♗xd6 12.♘xd6+ ♔f8 13.♕xb7 ♕xb7 14.♘xb7 ♘bd7 15.0-0-0+–, Petrick-Strydom, Cape Town 2002) 9.♘c3 ♘xe4. Now Black is more than fine after 10.♗d2 ♘xc3 11.♗xc3 ♕c7 12.♕f3 ♘c6 13.0-0-0 0-0-0 14.♘e3 g6 Vu T Minh-Nguyen Hong Minh, Ho Chi Minh City 2001, the subsequent 15.g4?! ♗h6 16.♔b1 ♗xe3 17.♕xe3 d5 gave Black had an obvious edge.

More interesting is 10.♕f3!?, and now:

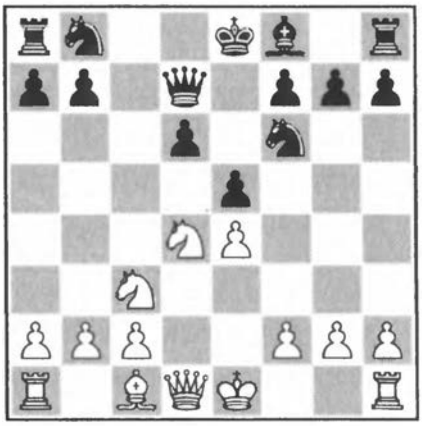


– After 10...d5 11.0-0! ♘xc3 12.♗d2! White has great compensation for the pawn.

– However, Black has a 'simple' solution in the form of 10...♘xc3! 11.♕xb7 ♕a6 12.♕f3 ♕c6∓.

7...♕xd7

This is the crucial position that I want to investigate in this article. The knight can jump to five possible squares: 8.♘f5, 8.♘db5, 8.♘b3, 8.♘f3, 8.♘de2. Which is better? Let's see.



I 8.♘f5 (8.♘db5)
II 8.♘b3
III 8.♘f3
IV 8.♘de2

Superficially 8.♘f5 followed by ♗g5 looks very strong so we will start to show that Black has no problems here.

Variation I

8.♘f5

This move is 'too active'. The same goes for 8.♘db5. It seems that neither move brings White anything, although, obviously, Black has to respond accurately.

In comparison to the Sveshnikov Variation 8.♘db5?! here does not make so much sense.

- Black can take the pawn 8...♘xe4!?, and now:

– 9.♘xe4 equalizes at best after 9...♕xb5 10.♘xd6+ (not 10.♕xd6?! ♘c6 11.♘c3 ♕a6 12.♕d5 ♖d8) 10...♗xd6 11.♕xd6 ♘c6 12.a4 ♕c4 13.♗e3 ♖d8 14.♕c5.

– More interesting is the reply 9.♘d5!?, after 9...♘a6 10.c4 ♘f6 11.♘xf6+ gxf6 12.0-0 ♘c7 13.♘xc7+ ♕xc7 White has obvious compensation after both 14.b3 and 14.♕d3.

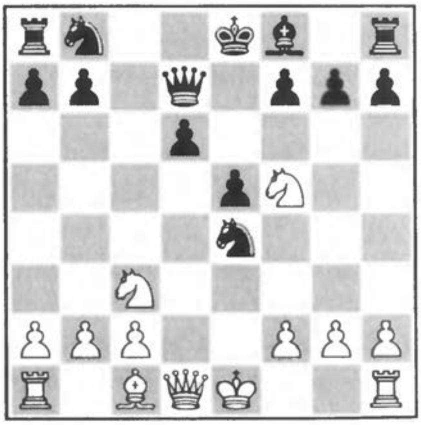
- Therefore it is simpler to play 8...a6, for after 9.♘a3 ♕c6 10.♕d3 ♘bd7 11.♗e3 ♖c8 the knight on a3 is out of play. In case of

12.♘d5 ♕a4 13.c4 ♘xd5 14.exd5, Black should not continue with 14...♕b4+?! 15.♗d2 ♕xb2 16.♖b1 ♕xa2 17.0-0 as in Pinkas-Ostermeyer, Goch 1991, but with 14...♗e7 15.0-0 0-0 16.f3 f5 17.♕b3 ♕xb3 18.axb3 ♘c5 with a slight edge for Black.

8...♘xe4

This is the correct response. Black does not fear the coming complications.

- 8...♘c6 9.♘e3 (9.f3) is pleasant for White.
- 8...d5 is an option:
  - 9.0-0 is answered by 9...d4.
  - 9.♗g5 can be met by 9...♘xe4 10.♘xe4 dxe4 11.♕g4 f6 12.♖d1 ♕c6 13.♗e3 g6 14.♘d6+ ♗xd6 15.♖xd6 ♕xd6 16.♕c8+ ♕d8 17.♕e6+ ♕e7 18.♕c8+ ♕d8 with a draw.
  - The problem in my opinion is 9.♘xd5 ♘xe4 10.0-0 ♘c6 11.c4!? which favours White.
- Black is a lot worse after 8...♕c6 9.♕f3 ♘bd7 10.♗g5 h6 11.♗xf6 ♘xf6 12.0-0-0 0-0-0 13.♖d3, Scarpa-Russo, Buenos Aires 1998.



9.♘xg7+

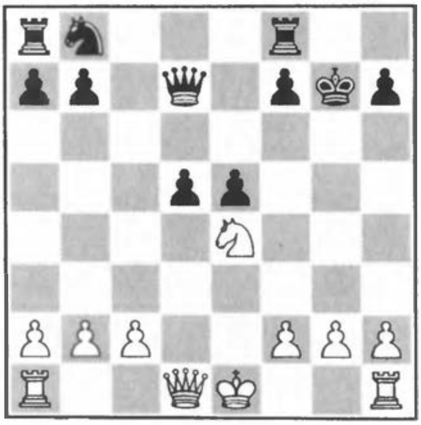
The only try for an advantage, but maybe White is better off with acknowledging that he has nothing by playing 9.♘xe4 ♕xf5 10.♘xd6+ ♗xd6 11.♕xd6. After 11...♘c6 12.♗e3 ♖d8 13.♕c5 Black can play 13...♕e6 14.0-0 b6 15.♕a3 ♕d6 with equal chances as in Ioseliani-Mai, Germany Bundesliga 1998/98. Or also 13...f6 14.0-0 ♕e6 15.f4 ♖d5 16.♕c4 0-0 17.♖ad1 ♖fd8 18.♖xd5 ♕xd5 19.♕xd5+ ♖xd5 20.fxe5 ½-½, Tonsingh-Shabsh Abdulatif, Lucerne ol 1982.

9...♗xg7 10.♘xe4 d5 11.♗h6

White uses tactics to develop. After 11.♘g3 0-0 (not 11...d4?! 12.0-0 ♘c6 13.♕f3 0-0-0 14.♗g5±) 12.♘h5 f5 (12...♘c6?! 13.♗h6) 13.♘xg7 ♔xg7 14.f4 e4 15.♗e3 ♘c6 16.c3 d4 Black is slightly better in view of 17.cxd4 ♘b4 or 17...♖ad8.

Worse is 11.♘c5 ♕c6 12.♕g4 0-0 13.0-0 f5 14.♕b4 b6 15.♘b3 a5∓, Instefjord-Agustsson, Norway 2002/03.

11...0-0 12.♗xg7 ♔xg7



13.♕h5!

White already has to take care. Thus, 13.♘g3?! ♘c6 14.0-0 f5 15.f4 e4 16.♕h5 d4 gave Black a great position in Janosevic-Bertok, Ljubljana ch-YUG 1960.

Please note that 13...f5? 14.f4! exf4 (14...e4 15.♕d4+ ♔g8 16.0-0-0) 15.♕d4+ ♔g8 16.♕xf4 ♕e6+ 17.♔d2 ♕f6 18.♖hf1 favours White, Panbukchian-Kovacevic, Pula 1990. With the text White sacrifices a piece to gain a draw by perpetual.

13...f5!?

Black plays for the win! Of course 13...dxe4 leads to perpetual check: 14.♕g5+ ♔h8 15.♕f6+ ♔g8 ½-½, Muratov-Zilber, Novgorod 1961.

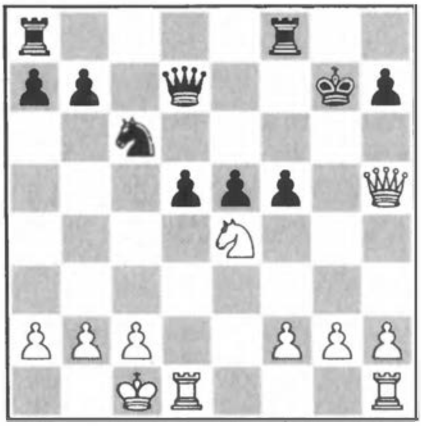
14.0-0-0!?

A creative reply! Not 14.♕g5+♔h8 15.♕h6 ♘c6 (15...♕g7 16.♕xg7+ ♔xg7 17.♘d6 ♘c6 18.0-0-0 d4 19.♘xb7 ♘b4 20.a3) 16.♘g5 ♖ae8∓. After castling Black is not forced to take the piece, but he can play

14...♘c6

After 14...fxe4 15.♕xe5+ White has a strong attack:

- 15...♔f7 16.♖xd5 ♕e7 17.♕g3 or 17.♕h5+ ♔g7 18.♖hd1 ♔h8 19.♔b1.
- Instead 15...♖f6 16.♖xd5 ♕e6 17.♕g3+ ♖g6 18.♕c3+ ♕f6 19.♕c8 ♕c6 20.♕d8 ♕f6 21.♕c8 ♕c6 22.♕d8 ♕f6 23.♕c8 was agreed drawn in Kotter-Ostermeyer, Germany Bundesliga B 1991/92.



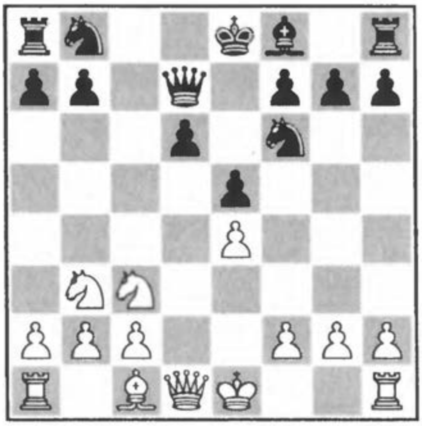
By not taking the knight Black preserves a small edge because of his centre which more than outweighs the slight weakness of his kingside.

So, neither 8.♘f5 nor 8.♘db5 promise White anything (in fact Black may hope for more than equality).

Variation II

☐ **Wladimir Schilow**
■ **Igor Glek**
Germany Bundesliga 2008/09

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 e5 6.♗b5+ ♗d7 7.♗xd7+ 7...♕xd7 8.♘b3



This move is less popular than 8.♘de2 or 8.♘f3. However, in my opinion, it is not weaker to say the least. Play now resembles the Najdorf line with 6.♗e3 e5 7.♘b3, especially when White is going to castle queenside. The exchange of the light-squared bishops favours White, although, as usual Black has gained time to start operating along the c-file. First, it is essential for Black to prevent ♗g5.

8...h6

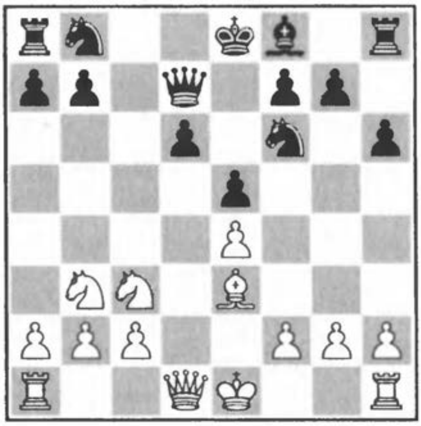
White's game is preferable after 8...♗e7 9.♗g5 and 8...♘c6 9.♗g5.

In case of 8...♕c6 9.♕d3, White preserves a pleasant edge after 9...♘bd7 10.♗g5 and now:

- 10...♗e7 11.♘a5 ♕c7 12.♗xf6 ♘xf6 13.♕b5+ ♕d7 14.f3 ♖c8 15.0-0-0 b6 16.♕xd7+ ♔xd7 17.♘b3, or 11.♗xf6 ♘xf6 12.♘a5 ♕c5 13.♘c4.
- 10...a6 11.0-0-0 ♖c8 12.♔b1 ♗e7 13.h4 b5 14.f3.

Stronger is 9...h6 to prevent 10.♗g5 after all. Now after 10.0-0 ♘bd7 11.♘a5 (11.♖d1 ♖c8 12.♗e3 a6) 11...♕c7 12.♘c4 ♖c8 13.♘e3 ♘c5 14.♕b5+ ♕c6 15.f3 ♕xb5 16.♘xb5 a6 17.♘c3 ♘e6 Black has enough counterplay to compensate for the weakness of square d5.

9.♗e3!?



White plays by analogy to the Najdorf line 6.♗e3 e5 7.♘b3.

● 9.f3 ♘c6 (9...♗e7 is possible but Black plays for ...d5) 10.♗e3 ♖d8 11.♘d5 ♘xd5 12.♕xd5 ♘b4 13.♕d2 d5 14.a3 ♘c6 15.♕xd5 ♕xd5 16.exd5 ♖xd5 and mission accomplished, Black has equalized.

● 9.♕d3 ♘c6 10.a3 ♖d8 (10...0-0-0!? 11.♗e3 d5) 11.♘d5 ♘xd5 12.exd5 ♘e7 13.0-0 and now both 13...f5 and 13...♕f5 are stronger than 13...g5?! 14.♗e3 b6 15.a4 as in Nguyen Van Huy-Pham, Phu Quoc 2007.

● 9.0-0 ♗e7 and now after 10.f4 0-0 11.h3 Black should play 11...exf4 12.♗xf4 ♘c6 or 11...♕c6.

Fleuren-Ostermeyer, Goch 1992, was quickly drawn after 10.♕d3 0-0 11.♗e3 a6 12.a4 ♕c7 13.a5 ♘bd7 14.f3 ♖ac8 15.♖f2.

9...♘c6

I was planning to play ...d5 as quickly as possible, but maybe it was more exact to play 9...♗e7.

● After 10.♕d3 ♘a6!? 11.0-0-0

– 11...0-0 12.f3 ♘b4 13.♕d2 b5 14.g4 a5 15.♔b1 a4 16.♘c5 ♕c6 both sides have chances.

– Equally complicated is 11...♘c7 12.f3 b5 (12...0-0 13.g4 ♖fd8 14.h4 d5 15.g5), for example: 13.a3 a5 14.♗b6 b4 15.♗xc7 bxc3 16.♗xd6 cxb2+ 17.♔xb2 a4 18.♗xe7 ♔xe7 19.♕c3 ♕b7 20.♕xe5+ ♔f8 21.♕d6+ ♔g8 If 22.e5, then 22...axb3 (not 22...♘h5 23.♕b4 ♕xb4 24.axb4 axb3 25.♔xb3 ♘f4 26.g3 ♘e6 27.♖d6 ♔h7 28.c4±) 23.exf6 bxc2+ 24.♔xc2 ♔h7.

Play is equal after 22.♕b4 ♕c7 23.♕c5 ♕b7 24.♕b4.

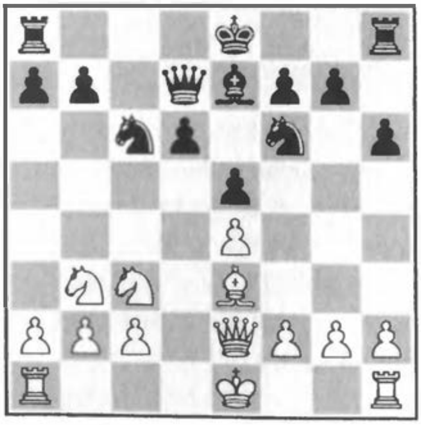
● 10.♕e2

– Obviously this is another complicated position that deserves further practical tests. A long line to illustrate the character of the play: 10...♘a6 11.0-0-0 ♘c7 12.f4 ♕g4 13.♕f2 0-0 14.h3 ♕e6 15.g4 b5 16.g5 exf4 17.♗xf4 hxg5 18.♗xg5 b4 19.♘d4 ♕e5 20.♗f4 ♕c5 (20...♕a5 21.♘c6) 21.♘a4 ♘xe4 22.♕f3 ♕d5 23.♖he1 f5 24.♘xf5 ♕xf5 25.♕xe4 ♖ae8=.

– Also not bad is 10...d5!? 11.♘xd5 ♘xd5 12.0-0-0 ♘c3 13.bxc3 ♕c6 with compensation.

● In case of 10.f3 White is going castle queenside, when again we reach such typical Sicilian positions with castling on opposite sides. Black should play 10...♘a6 with the idea of ♘a6-c7, and d6-d5.

10.♕e2 ♗e7



And now instead of

11.f3

which allows Black to solve his problems, White should have played 11.0-0-0!: answering 11...0-0-0 (or 11...♖c8 12.f3 0-0 13.g4) with 12.♕c4! ♕e6 13.♘a5 ♕xc4 14.♘xc4 ♔b8 (14...♘g4 15.♘b5 ♘xe3

16.fxe3 f6 17.♘bxd6+ ♗xd6 18.♘xd6+ ♔c7 19.♘f7 ♖xd1+ 20.♖xd1 ♖f8 21.♘d6 h5 22.c4±) 15.f3 ♘e8 (15...♖d7 16.♖d2 ♖hd8 17.♖hd1 ♘e8 18.a4 ♗g5 19.♗xg5 hxg5 20.♘b5) 16.♔b1 with a slight advantage.

In the game Black could execute his strategical idea and equalize.

11...d5!? 12.exd5

Black has compensation after 12.♘xd5!? ♘xd5 13.♖d1 (13.0-0-0 ♘c3 14.bxc3 ♕c7) 13...♘c3 14.bxc3 ♕c7.

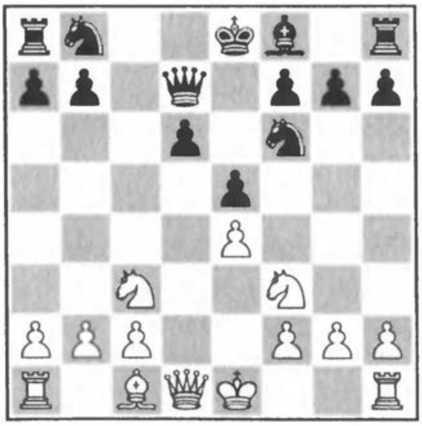
12...♘xd5 13.♘xd5 ♕xd5 14.0-0 0-0 15.c4 ♕e6 16.♘c5 ♗xc5 17.♗xc5

Draw.

Variation III

☐ **Marie Sebag**
■ **Igor Glek**
Metz 2009

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 e5 6.♗b5+ ♗d7 7.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 8.♘f3



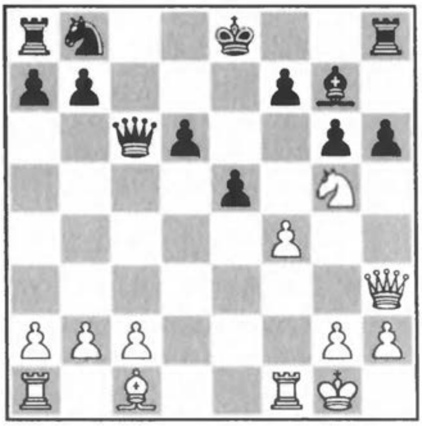
Now White will try to manoeuvre his king's knight to d5 – via ♘f3-d2-c4(f1)-e3 or ♘f3-h4-f5(g3, ♘g2)-e3. But it sure will take time.

8...♕c6

Again not 8...♗e7 9.♗g5±, but 8...h6 is possible and may transpose.

9.♕e2

9.0-0!? ♘xe4!? (safer is 9...♘bd7 or 9...h6) 10.♘xe4 ♕xe4 11.♘g5 (11.♖e1 is another idea) 11...♕c6 12.f4 h6 13.♕h5 g6 14.♕h3 ♗g7:

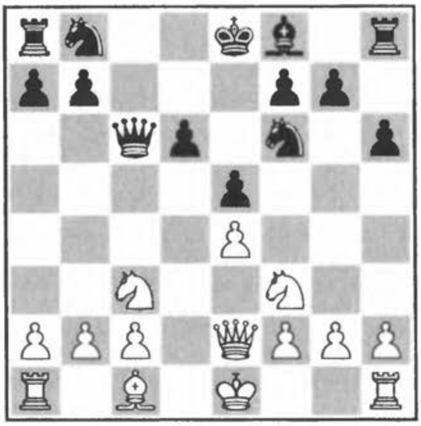


- Now 15.♘e6 can be met by 15...♗f6!? or 15...fxe6!? 16.♕xe6+ ♔d8.
- 15.♘xf7 ♔xf7 is very sharp:
  - Black defends after 16.fxe5+ ♔g8 17.exd6 ♕xd6 (17...♕b6+ 18.♔h1 ♔h7 19.♗xh6+–) 18.♕b3+ ♔h7 19.♗xh6 ♕b6+.
  - 16.f5 was played in Schönthier-Ostermeyer, Germany Bundesliga 1990/91. Now according to my analysis Black can survive the attack with 16...g5 17.f6 ♗xf6 18.♗xg5 ♘d7 19.♗xf6 ♘xf6 20.♕h4 d5 21.♖xf6+ ♕xf6 22.♖f1 ♕xf1+ 23.♔xf1 ♖ac8 24.♕h5+ ♔f6 25.♕h4+ ♔e6 26.♕g4+ ♔f6 27.♕d7 ♖hd8=. Of course this has to be checked carefully.

Please note that White is just clearly worse after 9.♗g5? ♘xe4 10.♘xe5 (10.♘d5 ♘d7) 10...♘xc3 11.♘xc6 ♘xd1 12.♘xb8 ♘xb2 13.♖b1 ♖xb8 14.♖xb2.

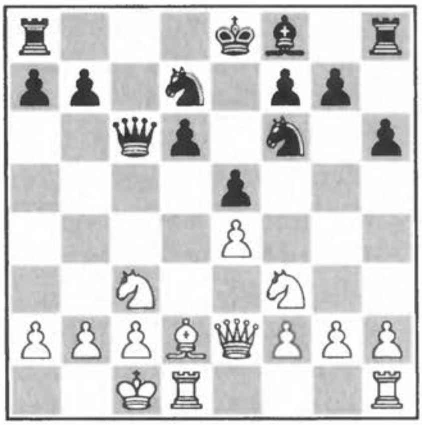
9...h6

9...♘bd7 is also possible – White can exchange his dark-squared bishop but Black's position is quite safe: 10.♗g5 h6 11.♗xf6 ♘xf6 12.0-0 ♗e7 13.♘h4 ½-½, Klavins-Petersons, Palanga 1961.



10.0-0

A plan with castling on opposite wings is possible but should not be very dangerous for Black: 10.♗d2 ♘bd7 11.0-0-0



11...a6 12.♔b1 ♖c8 13.♗c1 ♗e7 14.♘h4 g6 15.g3 b5 (15...♔f8 16.f4 ♔g7∞) 16.♘g2 ♔f8 (16...♘b6! Bosch; 16...♘c5?! 17.♘d5 ♘xd5 18.exd5 ♕b7 19.f4±; 16...♕b7 17.♘d5! ♘xd5 18.exd5±) 17.f3?! (17.f4 ♔g7) 17...♕b7! 18.♘d5 (18.♘e3 ♖xc3 19.bxc3=∞) 18...♘xd5 19.♖xd5 ♔g7 20.♘e3 ♘f6 21.♖d3 ♖c5 22.♖hd1 ♖hc8 and Black was doing fine in Otte-Bosch, Dieren 2009.

10...♘bd7

Also possible is 10...♗e7 11.♘h4 g6 12.f4 ♘bd7 13.♘f3 ♖c8 14.a4 ♔f8 15.♗e3 ♔g7 16.♔h1 a6 as in Gufeld-Romanishin, Tbilisi 1979.

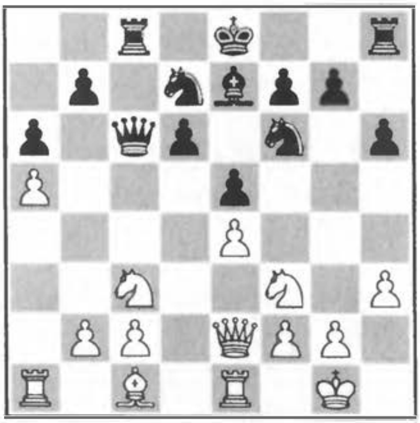
11.♖e1

Black had an easy game in Souleidis-Ostermeyer, Porz 1991, after 11.♘d2 ♖c8 12.f3 d5 13.exd5 ♘xd5 14.♘xd5 ♕xd5 15.♘e4 f5 16.♘c3 ♕c4 17.♕xc4 ♖xc4 18.♗e3 ♗c5 19.♗xc5 ♖xc5 20.♖ad1 ♔e7. Interesting is 11.♘h4!?.

11...a6 12.a4

After 12.♘d2 ♖c8 13.♕f3 ♗e7 14.♘f1 unclear play results from 14...♗d8!? 15.♘g3 ♗a5 16.♗d2 h5 or 16...g6 17.♖ad1 ♔f8 18.♘d5 ♗xd2 19.♖xd2 ♘xd5 20.exd5 ♕c7. Also good is 14...♘c5 15.♘g3 g6 16.♗e3 ♔f8 (16...h5!?) 17.♖ad1 ♘a4 (17...♔g7) 18.♘xa4 ♕xa4 19.♖xd6 ♔g7 as in Barczay-Malich, Pecs 1964. In the game White only won after a blunder by Black on move 27.

12...♖c8 13.a5 ♗e7 14.h3



14...♕c4

More roads lead to Rome here. True after 14...0-0 White has 15.♘h2!?. But Black can more or less force a draw with 14...♘c5 15.♖a3 (15.♗d2 ♘e6 16.♘h4 ♘d4 17.♕d3 ♕c4 18.♖a4 ♕xd3 19.cxd3 ♘d7 20.♘f5 ♘xf5 21.exf5 ♘c5 22.♖c4 ♖c6 23.d4 ♘d3) 15...♘e6 16.♖d1 (16.♕d3 ♘c5 17.♕e2 ♘e6=) 16...♘c5 17.♖e1.

15.♕d1

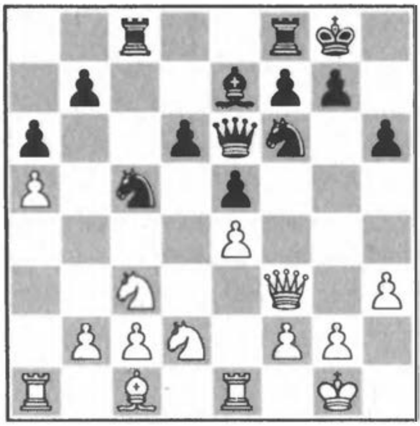
Play is also equal after 15.♕xc4 ♖xc4 16.♘d2 ♖c5 17.♖a4 0-0 18.♘c4 ♖fc8 19.♘e3 ♗d8 20.♘f5 d5 21.exd5 ♘xd5 22.♗d2.

The same verdict holds for 15.♖a4 ♕xe2 16.♖xe2 ♘c5 17.♖c4 ♖c6.

15...♘c5 16.♘d2

Black has decent counterplay in case of 16.♘h4 g6 17.♕f3 ♘e6 18.♖a4 ♕c6 19.♕d1 ♔f8 20.♗e3 ♔g7 21.♘f3 ♗d8.

16...♕e6 17.♕f3 0-0



18.b3

In this middlegame position both sides have their pluses and minuses. Black aims for counterplay along the c-file. White will try to use square d5. I believe that such positions are quite playable for Black.

18.b4 ♘cd7 19.♕d3 is met by 19...♖c7.

18...♘cd7

White would be slightly better after 18...♘h7 19.♘c4 (19.♘d5 ♗g5) 19...f5 20.exf5 ♖xf5 21.♕d5 ♘f6 22.♕xe6+ ♘xe6 23.♘e2.

19.♗a3

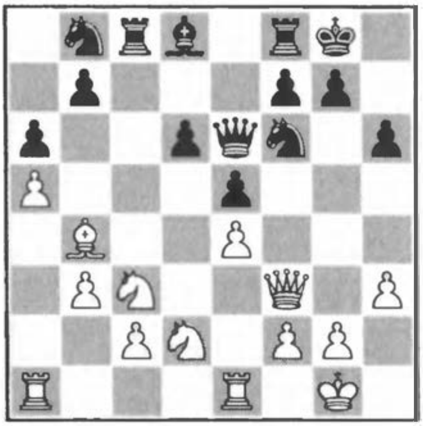
19.♘c4 allows us to illustrate the characteristic Sicilian exchange sacrifice:

- 19...♖xc4 20.bxc4 ♕xc4 (20...♖c8 21.♘d5 ♗d8) 21.♕g3 ♔h7 22.♕d3 ♖c8.
- 19...♖c7 20.♗a3 ♖fc8 21.♖ed1 ♖xc4 22.bxc4 ♕xc4 23.♖d3 ♘c5 24.♗xc5 ♕xc5.

As usual in such positions Black's compensation for the exchange is sufficient.

19...♗d8 20.♗b4 ♘b8!

This is an important manoeuvre – the knight is going to c6 from where it could jump to d4 or b4. Such an idea we may see, for example, in the games of David Bronstein.



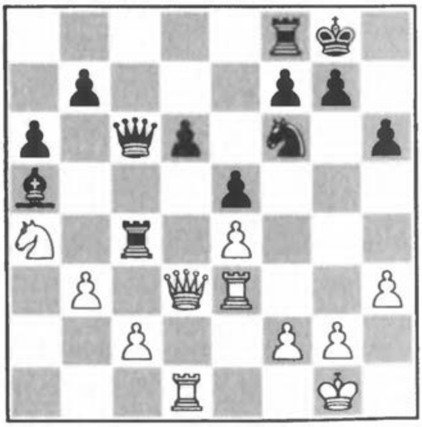
21.♘c4 ♘c6 22.♖a4 ♘xb4!?

A very concrete decision. Now Black's counterplay gives White no time to bring his second knight to the key square d5.

23.♖xb4 ♕e7! Threatening 24...d5. **24.♖a4 ♖c5** Black combines his counterplay along the c-file with an attack on the a5 pawn. **25.♕d3 ♕c7 26.♖e3 ♕c6 27.♖a1 ♗c7 28.♖d1**

Maybe 28.♖f3!? was the best chance – now after 28...d5 29.♖xf6! ♕xf6 30.♘xd5 ♕e6 31.b4 ♖c6 32.♘ce3 not, as in a game, Black will sacrifice the exchange, but White! And it looks that White's compensation is enough.

28...♗xa5! 29.♘a4 ♖xc4!



Black is playing to win! Playable was also 29...♖b5, but in this case many exchanges are coming and it is hard to believe that any result other than a draw will be possible.

30.♕xc4 ♕xc4 31.bxc4 ♖c8 32.♘b2

♖c6 33.♖dd3 ♘d7

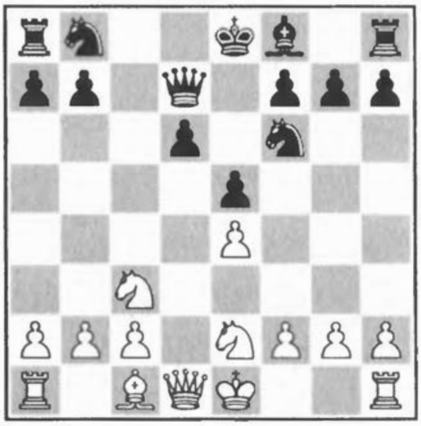
It is clear by now that Black will get dangerous pawns for the exchange, and White should fight very hard for the draw. Since this is a book on openings I give the remaining moves without comments.

34.♖d5 ♗c7 35.♘a4 ♖xc4 36.♖c3 ♖xc3 37.♘xc3 ♘f6 38.♖d3 ♔f6 39.f3 ♗a5 40.♘a4 ♔e7 41.c4 ♘d7 42.♔f1 ♗b4 43.♖b3 a5 44.♔e2 ♔d8 45.♖d3 ♔c7 46.♖d5 ♔c5 47.♖b5 ♘f8 48.♖d5 ♘e6 49.g3 ♘d4+ 50.♔f2 b6 51.f4 f6 52.♔e3 ♗c5 53.♘c3 h5 54.♘e2 a4 55.♘c3 a3 56.fxe5 fxe5 57.♔d3 ♘e6 58.♔c2 ♗d4 59.♘b5 a2 60.♖xd6+ ♔c5 61.♖d5+ ♔b4 62.♘xd4 a1♕ 63.♘xe6 ♔xc4 64.♘xg7 ♕c3+ 65.♔d1 ♕f3+ 66.♔d2 ♕f2+ 67.♔d1 ♔c3

White resigned.

Variation IV

8.♘de2



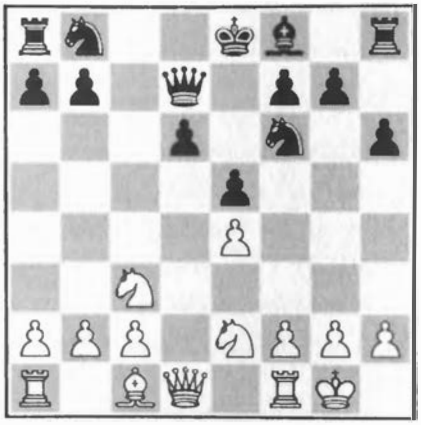
Theory recommends this move. The knight will defend pawn e4 from g3, does not get in the way of the f-pawn (f2-f4), and is ready to jump to f5, or via the squares f1 and e3 to d5. A possible drawback is that Black can sometimes embarrass the knight on g3 by pushing his h-pawn – the march h7(h6)-h5-h4-h3 is certainly not imaginary.

8...♕c6

Attacking pawn e4 and going for Najdorf-like piece coordination (the b8 knight is developed to d7).

- In the old game Fuderer-Jacob, Munich 1954, White obtained a pleasant edge after 8...♗e7 9.♗g5 ♕c6 10.♗xf6 ♗xf6 11.♕d2.
- Playable is 8...h6 which may transpose to the main line. After 9.♘g3, Black may decide to play for a quick ...d5 with 9...♘c6 as in Calota-Andreescu, Baile Tusnad 1997. After 10.♗e3 ♖d8 11.♕d2 d5 12.exd5 ♘xd5 13.♘xd5 ♕xd5 14.♕xd5 ♖xd5 15.♔e2 ♗c5 Black had achieved his aim.

After 9.0-0 we reach the diagrammed position.



– Now I am not a great fan of 9...♘c6. Thus 10.♗e3 d5 11.♘xd5 ♘xe4 12.c4 as in Pähtz-Petrenko, Plovdiv Ech-tt 2003, was just better for White.

10.♘g3 should favour White too. In that case, best for Black is 10...♖d8 to play for ...d5 again as in the old game Radovici-Zinn, East Berlin 1968.

– More flexible is 9...♗e7 when for instance 10.♗e3 ♕c6 11.♕d3 ♘bd7 12.♖ad1 a6 13.♘g3 g6 14.h3 ♖c8 15.♖fe1 ♔f8 16.♘f1 ♔g7 as in Gawehns-Ostermeyer, Germany Bundesliga B 1990/91, is strategically healthy.

- I don't trust the alternatives to 8...h6 or 8...♕c6. Indeed, 8...♘c6 9.♗g5 is just a very unpleasant position for Black. It is this sort of position that makes theory frown upon the whole 5...e5 6.♗b5+ ♗d7 line.

● If you are really inclined to take such chances than at least you should do it with the dubious (but surprising) 8...♕g4!?

– Now, the passive 9.♘g3 ♕xd1+ 10.♔xd1 is not such a big problem for Black after 10...♘c6 11.f3 h6. For example, 12.♘b5?! 0-0-0 13.c4 d5! 14.cxd5 ♘xd5 15.♘xa7+ ♘xa7 16.exd5 ♖xd5+ 17.♔e2 ♗c5 18.♖d1 ♖xd1 19.♔xd1 ♘c6 gave Black the initiative in Martinez-Perez Rodriguez, Santiago de Cuba 2009. Stronger was 12.♘f5 0-0-0 13.♘e3 ♘e7 14.♘cd5 ♘fxd5 15.♘xd5 ♘xd5 16.exd5 ♗e7 with equality.

However, White has three 'gambit' moves which all deserve attention:

– 9.♘d5!? ♘xd5 (9...♘a6 10.0-0 ♕xe4 11.♘ec3 ♕c4 12.♘xf6+ gxf6 13.♕f3) 10.♕xd5 ♘c6 11.♘g3 ♕e6 12.♕d3 0-0-0 13.c4 is at least slightly better for White.

– 9.0-0!? ♘xe4 10.♘d5 ♕d7 11.♗e3 ♘c6 12.c4 gives White good compensation.

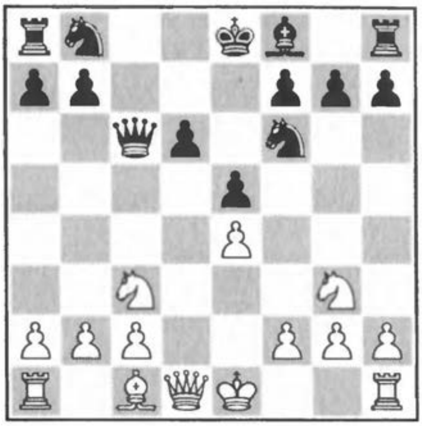
– 9.♕d3!? and now Black should grab some pawns with 9...♕xg2 10.♖g1 ♕xh2 11.♗g5. This is very dangerous for Black of course. Still some brief analysis for the really adventurous spirits among you.

Simply bad for Black is 11...♗e7 12.♘b5 0-0 13.♘c7 ♘c6 14.♘xa8 ♖xa8 15.0-0-0.

11...♘c6 12.♗xf6 gxf6 13.♘d5 0-0-0 14.♕f3 ♕h6 15.♖h1 ♕g5, and now 16.♖g1 is equal. However, White may prefer 16.♖h5 ♕g6 (16...♘d4 17.♕c3+) 17.0-0-0 ♗h6+ 18.♔b1 ♗g5 19.c3 ♔b8 20.♘g3 with compensation.

11...♘bd7 12.♗xf6 (this is simpler than 12.0-0-0 ♕xf2 13.♗e3 ♕f3 14.♖g3 ♕h5 15.♘b5 which occurred in J.Willemze-S.Ernst, Vienna 2003) 12...♘xf6 13.♕b5+ ♘d7 14.♘d5 ♖b8 15.♘c7+ ♔d8 16.♘d5 g6 17.♕a5+ ♔e8 18.♕xa7 ♗h6 (18...♗e7 19.0-0-0) 19.♕a3. In all objectivity, I believe that 8...♕g4 is too dangerous.

9.♘g3



9...h6

Once again it is important to prevent ♗g5. White is just better after 9...g6 10.0-0 ♗g7 11.♗g5 ♘bd7 12.♕d3 h6 13.♗xf6 ♘xf6 14.♖fd1 ♖d8 15.♘f1 0-0 16.♘e3 Shmits-Zilber, Novgorod 1961.

Too early is 9...h5, after 10.♕f3 ♘bd7 11.♗g5 h4 12.♘f5 h3 13.g3 ♘b6 14.♘xg7+ ♗xg7 15.♗xf6 ♗xf6 16.♕xf6 White had a won position in Kritz-Mikavica, Lausanne 2003.

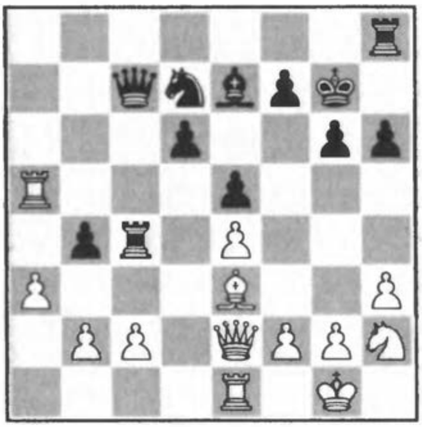
In a few high-level games 9...♘bd7 was tried. White is still better, though, after 10.♗g5 and now:

– 10...♖c8 11.0-0 g6 12.♕f3 ♗g7 13.♖fd1 0-0 14.♘f1 h6 15.♗xf6 ♘xf6 16.♘e3 Nicevski-Ljubojevic, Novi Travnik 1969.

– 10...g6 11.♕d2 h6 12.♗xf6 ♘xf6 13.0-0-0 h5 14.♕d3 0-0-0 15.♕f3 ♗e7 16.♘d5 ♘xd5 17.♖xd5 Estrin-Vasiukov, Moscow 1961. Black's disadvantage is perhaps not disastrous, but such positions hold few attractions for the second player. Indeed, they are certainly not the reason why I play this line!

10.0-0

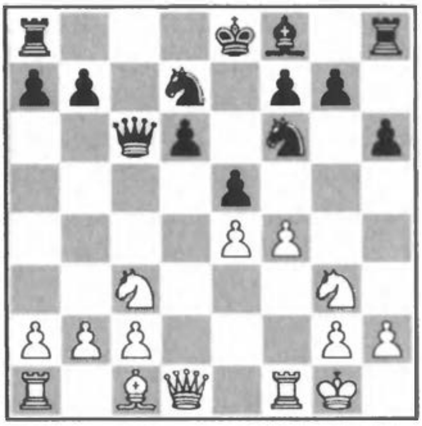
Practice has also seen 10.♕f3 ♘bd7 11.♗e3 b5 12.a3 a6. Just to give an example of this type of Sicilian let's follow the game Duarte Barahona-Dominguez Aguilar, Aguascalientes 2007: 13.0-0 g6 14.♖fd1 ♗e7 15.h3 ♔f8 16.♘f1 ♔g7 Black is castling by hand, a returning theme in this line. 17.♘h2 ♖ac8 Black has a perfectly playable 'Najdorf'. 18.♖ac1 ♕b7 19.♖d3 ♖c4 20.♖e1 a5 21.♕e2 b4 22.♘d5 ♘xd5 23.♖xd5 ♕c7 24.♖xa5



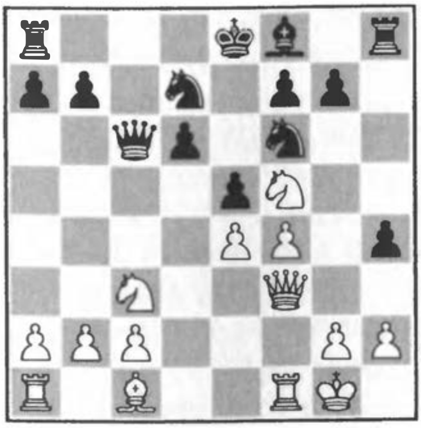
Now the game went 24...♖xe4 25.axb4 ♖xb4 26.♖a7 ♖b7 27.♖xb7 ♕xb7 28.c3 ♕b3 29.f4 ♖b8 30.fxe5 dxe5 31.♕d2 with a draw. Black could have preserved a slight edge with 24...♖xc2 25.♕d3 ♕xa5 26.♕xc2 bxa3 27.♗d2 ♕a6 28.bxa3 ♘c5 29.♗b4 (29.♘g4 ♕xa3) 29...♘d3 30.♖d1 ♘xb4 31.axb4 ♖b8.

10...♘bd7 11.f4

The most direct attempt to refute Black's play.



11...h5!? 11...g6!? was another option. **12.♕f3 h4** And here 12...0-0-0 could also be investigated. **13.♘f5**



13...0-0-0!

A clear improvement over 13...♘c5? 14.fxe5! dxe5 15.♗g5!±, Timmermans-Bosch, Vlissingen 2009. Now 15...♘cxe4 fails to 16.♘xe4 ♕xe4 17.♖ae1! and White has a winning advantage. 13...g6 14.♘e3 favours White, but 13...h3!? is also interesting.

14.a4

14.♕f2 ♘xe4 15.♕xa7 is met by the immediate 15...h3, or by 15...♘xc3 16.bxc3 h3 17.gxh3 ♖xh3 18.♖b1 (18.♗e3 g6 19.♕a8+ ♔c7 20.♕a5+ b6 21.♕a7+ ♕b7 22.♕xb7+ ♔xb7 23.♔g2 ♖h8 24.♘g3 f5 25.a4) 18...♕c5+ 19.♕xc5+ ♘xc5 (or 19...dxc5). Note that White cannot play 14.♗e3? because of 14...g6. After the text a sample line runs:

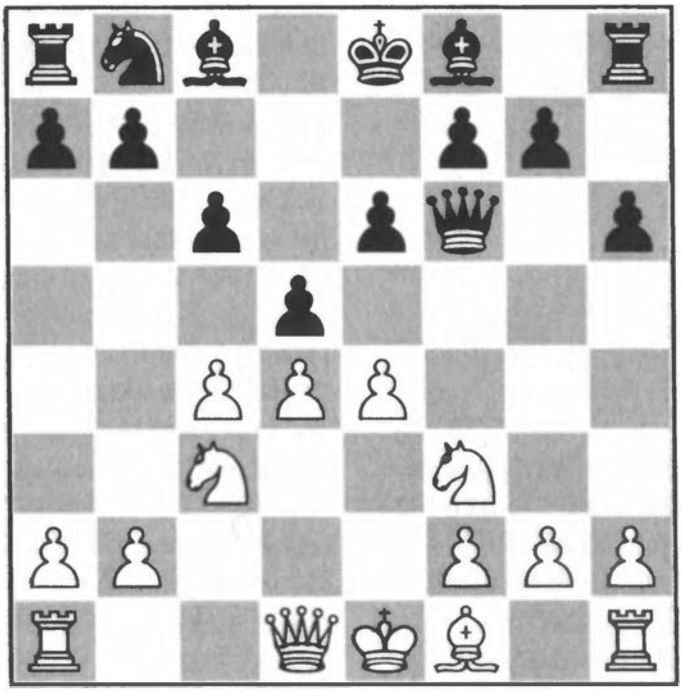
14...♔b8 15.h3 g6 16.♘e3 exf4 17.♕xf4 ♗h6 18.♕f3 ♖he8 19.♘ed5 ♗xc1 20.♖axc1 ♘xe4 21.♕xf7 ♘e5 22.♕f4 ♕c5+ 23.♔h2 ♘g3 24.♖fd1 ♖f8 25.♕e3 g5 and this favours Black.

So, we have seen that 5...e5 6.♗b5+ ♗d7 leads to a complicated game. At the moment I don't see how White obtains an advantage. Both active moves 8.♘f5 and 8.♘db5 are not dangerous for Black. White has to make a choice between 8.♘f3, 8.♘de2 and 8.♘b3. I suppose that 8.♘b3, as IM Shilow played against me, promises White some hope for an advantage, but obviously this continuation requires further practical tests.

CHAPTER 17

Sipke Ernst

Moscow Variation: A German Speciality



The immediate 7.e4!?

This ancient line of the Moscow Variation has not been very popular with strong players lately, although it is fully playable. Don't let the bad placement of the white king put you off! I recommend 7.e4 for several reasons:

1) Play is original and very interesting,
2) the move 7.e4 is completely forgotten, so your opponents won't be well prepared, and
3) the shock value of 9.♔e2!.

This early king-move has been known for a long time and had its peak in the 1980s, when especially East-German GMs like Uhlmann and Teske were playing this move on a regular basis. Since 2000, however, I can only find 11 games in my database. I think it's time for a revival!

□ **Sipke Ernst**
■ **Thomas Fiebig**
Netherlands 2009/10

1.♘f3 d5 2.d4 ♘f6 3.c4 c6 4.♘c3 e6 5.♗g5 h6 6.♗xf6

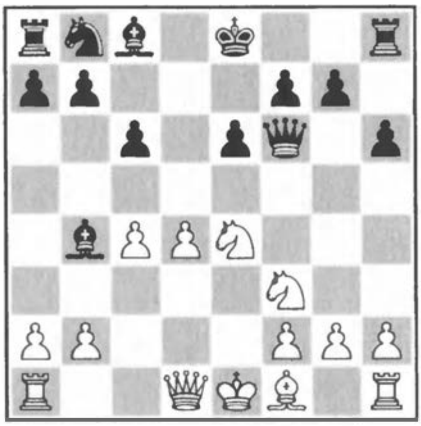
Presently, Black is holding his own in the lines starting with 6.♗h4, so top players are also looking at the alternative 6.♗xf6. This used to be the main line, but at some point it was agreed that Black has enough compensation for his deficit in space and central influence, owing to his pair of bishops.

6...♕xf6 7.e4!?

This was first played in a game between Jasnogrodsky and Baird, New York 1894!

Nowadays, 7.e3 is the absolute main line. Apart from 7.e3, 7.♕b3, 7.g3 and 7.♕c2 are also more popular than 7.e4.

7...dxe4 8.♘xe4 ♗b4+



9.♔e2!?

A cool looking move, guaranteeing a lot of disapproving faces when played in a team match. Definitely worth a try!

In the stem game, Jasnogrodsky continued 9.♘c3 ♘d7 10.a3?! ♗xc3+ 11.bxc3 c5 12.♗e2 e5 13.0-0 cxd4 14.cxd4 exd4 15.♘xd4 0-0, and the game ended in a draw.

Actually, 9...c5 is even better. An example is the game Adianto-Bareev, Cap d'Agde 2002: 10.♖c1 cxd4 (10...0-0!? might even be stronger) 11.♕xd4 ♕xd4 12.♘xd4 0-0 13.a3 ♗e7! (there is no need for giving up the two bishops, although 13...♗xc3+ 14.♖xc3 is also not bad) 14.g3? (this appears to be too weakening; it was safer to play 14.♗e2) 14...♖d8 15.♘b3 ♘c6 16.♗g2 (this move involves a pawn sacrifice, but I don't see any compensation for White. 16.♗e2 was still preferable) 16...♘e5 17.0-0 ♘xc4, Black was simply a pawn up for nothing and went on to win the game.

Apart from 9.♘c3 there is a second alternative, 9.♘ed2. This move has done reasonably well in practice, but I don't think that such a passive knight retreat can assure White something interesting: 9...♘d7 10.a3 ♗xd2+ 11.♕xd2 0-0 12.♗d3 e5 13.dxe5 ♘xe5 14.♘xe5 ♕xe5+, with equality, Eklund-Nordström, Linköping 1996.

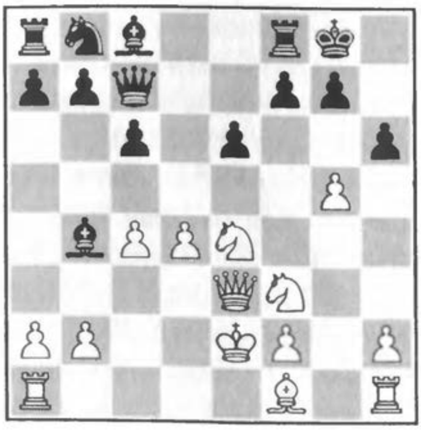
Instead 12.♕e3 momentarily prevents the ...e5 break, but Black gets easy play after 12...c5 13.♗d3 (13.0-0-0!? leads to interesting play, but seems to me to be too dangerous for White) 13...cxd4 (13...b6? 14.♕e4) 14.♕xd4 ♕xd4 15.♘xd4 ♘c5.

9...♕f4

All possible queen moves have been tried, except for 9...♕f5. Still, this move is not entirely stupid. The queen supports Black's pawnbreaks ...c6-c5 and ... e6-e5. Also, White won't be able to gain a tempo on the queen with g2-g3. Meanwhile it is not entirely clear what the drawbacks of this move are.

For 9...♕d8, see the third game.

After 9...♕f5 the main try is 10.♕d3 0-0 (or 10...♘d7 11.g4 – after 11.c5 0-0 12.g4 Black can play 12...♕xg4! 13.♖g1 ♕f4 and White has not enough compensation for the pawn – 11...♕xg4 12.♖g1 ♕f4 13.♖xg7, with unclear play) 11.g4!? (this move is double-edged. It might be the start of a dangerous attacking plan involving g4-g5 at some point, but it also weakens the black squares very much...) 11...♕f4 (11...♕xg4? 12.♘f6+ gxf6 13.♖g1 wins the queen) 12.♕e3 ♕c7 (after 12...♕xe3+ 13.fxe3 the best assessment is probably unclear, though I would prefer White because of the easy development and the space advantage) 13.g5



13...h5? (13...hxg5 is better: 14.♘exg5 – to 14.♕xg5 Black probably does best to react with 14...f5!) 14.♘f6+! ♔h8 (14...gxf6 15.gxf6 and mate in a couple of moves) 15.♘xh5, and White is much better.

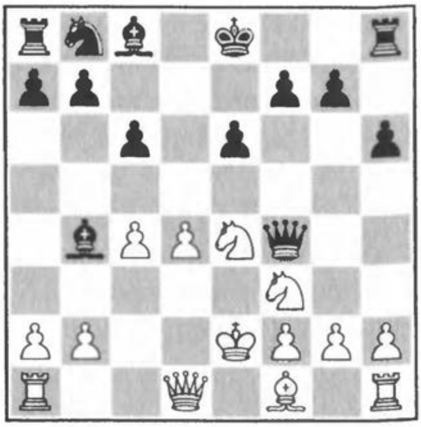
Instead of 10.♕d3 I also analysed:

– 10.♘g3 ♕a5 (or 10...♕f4 and now 11.♘h5 is a nice double attack, but it will fail to impress your opponent as there is 11...♕e4 mate!) 11.c5 ♕d8 12.a3 ♗a5, and here my computer program advises the very artificial 13.♔d3?! 0-0 14.♔c2 followed by ♗d3 or ♗c4. Still, Black's chances are preferable, as the white king is not so safe on the queenside.

– 10.♔e3?! (if this move is really the strongest, then I suspect everybody will switch to 9...♕f5 – the king makes room for the bishop) 10...♗e7 (10...0-0 11.c5 ♗a5 12.g4 ♕d5 13.♘d6) 11.♘e5?! ♘d7 12.g4 ♗g5+ 13.♘xg5 ♕xg5+ 14.f4 ♕e7 and Black is better. In chess, king safety is important and I feel that all this space grabbing by White will backfire later on.

On move 11 White should just play 11.♗d3 ♕a5 12.♖e1 0-0 and now the king has to rush back, since e3 is no square for a king when the board is full of pieces and the centre is open. Unfortunately, White's little experiment doesn't yield him any advantage after 13.♔e2 ♘d7 14.♔f1 e5 and at least White's king is safe, but Black is okay anyway.

Apart from 9...♕f5, another possible move is 9...♕g6. Now the correspondence game Schrancz-Persits, Simagin Memorial 1985, continued 10.♔e3!? f5 (after 10...♘d7 Black surprisingly runs into trouble thanks to 11.♘h4! ♕h7 12.c5 0-0 13.♗d3 and both the bishop on b4 and the queen are badly misplaced) 11.♘e5 f4+ (11...♕h7 12.♕h5+) 12.♔d3 ♕f5 13.g4 fxg3 (13...♕h7 14.♕f3 0-0 15.♔c2 and White is better) 14.hxg3 ♘d7 15.♕h5+ ♕xh5 16.♖xh5 ♘xe5+ 17.♖xe5 and White was much better.



10.♕c2

White has an important choice to make: where to put the queen?

10.♕d3 will be analysed in the next game, Vokac-Dreev, Ohrid 2009.

10...f5!?

An understandable decision. Black takes immediate action, as the white king is badly placed for the moment.

Things can easily go wrong for Black after the superficial 10...♘d7 11.g3 ♕c7? (11...♕g4 is better) 12.c5!, threatening both 13.a3 and 13.♘d6+. After 12...♕d8 (to make room for the bishop) 13.♘d6+ ♔f8 14.a3 ♗a5 15.♘e5 ♘xe5 16.dxe5 White has a great position!

11.♘ed2

11.♘c3 has been played before, but I am not convinced of White's chances after 11...e5 (or even the simple 11...♘d7 12.g3 ♕g4 13.♗g2 0-0 – 13...e5!? – 14.♖he1 e5! 15.♔f1 e4 16.♘d2 ♘f6, and Black is at least equal) 12.dxe5 ♕xc4+ 13.♔e1 ♕f7. Normally this position would be quite good for White, but now that the right of castling has been forfeited I think White has problems finishing his development!

11...♘d7

Black hurries with ...e6-e5.

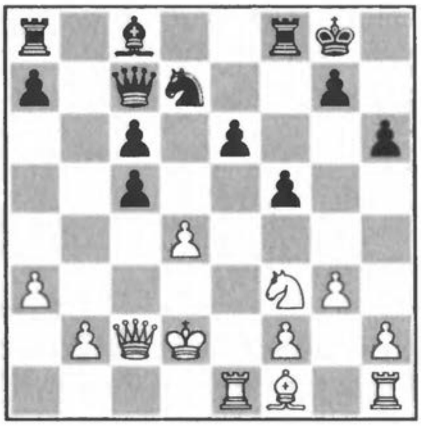
12.g3 ♕c7

During the game I was mostly worried about 12...♕g4. I considered 13.h3 ♕h5 14.♗g2 e5

15.g4 (after 15.♔f1 the rook on h1 is out of play) 15...fxg4 16.hxg4 ♕xg4 17.♖ag1 and here White has enough compensation for the pawn thanks to his well-placed pieces.

13.c5 b6 13...0-0 14.♘c4 and the bishop is in trouble. **14.a3 ♗xd2 15.♔xd2!** Making room for the bishop. The king will find a safe spot on the queenside.

15...bxc5 16.♖e1 0-0



17.♔c1!

A nice prophylactic move. White waits to see how Black arranges his pieces in order to react to Black's play.

17.♖xe6 is better for Black after 17...♘f6 18.♖e1 cxd4 19.♔c1 ♖d8.

17...♕a5?

Later in the game the queen will often be exposed to attacks, so Black should probably keep the queen on c7 for now.

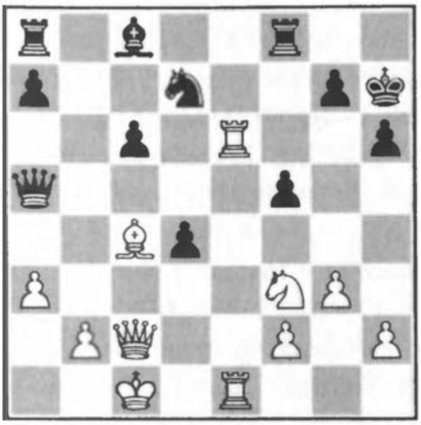
The alternatives are:

- 17...cxd4 18.♘xd4 ♘b6 19.♘xe6 ♗xe6 20.♖xe6 which is slightly better for White.
- Also possible is 17...♘f6 – the following line is more or less forced: 18.♗c4 ♘e4 (18...♘d5 19.dxc5) 19.dxc5 ♘xc5 20.♘d4 ♔h8 21.♗xe6 ♕d6 22.♗xc8 ♕xd4 23.♖d1 ♕f6 24.♕xc5 ♖b8! 25.♖d2 ♖fxc8 and if 26.♕xa7 then 26...c5! followed by ...c5-c4-c3, with serious counterplay, so White probably should settle for the better double rook ending with 25.♕d4.

18.♖xe6 Or 18.♗c4!?.

18...cxd4 19.♗c4 ♔h7 20.♖he1!

Now all of White's pieces are playing! Interesting is 20.h4 ♘f6 21.♘g5+ hxg5? 22.hxg5+ ♔g6 23.♖xf6+ gxf6 24.♕e2! fxg5 25.♕e7, and mate is unavoidable, but Black can simply reply 21...♔h8!, after which there is no easy way for White to continue the attack.



20...♗a6?

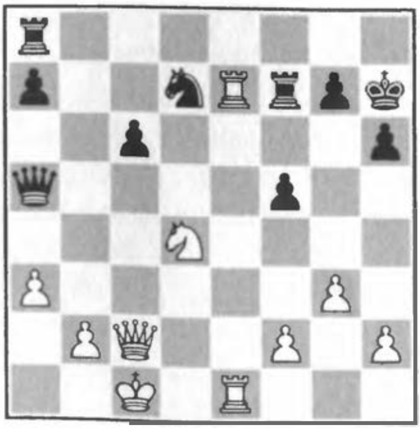
After this move Black is lost. Also bad was 20...♘f6?, in view of 21.♖1e5 ♕d8 22.♕xf5+ ♔h8 23.♘h4!.

The only way to continue the fight was 20...♘c5, though after 21.♖6e5 d3 22.♗xd3 ♘xd3+ 23.♕xd3 White is better.

21.♗xa6 ♕xa6 22.♘xd4

White has a winning position. Unfortunately I was running out of time and squandered my advantage.

22...♕a5 23.♖e7 ♖f7



24.g4

I missed a nice tactic here: 24.♘xf5! ♔h8 (both 24...♕xf5 25.♖xf7 and 24...♖xf5 25.g4 give White a decisive material advantage) 25.♖xf7 ♕xe1+ 26.♕d1 ♕xd1+ 27.♔xd1, and Black is hopeless in the ending.

24...♖af8 25.♘xf5

Also 25.gxf5 is not so bad, but I wanted to keep my pawn structure intact!

25...g6 26.♕c4?

This move throws away a great deal of White's advantage. I was reluctant to play 26.♕b3!, because of 26...♔h8 27.♘xh6?! ♖xf2 and things seemed not entirely clear to me. However, I missed 27.♖1e3!, winning immediately.

26...♕c5! 27.♕xc5 ♘xc5 28.♘d6 ♖xe7 29.♖xe7+ ♔g8 30.b4 ♘d3+ 31.♔c2 ♘xf2

It's safe to say that I didn't get the most out of my middlegame advantage.

32.g5 hxg5 33.♖xa7 ♘g4 34.♘e4 ♘xh2 35.♘xg5 ♘g4 36.a4? After 36.♖c7 Black still has problems to solve.

36...♖b8

And here my opponent offered a draw, which I happily accepted, as I had less than 30 seconds on the clock. Despite the errors I think it was an interesting game.

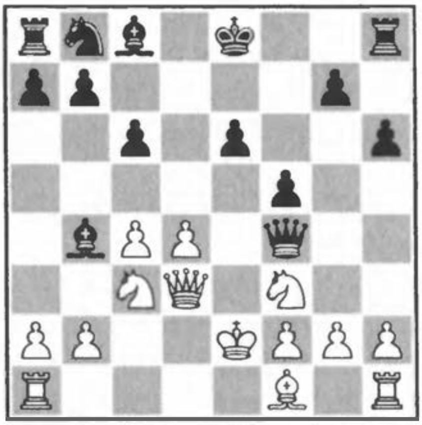
☐ **Marek Vokac**
■ **Alexey Dreev**
Ohrid 2009

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.♗g5 h6 6.♗xf6 ♕xf6 7.e4 dxe4 8.♘xe4 ♗b4+ 9.♔e2 ♕f4 10.♕d3!?

It is hard to say which move is better, 10.♕d3 or 10.♕c2. On d3 the queen can be exposed to an attack by a black rook on d8, but for the moment the queen is more actively placed than on c2. Also, this move gives White the option of ♕e3.

10...♗e7

Black has an important alternative here, the sharp 10...f5!. After the normal 11.♘c3 (11.♘ed2!?) the lines fork.



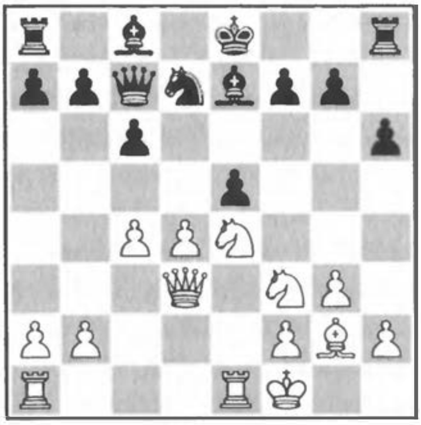
– 11...♘d7 12.g3 ♕d6 (or 12...♕g4 13.h3 ♕h5 and here a young Boris Spassky played 14.♗g2 0-0 15.g4 ♕f7 16.gxf5 exf5 17.a3 ♖e8+ 18.♔d2 ♗d6 19.♖ae1 ♘f6 with unclear play, Spassky-Reicher, Bucharest 1953. It seems to me that the light-squared bishop is better off on d3 or e2, so I recommend 14.♔d2!?) 13.♗g2 0-0 and now the best is 14.c5! (14.♖hd1 e5!? – 14...♕c7 15.♕e3 prevents Black's desired ...e6-e5 break – 15.dxe5 ♕e6 16.♔f1 ♘xe5 17.♘xe5 ♕xe5, Miedema-Savchenko, Béthune 2006 – now it is White who is looking for a way to equalize) 14...♕c7 (14...♕e7 is worse because of 15.♖he1 b6 16.♔f1 bxc5 17.d5! and after 17...♗xc3 – the 'clever' 17...c4 looks dangerous because of 18.♕c2 ♗xc3 19.♖xe6 ♕f7 20.♕xc3 cxd5 21.♖ae1 and White has a strong initiative – 18.d6 ♕f6 19.♕xc3 ♕xc3 20.bxc3 White has an advantage) 15.♖he1 b6 (15...e5?? 16.♕c4+) 16.♔f1 bxc5 17.♔g1!, and with this calm prophylactic move White ensures some advantage. Black is one pawn up for the moment, but there are a lot of weaknesses in his camp.

– 11...0-0 12.g3 ♕c7 13.a3 ♗d6 (or 13...♗e7 14.♗g2 ♘d7 15.♕e3!? – after the natural 15.♖he1 e5! 16.dxe5 ♘xe5 17.♘xe5 ♕xe5+ 18.♔f1 ♕f6 Black has a comfortable position – 15...♘f6 16.♖he1 c5 and chances are about equal) 14.♗g2 ♘d7 15.♖hd1 e5 16.dxe5 ♗xe5 17.♔f1 f4, and Black equalized in Gorelov-Filipenko, Moscow 1986. It seems that Black is doing okay here, so White needs an improvement in the lines following 10...f5, or he should prefer 10.♕c2.

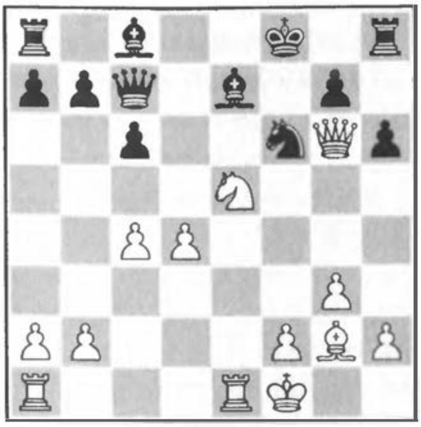
11.g3 ♕c7 12.♗g2 ♘d7 13.♖he1 e5 14.dxe5?

After the text-move Black has no problems neutralizing White's initiative. The rest of the game is a good example of what can happen if White doesn't play dynamically enough. After Black completes his development it is very hard for White to fight the two bishops.

White should play sharply in order to get something out of his development advantage. Therefore, 14.♔f1!?, a move that involves a piece sacrifice, is necessary. Now 14...f5 is critical, although Black does have some other options.



- 14...f5 15.♘c3 e4 (there is no backing out now...) 16.♘xe4! fxe4 17.♕xe4 ♘f6 18.♕g6+ ♔f8 19.♘e5!. This move prevents Black's defensive idea ...♗g4 followed by ...♗h5. White has two pawns and active play for the sacrificed material. Meanwhile, Black has some problems finishing his development. Especially the h8-rook won't be able to enter the game for some time to come.



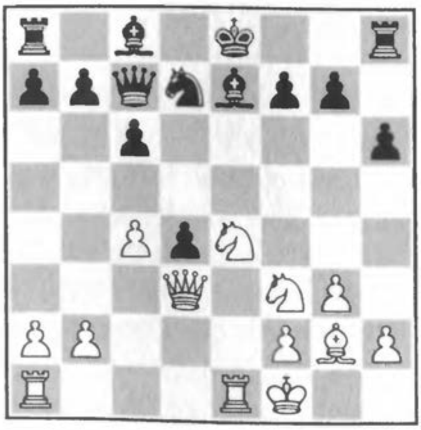
The following lines are exemplary:

– 19...♗e6 20.d5! cxd5 21.cxd5 ♗g8 22.♕f5! ♗f7 (22...♗h7 loses by force: 23.♕e6 ♗d6 24.♖ac1 ♕e7 25.♖c8+ ♖xc8 26.♕xc8+ ♕e8 27.♘g6+ ♗xg6 28.♖xe8+ ♗xe8 29.♕xb7) 23.♘xf7 ♔xf7 24.♕e6+ ♔f8 25.♖ac1 ♕d8 26.♖e3 with more than enough compensation.

– 19...♗b4 20.♖e2 ♗e6 21.c5! ♗f7 22.♕c2 ♗a5 (22...♕d8? 23.♘xf7 ♔xf7 24.♕b3++–) 23.a3 ♕d8 24.b4 ♗c7 25.♖ae1 ♗h5 26.♘g6+ ♗xg6 27.♕xg6 looks extremely dangerous for Black.

– Also 19...♗d6 20.c5 ♗xe5 21.dxe5 ♘d5 (21...♘g8? 22.♖e4 and 23.♖f4) 22.e6 looks very unpleasant for Black.

- 14...exd4?!



– 15.♕a3!, and now Black is mated after 15...♗xa3?? 16.♘d6+, while 15...c5? is also bad, in view of 16.♘xd4 0-0 (16...cxd4 17.♘d6+ ♔f8 18.♖xe7 wins) 17.♘b5 and White has a lot of positional pluses.

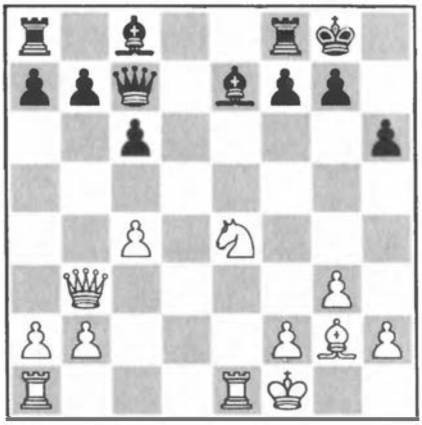
This makes 15...♘e5! effectively the only move. After 16.c5 0-0 (16...♘xf3?! 17.♘d6+) 17.♘xd4 b6 (17...♖d8 18.♖ad1 ♘g4 – 18...♗g4 19.f3 ♗d7 20.♘d6 with an advantage. The central control of the white pieces outweigh Black's bishop pair– 19.h3 ♘f6 20.♘d6 ♗xd6 21.cxd6 ♕xd6 – 21...♖xd6? 22.♘b5 – 22.♘e6 ♕xd1 23.♖xd1 ♖xd1+ 24.♔e2 ♗xe6 25.♔xd1 and although Black has very good drawing chances, White is slightly better) 18.♕c3 White has an edge. Black can easily slip with the active looking 18...♗a6+?! 19.♔g1 ♘d3? which loses immediately because of 20.♘f5! f6 21.cxb6 axb6 22.♕xc6.

– Other lines offer White nothing: 15.♘xd4 is the most logical continuation, and although this move is not without poison I think Black equalizes with correct play: 15...0-0 16.♘f5 (16.♖ad1 ♘c5 is equal) 16...♗b4! 17.♘ed6 looks interesting, as it is dangerous to take the exchange... 17...♗xe1 (unfortunately Black doesn't have to take the bait and can equalize with 17...♘e5! 18.♖xe5 ♗xf5 19.♕xf5 ♗xd6) 18.♘e7+ ♔h8 19.♖xe1 ♘f6 20.♘exc8 ♖axc8 21.♘xc8 ♖xc8 22.♕a3! and White has an edge.

– In the only game featuring 14.♔f1, Kishnev-Gorelov, Moscow 1984, the players agreed to a draw after .15.♕xd4 0-0 16.♖ad1.

● 14...0-0 looks safer, but White can try to make something of his lead in development by 15.♘c3 ♗f6 16.d5 (the only move to try for an advantage; 16.♖ad1 exd4 17.♘xd4 ♘c5 is fine for Black and 16.♘e4 ♗e7 repeats moves) 16...♘c5 17.♕c2 ♗g4 18.dxc6 bxc6 19.♘e4 ♘xe4 20.♕xe4 ♗d7! (20...♗xf3 21.♗xf3 with a small advantage) 21.♘xe5 ♖ae8! 22.f4 (also after 22.♘xd7 ♖xe4 23.♘xf6+ gxf6 24.♖xe4 White cannot count on an advantage) 22...♗xe5 23.fxe5 f6 24.♔g1 ♖xe5 25.♕d4 and Black is very close to equalizing.

14...♘xe5 15.♘xe5 ♕xe5 16.♔f1 0-0 17.♕b3 ♕c7



Black is already slightly better. The knight on e4 looks pretty but the black bishops are very strong.

18.♕e3 ♗e6 19.b3 ♖fe8 20.♕f3 Not 20.♘c5? ♗f6!. **20...♕a5 21.g4?**

Not the kind of move grandmasters are happy to play. Probably Vokac felt desperate here already.

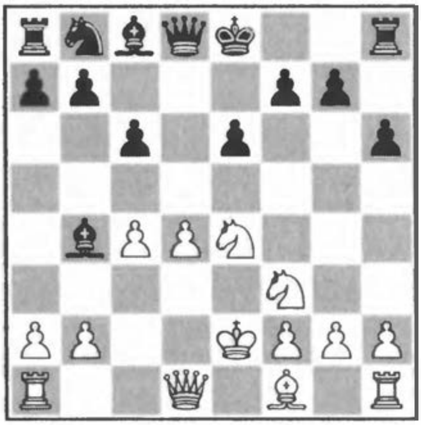
21...♖ad8 22.♔g1 ♖d4 23.h3 ♖ed8

Black has a close to winning advantage, and eventually won the game.

In the next game, played more than 50 years ago (!), we will deal with the solid 9...♕d8. Though this move looks kind of timid, it should not be underestimated, as it has some advantages over 9...♕f4. Most obviously, the move g2-g3 won't gain a tempo, and if White decides to play g2-g3 anyway, Black can decide if he wants to play ...♕c7 or not. A drawback is that the ...e6-e5 break is not supported for the moment, though, as we will see, Black often achieves this break nonetheless. This game also features the biggest expert on the 7.e4 line in the Moscow Variation. Wolfgang Uhlmann played this line five times according to my database, scoring two wins and three draws.

☐ **Wolfgang Uhlmann**
■ **Ludek Pachman**
Moscow 1956

1.c4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.d4 c6 5.♗g5 h6 6.♗xf6 ♕xf6 7.e4 dxe4 8.♘xe4 ♗b4+ 9.♔e2 ♕d8!?



This solid move should not be underestimated. Black has collected the bishop pair and the white king is badly placed on e2, so it is all on White to prove that his strategy is correct.

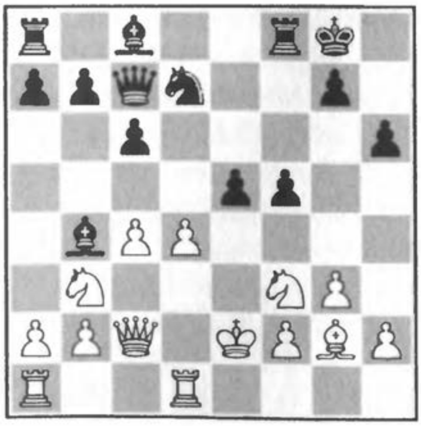
10.g3

In the game Teske-Neverov, Pardubice 1999, 10.♕b3 was tried. Black gradually equalized after 10...♗e7 11.♖d1 (it appears that the d1-square should be preserved for the king's rook. Also, this move doesn't prevent the ...c6-c5 break anyway) 11...♘d7 12.g3 0-0 13.♗g2 c5! 14.♖he1 (14.dxc5 ♕c7) 14...cxd4 15.♘xd4 a6 16.♔f1 ♕c7.

10...0-0 11.♗g2

The immediate 11.♕b3 is also possible, though it gives Black an additional option which is quite interesting: 11...♗e7 12.♗g2, and now:

- 12...b5!? 13.c5 e5 14.♘xe5! (in the game Uhlmann-Tischbierek, Cottbus ch-DDR 1983, there followed 14.dxe5 ♗e6 15.♕c3 ♗c4+ 16.♔e3 and I'm not sure whether Black actually has enough compensation for the pawn) 14...♕xd4 15.f4 ♗xc5 (or 15...♗e6 16.♖hd1 ♗xb3 17.♖xd4 ♗d5 18.♖xd5! cxd5 19.♘d6 ♗xd6 20.cxd6 and the powerful passed pawn is worth more than the exchange) 16.♖hd1 ♕b4 17.♕xb4 ♗xb4 18.♖ac1 and White has a lot of pressure for the sacrificed pawn.
- 12...♘d7 13.♖hd1 ♕a5 was seen in Cebalo-Sveshnikov, Leningrad 1984. (13...♕b6 14.♕c2 ♘f6 15.♘xf6+ ♗xf6 16.♔f1 c5– 16...♖d8 17.c5! and Black has a cramped position – 17.dxc5 ♕xc5 18.♘d2 with a small advantage) 14.♕c3!? (14.♔f1 b6 15.♔g1 is interesting; the pawn sacrifice 14.c5?! b6 15.♔f1 bxc5 16.♔g1 is not convincing, e.g. 16...♖b8 17.♕c2 ♕b6 18.b3 cxd4 19.♘xd4 ♘e5 and White's compensation is not sufficient) 14...♗b4 (14...♕f5 15.♘e5! is the main idea) 15.♕c2 f5 16.♘ed2 e5 17.♘b3 ♕c7

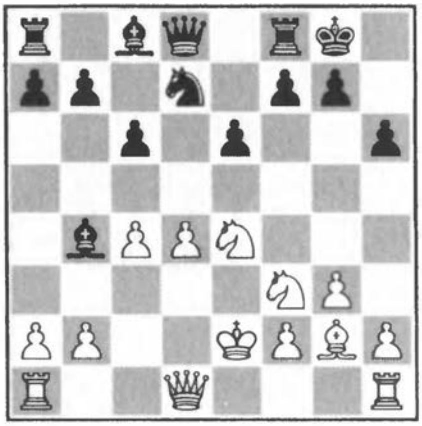


and here 18.c5! is strong (Cebalo played 18.dxe5♘xe5 19.♘xe5♕xe5+ 20.♔f1 ♕c7 and Black was doing fine), as Black's dark-squared bishop is in trouble. Black's best chance is probably 18...e4 19.♕c4+ ♖f7 20.♕xb4 exf3+ 21.♗xf3 ♘f6 and Black is not without counterplay (Black will play

...f5-f4 soon, activating Black's pieces) but still the pawn should count for something.

– Finally, 12...♕b6 13.♖hd1 ♕xb3 14.axb3 is slightly better for White.

11...♘d7



12.♕d3?!

This time, the queen is not so well placed here, as it quickly can become a target for Black's e-pawn.

In a later game against Sveshnikov in Sarajevo 1983 Uhlmann tried 12.♕c2, but Black easily equalized after 12...f5 13.♘c3 ♕f6 14.♕b3 ♗a5 15.♖he1 e5 16.dxe5 ♘xe5 17.♘xe5 ♕xe5+ 18.♔f1 ♕f6 and in fact it is White who should watch out or he will end up in a worse position.

12.♕b3, however, is an improvement. After the obvious 12...♗e7 13.♖hd1 the game transposes to the lines following 11.♕b3.

12...♗e7

Black has a much stronger plan: 12...f5! 13.♘c3 e5! 14.dxe5 (it is also dangerous to take with the knight: 14.♘xe5 ♘xe5 15.dxe5 ♕a5 16.f4 ♖d8 17.♕c2 ♗e6) 14...♕e7 15.♖he1 ♘c5 16.♕e3 (also 16.♕c2 f4 is very dangerous) 16...♗e6 17.b3 f4! 18.gxf4 ♗g4 19.♔f1 ♘e6 this is the kind of stuff White should avoid. Black is probably winning already!

13.♖hd1 ♕c7 14.♘c3

The superficial 14.♖ac1 runs into 14...e5 15.d5 f5!.

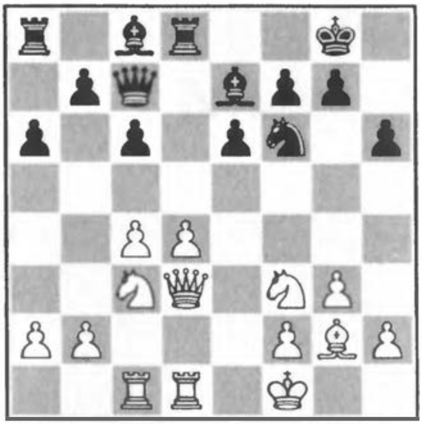
14...♖d8

Now, 14...e5 is answered by 15.d5.

15.♔f1 ♘f6

Also interesting is 15...b6!? 16.♖ac1 ♗b7 followed by ...c6-c5.

16.♖ac1 Not 16.c5? ♗xc5, but 16.♕e3!? is interesting. **16...a6**



17.b3?!

This inaccuracy offers Black the chance to equalize immediately.

Black would still have some small problems to solve after 17.♕e3, as after the logical 17...c5 18.dxc5 ♖xd1+ 19.♖xd1 ♗xc5 20.♕e5! the ending after 20...♕xe5 21.♖d8+ ♔h7 22.♘xe5 is very bad, so Black should go for 20...♕e7, though then too White keeps some pressure after 21.♘e4.

Possibly 17.♕e2!? is even stronger, as here the queen is not exposed to any attacks.

17...c5!

Now the game quickly peters out to a draw.

18.d5 exd5 19.♘xd5 ♘xd5 20.cxd5 ♗d7 21.♘d2

Of course not 21.d6?? ♗xd6 22.♕xd6 ♗b5+ and Black wins.

21...♗d6 22.♘c4 b5 23.♘xd6 ♕xd6 24.♖d2 ♖ac8 25.♔g1

Draw.

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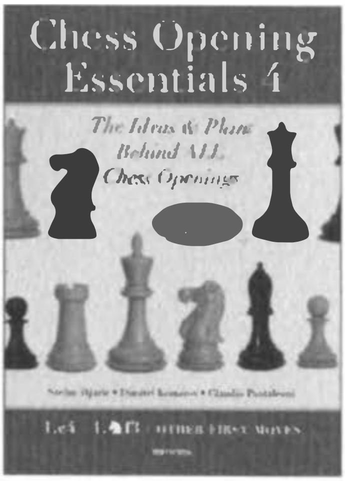
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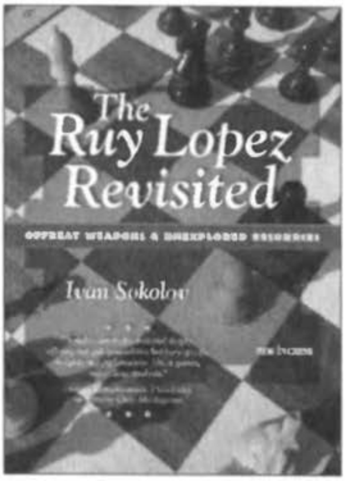
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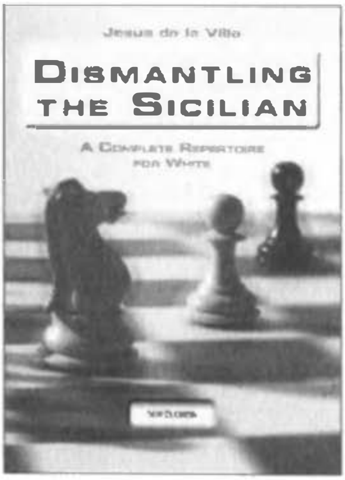
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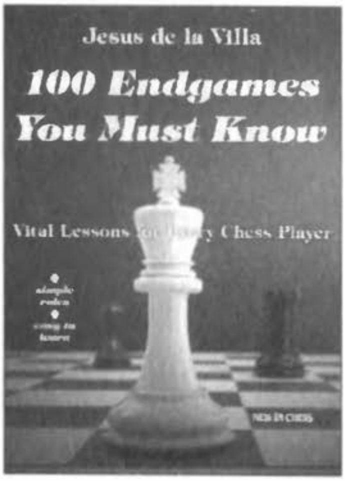
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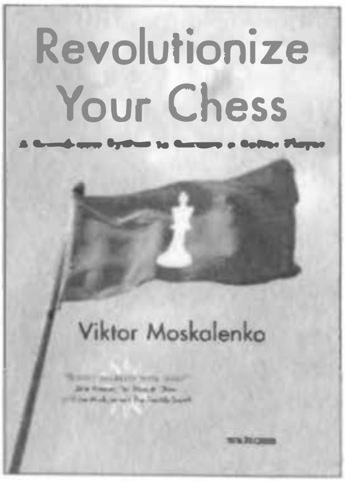
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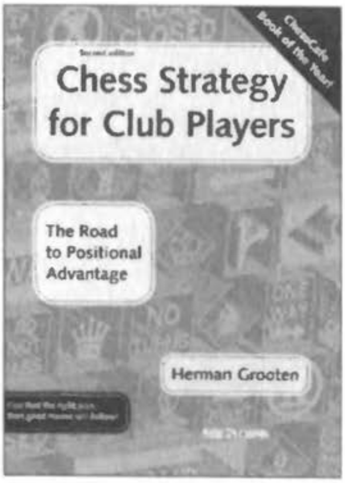
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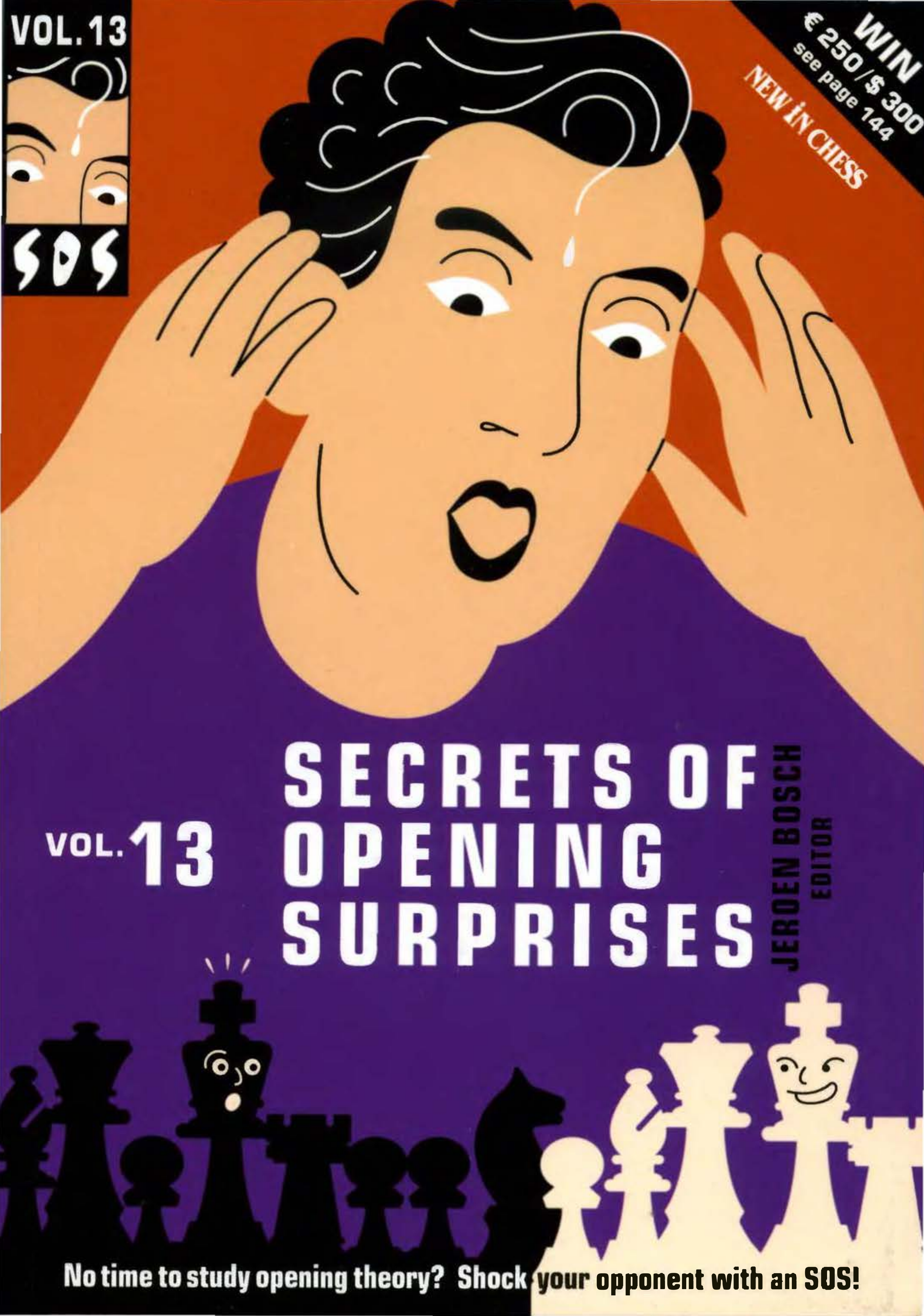

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John van der Wiel
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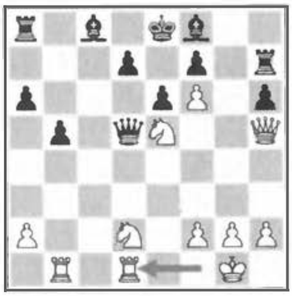
Jeroen Bosch

The SOS Files



Bisby-Emms after 17.♖fd1!

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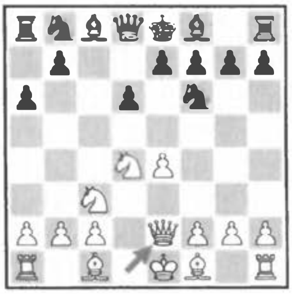
Arthur Kogan

Sicilian Najdorf: the Czebe Attack



Let's play 6.♕e2!?

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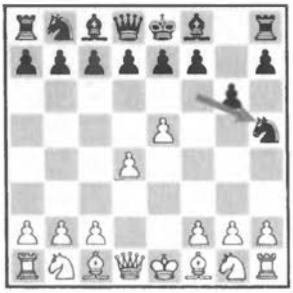
Jeroen Bosch

The North Sea Defence



Viking provocation or just testing the waters?

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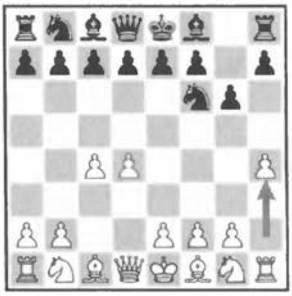
Simon Williams

The Williams Anti-Grünfeld Variation



1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.h4!?

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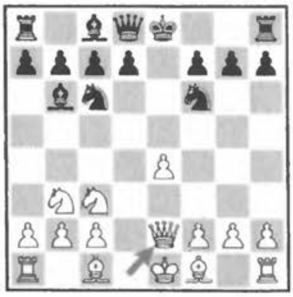
Konstantin Landa

The Scotch Game: Carlsen Leads the Way



Preparing to castle queenside

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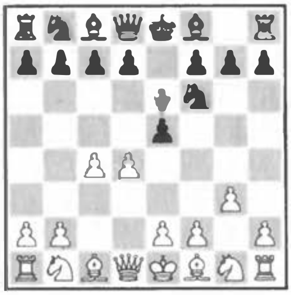
Jeroen Bosch

Budapest Gambit Delayed



Catalan with 3...e5

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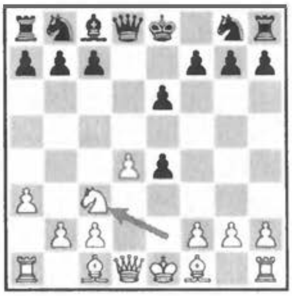
Alexander Finkel

French Defence: Obtaining Two Bishops



Winawer: 4.♘e2 dxe4 5.a3 ♗xc3+ 6.♘xc3

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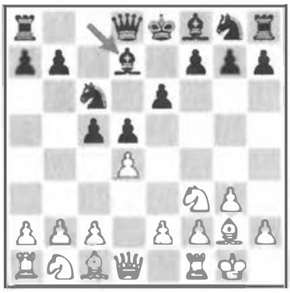
Glenn Flear

Grabbing a Pawn in the Réti/Catalan



The unspectacular 5...♗d7

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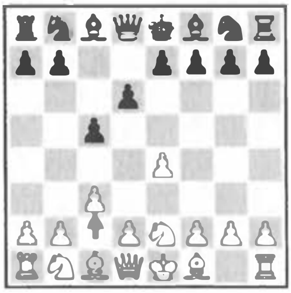
Dimitri Reinderman

Sicilian: Karma Chameleon



1.e4 c5 2.♘e2 d6 3.c3

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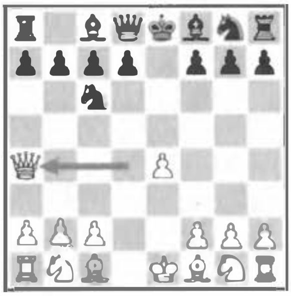
Jeroen Bosch

The Centre Game in Viking Spirit



1.e4 e5 2.d4 exd4 3.♕xd4 ♘c6 4.♕a4

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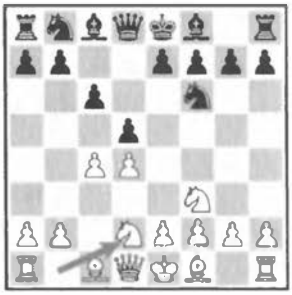
Efstratios Grivas

Slav: The Easy Way

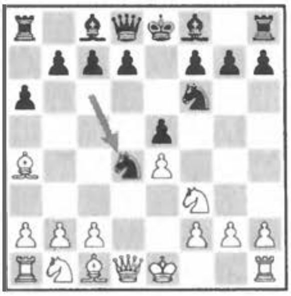


The unexplored 4.♘bd2

CHAPTER 12 - page 105

Adrian Mikhalchishin

Spanish: Kortchnoi's Idea in the Central Attack

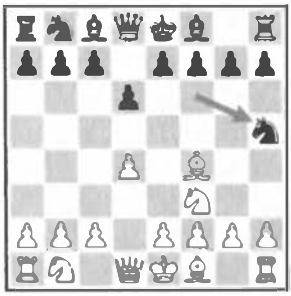


The surprising 5.d4 ♘xd4!?

CHAPTER 13 - page 110

Dimitri Reinderman

Panic in the London

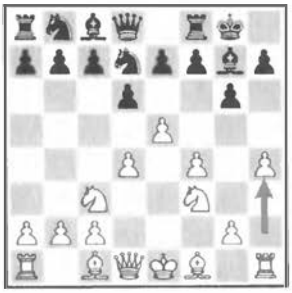


1.d4 ♞f6 2.♞f3 d6 3.♗f4 ♘h5

CHAPTER 14 - page 117

Alexander Finkel

Pirc Defence – Taking off the Gloves

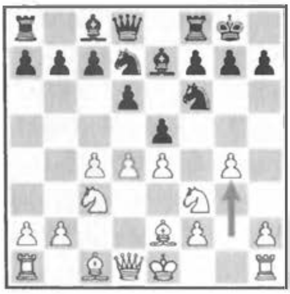


4.f4 ♗g7 5.♘f3 0-0 6.e5 ♘fd7 7.h4!?

CHAPTER 15 - page 124

Jeroen Bosch

New Recipe in Old Indian

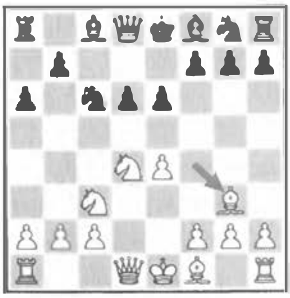


The universal antidote g4

CHAPTER 16 - page 130

John van der Wiel

Sicilian Mission: To Boldly Go...

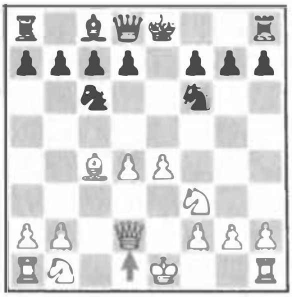


Where No Bishop Has Gone Before

CHAPTER 17 - page 140

Ian Rogers

Surprising Sacrifice in the Giuoco Piano



The cunning 8.♕xd2

CHAPTER 1

Jeroen Bosch

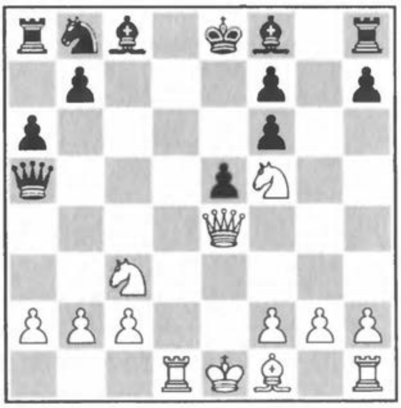
The SOS Files

Light Relief

Let's start this issue of the SOS Files with some light relief. In the next chapter Arthur Kogan explains why he feels that the Najdorf should be met by 6.♕e2!?. In Pamplona earlier this year White opted for the early queen move and it was bull's eye!

☐ **Du Plessis**
■ **Sebastian Almagro Mazariegos**
Pamplona 2010

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♕e2 e5 The typical Najdorf move isn't all that attractive here.
7.♘f5 d5 White always had a slight edge in Dvirnyy-A.l'Ami, Hoogeveen 2010, after 7...♘c6 8.♗g5 ♗xf5 9.exf5 ♘d4 10.♕d3 ♕c8 11.0-0-0 ♕xf5 12.♕xf5 ♞xf5 13.♗xf6 gxf6 14.♘d5.
8.♗g5! dxe4 9.♖d1 ♕a5 10.♗xf6 gxf6 11.♕xe4



White now has a splendid position after say 11...♗b4 12.♘d6+ or 11...♘c6 12.♗c4 but Black's actual choice was a howler:
11...♕b4?? 12.♘g7+ and Black had to resign as he loses his queen.

Winning Quickly

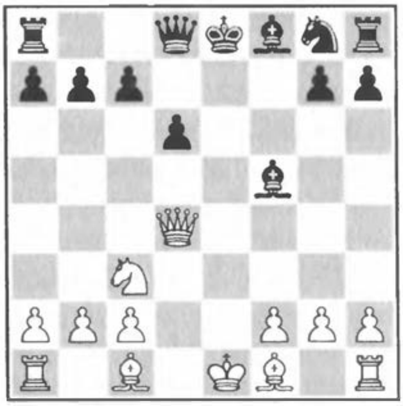
SOS-1, Chapter 16, p.127

The first-ever winner of the SOS Prize was a young Magnus Carlsen back in 2004. He employed an idea from SOS-1 ('The Improved Lisitsin Gambit') to beat GM Dolmatov in only 19 moves. Surprisingly, there are still players out there who are willing to enter this line as Black. The latest victim is Vladimir Malaniuk, one the greatest experts in the Dutch Defence. Mitigating circumstances are that he was Black against a 2700-player in a rapid game. Nevertheless, his demise was as quick as we could have predicted:

☐ **Laurent Fressinet**
■ **Vladimir Malaniuk**
Bastia 2010

1.♘f3 f5
Showing his willingness to enter the Dutch, but this is dangerous in view of our SOS weapon:
2.d3! Rather than the immediate 2.e4 which is the Lisitsin Gambit proper. **2...d6**

3.e4 e5 4.♘c3 ♘c6 5.exf5 ♗xf5 6.d4 ♘xd4 7.♘xd4 exd4 8.♕xd4



This really is a high-risk position for Black: why do they keep ignoring our warnings out there?

8...c6

8...♘f6 9.♗c4! c6 10.♗g5 b5 11.♗b3 ♗e7 12.0-0-0♕d7 13.♖he1 ♔d8 14.♖xe7! ♕xe7 15.♕f4 ♗d7 16.♘e4! d5 17.♞xf6 h6 18.♗h4 g5 19.♕d4! 1-0 was the afore-mentioned game Carlsen-Dolmatov, Moscow 2004.

9.♗f4! ♗xc2

9...♕b6 10.♕d2 d5 11.0-0-0 0-0-0 12.♗d3 ♗xd3 13.♕xd3 ♘h6? 14.♕h3+ ♖d7 15.♘xd5! and White won in a few moves, Sandner-Rechel, Germany 2003/04.

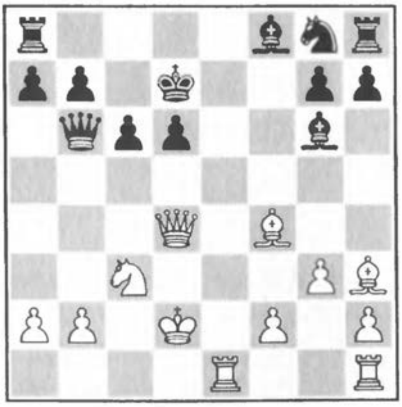
9...♕f6 10.♕b4 also favours White.

10.♔d2! ♗g6

Black is also in trouble after 10...♗f5 11.♖e1+ ♔d7 12.g4! ♗g6 (12...♗xg4 is met by 13.♖g1! ♘f6 – 13...♗f5 14.♖xg7+! – 14.♖xg4! ♘xg4 15.♗h3 h5 – 15...♕h4 16.♗xd6! – 16.f3 with an edge for White.) 13.♔c1! ♕b6 14.♕d2 ♕c5 15.g5!? ♘e7? (a blunder in a difficult position. 15...♔c7 16.h4) 16.♗h3+ ♘f5 17.♖e5! 1-0, Mikac-Zelic, Pula 2006.

11.♖e1+ ♔d7 12.g3 ♕b6?! 13.♗h3+

Amazingly all this is known to SOS-readers, Black is already lost.



13...♔c7

In the SOS Files of Volume 2 you will find the following miniature: 13...♔d8 14.♗g5+ ♔c7 15.♘d5+ 1-0, Seel-Horstmann, Bad Wiessee 2003.

14.♗xd6+! ♗xd6 15.♕xg7+ ♔b8 16.♔c1! ♕xf2 17.♘e4! 17.♖e2? ♕f6.

17...♗f4+??

Relatively best is 17...♕f8 18.♕xh8.

18.gxf4 ♕xf4+ 19.♘d2 ♕f6 20.♕d7

20.♖e8+ was a neat mate: 20...♗xe8 21.♕g3+ ♕d6 22.♕xd6+, but the text is of course sufficient.

20...♕f8? 21.♖e8+

1-0.

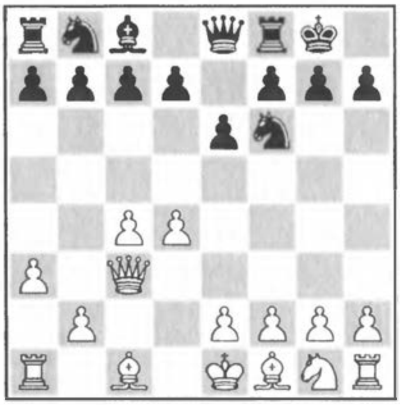
Hou about 6...♕e8 in the Nimzo?

SOS-8, Chapter 6, p.50

In the 2010 FIDE Grand Prix in Nalchik Hou Yifan defeated her former compatriot Zhu Chen with an SOS-line in the Classical Nimzo-Indian. Clearly, this idea of Keene has much to recommend itself.

☐ **Zhu Chen**
■ **Hou Yifan**
Nalchik 2010

1.d4 e6 2.c4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♕c2 0-0 5.a3 ♗xc3+ 6.♕xc3 ♕e8!?



The queen move was first played by Raymond Keene in 1973. In SOS-8 Sébastien Mazé and Matthieu Cornette explain the main ideas behind this 'mysterious' move:

– Black prevents a possible pin following ♗g5.

– The queen defends the e-pawn, thus preparing ...d6 and ...e5.

– Sometimes the queen aims for square h5; after ...♘e4 and ...f5.

– The queen also makes a queenside strategy involving ...a5-a4 and ...b5 possible.

7.b4

This gains space on the queenside and prepares the fianchetto. However, it also weakens the light squares which is a distinct drawback (White therefore often plays b3 at some point).

● In the opinion of our French authors in SOS-8 White's best move is 7.f3. In 2010 Black has done well so far after 7...d6, and now:

– 8.♗g5?! is inaccurate as Maze/Cornette point out because of 8...♘fd7! and the bishop is badly placed. This position clearly illustrates one of the main points behind 6...♕e8. In the game Kozhuharov-Cornette, Malakoff 2010, there followed: 9.e3 e5 10.d5 a5! 11.b4?! f5 (...♕h5 is an unpleasant threat) 12.♗h4 axb4 13.axb4 ♖xa1+ 14.♕xa1 ♘a6! 15.♕a3 ♘b6∓ 16.c5? ♘xd5 17.♗c4 ♗e6 18.cxd6 ♘axb4 19.♕b3 cxd6 and White resigned: he is two pawns and hasn't been able to develop his kingside yet.

– 8.e4 e5 (the subtleties of 8...♘fd7 first are explained in SOS-8) 9.♘e2 ♘fd7! 10.g4 (stronger is 10.♗e3 a5 11.b3 ♘a6 12.♘g3 – 12.♕xa5 f5!? – 12...exd4 13.♗xd4 ♘e5 14.♗e2 c5?! – 14...f6 15.0-0 ♘c5 – 15.♗e3 ♘c7 16.0-0 ♘e6 17.♖ad1 ♕e7 18.♖d2± f5 19.exf5 ½-½, Brunner-Cornette, Marseille 2010) 10...a5 11.♗e3 a4! 12.♗g2 ♘c6 13.0-0 b6 14.♖fd1 ♗a6 15.♗f1 ♘a5 (this game demonstrates the strength of Black's queenside strategy) 16.♘g3 ♘b3 17.♖ab1 c5 18.dxe5 dxe5 clearly favoured Black in Kotanjian-Iordachescu, Dubai 2010.

● 7.♘f3 d6 8.g3 a5! 9.b3 a4! 10.b4 b5! 11.c5 ♗b7 12.♗g2 ♗e4! 13.0-0?! (13.♕e3 ♕c6 14.0-0 ♕d5 15.♗b2 ♘c6 and Black was doing well in Hauchard-Bauer, Narbonne 1997. For an analysis of the remainder of the game see SOS-8) 13...♘d5 14.♕d2 f5 15.♘e1! (15.♖e1 f4 16.♘h4 ♗xg2 17.♘xg2 ♕g6 with an attack, Chekhov-Sjoberg, Kecskemet 1991, was mentioned by Mazé/Cornette) 15...♘f6 16.f3 ♗d5 17.♘d3 ♘c6 18.♗b2 ♖d8 with a slight edge in Borzov-Tukhaev, Alushta 2010.

● See SOS-8 for the more restrained 7.g3 and 7.b3.

7...d6 8.♗b2 b6

Sensible play by Hou Yifan. Black played very creatively (and successfully) in Arlandi-Tatai, Chianciano 1989: 8...♘bd7 9.e3 a5 10.♗d3 ♘b6!? 11.♕c2 (11.♘f3 ♘a4 12.♕c2 ♘xb2 13.♕xb2=) 11...♕a4!? 12.♕xa4 (12.♕c3 ♕c6 13.♘f3 ♘a4=) 12...♘xa4 13.♗c1 (13.♖b1) 13...axb4 14.axb4 ♗d7 (14...♘c5) 15.♘e2 b5! 16.0-0 (16.cxb5 ♖fb8∓) 16...bxc4 17.♗xc4 ♘b6 18.♖xa8 ♖xa8 19.♗d3 ♘fd5 20.♗d2 ♖a2∓ and Black won.

9.♕f3

Hoping to punish Black for 6...♕e8? The queen move provokes ...d5 and the closure of the long diagonal. However, the drawbacks are also clear. White loses time with her queen. Closes her own diagonal a1-h8, as d4-d5 is no longer on the cards. Moreover, ...d5 fits in with Black's light-squared strategy on the queenside. Still, things are not that clear in the game, as Zhu Chen's play can be improved upon.

9...d5 10.♖c1 c6 11.e3 a5?!

Here Black has the equalizing 11...♗a6 at her disposal.

12.bxa5?!

Stronger is 12.b5, for example: 12...cxb5 (12...♗b7) 13.cxb5 ♗d7 14.♕e2! (14.a4 ♕e7 15.♕d1 ♘e4 is a plausible line that favours Black) 14...♘e4 15.f3 ♘d6 16.a4±.

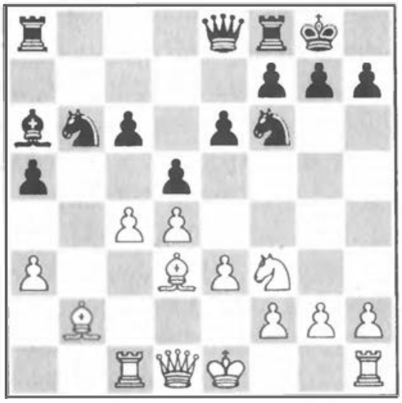
12...bxa5

Not bad is 12...♖xa5!? 13.♗c3 ♖xa3 14.♗b4 ♖a2 and Black is better as 15.♗xf8 ♕xf8 gives Black too much compensation.

13.♕d1

13.♗d3 followed by ♕e2, ♘f3 and 0-0 is a healthier way to develop.

13...♗a6 14.♘f3 ♘bd7 15.♗d3 ♘b6



Black has grasped the initiative by putting pressure on c4. Positionally, White should keep the pawn on c4, which involves a further loss of time.

16.♘d2

– 16.cxd5 ♗xd3 17.♕xd3 cxd5 is clearly better for Black.

– 16.c5 ♘c4 is probably better than 16...♗xd3 17.cxb6 (not 17.♕xd3 ♘c4 18.♗a1 ♕e7 19.0-0 ♖fb8).

16...♖b8 17.♗c3 17.0-0 dxc4. **17...♕e7! 18.♖a1** 18.♗xa5 ♕xa3 19.♗xb6 ♕xd3 20.♗c5 ♖fe8∓.

18...♘xc4

18...dxc4 is also unpleasant for White.

19.♘xc4 19.♗xc4 is relatively better to play for opposite-coloured bishops.

19...dxc4 20.♗e2 ♘d5 21.♗xa5 ♖b3 21...♖b2. **22.0-0 ♖xa3**

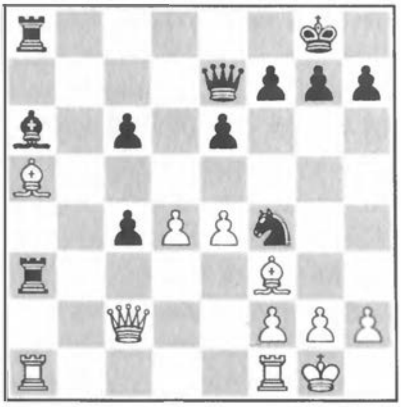
Hou Yifan is a pawn up, but White's structure is superior, so this does not mean much. More important is Black's piece activity and the tactical chances that this brings. Considering Zhu Chen's 24th and 25th move she must have been in serious time trouble by now.

23.♕c2 ♖a8 24.e4?

This is a serious blunder. It is hard to say what Zhu Chen overlooked. Clearly, allowing the knight to f4 brings nothing but trouble.

24.♕b2 ♖b3 25.♕c1 and White is able to defend.

24...♘f4 25.♗f3?? 25.♗g4 c3 also wins for Black.



25...♖xf3 26.♗d2

And White resigned without waiting for 26...♘e2+.

Beating the French

SOS-3, Chapter 8, p.71

Getting 'Out of the French Book', as Canadian GM Mark Bluvshtein entitled his 2005 article for SOS, is rather difficult, but the unusual 3.♗d3 still seems to do the trick. In a recent game Spanish GM Magem Badals beat his compatriot Oms Pallisse in an attractive little miniature.

☐ **Jordi Magem Badals**
■ **Josep Oms Pallisse**
Barcelona 2010

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♗d3!?

A flexible move. Rather than determining the pawn structure (3.e5 and 3.exd5), or obstructing his own development (3.♘d2), or obstructing the possible formation of a pawn chain a la Nimzowitsch (3.♘c3) White leaves it all open. Of course, to obtain such flexibility he has to commit the 'opening sin' of developing his bishop before his knights (Lasker's rule). This is perhaps a small drawback, but there is another one: a possible loss of time. Oms Pallisse responds correctly.

3...dxe4

By far the most natural move. Another typical French idea is 3...c5, when Bluvshtein makes a case for 4.c3, but I have personally preferred 4.exd5, when Black's safest bet is taking back with the pawn à la the Exchange Variation: 4...exd5 (4...♕xd5 5.♘c3 ♕xd4– 5...♕xg2? 6.♗e4+– – 6.♘f3 – 6.♘b5 – 6...♕d8 gives White enough for the pawn, Bosch-Stellwagen, Dutch tt 2007. See The SOS Files of Volume 8) 5.♘f3 c4 6.♗e2 ♘f6 7.0-0 ♘c6 8.b3 cxb3 9.axb3 ♗e7 10.♘e5 0-0 11.♘xc6 bxc6 12.♘c3 a5 13.♗a3 ♖e8 14.♗xe7 ♕xe7 ½-½, Grafl-Bromberger, Badalona 2010.

4.♗xe4 ♘f6

Winning a tempo for his development, which justifies his previous decision to 'give up the centre' just like in the Rubinstein Variation. Now White places his bishop on the h1-a8 diagonal putting pressure on Black's queenside – fairly unusual for a French Defence!

– 4...c5 5.c3!? (5.♘e2) 5...♘f6 6.♗f3 (6.♗d3 cxd4 7.cxd4 ♘c6 8.♘f3 ♘b4 9.♗e2 ♗e7 10.0-0 0-0 11.a3 ♘c6 12.♘c3 with a typical isolated pawn position, Bontempi-Krivoshey, Porto San Giorgio 2007) 6...♘c6 7.♘e2 e5 8.♗xc6+ bxc6 9.0-0 exd4 10.cxd4 ♗e7 was about equal in (among others) Vedder-Wemmers, Amsterdam 2010. Black has a pair of bishops but also a weaker pawn structure.

– 4...♗e7 5.♘e2 ♘f6 6.♗f3 c5 7.♗e3 ♘bd7 8.♘bc3 cxd4 9.♘xd4 a6 10.0-0 ♘e5 11.♗e2 ♘d5 12.♘xd5 ♕xd5 13.♘f3 ♕xd1 14.♖fxd1 ♘c6 15.c3 was slightly better for White in Collinson-Richter, Hinckley Island 2010. The position resembles a 2.c3 Sicilian gone right for White.

5.♗f3 ♘bd7

Preparing ...c5 in this way is not necessary and therefore this move is, ever so slightly, inaccurate. Good is the straightforward 5...c5 6.♘e2 ♘c6 (6...cxd4 7.♕xd4!? ♘bd7 8.♗e3 ♗c5 9.♕c3 ♕b6 10.♗xc5 – 10.♘d2 ♗xe3 11.fxe3± – 10...♕xc5 11.♕xc5 ♘xc5 12.♘bc3 ♗d7 13.0-0-0±, Jose Queralto-Antonsen, Khanty-Mansiysk ol 2010) 7.♗e3 e5 (7...♕b6 8.0-0?! – 8.♘bc3! see SOS-3 – 8...♕xb2 9.♘bc3 ♗e7?! 10.♘a4 ♕a3 11.c3? c4 12.♗f4 0-0∓, Cihal-Majer Sen, Brno 2010; but stronger was 10.♖b1! ♕a3 11.♘b5 ♕a5 12.♗f4 0-0 13.♘c7 cxd4 – 13...♖b8 14.♗xc6+– – 14.♘xa8±) 8.♗xc6+ bxc6 9.dxe5 ♕xd1+ 10.♔xd1 ♘g4, Sipila-Solomon, Khanty-Mansiysk ol 2010, was already indicated as satisfactory for Black by Bluvshtein, who noted that White had to play 9.c3 instead.

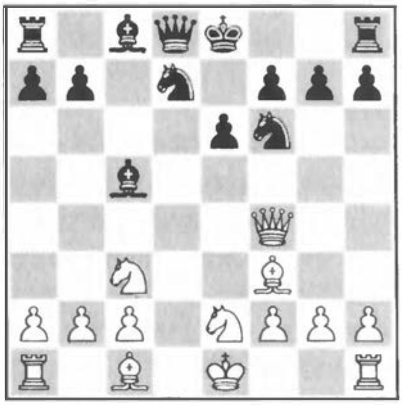
6.♘c3 c5

After all, but now Black can no longer put pressure on d4 with his queen's knight.

7.♘ge2 cxd4 8.♕xd4!?

Because of Black's move order White is not obliged to take back with the knight: 8.♘xd4, which also looks somewhat better for the first player.

8...♗c5 9.♕f4



9...♕e7

9...e5 10.♕g3 favours White who controls the light squares in the centre.

10.0-0 ♗d6 11.♕e3 a6

It is useful to cover square b5 but is does not completely solve Black's problems.

11...♗c5?! is met by 12.♕g5! 0-0 13.♖d1. Perhaps 11...0-0 or 11...♘e5.

12.♘g3

White has a slight edge.

12...♘e5 13.♖d1!?

Magem is not interested in saving his light-squared bishop!

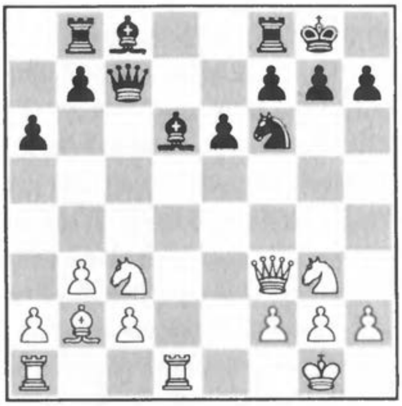
13...0-0 13...♘xf3+ 14.♕xf3 0-0 15.♗g5 is rather unpleasant for Black.

14.b3 ♕c7 14...♘xf3+ 15.♕xf3 ♕c7.

15.♗b2 ♘xf3+ 16.♕xf3 ♖b8?

Black is ambitious and wants to develop à la the Sicilian with ...b5 and ...♗b7, but he has lost his sense of danger for a moment. White has been preparing nasty things along the a1-h8 diagonal and Magem does not miss out on such a chance.

Still playable was 16...♗d7 17.♘ce4 ♘xe4 18.♕xe4 ♗xg3 19.hxg3 ♗c6. And 16...♗e5 17.♖e1± was another possibility.



17.♖xd6!

Winning by force in all lines. An important defender is removed and the rook on b8 is badly placed.

17...♕xd6 18.♘ce4 ♘xe4 19.♘xe4

There is no defence now against a devastating check on f6.

19...♕c7

– 19...♕e7 20.♘f6+ ♔h8 21.♗e5! ♖a8 22.♕e4 gxf6 23.♕h4+–.

– 19...♕d8 20.♘f6+ (even simpler is 20.♕g3+–) 20...♔h8 21.♝e5 ♖a8 22.♖d1 ♕e7 23.♕e4+–.

20.♘f6+ ♔h8 21.♕e4 And Black has no defence against checkmate. 1-0

Smyslov's SOS line

SOS-2, Chapter 16, p.121

The Ruy Lopez with 3...g6 is often called the Smyslov Variation, a fitting tribute to the efforts of the 7th World Champion who passed away in March 2010. In the 2010 European Championship 2700-GM Motylev demolished a variation in the 3...g6 Ruy Lopez on which we have repeatedly reported. Check out this attractive game and brush up on your knowledge so this does not happen to you!

☐ **Alexander Motylev**
■ **Michele Godena**
Rijeka 2010

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 g6

'Solid but Tricky' is how Glenn Flear dubbed this line in his article for SOS-2. While this sounds like a contradiction in terms it does have the merit of truth. Black often has the option to go either for a solid set-up, or take a more enterprising approach. In short an ideal surprise weapon, that can be played on a regular basis. Apart from Motylev's 4.d4, White has the innocuous 4.♗xc6, 4.♘c3 and especially 4.c3 at his disposal. All these moves are covered by Flear in SOS-2. Please note, if you play 3...g6 it can be useful to also incorporate 3...♘ge7 (the Cozio Variation) in your repertoire – see SOS-8, Chapter 16.

4.d4

The sharpest reaction. White aims to show that in the Open Games Black has no time to fianchetto his bishop.

4...exd4 5.♗g5!

5.♘xd4 ♗g7 6.♗e3 ♘f6 7.♘c3 0-0 8.f3 (8.0-0 ♘g4! 9.♕xg4 ♘xd4 is fine for Black, for example: 10.♗xd4!? ♗xd4 11.♖ad1 ♗xc3 12.bxc3 d6 13.♕g3 ♕e7, S.Polgar-Smyslov, London 1996) 8...♘e7 9.♘de2 (9.♕d2 d5!) 9...d5! 10.exd5 ♘fxd5 11.♗g5 c6 12.♘xd5 cxd5 13.c3 ♕d6 14.♕d2 ♘c6 15.♖d1 ♗e6 and Black was very comfortably placed in Dückstein-Smyslov, Bad Wörishofen 1991 (see SOS-2 for more details).

5...♗e7 6.♗xe7

In his *The Ruy Lopez Revisited* (New In Chess 2009), Ivan Sokolov also mentions the 'illogical' 6.♗f4, citing the game Anand-Smyslov, Groningen 1989, where Black was better after 6...♘f6 7.e5 ♘d5 8.♗h6 a6 9.♗a4 ♘b6 10.♗b3 d5 11.exd6 ♕xd6 12.0-0 ♗e6 13.♗xe6 fxe6 14.♘bd2 0-0-0.

6...♕xe7

6...♘gxe7 7.♘xd4 d5 8.♘c3 is somewhat unattractive for Black, and to avoid the dangers in the present game I would recommend the alternative on the next move.

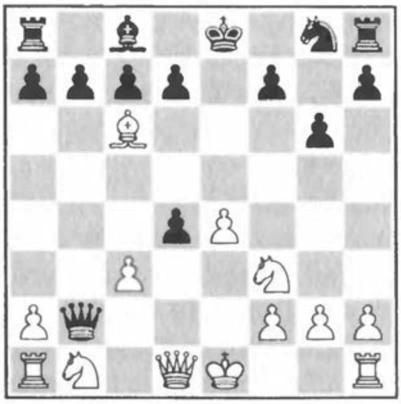
7.♗xc6!

7.0-0 is either answered by 7...♘f6 8.e5 ♘h5!, with a decent game for Black (see the SOS Files of Volume 3), or by 7...♕c5 8.♗xc6 dxc6 9.♕xd4 ♕xd4 10.♘xd4 ♗d7 11.♘c3 0-0-0, which is Sokolov's preference.

7...♕b4+?!

Very tricky, but also very risky as Motylev brilliantly demonstrates. The queen check is a speciality of GM Julian Radulski. Much more solid is 7...dxc6, when play might continue 8.♕xd4 ♘f6 9.♘c3 ♗g4 10.♘d2 (10.0-0-0 ♗xf3 11.gxf3 0-0) 10...♗e6 (10...c5 11.♕e3 0-0-0; 10...0-0) 11.f3 c5 12.♕e3 0-0-0 13.0-0-0 ♖d4 14.♖he1 ♖hd8 with equality in Organdziev-Radulski, Vrnjacka Banja 2004 – see the SOS Files of SOS-3.

8.c3 ♕xb2



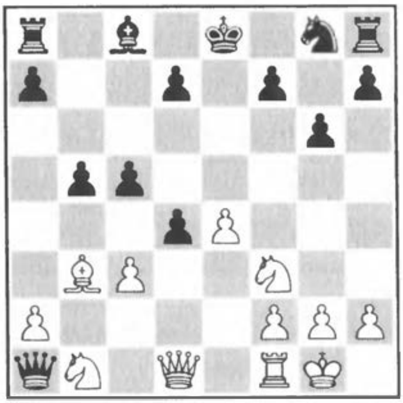
9.♗a4!

This is the new Star Move! Motylev preserves his bishop for the attack, not worrying about the rook he will lose on a1. The result is a very romantic game in the spirit of Anderssen and Morphy. Until now White took on d4: 9.♕xd4 bxc6 (9...♕xa1? 10.0-0 f6 11.e5! dxc6 12.exf6, with a killing attack, was given by Flear) 10.0-0 ♕xa1 (10...♗a6 and now Flear's 11.♘bd2! is strong) 11.♕xh8 ♔f8 12.♘g5 (12.♘e5 ♕xa2 13.♕xh7? d6! 14.♘xc6 a5! 15.f4 ♗a6 16.♖e1 ♗d3 17.e5 ♗e4! 0-1, Bjarnason-Radulski, Le Touquet 2007) 12...♗a6! 13.♘xh7+ ♔e7 14.♕e5+ ♔d8 15.♖d1 ♗e2! 16.♕g7 ♔e7 and the game Spasov-Radulski, Borovets 2008, soon ended in a draw by perpetual check (see the SOS-Files of SOS-10).

9...♕xa1 10.0-0 b5?

Hoping to gain time or to shut out the bishop. Yet this can be shown to be a losing mistake. 10...c5 11.♕d2 is also too risky (the queen on a1 is completely out of play), which leaves 10...♕xa2. If you want to insist on 7...♕b4+ then this should be the start of your (computer-assisted) analysis.

11.♗b3 c5



The idea is nice (shutting out the bishop), and while your engine will quickly reveal 12.♘xd4! this is not so easy to find over the board. Don't forget that in this game Black is a grandmaster too.

12.♘xd4! 12.cxd4 c4!. **12...cxd4 13.♕xd4 f6** Forced – if Black loses the rook on h8 his position is wrecked anyway. **14.e5!** Opening the position with the black king stuck in the middle. **14...♗b7 15.♘a3 ♕b2 16.exf6** The immediate 16.♘xb5 also wins.

16...♘h6

White wins after 16...0-0-0 17.♘xb5 ♗c6 18.♘xa7+ ♔c7 19.♘xc6 dxc6 20.♕a7+.

17.♕e5+ ♔d8 18.♘xb5

All units barring the rook are in on the attack. Black's forces are scattered over the board.

18...♕d2 19.♕c7+ ♔e8 20.♘d6+ and Godena resigned.

Motylev's 9.♗a4 led to a very nice victory. You may want to investigate 10...♕xa2, but there is a very safe line available in the form of 7...dxc6, rendering Smyslov's Variation absolutely payable.

Reading SOS Successfully

SOS-12, Chapter 4, p.34
SOS-6, Chapter 3, p.24

In the previous SOS volume Alexander Finkel wrote on an Alekhine favourite (6.g4) versus the French that in modern times has mainly been played by Swedish GM Jonny Hector. Not so long after the publication of SOS-12 one of our readers, Boris Grimberg, was able to employ Hector's weapon versus GM Ivan Farago in Germany's biggest open tournament. Farago had a tough time against such a 'booked-up' opponent. When playing through the game we were struck by how effortlessly it all seems.

☐ **Boris Grimberg**
■ **Ivan Farago**
Deizisau 2010

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♘e2 dxe4 5.a3 ♗e7

For 5...♗xc3+ 6.♘xc3 see Chapter 7 of the present volume.

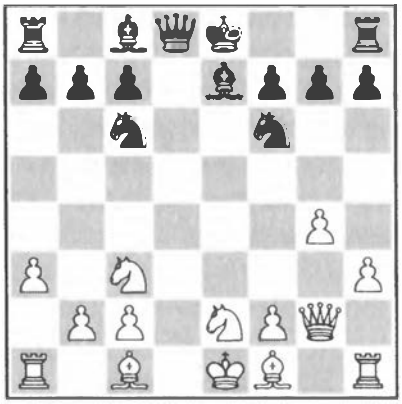
6.g4 e5

The most natural response, although Finkel feels that 6...♗d7 and 6...h5 are no worse.

7.h3 exd4?! 8.♕xd4 ♘c6

After 8...♕xd4 9.♘xd4 the ending is not so easy for Black, according to Finkel on the basis of several of Hector's games.

9.♕xe4 ♘f6 10.♕g2!



Interestingly White gains an edge here by fianchettoing his queen! In the game we will see that Black has trouble finding a safe haven for his queen. The queen on g2 is safe from any attacks by enemy pieces, and supports the pushing of the kingside pawns.

10...0-0 11.g5!?

Somewhat impatient, but difficult to find fault with. After 11.♗d2 ♗e6 12.0-0-0 ♕c8 13.♘f4 ♖d8 14.g5 ♘e8 15.♘cd5! White was much better in Hector-Heika, Hamburg 2005. (See SOS-12).

11...♘d7

Nor does Black achieve equality after either 11...♞h5 12.♝d2 ♕d6 13.0-0-0 ♗f5 14.♘d5, or 11...♘e8 12.♗d2 followed by queenside castling.

12.♗d2 ♘b6 13.0-0-0 ♘c4?! 14.♗f4

So far White has only made 'natural' moves – that is if you are in for 6.g4 and that sort of thing. It's a pleasant edge that White is enjoying. First of all because Black's queen is awkwardly placed, and, secondly, since White's plan of attacking on the kingside is so simple to execute.

14...♗d6 15.♗xd6

Keeping the tension with 15.♔b1 or 15.♘d5 also deserves consideration.

15...♘xd6 16.h4 ♗f5 17.♘g3 ♕d7

17...♗e6 18.♘ge4±. **18.♘xf5** To be able to develop the bishop to d3 with tempo. The crude 18.h5 was also strong.

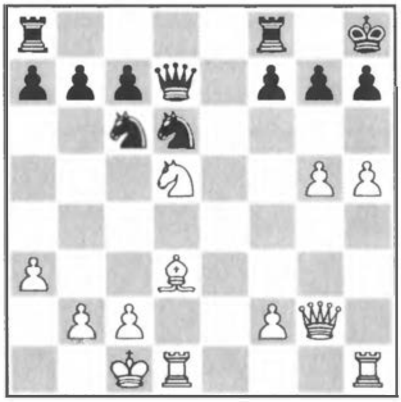
18...♕xf5 19.♘d5 ♔h8?!

This is understandable in view of a sometimes painful check on f6. Consider for instance: 19...♖ac8? 20.♗d3 ♕d7? 21.♞f6+, and wins.

The pawn sacrifice 19...♖ae8 brings no compensation after 20.♘xc7 ♖e5 21.♘d5.

19...♘e4 offered most resistance.

20.♗d3 ♕d7 21.h5



Chess is often a very difficult game, but here it all seems so simple!

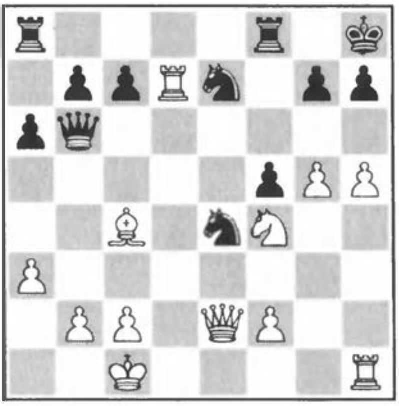
21...♘e7

White also wins after 21...♘e5 22.h6 g6 23.♕g3, and 21...♖ad8 22.h6 g6 23.♖he1.

22.♘f4 22.h6 was even stronger. **22...♕c6 23.♕g4 f5? 24.♕e2 ♘e4** 24...♖ae8 25.h6. **25.♗b5!**

This wins by force, but the game would also not have lasted much longer after 25.h6.

25...♕b6 25...♕c5 26.♘g6++–. **26.♖d7 a6 27.♗c4**

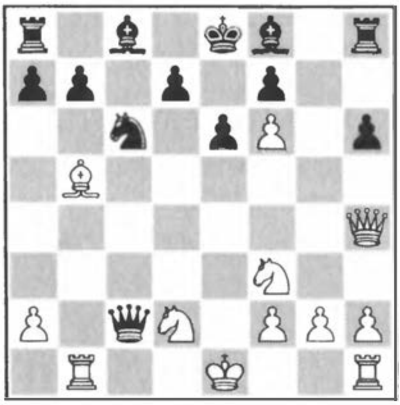


27...♕c6
It smacks of despair, but this is actually the strongest move in the position! 27...♖ae8 loses after 28.♖xe7 ♖xe7 29.♘g6+.
28.♖xe7 ♘g3 29.fxg3 ♕xh1+ 30.♔d2 ♖ad8+ 31.♗d3 ♕g1 32.♕e5 Or 32.h6. **32...♕f2+ 33.♔c3 ♖g8 34.h6** 1-0.

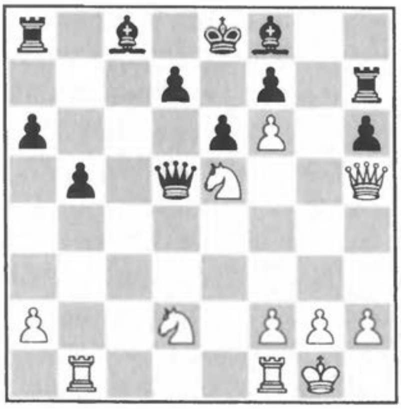
In SOS-6 I wrote about the so-called Aussie Attack. This is a particularly risky line, but you know how it is: high risk – high benefit. In the game below avid SOS-reader Daniel Bisby beats *Dangerous Weapons* editor GM John Emms with a novelty that was mentioned in SOS-6. A deserved win and the winner of the SOS Prize.

☐ **Daniel Bisby**
■ **John Emms**
London Chess League 2009

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗g5!?
This is the Aussie Attack!
4...♘f6 5.e5 h6 6.♗h4 6.♗c1 is the safer option, as indicated in SOS-6.
6...g5 7.exf6 Black is OK after 7.♗g3 ♘h5 8.♘bd2 ♘c6 9.♗b5 g4!, as I mentioned in the earlier article.
7...gxh4 8.♕xd4 ♘c6 9.♕xh4 ♕b6 10.♘bd2
Played like a man. 10.b3 is too insipid.
10...♕xb2 11.♖b1 ♕xc2 12.♗b5



12...a6
12...♖g8!? 13.0-0 (13.♔e2 is mentioned by Bisby, with the idea of 13...♖xg2? 14.♘e1!, although he mentions that it 'must be rubbish'!) 13...♕g6 to exchange queens with 14...♕g4 was indicated in SOS-6.
13.♗xc6 ♕xc6 14.0-0 b5 15.♘e5 ♕d5 16.♕h5 ♖h7
Interestingly, I gave this position in SOS-6 with the following comments: 'and Black had everything defended for the moment in Liu Pei-Qi Jingxuan, Suzhou 2006. White should now perhaps have played 17.♖fd1 (rather than 17.♘df3) and if you love to attack then here's your chance. White may well be better!'. Clearly, Bisby loves to attack and his strong opponent lasted for only a few more moves!

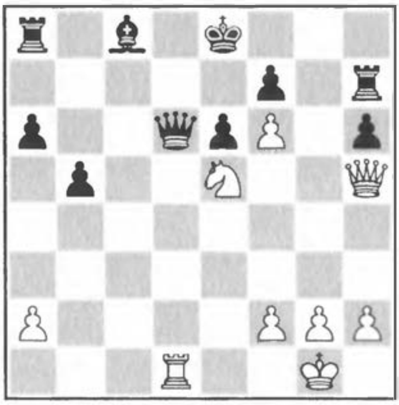


17.♖fd1! d6

This loses by force, but Black's position is very hard to play in practice.

18.♘dc4! ♕e4

Black also loses after 18...♕c5 19.♘xd6+! ♗xd6 20.♖xd6 ♕xd6 (20...♖a7 21.♖bd1 ♗d7 22.♕g4+–) 21.♖d1



21...♕c7 (21...♕c5 22.♕g4 ♖h8 23.♘xf7!+–) 22.♕g4 ♖h8 23.♕g7 ♖f8 24.♘g6! ♕c5 25.♘xf8 ♕xf8 26.♕xf8+ ♔xf8 27.♖d8 checkmate!

19.f3 ♕f4

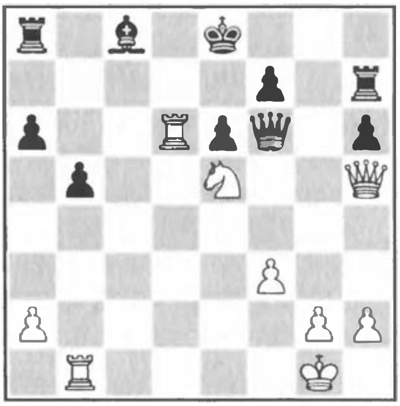
Black is lost in all lines:

– 19...♕f5 20.♕xf5 exf5 21.♘xd6+ ♗xd6 22.♖xd6+–.

– 19...♕c2 20.♖bc1 ♕e2 21.♖d2+–.

– 19...♕xb1 20.♖xb1 bxc4 21.♕g4 dxe5 22.♕xc4 ♗d7 23.♕e4 ♖c8 24.♕xh7+–.

20.♘xd6+ ♗xd6 21.♖xd6 ♕xf6



22.♖bd1?

Letting Black off the hook for a moment. Correct was 22.♕g4!, when White wins after 22...♔f8 (22...♖g7 23.♕e4) 23.♖e1! and now there are all sorts of nice geometrical motifs, for example: 23...♖g7 24.♕d4 ♔g8 25.♖d8+ ♔h7 26.♕e4+ ♕f5 27.♕xa8 ♕g5! 28.♖h8+! ♔xh8 29.♕xc8++–.

22...♖a7?

22...♕g5, to stay in the game.

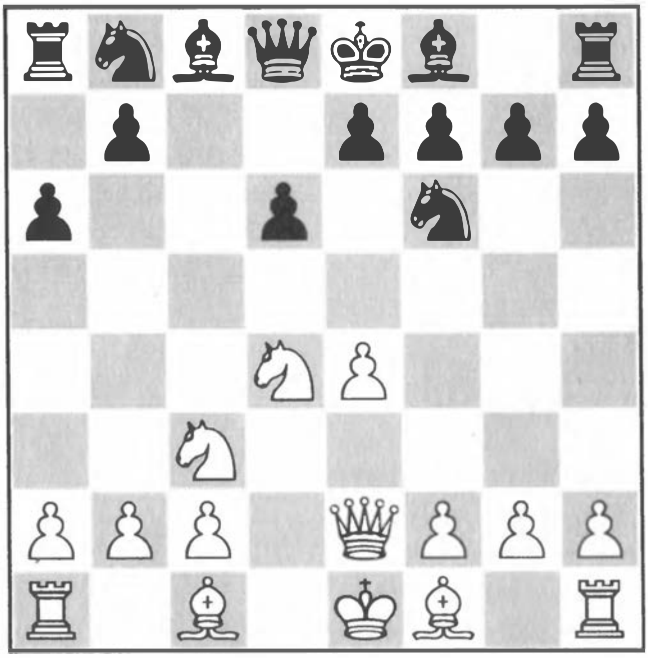
23.♖d8+

And Black resigned, as he loses his rook to a knight fork after taking twice on d8.

CHAPTER 2

Arthur Kogan

Sicilian Najdorf: the Czebe Attack



Let's play 6.♕e2!?

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6

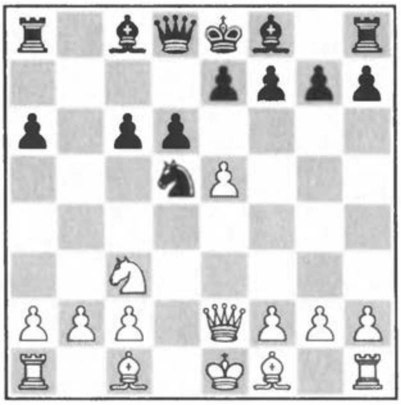
The Najdorf is usually played by those who take their openings very seriously and prepare and memorize long lines for hours. So, it makes sense to surprise them at an early stage, and test their creativity instead of their memory. Personally, I have played 6.♕f3 quite successfully (see SOS-5, Chapter 13, p.107), but perhaps this line is less surprising than it used to be. Therefore without further ado I present you

6.♕e2!?

This is slightly similar to 6.♕f3. White prepares to castle queenside as quickly as possible, and anticipates the Najdorf move 6...e5. Other attacking ideas include e5, f4, g4 or even ♘d5, depending on Black's set-up. Actually, these days the queen move has become quite common in several lines of the 6.♗g5 Najdorf. The point is that having the queen on e2 will not disturb the rook on d1 on the half open file. Moreover, with the queen on e2 there are often threats against the black king on e8 in combination with moves like e5, ♘d5 or even ♘f5. All this seems to compensate for the bishop on f1, that will feel sad for a while but can join the game from g2 after the customary push of g4 in many lines. At such an early stage in the game Black also has a wide choice. I will mainly show the basic ideas by combining the limited practical experience with my own analysis. There is still a lot of space for improvements and creativity for all the SOS fans out there!

While it is hard to divide the limited available material into main lines and side variations, I first present the following game excerpts with a few notes:

– 6...♘c6!? was tried by Murey, but I believe that White is better after 7.♘xc6 bxc6 8.e5! ♘d5

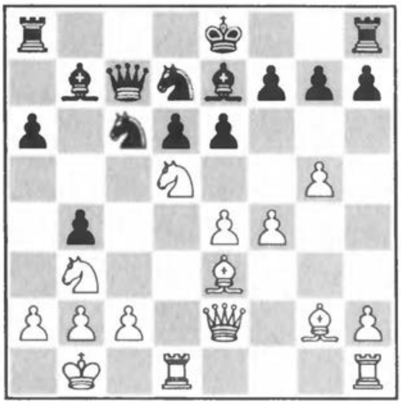


and now 9.♗d2! would be my recommendation. White is planning to take on d5, followed by ♗c3, when Black will have trouble developing his kingside.

Instead, the game went 9.♕c4!? ♗b7 (not bad is 9...e6 10.♕xc6+ ♗d7 11.♕c4 ♖c8, with very decent compensation to say the least) 10.exd6 ♕xd6 11.♗d2 g6 12.♕d4 e5 13.♕a4 ♕b4 14.♕b3 ♕xb3 15.axb3, and White still holds a modicum of an advantage, but the players soon agreed to a draw in Balinov-Murey, Seefeld 2002.

– 6...♕c7 is another logical move, that was played by the Najdorf expert Karjakin: 7.♗e3 (7.♗g5 can transpose to lines of the 6.♗g5 attack) 7...e5 8.♘b3 ♗e7 9.0-0-0 ♗e6 10.♘d5 ♗xd5 11.exd5 h5 12.♔b1 ♘bd7 13.h4 (here I would recommend 13.f4!± and if 13...h4 then 14.♖g1 followed by g4) 13...♖c8 14.c4 a5, and Black had serious counterplay in Rodriguez Guerrero-Karjakin, San Sebastian 2006.

– 6...♕b6!? is also logical, as in many Sicilians, to chase the knight from its active post. Here Black is clearly aiming to take advantage of 6.♕e2. However, White will soon gain a tempo on the queen with ♗e3. Play is similar to certain lines of the Scheveningen, where ♕e2 is also played sometimes. Here are some ideas for your 'brain bag': 7.♘b3 (not 7.♕c4?! ♘c6) 7...e6 8.g4! ♗e7 (8...♘c6 9.g5 ♘d7 10.f4 ♕c7 11.a3 b6 12.♗e3 ♗b7 13.♗h3 0-0-0 14.f5 ♖e8 15.0-0-0±, Perez Candelario-Röder, Campillos 2006) 9.g5 ♘fd7 10.f4 ♘c6 11.♗e3 ♕c7 12.0-0-0 b5 13.♗g2 ♗b7 14.♔b1 b4 15.♘d5!?



(making optimal use of the queen on e2, now that Black hasn't castled yet; actually, 15.♘a4 0-0 16.h4 also doesn't look so bad for White) 15...exd5 16.exd5 ♘a5 17.♘xa5 ♕xa5 18.♗d4 ♔d8 19.♖he1 ♖e8 20.♕h5 (20.♗xg7) 20...f6 21.♕f7±, Pikula-Misailovic, Budva 2009.

In all the above lines White clearly had decent chances to emerge with an opening advantage. Now, let's delve more deeply by means of the following division:

I 6...g6
II 6...b5
III 6...e6
IV 6...e5

Variation I – 6...g6

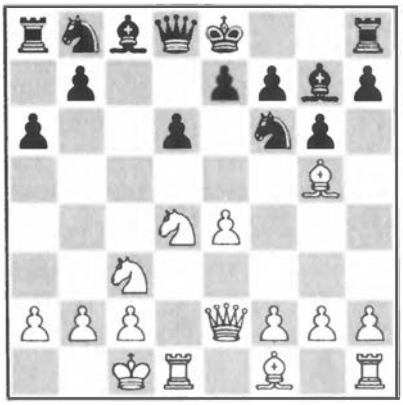
6...g6

Trying to transpose to a Dragon is fairly logical.

7.♗g5

7.f3!? is not so bad either, because ...a6 is not always useful in the Dragon, and Black will have to take care of a possible e4-e5, for example: 7...♗g7 8.♗e3 0-0 9.0-0-0

7...♗g7 8.0-0-0



8...0-0!

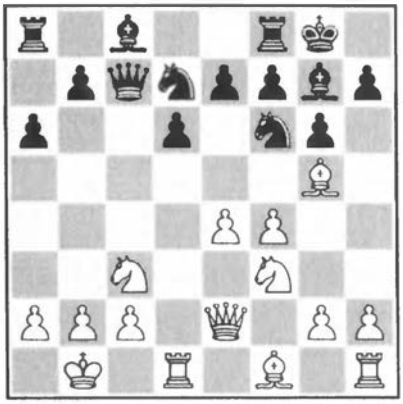
This looks very risky because of 9.e5, but I still consider it the best move for Black.

● Attila Czebe is the main practioneer of 6.♕e2. Our expert preferred 8...♘bd7 when confronted with 6.♕e2 himself. The game went 9.f4 ♕c7, and now White misplayed with 10.♗xf6?! ♘xf6 11.e5 dxe5 12.fxe5, and Black was more than OK after 12...♗g4! 13.♘f3 ♘d7 14.♘d5 ♕c5 15.♕e4 ♖c8 16.♘c3 ♗f5, Sommerbauer-Czebe, Oberwart 2005.

I would recommend the improvement 10.♔b1 (10.g4!? is interesting. 10.♘f3 is also logical, but I consider 10.♔b1 to be more useful: when the game opens up the king should be on b1 – 10...♘b6 11.e5 dxe5 12.fxe5 ♘g4 13.♗f4 f6 14.♖e1)

– 10...b5 11.♗xf6!. Now it works better. After 11...♘xf6 12.e5 dxe5 13.fxe5 ♗g4 (13...♘g4 14.e6) 14.♘f3 ♘d7 15.♕e4! ♗xf3 16.gxf3 ♖d8 17.f4± White looks better with his nice centre and that poor bishop on g7!.

– 10...0-0 11.♘f3! (11.g4!? with ♗g2 and ♘d5 is a more positional plan but also an option)



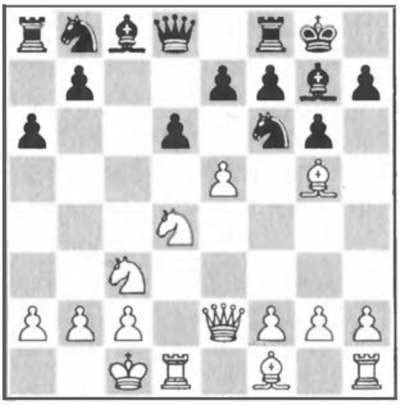
and White seems to have the better chances, for example: 11...♘b6 (11...b5? 12.e5 dxe5 13.fxe5 ♘g4 14.♘d5±) 12.e5 dxe5 13.fxe5 ♘g4 14.♗f4±.

● 8...♕a5 also make sense and was played once: 9.h4! ♘c6 10.♘b3! (so the queen is not so safe on a5 after all!) 10...♕d8, and here I would recommend 11.♘d5! (11.♔b1 0-0 12.♘d5±; 11.h5!? ♘xh5 12.♘d5 ♗e6 13.g4, with compensation in Sipos-Stavrianakis, Szombathely 2009) 11...♘xd5 12.exd5 ♘e5 13.h5!, with a nice initiative for White.

9.e5

9.f4?! was played by the always creative Swedish GM Hector. He got into trouble after 9...♗g4! 10.♘f3 ♕a5 11.h3 (or 11.e5 dxe5 12.♕xe5 – 12.fxe5 ♘c6!∓ – 12...♕b4!) 11...♗xf3 12.♕xf3 ♖c8. Black already has fine counterplay. The following move doesn't help: 13.♗xf6? ♗xf6 14.♘d5 ♕xa2, and Black was much better in Hector-Cheparinov, Malmö 2007.

An alternative for the forcing sequence after 9.e5 is 9.h3!?.



9...dxe5!

This is what I would recommend Black to play. It leads to a very complicated game.

9...♕a5 didn't stop our expert to score a nice win after 10.♗xf6! exf6 11.exd6 ♖d8 12.♕e7 ♗f8 13.♕c7 (13.♕xf6 ♖xd6 14.♕f4±) 13...♕g5+ 14.♔b1 ♖e8 15.♘f3 ♕f5 16.♗d3 ♕d7 17.♘d5 ♕xd6 18.♕xd6 ♗xd6 19.♘xf6+ ♔f8 20.♘xe8 ♔xe8 21.♗xg6 1-0, Czebe-Galyas, Balatonlelle 2007.

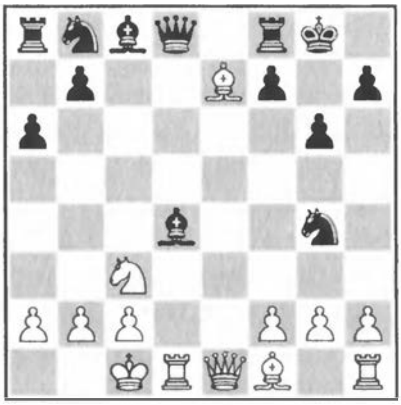
10.♕xe5

10.♘e6 is not that clear. After 10...♗xe6! 11.♖xd8 ♖xd8 Black will have very active piece play for the queen.

10...♘g4

The start of an impressive tactical display.

11.♕e1 ♗xd4 12.♗xe7



12...♗e3+! 13.♕xe3 ♕xd1+ 14.♘xd1 ♘xe3 15.♗xf8 ♘xd1

15...♘xc2 16.♗h6±.

16.♗c5 ♘xb2 17.♔xb2 ♗e6 18.♗d3±

And White's bishops seem to give him the better chances in this endgame. He can play on both sides of the board.

Variation II – 6...b5

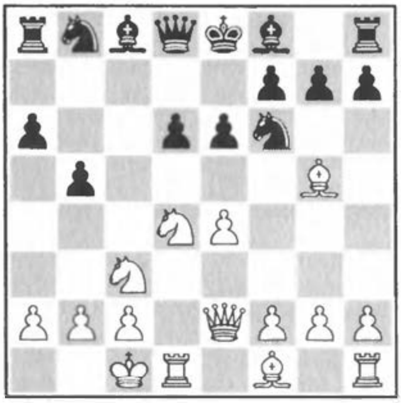
6...b5 7.♗g5

Also interesting is 7.♘d5!?.

7...e6

Play may be compared to 6.♗g5 e6 7.♕e2 and now 7...b5. Black's normal antidote to 7.♕e2 is 7...h6 8.♗h4 ♗e7!.

8.0-0-0



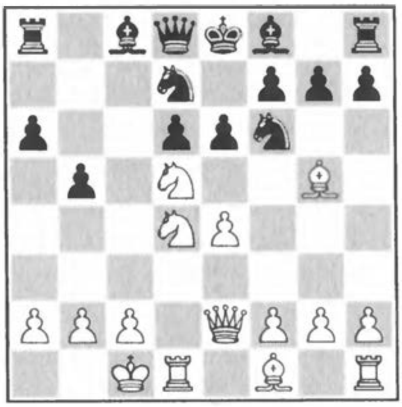
8...♘bd7

Against the logical 8...b4 I would recommend to go for an attack with 9.e5!? bxc3 (9...dxe5 10.♘xe6) 10.exf6 gxf6 11.♕f3! fxg5 12.♕xa8 cxb2+ 13.♔b1 ♕b6 14.♖d3!, with unclear play.

Or the characteristic sacrificial idea 9.♘d5!? exd5 10.exd5+ ♗e7 (or 10...♕e7 11.♕c4! ♕b7 12.♖e1+ ♗e7 13.♗xf6 gxf6 14.♗d3 with a dangerous attack) 11.♗xf6 gxf6 12.♖e1 intending ♕f3.

9.♘d5!

Such aggressive ideas should always be considered when one has a development advantage with the opponent's king still in the centre.



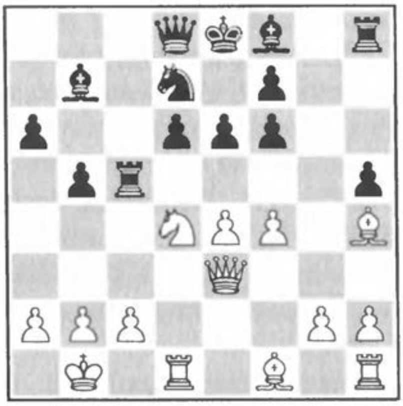
9...♗b7

Also critical is 9...exd5 10.exd5+ (10.♘c6 ♕c7 11.exd5+ ♘e5 12.f4 ♗g4!) 10...♕e7 (10...♘e5 11.f4 ♗g4 12.♘f3 illustrates the difference with 10.♘c6; 10...♗e7? 11.♘c6+–) 11.♕d2!, with multiple threats, for example: 11...♞e4 12.♗xe7 ♘xd2 13.♗xf8±, or 11...♕e5 12.♖e1 ♘e4 13.f4! ♘xd2 14.fxe5 dxe5 (14...♘xe5 15.♗xd2) 15.♗xd2 ♗b7 16.♘c6 f6 17.♗d3 which looks better for White.

10.♘xf6+ gxf6

Or 10...♘xf6 11.e5±.

11.♗h4 h5 12.♔b1 ♖c8 13.f4 ♖c5 14.♕e3



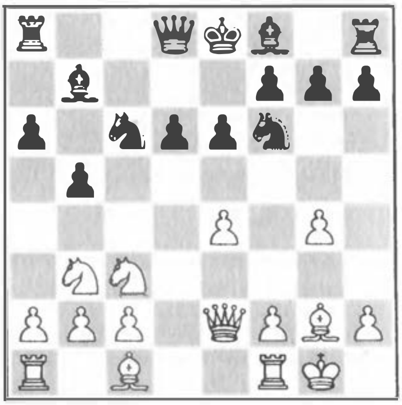
And White was clearly better in Czebe-Szabo, Budapest 2005. I would recommend playing g3 followed by either ♗g2 or ♗h3, with a decent positional edge.

Variation III – 6...e6

6...e6 7.g4!

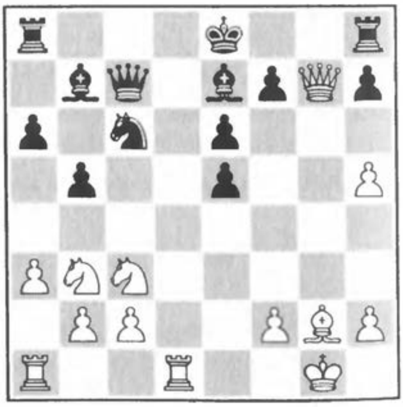
7.f4!? also makes sense and led to interesting play in Spasov-Vazquez, Tunja 1989: 7...♗e7 (7...b5 8.a3) 8.♗e3 ♕c7 9.g4 ♘fd7 10.g5 b5 11.a3 ♘c6 12.♕d2♖b8 13.h4 ♘b6 14.♘xc6 ♕xc6 15.h5 ♞c4 16.♗xc4 ♕xc4 17.♗d4, and White is better and won after 17...♖g8 18.b3 ♕c6 19.h6 e5 20.♗e3 exf4 21.♗xf4 gxh6 22.♖xh6 ♕c5 23.0-0-0 ♗e6 24.♗xd6 ♗xd6 25.♕xd6 ♕xd6 26.♖xd6 a5 27.♖xh7.

7...♘c6 8.♘b3 b5 9.♗g2 ♗b7 10.0-0



Motylev is playing for a typical Scheveningen, with a few additional tempi.

10...♗e7 11.a3 That's why Vallejo tried the creative: **11...g5?!** However, he got into trouble after: **12.e5! dxe5 13.♖d1 ♕c7 14.♗xg5 ♘h5 15.gxh5 ♗xg5 16.♕g4 ♗e7 17.♕g7±**

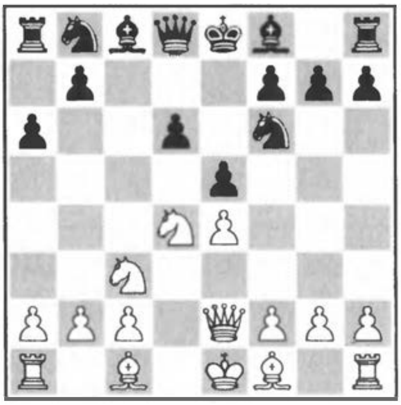


Motylev-Vallejo Pons, Wijk aan Zee II 2009.

Variation IV – 6...e5

6...e5

The most critical answer, following the basic idea of the Najdorf to obtain central control and fight for the d5-square. So here Black intends to push ...d6-d5 one day!



7.♘f5!

Following the creative spirit! After other moves the queen is misplaced on e2.

See, for example what happened in Perez Candelario-Rabadan, Madrid 2008: 7.♘f3 ♗e7 8.♗g5 ♗e6 9.0-0-0 ♘bd7 10.♗xf6 ♘xf6 11.♘xe5 ♖c8 12.♘d3 ♕a5!, and with ideas to sac on c3, and ...b5-b4 Black had more than enough compensation.

7...d5

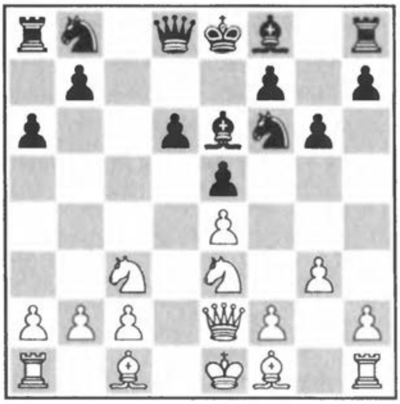
The direct approach!

● Also logical is 7...♗xf5 8.exf5, and now:

– 8...♘c6 9.♗g5 ♗e7 10.0-0-0 (or 10.♗xf6) 10...0-0 11.♗xf6! (my improvement over 11.h3? ♘d4 12.♕d3 ♖c8, as in Rudolf-Majdan, Dresden 2008) 11...♗xf6 12.♘d5, and White has the better chances, owing to his good control of d5. The plan is to play ♕e4 and push the g- and h-pawns to start a kingside attack.

– After 8...♗e7 I would recommend 9.g4 ♘c6 10.♗g2 ♘d4 11.♕d1, with nice pressure along the h1-a8 diagonal, but also good is 9.♗g5 ♘bd7 10.g4 (10.0-0-0 ♖c8).

● 7...g6 is weakening but was also tried a few times: 8.♘e3 (8.♘h6!? ♘c6 9.♗g5 ♗xh6 10.♗xh6 ♘g4 11.♗d2 ♘d4 12.♕d1 ♕h4 13.g3 ♕f6 14.f4 is another interesting line, since Black's activity might be just an illusion, as White intends ♘d5, c3 and ♗e2) 8...♗e6 9.g3 (more solid and less weakening than 9.g4!? ♘c6 10.♗g2 ♗h6 11.♘cd5 ♖c8 12.c3 ♗xd5 13.exd5 ♘e7 14.h4, with unclear play, although White has some initiative and later won in Czebe-Wang, Zalakaros 2008; or 9.♘ed5 ♘bd7 10.g3) was played by the Hungarian GM Czebe, one of the biggest fans of 6.♕e2.

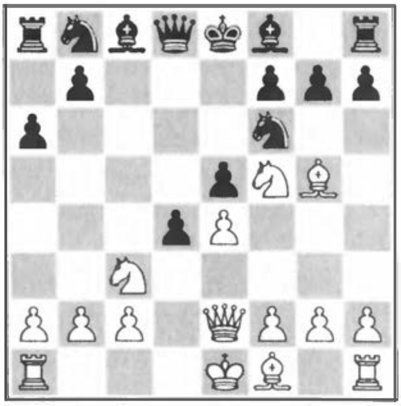


– 9...h5!? 10.♗g2 h4 11.0-0 (here 11.♘ed5± followed by ♗g5 and castling queenside is a possible improvement) 11...♗h6 12.♖d1 hxg3 13.hxg3 ♘c6 14.♕d3 ♘d4, with good play for Black in Romero Holmes-Harikrishna, San Sebastian 2006.

– 9...♘c6 10.♗g2 ♗g7 11.0-0 0-0 12.f4 (or 12.♘cd5) 12...exf4 13.gxf4 ♘h5 14.f5 ♗d7 15.♘ed5 ♕h4 16.♕f2 ♕xf2+ 17.♖xf2 ♘f6 18.♗g5 ♘xd5 19.exd5 ♘d4 20.f6 ♗h8 21.♘e4±, Czebe-Meszaros, Hungary 2009.

8.♗g5 d4

This is a logical improvement on 8...♗xf5?! 9.exf5 ♘bd7 10.0-0-0, and Black's centre is in trouble: 10...♗e7 (10...d4 11.♖xd4) 11.♗xf6! ♘xf6 12.♕xe5 0-0 13.♘xd5 ♘xd5 14.♖xd5 ♗g5+ 15.♔b1 ♕b6 16.♕d4!±, Balinov-Dudas, Austria 2001/02.



Now I propose

9.0-0-0!

playing for f4 is the main idea now.
Less clear but also interesting is 9.♗xf6 gxf6 10.0-0-0 ♗d7! (10...♗e6) 11.♕h5 (11.♘b1 is less attractive, because of 11...♗e6) 11...dxc3 12.♗c4 ♕b6 13.♕xf7+ ♔d8 14.b3 – White intends to double on the d-file.

9...♕a5

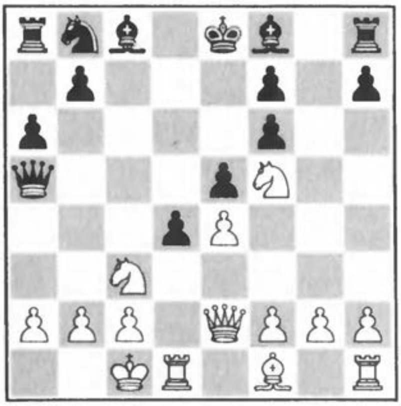
– 9...♘c6 is maybe better, but White has good attacking chances after 10.f4.

– 9...♗e6 10.♘d5! is an important detail, based on some intricate tactics: 10...♗xf5 (10...♗xd5 11.exd5 ♕xd5 12.♘xd4) 11.♘xf6+ gxf6 12.exf5±, and taking on g5 will lose the rook on h8! So White keeps the better position by playing ♗h4, g4 and ♗g2: 12...♘c6 13.♗h4 ♕d5 14.♔b1 (14.♕c4±) with ♖g1 and g4 and ♗g2 coming up.

– 9...♗d7 leads to similar play as in the previous note, after 10.♘d5 ♗xf5 11.♘xf6+ gxf6 12.exf5.

10.♗xf6 gxf6

And here comes an important move:



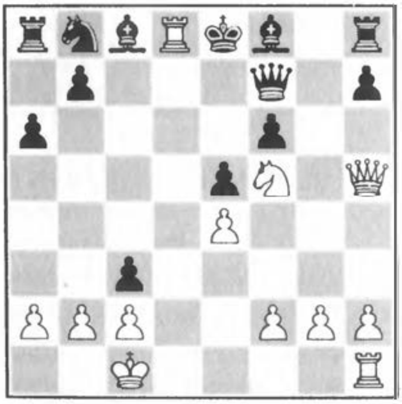
11.♕h5!!

And with ♗c4 coming up White has a very strong attack! For example:

11...dxc3

Or 11...b5 12.♘d5 ♕xa2 13.♘xf6+ ♔d8 14.♘d5 ♗e6 15.♕g5+ ♔c8 16.♕f6±.

12.♗c4 ♕c7 13.♗xf7+ ♕xf7 14.♖d8+!±

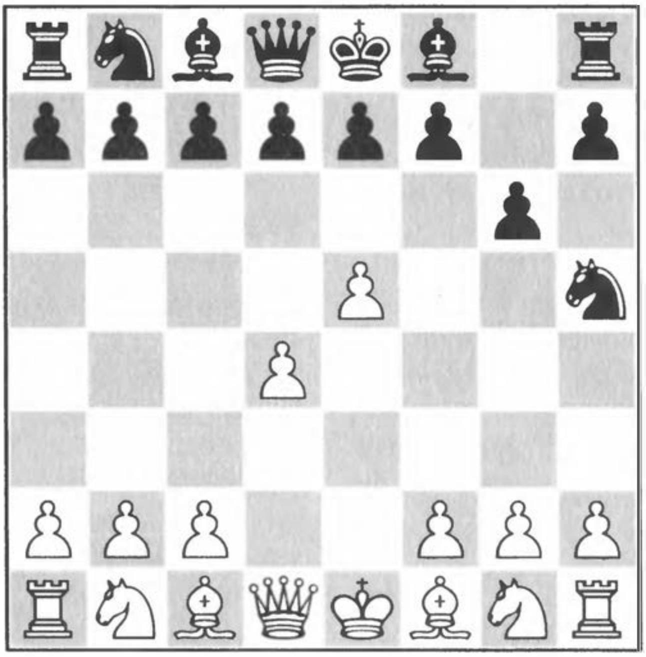


I tried to show you the key ideas behind 6.♕e2. I hope that you got enough inspiration to try it out for yourself!

CHAPTER 3

Jeroen Bosch

The North Sea Defence



Viking provocation or just testing the waters?

Magnus Carlsen had a tough time at the 2010 Olympiad in Khanty-Mansiysk, losing three of his games and some 15 elo-points in the process. Some pointed to the experimental mode in which he was playing some of his games as the reason for this failure. Especially his 6th round game against Michael Adams made him vulnerable to such criticism. Employing 1.e4 g6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.e5 ♘h5 will inevitably raise a few eyebrows, but online observers went much further, as did his former coach Garry Kasparov in an interview published on ChessVibes.com: 'I don't approve of this. In fact I think it's almost an insult to play such an opening against someone like Adams, a well-known top player. In my opinion Magnus deserved to loose (sic) this game.'

Arguably, the opinion of one of the greatest players in the history of our game is informative on such matters. Kasparov raised the level of chess and the level of opening preparation to a very high degree. His professionalism goes hand in glove with a seriousness, and a feeling of responsibility at how chess ought to be played by top players. Clearly, opening frivolities such as his former pupil is allowing himself here are to be frowned upon. Yet, is it really ethically unsound to direct your knight to the edge of the board at such an early stage against a player who deserves your respect? I find it hard to believe that Carlsen intended to insult Adams. And, observing the players during the game, I did not have the feeling that Adams was motivated by a desire to punish his opponent for his lack of respect. Although, with Adams's low-key exterior this is admittedly hard to gauge.

From another point of view one might also argue that Carlsen had so much respect for his opponent that he saw no chance to outplay him in a 'respectable' opening, and therefore went for something out-of-the box to obtain some chances of playing for a win as Black. Perhaps we could even invoke the spirit of the famous Dutch historian Johan Huizinga and call Magnus Carlsen a true 'Homo Ludens', whose great results in chess are inspired by 'playfulness'. Whenever, I see Carlsen's games I am not only impressed by his incredible strength, but also by the fact that, at this awesome height, he still seems capable of improving. If you look at it from this light, then it becomes very sensible to push to the outer limits of what is possible in chess.

Personally, I must confess that this opening idea has been hidden in my file of SOS ideas for many years but so far I had been reluctant to write on it, feeling that it is just a tad too dubious. However, I gave up all resistance after this game: if a 2800+ player can play it and achieve a very decent position against such a strong player as Adams then surely us lesser mortals can have a go at it sometimes? Meanwhile, Carlsen was certainly not the first strong GM to play in this way. Miles played it a few times, while others gave it an occasional outing, among them: Morozevich, Aronian (in a blindfold game in Amber), Hodgson, Hillarp Persson and Campora.

Interestingly, the idea of 2...♘f6 and 3...♞h5 was devised at approximately the same time (around 1983-1985) by two creative thinkers independently of each other. In the Netherlands Gerard Welling was inspired by Nimzowitsch-Alekhine, New York 1927: 1.♘f3 ♞f6 2.b3 d6 3.g3 e5 4.c4 e4 5.♘h4!? to come up with what he called the Horseshoe Variation. While in Sweden independent thinker Rolf Martens called it the Norwegian Defence. When both of them came to learn of this, Martens re-dubbed the line the North Sea Defence (Gerard Welling, personal communication). Readers who are interested in the ideas of the Swedish opening researcher may consult New In Chess Magazine 1999/8, 'The unorthodox explorations of Rolf Martens' by Jesper Hall. Those who want to read more on the history of this variation are advised to visit the ChessCafe.com website. In the May 2008 issue of his online column 'Over the Horizons', Stefan Bücker presents a well-balanced and highly informative view of the Norwegian Defence, and for those who want to dig even further his bibliography will come in useful. Now without further ado, let's look at the moves!

□ **Michael Adams**
■ **Magnus Carlsen**
Khanty-Mansiysk Olympiad 2010

1.e4 g6

Not nearly as provocative as Tony Miles' 1...a6 versus reigning World Champion Anatoly Karpov at the 1980 European Team Championship in Skara!

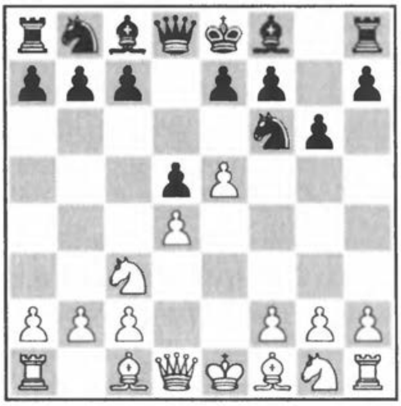
2.d4 ♘f6

This provokes the advance of the e-pawn, in the spirit of Alekhine's Defence.

3.e5

The only way to 'refute' the North Sea Defence.

3.♘c3 is not very principled, as it allows Black to transpose into the Pirc (3...d6). However, true Vikings will play 3...d5, when after 4.e5 Black has a choice between 4...♘h5 and 4...♘e4.

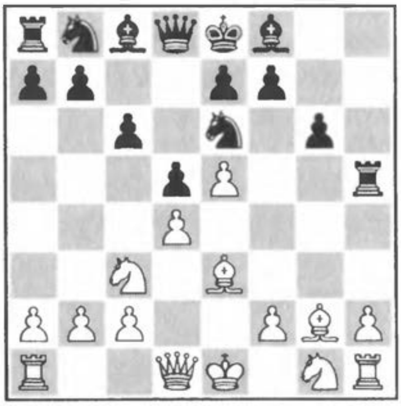


● 4...♘h5, and now:

– 5.h3 ♘g7 6.♗f4 c5 7.dxc5 d4 8.♘e4 ♘e6 9.♗d2?! ♕d5! and Black was doing fine in Spaan-Geselschap, Dutch tt 1995/96.

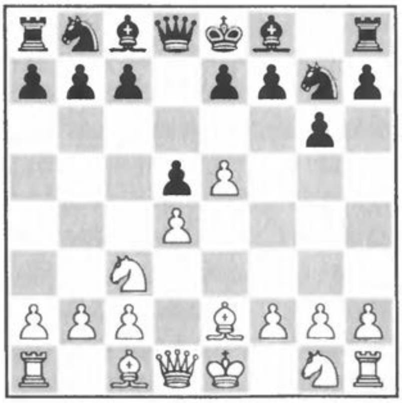
– 5.♘ge2 ♗g4 (subtle opening play, or a sign of disrespect for his weaker opponent? Possibly just Homo Ludens at his best!) 6.h3 ♗e6 7.g3 c6 8.♗g2 ♕d7 9.♗e3 ♘a6 10.♕d2 ♘c7 11.♗h6 f6 12.g4 ♘g7 13.♗f4 h5, and Miles later obtained an excellent position, but uncharacteristically lost track and the game, Jose Queralto-Miles, Andorra 1996.

– After 5.g4 ♘g7 6.♗g2 c6 7.♗h6 ♘e6 8.♗e3 (8.♗xf8 ♔xf8 9.♕d2 ♘g7 10.h3 h5 was Eriksson-G.Hjorth, Sweden 1992) 8...h5 9.gxh5 ♖xh5

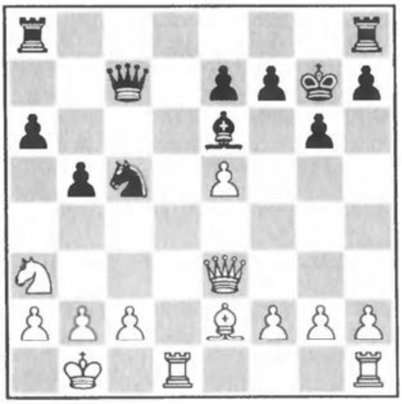


Black has positional compensation for his lack of development. I give you the remaining moves of this high-level game because they illustrate the general strategy that both sides may follow: 10.♕d2 ♘a6 11.♘ge2 ♘ac7 12.h4 ♘g7 13.♘g3 ♖h8 14.♗f3 ♗e6 15.h5 ♕d7 16.0-0-0 gxh5 17.♘xh5 ♘xh5 18.♗xh5 0-0-0 19.♘e2 ♗g7 20.♘f4 ♗h6 21.♘d3 ♗xe3 22.♕xe3 ♗g4 23.♞c5 ♕f5 24.♗xg4 ♕xg4 25.♖hg1 ♕f5 26.♖g5 ♕h7 27.♖dg1 b6 28.♘d3 draw, Hernandez-Campora, Ayamonte 2004. Both players are rated above 2500.

– 5.♗e2 ♘g7 (5...♘c6!? only works when White falls for 6.♗xh5 – 6.♘f3 a6 is how Rolf Martens wanted to play this position, but it looks too exotic. Bücker recommends 7.0-0 ♘g7 8.♘a4! – threatening c4 – , with an edge for White – 6...gxh5 7.♗e3 ♗f5 and Black's control of the light squares compensate for his damaged pawn structure, while 8.♕xh5 ♗xc2 9.e6 is exciting but better for Black after 9...♗g6 10.♕xd5 ♕xd5 11.♘xd5 0-0-0 12.♘f4 ♘xd4 13.♗xd4 ♖xd4, Katz-Kuraszkiewicz, Germany 1993)

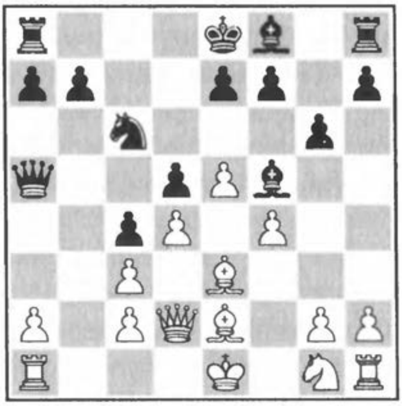


6.♗h6 (logical play by White – 6.♘f3 should be met by 6...♗g4, although White must be at least somewhat better; 6.f4 is met by 6...h5 to control the light squares on the kingside) 6...c5?! (Welling later tried to improve his own play with 6...♘f5 7.♗xf8 ♔xf8 8.♘f3 c6 9.♕d2 h5 10.0-0, Tolhuizen-Welling, Eindhoven 1988. Now 10...a5 has been suggested by Gunnar Hjorth in an extensive theoretical article in the *Correspondence Chess Informator* (Vol 7, 1995). The engines agree that this is best, but I would still prefer White!) 7.dxc5 d4 8.♘b5 ♞c6 9.♘f3 ♘e6 10.♗xf8 ♔xf8 11.♕d2 (11.c3! dxc3 12.♕xd8+ ♘exd8 13.♘xc3, as in Daamen-G.Welling, Eindhoven 1988, is better for White) 11...a6 12.♘a3 ♘xc5 13.0-0-0 ♗e6 14.♔b1 (as Welling has pointed out, it is important that after 14.♘xd4 ♘xd4 15.♕xd4 ♕xd4 16.♖xd4 ♗xa2 the bishop cannot be trapped with 17.b3?, because of 17...♗xb3) 14...♔g7 15.♘xd4 ♘xd4 16.♕xd4 ♕c7 17.♕e3 b5



Black has obvious compensation for the pawn. After 18.♖d4 ♖ab8 19.♖hd1 ♖hc8 20.g4 ♘a4 21.f4 ♕a5 22.f5, the stem game Bosboom-Welling, Dutch tt 1987, continued with 22...b4. Instead, 22...♘c3+! would have won on the spot: 23.bxc3 ♕xa3 24.fxe6 b4!, Welling.

● Personally, I would be less keen on these blocked positions, which is why I would prefer 4...♘e4 5.♗d3 (5.♘ce2 f6 6.f3 ♘g5; 5.♘xe4 dxe4 6.f3 – 6.♗c4 ♗g7 7.♗e3 c5 8.c3 cxd4 9.cxd4 ♘c6 10.♕d2 0-0 11.♘e2 ♘a5∓ Amberger-Andersen, Esbjerg 2008 – 6...c5 7.d5 ♗g7 is fine for Black, Gunlycke-Crouch, Oxford 2003) 5...♘xc3 6.bxc3 c5 7.f4 ♘c6 8.♗e3 ♕a5 9.♕d2 c4 10.♗e2 ♗f5,

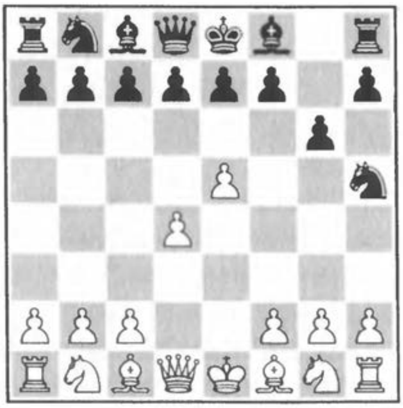


and although the e-pawn hasn't moved, I bet that many players of the French wouldn't mind being Black here, Rabiega-Paulsen, Berlin 2000.

When Aronian confronted Grischuk with the North Sea Defence the Russian copped out with 3.f3, and after 3...c6!? (3...d5 4.e5 ♘h5; 3...d6) 4.c4 d5 5.e5 ♘fd7 6.♘c3 dxc4 7.♗xc4 ♘b6 8.♗b3 ♘a6 9.♘ge2 ♘c7 10.0-0 ♗e6 11.♗xe6 ♘xe6 12.f4 ♕d7 13.f5 ♘g7 14.e6 fxe6 15.fxg6 0-0-0 it was clear that both players were in a very 'playful' mood that day, Grischuk-Aronian, blindfold Monte Carlo 2006.

After 3.♗d3 Black again has the option to go for a Pirc, but principled is 3...d5 4.e5 ♘h5.

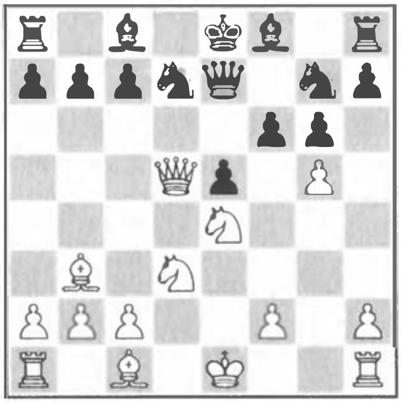
3...♘h5



4.♗e2

Most players will opt for this developing move that also attacks the trusty steed.

– In fact 4.♘f3 may well be stronger (as after 4.♗e2 d6 it turns out that taking the knight gives Black a lot of counterplay). Black has to attack the centre with 4...d6, when I would like to show you the game Hillarp Persson-Andersen, Copenhagen 2010. Remember that Hillarp Persson has also defended the black cause(!): 5.♗c4 (5.♘c3 dxe5 6.♘xe5 – the pawn sacrifice 6.♗e3!? has been suggested by Michiel Wind – see Bücker's ChessCafe.com article for more details – 6...♗g7 looks quite decent for Black) 5...dxe5 (very risky, 5...♘c6 6.♕e2 has been analysed by Hjorth – 6...♗g4 – and Martens – 6...a6. Personally, I would prefer 6...d5, or Bücker's 6...♗g7) 6.♘xe5 e6 7.♕f3 (sacrificing a pawn) 7...f6! 8.♘d3 ♕xd4 9.♗b3 e5 10.♘c3 ♕g4 (Black should keep this resource in reserve with 10...♘c6!? 11.♘b5 ♕d7) White was now better after 11.♕d5! ♕d7 12.g4! ♘g7 13.♘e4 ♕e7 14.g5 ♘d7?

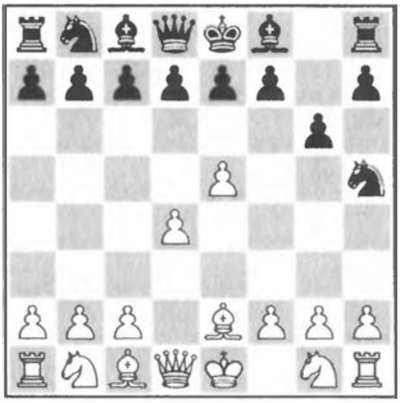


15.♕xd7+ (how to annotate this move? Only a true artist plays in this way! The mundane 15.gxf6 ♘xf6 16.♗a4+! c6 17.♗xc6+! bxc6 18.♕xc6+ ♔f7 19.♕xa8 wins for White. Possibly Hillarp Persson overlooked that at the end of this line 19...♗b7 fails to 20.♘d6+ ?) 15...♔xd7 16.gxf6 ♕e8 17.fxg7? (17.♗g5 followed by a timely f7 favours White) 17...♗xg7 18.♗g5 ♕f8 19.0-0-0 ♔c6 20.♘c3 ♗g4 21.♗a4+ b5! 22.♗xb5+ ♔b7, and Black was completely winning but the game ended in a draw in 106 moves!

– 4.g4?! ♘g7 5.♗h6?! d6 6.♕e2? ♘c6 was clearly better for Black in Hallebeek-Welling, Eindhoven 1988.

– 4.f4 d5! and this is certainly no worse than 1.e4 g6 2.d4 d6 3.♘c3 c6 4.f4 d5 5.e5 h5, which goes back to Gurgenidze's 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 g6 4.e5 ♗g7 5.f4 h5.

– After 4.♗c4 d5 5.♗d3 ♘g7 is logical once you have absorbed Black's way of thinking in this line.

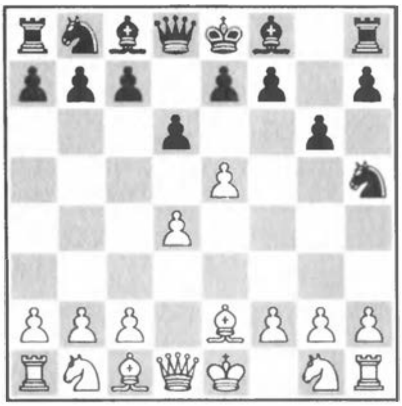


4...d6

Rolf Martens deserves considerable praise for inventing this whole concept. Black immediately puts pressure on White's centre, just like in the Alekhine. Of course, taking on h5 is now crucial for his whole idea. Gerard Welling's philosophical concept behind 2...♘f6 was to fianchetto the knight here – going for a kind of Gurgenidze System.

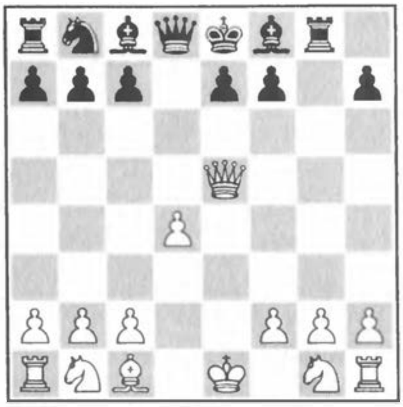
It must be said that his followers make for an impressive line-up as well: 4...♘g7 5.♘f3 d5 6.h3 (6.c4 c6 7.♘c3 dxc4 8.♗xc4 ♘e6 9.♗e3 ♗g7 10.♕d2 with a very pleasant edge for White in Burnakin-Morozevich, Sochi 2005

– the game ended in a draw) 6...h5 (6...♘e6 7.0-0 ♗g7 8.♗e3 0-0 9.c4 c6 10.♘c3 dxc4 11.♗xc4 was Ferguson-Hodgson, Kilkenny 1999. To my mind, White's play with an early c4 – just as in Burmakin-Morozevich – more or less refutes the set-up with 4...♘g7) 7.0-0 c6 8.b3 a5 9.c4 ♘a6 10.♘c3 ♘c7 11.cxd5!? ♘xd5 12.♘xd5 cxd5 13.♘g5 ♗d7 14.♗d3 ♘e6 15.♕f3! and White was superior in Lautier-Miles, Biel 1996.

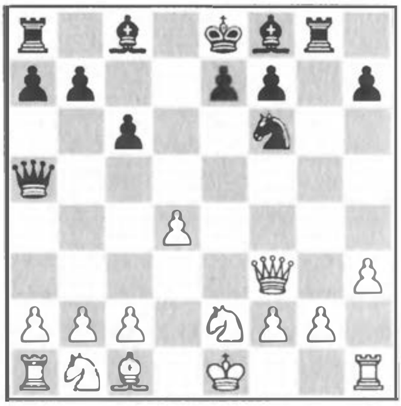


5.♘f3

Adams decides that he will not be provoked, undoubtedly after assessing that Black will have considerable compensation after 5.♗xh5 gxh5 6.♕xh5. Indeed, after 6...dxe5 7.♕xe5 (7.dxe5 ♕d5 and Black soon retrieves his pawn: 8.♘f3 – 8.♘e2 ♕xg2 9.♖g1 ♕h3; 8.f3 ♘c6 – 8...♕e4+ 9.♗e3 ♕xc2) 7...♖g8



you will find several games in your database from this position. White has a pawn, Black has some pressure and an important light-squared bishop. Hjorth's, very plausible, main line continues 8.♘e2 ♘d7 9.♕d5 (9.♕e4 ♘f6 10.♕f3 and now 10...c6 – 10...♕d5!? – transposes) 9...c6 10.♕f3 ♘f6 11.h3 (perhaps White may also hope for something after returning the pawn with 11.0-0!? ♗g4 12.♕d3 ♗xe2 13.♕xe2 ♕xd4 14.♘c3) 11...♕a5+ (11...♗e6!?; 11...♕d5!?) and now Bücker is right in claiming an edge for White after



12.♘bc3 ♕f5 13.♘f4! ♕xc2 14.0-0.

Not so popular in practice is 5.f4, an ambitious approach recommended by Stefan Bücker. This certainly looks dangerous for Black.

Hjorth points out that after 5.exd6 cxd6 White can still not profitably take on h5 with 6.♗xh5 because of 6...♕a5+.

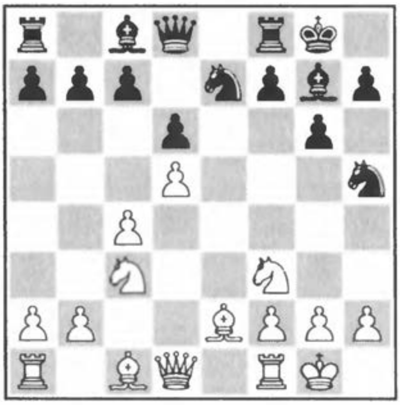
5...♘c6 6.exd6

6.0-0 ♗g7 (6...dxe5 7.d5!) 7.exd6 ♕xd6 (7...exd6 would transpose back into the main game after 8.d5 ♘e7 9.c4 0-0 10.♘c3) 8.♘a3 0-0 (8...♘xd4 9.♘xd4 ♕xd4 10.♘b5) 9.c3 ♘f6 10.♘c4 ♕d8 11.♘fe5 ♘xe5 12.♘xe5 ♗e6 13.♗f3 c6 with near-equality in Taylor-Hillarp Persson, Cobo Bay 2005. Play is similar to the Kengis Variation in the Alekhine (4.♘f3 dxe5 5.♘xe5 g6).

Releasing the tension, with something like

6.h3 dxe5 7.dxe5 ♕xd1+ 8.♗xd1, Hagesaether-Andersen, Aarhus 2009, is obviously fine for Black.

6...exd6 Also playable is 6...♕xd6. **7.d5** Gaining space, White could also continue his development with 7.0-0 ♗g7 8.c4 0-0 9.♘c3. **7...♘e7 8.c4 ♗g7 9.♘c3 0-0 10.0-0**



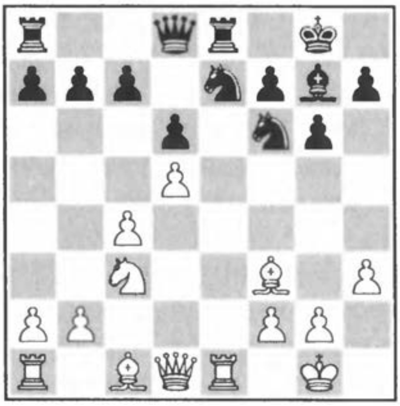
Adams certainly hasn't tried to refute Carlsen's audacious opening choice. Instead, he has settled for a healthy position with perhaps a slight plus for White. On the upside for our Viking: he has a playable position in which there is sufficient play left. I suspect that both players were satisfied here!

10...♗g4

White has a space advantage, so trading pieces is a good idea for Black. What is more, the light-squared bishop has no future anyway (where else to put it but on g4?), and exchanging it for the knight increases Black's central control over the dark squares d4 and e5.

11.♖e1 ♖e8 12.h3 ♗xf3 13.♗xf3 ♘f6

Black has lost some time with ♘g8-f6-h5-f6, but if you just look at the position you will see that this has not resulted in a disadvantage in development. Indeed, after White's next both sides have more or less fully developed and are ready for the middlegame. Black is certainly OK here despite his opening experiment (or is it because of it?).

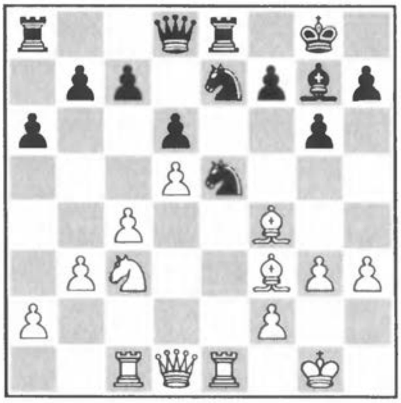


14.♗f4 ♘d7 15.♖c1 Or 15.♕d2 ♘e5 16.♗e2 ♞f5, with a decent game.

15...♘e5 16.b3 a6

Here 16...♘xf3+ 17.♕xf3 ♘f5 18.♘e4 h6 (covering square g5; not 18...♕d7 19.♗g5±) would limit White's advantage to a minor edge.

17.g3 17.♗e4 was a decent alternative.



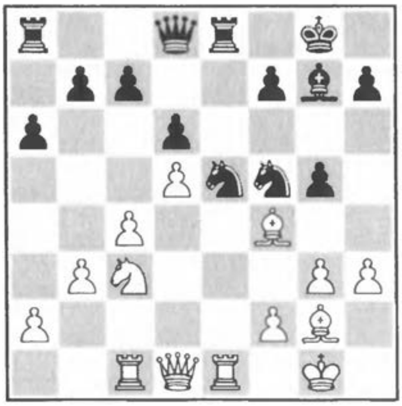
17...♘f5?!

Again avoiding the simplifying 17...♘xf3+ 18.♕xf3 ♘f5 when Black has equal chances. It seems that Carlsen's ambition is to blame for the final result, rather than his choice of opening.

Indeed, as Magnus Carlsen wrote on his weblog: 'Despite the unusual opening choice I was happy with my position entering the middle game. Becoming a bit too optimistic I played for a win but underestimated his attack and lost deservedly.'

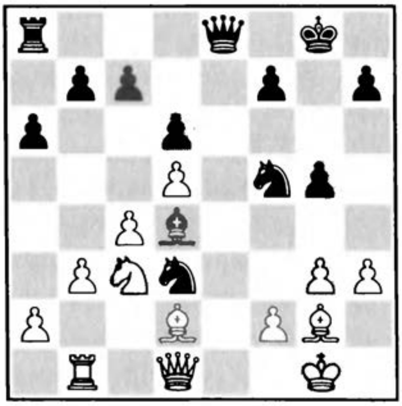
18.♗g2 Now Adams preserves the bishop, but Carlsen hunts for the other one with the slightly weakening

18...g5?! This very concrete move must have been Carlsen's idea. 18...h6.



19.♗xe5!

A wise and very practical choice. In the resulting position with bishops of opposite colours the looseness of the pawn on g5 is felt most clearly. Still, play is nearly equal. Giving the bishop for the other knight equalizes on the spot: 19.♗e3 ♘xe3 20.♖xe3 f5. Trying to preserve the bishop pair leads to complications: 19.♗d2 ♘d3 20.♖xe8+ ♕xe8 21.♖b1 (not 21.♗xg5 ♘xc1 22.♕xc1 and there is no compensation after 22...♕e5) 21...♗d4, and now:



● White can play for a slight edge with 22.♔h2!? when the lines fork:

– 22...♘xf2 23.♕f3 ♕e5 24.♖e1 g4 25.♖xe5 (25.hxg4 ♘h6! 26.♖xe5 ♘hxg4+ 27.♔g1 ♘h3+ 28.♔h1 ♘hf2+ 29.♔g1 ♘h3+ is either a perpetual, or more or less equal after 30.♔f1!? ♘h2+ 31.♔e2 ♘xf3 32.♖e4 ♘hg1+ 33.♔d3 ♗e5) 25...gxf3 26.♖xf5 fxg2 27.♔xg2 ♘d3±;

– Not 22...♗xf2? 23.♘e4 ♗xg3+ 24.♘xg3 ♘xg3 25.♕f3 and wins.

– 22...♕e5 23.♕g4 ♗xc3 24.♗xc3 ♕xc3 25.♕xf5 ♕d2 26.♖f1 ♘e5 27.♗e4± or 27.c5±.

● 22.♘e4 ♘xg3!

– 23.♗e3! ♘xe4 24.♕xd3 (24.♗xd4 ♘f4∓) 24...♗xe3 25.♕xe3 f5! 26.♗xe4 ♕xe4 27.♕xg5+ ends in a perpetual.

– 23.♘xg3 ♗xf2+ 24.♔h1 (24.♔h2 ♗xg3+ 25.♔xg3 ♕e5+ 26.♔f3 ♖e8∓) 24...♗xg3 25.♕f3 ♘f2+ 26.♔g1 ♗h4 is very unclear.

– 23.♘f6+ ♗xf6 24.fxg3 ♕e5∓.

19...♗xe5 20.♘e4

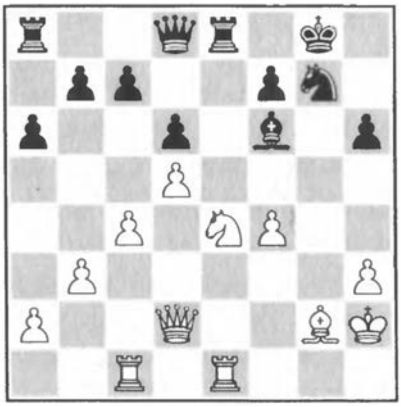
Threatening 21.♕g4 and therefore forcing

20...♘g7 White is now more comfortable because of the pawn on g5.

21.♕d2 h6 22.f4 gxf4 23.gxf4 ♗f6 24.♔h2

24.♘xf6+ ♕xf6 25.♗f3 ♘f5 is certainly not better for White.

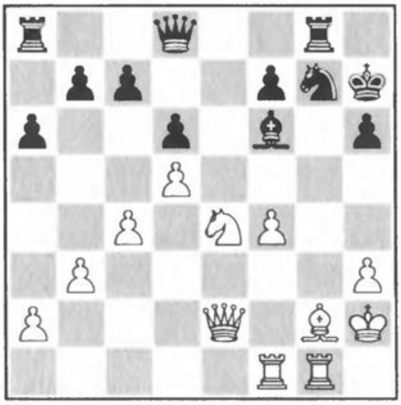
24.♗f3 ♗h4 25.♖e2 f5 and Black is nearly equal.



24...♘h5?!

Carlsen misses the stronger 24...♗h4! 25.♖g1 f5 when 26.♘g3 (26.♘f2 ♕e7 27.♖ce1 ♕f7; 26.♘c3 ♕e7 followed by 27...♕e3 is even slightly unpleasant for White) 26...♗xg3+ 27.♔xg3 ♘h5+ 28.♔h2 ♔f7 (28...♔h7) 29.♗f3 ♕h4 30.♗xh5+ ♕xh5 should end in draw.

25.♖g1 ♔h7?! 25...♔h8. **26.♖cf1 ♖g8 27.♕e2 ♞g7**



28.♕d3

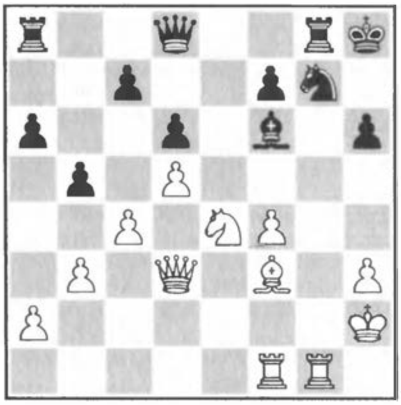
Even stronger was 28.♘xf6+! ♕xf6 29.♗e4+ ♔h8 30.♗b1! (to set up a well-known battery along the b1-h7 diagonal) 30...♕d4 31.♕g4 (threatening 32.♕h4) 31...♕f6 32.♕d1. Now ♕d3 or ♕c2 is back on the cards, after 32...♘e8 33.♕c2 White should win following 33...♖g7 34.♖g4!.

28...♔h8 29.♗f3

This is a terrible position for Black.

29...b5

29...♘f5 30.♘g5 hxg5 31.♕xf5 ♗d4 32.♖xg5 ♕f6 33.♕g4 and White wins. 29...♗h4 30.♕d4 ♕e7 (30...♔h7 31.♘g5+ hxg5 32.fxg5 ♗xg5 33.♗e4+ f5 34.♗xf5+ ♘xf5 35.♖xf5 ♖g6 36.♕g4+–) 31.♖g4! f5 32.♖g6! ♔h7 33.♖fg1 and the knight cannot be taken, which is why White's strategical dominance cannot be contested. If 33...fxe4? then 34.♗xe4+–.



30.♗d1!

Again we see the battery along the diagonal b1-h7 deciding the issue.

30...bxc4 31.bxc4 ♗h4 32.♗c2 f5 33.♖g6! ♔h7 34.♖fg1 ♕e7

34...fxe4?? 35.♕xe4 and mates.

35.♘g3

35.c5! is how the engines would have finished Black off. Adams's move is more than sufficient though: 35...fxe4 36.♕xe4 ♕xe4 37.♗xe4 and Black has to return the piece with 37...♘f5 38.♗xf5 ♖xg6 39.♖xg6, winning at least another pawn.

35...♗xg3+ 35...♖af8 36.♕d4!.

36.♕xg3 ♕f7 36...♘h5 loses after 37.♕f3 ♖xg6 38.♗xf5.

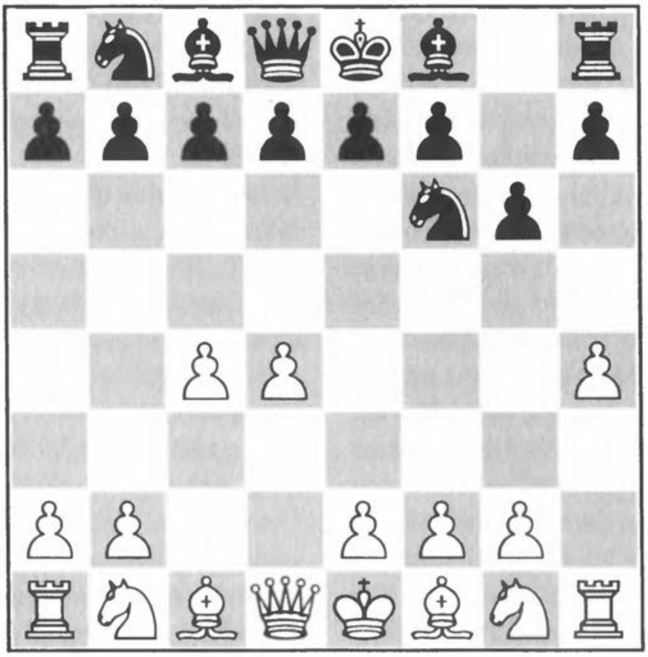
37.♗d1! ♖ae8 38.♖xh6+

And Carlsen resigned because of 38...♔xh6 39.♕g5+ ♔h7 40.♕h4+ ♘h5 41.♗xh5.

CHAPTER 4

Simon Williams

The Williams Anti-Grünfeld Variation



1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.h4!?

Struggling to keep up with the latest opening novelties can be a tough struggle, even for the most dedicated of chess players. It is especially tricky to get a good position from the opening if you do not have enough time. Enough time to search the internet for the latest improvements that top GMs seem to come up with on a regular basis.

One of the first strong players that I knew, Mike Basman, was a maverick. A maverick who had a rather different outlook on chess. His philosophy was that he would just play some strange opening moves. He did this in order to avoid any theory. This was certainly an intriguing, attractive and fresh outlook on the game. This way of approaching the game often gave him interesting and exciting games, the only problem was that his openings were not based on sound principles. For a start 1.g4 (his little baby!) did create a big hole on f4 and, as the famous saying goes, pawns cannot move backwards!

From my perspective I was getting annoyed playing against the Grünfeld opening. The theory was too much for my little brain to take in. I was always looking at ways to take my opponent out of familiar ground from as early a stage as possible. I started experimenting with 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.h4!? (see SOS-3, Chapter 3, p.28). This brought me some good results but then a couple of my opponents started to play

4...c5! In my opinion this move destroys any hopes that White has of getting an opening advantage (see The SOS Files of volume 12). So back to the drawing board...

I then had a crazy thought: what would happen if I played h4!? one move earlier? Could my opponent still play 3...d5? Well, the answer to this is, no, I do not believe he can! 3...d5? looks like an error! An error that should give White a good position! If you are not convinced, look at the first two games of this chapter.

Basically from that moment onwards I would always play 3.h4!? if I expected my opponent to reply with the Grünfeld. I believe that this is a very dangerous weapon against the Grünfeld. It loses some of its strength against the King's Indian Defence and especially the Benko set-up, but if used at the right moment it can bring devastating results!

The other interesting point was that when I searched 3.h4!? on ChessBase I stumbled across the first player to ever venture this move, and guess who it was? Well, Mike Basman of course!

Anyway, I hope that the games below give you an interesting insight into the ideas behind the strange push 3.h4!?. A word of warning though, I would only play this move if you know your opponent prefers the Grünfeld opening!

☐ **Simon Williams**
■ **Alexandre Platel**
Dieppe 2009

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.h4

I am going to be bold and call this the 'Williams Anti-Grünfeld Variation'. This forces Black to think from an early stage, which is always an attractive idea. Let's just take a quick look at what can happen if White tries to play h4 on move 4.

3.♘c3 d5 4.h4!? c5! Black immediately hits out against White's centre. This is the best way to take advantage of 4.h4. This is out of the scope of this article, but it does give Black a very satisfactory position. (4...♗g7? is an error due to 5.h5!, when play could very easily transpose to the next game in this chapter after 5...♘xh5 6.cxd5 c6 7.e4! cxd5 8.e5 and White has a nice position. This is one of the attractions of this variation!)

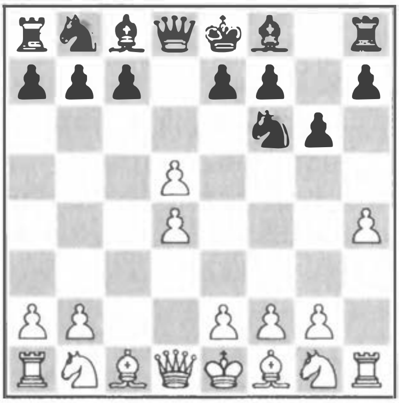
3...d5?!

In my opinion this move is already a mistake! Black's other options are 3...♗g7 and 3...c5. These moves will be looked at in more detail in the last game of this chapter. I will give you a little taster now...

– 3...♗g7 4.♘c3 0-0 (4...d5?! is an error, as White can now play 5.h5!, transposing to the next game: 5...♘xh5 6.cxd5 c6 7.e4! cxd5 8.e5 ♗f8 9.g4 ♘g7 10.♗g2) 5.e4 d6 6.h5 ♘xh5 7.♗e2 ♘f6 8.♗g5.

– 3...c5!? tries to enter an improved version of the Benko Gambit: 4.d5 b5 5.cxb5 a6.

4.cxd5



4...♕xd5

It looks a bit odd to capture this way, but the alternative 4...♘xd5 falls straight into White's hands. There are two good moves here:

– 5.e4 – unlike the main line Grünfeld Black no longer has the option of capturing

White's knight on c3, so he has to waste a tempo: 5...♘b6 (5...♘f6 6.e5 ♘d5 7.h5 – I prefer White's position here; the h-pawn march has been a success!) 6.h5 and White has good attacking chances.

– 5.h5 immediately also looks better for White, for example 5...♗g7?! 6.h6 ♗f8 7.e4 and Black will find it hard to develop his kingside, whilst White has taken over control of the centre.

5.♘c3

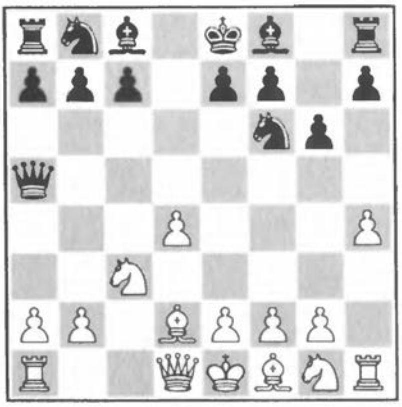
Why not develop and attack?

5...♕a5

In similar spirit to the Scandinavian. Black could have also tried 5...♕d8, but then White can continue in standard fashion with 6.e4, when again I believe that White's chances are to be preferred. Just compare this to the normal Grünfeld and we can see that White is doing well.

6.♗d2

A sensible move that creates some future threats against the black queen. We have basically reached a position where there is no theory, so both sides can just enjoy playing chess!



6...♕b6

Black tries to punish me for my strange opening play, but this is a very risky plan. Black's other options were:

– 6...♗g7, when White should just continue with 7.e4, with an advantage due to his strong centre.

– 6...c6 gives the black queen an escape route back to d8. This would have been the most sensible choice: 7.e4 with ♗c4 and ♘ge2 to follow (♘f3 would allow ...♗g4, which is an annoying pin and one which White should avoid).

7.h5!?

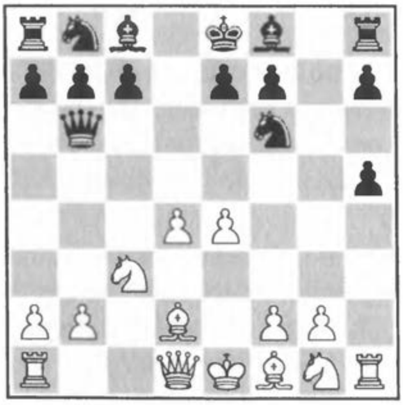
Using the h-pawn! If you are willing to play 3.h4!? then you must also be willing to sacrifice the pawn at a moment's notice! My general plan was to open up the h-file and to gain some time.

7...gxh5

Black elects to keep his knight on f6, but the problem with this is that he opens up his kingside. For a start the black king will now never feel entirely safe on g8.

After 7...♘xh5 I was planning to play 8.e4!? ♕xd4 9.♘f3, with quick development: 9...♕d8 10.♗c4 – I am ready to play ♕b3 and 0-0-0, when my initiative must be worth the invested material.

8.e4



Offering a pawn...

8...♕xd4

Black accepts the offer. This is greedy, but the most critical approach.

8...♗g7 allows me to continue with 9.e5, when Black's knight is forced away to a passive square. White is better.

9.♘f3

Developing with tempo.

9...♕b6

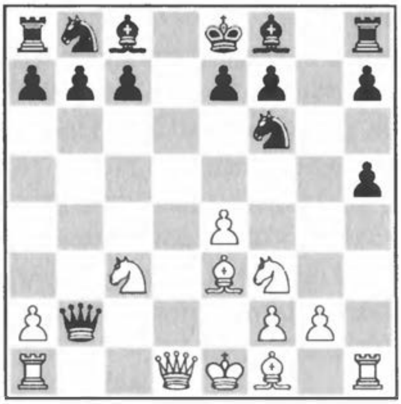
Black could have played 9...♕d8, when I was planning 10.♗c4 with ideas of ♕b3 and e5. The position certainly looks dangerous for Black, he is lagging behind in development.

10.♗e3!

Forcing Black to take another pawn! I had a crafty idea in mind...

10...♕xb2

This is the only move that makes any sense.



11.♗d4!

After this move Black's position falls apart, the queen has been rushing around the board like pacman on drugs, but Black has forgotten to castle or to develop his pieces!

11...c5

The position is not easy for Black – it is too late to try and develop some pieces. For example, 11...♗g7? allows 12.♘d5 and White is going to win the rook on a8.

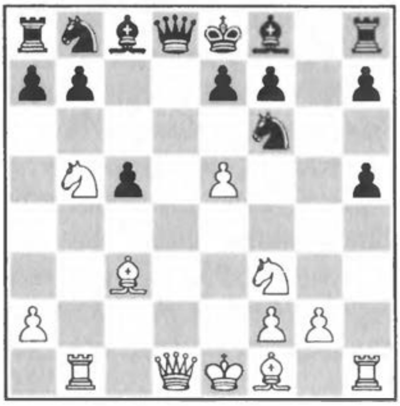
12.♖b1

Another White piece enters the game.

12...♕a3 13.♘b5! ♕a5+ 14.♗c3 ♕d8

So the queen arrives back at its starting square. In the meantime I have managed to activate most of my pieces. The end comes very quickly.

15.e5!



When you have the initiative you must use it, otherwise it will drift away.

15...♘g4

Black is basically lost, for example: 15...♘e4 16.♕a4, threatening the knight, ♘c7 mate and ♘d6 mate! Or 15...♕xd1+ 16.♖xd1 ♘e4 17.♘c7 mate. Or 15...♘d5 16.♕xd5 ♕xd5 17.♘c7+.

16.e6 f6

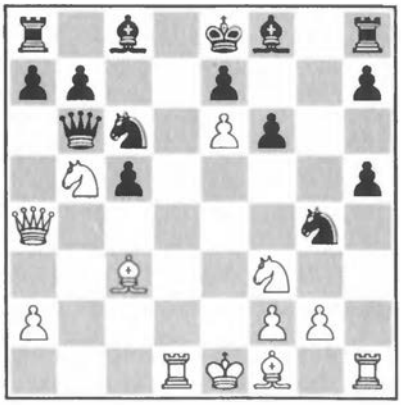
The following finish was extremely pleasing to play...

17.♕a4! Threatening a nasty discovered attack on the king!

17...♘c6

There is no defence, for example 17...♗g7 18.♖d1 (18.♘c7+ is also strong!) 18...♕b6 19.♘c7+ ♔f8 20.♖d8 mate.

18.♖d1 ♕b6



Can anyone spot the finish?

19.♗a5! ♘xa5 19...♕xa5+ 20.♕xa5 ♘xa5 21.♘c7 mate. **20.♘c7**
Mate.

We can see from this game that Black has to treat 3.h4!? with a certain amount of respect, otherwise things can go horribly wrong!

We will now look at another game where Black insists on playing an early ...d5. This time one move later than the last game, again it seems that White gets a good position after this push.

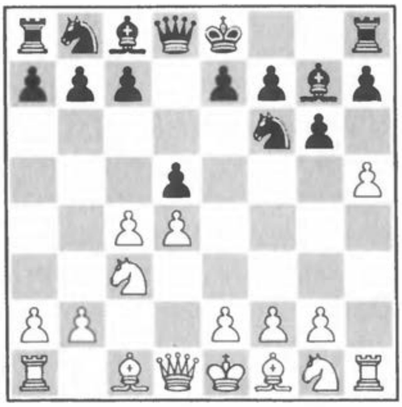
☐ **Simon Williams**
■ **Patrik Hugentobler**
Samnaun 2008

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.h4!?
This game transposes to a line that can be reached after 3.♘c3 d5 4.h4 ♗g7?! (4...c5!) 5.h5 ♘xh5 6.cxd5 (see SOS-3, Chapter 3, p.28).

3...♗g7 A sensible reply, the problem is the way that Black follows the move up.

4.♘c3 d5?!
Again I believe that this move is an error, but if Black insists on playing the Grünfeld it is very likely that he will play in this way. A better approach is 4...0-0, which will be looked at in the next game: 5.e4 d6 6.h5!?.

5.h5!



Correct! White uses the h-pawn to divert Black's knight away from f6. This is a standard plan in this opening. This is superior compared to 5.cxd5 ♘xd5 6.h5, because Black can strike out with 6...c5!.

5...♘xh5
The most common reply.

- Black has also played 5...c6 6.h6 ♗f8 7.♗g5. This also looks better for White. The game Dambrauskas-Ivoskaite, Panevezys 2007, continued 7...♘e4 8.♘xe4 dxe4 9.♕d2 ♗e6 10.e3 f6 11.♗f4, and White is clearly better, as Black has problems developing his kingside pieces and on top of this he has a weak pawn on e4.
- But 5...gxh5?! is an ugly move and White got a good position in Kanep-Lelumees, Tallinn 2005, after 6.cxd5 ♘xd5 7.♖xh5 (7.e4!?) 7...♘f6 8.♖g5!? (a strange plan!) 8...♔f8 9.e4 h6 10.♖g3 and now Black's kingside was already under strong pressure.
- 5...0-0 looks like suicide to me, but it has been tried out by the odd, brave/foolish player. Kadas-Kis, Hajduboszormeny 1995, continued 6.hxg6 hxg6 7.cxd5 (I would have wipped out 7.♗g5!? – the plan is to play ♕d2, ♗h6, ♗xg7 etc. checkmate...) 7...♘xd5 8.e4 ♘xc3 9.bxc3 c5:

– Now I am not convinced about 10.e5?!, which seems to give Black too much counterplay: 10...♘c6 11.♘e2 cxd4 12.cxd4 ♗f5 13.♗b2 ♘b4.

Two interesting options are:

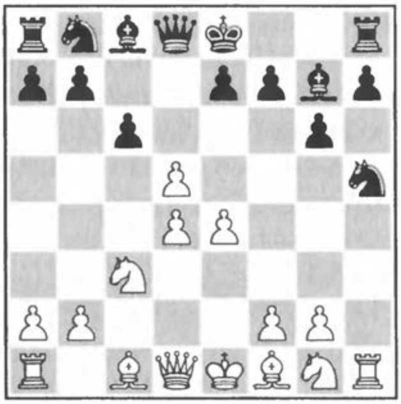
– 10.♗h6, which probably leads to a slightly better endgame after 10...♗xh6 11.♖xh6 cxd4 12.cxd4 ♕a5+ 13.♕d2,

– and 10.d5!?, which looks like the most fun, for example 10...♗xc3+ 11.♗d2 ♗xa1!? (very risky!) 12.♕xa1 f6 13.♗c4 and White has a strong attack.

6.cxd5 c6
Black is aiming to strike out against White's centre, but this allows a cute idea. Black has also tried 6...c5 7.dxc5 ♕a5, in

Sulyok-A.Nemeth (Hungary tt 1994), which continued 8.e4 ♕xc5, and here White should have just played 9.♘f3, with a promising position: 9...♗xc3+ 10.bxc3 ♕xc3+ 11.♗d2.

7.e4!



Sacrificing a pawn for a strong initiative.

7...cxd5

Or 7...♘f6!? 8.dxc6 and

- after 8...bxc6 Seres-Dembo, Budapest 2001, continued 9.♗e2 ♗a6 10.♘f3 ♕a5 11.0-0 (11.♗d2!?), with a better position due to Black's pawn formation.
- after 8...♘xc6 9.d5 ♘e5 10.f4 ♘eg4 11.e5 ♕b6 12.♕e2 ♘h5 13.♕b5+ White has a big advantage.
- 8...0-0!? was played in Seres-Balinov (Budapest 1999): 9.cxb7 ♗xb7 10.f3 ♘c6 11.♗e3 ♕c7 and now White should have either played 12.♕d2 ♖fd8 13.♘ge2 or 12.♖c1!?, with an advantage in both cases.

8.e5

This is White's idea. Black's knight on h5 is in danger of being trapped, and his kingside in general is cramped.

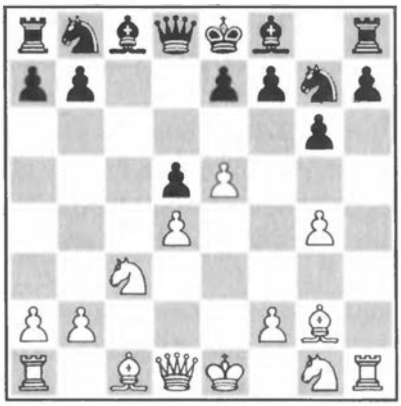
8...♗f8

This is pretty much forced in order to stop White from playing g4.

8...f5 is bad due to the simple 9.♗e2, with a big advantage.

9.g4 ♘g7 10.♗g2

Black now has a choice of two ways to defend d5. I believe that my opponent picked the correct one.



10...♗e6!

At least by avoiding ...e6 Black gives his bishop potential for the future.

10...e6 was played in Shliperman-Ady, New York 1999. White got a very good position after 11.♗h6!, a common idea which stops Black from moving his bishop, so Black's whole kingside is trapped in: 11...♘c6 12.♘ge2 ♗d7 13.♕d2 f6 14.exf6 ♕xf6 15.♖h3 ♗b4 16.♖f3 ♕e7 17.♗g5 ♕d6 18.a3.

11.♕b3

Another, possibly, stronger idea was 11.♘h3!?, which I would recommend you to play if you ever reach this position. For example 11...♘c6 12.♘f4 h5 13.♘xe6 ♘xe6 14.♗e3, after which White can continue with f4-f5.

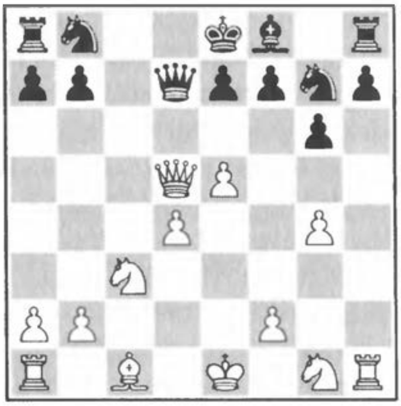
11...♕d7

This is a mistake. A stronger plan would have been 11...♘c6!, with a roughly equal position, for example 12.♘ge2 (12.♗e3!? is another possibility) 12...♕d7 13.f3, and Black's position is still cramped but he has no major weaknesses. I expect the position is roughly equal.

12.♗xd5

Simple and good.

12...♗xd5 13.♕xd5



13...♘c6?

This is the biggest mistake that Black plays – after this his position is pretty hopeless. Black should have played 13...♕xd5, which is still good for White but not terminal, for example 14.♘xd5 ♘e6 15.♘e2 ♘c6 16.♗e3 0-0-0 17.♘df4 ♘cxd4 18.♘xe6 ♘xe6 19.♗xa7.

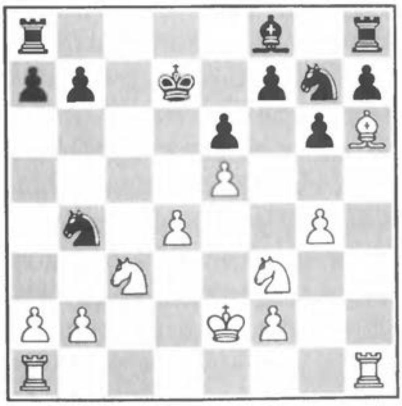
14.♕xd7+ ♔xd7 15.♘f3 e6

Black's kingside is not taking part in the game and he will suffer for this.

16.♗h6!

This standard plan again. White stops Black from developing his dark-squared bishop and therefore his rook on h8.

16...♘b4 17.♔e2



17...♘e8

A desperate attempt at co-ordinating the kingside pieces, but the h-pawn is too high a price to pay.

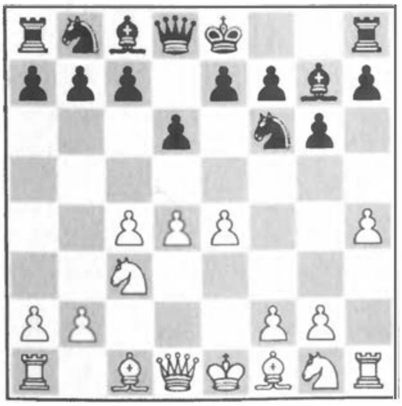
18.♗xf8 ♖xf8 19.♖xh7 White is winning. The rest is easy. **19...♖c8 20.♘g5 ♔e7 21.a3 ♘c6 22.♖d1 ♖d8 23.♔e3 ♘c7 24.f4 ♘d5+ 25.♘xd5+ ♖xd5 26.♘e4 ♖b5 27.b4 ♖d5 28.♘f6 ♖dd8 29.d5 exd5 30.♘xd5+ ♔e6 31.♔e4**

Black resigned. The position is hopeless, for example 31...♔d7 (31...a6 32.f5+ gxf5+ 33.gxf5+ ♔d7 34.e6+) 32.f5 gxf5+ 33.gxf5 ♔c8 34.b5 ♘a5 35.e6.

We will now look at what happens if Black avoids playing the slightly dubious ...d5 advance. This is the best way to play and I am going to suggest some interesting ideas that will keep the position lively! In this game we will concentrate on the King's Indian set up, which is one of Black's most common ways of meeting 1.d4.

☐ **Simon Williams**
■ **Michal Meszaros**
Reykjavik 2009

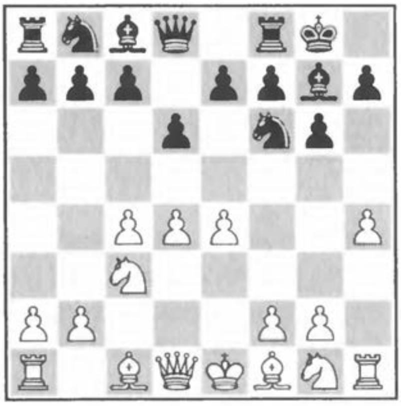
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.h4!? ♗g7 4.♘c3 d6 5.e4



5...0-0

5...c5 makes a lot of sense and has been given an outing at the highest level. Black is acting against a wing assault with a central attack. This is quite possibly Black's best reply to 3.h4!?.

6.d5 e6! (this is a good way to play against an early h4. Black is basically trying to punish White for his 'arrogant pawn lunge'! By opening up the centre Black is starting play against White's king. I expect that the position should be roughly equal here. 6...b5 is also very playable, as after 7.cxb5 a6 Black reaches a favourable Benko Gambit, as White's pawn on h4 seems a bit out of place in this structure) 7.dxe6 (another option which is in the spirit of the opening was 7.h5!? – you should not feel afraid about sacrificing this pawn, that is the idea of the variation! In this case White gains some tempo, an open h-file and a favourable exchange of pieces by playing this push. Play could continue 7...♘xh5 8.♗e2 ♘f6 9.♗h6 ♗xh6 10.♖xh6 – White has managed to swap off Black's best minor piece, which will mean that Black will always have a slightly weakened kingside if he castles. The position is interesting and requires practical examples) 7...♗xe6 8.♗e2 ♘c6 9.♘f3 (9.h5!? was more consistent: 9...♘xh5 10.♗xh5 gxh5 11.♘d5, but White cannot claim an advantage here, as Black has very good control of the dark squares) 9...0-0 (now White's pawn on h4 looks rather stupid!) 10.♗f4 ♖e8!? 11.♕xd6 ♕a5 and Black had very good play for the sacrificed pawn and he went on to win quite convincingly in Kazhgaleyev-Radjabov, Khanty-Mansiysk 2005.



6.♗e2

I had good memories of this move, but a very interesting alternative was 6.h5!? with the brutal idea of opening up the h-file. This can lead to some interesting possibilities!

For example 6...♘xh5 7.♗e2 ♘f6 8.♗g5. I have only found one game in this variation, Shirazi-Delorme, Pierrefitte rapid 2003, which continued 8...c5, which must be best (8...e5? is a typical mistake with the bishop on g5: 9.dxe5 dxe5 10.♕xd8 ♖xd8 11.♘d5 and White is winning material; 8...♘bd7 looks too slow: 9.♕d2 with ♗h6 and checkmate to follow). Black hits out in order to create counterplay. Yet if we compare this to 5...c5 we can see that in this position Black has really wasted a tempo castling. That is why I would consider 5...c5 to be one of Black's strongest replies.

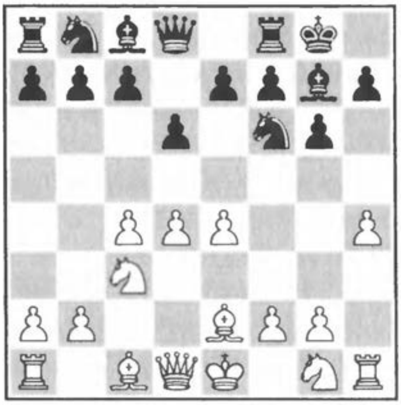
After 8...c5 9.d5 Black now has a number of ways to continue. Again all these possibilities require practical examples. Anyway, let's have a look:

– 9...e6! is the most logical and I expect best way for Black to play the position. The open e-file will become a useful asset to Black: 10.♕d2 exd5 11.♘xd5!? ♖e8 12.f3 with a roughly equal game.

– 9...b5 looks a bit slow to me. White's attack on the kingside is going to land first, for example 10.cxb5 (10.f3!?) 10...a6 11.♕d2! (there is no point messing about on the queenside: 11.bxa6? ♗xa6 12.♕d2 ♘bd7 13.♗h6 ♗xh6 14.♕xh6 ♕b6 15.♖b1 ♘e5 looks better for Black) 11...axb5 12.♗h6! (White has a simple plan: ♗xg7, ♕h6, e5!, ♘e4) 12...b4 13.♗xg7 ♔xg7 (13...bxc3? 14.♕h6 ♖e8 15.♗xf6 exf6 16.♕xh7+ ♔f8 17.♕h6+ ♔e7 18.bxc3 White is clearly better) 14.♕h6+ ♔g8 15.e5! (White is close to winning!) 15...dxe5 16.♘e4 ♘bd7 17.♘g5. Powerful play!

– 9...♘a6? is too slow, as after 10.♕d2 ♘c7 11.♗h6 e6 12.♗xg7 ♔xg7 13.♕h6+ ♔g8

14.g4 White is winning: 14...♖e8 15.e5 (15.g5!) 15...dxe5 16.d6 ♕xd6 17.g5 ♘d7 18.♘e4 and Black resigned in Shirazi-Delorme, rapid 2003.



6...c5!

Black should always aim to play this and then ...e6 in this variation.

7.d5 e6

Black will gain good play after ...exd5 and then ...♖e8. In the past I faced 7...a6?!, but I won a nice game after 8.a4 e6 9.h5 exd5 10.hxg6 d4 11.gxh7+ ♔h8 12.♘d5 ♘xe4 13.♘f3 ♗g4 14.♘h4 ♖e8 15.♘f4 ♕f6 16.f3 ♘g3 17.fxg4 ♘xh1 18.g5 ♕d8 19.♕d3 ♗e5 20.♘hg6+ fxg6 21.♘xg6+ ♔g7 22.♕h3 ♗g3+ 23.♔f1 ♔xg6 24.♕h6+ ♔f5 25.♗g4+ ♔e5 26.♕g7+ ♔e4 27.♕g6+ ♔e5 28.♕f5 mate, Williams-Palliser, London 2000.

8.h5 At least this move is consistent!

8...exd5 9.hxg6 hxg6

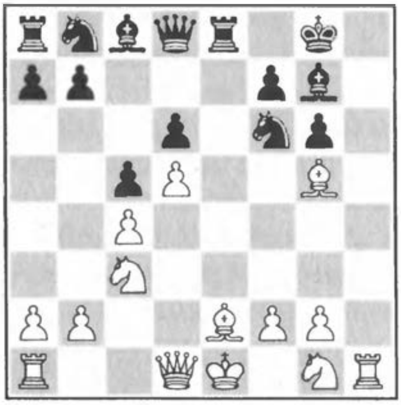
9...d4 10.gxh7+ ♔h8 11.♘d5 ♘xe4 12.♘f3 – White's attractive idea is to play ♘h4, ♘f4 and then ♘g6+! with mate to follow.

9...fxg6!? looks like the best approach, as Black might be able to start an attack down the f-file.

10.exd5 The position is roughly equal. Black will attack down the e-file and queenside whilst White will try to create some attacking chances on he kingside.

10...♖e8 11.♗g5?!

Premature. 11.f3 was better.



11...♕b6! Black is planning to play ...♘e4!, which frees up his bishop on g7.

12.♘a4?

A mistake, I had to try 12.♕d2, but Black must be better after 12...♘e4 13.♘xe4 ♖xe4.

12...♕c7?

Black misses 12...♕b4+, which would have given him a large advantage after 13.♗d2 (13.♔f1 ♗d7) 13...♕xc4.

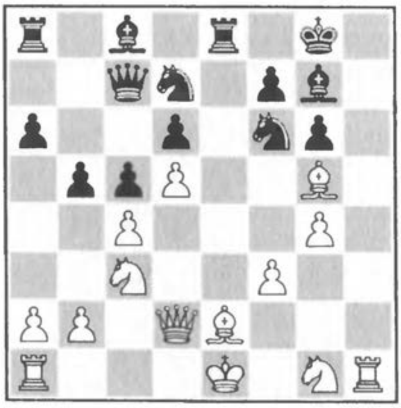
13.f3 Planning ♔f2 and then g4, which gains space on the kingside.

13...a6 14.♘c3 b5 15.♕d2

Trying to keep the queenside closed!

15.cxb5 axb5 16.♘xb5 ♕b6 is very risky, as Black's pieces are ready to spring to life.

15...♘bd7 16.g4 It may have been worth playing 16.♗h6 ♗h8 first, who knows!



16...b4!? This closes the queenside.

17.♘d1 ♘e5 18.♔f1 18.♘e3 was equal.

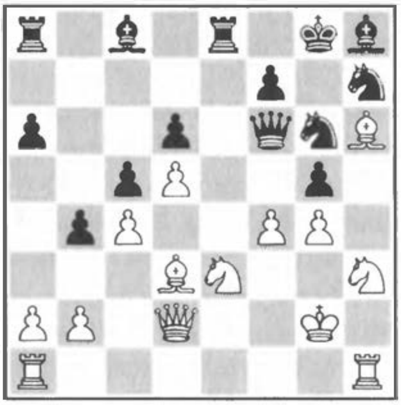
18...♘h7 19.♗h6 ♗h8 20.♘e3 ♕e7!

This is a very good plan. Black brings his queen around to the kingside where I may have overextended myself.

21.♘h3 21.♞g2 was slightly better.

21...♕f6! Black is now clearly better.

22.f4 g5! Taking advantage of the placement of my king. **23.♔g2 ♘g6** Suddenly Black's pieces flood into my position. I was feeling rather uncomfortable here! **24.♗d3**



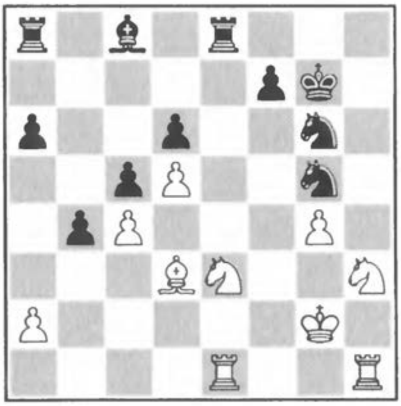
24...♕xb2?! A stronger plan was 24...gxf4 25.♗xg6 f3+ 26.♔f2 ♕xg6 27.♘f4 ♕e4, when Black is on the verge of winning.

25.♕xb2 ♗xb2 26.♖ae1 ♗g7?

Throwing away the advantage. Black should have played 26...♗c3 27.♖e2 ♘f6, which leaves me tied up.

27.♗xg7 ♔xg7 28.fxg5 A silly error. I should have played 28.♔g3!, which is equal, for example 28...gxf4+ 29.♘xf4 ♘f6 30.g5.

28...♘xg5!



29.♘xg5??

The final mistake. It was time to bail out with 29.♗xg6!=, when the game should end in a rather fortunate draw for me. 29...♔xg6 30.♘f4+ ♔g7 31.♘h5+ ♔g6 32.♘f4+ ♔g7 33.♘h5+ ♔f8? would have been a misguided winning attempt, as after 34.♘f6 ♖e7 35.♖h8+ ♔g7 36.♖e8! White is better.

29...♘f4+ 30.♔f3 ♘xd3

Black's queenside pawn mass is going to win the game.

31.♖h7+? The final error!

31...♔g6 32.♖eh1 ♔xg5 33.♖7h6 ♘e5+! 34.♔g3 ♘g6 35.♘f5 ♗xf5 36.♖1h5+ ♔f6 37.gxf5 ♖e3+ 38.♔f2 ♖ae8 39.fxg6 fxg6 40.♖h1 ♖e2+ 41.♔g3 ♔g5

White resigned.

I decided to include the next game as it demonstrates what can go wrong if someone is not in his comfort zone. When I was preparing for this game I noticed that my opponent always played the Grünfeld, hence why I played 3.h4. My opponent smelled a rat and went for a King's Indian set-up but it was clear that he was not at home in this system. That is one of the great advantages of 3.h4!?. Your opponent will often get confused and this will make him play inferior moves. Anyway onto the game.

☐ **Simon Williams**
■ **Peter Poobalasingam**
Hastings 2008/09

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.h4!? d6

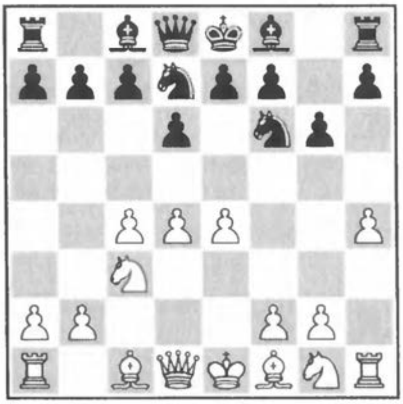
3...c5!? is a very important alternative! This advance makes a lot of sense. White has apparently wasted a move playing h4 so Black aims to punish White by steering the game into Benko territory. Personally I would only play 3.h4!? if I expected my opponent to play the Grünfeld. If I had any inkling that they might hit me with 3...c5, the Benko approach, then I would avoid playing 3.h4!?. I expect that after this move White cannot really hope of gaining an advantage. I had one game in a local league match that continued 4.d5 b5 5.h5!? (an interesting way to try and take the game in uncharted waters) 5...♘xh5 and now in Williams-Wells I tried 6.d6?!, which is a bit over the top! I should have just continued 6.cxb5 a6 7.e4 d6, with an interesting Benko position! Black has sacrificed a pawn on the queenside whilst White has done the same on the kingside. I expect the position is roughly equal, White can aim to play ♗e2 and ♗h6 at the correct moment, with hopes of starting a kingside attack. An interesting battle lies ahead.

4.♘c3 ♘bd7?!

This is not as flexible as 4...♗g7, as the black knight can no longer move to c6. This is the first indication that my opponent was not totally at home.

4...♗g7 was looked at in the previous game.

5.e4



5...e5

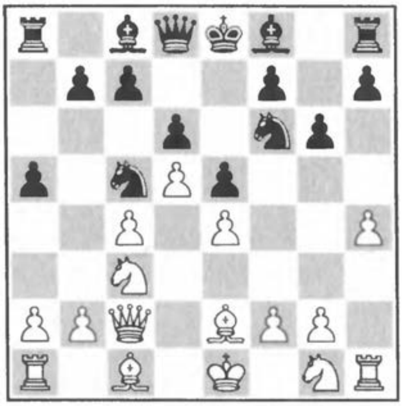
5...♗g7 transposes to Azmaiparashvili-Radjabov, Benidorm, 2003. It seems to me that Black may have committed his knight to d7 rather prematurely: 6.♗e2 (White prepares to play h5, which is the standard plan in this variation!) 6...e5 (6...c5 is also playable if Black wants to lead the game into a Benko Gambit, play could continue for example with 7.d5 b5 8.cxb5 a6, when one interesting idea would be 9.h5!?, which aims to take advantage of the early charge of the h-pawn: 9...♘xh5 – with this move Black figures that he will rely on getting enough counterplay from his light-squared bishop – 10.♗xh5 gxh5 11.bxa6 ♗xa6 12.♘ge2 and Black has good counterplay in the spirit of the Benko but he also has some weaknesses on the kingside. Practical examples are needed!) 7.d5 (and not 7.h5? exd4 8.h6 dxc3 9.hxg7 ♖g8, when Black is better) 7...♘c5 8.♕c2 h5 (this is often the best way for Black to stop White from causing any problems with h5) 9.b4 ♞cd7 10.♖b1 a5 11.a3 axb4 12.axb4 c6 13.♘f3 0-0 14.♗g5 ♕c7 15.♘d2 and White's position was to be slightly preferred due to the space that he had gained on the queenside.

6.d5 ♘c5 7.♕c2 a5

Black decides that he should stop me from expanding on the queenside with b4. A sensible plan.

8.♗e2

This is the normal approach. By playing ♗e2 I prepare the 'threat' of h5. How should Black deal with this threat?



8...h6?!

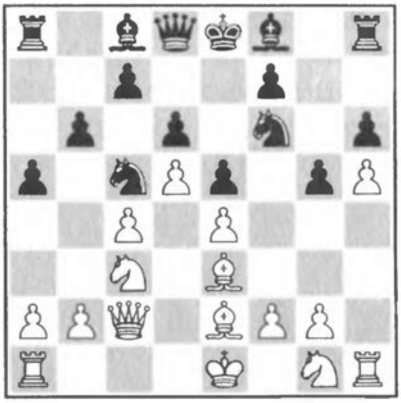
This is another indication that my opponent is not comfortable with the subtleties of the position. This is a mistake which will leave Black with some serious positional weaknesses after 9.h5 g5. As a rule Black should always meet h4 with h5.

8...h5! stops the h-pawn in its tracks. This does leave the g5-square weak but this is not a serious problem. At least by playing in this manner Black can target my pawn on h4 and maybe play for the break ...f5 at a later moment. The position is roughly equal here: 9.♗g5 ♗e7! 10.♘f3 ♘g4.

9.h5! g5

The pawn structure has changed and Black has three main problems: 1) Black has saddled himself with a major weakness on f5. This is his main problem for the rest of the game. 2) Black's dark-squared bishop is also very bad and it does not have much potential to break out. 3) Black's standard way to break out in the King's Indian – ...f5 – is going to be very hard to achieve now. Basically Black is left with a very passive position. I would say that White has a nice advantage here.

10.♗e3 b6

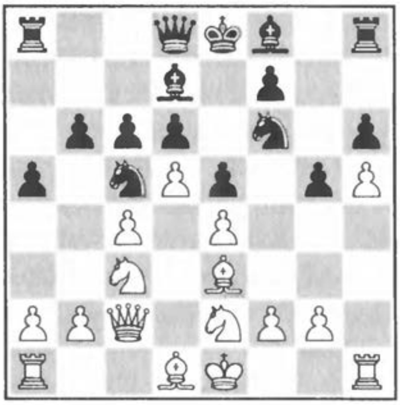


11.♗d1!

The idea behind this move is to target Black's f5-square. My plan is to play ♘e2, ♘g3 and then at a later moment ♘f5. The knight is on a better route to f5 here compared to f3.

11.♞f3 was also possible. I could continue with ♘d2, ♞f1, ♞g3 and then ♘f5. 11...♗g4?! would be a mistake, as after 12.♘d2 ♗xe2 13.♔xe2 Black's f5-square is even more weak due to the exchange of light-squared bishops.

11...♗d7 12.♘ge2 c6



13.♗xc5!?

This move simplifies matters. I also want to play against Black's bad dark-squared bishop.

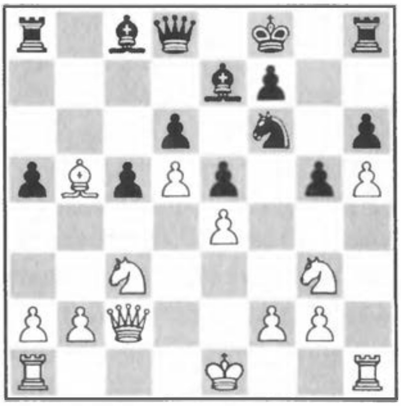
13...bxc5 14.♘g3

A fair bit of manoeuvring goes on now, but my basic plan is to swap off the light-squared bishops and then land a knight on f5.

14...cxd5 15.cxd5 ♗e7 16.♗e2 ♔f8 17.♗b5

Trying to execute the first stage of my plan, the exchange of light-squared bishops.

17...♗c8



18.♘d1

Preparing ♘e3 and then ♘f5. It is all about the f5-square that Black has made permanently weak after ...h6?! and ...g5.

18...♘e8 19.♘e3 ♘g7

Bringing another piece to the defence of f5. Passive defence is rarely a good plan though.

20.♗e2

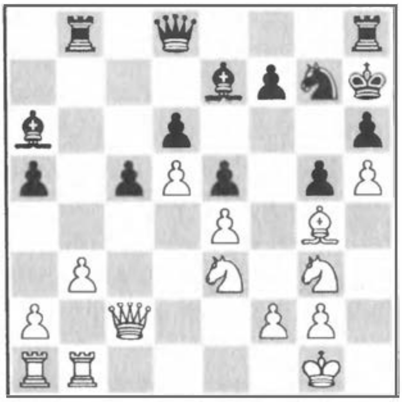
Preparing ♗g4.

20...♖b8 21.0-0 ♔g8 22.b3

A useful waiting move. In order to win I will probably have to make a break on the queenside as well, and this move prepares a3 and b4 at a later stage.

22...♔h7 23.♗g4 ♗a6 24.♖fb1!

Now that the kingside is under control, my aim is to open up the queenside.



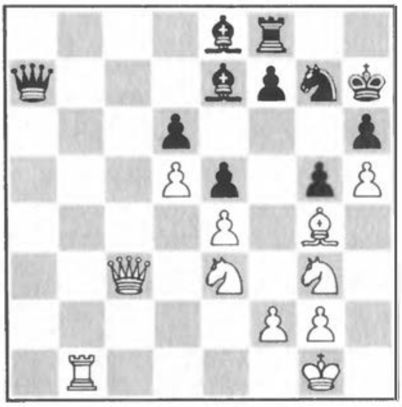
24...♖f8 25.♕c3

There is no need to rush. From c3 the queen supports an eventual b4 push.

25...♗b5 26.a3 ♗e8 27.b4!

Black is horribly passive and it is no surprise that his position collapses quickly.

27...axb4 28.axb4 ♖b5 29.♖a7 cxb4 30.♖xb4 ♕b8 31.♖xb5 ♕xa7 32.♖b1



32...f5? Desperation which quickens the end, but the position was pretty miserable anyway, for example 32...♗d8 33.♕b4 and I am threatening ♕xd6 as well as an exchange of queens with ♕b7.

33.♘exf5 ♗d7 33...♘xf5 34.♗xf5+ ♔h8 35.♕b4. **34.♕e3** An exchange of queens simplifies matters and avoids any complications. **34...♕c7 35.♕b6! ♕xb6 36.♖xb6 ♗xf5 37.♗xf5+**

I had a pleasant choice, but I wanted to avoid a simplified opposite-coloured bishop endgame, which may arise after 37.♘xf5 ♘xf5 38.♗xf5+.

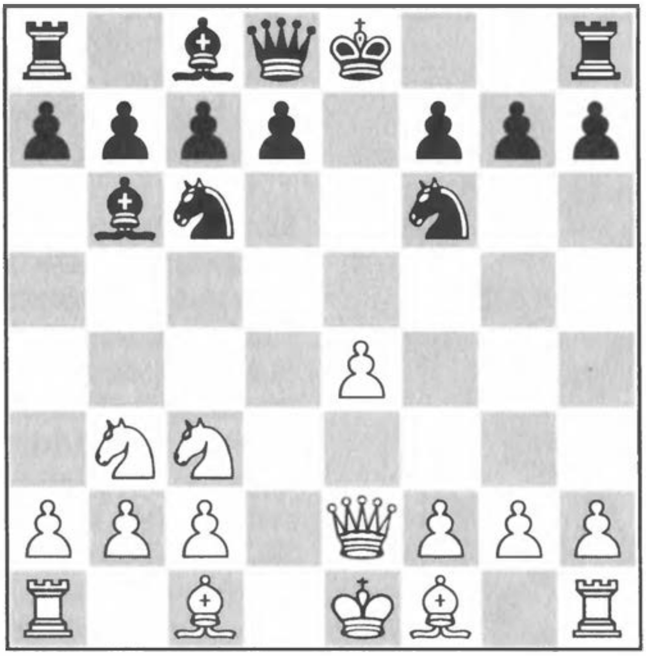
37...♔g8 37...♘xf5 38.♘xf5 is hopeless for Black. **38.♖b7 ♗f6** 38...♘xf5 39.♘xf5 is a classic example of a strong knight versus bad bishop position! **39.♗e6+ ♔h8 40.♖d7 ♘e8 41.♘f5 ♗g7 42.♘e7** 43.♘g6 is next, so Black threw in the towel.

Well, I hope this chapter has given you the inspiration to be adventurous and to give 3.h4!? a try. In chess it is sometimes more fun to think outside of the box, if in doubt just take a look at Mike Basman's games!

CHAPTER 5

Konstantin Landa

The Scotch Game: Carlsen Leads the Way



Preparing to castle queenside

☐ **Magnus Carlsen**
■ **Etienne Bacrot**
Nanjing 2010

1.e4 e5

At the present time this is the soundest move. Players who are ready to make this move at the board usually possess a more developed positional understanding. For players with a tactical, attacking style, 1...c5 is more appropriate, of course.

2.♘f3 ♘c6

We will leave to one side the searches for an advantage after 2...♘f6. This is a tedious matter, but nevertheless not hopeless. According to the present world champion Viswanathan Anand 'The Petroff Defence is not yet completely a draw'.

3.d4!?

Why do I attach any marks as early as the third move? I think that the Scotch Game is made for those who want to embark on 'their' play from the very first moves! The opening is absolutely correct, and White obtains exactly the same disappearing advantage as after other continuations, but... the variation has not been so seriously studied as other continuations. The resulting positions are complicated and very concrete! Black has to keep a very careful eye on his opponent's threats. Lengthy manoeuvring in this opening hardly ever occurs, which is usually very unpleasant for the player with the black pieces. Just think what can happen after the classical 3.♗b5. In the complicated Ruy Lopez one has to 'rack one's brains' over the Chigorin, Breyer and Zaitsev Variations and much other information which is of absolutely no use in a specific game for the commander of the white pieces. Your opponent may be excellently prepared in one, individual variation, but you have to remember them all! What is the point, with a head aching from preparation, of going into a complicated middlegame?

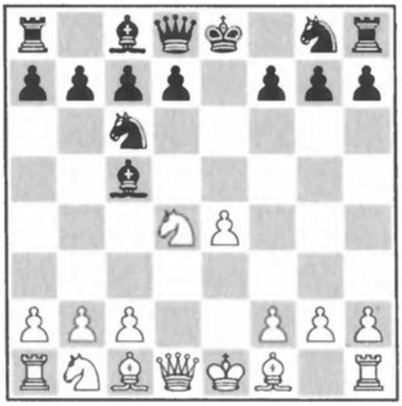
In my view, this is a direct way to obtain a zero in the tournament table, unless you are a player in the world's top hundred! Nowadays White counters this problem by playing the Spanish Exchange Variation...

3...exd4 4.♘xd4 ♗c5

The main line of modern theory. After 4...♘f6 5.♘xc6 bxc6 6.e5 ♕e7 7.♕e2 ♘d5 8.c4, despite the favourable assessment for Black of the resulting positions, not everyone likes the obscure structure and the complexity of the positions arising.

For example, after 8...♗a6 9.b3, if I did not know the theoretical lines I would feel the desire to resign at the sight of the 'dead' bishop on a6...

Of course, it is not all so simple and Black holds on thanks to dynamic factors, but the feeling that White must be better does not leave me for a second.



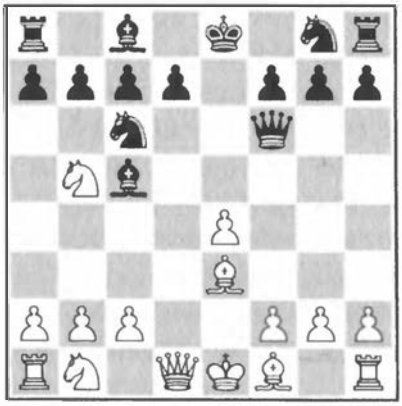
5.♘b3

But this is interesting! Earlier Magnus looked for an advantage in two directions:

– In the endgame after 5.♘xc6 ♕f6 6.♕f3 (6.♕d2 practically went out of use at the start of this century; after 6...dxc6 7.♘c3 ♗d4 8.♗d3 ♘e7 9.0-0 ♘g6 Black began achieving very respectable results) 6...dxc6!? (in return for White's slightly better pawn structure, Black obtains free development. The 'classical' position of the variation arises after 6...bxc6 7.♘d2. 6...♕xf3 7.gxf3 bxc6 8.♗e3 ♗xe3 9.fxe3 is also possible) 7.♗c4 ♕xf3 8.gxf3 ♘f6 9.♗e3 ♗xe3 10.fxe3 ♔e7. In my view, in the given version of the endgame White has no advantage.

– The second way of fighting for an advantage came to the fore quite a long time ago – White tries to reinforce his knight at d4 in all possible ways, even to the detriment of the normal development of his knight at c3: 5.♗e3 ♕f6 6.c3!?. The resulting position has its own, very extensive theory, but in recent times here too Black has adapted and White has been unable to obtain not just an advantage, but even a hint of a playable position.

The aggressive 6.♘b5 (the Blumenfeld Attack)

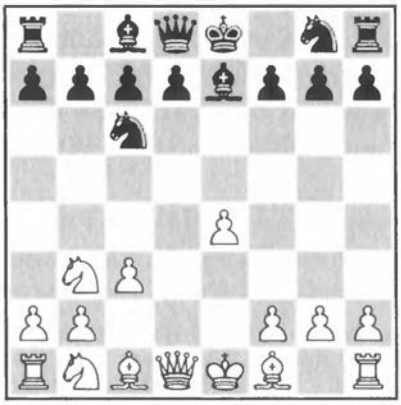


was examined in SOS-3 (Chapter 7, page 62).

5...♗b6

The retreat 5...♗e7 looks rather passive. White can continue calmly developing his pieces by 6.♘c3 ♘f6 7.♗e2 0-0 8.0-0 d6 9.♗f4 with a spatial advantage.

5...♗b4+, somewhat disrupting the coordination of the white pieces, is far more cunning: 6.c3 (6.♗d2!? a5 7.a3 ♗xd2+ 8.♕xd2 ♘f6 9.♘c3 0-0 10.0-0-0 is also interesting) 6...♗e7, and now two continuations can be recommended for White:



– The classical occupation of the centre by 7.c4 ♘f6 (a game of my own from the 2004 world championship continued 7...♗f6 8.♗d3 d6 9.0-0 ♘ge7 10.♘c3 ♗xc3 11.bxc3 0-0 12.♘d4 f5 13.f4! ♘xd4 14.cxd4 fxe4 15.♗xe4 d5 16.cxd5 ♘xd5 17.♗a3 ♖f7 18.♕b3 ♘f6, Movsesian-Landa, Tripoli 2004, and here White would have gained a promising position after 19.♗c2! b6 20.♕d3 ♗b7 21.♖ae1±) 8.♘c3 0-0 9.♗e2 ♖e8 10.0-0 a5 11.f3 a4 12.♘d4 a3 13.b3 ♗b4 14.♕d3 d6 15.♗e3 ♘xd4 16.♗xd4, and White is slightly better, Petrosian-Smorodsky, Tbilisi 1944.

– 7.g3 (evoking memories of Richard Réti) 7...♘f6 8.♗g2 d6 9.0-0 ♗g4 10.f3 ♗e6 11.♘d4, and in both cases White has the easier game thanks to his advantage in space.

6.♘c3

The 'classical' way to play this line was 6.a4, but Carlsen has in mind to castle on the queenside.

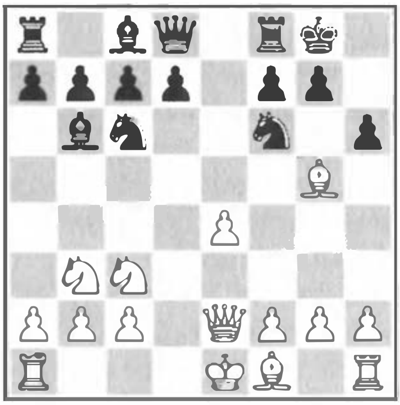
6...♘f6

The move recommended by the computer. The other plan with the development of the knight at the more stable position e7 will be examined in the next game.

7.♕e2

White deploys his pieces as in the Sicilian Defence, where the plans for attacking the black king have already been worked out in detail.

7...0-0 8.♗g5 h6



9.♗h4

9.h4?! must be deemed too drastic in view of 9...d6! (of course, the immediate 9...hxg5? is bad, as after 10.hxg5 White gains a strong attack) 10.f3 (the principled continuation, but it effectively loses the game; chances of a fight are retained by 10.♗e3 ♖e8 11.♗xb6 axb6 12.f3 – 12.0-0-0 b5! – 12...d5 13.0-0-0 ♗d7!) 10...hxg5 11.hxg5 ♘g4! 12.fxg4 ♕xg5 13.♕f3 ♗xg4 14.♕g3 ♘e5 and White has not achieved anything, Rublevsky-Anand, Bastia 2004 (however, 14...♘b4 15.♗d3 ♖ae8 was even stronger).

9...a5! 10.a4

White is contemplating castling long, and therefore the inclusion of the moves by the rooks' pawns of both sides is clearly advantageous to Black. The very sharp variations where the advance of the black a-pawn is ignored have not yet occurred in practice. 10.0-0-0!? (with 'eyes wide shut') 10...a4 11.♘d2, and now:

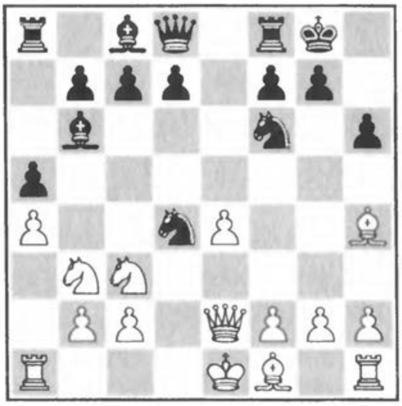
– 11...a3 12.e5 axb2+ 13.♔b1 ♘d4 (13...♖e8 14.♗xf6 gxf6 15.♕g4+ ♔h8 16.♕h4 ♔g7 17.exf6+ ♕xf6 18.♕xf6+ ♔xf6 19.♘d5+ ♔g7 20.♘xb6 cxb6 21.♘c4 d5 22.♘xb6 ♖a5 23.♘xd5±) 14.♕d3 d5! 15.exf6 ♗f5 16.♕g3 ♗xc2+ 17.♔xb2 g6 18.♖c1. The position is a mind-boggling one, but I would prefer to be Black – the white king is too exposed (18...♗f5 19.♘b3 c6).

– 11...♗d4 (this seems safer for Black) 12.♘b5! a3 13.♘xd4 ♘xd4 14.♕e3 axb2+ 15.♔xb2 ♘e6 16.♗c4 d5 17.♘f3 c6 unclear.

10...♘d4

Etienne decides to simplify the position immediately.

Before the present game this position had only been considered by non-human minds. An internet rapid game between two engines continued as follows: 10...d6!? 11.0-0-0 ♗e6 12.♕e1!? (for a human, such a move is impossible to make at the board! 12.f3 looks more 'human', with the idea after 12...♕e7?! of sticking the knight on the central square: 13.♘d5 ♗xd5 14.exd5 ♖ae8 15.♕xe7 ♘xe7 16.♗b5 and White has the advantage) 12...♕e7 13.f4 ♖ae8 14.♘d2 ♗d4 15.♘b5 ♗g4 16.♘f3 ♕xe4 17.♕xe4 ♖xe4 18.♖xd4 ♘xd4 19.♘fxd4 c6 20.♗d3 cxb5 21.♗xe4 ♘xe4 22.♖e1 d5 23.♘xb5 ♖c8, and the result of a tense struggle was a roughly equal endgame, 'Fredis'-'Hoshad', playchess.com 2006.

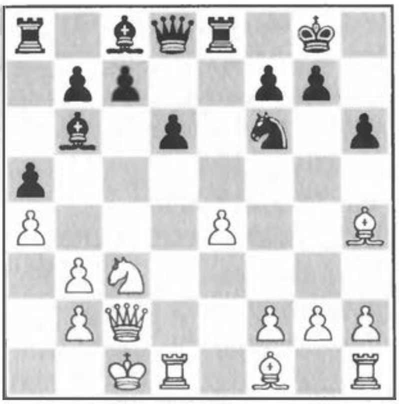


11.♕d3

If White goes along with Black by playing 11.♘xd4, then after 11...♗xd4 12.0-0-0 ♗xc3 13.bxc3 ♕e7 14.e5 ♕a3+ 15.♔b1? (15.♔d2 ♕xa4 16.♗xf6 gxf6 17.♕e3 ♕h4 18.g3 ♕g5 19.f4 ♕g7∓) 15...♖a6 the inclusion of the moves a5 – a4 is clearly felt.

11...♘xb3 12.cxb3 Now the white king has acquired a 'home' at a2.

12...♖e8 13.0-0-0 d6 14.♕c2



14...♗d7?

A loss of a tempo, which effectively already ruins Black's game! Although in the given position the computer gives assessments in favour of Black, for some reason all the time one wants to give an advantage to White – he has easy play in the centre and on the kingside. Apparently there are still positions in which silicon is powerless. It was essential to cover the d5-point, even at the cost of weakening the d6 pawn: 14...c6 15.♗c4 (Black can meet 15.♗g3 with 15...d5! 16.e5 ♘h5) 15...♕e7 16.♖he1 ♗e6 17.f4 ♗xc4 18.bxc4 ♕e6 19.♕d3, with a slightly inferior but defensible position. Of course, Black cannot play 14...♗e6? 15.e5 g5 16.♗g3 ♘h5, when 17.♗b5! ♗d7 18.♗c4! is very strong for White.

It is not possible to escape from the unpleasant pin by 14...g5?! 15.♗g3 ♘h5 16.e5 ♘xg3 17.hxg3 ♖xe5 18.♖xh6 ♗f5 19.♗d3 g4 20.♔b1, when Black comes under a strong attack.

15.♗c4 ♗e6 Again 15...g5 16.♗g3 (16.e5!?) 16...♘h5 17.e5! was bad for Black.

16.♖he1

White has a decent advantage. Even 'visually' it is evident that he has a pleasant and easy game, with all his pieces standing in the centre, and that Black's game is very difficult.

16...♕e7 17.e5

Magnus decides to 'fracture' Black's position immediately, exploiting the advantage of having his rooks on the central files. White's other possibility was 17.f4 ♗xc4 18.bxc4 ♕e6 19.♗xf6 ♕xf6 20.♘d5 ♕d8 21.♘xb6 cxb6 22.g3±.

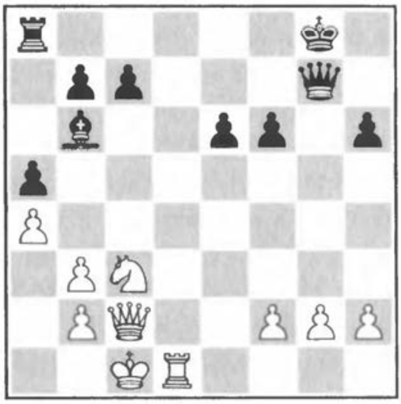
17...dxe5 18.♖xe5 ♕f8

18...♖ad8? would have lost to 19.♘d5, with a pin on the diagonal and on the file!

19.♗xf6 gxf6 20.♖e2 ♕g7

No better is 20...♗xc4 21.bxc4 ♖xe2 22.♕xe2 ♖e8 23.♘e4 ♖e6 24.♕f3±, when White gradually steals up on the weakened black king.

21.♗xe6 ♖xe6 22.♖xe6 fxe6



23.♖d3!

Strongly played! White's aim is the black king. While the black bishop is 'chilling out' at b6, White begins a very strong attack.

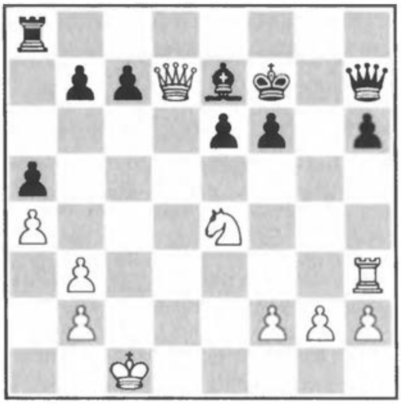
23...♔h8 24.♖g3 ♕h7 25.♕d2 ♗c5

25...♖g8 26.♖xg8+ ♔xg8 27.♕d8+ ♔g7 28.♕e7+ ♔g6 29.♕xe6±.

26.♘e4 ♗e7 27.♖h3 ♔g7

The knight is taboo: 27...♕xe4 28.♕xh6+ ♔g8 29.♖g3+ ♔f7 30.♕h5+ ♔f8 31.♕h8+ ♔f7 32.♖g7 mate.

28.♕d7 ♔f7



29.♘g5+! Very pretty. 29.♘xf6 ♔xf6 30.♖f3+ ♔g5 31.♕xe6 would also have concluded the game.

29...fxg5 30.♖f3+ ♔g8

30...♔g6 31.♕xe6+ ♔h5 32.♖h3 mate.

31.♕xe6+ ♔h8 32.♖f7 ♗d6

32...♕d3 33.♕xh6+ ♔g8 34.♕g7 mate.

33.♖xh7+ ♔xh7 34.♕f7+ ♔h8 35.g3 ♖a6 36.♔b1 ♗b4 37.f4 gxf4 38.gxf4

Black resigned. A quite timely decision – he is not able to create any fortress, and White wins easily.

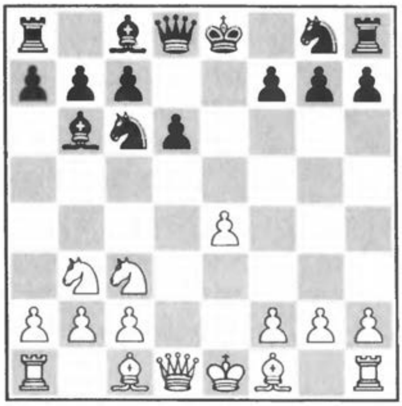
☐ **Teimour Radjabov**
■ **Evgeny Tomashevsky**
Plovdiv 2010

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 exd4 4.♘xd4 ♗c5 5.♘b3 ♗b6 6.♘c3

Very recently, in the latest European Club Championship, this position occurred again. Evgeny Tomashevsky, a solid positional player, chose a different plan.

6...d6!?

A flexible move: for the moment Black has not decided where to develop his king's knight. In addition, the immediate development of the bishop at g5 is not possible.



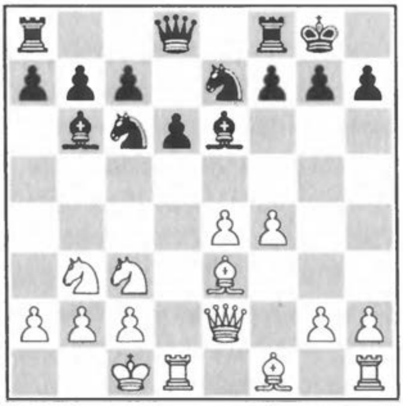
7.♕e2

All the same!

7...♘ge7

Black, having evidently observed the horror of the Carlsen-Bacrot game, chooses a solid arrangement of his forces. It is no longer possible to pin the knight on e7, but in this branch too, in my view, Black has problems! Naturally, if 7...♘f6 there immediately follows 8.♗g5!.

8.♗e3 0-0 9.0-0-0 ♗e6 10.f4



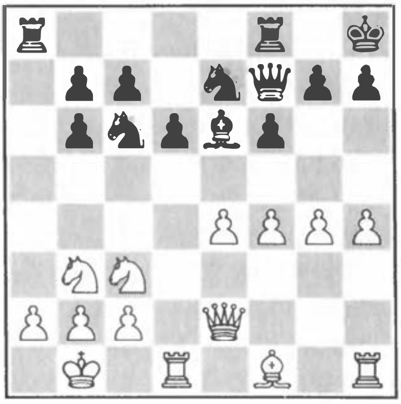
10...♔h8

Black responded badly in the source game: 10...f5? 11.g4!? (the simple 11.e5 d5 12.♕f2± would also have given an advantage) 11...♖e8 12.♖g1 fxg4 (Black should have taken the other pawn 12...fxe4, although in this case too White's chances of a direct attack after 13.♔b1! are considerable) 13.♗xb6! axb6 14.f5 ♗f7 15.♕xg4 with a deadly attack on the kingside, Shmirina-T.Mamedyarova, Budva 2003.

11.♔b1 ♕e8 12.♗xb6 axb6 13.g4 f6

With a good knowledge and a little imagination, in the contours of this position one can see a mirror reflection of the Caro-Kann Defence, only it is not the light-squared, but the dark-squared bishops which have been exchanged. A drawback to Black's position is the insecure position of his monarch on the kingside.

14.h4 ♕f7



15.f5!

Setting up a bind and preparing a direct attack on the king. White gives up the e5-square, but the black knight there only looks nicely placed.

15...♗xb3 16.cxb3 White recaptures with this pawn, keeping the a-file closed!

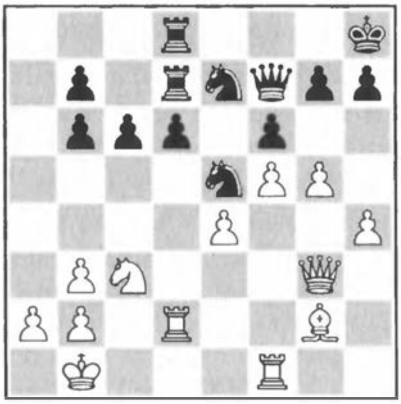
16...♘e5 17.g5 ♖ad8 18.♗g2 ♖d7 19.♖hf1 ♖fd8 20.♕e3 ♖e8 21.♕g3 ♖ed8 22.♕e3

Indecision No.1...

22...♖e8 23.♕g3 ♖ed8 24.♖d2

Black is very passively placed, whereas White has a mass of possibilities, one of which consists in playing his knight to e6. I also took part in this tournament and I witnessed this game. At this point, to be honest, I had no doubts about what the result would be.

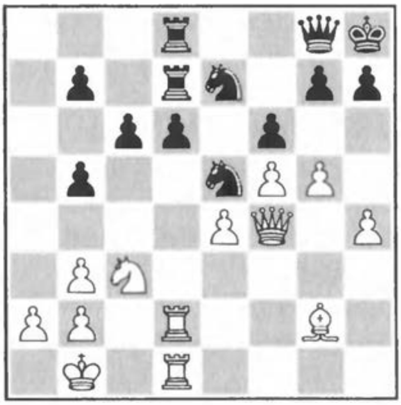
24...c6 In any case Black must undertake something, to avoid being suffocated.



25.♕f4?!

Indecision No.2. The direct switching of the knight to e6 should have been calculated. In all variations White has a significant advantage: 25.♘e2 d5 26.♘f4 dxe4 27.♖xd7 ♖xd7 28.♗xe4 ♘d5 29.♗xd5 cxd5 30.gxf6 gxf6 (30...♕xf6 31.♘h5 ♕d6 32.f6 g6 33.♖e1 gxh5 34.♖xe5 and Black has no defence) 31.♖c1 ♘c6 32.h5! (intensifying the threats to the black king) 32...d4 33.h6 ♕g8 34.♕xg8+ ♔xg8 35.♖g1+ ♔f7 36.♔c2±.

25...b5 26.♖fd1 ♕g8 27.♖d4 ♕f7 28.♖4d2 ♕g8



29.♗h1?!

Indecision No.3. Why not 29.♘e2 ? – after 29...d5 30.♘d4 dxe4 31.♗xe4 ♘d5 32.♗xd5 ♖xd5 33.♘e6 ♘g6! (33...♖xd2 34.♖xd2 ♖xd2 35.♕xd2+−) 34.♖xd5 ♖xd5 35.♕c1 ♖xd1 (35...♘xh4 36.♖xd5 cxd5 37.♕f4 ♘g6 38.♕c7 ♘e5 39.♕xb7 fxg5 40.♘xg5±) 36.♕xd1 ♘xh4 37.♕g4 fxg5 38.♕xg5 ♘g6 39.a3 White retains a great advantage (39...♕e8 40.♕g4!). I cannot explain Teimour's rejection of the knight manoeuvre to e6. Possibly he underestimated how strong the steed would be there.

29...♕f7 30.♖d4 ♕h5 31.b4 ♕g4 32.♕xg4 ♘xg4

Without the queens it is easier for Black to defend, of course, but even so the advantage is still with White.

33.♖g1 ♘e5 34.♖f1 ♘f7 35.♖g1 ♘e5 36.♖f1 ♘f7 37.♖g1 ♘e5

Draw by repetition.

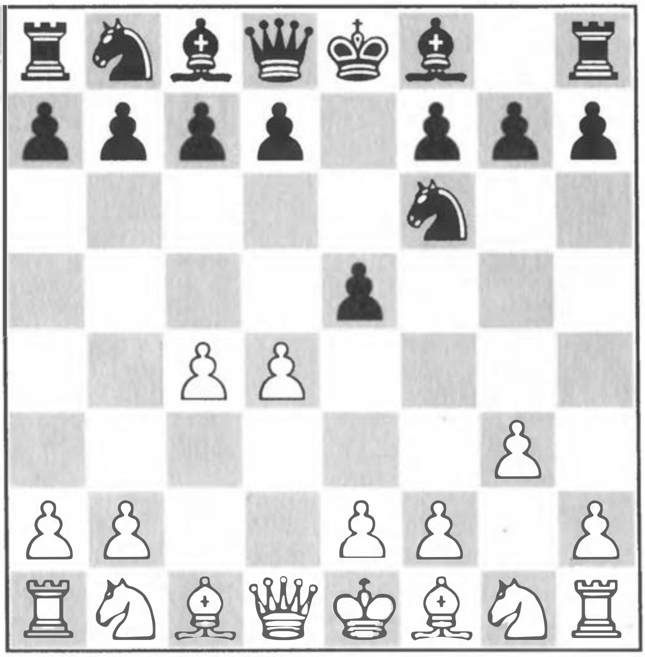
What conclusion can be drawn from the material we have studied? To me it is obvious that the Scotch Game is quite a dangerous weapon against players who begin with 1...e5.

In addition, the line with the bishop retreat to h4, discovered by Magnus Carlsen, is highly venomous for Black. Although in many lines the computer gives Black the advantage, this opinion is unjustified in this position. Experience and a more detailed analysis show that it is much more difficult for Black to defend, than for White to attack! In the last two games which we have analysed, Black was unable to equalise. We now await revelations at the Anand-Kramnik level in this opening. But until they have been expressed, one can play this line and win at any level!

CHAPTER 6

Jeroen Bosch

Budapest Gambit Delayed



Catalan with 3...e5

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 e5

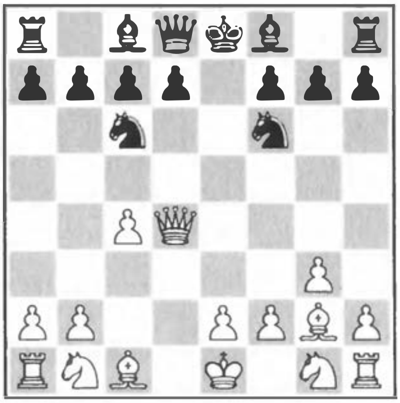
A real surprise! Pawns can't move backwards so a certain amount of caution is always required. However, that does not explain Black's slow-motion e-pawn which goes from e6 to e5. In fact, Black argues that in the Budapest Gambit an additional tempo (3.g3) is detrimental to White's position. There are two arguments in favour of this line of reasoning. Firstly, White's main line against the Budapest proper (1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e5 3.dxe5 ♘g4) is 4.♗f4; with a pawn on g3 the bishop feels less comfortable on f4, though. Secondly, White often plays e3 in the Budapest Gambit, which does not combine very well with 3.g3. Naturally, Black has to watch out for those positions where g3 comes in handy, and these do occur in the Budapest.

The witty 3...e5 was first played by the multiple Hungarian Champion Gedeon Barcza (against Pal Benko in 1948). A young Lajos Portisch has also played it (unsuccessfully), but 3...e5 has mainly been tried by the Brazilian IM Herman van Riemsdijk. On the whole, you won't find many games with this Delayed Budapest Gambit. Disregarding the objective merits of the tempo loss for a moment, this may also be explained by the fact that Budapest players will embark on their favourite gambit on the second move, and those who don't play the gambit will certainly not consider it a tempo down. Yet, I feel that this gambit against the Catalan has been underestimated, and I intend to show you why.

4.dxe5

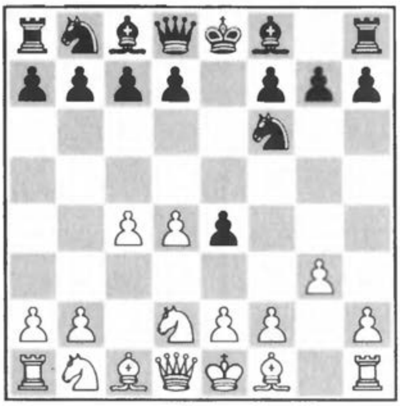
As they say, the only way to refute a gambit is by accepting it. Of course White could argue that with the additional 3.g3 it makes sense to investigate positions that could also result from the English Opening:

● 4.♗g2 exd4 5.♕xd4 ♘c6



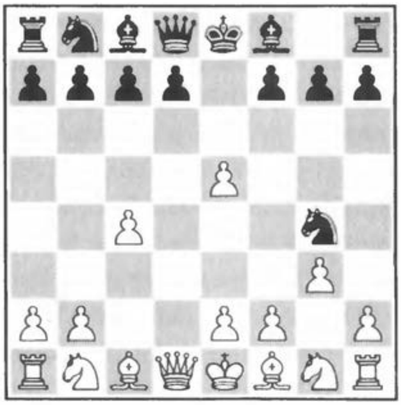
This attack on the queen proves White wrong. It is impossible to believe in a white opening advantage after Black regains tthe time lost in the opening (2...e6 and 3...e5) with this natural developing move. 6.♕d1 (6.♕d2 ♗c5 7.♘c3 d6 8.♘f3 0-0 9.0-0 ♖e8 10.e3 ♗e6 11.b3 ♕d7 was fine for Black in Cobo-Van Riemsdijk, Tucuman 1971) 6...♗b4+ (6...♘e5!?7.♘d2♗b4 8.♕b3 ♕e7 9.a3 ♗c5 10.♘h3 a5 11.♘f4 a4 12.♕c3 d6, Neelotpal-Sharbaf, Mashhad 2010, and having cramped White's queenside, Black is doing very OK) 7.♘d2 d5!? (7...0-0) 8.cxd5 ♘xd5 9.♘f3 0-0 10.0-0 ♖e8 11.♘b3 ♘f6 12.a3 ♕xd1 13.♖xd1 ♗f8 14.♔f1 ♗f5 15.♘fd4 ♘xd4 16.♘xd4 ♗e4 17.♗xe4 ♘xe4 18.♗f4 c6 with equal chances in the stem game Benko-Barcza, Budapest 1948.

● 4.♘f3 e4 (4...exd4 5.♘xd4 – if Black now continues quietly, he might well end up in an English Opening a (useful) tempo down. So he went: 5...d5 6.♗g2! ♗b4+ – 6...dxc4 is a better attempt, but I would prefer White – 7.♘c3 0-0 8.cxd5 ♘xd5 9.♕b3!, and White had an edge after 9...♗xc3+ 10.bxc3 ♘b6 11.♗a3 ♖e8 12.0-0, Pachman-Brat, Prague 1954. As an afterthought, 4...♗b4+!? is interesting) 5.♘fd2.



Now 5...c6 6.♗g2 d5 7.0-0 ♗d6?! (7...♗e7 8.cxd5 cxd5 9.f3 ♘c6 is about equal) 8.cxd5 cxd5 9.f3 0-0? 10.fxe4 ♘g4 11.♕b3 ♘c6 12.e3♘xh2? 13.♔xh2 ♕h4+ 14.♔g1 ♕xg3 was easily refuted by 15.e5+–, Molnar-L.Portisch, Budapest 1956. Black can just improve with 7...♗e7, but he can also play 5...d5 6.cxd5 (or 6.♗g2 ♘c6!?, while 6...c6 transposes to Molnar-Portisch) 6...♕xd5 7.e3 ♗b4 8.♘c3 ♗xc3 9.bxc3 0-0, with interesting play.

4...♘g4

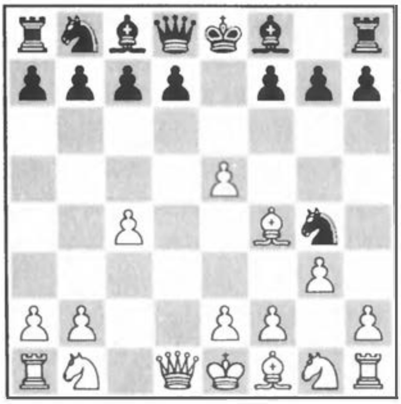


Here we are in the realm of the Budapest Gambit with the addition of g2-g3.

It makes sense to make 5.♘f3 the main line of our investigation. Together with 4.♗f4, 4.♘f3 is, after all, the main line against the 'regular' Budapest Gambit.

5.♘f3

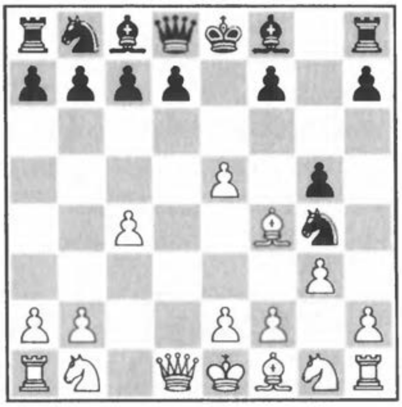
- Nobody has ever dared **5.♗f4**, convinced as they are that the combination of a bishop on f4 and a pawn on g3 is unhealthy. Yet, things are not that clear.



Now, I don't like 5...♗b4+ because of 6.♘c3 (not 6.♘d2 g5), when the additional g3 favours White.

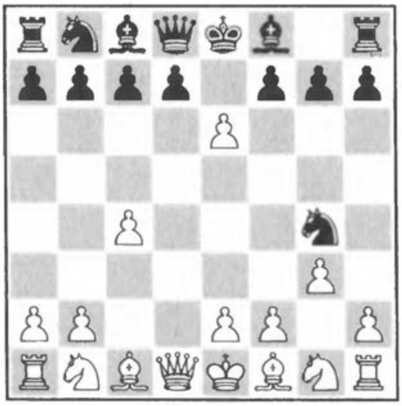
– After 5...♘c6 6.♘f3 Black may consider 6...♗c5!? (in the main line of the Budapest Gambit Black gives a check with the bishop, but here after 6...♗b4+ 7.♘c3! – 7.♘bd2 ♕e7 8.♗g2 ♘gxe5 9.0-0± – 7...♗xc3+ 8.bxc3 ♕e7 9.♕d5 the extra tempo is very useful and renders this line almost unplayable for Black) 7.e3 f6!? 8.exf6 ♕xf6 9.♘c3 ♗b4 and the bishop on f4 is slightly awkward, but there is nothing concrete for Black.

– 5...g5!?. This is less odd than it looks. In the Budapest Gambit after 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e5 3.dxe5 ♘g4 4.♗f4 they also play 4...g5 (Mamedyarov and a young Topalov have done so). Then White's best answer is 5.♗g3, when he can obtain an edge with a fairly quick h4. Now he is forced to be more modest.



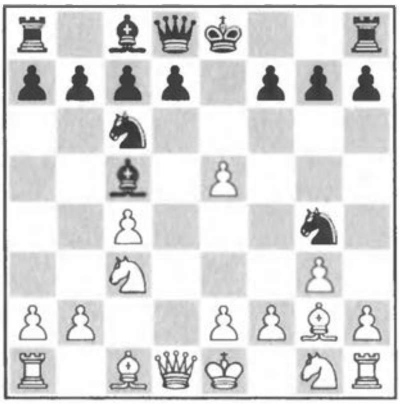
6.♗d2 ♘xe5 (6...♗g7) 7.♘f3 (7.♗c3 ♘bc6 8.♘f3 ♗g7 9.♗g2 0-0 is a normal continuation. White has a slight edge) 7...♗g7 (7...♘xf3+ 8.exf3 ♕e7+ 9.♗e2±) 8.♘xe5 (8.♘xg5?! ♘xc4) 8...♗xe5 9.♗c3 ♞c6 (not 9...♕f6 10.♗xe5 ♕xe5 11.♘c3 d6, with a positional edge for White) 10.♗g2, with a slight advantage but nothing special.

- Dubious is **5.f4?!** ♗c5 6.♘h3 d6, and Black has ample compensation.
- **5.e6** cannot unduly worry Black, although it is more tricky here than in the Budapest proper.



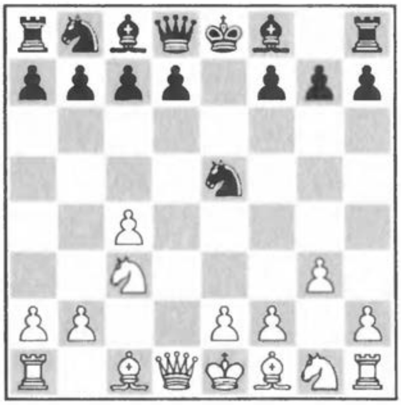
5...♗b4+ (the exciting way to play it; 5...fxe6 6.e4 ♘e5 is also playable; worse is 5...dxe6 6.♕xd8+ ♔xd8, which equalizes in the regular Budapest Gambit, as with the pawn on g3 White can put some pressure on Black's queenside with ♗g2) 6.♗d2 ♕f6 7.exf7+ ♚xf7 8.♘f3 ♕xb2 9.♗xb4 ♕xb4+ 10.♘bd2 ♖e8 or 10...♖f8.

- The book refutation of our SOS line is **5.♘c3**, which is based on a game Tukmakov-Van Riemsdijk, Groningen 1990, where White gained an edge after 5...♘c6?! 6.♗g2 ♗c5?! (6...♘gxe5)



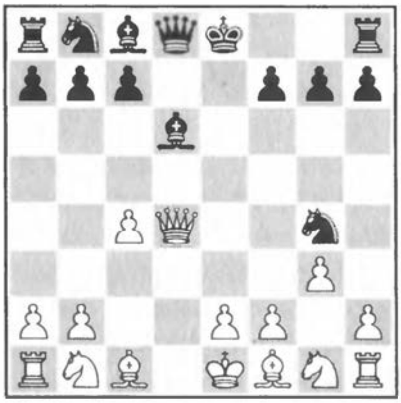
7.♘h3! (this is the point – White can harmoniously develop all his pieces without having to play e3) 7...♘cxe5 8.0-0 0-0 9.♘e4 ♗e7 10.b3 d6 11.♘f4 ♘f6 12.♘c3 c6 13.♕c2.

However, Black's fifth move is the culprit, and after 5...♘xe5! Black is doing well.



The pawn sacrifice 6.♘f3 ♘xc4 7.♕d5 is not very convincing, when Black the returns material with 7...♞b6 (7...♘d6) 8.♕e5+ ♕e7 9.♕xc7 ♘a6 10.♕f4 ♘b4, with active piece play. And 6.b3 can be favourably met by 6...♗b4! 7.♗b2 (7.♗d2 0-0 8.♗g2 ♖e8) 7...0-0 or even 7...♕f6!?.

- Somewhat similar to Tukmakov-Van Riemsdijk is **5.♗g2** ♗c5?! 6.♘h3 ♘xe5 7.0-0 d6 8.♘c3 0-0 9.b3 a6 10.♘f4±, J.Horvath-G.Horvath, Zalaegerszeg 1991. However, here too, Black has 5...♘xe5!.
- **5.♕d4** was given an exclam by Eric Schiller, but Black has 5...d6, which is a promising gambit (incidentally **5.♕d5** can also be met by 5...d6). 6.exd6 ♗xd6! (6...♘c6? 7.♕e4+ ♝e6 8.dxc7 ♕d1+– 8...♕xc7 – 9.♔xd1 ♘xf2+ 10.♔e1 ♘xe4 11.♗g2 f5 was not entirely clear in Malo-Arpa, Aragon 1998, but White should have a slight edge).



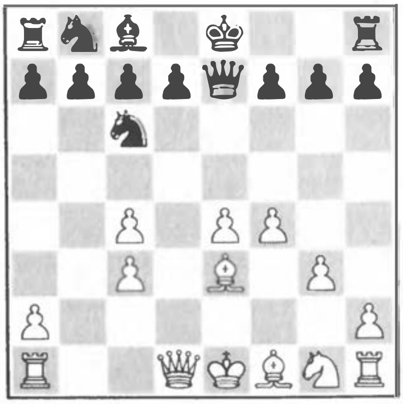
And now:

- 7.♘f3 0-0 8.♗g2 ♘c6 9.♕d2 (9.♕d1? ♗c5!∓) 9...♗e6, and Black has more than enough for the pawn.
- Not 7.♕xg7? ♗e5, and wins.
- 7.c5? was given an ! by Schiller, but 7...♘c6 favours Black.
- 7.♕e4+ ♗e6 (7...♗e7) 8.♘c3 (8.♕xb7 ♘d7; 8.♗h3 ♘d7 9.♗xg4 ♘f6 10.♕xb7 ♘xg4) 8...♘c6, with compensation.

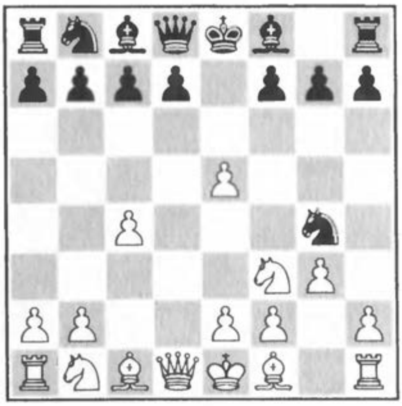
- **5.e4** is a serious move – in the Budapest Gambit 4.e4 is often associated with

Alekhine. After 5...♘xe5 6.f4 Black should play 6...♘ec6 7.♗e3 (7.♗g2 ♗c5 8.♘e2 d6 9.♘bc3 0-0 10.♘a4 ♗b4+ 11.♗d2 a5 is about equal, Hanks-Perez, Tel Aviv ol 1964. On move 7 Black can also play 7...♗b4+) 7...♗b4+ and now:

- 8.♔f2 ♕e7 9.♗g2 ♗c5 10.♕d2 ♗xe3+ 11.♕xe3 ♘b4 was Quinteros-Van Riemsdijk, Sao Paulo 1978. Black is doing fine in this complicated position.
- In Laznicka-Timman, Paks 2010, there followed 8.♘d2 ♕e7 9.♗g2 ♘a6 10.♘e2 ♘c5 11.♕c2 f5 (this looks strong, but Laznicka counters with a temporary pawn sacrifice) 12.♘c3 ♗xc3 13.♕xc3 ♘xe4 14.♘xe4 fxe4 15.0-0-0. White is a pawn down, but he has two bishops, an edge in development, and open files for his rooks. Black's position is more difficult to play. On move 10 I would prefer 10...0-0 intending ...♗c5, but please note that the immediate 10...♗c5 favours White after 11.♗xc5 ♘xc5 12.0-0 d6 13.♘c3.
- 8.♘c3 ♗xc3+ 9.bxc3 ♕e7



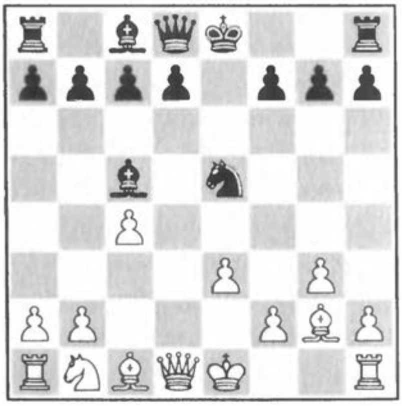
Play has transposed directly into the Budapest Gambit, a line which is known to favour Black. You will find several games in your database (two by Keres as White) following 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e5 3.dxe5 ♘g4 4.e4 ♘xe5 5.f4 ♘ec6 6.♗e3 ♗b4+ 7.♘c3 ♕h4+! (so Black actually provokes g3!) 8.g3 ♗xc3+! 9.bxc3 ♕e7. Viktor Moskalenko explains the ins and outs in his *The Fabulous Budapest Gambit* (New In Chess, 2008).



5...♗c5

Black develops just like he does in the Budapest Gambit and provokes e3. Here the combination of e3 and g3 will lead to Budapest positions in which White can develop his bishop to the long diagonal (not bad), but Black may profit from the weakened light squares. The subsequent moves are pretty much forced.

6.e3 ♘c6 7.♗g2 ♘gxe5 8.♘xe5 ♘xe5



Black has retrieved his gambit pawn with a perfectly normal position. Just imagine: you could also have been defending some slightly worse Catalan around this stage!

9.0-0

9.♘c3 0-0 10.0-0 d6 11.b3 a5 (11...♗g4! is OK for Black) 12.h3 ♕f6?! 13.♘d5! ♕d8 (Black had probably overlooked 13...♘f3+ 14.♕xf3 ♕xa1 15.♕e2!, and White more or less wins) 14.♗b2 c6 15.♘c3 ♕e7 16.♘e4, with a slight edge for White in Quinteros-Tempone, Mar del Plata 1995.

9...d6

Or the immediate 9...0-0.

10.b3

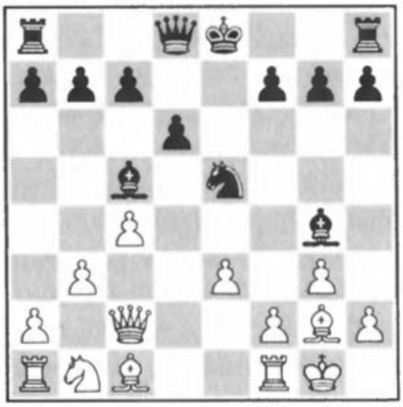
10.b4 looks frightening, and is an argument in favour of 9...0-0. Yet, after 10...♗b6 11.c5 dxc5 12.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 13.♗b2 (13.♖d1+ ♔e7 14.♖d5 f6 15.bxc5 ♗a5) 13...f6 14.bxc5 ♗xc5 White has a certain amount of compensation for the pawn, but nothing special.

10.♕c2 0-0 11.b3 ♕f6 (11...c6) 12.♗b2 ♕h6!? (12...♗f5) 13.♗xe5 (or 13.♘c3 ♗h3 14.♘d5 ♗xg2 15.♔xg2 c6) 13...dxe5 14.♘c3 f5 15.♖ad1 c6, with a favourable Dutch in Terasti-Laihonen, Tampere 1997.

10...♗g4

Gaining time and taking advantage of the weakened light squares. Alternatively, there is 10...0-0.

11.♕c2



11...♘f3+!?

Black is also doing well after 11...♗f3.

12.♔h1 0-0 13.♘d2

Admitting that Black is fully equal. White suffers slightly after 13.♗b2 ♕g5! 14.♘d2 ♕h5. Note that 13.h3?! is well-met by 13...♕f6!.

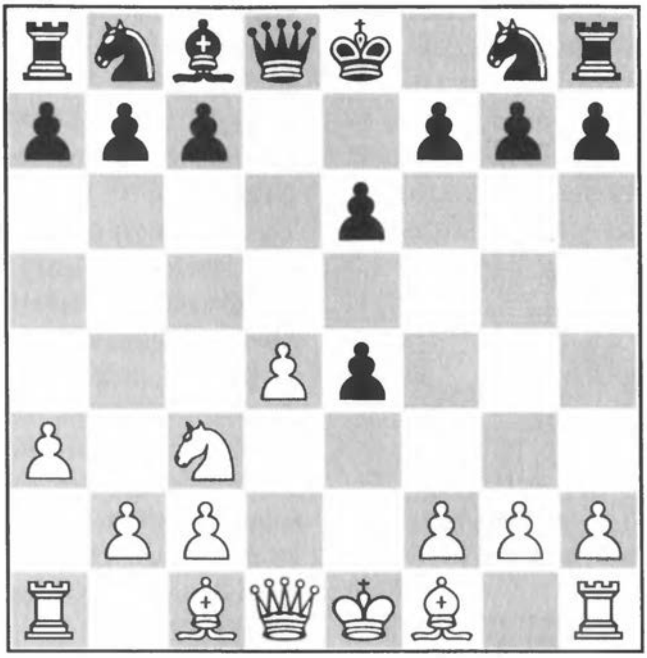
13...♘xd2

Draw. Küttner-Frenzel, Ruhla 1957.

CHAPTER 7

Alexander Finkel

French Defence: Obtaining Two Bishops



Winawer: 4.♘e2 dxe4 5.a3 ♗xc3+ 6.♘xc3

After covering 5...♗e7 in the previous issue of SOS, the following article is dedicated to Black's other popular reply on 5.a3: 5...♗xc3+, which is considered by modern theory as the most solid way to treat 4.♘e2.

The big question is whether White has sufficient resources to fight for an opening advantage if Black doesn't have aggressive intentions and is satisfied with equality, even if this means giving up serious attempts to play for a win?! Objectively speaking Black should be able to keep the balance if he is well prepared for this line, however even in that case White may pose him some tough problems to solve.

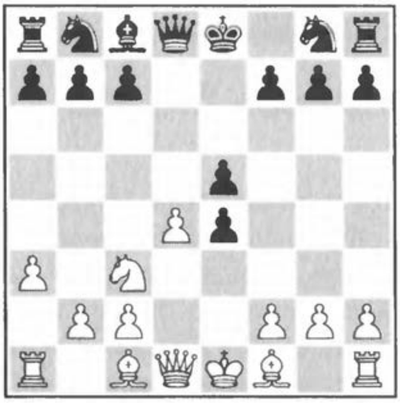
Black's play in this line may be classified into three main categories: he either tries to hold a slightly inferior endgame in which White enjoys a minimal but rather annoying advantage due to his bishop pair (even though in some of the lines Black neutralizes White's pressure in the endgame almost by force); or he tries to keep his extra pawn on e4, which usually allows White to gain a dangerous initiative, as Black has to play ...f5, weakening the dark squares on the kingside and in the centre (which is obviously welcomed by White, since his dark-squared bishop may just turn into a monster!); or he tries to give back the pawn on e4 at the right moment, initiating some trades along the way (bingo!).

It should be emphasized that by choosing the 4.♘e2 line White deliberately gives up the fight for a serious opening advantage (although he may get a really nice edge in case Black gets greedy or incautious). However, in most cases White emerges out of the opening with a very solid position and good prospects to turn his symbolic plus into something more tangible.

In the illustrative games I tried my best to cover every important alternative by Black, so after reading this article you should have a rather clear idea what to do regardless of Black's opening choice.

☐ **Daniel Campora**
■ **Paulo Dias**
Santo Antonio 2001

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♘e2 dxe4 5.a3 ♗xc3+ 6.♘xc3 e5?!



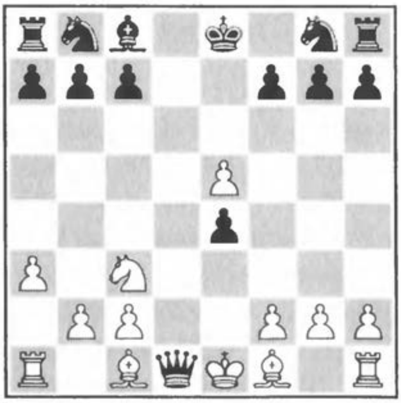
It seems that this straightforward attempt to simplify the position is not sufficient for equality. Moreover, White has more than one way to secure a small, but long-lasting opening advantage.

Instead, 6...♘f6 7.♗g5 favours White who will win back the pawn with some edge. While 6...f5?! was played in the famous game Alekhine-Nimzowitsch, Bled 1931. After 7.f3! exf3 8.♕xf3 ♕xd4 (Larsen has indicated 8...♕h4+ 9.g3 ♕xd4 10.♗f4! c6 11.♕h5+ g6 12.♕e2 ♕g7 13.0-0-0 as favouring White; 8...♘f6 9.♗f4 0-0 10.0-0-0) 9.♕g3 ♘f6 10.♕xg7 ♕e5+ (White is also better after the stronger 10...♖g8 11.♕xc7 ♘c6 12.♗f4!, as originally indicated by Alekhine) 11.♗e2 ♖g8 12.♕h6 ♖g6 13.♕h4 ♗d7 (13...♖g4!?, Kasparov) 14.♗g5! ♗c6? (14...♘c6 15.0-0-0 0-0-0) 15.0-0-0 White won quickly.

7.dxe5

This seemingly unpretentious move appears to be less logical than 7.♗e3 (White's plan is just to complete development of the pieces leaving the black pawn on e4 for dessert!) 7...♘c6 (7...exd4 8.♕xd4 ♘f6 9.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 10.0-0-0+ ♘bd7 11.♗c4 ♔e7 12.♖he1 c6 13.♘xe4 ♘xe4 14.♗g5+±, Thomas-Hollis, Bristol 1968) 8.♗b5 ♗d7 9.dxe5 ♘ge7 10.♕h5 ♘g6 11.0-0-0 ♕c8 12.e6 ♗xe6 13.♗xc6+ bxc6 14.♕c5±, Hector-Lyrberg, Sweden 2005/06.

7...♕xd1+



8.♘xd1!?

Just as on the previous move White has another decent alternative: 8.♔xd1 ♗f5 9.♘d5 ♔d7 (9...♘a6 10.♗g5 ♗e6 11.♗b5+ c6 12.♗xa6 ♗xd5 13.♗xb7 ♖b8 14.♗a6 ♖b6 15.♗e2 ♖xb2 16.♔d2±, Letzelter-Huss, Buenos Aires ol 1978) 10.♗f4 ♘c6 11.♗b5 a6 12.♗xc6+ ♔xc6 13.♘c3 ♘e7 14.♔e2 ♘g6 15.♔e3 ½-½, Fegebank-Barkowski, Bargteheide 1989.

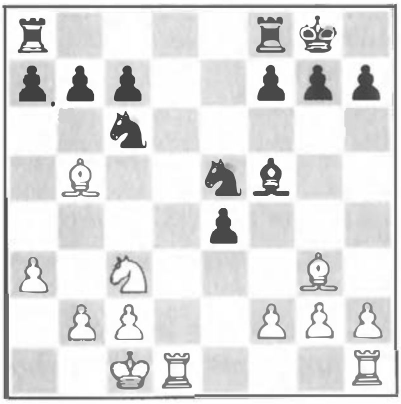
8...♘c6 9.♗f4 ♘ge7 10.♘c3 ♗f5 11.0-0-0 ♘g6 12.♗g3 ♘gxe5

Perhaps Black should've preferred a capture with the other knight in order to prevent White's next move.

12...♘cxe5!? 13.♖e1 (13.h4 h5 14.♗b5+ c6 15.♗a4 ♘d7 16.♖he1 ♘c5=) 13...0-0-0 14.♘xe4 ♖he8 15.♘c3 ♘c6 16.♖xe8 ♖xe8 17.♗b5 a6 18.♗xc6 bxc6 19.♖d1 is only slightly better for White.

13.♗b5! 0-0?!

This natural move is obviously an inaccuracy allowing White to trade his pair of bishops for Black's pair of knights causing an irrepairable damage to Black's pawn structure. After the correct 13...a6! 14.♗xe5 axb5 15.♗xg7 ♖g8 16.♗f6 ♖xg2 17.♘xb5 ♖c8 18.♖hg1 ♖g6± Black has excellent chances to hold.



14.♖d5! f6 15.♗xc6 bxc6 16.♖c5 ♗g6 17.♖e1 Black just has too many weaknesses to protect!

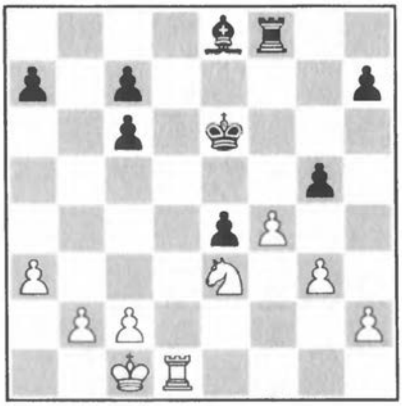
17...♖fe8

Removing a rook from the f-file is tough decision to make, but he hardly had anything better. 17...♖ae8!? 18.♖a5 ♖f7 19.♖xa7 f5 20.♗f4 ♘g4 21.♖e2±.

18.♗xe5 ♖xe5 19.♖xe5 fxe5 20.♘xe4 ♖d8

The rook endgame after 20...♗xe4 21.♖xe4 ♖e8 22.♔d2 ♔f7 23.♖a4 ♖a8 24.♖a6 is hopeless for Black.

21.f3 ♔f7 22.♘f2 ♖e8 22...♖d5?! 23.♘g4 ♔e6 24.c4 ♖a5 25.♔d2 ♔f5 26.♔c3+−. **23.♘g4!? e4 24.f4 ♔e6 25.♘e3 ♖f8** 25...c5 26.♔d2 h5 27.♔c3 ♗f5 28.g3 g6 29.♖d1±. **26.g3 ♗e8 27.♖d1 g5?!**



28.f5+!?

28.fxg5!? ♖f3 29.♖e1±.

28...♔f6 29.♖d8!

This move practically decides the game as trading the rooks would lead to an easily winning endgame.

29...h5 30.♔d2 h4

Also losing is 30...♔e7 31.♖d4.

31.♖a8 hxg3 32.hxg3 ♖h8 33.♔c3 ♔e5 34.b4 a6 34...c5 35.b5. **35.a4 ♔d6 36.♔d4 ♔e7 37.g4 ♖h1 38.♖xa6 ♖b1 39.c3 ♖b3 40.♖a8 ♖a3 41.♘c4**

Black resigned. A great example of endgame technique by Campora!

☐ **Igor-Alexandre Nataf**
■ **Manuel Apicella**
Marseille ch-FRA 2001

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♘e2 dxe4 5.a3 ♗xc3+ 6.♘xc3 ♘c6

The main reply. Black's basic idea in this line is to return the pawn under more favourable conditions.

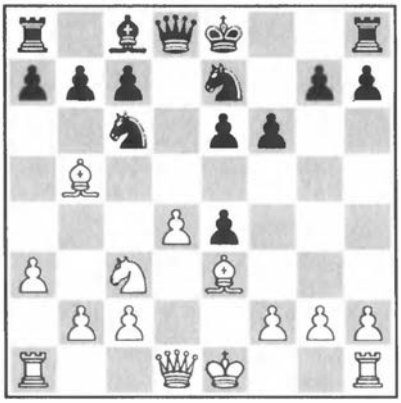
7.♗b5 ♘e7 8.♗g5

White's only attempt to fight for an opening advantage. Other moves do not pose Black any problems:

– 8.♗e3 0-0 9.♕d2 e5! 10.dxe5 ♕xd2+ 11.♗xd2 a6 (11...♘xe5 12.♘xe4 ♗f5 13.f3 ♗xe4=) 12.♗xc6 ♘xc6 13.0-0-0 ♘xe5 14.♘xe4 ♘g4! with even chances, Mokry-Casper, Olomouc 1983.

– 8.♘xe4 a6 9.♗xc6+ ♘xc6 10.♗e3 0-0 11.♕d2 b6 12.0-0-0 ♗b7 13.f3 ♕d5 14.♘c3 ♕a5 equal, Kassimov-Tarlev, Anapa 2009.

8...f6 9.♗e3



9...f5?!

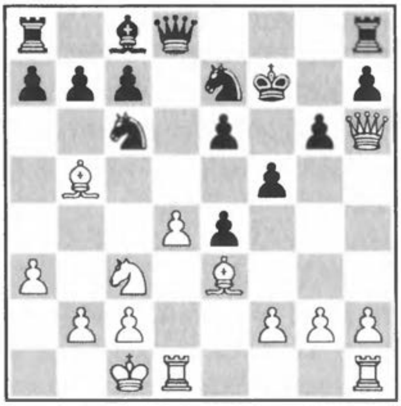
As I previously mentioned, Black shouldn't be too greedy. The pawn on e4 is not worth weakening the dark squares on the kingside, especially since White's dark-squared bishop doesn't face any opposition.

9...a6?! 10.♗xc6+ ♘xc6 11.♕h5+ ♔f8 12.0-0-0 ♕e8 13.♕h4 ♘e7 14.♕xe4 ♘f5 15.♗f4±, Skaric-Govedarica, Belgrade 2007.

10.♕h5+!?

Another promising option was 10.f3: 10...exf3 11.♕xf3 0-0 12.0-0-0 ♘d5 13.♘xd5 ♕xd5 14.♕xd5 exd5 15.♗f4 with compensation, Westerinen-Djurhuus, Oslo 1988.

10...g6 11.♕h6 ♔f7 12.0-0-0



12...♘d5

After the text Black is doomed to a passive defence, therefore the ugly 12...♘g8 deserved attention, intending to play ...h6 later on: 13.♕f4 ♘f6 (13...♘ce7 14.♘xe4 ♘d5 15.♘g5+ ♔g7 16.♕e5+ ♘gf6 17.♗d2±, Cordovil-Vega Holm, Loures 1998) 14.♕h4?! (14.f3!?) 14...h6 15.♗xh6 ♘g4 16.♕xd8 ♘xd8 17.♗e3 ♔g7 unclear, Gankin-Paveliev, Moscow 2008.

13.♘xd5 exd5

Or 13...♕xd5 14.c4 ♕d6 15.♗f4 ♕f8 16.♕xf8+ ♖xf8 17.♗xc7 with a slight plus.

14.♗f4

The weakness of the dark squares in Black's camp fully compensates White for the lack of pawn.

In a later game White immediately traded his light-squared bishop for Black's knight, securing the penetration of the other one to e5: 14.♗xc6!? bxc6 15.♗f4 ♕f8 16.♕h3 h6 17.♗xc7 ♕e7 18.♗e5 ♕g5+ 19.♔b1 ♖e8 20.♕c3 ♗d7 21.h4 ♕xg2 22.♕e3±, Moreda-Daneri, Mar del Plata 2009.

14...♕f8 The only move, for if 14...♗d7? then 15.♗xc6 ♗xc6 16.♗e5 ♕f8 17.♕h3±. **15.♕h4** 15.♕h3!?, Pilnik-Czerniak, Buenos Aires 1941. **15...♕e7 16.♕g3 ♗e6 17.h4** 17.♗xc6!?. **17...h5** 17...♖ac8 18.h5 is annoying.

18.♗xc7

Restoring the material balance and keeping the pressure.

18...♖hc8 19.♗d6 ♕d8 20.♔b1 a6?!

Black should have kept the knight on the board in order to cover the dark squares on the kingside: he is slightly worse after 20...♘e7! 21.♗e2 ♖c6 22.♗e5 ♖ac8 23.♖d2 ♘g8.

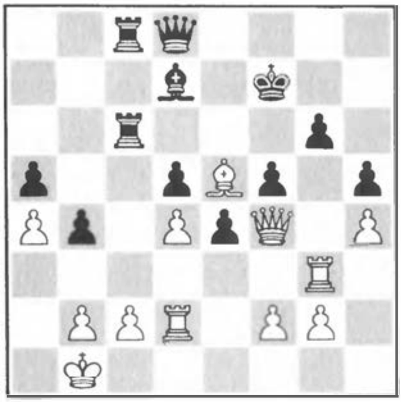
21.♗xc6 ♖xc6 22.♗e5 ♖ac8 23.♖d2 b5 24.♕f4 a5 25.♖h3 b4 26.♖g3

Everything is set up for ♕h6.

26...♗d7

White keeps the initiative after 26...bxa3!? 27.♕h6 a2+ 28.♔xa2 ♕g8 29.♔b1.

27.a4



27...♖c3!?

Finding a very interesting defensive resource! 27...♖e6.

28.♕h6!

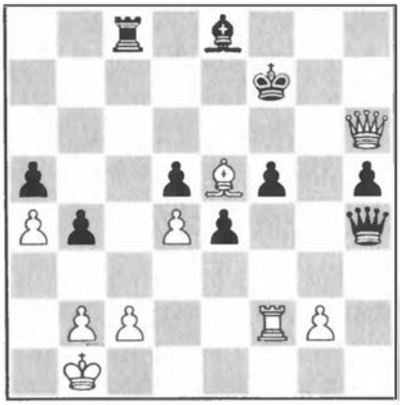
Of course not 28.bxc3? bxc3 29.♖e2 ♕b6+ 30.♔c1 ♕b2+ 31.♔d1 ♖c4! 32.♕g5 ♕a1+ 33.♕c1 ♖xa4 34.♗f4 ♕b2! and Black is better.

28...♖xg3 28...♕g8? 29.bxc3 bxc3 30.♖e2+–. **29.♕g7+ ♔e6 30.fxg3 ♗e8** 30...♕g8? 31.♕f6 mate.

31.g4! ♕xh4?

The decisive mistake! After the correct 31...hxg4 32.h5! ♕e7! (32...gxh5 33.♕h6+ ♔f7 34.♖f2) 33.♕xe7+ ♔xe7 34.h6 ♗xa4 35.g3 (35.h7 e3 36.♖e2 f4 37.h8♕ ♖xh8 38.♗xh8 ♔e6 and the ending is not clear: 39.g3?! g5 40.♗e5? f3–+) 35...g5 36.h7 f4 37.gxf4 gxf4 38.♗xf4 ♖h8 39.♖h2 ♔f7 40.♗e5 g3! Black holds the draw.

32.gxf5+ gxf5 33.♕h6+ ♔f7 34.♕g7+ ♔e6 35.♕h6+ ♔f7 36.♖f2!



Now it's all over.

36...♗d7 36...♕xf2 37.♕f6+ ♔g8 38.♕g7 mate. **37.♕g7+ ♔e6** 37...♔e8 38.♗f6+–. **38.♕g6+ ♔e7 39.♕d6+ ♔e8 40.♗f6**

Black resigned.

☐ **Francesco Bentivegna**
■ **Milan Drasko**
Cutro 2005

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♘e2 dxe4 5.a3 ♗xc3+ 6.♘xc3 ♘c6 7.♗b5

Black equalizes after 7.d5 exd5 (7...♘ce7?! 8.♕g4!) 8.♕xd5 ♘ge7 9.♕xd8+ ♘xd8 10.♘xe4 ♗f5 11.♗d3 (11.♗b5+ ♘dc6 12.f3 0-0-0 13.0-0 ♘d4) 11...♘e6 12.♗d2 0-0-0 13.0-0-0 ♘d4!? (13...♗g6) 14.♔b1 ♘ec6, Zelcic-Psakhis, Batumi 1999.

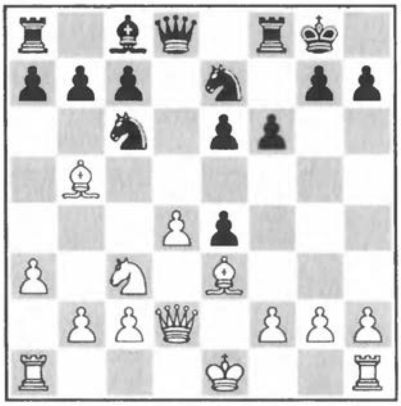
7...♘e7 8.♗g5 f6 9.♗e3 0-0

Indisputably Black's best reply.

10.♕d2

Not good is 10.♘xe4? f5 11.♘g5 f4 12.♗d2 ♕d5! 13.♗xc6 ♘xc6 14.♘f3 ♘xd4

15.♘xd4 ♕xd4∓, Dragicevic-Höggström, Sweden 2007/08.



10...a6!?

This logical move, forcing White to define the future of the light-squared bishop, appears to be an excellent alternative to the mainstream 10...e5, which is considered Black's safest choice by modern theory.

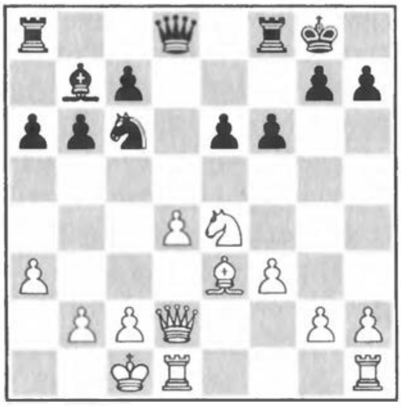
11.♗xc6

Objectively speaking Black doesn't face any problems once White gives up the light-squared bishop, however 11.♗c4!? is also hardly sufficient for an advantage: 11...♔h8 12.0-0-0 e5 13.d5 ♘a5 14.♗a2 ♗g4 15.b4 ♗xd1 16.♖xd1 f5 17.g3 b6 18.bxa5 ♕d6 19.♔b2, Rogulj-Pfeifer, Venice 2005.

11...♘xc6 12.0-0-0

12.♘xe4 e5 with an equal position, Gipslis-Casper, Jurmala 1987.

12...b6 13.♘xe4 ♗b7 14.f3



14...♕d7

Both sides have just one weakness: White's pawn on d4 versus the black one on e6. Neither White or Black have an active plan to improve their position, so it's mostly about manoeuvring and... more manoeuvring!

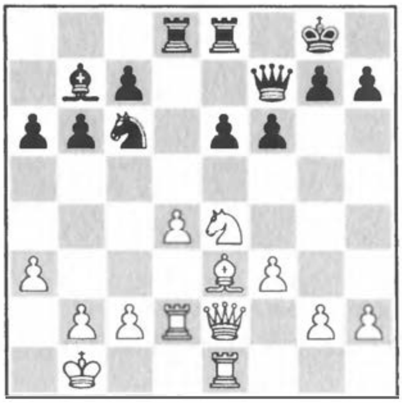
– 14...♖f7 15.♕f2 ♖d7 16.h4 ♕f8 17.h5 ♖ad8?! (17...h6) 18.h6 g6 19.♕h4 ♖f7 20.g4±, Moussard-L.Roos, Pau 2008.

– 14...♕e7 15.♕c3 ♖ad8 16.h4 ♕f7 17.h5 h6 18.b3 f5 19.♘d2 f4 20.♗f2 ♖d5 unclear, Vujadinovic-Holzke, Budapest 1991.

15.♖he1 ♖ad8 16.♕e2

16.♗f2 ♕f7 17.♕e2 ♖d7 18.♘c3 ♖fd8 19.♕xe6 ♘xd4 20.♗xd4 ♖xd4 21.♖xd4 ♖xd4 22.♕e8+ ♕xe8 23.♖xe8+ ♔f7 was equal in the game Hector-Casper, Germany Bundesliga 2001/02.

16...♖fe8 17.♔b1 ♕f7 18.♖d2



18...♖e7!?

Black is not satisfied with a draw, which would be most likely result after the thematic 18...e5, so he keeps on regrouping his pieces, hoping to outplay White later on (in which he eventually will succeed!).

19.♖ed1 ♖ed7 20.♗f2 ♘e7!? 21.♘c3

21.h4, gaining some aggression on the kingside in order to force Black to push the liberating ...e5, deserved attention: 21...♘g6 22.g4 e5 23.dxe5 ♘xe5 24.♗g3 equal.

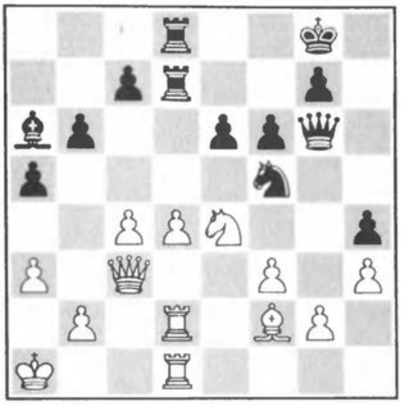
21...♘g6 22.♗g3 h5 23.h3?!

A minor concession, which eventually costs White the game! There was no need to allow Black to push ...h4.
23.h4 ♘e7 24.♗f2 intending 24...♘f5 25.g4 with a slightly better position.

23...h4 24.♗h2 ♘e7 25.♕e1 ♘f5∓ 26.♗g1 ♖e7 27.♗f2 ♕h5 28.♖e2 ♖de8 29.♘e4 a5 29...♗d5!?. **30.c4**

Not a bad idea, but it was also possible just to sit and wait...

30...♗a6 31.♕c3 31.♖c2. **31...♕g6 32.♔a1 ♖d8 33.♖ed2 ♖ed7**



34.♗e1?!

It was about time for White to force a change in the pawn structure and get some fresh air for his pieces: 34.d5!? exd5 35.cxd5 ♔h7 36.♕c2 ♗b7 37.♘c3 and chances are even.

34...♗b7 35.b3?

Cracking under the pressure. White obviously underestimated the transfer of the black queen to f4.
35.♗f2 ♕h6 36.♕b3 ♕f4 37.d5 ♔h7∓.

35...♕h6!∓ 36.♗f2 36.♔b2 ♘e3 37.♖c1 f5∓. **36...♕f4!**

The knight has no place to retreat to...

37.♕c2 c5 38.dxc5?

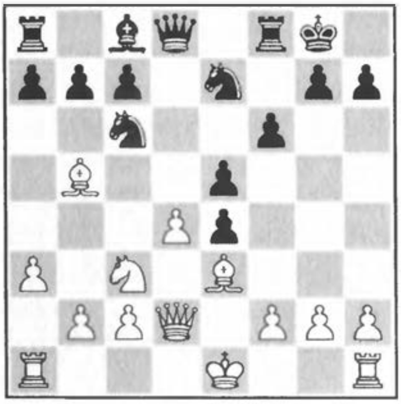
The last chance to put up some resistance was 38.d5 exd5 39.cxd5 ♗xd5 40.♘c3 ♗c6 41.♖xd7 ♖xd7 42.♖xd7 ♗xd7 43.♔b2.

38...♗xe4–+ 39.♖xd7 ♗xc2 40.♖xd8+ ♔h7 41.♖1d2 ♗xb3 42.cxb6 ♕xc4 43.♔b2 ♗a4 44.♔a1 ♕c1+ 45.♔a2 ♗c2 White resigned.

☐ **Slavik Sarhisov**
■ **Michael Tscharotschkin**
Neuhausen 2007

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♘e2 dxe4 5.a3 ♗xc3+ 6.♘xc3 ♘c6 7.♗b5 ♘e7 8.♗g5 f6 9.♗e3 0-0 10.♕d2 e5

As I mentioned in the comments to the previous game this move is Black's most popular response.

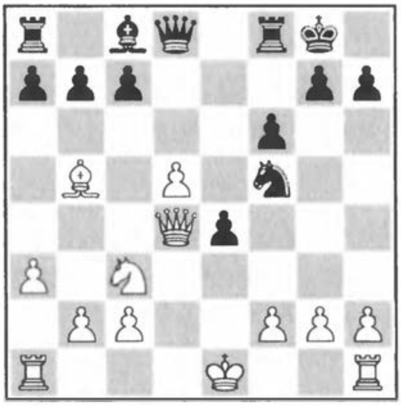


11.d5!?

Since the endgame arising after 11.dxe5 is perfectly safe for Black, White has to enter a long forced line in order to fight for an opening advantage: 11...♕xd2+ 12.♗xd2 ♘xe5 (12...f5 13.♗c4+ ♔h8 14.♘b5 ♘xe5 15.♘xc7 unclear, Gipslis-Toshkov, Jurmala 1987) 13.0-0-0 (13.♘xe4 ♗f5 14.f3 ♗xe4 15.fxe4 ♘c8! 16.0-0-0 ♘d6 17.♗d3 ♖fe8 18.♖he1 ♖e6 19.♗f4 ♖ae8∓ Gipslis-Knaak, Berlin East 1988) 13...c6 (13...f5 14.♗g5 ♘7g6 15.♘d5 c6 16.♘c7 ♖b8 17.♗a4 c5 18.h4 with compensation, Kovalev-Ulibin, Simferopol 1988) 14.♗a4 ♗e6 15.♘xe4 b5 16.♘c5 ♗c4 with equality in Hector-Müller, Hamburg 2001.

11...♘d4 12.♗xd4 12.♗c4!?. **12...exd4**

13.♕xd4 ♘f5



14.♕xe4!?

I believe this is the most challenging move, however the cunning 14.♕b4!?, once employed by Hertneck, deserves attention: 14...♘d6 15.0-0-0 ♗f5 (perhaps 15...f5!? is more in the spirit of the position, but Black looks rather safe after the text, too) 16.h4 a6 17.♗e2 ♕d7 18.h5 h6 19.♖d2 ♖fe8 20.♘d1 ♗g4 21.♗xg4 ♕xg4 22.♘e3 and White managed to get a minimal advantage in Hertneck-Uhlmann, Austria 2000/01.

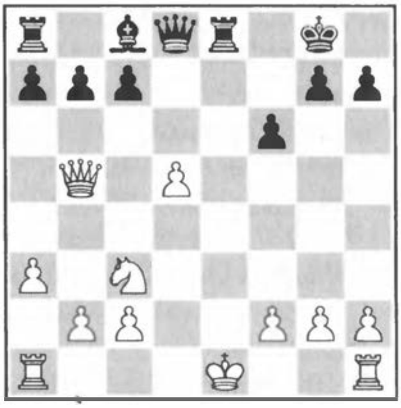
14...♘d6

Black doesn't succeed in equalizing after the natural 14...c6: 15.♗e2 ♖e8 16.♕d3 cxd5 17.0-0-0 d4!? (17...♗e6?! 18.♗g4 ♕d6 19.♘xd5 ♖ad8 20.♖he1 ♕xd5 21.♕xd5 ♗xd5 22.♖xe8+ ♖xe8 23.♖xd5±, Müller-Holzke, Hamburg 1990) 18.♗g4 (18.♗f3!?) 18...♘e3! 19.fxe3 ♗xg4 20.♕c4+ ♗e6 21.♕xd4 (21.♕b4!?) 21...♕a5 22.h4 ♖ac8 23.♕b4 ♕xb4 24.axb4 ♗f5 25.♖d5 ♗e4 26.♖d2± ½-½, Spiess-Jörgens, Germany 1997/98.

15.♕a4

The only move. After 15.♕f3?! ♘xb5 16.♘xb5 ♖e8+ 17.♔f1 c6 18.dxc6 bxc6 19.♖d1 ♕e7 it was White who had to show some accuracy to keep the balance in Klinger-Lamoureux, Gausdal 1986.

15...♘xb5 16.♕xb5 ♖e8+



17.♔d2

It is necessary to coordinate the rooks. White has also tried 17.♔f1 and even succeeded to get a slight edge, but that was mostly due to Black's passive play: 17...♕e7 (17...♗f5!?) 18.♖d1 ♗d7 19.♕c4 ♔h8 20.f3 a6 21.♕d4 ♖ad8 22.♔f2, Sahm-Rosenberger, Germany 2002/03.

17...c6 18.♕b3!?

This move shouldn't be sufficient for an advantage, but at least White doesn't have to worry about his king! More ambitious is 18.♕c5!?, leading to double-edged play in which Black retains excellent compensation for the sacrificed pawn: 18...♗e6 (18...cxd5 19.♖ad1 ♗e6 20.♔c1 ♗f7 21.♖d2 b6 22.♕d4 ♕d6 23.h3 ♖ad8 24.♖hd1±, Vujadinovic-Gavric, Kladovo 1991) 19.d6 b6 20.♕d4 c5 21.♕f4 ♖b8 22.♖ad1 b5 23.b4 (or 23.♘e4 b4 24.a4 ♕a5 25.♖he1 c4 26.♖e3 ♗f5 27.♘g3 c3+, Costantini-Naumkin, Montecatini Terme 2002) 23...♕b6 24.♖he1 a5 25.♖e3 ♖bd8 26.♔e1 cxb4 27.axb4 ♗c4, Zlochevskij-Naumkin, Moscow 2002.

18...♗e6

18...cxd5?! 19.♖ad1 ♗e6 20.♔c1 d4 21.♕a4 and White is slightly better.

19.♖ae1?! The rook belongs on d1! 19.♖ad1 ♗xd5 20.♘xd5 ♕xd5+ 21.♕xd5+ cxd5 22.♖he1 ♔f7 and Black should be able to draw the ending easily.

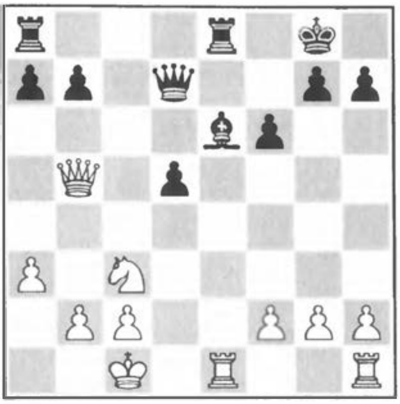
19...♕d7

Playing on the safe side, however White wasn't really thtreatening to take on b7, so it was a bit more accurate to take on d5: 19...cxd5!? 20.♔c1 (20.♕xb7? d4) 20...♕d6 with counterplay.

20.♔c1 cxd5

There was nothing wrong with 20...♗xd5 21.♘xd5 ♕xd5 22.♕xd5+ cxd5 23.♔d2 ♔f7 and Black is just in time to protect d5 with the king.

21.♕b5!?



21...♖ad8?!

A bad strategic decision, after which White enjoys a very comfortable advantage. Better was 21...♕d6.

22.♕xd7 ♖xd7 23.♘b5 a6 24.♘d4 ♗f7 25.♖xe8+ ♗xe8 26.♖e1 ♗f7 27.♔d2 ♔f8 28.♖e3! Heading for b6. **28...g6 29.♖b3 ♖c7 30.♖b6 ♔e7 31.♘b3?!**

The knight is perfectly placed on d4, so there was no reason to transfer it to a5!

31.♔d3 ♗e8 32.♖e6+ ♔f7 33.c3±.

31...♗e6 32.♘a5 ♗c8 33.c3 ♖d7 34.♔e3 ♖d6 35.♖xd6 ♔xd6

The endgame is just equal, although White could have tried a bit harder than he did in the game.

36.b4 b6 37.♘b3 ♗d7 38.♔d4 ♗a4 39.♘c1 39.♘d2. **39...♗b5 40.♘b3 ♗f1 41.g3 ♗c4 42.♘d2 ♗e2 43.♔e3 ♗d1 44.♔d4 ♗e2 45.♔e3**

Draw.

☐ **Jonny Hector**
■ **Ivan Farago**
Hamburg 2004

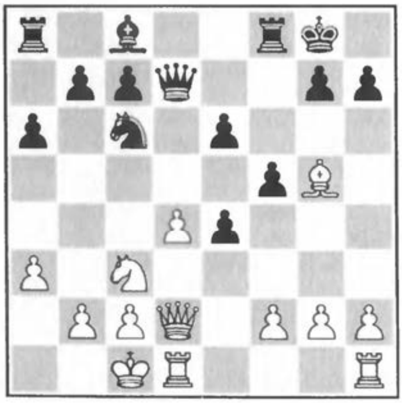
1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♘e2 dxe4 5.a3 ♗xc3+ 6.♘xc3 ♘c6 7.♗b5 ♘e7 8.♗g5 f6 9.♗e3 0-0 10.♕d2 f5!?

Another possible reply, leading to interesting strategic play.

11.0-0-0 a6

11...♘d5?! 12.♘xd5 exd5 13.♗xc6 bxc6 14.♗f4 ♗e6 15.h4 ♖b8 16.♕a5 ♖b7 17.♕a6±, Turner-Quillan, England 2007/08.

12.♗xc6 ♘xc6 13.♗g5 ♕d7



14.d5!?

It's hard to come up with anything better than the text-move.

14.♗f4 ♘e7 15.f3 exf3 16.gxf3 b5 17.♖hg1 ♗b7∓, V.Gurevich-Dimitrov, Werfen 1990.

14.f3 exf3 15.gxf3 e5! 16.d5 ♘d4 17.♕g2 f4∓.

14...exd5

It's a bit dangerous for Black to play 14...♘e5, but it seems that 14...♘e7 is perfectly safe.

- 14...♘e5?! 15.f3 ♘f7 16.fxe4 ♘xg5

17.♕xg5 fxe4 18.♖hf1, Kolev-Matamoros, Lanzarote 2003.

– 14...♘e7 15.dxe6 ♕xe6 16.f3 h6 17.♗xe7 ♕xe7 18.fxe4 fxe4 19.♖he1 ♗e6=, Westerinen-Thompson, Gausdal 2006.

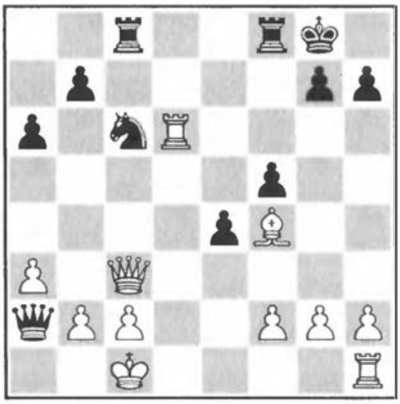
15.♘xd5 ♕f7 16.♗f4 ♗e6?!

Black is easily equalizing after 16...♖d8! 17.♗xc7 ♖d7 18.♗f4 b5 (he might even try 18...♔h8!? if he's up for more than plain equality) 19.♕c3 ♖xd5 20.♕xc6 ♗b7 21.♕b6 ♖e8.

17.♘xc7 ♖ad8 18.♕c3 ♖c8

White obtained a slight edge after 18...♗c8 19.b3 ♕e7 20.b4 ♕h4 21.g3 ♕e7 22.h4 ♖xd1+ 23.♖xd1 ♖d8 24.♖xd8+ ♕xd8 25.♕c4+, Midoux-Roos, Gonfreville 2006.

19.♘xe6 ♕xe6 20.♖d6 ♕a2



21.♖hd1

Control over the d-file and remote prospects of getting an ♖ + ♗ versus ♖ + ♘ endgame indicate that White is firmly in control, although Black's position remains quite safe.

21...♖cd8

21...♖fe8!? 22.♖d7 ♖e7 23.♖1d5 (23.♗g5?? ♕a1+–+) 23...♕a1+ 24.♔d2 ♕f1 25.♕g3 ♖ce8 with counterplay.

22.b4 ♖xd6 23.♖xd6 ♕f7?!

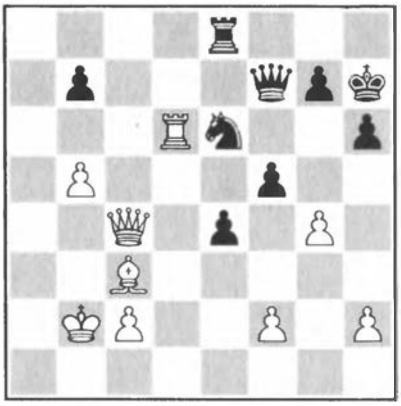
Allowing White to start active operations on the queenside.

23...♖f7!? 24.♕b3 ♕xb3 25.cxb3 ♔f8=.

24.♔b2 h6 25.a4! ♖e8 26.b5 axb5 27.axb5 ♘d8 28.♗d2 ♘e6 29.♕c4 ♔h7 30.♗b4

White has definitely succeeded in making progress on the queenside, however Black should be able to hold.

30...♕g6 31.g3 ♕f6+ 31...h5? 32.♕d5±. **32.♗c3 ♕f7 33.g4!**



Hector continues to pose problems on every move, and finally gets rewarded.

33.♕d5 ♖e7.

33...♖e7

33...g6 34.gxf5 gxf5 35.♕d5 ♖e7 36.h4±.

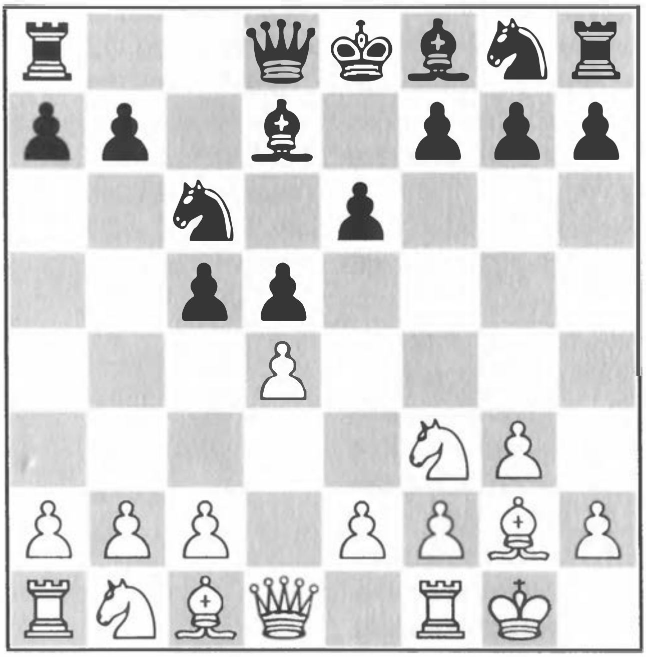
34.gxf5 ♕xf5 35.♖d5 ♕xf2 35...♖c7 36.♖xf5 ♖xc4 37.♔b3 ♖c7 38.♖e5 ♘g5 39.h4 ♘h3 40.♗d4±. **36.♕xe4+ ♔g8 37.♖d8+ ♔f7** 37...♘xd8 38.♕xe7 ♕f8 39.♕d7!±. **38.♖c8 ♕f4?** 38...♕f1!. **39.♕d3** 39.♕xf4+ ♘xf4 40.♗b4 ♖e4 41.♖c7+ ♔e6 42.♗d2±. **39...♕f2??** 39...♘c7. **40.♗b4**

Black resigned.

CHAPTER 8

Glenn Flear

Grabbing a Pawn in the Réti/Catalan

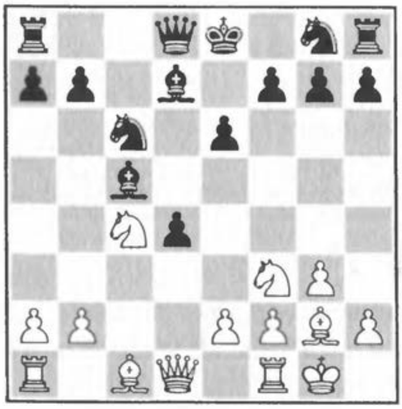


The unspectacular 5...♗d7

I once read and accepted that a reversed King's Indian Defence is OK for Black, but a reversed Grünfeld is unwise, but I no longer agree with the second of these views.

After 1.♘f3 d5 2.g3 c5 3.♗g2 ♘c6 4.d4 (a reversed Grünfeld) Black needs to find a method of deploying his pieces where White's extra tempo has little impact. So I suggest that he continues 4...e6 5.0-0 ♝d7. Now this move is definitely not the usual fare of SOS articles, where something dramatic usually happens when you least expect it.

However, the thinking behind this 'modest little move' fits in nicely. By playing 5...♗d7 Black is egging White on – *Well if you don't get a move on I'm going to calmly develop my pieces!* – and a number of white players then realise that the only way to test Black is to play 6.c4, whereupon Black grabs a pawn... 6...dxc4 7.♘a3 cxd4 8.♘xc4 ♗c5



This position becomes reminiscent of a well-known line of the Catalan, where Black has usually played ...♘f6 instead of ...♗d7. In our 'anti-Réti system' Black takes advantage of this difference by often playing his king's knight to e7 where it blocks any problems along the a3-f8 diagonal.

It turns out that in a number of lines White's compensation for the pawn is hardly convincing and even some experienced GMs playing White have found themselves with a disadvantage after the opening.

Here is how it all fits together...

1.♘f3 d5 2.g3 c5 3.♗g2 ♘c6 4.d4 e6 5.0-0 ♗d7 6.c4

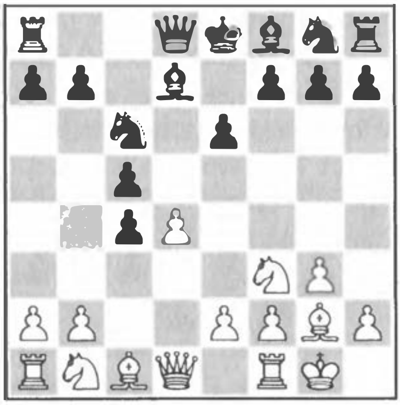
Other moves suggest that White isn't particularly interested in using his extra tempo, e.g.:

– 6.b3 Black no doubt has many possible set-ups, but one reasonable one is 6...♖c8 7.♗b2 cxd4 8.♘xd4 ♘f6, when White has no pressure at all.

– 6.c3 ♖c8 7.♗e3 cxd4 8.cxd4 ♘f6 with equality or 8...♕b6!?.

– 6.a3 cxd4 7.♘xd4 ♘f6 8.♘c3 ♘xd4 9.♕xd4 ♗c6 10.b4 ♗e7 11.♗b2 b6 was equal in Janov-Wehmeier, Bundesliga 2002.

6...dxc4!



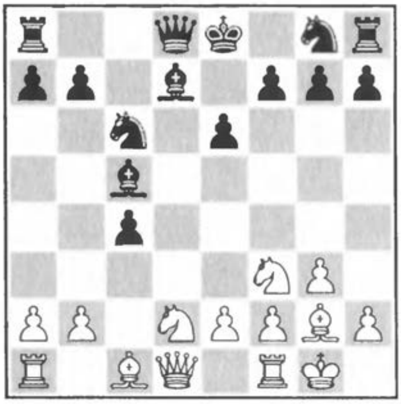
7.♘a3

The thematic and most popular move, but maybe not the best. Here are White's other options:

● 7.d5?! exd5 8.♕xd5 ♗e6 is already easy-going for Black.

● 7.♘c3 ♘f6 8.♗g5 (White soon got into a mess after 8.♗f4 ♖c8 9.♘b5 ♕b6 10.♘a3 ♕a6 11.♘e5 c3 12.♘ac4 b5 in Begun-Kapengut, Minsk 1981) and now 8...♗e7 9.♗xf6 ♗xf6 10.dxc5 ♗xc3 11.bxc3 0-0 12.♖b1 ♕c7 13.♕d6 favoured White in Haik-L.Roos, Rouen 1987, but Black should vary on move eight, e.g. 8...♕b6 9.♘a4 ♕a5 10.♘xc5 ♗xc5 11.dxc5 ♕xc5 12.♖c1 b5!? with equal chances.

● 7.dxc5 ♗xc5 8.♘bd2 (8.♘c3 ♘f6 9.♗g5 looks to be nothing special after 9...♗e7) and now:



– 8...♘a5 (risky) 9.♘e4 ♗e7 10.♘d6+ (10.♘e5 ♘f6 11.♘d6+ ♗xd6 12.♕xd6 ♗c6 13.♗xc6+ ♘xc6 14.♘xc4 ♘d4! 15.e3 ♘f5 16.♕b4 ♕e7=) 10...♗xd6 11.♕xd6 ♗c6 12.♕a3! b5 13.♗f4 ♘e7?! (13...♘b7! 14.♖fd1 ♕a5! 15.♕xa5 ♘xa5 16.♗d2 ♘b7 17.a4 bxa4 18.♘e5 ♗xg2 19.♔xg2 ♘f6 20.♖xa4 gives White a workable edge) 14.♖fd1 ♕b6, Lengyel-Skrobek, Warsaw 1979, looks bad for Black after 15.♗d6!±.

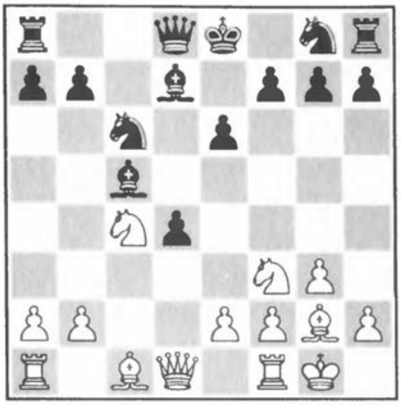
– 8...♘f6 9.♘xc4 0-0 10.♘fe5 (perhaps 10.♗g5 is better, for example 10...♖c8 11.♘d6 ♗xd6 12.♕xd6 ♘e4 13.♗xd8 ♘xd6 14.♗g5±) 10...♘xe5 11.♘xe5 ♗b5=, Rachela-Janos, Slovakia 2008.

– 8...c3!? 9.♘e4 ♗e7 10.♘xc3 (10.bxc3

♕c7 11.♘d4 a6=) 10...♘f6 (±/=) 11.♕b3 ♕c7 12.♘b5 ♕b8 13.♗g5 0-0 14.♖fd1 ♖d8 15.♖ac1 e5 16.♘c3 ♗e6 17.♖xd8+ ♗xd8 18.♕b5 ♕c7=.

My feeling is that Black's route to equality is longer and harder (than in the main line) after 7.dxc5 ♗xc5 8.♘bd2.

7...cxd4 8.♘xc4 ♗c5



9.♗f4

Here 9.e3 has been tried on a couple of occasions: 9...♘f6 10.♘xd4:

- 10...♗xd4 11.exd4 0-0 12.b3 b5 (Black was solid after 12...♘d5 13.♗a3 ♘ce7 14.♖e1 ♗c6 15.♖c1 ♖c8 16.♕d2 ♖c7 in Pigusov-Kortchnoi, Smolensk 2000) 13.♘e3 (more active is 13.♘e5 ♘d5 14.♖e1 ♖c8 15.♕g4!?) 13...♖c8 14.d5 ♘xd5 15.♘xd5 exd5 16.♕xd5 ♘b4 17.♕h5 ♖e8 18.♗d2, Jakobsen-Portisch, Raach zt 1969, and now 18...♗g4 19.♕xg4 ♕xd2 20.♖ad1 ♕c3 21.♖d7 a5 22.a3 ♘d3 is equal.
- How about 10...0-0!? 11.♘xc6 ♗xc6 12.♗xc6 bxc6, where Black may have a broken structure but the move e2-e3 rather complicates White's development, so Black should be fine, e.g. 13.b3 ♘e4 14.♕c2 ♕d5 15.♖d1 (possibly 15.f3 ♘d6 16.♖d1 ♕xf3 17.♖xd6 ♗xd6 18.♘xd6 ♖fd8 19.♗a3 ♕xe3+ 20.♕f2 ♕xf2+ 21.♔xf2 a5∞; but not 15.♗b2? ♘g5) 15...♕f5 16.♗b2 ♘xg3!=.

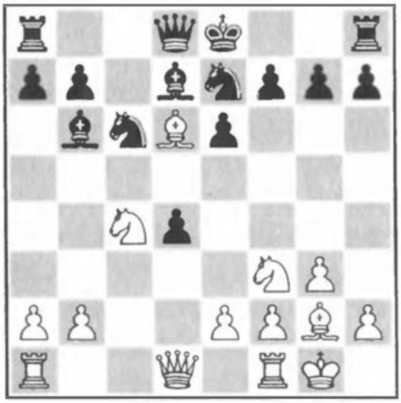
9...♘ge7

Dubious is 9...f6?!, due to 10.♗d6! b6 11.b4! ♘xb4 12.♘xd4±, Kadar-Kiss, Hungary 2009.

10.♗d6

Less critical is 10.♘d6+ ♗xd6 11.♗xd6 ♕b6 12.b4 a5 13.♗c5 ♕a6 14.bxa5 ♕xa5 15.♗xe7 ½-½, Soppe-Z.Varga, Lodi 2006.

10...♗b6



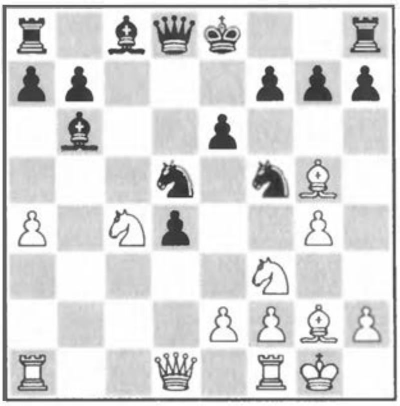
Black has a big hole on d6, but is this really a problem? White will have to work to regain the pawn, and this gives Black the time he needs to get his king into safety.

11.b4

Two other moves have been tried here:

- 11.♕b3 0-0 12.♘xb6 axb6! (better than 12...♕xb6 13.♕xb6 axb6 14.♖fd1 ♖fc8 15.♘xd4±) 13.♖fd1 e5! (a neat liberating move that relies on tactics against White's queen) 14.♘xe5 (14.♗xe5 is well met by 14...♘xe5 15.♘xe5 ♗a4∓) 14...♗e6 15.♗xe7 ♗xb3 16.♗xd8 ♗xd1∓, Yandemirov-A.Sokolov, Elista 1995. That game continued with 17.♘xc6 bxc6 18.♗xb6 ♗xe2 19.♗xd4 ♖fd8 20.♗xc6 ♖ac8 21.♗b6 ♖d6 22.♗b7 ♖c2 23.♗e3 ♖xb2, and White eventually scraped a draw in the endgame.
- 11.♗a3 0-0 12.♘xb6 ♕xb6 13.♗xe7 ♘xe7 14.♕xd4 ♕xd4 15.♘xd4 e5 16.♘b3, when a draw was agreed in Murshed-Rahman, Dhaka 2007, as 16...♗c6 is totally balanced.

11...♘f5 12.a4 ♗c8! 13.♗f4 ♘xb4 14.g4 ♘d5!∓ 15.♗g5



15...♞fe7

Otherwise 15...f6!?, mentioned by Avrukh, is interesting: 16.♗c1 (16.gxf5 fxg5∓) 16...♘fe7 17.♘xb6 ♕xb6 seems to leave Black on top.

16.♘xb6 axb6

Here 16...♕xb6 17.♖b1 ♕a6 18.♘xd40-0 is playable, albeit slightly precarious-looking, but 19.♘b5 probably gives White enough play.

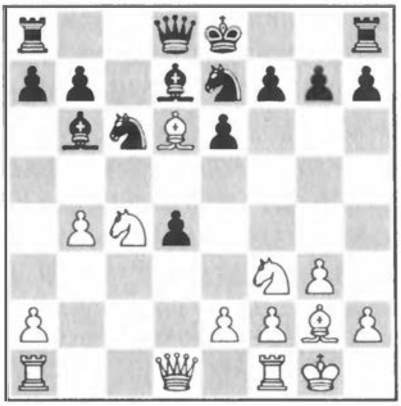
17.♕xd4 f6 18.e4 fxg5 19.exd5 0-0 20.dxe6 ♗xe6 21.♖fe1 ♘c6 22.♕xd8 ♘xd8 23.h3 h6 24.♘e5

Khalifman-Dokuchaev, Maikop 1998, and White managed to hold.

There follow a couple of my own games where in the notes I delve a little deeper into the main line.

☐ **Arkadij Rotstein**
■ **Glenn Flear**
Port Barcarès 2005

1.♘f3 d5 2.g3 c5 3.♗g2 ♘c6 4.d4 e6 5.0-0 ♗d7 6.c4 dxc4 7.♞a3 cxd4 8.♘xc4 ♗c5 9.♗f4 ♘ge7 10.♗d6 ♗b6 11.b4

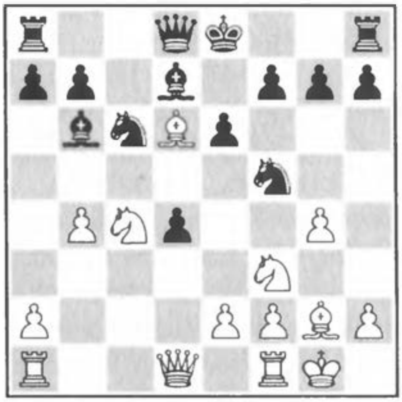


11...♘f5!

The best move. Instead, after 11...0-0?! 12.b5 ♘a5 13.♘xa5 ♗xa5 14.♘xd4 ♗c8 15.♘b3 ♗b6 16.♘c5 ♗c7 17.♗xc7 ♕xc7 18.♖c1, Löffler-Z.Varga, Austria 2008, Black had failed to solve his development problems.

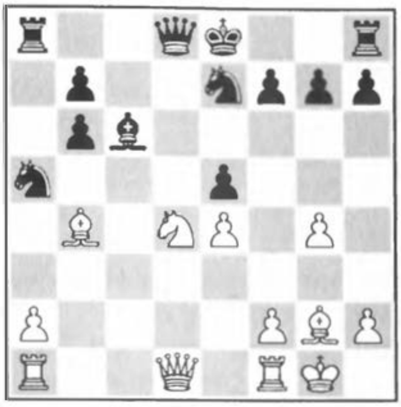
12.b5?!

Here 12.g4! has been recommended and analysed by Akrukh:



12...♘xd6! (12...♘h4?! 13.♘xh4 ♕xh4 14.b5 ♘e7 15.♘xb6 axb6 16.♕xd4 ♘f5 17.♕xb6 ♘xd6 18.♕xd6 ♕xg4 19.a4! yields an advantage for White, as Black will have difficulty to complete his development) 13.♘xd6+ ♔e7!? (otherwise 13...♔f8 14.b5 ♘a5 15.♘e5 ♗e8 is plausible) 14.♘xb7 ♕c7 15.b5! (or 15.♘c5 ♗xc5 16.bxc5 e5 17.♕d2 ♖ad8, with double-edged play in prospect) 15...♘e5 (15...♕xb7? allows a punishing pin with 16.♘e5) 16.♖c1 ♘xf3+ 17.♗xf3 ♕e5 isn't clear, for example 18.♕d2 ♖ac8 19.♕b4+ ♔f6! 20.h4 h6.

12...♘a5 13.♘xb6 axb6 14.♗b4 ♗xb5 15.g4 ♘e7 16.♘xd4 ♗c6 17.e4 e5



18.♗xe7?!

A slightly lesser evil is 18.♘f5, e.g. 18...♘xf5 19.gxf5 ♕xd1 20.♖fxd1 ♘c4 21.♗f1 ♖a4 22.a3 b5 23.f3 f6 24.♗d3 ♘b2∓, Sulava-Payen, Gonfreville 1999.

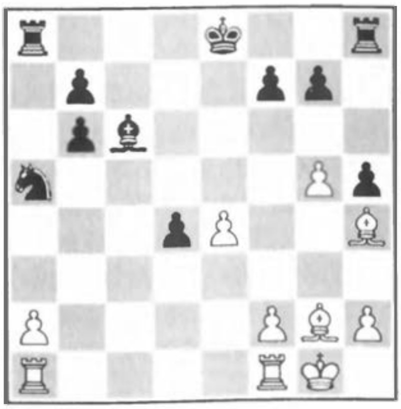
18...♕xd4 19.♕xd4 exd4

With the queens off the board, the position of Black's king is less worrying and the pawn deficit becomes a serious problem for White.

20.♗h4?!

Or after 20.♗b4 Black has 20...♘c4 21.♖fd1 ♖d8.

20...h5 21.g5



21...0-0

Even 21...d3 22.♖fd1 d2 is possible, e.g. 23.♖ab1 (23.♖xd2 ♘b3) 23...♘c4 24.♗f1 ♘e5!.

22.♖fd1 ♖fd8 23.g6 f6 24.e5 d3

Alternatively, 24...fxe5 25.♗xd8 ♖xd8 26.♖ac1 ♖d6 comes into consideration.

25.exf6 gxf6 26.♗xf6 ♖d6 27.♗g5 ♗xg2 28.♔xg2 ♘c4 29.♖ac1 b5 30.♖c3 d2 31.♖c2 ♖c8 32.♔g1 ♖d5!?

Or 32...♖xg6 33.h4 ♖f8 34.a4 ♖f4 35.♔h2 ♖xg5 36.hxg5 bxa4.

33.h4 ♖c6 34.♔h2 ♖e6 35.a4 ♖e1 36.♖dxd2 ♘xd2 37.♗xd2 ♖e2 38.♖c8+ ♔g7 39.♗c3+ ♔xg6 40.axb5 ♖xf2+ 41.♔g3 ♖c2 42.♖g8+ ♔f7 43.♖g7+ ♔f8 44.♗f6 ♖d3+ 45.♔f4 ♖f2+ 46.♔e4

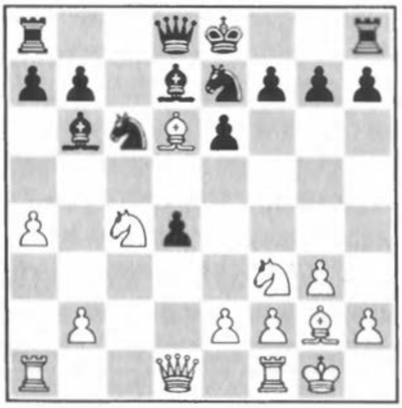
46.♔e5 ♖xf6!.

46...♖xf6 47.♖xb7 ♖b3 48.♔d5 ♖f7 49.♖b8+ ♔g7 50.b6 ♖f4

White resigned.

☐ **Carlos Nava**
■ **Glenn Flear**
San Sebastian 2004

1.♘f3 d5 2.g3 c5 3.♗g2 ♘c6 4.d4 e6 5.0-0 ♗d7 6.c4 dxc4 7.♘a3 cxd4 8.♘xc4 ♗c5 9.♗f4 ♘ge7 10.♗d6 ♗b6 11.a4 A new move!



11...0-0?!

Best is 11...♘f5! 12.♗a3 (12.b4 transposes to Khalifman-Dokuchaev, see above, when Black should opt for 12...♗c8!) 12...♗c7, with chances for both sides.

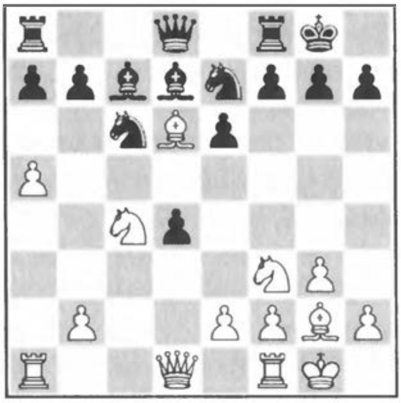
Inferior however is 11...f6?! 12.b4 (12.a5 ♘xa5 13.♘xa5 ♗xa5 14.♘xd4 is also promising) 12...e5 13.a5 ♗c7 14.b5 ♘b8 15.b6, and Black is in trouble.

12.a5?!

Here 12.♗a3 is no improvement, as both 12...♖c8 and 12...a5 seem fine.

However, 12.b4! ♗c7 13.b5 ♘a5 14.♘xa5 ♗xa5 15.♘xd4 is slightly better for White.

12...♗c7



13.♗xc7?!

This enables Black to obtain a comfortable game and retain some tension.

Instead, White should opt for 13.♘xd4 ♘xd4 14.♕xd4 ♘f5 15.♕c5 ♘xd6 16.♘xd6 ♗xd6 17.♕xd6 ♗c6, which looks rather dry.

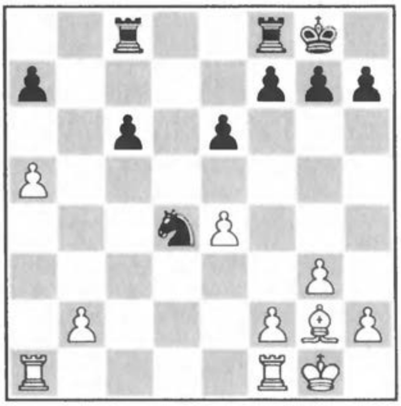
13...♕xc7 14.♘xd4 ♘xd4 15.♕xd4 ♘f5 Otherwise 15...♗b5 16.♖fc1 ♖fd8 is about equal after 17.♕e5.

16.♕e4 Or 16.♕c3 ♖ac8=.

16...♗c6 17.♕e5 ♖ac8 18.e4?! An anti-positional move, as this pawn blocks the 'Catalan bishop'.

18...♕xe5 19.♘xe5 ♘d4 20.♘xc6 bxc6!

I like this move. Voluntarily breaking one's owns pawns is counter-intuitive, but Black's superior activity is a more important factor.



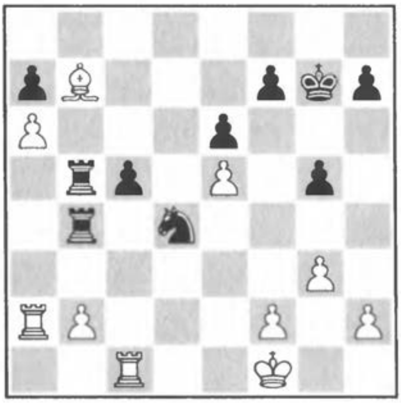
21.e5?!

A more robust defence would have been possible with 21.f4 ♖b8 22.♖f2.

21...♖b8 22.♖a2 g5! 23.♖d1 ♖b4 24.a6 ♖fb8 25.♔f1 ♖8b5 26.♖c1 c5 27.♗b7

White has little to bite on, whereas Black can probe against several weaknesses.

27...♔g7



28.g4?

After 28.♔g2 c4 29.♖d1 ♘b3∓ 30.♖e1 ♘c5 something will have to be given (b2 or e5).

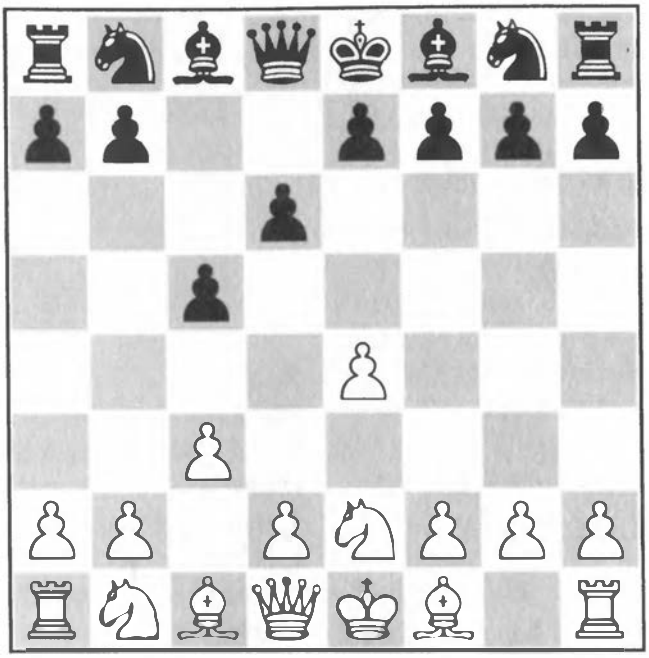
28...♘b3 29.♖c3 ♖xg4 30.♗c6 ♖bb4 31.h3 ♖gf4 32.♔g2 ♖b6 33.♗a4 ♘d2 34.♖c2 ♘f3 35.♖xc5 ♘e1+ 36.♔g1 ♖xa6 37.b3 ♘d3 38.♖b5 ♖c6 39.b4 ♖c1+ 40.♔g2 ♖fc4 41.♖a3 ♞f4+ 42.♔h2 ♖f1 43.♖f3 ♖cc1

White resigned.

CHAPTER 9

Dimitri Reinderman

Sicilian: Karma Chameleon



1.e4 c5 2.♘e2 d6 3.c3

When I was young, I often played the Chameleon Variation of the Sicilian, in which White, instead of ♘f3, plays ♘e2 on the second or third move.

The idea is that White can adapt to the environment: he can play the Closed Sicilian, for example if Black plays ...♘c6 and ...e6, but he can also play the Open Sicilian, which might be good if Black normally plays the Najdorf but has already put his knight on c6.

In those days I was often successful in tricking opponents in positions of my liking, but I got a bit bored with it, and so one day I wondered if I could play something different. What would happen when I moved the knight from e2 to g3? I decided to try it out in the Dutch semi-finals and it was a big success: mate in 27 moves!

So the system I present in this article starts with 1.e4 c5 2.♘e2 d6 3.c3.

Like in the real Chameleon, there are different set-ups possible for White after this move. White can go for the centre and play d4, as in the game Nijboer-Stam.

White can also try to fianchetto his king's bishop, as in Ermenkov-Hmadi, but this does have a tactical problem.

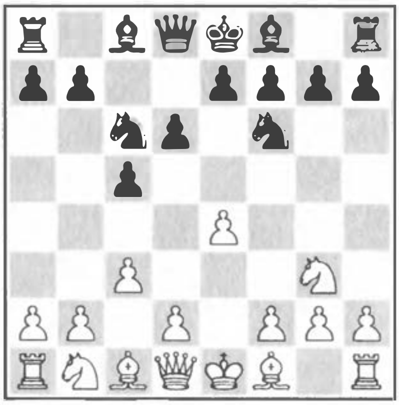
In my game I used a setup with ♘g3, d3 and f4, putting the bishop on e2. If Black plays ...e5 though, the bishop can go to c4 (see Nijboer-Stam).

☐ **Dimitri Reinderman**
■ **Nico Kuijf**
Eindhoven 1989

1.e4 c5 2.♘e2 d6

After 2...♘c6 or 2...e6, 3.c3 would be less good because of 3...d5, but White can just play either 3.♘bc3 or 3.d4.

3.c3 ♘f6 4.♘g3 ♘c6



5.♗e2

5.d4 is possible here. Black has a lot of options, but one interesting variation is 5...h5 6.d5 h4 7.dxc6 hxg3 8.♗b5 gxf2+ 9.♔xf2 bxc6 10.♗xc6+ ♗d7 11.♗xa8 ♕xa8 when Black has enough compensation for the exchange. I avoided 5.d4 not because of this, but because I wanted to play with d3 and f4.

5...g6

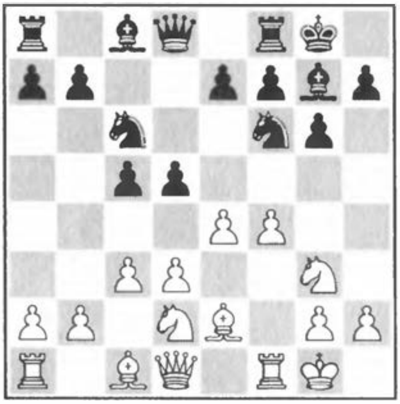
The fianchetto is a logical reaction to the white system. In general in the Sicilian, when White doesn't play d4, the bishop is more active on g7 than it would be on e7.

6.d3 ♗g7 7.0-0 d5

Another idea would be to leave the situation in the centre as it is and play for ...b5-b4, just like in the Closed Sicilian.

But Black can also try to refute White's system by playing 7...h5. Since permitting ...h4-h3 is a bit unconfortable for White, 8.h4 is logical, but following this up with f4 would leave a nice square on g4 for the black knight. White should probably leave the pawn on f2 and play ♘d2-f3 followed by d4 or ♘g5.

8.♘d2 0-0 9.f4



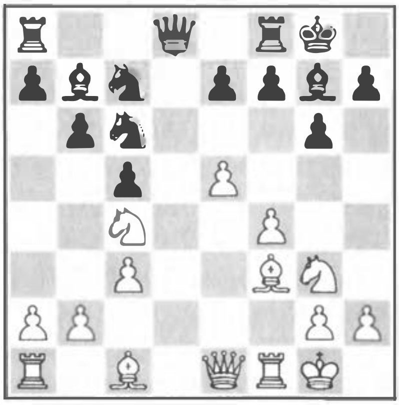
9...dxe4

Black was probably afraid of 10.e5 followed by ♘f3 and d4. Then Black has to play ...e6 (otherwise White will play f5), but this leaves the bishop on g7 badly placed. It isn't necessarily bad for Black, but it would be more like the French than the Sicilian.

10.dxe4

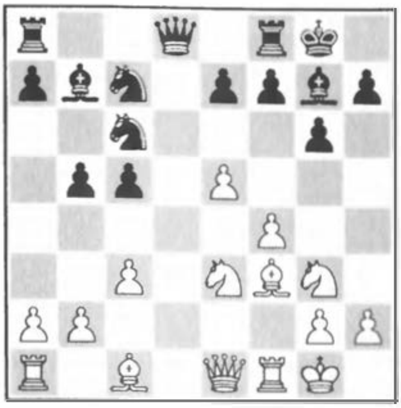
Exchanging on e4 was a small concession by Black though: after White plays e5 there will be nice squares for the knights on c4 and e4.

10...b6 11.♗f3 ♗b7 12.e5 ♘d5 13.♘c4 ♘c7 14.♕e1



At that time I was very fond of the set-up f4, ♕e1 and ♕h4 against a kingside fianchetto, often mating opponents quickly with it. I probably assumed I would mate my opponent now also, in at most 13 more moves or so...

14...b5 15.♘e3



15...♘a5?

White moves a knight to the centre, Black one away from it... Apart from general considerations, there is a concrete problem. White really would like to play f5, but say after 15...c4 16.♘e4 ♘e6 17.f5 gxf5 18.♘xf5 ♘xe5 the knight on e5 is a good defender. In the game the knight will be a bystander.

16.♘e4 ♘e6?

16...c4 is still stronger, though after 17.♕g3 the move f5 will be difficult to prevent.

17.f5 ♘c7

17...gxf5 18.♘xf5 ♔h8 19.♕h4 also gives White a winning attack.

18.f6?!

Pawns want to be pushed, but objectively 18.♕h4 is better, when there is no good defence for Black. For example 18...♗xe5 19.♘g5 h5 20.♗xh5 ♔g7 21.♗xg6 ♖h8 22.♗h7 and wins.

18...♗h8?

Black had some kind of defence here: 18...exf6 19.exf6 ♖c8 20.♕h4 ♗f8 after which White is better, but going for a quick mate doesn't work: 21.♘g4? ♖xc4 22.♗xe4 ♗xe4 23.♘h6+ ♗xh6 24.♕xh6 ♘e6–+.

19.♘f5

Now White gets to enjoy himself.

19...♖e8 20.♘h6+ ♔f8 21.♘xf7

Not difficult, but still nice to play!

21...♔xf7 22.♘g5+ ♔f8 23.♘xh7+ ♔f7 24.♘g5+ ♔f8 25.♕h4 ♗xf6 26.♗xb7 ♘xb7 27.♕h8

Mate.

☐ **Friso Nijboer**
■ **Arno Bezemer**
Haarlem 1999

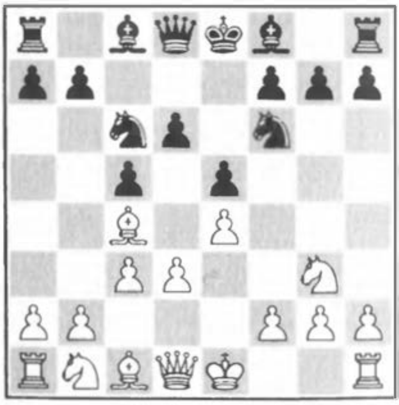
1.e4 c5 2.♘e2 d6 3.c3 ♘f6 4.♘g3 e5

Directed against 5.d4, at the cost of some white squares. Play will be a bit simular to the 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 e5 variation. Amongst the differences is that White can play f4 more easily.

5.♗c4

5.d4 is possible: Black probably intended something like 5...cxd4 6.cxd4 exd4 7.♕xd4 ♘c6 8.♗b5 ♗e7 9.0-0 0-0 with equality.

5...♘c6 6.d3



6...d5!?

Black as the underdog bravely goes for complications, while moves as 6....♗e7 or 6...g6 are perfectly reasonable.

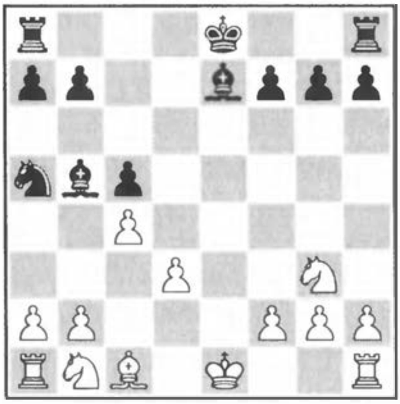
7.exd5 ♘xd5 8.♕b3

Another idea is to play 8.♕f3 ♗e6 9.♘d2 to try to get knights on e4 and f5.

8...♘a5 9.♗b5+ ♗d7?!

Bezemer sacrifices a pawn, but does not get full compensation. Better is 9...♘c6 10.0-0 ♗e6 when White can spoil Black's pawn structure, but the weakness of d3 would compensate for that.

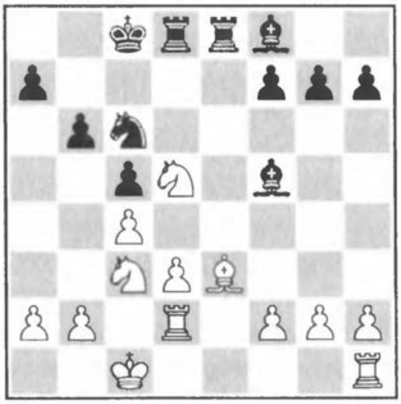
10.♕xd5 ♗xb5 11.♕xe5+ ♕e7 12.♕xe7+ ♗xe7 13.c4



13...♗d7

This looks a bit like 1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♞f6 3.c4 e6 4.dxe6 ♝xe6 without queens and with better development for White.

14.♘c3 ♗e6 15.♗e3 0-0-0 16.0-0-0 ♘c6 17.♘ge2 ♖he8 18.♘f4 ♗f5 19.♘fd5 ♗f8 20.♖d2 b6

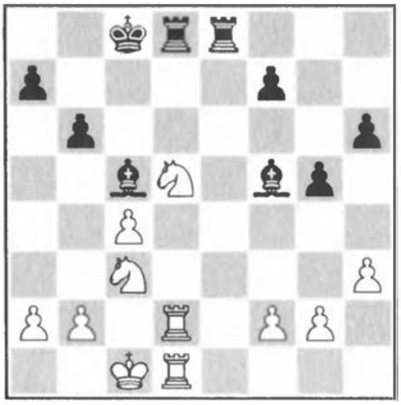


Black still has some compensation for the pawn because of the backward d-pawn and the pair of bishops, but his pieces aren't very active, so White easily consolidates.

21.h3 h6 22.♖hd1 g5 23.d4

The problem of the backward pawn is solved. Now Black only has the pair of bishops as compensation.

23...cxd4 24.♗xd4 ♘xd4 25.♖xd4 ♗c5 26.♖4d2



The normal strategy for bishops when fighting against knights is to push the knights away from good squares using pawns or pieces. In this case the knight on d5 cannot be attacked by pawns, and attacking it with pieces won't help since it's 'überdefended'.

26...♔b7 27.b4 ♗f8 28.♔b2 ♗g7 29.♔b3 ♗e6 30.♘b5

The general strategy when being a pawn up is to exchange a lot of pieces. In this case however, exchanging both rooks would be fine for Black if he can keep his bishops, but good for White if he can exchange one of his knights.

30...♗e5 31.a4 ♖d7 32.♘e3 ♖xd2 33.♖xd2 a6 34.♘d6+ ♗xd6 35.♖xd6

Mission accomplished. It's still not easy to win, but it feels like 'the rest is a matter of technique'.

35...b5 36.♘d5 bxc4+ 37.♔xc4

37.♔c3 is a good idea here, since 37...♗xd5 38.♖xd5 should be winning for White.

37...♖c8+ 38.♔d3 ♖c1

Now Black has some counterplay.

39.a5 ♖d1+ 40.♔e4 ♖e1+ 41.♔f3 ♖b1 42.♖b6+ ♔c8 43.♘e3 ♖b2 44.g4 ♔c7

45.♔g3 ♔d7 46.f4 ♖b3 47.♔f3 ♗d5+ 48.♔e2?

A mistake that could have cost White dearly – 48.♔f2!.

48...♗e4?

48....♗c6! 49.f5 ♗b5+ should draw.

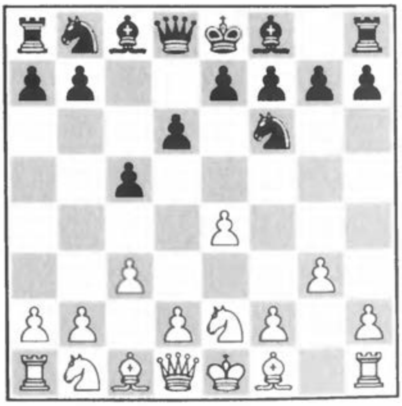
49.f5 ♖b2+? 50.♔d1 h5 51.gxh5 ♗f3+ 52.♔c1 ♖b3 53.♘g4 ♗g2 54.h6 ♖xh3 55.h7

1-0.

☐ **Evgeny Ermenkov**
■ **Slaheddine Hmadi**
Tunis Interzonal 1985

1.e4 c5 2.♘e2 d6 3.c3 ♘f6 4.g3

4.♘g3 defends the pawn, but it is indirectly defended already, or is it? Well, after the text – not quite! Another way to defend the pawn is 4.f3. Putting pawns on c3 and f3 doesn't show much respects to the white knights, but in Muromtsev-Nalbandian, Alushta 2003, it turned out alright: 4.f3 g6 5.d4 cxd4 6.cxd4 ♗g7 7.♗e3 0-0 8.♘bc3 ♘c6 9.♕d2 e5 10.d5 ♘e7 11.g4!? ♘e8 12.♘g3 f5 13.gxf5 gxf5 and now 14.♘h5 would have been very nice for White.



4...♘xe4!

Black calls White's bluf!

5.♕a4+

There is an old game of two grandmasters, Tartakover-Stahlberg, Amsterdam 1950, where White tried to cut his losses and played 5.♗g2. Of course White doesn't have enough compensation for the pawn, but he did make a draw.

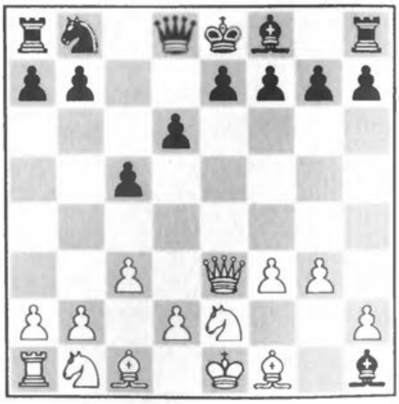
Playing a player with 230 rating points less, Ermenkov's move is a better practical choice and gives a very interesting position.

5...♗d7 6.♕xe4 ♗c6 7.♕e3 ♗xh1

So White is an exchange and a pawn down. However, the bishop is trapped in the corner after the next move and there's no easy way to get it out.

8.f3

♔e1-f2-g1xh1 is the threat.



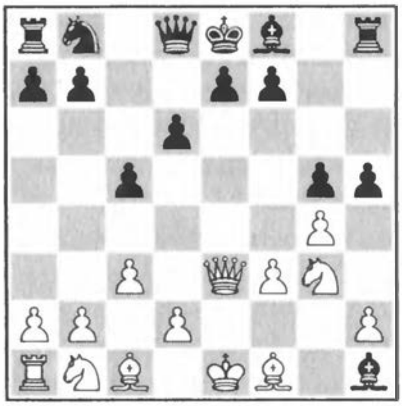
8...g5

I do not think that White has enough compensation for the material deficit, but the problem for Black is that he cannot just consolidate, he has to fight for the advantage. Variations like 8...♘c6 9.d4 cxd4 10.♘xd4 h5 11.♔f2 h4 12.gxh4 e5 13.♔g1 ♕xh4 14.h3 ♗xf3 15.♘xf3 ♕g3+ or 8...♘d7 9.d4 g5 10.g4 h5 11.♘g3 hxg4 12.♘xh1 gxf3 13.♕xf3 cxd4 14.cxd4 ♗g7 look good, but aren't easy to calculate.

9.g4

The only way to prevent Black from liberating his bishop.

9...h5 10.♘g3



10...hxg4

Interesting is 10...♖h6!? threatening to win a queen. After 11.♗e2 ♗g2 12.♘xh5 White has good compensation for the exchange though.

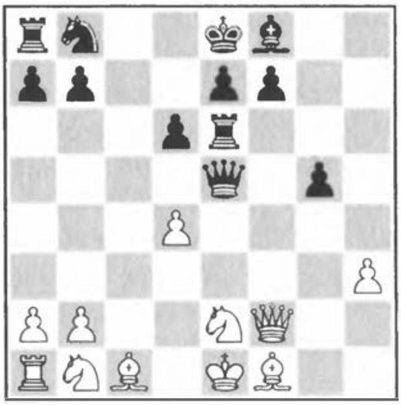
11.♘xh1 ♕d7

11...gxf3 12.♕xf3 ♘c6 13.h3 ♕d7 is better for Black, since he's better developed. The game continuation is not bad, but more complicated.

12.fxg4 ♕xg4 13.♘f2 ♕g1 14.h3 ♖h6 15.♘e4 ♕h1 16.♘g3 ♕h2 17.♕f2 ♖e6+ 18.♘e2 ♕e5

After exchanging queens Black still would have an edge with his nice compact pawn structure.

19.d4 cxd4 20.cxd4



20...♕b5?

The wrong way: it was better to defend the g-pawn by 20...♕g7 and then finish development.

21.♘c3 ♕d3 22.♘d5 ♘a6 23.♗xg5

White takes a pawn while developing.

23...♖c8 24.♖d1 ♕b5 25.♕f5

White is clearly better now.

25...♕xb2 26.♖d2 ♕a3 27.♖d3

27.♔f2! threatening 28.♘ef4 is very strong.

27...♕a5+ 28.♗d2 ♕xa2 29.♘f4 ♕b1+ 30.♔f2 ♗h6?

30...♘c5 31.dxc5 ♖xc5 32.♕g4 ♖ee5 is a better try.

31.♘xe6 ♗xd2 32.♘g7+

1-0.

☐ **Friso Nijboer**
■ **Bart Stam**
Haarlem 1999

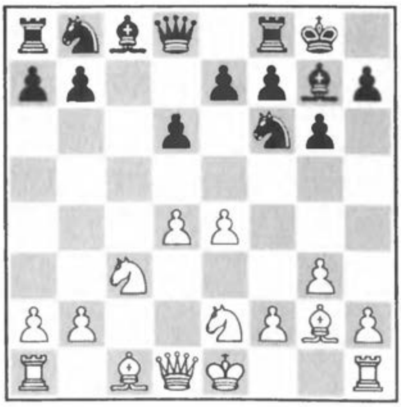
1.e4 c5 2.♘e2 d6 3.c3 g6

3...♘f6 is the natural move, but what happens if Black allows 4.d4?

4.d4 cxd4

I can understand that Black doesn't like 4...♗g7 5.dxc5 dxc5 6.♕xd8+ ♔xd8, but I would play 5...♘d7 here, so that White's queen's knight cannot go to c3.

5.cxd4 ♗g7 6.♘bc3 ♘f6 7.g3 0-0 8..♗g2



Now White has the centre and a smooth development, so he is a little better.

8...♘c6 9.h3 ♗d7 10.0-0 ♖c8 11.♗e3

White's next moves are easy: queen to d2, a rook to c1, king to h2. Black must move his queen to finish development, but whereto? At a5 she provokes a3 and b4, while after going to b6 or c7, ♘d5 might come. So Black keeps her at d8 and tries to win some space on the queenside.

11...a6 12.♕d2 b5 13.♔h2 ♕c7 14.♖fc1

'Which rook' is an eternal question. In this case the choice depended on which side of the board White wants to attack, and the queenside it is.

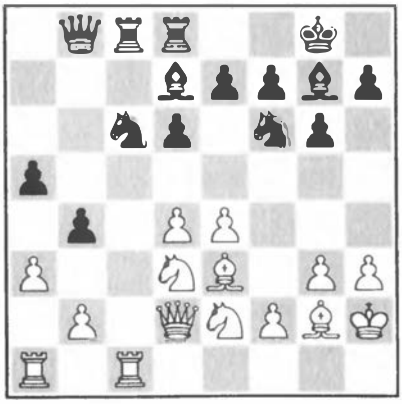
14...♕b8

At b8 the queen is safe from any attacks.

15.♘f4 b4

There is not much else Black can do (apart from waiting), but this move creates a target for White.

16.♘ce2 ♖fd8 17.♘d3 a5 18.a3

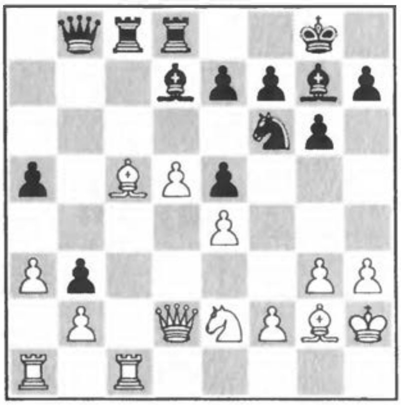


18...b3?

This loses a pawn. After 18...♕b5 White would only have a small advantage.

19.d5 ♘e5 20.♘xe5 dxe5 21.♗c5?

White probably didn't play 21.♕xa5 because of 21...♖c2, but after 22.♖xc2 bxc2 23.♖c1 ♖c8 24.♕b4 the pawn on c2 is not that dangerous.



21...a4?

Losing e7 is much worse than losing a5. Apart from that, after 21...♖e8 22.♕xa5 ♕b5 23.♕xb5 ♗xb5 24.♘g1 ♗h6 Black would have counterplay. In the game he gets none whatsoever.

22.♗xe7 ♖xc1 23.♖xc1 ♖c8 24.♖xc8+ ♕xc8 25.♕a5 ♘e8 26.♘c3

White is a pawn up and has a better position.

26...♗h6 27.♘xa4 ♕c2 28.♕a7

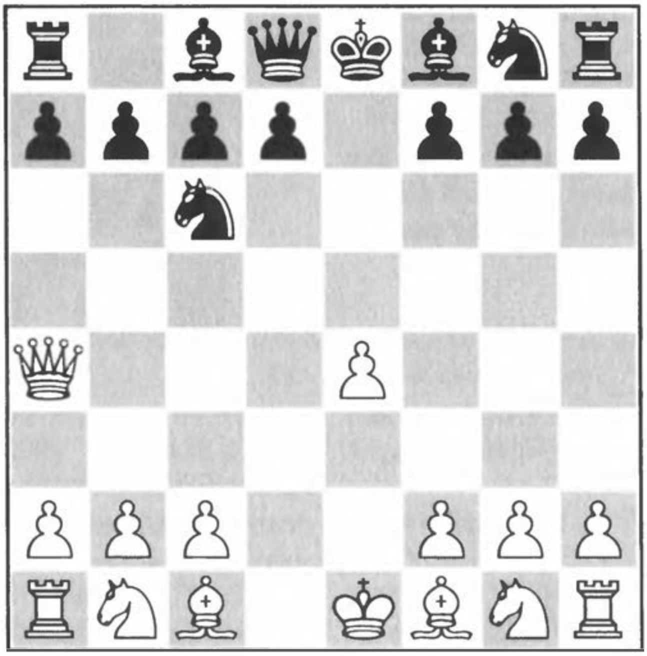
1-0.

As the games show, the system featured in this SOS doesn't offer much hope for a big advantage in the opening: after normal moves Black should be equal, and if Black gives White what he wants it's still only a small advantage. But it does give original positions and the possibility to 'play chess, not opening theory' without running big risks. So if you want something different against the Sicilian, why not try it out?

CHAPTER 10

Jeroen Bosch

The Centre Game in Viking Spirit



1.e4 e5 2.d4 exd4 3.♕xd4 ♘c6 4.♕a4

☐ **Dragoljub Velimirovic**
■ **Goran Todorovic**
Pula ch-YUG 1988

1.e4 e5 2.d4 exd4 3.♕xd4

3.♘f3 transposes to the Scotch, while 3.c3 would turn it into the Danish Gambit. We are concerned with the Centre Game, but we will give it a Scandinavian twist.

3...♘c6 4.♕a4

Compared to the Scandinavian (or the Centre Counter as it is sometimes called) White is a full tempo up (the pawn is on e4). As always you can argue whether it is a good thing to play a Black defence with White. The extra move has some significance, but often Black will equalize as playing a black opening is often simply not ambitious enough when you are White.

Here I would suspect that given a certain amount of accuracy Black may obtain equal chances. However, that does not mean a sterile draw. After all White is playing rather ambitiously: having played both e4 and d4– which enables him to develop freely, and, with the queen conveniently out of the way, queenside castling will be the rule rather than the exception. True, White has committed one sin: he has developed his queen early on in the game. 4.♕e3 is the absolute main line of the Centre Game. See our SOS weapon 4...♘b4 in SOS-12.

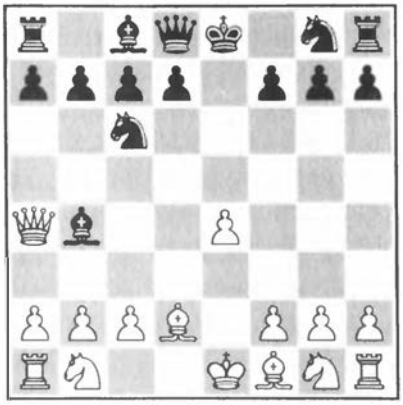
Instead, 4.♕d2 has been suggested by Bronstein. His idea was to continue with ♗d3, f4, ♘f3, 0-0, b3 and ♗b2. This has never gained any popular appeal. 4...♘f6 5.♗d3 d5 (Emms) is fine for Black.

4...♗b4+

Black develops with gain of time. The idea is that 5.c3 is awkward (the knight aims for this square), while 5.♘c3 is a self-pin.

5.♗d2

Worse is 5.♘d2 ♘f6 6.e5? ♕e7 7.f4 d6, and Black wins a pawn, keeping a good position, Kozel-Romanishin, Alushta 2005.



5...♕e7

Not wishing to accelerate White's development, but the queen is slightly vulnerable on e7 as we will see. Perhaps it was better to play 5...♗xd2+ 6.♘xd2 after all. When Black can either develop normally 6...♘f6 7.♗b5!? 0-0 8.♘gf3 when White is perhaps slightly better, or he can try the enterprising 6...♕f6!?.

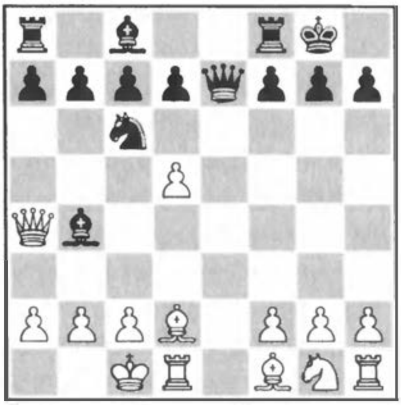
6.♘c3 ♘f6 7.0-0-0

White has succeeded in developing his queenside first. He holds a pleasant plus in view of the threat of ♘d5.

7...0-0 7...♗xc3 8.♗xc3 0-0 9.f3 does not solve Black's problems. **8.♘d5 ♘xd5**

Here too Black could have considered taking on d2: 8...♗xd2+ 9.♖xd2 ♘xd5 10.exd5 ♘e5 (10...♕b4 11.♕xb4 ♘xb4 12.a3 ♘a6 13.d6±) 11.d6 cxd6 12.f4 ♘g6 13.♘f3±.

9.exd5



9...♕e4?

Black willingly enters huge complications, which will turn out unfavourably for him in the end. 9...♗xd2+ 10.♖xd2 ♘e5 transposes to the previous comment.

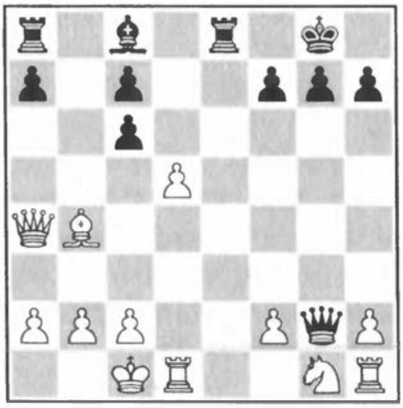
10.♗c3

White should also win with 10.c3 d6 11.cxb4 (11.♖e1!? ♕xd5 12.cxb4) 11...♗f5 12.♗c3, when Black can try to confuse the issue with 12...♘xb4! 13.♗xb4 a5, but 14.♗d3 ♕xg2 15.♗c3 ♗xd3 16.♕d4 still wins for White.

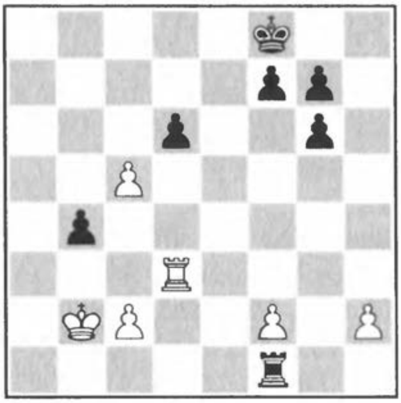
10...b5!?

Black loses after 10...♕f4+ 11.♔b1 ♕d6 12.♗e2 ♗xc3 13.dxc6 ♕b4? 14.♕xb4 ♗xb4 15.cxd7. **11.♗xb5 ♕xg2 12.♗xc6**

The desperado 12.♗xg7 is also strong. **12...dxc6** Or 12...♗xc3 13.♗xa8 ♕xh1 14.bxc3 ♕xh2 and now most accurate is 15.d6!. **13.♗xb4 ♖e8**



14.♘e2?! Velimirovic settles for a superior ending, or he may have overlooked Black's 15th move. Objectively it was stronger to play 14.♕xc6 ♗g4 15.f3. **14...♖xe2 15.♕xc6 ♕g6! 16.♕xg6 hxg6 17.♖d2** White is a pawn up, and his queenside preponderance counts for a lot. Still, the opposite-coloured bishops introduce drawing tendencies. **17...♗a6 18.♖xe2 ♗xe2 19.♖e1 ♗c4 20.♖d1 a5 21.b3!?** 21.♗c3 intending to attack the weak c7 pawn. **21...axb4?!** Better was 21...♗xb3 22.axb3 axb4 23.♖d4 ♖b8. **22.bxc4 ♖xa2 23.♖d3 ♖a1+** 23...♔f8 24.♔b1! ♖a6 25.♔b2. **24.♔b2! ♖f1 25.c5!** It's all about creating a passed pawn as soon as possible. **25...♔f8 26.d6 cxd6**



27.♖xd6! In this way the passed pawn is further away from the opponent's king, while the rook can cut off the king's approach. 27.cxd6 ♔e8 is merely equal. **27...♔e7** 27...♖xf2 28.c6 ♔e7 29.c7+–. **28.♖d2! ♖h1** 28...♖e1 29.♔b3. **29.♔b3 ♖xh2 30.♔xb4** White is winning. **30...g5** 30...♖h8 31.c6 ♖d8 is met by 32.♖d3! which is the only move that wins here. The rest is simple: **31.c6 ♖h8 32.♔c5 f5 33.c7 g4 34.♔c6 f4 35.♖d4 g5 36.♖d7+ ♔f6 37.♖d8**

Black resigned.

After this inspiring game we will investigate the variation systematically.

Variation I – 4...♗c5 (4...g6, 4...d6)

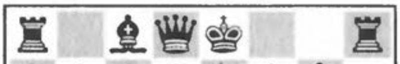
1.e4 e5 2.d4 exd4 3.♕xd4 ♘c6 4.♕a4 ♗c5

Black develops the bishop without the check.

● An important alternative is a kingside fianchetto: **4...g6**

The repertoire books of Nigel Davies and Mihail Marin both warmly recommend this line of play. **5.♘f3 ♗g7 6.♗g5 ♘ge7 7.♘c3** (shortening the diagonal with 7.c3 is passive but still equal: 7...0-0 8.♗b5 ♕e8 9.0-0 ♘e5, Mercier-Butler, Switzerland 1994. And now 10.♘xe5 ♗xe5 11.♘d2 or 11.♗h6 ♗g7 12.♗xg7 ♔xg7 13.♘d2 would have favoured White. However, more natural is Konikowski's 9...d6 10.♘bd2 ♗d7) **7...h6**:

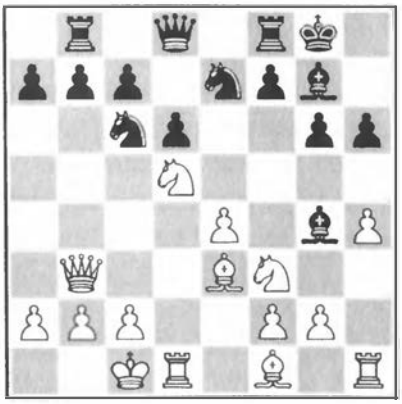
– **8.♗f4** Critical according to Marin in his excellent *Beating the Open Games* (Gambit 2007).



8...d6 (8...0-0?! 9.0-0-0± is Marin's verdict, who points out that White has pressure along the d-file) 9.e5!? (this is Marin's main line, but I would prefer castling queenside – the natural 9.0-0-0 ♗d7 is equal according to

Marin. This may well be true, but still the position is quite interesting after 10.♕b3 ♖b8 11.h4 b5 12.♘d5) 9...d5 (much simpler in my opinion is 9...dxe5 10.♗xe5 ♗xe5 11.♘xe5 0-0 12.♖d1 ♕e8, which 'offers reasonable chances of equalizing gradually' – Marin. Indeed, I agree there is not so much to play for here) 10.0-0-0 0-0 11.h4 (11.♗c4 ♗e6 12.♗b3 ♕d7! 13.♖he1 ♖fd8 14.h4 a6 15.♕a3 ♕e8 is equal according to Marin. White has to take care: a future ...♗f8 could be annoying; 11.♘e4 g5 12.♗g3 ♘f5 13.♘f6+ ♗xf6 14.exf6 ♘xg3 15.hxg3 ♕xf6 16.♖xd5 ♗e6 17.♖d1 ♖ad8 is also evaluated as equal by Marin) 11...♗g4 12.♗e2 a6 13.♗h2 h5 was equal in Hanghoj-Ingerslev, cr 1979. White now went wrong with 14.♘xd5?! ♘xd5 15.♕b3 ♘cb4 16.a3 c6∓.

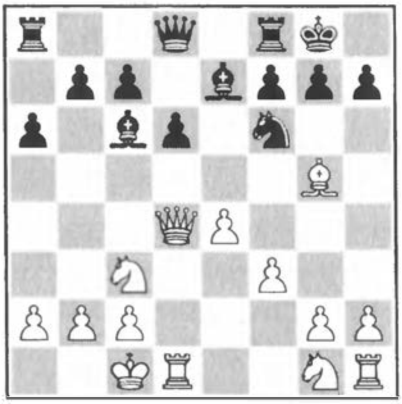
– Instead of 8.♗f4 White can also play **8.♗e3**. Nikoliuk-Yanvarev, Moscow 1994, is often quoted as a problem for White, but things really aren't all that clear. It could be worth your while to investigate this move: 8...d6 9.0-0-0 ♗d7 10.♕b3 ♖b8 11.♘d5 0-0 12.h4 ♗g4



13.♗e2 (13.♘f4 or 13.h5!? ♗xh5 14.♖xh5 gxh5 15.♘f4, with compensation) 13...b5 14.♕d3 b4 15.♕d2? (only now White is more or less beyond saving; 15.♘f4!) 15...♘xd5 16.♕xd5 (16.exd5 ♕f6) 16...♕f6!. A strong sacrifice that cannot be accepted. Nikoliuk went down after 17.♕xc6 ♕xb2+ 18.♔d2 ♗d7! 19.♕xd7 ♕c3+ 20.♔c1 ♕a3+ 21.♔d2 ♗c3+.

All in all, I think that White should either play 8.♗e3 and improve upon White's play in Nikoliuk-Yanvarev, or he should go for 8.♗f4 d6 and now 9.0-0-0 rather than 9.e5, when Black has several roads to equality. I don't want to claim an edge for White, but these positions with castling on opposite sides are interesting. You will certainly be better prepared than your opponent!

- Slightly passive is **4...d6**, but it is not illogical to place the bishop on d7 to annoy the intrepid queen. 5.♗b5 (5.♘c3 ♗d7 6.♘f3 is another idea, not fearing 6...♘e5?! 7.♕b3 ♘xf3+ 8.gxf3, when White is much better. Rather than 6...♘e5, Black should continue his development and keep the attack on the queen in reserve) 5...♗d7 6.♘c3 ♘f6 (6...a6!? 7.♗xc6 ♗xc6 8.♕d4 with about equal chances. White has space, Black has two bishops) 7.♗g5 ♗e7 8.0-0-0!? (8.♘f3) 8...0-0 9.f3 a6 10.♗xc6 ♗xc6 11.♕d4



11...♖e8 (11...♘d7 12.♗xe7 ♕xe7 13.♘ge2 ♕e5 is perhaps a tiny edge for White Lind-Wahlström, Gothenburg 2005) 12.h4?! (12.♘ge2? ♘xe4!; stronger is 12.♗e3!? and both sides have about equal chances) 12...h6 13.♗e3 ♘d7 14.h5 ♗f6 15.♕d2 ♘e5∓ 16.b3 b5 17.♘ge2 b4 18.♘d5 ♗xd5

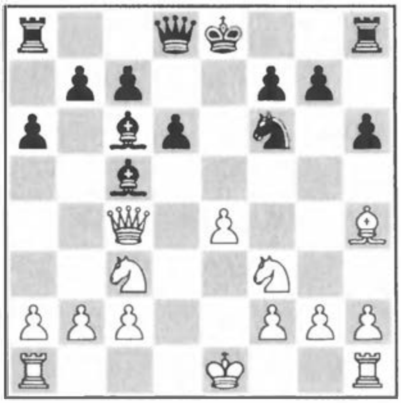
19.♕xd5 a5 20.♔b1 a4 gave Black an attack in Resika-Lukacs, Budapest 2000.

5.♘f3

Krämer-Firnenich, cr 1965, is another game that one comes across when researching the literature on 4.♕a4. Presumably that is because Black was soon better after White allowed a queen sacrifice: 5.♘c3 ♘ge7 6.♗g5 (6.♘f3=) 6...0-0 7.♘d5 ♔h8 8.b4? (this is a blunder in view of Black's next) 8...♘xd5! 9.♗xd8 ♗xb4+ 10.c3 ♘xc3 11.♕b3 ♖xd8 and White is just lost, as ...♘xe4+ and ...♘xf2+ cannot be parried satisfactorily.

5...d6 6.♗b5

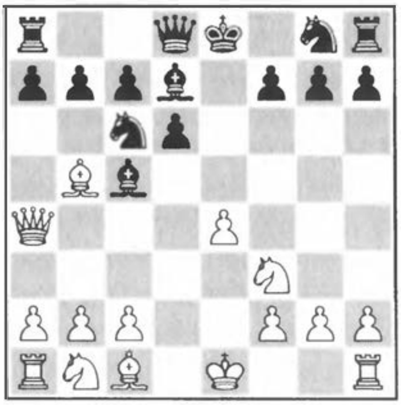
This is perhaps better than the other active bishop move: 6.♗g5 ♘f6 (also playable is 6...♞e7, when 7.♘c3 0-0 8.♘d5 – 8.♗b5 – 8...f6 9.♗e3 ♘xd5 10.♗xc5 dxc5 11.0-0-0 is about equal, Herman-Jimenez, Buenos Aires 2000) 7.♘c3 h6 8.♗h4 ♗d7 9.♗b5 a6 10.♗xc6 ♗xc6 11.♕c4



– 11...♕e7 12.0-0-0 0-0-0 13.♖he1. Now White has everything in order again. Chances are about equal: 13...♗b6?! (13...♕e6; 13...g5 14.♗g3 ♕e6) 14.♘d4 ♗xd4 15.♕xd4 ♕e5 16.♗xf6 ♕xf6 17.♕xf6 gxf6 18.♘d5 ♗xd5 19.♖xd5. The double rook ending is very pleasant, as Black has a fractured kingside structure. White won in Najer-Dervishi, Hania 1994.

– Much stronger is 11...g5! 12.♗g3 b5! 13.♕d3 b4! (13...♘xe4 14.♘xe4 ♕e7 15.♘e5! is not clear) 14.♘d5 ♘xd5 15.exd5 ♗b5 (just look at those powerful bishops!) 16.♕e4+ ♕e7 17.♕xe7+ ♔xe7 18.h4 f5 19.0-0-0 f4 20.♗h2 ♗xf2. This twice occurred in practice. Black won in Levi-West, Melbourne 2002, and in Bellon Lopez-Rivera, Santa Clara 1998. The grandmaster managed to draw by the skin of his teeth. A fair reflection of the actual chances. White has no compensation for his lost pawn here.

6...♗d7



7.0-0

It looks more accurate to develop the queen's knight first. See the next notes. In another game Lardot went for queenside castling: 7.♞c3 a6 8.♗xc6 ♗xc6 9.♕c4 ♘f6 10.♗g5 0-0 11.0-0-0 (11.0-0 is about equal and would transpose to the next note) 11...b5 12.♕d3 ♖e8 (12...h6 13.♗h4 b4 – 13...g5 14.♘xg5 hxg5 15.♗xg5 is too dangerous for Black – looks OK until you see 14.♘d5 g5 – 14...♗xd5 15.exd5± – 15.♘xg5! ♘xd5 – 15...hxg5 16.♗xg5 ♗xd5 17.exd5+– – 16.exd5 hxg5 17.♕g3!) 13.♘d4 ♗b7 14.♘f5 b4 15.♘d5 ♗xd5 16.exd5, and White is superior and won quickly after 16...♗xf2? 17.♖hf1 ♗b6 18.♘h6+ (18.♘xg7) 18...gxh6 19.♗xf6 ♗e3+ 20.♔b1 ♕d7 21.♖f3 ♗g5 22.♖g3 ♔f8 23.♖xg5 1-0, Lardot-Siljander, Kokkola 2000.

7...a6

The best move order for Black. Now the

queen cannot go to c4 after the exchange on c6. Therefore it would be natural for White to play 7.♘c3 rather than 7.0-0.

7...♘f6 8.♘c3 0-0 9.♗g5 a6 10.♗xc6 ♗xc6 11.♕c4 ♖e8 12.♖fe1 h6 13.♗h4 g5 14.♗g3 b5 15.♕d3 b4 16.♘d5 ♗b5 (16...♘xd5 17.exd5 ♗b5 18.c4 bxc3 19.♕xc3, with even chances) 17.c4 (all other moves favour Black) 17...♗d7?! (17...bxc3) 18.e5 ♘h5? (18...♘xd5 19.cxd5 ♗b5 20.♕f5) 19.exd6 cxd6 20.♖xe8+ ♗xe8 21.♖e1, with a strategically winning position, Lardot-Lehtosaari, Oulu 2002.

8.♗xc6 ♗xc6 9.♕b3

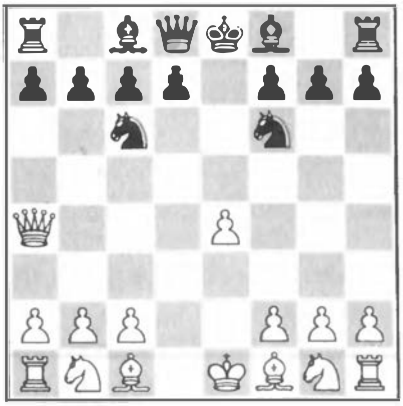
A pity but 9.♕c4? is not on in this move order, as 9...♗b5 wins an exchange.

9...♘f6 9...♘e7 10.♘c3 0-0 11.♗g5 ♔h8 12.♖ad1 f6 13.♗c1 ♘g6 14.♘d4 ♗xd4 15.♖xd4±, Nylund-Mayra, Finland 2006/07.

10.♘c3 ♕d7 10...0-0 11.♗g5 h6 is more natural. **11.♗g5 ♕e6** 11...♘xe4 12.♘xe4 ♗xe4 13.♖fe1 f5 looks dangerous, but there is no clear refutation. Play is about equal. **12.♖fe1 ♕xb3 13.axb3 ♘g4 14.♗h4 f6 15.♖ad1 0-0 16.♘d4** with an equal game in Lardot-Mujunen, Tampere 2001.

Variation II – 4...♘f6

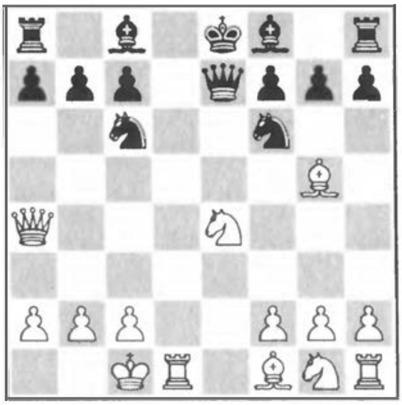
1.e4 e5 2.d4 exd4 3.♕xd4 ♘c6 4.♕a4 ♘f6



Perhaps the most natural response, Black does not commit his king's bishop yet. White can develop either knight now, or go for Najer's 5.♗g5 aiming for queenside castling.

5.♗g5

● An amusing miniature (known in the literature as Bronstein-NN, Sochi 1959) is: **5.♘c3** d5?! 6.♗g5! dxe4 7.♘xe4?! (7.♗b5!) 7...♕e7?! (7...♗b4+! 8.c3 ♕d4! is a neat defence, when Black is actually slightly better!) 8.0-0-0

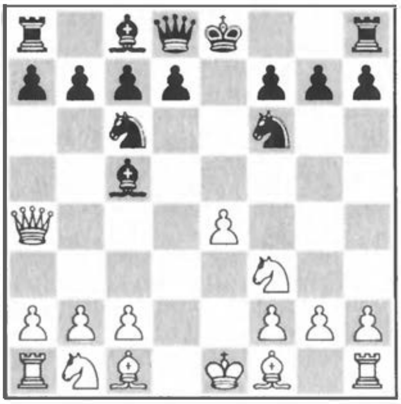


8...♕xe4? (8...♗d7) 9.♖d8+! ♔xd8 10.♕xe4 and Black resigned.

Stronger is 5...♗b4, when 6.♗d2 0-0 7.0-0-0 ♖e8 8.f3 a6 9.g4 ♖b8 10.h4 b5 11.♕b3 d6 12.♗g5 was a typically exciting but unforced continuation in Nikoliuk-Mukhaev, Moscow 1994.

5...♗e7 6.♘f3 d6 7.♗f4 (7.e5 ♘g4 8.exd6 ♕xd6 9.♗f4 ♕c5=, Doncevic-Campos, Benidorm 1989) 7...0-0 8.♗e2 ♗g4 9.h3 ♗xf3 10.♗xf3 ♘d7 with approximately equal chances in Fedder-Rosenlund, Roskilde 1978.

● **5.♘f3** seems the least accurate reply. It's all about the squares e4 and d5 for the moment, and this knight move does not contribute to gaining influence on either of these central squares. **5...♗c5** (Black has other satisfactory methods as well: 5...d5 is now fully playable: 6.exd5 ♘xd5 7.♗e2 ♗e7 8.0-0 0-0 9.♖d1 ♘b6 was about equal in Zozulia-Goodger, Port Erin 2005; 5...♗b4+ 6.c3 – not 6.♗d2 as in the Velimirovic game, because of 6...♕e7! and White has problems defending e4 – 6...♗c5 7.♗d3 0-0 8.♗g5 h6 9.♗h4 d6 10.♘bd2 ♘e5 11.♘xe5 dxe5 12.♕c2 with even chances, Maciejewski-Twardon, Bydgoszcz 1979).



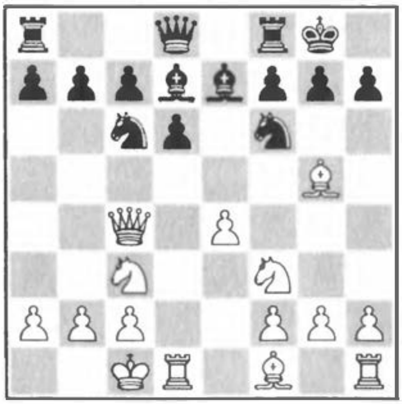
– 6.♗g5 and 6.♘c3 are most natural. Note that after 6.♘c3 White can ignore 6...♘g4 with 7.h3! as 7...♘xf2? leaves the knight trapped after 8.♖h2!.

– 6.♗b5?! ♕e7 7.♞c3 ♘e5 8.♞xe5 ♕xe5. This is quite pleasant for Black already. Prié now played too ambitiously with 9.f4 ♕e7 10.e5 0-0 11.♗e2 ♘g4 12.♗xg4? (12.♘d5 ♕d8) 12...♕h4+ 13.g3 ♕xg4 14.♕e4 d6 15.♘a4 ♗d7 16.♘xc5 ♗c6, and Black won in Prié-Relange, Nice 1994.

– 6.♗d3 d6 7.c3 ♗d7 8.♕c2 a5 9.♗g5 ♘e5 10.♘xe5 dxe5 11.0-0. White is effectively a tempo down on Maciejewski-Twardon. The game is still equal of course: 11...h6 12.♗h4 g5 13.♗g3 ♕e7 14.♘d2 ♞h5 15.♘c4 ♘f4 (15...♘xg3 16.hxg3 h5) 16.♘e3 ♗xe3 17.fxe3 ♘xd3 18.♕xd3 0-0-0 19.♕c4 f6 20.b4 (after a slow start the game suddenly gets exciting. Both sides need to attack, and the opposite-coloured bishops add excitement – for the moment) 20...axb4 21.cxb4 ♗e6 22.♕c3 ♖d6? (22...♖hf8 was necessary – 23.b5) 23.♖xf6! ♕xf6 24.♗xe5 ♖c6 25.♗xf6 ♖xc3 26.♗xc3, and Ekström easily converted his edge in Ekström-Schaerer, Mendrisio 1988.

5...d6

- 5...h6 6.♗h4 ♕e7 7.♞c3 ♕b4!? 8.♕xb4 ♗xb4 9.0-0-0?! (stronger is 9.♗xf6 gxf6 10.♘e2, with a pleasant edge for White) 9...♗xc3 10.bxc3 d6 11.♗xf6 gxf6 12.♘e2 was equal in Ermenkov-Radev, Bulgaria 1975.
- 5...♗b4+ is a good response, as we have seen that after 4...♗b4+ White's best is 5.♗d2. 6.c3 ♗c5 7.♘f3 d6 8.♗b5 (8.♗d3=) 8...♗d7 9.♘bd2 a6 10.♗xc6 ♗xc6 11.♕c2 ♕e7, with an easy game for Black, Levi-Lane, Melbourne 2001.
- 5...d5 6.♘c3 transposes to the Bronstein miniature above.
- 5...♗e7 6.♘c3 0-0 7.♘f3 (7.0-0-0 ♘g4?! 8.♗xe7 ♘xe7 9.♕d4 d6 10.h3 ♘e5 11.f4 ♘5g6, and now it should be easy to improve upon 12.g4? ♘xf4 13.e5 ♘e6 14.♕f2 d5∓, Levi-Chapman, Melbourne 2000. White is better after 12.♕e3, 12.♕f2, 12.♕d2 or 12.g3) 7...d6 8.0-0-0 ♗d7 9.♕c4



and practice has demonstrated that the chances are equal:

– 9...♗e6 10.♕e2 ♘d7 11.h4 ♘de5 12.♘d5 ♗xd5 13.♗xe7 (13.exd5!?) 13...♘xe7

14.exd5=, Milev-Chipev, Sofia 1961.
– 9...h6 10.♗h4 ♗e6 11.♕e2 ♘d7 12.♗xe7 ♕xe7 13.♘d5 ♕d8 (13...♗xd5 14.exd5 ♘ce5=) 14.♕e3 ♖e8 15.♘c3 a6 16.♘d4 ♘xd4 ½-½, Szabolcsi-Lukacs, Budapest 1994.

6.♘c3 ♗e7 7.0-0-0 ♗d7 8.f4!?

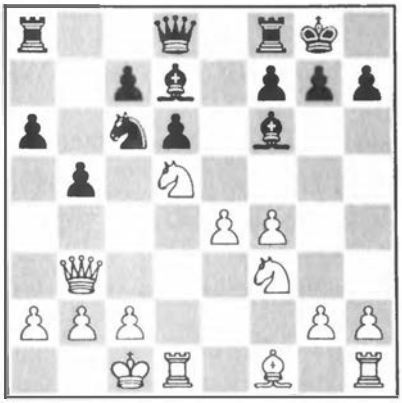
8.♗b5 would directly transpose to the note to 4...d6 in the previous main game.

8...a6 9.♝xf6

More or less forced, but White certainly has a nice space advantage in return for the bishop pair.

9.♘f3?! b5 10.♕b3 ♗e6 11.♘d5 ♘xe4 was the point of 8...a6.

9...♗xf6 10.♘d5 0-0 11.♘f3 b5 12.♕b3



Chances are (again) about equal. As I mentioned in the introduction, the Centre Game with 4.♕a4 objectively promises you no advantage, but the resulting positions are certainly not a sterile draw. There is ample room for errors (for both sides!), and a young Najer (who was already rated 2490 at the time) was apparently confident that he could outplay his opponents in these tense middlegames.

12...♗e6 13.h4 ♖e8 14.g3

Modestly cementing his space advantage for the moment with this solid move.

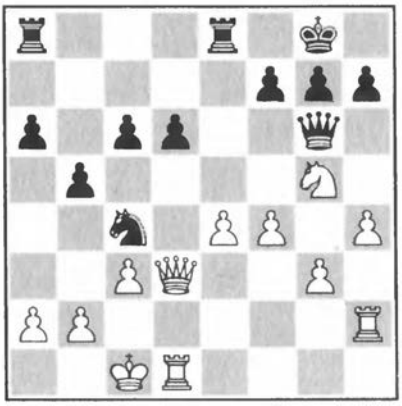
14...♗g4!? 15.♕d3 ♘a5 16.♗h3!

14.g3 was not only played to fianchetto the bishop. White is now slightly better.

16...♗xh3 17.♖xh3 ♞c4 18.c3 c6 19.♘xf6+ ♕xf6 20.♖h2

Again very patient. There is still not much wrong with Black's game of course.

20...♕g6! 21.♘g5

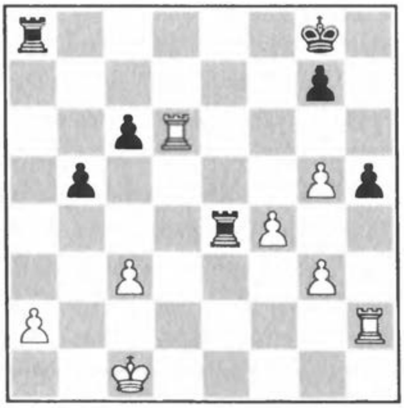


21...h5?!

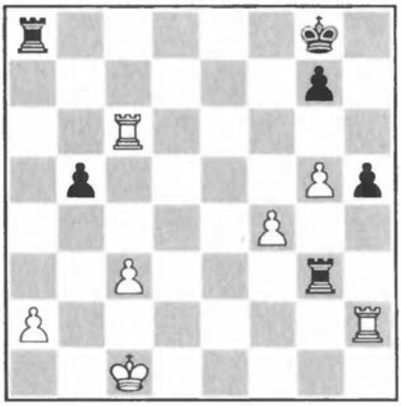
Correct was 21...♖ad8!. White is better after 21...h6? 22.h5! ♘e5 (22...♕f6 23.e5+–) 23.♕e3 ♕f6 24.fxe5 ♕xg5 25.♕xg5 hxg5 26.exd6.

Still playable is 21...f6 22.h5 ♕h6 23.♘f3 f5!?, or 23...♘e5 24.♕e2±.

22.b3 f6 This is forced. **23.bxc4** Stronger was 23.f5 ♕h6 24.bxc4 fxg5 25.♕d2±. **23...fxg5 24.hxg5 ♕xe4?!** Keeping the queens with 24...♖xe4 25.cxb5 axb5 26.♕xd6 ♕e8 was a better defence. **25.♕xe4 ♖xe4 26.cxb5 axb5 27.♖xd6**



With a pawn up in the double rook ending, White has excellent chances of converting, especially because Black's king is also unsafe. **27...♖e3?** 27...♖c4. **28.♖xc6 ♖xg3**



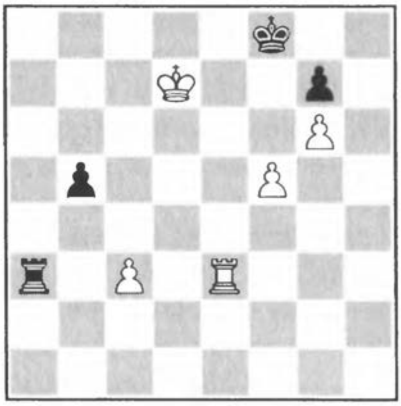
29.g6! Pinning the king on the back rank, introducing mating motifs.

29...♖g1+ 30.♔b2 h4 31.f5 h3? 31...♖g4 32.♖b6 ♖ga4 33.a3 ♖xa3 34.♖xh4+–.

32.♖xh3 ♖g2+ 33.♔b3 ♖gxa2 34.♖c7 Now the win has become elementary.

34...♖2a3+ 35.♔b4 ♖3a4+ 36.♔c5 36.♔xb5. **36...♖c4+ 37.♔d6 ♖xc7** 37...♖a6+ 38.♔d7 ♖xc7+ 39.♔xc7 ♖a1 40.♖e3+–; 37...♖d8+ 38.♔e7 ♖xc7+ (38...♖a8 39.♖xc4 bxc4 40.♖h4+–) 39.♔xd8 ♖c5 40.♖e3 ♖d5+ 41.♔e7 and now White forces a winning pawn ending after 41...♖xf5 42.♔d7 ♖d5+ 43.♔c6 ♖d8 44.♔c7 ♖a8 45.♖d3.

38.♔xc7 ♖a3 39.♖e3 ♔f8 40.♔d7!



Again the threat of mate helps White to convert.

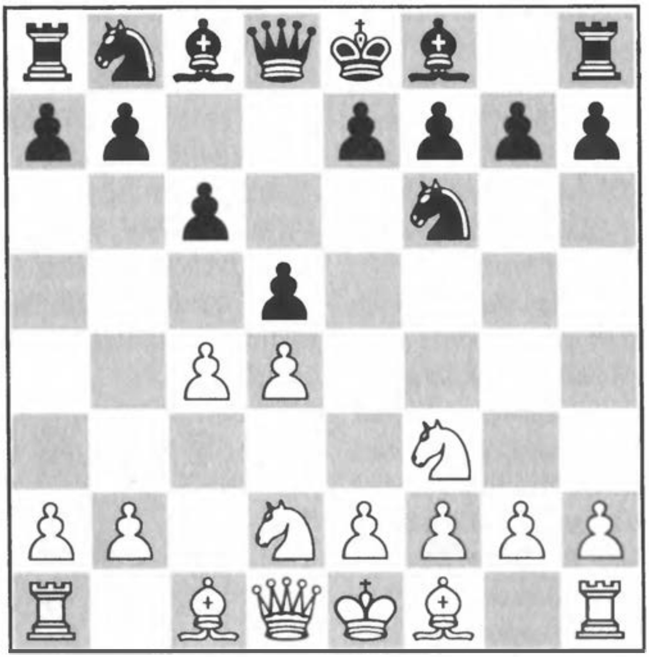
40...♖a8 41.♔c6 ♖b8 42.♔c5 ♖b7 43.♔b4 ♖b6 44.♖e5 ♖c6 45.♖xb5 ♔e7 46.♖d5 ♔f6 47.c4 ♔g5 48.c5 ♔f4 49.♔b5

Black resigned. Najer-Dorofeev, Moscow 1994.

CHAPTER 11

Efstratios Grivas

Slav: The Easy Way



The unexplored 4.♘bd2

It is well-accepted that fashion rules our lives, and chess cannot escape its fate! Nowadays a white d4-player must be ready to face the popular 'Slav Defence' and its various branches. Keeping up-to-date here can be quite time-consuming.

My proposal in this SOS survey is a line that is quite easy to handle (and at the same time fairly unexplored): 1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 and now 4.♘bd2. White immediately protects his c4 pawn and play may transpose into lines of the Schlechter Defence (...g6), Grünfeld Defence (...g6 and ...c5) or even Catalan (...e6) pawn-formations. These formations could easily become a nightmare for a 'Slav Defence' player as his experience may be severely limited. Indeed, he played the Slav, didn't he?

As I was preparing for the Corus C tournament in Wijk aan Zee in 2008 I thought about this system. Further analysis convinced me that it was worth giving it a try. And it really paid-off as I was able to beat the strong German player Arik Braun in a mere 24 moves!

I have structured the material in the illustrative games that follow. First, in the game Arkell-Hamelink, Sunningdale 2007, all the rare moves are covered. Things are far from easy but it seems that White can be pleased. Second, after 4...g6 (the Schlechter Defence) White can play both 5.g3 and 5.e3. Here for reasons of space I have limited myself to the latter, see Tu Hoang Thong-Russell, Cebu City 2007. The aggressive line is 4...♗g4. This is presented in the game Grivas-Braun, Wijk aan Zee 2008 and it seems that White is doing fine. Next, there is a type of Meran Variation (4...e6). I think that White's best is to transpose to a closed Catalan with 5.g3; see section IV.

Finally, we come to the most serious answer to 4.♘bd2 and that is 4...♗f5. In my opinion White should continue with 5.♘h4, when I now think that Black should play 5...♗e4 (you will find several games with the alternative moves below).

Black's main idea is that before he withdraws his bishop to g6, to provoke the move f3, as he believes that White's weakened kingside should offer him sufficient counterplay for surrendering the bishop-pair. The future key-move for Black should be **...♕c7**, putting pressure on White's h2-pawn (after an eventual **♞xg6** and **...hxg6** the black h8-rook helps in that direction), and generally along the h2-b8 diagonal, keeping options like **...c5** or **...e5** alive.

In reply (after 6.f3 ♗g6) White should either take on g6 and forget about the option of ♕b3 (see Zambo-Drexler, 2005), or he should play 7.♕b3 ♕c7 and now my novelty 8.g4!?. See the final game in this article.

I. 4th move alternatives

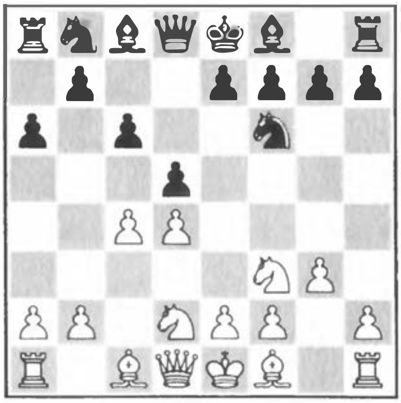
☐ **Keith Arkell**
■ **Desiree Hamelink**
Sunningdale tt 2007

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘bd2 a6

Instead of the text move Black has tried some other continuations too:

- 4...♕a5 5.e3 ♗g4 6.♕b3 ♕c7 (6...♗xf3? 7.♕xb7! ♗g4 8.♕xa8 ♕b6 9.♗d3+−) 7.♘e5 e6 (7...♗h5 8.cxd5 cxd5 9.♘df3 ♘c6 10.♗d2 e6 11.♖c1±) 8.h3 ♗f5 9.g4± Rogers-Stead, Canberra 2001.
- 4...h6!? preparing ...♗f5 is met by 5.♕c2! g6 6.e4 dxe4 7.♘xe4 ♘xe4 8.♕xe4 ♗g7 9.♗e2 ♗f5 10.♕f4 ♘a6 11.♗d2 c5 12.♗c3± Nikolaev-Fedoseev, St Petersburg 2008.
- 4...♕b6 5.e3 ♗f5 6.♞h4 ♗e6 7.♗d3 g6 8.0-0 ♗g7 9.b3 0-0 10.♗b2 ♘bd7 11.♕e2 ♖ac8 12.♞hf3±.
- 4...c5 5.dxc5!? ♘c6 6.♕a4 e6 7.b4±.
- 4...dxc4 5.♘xc4 ♗f5 6.g3 h6 7.♗g2 ♘bd7 8.0-0 ♘b6?! (8...e6 9.♕b3 ♘b6 10.♘fe5±) 9.♘a5! ♕c8 10.♘e5± Drabek-Schmid, Czech Republic 1995.
- 4...♘bd7 5.g3 ♕a5 6.cxd5 cxd5 7.♗g2 e6 8.0-0 ♗d6 9.♘b3±.

5.g3



5...e6

Black's alternatives mainly are:

- 5...♗f5 6.♗g2 e6 7.♘h4!? ♗g4 8.h3 ♗h5 9.g4± Houriez-Tournier, France 2009.
- 5...♗g4?! 6.♘e5 ♗h5 7.♕b3 b5 8.cxb5 cxb5 9.a4! ♕a5 10.g4! ♗xg4 11.♘xg4 ♘xg4 12.♕xd5±, Chernuschevich-Malakhov, Lvov 1999.
- 5...b5 6.cxd5 cxd5 7.♗g2 e6 8.0-0 ♗b7 9.♘b3 ♘bd7 10.♗g5± Drabek-Lednicky, Tatranske Zruby 2004.

6.♗g2 ♘bd7 7.0-0 b5

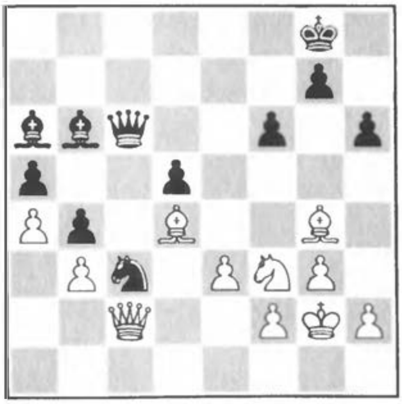
This is logical in connection with 5...a6. The other try is 7...♗d6 8.♕c2 (8.e4 dxe4 9.♘g5 0-0 10.♘gxe4±) 8...0-0 9.e4 dxe4 10.♘g5 h6 11.♘gxe4 ♗e7 12.♘f3 ♕a5 13.♗f4± Verat-Nguyen Thanh Tong, Paris 2004.

8.b3 ♗b7 Or 8...♗e7 9.♗b2 0-0 10.♕c2 a5 11.♖fc1 bxc4 12.bxc4 ♗a6 13.e3± Bienkowski-Walaszczyk, Lublin 1999.

9.a4

White should take into consideration the thematic advance 9.e4!? ♘xe4 10.♘xe4 dxe4 11.♘g5 ♘f6 12.♘xe4±.

9...♗e7 10.♕c2 0-0 11.♗a3?! 11.e4!?. **11...b4** 11...♗xa3 12.♖xa3 ♕e7 13.♖aa1 bxc4 14.bxc4 c5=. **12.♗b2 c5 13.cxd5 exd5!? 14.♖ac1 ♖c8 15.♕b1 ♕b6 16.♖fd1 ♖fd8 17.e3 h6?! 18.dxc5 ♘xc5 19.♗d4?!** 19.♗h3! ♘e6 20.♘d4±. **19...♕e6 20.♘e5 ♘fe4 21.♘d3 ♘xd3 22.♕xd3 ♘c5** 22...a5! 23.♘xe4 dxe4 24.♕b5 ♖xc1 25.♖xc1 ♗d5=. **23.♕b1** 23.♗xc5!? ♖xc5 24.♖xc5 ♗xc5 25.♘f3±. **23...a5 24.♘f3 ♘e4 25.♕b2 f6 26.♘e1 ♗a6 27.♖xc8 ♖xc8 28.♖c1 ♖c6 29.♗f3 ♕c8 30.♖xc6 ♕xc6 31.♗d1± ♘c3 32.♗g4 ♗d6 33.♔g2 ♗e5 34.♘f3 ♗c7?! 35.♕c2 ♗b6?**



35...♗e2 36.♗xc3 ♗xf3+ 37.♗xf3 bxc3 38.♕d3±. **36.♕g6! ♗xd4** 36...♗b7 37.♘h4+–. **37.♘xd4 ♕a8 38.♗e6+** 38.♘e6+–. **38...♔h8 39.♗f5?!** 39.♘f5 ♕f8 40.♘d6+–. **39...♕g8 40.♘c6 ♗c8 41.♗c2?** 41.♘d8! ♗xf5 42.♘f7+ ♕xf7 43.♕xf7+–. **41...♘e4 42.♘e7 ♕d8 43.♘xc8 ♕xc8 44.♗xe4 dxe4 45.♕xe4±** and White mated Black on move 115!

II. The Schlechter line, 4...g6

☐ **Tu Hoang Thong**
■ **MKA Russell**
Cebu City 2007

1.d4 d5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.c4 c6 4.♘bd2 g6 5.e3 ♗g7 6.♗e2

The text move looks a bit passive but I regard it to be the best. Alternatives are 6.♗d3, 6.b4 and 6.b3.

6...0-0 7.0-0 ♘bd7

Black's other options are:

– 7...♗g4 8.h3 ♗xf3 9.♗xf3 e6 10.b3 ♖e8 11.♗b2 ♘bd7 12.♖c1 ♖c8 13.♖c2±, Hernandez-Hernandez, Mondariz 1999.

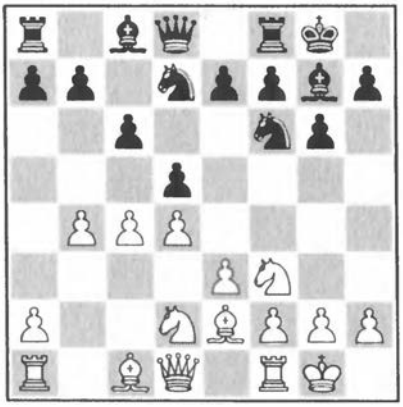
– 7...a5 8.b3 ♗f5 9.a3 ♘e4 10.♗b2 ♘d7 11.♘xe4 dxe4 12.♘d2 h5 13.♕c2±.

– 7...b6 8.b3 ♗b7 9.♗b2 ♘bd7 10.♖c1 e6 11.♖c2 ♕e7 12.♕a1 a5 13.a4 ♖fc8 14.♖fc1 ♗f8 15.♗d3±, Rusev-Nikolov, Pleven 2005.

– 7...a6 8.b3 b5 9.♗b2 ♗g4 10.h3 ♗xf3 11.♗xf3±, Galego-Karim, Vila Nova de Gaia 2010.

– 7...♗f5 8.b3 ♘bd7 9.♗b2±.

8.b4



White has also tried the more 'modest' 8.b3 c5 9.♗b2 cxd4 when I would recommend 10.♗xd4!? b6 11.cxd5 ♘xd5 12.♘c4 ♗b7 13.♖c1±.

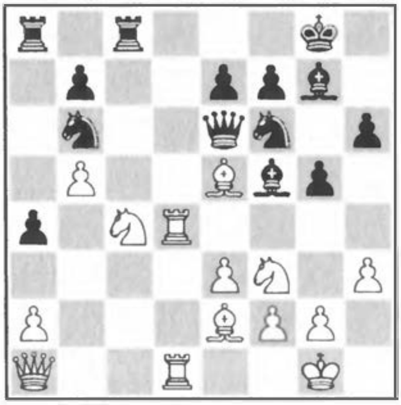
8...a5 Here 8...dxc4 is best answered by 9.♘xc4 – this is a clear advantage of having the knight on d2. Bad is 8...e5?! 9.♘xe5 ♘xe5 10.dxe5 ♘d7 11.f4 ♕b6 12.♕b3 a5 13.cxd5 cxd5 14.♗a3±, Panchenko-Krajnak, Bratislava 1991.

9.b5 9.bxa5!? ♕xa5 10.a4 is also quite interesting.

9...c5 Or 9...cxb5 10.cxb5 a4 11.♗a3 ♘b6 12.♖c1 ♗f5 13.♘e5 ♘e4 14.♘xe4 ♝xe4 15.♗c5 ♗f5 16.♖c3±, Ratcu-Grosar, Istanbul ol 2000.

10.♗b2 ♖e8 White has a slight edge after 10...b6 11.cxd5 ♘xd5 12.♘c4 ♗b7 13.♖c1 ♖c8 14.dxc5 ♖xc5 15.♗xg7 ♔xg7 16.♘d4. The same goes for 10...cxd4 11.♝xd4 ♖e8 12.cxd5 ♘xd5 13.♗xg7 ♔xg7 14.♘c4 ♘7f6 15.♕d4 as in Simonenko-Kreisl, Turin 2006.

11.dxc5 11.cxd5 ♘xd5 12.♘c4±. **11...♘xc5 12.♖c1 ♗f5 13.♘b3 ♘a4?!** 13...♘xb3 14.♕xb3 e6 15.♖fd1±. **14.♗e5!± dxc4 15.♖xc4 ♘b6 16.♖d4! ♕c8** 16...♘fd7 17.♘c5 f6 18.♗g3 ♕c8 19.♘xd7 ♗xd7 20.a4±. **17.♕a1 a4 18.♘bd2 ♕e6 19.♘c4 h6 20.h3?** 20.♖fd1±. **20...g5?** 20...♘bd7 21.♖xd7 ♕xd7 22.♘b6 ♕e6 23.♘xa8 ♖xa8 24.♖c1 ♖c8 25.♖xc8+ ♕xc8=. **21.♖fd1 ♖ec8?!** 21...♘xc4 22.♗xc4 ♕b6 23.a3±.



22.♘d6!+– exd6 22...♖c5 23.♘xf5 ♕xf5 24.♖d8+ ♖xd8 25.♖xd8+ ♗f8 26.♗d4+–. **23.♖xd6 ♕e7 24.♗xf6 ♗xf6 25.♖xf6** Black resigned.

III. The Aggressive 4...♝g4

☐ **Efstratios Grivas**
■ **Arik Braun**
Wijk aan Zee 2008

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘bd2 ♗g4 5.♘e5! ♝f5

Other options are:

– 5...♝h5?! 6.♕b3 ♕b6 (6...♕c7 7.♘df3 e6 8.♝f4 ♘e4 9.g4± Houriez-Hugaert, Puerto Madryn 2009) and now the surprising: 7.♕h3! e6 8.e3 ♗b4 9.g4 ♘e4 10.♗d3 ♘xd2 11.♗xd2 ♗xd2+ 12.♔xd2 ♕xb2+ 13.♗c2 ♗g6 14.♘xg6 ♕b4+ 15.♔e2 fxg6 16.♗xg6+ ♔d8 17.♖hb1±.

– 5...♗e6 6.♕b3 ♕c7 7.cxd5 ♗xd5 (7...cxd5 8.♘df3 ♘c6 9.♗f4 ♕b6 10.♕xb6 axb6 11.e3±) 8.♕c2 ♘bd7 9.♘xd7 ♕xd7 10.e4 ♗e6 11.♘f3 ♗g4 12.♗e3±.

6.e3 e6

6...♘bd7 7.cxd5 cxd5 8.♕b3 ♕c7 9.♘xd7 ♗xd7 10.♘f3 e6 11.♗d2 ♗d6 12.♖c1 ♗c6 13.♝d3 0-0 14.♗b4 ♖fc8 15.♗xd6 ♕xd6 16.0-0 ♖c7 17.♘e5 ♖ac8 18.♖c3 ♘d7 19.f4 f5 20.♖fc1± Grinshpun-Wapner, Israel 1996.

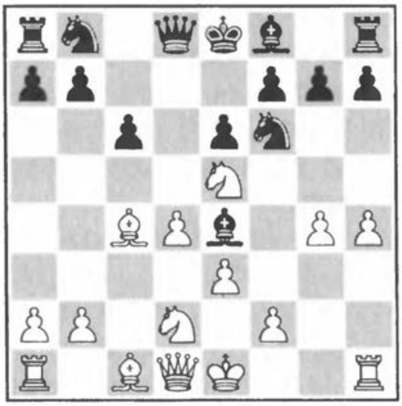
7.g4! ♗g6

7...♗e4 8.f3 ♗g6 9.h4 h6 10.♘xg6 fxg6 11.♗d3±.

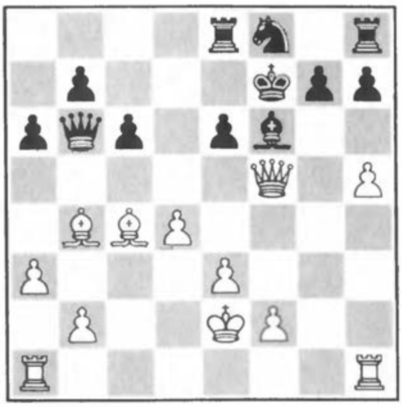
8.h4 dxc4 8...♘bd7 9.♘xd7 ♕xd7 10.h5 ♗e4 11.f3+–; 8...h5 9.g5 ♘g8 10.♘xg6 fxg6 11.♗h3±.

9.♗xc4 ♗e4?

Not 9...♗b4?! 10.f3 ♘d5 11.♗xd5 ♕xd5 12.h5 f6 13.hxg6 fxe5 14.♖xh7 ♖g8 15.a3±. But stronger was 9...♘bd7! 10.h5 ♗e4 11.f3 (11.♘xe4 ♘xe4 12.♘xd7 ♕xd7 13.♕c2±) 11...♗d5 12.e4 ♝xc4 13.♘dxc4±.



10.♘xf7! A clear improvement over 10.♘xe4? ♘xe4 11.♕f3 (11.♘xf7? ♗b4+ 12.♔f1 ♕f6!) 11...♗b4+ 12.♔e2 ♘d6 13.a3 ♗a5 14.♗d3 ♘d7 15.b4 ♗c7 16.♗b2± ½–½ Heilinger-Schmidlechner, Vorarlberg 1998. **10...♔xf7** 10...♕a5 11.♘xh8 ♗xh1 12.g5+–. **11.♘xe4 ♘xe4 12.♕f3+ ♘f6 13.g5 ♗b4+ 14.♔e2! ♘d7 15.a3 ♗e7?!** 15...♗d6 16.♗d2±. **16.♕f5! ♘f8** 16...♔e8 17.♗xe6 g6 18.♕f4! ♘f8 19.♗c4 ♘d5 20.♕e5 ♖g8 21.e4 ♘d7 22.♕e6 ♖f8 23.exd5 ♘b6 24.♗d3 ♕xd5 25.♕xd5 ♘xd5 26.h5+–. **17.gxf6 ♗xf6** 17...gxf6 18.♕h5+ ♘g6 19.♕g4 ♕d6 20.h5 ♘f8 21.♖g1+–. **18.♗d2 ♕b6 19.h5 ♖e8 20.♗b4 a6**



21.♖ag1 ♖g8 21...g6 22.♕f3 a5 23.hxg6+ ♘xg6 24.♗c3+–. **22.♖g3 ♕d8 23.♖hg1 ♕b6** 23...h6? 24.♕g6+! ♘xg6 25.hxg6 mate; 23...g6 24.hxg6+ hxg6 25.♕e4 g5 26.f4!+–. **24.h6!** Black resigned as there is no defence left: 24...♘g6 (24...g6 25.♕xf6+ ♔xf6 26.♖f3 mate; 24...g5 25.f4) 25.♖xg6.

IV. The Meran option, 4...e6

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘bd2 e6 5.g3 ♘bd7

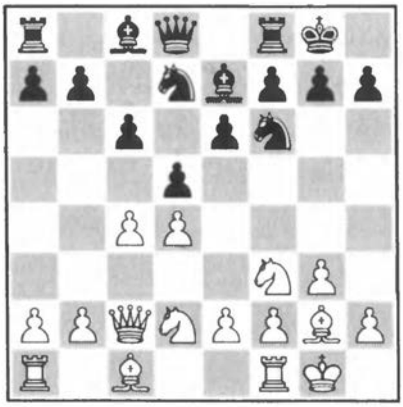
A solid continuation. Other tries for Black are:

- 5...dxc4 6.♘xc4 c5 7.♗g2 ♘c6 and now both 8.♘fe5 and 8.0-0 favour White.
- 5...♘e4 6.♗g2 f5 Black has transposed to a Stonewall Dutch. 7.0-0 ♗d6 8.♘xe4 fxe4 9.♗g5 ♗e7 10.♗xe7 ♕xe7 11.♘d2±.
- 5...♗e7 6.♗g2 0-0 7.0-0 b6 8.♕c2 ♗b7 9.♖d1 ♕c8 10.b3 ♘bd7 11.♗b2 c5 12.♖ac1±, Tu Hoang Thong-Florendo, Olongapo City 2010.

6.♗g2 ♗e7

Playable is 6...♗d6 7.0-0 0-0 8.♕c2 e5 9.cxd5 cxd5 (9...♘xd5? 10.♘c4± Salov-Gayo, Oviedo 1993) 10.dxe5 ♘xe5 11.♘xe5 ♗xe5 12.♘f3 ♗d6 13.♖d1 ♖e8 (13...♗e6 14.♗e3 ♕e7 15.♖ac1± Bu Xiangzhi-Sorm, Bad Wörishofen 2007) 14.♗g5 ♗e6 15.♘d4 ♗e5 16.♘xe6 fxe6 17.e4± Rogers-Handoko, Jakarta 1993.

7.0-0 0-0 8.♕c2



This is a standard position in the Catalan.

8...b6

White seems to enjoy a pleasant advantage even with the alternatives:

– 8...c5 9.cxd5 exd5 10.b3 ♖e8 11.♗b2 ♖b8 12.dxc5 ♗xc5 13.e3 b6 14.♘d4 ♗b7 15.♘2f3 ♖c8 16.♕e2 ♘b8 17.♖fd1± Kasparov-Hartweg, simul Colmar 1998.

– 8...b5 9.c5! a5 (9...e5 10.dxe5 ♘g4 11.♘b3 ♘gxe5 12.♘xe5 ♘xe5 13.♘d4 ♗d7 14.a4± Kozul-Madina, Benidorm 2006) 10.e4 dxe4 (10...♖a6 11.♖e1 g6 12.e5 ♘h5 13.♘f1 ♖a7 14.h4± King-Rogers, Geneve 1990) 11.♘xe4 ♘xe4 12.♕xe4 ♘f6 13.♕c2 ♘d5 14.♖e1 ♗f6 15.h4 h6 (15...♗a6 16.♗g5 ♕c7 17.♕d2 b4 18.a3± Vaganian-Laznicka, Germany 2006/07) 16.♗d2 ♗d7 17.♕e4 ♗e7 18.♘e5± Ftacnik-Marangunic, Sibenik 2007.

9.e4 ♘xe4

Maybe Black should dig into the following options:

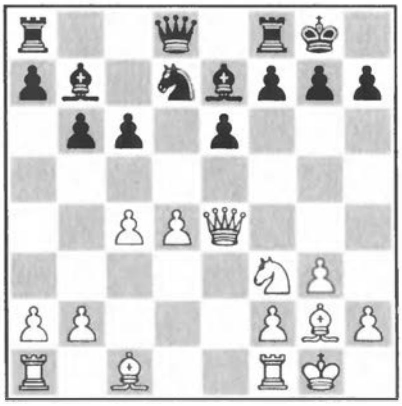
– 9...♗b7 10.e5 ♘e8 11.b3 ♖c8 12.♗b2 c5 13.dxc5 ♘xc5 14.♖fd1± Shirov-Vaganian, Germany 2006/07.

– 9...♗a6 10.♖e1 ♖c8 11.e5 ♘e8 12.b3 c5 13.♗b2 ♘c7 14.♖ad1± Shirov-Azarov, Kemer 2007.

– 9...dxc4 10.♘xc4 ♗a6 11.♖d1 c5 12.d5 exd5 13.exd5 ♗xc4 14.♕xc4±, Izoria-Zhao Jun, Richardson 2007.

– 9...dxe4 10.♘xe4 ♗b7 11.♖d1 ♕c8 12.♘xf6+ ♘xf6 13.c5 with a slight plus.

10.♘xe4 dxe4 11.♕xe4 ♗b7



From the diagrammed position practice has demonstrated a slight but pleasant White advantage with the natural **12.♖d1** and now:

– 12...♖c8 13.♗f4 ♘f6 14.♕c2 ♗d6 15.♗xd6 ♕xd6 16.c5 ♕e7 17.b4 ♘d5 18.♖ab1 b5 19.h4 h6 20.♘e5± Grischuk-Bujupi, Kemer 2007.

– 12...♕c8 13.♗f4 ♖e8 (13...c5 14.d5 ♗f6 15.♕c2±) 14.♘e5 ♘xe5 15.♗xe5 ♖d8 16.♕g4 ♗f8 17.c5± Cabrilo-Radlovacki, Pancevo 2002.

– 12...♘f6 13.♕e2 ♕c7 14.♗f4 ♗d6 15.♘e5 ♘d7 16.c5! ♗xe5 (16...bxc5 17.♘xd7 ♗xf4 18.♘xf8+–) 17.♗xe5 ♘xe5 18.♕xe5± Ljubojevic-Lucena, Brasilia 1981.

V. The Main Line, 4...♗f5 5.♘h4

☐ **Dragan Kosic**
■ **Petar Matovic**
Stara Pazova 2007

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 d5 3.c4 c6 4.♘bd2 ♗f5 5.♘h4 ♗g6

This is a passive move.

Black has a variety of options:

– 5...♗e6 6.e3 g6 7.♗d3 ♗g7 8.0-0 0-0. Now 9.h3 (Benkovic-Sokolov, Neum 2005) fails to impress. White can choose between 9.b4 dxc4 10.♘xc4 ♗xc4 11.♗xc4 ♘d5 12.♕b3 b5 13.♗e2± Miron-Kalezic, Cetinje 2009, and 9.cxd5 ♘xd5 10.a3 ♘d7 11.♘e4 ♘7f6 12.♘c5 ♗c8 13.♘f3 b6 14.♘b3 ♗b7 15.e4 ♘c7 16.♕e2± Nikolaev-Gavrilov, St Petersburg 2009.

– 5...♗c8 6.g3 dxc4 (6...e6 7.♘hf3 transposes to 4...e6) 7.♘hf3 (7.♘xc4? ♕d5) 7...b5 (7...♗e6 8.♗g2 ♕d5 9.0-0 ♘bd7 10.♕c2 unclear) 8.♗g2 ♗b7 9.0-0 e6 and now 10.e4!? c5 11.e5 leads to an interesting position which needs further analysis and test in practice.

– 5...e6 6.♘xf5 exf5 7.e3 ♘a6 (7...♗d6

8.♗d3 g6 9.h3 ♘bd7 10.♕f3 ♕e7 11.g4± Boor-Ramirez, Mesa 2009) 8.♗d3 g6 9.0-0 ♗e7 10.cxd5 ♘b4 11.♗b1 ♘bxd5 12.♘c4 0-0 13.♗d2±.

– 5...g6 6.♘xf5 gxf5 7.♕b3 ♕b6 8.e3 e6 9.♗d3±.

– 5...♗d7 6.g3 e6 7.♗g2 ♗e7 8.0-0 0-0 9.♘hf3 c5 10.cxd5 ♘xd5 and now White is somewhat better after 11.e4!? ♘f6 12.♕e2 cxd4 13.♘xd4 ♘c6 14.♘xc6 ♗xc6 15.♘c4 ♗b5 16.♗e3.

6.♘xg6

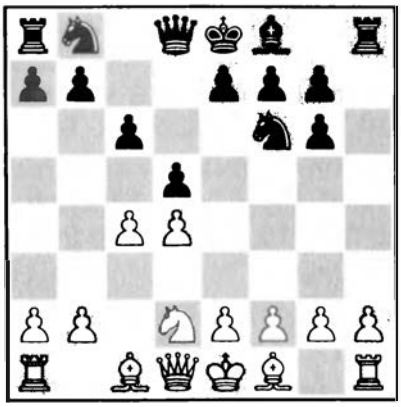
A nice alternative is 6.♕b3 and now:

– 6...♕b6? 7.♕h3! (we already saw this manoeuvre once before) 7...♘a6 8.c5 ♕c7 9.♘xg6 fxg6 10.♖b1! e5 11.dxe5 ♕xe5 12.b4±.

– 6...♕c8 7.♘xg6 hxg6 8.g3 e6 9.♗g2 ♘bd7 10.0-0 ♗e7 11.♖d1 0-0 12.e4 dxe4 13.♘xe4 ♘xe4 14.♗xe4 ♘f6 15.♗f3 a5 16.♗f4± Erdos-Figura, Germany 2008/09.

– 6...♕c7 7.♘xg6 (7.♕h3 ♕d7) 7...hxg6 8.g3 e6 9.♗g2 ♘bd7 10.0-0 ♗e7 11.e4 dxe4 12.♘xe4 ♘xe4 13.♗xe4 0-0 14.♗e3 ♘f6 (14...e5 15.♖fe1!) 15.♗f3± Harika-Sebag, Dresden ol 2008.

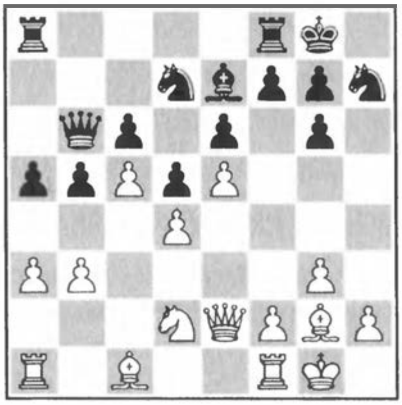
6...hxg6



7.e3 e6 8.a3!? ♗d6

8...♘bd7 9.♗e2 a6 10.g3 ♗e7 11.0-0 0-0 12.b3 ♕c7 13.♗b2 ♖fc8 14.♖c1±, Kosic-Mrkonjic, Subotica 2010.

9.g3 ♘bd7 10.♗g2 a5 11.b3 b5?! 11...0-0 12.♗b2±. **12.0-0 0-0 13.e4 ♗e7** 13...dxc4 14.bxc4 e5 15.♗b2±. **14.e5 ♘h7 15.♕e2?!** 15.c5!±. **15...♕b6?!** 15...bxc4!? 16.bxc4♖b8±. **16.c5!**



Now play is one-sided as White is winning on the kingside. His space advantage and the bishop-pair are his trumphs.

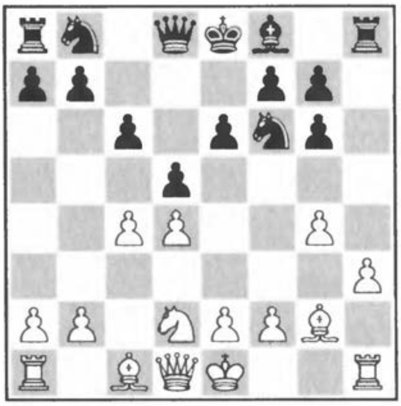
16...♕a6 17.♗b2 ♖fe8 18.f4 ♘df8 19.g4 ♕c8 20.♕d3 ♗d8 21.♖ae1 ♖a7 22.♘f3 ♕d7 22...a4 23.b4±. **23.♗c1 ♕c8 24.♗h3 ♕b7 25.♖f2 ♕c7 26.♕c2 ♗e7 27.♗f1 ♕d8 28.♖g2 ♔h8 29.♗d3 ♕c7 30.h4 ♗d8** 30...♕d8 31.h5 a4 32.b4+–. **31.g5** 31.h5!? gxh5 32.gxh5 a4 33.b4+–. **31...♔g8 32.♔f2 ♖e7 33.♖h1 ♕d7** 33...♖e8 34.♖gh2 ♔h8 35.♔g3+–. **34.h5 ♕e8** 34...a4 35.b4 gxh5 36.♗xh7+ ♘xh7 37.♖xh5 g6 38.♖h1+–. **35.♖gh2 a4 36.b4**

Black resigned.

☐ **Efstratios Grivas**
■ **Halil Osmanoglou**
Kallithea 2008

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘bd2 ♗f5 5.♘h4 ♗g4 In this way Black also cannot hope to solve his opening problems. **6.h3 ♗h5 7.g4 ♗g6 8.♘xg6 hxg6**

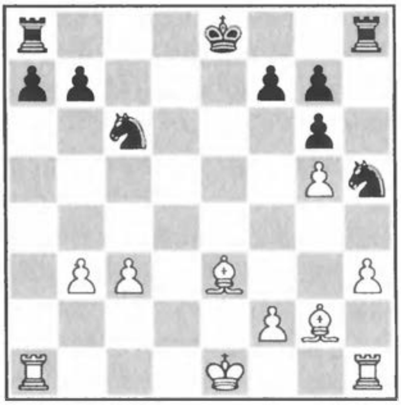
9.♗g2 e6



White has the bishop-pair, but in order to take advantage of this fact he must create the right environment: open centre with pawns on both flanks.

10.e4! dxe4?! Black should try to keep the centre closed: 10...♗b4!? 11.e5!? ♘e4 12.♗xe4 dxe4 13.♕b3 c5 14.a3 ♗xd2+ 15.♗xd2 ♘c6 16.♕xb7 ♕c8 17.♕xc8+ ♖xc8 18.dxc5 ♘xe5 19.♗c3 ♖xc5 20.♗xe5 ♖xe5 21.b4±. **11.♘xe4 ♗b4+** After 11...♘xe4 12.♗xe4 ♗b4+ 13.♔e2! ♘d7 14.♗e3 White's king is perfectly placed in the center, as Black has no way to embarrass him. **12.♘c3 ♘bd7 13.♕b3 ♕b6** The alternative was 13...♕a5!? 14.♗d2±. **14.♗e3 ♗a5?!** An inaccuracy. Also bad was 14...c5?! 15.0-0-0!±, but Black had to try 14...0-0-0 15.0-0-0±. **15.g5! ♞h5?!** Having a knight on the edge cannot be advisable. Black had to go for 15...♘g8 16.d5 ♕xb3 17.axb3 ♗xc3+ 18.bxc3 exd5 19.cxd5 ♘e7 20.dxc6 ♘xc6 21.b4±. **16.d5!** The correct evaluation – the position should be opened in order to create a feast for the bishop-pair! **16...♕xb3** 16...♘c5 17.♕xb6 axb6 18.dxc6±. **17.axb3 ♗xc3+ 18.bxc3 exd5 19.cxd5 ♘e5** After 19...cxd5 20.♗xd5 Black loses material with no compensation.

20.dxc6 ♘xc6



21.b4!

White could win a pawn with 21.♗xc6+? bxc6 22.♖xa7 ♖xa7 23.♗xa7, but after 23...♘f4 24.h4 ♔e7 Black should feel more than happy with the resulting position. There is no need to hunt useless pawns around. A serious player should wait for the right moment for material gain and mainly try to increase his advantage instead of hurrying to win 'suspicious' material.

21...a6 22.b5 ♘d8 23.♔d2!

Accurate. White must place his king somewhere in order to connect his rooks. On d2 the white king protects the valuable c-pawn and avoids any potential ...♘f4+ threats. Wrong would be 23.bxa6? ♖xa6 24.♖xa6 bxa6 25.♔d2 ♘e6 26.♖a1 ♘hf4 27.♗f1 ♖h5.

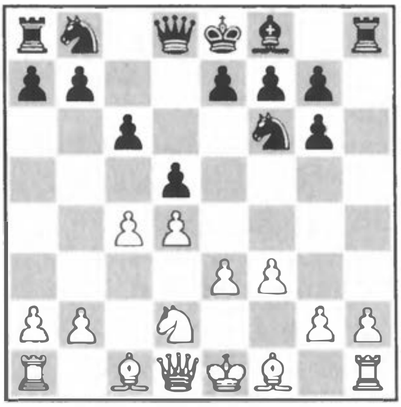
23...♔d7 24.♖hb1 ♔c7 Or 24...a5 25.♖a4! f6 26.h4 ♔c7 27.♖ba1+–.

25.bxa6 ♖xa6 26.♖xb7+! White wins material while preserving his advantages. Game over! **26...♘xb7 27.♖xa6 ♖d8+ 28.♔c2 ♖d7 29.♗b6+ ♔b8 30.♗d4** Black resigned.

☐ **Zoltan Zambo**
■ **Mihaly Drexler**
Eger 2005

1.d4 d5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.c4 c6 4.♘bd2 ♗f5 5.♘h4 ♗d7 6.♘hf3 ♗f5 7.♘h4

♗e4 8.f3 ♗g6 9.♘xg6 hxg6 10.e3



As the white queen is not ideally placed on b3 in this set-up, maybe this logical move is better than 10.♕b3 which we will study below.

10...e6 11.♕c2 ♗d6

The key-move 11...♕c7!? 12.g3 could also be played by Black.

12.f4 ♘g4 13.♘f3 ♗b4+ 14.♔d1!

White lost his castling rights, but on the other Black also moved two of his pieces twice in an early development stage.

14...♘d7 15.a3 15.c5!? ♗a5 (15...♘df6!? 16.♗d3 ♘e4 17.♖f1) 16.h3 ♘gf6 17.♘g5 is unclear and about equal.

15...♗e7 16.♗d3 ♞df6

16...c5!? is interesting, although it leads to enormous complications after 17.cxd5 exd5 18.♗xg6 ♖c8 19.♘e5!.

17.♔e2

White has achieved piece coordination and king safety, so in general he should feel happy.

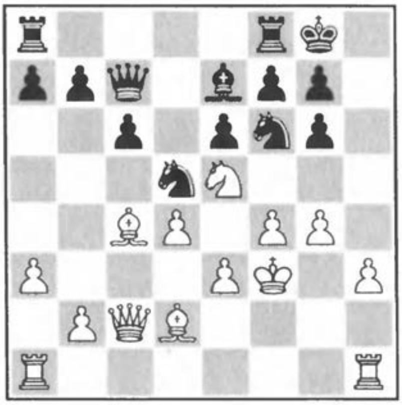
17...dxc4

17...♕c7 18.♗d2 0-0-0 19.h3 ♘h6 20.g4 looks quite nice for White.

18.♗xc4 ♕c7 19.♗d2 ♘d5 20.h3 ♘gf6 21.♘e5 ♘h5?!

Good-placed pieces should be eliminated; for that purpose 21...♘d7 was natural: 22.♖hf1 0-0 23.e4 ♘5b6 24.♗a2±.

22.♔f3! 0-0 23.g4 ♘hf6



24.h4!

White stands better due to his spatial advantage, his bishop-pair and his strong attack!

24...c5

Now 24...♘d7 is not a solution: 25.h5 ♘xe5+ 26.dxe5 gxh5 27.♖xh5 g6 28.♖h6 ♔g7 29.♖ah1 ♖h8 30.g5 ♖xh6 31.gxh6+ ♔h7 32.e4 ♘b6 33.♗b3±.

25.♗xd5?

25.h5 gxh5 26.g5± was the natural way to continue the attack.

25...♘xd5?

Black should try to defend by 25...exd5! 26.h5 gxh5 27.gxh5 ♗d6, when nothing is clear yet.

26.♖ac1? Good was 26.h5 g5 27.h6±.

26...♖ac8?

Again Black could have put-up a defence by eliminating the strong placed e5 knight: 26...♗d6 27.h5 cxd4 28.♕xc7 ♗xc7 29.exd4 gxh5 30.♖xh5 ♗xe5 31.dxe5 f6! 32.exf6 ♖xf6 33.♖e5±.

27.e4?!

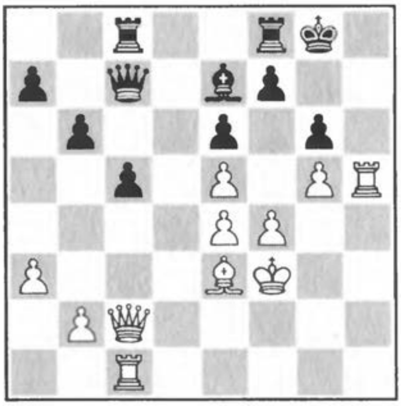
27.h5! cxd4 28.♕b1 and White wins.

27...♘f6 28.♗e3 b6?!

Not pleasant but forced was 28...♘d7! 29.♘xd7 ♕xd7 30.dxc5±.

29.h5 gxh5 30.g5! ♘d7 Or 30...♘g4 31.♖xh5 f5 32.gxf6 ♘xf6 33.♖h8+! ♔xh8 34.♖h1+ ♘h7 35.♕h2 ♗h4 36.♘g6+ ♔g8 37.♕xh4.

31.♖xh5 ♘xe5+ 32.dxe5 g6



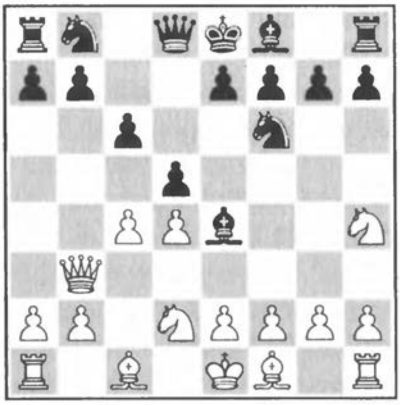
33.♖h8+! ♔g7 33...♔xh8 34.♕h2+ ♔g7 35.♕h6+ ♔g8 36.♖h1+–.

34.♖h7+!

Black resigned due to 34...♔g8 (34...♔xh7 35.♕h2+ ♔g7 36.♕h6+ ♔g8 37.♖h1+–) 35.♕h2 f5 36.♕h6 fxe4+ 37.♔g3+–.

☐ **Alexey Chernuschevich**
■ **Eric Prié**
France 2003

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♞d2 ♘f6 4.♘gf3 ♗f5 5.♞h4 ♗e4 6.♕b3



6...♕b6 7.c5?!

Nothing is offered by 7.f3 ♕xb3 8.axb3 ♗c2, but White might have tried 7.♘xe4 ♘xe4 (7...dxe4 8.g3 e6 9.♗d2±) 8.e3 e6 9.♗d3 ♘d7 10.0-0±.

7...♕c7?!

Black could safely go for 7...♕xb3 8.axb3 ♗c2 (8...♘a6 9.♘xe4 ♘xe4 10.♖a4!±) 9.e3 e5 10.b4 ♘bd7 11.b5 with unclear play.

8.f3 ♗g6 9.e4!

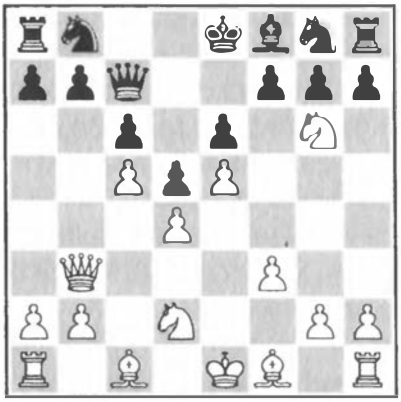
An active and correct response. The 'passive' 9.e3 e6 10.♕c3 transposes to Gurevich-Hauchard, Gibraltar 2009.

9...e6

White's initiative after 9...dxe4 10.fxe4 (10.♘xg6 hxg6 11.♗c4 e6 12.♘xe4 ♘bd7 13.♗e3 ♗e7 – 13...♖xh2? 14.♖xh2 ♕xh2 15.♕xb7 ♖b8 16.♕xc6 ♖xb2 17.0-0-0 ♕xg2 18.♘d2 ♖b8 19.♝f4 ♖d8 20.♝xe6+– – 14.0-0-0 0-0∞) 10...♘bd7 (10...♝xe4 11.♘xe4 ♘xe4 12.♗c4 e6 13.0-0≌) 11.e5 ♘d5 12.♘c4± looks nice.

10.e5 ♘g8 10...♘fd7!? 11.♘xg6 hxg6 12.♕c3 a5 13.a3 a4 14.b4 axb3 15.♘xb3±, Miron-Burmakin, Rochefort 2009.

11.♘xg6



11...fxg6?!

A rather optimistic capture. Black had to opt for the natural 11...hxg6 12.♕c3 ♘d7 13.♝d3±.

12.♕e3?

If White had found 12.f4! ♘h6 (12...b6 13.♕h3±) 13.♕h3 ♘f5 14.♘f3± Black would have regretted his 11th move.

12...♘h6?!

The unclear 12...b6 13.b4 a5 14.cxb6 ♕xb6

15.bxa5 ♕xa5 16.♔f2 was an 'attractive' option for Black.

13.f4?!

As 13.♗d3 ♘f5 14.♕f2 b6 15.g4 (15.b4? bxc5 16.bxc5 ♗xc5!) 15...♘h6∞ leads to nowhere, White had to admit his mistake and play 13.♕c3! b6 14.b4 a5 15.a3±.

13...a5?! Why not 13...b6!. **14.♘f3 ♗e7 15.h4** 15.♗d3 was also a possible and fair alternative: 15...0-0 16.0-0±.

15...b6?!

Now this break is not correct. Black had to opt for 15...♘f5 16.♕f2 h5 17.♘g5! ♗xg5 18.hxg5 0-0 19.♗d3 ♘a6 (19...b6? 20.♗xf5 ♖xf5 21.g4! hxg4 22.♕h4+–) 20.♗e3±.

16.♘g5! ♕d7

Or 16...♘f5 17.♕c3 ♗xg5 18.hxg5 bxc5 19.dxc5 ♘d7 20.g4 ♘e7 21.♗e3±.

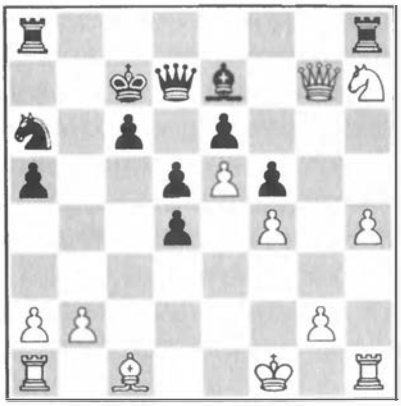
17.♗d3?

White opts for a dubious tactical shot. Correct was the simple 17.cxb6 ♘f5 18.♕f2±.

17...bxc5! 18.♘xh7?

White had to admit his mistake and go for 18.dxc5 ♘a6 19.♗xa6 ♖xa6.

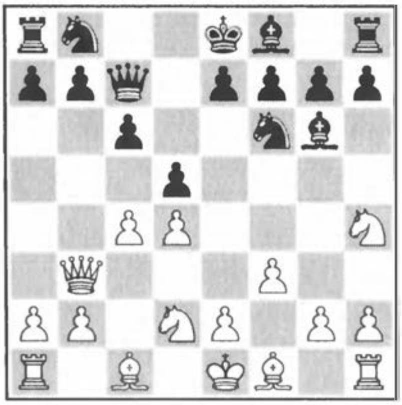
18...♘f5! Now Black takes over the advantage. **19.♗xf5 gxf5 20.♕g3** 20.♘g5 cxd4 21.♕xd4 c5 22.♕f2 ♘c6∓. **20...cxd4 21.♕g6+ ♔d8 22.♔f1 ♘a6 23.♕xg7 ♔c7**



Black completed his development and his king is safe. He won on move 36

☐ **Mert Erdogdu**
■ **Evgeny Agrest**
Plovdiv 2010

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘bd2 ♗f5 5.♘h4 ♗e4 6.f3 ♗g6 7.♕b3 ♕c7



8.g4!?

While I was preparing for an important game around February 2010, I came across this new concept. I was not able to use this novelty but I showed it (and its merits) to my trainees (the Turkish National Men Team). One of them was 'lucky' enough to use it! White's idea is simple: he will delay the capture on g6 and he will try for an e4 advance, using the threat g5.

8...e6 More or less natural. Bad looks 8...♘bd7 9.g5 dxc4 (9...♘h5 10.cxd5) 10.♘xc4 ♘d5 11.e4±.

9.e4

The 'natural' follow-up.

9...dxe4

I do not like this move. Preferable is the passive but probably perfectly playable 9...♗e7, and now after 10.♘xg6 hxg6 White should opt between 11.cxd5 or 11.e5!?.

10.g5 e3

10...♘h5 11.♘xe4 ♘d7 12.♗d2 ♗e7 13.♘xg6 hxg6 14.0-0-0 0-0-0 15.♕e3 is nice for White (space, bishop-pair, and the edged h5-knight).

The other option is 10...♘fd7 11.♘xg6 hxg6 12.♘xe4 ♘a6 13.c5 e5 14.♗xa6 bxa6 15.♗e3 ♕a5+ (15...♖h3?! 16.0-0-0! ♖xf3 17.♖hf1±) 16.♕c3 ♕xc3+ 17.bxc3 exd4 18.cxd4±.

11.♕xe3 ♘fd7

After 11...♘h5 White can opt for 12.♘xg6 hxg6 13.♘e4 ♗b4+ 14.♔d1! ♗e7 (14...♘d7 15.c5!) 15.♔c2 ♘d7 16.♗d2 0-0-0 17.♖d1±.

12.♘xg6?!

Too early, as White mixed the variations. 12.♘e4 ♗b4+ 13.♔f2 ♗e7 14.♗d2 ♘a6 15.♘xg6 hxg6 16.♔g2± was good.

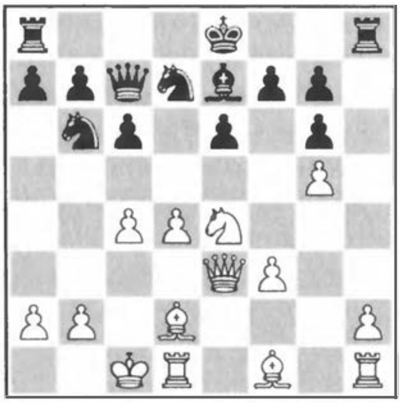
12...hxg6 13.♘e4 ♘b6?!

Why not 13...♖xh2 14.♖xh2 ♕xh2 although White has compensation after 15.♗d2.

14.♗d2

14.♕f4! was stronger: 14...♘a6 15.♕xc7 ♘xc7 16.♗f4 0-0-0 17.0-0-0±.

14...♗e7 15.0-0-0 ♘8d7



16.♗e1!

Now Black is in trouble, as the threat ♗g3 is annoying.

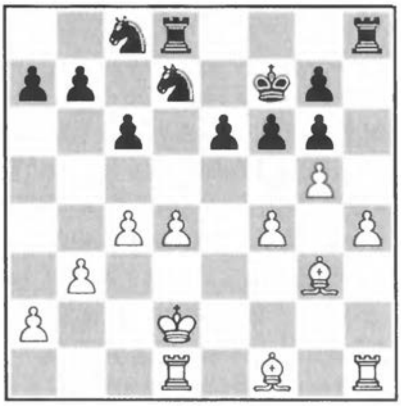
16...♗d6 17.♘xd6+ ♕xd6 18.♗g3?!

It would be better to preserve the queens on the board: 18.♗e2 ♕e7 19.f4 0-0-0 20.h4±.

18...♕b4! 19.♕d2 ♕xd2+ 20.♔xd2 f6! 21.f4?!

'Killing' the bishop-pair. 21.♗d3!? ♔f7 22.♔c3 still looks nice for White.

21...♔f7 22.h4 ♖ad8 23.b3 ♘c8!



Now Black can hold the position, as the bishop-pair is not strong anymore and his knight is heading for f5.

24.♗g2 ♘e7 25.♗f3 ♘b6 26.♔e2 ♘bc8 27.a4 ♘d6 28.♗f2 a6 29.♔e3 ♘df5+ 30.♔e2

Draw.

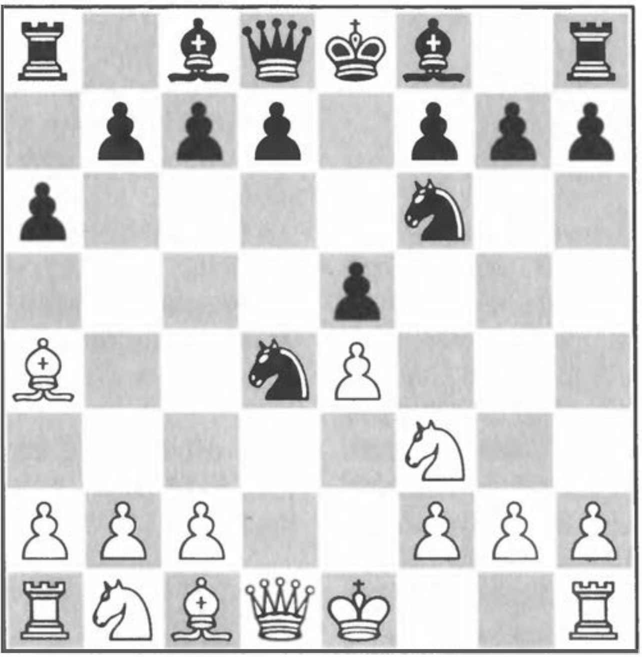
Conclusion

The 4.♘bd2 continuation is a side line of the Slav Defence, as not many top-players have adopted it. However, this means that it may well be an excellent tool for the club-player, who has a limited amount of time for the study of opening theory. Most lines are poisonous enough, and it seems that White can still achieve the advantage that the right of the first move gives him.

CHAPTER 12

Adrian Mikhalchishin

Spanish: Kortchnoi's Idea in the Central Attack



The surprising 5.d4 ♘xd4!?

The Central Attack in the Ruy Lopez arises after 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.d4. This early opening of the centre is considered to be unpleasant for strong Black players, as usually, it leads to the positions with a slight advantage for White and no real counterplay for Black.

For this reason Kortchnoi suggested the capture on d4 with the knight as the only chance to obtain some counterplay.

Before we investigate Kortchnoi's idea I first want to show you what can happen after 5...exd4.

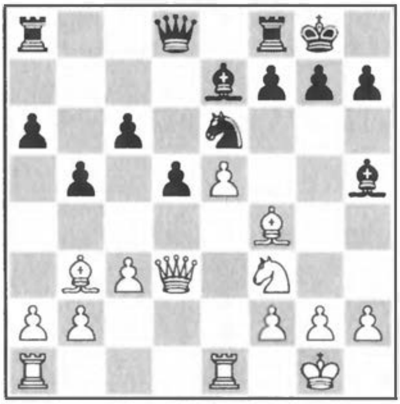
My first ever win against a grandmaster occurred in this variation! I had carefully read the theoretical articles of the great Svetozar Gligoric in the Yugoslav periodical *Sahovski Glasnik*, and there were several nice games won by GM Slavo Marjanovic in this line.

☐ **Adrian Mikhalchishin**
■ **Yury Averbakh**
Lviv 1972

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.d4 exd4 6.0-0 ♗e7 7.♖e1 0-0

Here 7...b5 8.♗b3 d6 is a serious alternative.

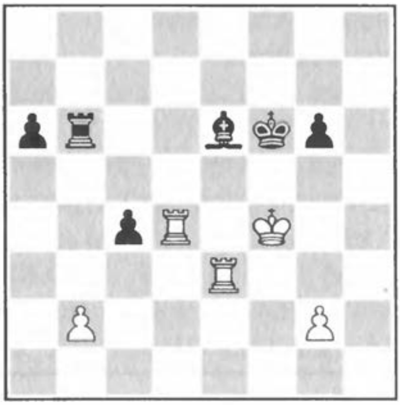
8.e5 ♘e8 9.♗f4 b5 10.♗b3 d5 11.♘xd4 ♘xd4 12.♕xd4 c6 13.♕d3 ♗g4 14.♘d2 ♘c7 15.c3 ♗h5 16.♘f3 ♘e6



17.♕e3? Nowadays I would play simply with the bishop: 17.♗g3. **17...c5! 18.♗g3 c4 19.♗d1 ♗c5 20.♘d4 ♘xd4** 20...♗xd4 21.cxd4 ♗xd1 22.♖axd1 ♕d7 23.f4 was unclear. **21.cxd4 ♗xd1 22.dxc5 d4 23.♕e4 ♗h5 24.e6 fxe6 25.♗d6 ♖f6 26.♕xd4 ♗e8 27.♖ad1 ♖g6 28.♕e3 ♗c6 29.♗g3 ♗d5 30.c6 ♖c8 31.c7 ♕d7 32.♕b6 ♖xg3 33.hxg3 ♕xc7 34.♕xc7 ♖xc7 35.a3 h5 36.♖e3 g6 37.♖d4 ♖b7 38.g4 b4 39.axb4 ♖xb4 40.♖e2 hxg4 41.♖xg4**

Here the game was ajourned and my friend GM Oleg Romanishin helped me with the analysis, but our conclusion was that this position is a draw.

41...♔g7 42.f3 ♖a4 43.♔f2 ♖b4 44.♔e3 e5 45.♖d2 ♗e6 46.♖e4 ♔f6 47.f4 exf4+ 48.♔xf4 ♖b3 49.♖e3 ♖b4 50.♖d4 ♖b6



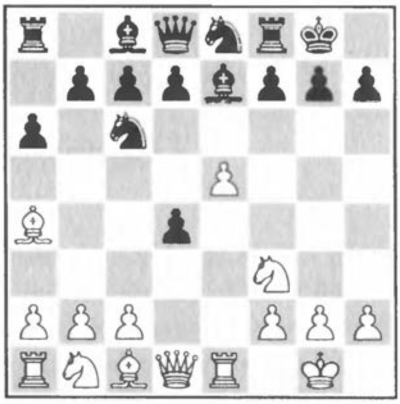
51.g4! g5+ 52.♔g3 ♔g7 53.♖de4 ♔f6 54.♖e5 ♔f7 55.♖c5 ♔g7 56.♖e2 ♔f6 57.♔f3 ♖b3+ 58.♔e4 ♗xg4 59.♖f2+ ♔e7 60.♖xg5 ♗e6 61.♖g7+ ♔d6 62.♖g6 ♖h3 63.♖d2+ ♔e7 64.♔d4 ♔f7 65.♖g1 ♖f3 66.♖e1 ♖f5 67.♖de2 ♖f4+ 68.♖e4

Black resigned.

I present you with one more beautiful and simple game, which demonstrates some of Black's problems in the theoretical lines (of those days).

☐ **Oleg Romanishin**
■ **Vladimir Tukmakov**
Tbilisi 1978

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.d4 exd4 6.0-0 ♗e7 7.♖e1 0-0 8.e5 ♘e8



9.c3!?

We already saw 9.♗f4 in the previous game.

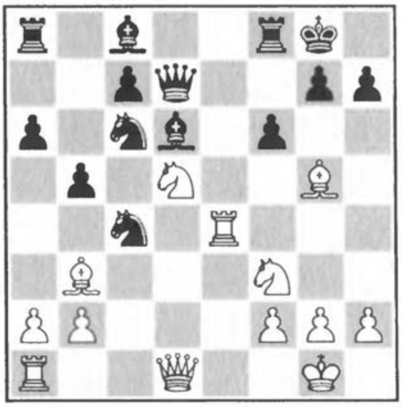
9...dxc3 10.♘xc3 d6 11.exd6 ♘xd6

Maybe it was worth trying the paradoxical 11...cxd6. I remember that all participants were curious how powerful this pawn sac really was.

12.♗f4

Tempting, but premature, was 12.♘d5.

12...b5?! 13.♗b3 ♘c4 14.♘d5! ♗d6 15.♗g5! ♕d7 16.♖e4 f6?



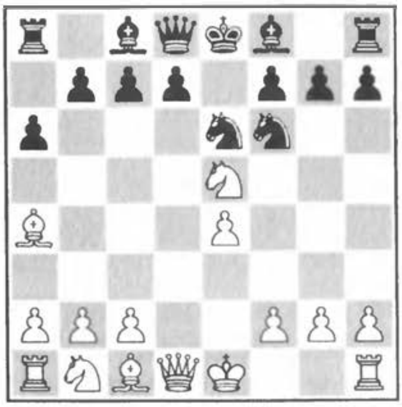
17.♗f4! ♗xf4 18.♖xf4± ♖d8 19.♕e2 ♖e8 Or 19...♕xd5 20.♖xc4. **20.♕c2 ♘6e5? 21.♘xe5 ♖xe5 22.♖xc4!+– bxc4 23.♕xc4 ♔f8 24.♘xc7 ♖a7 25.♕g8+ ♔e7 26.♘d5+**

Black resigned.

☐ **Oleg Romanishin**
■ **Alexander Beliavsky**
Kiev 1978

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.d4 ♘xd4!? In 1976 Beliavsky, Romanishin and myself had a training session with Kortchnoi, and this simple idea was proposed by our teacher there!

6.♘xd4 If 6.♘xe5 then 6...♘e6.



When the lines fork:

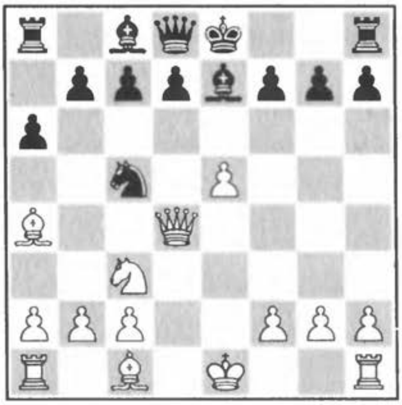
– After 7.c3 ♘xe4 8.♗c2 d5 White has insufficient compensation for the pawn.

– And 7.♘c3 b5 8.♗b3 ♗b7 9.f3 c5 promises Black comfortable play

6...exd4 7.e5

Wrong is 7.♕xd4 c5 8.♕e5+ ♕e7 9.♕xe7+ ♗xe7, threatening b7-b5.

7...♘e4 8.♕xd4 ♘c5 9.♘c3 ♗e7



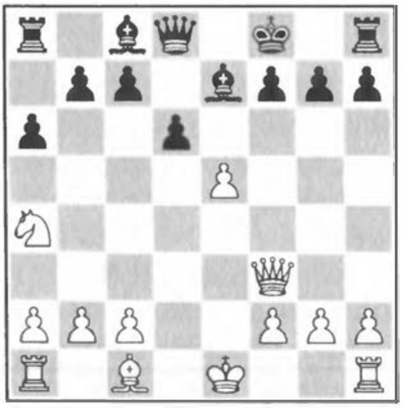
Now it looks tempting to eliminate the opponent's possibility to castle, but it leads to a loss of the battle in the centre.

10.♕g4 Maybe it would be interesting to try to castle to the queenside with 10.♗e3.

10...♔f8 Very bad is castling 10...0-0? 11.♗h6 ♘e6 12.♗b3 ♔h8 (12...♗g5 13.♗xg5 ♕xg5 14.♕xg5 ♘xg5 15.♘d5+–) 13.♗xe6 gxh6 14.♗f5. And 10...g6 weakens the dark squares too much.

11.♕f3 Better looks 11.♕f4, but Romanishin wants to prevent d7-d5.

11...♘xa4 12.♘xa4 d6



13.♗e3

It was correct to take on d6, but Romanishin in those days was convinced that he could sacrifice a pawn against everybody.

After 13.exd6 ♗xd6 14.♗e3 ♕h4 15.♘c3 ♕b4 16.0-0 ♗d7 Black can't be afraid of anything with his pair of bishops.

13...dxe5 14.♖d1 ♕e8 15.♗c5 e4

15...h5! was better, with the threat of 16...♗g4.

16.♕g3

Still harbouring ambitions. Stronger was simply 16.♕xe4 ♗f5 17.♗xe7+ ♕xe7 18.♕xe7+ ♔xe7 19.♔d2.

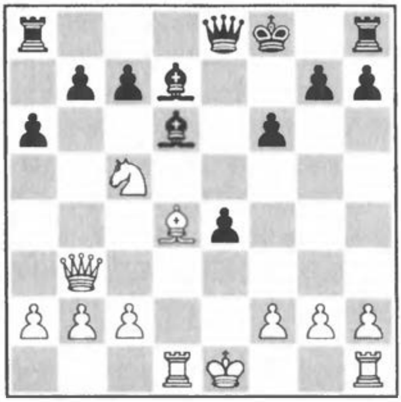
16...♗d7

Possible was 16...b6 17.♗xe7+ ♕xe7 18.♘c3 ♗b7 19.♘d5 ♗xd5 20.♖xd5 ♖d8 21.♖xd8+ ♕xd8 22.0-0.

17.♗d4

Not sufficient was 17.♗xe7+ ♕xe7 18.♘c3 ♗c6 19.0-0 g6 20.♖fe1 ♖e8.

17...f6 18.♘c5 ♗d6 19.♕b3



19...♗g4! 20.0-0

Or 20.♕xb7 ♗xd1 21.♔xd1 ♖d8 22.♔c1 ♗xc5 23.♗xc5+ ♔f7 24.♕xc7+ ♖d7 and Black consolidates.

20...♕h5

Possible was the sharp 20...♗xd1 21.♘e6+ ♔e7 22.♘xg7 ♕g6 23.♕e6+ ♔f8.

21.h3 ♗xd1 22.♘e6+ ♔e7 23.♘xg7 ♕g6 24.♕e6+ ♔f8 25.♘f5 ♗f3 26.♘h4 ♕f7 27.♕xf7+ ♔xf7 28.gxf3 ♖hg8+ 29.♔h1 exf3 30.♘xf3 ♖ae8

With an extra exchange Black is easily winning. Beliavsky won on move 56.

☐ **Zeljko Pavicic**
■ **Adrian Mikhalchishin**
Sibenik 2007

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.d4 ♘xd4 6.♘xd4 exd4 7.e5 ♘e4 8.♕xd4

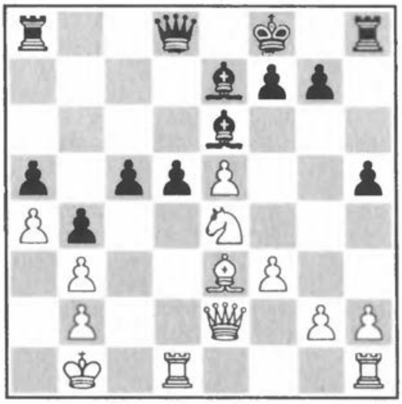
Wrong is 8.0-0 b5 9.♕xd4? ♗b7 10.♗b3 c5 and Black arrests the b3 bishop: 11.♗xf7+ ♔xf7 12.♕e3 c4 13.♖e1 ♔g8 14.♕f4 ♘c5 15.♘c3 ♘e6 16.♕g3 ♕e8 17.f4 ♘d4 18.♕f2 ♕g6 19.♔h1 ♞xc2 0-1, Coklin-Mikhalchishin, Ljubljana 1995.

8...♘c5 9.♘c3 ♗e7 10.♕g4

Perhaps 10.♘d5!?.

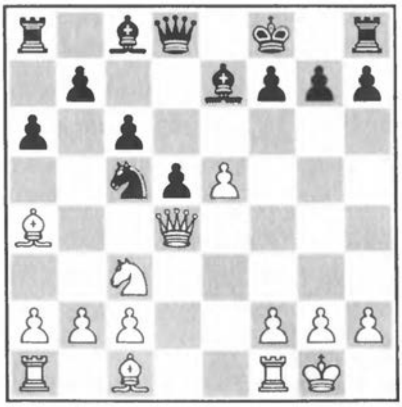
10...♔f8 11.♗b3

– Even worse is 11.♗f4 d5 12.♕e2 c6 13.♗b3 h5 14.0-0-0 ♗e6 15.♗e3 b5 16.f3 a5 17.a4♘xb3+ 18.cxb3 b4 19.♘e4c5 20.♔b1



20...d4 21.♕c2 ♕d5 22.♗g5 ♖c8 23.♗xe7+ ♔xe7 24.♘d2 ♕xe5 25.♕d3 ♖hd8 26.♕c2 ♗f5, with a clear advantage for Black, Acosta-Mikhalchishin, Mexico 1980.

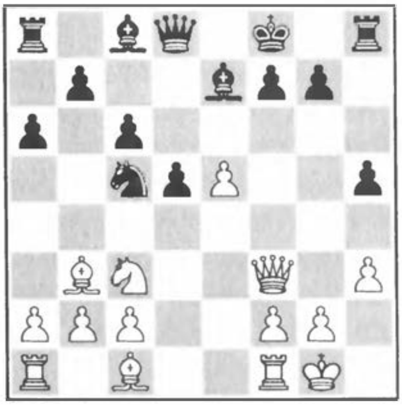
– 11.0-0 d5 12.♕d4 (12.♕h5 d4 13.♖d1 ♘xa4 14.♘xa4 b5∓) 12...c6



13.♗b3 (13.f4!? ♗f5 14.g4!? ♘xa4! 15.♘xa4 ♗xc2) 13...h5 (13...♗f5 14.g4! ♘xb3 15.cxb3 ♗g6 16.f4) 14.♘e2 ♗f5 15.♗e3!? (15.♕d1! ♕d7 16.♘d4 g6 17.c3 ♔g7 18.♗e3, ± Kortchnoi) 15...♘xb3 16.cxb3 c5 and Black was clearly better in Short-Kortchnoi, London 1980.

11...d5 12.♕f3 c6 Black does not need to take the bishop on b3. On the contrary, it is necessary to play as if it does not exist! Black has to create a strong centre and to develop his king – just that and White has no real counterplay.

13.0-0 h5 14.h3



14...g5! First I just wanted to complete my artificial castling with 14...g6, but when I looked deeper into the position, I realized, that Black actually has a powerful initiative on the kingside

15.♗e3 It was slightly better to sacrifice a pawn with 15.♕e2 g4 16.h4 ♗xh4 17.♗e3 ♗e7 18.f3 trying to open the f-file.

15...g4 16.hxg4 ♗xg4

16...hxg4 17.♕g3 was also possible, but I did not see the queen transfer 17...♕d7! 18.f3 ♘xb3 19.axb3 ♕f5.

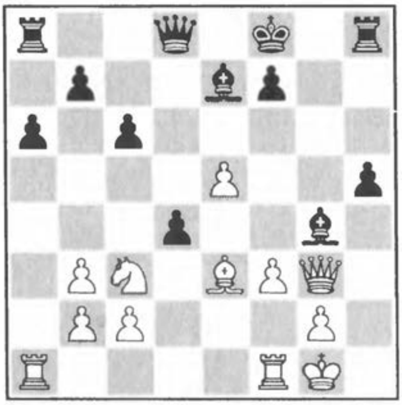
17.♕g3

17.♕f4! ♘e6 18.♕h2 h4 leads to unclear game, but I still prefer Black's position.

17...♘xb3

17...d4 18.♖ad1 ♗xd1 19.♖xd1 ♘xb3 20.axb3 c5 was clearly better for Black.

18.axb3 d4 19.f3



19...♗h4 Faster was 19...dxe3 20.fxg4 e2 21.♘xe2 ♗c5+ 22.♖f2 ♕d2.

20.♕f4 dxe3 21.fxg4 ♗f2+ 22.♖xf2 exf2+ 23.♕xf2 hxg4 Black has won an exchange.

24.♖f1 ♖h7 25.♘e4 g3! It is necessary to deflect one of the white pieces. **26.♘xg3 ♕h4 27.♖e1 ♖e8 28.♖e4 ♕h2+ 29.♔f1 ♖g7 30.♖e3 ♖e6** More exact was 30...♖d8. **31.♕f4 ♕h6 32.♕d4 ♕g5** 32...♖g4!. **33.♔f2 ♖h7 34.♕b4+ ♕e7 35.♕f4** In the endgame Black is winning, but it demands precise play: 35.♕xe7+ ♔xe7 36.♔f3 ♖g6 37.♘f5+ ♔e6 38.♘d4+ ♔d7 39.g3 c5.

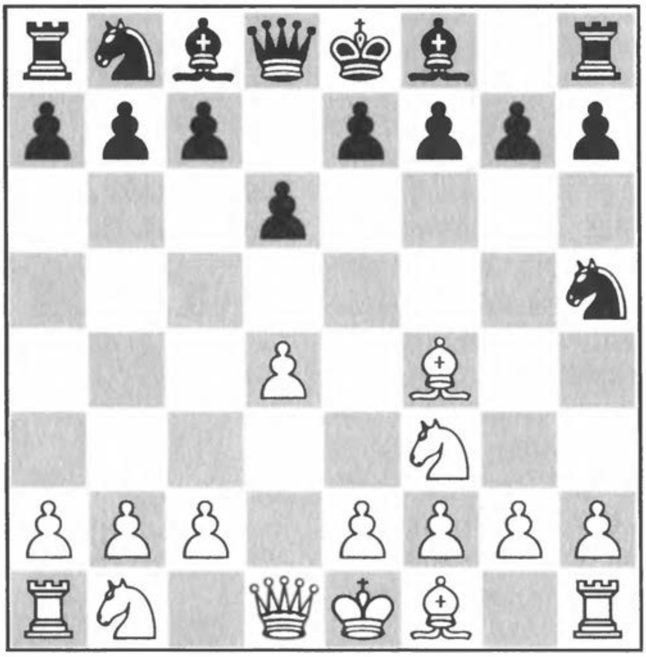
35...♕h4 36.♕f5 ♖g7 37.♕d3 ♖g4 38.♔g1 ♖eg6 39.♔f2 ♖d4 40.♕e2 ♖f4+ 41.♔g1 ♖xg3

White resigned.

CHAPTER 13

Dimitri Reinderman

Panic in the London



1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 d6 3.♗f4 ♘h5

You probably know the type of player that doesn't want to study theory and plays the London system with white. 1.d4, 2.♘f3 and 3.♗f4, bishops to h2 and e2, knight to d2, pawns to e3 and c3 (or c4), castle short etc. It is a legal way of playing, but is it fun?

Well, that is their problem, unless you are paired against such a player. Let's say you are a King's Indian adherent, what are your options then? Well, you can study a good line against the London to get equality from the opening. However, probably your opponent will be more familiar with the position than you are. Isn't there a way to get him out of his usual pattern without playing something dubious? Yes, there is!

Start with 1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 d6 (instead of 2...g6). After 3.c4 you play 3...g6 to get the King's Indian, but your opponent will probably play 3.♗f4. Now comes the surprise: 3...♘h5! Immediately your opponent has a problem: what do to with the bishop?

There are nine possible moves (that don't lose right away), of which four have been used in practice.

Many players will move their bishop to g3. Black is fine though after 4...g6, and, as our first game Bree-Kupreichik shows, Black can even get an advantage if White plays unambitiously.

If White moves the bishop to g5, Black will chase it to g3 with h6 and g5. This is slightly weakening, but Black has good chances with his pair of bishops, as you can see in the second game of this article, Mordiglia-Efimov.

4.♗c1 has been played by good players. Black can repeat moves with 4...♘f6, but 4...g6 is also good, though you have to be aware that after 5.e4 and 6.♘c3 a Pirc arises. The Pirc may not be on your repertoire, but having the free moves ...♘f6 and ...♘h5 is a nice bonus.

The fourth move that has been played in practice is 4.♗d2 and this is White's best try for an advantage. White can make use of the move ♗d2 by putting the bishop on c3. Still, in game 3, Biriukov-Golubev, Black was fine after the opening.

So far for practice, but for completeness sake I will discuss the other possibilities too. White can defend the bishop by 4.e3, 4.g3 or 4.♕c1. It's not totally stupid, but you can be happy after taking the bishop and putting yours on the long diagonal. Another move not in the database is 4.♗e3, and while it looks antipositional (blocking the e-pawn), it's actually not that bad: White can continue with g3 and ♗g2 or even ♕d2 and ♗h6, with an interesting game.

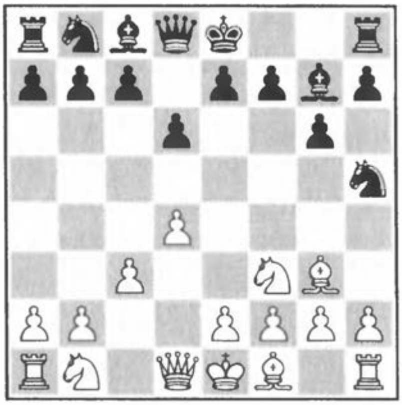
All in all, 3...♘h5 is a good way to avoid the standard London moves, and, quite importantly, it is fun for Black!

Alas, White is not obliged to play 3.♗f4 immediately, but after the annotated games I will give some options if White tries something else on the third move (like 3.h3 to transpose to the London after all).

☐ **Thomas Bree**
■ **Viktor Kupreichik**
Münster 1995

In this game White plays the usual solid moves: e3, c3 and moving the bishop back. Since square h2 is occupied, it stands on g3 now. Black gets easy equality though and gradually outplays his opponent.

1.d4 ♞f6 2.♞f3 d6 3.♗f4 ♘h5 4.♗g3 g6 5.c3 ♗g7



6.e3

White can also play with e4 (which I think is better) but Black will castle and play ...e5 just like in the game.

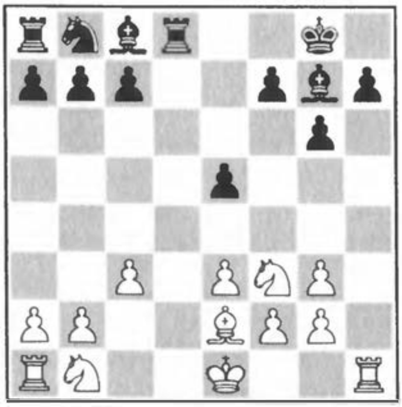
6...0-0 7.♗e2 e5

Taking on g3 first is more accurate, as White can play 8.♗h4 now to keep his bishop.

8.dxe5 ♘xg3 9.hxg3 dxe5 10.♕xd8

White hopes to make a draw by exchanging a lot. Meanwhile, Black gets the d-file for free.

10...♖xd8



11.♗c4

Threatening 12.♘g5 and also making room for the king. But if the bishop is on c4, where can the knight on b1 go to? It can go to b3, but as the game shows it's not doing much there.

11...h6 12.a4 ♘d7 13.♘bd2 a5 14.♔e2 ♘c5

The knight stands well here: looking at d3 and attacking a4.

15.♘b3

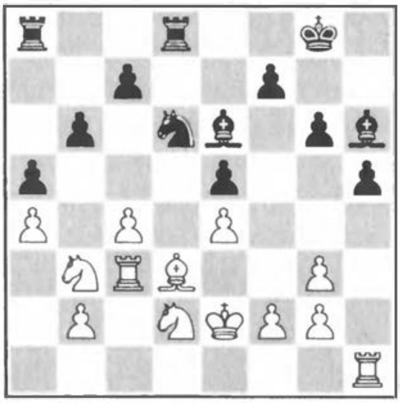
Black's knight isn't allowed to stay on c5, but now the white knights will be passive.

15...♘e4 16.♘fd2 ♘d6 17.♗d3 b6 18.e4 ♗e6

The position is almost symmetrical and the pair of bishops doesn't play a role (yet), but White can't do much while Black can improve his position by activating his king's bishop and doubling his rooks on the d-file.

19.♖ac1 h5 20.c4 ♗h6 21.♖c3

21.c5 loses a pawn: 21...♗xb3 22.cxd6 ♗xd2 23.dxc7 ♗xc1 24.cxd8♕+ ♖xd8 25.♖xc1 ♗xa4.



21...♘b7!

Preventing c5 and making room for the bishop.

22.♘f3 f6

In the next four moves White does nothing, while Black improves his position to perfection.

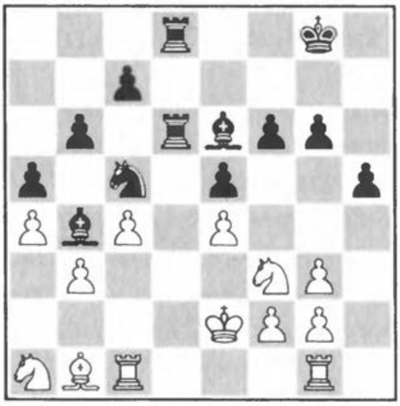
23.♗c2 ♗f8 24.♗d3 ♖d7 25.♗b1 ♖ad8 26.♖cc1 ♗b4 27.♖hg1

White can do little but move this rook.

27...♖d6

With the idea of winning the pawn on a4 by ♗d7.

28.♘a1 ♘c5 29.b3



29...♗g4

Black could win a pawn with 29...♗a3 30.♖cd1 ♞xa4, but the game move is good enough.

30.♖cd1 ♖d2+ 31.♖xd2 ♖xd2+ 32.♔e3 ♖b2 33.♗c2 ♖a2 34.♖c1 ♗c3

The queen's knight was never really happy in this game, and now it dies on a sad square...

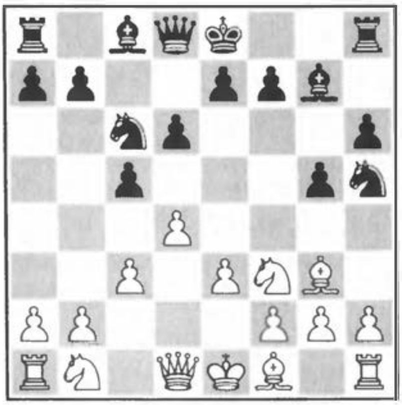
White resigned.

☐ **Riccardo Mordiglia**
■ **Igor Efimov**
Arco 1999

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 d6 3.♗f4 ♘h5 4.♗g5 h6 5.♗h4 g5 6.♗g3

Black has the additional moves ...h6 and ...g5 compared to 4.♗g3, which has advantages and disadvantages, but compare this position with the one after 1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 d6 3.♗g5 g6 4.♘bd2 ♗g7 5.e3 h6 6.♗h4 g5 7.♗g3 ♘h5 (a.o. Radjabov-Morozevich, World Blitz 2008). There White has the moves e3 and ♘bd2 extra compared to the game. That variation is not known to be dangerous for White, and with the two extra tempi Black can try to get an advantage.

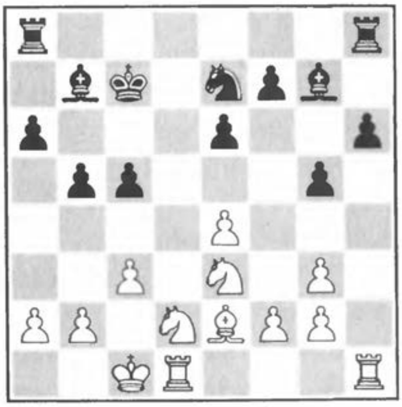
6...♗g7 7.e3 c5 8.c3 ♘c6



9.dxc5

Again White hopes to make a draw by exchanging queens, but in the endgame Black is a little more active, and the two bishops might play a role later.

9...♘xg3 10.hxg3 dxc5 11.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 12.♘a3 a6 13.0-0-0+ ♔c7 14.e4 b5 15.♘c2 ♗b7 16.♘e3 e6 17.♗e2 ♘e7 18.♘d2



The situation is better here for White than in the previous game: White's pieces have some activity, the knight on e7 is not doing much and the bishop on g7 doesn't bother White (since b4 would give White square c4 for his knight). Still Black is slightly more comfortable here.

18...♖ad8 19.♗h5 ♖hf8 20.♖he1 ♖d7 21.♘b3 ♖xd1+ 22.♖xd1 c4 23.♘c5

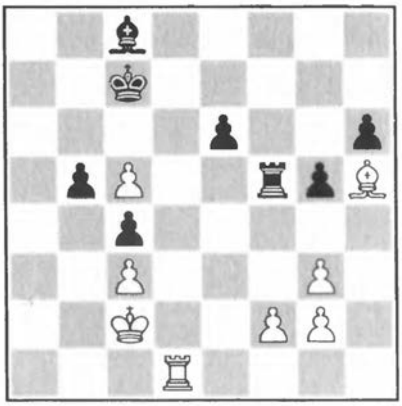
A bit risky, since the knight cannot cannot go back anymore.

23...♗c8 24.♔c2 ♗e5 25.b4 ♗d6

And now it looks like White will lose a pawn.

26.a4 f5 27.axb5 axb5 28.exf5 ♗xc5 29.bxc5 ♘xf5 30.♘xf5 ♖xf5

And he does, but the situation is far from hopeless for White.



31.♗f3?

But after this move it is hopeless.

31.♖f1 ♖xc5 32.♖e1 gives good chances to draw: Black has difficulties in creating a passed pawn and h6 is weak.

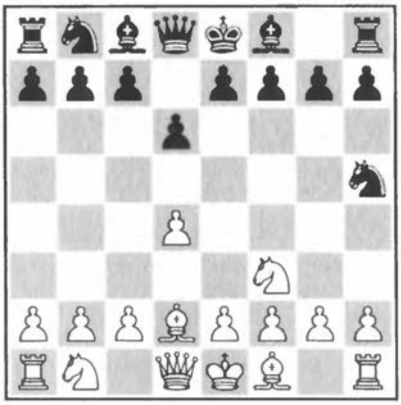
31...♗b7! 32.♖e1 ♗xf3 33.gxf3 ♖xf3 34.♖xe6 ♖xf2+ 35.♔c1 ♖f3

White resigned, since after 36.♔c2 h5 37.♖e7+ ♔c6 38.♖e6+ ♔d7 39.♖h6 ♖xg3 40.♖xh5 ♔c6 he will lose another pawn.

☐ **Sergey Biriukov**
■ **Mikhail Golubev**
Alushta 2005

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 d6 3.♗f4 ♘h5 4.♗d2

The critical move. The question is whether the bishop is better on d2 than on its original square. If White plays c4 and ♘c3, the rook can go to c1, which is useful. Also there is the option of playing ♗c3. The other question is how useful the knight on h5 is. Well, on f6 it has more influence on the centre, but there it blocks the bishop on g7 (assuming Black goes for a fianchetto) and the pawn on f7. With the knight on h5, Black can play ...g6, ...♗g7, ...0-0, ...e5 and ...f5 if White plays passively. And if White plays e4, the knight might go to f4.



4...g6

The grandmasters haven't agreed so far what the best move is here.

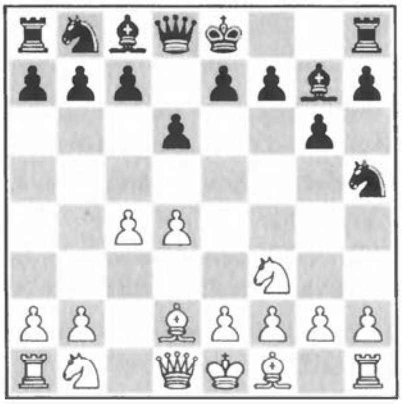
- Kupreichik and Quinteros have played 4...f5, which you can play if you have some understanding of the Leningrad Dutch:
  - 5.e4 fxe4 6.♘g5 ♘f6 7.f3 ♘c6 8.d5 ♘xd5 9.fxe4 ♘f6 10.♘c3 h6 11.♘f3 ♗g4 was OK for Black in Prang-Kupreichik, Münster 1994.
  - 5.c4 g6 6.♘c3 ♗g7 7.e4 0-0 8.exf5 ♗xf5 9.h3 ♗d7 10.♗e3 and now 10...♘c6 would have been about equal in Glienke-Quinteros, Hannover 1983.
- Anthony Miles tried 4...♗g4 5.h3 ♗xf3 6.exf3 g6 7.♗e2 ♗g7 8.c3 ♘d7 9.f4 ♘hf6 against Sazonov in Agios Nikolaos, 1995, which is playable, but personally I like to keep my bishops.
- And then there is a very old game: 4...♘f6 5.c4 ♘bd7 6.♗c3 e6 7.e3 d5 8.c5 ♘e4 9.♗d3 f5 10.b4 g6 11.♗b2 ♗g7 and eventually Black won in 29 moves in Cohn-Nimzowitsch, Ostend 1909, but this is mainly interesting for historical reasons.

4...g6 is the move if you like to play a King's Indian.

5.c4

White can also go for the Pirc with 5.e4 ♗g7 6.♘c3 0-0 7.♗e2, and now Black has to be a bit careful. If he tries 7...e5 White can play 8.♗g5! which is annoying, e.g. 8...f6 9.♗e3 ♘f4 10.♗xf4 exf4 11.♕d2 is better for White. But Black can first play 7...c6 and on the next move play ...e5 or ...b5.

5...♗g7



6.♗c3!?

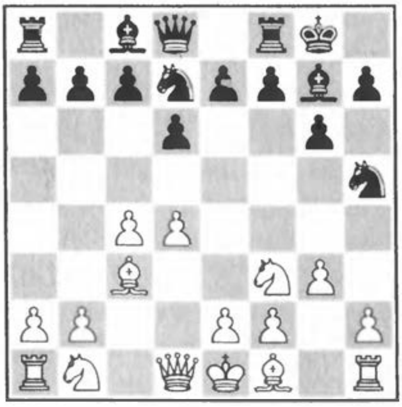
White uses the fact that Black can't play ...♘e4. After 6.♘c3 0-0 7.e4 Black has different options, but safest is 7...c6 8.♗e2 e5 followed by a quick ...♘f4.

6...0-0 7.g3

White was a bit better after 7.e3 ♘d7 8.♗e2 f5 9.d5 ♘df6 10.♘bd2 c5 11.0-0 ♕e8 12.a3 in Appel-Flores, Vlissingen 2007, but I don't think White has any advantage after the simple 8...e5.

7.g3 is more logical than 7.e3, since the bishop is more active on the long diagonal than on e2, and if White plays e4 in the future, he won't be bothered by ...♘f4.

7...♘d7



8.d5

Otherwise Black just plays 8...e5.

8...♘hf6

While it isn't necessarily terrible to exchange bishops, a King's Indian player prefers to hang on to 'his precious' if he can.

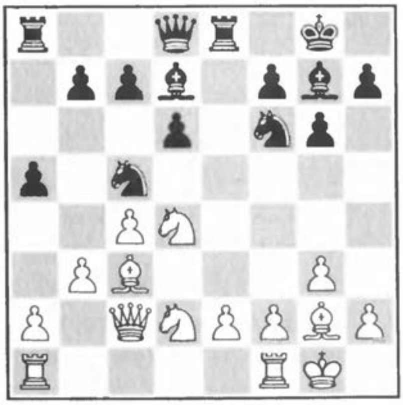
9.♗g2 ♘c5 10.♘bd2 a5 11.0-0 e5

Now 12...♘ce4 is a mini-threat.

12.dxe6

More or less obligatory, since 12.♘e1 ♗f5 13.f3 c6 isn't attractive for White.

12...♗xe6 13.♘d4 ♗d7 14.♕c2 ♖e8 15.b3



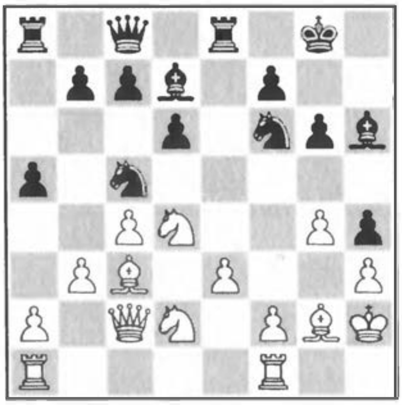
If we put the bishop on b2, the knight on c3 and the rook on d1, we get a theoretical position. This suggests that Black has won some tempi. However, if he just develops, White might consolidate and use his space advantage, so instead Black goes for an active plan: attacking the white king.

15...h5 16.h3 ♕c8 17.♔h2 h4?!

This brings rise to interesting complications, but better would have been 17...♗f5!, since 18.♘xf5 ♕xf5 19.♕xf5 gxf5 is good for Black due to the threats 20...♘g4+ and 20...♖xe2. Instead White should play 18.♕b2 when 18...♘fe4 is equal.

18.g4 ♗h6 19.e3

Now if Black doesn't act, f4 might be on the cards one day.



19...♗xg4!? 20.hxg4 ♘xg4+ 21.♔h1

White could have played for a win with 21.♔g1!, and now either 21...♖xe3 22.♖ad1 or 21...♘xf2 22.♖xf2 ♗xe3 23.♘f1, which is not quite clear but should be better for White.

21...♗xe3 22.♗d5

And here 22.♘e4! ♘xe4 23.♗xe4 ♘xf2+ 24.♖xf2 ♖xe4 25.♕xe4 ♗xf2 26.♔g2 could have been tried.

22...♘e5 This forces the draw.

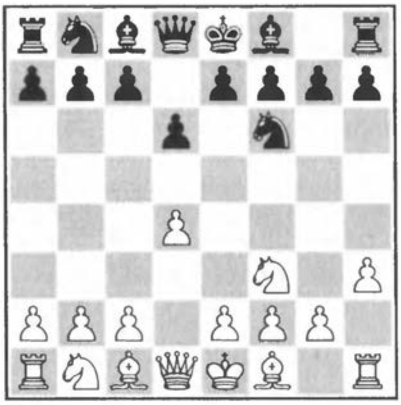
23.♗xf7+ ♔h7 24.fxe3 ♕h3+ 25.♔g1 ♕g3+ Draw.

Odds and ends

After 1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 d6 White might postpone ♗f4 and play the London move(s) c3 and/or h3 first.

- 3.c3 has the idea that after 3...g6 4.♗f4 ♘h5 5.♗g5 h6 6.♗h4 g5 7.♗g3 White is a tempo up compared to Mordiglia-Efimov. It's still fine for Black, but I recommend 3...♘bd7. After 4.♗f4 there is 4...♘h5 again, and otherwise Black plays 4...e5.

● If White really wants to get a London set-up, he can play 3.h3.



Unfortunately, our pet move won't annoy White now: 3...g6 4.♗f4 ♘h5 5.♗h2 has the bishop placed on the usual comfortable square. Still it's possible to get a non-standard position.

I will give some examples:

– 3...♘bd7 4.♗f4 c5 5.e3 ♕b6 6.♕c1 cxd4 7.exd4 e5!? with complications has been tried in some games. Alas White can avoid this by playing 5.c3.

– 3...c5 is the elite choice: 4.c3 (4.dxc5 ♕a5+ 5.c3 ♕xc5 6.b4 ♕c7 7.♗b2 g6 8.e3 ♗g7 9.♘bd2 0-0 10.c4 gave Grachev an equal position against Grischuk and against Carlsen in the World Blitz 2008) 4...b6 5.♗f4 ♗a6 6.♘bd2 g6 7.e3 ♗xf1 8.♘xf1 ♗g7 9.♘1d2 0-0 10.0-0 ♘c6=, Dobbelhammer-Humer, Austria 1999 is quite a London, but at least White had to think here.

On the third move, White might also abondon the London by playing 3.♗g5 or 3.♘c3.

● 3.♗g5 ♘bd7 is OK for Black: continue either with ...g6, with ...h6/...g5/...♘h5 or ...e5 and ...♗e7.

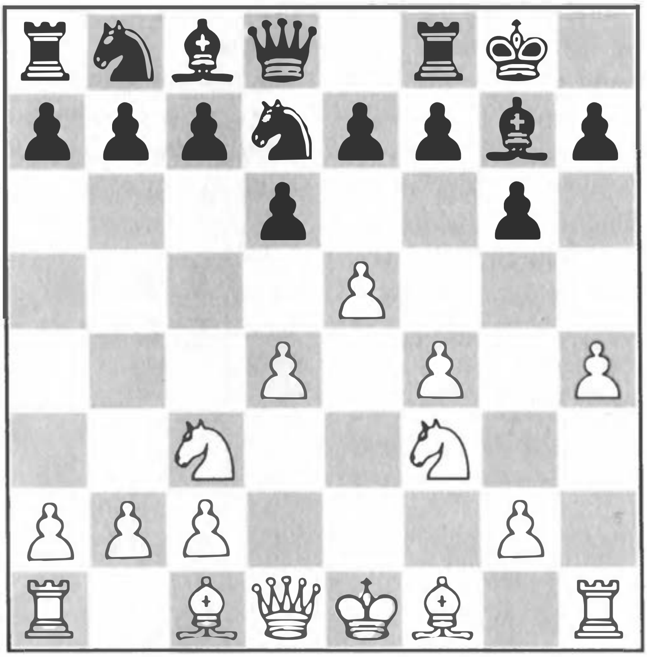
● After 3.♘c3 you can play the Pirc (3...g6), Philidor (3...♘bd7 and 4...e5) or the Miles system (3...♗g4), but 3...♗f5 (Adams, Spassky, Tal) and 3...d5 (Morozevich, Capablanca, Euwe) aren't bad either.

Hopefully you don't have to worry about all this and can surprise your opponent with 3.♗f4 ♘h5!

CHAPTER 14

Alexander Finkel

Pirc Defence – Taking off the Gloves



4.f4 ♗g7 5.♘f3 0-0 6.e5 ♘fd7 7.h4!?

In SOS-12 I covered the line starting with 5.e5 dxe5 6.dxe5 ♕xd1+ 7.♔xd1, indicating that one can't be absolutely sure that the queens will be swapped, due to 5...♘fd7!?, following which White doesn't really have a choice, but to opt for 6.♘f3 0-0 7.h4, transposing to our present subject. I guess I should add now that if Black meets 6.e5 with 6...dxe5 White should definitely reply 7.dxe5, entering the endgame examined in my previous Pirc article.

Since both lines are closely connected and basically combine an integral part of one whole variation (although it's hard to think of two more polar sub-lines!) it's highly recommended to carefully read both of them – it will provide you with a complete tool box against the Pirc.

With 7.h4!? White is going for a direct assault on Black's king, intending to make good use of his rook on h1 after opening up the h-file by means of h4-h5-hxg6. The queen is transferred to h4 or h2 later on (depending on your personal taste), while the king either stays in the centre or will be evacuated to the queenside.

White's attacking set-up is quite intimidating, however, the luxury to attack from the very first moves bears a heavy price. White has to make serious strategic and sometimes material concessions (meaning major risks) to make it work.

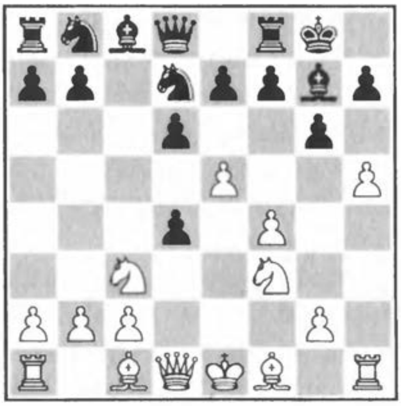
Basically, one shouldn't be too concerned with the material concessions that have to be made; usually it's about sacrificing a pawn to keep the flame of the attack burning, a not too excessive price to pay if you ask me.

The strategic concessions have more impact though. Since Black meets White's flank aggression by breaking up the centre with 7...c5 (just as the general strategic rule prescribes), White's over-extended pawn chain (d4, e5, f4) is usually eliminated, opening up the a1-h8 diagonal for the black dark-squared bishop and freeing some squares for other black minor pieces. Moreover, White is forced to give up control over the centre, so he is highly dependent on the success of his attack.

On the positive side, when Black accepts the pawn sacrifice White's attack may become extremely dangerous, as you will see in the illustrative games.

☐ **Jan Banas**
■ **Stefan Kindermann**
Trnava 1987

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 g6 4.f4 ♗g7 5.♘f3 0-0 6.e5 ♘fd7 7.h4 c5 8.h5 cxd4

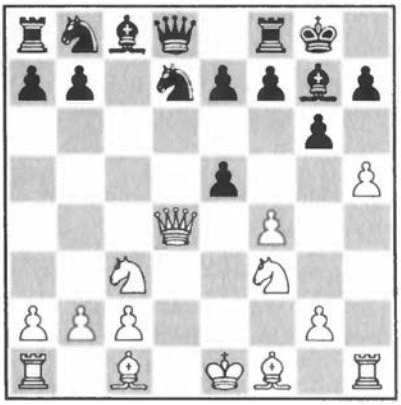


9.♕xd4

In my opinion this move offers White more chances to fight for an opening advantage than the more committal piece sacrifice 9.hxg6 (as was played for example in Shirov-Smirin, Odessa 2007). I cannot really advise this course although it leads to exciting chess (with some forced draws).

9...dxe5

The best reply. After 9...♘c6? 10.♕f2 ♖e8 11.hxg6 hxg6 12.e6 fxe6 13.♗d3 ♘f8 14.♕g3 White just had a fantastic attacking position in Hector-Johansen, Gausdal 1990.



10.♕f2

It is not so easy to make a choice between the move in the game and the less popular 10.♕g1, which also offers White excellent attacking chances, but I eventually decided to concentrate on the main line and bring to your attention three highly interesting games which cover all possible developments.

10.♕g1!? e4 11.♘g5 (11.♘xe4 ♘f6 12.♘xf6+ exf6 13.hxg6 ♖e8+ 14.♔f2 hxg6 15.♗d3 ♘d7 16.♗d2 ♘c5 17.♔g3 b6 18.♖h4 ♗a6∓, Santos-Ribeiro, Lisbon 1996) 11...♘f6 12.hxg6 hxg6 13.♗e2 (13.♕h2 ♕d4 14.♘cxe4 ♖e8 – 14...♖d8 – 15.c3 ♕d5 16.♘d2 ♕c6 17.♗c4 e6 18.0-0 b5 19.♗e2±, Minic-Unger, Bad Wörishofen 1985) 13...♘c6 14.♕h2 ♕d4?! 15.♗e3 ♕b4 (15...♕xe3 16.♘d5) 16.0-0-0 ♖d8 17.a3

♖xd1+ 18.♖xd1 ♕a5 19.♗c4+–, Izquierdo-Belistri, Uruguay 1982.

10...e4

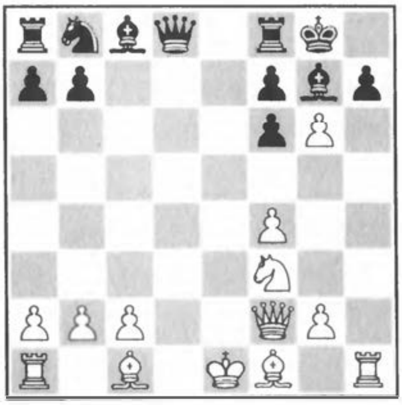
This reply is considered to be Black's safest choice. The other two popular options are 10...exf4 and 10...e6, which will be examined in the next games.

11.♘xe4

This move is more popular than 11.♘g5, which leads to much sharper play.

For those of you who like to take greater risks I'd suggest to take a closer look at White's play in E.Pähtz-Schmaltz: 11.♘g5 ♘f6 12.hxg6 hxg6 13.♗e3!? (13.♕h4? ♕d4! 14.♘gxe4 ♖e8 15.♗d3 ♗f5 16.♘e2 ♕d5 17.♘xf6+ exf6∓, Matousek-Gofshtein, Prague 1989) 13...♗g4 14.♕h4 ♘bd7 (14...♕a5! is better – Vigus) 15.♘gxe4 ♖e8 16.♘f2 e5 17.f5 ♗xf5 18.0-0-0 with an initiative for White, E.Pähtz-Schmaltz, Dresden 2002.

11...♘f6 12.♘xf6+ exf6 13.hxg6



13...♖e8+!

An important intermediate move, aimed at preventing White from castling queenside.

13...hxg6?! 14.♗d2 ♘c6 15.0-0-0 ♗e6 16.♕h4 ♖e8 17.f5 ♗xf5 18.♕h7+ 1-0, Jovanovic-Martic, Bizovac 2007.

14.♗e3

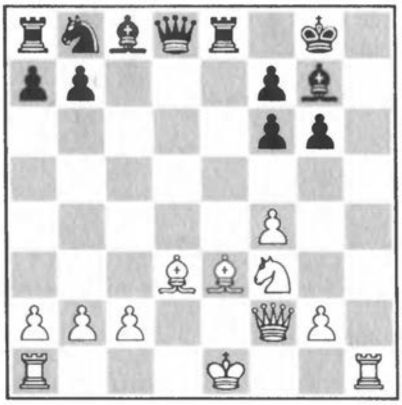
Black seems to be doing fine after this, so perhaps more challenging for Black is 14.♗e2 fxg6 15.♗d2!?, with the idea to keep the rook on the h-file: 15...♕e7 16.♔f1 ♘c6 17.♗d3 with an attack.

Instead of 15.♗d2!?, practice has also seen 15.0-0 ♘c6 when play is equal after either:

- 16.♗e3 ♔h8 17.♖fe1 ♗f5 18.c3 ♕a5 19.♘d4 ♘xd4 20.♗xd4 ♗e4 21.♗f3 ♗xf3 22.♕xf3 ♕b5, Zichichi-Diaz, Havana 1966, or
- 16.♗d2 ♕c7 17.♗c4+ ♗e6 18.♗xe6+ ♖xe6 19.♖fe1 ♖ae8 20.♖xe6 ♖xe6 21.♖e1 ♕e7 22.♗c3 ♖xe1+ draw, Pulyaev-Goroschenko, Alushta 2005.

14...hxg6 15.♗d3

White got a fantastic position after 15.♗c4 ♕e7? 16.0-0-0 ♕c7 17.♗b3 ♘d7 18.♖he1 ♘f8 19.♘d4 ♗g4 20.♖d2, Fabian-Pinter, Slovakia 2002/03. However, things look far less attractive after the natural 15...♕b6! intending 16.♘e5 ♕a5+ 17.♗d2 ♕c7–+.



15...♕a5+

15...♕b6 deserves attention, after 16.♔d2 Black must choose between:

- 16...♕xb2? 17.♗c5! f5 (17...b6 18.♖hb1 ♕xa1 19.♖xa1 bxc5 20.♕xc5±) 18.♘e5 ♘d7 19.♖hb1 ♗xe5 20.♖xb2 ♗xb2 21.♖e1 ♖xe1 22.♔xe1 ♘xc5 23.♕xc5±, and
- 16...♕a5+, when White should not play 17.♔c1?!, because of 17...♘c6 18.♗d2 (18.♘d4!? ♘b4) 18...♕d5 19.♘h4 (19.♕h4 ♗f5 20.♗xf5 ♕xf5 21.♕h7+ ♔f8∓)

19...♗g4 20.♕f1 ♘d4∓, Varadi-Ianov, Nyiregyhaza 2002. Instead the white king feels quite comfortable in the centre after 17.c3!? ♘c6 18.♘d4 ♗d7 19.♘b3±.

16.c3 ♗g4 17.0-0 ♘c6 18.♘d4 f5!?

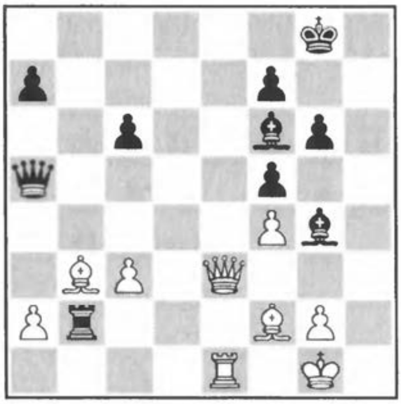
Black is trying to take over the initiative. Simply 18...♘xd4!? 19.♗xd4 f5 20.♗xg7 ♔xg7 21.a4 ♖ad8 was good enough for equality.

19.♘xc6 bxc6 20.♖fe1 ♖ad8 21.♗c2

Or 21.♗e2 ♖d7. **21...♖e7 22.♗b3 ♖de8 23.♕g3**

Preparing a trade of rooks over the e-file.

23...♗f6 24.♗f2 Of course not 24.♗d4?? ♗xd4+ 25.cxd4 ♖xe1+−+. **24...♖e2 25.♖xe2 ♖xe2 26.♖e1! ♖xb2** 26...♖xe1+ 27.♗xe1 ♕b5. **27.♕e3**



27...♕c7?

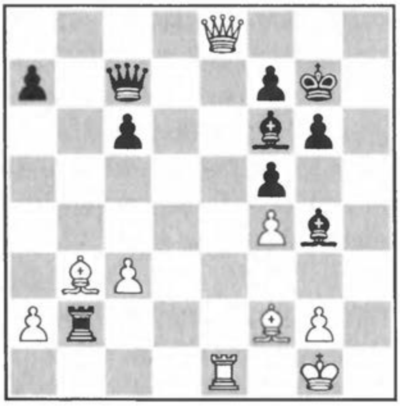
Throwing away everything that was achieved by the previous energetic play. It was much better to play 27...♔g7! 28.♕e8 ♕xc3 29.♕xf7+ ♔h6, forcing White to deal with the ...♖xf2 threat.

28.♕e8+

All of a sudden Black finds himself in a rather unpleasant situation, as all White's pieces take part in the attack.

28...♔g7?

It was necessary to play 28...♔h7 29.♗xf7 ♖b8 30.♕e6 ♔g7, although White's initiative is extremely dangerous after 31.♗e8.



29.♗c5! After this strong move Black is helpless against the many threats.

29...♗xc3

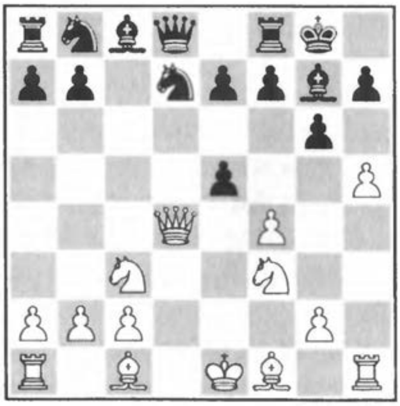
29...♗h5 30.♕f8+ ♔h7 31.♗xf7 ♕d8 32.♗e8! intending 32...♕d5 (32...♖b7 33.♔h2) 33.♗xc6! ♕xc6 34.♖e7+ ♗xe7 35.♕xe7+ ♔g8 36.♕f8+ ♔h7 37.♕f7+ ♔h6 38.♗f8 mate.

30.♕f8+ ♔h7 31.♗xf7 ♗g7 32.♕g8+ ♔h6 33.♗f8 ♕b6+ 34.♔h1

Black resigned.

☐ **Anatoli Vaisser**
■ **Mladen Palac**
Cannes 2000

1.d4 d6 2.e4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 g6 4.f4 ♗g7 5.♘f3 0-0 6.e5 ♘fd7 7.h4 c5 8.h5 cxd4 9.♕xd4 dxe5



10.♕f2

Bad is 10.fxe5?! ♘xe5 11.♕h4 ♘xf3+ 12.gxf3 ♗f5 13.hxg6 ♗xg6 14.♗d3 h5 (14...♗xc3+ 15.bxc3 ♗xd3 16.cxd3 ♕xd3 looks very dangerous for Black) 15.♗e3 ♘c6 16.0-0-0 ♕a5∓, Sax-Szpisjak, Chicago 1995.

10...exf4

Along with 10...e4 and 10...e6 one of three possible ways to deal with 7.h4, and definitely the most principled one. Black picks up a pawn, offering White to prove that his attacking prospects compensate for the material deficit.

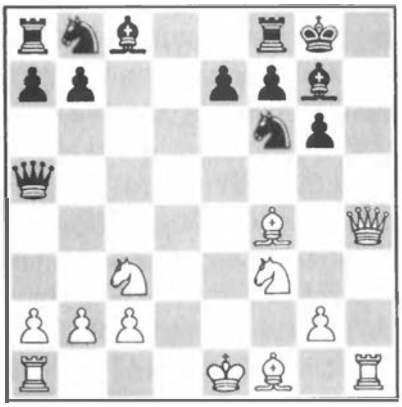
11.hxg6 hxg6

It seems right not to spoil the pawn structure, however 11...fxg6, opening up the f-file for the rook, is perfectly playable too: 12.♖xh7!? (stronger is 12.♕h4 ♘f6 13.♗xf4) 12...♘f6 13.♖h1 ♕c7 14.♕h4 ♘h5∓, Velema-Houben, Hengelo 1997.

12.♕h4 ♘f6 13.♗xf4 ♕a5

Black loses after 13...e5? 14.♗g5 ♖e8 15.♗b5 ♘c6 16.♖d1 ♕e7 17.♘d5, Saldano-Garcia, Albacete 2004.

Perhaps Black can get away with 13...♗f5!? 14.♗d3 ♗xd3 15.0-0-0 ♕a5 16.♖xd3 ♕h5 17.♕e1 ♕f5, Kalendovsky-Babula, Brno 1969.



14.♗b5!

It's vital for White to prevent the transfer of the black queen to h5: 14.0-0-0 ♕h5! (after the exchange of queens it is much more difficult for White to prove an initiative for the sacrificed pawn) 15.♗c4 ♕xh4 16.♘xh4 e6 17.♘b5 ♘a6∓.

Also worse is 14.♘g5?! ♗g4 15.♗d3 ♘bd7 16.0-0♗h5 17.♖ae1 e5? (17...♕b6+ 18.♔h1 ♕xb2 19.♘ce4 ♕a3∓) 18.♗d2 ♕c5+ 19.♗e3 ♕c6 20.♗b5 ♕c7 21.♗e2 with an attack, Bronstein-Palmiotto, Munich ol 1958.

14...♕b4!

An important defensive move, halting ♗h6: 14...a6 15.♗h6 ♘h5 16.♗xg7 ♔xg7 17.g4±.

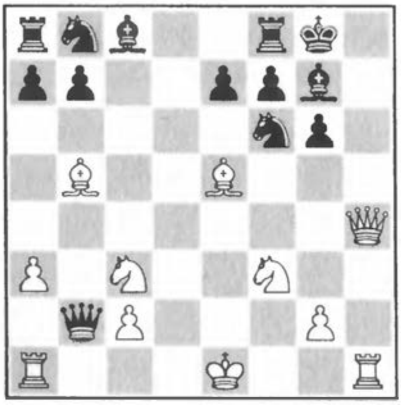
15.a3?

Based on a miscalculation, which was not exploited by Palac in the game.

It was necessary to play 15.0-0-0!? with excellent attacking chances.

15...♕xb2 16.♗e5

Gallagher has analysed 16.♘d5! as stronger, which after complications should lead to a draw by repetition. However, as I mentioned just now in my opinion White should have played 15.0-0-0!?.



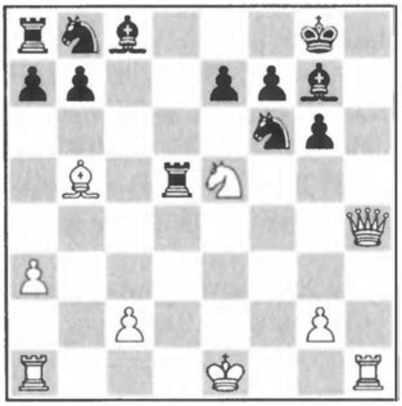
16...♖d8?

Trusting the opponent or just missing the ♕c1-h6 idea, which would've put White on the ropes: 16...♕xa1+! 17.♘d1 ♕c1! 18.♗xf6 ♕h6 and Black should win.

17.♘d5?

There was a much more efficient way to trap the black queen: 17.♖a2! ♕c1+ 18.♔e2 g5 19.♕h2 ♕e3+ 20.♔xe3 ♘g4+ 21.♔e2 ♘xh2 22.♗xg7 with a technically winning position.

17...♕xe5+ 18.♘xe5 ♖xd5



The arising position is quite unclear, but it seems that Black is the one in control.

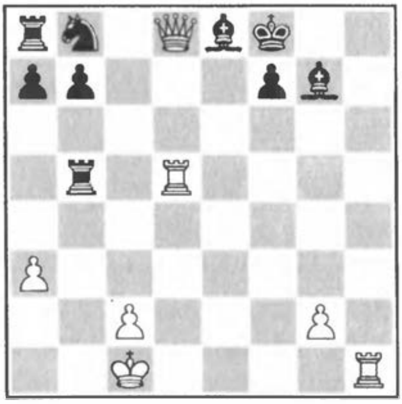
19.♘xg6! ♖xb5!

Making the right choice. After 19...fxg6? 20.♗c4 e6 21.♗xd5 exd5 22.0-0 White's initiative is highly unpleasant.

20.0-0-0 20.♘xe7+? ♔f8 21.♘xc8 ♘bd7.

20...♗d7 White is better after 20...♘c6?! 21.♘xe7+ ♔f8 22.♘xc6 bxc6 23.♖d8+ ♚e7 24.♕d4 ♖d5 25.♖xd5 cxd5 26.♕c5+.

21.♘xe7+ ♔f8 22.♘d5!? ♘xd5 23.♕d8+ ♗e8 24.♖xd5



24...♗b2+?! A serious inaccuracy, which brings up another major mistake two moves later. After the most natural 24...♖xd5 25.♕xd5 ♘c6 White would have to work very hard to keep the balance.

25.♔d2 ♘d7 26.♕g5 ♗f6?? Blundering the rook! 26...♖xd5+ 27.♕xd5 ♗f6±.

27.♕h6+ ♗g7 28.♕d6+

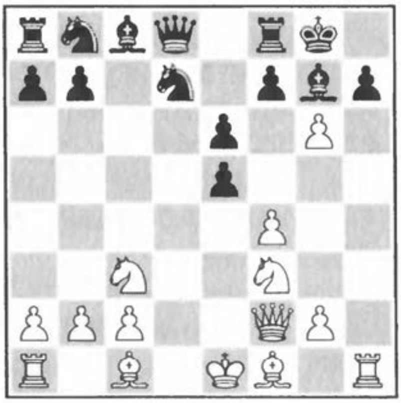
Black resigned.

☐ **Leonid Stein**
■ **Vladimir Liberzon**
Yerevan 1965

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 g6 4.f4 ♗g7 5.♘f3 0-0 6.e5 ♘fd7 7.h4 c5 8.h5 cxd4 9.♕xd4 dxe5 10.♕f2 e6

Finally the least popular out of Black's replies, which however also leads to rather unclear positions.

11.hxg6



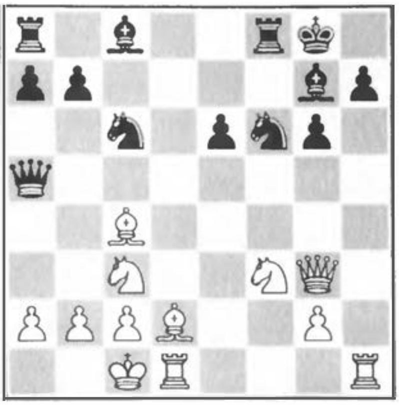
11...fxg6

You need guts to take with the other pawn, but it's the sort of quality you've got to have to successfully defend such positions on the Black side!

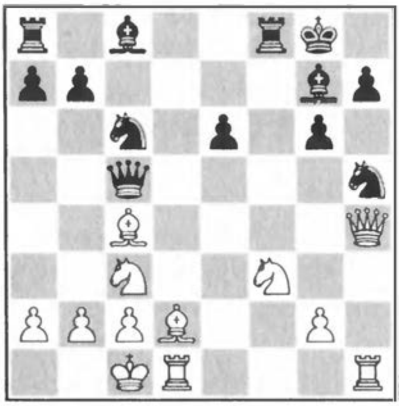
11...hxg6!? 12.♘g5:

- 12...exf4 13.♕h4 ♘f6 14.♗xf4 e5 15.♗d2 ♘bd7 16.0-0-0, Weitzer-Hoffmann, Germany Bundesliga B 1994/95, gives White the attack.
- 12...♖e8!?, and now rather than 13.♗d3?! ♕e7 14.♕h4 ♘f8 15.fxe5 ♘c6! 16.♗f4 ♘xe5 17.0-0-0 ♗d7 18.♗xe5? ♗xe5 19.♖df1 f5∓, Viksni-Fridmans, Riga 1994, White should play 13.fxe5 ♘xe5 14.♕h4 ♘bd7 15.♗e3 ♘f8 16.♖d1 ♗d7 17.♘ce4 with ongoing complications.

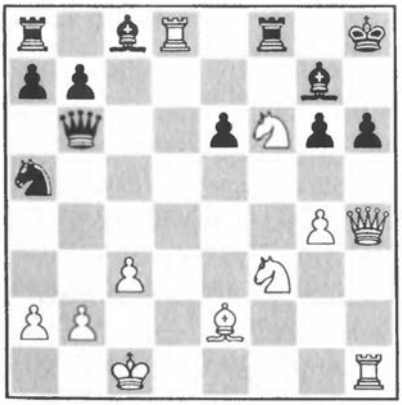
12.♕g3 exf4
No good is 12...♘c6? 13.♕h3 ♘f6 14.fxe5 ♘h5 15.g4 and White has a clear plus.
13.♗xf4 ♕a5
Other replies hardly promise Black an easy life:
– 13...♕f6 14.♗g5 ♕f7 15.♗c4 ♘c6 16.0-0-0 ♘de5 17.♕h4, Osterman-Nouro, Finland 1996/97.
– 13...♖xf4 14.♕xf4 ♘f8 15.♗d3 ♘c6 16.0-0-0 ♕f6 17.♕xf6 ♗xf6 18.♘e4±, Vokac-Votava, Lazne Bohdanec 1996.
– 13...♗xc3+ 14.bxc3 ♕f6 15.♗d2±.
14.♗d2 ♘f6 15.♗c4 ♘c6 16.0-0-0



We may sum up the opening stage of the game. White may be very pleased with the outcome of the opening, as his pieces are very harmonically developed and the semi-open h-file suggests that White is quite likely to get to the black king!
16...♕c5 16...♕f5!?. **17.♕h4 ♘h5**
Black's position remains highly dangerous, but defendable after 17...♕h5 or perhaps 17...b5.
– 17...♘a5 18.♘e4 ♘xe4 (18...♕xc4 19.♘xf6+ ♖xf6 20.♕xh7+ ♔f8 21.♗xa5+–) 19.♕xh7+ ♔f7 20.♗h6 ♖g8 21.♘g5+ ♘xg5 22.♖hf1+ ♔e7 23.♕xg8 ♗xb2+ 24.♔b1 +–.
– 17...♕h5 18.♕e1 ♕g4 19.♕e2±.
– 17...b5!?.



18.♘e4! ♕b6 18...♕xc4? 19.♘f6++–.
19.c3 ♘a5? Just helping White to push g4! It was necessary to play 19...h6.
20.♗e2 Now Black is helpless against the forthcoming 21.g4.
20...h6 21.g4 ♘f4 22.♗xf4 ♖xf4 23.♖d8+
Black's kingside pieces don't get the chance to participate in the game, which is decided by a direct attack.
23...♖f8 23...♔h7 24.♘eg5 mate; 23...♔f7 24.♘d6++–. **24.♘f6+! ♔h8**
24...♔f7 25.♘e5+ ♔e7 26.♘d5 mate; 24...♗xf6 25.♖xf8+ ♔xf8 26.♕xf6++–.

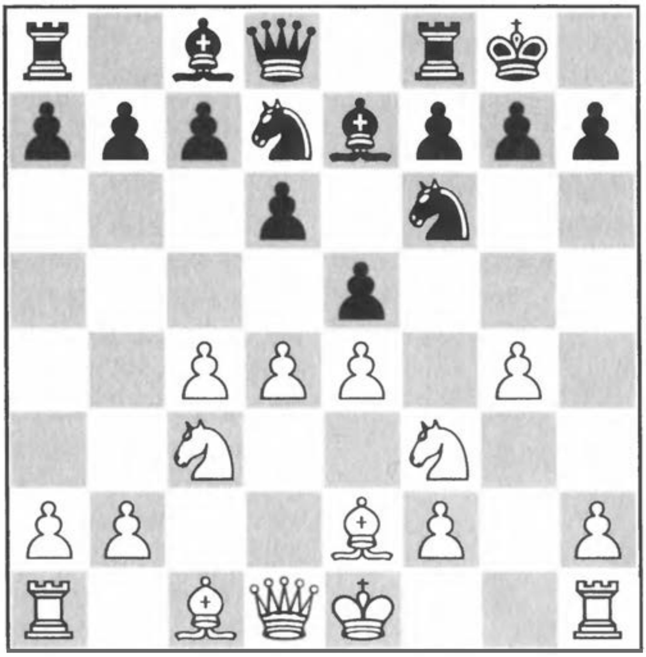


25.♕xh6+!
Black resigned because of 25...♗xh6+ 26.♖xh6+ ♔g7 27.♖h7+ ♔xf6 28.♖xf8 mate.
A very nice finish of an inspirational attack by one of the best attacking players in the history of chess.

CHAPTER 15

Jeroen Bosch

New Recipe in Old Indian



The universal antidote g4

The universal antidote to all opening problems these days is to just throw your flank pawns at your opponent. Within the SOS-series we have seen numerous lines with audacious flank pawns.

With absolutely no attempt at inclusiveness I will just mention:

- The Grünfeld with 4.h4 (SOS-3) and 4.g4 (SOS-12)
- A closed (or is it open?) Sicilian: 1.e4 c5 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.g4 (SOS-5)
- The Shirov Philidor 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 ♘f6 4.♘c3 ♘bd7 5.g4 (SOS-7)
- The Bogo-Indian with 6.g4 (SOS-7)
- An Anglo-Dutch 1.c4 f5 2.e4 fxe4 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.g4 (SOS-8)
- The King's Indian with 6.g4 (SOS-9)
- The French Winawer with 4.♘ge2 and 6.g4 (SOS-12)
- The Ruy Lopez Bird with 5...h5 (SOS-12).

Many authors have noted this modern predilection for pawn moves on the flank, perhaps no one more lucidly than John Watson in his *Secrets of Modern Chess Strategy*.

Needless to say that the previous words introduce yet another flank pawn thrust in the opening. In the Old Indian experience with an early g4 (for that is what we are talking about here) is as yet so limited that we present the idea here to inspire others to follow the signs of the times. Oh, by the way, this line comes with the stamp of approval of a 2700+ player...

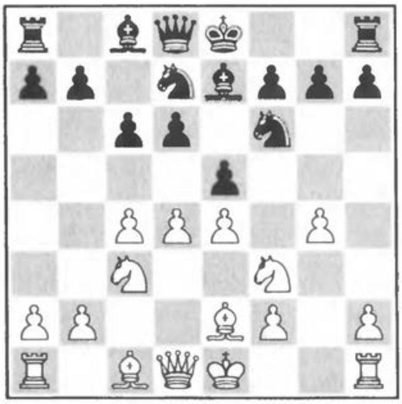
☐ **Shakhriyar Mamedyarov**
■ **Dmitry Andreikin**
Sochi 2008

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 d6 3.♘c3 e5 4.♘f3 ♘bd7 5.e4 ♗e7

So Black settles for the so-called Old Indian. Not the most popular opening in the world, but one that has been played at the highest level by such grandmasters as Bent Larsen and Eugenio Torre.

6.♗e2 0-0

Black usually prefers to play **6...c6** first, but there is no need to alter our strategy in that case. White can also go **7.g4** here, when taking on g4 allows White to win back the pawn on g7 (just as in Shabalov's g4-variation in the Meran).



Let's have a closer look:

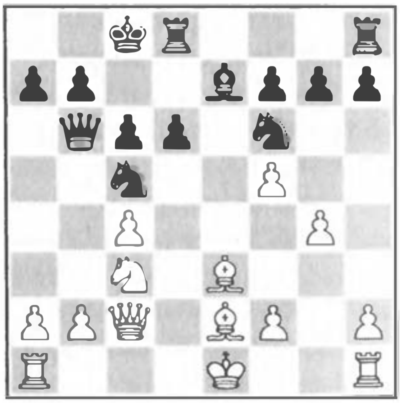
● **7...exd4** – in response to a flank attack, Black opens the centre. Now White should take with the knight on d4, as 8.♕xd4 ♕b6 (8...♘c5 9.h3 but not 9.g5 ♘e6 10.♕d1 ♘h5 and White has created a hole on f4 for a black knight to hop into) 9.g5 ♘g4 10.♗f4 (10.♕xg7 ♕xf2+ 11.♔d1 ♖f8 12.♖f1 ♘e3+ 13.♗xe3 ♕xe3 is OK for Black) 10...♘de5 favours Black slightly, and after 11.0-0-0? ♕xd4 12.♖xd4 ♘xf2 13.♖f1 ♘h3 Black was winning in Wright-Xie, Canberra 2003.

8.♘xd4 and now:

– 8...d5 is well-met by 9.cxd5 cxd5 10.♘f5!.

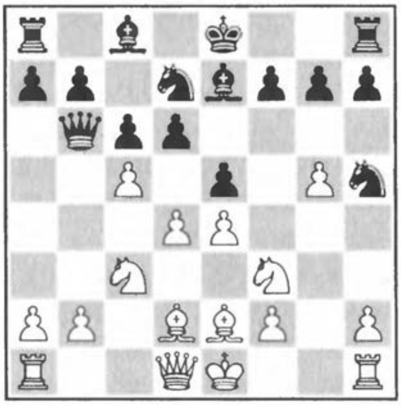
– After 8...0-0 both the sensible 9.♗e3 and the more blunt 9.g5 ♘e8 10.h4 look attractive.

– 8...♘c5 9.♘f5 (9.f3 planning ♗e3, ♕d2 and queenside castling is entirely possible of course. This would be a similar set-up to Mamed-yarov's in our main game. However, here – with the pawn already on c6 and the king still on e8, leaving g7 undefended – the knight move makes a lot of sense) 9...♗xf5 10.exf5 ♕b6 11.♕c2 0-0-0 12.♗e3



With his bishop pair and space advantage White has an edge. Note that the 'weakening of the kingside' with g4 hardly counts – it rather gives White the possibility to gain even more space with g4-g5. 12...h5 (not wishing to continue quietly and suffer, Black seeks counterplay. 12...d5 13.cxd5 ♘xd5 14.♘xd5 ♖xd5 15.0-0 is just better for White) 13.g5 ♘g4 14.♗xg4 hxg4 15.0-0-0 ♕b4 16.♕e2 ♘a4?! (16...♘d7) 17.♘xa4 ♕xa4 18.♕xg4. White was just a pawn up and won in Anisimov-Kovalenko, St. Petersburg 2009.

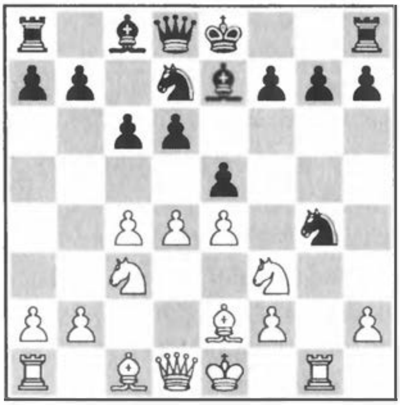
● **7...♕a5 8.♗d2 ♕b6** is an -interesting manoeuvre. However, after 9.g5 ♘h5 10.c5!



- 10...♕xb2? 11.♖b1 ♕a3 12.♖b3 ♕a5, and White wins after either 13.♘b5 or 13.cxd6.
- 10...♕c7? 11.cxd6 ♗xd6 12.♘xe5 proves Tarrasch right, although he wasn't speaking of unprotected knights on the edge...
- 10...dxc5 11.dxe5 g6 Lebedev-Belmeskin, Tomsk 2007 – had White now continued with 12.♕c2 ♕c7 13.0-0-0 then he would have been guaranteed of an edge.

● Stopping the g-pawn with **7...h6** is always an important idea in g4-variations. The question usually is: which is more important, the space gained by the 'active' g4, or the squares weakened by the 'inconsiderate' pawn advance? 8.♖g1. This is played in the same spirit as 7.g4, kingside castling is now no longer on the cards for either side. (8.h3 is feasible as well, consolidating the space that has been gained on the kingside.) In Ustianovich-Pavlenko, Chervonograd 2008, Black continued with the same queen-manoeuvre as in the previous note: 8...♕a5 9.♗d2 (9.♕c2) 9...♕b6 10.♗e3 (10.c5!? ♕c7 11.cxd6 ♗xd6 12.h4 is certainly worth considering here) 10...♕xb2 11.♘a4 ♕b4+ 12.♗d2 ♕a3 13.♗c1 ♕b4+ 14.♗d2 ♕a3. Now White should perhaps have taken the draw by repetition (which means that 10.c5 is stronger than 10.♗e3), but instead he went for the unclear 15.♖b1 ♘b6 16.♘c3.

● **7...♘xg4**. Taking the pawn must always be considered. White goes 8.♖g1.



Black does not necessarily have to withdraw his knight immediately as in the old game P.Schmidt-Lange, Bad Pyrmont 1950: 8...♘gf6, now that game was quickly drawn after 9.dxe5 ♘xe5 10.♘xe5 dxe5 11.♕xd8+ ♗xd8 12.♖xg7 ♗e6, which is in itself quite surprising after 7.g4!?. However, I don't understand why White did not just play 9.♖xg7 when his chances are to be preferred.

8...♘f8 looks stronger actually, when play might continue: 9.h3!? ♘f6 (9...exd4 10.♘xd4 ♘e5, and now White should not be afraid to sac another pawn. He comes out on top after 11.♝e3 ♘fg6 12.♕d2 ♗xh3 13.0-0-0) 10.♖xg7, and now 10...♘g6? is bad because of 11.♘g5, when the inventive 11...♖g8 loses after 12.♘xf7 ♕a5 13.♖xg8+ ♞xg8 14.dxe5! (14.♘h6 ♘xh6 15.♗xh6 ♕b6) 14...♔xf7 15.exd6, and White regains the piece.

8...♘b6!? is perhaps best, when 9.dxe5 (9.h3 exd4 10.♘xd4 ♘e5 gives Black more than enough counterplay) 9...♘xe5 10.♘xe5 dxe5 11.♕xd8+ ♗xd8 12.♖xg7 does look like an equal endgame.

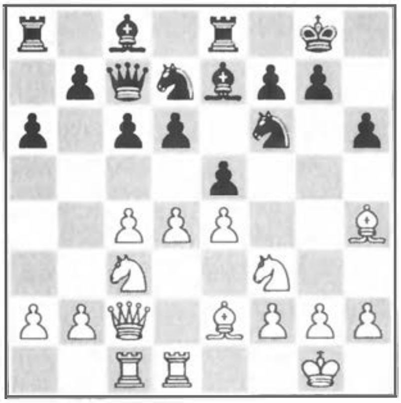
7.g4

Mamedyarov clearly is a child of his times.

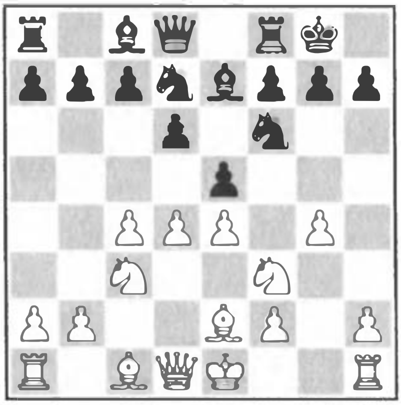
It is very interesting to see a top grandmaster play g4 rather than go for a ± position that theory promises the first player after the more mundane 7.0-0.

One reason why Black often prefers 6...c6 over 6...0-0 is 7.d5 ♘c5 8.♕c2, when White has closed the centre (a concession of sorts) but still has the option to castle queenside. Grandmaster Andreikin does not seem to mind this too much.

Just to briefly show you that even on a high level it is not easy to make something of White's traditional slight plus in the Old Indian: 7.0-0 c6 8.♕c2 a6 9.♖d1 ♕c7. The traditional Old-Indian set-up. Black often continues ...b5, ...♗b7, ...♖fe8 or ...♖fd8, and ...♖ac8, with a solid Ruy Lopez-like middlegame. Rodshtein-Andreikin, Puerto Madryn 2009, went: 10.♗g5 h6 11.♗h4 ♖e8 12.♖ac1



12...g5!? Well, here's that g-pawn again! 13.♗g3 ♘h5 14.d5 c5 15.h3 ♘f4 16.♘h2 ♘xe2+ 17.♕xe2 ♘f6 18.♘g4 ♗xg4 19.hxg4 ♕d7 20.f3 h5!? 21.gxh5 (21.♕e3 ♔h7 22.♕xg5 ♖g8 23.♕h4 ♘xg4 24.♕xh5+ ♘h6 with obvious compensation for the pawn) 21...♘xh5 22.♔f2 ♔g7 23.♖h1 ♖h8 24.♖h3 ♘f4 25.♗xf4 exf4 26.♖ch1 ♗f6 27.♕d3 ♗e5 28.♔e2 ♖xh3 29.♖xh3 b5, with superior chances, but White managed to hold.



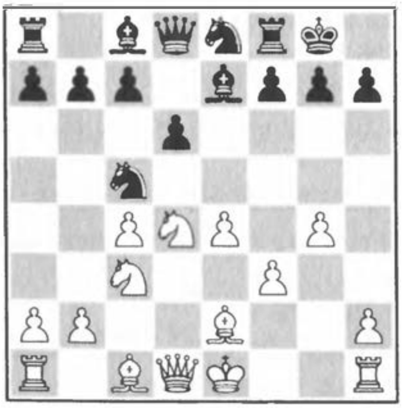
7...exd4

Opening the g-file in front of your king is not very logical. For example: 7...♘xg4 8.♖g1 and now:

- 8...f5 9.exf5 ♘gf6 10.♘g5 ♘b6 11.♘e6 ♗xe6 12.fxe6 exd4 13.♕xd4 favours White.
- 8...♘gf6 9.♗h6 (9.♗e3) 9...♘e8 10.♕c2.
- 8...exd4 9.♘xd4 ♘ge5 10.♗e3 and White's position plays itself.

8.♘xd4 ♘c5 9.f3 ♘e8

Black understandably wants to punish his opponent for his early g4, but White now has solid structural advantages like central control and space. It looks as if White has played the Sämisch versus the King's Indian, but Black has forgotten to fianchetto his bishop and has insufficient counterplay.



10.♗e3

The most ambitious continuation, ignoring the threatened check, when the king will flee to the queenside anyway. Meanwhile, 10.0-0 c6 11.♗e3 was enough for a very pleasant plus.

10...♗h4+ 11.♔d2 g6 12.♔c2 ♞g7 13.♕d2

White's opening has been a total success.

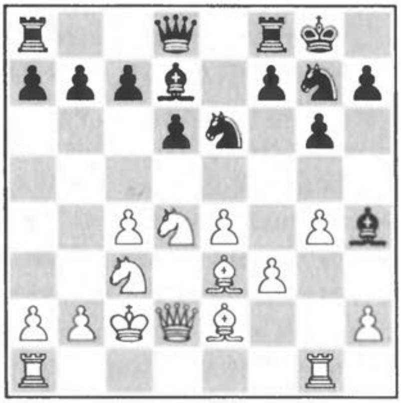
13...♗d7

After 13...f5 there is either 14.gxf5 gxf5 15.♖ag1 for an all-out attack or the positional 14.exf5 gxf5 15.♖af1.

14.♖hg1

After 14.♖ad1, 14...♘a4 is an idea to relieve some of the pressure. Although White always keeps an edge.

14...♘ce6



15.♘f5!

Not difficult to find, Black cannot even contemplate to take the knight.

15...♗f6

15...gxf5? 16.gxf5 ♘c5? (16...♔h8) 17.♗h6 ♗f6 18.♗xg7 ♝xg7 19.♕h6 is a straightforward win.

16.♘h6+ ♔h8 17.g5 ♗e7 18.f4

Now in order to avoid being crushed Black has to play

18...f5 19.exf5

19.gxf6 ♝xf6 20.♘d5 is also better for White, but there is nothing wrong with the game move.

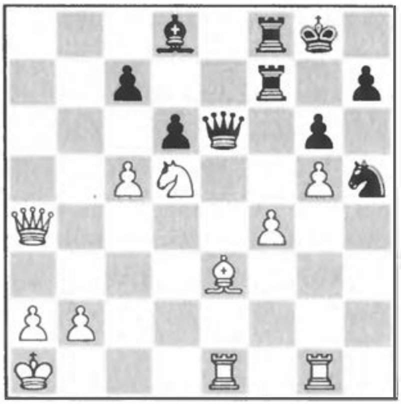
19...♘xf5 20.♘xf5 ♖xf5 21.♗g4 ♖f7 22.♖ae1 ♘g7 23.♕d5!

A double attack to win material.

23...♔g8 24.♗xd7 ♕xd7 25.♕xb7 ♖af8 26.♔b1 ♗d8 27.♕xa7 ♘h5 28.♕a4 ♕h3

Andreikin seeks counterchances with this objectively bad move, understandably he did not much like the ending after 28...♕xa4 29.♘xa4 ♞xf4.

29.♘d5 ♕xh2 30.c5! ♕h3 31.♔a1 ♕e6



32.♕c6

The beginning of a faulty manoeuvre. It was correct to keep the knight on d5 with 32.♖d1! when after 32...♖f5 33.♕b3 ♕f7 (33...c6?? 34.♘e7++−), 34.c6! fixes the beast firmly on d5 with a won game.

32...♖f5 33.♖d1

33.♘xc7.

33...♕e8!

It is hard to blame Mamedyarov for overlooking this move which paradoxically offers to trade queens. The problem is that White's light pieces suddenly hang in the air.

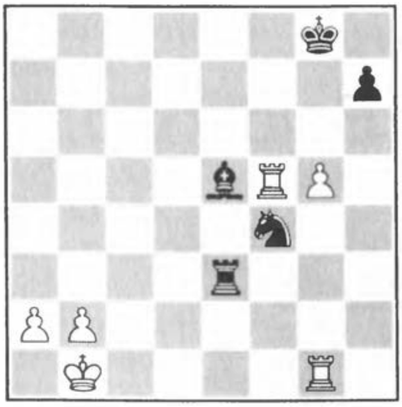
34.♕xe8 ♖xe8

Now it is clear that White is losing some material.

35.cxd6 35.♗c1 dxc5. **35...♖xd5 36.♖xd5 ♖xe3 37.dxc7**

37.♖e5 ♖xe5 38.fxe5 cxd6 39.exd6 ♔f7.

37...♗xc7 38.f5 gxf5 39.♖xf5 ♘f4 40.♔b1 ♗e5



Just look at that bishop that was once stuck on d8 defending a pawn, and that knight which was formerly such a pain on the edge. Black's pieces have miraculously come alive and coordinate well. A draw is the normal result now.

41.♖f1 ♘d3 42.♖5f3 ♖xf3 43.♖xf3 ♘xb2 44.♔c2 ♔g7 45.♖e3 ♘c4 46.♖e4 ♘a3+ 47.♔b3 ♗d6 48.♖d4 ♗f8 49.♖d8 ♗c5 50.♖a8 ♘b1 51.♔c4 ♗e7 52.a4

Black also draws after 52.♖a7 ♔f7 53.a4 ♘d2+ (53...♔e6? 54.♔d3 ♗xg5 55.a5 ♘a3 56.a6 ♗h4 57.♖b7+–) 54.♔d5 ♘b3 55.♖b7 ♘a5 56.♖b5 ♗d8.

52...♘d2+ 53.♔d5 ♘b3 54.♖b8 ♘a5 55.♖b5 ♗d8 56.♔e6 ♘c4 57.♔d7

Winning the bishop, but Black drew after

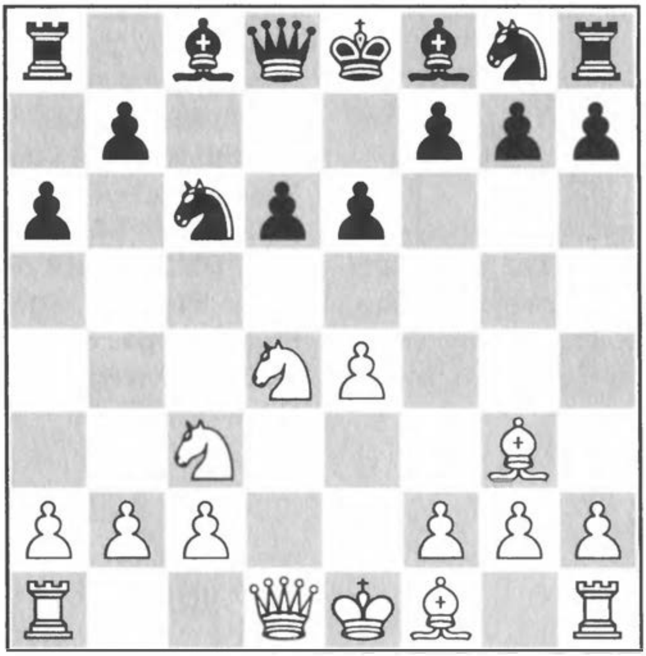
57...♘b6+ 58.♔xd8 ♘xa4 59.♔e7 ♘c3 60.♖c5 ♘e4 61.♖e5 ♘f2 62.♖f5 ♘e4 63.♔e6 ♔g6 64.♖f6+ ♔xg5 65.♖f7 ♔g4 66.♖xh7 ♘g5+ 67.♔f6 ♘xh7+ 68.♔e5

Draw.

CHAPTER 16

John van der Wiel

Sicilian Mission: To Boldly Go...



Where No Bishop Has Gone Before

Introduction

In the Sicilian after **1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘c6 5.♘c3 a6** there is nothing particularly wrong with 6.♘xc6 bxc6 7.♗d3, apart from the fact that your opponent will be prepared for it. Therefore you may want to try 6.♗f4. In the 1980s I experimented with the somewhat primitive 6.♗f4 d6 7.♘xc6 bxc6 8.♗c4, but here we shall focus on:

6.♗f4 d6 7.♗g3

A rare occurrence in a Sicilian, this bishop on g3. I don't know that many games where a bishop ends up on g3, but quite possibly a brave bishop has visited that square before. So much for the title. The questions remains: was it inspired by recent scandals in the Catholic church or by a favourite TV-series? White's idea is to maintain pressure against d6, without deciding about the future of the knight on d4 just yet. (Another idea is 7.♘b3, when 7...b5 is a good reply). Depending on Black's reaction, White will continue positionally with ♗f1-e2 or more aggressively with ♕d1-d2 and 0-0-0. After 7.♗f4 Black's most popular reply is 7...♘f6, and next on the popularity scale comes 7...♗e7. However, 7...♗d7, 7...♕c7 and 7...e5 are quite reasonable responses too. That suggests plenty of scope for creativity. In the next four games I shall try and demonstrate the further implications.

☐ **Yaroslav Zherebukh**
■ **Anton Kovalyov**
Cappelle-la-Grande 2010

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘c6 5.♞c3 a6 6.♗f4 d6 7.♗g3 ♘f6

This move allows White to go 8.♘xc6 bxc6 9.e5 (9...♘d5), yet it is most popular. And, indeed, White is well-advised to postpone that particular action for one more move.

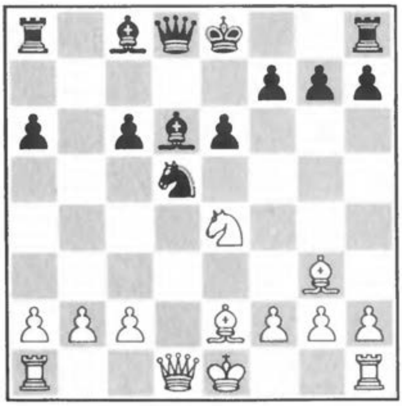
8.♗e2 ♗e7

Probably it is wiser for Black to do something like 8...♕c7, as in Fernandez Garcia-Andersson, Bilbao 1987, when after 9.f4 (I would prefer 9.♕d2; or on a more peaceful day 9.0-0) 9...♗e7 10.e5?! ♘d5 White had absolutely nothing. The vast majority of mankind chooses the text, though. A case of 'database-induced herd mentality'?

9.♘xc6! bxc6 10.e5 ♘d5

The endgame cannot be to Black's liking. In Moldovan-Popa, Romania tt 1994, White didn't manage to win, but after 10...dxe5 11.♕xd8+ ♗xd8 12.♗xe5 0-0 13.0-0-0 ♗b6 14.♖hf1 ♗b7 15.♘a4! ♝a7 16.♗d6 ♖fd8 17.♗c5 he was clearly better: superior pieces and pawn structure.

11.exd6 ♗xd6 12.♘e4

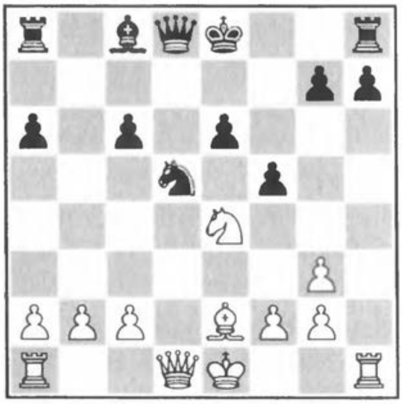


12...♗xg3

A concession. White is happy to play h2xg3 and there will be weaknesses in Black's camp on the dark squares. When White plays the same variation a tempo down, starting with 8.♘xc6 bxc6 9.e5 (so with the bishop still on f1), Black can opt for 11...♗e7! and if 12.c4 then 12...♕a5+, after which 13.♔e2!? 0-0!? has never been tested (White always played the modest 13.♘d2). In the actual position Black doesn't have a satisfactory move: 12...♗e7 13.c4 ♕a5+ 14.♔f1 is awful for Black, and 12...♗c7 13.c4 ♘f4 14.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 15.0-0-0+ ♔e7 16.♗f3 ♖a7 (or 16...h5 17.h4 a5 18.♖d2 ♖d8 19.♖xd8 ♔xd8 20.♖d1+ ♔e7 21.♗xh5!, winning a healthy pawn in Korensky-Sideifzade, Tbilisi 1974, the oldest game with 8.♗e2 and 9.♘xc6) 17.♘c5 ♘g6 18.♗xc7 ♖xc7 19.♖he1 ♖d8 gave White a very nice advantage in W.Watson-Benjamin, New York 1987, similar to Moldovan-Popa above.

13.hxg3 f5?!

For 13...0-0 see the next game.



14.♗h5+

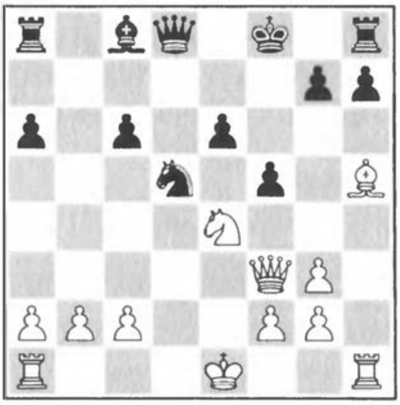
Unpleasant for Black's king, but even the quiet 14.♘d2 poses serious problems. We shall follow Tseitlin-Yudasin, Leningrad Championship 1987: 14...♕f6 15.♘c4 e5 16.♕d2 0-0 17.0-0-0 ♖b8 18.f4! exf4 19.gxf4 ♗e6 20.♘e5 ♘b4 21.a3 ♖fd8 22.♕e3 ♘d5 23.♕f2, highlighting White's dominance on the dark squares and winning the game soon afterwards.

14...♚f8

There was one older example: W.Watson-P.Cramling, Hastings 1985/86. That game went 14...♔e7 15.♘d2 ♕b6 16.b3 ♕d4 17.0-0♘c3 18.♕c1 a5?! (18...g6!?) 19.♘f3! ♕d6 20.♖e1 ♘e4 (20...g6 21.♕b2) 21.♘g5! and Black's position quickly disintegrated.

15.♕f3?

White continues in vigorous style, but he shouldn't. Stronger is 15.♘d2! ♕f6 (15...♕b6 16.c4!? – or 16.♘b3) 16.♘c4. Things are similar to Tseitlin-Yudasin, even slightly more unpleasant for Black, see 16...g6 17.♗e2 ♔g7 18.♕d2 eyeing h6, or 16...♕h6 17.♕d4.



15...♕a5+?

This prevents White from ever moving his queen to a3, but ventures too far away from the critical zone.

There were two better options:

- 15...♕e7 which threatens to win a piece by 16...♔g8 and 17...g6. Now 16.c4 ♕b4+ saves the day for Black, but White plays 16.♘d2 and still evacuates his minor pieces. Black is worse, especially since 16...g6? 17.♗xg6 ♕g7 18.♕a3+ is no good. With 16...♖b8 he can put up a good fight.
- 15...♔g8 (!) Black can't take on e4 yet, but 16...g6 will win material. White has to try 16.c4, when
  - 16...g6 17.♗xg6!? hxg6 18.♖xh8+ ♔xh8 19.cxd5 fxe4 20.♕c3+ ♔g8 21.dxc6 is highly unclear.
  - 16...♘e7! looks best. Then 17.♘g5 ♕a5+! (17...g6 18.♕c3!) 18.♔f1 g6 19.♗g4 h6 does not seem to help White. Perhaps something miraculous like 17.♕f4 g6 18.♘f6+ (18.♘d6 ♕a5+!) 18...♔f7 19.♕e5 could work, but I don't think so.
  - 16...♘b4!? is another interesting option.

16.c3 ♖b8 17.♘d6!

Putting an end to Black's counterplay. If 17...♖xb2 then 18.♘c4!, if nothing else, is decisive.

17...♕c5?

In retrospect, both 17...♕c7 and 17...♔e7 ought to be preferred. Against the latter, White replies 18.♘c4.

18.♘xc8 ♖xc8 19.♕e2 ♘c7

A terrible move to (have to) play, but 19...♘f6 20.♕xe6, 19...♘xc3 20.♕xe6 and 19...♔e7 20.♕e5! are just not feasible.

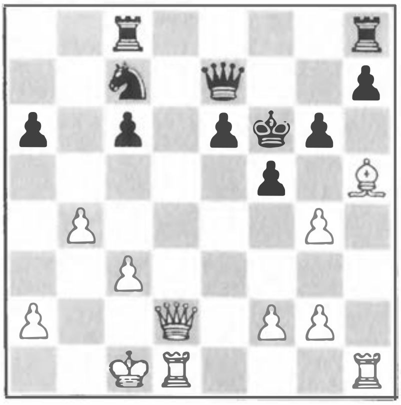
20.0-0-0 ♔e7 21.♕d2! ♔f6 22.b4

White conducts the game with great force.

22...♕e7

For if 22...♕d5 then after 23.♕b2! ♕xg2 24.c4+ e5 25.♖he1 Black has to bleed: 25...♔g5? 26.f4+.

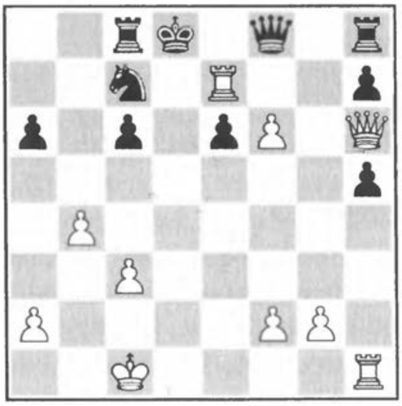
23.g4 g6



24.gxf5! gxh5?!

Objectively Black has to play 24...exf5 25.♖he1 ♘e6, but possibly Kovalyov (who otherwise didn't have a very bright day for his rating) judged that 26.♗e2 wouldn't leave him much hope. One example: 26...♖hd8 27.♕b2 ♖xd1+ 28.♗xd1 c5 29.c4+ and White is winning, e.g. 29...♔f7 30.♗f3, or 29...♔g5 30.f4+!.

25.♕h6+ ♔f7 26.f6 ♕f8 27.♖d7+ ♔e8 28.♖e7+ ♔d8



29.♕f4!

That seals it. Black can resign.

29...♕xe7 30.fxe7+ ♔xe7 31.♕g5+ ♔f7 32.♕xh5+ ♔f6 33.♕h6+ ♔f7 34.♖h3 ♖hf8 35.♖f3+ ♔g8 36.♖g3+ ♔f7 37.♖g7+ ♚e8 38.♕h5+

Black resigned.

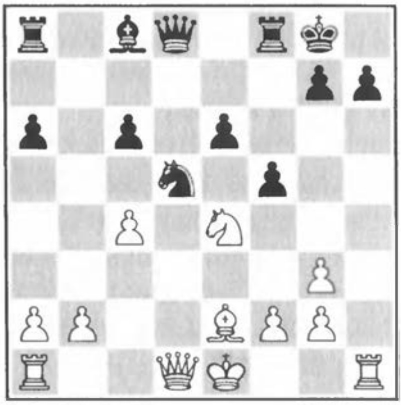
☐ **Sergio Mariotti**
■ **Anatoly Karpov**
Leningrad 1977 (11)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘c6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♗f4 d6 7.♗g3 ♘f6 8.♗e2 ♝e7 9.♘xc6 bxc6 10.e5 ♘d5 11.exd6 ♗xd6 12.♘e4 ♗xg3 13.hxg3 0-0

We already know that 13...f5 14.♗h5+ is no ride in the park for Black.

14.c4 f5!?

Most certainly the World Champion was SOS-ed in this game. The text has nothing to do with luxury or preparation, it is merely meant to avoid an inferior ending after 14...♘f6 15.♕xd8 ♖xd8. Then Sax-Etchegaray, Benasque 1993, went 16.♗f3 ♖b8 17.b3 ♘xe4?! (17...♖b6!?) 18.♗xe4 c5 19.♗xh7+ and White was as good as winning.



15.♘d2?!

It is hard to understand why Mariotti did not opt for 15.cxd5 fxe4 16.dxc6. After 16...♕b6 (16...♕a5+ 17.♕d2 ♕xd2+ 18.♚xd2 ♖xf2 19.♔e3 surely must be winning for White) 17.0-0 ♕xc6 (17...e3 18.♗f3) all Black can do is pray and play for a draw, as White is much better.

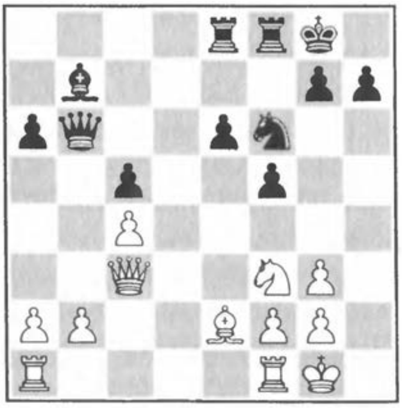
15...♘f6 16.♘f3?!

With hindsight White should have secured some advantage with 16.♘b3. This limits the possibilities of Black's queen, and, most importantly, controls the c5-square.

16...♕b6! 17.♕d4 c5

Already Black has equalized.

18.♕c3 ♗b7 19.0-0 ♖ae8!



And now it is practically impossible to prevent e6-e5, see: 20.♘e5 ♘e4 21.♕a3?! (or 21.♕b3?! ♕c7; White should play 21.♕e3! here, however, since 21...♕xb2 22.♘d7! is highly unclear and possibly too dangerous for Black, it is hard to see Karpov going for such a line) 21...♕d6! 22.f4 ♕d4+ 23.♔h2 ♖f6.

20.♖fe1?! e5 21.♖ad1

Obviously 21.♘xe5? ♘e4 loses material.

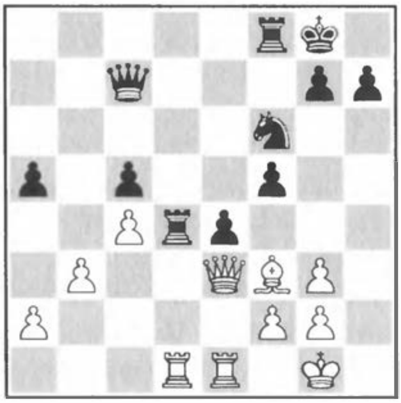
21...a5 22.b3 ♕c7 23.♘d2 ♖d8 24.♘f3

Mariotti's meek play has earned him a passive position. Perhaps it wouldn't have been so tragic yet, had he chosen 24.♘f1 ♖d4 25.♘e3 and if 25...♘e4 then 26.♕c1.

24...♗xf3! 25.♗xf3

Probably better was 25.gxf3.

25...♖d4 26.♕e3 e4

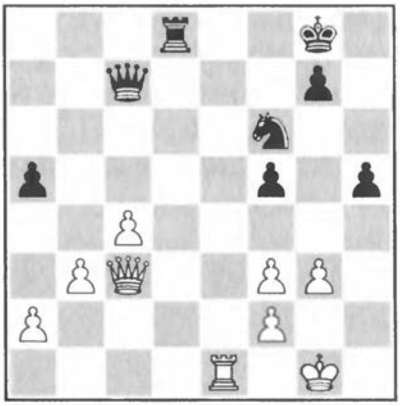


27.♖xd4!?

A rather desperate piece sac, but an understandable one. After 27.♗e2 ♖fd8 White doesn't have a constructive defensive plan and Black may even follow up with 28...♕d6, already threatening to take thrice on d1! Or else 28.♕f4 ♕xf4 (28...♕d7 29.f3) 29.gxf4 ♖d2 and 30...♖8d4 leads to an ending that leaves White with very little hope.

27...cxd4 28.♕xd4 ♖d8 29.♕c3 exf3 30.gxf3 h5?!

This might be somewhat frivolous. True, there is no clear path to victory (yet), but 30...♖e8 was more normal, and 30...♔f7 (30...f4!?) is a good move too.



31.♖e5?!

Going after Black's loose pawns whilst leaving all the heavy pieces on the board, turns out to be too dangerous. 31.♕e5! would be the safer way to do it. I am not sure how Black would then proceed. Possibly he can choose between 31...♕xe5 32.♖xe5 f4!? and 31...♕d7 32.♕xa5 f4 (32...h4).

31...♖d1+ 32.♔g2 ♕d7 33.♖xa5 h4! 34.gxh4 ♖d4 35.♖d5

Unfortunately White cannot afford to play 35.♖xf5 ♖xh4 36.♕e5 ♕d1!, but now the ensuing endgame should be lost in the long run. A last try could be 35.♕c2!? (35...g6 36.♕b2).

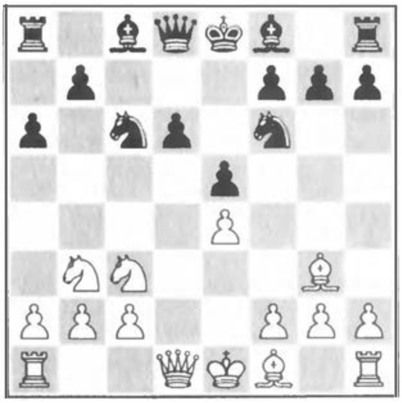
35...♖xd5 36.cxd5 ♘xd5 37.♕e5 ♔f7 38.a4 ♘b4 39.♕c5 ♘d3 40.♕c4+ ♔g6 41.♔f1 ♕d6 42.♔e2 ♘f4+ 43.♔e3 ♘g2+ 44.♔e2 ♕e5+ 45.♔d3 ♘e1+ 46.♔d2 ♘xf3+ 47.♔c2 ♔h5 48.b4 ♕e1 49.♕c5 ♕d2+ 50.♔b3 ♕d3+ 51.♔b2 ♘d2 52.♕c3 ♕b1+ 53.♔a3 ♕e1 54.♔b2 ♕xf2 55.♕xg7 ♘e4+ 56.♔b3 ♕e3+ 57.♔b2 ♕d2+ 58.♔b3 ♕d5+ 59.♔b2 f4 60.♕h8+ ♔g4 61.h5 ♕d2+ 62.♔b3 ♕d3+ 63.♔b2 f3 64.h6 ♘g5 65.♕c8+ ♔h5 66.♕e8+ ♔xh6 67.♕f8+ ♔h5 68.♕e8+ ♔g4 69.♕c8+ ♔g3 70.♕c7+ ♔g2 71.♕c6 ♕e4 72.♕c5 ♘e6

White resigned.

Intermezzo

After these games we know that 7...♘f6 and 8...♗e7, though played relatively often, is actually quite bad for Black. He had better follow up with 8...♕c7, once he has selected 7...♘f6. Now it is time to look at other 7th moves by Black. Before we move on to the next two games, a few words about 7...e5, which is a good attempt to break the pressure of ♗g3. The positions often resemble the Najdorf. In practice this may be to White's advantage: when Black starts out with ...e6, ...♘c6 and ...a6 he is usually not a Najdorf expert. White can choose a treatment with ♕d1-d2 and f2-f4, the tempi being the same as in the 6.♗e3-system, or something slower with ♗g3-h4 as a useful tool in the struggle for control over the d5-square.

7...e5 8.♘b3 ♘f6



and now:

- **9.♗c4 ♗e7 10.0-0 0-0** 10...b5!?. **11.a4 b6 12.♕e2 ♗b7 13.♖fd1** with some advantage to White, as ♗g3-h4 is coming up (Janosevic-Hartoch, Amsterdam IBM 1970).
- **9.f4 exf4 10.♗xf4 ♗e7 11.♕d2 0-0 12.0-0-0 ♗g4?!** 12...♘e5; 12...♗e6!?. **13.♗e2 ♗xe2 14.♕xe2 ♕c7?!** 14...♖e8. **15.g4! ♘e5 16.g5 ♘fd7 17.♘d5 ♕d8 18.h4** And White had a great position in Fernandez Garcia-Mendoza Contreras, Spain 1990.

Black can consider postponing e6-e5 to a better moment, as we shall see in the next game.

☐ **Andrey Lukin**
■ **Alexey Suetin**
Moscow tt 1972

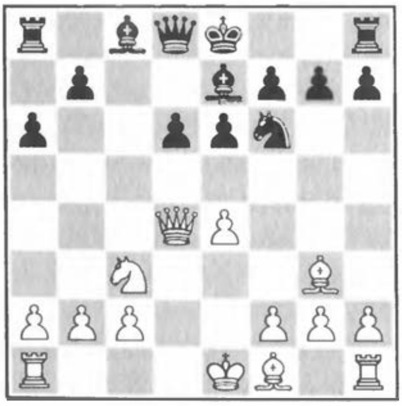
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘c6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♗f4 d6 7.♗g3 ♗e7

For 7...♗d7 and 7...♕c7 see Game 4.

8.♕d2

An original (but not so strong) approach was to be seen in Tseitlin-Vyzhmanavin, Soviet Army Championship 1983: 8.♘xc6 bxc6 9.e5 d5 10.♕g4 g6 11.♗d3 ♘h6 12.♕f3 ♘f5 13.♗f4 h5 14.♗d2 (14.g4!?) 14...♕c7 15.0-0-0 ♕xe5 16.♖he1 ♕c7 (16...♕g7! looks safer) 17.♗xf5 gxf5 18.♘e2 c5?! (and here 18...♗d7 ought to be preferred) 19.♘f4 and now White had dangerous compensation, but mainly due to Black's careless play.

8...♘xd4 9.♕xd4 ♘f6



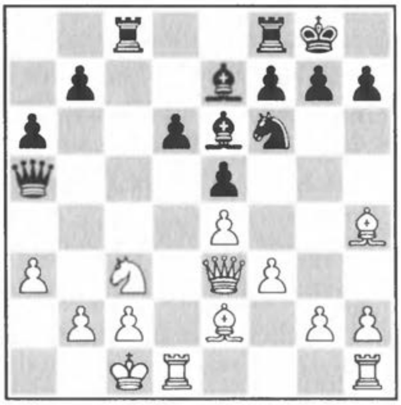
10.♗e2

In a game Zolnierowicz-Svenn, Gothenburg 1989, White opted for the more powerful 10.♗c4 0-0 11.0-0-0 e5 12.♕d3 ♗e6 13.♗b3 ♗xb3 14.axb3 ♖c8 15.♔b1 ♖c6 16.♕e2 ♕a5 17.♗h4 ♖fc8 18.♗xf6 ♗xf6 19.♕g4 and held a clear advantage. I think there is something to be said for 10...b5

11.♗b3 ♘h5!? (12.a4!) or rather 10...♘h5!?, letting White know his bishop should have gone to e2. After eliminating ♗g3 there is less central pressure and no need to give up the d5-square, but White still has chances on the kingside.

10...e5 11.♕e3 ♗e6 12.0-0-0 ♕a5 13.a3 ♖c8 14.f3 If 14.♗h4 then 14...♖xc3!.

14...0-0 15.♗h4 The alternative is 15.♗e1, paving the way for the g-pawn.



15...d5?!

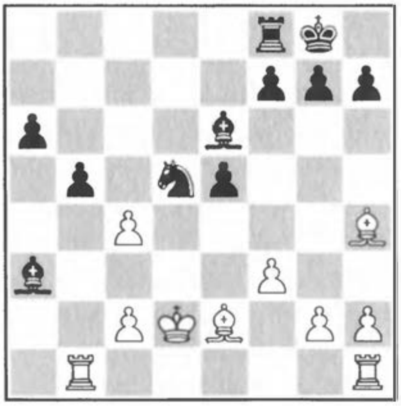
A radical solution, but maybe not the best one. My money would be on 15...♘g4!? 16.fxg4 ♗xh4. After 17.♖xd6 (17.g5 ♕c5!) 17...♝e7 18.♖d3 ♗c5 Black surely has good compensation. White does not have to eat the pawn, of course. 17.♔b1 is about equal. 15...♘xe4 16.♗xe7 ♘xc3 17.♗xf8 is not quite enough.

16.exd5 ♖xc3

The problem with 16...♘xd5 is not so much 17.♘xd5 (17...♗xh4 18.♕xe5 ♖c5 then looks acceptable for Black), but 17.♖xd5!, see: 17...♖xc3 18.♖xa5! ♖xe3 19.♗xe7 ♖xe2 (19...♖e8 fails to 20.♔d2!) 20.♗xf8 ♔xf8 21.♔d1 ♖xg2 22.♖xe5 and Black does not have enough. Therefore another endgame is reached by force.

17.♕xc3 ♕xc3 18.bxc3 ♗xa3+ 19.♔d2 ♘xd5 20.♖b1 b5 21.c4

21.♖a1 b4 is fine for Black.



21...♘f4

White was hoping for 21...♗b4+? 22.♖xb4 ♘xb4 23.♗e7. Black could have chosen 21...bxc4 22.♗xc4 ♗b4+ though. As the white king has no squares, there follows 23.♖xb4 ♘xb4 24.♗xe6 fxe6 25.♗e7 or 25.♖b1 which looks like a draw.

22.cxb5 axb5?!

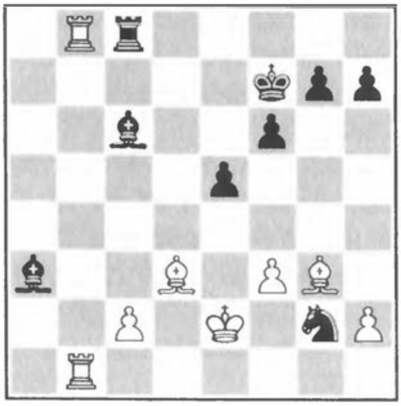
Strange. After 22...♘xe2! 23.♚xe2 axb5 Black's advantage looks minimal. So, did Suetin fear 23.bxa6 ? I don't believe White can win after 23...♞d4 24.a7 ♗c5.

23.♗xb5 ♘xg2 24.♝g3

From here onwards it's a game of two results: 1-0 or ½-½.

24...f6 25.♗d3 ♗d5 26.♖b5 ♖d8

White had set a little trap: 26...♗xf3? 27.♖b3 attacks two bishops, because of ♗d3-c4+. **27.♔e2 ♗c6 28.♖b6 ♖c8 29.♖hb1 ♔f7 30.♖b8**



30...♖xb8

Another weird decision. With the last Black rook gone, White's dominance is doubled. 30...♖c7 would have made Lukin's task much harder.

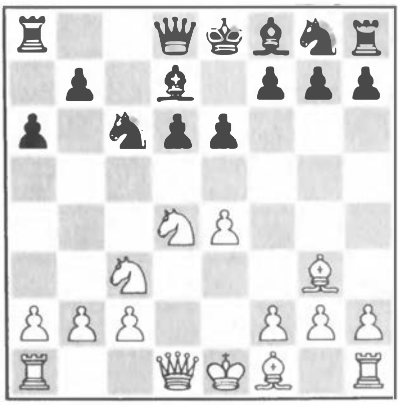
31.♖xb8 h5 32.♖c8 ♗d7 33.♖c7 ♔e6 34.♔f2 ♘f4 35.♗xf4 exf4 36.♗f5+ ♔xf5 37.♖xd7 g5 38.♖h7 ♗c5+ 39.♔e2 ♔g6 40.♖c7 ♗d4 41.c4 ♗e5 42.♖d7 g4 43.c5 g3 44.♔f1 h4 45.♔g2

Black resigned.

☐ **Mark Tseitlin**
■ **Valery Loginov**
Rostov on Don 1976

Finally we shall turn our attention to 7...♗d7 and 7...♕c7. These moves can often inter-transpose.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘c6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♗f4 d6 7.♗g3 ♗d7

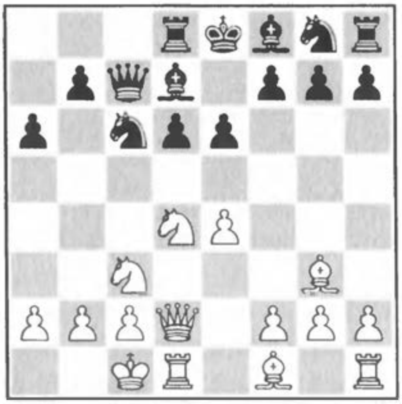


8.♕d2 ♕c7

The usual approach. Black wants to protect d6 first and then develop his kingside. One exception is Khalifman-Gdanski, Leningrad 1989: 8...♘f6 9.0-0-0 ♖c8 10.♘xc6 ♗xc6 11.f3 (11.♗xd6?! ♕xd6 12.♕xd6 ♗xd6 13.♖xd6 ♗xe4) 11...d5 12.e5 ♘d7 13.♘e2 ♗e7 14.♘d4 0-0 15.♔b1 ♘c5 16.h4 ♕b6 17.h5 ♖fe8 18.♗h4 ♗f8 19.♖h3 ♔h8 20.♖g3 and White developed a dangerous initiative.

9.0-0-0 ♖d8

Black could defend d6 by means of 9...0-0-0, but no one has ever played that. The reason: after 10.f3 (10.f4) and 11.♗f2 the b6-square is vulnerable and, having castled, Black does not want to weaken himself by b7-b5 (in order to stop ♘c3-a4).



10.♗e2

A good universal move. Other, more extreme, examples are:

– 10.♞b3 ♗c8 11.f4 ♘f6 12.♗h4 ♗e7 13.g4?! (13.♕e1!?) 13...♘xe4 14.♘xe4 ♗xh4 15.♘xd6+ ♔f8 16.g5 h6 17.♖g1 e5 with a big advantage for Black in Pietrusiak-Wl.Schmidt, Gdynia 1973.

– 10.h4 ♘f6 11.h5 ♗e7 12.♔b1 h6 13.f4 ♗c8 14.♕e1 0-0 15.♗h4 b5 16.♘xc6 ♕xc6 17.♗d3 and White was slightly better and after 17...b4 18.♘e2 e5 19.♕xb4 exf4 20.♘xf4 ♖fe8 21.♘d5 more than slightly, Pavlov-Ogaard, Bucharest 1976.

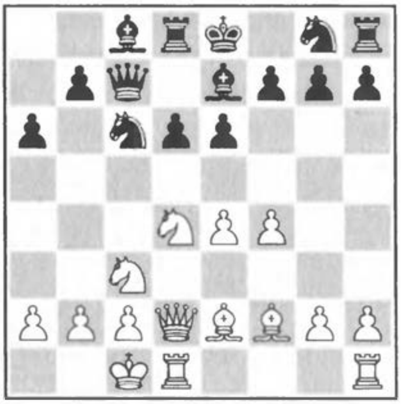
Probably in this game Black should try 13...♘xd4 (13...b5 14.♗xb5!?) 14.♕xd4 ♗c6, intending to follow up with b7-b5.

– 10.f4, a good way to play for the initiative, retaining the option of ♗f1-c4. This has never been tried.

10...♝e7

It is very difficult to develop with ♘g8-f6 here, as White has tactics in the centre on his side, viz.: 10...♘f6 11.f4 ♗e7 12.e5! dxe5?! 13.fxe5 ♘xe5 14.♕g5! and Black has no reply.

11.f4 ♗c8 12.♗f2



12...b5?!

Loginov underestimates the power of White's mobilization. He wants to prevent ♘c3-a4 once and for all, but here it was necessary to go 12...♘f6. When needed the knight can go to d7, in Scheveningen style. After 13.g4 we have a full-blooded fight that might be called slightly better for White. Now White can sacrifice:

13.♘cxb5! axb5 14.♕c3 ♗d7

14...♗b7! looks better (15.♗xb5 ♖c8 or 15.♘xb5 ♕b8) because d6 is not as weak. Maybe the players discarded it on account of 15.♘xe6 fxe6 16.♕xg7, but after 16...♘f6! White probably cannot justify his action.

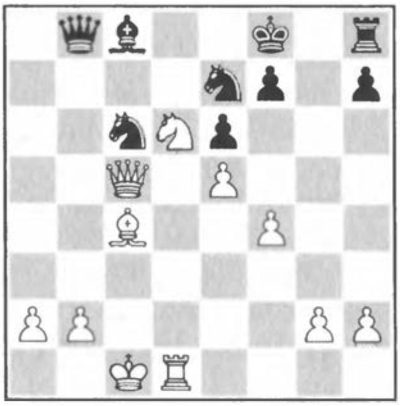
15.♘xb5 ♕b8 16.♕xg7 ♗f6 17.♕g3 ♗c8

Or 17...♗e7 18.♕c3 ♘f6 19.♗h4!.

18.♕a3! d5 19.e5 ♗e7 20.♗c5

With three pawns up and so many positional and dynamical trumps for the piece, White must be close to winning.

20...♖d7 21.c4! dxc4 22.♗xc4 ♗xc5 23.♕xc5 ♖xd1+ 24.♖xd1 ♘ge7 25.♘d6+ ♔f8



26.f5!

Not too difficult, but nevertheless quite effective! White wants to crack open the black king's position and have his queen join the fun.

26...exf5

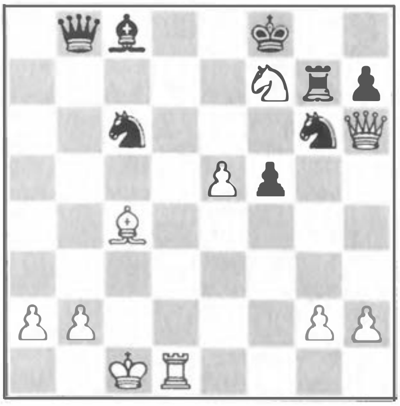
Even 26...♕b4 27.♕xb4 ♘xb4 28.♘xc8 ♘xc8? (28...♘xf5) 29.♖d8+ ♔g7 30.f6+ cannot save Black.

27.♕e3 ♖g8

Or 27...h6 28.♘xf7.

28.♕h6+ ♖g7 29.♘xf7 ♘g6

29...♕b4 30.♘d6 threatens a big check on f6.



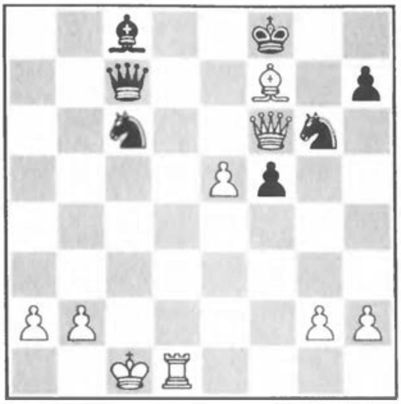
30.♕g5?

My first impression was that this was a very nice game by Mark Tseitlin, who employed this SOS-system several times. However, this decisive-looking manoeuvre does not win! I am convinced that time-trouble played a significant part in the remainder of the game. Anyhow, the position is far from easy. For instance, 30.♘g5 ♕xe5 31.♘xh7+ ♔e8 doesn't quite do the trick. Possibly, 30.♖d6 ♕b4! 31.b3 wins eventually, but even that is not guaranteed.

30...♕c7 31.♕f6

Leaving Black no choice...

31...♖xf7 32.♗xf7



32...♕xf7?

...but here there was another option! Instead of this blunder Black could and should select 32...♘cxe5+ 33.♗c4+ ♔e8, when White can play on with 34.b3 ♘xc4 35.bxc4 ♕xc4+ 36.♔b1, but there is no win in sight.

33.♕xc6 ♗e6 34.♖d6 ♘xe5

This hastens the end, but Black's position was beyond salvation anyway.

35.♕c5!

Setting up a murderous discovered check or winning the knight. Black resigned.

Conclusion

My database produced 56 games stemming from the position after 7.♗g3. White scored 63%. Not bad, but this is not a large sample of course.

Strangely enough, Black's percentages after 7...♘f6 are relatively best (around 45%), although we have seen that White obtains a big advantage after 8.♗e2 ♗e7?! 9.♘xc6 bxc6 10.e5.

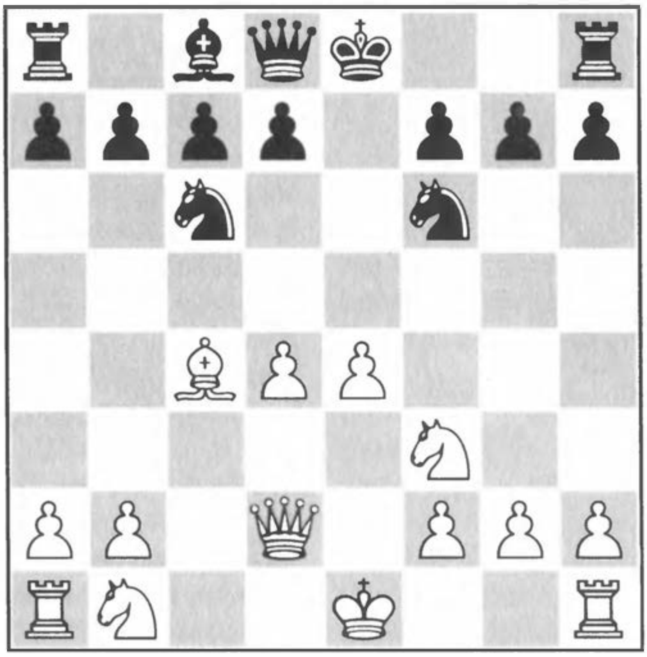
Black does better to avoid this white thrust by 8...♕c7 or 8...♗d7, which might transpose to a 7...♕c7/7...♗d7 line, which I slightly distrust: see Tseitlin-Loginov.

For Black, I would mainly put my trust in 7...♗e7. One reason being that Portisch once played it, and did anyone ever study any line more in-depth than he did? Nevertheless, White has some options here too: especially 10.♗c4 and 15.♗e1, as mentioned in Lukin-Suetin. And if, in the only recent game, a 2600-player can be lured into the 'headache variation' and defeated, then we can safely say: this is a typical SOS-system!

CHAPTER 17

Ian Rogers

Surprising Sacrifice in the Giuoco Piano



The cunning 8.♕xd2

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♗c5 4.c3 ♘f6 5.d4 exd4 6.cxd4 ♗b4+ 7.♗d2 ♗xd2+

This position has been reached thousands of times, with the reply being automatic. Yes, we all know that White would prefer to put his b1 knight on c3 rather than d2, but surely any other move than 8.♘bxd2 loses a pawn?

8.♕xd2!

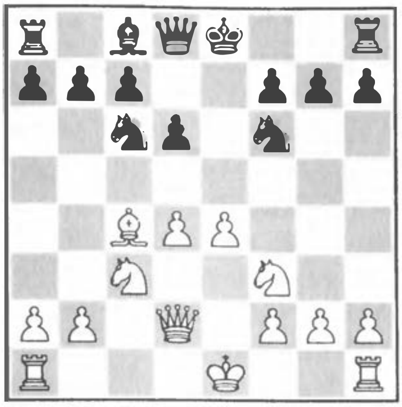
An idea discovered about 35 years ago and first played (as a deliberate sacrifice rather than a pawn blunder!) by this writer in an unnoticed Zonal Tournament game in Japan in 1978. White is sacrificing the e-pawn, but in many variations wins it back immediately, with a better position than in the usual 8.♘bxd2 lines. When Black decides to keep the pawn, he will be subject to considerable pressure, which can lead to trouble in surprisingly quick time.

8...♘xe4

'The only way to refute a gambit is to accept it!' said Steinitz. Though other moves are undoubtedly playable, they tend to lead to inferior versions of other Giuoco Piano variations.

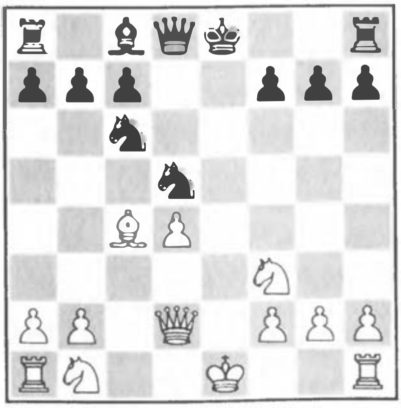
- 8...d6 9.♘c3

This is the same as the position which would usually arise via 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♗c5 4.c3 d6 5.d4 exd4 6.cxd4 ♗b4+ 7.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 8.♕xd2 ♘f6 9.♘c3. Black's position is not disastrous, but it is clear that not many players would enjoy sitting with the black pieces here either – otherwise 4...d6 would have emerged from oblivion at some point.



Play has continued 9...0-0 10.0-0 ♗g4 (10...♖e8 11.♖fe1 ♗d7?! 12.♖ad1 ♘e7?! 13.e5!± was Sleczka-Kopera, Polanica Zdroj 2008; 10...♘xe4!? is a serious try – only slightly better for White after 11.♘xe4 d5 12.♗d3 dxe4 13.♗xe4) 11.♘e1! h6?! (11...♖e8 is more sensible, but still better for White after 12.f3!) 12.f3 ♗h5 13.♘c2 ♗g6 14.♘e3 and Black was living in a counterplay-free zone in Sarsam-Djikerian, Beirut 2007.

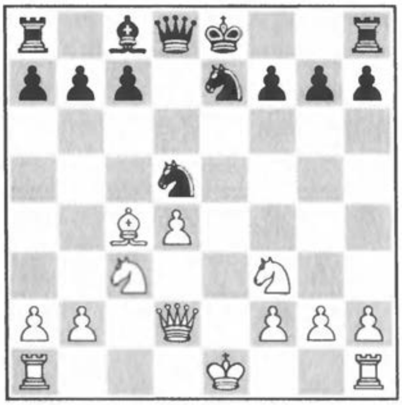
● In the original game with 8.♕xd2, Black tried to follow the main line by playing 8...d5, but after 9.exd5 ♘xd5



(Note that White has reached a position which could arise via 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♗c5 4.c3 ♘f6 5.d4 exd4 6.cxd4 ♗b4+ 7.♗d2 d5!? 8.exd5 ♗xd2+ and now 9.♕xd2 'exclam' – say the books – 9...♘xd5 and, as with the ...d6 lines, noone has been rushing out to recommend 7...d5.)

White has a pleasant choice:

– 10.♘c3 ♘xc3 (10...♗e6 11.♘xd5! ♗xd5 12.♕e2+ is awkward for Black, while after 10...♘ce7?!



hoping for something like the main 8.♘bxd2 line, 11.♕g5! shows one of the tactical points behind 9.♕xd2) 11.bxc3 (11.♕xc3!? 0-0 12.0-0± Kaplan-Giblon, Kemer 2007) 11...♕e7+ 12.♕e3 0-0 (12...♕xe3+ 13.fxe3±) 13.♕xe7 ♘xe7 14.0-0±.

– 10.♗xd5!? ♕xd5 11.0-0 0-0 12.♘c3 ♕d8 13.d5 ♘e7 14.♖ac1 ♗d7 15.♖fe1 ♘g6 16.♕d4 and Black was rather passively placed but hung on to draw in Rogers-Shaw, Itoh zonal 1978.

– 10.0-0 is perhaps a little too slow – after 10...0-0 11.♘c3 (11.♖e1!? Jirousek-Cizek, Frymburk 2000) Black has time for 11...♘ce7.

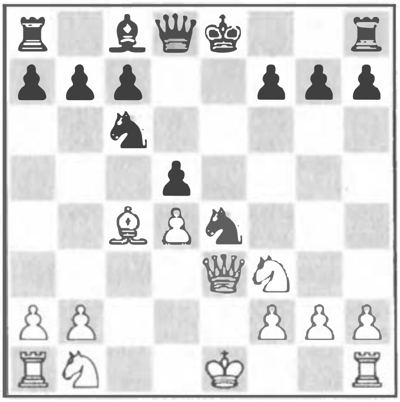
● 8...0-0!? has rarely been played but might be one of Black's best replies. After 9.e5 (9.♘c3?! ♘xe4!) 9...d5 (9...♘e4 10.♕e3 d5 gives White more options for a bishop retreat) 10.♗b3 ♘e4 11.♕e3 we have a messy, Open Spanish-style position. Quite possibly Black is fine, but White's plan – starting with ♘c3 and 0-0 and later looking for a kingside attack – is probably easier to carry out than Black's.

● 8...♕e7 most likely leads to an inferior version of the 8...0-0 lines after 9.e5 d5 (9...d6?! looks too risky after 10.0-0 dxe5 11.dxe5 ♘g4 12.♘c3!, while on 9...♘e4?! 10.♕f4! ♕b4+?! 11.♘bd2 Black is already lost) 10.♗b3 ♘e4 11.♕e3, ± since the d5 pawn is needing help.

9.♕e3 ♕e7

If Black wishes to hang onto the pawn then this is necessary.

The alternative is 9...d5

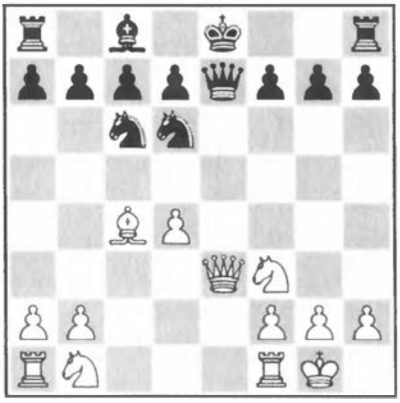


10..♗xd5! ♕xd5 11.♘c3 ♕d8 (11...♘b4? loses to 12.♘xd5 ♘c2+ 13.♔e2! ♘xe3 14.♔xe3, but Black has many alternative queen moves, of which 11...♕f5, never played, is the most serious alternative. After 12.♘xe4 0-0 13.0-0 ♗e6 14.♖fe1 ♝d5 15.♘g3 ♕f6 16.♘e5 the black bishop on d5 is a great piece but ♘h5-f4 should neutralize it. If Black is looking for an equalizer, this may be the way to play – though 7...♘xe4!? – beyond the scope of this article – is probably a better way to play for a draw) 12.♕xe4+ ♕e7 looks as if it should be a safe equalizer, but 13.♕xe7+ ♘xe7 14.0-0 0-0 15.♖fe1 gave White a nagging edge in Guo-Mareckova, Chotowa World Girls U20 2010, and in fact White won rather easily.

10.0-0 0-0

● 10...♘f6 11.♖e1 ♕xe3 12.♖xe3+ leads to the sort of endgame White must not be scared of if he or she wishes to play 8.♕xd2. Play can continue 12...♔f8 13.♘c3 ♘a5 14.♗d3 d5 15.♖ae1 ♗d7 16.♘e5 ♝e6, and now 17.♘b5 ♘e8 18.f4 g6 19.g4, Song-Mendes da Costa, Ryde-Eastwood 2005, could have been well met by 19...♘c4!, so White should prefer 17.f4, e.g. 17...g6 18.f5 ♗xf5 19.♗xf5 gxf5 20.♖f3, with more than enough for the pawn.

● On 10...♘d6

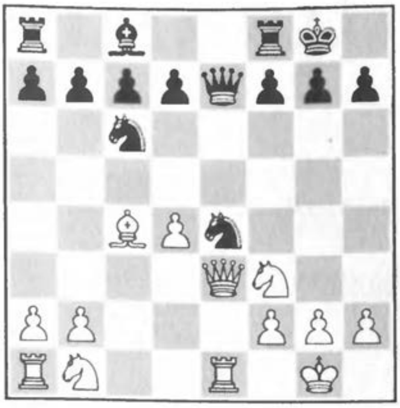


White does not even need to exchange queens:

– 11.♕b3!? 0-0 (11...♘a5 12.♕c3!; 11...♘xc4 12.♖e1 ♘4e5 13.dxe5) 12.♗d3 and Black's development will remain difficult, while White has ♘c3-d5 coming.

– 11.♕xe7+ is not bad either, e.g. 11...♘xe7 12.♗b3 (12.♗d3!?) 12...0-0 13.♖e1 ♘g6 14.♘c3 c6 15.♖ac1 ♘f5 and now 16.d5! is a typical idea for White, since after 16...d6 17.dxc6 bxc6 18.♞e4 ♗b7 19.g4! ♘fh4 20.♘xh4 ♘xh4 21.♘xd6! ♘f3+ 22.♔g2 ♘xe1+ 23.♖xe1 ♗a6 24.♖e7 White has much the easier position to play.

11.♖e1



11...♖e8?!

The most natural move in the world, but it also loses by force! Black's other options also have their downsides, e.g.:

- 11...♘b4?! 12.♘c3! ♘c2 (12...c6 13.d5! ♘c2 14.♕xe4 ♕xe4 15.♘xe4) 13.♕d3! ♘xe1 14.♖xe1, when the two pieces are worth far more than rook and pawn.
- 11...♕b4!? 12.♕xe4 ♕xc4 13.♘c3 d6 14.d5, when White will win back the pawn with a slightly better endgame.
- 11...♘d6 12.♕d3 ♕f6 13.♘c3 ♘xc4 14.♕xc4 ♕d8 (otherwise 15.d5 wins back the pawn) 15.d5 ♘e7 16.d6 looks horrible.

12.♕f4!

Far stronger than the 12.♘c3 of Song-Mendes da Costa, Sydney 2005. Now, incredibly, Black must lose a piece due to the pin on the e-file and the threats against f7. This opening trap has never yet happened in a game – using this SOS you might be the first!

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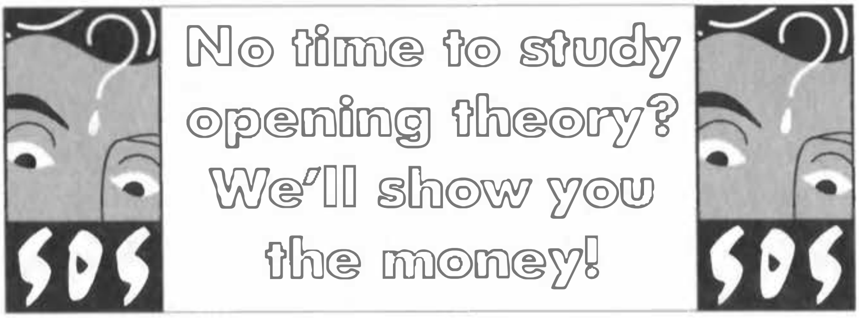
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JEROEN BOSCH
EDITOR

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14

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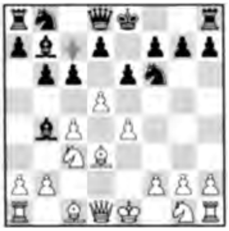
Jeroen Bosch

The SOS Files



Novelty in the Queen's Grünfeld

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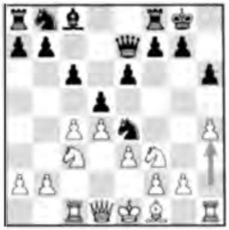
Jeroen Bosch

SOS in the Lasker Defence

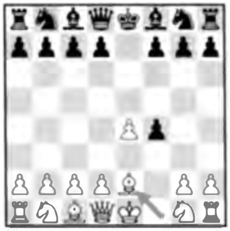


Let's play 10.h4!?

CHAPTER 3 - page 22

Simon Williams

King's Gambit: Tartakower Variation



1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.♗e2!?

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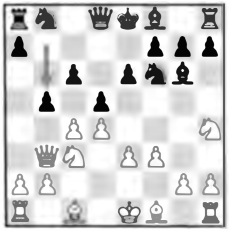
Alexander Finkel

An Opening Bomb in the Slav



Let's play 8...b5!?

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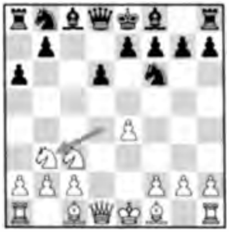
Dimitri Reinderman

Sicilian Najdorf: the 'Mejvik Variation'



A voluntary retreat: 6.♘b3

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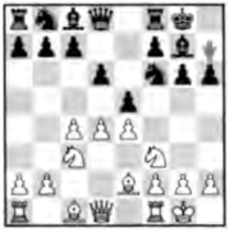
Sinisa Drazic

A King's Indian Surprise



7...h6!? in the main line

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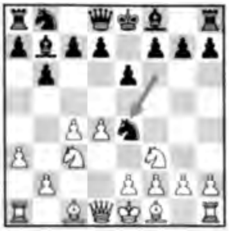
Igor Lysyj

Queen's Indian: Chernyshov's Line



4.a3 ♗b7 5.♘c3 ♘e4!?

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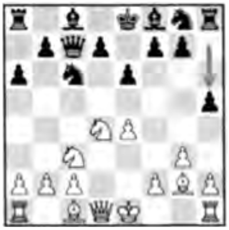
Jeroen Bosch

An Unusual Taimanov



7...h5!?

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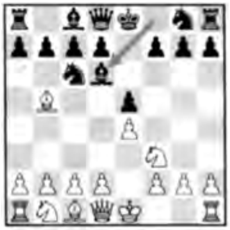
Maurits Wind

The Mayet Defence

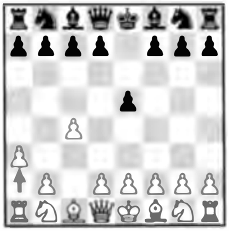


Spanish with 3...♗d6

CHAPTER 10 - page 81

Arthur Kogan

English Opening: Early Inspiration

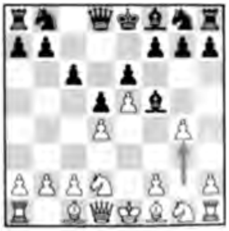


1.c4 e5 2.a3!?

CHAPTER 11 - page 88

Alexander Finkel

Caro-Kann Advanced: an SOS Trend

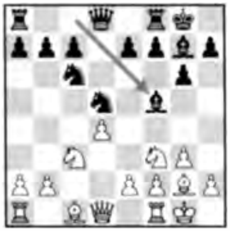


1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♗f5 4.♘d2 e6 5.g4!?

CHAPTER 12 - page 97

Matthieu Cornette

Grünfeld Fianchetto: a New Idea

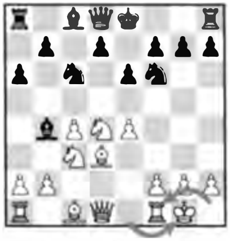


Avoiding the main line with 8...♗f5!?

CHAPTER 13 - page 104

Max Illingworth

Sicilian: the Illingworth Gambit

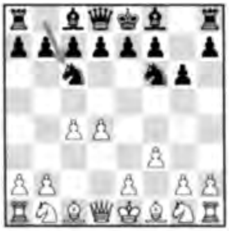


Sacrificing a piece with 8.0-0!

CHAPTER 14 - page 114

Jeroen Bosch

Avoiding the King's Indian Sämisch

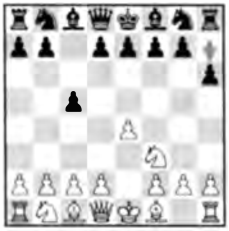


1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.f3 ♘c6!?

CHAPTER 15 - page 120

Sinisa Drazic

Sicilian: the Bücker-Welling Variation

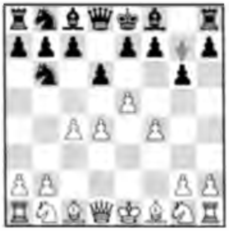


1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 h6!?

CHAPTER 16 - page 130

Jeroen Bosch

Fianchetto in the Alekhine Four Pawns

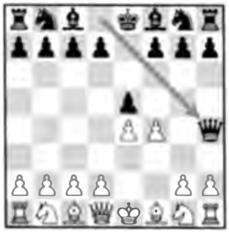


The less explored 5...g6!?

CHAPTER 17 - page 137

Arthur Kogan

King's Gambit – a Patzer Check



1.e4 e5 2.f4 ♛h4+!?

CHAPTER 1

Jeroen Bosch

The SOS Files

Svidler Improves Upon Smyslov

SOS-5, Chapter 10, p.80

In SOS-5 I wrote on two sidelines in the Ruy Lopez Exchange: 5...♗e6 and 5...♕e7. Both moves are playable at the highest level. In the Russian team competition Peter Svidler adopted an interesting novelty against Alexander Motylev in an old Smyslov favourite of the Ruy Lopez Exchange.

☐ **Alexander Motylev**
■ **Peter Svidler**
Olginka tch-RUS Premier 2011

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗xc6 dxc6 5.0-0 ♕e7!?

Smyslov's move, Black protects the e-pawn and prepares ... ♗g4 and queenside castling. He will often start a pawn storm on the kingside.

In the same article in SOS-5 I also investigated 5...♗e6!?, a move that was later adopted by such formidable players as Carlsen and Caruana. After 6.♘xe5 ♕d4 7.♘f3 ♕xe4 8.♘g5 ♕f5 (Carlsen preferred 8...♕g6 9.♘xe6 fxe6 10.d3 0-0-0 11.♕e2 ♗d6 12.♘d2 ♘f6 13.♘e4 ♘xe4 14.♕xe4 ♕xe4 15.dxe4 and the ending was equal in Naiditsch-Carlsen, Sarajevo 2006) 9.♘xe6 fxe6 10.d3 ♘f6 11.♘d2 0-0-0 12.♘c4 e5 13.♕e2 e4 14.dxe4 ♘xe4 15.♗e3 ♗d6 16.♖ad1 ♖he8 and Black had a pleasant position in Nisipeanu-Caruana, Plovdiv 2010.

6.d4

White almost invariably plays in the centre. Black obtained an excellent game after 6.♘a3 ♗g4 7.♘c4 f6 8.♘e3 ♗h5 9.♘f5?! ♕d7 10.d3 0-0-0 11.♗e3 ♗g4 12.♘g3 h5! 13.h3 ♗e6 (even sharper than 13...h4!?, which is also preferable for Black) 14.d4 ♕f7 15.♕c1 g5! (Black has a very strong attack and is not in the least bothered by the fact that his pieces on the kingside are still not developed) 16.dxe5 g4 17.♘d4 gxh3 18.♘xe6 ♕xe6 19.♖d1 ♖e8! 20.gxh3 ♕xh3 21.♕d2 fxe5 and Black won in S.Kasparov-Ris, Heraklion 2011.

6...exd4 7.♕xd4 ♗g4

Losing a tempo with 7...♕f6 as played by Igor Zaitsev and Bulgarian Champion Julian Radulski is a serious alternative.

8.♗f4 ♘f6

This is a more or less novel approach (there has been one earlier game where Black refrained from taking on f3). Black traditionally uses the opportunity to fracture White's kingside with 8...♗xf3 9.gxf3 ♘f6. However, after 10.♘c3 ♘h5 11.♗g3 White is 'clearly' slightly better, and has indeed scored significantly better than Black from this position (+4, =2).

9.♘c3

9.♘bd2 ♘h5 10.♗g5 ♕d6 11.h3 ♕xd4 12.♘xd4 ♗d7 13.g4 h6! 14.♗e3 ♘f6 15.c4 0-0-0 as in Gorin-Sarwinski, Koszalin 1998, looks quite alright for Black, especially when compared to all these Berlin endings where Black's king is still stuck in the centre around this time.

9...♘h5 10.♕e3!?

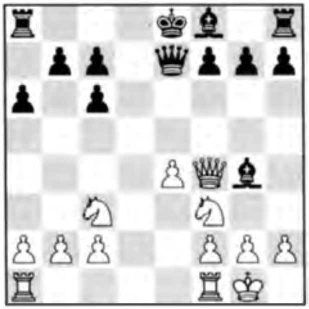
Giving up the bishop for a lead in development. The alternatives do not seem to promise much:

– 10.♗g5 ♕d6 or even 10...f6 11.e5!? ♕b4 12.exf6 ♕xd4 13.♘xd4 ♘xf6.

– 10.♗e3 ♗xf3 11.gxf3 ♕e6 and compared to 8...♗xf3 9.gxf3 ♘f6 10.♘c3 ♘h5 11.♗g3! it is disadvantageous for White that his bishop is placed on e3 here. Black is comfortable.

– 10.♗g3 ♘xg3 11.hxg3 is preferable for Black.

10...♘xf4 11.♕xf4



11...h5! 12.e5

12.♖ad1 g6, when Black will be able to finally develop his kingside: 12.♘e5 g5!? 13.♕g3 ♗e6 is pleasant for Black.

12...0-0-0 12...g6. **13.♖ad1 ♖e8**

Still aiming for complicated play. Meanwhile Black is completely OK after 13...♖xd1 14.♖xd1 g5!.

14.♖fe1 g5

Smyslov's original idea behind 5...♕e7! Black has done everything according to plan: ...♗g4, castling queenside, gaining space on the kingside.

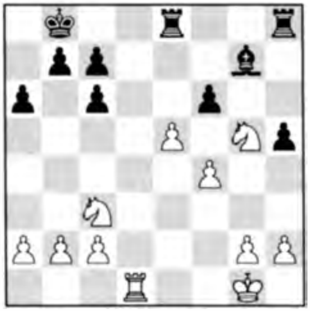
15.♕e3

Very subtle. Motylev lures Black's king to b8 before sacrificing the exchange by taking on g5. Judging from the course of the game this is quite significant.

15...♔b8 16.♕xg5!?

White is in trouble and this positional exchange sacrifice is an interesting defensive measure.

16...♕xg5 17.♘xg5 ♗xd1 18.♖xd1 ♗g7 19.f4 19.♘xf7? ♖hf8 20.♘g5 ♗xe5 ought to win for Black. **19...f6**



20.♘ge4!

20.exf6 ♗xf6 and although White has two potential passed pawns on the kingside, his compensation for the exchange is insufficient. Black has too many open files for his rooks. That's why Motylev tries to keep the position as closed as possible (favouring his knights and annoying the oppponent's rooks).

20...♖hf8 21.♖f1 ♖e7!? 22.g3 fxe5 23.f5 ♖ef7

Now with the king on c8 Black would simply win the f5 pawn (remember 15.♕e3 and 16.♕xg5). Now, however, White still has:

24.♘c5! ♔c8 Only White can win after 24...♖xf5 25.♘d7+ ♔c8 26.♘xf8 ♖xf1+ 27.♔xf1 ♗xf8 28.♘e4.

25.♘e6 ♖g8 26.♘g5 ♖d7 27.♘ce4

White has excellent positional compensation for the exchange. The players agreed to a draw.

Chess is Fun

SOS-5, Chapter 4, p.38

Russian grandmaster Boris Savchenko has a rather interesting style. In the opening he is not just willing to experiment, no, he is prepared to take extreme risks. In the Russian Championship (Higher League) he took up the 'mundane' Zviagintsev Sicilian. Have fun!

☐ **Boris Savchenko**
■ **Ivan Bukavshin**
Taganrog 2011

1.e4

To illustrate Savchenko's preferences in the opening: 1.c4 ♘f6 2.d4 g6 3.♘c3 ♗g7 4.h4!? d6 5.h5?! ♘xh5 6.e4 e5 7.d5 ♘f6 8.♗e2 h5 9.♘f3 a5 and White had very little for the pawn in the last round game of the Higher League, Savchenko-Inarkiev, Taganrog 2011.

1...c5 2.♘a3

You may recall that it was in the 2005 Russian Super Final that Zviagintsev sprang this move on the unsuspecting Alexander Khalifman, who promptly burst out laughing. White had the final laugh when he won on move 37. In the six years since this first outing the knight move has been played in some 500 documented games...!

Another weird Savchenko game came about after 2.b3. See SOS-9, Chapter 16, p.123, for Arthur Kogan's take on 2.b3. I can assure the reader that Kogan did not consider Black's next move! 2...h5 3.♗b2 ♘c6 4.♘f3 d5 5.exd5 ♕xd5 6.♘c3 ♕d8 7.♗b5 ♖h6 8.0-0 a6 9.♗xc6+ ♖xc6 10.♘e5 ♖h6, Paichadze-Savchenko, Aix-les-Bains ch-EUR 2011. White has a tremendous position of course, but he lost – see also New In Chess Yearbook 99 (pp. 14-15) for notes on the game.

2...♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘a5

This reminds us of course of our SOS versus the Rossolimo: 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘a5 – see SOS-4, Chapter 15, p.111. Black prevents the doubling of his pawns and prepares to hit the bishop with ...a6.

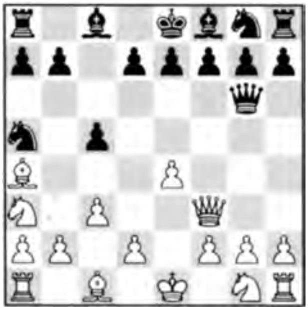
4.♗a4

A novel approach. Previously the sedate 4.c3 a6 5.♗e2 ♘f6 6.d3 had been tested twice.

4...♕b6 5.c3

Also tempting is 5.♘f3 ♕b4?! 6.c4 ♘xc4 7.♘xc4 (7.♘b5!?) 7...♕xc4 8.d3 ♕b4+ 9.♗d2 with a huge edge in development.

5...♕g6 6.♕f3



6...♘c6 7.♘c4

7.♘b5 ♘e5 is OK for Black (7...♔d8 is not bad either): 8.♕f5 ♕xf5 9.exf5 ♔d8 10.d4 ♘d3+ 11.♔e2 ♘xc1+ 12.♖xc1 a6 13.♘a3 b5 14.♗c2 cxd4 15.cxd4 ♗b7 16.♘f3.

7...♕e6?! 8.♘e3

8.d3 d5 9.♘a5! ♗d7 10.♗xc6 ♗xc6 11.♘xc6 bxc6 is slightly better for White.

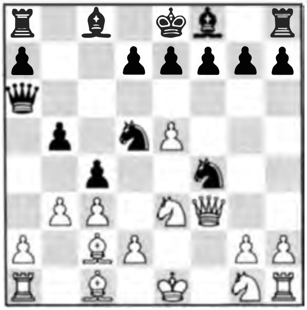
8...♘e5 9.♕e2 c4 10.f3

This looks odd, but Black was intending to meet 10.♗c2 with 10...♘f6 (not 10...♘d3+ 11.♗xd3 cxd3 12.♕xd3 ♘f6 13.f3) 11.♘f3 ♘d3+ 12.♗xd3 cxd3 13.♕xd3 ♕xe4, when White should be slightly better.

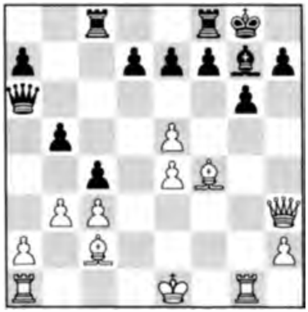
10...♕a6! 11.♗c2 ♘f6 12.b3! b5

12...♘d3+ 13.♔f1 ♘xc1 14.♖xc1 ♕xa2 15.♕xc4 favours White.

13.f4 ♘g6
Like it or not, it was more consistent to play 13...♘d3+ 14.♗xd3 cxd3 15.♕xd3 ♗b7 16.e5 ♘e4 with some compensation.
14.e5 ♘xf4 15.♕f3 Here we see why White wanted to provoke ...b5.
15...♘6d5



16.♘h3!
This wins material. 16.g3? ♘xe3 17.dxe3 ♗b7 18.♗e4? ♘d3+; 16.♗e4 e6.
16...♘xe3
White is much better after 16...♘xh3 17.♘xd5 ♘g5 18.♕g4 (18.♘c7+ ♔d8 19.♕xa8 ♔xc7 20.♕d5 e6 21.♕d4) 18...♘e6 19.bxc4 bxc4 20.♖b1.
17.dxe3 ♗b7! 18.♕xf4 ♗xg2 19.♖g1
Winning a piece, but things remain messy. 19.♗e4!? ♗xh1 20.♗xh1 ♖c8 21.b4±.
19...♗xh3 20.♕f3! ♖c8 21.♕xh3 g6 22.e4 ♗g7 23.♗f4 0-0



Black has two pawns for the piece, and White's king is hardly safe. Still, White has an edge. With his next move he logically attempts to close files in order to consolidate (and find a safe haven for his king).
24.b4 ♕a3!? 25.♗c1!? ♕a6 26.♗h6 ♗xe5 Raising his bet to a rook. The best chance was perhaps to return with the queen to a3. **27.♗xf8 ♖xf8 28.♖g5!?**
A nice consolidating move was 28.a3, with the point of 28...♕f6 29.0-0-0! ♗xc3 30.♖gf1 ♕g7 31.♖xd7.
28...♗f6?! After the natural 28...♕f6 White would have returned material with 29.♖xe5! ♕xe5 30.0-0-0.
29.♕g3 Strong was 29.♖d5 d6 30.a4!.
29...♕b6 30.a4? 30.♖d5; 30.0-0-0. **30...bxa4?** 30...♗xg5 31.♕xg5 a5! would have messed things up to a considerable extent.
31.♖xa4 e6? 32.♖ga5
Now White is clearly winning. Black resigned on move 49.

Reading SOS Brings Success

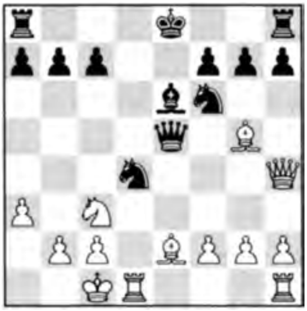
SOS-13, Chapter 7, p.61

Regarding the next game, White must have read Alexander Finkel's article in SOS-13 carefully, while his opponent left SOS-theory on move 16, only to resign 7 moves later (in a position where he should have played on!).

☐ **David Klein**
■ **Peter Poobalasingam**
Haarlem 2011

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♘e2 dxe4 5.a3 ♗xc3+
5...♗e7 6.g4 was a companion article of Finkel. See SOS-12, Chapter 4, p.34.
6.♘xc3 ♘c6 7.♗b5
The best move according to Finkel.

7.d5 exd5 8.♕xd5 has been played by Solodovnichenko. After 8...♗e6 (Finkel argues that Black equalizes after 8...♘ge7 9.♕xd8+ ♘xd8 10.♘xe4 ♗f5) 9.♕xe4 ♘f6 10.♕h4 ♕d4 11.♗g5 ♕e5+ 12.♗e2 ♘d4?! (12...0-0-0) 13.0-0-0!



– 13...0-0-0 14.♗d3 h6 15.♗xf6 ♕xf6!N (15...gxf6) 16.♕xf6 gxf6 17.♘e4 (17.♖he1±; 17.♖d2±) 17...♗d5 (17...f5 18.♘c5±) 18.f3 (18.♖he1) 18...♗xe4 19.fxe4 White has a slight edge. After 19...♖d6 20.♖hf1 Black erred with 20...♔d8?, when 21.♗c4 cemented White's edge in Solodovnichenko-Edouard, Mulhouse 2011.

– Wrong is 13...♘xe2+? 14.♘xe2 ♕xe2 15.♗xf6 gxf6 16.♖he1 ♕a6 17.♕xf6 0-0 (not 17...♖g8 when 18.♖e3! wins as Black cannot prevent 19. ♖de1 and taking on e6) 18.♖e5 ♖fe8 19.♖d3+–, Solodovnichenko.

7...♘e7 8.♗g5 f6 9.♗e3 f5?!

Finkel devotes the bulk of his article to the stronger 9...0-0 but also covers the text.

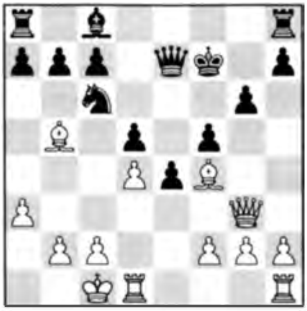
10.♕h5+ g6 11.♕h6 ♔f7 12.0-0-0 ♘d5 13.♘xd5 exd5 14.♗f4 ♕f8

14...♗d7 15.♗xc6 ♗xc6 16.♗e5 ♕f8 17.♕h3 is indicated as clearly favourable for White by Finkel.

15.♕h4

15.♕h3 from Pilnik-Czerniak, Buenos Aires 1941, makes a lot of sense too.

15...♕e7 16.♕g3



16...♗d7

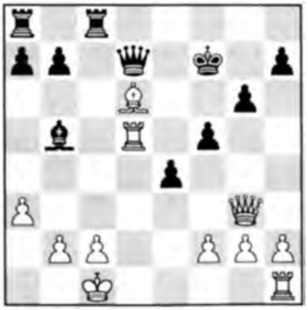
You could call this a novelty, but it does not change the evaluation: Black faces an unpleasant struggle for a draw.

16...♗e6 17.h4 (17.♗xc6!?) 17...h5 18.♗xc7 ♖hc8 19.♗d6 ♕d8 20.♔b1 favoured White in Nataf-Apicella, Marseille 2001. See SOS-13.

17.♗xc7 Retrieving the pawn, whilst preserving a dark-squared edge. **17...♘xd4 18.♖xd4 ♗xb5 19.♖xd5 ♖hc8**

19...♖ac8 should be met by 20.♗d6 (20.♗a5!?; 20.♕b3 ♕e6 21.♕xb5 ♖xc7 22.♖hd1±) 20...♕d7 21.♔b1 (for now 21.♖e5 meets with the equalizer 21...♖he8).

20.♗d6 ♕d7



21.♖e5!?

This cheeky move wins the game in a few moves. Again 21.♔b1 is enough for an edge.

21...♖e8?

21...♗d3 22.♖e7+ ♕xe7 23.♗xe7 ♖xc2+ 24.♔b1 ♔xe7 25.♕e5+ ♔f7 26.♔a1 and when you are a computer you will be able to draw this fairly easy I suppose. But for humans Black's position is still rather unpleasant.

White wins after 21...♔g8? 22.♖e7 ♕c6 23.c3 ♖e8 24.♖c7 ♕b6 25.♕h4 or 21...♕xd6?? 22.♖xf5+ ♔e7 23.♖f7+.

22.♕b3+! ♔f6 23.♕xb5!?

And Black resigned, undoubtedly overlooking that he does not lose a piece, because of 23...♕xd6 24.♖xe8 a6! when White is better but nevertheless will have to work quite hard for a full point!

Objectively White had to play 23.♖d1! ♗c6 24.♕g3 with a very strong attack.

The Queen's Grünfeld Line

SOS-6, Chapter 11, p.88

If you want to leave the beaten track fairly soon, but still aim for typical 'Indian' complexity, then the Queen's Grünfeld Line (as Arthur Kogan dubbed it in SOS-6) might be up your alley. In the 2011 Dutch Championship Ivan Sokolov employed it to defeat the early leader Wouter Spoelman.

☐ **Wouter Spoelman**
■ **Ivan Sokolov**
Boxtel ch-NED 2011

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 b6 3.♘c3 ♗b7 4.♕c2

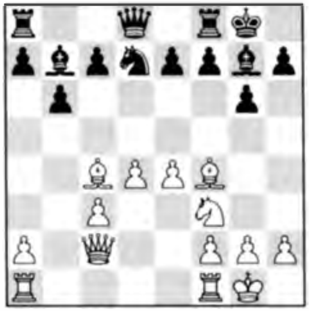
Earlier this year Sokolov had encountered 4.♗g5, when a transposition to the Nimzo/Queen's Indian is possible. 4...e6 5.e3 h6 6.♗h4 ♗b4 7.♘e2 (7.♘f3) 7...0-0 8.f3 d5 9.cxd5 exd5 10.a3 ♗d6 11.♗f2 ♖e8 12.♘g3 c5 13.♗e2 ♘bd7 14.0-0 a6 15.♘f5 ♗f8 16.♕c2 g6 17.♘g3 ♖c8 18.♖ad1 h5! and Black was better in Bratanov-Sokolov, Mulhouse 2011.

For 4.d5 and the winner of the SOS Prize see the end of this chapter!

4...d5 5.cxd5 ♘xd5 6.e4 ♘xc3 7.bxc3 g6 8.♘f3 ♗g7 9.♗c4

If you consider taking up this line in your (surprise) repertoire, then the next fragment is well worth studying: 9.♗e2 0-0 10.0-0 ♘d7 11.a4 e5 12.♗b2 ♖e8 13.♗d3 exd4! 14.cxd4 c5 (14...♘c5!? 15.dxc5 ♗xb2 16.♖ae1! ♗a3∓) 15.d5 c4 16.♗xc4 ♗xb2 17.♕xb2 ♖xe4 18.♗b5 ♘c5 and Black is slightly better, Bukic-Planinec, Skopje 1971.

9...0-0 10.0-0 ♘d7 11.♗f4



11...e5! 12.dxe5

More testing was 12.♗g5 ♕e8 13.♖fe1 (13.♖ae1) 13...exd4 14.cxd4 c5 15.♖ad1.

12...♕e7 13.♖ad1

Play is equal after 13.e6 fxe6 14.♗g5.

13...♘xe5 14.♘xe5 ♗xe5 15.♗xe5 ♕xe5 Material is equal, but Black's pawn structure is slightly superior, which is why the second player may already entertain some hope of achieving more than a comfortable draw.

16.♗d5 c6 17.f4 ♕e7 18.♗b3 ♖ad8 19.e5 ♗c8!

Well-played. Rather than opening the long diagonal for the bishop, Sokolov transfers the bishop to neutralize White's counterplay.

20.♖xd8 ♖xd8 21.♖d1 ♔g7!

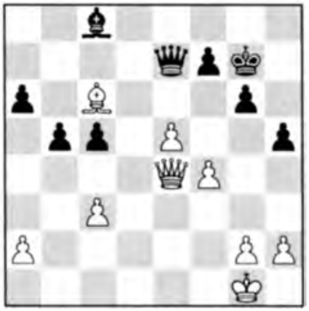
21...♕c5+ 22.♔h1 ♖xd1+ 23.♕xd1 ♕xc3

is only a draw after 24.♕d8+ ♔g7 25.♕f6+ ♔h6 with a perpetual.

22.♖xd8 ♕xd8 23.♕d1 ♕e7

23...♕xd1+ 24.♗xd1 ♗e6 25.a3 is a draw.

24.♕d4 c5 25.♕e4 h5 26.♗d5 b5 27.♗c6?! a6 Black is slightly better.



28.a3? c4 29.♕d4 ♗e6 30.a4

White cannot keep out the opponent's queen with 30.♕d6, as Black has 30...♕a7+ 31.♔f1 ♕e3.

30...b4 31.cxb4 ♕xb4 32.♔f2 a5?!

Stronger was 32...♕a3. **33.♔e3??**

A blunder which allows mate in two. White had to play 33.♔e2, when he is much worse but perhaps not yet losing.

33...♕e1+

And White resigned, as he is mated after 34.♔f3 ♗g4+.

Novelty Wins SOS Prize

SOS-6, Chapter 11, p.88

We received an interesting letter from one of our Irish SOS readers, Colin Menzies. Colin came up with a strong novelty in the Queen's Grünfeld Line, the main point of Black's play involving a piece sacrifice (albeit for three pawns) which promises Black an excellent game. The whole idea is convincing enough for the SOS Prize!

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 b6 3.♘c3 ♗b7 4.d5

With this ambitious line White aims to 'suffocate' the bishop. **4...e6 5.e4**

Colin agrees with SOS author Arthur Kogan that the prophylactic 5.a3 is stronger. However, he also writes that most players are out of book by now, so that roughly two-thirds of his opponents play 5.e4.

After 5.a3 Black has 5...♗d6!?, when 6.e4 is met by 6...♗e5!.

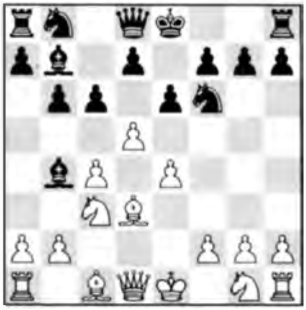
5...♗b4 6.♗d3

White has an imposing centre, and Black will have to find counterplay soon.

Colin also gives the following alternatives:

- 6.♗g5 h6 7.♗xf6 ♕xf6 8.♕f3 ♗xc3+ 9.bxc3 ♘a6∓ with a big hole on c5. (9...♕e7 is also good)
- 6.e5 ♘e4 7.♘e2 0-0 8.a3 ♘xc3 9.bxc3 (9.♘xc3 ♗xc3+ 10.bxc3 exd5 11.cxd5 d6) 9...♗c5∓ with a lead in development.

6...c6!



A good novelty that requires calculation (or preparation), as 7.e5 now seems strong. Colin writes that he first played this move in the 2008 Bunratty congress. Somehow, the game has not entered the databases, so we can still present it as a novelty! Colin found the move over the board, and writes that: 'This line still comes up quite often for me online (mostly blitz). If White plays 'natural moves' with a vague plan of holding a strong centre, he can quite easily end up facing this line. With best play from White, Black has no trouble achieving equality (at the very least), which I believe is the real value of this move, and probably means the Advance Variation without a3 is a bad idea in general for White.' His score from this position is about 65% from 20 games.

6...b5 was recommended by Arthur Kogan in SOS-6. Kogan warmly supports Black's cause after 7.cxb5 exd5 8.e5 d4. However, instead of 8.e5, White should play 9.exd5 which seems to promise an advantage.

A good alternative is 6...exd5 7.cxd5 c6 (as played by Dizdarevic against Iotov at Plovdiv 2010) but this does not offer White any dangerous temptations and equalizes.

7.e5?!

Again I would like to quote Colin at length: 'I think this move is an error, as it leads to Black getting three pawns for a piece (at the very least) and a very comfortable position. No one expects a knight sac so early, which is where the SOS factor comes in, I guess! Of course White doesn't have to play e5, but in that case Black gets a very playable position without much effort, because the pressure on d5 means White cannot hold on to his extended centre. Most of the following variations illustrate that Black simply exchanges on d5 and castles, with clear equality (in fact White has to be slightly more careful, or he can be left with a horrible pawn structure).'

– 7.♘f3 cxd5 8.exd5 0-0 9.dxe6 dxe6 is slightly better for Black.

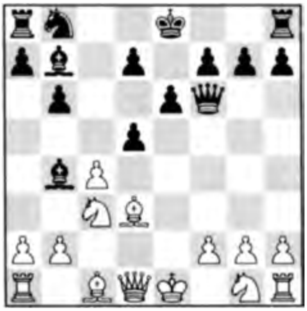
– 7.♘e2 cxd5 8.cxd5 exd5 9.exd5 and now Black should accept the pawn on offer: 9...♘xd5 10.0-0 ♘xc3 11.♘xc3 0-0 and White has just about enough compensation for the pawn.

– 7.dxe6 dxe6 8.♘f3 ♘bd7 9.♕e2 (9.♕c2? ♘c5∓; 9.e5?! ♘c5) is about equal.

7...cxd5! 8.exf6

White must accept the sacrifice.

8...♕xf6



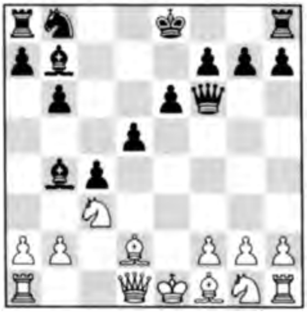
9.♗d2

– 9.♔f1 is the best move, as it protects g2 and moves out of the pin: 9...dxc4 10.♗c2 (10.♗xc4? ♗xc3 11.bxc3 ♕xc3 is a double attack) 10...♗xc3 11.bxc3 ♕xc3 12.♗d2 ♕f6 13.♘e2 d5 and while things still look unclear, Black seems to be more comfortable.

– 9.♘e2? d4∓ 10.♕b3 (10.a3 dxc3 11.axb4 cxb2) 10...♗a5 11.0-0 dxc3 12.bxc3 ♘a6 13.♗e3 0-0 14.c5 ♘xc5 15.♗xc5 ♕g5! 16.♘g3 ♕xc5 and Black won in the stem game Rea-Menzies, Bunratty Challengers 2008.

– 9.♕c2? d4∓.

9...dxc4 The threat on g2 is why the whole variation works. **10.♗f1 d5**

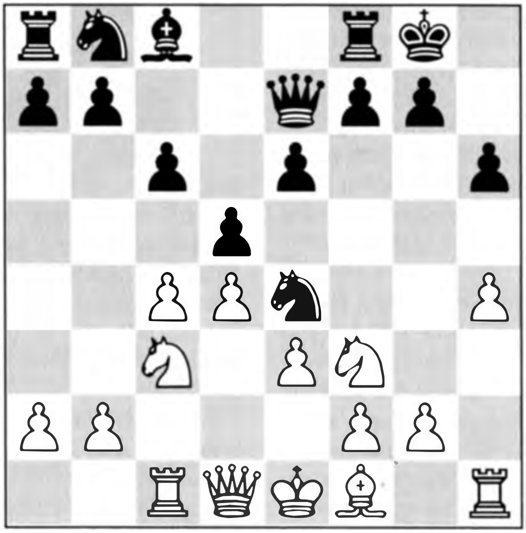


And with three pawns for the piece, and a dominating centre, Black has the better chances.

CHAPTER 2

Jeroen Bosch

SOS in the Lasker Defence



Let's play 10.h4!?

☐ **Levon Aronian**
■ **Pentala Harikrishna**
Ningbo World Teams 2011

The Lasker Defence of the Queen's Gambit is quite fashionable these days. As so often in chess the World Champion is setting the standard. Anand used this rock-solid line of the second World Champion to successfully defend his title against Veselin Topalov. Not only did he win the 12th and final game of their 2010 World Championship's match, but later in the year he also repeated the line in Nanjing to score another devastating win against the Bulgarian.

Former World Champion Vladimir Kramnik is of course another major adherent of Lasker's simplifying manoeuvre. The summer of 2011 may have warmed the hearts of 1.d4 devotees though, as Levon Aronian came up with a remarkable idea that so far has brought White great opening results. In great SOS style Aronian goes h4 and g4 where previously players only considered such mundane matters as development and castling. Enjoy!

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 ♗e7 5.♗g5 h6 6.♗h4 0-0 7.e3 ♘e4

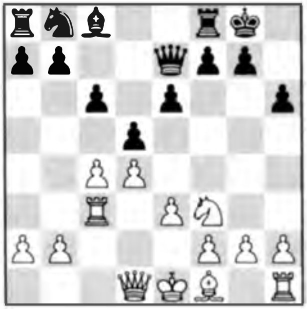
This is known as Lasker's Defence. Black aims to exchange two pairs of minor pieces, thereby relieving his game. As he has no weaknesses he aims to equalize in the early middlegame, often by means of ...dxc4 and ...e5 or ...c5.

8.♗xe7 ♕xe7 9.♖c1

9.cxd5 ♘xc3 10.bxc3 exd5 is another main line in the Lasker.

9...c6

This is thought to be more accurate than the immediate 9...♘xc3 10.♖xc3 c6, although play usually transposes. Interestingly, Aronian's idea had been anticipated in this position by Dutch grandmaster Jan Werle (albeit in a rapid game).



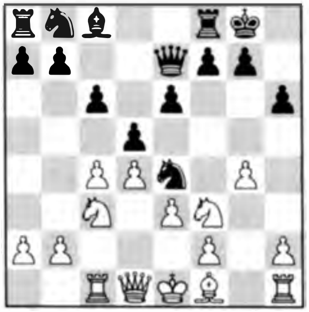
11.g4!? – White argues that the pawn on h6 is a clear target with Black already castled on the kingside. Moreover, after the exchange on c3 Black has no minor pieces developed just yet, so how is he ever going to profit from the 'weakening' g4? Indeed, there is no break in the centre available in reply to this audacious flank attack. 11...♘d7 12.♖g1 (12.h4 looks even better, and could in fact transpose to our main game, if Harikrishna had taken on c3 on move 11) 12...g6?! 13.g5 h5 (13...hxg5 14.♘xg5, when 14...e5 15.cxd5 cxd5 16.dxe5 looks a little better for White, while 14...♘f6 15.h4 e5 or 14...♔g7 may be better) 14.cxd5 exd5 15.♗e2. Black has ended up in a position where he has no pawn breaks (...f6 or ...c5) without damaging his structure, Werle-Van der Werf, Leeuwarden rapid 2009.

10.h4

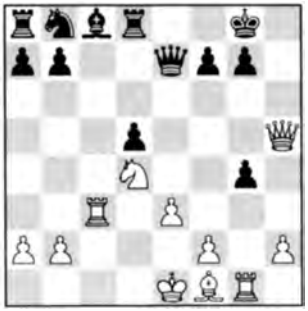
Within the SOS-series we have often remarked that moves like h4 and g4 in the opening are the hallmark of modern chess. However, no one had actually dared (or perhaps even thought of) playing it in this respectable Queen's Gambit position.

However, once you are clever enough (or crazy enough?) to have come up with the idea, it may strike you that Black is not exactly in a great position to take advantage of this flank attack with the prescribed break in the centre. He simply has too little control over the central squares at the moment (the price of playing twice with the same piece in the opening and exchanging off his good bishop).

Indeed, had the opening been a Sicilian, where Black had castled kingside and had weakened his king with ...h6, then I think that we all would have started to embark on a flank attack. So hats off for Aronian for this original opening idea in SOS-style. And while we are at it, we might as well wonder if 10.g4 isn't playable as well?



The answer is not exactly blowing in the wind. In his 2011 first round World Cup match, Austrian GM Markus Ragger twice played this move versus Alekseev. Two draws were the result, but in both games Ragger was comfortably placed, to say the very least: 10...♖d8 (10...♘d7 11.h4 was played in Ragger-Alekseev, Khanty-Mansiysk 2011, a game with the regular FIDE tempo. Play transposes to the comments on move 11 in our main game. Note that 10...f5!? 11.gxf5 ♕f6 was a blitz game Halkias-D.Fridman, Warsaw 2010) 11.♖g1 (11.h4 c5 12.cxd5 exd5! was Black's main idea. Play is unclear, as Black has counterplay too: 13.g5 ♘c6 14.gxh6 ♕f6!) 11...c5 (the idea behind placing the rook on d8. Alekseev aims for counterplay in the centre) 12.cxd5 ♘xc3?! (12...exd5 has to be investigated too, of course. White could continue 13.g5!?, when 13...hxg5?! – 13...♘xg5 14.♘xg5 hxg5 15.♕h5!?; 13...♘xc3 14.♖xc3 hxg5 15.♘xg5 – 14.♘xe4 dxe4 15.♘xg5 favours White greatly, as 15...cxd4 is met by 16.♗c4!) 13.♖xc3 cxd4 (13...♖xd5 14.♕c2!; 13...exd5? 14.♖xc5) 14.♘xd4 exd5. White has a structural edge but he has to take care of his king in the centre, or so it seems. Ragger, in fact, demonstrates that it is Black's king who has all the worries: 15.g5! (very energetic!) 15...hxg5 16.♕h5 g4 (16...f6 17.♗d3 just wins for White)



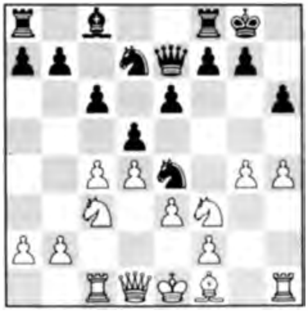
17.♖xc8 (a powerful sacrifice, but not the best one! Chess engines will prove that White is winning after 17.♗d3 g6 18.♗xg6! fxg6 19.♕xg6+ ♕g7 20.♕h5!! – this type of quiet move is difficult for humans to find. Black has no satisfactory defence against the threat of 21.♖xc8 and 22.♖xg4. The main line is 20...♘c6 21.♘xc6 bxc6 22.♖xc6 ♔f8 23.♖g6 and queen and rook join in a winning attack) 17...♖xc8 18.♕xg4 (and here 18.♗d3! was still good enough for a winning position after 18...♕b4+ – 18...g6 19.♗xg6 fxg6 20.♖xg4+– – 19.♔d1 ♘c6 20.♕xg4 ♔f8 21.♕xg7+ ♔e7 22.♕g5+) 18...♕f8 19.♘e6! (19.♘f5 ♘c6 20.♕h5 g6 21.♖xg6+ fxg6 22.♕xg6+ ♔h8 23.♕h5+ is a draw) 19...♖c1+! (19...fxe6 20.♕xe6+ ♔h8 21.♖g5 ♕b4+ 22.♔d1 wins for White) 20.♔d2 fxe6 21.♕xe6+ ♕f7 22.♕xf7+ ♔xf7 23.♔xc1 and White is a pawn up but did not win in Ragger-Alekseev, FIDE World Cup 2011 rapid.

– The boring 10.♗e2 ♘xc3 11.♖xc3 dxc4 12.♗xc4 ♘d7 is the main line, where White has not exactly been able to prove anything lately.

10...♘d7

Mikhail Golubev's 10...♖d8 is interesting. The idea is to transpose to our comments on Ragger-Alekseev above after 11.g4 c5 12.cxd5 exd5. Still, White does not have to lunge forward now. I would propose 11.♕c2!?.

11.g4

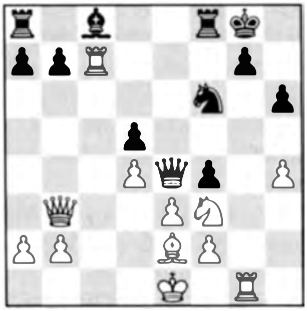


This position may also be reached via the move 10.g4 ♘d7 11.h4, as was the case in the Ragger-Alekseev mentioned game in the previous comment. Black is now at crossroads.

11...e5

In principle the logical strike in the centre.

● 11...f5 12.gxf5 exf5 (12...♖xf5 deserves attention, although I would not mind playing the position after 13.♗d3; 13.♘xe4 dxe4 14.♘d2 e5! 15.d5 ♘c5 is unclear but seems fine for Black) 13.cxd5 ♘xc3 14.♖xc3 cxd5 15.♕b3 ♕e4 (sharp, but otherwise White just has a sound structure and better development. 15...♘f6 16.♘e5 must be better for White) 16.♗e2 ♘f6 17.♖g1 f4 18.♖c7



and now:

– 18...♘e8? 19.♘d2! ♕h7 (19...♕f5 20.♖e7) 20.♕xd5+ ♔h8 21.♖e7 ♗f5 22.e4 ♗g6 23.h5 ♘f6 24.♕xb7 ♖ab8 25.hxg6 ♖xb7 26.♖xb7! ♕g8 27.♗c4 and Black resigned after a few more moves in Sambuev-Martchenko, Montreal 2011.

– 18...♗d7 19.♘e5 fxe3 was best, when play is unclear after 20.♕xe3 ♕b1+.

– 18...♕b1+? 19.♗d1 and Black has no satisfactory defence against the attack on g7: 19...♗d7 (19...♖f7 20.♖xf7 ♔xf7 21.♘e5+ ♔g8 22.♕b4+–) 20.♘e5 ♖ad8 21.♖xb7 fxe3 22.fxe3 ♕e4 23.♗f3 ♕xh4+ 24.♔e2, winning material.

● 11...♘d6!? 12.c5 (12.cxd5 exd5 would open the e-file in Black's favour, while the knight on d6 is extremely well-placed. However, play is still interesting after 13.g5; 12.g5!? is a worthwhile try as 12...♘xc4 13.♗xc4 dxc4 14.gxh6 gxh6 15.♘d2 favours White) 12...♘e8 13.g5 e5! 14.gxh6 gxh6 15.♖g1+ ♘g7 (White keeps an edge after both 15...♔h8 16.dxe5 ♘xe5 17.♕d4 f6 18.♕f4 and 15...♔h7 16.dxe5 ♘xe5 17.♘xe5 ♕xe5 18.♗d3+) 16.♗h3 (only equal seems 16.dxe5 ♘xe5 17.♘xe5 ♕xe5 18.♕d4 ♕xd4 19.exd4 ♗f5) 16...f5 (stronger than 16...e4 17.♗xd7! ♗xd7 18.♘e5) 17.dxe5 ♘xe5 18.♘xe5 draw agreed in view of the equal ending after 18...♕xe5 19.♕d4 ♕xd4 20.exd4 f4. Ragger-Alekseev, Khanty-Mansiysk 2011.

● 11...♘xc3 12.♖xc3 seems like a concession, but may actually transpose to the game, while it is also relevant in view of the (less accurate) move order 9...♘xc3 10.♖xc3 c6 11.g4!? ♘d7 12.h4. 12...e5 (play is also sharp after 12...dxc4 13.♗xc4 – 13.g5!? – 13...b5 14.♗e2 – 14.♗d3 e5 with counterplay – 14...♗b7 15.g5) 13.cxd5 cxd5 14.g5 and we have transposed to the main game.

12.cxd5 ♘xc3

Black finally has to exchange the knights.

12...cxd5 13.♘xd5 ♕d6 and Black has no compensation for the pawn.

12...exd4 13.♕xd4 ♘xc3 14.♖xc3 cxd5 15.g5! with a superior position.

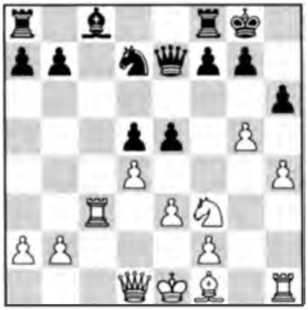
13.♖xc3 cxd5

13...♘b6 is met by the intermediate move 14.d6! ♕xd6 15.♘xe5 ♕d5 16.♖g1 ♕xa2 17.g5! with a strong attack.

13...♘f6 14.d6 ♕xd6 15.♘xe5 also looks worse for Black.

14.g5

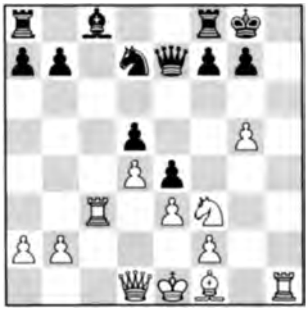
Everything according to plan! White has made contact with the enemy, while his position in the centre is still stable.



14...h5

Harikrishna understandably wants to keep all files on the kingside closed. However, pawn h5 is a further weakness, and even optically it is clear that White's opening has been a success.

- A few weeks later at the Summer Universiade in China Kravtsiv played 14...hxg5 15.hxg5 e4, which looks extremely risky because of the opening of the h-file.



– Wang Hao now continued 16.♘d2?!, forcing Black to take the g-pawn, when the game went 16...♕xg5 17.♖h5 ♕g1 18.♖h3 (not 18.♖xd5 ♘f6, when Black is better) 18...♘f6 19.♖g3 ♕h1 but failed to obtain sufficient compensation. It was obvious that Black was better after the continuation 20.♘b3 b6 21.♔d2 ♗g4 22.♕c1 ♖ac8 23.♗a6 ♕xc1+ 24.♘xc1 ♖xc3 25.bxc3 ♖b8, Wang Hao-Kravtsiv, Shenzhen 2011. In the end the eventual winner of the silver medal managed to draw with White.

– More logical is 16.♘e5!, when after 16...♘xe5 (16...♕xg5 17.♖xc8 ♖axc8 – 17...♖fxc8? 18.♖h8++– – 18.♘xd7 favours White) White can take advantage of the open h-file with 17.♕h5 f6 (17...♘f3+? 18.♔d1 f6 19.g6) 18.g6 (18.gxf6 ♘f3+ 19.♕xf3 ♕xf6 20.♕xf6 ♖xf6 is an unpleasant ending for Black) 18...♘xg6 19.♕xg6 with a strong attack. After 19...♗d7 20.♕h7+ ♔f7 21.♖g1 ♖g8 22.♕h5+ ♔f8 23.♕xd5 White has retrieved his pawn with a better position.

- 14...e4 15.♘d2 hxg5 can be answered by 16.♕h5 and this must be the reason why Kravtsiv first took on g5 before playing ...e4. White will retrieve the pawn and keeps a slight edge.

15.♗b5!?

The simple 15.♗e2 is also worth considering.

15...exd4

Black sees an opportunity to exchange queens and goes for it, but in the ending White's plus is indisputable.

Stronger is 15...e4 16.♗xd7 (16.♘d2 ♘b6! 17.♕xh5 a6 18.♗e2 ♗f5 and White has won a pawn, but this is a pyrrhic victory as the quality of Black's position has considerably increased over the last few moves) 16...♗xd7 17.♘e5 ♖ac8 18.♕xh5 ♖xc3 19.bxc3 and now after 19...♗f5 Black certainly has compensation for the pawn, although I would still prefer White.

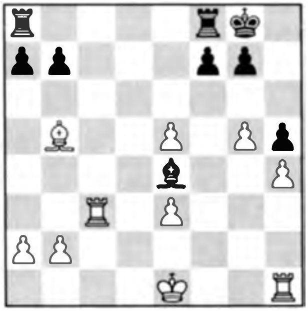
16.♕xd4 ♕e4 17.♕xe4 dxe4 18.♘d2 ♘e5

18...f5 keeps the pawn but places another pawn on a light square.

19.♘xe4 ♗e6 20.f4! ♗d5

White has a distinct endgame plus after 20...♘g4 21.♘c5 ♗xa2 22.♔e2.

21.fxe5 ♗xe4



22.0-0!

Aronian follows Richard Reti's dictum that one should only castle once there is no better move available.

22...♗d5

After the exchange of rooks with 22...♖ac8 23.♖xc8 (23.♗c4!?) 23...♖xc8 White has 24.e6! fxe6 25.♗d7 to keep his edge.

23.♗d7 ♖fd8 24.♖c7

Black is virtually stalemated, and has to wait when and where he will be dealt the final blow.

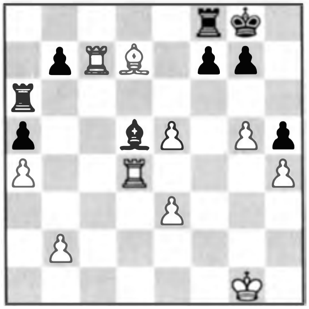
24...a5?!

White should win after 24...♗xa2 25.g6! fxg6 26.e6.

25.a4 ♖a6 26.♖f4!

26.♖d1?! is a self-pin and there is no point in allowing the rook ending after 26...♗e6 27.g6! ♗xd7 28.gxf7+ ♔xf7 29.♖dxd7+ ♖xd7 30.♖xd7+ ♔f8 31.♖xb7 ♖g6+! 32.♔f2 ♖g4 when 33.b4! should still win.

26...♖f8 27.♖d4



Now the bishop has to leave its optimal square, after which all is clear.

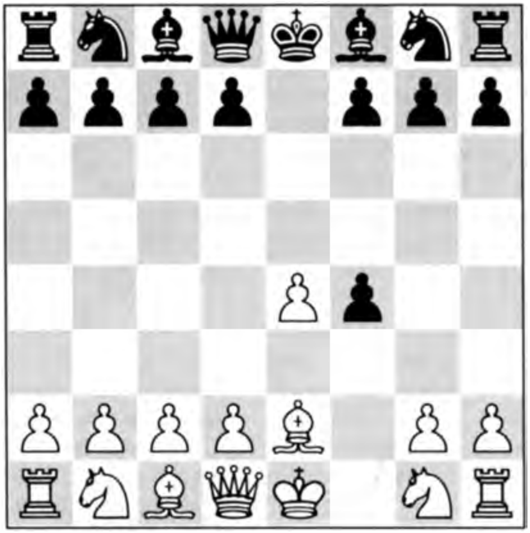
27...♗c6 27...♗e6 28.♖xb7. **28.e6 fxe6 29.♗xe6+ ♔h8 30.♗f7 ♖b6 31.b3 ♗f3 32.g6 ♖c6 33.♖xc6 bxc6 34.e4 ♗e2 35.e5**

A fantastic win after a completely novel idea in an age-old main line of the Queen's Gambit Declined.

CHAPTER 3

Simon Williams

King's Gambit: Tartakower Variation



1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.♗e2!?

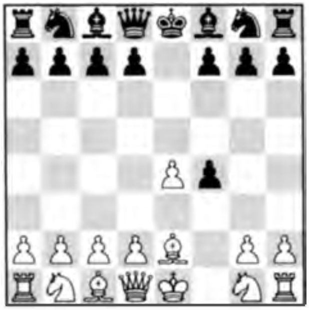
☐ **Henry Edward Bird**
■ **Leon Weiss**
Bradford 1888

1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.♗e2

According to Y.Estrin and I.B.Glazkov, in their book *Play the King's Gambit*, 'This continuation was first suggested by the well-known Russian player Petroff in the 1840s'. Petroff is more well known for figuring out a rather boring reply to 1.e4, but if he did come up with 3.♗e2 then credit where credit is due!

This 'little bishop gambit' is a very interesting way of trying to take your opponent out of theory. The bishop is more passively placed on e2 compared to c4 but there are some benefits to placing the bishop on this square. For a start White can now often consider meeting ...♘f6 with e5. This lost a lot of its sting with a bishop on c4, as Black could reply with ...d5!. This reply is not possible now. White can now also play c4 in some variations, this is especially effective when Black reacts with 3...d5. Another obvious benefit is that White has delayed developing his knight to f3 so he does not have to worry about ...g5 and then ...g4. Do I believe that 3.♗e2 is sound? It certainly has great surprise value and that is what the SOS books are about. In general most gambit lines are now going out of fashion due to computer involvement but I believe that

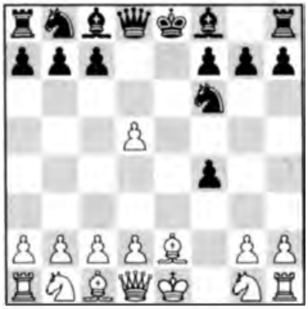
3.♗e2!? has the potential to score some devastating wins. The problem with 3.♗e2!? is 3...f5!. If Black finds this move then White must be happy to aim for equality.



3...f5!

To start this chapter off we are going to look at some of the earliest games played in this variation. Two famous players, Henry Bird and Savielly Tartakower, were the first strong players to experiment with 3.♗e2. Alekhine mentioned that he believed 3...f5! to be a good reply to 3.♗e2 and it does certainly seem critical. In practical play 3...f5! is quite a rare guest and this move does look very odd, so I expect that only a well-prepared opponent would play in this manner. 3...f5! does seem like a good move though and it looks like White should aim for equality with 5.d4!?. That is one reason why this opening is best used as a surprise weapon!

- 3...♘e7 is interesting. Black aims to play ...d5 but by playing the knight to e7 and not f6 Black avoids the unpleasant move e5. Now 4.d4 d5 5.exd5 ♘xd5 6.♘f3 ♗b4+ 7.c3 ♗e7 8.0-0 0-0 9.c4 ♘e3 10.♗xe3 fxe3 11.♕d3 ♗f6 was slightly better for Black in Tartakower-Alekhine, New York 1924. However, 4.♘f3! is correct, when the position would transpose to our next game after 4...d5 5.exd5 ♘xd5, which looks fine for White. In the game Ree-Bok, Netherlands tt 2010/11, Black played 4...♘g6 instead, after 5.♘c3 c6 6.d4 d5 7.exd5 cxd5 8.0–0 ♘c6 9.♗d3 ♗e7 10.♘e2 ♗g4 11.c3 ♗d6 12.♕b3 ♘ce7 13.♕xb7 0–0 14.♕b3 ♕d7 15.♗d2 a tense situation had arisen, after 15...♗xf3 16.♖xf3 ♘h4 Ree correctly sacrificed the exchange with 17.♖xf4 ♗xf4 18.♘xf4 with about even chances.
- 3...d5 seems to be Black's most common reply to 3.♗e2. This move will be examined in more depth in the next game of this chapter. 4.exd5 ♘f6



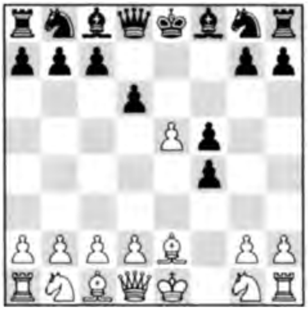
5.c4?! was Tartakower choice on a couple of occasions. This is not to be recommended though (I would stick to quick development with 5.♘f3!, which looks best and is examined later on in this chapter) 5...c6 6.d4 ♗b4+ (6...cxd5 7.♗xf4 dxc4 8.♗xc4 ♗b4+ 9.♘c3 0-0 10.♘e2 ♗g4 11.0-0 ♘bd7 12.♕b3 ♗xc3 13.bxc3 was slightly better for White in Tartakower-Bogoljubow, New York 1924) 7.♔f1 cxd5 8.♗xf4 dxc4 (8...0-0!?) 9.♗xb8 ♘d5! 10.♔f2 ♖xb8, with an already very good position for Black in Tartakower-Capablanca, New York 1924.

4.e5

4.exf5 looks dubious, as Black can reply 4...♕h4+ 5.♔f1 d5 and Black's position already looks good. Thoeng-Hector, Antwerp 1994, continued 6.♘c3 (6.g3?! fxg3 7.♔g2 gxh2 8.♖xh2 ♕g5+ 9.♔h1 is one amusing idea – White is relying on the open lines on the kingside to generate some play. A word of warning though: this does look very dodgy and I would only suggest that you even think about playing this line in a blitz game!) 6...c6 7.d4 ♗xf5 8.♘f3 ♕h6, when White was lacking any counterplay for the pawn.

4.d3?! seems to be a novelty as early as move 4! The position does look good for Black though, as long as he plays 4...♕h4+! 5.♔f1 fxe4 6.dxe4 ♗c5!, with a big advantage.

4...d6 It makes sense to immediately attack White's centre.

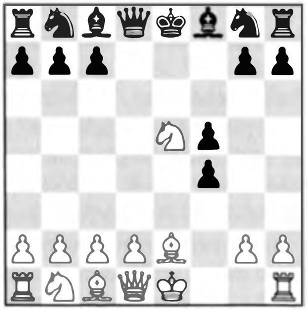


5.♘f3

– In an earlier game Bird tried capturing on d6. Bird-Zukertort, London 1886, continued 5.exd6 ♕h4+ Black is advised to play this before White has a chance to play ♘f3. 6.♔f1 ♗xd6 7.d4 ♘e7 8.♘f3 ♕f6 9.c4, funnily enough this transposes to the position after 10.c4 in the main game.

– 5.d4!? has been suggested in some places and it does remain an interesting choice. Mieses-Maroczy, Vienna 1903, continued 5...dxe5 6.dxe5 ♕h4+ (critical, as otherwise White would probably be able to capture his pawn back on f4 with a satisfactory position. 6...♕xd1+ is a rather dull way to play but it also looks like a safe way to equalise. In some cases Black could even claim an edge due to White's e-pawn. 7.♗xd1 ♘c6 8.♗xf4 ♘ge7 9.♘c3 looks roughly equal. Here 9...♘g6?! allows 10.♗h5) 7.♔f1 ♗c5 8.♘h3 ♗e3 9.♘c3 (9.♗xe3 fxe3 10.♗b5+ was suggested in *Play the King's Gambit*, but the authors stop analysing at this point! To be honest I do not really see the point to this move and it just looks like Black is doing well, for example: 10...c6 and now maybe White could try 11.♘c3!? but this looks inadequate: 11...cxb5 – 11...f4!? must also be good for Black – 12.♘xb5 ♕c4+ 13.♕e2 ♕xe2+ 14.♔xe2 ♘a6 White is lacking any compensation for the piece. Black is winning) 9...♗e6 (9...♘e7! looks more precise, as after 10.♘d5 – 10.♕d3!? – 10...♘xd5 11.♕xd5 ♘c6 Black has managed to keep his light-squared bishop, which does help plug up some holes) 10.♘d5 (10.♗xe3! looks even better, for example: 10...fxe3 11.♘b5 ♘a6 12.♕d4! ♕xd4 13.♘xd4 ♗c8 14.♗b5+ ♔e7 – 14...c6 15.♘xc6 – 15.♗xa6 bxa6 16.♘f4, when White should be a bit better) 10...♗xd5 11.♕xd5 ♘c6 12.♗c4 looked OK for White but Black should be able to improve his play earlier on, both 6...♕xd1+ and 9...♘e7 should be fine for Black.

5...dxe5 6.♘xe5



6...♕h4+

Critical and best.

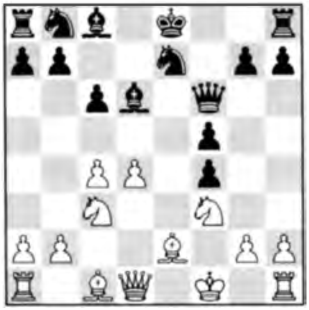
7.♔f1

If White's king was castled here then he would have full compensation for the pawn. Unfortunately White's rook on h1 can not join in the game for a while, so the compensation looks a bit suspect.

7...♗d6 8.♘f3 ♛f6

Black could have also considered 8...♛h6!? so that the black knight can develop to f6, for example 9.d4 ♘f6 10.c4 c6 and Black is doing very well – he is a pawn up with good development!

9.d4 ♘e7 10.c4 c6 11.♘c3



The position is rather unclear. White has some chances in the centre of the board but Black is well developed and has a dangerous pawn formation on the kingside. I would prefer to be Black but there is still a lot of play left in the position.

11...♘d7

Black could have played 11...g5!?, leading to a very messy position.

12.♗d2 ♛h6?

If Black wanted to place his queen here, then he should have done it on move 8.

Two more sensible moves were 12...0-0 and 12...g5.

13.c5!

White takes his chance to create some attacking play.

13...♗c7 14.♛b3

From b3 the queen takes up a dangerous position, pressurizing Black's queenside and kingside.

14...♘f6 15.♗c4 ♘e4

15...b5!? was worth considering, as after 16.cxb6 axb6 Black can consider playing ...♗a6 at some point which exchanges White's strong light-squared bishop off.

16.♜e1 ♘xd2+ 17.♘xd2 ♔d8 18.♘f3!

White has clearly outplayed his opponent in the early middlegame and he now has a very good position. Some ideas include ♘e5 and d5, opening up the centre.

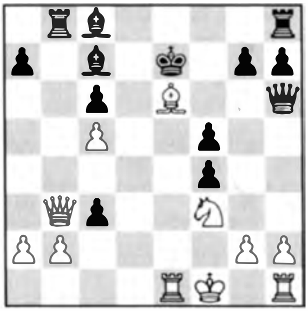
18...b5

This move should have been played a long time ago!

19.♗e6 b4 20.d5!

Simple and good. White opens up Black's king.

20...bxc3 21.d6 ♜b8 22.dxe7+ ♔xe7



23.♗d7+?

White could have won a lot quicker with the fairly straightforward 23.♗g8+!, for example: 23...♔d8 (23...♔f6 24.♛e6+ ♗xe6 25.♜xe6 mate) 24.♜d1+! (24.♛f7? would be a mistake due to 24...♗a6+ and the black king can run away to the queenside) 24...♗d7 25.♛f7 ♔c8 26.♜xd7!, with a devastating attack.

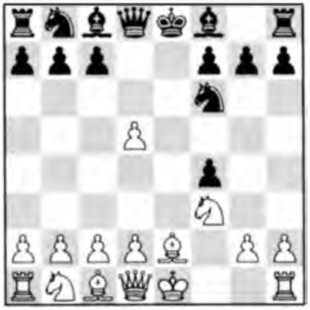
23...♔d8 The bishop is immune: 23...♔xd7?? 24.♛f7+ ♔d8 25.♛e7 mate.

24.♛f7 ♗xd7

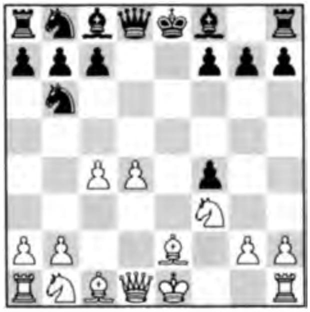
Or 24...♗a6+ 25.♔g1 ♗d6!? 26.cxd6 ♕xd6 27.♕xg7 cxb2 28.♔f2, and White is winning.
25.♖d1 ♔c8 26.♕xd7+ 26.♖xd7? allows Black to defend with 26...♖b7.
26...♔b7 27.♖d6! The rest is easy.
27...♕h5 28.♕xc6+ ♔c8 29.♕a6+ Black resigned.

☐ **Klaus Bolding**
■ **Clement Houriez**
Val d'Isere ch-FRA 2004

1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.♗e2!? d5
A natural response to 3.♗e2!?. Black aims for quick development, figuring that White's bishop is rather passively placed on e2.
4.exd5 ♘f6
Black can also consider 4...♕xd5, which is often a good idea in similar lines of the King's Gambit, but here White has a pleasant development advantage after 5.♘f3 ♘c6 6.♘c3 ♕d8 7.d4 ♗d6 8.0-0.
5.♘f3!



I would imagine that if you take the plunge and decide to play 3.♗e2!? then this position is one of the most likely positions that you could reach. It is also worth noting that this position is more commonly reached via the move order 1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.♘f3 d5 4.exd5 ♘f6 5.♗e2. It is important that you try to get to grips with what White should be trying to do here. The basic plan is to advance in the centre with c4 and d4, castle kingside and then recapture your pawn on f4. If you can achieve all this then you should be left with a superior position. This game is a model example of that!
5...♘xd5
● 5...♗e7 is another way in which Black could develop. Now amazingly I cannot find any games in my database where White has continued with 6.c4!?, which is the most logical move. Play could continue 6...0-0 7.0-0 c6 8.dxc6 ♘xc6 9.d4. White must have an advantage due to his strong centre. He can always play d5 if the d-pawn becomes attacked.
● 5...♗d6 makes a lot of sense. The bishop is more active on d6 compared to e7 and the bishop also guards the pawn on f4. On the downside, Black's bishop maybe a target to White's c-pawn: 6.c4 c6 (Black has to break up White's strong pawn centre) 7.dxc6 (the safest, even though 7.d4!? cxd5 8.c5 ♗c7 is interesting) 7...♘xc6 8.d4 and White should be doing quite well here due to his strong centre. Bricard-Ludewig, Mürren Mitropa Cup 1987, continued 8...0-0 9.0-0 a6 10.♘c3 ♗c7 11.♔h1 ♗g4 12.d5 ♗xf3 13.♗xf3 ♘e5 14.♗e2, with a big advantage for White.
6.c4 ♘f6
– 6...♘b4!? is an interesting idea, for example: 7.d4 ♗f5 and White can now continue in romantic fashion with 8.0-0!? (8.♘a3 is more conservative!), when he has decent compensation for the exchange after 8...♘c2 9.♗xf4 ♘xa1 10.♗d3 ♗xd3 11.♕xd3 ♘c6 12.♘c3 and Black has to find a safe place to hide the king. If he goes kingside then he must watch out for ♘g5!. And if 12...♗e7, then 13.♘d5.
– 6...♘b6 makes it possible for Black to play ...g5 in the future. Bergström-T.Ernst, Gausdal 1994, continued 7.d4



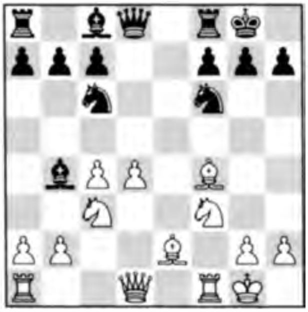
7...g5 (this move does save the pawn on f4 but Black's king is going to always feel a bit insecure now) 8.h4!? (a safer option would have been 8.0-0 ♗g7 9.c5) 8...f6 (8...g4! 9.♘e5 f3 10.gxf3 g3 looks good for Black) 9.hxg5 fxg5 10.♘e5 ♗g7 11.♗h5+ ♔f8 12.♕e2 ♗e6 and now White should have played 13.b3!, with good chances.

7.d4 I already like White's position here. White will win the pawn on f4 back and then he will be left with the superior centre.

7...♗b4+

7...♗d6 runs into 8.c5 ♗e7 9.♘c3!. This move makes it more difficult for Black to secure his knight on the d5-square. After 9...♗e6 10.♗xf4 ♘c6 11.0-0 White has a space advantage but Black does have control of the d5-square. The position is roughly equal.

8.♘c3 ♘c6 9.♗xf4 White has a small advantage. **9...0-0 10.0-0**



We can see just how useful White's d-pawn is. Black has to constantly be on guard for the d5 push. White's development is also very easy, he can continue with the simple plan of ♕d2 and ♖ad1/e1.

10...♘h5

A better plan would have been 10...♖e8, which aims to stop White from playing ♕d2. Play could continue 11.a3 ♗d6 (11...♗xc3 12.bxc3 leaves Black horribly weak on the dark squares) 12.♘e5!?, when White has a certain amount of pressure.

11.♗g5!

An obvious but strong move.

11...♗e7

11...f6 is a rather ugly move to play. White is better after 12.♗c1!, the safest square for the bishop. Black's pieces are misplaced, especially the knight on h5. White is also ready to play d5. Note that 12.♗e3 ♖e8 is annoying for White.

12.♗xe7

An even stronger possibility was 12.♗e3!. White no longer has to fear ...♖e8 and White's dark-squared bishop is superior to Black's, so he should keep these pieces on the board: 12...♘f6 (the knight was doing nothing on h5, by playing it to f6 Black can at least threaten ...♘g4) 13.d5 ♘b8 14.♕d2, and White has a big advantage.

12...♘xe7 13.♘g5!?

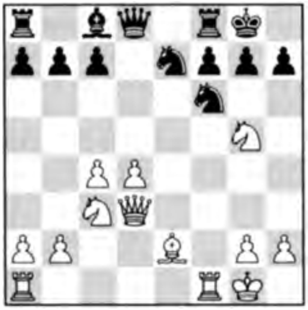
White aims for an immediate attack.

A more solid approach would have been 13.♕d2 ♘f6 14.♗d3 c6 15.♖f2, with a safe advantage. White has more space, a strong centre and better positioned pieces.

13...♘f6

Another interesting line would have been 13...♘f5 14.♕d2 (14.♘xh7 ♔xh7 15.♗xh5 g6 16.♗f3 ♘e3 17.♕d2 ♘xf1 18.♖xf1 is unclear, White certainly has compensation for the exchange but he still has to prove whether it is enough) 14...♘f6 15.d5 and White has the advantage.

14.♕d3



Route one tactics! White just wants to play ♖xf6 and ♕xh7 mate.

That is the way that you should play the King's Gambit, no messing about, aim straight for the king!

14...♘g6

14...♗f5!? was worth considering, for example: 15.♖xf5 ♘xf5 16.♕xf5 ♕xd4+ 17.♔h1 ♖fe8 and White has two minor pieces in exchange for a rook and pawn. A trade that is normally favourable.

Things are not so clear here though, as Black has good control of the d- and e-files.

15.h3 ♗d7 16.♖f2

White slowly increases the pressure on Black's position.

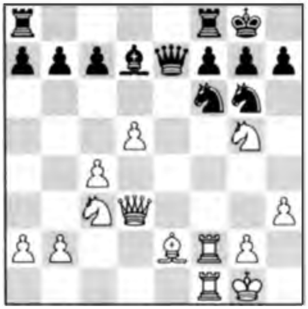
16...♗c6 17.♖af1 ♕e7

Black could have considered kicking White's knight on g5 away, for example 17...h6, when White has the interesting idea 18.♘xf7!?, when Black has to be careful: 18...♖xf7 (18...♔xf7? is a mistake due to 19.♗h5, which wins back the piece with interest) 19.d5 (19.♕xg6 ♕xd4 is fine for Black) 19...♘e5 20.♕g3 ♗xd5 21.♕xe5 ♗c6 22.c5 with the idea of playing ♗c4 22...♕e7 and Black is just about OK.

18.d5

This is good but White also had the interesting exchange sacrifice 18.♖xf6!?. This move looks very tempting, for example: 18...gxf6 19.♘ge4 f5 20.♖xf5 ♗xe4 21.♘xe4 f6 after which White has a dangerous initiative but Black can struggle on.

18...♗d7



19.h4!?

Here come the reserves!

19.♕d4, placing f6 under more pressure, also makes a lot of sense, for example: 19...h6 20.♖xf6! hxg5 (20...gxf6? 21.♘ge4 is horrible for Black) 21.♖6f3 and White has a small advantage.

19...♘e5

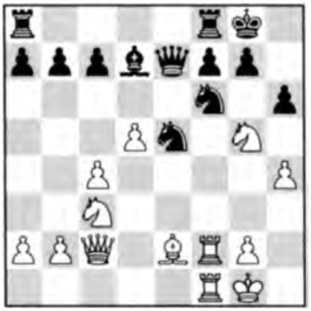
19...♕e5 looks like an improvement. With this move Black is aiming to make it hard for White to play h5 due to ...♕xg5. White can still now play the exchange sacrifice on f6, for example 20.♖xf6!? gxf6 21.♘ge4 f5 22.♘c5 ♗c8 23.h5, with an unclear position.

20.♕c2

White decides to keep an eye on the h7-square. Another good choice would have been 20.♕g3!, when White is threatening ♘e6!.

Let's take a look: 20...♔h8 21.♘e6! fxe6 22.♕xe5 ♕c5 23.b4 ♕xb4 24.dxe6 ♗c6 25.e7 and Black's position has fallen apart. White should be winning here.

20...h6

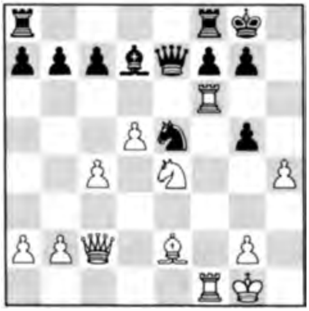


21.♖xf6

An even stronger but hard plan to see was 21.d6!, with the idea of trying to play ♘d5 next. Play could continue 21...♕xd6 (21...cxd6?? 22.♘d5 ♘xd5 23.♕h7 mate) 22.♖d1 ♕c5 23.♘d5! hxg5 24.b4! and out of nowhere Black's queen is trapped in the middle of the board!

21...hxg5 22.♘e4

Again 22.d6 was interesting, when one crazy line goes 22...cxd6 23.♘d5 ♕d8 24.♖h6!? (madness!) 24...♘g6 25.♘f6+ (25.♖h5 keeps the game alive) 25...gxf6 26.♖xg6+ fxg6 27.♕xg6+ ♔h8 28.♕h6+, with a draw!



22...♖ae8?

Black crumbles in a difficult position. After this move the position is lost. Black should have tried 22...♘g6!, when he seems to be defending everything, for example: 23.hxg5 gxf6 24.gxf6 ♕e5 25.♕c1 ♔h7 26.♘g5+ ♔g8 27.♘e4 ♔h7 28.♘g5+ ♔g8 29.♘e4, with a draw.

23.♘xg5 The rest is easy.

23...g6 23...♘g6 24.♖xf7. **24.c5**

White's centre has been a success story!

24...♗f5

A desperate try. White's next move is rather easy to spot!

25.♖1xf5 gxf5 26.♕xf5 ♘g6 27.h5

27.d6! or even 27.♘e6! were even stronger possibilities.

27...♕xc5+ 28.♔h1 ♖xe2 29.♖xg6+ ♔h8 30.♕f6

Mate.

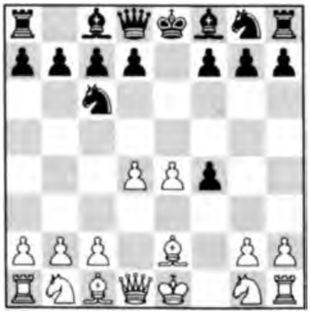
☐ **Jon Arnason**
■ **Heikki Westerinen**
Brighton 1982

1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.♗e2 ♘c6

This rarely seen move is an interesting way of meeting White's opening. I do not believe that it is as good as 3...f5! but White still has to respond actively. We will look at all of Black's other sensible options in the next game.

4.d4

There cannot be too much wrong with this move. White places another pawn in the centre and attacks Black's pawn on f4.



4...♘f6!?

Black aims for quick development and an attack against White's centre.

– 4...d5 is quite a common reply from Black. White should now continue 5.exd5 ♕xd5 6.♘f3.

This was played in Tartakower-Yates, New York 1924, which continued 6...♗g4 7.♘c3 ♗b4 8.0-0 ♗xc3 9.bxc3 ♘ge7 10.♗xf4, when White was already better due to his strong dark-squared bishop, which is placing c7 under attack.

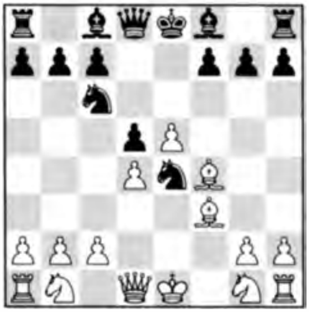
– 4...g5 has been played twice leading to a typical King's Gambit type of struture. The last encounter continued 5.h4 (5.♘c3!? is worth considering, for example: 5...♗g7 6.d5 ♘e5 7.d6!, when White has decent attacking chances) 5...♗g7 6.c3 h6 7.g3?! (this is a bit too optimistic. White should have played 7.hxg5 hxg5 8.♖xh8 ♗xh8 9.♗d3, when the queen can move over to h5 with some counterplay) 7...fxg3 8.hxg5 hxg5 9.♖xh8 ♗xh8 10.♕d3 d6 11.♕xg3 ♗f6 12.♗e3 g4, J.Nabuurs-Pruijssers, Groningen 2009.

5.♗f3

This seems sensible but there is another option: 5.♘f3!? has yet to be tried, but it looks like an interesting choice, for example: 5...♘xe4 6.d5 ♘e7 (6...♘e5!? is wild! 7.♕d4! – 7.♘xe5? ♕h4+ 8.g3 fxg3 is winning for Black – 7...♘xf3+ 8.♗xf3, with a roughly equal position) 7.♕d4 f5 8.♘c3 ♘xc3 9.♕xc3 and White has compensation in exchange for the pawn, as Black has some untangling to do. Practical examples are needed! 9...♘xd5 is greedy here: 10.♕e5+ ♘e7 11.♘d4! d6? 12.♗h5+.

5...d5 6.e5 ♘e4 7.♗xf4

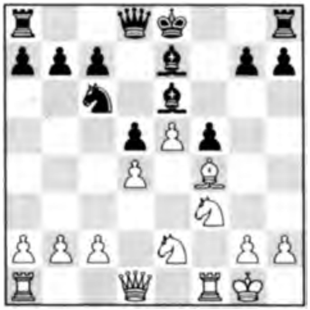
This position looks about equal to me. White has won his pawn back, but Black has some very active pieces. If I had to face this variation then I would seriously consider White's other option 5.♘f3, which looks like a lot of fun!



7...♗e6 8.♘e2 ♗e7 9.0-0

Perhaps White should have tried 9.c4!?, for example: 9...0-0 10.cxd5 ♗xd5 11.0-0 f6! 12.exf6 ♘xf6 13.♘bc3 ♗xf3 14.♖xf3, with an even game.

9...♘g5 10.♘d2 ♘xf3+ 11.♘xf3 f5

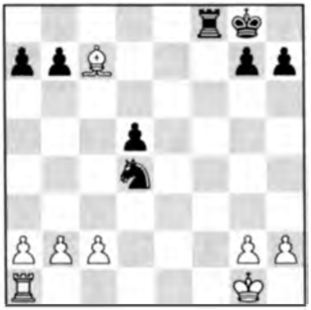


The position has become quite closed, which is a bit untypical for a King's Gambit. I cannot see how either side can really claim an advantage here.

12.exf6 White decides to keep some lines open. 12.♕d2 was a safer option.

12...♗xf6 13.♘g3 0-0 14.♘h5?! 14.c3 is more logical. **14...♗g4 15.♘xf6+ ♕xf6 16.♗xc7 ♗xf3 17.♖xf3 ♕xd4+ 18.♕xd4 ♘xd4 19.♖xf8+ ♖xf8**

The dust has settled and we have a reached a fairly equal ending. If anyone can claim an advantage then it must be Black, as his knight is more active compared to White's bishop.



20.♖d1?!

20.c3 may have been a slight improvement. In general White should aim to keep the rooks on the board as the combination of rook and bishop work very well together. 20...♘e2+ 21.♔h1 ♖c8 22.♗e5 ♖e8 is a draw.

20...♘xc2 21.♖xd5 ♘e3 22.♖d8 ♖xd8 23.♗xd8 ♘d1!

White now has some problems defending his queenside pawns.

24.b4 ♔f7 25.♔f1 ♔e6?!

This move is OK but I would have wanted to stop White from playing ♔e2, for example: 25...♘c3! 26.a3 ♔e6 (White now has a very hard defensive job as Black's king will reach c4, on top of this his queenside pawns are fixed on the same colour square as his bishop) 27.♔f2 ♔d5 28.♗e7 b5! and Black should win this ending.

26.♔e2!

White's king can now come over to the rescue of his queenside.

26...♘c3+ 27.♔d3 ♘xa2 28.♔c4 ♘c1

Even though Black has won a pawn he has allowed White's king to become very active when he did not need to.

29.♗g5 ♘e2 30.♗e3 Black's knight is also in some danger. The game now ended. **30...♔f5 31.♗xa7 ♘f4 32.g3 ♘e6 33.♔b5 ♘c7+ 34.♔b6 ♘d5+ 35.♔c5 ♘xb4** Simplifying into a drawn position. **36.♔xb4 ♔g4 37.♔b5 ♔h3 38.♗b8** Draw.

☐ **Willem Bor**
■ **Luc Henris**
Belgium tt 2000/01

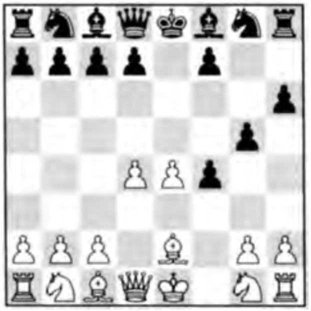
1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.♗e2

In this, the last game, we will take a look at any other possibilities that Black might try.

3...♕h4+

In general this move should help White, as he can gain a tempo with ♘f3 at a later point. The misplacement of his king is not such a big deal.

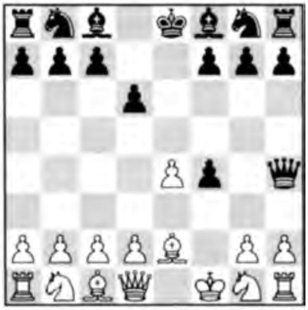
● 3...h6 is one rather greedy approach. Black simply wants to play ...g5, holding onto his extra pawn. 4.d4 g5



5.h4 (White can also play without this move, which does not seem to help him too much. For example, 5.♘c3!? looks like a good alternative. The idea is to play g3 next: 5...♗g7 6.g3! d5! 7.exd5 fxg3 8.hxg3 ♘e7 9.♗f3, with an unclear position) 5...♗g7 6.g3!? fxg3 7.hxg5 hxg5 8.♖xh8 ♗xh8 9.♗e3 d6 (9...d5! looks more dynamic) 10.♘c3 ♘c6 11.♕d2 g4 12.0-0-0 ♗d7 13.♘d5 ♘ce7 14.♗g5 f6 15.♗xf6 ♗xf6 16.♘xf6+ ♘xf6 17.♕f4 ♘eg8 18.e5 was chaos in N.Littlewood-Zwaig, Tel Aviv ol 1964.

- White should hardly fear 3...♗e7, for example: 4.d4 ♗h4+ 5.♔f1 ♘f6, Mazuchowski-Thomas, Lansing 1997, and here I would have seriously considered playing 6.g3!? (6.♘c3 is the safe option, which must be OK for White) 6...fxg3 7.hxg3 ♘xe4 (7...♗xg3 8.♕d3! traps Black's bishop!) 8.gxh4 ♘g3+ 9.♔g2 ♘xh1 10.♘f3, when I like the look of White's position!
- 3...♘e7 leads back into 1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.♗e2 d5 4.exd5 ♘f6 5.♘f3! after 4.♘f3 d5 5.exd5 ♘xd5.

4.♔f1 d6



5.d4

White has scored 3/3 with this move. It is often worth delaying ♘f3 until later on, but another move worthy of consideration was 5.♘c3!?. White tries to take advantage of the c7-square now that Black's queen has moved away. This is the move that I would play. After 5...♘f6 6.♘f3 ♕h6 7.d4 White must be happy with the outcome of the opening, if not then do not play the King's Gambit! White has a strong centre and a good development. Play could continue 7...♗e7 (7...♘c6 8.e5 ♘h5 9.♘d5 ♚d8 – we have been following Kammer-Stockmann, Germany tt 1997/98, and now White should have played 10.♖g1!, with the idea of playing g4 again, when White would be better) 8.e5 dxe5 9.dxe5 ♘h5 10.♖g1 0-0 11.g4!, with an unbalanced game.

5...g5!

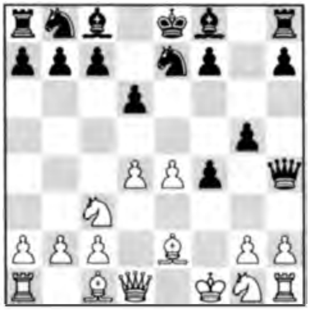
This is the most critical choice. Black holds onto his extra pawn on f4.

5...♘e7 6.♘f3 ♕h6 7.h4!? (in order to stop ...g5 and prepare g3 without allowing ...♕/♗h3+), with an unbalanced game.

6.♘c3

Rather than playing a plan with ♘f3 White has another idea in mind...

6...♘e7



7.g3?!

I like this plan and I have tried a similar idea in the King's Gambit against David Howell, but it is also very double-edged. After the position opens up, White's king could be in more danger compared to Black's and that seems to be the case here.

7.♘f3 is also possible and it may be stronger, for example: 7...♕h6 8.h4 g4 9.♘h2 ♕xh4 10.♔g1 ♕g5 11.♘xg4 ♖g8 12.e5 ♗xg4 13.♘e4, with a mess!

7...♕h6 7...fxg3?! looks far too risky. White should reply 8.♔g2! ♕h6 9.hxg3, with a strong attack.

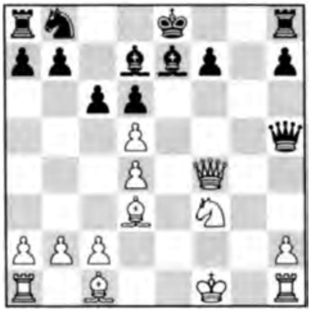
8.gxf4 gxf4 9.♕d3 ♗d7?!

This is just too passive. Black should have played 9...♖g8, followed up with ...♘bc6, when Black's position is to be preferred.

10.♘d5 ♘xd5 11.exd5 ♗e7 12.♕e4 ♕g6 13.♗d3 c6

Black still has a slight advantage here but he quickly goes wrong.

14.♕xf4 ♕h5 15.♘f3

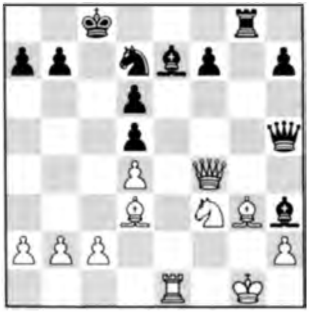


15...♖g8?!
15...♕xd5 was simple and good. Black might as well keep his pawn advantage. White can keep fighting though, for example: 16.♗d2 ♘a6 17.♖e1 ♗e6 18.c4 ♕h5 19.♔e2!?.

16.♖g1 ♗h3+ 17.♔f2 ♖xg1 18.♔xg1
White is OK now, as his king has reached safety. The position is dynamically equal.

18...cxd5 19.♗e3 ♘d7 19...♘c6 was a more active square for the knight. **20.♖e1**
White's playing a bit too carelessly. He should be in a rush to do something, because in the game Black is able to gain a dangerous initiative on the kingside.
20.♘g5!?

20...0-0-0 21.♗f2 ♖g8+ 22.♗g3

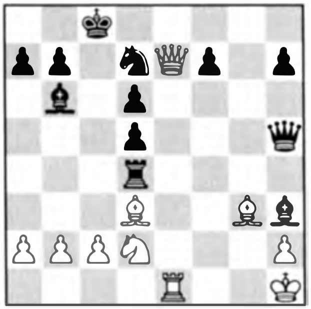


22...♖g4 22...♗e6! was simple and strong. Black is now ready to play ...♘f6 and ...♖g4. White's king is certainly in more danger than Black's!

23.♕e3 ♗d8 24.♘d2 ♖xd4?
A mistake which White misses!
24...♗g5! 25.♕e8+ ♔c7 26.♗b5 ♖xg3+! 27.hxg3 ♗xd2 is clearly better for Black.

25.♔h1?
White could capture the rook! For example: 25.♕xd4 ♗b6 26.♖e8+ ♔c7 27.♗xd6+! ♔c6 (27...♔xd6 28.♘c4+ ♔c7 29.♘xb6 is good for White) 28.♖c8+ ♔xd6 29.♘c4+ ♔e7 30.♘xb6 White is better.

25...♗b6 26.♕e7
Black is back on top again!



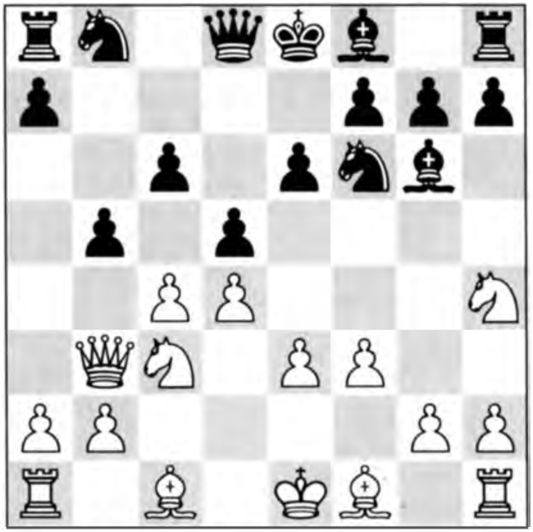
26...♕h6?! 26...♗f5! was clearly better for Black. **27.♘f3** Equal now! **27...♖g4?? 28.♗f5**
Winning for White! This game was clearly not perfect by any means, but it was a good old scrap. Earlier on White should have considered playing either 5.♘c3 or 7.♘f3.

Anyway I hope my article has inspired you to give 'The little bishop's gambit' a go in the odd game. It is quite annoying that Black has the move 3...f5 available to him, but even then he has to find that move and it hardly looks logical!

CHAPTER 4

Alexander Finkel

An Opening Bomb in the Slav



Let's play 8...b5!?

Nowadays the Slav Defence is one of the most popular openings versus 1.d4, while the 4.e3 ♗f5 5.♘c3 e6 6.♘h4 line is enjoying an enormous popularity between players from club level to the top grandmasters in the world. For that reason it is extremely surprising and exciting to find a virgin soil in the field of countless theoretical variations! It's hard to think of a more unexpected and yet sound idea than 8...b5!? in the position arising after 8.♕b3. No wonder it was brought into practice by one of the most creative and unconventional players, the Swedish GM Tiger Hillarp Persson, who is capable to look at a position from quite a different angle than most other players.

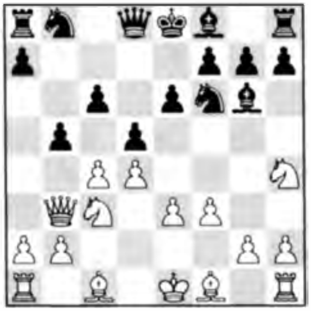
Thus far 8...b5!? has served Black fairly well: Black holds a respectable plus 1 score out of nine games played with this move, losing only two. One may ask: if Black is doing so great after 8...b5!? why hasn't it been picked up by more players and become a popular reply to 8.♕b3? Well... apparently it's not all just honey for Black! First of all Black should be ready to play a pawn down if White accepts a gift. He does get long-term compensation and a good chance to seize the initiative if White stumbles on the way (and it is very easy to do so), but a pawn is a pawn.

Another, probably even more irritating, issue is dealing with 9.c5!?. In that case

Black should either accept defending a slightly worse position after 9...♘bd7 10.a4 a6 11.♘xg6 hxg6 12.♕a3 ♖b8 13.axb5 axb5 14.♕a5 or to opt for the highly risky 9...a5, allowing White to get a dangerous initiative by a typical knight sacrifice on b5. Although both of these line are perfectly playable (as you will learn from the illustrative games), none is offering comfortable equality. On the positive side, dealing with 8...b5!? is never easy for White so I would say that employing this opening bomb may well be very rewarding!

☐ **Yury Kuzubov**
■ **Tiger Hillarp Persson**
Helsingor 2009

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.e3 ♗f5 5.♘c3 e6 6.♘h4 ♗e4 7.f3 ♗g6 8.♕b3 b5!?



An extremely interesting continuation, forcing White to think independently from the very first moves. White is facing a tough choice, as he needs to define the pawn structure for the rest of the game – a decision most players prefer to make based on home preparation and some good advice from a silicon friend!

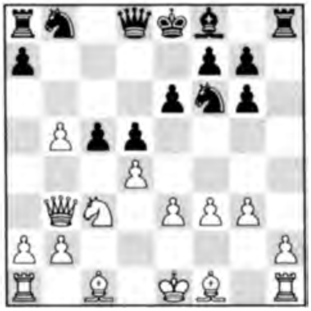
9.cxd5?!

It's amazing that none of the players confronted with 8...b5 (in the nine games played thus far) dared to accept the pawn sacrifice, although it is definitely the most critical continuation.

I believe that if White is willing to refute 8...b5 he's got to take the pawn: 9.cxb5 c5 (Black's idea makes sense due to the position of White's f3 pawn), and now:

– 10.g3!? (probably the most challenging move) 10...♗h5!? (otherwise White would take on g6 followed by ♗g2 and 0-0) 11.♕d1 ♗d6 12.♘g2 ♘bd7 13.♗e2 ♖c8 14.0-0 0-0 15.♘f4 and White keeps the slightly better chances, although Black has clear compensation.

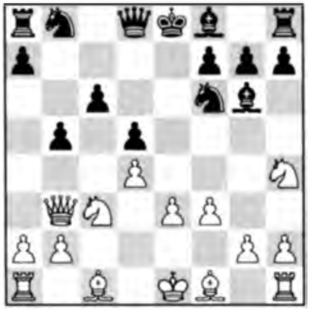
– After the immediate capture on g6 White would need to make some concessions in order to complete his development, as his kingside proves to be quite vulnerable: 10.♘xg6 hxg6 11.g3



11...♗d6! (of course not 11...♘bd7?! 12.♗g2 ♗d6 13.0-0 0-0 14.a4 ♖c8 15.a5, with a huge edge for White) 12.♔f2 (a very interesting position arises after 12.dxc5 ♗xg3+ 13.♔e2 ♘bd7 14.c6 ♘e5 15.♗g2 ♗xh2 and Black has serious counterchances due to ...♘h5, followed by ...♕h4 ideas; 12.♗g2 ♖xh2!) 12...♘bd7 13.♗g2 ♕c7 14.♗d2 (14.♘e2 g5! also looks great for Black) 14...cxd4 15.exd4 ♘b6 (or even 15...♖xh2!? 16.♘e2 ♖xh1 17.♖xh1 ♘b6), with excellent compensation for the pawn.

9.c5!? is another challenging move, which will be explored further.

9...exd5



10.♘xg6

Sooner or later this move has to be played.

– 10.g3 ♗e7 (or 10...♗d6 11.♗d2 a5 12.a4 b4 13.♘d1 ♘bd7 14.♘f2 ♕b6 15.♗h3 0-0 16.g4 ♖ad8 with good play in Delemarre-Vogel, Netherlands 2008/09) 11.♗h3 0-0 12.0-0 a5 13.♘xg6 hxg6 14.♗d2 a4 15.♕c2 ♕b6 16.♖ac1 ♘a6, Saric-Ragger, Zadar 2009.

– 10.a4 b4 11.♘e2 ♗d6 12.♘xg6?! (12.g3) 12...hxg6 13.♗d2 ♘bd7 14.♕d1 ♘h5 15.♔f2 c5∓, Lund-Hector, Denmark 2008/09.

10...hxg6 11.♗d2 a5 12.a4

Black got a fantastic attacking position after 12.0-0-0 ♗e7 13.g4 ♘a6 14.♕c2 a4 15.h4 ♘b4 16.♕b1 a3 17.b3 ♕d6∓, Giri-Hillarp Persson, Wijk aan Zee 2009.

Perhaps 12.♘e2!? is a better try.

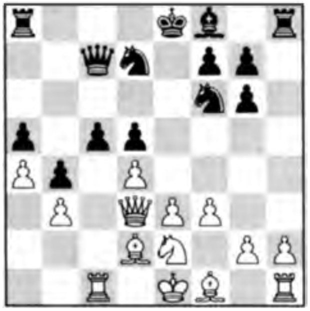
12...b4 13.♘e2 ♘bd7 14.♕d3 c5!

One doesn't need to be a grandmaster to realize that Black is doing great!

15.b3 ♕c7

Another, equally good option was 15...♗d6!? 16.♖c1 ♖c8 17.g3 ♕c7 18.e4 0-0! 19.♗g2 (19.e5? ♗xe5 20.dxe5 ♘xe5 21.♕e3 d4–+) 19...c4 20.♕c2 ♖fe8!∓ intending 21.e5 ♗xe5 22.dxe5 ♘xe5 23.0-0 ♕b6+ 24.♔h1 ♘d3–+.

16.♖c1



16...♖c8?!

I don't see why Black should refrain from taking on h2: 16...♖xh2!? 17.♖xh2 ♕xh2 18.dxc5 ♘xc5 19.♕b5+ ♘fd7 20.♘d4 ♕d6∓.

17.e4 c4

Very serious attention deserved the odd looking 17...dxe4!? 18.fxe4 ♕d8 when White's centre is under serious pressure, but it's too much even for such a creative player as Tiger!

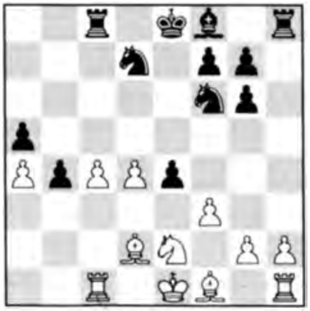
18.♕c2

18.♕e3!? intending 18...c3 19.e5 cxd2+ (19...♘g8 20.e6 ♘df6 21.♘xc3 bxc3 22.♗b5+ ♔d8 23.♖xc3 ♕xc3 24.♗xc3 ♖xc3 25.♕e5 with an attack) 20.♔xd2 ♕b8 21.exf6+ ♔d8 22.fxg7 ♗xg7 23.g3±.

18...dxe4 19.♕xc4

19.fxe4 ♕b7!.

19...♕xc4 20.bxc4



20...♘b6?!

The endgame is very complex, so Black has to play very precisely not to get himself in trouble.

The pawn on a5 desperately needs protection, so it made sense to bring the bishop to c7: 20...♗d6! 21.c5 ♗c7 22.♔f2 exf3 23.gxf3 ♘d5 when both sides have chances.

21.c5 ♘bd5

Not 21...♘xa4 22.♘g3!.

22.♔f2± ♗e7 23.g3 exf3 24.♔xf3

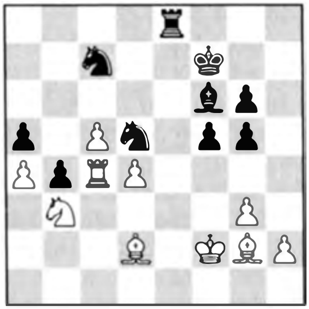
Black is deprived of active counterplay, so White just builds up the pressure.

24...0-0 25.♗h3 25.♖e1!? intending 25...♖fe8 26.♘c1. **25...♖cd8 26.♖he1 ♖fe8 27.♘f4 ♘c7 28.♖c4 g5 29.♘d3 ♘fd5 30.♘c1**

Even better was 30.♘e5 ♗f6 31.♘c6 ♖xe1 32.♗xe1 ♖e8 33.♗d2 b3 34.♖c1±.

30...g6 31.♘b3 f5 32.♔f2 32.g4 f4 33.♗f1 ♖a8 34.♖cc1 ♔g7 35.♖e4±.

32...♗f6 33.♖xe8+ ♖xe8 34.♗g2 ♔f7

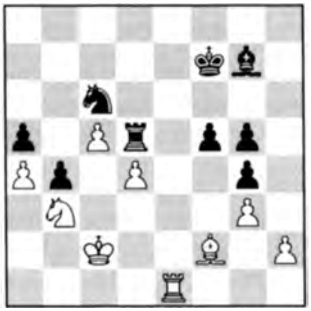


35.♖c1?

Throwing away the greater part of his advantage.

After the correct 35.♘xa5! g4 (perhaps White missed that after 35...♖a8 he can just take on b4: 36.♗xb4+–) 36.♘b3 ♖h8 37.♔g1 g5 38.a5± Black is on the ropes.

35...g4 36.♗f1 g5 37.♗c4 ♔g6 38.♖e1 ♖d8! 39.♖c1 ♘e7 40.♗e3 40.♘xa5 ♗xd4+ 41.♔e2 ♖h8 42.♔d3 ♗f2 43.♗xb4 ♖xh2 44.c6 ♘c8∓. **40...♘c6 41.♖d1 ♘d5 42.♗xd5 ♖xd5 43.♔e2 ♔f7 44.♔d3 ♘e5+ 45.♔c2 ♘c6 46.♗f2** 46.♔d3=. **46...♗g7 47.♖e1**



47...♗xd4? A blunder which eventually turned out to be the winning move!

47...f4?! 48.♔d3±; 47...♖d8! 48.♔d3 ♘e5+=.

48.♖d1 ♖xc5+ 49.♘xc5 ♗xf2 50.♘b3?

After the simple 50.♖f1! Black is helpless: 50...♗d4 51.♖xf5+ ♗f6 52.♘b3+–.

50...♔e6∓ 51.♔d3 ♘e5+ 52.♔e2 ♗b6 53.♖f1 ♘f3 54.♖c1? 54.♘d2!∓. **54...♔d5 55.♖c8 f4–+ 56.♖g8 ♔c4 57.♘d2+ ♘xd2 58.♔xd2 ♗e3+ 59.♔e2 b3 60.♖xg5**

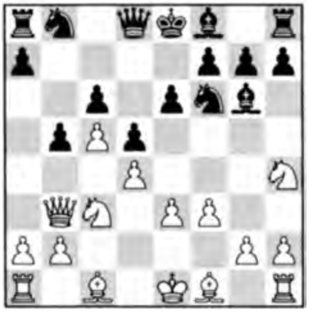
And White resigned because of 60...♖xg5 b2 61.♖b5 ♔c3 62.gxf4 ♗xf4 63.♖b6 ♗xh2.

An excellent game by both players!

☐ **Alexander Zubov**
■ **Alexander Lastin**
Moscow Open 2009

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.e3 ♗f5 5.♘c3 e6 6.♘h4 ♗e4 7.f3 ♗g6 8.♕b3 b5 9.c5

This move is clearly more dangerous for Black than 9.cxd5, but it's most certainly not a refutation of the 8...b5 line.



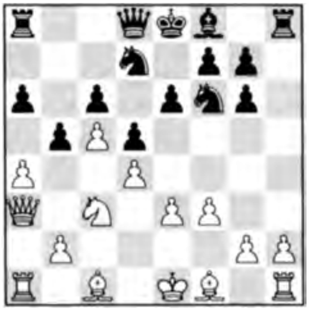
9...♘bd7

9...a5!? is covered in Schenk-Hector.

10.a4 a6 11.♕a3

Taking control of the a-file.

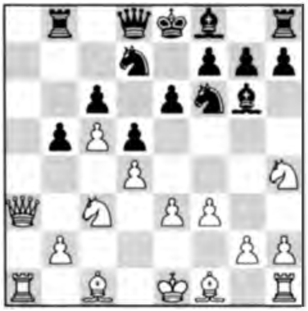
The immediate capture on g6 may just lead to a transposition in case Black reacts correctly to 12.♕a3: 11.♘xg6 hxg6 12.♕a3, and now:



– 12...♕b8? 13.axb5 cxb5 14.♘xb5 ♖xh2 15.♖xh2 ♕xh2 16.♕a5+–, Malakhov-Hector, Helsingor 2009.

– The position arising after 12...♖b8 is very important for the evaluation of the 8...b5 line, as Black can't safely avoid it (9...a5!? is a possible move, but it hardly applies to the term 'safely'!). After 13.axb5 axb5 14.♕a6 ♕c7 15.♕a5 ♕c8 16.♗d2 it is pretty obvious that White has the better chances due to the well established control over the a-file and the possibility to put pressure on c6 by ♘a2-b4. However, it's a perfectly playable position for Black.

11...♖b8 12.axb5 axb5



13.♕a5?!

Apparently White thought that he could take on g6 at any moment...

13.♘xg6 hxg6 14.♕a5 ♕c8 15.♗d2±.

13...♗c2!

Suddenly the white knight on h4 feels very uncomfortable!

14.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 15.g3?!

Another inaccuracy, after which White is on the defensive for the rest of the game.

It was better to play 15.f4, with equal chances, as it's too dangerous for Black to push ...b4:

– 15...b4 16.♘d1 ♗e7 (16...♘e4 17.♘f2 ♘xf2 18.♔xf2 ♔c7 19.♘f3 ♗e7 20.♖a7+ ♖b7 21.♖a6±) 17.♘f2 ♔c7 18.♗d3 ♗xd3 19.♖a7+ ♖b7 20.♖xb7+ ♔xb7 21.♘xd3 ♖a8 22.♘f3±.

– 15...♔c7 16.♖a7+ ♖b7 17.♖a8 ♖b8=.

15...g5!∓ 16.♘g2 b4 17.♘e2 g4?!

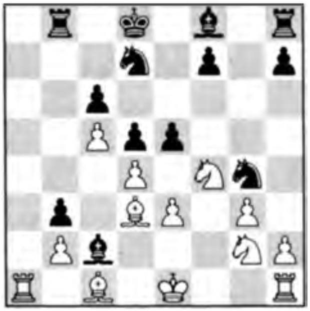
17...h5! 18.♗d2 (18.h3!?) 18...g4 19.♘h4 ♗h6 20.♘f4 ♗g5∓.

18.fxg4 ♘xg4 19.♘ef4

White is not willing to take any chances.

19.♗d2!? e5 20.♘c1 exd4 21.exd4 ♗g7 22.♗g5+ ♗f6 (22...♔e8 23.♘e2 ♘f8 24.♗f4±) 23.♗xf6+ ♘dxf6 24.h3 ♘h6 25.g4±.

19...e5 20.♗d3 b3!



A strong move keeping things under control.

21.♗xc2 bxc2 22.♘e2 ♗h6 23.♖a3

The position is about equal, so both players seem to be quite happy to wrap up the game.

23.h3 ♘gf6 24.0-0 ♘e4 with counterplay.

23...exd4 24.♘xd4 ♘ge5 25.♖c3 ♗f8

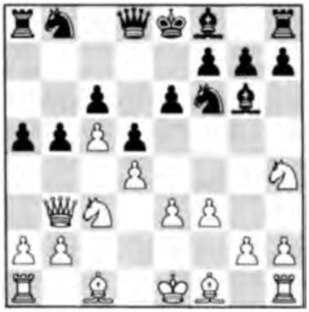
25...♘f6!?.

26.0-0 ♗xc5 27.♖xc2 ♔c7 28.♗d2

½-½.

☐ **Andreas Schenk**
■ **Jonny Hector**
Germany Bundesliga 2009/10

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.e3 ♗f5 5.♘c3 e6 6.♘h4 ♗e4 7.f3 ♗g6 8.♕b3 b5 9.c5 a5



A very risky move, inviting White to sacrifice the knight on b5, as he often does in certain lines of the Chebanenko Slav. The arising position is very complex and cannot be fully exhausted by variations, however it is pretty obvious that White gets excellent compensation for the sacrificed material. Nevertheless, the position is double-edged so White is no longer in the 'comfort zone' of risk-free play as in the main lines of the 4.e3 variation.

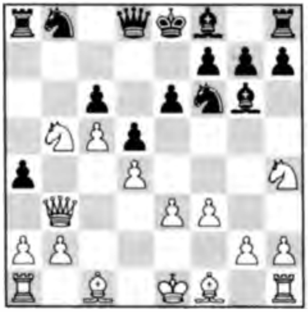
10.♘xb5

Apparently this bold move is White's best (not to say only) attempt to pose Black some problems in the opening.

After 10.♘xg6 hxg6 11.g3 ♗e7 12.♗g2 0-0 13.0-0 e5 14.♗d2 ♘bd7 15.♕c2 ♖e8 Black is very close to equality.

10...a4?!

Although the alternative looks quite scary I tend to believe it offers Black way more practical chances than the text-move: not many players would enjoy defending Black's position after 10...cxb5 11.♗xb5+ ♔e7 12.♗d2 (12.e4 a4 13.♕d3 ♘a6 14.♗d2 ♘c7) 12...♕c7 13.♕a4 (13.0-0 ♘c6 14.♗e1 ♖c8 15.♗g3 ♕b7 16.♘xg6+ hxg6 17.♕a4) 13...♗h5 14.e4, however things are far from being clear in that case.



11.♕a3?!

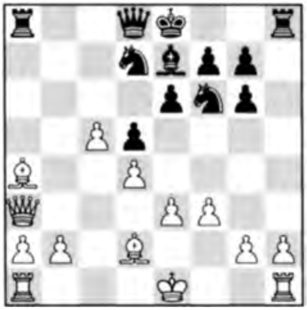
After this move Black can be very happy

with the outcome of the opening. White had two promising alternatives at his disposal to secure his opening advantage.

– The safest is 11.♘d6+! ♗xd6 12.♕b7 ♘bd7 (12...♕a5+ 13.♗d2 ♖a7 14.♕c8+ ♕d8 15.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 16.cxd6 ♖b7 17.♘xg6 hxg6 18.♖b1±) 13.cxd6 c5 14.♕c7 0-0 (14...c4!?) 15.dxc5 ♕xc7 16.dxc7 ♘xc5 17.♘xg6 hxg6 18.♗d2 ♖fc8, with a very comfortable endgame.

– The more aggressive 11.♕c3!? looks just as attractive: 11...cxb5 12.♗xb5+ (forcing the black king to come to e7, since the white queen is no longer hanging on a3) 12...♔e7 13.b4! ♕c7 (13...axb3 14.axb3 ♖xa1 15.♕xa1 ♕c7 16.♘xg6+ hxg6 17.♗d2±) 14.0-0 ♘bd7 15.♘xg6+ hxg6 16.g3±.

11...cxb5 12.♘xg6 hxg6 13.♗xb5+ ♘bd7 14.♗d2 Not 14.♗xa4?? ♕a5+ 15.♗d2 ♕xa4–+. **14...♗e7 15.♗xa4**



15...0-0?

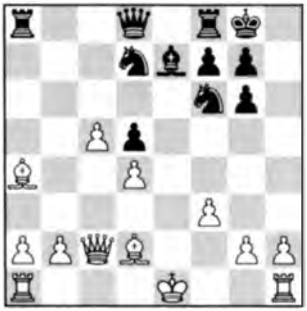
It's surprising that such a great attacking player as Hector ruins a very promising position by this passive move. The rook was very active over the h-file, so Black should have started active operations on the kingside right away.

15...♕c7! 16.b4 (16.♕b3 g5 17.♕c2 g4 18.0-0-0 0-0 19.b4 ♖fb8∓) 16...g5! 17.♗xd7+ ♔xd7 18.♕d3 ♖xh2∓.

16.♕b3 e5

It wasn't too late for 16...g5!?, with the idea to get some play on the kingside.

17.♕c2 exd4 18.exd4



18...♗xc5?

The position wasn't calling for such drastic measures. After the more solid 18... ♘h5!? 19.0-0 ♗f6 20.♗e3 ♖e8 21.♗f2 ♘f4 22.♗b5 White is definitely better but Black has his chances as well.

19.dxc5 ♕e7+

Nothing changes after 19...♘xc5 20.♕xc5 ♖xa4 21.0-0±.

20.♔d1 ♘xc5 21.♗b4! 21.♗b5? ♖fb8 22.a4? (22.♗e2 ♘b3–+) 22...♖xb5 23.axb5 ♖xa1+–+. **21...♖fc8 22.♖c1 ♕a7 23.♗xc5 ♖xc5** 23...♕xa4 24.♕xa4 ♖xa4 25.a3±. **24.♕xc5 ♕xa4+ 25.♖c2 ♕xa2 26.♔e2**

White emerged out of the mini-complications with a decisive advantage, but his technique let's him down.

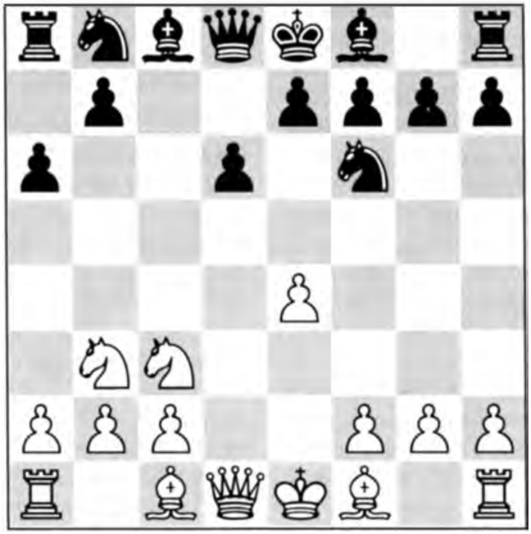
26...♖b8?! 26...g5. **27.♖d1?** The simple 27.♕a3! ♕xa3 28.bxa3+– would probably force Black to resign. **27...♖xb2 28.♖xb2 ♕xb2+ 29.♔f1 g5 30.♕c8+** 30.h3 ♔h7 31.♕c1 ♕b5+ 32.♔g1 ♕a4 33.♕d2±. **30...♔h7 31.♕f5+ ♔h6 32.♖b1 ♕d4 33.♖e1**

For some reason White decided to call it a day, even though Black's defensive task is far from being easy! Draw.

CHAPTER 5

Dimitri Reinderman

Sicilian Najdorf: the 'Mejvik Variation'



A voluntary retreat: 6.♘b3

If you want to surprise your Najdorf opponent on move 6, there are quite a few possibilities if you believe the database, which shows 30 different moves played by White. However, a lot of them are either main lines (even 6.h3 has been played and analysed a lot lately), pointless, or even losing material. To find a move which is both surprising and sound is not so easy, but recently the move 6.♘b3 came to my attention.

Let me first explain how I got to know this variation. I play an online browser game, Utopia, in which you have to cooperate with other players from your kingdom to fight other kingdoms. To communicate, we use IRC (the oldest chat network on internet) and so I found out that one of my kingdom mates, a Swedish student called Jacob Mejvik, was a chess player. He told me that amongst his companions he was known (or notorious) for playing a special variation of the Najdorf, the 'Mejvik Variation' 6.♘b3. And while I thought it had mainly curiosity value, I asked him to send his analysis of the move, part of which was done with the help of GM Grandelius.

In opening books (or in SOS articles) you'll often find that the opening/variation the author embraces is either better for White or at least equal for Black in all variations. Of course this is not really credible, especially in offbeat openings. Mejvik's analysis had the same flaw: either the final evaluation of variations was off the mark or superior moves for Black were not considered.

It is permissible to be (too) optimistic when analysing one's own pet variation, so I don't blame him. It can be a dilemma for an author though: should one be subjective (which often means not telling your readers the whole truth) or objective (which might mean you are not really promoting the opening/variation you write about)?

In case of SOS articles, best is probably to show 'model games' in which things go well, but also mention what happens in case of perfect play. Also, phrases like 'with chances for both sides' can both be good marketing and a correct objective evaluation.

Back to 6.♘b3. White does not have an advantage after this move, but that shouldn't dissuade you from playing this move, since it's hard enough to prove an advantage after moves like 6.♗g5 or 6.♗e3. The voluntary retreat 6.♘b3 can transpose to other variations, for example after 6....e5 7.♗e2 (or 7.a4, 7.♗e3, 7.g3 etc.; 7.♗g5 is a more unique case as after 6. ♗g5 the reply 6…e5 is rare). However, normally you will at least have gained some time on the clock.

There are also some variations which are only possible (or likely) to result via the 6.♘b3 move order. And while Black is equal with perfect play, it does give chances for both sides...

In the first game of this article, Novikov-Nepomniachtchi, Black plays the typical Najdorf move ...e5. Often in this formation the white bishop goes to e2, but Novikov places it on the more active square c4. White got a bind on the queenside and eventually won.

Kim-Tologontegin sees White attacking with g4-g5 after Black plays the Scheveningen move 6...e6. After inaccurate play by Black he got a bad position and White easily won.

In the end of the article I'll analyse some other possibilities. One of them is the exciting 6....b5 7.e5!? This you won't find in the database!

☐ **Stanislav Novikov**
■ **Ian Nepomniachtchi**
Nojabrsk RUS-ch U20 2005

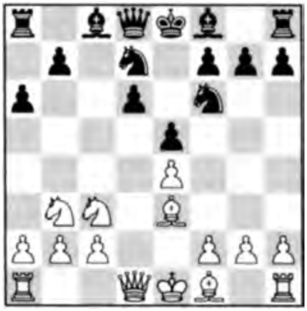
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♘b3 ♘bd7

After 6...e5 there are lots of ways to get into regular variations. An interesting option is 7.♗g5 ♗e7 8.♕d2 ♗e6 9.0-0-0 ♘bd7 10.f3 b5 11.h4 0-0 12.♔b1 ♕c7 13.g4, with a sharp position in Galego-Nogueira, Bobadela Mestres 2002.

7.♗e3 e5

Although 6.♘b3 anticipated this move, it's still perfectly alright.

So does White have anything better than 8.♗e2 with a normal Najdorf position? Probably not, but while 8.♗c4 isn't better, at least it's different. Don't play it if you like your pair of bishops though.



8.♗c4

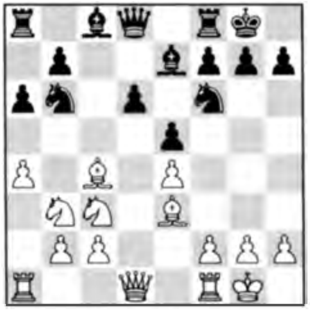
Another high level game went 8.f3 b5?! (too early) 9.a4 b4 10.♘d5 ♘xd5 11.♕xd5 ♖b8 12.♗c4, with a nice position for White in Tiviakov-Gelfand, Elista 1998. The move order in this game was 6.♗e3 e5 7.♘b3 ♘bd7 and now 8.f3.

8...♗e7 8...b5 9.♗d5 ♘xd5 10.♘xd5 is a tiny bit better for White.

9.0-0 0-0 10.a4 ♘b6

This forces White to give up his dark-squared bishop, but in Sicilian structures with ...d6 and ...e5 White often does this voluntarily anyway.

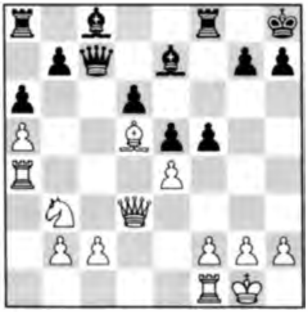
If Black develops normally, 10...b6 11.f3 ♗b7 12.♕e2 looks better for White than the normal lines after 6.♗e2 e5.



11.♗xb6 ♕xb6 12.♘d5 ♘xd5 13.♗xd5

White dreams of exchanging the light-squared bishops and getting a knight to d5, but Black's chances on the kingside shouldn't be underestimated.

13...♔h8 14.♕d3 f5 15.a5 ♕c7 16.♖a4



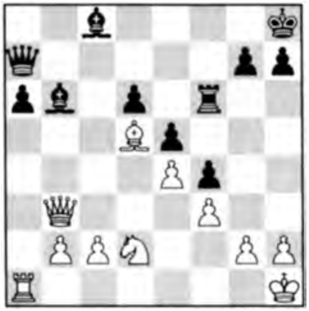
16...f4

Interesting was 16...fxe4!? 17.♗xe4 ♗e6, when 18.♗xh7 d5 would appeal to Sveshnikov players.

17.♖c4 ♕d7 18.f3

White is better off without this move (which weakens the a7-g1 diagonal), and should have played 18.♘d2 ♗d8 19.b4.

18...♗d8 19.♖b4 ♖b8 20.♖a1 ♖f6 21.♘d2 b5 22.axb6 ♖xb6 23.♕b3 ♕a7 24.♖xb6 ♗xb6+ 25.♔h1



25...g5

Better is 25...♕c7 26.♕c4 ♕d8 followed by 27...♖h6 which forces the knight to f1 (otherwise mate in two!).

With the pawn on g5 the black queen can no longer gain easy access to square h4.

26.♕c4

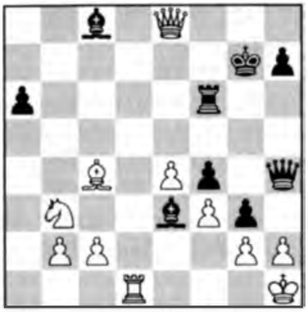
Now White could have played 26.♘c4! ♗c5 27.♕a4 ♖f8 28.c3 with a clear advantage. Looking at the moves that follow now, it seems that both players were short of time.

26...♕d7 27.♕c6 ♕d8 28.♖a3 ♔g7 29.♖c3 ♖f8 30.♖d3 ♗c5 31.♘b3 ♗e3 32.♗c4 g4 33.♖xd6

33.♕xd6 is safer, after 33...♕xd6 34.♖xd6 gxf3 35.gxf3 ♖f6 36.♖xf6 ♔xf6 37.♔g2 Black has good drawing chances, but it's still a pawn.

33...♕h4 34.♕c7+ ♔h8 35.♖d1 g3

36.♕xe5+ ♖f6 37.♕e8+ ♔g7



38.♖d7+

The only move; otherwise White loses.

38...♗xd7 39.♕xd7+ ♔h6 40.h3 ♕g5

If it wasn't for his king, White would be winning with two strong pawns for the exchange. But the king counts, and any check that Black gives will be close to mate.

41.♘d4 ♗xd4

A winning attempt. 41...♕a5 42.♘f5+ ♖xf5 43.♕e6+ is a perpetual.

42.♕xd4 ♖c6 43.e5 ♔h5 44.♗f7+ ♔h6 45.♗c4 ♖c8 46.♔g1 ♖d8 47.♗d5 ♔h5?!

Black could (and should) win a pawn here with 47...♖e8 48.e6 ♖d8 49.c4 ♕f5 50.♔f1 ♖b8 51.♗e4 ♕xe6, but the c-pawn should give White a draw.

48.♔f1

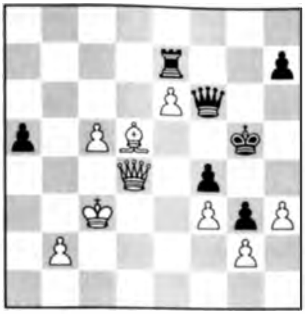
But now White can play for more than a draw. He moves his king to a safer position and his majesty will even turn out to be an attacking piece.

48...♕g6 49.♔e1 ♖d7 50.♔d2

Now White has a clear plan: c4, ♔c3 and push the pawns. It's not easy to defend against this plan, since the black queen has to defend her husband and the pawn on f4.

50...♕f5 51.c4 a5 52.♔c3 ♖e7 53.e6 ♔g5 54.c5 ♕f6

Endgames are losing for Black, but otherwise White will enter Black's position with his king.



55.c6 ♖c7 56.♔c4 ♕xd4+ 57.♔xd4 ♔f5

The wrong direction. The king should go to f6 (here or on the next moves).

58.b3 h6 59.h4 h5 60.♔c5 ♔e5 61.♗c4

This bishop will eventually go to d7, when one of the pawns will queen.

61...♖g7 62.♔b6 ♔d6 63.♗a6 ♖c7 64.♗b7 ♖g7 65.♗c8 ♖g8 66.♔b7 ♖f8 67.♗d7 ♖f5 68.c7

Black resigned.

☐ **Alexey Kim**
■ **Semetery Tologontegin**
Voronezh 2006 (6)

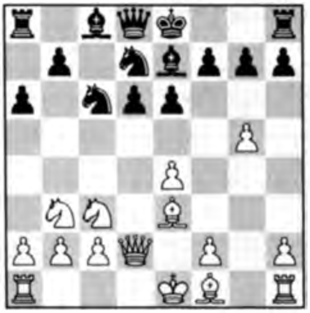
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♘b3 e6 7.♗e3 ♗e7 8.g4

In the Perenyi Attack (6.♗e3 e6 7.g4) Black can (and often does) win material with 7...e5 8.♘f5 g6, with a very sharp and interesting position.

Since there is no knight on d4, Black doesn't have this option in the game.

8...♘c6 9.g5 ♘d7 10.♕d2

Now the position looks like one from the Keres Attack. An early ♘b3 is not so common there, but the advantage is that White doesn't have to worry about ...♘xd4 anymore.



10...b5 11.0-0-0 0-0 12.f4 ♘c5

Black is not afraid of ♘xc5, since that brings a black pawn closer to White's king.

13.♗g2 b4?!

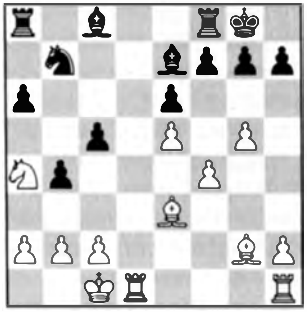
But now c5 becomes a weakness.

13...♘a4 14.♘xa4 bxa4 15.♘d4 ♘xd4 16.♕xd4 a3 17.b3 a5 would bring about a sharp position, with chances for both sides.

14.♘xc5! dxc5?!

14...bxc3 15.♕xc3 loses a pawn, but with open lines there's always some compensation. Now Black just gets a bad endgame.

15.♕xd8 ♘xd8 16.♘a4 ♘b7 17.e5



The difference in activity between the white and the black pieces is clear.

17...♖b8 18.♖he1

This way White can take on b7 and c5 without leaving the rook hanging on h1.

18...♖e8 19.♗c6

White is impatient and wants to capture the pawn right away.

Waiting with 19.b3! is even stronger. Since Black can't do anything, White has time to improve his position.

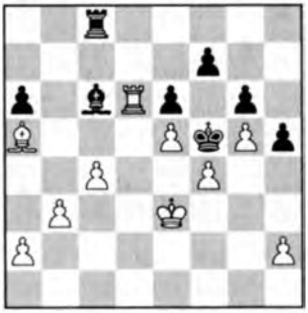
19...♖d8 20.♗xb7 ♗xb7 21.♗xc5 ♗c6?

After 21...♔f8 the win is not so easy, for example 22.♗xe7+ ♔xe7 23.♘c5 ♗f3! 24.♖xd8 ♖xd8 25.♘xa6?! ♖d4! gives Black counterplay.

22.♗xe7 ♖xd1+ 23.♖xd1 ♗xa4 24.♗xb4

With two pawns more the win is easy, even with opposite-coloured bishops on the board.

24...h5 25.♗a5 ♔h7 26.b3 ♗c6 27.♖d6 ♖c8 28.♔d2 ♔g6 29.♔e3 ♔f5 30.c4 g6



31.♖xc6

At first sight a bit odd, but it turns out to be a good practical decision. Black's king will stay on f5 and his rook cannot do anything active while White pushes his pawns.

31...♖xc6 32.h3 h4 33.♗d8 ♖c8 34.♗b6 ♖c6 35.c5 ♖c8 36.b4 ♖c6 37.a3 ♖c8 38.a4 ♖b8 39.♗a5

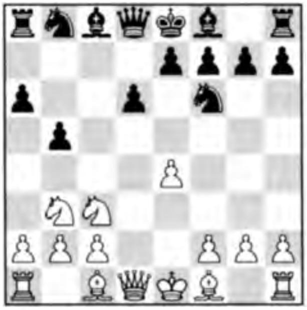
39.b5 axb5 40.axb5 ♖b7 41.c6 ♖xb6 42.c7 ♖xb5 43.c8♕ also wins.

39...♖c8 40.♔f3 ♖c6 41.♗d8 ♖c8

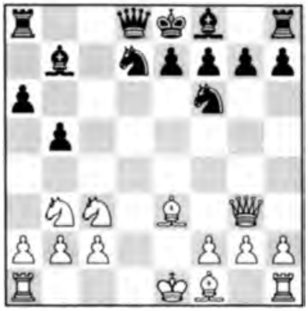
42.♗e7 ♖b8 43.c6 ♖b6 44.c7 ♖c6 45.♗d6 a5 46.bxa5 ♖c3+ 47.♔e2 ♔e4 48.♔d2 ♔d4 49.a6 ♖xh3 50.c8♕ ♖h1
Black resigned.

6...b5 and other moves

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♘b3 b5
After 6...♘c6 I recommend 7.♗e3, to play 8.g4 after 7...e6.
Black also can switch to the Dragon with 6...g6. Probably best is to play the classical variation with 7.♗e2 and 8.0-0, but 7.e5!? isn't totally stupid.
There are also some games with 6...♕c7. Apart from developing, White can try 7.♘d5!?.



7.e5!?
Of course White can play some normal move, but this pawn sacrifice is more in 'SOS-style'. It doesn't give an advantage with correct play, but White can win the pawn back if he wants.
7...dxe5 8.♕f3 ♖a7 9.♗e3 ♗b7
Mejvik analyses 9...♖d7 10.♘c5 ♖d6 11.♕a8 as 'not as killing as I first thought', which is correct. White does have enough compensation for the pawn though, e.g. 11...♘bd7 12.a4 b4 13.♘3e4 ♘xe4 14.♘xe4 ♖g6 15.♘c5 ♘xc5 16.♗xc5 and White regains the pawn.
10.♕g3 ♖a8 11.♕xe5
It's actually possible not to take the pawn. Houdini says it's equal after 11.♖d1 ♘bd7 12.♘c5 ♗c6 13.♘xd7 ♘xd7 14.♗e2 e6 15.0-0 but it's a difficult position to play (for both sides probably).
11...♘bd7 12.♕g3

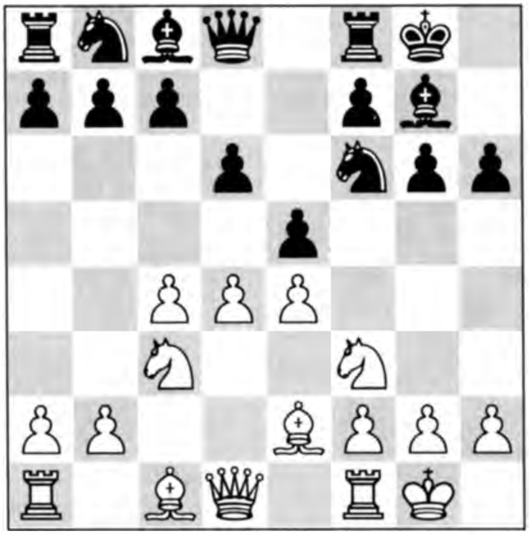


Black and White both have three pieces developed, the main difference is the position of the queen. White's queen is active (but could be vulnerable to attacks), Black's queen doesn't have a lot of squares to go to. She could go to b8, but ♘a5 might be annoying then. Maybe the best option is to play ...♖c8 and ...♕c7 (after developing the kingside or even right away).
12...e6
The most normal move, although 12...g6 and 12...♖c8 are also fine.
13.♖d1 ♖c8
Preventing 14.♘c5 and preparing ♕c7.
14.♗d3 ♕c7 15.♕xc7 ♖xc7 16.0-0
With an equal position.

CHAPTER 6

Sinisa Drazic

A King's Indian Surprise



7...h6!? in the main line

I am an active tournament player, and therefore often confronted with the problem of what to play against my next opponent and how to surprise him. For, if you give me the choice between going into deep well-analysed variations, or playing something new and original, I will choose the second option. Computers have made opening preparation easier, but on the other hand there are now many young players who lack fundamental chess knowledge. For this reason, I like to force those players to think with their own heads, right from the start of the game! I want to play 'head to head', not against some version of Rybka.

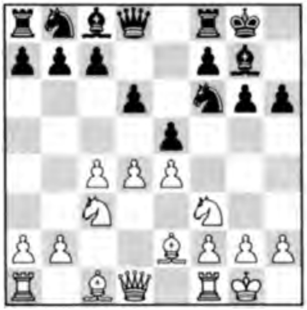
The present subject is the result of my search for something new in the King's Indian. At one point I said to myself, why not play some useful move in an early stage of the game which would stop the lines with ♗g5. Also why not confuse my opponent? Indeed, some perfectionist will be nervous and try to refute my line with direct moves, which can give me some extra chances to play for the edge!

My results in this line have been good, but to be honest I usually play this line against players who are below my level. The move ...h6 has its good and its bad sides, and the games that I selected will demonstrate this.

In the first game of this article (and in the notes) I will explain some typical mistakes that Black can make in the King's Indian. Indeed, remember that the move 7...h6 may surprise your opponent, but the laws of chess do still apply!

☐ **Guillermo Llanos**
■ **Anibal Aparicio**
Buenos Aires 1991

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♗g7 4.e4 0-0 5.♘f3 d6 6.♗e2 e5 7.0-0 h6



A very rare move indeed. The main idea is to get out of the standard positions of the King's Indian; to avoid ♗g5; and to be ready for d4-d5, when Black has ...♘h7 and ...f5 (which is a basic idea in the KID), before White is ready to stop this option (with say ♗e3 and ♕d2). The downside of an early ...h6 is that in some variations the move might not be necessary and could be a loss of tempo. However, it is rare that after such a semi-useful move White can count on a big advantage at such an early stage of the game!

8.♖b1

Unclear play arises after 8.d5 ♘h7 9.g3 ♗h3 10.♖e1 ♘d7.

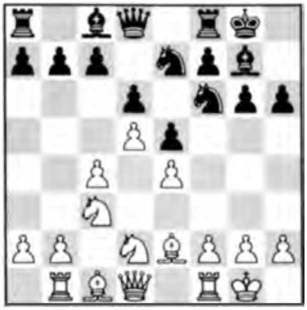
And 8.♗e3 ♘g4 9.♗c1 ♘c6 10.d5 ♘e7 leads to a well-known and popular position. John Nunn was one of the top GMs to play this successfully as Black.

8...♘c6 9.d5

The only way to fight for an advantage and to justify ♖b1.

Usually after taking on e5, White cannot count on any advantage. This is the case here too! After 9.dxe5 dxe5 10.♗e3 (likewise 10.h3 ♕e7 11.♘d5 ♕d6 is equal, but not 11...♘xd5 12.cxd5 ♘d4 13.♘xd4 exd4 14.♗d3±) 10...♗g4 the chances are even.

9...♘e7 10.♘d2



10...g5?!

A typical positional mistake. Better was 10...♘h7 or 10...♘d7 with 11...f5 to follow. After the text Black will be without counterplay!

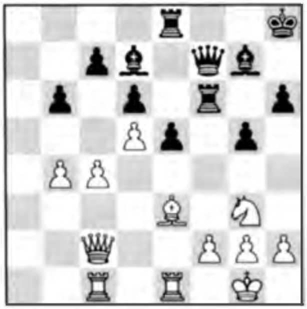
– I also don't like 10...c5. (Why play ...c5, after White has already prepared b4 with ♖b1?) 11.a3 ♘e8 12.b4 b6 13.bxc5 bxc5 14.♘b3 ♔h7 (14...f5 15.♗d2 ♘f6 16.f3±) 15.♗d2 f5 16.f3 f4 17.♘a4 g5 18.♗a5 ♕d7 19.♘axc5. Of course. White rightly sacrifices a piece and he is now almost winning! 19...dxc5 20.♘xc5 ♕d6 21.♘d3± Ellers-Pasalic, Leipzig 1995.

– 10...a5 11.a3 ♘d7 (I like 11...♘h7 12.b4 axb4 13.axb4 f5 with a full struggle ahead) 12.b4 axb4 13.axb4 f5 14.♕c2 f4?! (this is a positional mistake. Now White can exchange the light-squared bishop after which he is simply better because of the fact that the black bishop on c8 is one of the most dangerous pieces in the KID! Of course, 14...♘f6 was a much better solution, keeping the option ...f5-f4 and many others!) 15.♗g4± ♘f6 16.♗xc8 ♖xc8 17.c5 g5 18.f3 g4 19.♘c4 h5 20.♗a3 ♘e8 21.♕e2 ♘g6 22.♔h1 ♕g5 23.♖bc1 ♖f6 24.b5 and White's play on the queenside is much faster, Kojoukhar-Pasalic, Germany 1995.

11.♖e1 ♘d7 12.♗g4

A typical reaction. Black has a bad position and will have no chances anymore to organize a strong attack!

12...a5 13.♘f1 f5 14.♗xf5 ♘xf5 15.exf5 ♖xf5 16.♘e4 ♖f7 17.♘fg3 b6 18.♕h5 ♘f6 19.♘xf6+ ♕xf6 20.♗e3 ♗d7 21.♖bc1 ♖e8 22.b3 ♕e7 23.♕g6 ♖f6 24.♕c2 ♕f7 25.a3 ♔h8 26.b4 axb4 27.axb4



27...♖g8

At first sight 27...b5 looks good but is not enough! White more or less wins after 28.cxb5 ♗xb5 (28...♕xd5 29.♕xc7 ♕xb5 30.♘e4+−) 29.♕xc7 ♕xd5 30.♖ed1 ♕e6 (30...♕b3 31.♘e4) 31.♘e4.

28.♕d1 ♗f8 29.c5 bxc5 30.bxc5 dxc5 31.♘e4 ♖f4 32.♘xc5 ♗g4 33.f3

With 33.♕d2 White would not even have allowed Black the illusion of counterplay.

33...♗xf3 34.gxf3 ♖xf3 35.♘e4 g4 36.♗f2 h5 37.♖c2 ♗h6 38.d6 cxd6 39.♕xd6 ♗f4 40.♖c7 ♗xh2+ 41.♔h1 ♕f8 42.♕xf8 ♖gxf8 43.♔xh2 h4 44.♔g2 h3+ 45.♔g1 ♖8f7 46.♖xf7 ♖xf7 47.♗g3 ♔g7 48.♘f2 ♖f3 49.♗xe5+ ♔g6 50.♘xg4 ♖f5 51.♔h2

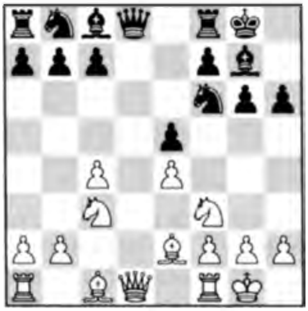
Black resigned.

Instructive mistakes were made, but on move 10 Black ought to have started preparing for ...f5.

Now what if White wants to use the loss of tempo (7...h6) to take on e5? Doesn't he just win a pawn?

☐ **Davoud Pira**
■ **Sinisa Drazic**
Cannes 2005

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 g6 3.c4 ♗g7 4.♘c3 0-0 5.e4 d6 6.♗e2 h6 7.0-0 e5 8.dxe5 dxe5



9.♘xe5

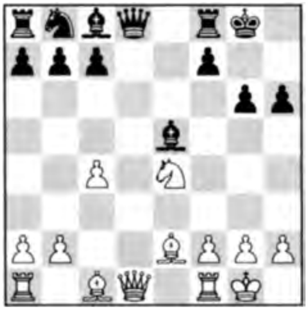
9.♕c2 ♘bd7 10.♖d1 ♘h5 11.♗e3 c6 12.b4 ♕e7 13.c5 ♘df6 14.h3. This plan is not so bad. White has a space advantage and more liberty to play, but he should be careful. 14...♘f4 15.♗f1 ♘6h5?! (a bad move, without a clear idea. 15...♘h7 is natural and good: 16.♖d6 ♘g5 17.♘xg5 hxg5 18.♗c4 ♗e6 19.♕b3 ♗xc4 20.♕xc4 ♖fd8 21.♖ad1 ♘e6 22.b5 ♘d4± and there is still a lot of poison in the position). Now correct is 16.♖d6 with the idea to double the rooks, and I can't see what Black's knight is doing on h5, White would have been much better. In Kuhne-Stolz, Potsdam 1995, 16.♔h2 was played and after several mistakes Black even won.

9...♘xe4!

The only move for equality, and the tactical justification for 7...h6.

9...♕e7? leaves White with a clear pawn up: 10.f4 (of course, even 10.♗f4± is possible) 10...c6 11.♗e3 ♘a6 12.♕c2 ♘c5 13.♖ad1 ♖e8 14.♗f3 a5 15.♕f2 ♗f8 Chytilek-Holemar, Brno 2001, and now 16.♖d2 should suffice – a pawn up and better development.

10.♘xe4 ♗xe5



11.♕xd8

11.♗xh6 ♕h4 (after this move Black doesn't have problems anymore!) 12.f4 ♕xh6 13.fxe5 ♕e3+! (an important move) 14.♘f2 ♘c6 15.♗g4 ♗xg4 16.♕xg4 ♘xe5 17.♕h4 ♖ae8∓ (instead, 17...♘d3 18.b3 ♖ae8 19.♖ad1 ♘xf2 20.♕xf2 is equal) 18.♖ae1 ♕b6 (after simple play, Black is slightly better) 19.♔h1 Gombac-Drazic, Nova Gorica 2010. And now instead of 19...f5 Black retains a slight edge with 19...♔g7.

11...♖xd8 12.♗xh6 ♗xb2 13.♖ad1

A good move. Ignoring the bishop on b2, which is not stronger here than on g7!

After 13.♖ab1 ♗g7 14.♗g5 (14.♖fd1 ♖xd1+ 15.♖xd1 ♘c6=) 14...♖e8 Black is equal.

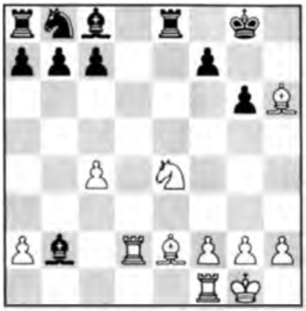
13...♖e8

A good reply. Black keeps as many pieces as possible in the game, which can help to create winning chances.

After 13...♖xd1 14.♖xd1 ♘c6 15.♗e3 White is slightly better because Black has problems developing.

14.♖d2

14.♗f3 ♘c6 15.♖fe1 ♗f5 is unclear.



14...♗g7

This move isn't bad, but Black will have no more winning chances. Of course we can win any position in practical play, but this position is clearly drawish and any other result will be a surprise.

14...♗h8! was the best move. The idea is to support the knight, which will move to c6 and d4. Then Black will have an excellent position, with a strong knight in the centre! Still, with best play the game could end in a repetition after 15.♗f3 ♘c6 16.♘c5 (16.♗f4 ♗g4!∓) 16...♘e5 17.♗xb7 ♗xb7 18.♘xb7 ♖ab8 19.♘a5 ♘g4 20.♗f4 ♗c3 21.♖d5 ♘f6 22.♖c5 ♘e4 23.♖d5 ♘f6=.

15.♗xg7 ♔xg7 16.♘c5 ♘c6 17.f4 ♖b8

17...♘a5.

18.♗f3 ♘a5 19.♖c1 b6 20.♘b3 ♘xb3 21.axb3 a5 22.♔f2

And the game ended in a draw on move 59.

☐ **Remus Cornea**
■ **Almos Szirti**
Marijampole 1994

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d6 4.e4 ♗g7 5.♗e2 0-0 6.♘f3 e5 7.0-0 h6 8.d5 a5

As I mentioned above the alternative is 8…♘h7 to prepare …f5.

9.♖b1

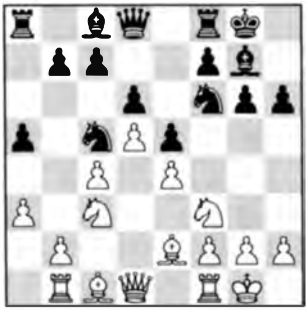
I don't like this move, better is 9.♘d2 or 9.♘e1.

After for instance 9.♘e1 ♘a6 10.♘d3 ♘d7 we enter a typical standard King's Indian position. Play is dictated by the pawn chain. White will play on the queenside, and Black on the kingside.

9...♘a6 10.a3?!

A mistake, after which Black can have all the advantages which the King's Indian Defence can give!

10...♘c5



11.♕c2?

A direct mistake, connected with the badly-placed rook.

Black has a pleasant position after 11.♘d2 a4.

11...♘fxe4!

Possible because the rook is hanging.

12.♘xe4 ♘xe4 13.b4 ♘f6

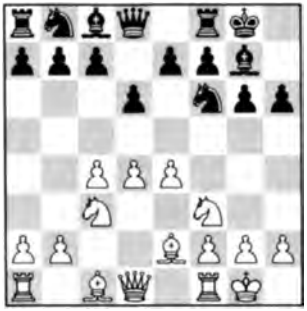
And Black is a clear pawn up in an early stage of the game, with no compensation for White!

☐ **Daniele Zarpellon**
■ **Sinisa Drazic**
Padova 2005

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♗g7 4.e4 d6 5.♘f3 0-0 6.♗e2 h6

If you are in a more provocative mood you can play 6...h6, like I did in this game.

7.0-0



7...a6

This is a novelty. 7...e5 would bring us back to our standard SOS position. The idea is of course to confuse the opponent, because without …e5 or …c5, White has nothing to do, except for developing his pieces, and Black might have the additional option to have a useful tempo if the position switches to the Benoni-Benko type later on. A note of warning: such half risky moves are especially good if you play against opponents weaker than yourself!

8.h3 e5

I opt for a set-up with …e5. Which is more useful: the pawn on h3, the pawn on h6 – or the pawn on a6? Tactically there is something wrong with my play though.

9.dxe5

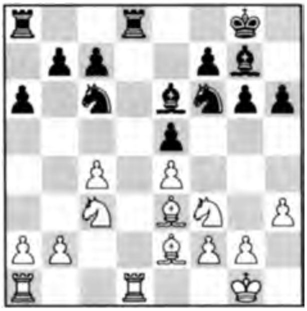
In case of 9.d5 Black's counterplay on the kingside would be faster than usual because of the target provided by h3.

9...dxe5 10.♛xd8

Correct was 10.♘xe5 ♘xe4 11.♘xe4 ♗xe5

12.♗xh6 ♕xd1 (12...♖e8 13.♕xd8 ♖xd8 14.♖fe1 ♗xb2 15.♖ab1 ♗g7 16.♗g5 ♖e8 17.♗g4+−) 13.♖axd1 ♖e8 14.♗f3 ♗xb2 15.♗f4 and with simple moves White has obtained a better position!

10...♖xd8 11.♗e3 ♘c6 12.♖fd1 ♗e6



13.b3

White is still somewhat better after 13.♘d5 ♖ac8 14.♘xf6+ ♗xf6 15.♗xh6 ♘d4 16.♘xd4 exd4 17.♗f4. He is a pawn up, but Black has some compensation.

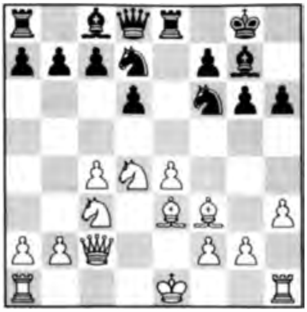
13...♔h7 14.♖xd8 ♖xd8 15.♖d1 ♖xd1+ 16.♗xd1 The position is equal. With small positional mistakes later on, White lost the fight and the game. **16...♗f8 17.♗c2 ♔g7 18.♗b1** The game is even after 18.♘d5 ♘e8. **18...♘e8 19.♘e2** 19.♘d5 is still equal. **19...♗a3** 19...♗b4. **20.♘e1 f6 21.f3 h5 22.h4 ♔f7**

And after 97 moves Black scored the full point, from a totally equal position.

In another fairly recent game of mine White postponed castling, still the early ...h6 justifies its selection for this article.

☐ **Corrado Astengo**
■ **Sinisa Drazic**
Milano 2010

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 d6 3.♘f3 g6 4.♘c3 ♗g7 5.e4 0-0 6.♗e2 h6 7.h3 e5 8.♗e3 exd4 9.♘xd4 ♖e8 10.♗f3 ♘bd7 11.♕c2



11...a6

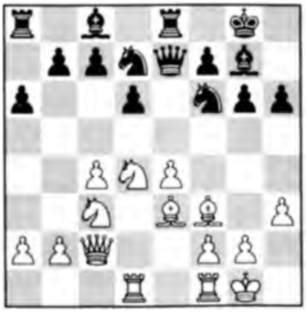
11...♘b6 looks very attractive, but with a few strong moves White can punish this 'nice' move: 12.b3 d5 13.exd5 ♘fxd5 14.♘xd5 ♗xd4 15.0-0-0 ♗f5 16.♖xd4! ♗xc2 17.♘xb6 ♕e7 18.♘d5 ♕a3+ 19.♔xc2 ♕xa2+ 20.♔c3 and the pieces are superior to the queen.

A good alternative was 11...♘e5 12.♗e2 c5 13.♘f3 ♘c6 – Black has a weak point on d6, but on the other hand he controls square d4 and his pieces are better placed and he has the option to gain good counterplay with ...♗e6 and ...a6.

12.♖d1 ♕e7

Not 12...c5 13.♘b3 ♘e5 14.♗e2 ♕c7 15.♕d2±.

13.0-0



13...♘e5

Stronger was 13...c5. Black gains space, for the price of a small weak point, which is practically untouchable anyway! Tell me, after 14.♘b3 ♘e5 15.♗e2 ♗e6 16.♘d2 ♗d7 17.♘f3 ♘xf3+ 18.♗xf3 ♗c6, what's wrong with the black position? Of course, Black is OK (as Adorjan told us long ago!). In the game I lack space, and am soon inferiorly placed.

14.♗e2 ♗d7 15.f4 ♘c6 16.♗f3 ♘xd4 17.♗xd4

Black lacks space no doubt about it!

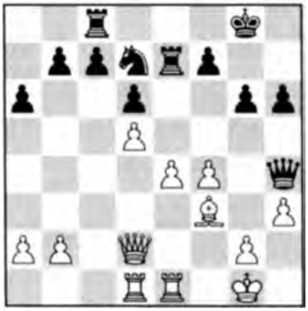
17...♗c6 18.♖fe1

Why didn't White play 18.e5, an obvious move, so natural and simple? It promises a clear advantage!

18...♖ac8

What should Black do? He can only wait for some mistakes, right?

19.♕f2 Or 19.b4 to gain even more space. **19...♘d7 20.♘d5 ♗xd5 21.cxd5 ♗xd4 22.♕xd4** 22.♖xd4 was better. **22...♕h4 23.♕d2 ♖e7**



This is the best position for Black since the start of the game.

Not 23...g5 24.♗g4.

24.♗g4 24.♖c1. **24...♖ce8 25.♗xd7 ♖xd7**

White plays for a draw, and just because of this Black gains time to consolide, and then to press the opponent for more! One more mistake is needed though.

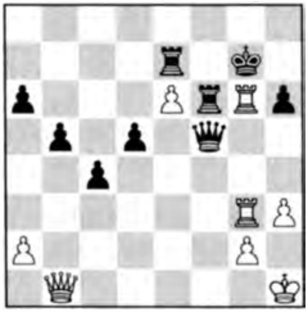
26.e5?

Here it is! This often happens when you have only one result in mind. You should always play for the best moves and then press your opponent to defend, rather than exchanging pieces at any cost and slowly drift towards a weaker position. Once you wake up, you realize that you are in an already lost position!

26...♖de7

Black is slightly better, and with good technique and calculation he won the game.

27.e6 fxe6 28.dxe6 ♕f6 29.♕d5 b6 29...♕xb2∓. **30.♖d4 ♔g7 31.♖de4 ♕xb2 32.f5 ♖f8 33.♖f1** 33.♖g4 ♖f6 34.♖xg6+ ♖xg6 35.fxg6 ♕c3∓. **33...♖f6 34.♖g4 ♕e5 35.♕d3 b5 36.♔h1 c5∓ 37.♖f3 c4 38.♕b1 d5 39.♖fg3 ♕xf5 40.♖xg6+**



After **40...♔h7** Black won on move 64.

☐ **Norbert Stull**

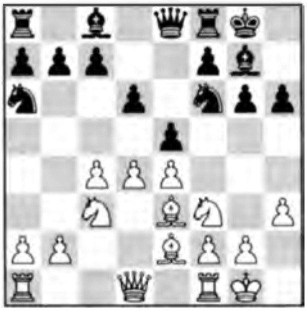
■ **Boris Gruzmann**

Davos 2008

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 d6 3.♘c3 g6 4.e4 ♗g7 5.♗e2 h6 6.♘f3 0-0 7.0-0 ♘a6

Here too Black postpones ...e5.

8.h3 ♕e8 9.♗e3 e5



10.d5

10.dxe5 dxe5 11.a3 is an alternative. The move ...h6 is not necessary, but it's also not so bad. After a3, b4, ♛c2, White keeps the somewhat better prospects.

10...♔h7

I don't like this plan. Black will lose a lot of time to push ...f5. It was possible to play in a much simpler way.

Black has some compensation after 10...♘h5 11.♛d2 ♘f4 12.♗xf4 exf4 13.♛xf4 ♘c5 14.♜fe1 f5 15.exf5 ♗xf5 16.♛d2±.

Best is 10...♘h7 11.♛d2 h5 12.a3 f5 when things are not clear! It is the plan with ...♘h7 that you should remember when you decide to take up this King's Indian with ...h6.

11.♘d2 ♘g8 12.a3 f5 13.f3?!

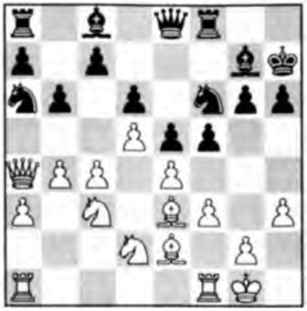
13.exf5 gxf5 14.♛c2 ♘e7 15.f4 e4 16.♘b3 is a typical position in which White is clearly better. He must push g4 at the right moment, after some preparation. Black has an additional problem compared to similar positions, because he can't control the important square d4.

13...♘f6 14.b4 b6?

14...f4 was the only chance to attack the white king but objectively the first player is better after 15.♗f2 g5 16.c5.

15.♛a4??

15.exf5! gxf5 16.♗d3 was strong. What is the black king doing on h7?

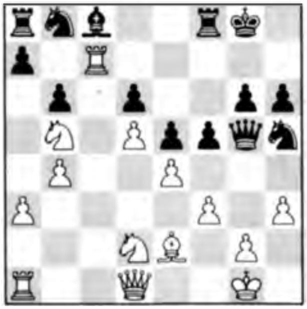


15...♛e7?

White is only slightly better after 15...♛xa4 16.♘xa4 ♘h5 17.♜fc1.

Now Black is forced to bury his pieces on the queenside. Still he will be successful, so should we really condemn his desire not to exchange queens?

16.c5 ♘b8 17.cxd6 cxd6 18.♜fc1 ♘h5 19.♛d1 ♗f6 20.♘b5 ♗g5 21.♗xg5 ♛xg5 22.♜c7+ ♔g8



23.♘f1?

After this mistake White will have no more chances to come back in the game!

23.♛e1 is much stronger: 23...♘f4 24.♗f1 ♘xh3+ 25.♔h1 ♘f4 26.♘xd6±.

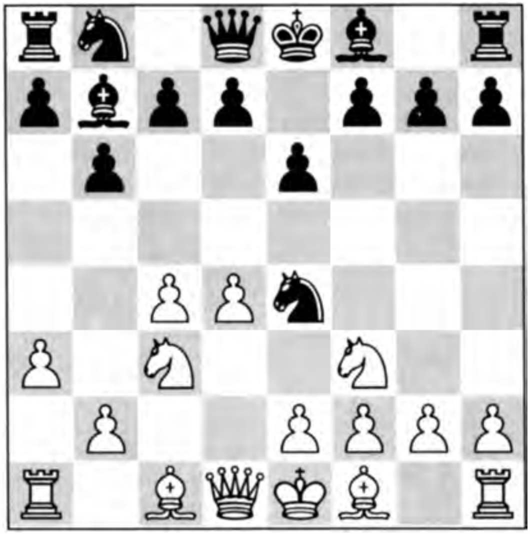
23...♘f4 24.g3 fxe4 25.♘xd6 ♘xh3+ 26.♔h2 ♘f2 27.♛c1 ♛h5+ 28.♔g1 ♘h3+ 29.♔h2 ♘f4+

White resigned.

CHAPTER 7

Igor Lysyj

Queen's Indian: Chernyshov's Line



4.a3 ♗b7 5.♘c3 ♘e4!?

After five rounds of the Aeroflot Open I was completely disillusioned with my play and my tournament position. The pairings also did not inspire any optimism: in the sixth round I was black against grandmaster Vorobiov, who has a solid opening repertoire. In search of complicated play, I hit upon an unusual way of handling the Petrosian Variation of the Queen's Indian Defence, which I had observed being played by the inventive Russian grandmaster Alexander Chernyshov. After 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.a3 ♗b7 5.♘c3 ♘e4!? my opponent responded in the most critical way with 6.♘xe4 ♗xe4 7.♘d2 ♗g6 8.g3. But first let us analyse less ambitious ways of playing for White...

☐ **Tal Shaked**
■ **Nick De Firmian**
Denver 1998

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.a3 ♗b7 5.♘c3 ♘e4!?

I should mention that the rare knight jump on the 5th move, with the idea of immediately beginning a piece battle for the key e4-point while retaining a flexible pawn structure, has quite an ancient history and was first employed in the game Simagin-Keres, Parnu 1947. I recommend this move to those who like unusual play. To those who are prepared to go in for a certain strategic risk in order to play for a win.

6.♗d2

White has also played 6.♕c2 ♘xc3, and now:

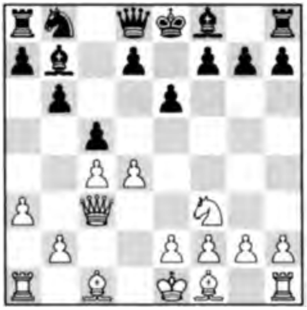
7.bxc3?! is illogical, as after 7...f5! Black successfully fights for the e4-point and creates counterplay against the opponent's doubled pawns:

– 8.g3 ♗e4! 9.♕b3 ♘c6! 10.♗g2 ♘a5 11.♕a4 ♗c6 12.♕d1 ♘xc4∓, Hanko-Chernyshov, Litomysl 1996.

– 8.e3 ♗e7 9.♗d3 0-0 10.e4 fxe4 11.♗xe4 ♗xe4 12.♕xe4 ♘c6 13.0-0 ½-½, Voloshin-Chernyshov, Frydek Mistek 1996. Black's position is more promising after 13...♘a5 14.♕d3 ♕e8 15.♖e1 ♕h5 I would prefer his position.

7.♕xc3 and now:

- 7...c5. The most logical continuation; Black clarifies the situation in the centre:

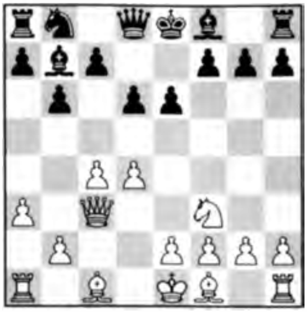


– 8.♗f4 cxd4 9.♘xd4 f6!? 10.♘f3 (10.♗g3 e5 11.♘c2 ♘a6 12.b4 ♖c8) 10...e5 11.♗e3 d5 12.cxd5 ♘a6 13.♖d1 ♖c8 14.♕d2 ♘c7 15.d6 ♘d5 is equal.

– 8.d5!? exd5 9.cxd5 ♗xd5 10.♗g5 f6 11.♖d1 ♗e6 12.♗h4 ♗e7 13.e4 0-0, White has compensation for the pawn, but no more, Munoz-Rios Parra, Medellin 2010.

– 8.dxc5 bxc5 9.♗f4 d6 10.♖d1 ♕b6 11.e3 ♘d7 12.♗e2 ♘f6 with an equal game.

- But 7...d6 is no worse, with the approximate variations:



– 8.♕c2 c5 9.e3 (or 9.e4 cxd4 10.♘xd4 ♘d7, setting up a 'hedgehog') 9...♗e7 10.♗d3 cxd4 11.♘xd4 ♘d7 Black has counterplay.

– 8.g3 ♗e7 9.♗g2 ♘d7 10.♕c2 ♘f6 equal.

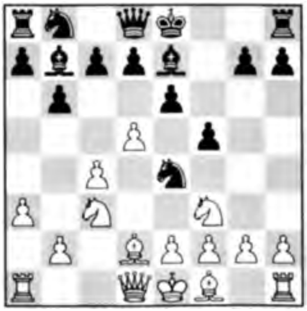
– 8.♕d3 ♘d7 9.e4 e5 10.d5 ♘c5 11.♕c2 a5 12.b3 c6, aiming to exploit the position of the white queen on the c-file, or 12...♕f6!? with the idea of 13...♕g6, putting pressure on the e4 pawn.

Black has good play in all lines since he has managed to exchange a pair of knights without making any concessions.

6...♗e7 7.d5

This principled continuation brings White nothing but problems. He should have preferred the modest 7.♕c2 ♘xd2 8.♕xd2.

7...f5!



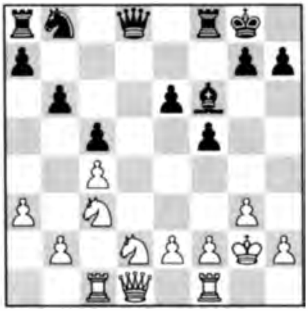
8.g3?!

I also prefer Black after 8.♘xe4?! fxe4 9.♘d4 exd5 10.cxd5 0-0 11.♕b3 ♗c5 12.d6+ ♔h8 13.dxc7 ♕xc7 14.e3 (14.♗c3? ♕f4–+) 14...♗xd4 (14...♘c6 15.♘xc6 ♗xc6∓) 15.exd4 ♘c6 16.♗e3 ♕d6 17.♖d1 ♘e7.

8...♗f6 9.♖c1 c6 10.dxe6

If White stubbornly avoids capturing on e6, then after 10.♗g2 0-0 11.0-0 cxd5 12.cxd5 ♘xc3 13.♗xc3 ♗xd5 14.♘d4 ♗xg2 15.♔xg2 ♘a6 he has no compensation for the material.

10...dxe6 11.♗g2 c5 12.0-0 ♘xd2 13.♘xd2 ♗xg2 14.♔xg2 0-0



The white knights have no prospects. Black, with his long-range bishop, has control over the central squares and a comfortable game.

15.b4

With this move White merely creates weaknesses for himself. He should have preferred 15.f4 ♘c6 16.♘f3 ♕xd1 17.♖fxd1 ♖ad8∓.

15...cxb4 16.axb4 ♘c6 17.b5 ♘a5 18.♘cb1 ♖c8 19.♕a4 ♕c7 20.♕a2 ♔h8 21.♔g1 f4?!

A sharp move. Black tries to create an attack on the opponent's king.

After 21...♕e7 22.♕a4 ♖fd8 23.♘b3 ♘xb3 24.♕xb3 ♕c5 he would have retained a solid advantage.

22.♘e4 ♗d4? Black still has counterplay after 22...♕e5 23.♘bd2 ♗e7 24.♔g2 h5.

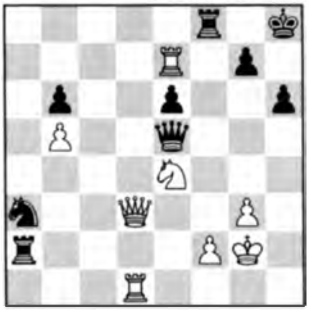
23.♘bd2 ♕e5 24.♕b1

White has consolidated, and now his position is even slightly preferable.

24...♕h5 24...fxg3 25.hxg3 ♕f5 26.♔g2±.

25.♘f3 ♗c5?! Now the white knights acquire comfortable posts, but the same cannot be said about the black steed on a5. 25...e5 was more resilient.

26.♖fd1 fxg3 27.hxg3 ♘xc4 28.♔g2!± ♗e7 29.♖d7 ♘a3 30.♕b2 ♕e8 31.♖cd1 31.♘e5!± was better. **31...♖c2 32.♕b3 ♖xe2 33.♕d3 ♖a2 34.♖xa7 h6 35.♘e5?** 35.♕b3! ♖e2 36.♕xe6 ♕h5 37.♖d3 would have won. **35...♕h5 36.♖xe7 ♕xe5**



37.♕e3?? A blunder. Of course, after 37.♖a7 ♕f5 38.♔g1 White's position is preferable, despite the pawn deficit.

37...♖axf2+

White resigned.

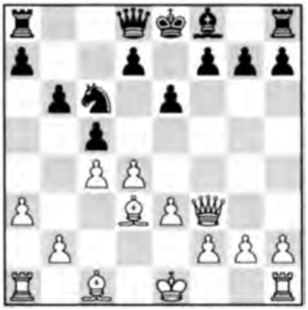
☐ **Piotr Staniszewski**
■ **Igor Lysyj**
Warsaw 2010

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.♘c3 ♗b7 5.a3 ♘e4 6.♘xe4 ♗xe4 7.e3

This modest continuation promises White a slight advantage in space. However, only two pairs of minor pieces are left on the board, and so White's spatial advantage is not so perceptible.

7...♗e7

I like this sound continuation. But if you prefer sharp play, you can try 7...c5!? 8.♗d3 (the consequences of 8.d5!? are unclear; after 8...exd5 9.cxd5 ♗e7 Black has counterplay in the spirit of the Modern Benoni) 8...♗xf3! (weaker is 8...♗xd3 9.♕xd3, when after 9...cxd4?! 10.exd4 d5 11.0-0 ♗e7 12.♗f4 dxc4 13.♕xc4 ♘d7 14.♖fd1 White's lead in development is bound to tell; for example 14...0-0 15.d5! ♖c8 16.♕e2±) 9.♕xf3 ♘c6 and now:

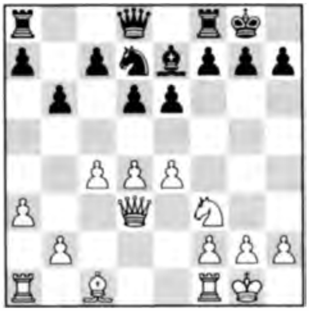


– 10.dxc5 ♘e5 11.♕e2 ♘xd3+ 12.♕xd3 ♗xc5 13.0-0 ♕c7 leads to equality.

– 10.♗e4 ♖c8 11.0-0 (11.dxc5 ♘e5!) 11...cxd4 12.exd4 ♕f6 13.♕xf6 gxf6 14.♗xc6 dxc6 is also equal.

– 10.♕g3 cxd4 11.exd4 ♕f6 (11...♘xd4 12.♗g5 ♕c8 13.0-0 is too risky) 12.♗e3 ♖c8 and Black has good play.

8.♗d3 ♗xd3 9.♕xd3 d6 10.0-0 0-0 11.e4 ♘d7



Black's position has no weaknesses, and although it is rather passive, it is very solid.

12.♗e3

If 12.b4 Black can respond in two ways:

– 12...c5 13.bxc5 bxc5 14.d5 ♖b8 (possible was 14...exd5!? 15.exd5 – 15.♕xd5 ♘b6 16.♕d3 ♕c8 17.♗b2 ♕e6 18.♖ac1 ♖ab8 19.♗a1 ♖fe8 20.♖fe1 ♗f6= – 15...♗f6 16.♖b1 ♘e5 17.♘xe5 ♗xe5 18.g3 ♖e8 with an equal game) 15.dxe6 fxe6 16.♗d2 and now, rather than spoil his pawn structure with 16...♘e5? as in the game Riazantsev-Asik, Dubai 2005, better is 16...♗f6 with the approximate continuation 17.♖ad1 ♘e5 18.♘xe5 ♗xe5 when the chances are even.

– 12...a5 13.♗b2 ♕c8! ♕d8-c8-b7 is a standard manoeuvre in this type of position. It is at b7 that the queen is most harmoniously placed. The following games demonstrate the soundness of Black's defences: 14.b5 ♕b7 15.♖fe1 ♖fe8 (15...♖ad8 16.h4 e5 17.♖ad1 exd4 18.♘xd4 ♗f6 19.g3 ♖fe8 20.♕c2 ♗xd4 21.♖xd4 ♖e7 22.♖d5 ♖de8 23.f3 ♕c8 24.♔g2 ♘e5 25.♗xe5 ½-½, Van Wely-Ivanchuk, Monaco 2002) 16.♖ad1 ♖ad8 17.♕c2 ♗f8 18.h3 g6 19.♖e2 ½-½, Vitiugov-Khairullin, St. Petersburg 2006.

12...♕c8 13.♖ad1 ♕b7 14.♖fe1 a5 15.d5 e5

Or 15...a4!? 16.e5 exd5 17.exd6 dxc4 18.♕xc4 cxd6 with even chances.

16.♕b3?!

16.b3 is stronger, not allowing the fixing of the pawn on b2: 16...♘c5 (16...a4 is unfavourable because of 17.b4±) 17.♕c2 h6 18.♘d2 ♕c8 with sufficient counterchances.

16...a4! 17.♕b5 ♘f6 18.♗g5 ♖a5 19.♕b4 h6 20.♗h4 ♖e8

Black has achieved an equal game. In the subsequent far from faultless play I managed to win.

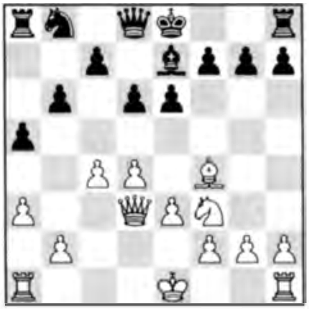
☐ **Tornike Sanikidze**
■ **Evgeny Romanov**
Aix-les-Bains 2011

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.a3 ♗b7 5.♘c3 ♘e4 6.♘xe4 ♗xe4 7.♗f4

This 7th move also does not claim to be an attempt to refute Black's opening set-up. White simply develops his pieces and transfers the weight of the struggle to the middlegame.

7...♗e7 8.e3 a5!? 9.♗d3 ♗xd3 10.♕xd3 d6

This position, but via a different move order (8...d6 9.♗d3 ♗xd3 10.♕xd3 a5), was three times successfully reached by Portisch.



11.0-0

Portisch's opponents played more accurately – 11.b3, not allowing the fixing of the queenside by a5-a4, but after 11...♘d7 all the same they did not achieve any advantage:

– 12.0-0 0-0 13.h3 ♖e8 14.e4 e5! 15.♗e3 (15.dxe5?! dxe5 16.♗g3 – 16.♘xe5?? ♘xe5 17.♕xd8 ♗xd8–+ – 16...f6 17.♖fd1 ♘c5 18.♕e3 ♕c8 19.b4 axb4 20.axb4 ♘e6∓) 15...exd4 16.♗xd4 ♘e5 (16...♗f6=) 17.♕c3 ♗f6 18.♖ad1 ♘xf3+ 19.♕xf3 ♗xd4 20.♖xd4=, Nikolic-Portisch, Reykjavik 1991.

– 12.e4 0-0 13.0-0 ♖e8 14.♖fd1 ♕c8 15.e5 (this leads to an equal game; 15.♖e1 also does not give White any advantage after 15...♕b7 16.♖ad1 ♖ab8 17.d5 ♗f6 18.e5 with mass exchanges in P.Cramling-Portisch, London 1996) 15...dxe5 16.♘xe5 ♘xe5 17.♗xe5 ♗d6 18.♕g3 ♗xe5 19.dxe5 ♕b7=, Gelfand-Portisch, Moscow 1990.

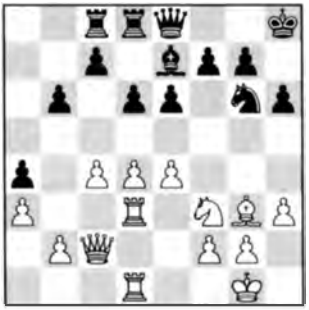
11...a4!? 12.e4 0-0 13.♖ad1 ♘d7 14.♖fe1 ♖e8 15.h3 ♘f8

Play is even after 15...♕c8 16.e5 ♕b7.

16.♕c2 ♕d7 17.♖e3 ♘g6 18.♗h2 ♖ed8 19.♖c3 ♖ac8

Or 19...♖a5!? which changes nothing about the evaluation that the game is equal.

20.♖cd3 ♕e8 21.♗g3 h6 22.♖1d2 ♔h8 23.♖d1 ♔g8 24.♖1d2 ♔h8 25.♖d1



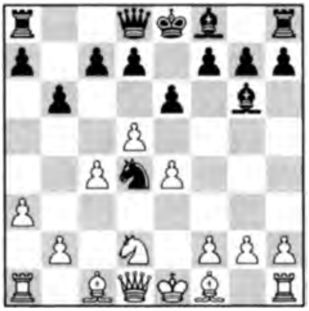
Draw.

☐ **German Pankov**
■ **Nikolay Ogloblin**
Sochi 2007

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.a3 ♗b7 5.♘c3 ♘e4 6.♘xe4 ♗xe4 7.♘d2 ♗g6

7...♗b7 is unthematic. A few years ago I witnessed the following crushing defeat: 8.e4 ♕f6 (in the event of 8...♘c6 9.♘f3 the drawback to the bishop's position on b7 becomes apparent – the e4 pawn is not under attack) 9.d5 ♗d6 10.♗d3 a5 11.♘f3 ♘a6?? (11...h6 12.0-0±) 12.e5! ♕e7 (12...♗xe5 13.♗g5+–) 13.exd6 ♕xd6 14.0-0 and White converted his extra piece, Zabotin-Chernyshov, Serpukhov 2007.

8.e4 ♘c6! 9.d5 ♘d4



10.♘f3

With this move White exchanges the active black knight, without any pretentions to gain an advantage.

But 10.♗d3 also does not promise White anything. The best that he can hope for in this variation is a complicated battle where three results are possible:

– 10...e5 11.0-0 (11.h4 h5 12.♘f3 ♘xf3+ 13.♕xf3 ♗e7 14.♕g3 0-0=) 11...♗d6 (11...c5=) 12.b3 c5 13.♘b1 0-0 14.♘c3 a6 Black has a perfectly good game. His position is at least equal. 15.g3 ♕e7 16.f3 f5 17.exf5 ♗xf5 18.♘e4 h6 19.g4 ♗g6∓, Krasenkow-Chernyshov, Warsaw 2002.

– 10...♗d6!? is no worse than Chernyshov's continuation, for example: 11.0-0 (11.h4 h5 12.♘f3 ♘xf3+ 13.♕xf3 ♗e5) 11...0-0 12.♘b3 ♘xb3 13.♕xb3 ♖e8 with counterplay.

– Best is 10...♕g5 11.0-0 ♗h5 12.♘f3 ♘xf3+ 13.♕xf3 ♕xc1 14.♖axc1 (14.♕xh5 ♕xb2 15.e5 ♗c5∓) 14...♗xf3 15.gxf3 ♗d6∓.

10...♘xf3+ 11.♕xf3 ♗c5

The less standard 11...♗d6!? is also possible, with good play for Black against the enemy centre. For example 12.♗d3 and now:

– 12...♗e5 13.0-0 ♕f6 14.♕xf6 ♗xf6=.

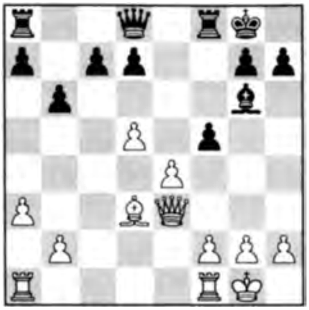
– 12...0-0 13.0-0 f5 (13...♕h4!? 14.g3 ♗h5 15.♕e3 ♕f6 16.♖e1 ♗e5 17.♖b1 exd5 18.cxd5 ♖ae8) 14.exf5 ♗xf5 15.dxe6 ♗xd3 16.♕xd3 dxe6 17.♕e2 ♕f6 18.♗e3 ♗e5=.

– 12...exd5 13.cxd5 0-0 14.0-0 c6 15.dxc6 dxc6∓.

12.♗d3 0-0 13.♗e3 exd5

Also good is 13...♗d6 14.0-0 (14.h4 f5) 14...f5 15.exf5 ♗xf5 16.♗xf5 ♖xf5 17.♕g4 ♕f6, and Black's position is not worse.

14.cxd5 ♗xe3 15.♕xe3 f5 16.0-0



16...f4?! An attempt to complicate the play.

After 16...fxe4 17.♗xe4 ♕f6 a draw can be agreed upon.

17.♕h3 17.♕d4! c5 18.dxc6 dxc6 19.♕c3±. **17...♕e7 18.♖ac1 ♕d6 19.e5**

This simplifies the position. Black was wrongly hoping for 19.♖fd1! ♖ae8 20.f3 ♖e5 with double-edged play, although after 21.♕h4! ♖h5 22.♕f2 ♗e8 23.♗f1 ♕h6 24.h3± things would not have been easy for him.

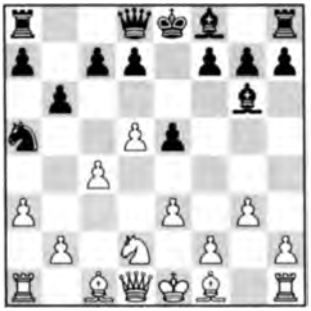
19...♕xe5 20.♗xg6 hxg6 21.♕xd7 ♖f7 Draw.

☐ **Claude Landenbergue**
■ **Konstantin Chernyshov**
Cappelle la Grande 2006

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.a3 ♗b7 5.♘c3 ♘e4 6.♘xe4 ♗xe4 7.♘d2 ♗g6 8.g3!

The only way of fighting for an appreciable advantage. The white bishop eyes the long diagonal, which has only just been abandoned by his opponent. It appears that in the opening battle the scales are beginning to tip in favour of White, but...

8...♘c6! 9.e3 e5! 10.d5 ♘a5

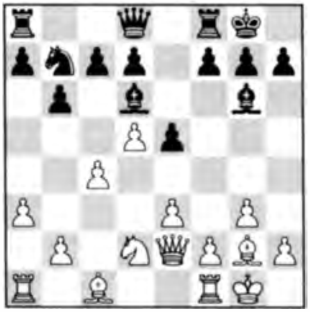


11.b4

If 11.♗g2, then 11...♗d6 12.0-0 0-0. Black should not prematurely play 12...♗d3?! 13.♖e1, when his bishop comes under attack, for example 13...f5 (13...♘xc4? 14.♕b3+–) 14.b4 ♘xc4 15.♕b3 ♘xd2 16.♕xd3 ♘e4 17.f3 ♘f6 18.♕xf5±.

● No advantage is given by 13.b4 ♘b7 14.♗b2 a5! 15.♘e4 (15.f4 exf4 16.exf4 f6 17.f5 ♗f7 18.♗c3 ♖e8 19.♖e1 ♖xe1+ 20.♕xe1 ♕f8 21.♘e4 ♖e8 with sufficient play) 15...axb4 16.axb4 ♖xa1 17.♕xa1 ♗xb4 18.♗xe5 ♖e8 19.♕b2 ♗f8 20.♘d2 ♘c5, when Black has a strong point at c5 and stands at least equal.

● 13.♕e2 ♘b7, and now:



– 14.h4 h6 (14...a5 is also possible, since 15.h5 is not dangerous in view of 15...♗c2 16.♘b1!? ♗b3!? 17.e4 a4 18.♘d2 ♘a5 with play against the c4 pawn; White has nothing better than 19.♘xb3 ♘xb3 20.♖b1 ♗c5∓) 15.h5 ♗h7 with complicated play.

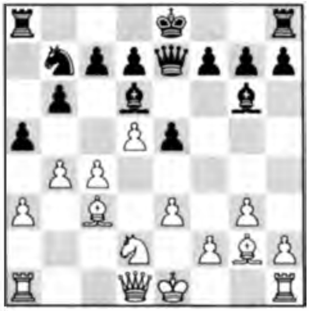
– The pawn sacrifice 14.b4 a5 15.c5 bxc5 16.b5 is interesting, but insufficient on account of 16...a4! 17.♘c4 ♘a5∓.

– 14.♘e4 ♗xe4! 15.♗xe4 f5 16.♗g2 e4 17.b4 a5 18.♗b2 ♕e7∓.

If 11.b3, avoiding creating any targets for attack on the queenside, Black employs the standard piece arrangement in this variation: 11...♗d6 12.♗b2 ♘b7 13.♗e2 0-0 14.0-0 ♕e7.

11...♘b7 12.♗b2 ♗d6! 13.♗g2 a5 14.♗c3 14.♕b3 ♕e7 15.0-0 0-0 16.♗c3 ♗d3 17.♖fc1 e4 strengthening the outpost.

14...♕e7



It was this position that I had aimed for in my preparation. The positioning of the black pieces seems unprepossessing, but, strangely enough, they are all making life uncomfortable for White's attractive classical set-up. The bishop on g6 is ready at any moment to establish itself at d3. The bishop on d6 is preventing the activation of the g2 bishop and supporting the e5 pawn, and together with the queen and the rook on a8 it creates pressure on the white a3 and b4 pawns, trying to win the c5-point for the black knight.

15.0-0 0-0 16.♕b3 ♗d3 17.♖fe1 e4

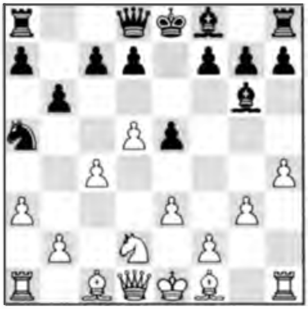
The unusual placing of the black pieces does not prevent them from successfully coordinating.

18.♕b2 f5 19.♗f1 ♗xf1 20.♖xf1 c6 21.dxc6 dxc6 22.♖fd1 c5 23.bxa5 ♘xa5 24.♗xa5 bxa5 25.♖ab1 a4

Black's game is easier. White has a temporarily inactive knight and a fixed pawn weakness on a3. In the subsequent far from faultless play the main expert on the variation went on to win.

☐ **Evgeny Vorobiov**
■ **Igor Lysyj**
Moscow Aeroflot Open 2011

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.a3 ♗b7 5.♘c3 ♘e4 6.♘xe4 ♗xe4 7.♘d2 ♗g6 8.g3 ♘c6 9.e3 e5 10.d5 ♘a5 11.h4



An attempt to exploit the position of the bishop on g6.

11...h6 12.e4

After the impetuous 12.h5 there follows 12...♗h7 13.b4 ♘b7 14.♗b2 ♗d6 15.♗h3 a5 with pressure on the b4 pawn, traditional for this set-up. The best chance for White would appear to be the sacrifice 16.c5 bxc5 17.b5.

After 12.♗h3 in the game Borovikov-Chernyshov, Pardubice 2004, there followed 12...♘b7! 13.0-0 a5 14.b3 ♘c5!? (the alternative is 14...♗d6 with the approximate continuation 15.♗b2 0-0 16.f4 exf4 17.exf4 f6=) 15.e4 ♗d6 16.♗f5 ♕f6∓.

12...♗d6

12...♗c5!? is stronger: 13.♗d3 ♘b7 14.b4 ♗d4 15.♖b1 0-0 (15...a5!? 16.0-0 axb4 17.axb4 0-0) 16.h5 ♗h7 17.♘f3 c5 18.dxc6 dxc6 19.0-0 c5 with good play.

13.♗d3

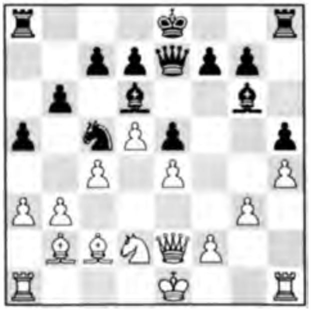
If 13.♗h3, then 13...h5!? 14.0-0 ♘b7 15.♗f5 ♕f6 16.♕c2 ♗xf5 17.exf5 0-0 18.♘b3 g6 is equal.

13...♘b7 14.♗c2 a5 15.b3

After 15.h5!? ♗h7 16.♕g4 Black can go into an equal endgame by 16...♕g5 17.♕xg5 hxg5.

15...♕e7 16.♗b2 h5!? 17.♕e2 ♘c5?!

In this non-standard position Black is the first to go wrong. After 17...c6!? 18.0-0 0-0 19.f4 f6∓ his position is certainly not worse.



18.f3?!

Returning the favour! After 18.0-0 0-0 19.b4! (if 19.f4 there can follow 19...f6 – it looks very risky to play 19...exf4 20.gxf4 ♕xh4 21.f5 ♗h7 22.e5 ♗e7 23.♖f2 – 20.f5 ♗f7 21.♔f2 ♘b7) 19...axb4 20.axb4 ♘b7 21.c5 bxc5 22.b5 ♖xa1 23.♖xa1 ♖b8 24.♘c4 the position is unclear. Although White is material down, he has excellently-developed 'working' pieces, whereas Black has problems in finding a sensible plan and making progress in improving the placing of his pieces.

18...c6

Or 18...0-0!? 19.g4 ♚h8 20.♔f2 c6 21.♖ag1 f6.

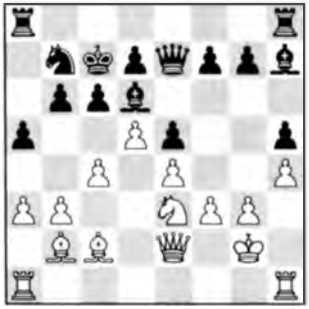
19.♘f1

19.♔f2 0-0! 20.g4 f6 21.♖ag1 ♘b7∓.

19...♘b7 20.♘e3 ♔d8?!

Black tries to be excessively original. He should have played 20...♗c5 21.a4 (or 21.dxc6 dxc6 22.♘f5 ♗xf5 23.exf5 0-0-0 24.♔f1 ♗d4) 21...0-0-0 22.0-0-0 f6 with a solid position, but not 20...0-0?! 21.g4 ♗c5 22.0-0-0!? ♗xa3 23.gxh5 ♗xb2+ 24.♔xb2 ♗xh5 25.♖hg1, when the open g-file causes him problems.

21.♔f2 ♔c7 22.♔g2 ♗h7



23.dxc6?

Prematurely releasing the tension. 23.♘f5 promised more benefits. After 23...♗xf5 24.exf5 f6 25.♖he1 ♖he8 26.♕d2 White dominates the entire board.

23...dxc6 24.♘f5 ♗xf5 25.exf5 f6 26.♖hd1 26.♖he1 ♖he8=.

26...♖ad8 27.f4?

A repetition was possible after 27.♔h3 ♗c5 28.♖e1 ♕d7 29.♖ed1 ♕e7.

27...♖he8

After 27...exf4 28.♛xe7+ ♗xe7 29.gxf4 ♗c5 30.♔f3 Black cannot exploit the opponent's pawn weaknesses, whereas White begins to fasten on to the g7 and h5 pawns. Chances are even.

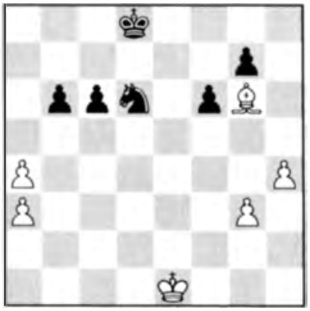
28.fxe5 ♗xe5 29.♗xe5+

It was possibly better to keep the queens on. After the approximate 29.♖xd8!? ♛xd8 30.♖e1 ♘d6 31.♗xe5 ♖xe5 32.♕f2 ♘f7 33.♗d1 ♖xe1 34.♕xe1 ♘e5 35.♗xh5 ♛d4 Black dominates, but White retains drawing chances.

29...♕xe5 30.♕xe5+ ♖xe5 31.♖xd8 ♔xd8 32.♔f2 ♘d6 33.♖e1?

The only saving chance was 33.♖d1! ♚d7!? 34.♖d4 b5 35.♖f4 bxc4 36.bxc4 c5 37.♗a4+ ♔c7 38.♗c2 ♖e8 39.g4 ♘f7 40.gxh5 ♘e5∓.

33...♖xe1 34.♔xe1 a4! 35.bxa4 ♘xc4 36.♗d1 ♘e3 37.♗xh5 ♘xf5 38.♗g6 ♘d6



Black has a decisive advantage, which he easily converts into a win.

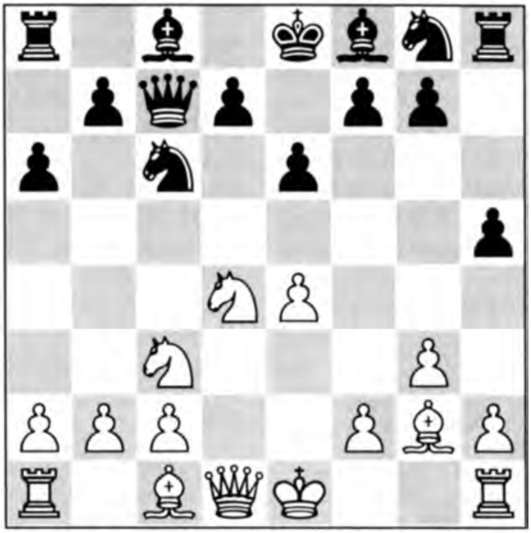
39.♔d2 ♔e7 40.♔c3 ♔e6 41.♔b3 ♔d5 42.g4 ♔d4 43.♗c2 ♘c4 44.g5 fxg5 45.hxg5 c5 46.g6 ♘d2+ 47.♔b2 c4 48.♗f5 ♘b3 49.♗d7 ♔d3 50.♗h3 ♔d2

White resigned.

CHAPTER 8

Jeroen Bosch

An Unusual Taimanov



7...h5!?

☐ **Alexander Berelowitsch**
■ **Francisco Vallejo**
Germany Bundesliga 2010/11

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 e6 5.♘c3 ♕c7

The Taimanov Variation of the Sicilian, which these days is often met by 6.♗e3, followed by 7.♕d2 and queenside castling. One of White's main (and most solid) options has always been the kingside fianchetto, though.

6.g3

Many top players favour 6.g3, but Michael Adams deserves special mention as the main supporter of this line.

6...a6 7.♗g2 h5!?

Attaboy! It is unusual in such a theory-heavy opening as the Sicilian to see a top player like Vallejo leave the well-trodden paths at such an early stage in the game. The audacious 7...h5 was first played by Bent Larsen in a period when he experimented with many opening ideas. The launch of the h-pawn may remind you of coffee-house chess (or ICC blitz), but it really isn't just about attacking bluntly on the kingside. Positionally speaking, the move 7...h5 is quite sound: 1. To stop the h-pawn in its tracks White would have to play 8.h4 here, which weakens the g4-square (as f4 is a normal part of White's plan).

2. Playing 8.h3, to meet 8...h4 with 9.g4, on the other hand, weakens the dark squares.

3. Allowing Black to play ...h4 gives him the opportunity to open the h-file whenever he wants to, and also weakens the g4-square somewhat (in these fianchetto lines White often wants to play h3 to protect g4, but this isn't possible when Black and White have exchanged their h-pawns on g3).

The main line is 7...♘f6 (your database will easily list some 3500 games!), but we do well to remember that 7...d6 8.0-0 ♗d7 9.♖e1 ♗e7 10.♘xc6 ♗xc6 11.♕g4 h5!? 12.♕e2 h4 is another not unpopular line that scores very decently for Black: 13.a4 hxg3 14.hxg3 ♘f6 is then the normal continuation.

8.h3

A logical response to the threat of ...h5-h4.

- Ignoring the advance of the h-pawn is possible: 8.0-0, castling into the storm, or obtaining a useful edge in development?

8...h4 9.♖e1 hxg3 10.hxg3 ♗c5 (Black fights for the initiative; not 10...♘f6 11.♘d5! – 11.♘xc6 bxc6 12.e5 ♘d5 is OK for Black – 11...exd5 12.♘xc6 bxc6 13.exd5+ ♔d8 14.dxc6, and White has great compensation for the piece). Now:

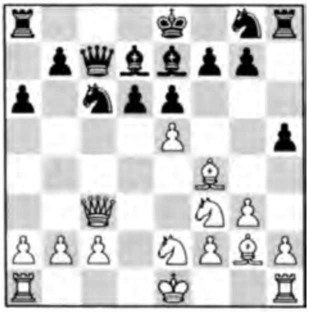
– 11.♗e3 ♘e5 12.♗f4?! (12.♘f5! ♗xe3 – too dangerous is 12...exf5? 13.♘d5 ♕d6 14.♗xc5 ♕xc5 15.exf5 – 13.♘xe3 is slightly better for White, while 13.♘d6+ ♔f8 14.♖xe3 ♘f6 is less clear) 12...d6 13.♘b3 ♗a7 14.♕e2 ♘f6 15.♖ad1 b5 is an ideal Sicilian for Black. His positional advantages are obvious, while his king is relatively safe in the centre: 16.♘d4 ♗d7 17.♘f3 ♘fg4! 18.♖f1 b4 19.♘xe5 ♘xe5 20.♘b1 ♗b5, and Black won an exchange and soon afterwards the game in S.Collins-A. Kogan, Port Erin 2002.

– 11.♘xc6 is a very decent alternative: 11...bxc6 (11...dxc6? 12.e5±) 12.e5! ♘e7 (12...f5!?) 13.♗g5 (13.♘e4!) 13...♔f8 14.♘a4 ♗a7 15.♗e3 (15.c4!?) 15...♗xe3 16.♖xe3 ♘f5 17.♖b3 ♖b8 18.♘c5?! ♖b5! 19.♖xb5? cxb5 20.b4 ♕xe5, and although the win is still not that easy, Black clearly had the upper hand in Ocantos-R.Swinkels, Maastricht 2010.

– Black should meet 11.♘b3 with 11...♗e7 (11...♗a7 12.♗f4), when he should be happy to have achieved the withdrawal of the knight from the centre, for example 12.a4 d6 13.a5 ♘f6, with about equal chances.

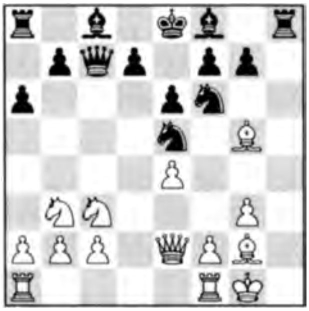
– 11.♗f4!? is a very concrete attempt. Black must reply with 11...e5, when it all depends on 12.♘d5 ♕b8 and now 13.♘xc6 (13.♘b3 exf4 14.♘xc5 fxg3 with sharp play. Black has achieved a lot on the kingside, but White has an advantage in development) 13...dxc6 (if 13...dxc6 is too mundane for you, then you may well wish to investigate the sharp 13...♗xf2+ 14.♔xf2 bxc6) 14.♗e3 ♗xe3 15.♘xe3 ♗e6 is equal.

- White can prevent ...h4 by withdrawing his knight to f3, but this is harmless: 8.♘f3 ♗e7 9.♗f4 d6 10.♕d2 ♘e5 11.♘e2 ♗d7 12.♕c3!? ♘c6!? 13.e5



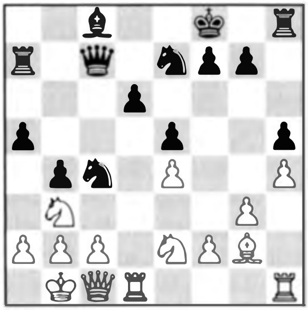
13...d5! (13...dxe5 14.♗xe5 ♕b6 15.♗xg7 ♗b4 16.♗xh8 is unclear) 14.a3 ♖c8 15.h4 ♘h6 16.0-0 ♘g4, and Black was better in the stem game Terkelsen-Larsen, Aarhus 1959.

- Moving the knight to b3 has also occurred in practice. This immediately gives Black an easy game. 8.♘b3 h4 9.0-0 (9.♗f4 ♘e5) 9...hxg3 10.hxg3 ♘f6 11.♕e2 ♘e5 12.♗g5



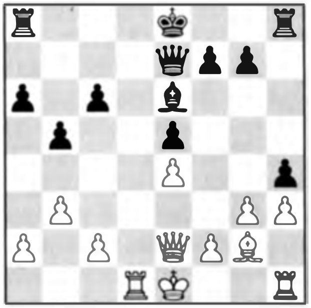
and now Black has many good options to obtain the better game 12...♗b4 (12...♘fg4; 12...d6; 12...b5) 13.♘d1 ♕c4 14.♕xc4 ♘xc4, and Black had a very comfortable queenless middlegame in Misailovic-Kontic, Cetinje 1992.

- 8.h4 – stopping the cheeky rascal in its tracks. Let's follow the example of Spanish GM Arthur Kogan: 8...♗c5 9.♘b3 ♗a7 10.♗f4. It's normal to develop the bishop to f4 (moving a pawn to f4 would accentuate the weakness of square g4). 10...♘e5 11.♕e2 d6 12.0-0-0 ♘e7 (12...♘f6!?) 13.♗e3 b5 14.♗xa7 ♖xa7 15.♕d2?! (15.f4) 15...♘c4 16.♕g5 (a shot in the dark; the black king doesn't mind moving to f8 anyway) 16...b4 17.♘e2 ♔f8 18.♔b1 e5! 19.♕c1 a5!



and Black's chances are to be preferred, Remiro Juste-Kogan, Spain 2004.

- 8.♗e3 ♘f6 (8...h4 is a bit rash when White hasn't castled kingside and has spent no time on preventing ...h4. White could, for instance, play 9.♘xc6 bxc6 10.♕d4, intending to castle queenside) 9.h3. White reacts belatedly to the threat of ...h4. With his next move Black exploits the early development of the bishop to e3: 9...♘e5! 10.♕e2 ♗b4 11.♗d2 ♘c4 12.0-0-0 ♘xd2 13.♕xd2 d6. White has no compensation for having lost the important dark-squared bishop. Black has a slight edge. 14.♘de2 ♗d7 15.♕g5 (just like in our previous example, this yields nothing) 15...♔f8! 16.♖d2 ♖c8 17.♖hd1 ♗c5 18.♔b1 ♖h6 19.♖d3 b5 20.a3 a5! favoured Black in Heidenfeld-Miladinovic, Leon Ech-tt 2001.
- A concession is 8.♘xc6, when after 8...dxc6 (8...bxc6) 9.♗e3 ♘f6 10.h3 e5 Black has obtained an equal game: 11.♘a4 ♘d7 12.♕d2 b5 13.♘c3 ♗e7 14.♖d1?! ♘b6 15.♕e2 (15.b3) 15...♗e6 (15...h4). This enables White to exchange some pieces: 16.♗xb6! ♕xb6 17.♘d5! ♕a7 18.♘xe7 ♕xe7 19.b3?! h4!



20.g4?! ♕b4+ 21.♕d2 ♕xd2+ 22.♖xd2 ♔e7, and due to the weak dark squares on the kingside White is worse, Draganova-Djingarova, Veliko Tarnovo ch-BUL 2005. Here we see illustrated one of the main positional ideas behind 7...h5.

● 8.f4, and now:

– I would recommend 8...b5!?, when 9.♘xc6 (9.e5 ♗b7) 9...♕xc6 10.♕e2 ♗b7 is fine for Black.

– 8...h4?! 9.♗e3 (9.g4) 9...hxg3 10.hxg3 ♖xh1+ 11.♗xh1, with a slight advantage for White.

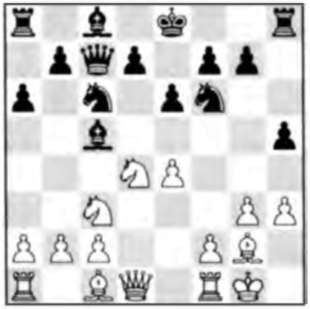
– 8...d6?! 9.♗e3 ♗d7 10.♘xc6 ♗xc6 11.♕e2 ♗e7 12.♗d4 e5 13.♗e3 ♗f6? 14.0-0-0! and Black's plan has failed completely. Genzling-Vila Gazquez, Sibenik jr 2007.

8...h4

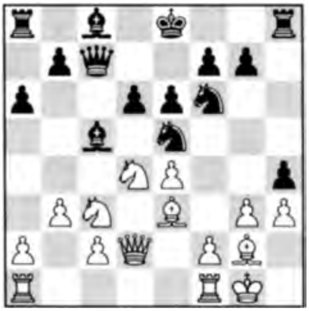
This is certainly consistent, but not the only move to consider.

– 8...♗c5?! 9.♘xc6 dxc6 10.♕e2 e5 11.♗e3, as played in Garcia Brion-Vila Gazquez, La Pineda de Vila 2009, is slightly better for White. Normally, in such positions taking on c6 promises little, but here the inclusion of ...h5 and h3 favours White. White will castle queenside and Black will find it difficult to equalize.

– 8...♘f6 9.0-0 ♗c5

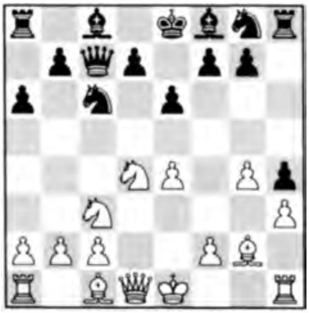


is a position that has occurred in several games (sometimes via the move order 7...♘f6 8.0-0 h5!?). This is playable. One fairly recent example between two strong grandmasters is Sutovsky-Safarli, Baku 2010: 10.♗e3 (10.♘b3 ♗a7 11.♗f4 ♘e5 12.♕e2 d6 13.♖ad1 b5 14.♘c1? b4 was a clear edge in Makka-Lanchava, Varna Ech 2002; 10.♘xc6 dxc6 11.e5!? ♕xe5 12.♗f4 is a decent pawn sacrifice that has occurred in practice) 10...d6 11.♕d2 ♘e5 (after 11...♘xd4 12.♗xd4 ♗xd4 13.♕xd4 e5 14.♕d2 h4 the chances are equal) 12.b3 h4!



13.f4 (13.g4? ♘fxg4 14.hxg4 h3 15.♗h1 h2+ 16.♔g2 ♘xg4 with long-term positional compensation for the piece) 13...♘g6 14.g4 e5! 15.fxe5 dxe5 16.♘f5 (16.♘de2) 16...♗xf5 17.exf5 ♘f4 18.♖ae1 ♖d8 19.♕f2 ♘xg2 20.♗xc5 ♘xe1 21.♖xe1, and the players, somewhat surprisingly, agreed on a draw. Objectively, White seems to be struggling to prove that he has enough for the exchange.

9.g4



9...♘ge7

Taimanov's favourite knight manoeuvre in his very own Sicilian. Vallejo aims to control as many dark squares as possible, which is why the knight should be developed to e7 (and not to f6) and from there to g6 or c6. Black can also opt for the immediate knight swap, followed by ...♘e7: 9...♘xd4 10.♕xd4 ♘e7 11.♗e3 b5 12.0-0 (12.0-0-0!?) 12...♘c6 13.♕d1 (13.♕d2) 13...♗b7 14.♘e2 (14.f4 ♘a5∓) 14...♘e5 15.b3 ♖c8 16.c3 ♗c5, and Black was quite happy with the outcome of the opening, Radovanovic-Bakic, Kladovo ch-YUG 1992.

10.♘de2

Berelowitsch avoids the knight swap but Black doesn't really mind. In fact, Black's knight is fairly useful on g6, while there is no real future for the 'superfluous' knight on e2 (as square g3 is controlled by Black's h-pawn).

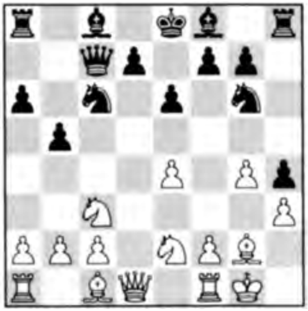
In case of 10.♗e3, Black should continue 10...♘e5 (rather than 10...♘xd4 11.♕xd4 ♘c6 12.♕b6, with a slight edge for White), when he is doing OK.

After 10.0-0 the exchange of knights is best though: 10...♘xd4 11.♕xd4 ♘c6 12.♕e3 (12.♕d1 ♗c5) 12...♘e5.

10...♘g6 11.0-0

Instead, 11.f4 weakens the diagonal g1-a7. After 11...♗c5 12.e5 d5 13.exd6 Black should not exchange queens (13...♕xd6?! 14.♕xd6! ♗xd6 15.♘e4, with a slight advantage for White, Marinkovic-Kontic, Podgorica 1993, or 15.♗e3 ♗c7 16.0-0-0, with a slight advantage for White), but play 13...♗xd6.

11...b5



12.a3

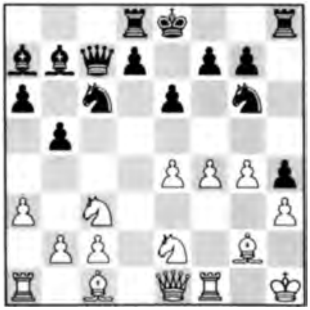
Black may reject the sacrificial 12.a4 b4 13.♘d5!? with 13...♕a5, but he can also accept the piece with 13...exd5 14.exd5 ♘d8 (14...♗d6 15.dxc6 dxc6 16.♘d4 0-0), and now:

- 15.♖e1 ♗d6;
- 15.♘f4!? ♘xf4 16.♖e1+ ♘de6 17.♗xf4 (17.dxe6 ♘xh3+!) 17...♕xf4 18.dxe6 fxe6 19.♗xa8 ♗d6, with sufficient compensation for the exchange;
- 15.d6 ♕b8 16.♗xa8 ♕xa8 17.♖e1 ♘e6 favours Black.

12...♗c5 13.♔h1 ♗b7

Black has a very agreeable Taimanov Sicilian. Note that the h4 pawn is more a strength than a weakness. Vallejo makes all his useful moves first, before finally castling kingside.

14.f4 ♖d8!? 15.♕e1 ♗a7



16.♗d2

White understandably wants to finish his development, but this passive move gives Black plenty of leeway.

Best is perhaps 16.f5 ♗b8 (16...♘ge5 17.♗f4) 17.♘f4 ♘ge5.

After 16.e5 Black can advantageously sacrifice a piece with 16...♘cxe5!? (16...♘d4 17.♘xd4 ♗xg2+ 18.♔xg2 ♗xd4 is also fine) 17.fxe5 ♗xg2+ 18.♔xg2 ♕c6+ 19.♔h2 ♘xe5, when he will regain his material with interest: 20.♗f4 (20.♘g1 ♗xg1+

21.♔xg1 ♘f3+ 22.♖xf3 ♕xf3 23.♕e3 ♕xe3+ 24.♗xe3) 20...♘f3+ 21.♖xf3 ♕xf3.

16...♘ce7 17.♘c1?

Improving the position of the poorly placed knight, but it was necessary to anticipate ...d5.

- 17.♖d1 is also met by 17...d5.
- 17.f5!? ♗b8 18.♘f4 ♘e5, and now Black has good dark-square control after 19.♗e3 g5! 20.fxg6 ♘7xg6 21.♘xg6 ♘xg6 22.♗g1 but White is still fully in the game too.

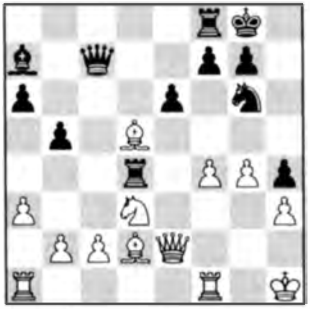
17...d5! 18.♘d3

18.exd5 ♘xd5 19.♘d3 0-0 20.♘xd5 ♗xd5 21.♗xd5 ♖xd5 is very pleasant for Black, as is 18.e5 0-0.

18...dxe4 18...0-0!?. **19.♗xe4 ♖d4!?**

Enterprising play by Vallejo. 19...0-0 is the simple way. **20.♗f3?!** 20.♗xb7 ♕xb7+ 21.♔h2. **20...0-0 21.♕e2 ♘d5 22.♘xd5 ♗xd5 23.♗xd5?!**

23.♗e3 looks like the best way to keep Black's advantage within drawing limits.



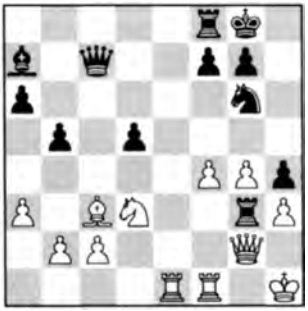
23...exd5!

Well-played! The isolated pawn provides Black with a useful stronghold on e4.

24.♗c3 ♖e4 25.♕g2 ♖e3 26.♖ae1?

26.♖f3 was the only move, but White is in deep trouble after 26...♖xf3 27.♕xf3 ♖e8 when 28.♕xd5 ♖e3! is hard to meet, and most other moves will lose a pawn somewhere.

26...♖g3



Well, that h-pawn certainly came in useful!

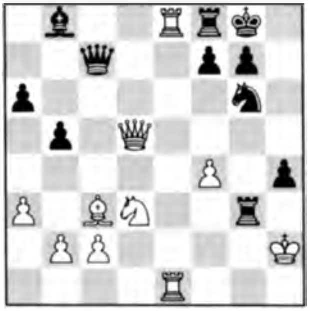
27.♕xd5 White can resign after 27.♕h2 d4. **27...♖xh3+ 28.♔g2 ♖g3+ 29.♔h2 ♖xg4 30.♖e4 ♖g3**

Even stronger was 30...♕c8!, with the threat of 31...♖g2+.

31.♖fe1 ♗b8

The easiest win was 31...♕c8 32.f5 ♖g5!, but Vallejo finishes in style:

32.♖e8



32...♖xd3! 33.♖xf8+ ♘xf8 34.♕xd3

Or 34.cxd3 ♕xf4+ 35.♔g1 h3−+.

34...♕xf4+ 35.♔g2 ♕h2+ 36.♔f1

36.♔f3 h3−+.

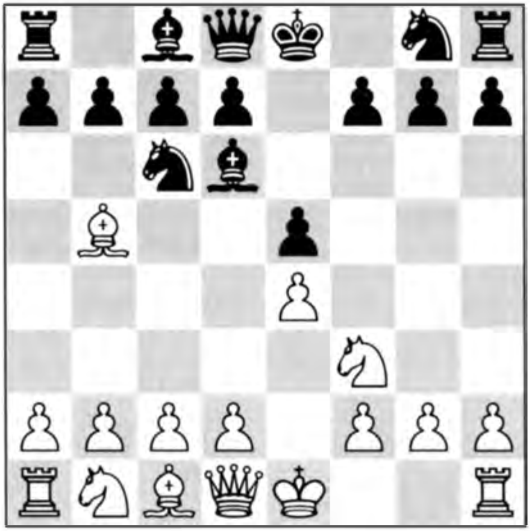
36...♗g3! 37.♕d4 ♕h1+ 38.♔e2 ♕g2+ 39.♔d3 ♗xe1 40.♗xe1 h3

White resigned.

CHAPTER 9

Maurits Wind

The Mayet Defence



Spanish with 3...♗d6

Carl Mayet (1810-1868) was a German chess master who lived in Berlin. Mayet was a member (and in 1836 the president) of the prestigious Berliner Schachgesellschaft. He was one of the seven chess masters, who were collectively known as the *Berliner Siebengestirn* or the *Plejades*. The names of these seven players are Von Bilguer, Von der Lasa, Hanstein, Horwitz, Bledow, Mayet and Schorn. These seven players frequently came together to discuss opening theory, to play free games and to test their ideas in corr. chess with other German chess clubs.

One important chess opening that was being examined was the Spanish Opening. After 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 the move 3.♗c4 had long been considered strongest. However, it became more and more apparent that Black can neutralize White's initial onslought and obtain equality. In particular the work by theoretician Paul Bilguer on 3...♘f6 (the Prussian game or Two Knights Defence) was a breakthrough. Attention then began to shift towards 3.♗b5, the move proposed by Lopez in 1561. The members of the Berliner played a leading role in this exploration. Without pre-existing theory, a wide range of defences was examined. For example set-ups with ♛f6 & h6, ♘ge7, ♗c5, ♗d6. In later years these early attempts were superseded by stronger ideas such as 3...♘f6, nowadays called the Berlin defence, and 3...a6, Morphy's continuation.

It was Carl Mayet who endorsed the defence 3...♗d6 in the Spanish. The idea did not gain much support but was occasionally tried in games. Then Paul Rudolf von Bilguer and Tassilo von der Lasa began their monumental work on the first encyclopedia of chess openings: the *Bilguer*. The first edition [reference 1] appeared in 1843. The section on the defence 3...♗d6 in the Spanish was written by Carl Mayet. Nine lines of analysis were presented, most resulting in a ± verdict. (Note: the modern ± and ∓ assessments were not in use then!) Nevertheless, the author comments: 'Gegen diesen Zug, so schlecht derselbe der Theorie nach zu sein scheint, ist es dennoch für Weiss sehr schwierig zu spielen.' Later editions of the Bilguer present essentially the same analysis, only in a condensed form. This is an indication that the analysis of 3...♗d6 was old, already a closed topic, when it was included in the Bilguer of 1843.

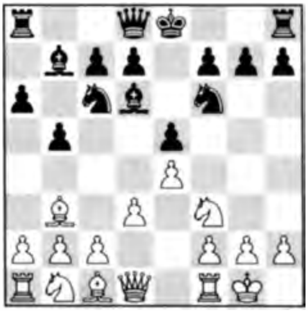
I believe this is sufficient ground to name the defence 3...♗d6 in the Spanish opening after Carl Mayet. J.Ganzo, in a booklet on the Spanish opening [2], mentions 3...♗d6 and names it the Bilguer Defence. In my opinion it is appropriate to name an opening system after its inventor, instead of to the first book in which it is treated.

Current theory rejects the defence 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♗d6 as poor. In fact many openings books ignore the move 3...♗d6 altogether! ECO [4] adorns the move with a question mark and cites a short variation from the Bilguer. Khalifman [5] is equally dismissive. But is this poor reputation justified?

Recently I performed the following experiment with the strong chess programme Rybka 3. I checked several of the offbeat third move alternatives that Black has in the Spanish Opening. And while Rybka dismissed most of them easily, it gave a thumbs to 3...♗d6. Quite a surprising outcome! This result triggered my interest in both the theoretical aspects and the history of 3...♗d6, with the present article as a result.

In tournament and match play the ...♗d6 defence was occasionally played. If 19th century masters chose it, they tended to prefer the version 3...♘f6 and 4...♗d6. In modern chess praxis the defence 3...♗d6 only occurs in lower level competition. However, a few examples can be found in correspondence chess. The Polish IM Leszek Ostrowski (Elo 2330) has played in at least two games, and so has S. Daenen in the French correspondence championship 2008/2009.

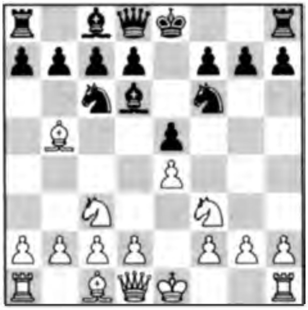
While grandmasters shy away from 3...♗d6, they are certainly willing to play the bishop move when they feel the conditions are right. Malaniuk has played 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 b5 6.♗b3 ♗b7 7.d3 ♗d6!?



on three occasions, scoring 2½ out of 3. This is now considered a respectable line in the Arkhangelsk Variation.

Tiviakov-Carlsen, Wijk aan Zee 2010 saw 5...♗d6 in the Worrall Variation: 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.♕e2 ♗d6 and the game ended in a draw after 27 moves.

Finally there is the analogy with a currently fashionable line in the Spanish Four Knights Opening: 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗b5 ♗d6!?.



This was the subject of an interesting article by Jeroen Bosch in SOS-1 [3]. Black's plan in this system is to play ...0-0, ...♖e8, ...♗f8 and then ...d5.

It should be noted that in the last three systems White settles for a pawn centre with a pawn on d3. Yet, after 3...♗d6 White can go for a classical centre with c3 and d4. This is considerably more testing for the second player. We shall now examine how the 3...♗d6 defence holds up.

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♗d6

Back's plan is straightforward. He intends to play ...♘f6, ...0-0, ...♖e8, ...h6 on the kingside and centre, in combination with the standard moves ...a6, ...b5, ...♗b7 on the queenside. Once this set-up is complete, Black will make a crucial decision on how best to reposition the bishop on d6.

Variation A – 4.c3
Variation B – 4.0-0

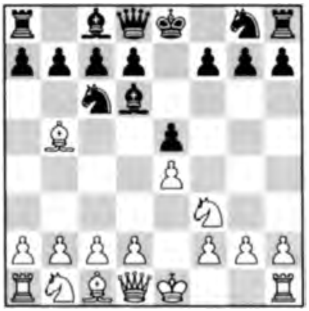
Other continuations are less critical:

- 4.♘c3 ♘f6 transposes to the 4...♗d6 variation of the Spanish Four Knights. Play may continue: 5.d3 a6 6.♗a4 h6 7.h3 b5 8.♗b3 ♗b7 9.a3 ♗c5 10.0-0 0-0 11.♘d5 ♘d4 12.♘xd4 ♗xd4 13.c3 ♗a7 14.♘xf6+ ♕xf6=, Jonkman-Sokolov, Leeuwarden ch-NED 2002. This game is annotated in SOS-1.
- 4.d3 a6 5.♗a4 b5 6.♗b3 ♘f6 7.c3 ♗b7 8.0-0 0-0 9.♘bd2 h6 10.♖e1 ♖e8 11.♘f1 ♗f8 12.♘g3 ♘a5 13.♗c2 c5=, Dolmatov-Saveliev, Krasnoyarsk 2003.
- 4.d4 ♘xd4 (more accurate than 4...exd4 5.0-0) 5.♘xd4 exd4 and now:

– 6.♕xd4 ♕e7! 7.f4 (7.♕xg7?? ♗e5 8.♕g4 ♕b4+–+) 7...♘f6 8.♘c3 c6 and Black equalizes easily.

– 6.0-0!? ♕f6 7.f4 ♗c5 8.♘d2 ♘e7 9.♕h5 with compensation.

Variation A



4.c3

The move preferred by the Bilguer [1]. White intends to build a classical centre with moves like d4, 0-0, ♖e1. The early 4.c3 (instead of 4.0-0) has the point that the bishop on b5 may return via a4 to c2 in one move instead of two (a4-b3-c2). However, the move is also a bit slow and allows Black the sharp response ...f5.

4...a6 5.♗a4

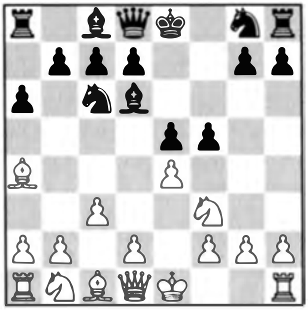
Others:

– 5.♗xc6 dxc6 is a harmless version of the Exchange Variation.

– 5.♗c4 is okay, but annuls the point outlined above. After 5...♘f6 6.0-0 (or 6.d3) 6...b5 the bishop is forced to b3, transposing to Variation B.

– Stefan Bücker points to the interesting move 5.♗d3!?. White prevents 5...f5, while still intending to play 0-0, ♗c2, ♖e1 and d4. However, Black has an excellent reply in 5...♗e7! 6.♗c2 d5, equalizing comfortably.

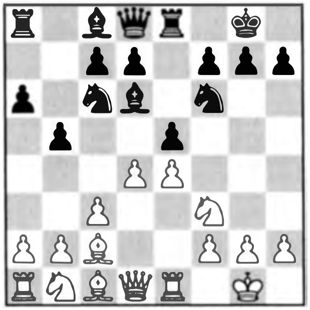
5...f5!



This fine move is a proposal by Stefan Bücker. It may seem odd that Black can afford such a sharp move in combination with the defensive 3...♗d6, but the idea holds up well in analysis.

The Bilguer [1] gives 5...b5, analysing 6.♗b3 ♘f6 7.0-0 to advantage for White after both 7...♘xe4 (given an !) and 7...0-0. See Variation B. The Bilguer also mentions 6.♗c2 as a recommendation by Von Bardeleben. This move is indeed stronger and it is the reason why I recommend 5...f5 rather than the natural 5...♘f6 to which this line may transpose.

Surprisingly, the natural development of Black's kingside knight with 5...♘f6?! is inaccurate. The point is that 4.c3 has enabled White to withdraw his bishop to c2 gaining an important tempo on Variation B below. After 6.0-0 0-0 (the 'Open Spanish' treatment with 6...♘xe4 turns out to be too risky. After 7.♖e1 the complications are clearly in White's favour. See 7...b5 8.♗b3! – Stefan Bücker – 8...♘c5 9.♗c2 ♘e6 10.d4 exd4 11.cxd4 ♗b4 12.d5±) 7.♖e1 ♖e8 8.d4 b5 (note that the attempt to win pawn e4 by means of 8...exd4, fails to 9.♗xc6 dxc6 10.e5 and White wins a piece) 9.♗c2! (here the weaker continuation 9.♗b3 transposes to B)



the thematic continuation is 9...♗b7, after which White plays 10.♘bd2, when both 10...h6 11.h3 and 10...♖b8 11.h3 ♗a8 (11...♕e7!?) 12.a3 h6 transpose to positions from Variation B or Variation B3, with the important difference that White has a useful tempo (h3) extra. Although Black's position might still be tenable, White must be significantly better.

Therefore Stefan Bücker and I have also investigated the interesting 9...a5!?, a move with which Black tries to gain counterplay and space on the queenside. Still, on the whole White will be able to gain an advantage, which is why I prefer 5...f5!.

6.d4

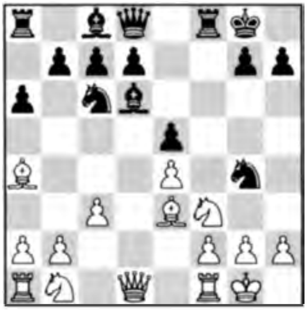
This appears to be the only way for White to fight for a small advantage. The alternatives give Black an easy game.

● 6.exf5 e4 and now:

– 7.♘d4 ♕h4 8.♗c2 ♘f6 9.d3 ♘xd4 10.cxd4 exd3 11.♕xd3 0-0 equal.

– 7.♕e2 ♕e7 8.♘d4 ♗c5 9.♕h5+ ♔f8 10.♗xc6 dxc6 11.0-0 ♘f6 12.♕h3 ♕e5 with even chances.

● 6.d3 fxe4 7.dxe4 ♘f6 8.0-0 0-0 9.♗e3 ♘g4



and now:

– 10.♗g5 ♗e7 11.♗xe7 ♕xe7 12.c4 d6 13.♘c3 ♘f6 14.h3 ♗e6 15.♘d5 ♕d8=.

– 10.c4!? ♘d4! 11.♗xd4 exd4 12.h3 ♘e5 13.♘xd4 ♗c5 14.♘c3 d6 15.♘ce2 ♔h8 16.♖c1 ♕h4 with full compensation for the pawn.

6...exd4

After 6...fxe4?! 7.♘xe5 ♘f6 White has the strong move 8.♘g4! which yields him the advantage. After 8...0-0 9.♗c2 pawn e4 becomes vulnerable.

7.0-0

An ambitious alternative is 7.exf5!? ♕e7+ 8.♔f1 ♘f6 9.cxd4 b6! (also interesting is 9...b5!? 10.♗b3 ♗b7 11.♘c3 0-0-0 and now 12.a4 or 12.♗g5) 10.♘c3 (or 10.g3 ♗b7 11.♔g2 0-0-0 12.♘c3 ♕e8 unclear) 10...♗b7 11.h4!? (11.♗xc6?! dxc6!) 11...0-0-0 12.♖h3. White has obtained the double-edged position he was looking for. Objectively Black can be satisfied since chances are roughly equal.

7...fxe4 8.♖e1 ♘f6

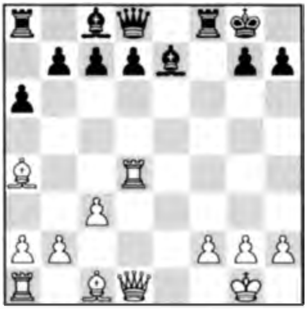
The safest continuation. After 8...♗e7?! White obtains a pleasant edge: 9.♖xe4 ♘f6 10.♖e1 0-0 11.cxd4 (harmless is 11.♘xd4 ♘xd4 12.♕xd4 d5 13.♗g5 c5=) 11...d5 12.♗xc6 bxc6 13.♘e5 ♗b7 14.♕c2±.

9.♘bd2 0-0 10.♘xe4 ♘xe4 11.♖xe4 ♗e7 12.♘xd4 ♘xd4!

This is better than 12...d5, after which White maintains the initiative and a small advantage with 13.♘e6 ♗xe6 (13...♕d6? 14.♗b3±) 14.♖xe6 ♕d7 15.♖e2 ♗c5 16.♗e3 ♗xe3 17.♖xe3±. White's bishop is stronger than Black's knight and pawn d5 is vulnerable.

13.♖xd4

The exchange of the central pawns and the knights has resulted in a simplified position. White still exerts some pressure, but with accurate play Black should be able to hold the balance. In my opinion there are two good methods with which Black can steer towards equality.



– 13...♗f6 14.♗b3+ ♔h8 15.♖f4 d6 16.♗e3 ♗e5 17.♖xf8+ ♕xf8 18.♕h5 g6 19.♕h4 ♗d7 20.♖e1 ♖e8.

– 13...♗c5 14.♗b3+ ♔h8 15.♖f4 ♕e8! (prevents 16.♕h5) 16.♖xf8+ ♕xf8 17.♗e3 ♗xe3 18.fxe3 d6 19.♕h5 ♕e7 20.♗c2 g5.

Variation B

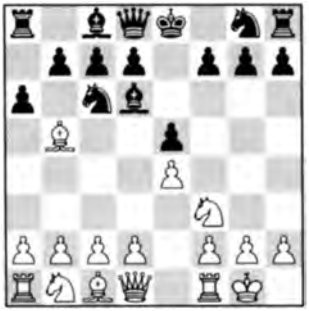
4.0-0

The strongest and most flexible move. White can follow-up with a classical set-up (♖e1, c3, d4), but sharper lines with a direct d4 are also an option.

4...a6

Clearly best. Khalifman [5] only mentions the weak move 4...♘f6?, which he refutes by 5.d4! ♘xe4 6.♕e2 f5 7.dxe5 ♗c5 (7...

♘xe5? 8.♘xe5 ♗xe5 9.f3 c6 10.♗d3+–) 8.♘bd2! ♘xd2 9.♗xd2 with a clear advantage for White.



5.♗a4

Here White has two important alternatives.

● With 5.♗xc6 White can go for the Exchange Variation, in which Black has committed himself to the ...♗d6 system. However this is not a big concern, since this particular line is currently considered safe for Black. It is frequently being tested in high level competition. After 5...dxc6 6.d4 exd4 7.♕xd4 f6 play usually goes 8.♗e3 ♘e7 9.♘bd2 ♗e6 and now:

– 10.♕c3 ♘g6 11.♘d4 ♕e7 12.♘xe6 ♕xe6 13.♕b3 ♕xb3 14.axb3 0-0-0 15.♖fd1 with a small edge for White.

– 10.♖ad1 ♘g6 11.♘c4 ♗xc4 12.♕xc4 ♕e7 13.♖fe1 0-0-0 with balanced chances.

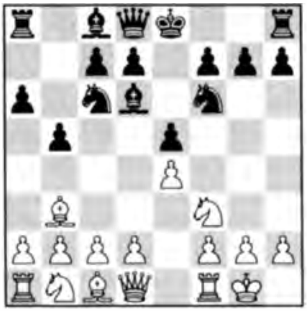
● 5.♗c4!? is well worth considering. After 5...b5?! 6.♗d5 ♘ge7 7.d4 exd4 8.♘g5 White obtains good chances. Better is 5...♘f6. Now 6.♖e1 b5 7.♗b3 transposes to the main line, while after 6.d3 Black can play 6...♗c5 with an Italian Game. More interesting is 6.d4 0-0 7.♖e1 b5 8.♗d3(!) ♖e8 9.c3 ♗b7. The Spanish bishop has arrived at square d3 instead of b3. This possibility presents an argument in favour of the move order 3...a6 4.♗a4 and only now 4...♗d6.

5...b5

This move is essential in Black's plans, so it is best to play it right now. Otherwise White can play c3, preparing the retreat of ♗a4 to square c2. Indeed 5...♘f6?! is already inaccurate since 6.c3! transposes to 4.c3 a6 5.♗a4 ♘f6 a line that I consider inferior.

6.♗b3 ♘f6

It is also perfectly sound to play 6...♗b7 first. Both 7.c3 ♘f6 and 7.d3 ♘f6 transpose to positions examined below.



7.c3

By transposition we have reached a position examined by the Bilguer [1] and ECO [4]. White's plan is to apply the Spanish Torture by establishing the classical pawn centre supported by ♖e1 and ♘bd2. Other continuations:

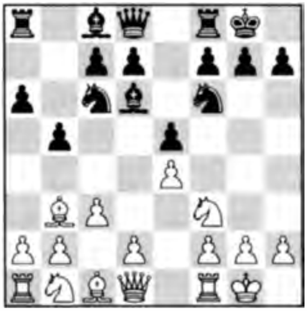
● 7.d3 is too timid to challenge the validity of the Mayet Defence. Nevertheless the continuation is of theoretical relevance. After 7...♗b7 (Black can also delay this by playing 7...0-0) we have reached a position from the Arkhangelsk Variation: 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 b5 6.♗b3 ♗b7 7.d3 ♗d6. The last move 7...♗d6!? gained recognition when the Ukrainian GM Vladimir Malaniuk played it successfully around 1990. Nowadays this is main line theory, frequently tested in tournament practice. Play may go: 8.a3 0-0 9.♘c3 h6 10.♗e3 (White has also tried 10.♖e1, 10.h3, 10.♘e2 and 10.♗a2) 10...

♘g4 11.♗d2 ♗c5 12.♗d5 (12.♘d5!?) 12...d6 13.b4 ♗b6 14.♗b3 ♘e7 with equal chances in Inarkiev-Vasquez, Linares 2003.

- 7.♖e1 0-0 8.d4 ♗b7. Now 9.c3 transposes to the main line. Kononenko-Tarlev, Kharkov 2007, took an original course: 9.c4!? ♗b4 (9...♘xd4 is also playable) 10.dxe5 ♘g4 11.♗g5 ♗xe1?! (courageous; 11...♕e8 equalizes) 12.♗xd8 ♗xf2+ 13.♔h1 ♖axd8 14.h3 ♘gxe5 15.cxb5 axb5. White won in 56 moves.
- 7.d4 ♗b7 8.dxe5!? (8.c3 0-0 see main line) 8...♘xe5 9.♘xe5 ♗xe5 10.f4 ♗d6 11.e5 ♗c5+ 12.♔h1 ♘e4 13.♕e1 ♕e7 14.♘d2 ♘xd2 15.♗xd2 0-0-0 16.a4 f6 with sharp play and balanced chances.

7...0-0

The Bilguer [1] and ECO [4] consider 7...♘xe4 as good (or as bad!) as the text-move. The Bilguer even assigns an exclamation mark to 7...♘xe4. However, the tactics are clearly in White's favour: 8.♖e1 (also very strong is 8.d4±) 8...♘c5 (equally insufficient are 8...f5 9.d4 and 8...♘f6 9.d4 e4 10.♘bd2) 9.♗c2 ♘e6 10.d4 exd4 11.cxd4 ♗b4 12.d5±. A valid alternative to the text move is 7...♗b7. It should transpose to the main line after 8.d4 0-0.



8.d4

Or 8.♖e1. ECO [4] stops here and assesses the position as ±, referring to the Bilguer [1]. There we find the following line: 8...♖e8 9.♘g5 ♖e7 10.f4 with a dangerous attack both after 10...exf4 and 10...h6. However, Black should play instead 8...♗b7!. After 9.d4 h6 10.♘bd2 ♖e8 we reach the main line. Moves like 8.d3, 8.a4 and 8.♕e2 are playable but pose no particular threat to Black.

8...♗b7

Black should avoid the trap 8...♘xe4?? 9.♗d5! ♘f6 10.♗xc6 dxc6 11.dxe5 and White wins a piece.

9.♘bd2 h6

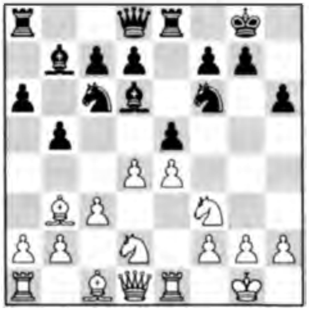
A useful precaution. Before playing ...♖e8 Black takes away square g5 from White's knight and bishop. The odd alternative 9...♕b8?! most likely transposes to a dubious line from B3 after 10.♗c2 ♖e8 11.♖e1 h6 12.h3.

10.♖e1

Sharp complications can arise from 10.dxe5!? ♗xe5 11.♘xe5 ♘xe5 12.f4 ♘eg4 13.♕e2 c5!. It appears that Black is okay: 14.h3 c4 15.hxg4 cxb3 16.e5 ♖e8 equal; or 14.♗c2 c4 15.♘f3 ♖e8 16.h3 ♘xe4! 17.hxg4 ♘xc3 18.♕f2 ♖e2 unclear.

10...♖e8

Black has completed his development and is now ready to retreat his bishop from d6 to f8.



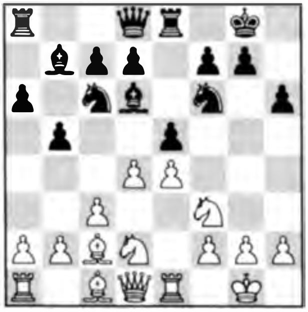
11.♗c2!

With this move White strengthens pawn e4 and indirectly discourages Black's intended bishop retreat. The importance can be seen in the next variation:

- 11.h3 ♗f8 12.♘xe5 ♘xe5 13.dxe5 ♖xe5. Now the intended move 14.♘f3 is not feasible since pawn e4 is insufficiently protected. Hence White plays 14.♗c2, but after 14...d6 Black is okay.
- 11.d5 ♘e7 12.♘f1 is comfortably met by 12...c6 (also good is 12...♘g6) 13.dxc6 dxc6 14.♘h4 c5 15.♕f3 c4 16.♗c2=.
- 11.a4 ♗f8 12.h3 d6 13.♗c2 exd4 14.cxd4 ♘b4 15.♗b1 c5 16.d5 g6 17.♘f1 ♗g7 =. A classical Spanish position in which Black has good counterplay. Chances are equal. Drawn in 29 moves, Gueci-Ostrowski, correspondence game 2008.

After the text-move (11.♗c2) we have reached a key position for the 3...♗d6 Spanish. The position can be reached by numerous move orders. It has been tested in a small number of correspondence games. Now that both sides have completed their development, the main issue to be resolved is the repositioning of the bishop on d6. Black has the choice between three strategies:

1. to retreat the bishop to f8;
2. to exchange pawns in the centre;
3. to postpone a decision, waiting to see how White resolves the central tension, either by advancing the d-pawn to d5 or by exchanging it on e5. We examine:



Variation B1 – 11...♗f8
Variation B2 – 11...exd4
Variation B3 – 11...♖b8

Variation B1

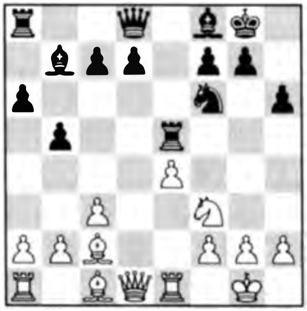
11...♗f8

With this bishop retreat Black signals his wilingness to transform the position to a classical variation by following up with ...d6. However, as we shall see the move comes down to an exchange sacrifice, the value of which can be disputed.

12.♘xe5

The right way for White to take advantage. After 12.h3 d6 13.a3 we would reach a position from the Smyslov/Zaitsev/Flohr Variation (ECO code C93) with balanced chances. Note that instead of the text-move (12.♘xe5), the capture 12.dxe5(?) is inaccurate since it allows the good reply 12...♘g4! e.g. 13.♘b3 ♘gxe5 14.♘xe5 ♘xe5=.

12...♘xe5 13.dxe5 ♖xe5 14.♘f3



14...♖xe4

This exchange sacrifice is the point of Black's play. It is also forced, because if the rook would retreat then White has 15.e5± with a dominating position.

15.♗xe4 ♘xe4

Weaker is 15...♗xe4 because of 16.♘e5.

After the textmove we have reached an important position. Black has sacrificed the exchange, for which he has obtained fair compensation in the form of a pawn, the bishop pair and activity. Whether this is really sufficient is difficult to say. In the databases I found four correspondence games reaching this position. White scored +1 =3 –0.

16.♗f4

The 2008 correspondence game Germann-Sueess went: 16.♗e3 ♗d6 (16...c5!?) 17.a4 (17.♘d4 ♕h4 18.h3) 17...b4 18.♕c2 ♖c8 19.♗d4 ♘g5 20.♘d2 ♘e6 21.♘e4 ♗f8 22.♖ad1 d5±, draw in 34. Other reasonable moves are 16.♘d4 and 16.a4.

16...♖c8

An alternative is 16...d5 17.♘d2 ♘c5 18.♘b3 ♘e6.

17.♘d4 ♕f6 18.♕g4 c5 19.♘f3 c4 20.♗e3 ♕e6 21.♕xe6 dxe6 22.♖ed1 ♗d5 23.♘e5 ♖c7

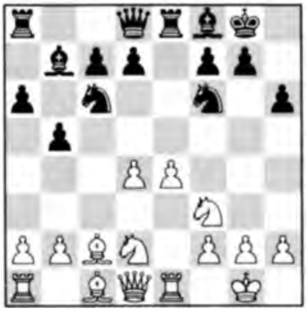
White is still better, but Black's position is resilient. Tombette-Daemen, correspondence game 2008 was drawn in 48 moves.

Variation B2

11...exd4

In my opinion this is a sound move, worth testing in practice.

12.cxd4 ♗f8



The pawn exchange has left White in control of the centre. However, if he plays slow then Black will obtain counterplay by attacking the centre with ...c5. For example: 13.a3 d6 14.h3 ♘e7 15.♘f1 ♘g6 16.♘g3 c5 17.d5 ♘d7 18.♘f5 ♘de5 19.♗d2 ♗c8 and White has only a small edge.

13.e5!?

A sharp advance. White obtains square e4 plus chances along b1-h7, but Black gets square d5 for his knight and the chance to attack the centre with ...d6. The other central advance is also of interest. 13.d5!? ♘a5 14.h3 ♖c8 15.a3 c5 16.b3 g6 17.♗b2 ♗g7 18.♖c1 d6 19.♗b1 ♔h7 with a tense position. White is slightly better.

13...♘d5 14.♗e4 ♘b6 15.a3

White intends to play ♕c2 and first takes control over square b4. Another possibility is 15.b3 ♖b8! 16.♗b2 ♘e7 17.♗xb7 (or 17.♖c1 ♗xe4 18.♘xe4 ♘ed5 19.g3 d6±) 17...♖xb7 18.♘e4 ♘ed5 19.g3 (idea: ♘h4) 19...♗e7 followed by ...d6. White is slightly better.

15...♕c8

There are other defensive set-ups that are worth considering:

- 15...d6 16.♕c2 ♕d7 17.♗h7+ ♔h8 18.♗f5 ♕d8 19.b3 ♘e7±.
- 15...♖b8 16.♕c2 ♕c8 17.♗h7+ ♔h8 18.♗f5 ♘e7 19.♗g4 ♗d5±.

16.♗b1

With the idea of bringing the bishop to a2. After 16.♕c2 ♘d8 White has little.

16...d6 17.♕c2 g6 18.♘e4 ♗g7 19.♗a2 ♘e7±

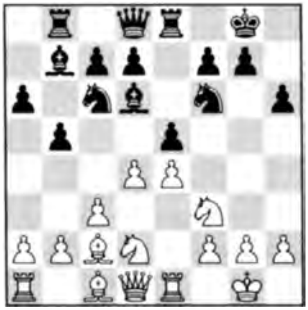
We have reached a tense and interesting middle game position, in which White holds the slighty better chances.

Variation B3

11...♖b8!?

A semi-useful waiting move. Black maintains the central tension and wants to see what White will do. Obviously there are similar waiting moves Black may consider. The main problem is to give them meaning if White follows suit by playing another preparatory move. For example:

- 11...♕c8?!. Hoping for 12.h3, when 12...exd4 13.cxd4 ♗f8 14.e5 ♘d5 15.♗e4 ♘ce7 is interesting. However after 12.a3(!) I fail to see a good follow-up for Black.
- 11...♕b8?!. The 2008 correspondence game Khachaturov-Ostrowski went 12.a3 ♗f8 13.♘xe5 ♘xe5 14.dxe5 ♖xe5 15.♘f3 ♖xe4 16.♗xe4 ♗xe4 with play similar to that in B1. Better might be 12.h3(!), e.g. 12...♕a7?! (12...a5?! 13.a4!) 13.♘b3. Black has achieved nothing with his odd manoeuvres, since the intended line 13...exd4 14.cxd4 ♘b4 15.d5 ♘xc2 16.♕xc2 – while achieving the desired exchange of knight versus light-squared bishop – clearly favours White.

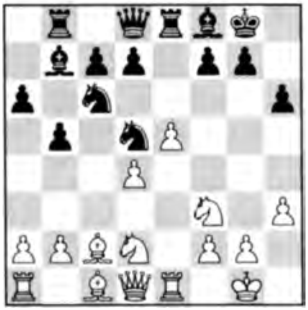


12.h3

The main alternative is 12.a3. One option for Black is to play 12...♗f8. More interesting is the continuation 12...♗a8!?, and now:

- 13.b4 a5 (a good move to prepare this pawn advance is 13...♕c8) 14.bxa5 ♘xa5 15.♘xe5 ♗xe5 16.dxe5 ♖xe5 17.f4 ♖e8 18.a4 ♕e7 19.axb5 ♕c5+ 20.♔h1± Zielinski-Frenzel, correspondence game 2006.
- 13.h3 ♗f8 (other continuations like 13...♕c8?! are too slow) 14.dxe5 ♘xe5 15.♘xe5 ♖xe5 16.♘f3 ♖xe4 17.♗xe4 ♘xe4 18.♗e3 c5. The position is similar to those discussed in B1. Black's chances may have improved, due to the fact that his rook has access to square b6 and from there to the kingside (f6 or g6).

12...exd4 13.cxd4 ♗f8 14.e5 ♘d5



15.♘f1!?

After the logical move 15.♗e4 we see a key-point of 11...♖b8, the bishop on b7 is protected by the rook. Play goes 15...♘b6 16.a3 ♘e7 17.♗xb7 ♖xb7 18.♘e4 ♘ed5±. Black has firm control over square d5 and he will soon follow up with ...d6.

15...d6 16.♕d3 g6 17.e6 f5 18.♗d2 ♕e7

We have reached a rich and complicated position, with chances for both sides.

Final Thoughts

It seems to me that Rybka's first impression was right: the Mayet Defence 3...♗d6 in the Spanish Game is indeed much stronger than its poor reputation suggests. After 4.c3 a6 5.♗a4 Black has an excellent response: 5...f5!. The main line positions arising from 4.0-0 are interesting and playable, in particular the line 11...exd4 12.cxd4 ♗f8 examined in B2.

White has a lot of options to consider in this opening, e.g. whether to play d3 and a4, or go for a classical centre with c3 and d4. In the latter case there are issues whether to exchange pawns on e5; or to close the centre with d5; or to go for the standard knight manoeuvre ♘d2-f1-g3. On the other hand Black's play is fairly straightforward, making this an easy to learn system that can be employed as a surprise weapon in tournament play.

In this article I have focused on ...♗d6 at move three. Since Black's plan involves standard moves like a6, b5 and ♘f6, other move orders can be considered. The variation 3...a6 4.♗a4 ♗d6 comes to mind. This is at least equivalent to 3...♗d6, and perhaps slightly more accurate; this way one sidesteps possibilities like 5.♗xc6 and 5.♗c4 in B. Furthermore one may take the Archangelsk Variation 3...a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 b5 6.♗b3 ♗b7 as a starting point. This move order allows one to defer ...♗d6 to move 5, 6 or 7. Of course this would spoil the surprise factor a bit.

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3. Bosch: *Sokolov's Surprise*, SOS-1 (2003)
4. *Enzyklopädie der Schacheröffnungen*, Volume C (1974)
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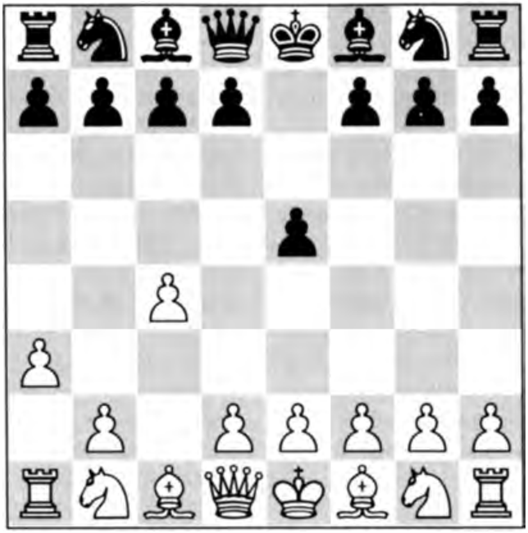
CHAPTER 10

Arthur Kogan

English Opening: Early Inspiration



1.c4 e5 2.a3!?

When you surprise your opponent with a semi-useful move like 2.a3 it means offering him a world of choice. It is pointless, then to try and cover every possible reply. Indeed, our choice was to avoid theory, not to remember it! However, I do want to inspire you and like to present you with three annotated games.

□ **Manuel Bosboom**
■ **Loek van Wely**
Wijk aan Zee Blitz 1999

1.c4 e5 2.a3!?
Getting away from the main lines as soon as possible. This little pawn move has obvious merits though. Indeed, it is possible that you end up in a Sicilian a tempo up! In the Sicilian ...a6 is almost always a useful move, and in the English Opening this holds true as well. White prepares b4 and prevents ...♘b4 and ...♗b4. At the same time, White is employing the cyclist's strategy of 'sur place': he is waiting for Black to make the first 'move', to then respond in the proper way. Interestingly, the move 2.a3 was used from time to time that past genius Adolph Anderssen (even versus Morphy!). Later Leko played it (hoping for his Taimanov or Paulsen Sicilian with an extra tempo!), and even more aggressive players like Velimirovich, Galkin and Carlsen!

Please note that 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.♘f3 ♘c6 4.a3 was covered by Mikhail Gurevich in SOS-3 (Chapter 17, p.131).

2...♘f6

This is the most common answer, and it makes it easier for White to imagine that he is playing a Sicilian a tempo up! I will mainly give examples without a knight on f3, but you could also use this chapter in combination with the article of Gurevich in SOS-3.

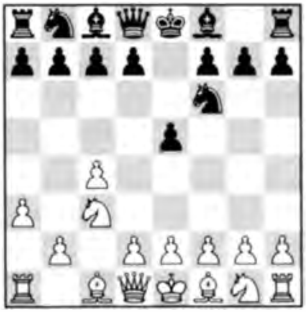
2...♘c6 3.b4 (after 3.♘c3 play could transpose to an open (or closed) Sicilian with a3 added – so no more Rossolimo Variation for example!) 3...f5 4.♗b2 d6 5.g3 (5.e3) 5...♘f6 6.♗g2 g5?! 7.d4?! (not the best, after 7.♘f3 g4 8.♘h4 the position looks dubious for Black) 7...♘xd4 8.♗xd4 exd4 9.♘f3 ♗g7 10.♘xg5 c5 (10...d5!) 11.♘d2 0-0 12.0-0 and White was slightly better in Galkin-Winants, playchess. com 2007.

3.e3

Played in Paulsen style.

3.d3!? was later played by 2.a3 expert Bosboom: 3...d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.♘f3 ♗d6 6.g3 0-0 7.♗g2 a5 8.0-0 c6 9.b3 f6 10.♗b2 ♗e6 11.♘bd2 c5 12.e3 ♘c6 13.♖c1 ♖c8 14.♘e4 b6 15.d4 cxd4 16.exd4 ♘xd4 17.♗xd4 ♖xc1 18.♕xc1 exd4 19.♕c6 ♘c3 20.♘xd4 and Black resigned in Bosboom-Pilgaard, Kemer 2007.

A few examples after **3.♘c3**:



- 3...♘c6 4.e3 d5 5.cxd5 ♘xd5 6.♘f3 ♗g4 7.♗e2 (7.♕a4) 7...♘xc3 8.bxc3 f5 9.d4 e4 10.♘d2 ♗xe2 11.♕xe2 a6 12.0-0 ♗d6 13.♕h5+ g6 14.♕h6 and White held the initiative in the old game Tarrasch-Mendelsohn, Breslau 1879.
- 3...g6 4.d4!?. Just like in the Sicilian this move grabs the initiative! (4.g3 d5 5.cxd5 ♘xd5 6.♗g2 ♘e7 7.d3 ♗g7 8.h4 h6 9.♘f3 ♘bc6 10.♗d2 b6 11.0-0 ♗b7 12.b4±, Velimirovic-Todorovic, Obrenovac 2008; 4.♘f3 ♘c6 5.g3 ♗g7 6.♗g2 0-0 7.0-0 d6 8.b4 ♘d4 9.♗b2 c6 10.d3 ♖e8 11.♘d2 ♗e6 12.e3±, Carlsen-Eljanov, Moscow WCh Blitz 2010) 4...exd4 5.♕xd4 ♗g7 (5...♘c6 6.♕e3+ ♕e7 7.♘d5±) 6.♕e3+! ♔f8 (6...♕e7 7.♕xe7+ ♔xe7 8.♗g5 favours White) 7.♕d3 (7.g3±) 7...♘c6 8.♘f3 d6 9.e4 h6 10.♗e2 ♗g4 11.♗e3± Velimirovic-Todorovic, Ulcinj 1997.
- 3...c6 4.♘f3 (4.d4! is also good) 4...e4 5.♘d4 d5 6.cxd5 ♕b6 7.e3 cxd5 8.d3 ♘c6 9.♘xc6 bxc6 10.dxe4 dxe4 11.♕c2 ♗f5 12.♗e2 ♗d6 13.g4! ♗g6 and now 14.♗d2! (an improvement over 14.g5 ♘d7 15.♘xe4 0-0 16.♕a4 ♗e5 and Black had compensation in Eljanov-Kalugin, Alushta 2000) 14...0-0 (14...♖b8 15.♘a4 ♕c7 16.♖c1±) 15.h4 with an attack.
- 3...c5 4.g3 (for 4.e3 or 4.e4 see my comments to the game Kacheishvili-Macieja) 4...♗e7 5.♗g2 0-0 6.♘f3 ♘c6 7.0-0 d6 8.d3 h6 9.♘d2 ♗e6 10.♘d5 ♕d7 11.b4 cxb4 12.♖b1 bxa3 13.♘xe7+ ♕xe7 14.♗xa3 with nice Volga-like compensation. Velimirovic-Vajda, Herceg Novi 2007.
- 3...d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5. This is exactly what White wants by playing 2.a3: an open Sicilian with tempo up! Now just choose your favourite open Sicilian line.

– For example: the most principled way to fight for a quick edge is perhaps 5.e4, which makes sense as ...♘b4 is impossible! 5...♘b6 (5...♘f4 6.d4!) 6.♘f3 ♗g4 7.h3 ♗xf3

8.♕xf3 ♗e7 9.♗b5+! c6 10.♗e2 0-0 11.0-0 c5 12.a4 ♘c6 13.a5 ♘d4 14.♕g3 ♘d7 15.♗c4, Schmidt-Schulz, Hamburg 2002.

– 5.♘f3 ♘c6 6.d3 (6.e4 and 6.♕c2!? are covered by Gurevich in SOS-3). The super popular Najdorf or Dragon Variations reversed with a tempo up can't be bad, right? 6...♗e7 7.g3 0-0 8.♗g2 ♗e6 9.0-0 ♔h8 10.♗d2 f5 11.♖c1 ♗f6 12.♘a4 ♕e7 13.♘c5 (White holds the initiative) 13...e4 14.dxe4 fxe4 15.♘g5 ♗g8 16.♘gxe4 ♗xb2 17.♖b1 ♗xa3 18.♗g5 ♕f7 19.♘xb7 ♗e7 20.♗xe7 ♘dxe7 21.♕d7±, Leko-Fontaine, Spain 1995.

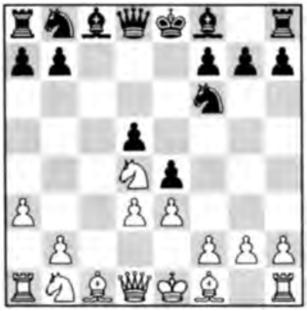
– 5.e3 ♗e6 6.♘f3 ♗d6 7.♗e2 (7.d4!) 7...0-0 8.0-0 (8.d4 ♘xc3 9.bxc3 e4 10.♘d2 f5 11.f4!? g5?! – 11...♕h4+ 12.g3 ♕h3 13.♗f1 ♕h6 14.c4 c6 unclear, Anderssen-Morphy, Paris 1858 – 12.♗c4 ♗xc4 13.♘xc4 gxf4 14.exf4 ♕e8 15.0-0± ♕c6 16.♕b3 ♕d5 17.♖b1±, Anderssen-Morphy, Paris 1858) 8...♘xc3 9.bxc3 f5 10.d4 e4 11.♘d2 ♖f6 12.f4 ♖h6 13.g3 ♘d7 14.♘c4 ♗xc4 15.♗xc4+ ♔h8 16.♖a2 ♕e7 17.a4 ♘f6 18.♕b3 b6 19.♗e6 was played in one of the first games of all time with 2.a3 between two legendary players. White later won in Anderssen-Morphy, Paris 1858.

– 5.g3 is a 'Dragon'.

3...c6 4.♘f3

4.d4 is also logical. This is an Alapin Reversed, of course. 4...exd4 5.♕xd4 (5.exd4 d5 6.♘f3 is also playable. White aims for an isolated pawn position where a3 is useful) 5...d5 6.♘f3 ♗e7 (6...♗d6 7.♘c3 dxc4 8.♕xc4 0-0 9.e4?! – 9.0-0 is more promising – 9...♗c7 10.♕xd8 ♖xd8 11.♘g5?! – 11.0-0 ♗g4 12.♗e3 was equal – 11...♖f8 12.f4 h6 13.♘xf7 ♖xf7 14.e5 ♘fd7 15.♗e3 ♘f8 16.♗xf7+ ♔xf7 and by now Black was slightly better in Bosboom-Tiviakov, Hilversum 2007) 7.♘c3 0-0 8.cxd5 cxd5 9.♗e2 ♘c6 10.♕d3 ♗g4 11.0-0 ♕d7 12.b3 ♖fd8 13.♗b2 ♗f5 14.♕d1 d4 (Black has completely equalized) 15.exd4 draw, Galkin-Alsina, Lugo 2009.

4...e4 5.♘d4 d5 6.cxd5 cxd5 7.d3



And here we are in a Sicilian Alapin reversed, where a3 is very useful.

7...a6!?

It seems that Van Wely is now making a small joke by returning the tempo. He prepares ...♗d6 and does not want to be disturbed by ♘b5.

– 7...♗c5 is a better option, but White can still look forward to typically complex play after 8.♘c3 (8.dxe4 dxe4 9.♗e2; 8.♘b3 ♗d6 9.♘c3, pressing the centre) 8...0-0 9.♗e2 ♕e7 10.0-0 ♖d8 11.b4 ♗xd4 12.exd4 ♘c6 13.♗e3 ♗f5 14.dxe4 (14.♖e1) 14...dxe4 15.♕d2 ♕e6 (15...♗e6 16.f3) 16.♖fd1 ♘e7, Milov-Godena, Cannes 2006. Now instead of 17.♗g5 White could improve with 17.d5! ♘fxd5 (17...♕d7 18.d6) 18.♗c4 ♗g4 19.♘xd5 ♗xd1 20.♖xd1 ♘xd5 21.♗xd5 ♕f5 22.♕a2 ♖d7 23.h3! ♖ad8 (23...h5 24.♖d4) 24.g4 ♕f3 25.♖d4 ♕xh3 26.♖xe4±.

– 7...♘c6 8.♘xc6 bxc6 9.♕c2 ♗d7 10.♘d2 exd3 11.♗xd3 Camacho Calle-Franco Ocampos, Dos Hermanas 2004.

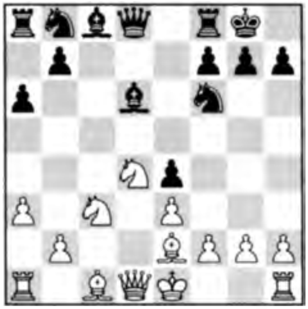
– 7...♗e7 8.♘c3 0-0 9.♗e2 ♘bd7 10.♘f5!? (10.dxe4 dxe4 11.0-0±) 10...exd3 11.♗xd3 ♗c5 12.♘a4 g6 13.b4! ♗b6 14.♘xb6 ♘xb6 15.♘d4 ♗g4 16.♕b3 (16.♘e2) 16...♖c8

17.0-0 ♘c4 18.h3 with unclear play in Shlegin-Shukh, Saratov 2009.

8.♘c3 ♗d6 9.dxe4 dxe4 10.♗e2

10.♕c2 0-0! 11.♘xe4 ♘xe4 12.♕xe4 ♖e8 13.♕c2 will leave Black with attacking chances for the pawn, and Bosboom clearly prefers to attack!

10...0-0



11.g4!

A very ambitious and risky way to fight for the centre! A perfect Bosboom plan, certainly in a blitz game like this!

11...♖e8 12.g5 ♘fd7 13.h4!

Now Black should sacrifice the e-pawn for some compensation, otherwise, having his king safe in the centre, White might even play ♗f1, ♗g2 and ♕c2 and win it for nothing...

13...♘c5 14.b4 ♘d3+!

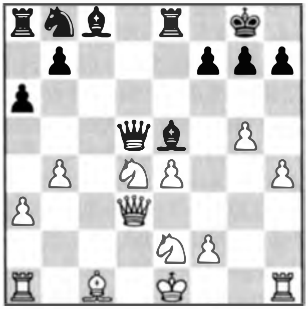
14...♘e6 15.♘f5 (not 15.♘xe4?! ♗e5 16.♗b2 ♘xd4 17.exd4 ♗f4) 15...♗e5 16.♗b2 with the better chances.

15.♗xd3 exd3 16.♕xd3 ♗e5!

Black surely has some compensation for the pawn, but he should be very concrete, since if White manages to finish his development and/or get his king safe, then he is simply a pawn up!

17.♘ce2 ♕d5 18.e4

Bosboom is never afraid of complications – he simply enjoys them, winning or losing. 18.f3, hiding the white king on f2, was also an idea.



18...♕d6

18...♗f5!! could make it even hotter, with nice pins and hanging pieces from all sides!! 19.f3 is the only move (19. exd5 ♗xd3–+). 19...♘c6! 20.♗b2 ♗xd4! 21.♗xd4 (21.♘xd4 ♗xe4!–+) 21...♗xe4! 22.fxe4 ♖xe4 23.0-0-0!! (the only move, otherwise Black is winning!) 23...♖d8 and Black will regain his piece: 24.♖he1! g6 25.♘c3 ♕xd4 26.♘xe4! ♕xd3 (26...♕a1+ 27.♕b1 ♕xa3+ 28.♕b2) 27.♖xd3 ♖xd3 28.♘f6+ ♔g7 29.♘e8+ ♔h8 30.♘f6 ♖d8 31.♔b2 with even chances.

19.♗e3 a5!? 19...♘c6 20.♖d1. **20.b5 ♘d7 21.♖d1 ♘c5 22.♕c2**

And suddenly Black's compensation for the pawn seems dubious. White managed to finish his development, and even his king is quite safe! I will give the remaining moves of this blitz game with only a few notes.

22...♕e7 23.♘f5 23.♘c6! was better.

23...♗xf5 24.exf5 ♖ac8 25.0-0

25.f6!? ♕e6! (25...gxf6 26.♖g1 ♔h8 27.♕f5 with an attack).

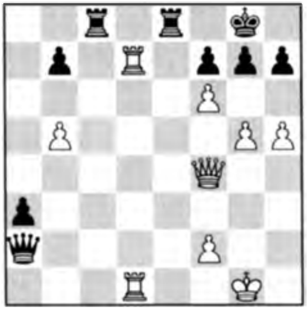
25...♗b8 25...♘e4! 26.♕d3 ♖ed8 27.♕b1 h6! is unclear.

26.♘f4?! 26.♖c1 b6 (26...♕d6 27.♗f4) 27.♖fd1. **26...♘e6** 26...♘e4!. **27.♕d2 ♘xf4 28.♗xf4 ♗xf4 29.♕xf4 ♕xa3**

After a few not so accurate moves, White seems to be fighting for a draw, but he still manages to make some Bosboom magic...

30.f6!? 30.♖d7 ♖e7=. **30...♕c5 31.♖b1 ♕d5** 31...♕c4!. **32.♖fd1 ♕e6** 32...♖e4; 32...♖c4. **33.♖d6 ♕a2 34.♖bd1 a4 35.♖d7 a3** Loek is an optimist as usual and plays for the win! 35...♕e6 with ♖c4 coming was more to the point.

36.h5



36...♖f8?? 36...g6 was the only move, and even though it looks already dangerous for Black, I don't see more than a draw after 37.hxg6 hxg6 38.♕h4 ♕e2! 39.♕h6 ♕g4+ 40.♔f1 ♕e2+ 41.♔g1 ♕g4+=.

37.fxg7 ♖fe8 37...♔xg7 38.♕f6+ ♔g8 39.h6 ♕b2 40.♖7d4+–. **38.g6!**

Loek probably missed this small pawn push, and as you already know Bosboom is a big fan of small pawn moves!

38...fxg6 39.hxg6

Black resigned.

☐ **Andrey Deviatkin**
■ **Konstantin Landa**
Serpukhov 2008

1.c4 e5 2.a3! c6

Planning ...d5 is also logical of course. Still, a3 comes in useful, and you can choose your favourite line against the Alapin!

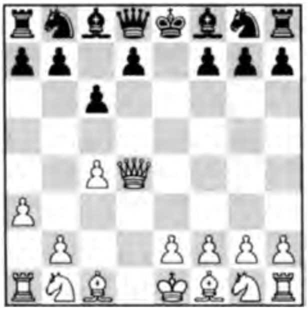
3.d4!

Time to get rid of Black's central pawn. Without a knight on c6, the queen feels quite good on d4!

– 3.♘f3 e4 4.♘d4! is also good: 4...d5 5.cxd5 cxd5 6.d3 exd3 7.♕xd3 ♘c6 8.♘c3 (8.g3! would be the Rubinstein response in this Tarrasch structure) 8...♘f6 9.♗g5 (9.g3) 9...♗e7 10.e3 ♗e6 11.♗e2 0-0 12.0-0 ♘e5 13.♕b5 was better for White in Brener-Schaffer, playchess.com 2007.

– 3.e3 is also possible, offering to play a French Defence, but it is a bit too passive to my taste: 3...d5 4.d4 e4 5.♗d2 ♘f6 6.cxd5 cxd5 7.♗b4 ♗d6 8.♗xd6 ♕xd6 9.♘e2 0-0 10.♘bc3 ♘c6 11.♘f4 with approximate equality Bunzmann-Yakovich, Saint Vincent 2000.

3...exd4 4.♕xd4



4...d5

And here White can also choose according to his taste (and the line he likes to play with Black a tempo down!). The bishop may be developed to f4 or g5. Or White can play e3 and first finish his development before placing it on b2.

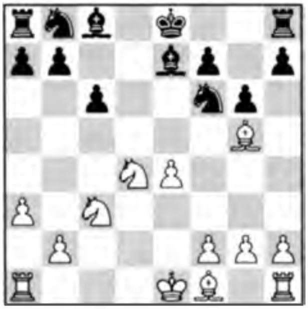
5.♘f3 ♘f6 6.♗g5

Also good looks 6.♘c3 ♗e7 7.cxd5 cxd5 8.g3!? (or 8.♗f4).

6...♗e7 7.cxd5

7.♘c3 c5?!, and now 8.♕f4! is strong (not 8.♕d2? d4 9.♗xf6 ♗xf6 10.♘d5 ♗e6 11.e4 dxe3 12.fxe3 0-0 13.♗e2 ♗xd5 14.cxd5 ♕d6=, Galkin-Ovetchkin, playchess.com 2007), since 8...d4? fails to 9.♗xf6! ♗xf6 10.♘d5 with excellent play for White.

7...♕xd5 7...cxd5 8.e3. **8.♘c3 ♕xd4 9.♘xd4 g6 10.e4**



The middlegame without queens is more pleasant for White, who has more space and presence in the centre.

10...♘fd7 11.♗e3 a5 12.♗e2 ♘a6 13.f4 ♘ac5 14.0-0-0 a4 15.♖he1 ♘b6 16.e5 h5 17.♗f3 ♗d7 18.♘e4 ♘xe4 19.♗xe4 ♘c4 20.♗f2 20.e6 is strong too. **20...0-0 21.♗d3 ♘a5 22.e6!** A very strong move, breaking Black's structure.

22...♗xe6 23.♘xe6 fxe6 24.♖xe6 ♖xf4 25.♗e3 ♖f7 26.♗xg6 ♖g7 27.♗h6 ♘b3+ 28.♔b1 ♘c5 29.♗xg7 ♘xe6 30.♗e5 The pair of bishops rules the board! **30...♘c5 31.♗xh5 ♖f8 32.♗f3** White is a pawn up and has the bishop pair. He won on move 61.

☐ **Giorgi Kacheishvili**
■ **Bartlomiej Macieja**
Istanbul 2003

1.c4 e5 2.a3 c5

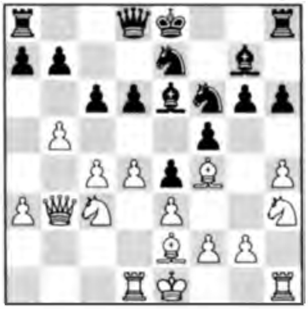
This is not illogical. Black gains more control over square d4, but still it does weaken square d5. You could compare it to 1.e4 c5 2.c4. All the same we have our extra tempo.

■ White can also try to use his extra tempo after 2...f5?! 3.d4! To obtain a good French structure without the bad bishop! 3...e4 and now:

– 4.h4!? would be a typical way to gain control over the f4-square and to block the advance of black's pawns on the kingside: 4...♗e7 5.g3 ♘f6 6.♘c3 0-0 7.♘h3 d6 8.♗g5 (8.♘f4) 8...♘g4 9.♘d5 ♗xg5 10.hxg5 ♘c6 11.♕d2 (instead, 11.f3! would have crowned Bosboom's SOS strategy with a more or less winning position versus a strong GM: 11...exf3 12.exf3 ♖e8+ 13.♔d2) 11...♘e7 12.♘e3 ♘g6 and now the chances were unclear in the blitz game Bosboom-Sokolov, Wijk aan Zee 1999.

– 4.♘h3!? is fine too.

– 4.♗f4 ♘f6 5.h4 g6 6.♘c3 d6 7.e3 ♗g7 8.♗e2 ♘c6 9.b4 ♘e7 10.♕b3 c6 11.b5 h6 12.♘h3 ♗e6 13.♖d1 (White has an edge)



13...0-0 14.0-0 ♗f7 15.♕b4! ♘c8 16.c5 d5 17.bxc6 bxc6 18.♗a6 and White was already winning in Galkin-Winants, playchess.com 2007.

■ 2...a5?! 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 ♘c6 5.e3! d5 6.cxd5 ♘xd5 7.♗b5 (7.♕c2 is strong too) 7...♘xc3 8.bxc3 e4 9.♘d4 ♗d7 10.♕c2 again led to a good Sicilian for White. Clearly, ...a5 is much less effective than a3! 10...♘xd4 11.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 12.cxd4 f5 13.d3 exd3 14.♕xd3±, Genov-Ozturk, Ankara 2010.

3.e3!

White is planning d2-d4 to gain more control over square d5. So Black will logically have to react with a quick ...d5, for otherwise he would end up with a backward pawn.

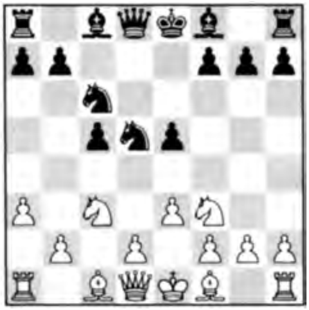
3.g3, to place a 'knife' on g2, always make sense in such structures: 3...♘c6 4.♗g2 f5 5.d3 g6 6.♘c3 ♗g7 7.b4 (7.♖b1±; 7.h4 h6 8.e4 d6 9.exf5 ♗xf5 10.♘d5 ♕d7 11.♘e2 ♘f6 was unclear in Kahn-Peredy, Budapest 1995) 7...d6 (7...cxb4 8.axb4 ♘xb4 9.♘b5±) 8.♖b1 with a pleasant edge for White.

Another logical option is 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e4! and then to organize the f4 pawn break.

3...♘f6 4.♘c3 ♘c6 5.♘f3 d5

Otherwise White will play d4, or ♕c2 and ♗d3, when Black is weak on the light squares.

6.cxd5 ♘xd5



7.♕c2

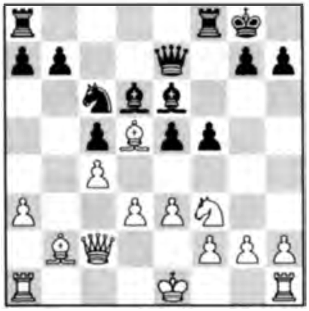
Just like in the regular Sicilian where ...♕c7 is nearly always a good move. White is intending moves like ♘e4, ♗b5 or ♗d3, with excellent play.

7.♗b5 leads to a good Sicilian as well. Ideas as ...♘b4 are not possible here, and Black's centre is under pressure. (7...♘xc3 8.bxc3 ♗d6 9.0-0.)

7...♘xc3 8.bxc3

Also good is 8.dxc3 ♗d6 9.e4 0-0 10.♗c4 ♘a5 11.♗d5 c4 12.♗e3 ♕c7 13.♕e2 ♗d7 14.0-0 ♖ae8 15.♖ad1 ♗a4 16.♖de1 ♗c5 17.♘h4 and White held the initiative in Eljanov-Avrukh, Andorra 2003.

8...♗d6 9.♗c4 9.♗d3!? is playable too. **9...♕e7 10.♗d5** Placing the bishop on a dominating square. **10...♗e6 11.c4 f5 12.d3 0-0 13.♗b2**



13...♗xd5 Possibly Black should have preferred to keep the tension (and the structure). **14.cxd5 ♘d8 15.a4 ♖f6 16.e4 f4 17.♕c4 ♘f7 18.h4!? ♖g6 19.♔f1 h5 20.♗c3 ♖g4 21.♖b1** White has a pleasant edge. **21...♔f8 22.♖b5 ♖d8 23.a5 ♖d7 24.♕b3 ♔g8**

Black has everything defended for the moment, and it is not easy for White to break through. Kacheishvili now walks his king over to the queenside before engineering the g3-break on the kingside. It all takes a while, and I will only give a few light comments.

25.♕b2 ♖c7 26.♖g1 ♕d7 27.♕b3 ♕c8 28.♕c4 ♔h7 29.♔e2! ♖g6 30.♔d2 ♔h8 31.♔c2

The king is now out of the way. White is ready for the break.

31...♖g4 32.g3

32.♖bb1 was another useful move to make.

32...fxg3 33.fxg3 ♖g6 34.♖bb1 ♕h3 35.♕b5 ♖xg3?

Too greedy. White has a tactical refutation.

36.♕e8+ ♔h7 37.♖xg3 ♕xg3 38.♖f1?

White could win with 38.♘g5+! ♘xg5 39.♕xh5+ ♔g8 40.hxg5.

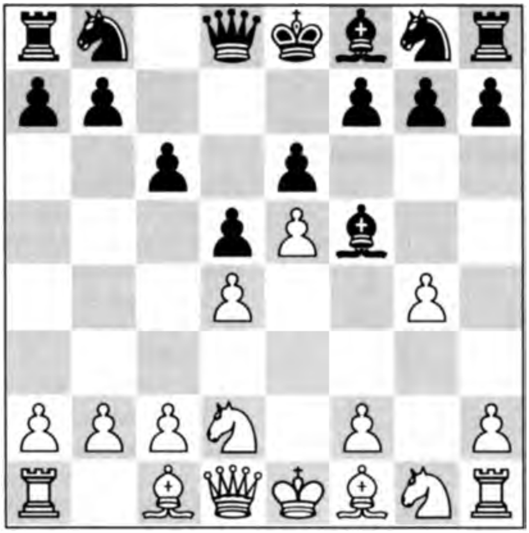
38...♕g2+?! 39.♘d2 ♘h6? 39...♖e7?. **40.♕xh5**

Material is equal, but White's structure is better and so are his pieces. White won on move 70.

CHAPTER 11

Alexander Finkel

Caro-Kann Advanced: an SOS Trend



1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♗f5 4.♘d2 e6 5.g4!?

This chapter is dedicated to one of the latest trends in the Advance Variation of the Caro-Kann Defence.

I guess 'trend' isn't the right term to describe the state of affairs in the above-mentioned line, as we are definitely not talking about the mainstream variation. Although 4.♘d2 has been a legitimate and popular move against the Caro-Kann for quite some time, it has never been associated with aggressive kingside play by means of g4, followed by ♘ge2 and h4.

It's needless to mention that 4.♘c3 e6 5.g4 ♗g6 6.♘ge2 once enjoyed a tremendous popularity, but as the time passed Black succeeded to adjust to White's ultra-aggressive play in this line, so it slowly disappeared from tournament practice and was almost exclusively replaced by the less committal 4.♘f3.

The ideas behind 4.♘d2 e6 5.g4!? are obviously quite similar to those in the 4.♘c3 e6 5.g4 line, however the position of the knight on d2 affects the plans of both sides. Although White seems to waste an important tempo compared to the 4.♘c3 line (since he would need to move his knight once again to b3 in order to complete development), he clearly benefits from the possibility to cement his centre by c3 as well as a chance to hold on to the c5 pawn after a standard ...c5 break by Black. In other words, White gets a more solid and strategically more balanced version of the 4.♘c3 e6 5.g4 variation!

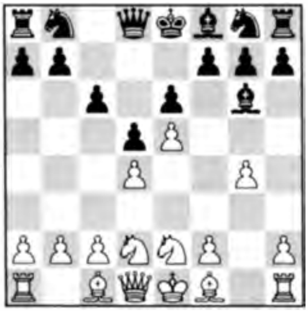
Since 5.g4!? has been re-introduced into practice by the Spanish grandmaster Francisco Vallejo back in 2009 (until that game it was never employed by a serious tournament player) we saw some strong players occasionally (and quite successfully) employ it, producing some sort of theoretical background for our article. Nevertheless, 4.♘d2 e6 5.g4 remains almost completely unexplored, so our readers get an excellent chance to shape the theory of this exciting variation!

☐ **Francisco Vallejo**
■ **Anatoly Karpov**
San Sebastian (Donostia) 2009

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♗f5 4.♘d2 e6 5.g4!?

Although 5.g4 has been tried before in a dozen games, Vallejo was the first one to employ it on the top level.

5...♗g6 6.♘e2



6...c5

The most natural and logical response, which is beyond any doubt the most crucial one to test the feasibility of White's set-up involving 4.♘d2 and 5.g4.

Worse is the other pawn break 6...f6?! 7.♘f4 ♗f7 8.♘f3 ♘d7 9.♕e2 fxe5 10.dxe5 ♗c5 11.♗d2 ♘e7 12.h4 h6 13.h5±, Vysochin-Csiszar, Ohrid 2009.

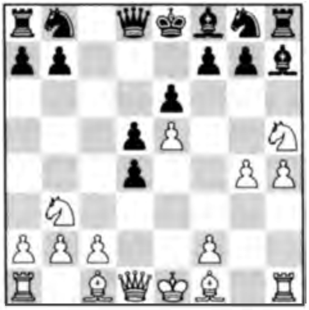
7.h4 h5

Karpov again opts for the most principled continuation. Another reasonable move is 7...h6, which is explored in-depth in the next game Vysochin-Bruchmann.

8.♘f4 ♗h7!

In a recent game between two strong Italian youngsters Black successfully tried 8...♘e7!?, which obviously caught White off-guard, as he reacted rather poorly with 9.gxh5?! (the right way to meet 8...♘e7 appears to be 9.♘xg6 ♘xg6 10.gxh5 ♘xh4 11.♕g4 ♘f5 12.dxc5 ♘c6 13.♘f3 ♗xc5 14.♗d3 with a minimal advantage) 9...♗f5 10.dxc5 ♕c7 11.♗b5+ ♘ec6 12.♘b3 ♗xc5 13.♕e2 ♗b6 and Black got an excellent position in Dvirnyy-Rombaldoni, Siena 2010, even though it was White who celebrated a victory at the end of the day.

9.♘xh5 cxd4 10.♘b3



10...♘c6

Another reasonable option was 10...♕c7 11.♘xd4 ♕xe5+ (the greedy 11...♗b4+? fails to 12.c3 ♗xc3+ 13.bxc3 ♕xc3+ 14.♕d2 ♕xa1 15.♗b5+ ♘d7 16.0-0+–) 12.♗e3 (12.♗e2 ♘c6 13.♘b5? ♘b4!) 12...♘c6 13.♗b5 ♕c7 14.c3 ♘e7 15.f4 0-0-0, with a highly complicated struggle.

11.♘xd4 ♘ge7

The pawn on e5 is not going anywhere.

The immediate 11...♘xe5 12.♗g5 ♕c7 13.♗b5+ ♘c6 14.c3 ♘e7 is quite similar to the game.

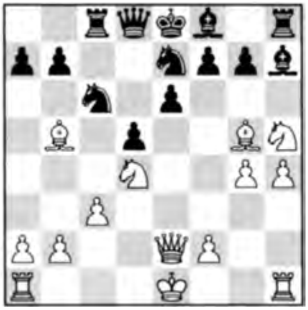
12.c3

Black has more than sufficient compensation for the pawn after 12.f4?! ♘xd4 13.♕xd4 ♘c6 14.♕f2 ♕a5+ 15.♗d2 ♕a4.

12...♘xe5 13.♗g5 ♘5c6 14.♗b5 ♖c8

14...♕c7 15.♕a4.

15.♕e2



All White's pieces have taken up very active positions, but Black has everything covered, while the strong pawn chain in the centre may become a formidable force. This is exactly the kind of position we treat as 'dynamic equality'!

15...♕d6 16.♖h3

Bringing another piece into play. The following line is very illustrative (even though not necessarily forced) to emphasize the hidden potential of Black's position: 16.0-0-0 a6 17.♗f4 ♕d7 18.♗xc6 ♘xc6 19.♘f5 f6 20.♘fxg7+ ♗xg7 21.♘xg7+ ♔f7 22.♘h5 ♘b4, and things get really messy.

16...a6

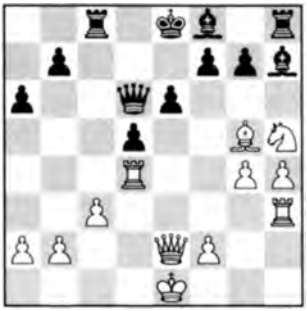
It's too early for the liberating 16...e5?!, as White seizes the initiative with 17.♘xc6 bxc6 18.♗a6 ♖b8 19.f4.

But the cunning 16...♗g6!? 17.♘f4 ♗e4 was worth the try: 18.♘d3 f6 19.♗e3 a6.

17.♗xc6+

Grabbing a pawn hardly promised White anything at all: 17.♗xe7 ♕xe7 18.♗xc6+ bxc6 19.♕xa6 ♕c7, with terrific compensation.

17...♘xc6 18.♖d1 ♘xd4 19.♖xd4



19...♗b1?

Black had two reasonable options at his disposal, but it's perfectly understandable why he wasn't too eager on entering the massive complications after 19...f6 20.♖e3 e5 (20...♔f7 21.♖f4 ♗e4 22.♘xf6 gxf6 23.♖xf6+ ♔g8 24.f3) 21.♗xf6 gxf6 22.♖xd5 ♕c6 23.g5 ♗e7 24.♘xf6+ ♗xf6 25.gxf6 ♔f7 26.♕h5+ ♗g6 27.♕xe5 ♖he8 and White has four pawns for the piece in an unclear position.

However, the solid 19...♗e4 20.♖e3 ♕h2 would've secured him at least equal chances in the forthcoming struggle.

20.♕d1!

A nasty move, which was probably overlooked by the former world champion.

20...♖xh5?!

It was better to admit his mistake and return to h7: 20...♗h7 21.♖e3 ♔d7 22.♗f4 ♕c5 23.♗e5, although White's pieces are dominating the field.

Instead, 20...♗e4 fails tactically to 21.♘xg7+! ♗xg7 22.♖xe4±.

21.gxh5 ♗f5 22.♖e3

Black does not have enough compensation for the exchange.

22...♕h2

22...♔d7 23.♗f4 ♕c6 24.♖g3±.

23.♕f3 ♗e4 24.♖exe4

Returning the exchange for a 'simple' position a pawn up.

24...dxe4 25.♕xe4 ♕c7 26.♔d1!?

White is just a pawn up, so in terms of top-level chess the rest is a matter of technique. But Karpov puts up tenacious resistance.

26...♗c5 27.♖d2 ♕c6 28.♕d3

It is not perfectly clear if White is winning after 28.♕xc6+ bxc6 29.h6 gxh6 30.♗xh6 ♔e7 31.b4 ♗b6 32.♗f4.

But after 28.♕g4! ♗f8 29.♕d4 it would be tougher for Black to organize his defence.

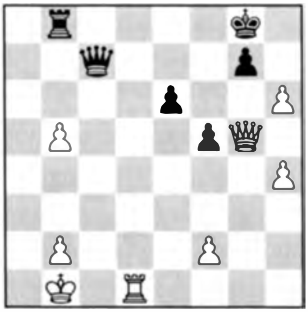
28...♗e7 29.♔c1

29.♗xe7!? ♔xe7 30.♕d4.

29...b5 30.a3 a5 31.♔b1 b4 32.cxb4 axb4 33.axb4 f5

White remains with a clear edge after 33...♕c1+ 34.♔a2 ♖a8+ 35.♔b3 ♕c6 36.b5 ♖b8 37.♗xe7 ♔xe7 38.♔b4.

34.♗xe7 ♔xe7 35.♖d1 ♕b7 36.b5 ♕c7 37.♕d2 ♖b8 38.♕g5+ ♔f8 39.h6 ♔g8



40.hxg7?!

40.♖d6! would have won on the spot.

40...♕c4 41.♖d8+ ♖xd8 42.♕xd8+ ♔xg7 43.♕d7+ ♔f6 44.♕c6

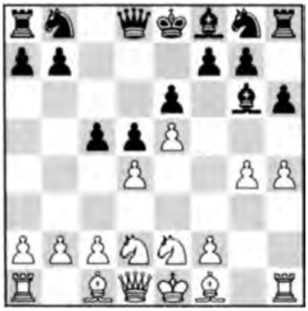
The queen ending is winning. I give the remainder without comments.

44...♕a4 45.♕c3+ ♔g6 46.♕d3 ♔h5 47.b6 ♕c6 48.♕d4 ♕b5 49.b4 e5 50.♕c5 ♕f1+ 51.♕c1 ♕d3+ 52.♔a2 f4 53.♕c5 ♔xh4 54.♕xe5 ♕c2+ 55.♔a3 ♕xf2 56.♕e7+ ♔g3 57.b7 ♕a7+ 58.♔b3 ♔f3 59.♕c7

1-0.

☐ **Spartak Vysochin**
■ **Stephan Bruchmann**
Ohrid 2009

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♗f5 4.♘d2 e6 5.g4 ♗g6 6.♘e2 c5 7.h4 h6!?



The main idea behind this move is not to keep the h-pawn, but to take under control the very important g5-square, which could be comfortably occupied by the white bishop in case of 7...h5!?.

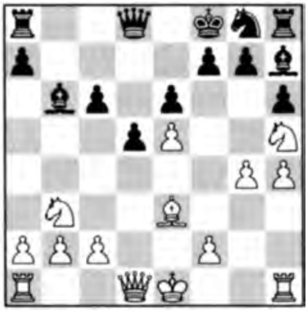
8.♘f4 ♗h7 9.dxc5 ♗xc5

Although Black suffered a crushing defeat after 9...♘c6 things are not perfectly clear in that case too: 10.♘b3 ♕c7 11.♗b5 ♕xe5+ 12.♗e3 ♘f6 (12...♕xb2!?) 13.♕e2 ♗e7 (13...♕xb2) 14.0-0-0 ♘d7 15.♘h5 g5?! 16.hxg5 hxg5 17.♕d2±, Satyapragyan-Ismagambetov, Kolkata 2009.

10.♘b3

Less accurate is 10.♗b5+?! ♘c6 11.♘b3, allowing Black to flick in 11...♕b6!, after which White should be happy to keep the balance: 12.♗xc6+ ♕xc6 13.♘xc5 ♕xc5 14.c3 ♘e7 15.♘h5 ♗e4 (15...0-0!) 16.♖h3 0-0-0 17.♗e3 ♕c7 18.♗d4 (18.♘xg7 ♕xe5 19.♗d4 ♕d6 20.f3 ♗h7 is unclear) 18...♘c6 19.♕e2, ½-½ Boros-Böhnisch, Rijeka 2010.

10...♗b6 11.♗b5+ ♘c6 12.♘h5 ♔f8 13.♗xc6 bxc6 14.♗e3!



14...♗g6

Less convincing is 14...♗xe3?!, opening up the f-file for the white pieces: 15.fxe3 ♕b6 16.♕d2 a5 17.0-0 (17.♖f1!?) 17...♘e7 18.♕f2 ♗g6 19.♘f4 ♔g8 20.♘d4 ♔h7 (20...♖a7 21.h5 ♗e4 22.♘fe2 ♘c8 23.♘c3±) 21.♘xg6 ♘xg6 22.♕xf7 ♘xe5 23.♕xe6 ♖he8 24.♕f5+ ♔h8 25.b3±, Bentivegna-Dziuba, Bratto 2010.

Black could consider 14...♕e7!?.

15.♘f4 ♗e4!

Black comes up with an excellent defensive idea, sufficient for equality.

15...♘e7 16.♘c5 ♔g8 17.h5 ♗h7 18.♕d2 ♘c8 19.0-0-0 ♗xc5 20.♗xc5 ♘b6 21.♘e2±.

16.♖h2 h5! 17.♘c5

White doesn't have a choice but to allow ...hxg4, as after 17.g5 or 17.gxh5 the black knight would get a fantastic outpost on f5.

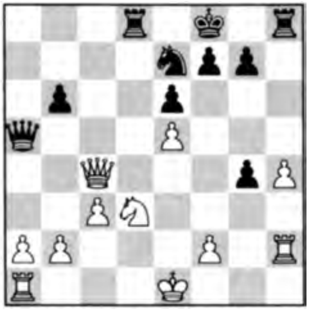
17...♕e7 18.♘xe4 dxe4 19.♗xb6 axb6

19...♕b4+ 20.♕d2 ♕xb6 21.0-0-0 hxg4 22.h5 favours White, who is intending 22...g5? 23.hxg6! ♖xh2 24.♘xe6+ fxe6 25.♕f4+.

20.♕d4 ♖d8 21.♕xe4 hxg4 22.♘d3 ♕a7!?

The pawn on c6 is worth a couple of tempi, essential to consolidate Black's position. Unclear is 22...c5 23.0-0-0 ♖d4.

23.♕xc6 ♘e7 24.♕c4 ♕a5+ 25.c3



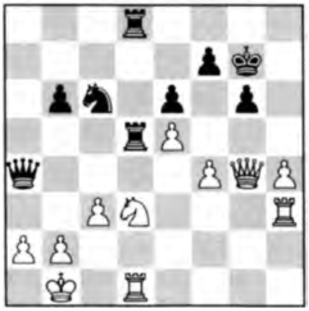
25...g6?!

Thus far Black's play was just about perfect, but he goes astray just one step from liquidating into the comfortable endgame arising after 25...♕d5! 26.♕xd5 ♖xd5 27.0-0-0 ♖h5 28.♔c2 ♘g6 and it is White who has to be careful to keep the balance.

26.0-0-0 ♔g7 27.♔b1 ♖d5?! 27...♖a8 28.a3 ♕a4±. **28.♕xg4**

White is just two pawns up, while Black's play on the queenside can be easily neutralized.

28...♖hd8 29.♖h3 ♘c6 30.f4 ♕a4

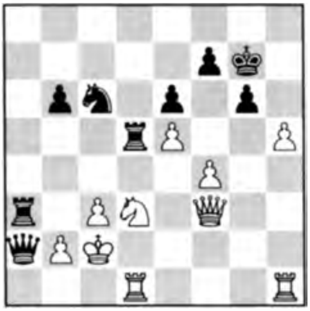


31.♕f3?

A rather silly mistake, which could've turned things around had Black found a nice attacking resource on the 35th move: 31.♕e2 ♖a8 32.b3 ♕a5 33.h5+−.

31...♖a8! 32.a3 ♕b3 33.♖hh1 ♖ad8?

Refusing to take the gift generously offered by White a couple of moves ago: 33...♖xa3! 34.h5 ♕a2+ 35.♔c2 (35.♔c1 ♖xc3+ 36.bxc3 ♖b5−+)



35...♖xc3+!! (this nice move was missed by both sides in their calculations) 36.♔xc3 ♕a5+ 37.♘b4 (37.b4 ♘xb4!−+) 37...♖c5+ 38.♔d2 ♕xb4+∓.

34.h5

Now it's all over.

34...♘a5 35.hxg6 ♘c4 36.♕g2 fxg6 37.♖dg1 ♘xa3+ 38.♔c1 ♕c2+ 39.♕xc2 ♘xc2 40.f5! ♖xd3 41.f6+ ♔f8 42.♖h8+ ♔f7 43.♖h7+ ♔f8 44.♖xg6

1-0.

☐ **Daniele Vocaturo**
■ **Nazi Paikidze**
Moscow Aeroflot 2011

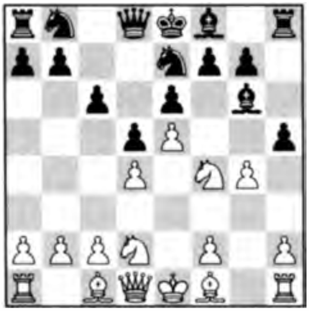
1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♗f5 4.♘d2 e6 5.g4 ♗g6 6.♘e2 ♘e7!?

Another possible way to meet 5.g4: Black prefers to carefully prepare the advance of the c-pawn rather than to enter the complications inevitably arising after 6...c5. I believe White should be able to get the upper hand after the text-move, but it is by no means trivial.

7.♘f4

Not 7.♘g3 c5 8.♗b5+ ♘ec6 9.f4 h6 10.f5 ♗h7 11.0-0 ♕b6 12.♕e2 cxd4 13.♗d3 ♘d7∓, Agrinsky-A.Lundin, Moscow 1998.

7...h5



8.gxh5?!

I don't particularly like this capture, letting Black comfortably develop his pieces prior to performing the typical ...c5 break.

The right way to meet 6...♘e7 followed by 7...h5 is once again 8.♘xg6!? ♘xg6 9.gxh5 ♘f4 and now:

- Unclear is 10.h6!? g6 11.♘b3 ♗xh6 12.♕f3 ♘h5 13.♗xh6 ♖xh6 14.♕e3 ♖h7 15.0-0-0 ♘d7, but
- 10.c3 ♘xh5 (10...♕h4 11.♘f3 ♕g4 12.♖g1 ♕f5 13.♘g5) 11.♘f3 (intending to put pressure on f7) 11...c5 (11...♕b6 12.♘g5 c5 13.♕f3 ♕c7 14.♗e3 cxd4 15.cxd4 ♗b4+ 16.♔d1 with a dangerous initiative) 12.♕a4+ ♘c6 13.♗e3 ♕b6 14.0-0-0 leads to a somewhat better position for White.

8...♗f5 9.♘b3 ♘d7 10.♗e3 ♕c7 11.♕d2

An attempt to prevent ...c5 by 11.♘d3 would run into 11...♗e4 12.f3 ♗xd3

13.♕xd3 ♘f5, with a comfortable position for Black.

11...a6

Perhaps Black could gain a tempo by pushing ...c5 right away, but I don't think it's any better than the move in the game: 11...c5!? 12.♘xc5 ♘xc5 13.dxc5 ♕xe5 14.♗b5+ ♘c6 15.0-0-0 (15.♗xc6+ bxc6 16.0-0-0 ♗e4 17.♖hg1 ♕c7∓) 15...♕c7 with counterplay.

12.0-0-0

The knight on b3 is misplaced if White decides to push 12.c4?!, so Black gets a very comfortable position: 12...dxc4 13.♗xc4 0-0-0 14.♕e2 (14.0-0-0? ♘xe5) 14...♘b6 15.♗d3 ♗xd3 16.♘xd3 ♘f5.

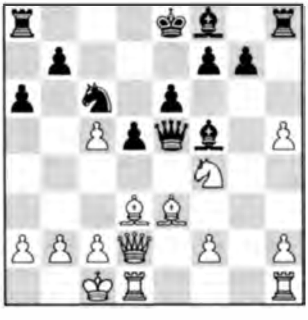
12...c5 13.♘xc5

It makes perfect sense to trade the knights. 13.dxc5 ♘xe5 14.♘d4 ♘g4∓.

13...♘xc5 14.dxc5 ♘c6 15.♗d3

An interesting possibility was 15.h6!? g6 (15...♖xh6 16.♘d3 ♖h8 17.f4±) 16.♘d3 ♗xd3 17.♗xd3 ♘xe5 18.h4 ♗xc5 19.h5.

15...♕xe5



It is clear that Black has successfully solved the opening problems.

16.♖he1 0-0-0 17.♗xf5?!

Play is unclear after 17.c3!? ♗g4 18.♗e2 ♗xe2 19.♖xe2 (19.♕xe2 ♗xc5 20.♕g4 ♗xe3+ 21.♖xe3 ♕c7∓) 19...♕f6 20.♕c2.

17...♕xf5 18.♘e2 e5

Or simply 18...♕xh5!? 19.♘d4 ♘xd4 20.♗xd4 ♕xh2∓.

19.♘g3 ♕e6?!

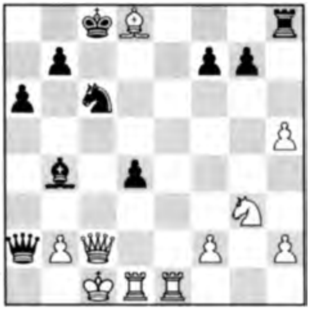
Better is 19...♕f3∓.

20.c3 d4!?

Objectively White should be better after this move, but it requires very precise play to prove this. Normal was 20...♗e7.

21.cxd4 exd4 22.♗g5 ♕xa2 23.♗xd8 ♗xc5 24.♕c2 ♗b4

Up to this point none of the sides could've deviated from the forced line which was initiated by 20...d4!?.



25.♗b6?!

Giving away the chance to fight for a win after 25.♗e7!.

White would find himself under a very dangerous attack after 25.♗g5?! ♔b8 26.♖d2 ♖c8 27.♗f4+ ♔a7 28.♔d1 ♕a1+ 29.♔e2 ♖e8+ 30.♘e4 ♕a5.

But after the correct 25.♗e7! ♔b8 (25...♕a1+ 26.♕b1 ♕xb1+ 27.♔xb1 ♗xe7 28.♖e4±) 26.♗xb4 ♘xb4 27.♕b1 ♕a5! 28.♔d2 d3 29.♖e3 ♖c8 30.♔e1 Black's defensive task would be quite difficult.

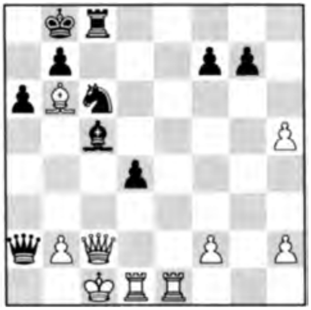
25...♔b8 26.♕b1 ♕c4+ 27.♕c2 ♕a2 28.♘e4

Trying to squeeze something out of the position by avoiding the repetition with 28.♕b1.

28...♖c8 29.♘c5

Here 29.♘c3 leads to a draw after 29...dxc3 30.bxc3 ♗a3+ (30...♕a3+ 31.♕b2 ♕xc3+ 32.♕xc3 ♗xc3 33.♖e4±) 31.♔d2 ♕d5+ 32.♕d3 ♕a2+.

29...♗xc5



30.♕xc5??

Throwing away a well-played game.

It was necessary to take the draw after 30.♗xc5 ♘b4 31.♗d6+ ♔a7 32.♗c5+ (32.♕xc8 ♕a1+ 33.♔d2 ♕xb2+−+) 32...♔b8 (32...♔a8 33.♖e8 ♖xe8 34.♗xb4) 33.♗d6+=.

30...♕a1+ 31.♔d2 ♕xb2+ 32.♕c2

32.♔d3 ♘b4+ 33.♔e4 ♖xc5 34.♗xc5 ♕c2+−+.

32...♕xb6 33.♕f5?!

Better was 33.♖b1.

33...♕b2+ 34.♕c2 ♕b4+ 35.♔e2 ♘e5 36.♕e4 ♕b5+

0-1

☐ **Milos Perunovic**
■ **Bojan Vuckovic**
Vrnjacka Banja 2010

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♗f5 4.♘d2 e6 5.g4 ♗g6 6.♘e2 ♕b6?!

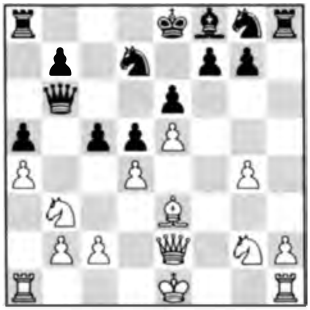
Although this move has a full right to exist it's clearly inferior to 6...c5 or 6...♘e7.

7.♘b3

This move is clearly better than the passive 7.c3?! c5 8.♘b3 ♘c6 9.dxc5 ♗xc5 10.♘xc5 ♕xc5 11.♗e3 ♕a5 12.♗d4 ♘ge7=, Dmitriev-Sapis, Polanica Zdroj 1994.

But White could try to take advantage of the early 6...♕b6 by 7.c4!? ♘d7 8.c5 ♕c7 (8...♘xc5 9.dxc5 ♗xc5 10.♕b3 ♗xf2+ 11.♔d1∞) 9.♘f4 ♘e7 (9...b6?! 10.h4 bxc5 11.h5 ♗e4 12.f3 cxd4 13.fxe4 ♕xe5 14.♘d3 ♕g3+ 15.♘f2±) 10.h4 h6 11.♘xg6 ♘xg6 12.h5 ♘e7 13.♖b1, with a very comfortable advantage.

7...♘d7 8.♗e3 h5?! 8...c5!?. **9.♘f4 ♗e4 10.f3 ♗h7 11.♕e2** 11.♘xh5 ♘xe5. **11...hxg4 12.fxg4 a5! 13.a4** 13.c3 a4 14.♘c1 c5 15.♗g2 a3∓. **13...♗e4** 13...♗b4+!?. **14.♗g2 ♗xg2 15.♘xg2 c5**



16.0-0

White's forces are much better mobilized, so once the position opens up Black's king would be in serious danger. Therefore serious consideration deserves 16.dxc5!? ♕c7 (16...♘xc5?! 17.0-0↑) 17.♖f1 (17.0-0-0 ♗xc5 18.♘xc5 ♘xc5 19.♗xc5 ♕xc5 20.♘f4 ♘e7) 17...♕xe5 18.♕f2 ♘gf6 19.0-0-0.

16...c4 17.♘d2 f6

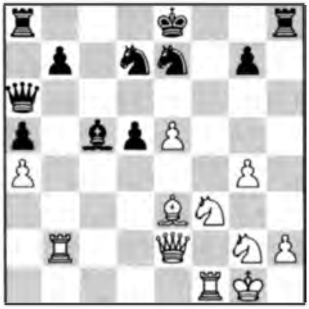
Perhaps 17...♘h6!?, but dangerous is 17...♕xb2 18.♕f3 f6 19.♘f4 ♕b6 20.♖ae1.

18.b3!? 18.exf6 gxf6 19.♘f4 ♗d6 20.b3 cxb3 21.♖ab1±. **18...cxb3 19.c4 fxe5**

20.cxd5

20.dxe5 ♗c5 21.cxd5 exd5 would just transpose to the game.

20...exd5 21.dxe5 ♗c5 22.♖ab1 b2 23.♘f3 ♘e7 24.♖xb2 ♕a6



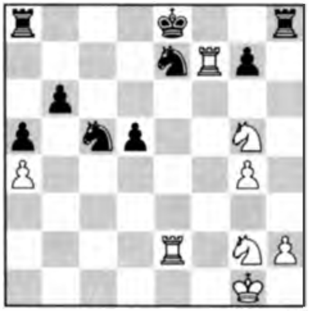
25.e6?!

It was just about time to seal the advantage by 25.♕xa6 ♖xa6 26.♖xb7 ♗xe3+ 27.♘xe3, enjoying an extra pawn in the endgame.

25...♕xe6 26.♘g5 ♕e5 27.♘f3 ♕e6 28.♗xc5 ♕xe2 29.♖xe2 ♘xc5 30.♘g5 b6

30...♔d7 31.♖f7 ♖he8 32.♘f4 ♔d6 33.♖xg7 ♖ac8 34.h4±.

31.♖f7



31...♘e4?

It was necessary to take care of the seventh rank by 31...♖a7, with excellent chances to hold the position: 32.♘e3 (32.♖xg7 d4 33.♘f4 d3 34.♖d2 ♖d7 unclear) 32...♘e6 33.♘xd5 ♘xg5 34.♖fxe7+ ♖xe7 35.♖xe7+ ♔f8 36.♖b7 ♖h4±.

32.♖xg7 ♘xg5

32...♔f8 33.♘e6+ ♔e8 34.♘gf4+−.

33.♖exe7+ ♔f8 34.h4 ♘f3+

A bit more stubborn was 34...♘e6, but White wins quite easily with 35.♖gf7+ ♔g8 36.g5.

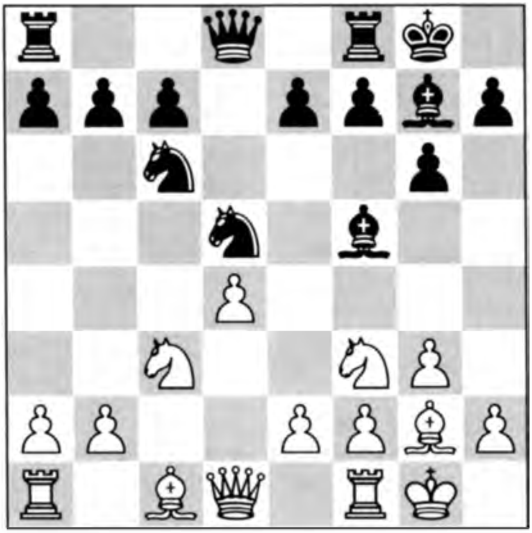
35.♔f2 ♘xh4 36.♘f4 ♖h6 37.♖ef7+ ♔e8 38.♘xd5 ♖c8 39.♘f6+ ♖xf6+ 40.♖xf6

1-0.

CHAPTER 12

Matthieu Cornette

Grünfeld Fianchetto: a New Idea



Avoiding the main line with 8...♗f5!?

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘f3 ♗g7 4.g3

Many players like to play a fianchetto against the King's Indian or the Grünfeld Defence.

4...0-0 5.♗g2 d5 6.cxd5 ♘xd5 7.0-0 ♘c6

A 'tricky move' according to Boris Avrukh in his *1.d4 – Volume Two* (Quality Chess, 2010). However after 8.♘c3, apart from mentioning that 8... ♘b6 9.e3 leads to the absolute main line, he only considers 8... ♘xc3 and 8...♗e6. We have a surprise up our sleeve!

8.♘c3 ♗f5!?

Here we are! In my database, there are only 17 games with this 'malicious' bishop move, with a very decent score (=6 –6 +5). I began to play this variation in 2010, with good results. The first time I saw this move was in the game Meier-Vachier-Lagrave (see Game 1). I was very impressed with how easily Black equalized, and I decided to study it.

The main idea is to prevent White's e4. By waiting before he moves his knight from d5 Black keeps the options open between ...♘b4, aiming for the c2 square, and ...♘xc3 followed by ...♘a5 and ...c5 or of course ...♘b6.

The main line is 8...♘b6 and after 9.e3 ♖e8 theory is very complicated, and in constant progress. Everyone remembers Grischuk's dramatic loss in the final game of his World Candidates' match against Gelfand.

I'll analyse three games for you: the first one with the main line 9.♖e1, in the second one we'll see the lines in which White moves ♘f3, and the last one will cover the other moves.

In conclusion: I really think this variation is a perfectly valid alternative to the main line. The resulting positions are in pure Grünfeld style: unclear and very interesting.

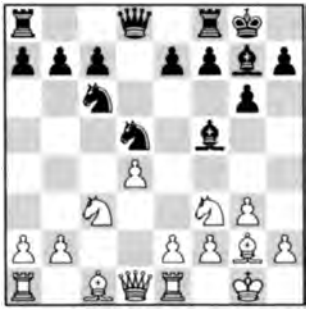
☐ **Georg Meier**
■ **Maxime Vachier-Lagrave**
France tt 2010

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.g3 ♗g7 6.♗g2 0-0 7.0-0 ♘c6 8.d4 ♗f5!?

I perfectly remember this game, I was playing next to them and when I saw this move I was very curious to see what would happen next.

9.♖e1

The most common move. White wants to play e4.

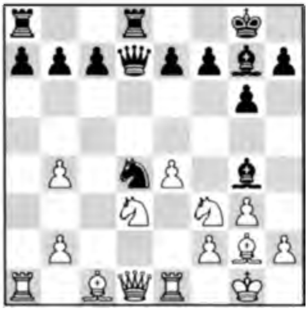


9...♘xc3

The normal move, as 9...♘db4?! is no good after 10.e4 ♗g4 11.a3 ♘a6 12.e5!N (12.h3? Musaeva-Breslavskaya, Nikolaev 2000) 12...♗xf3 13.♗xf3 ♕xd4 14.♕xd4 ♘xd4 15.♗xb7 ♖ab8 16.♗xa6 ♘f3+ 17.♔f1 ♘xe1 18.♔xe1 ♗xe5 19.♔d2 ♖fd8+ 20.♔c2±.

I propose the novelty 9...♕d7! The main idea is to avoid the 11.♘g5 line below:

● 10.♘a4!? – the critical move for the evaluation of this novelty: 10...♘db4! 11.♘c5 ♕c8 12.e4 (12.d5 b6! – a very important reaction – 13.♘b3 – after 13.e4 ♗g4 14.♘d3 ♗xf3 15.♗xf3 ♘xd3 16.♕xd3 ♘e5 Black has equalized – 13...♗c2 14.♕d2 ♖d8 15.e4 ♗xb3 16.axb3 e6! with a very sharp position) 12...♗g4 13.a3! ♘xd4! 14.axb4 ♖d8 15.♘d3! ♕d7 – the critical position:



– 16.e5 ♘xf3+ 17.♗xf3 ♗xf3 18.♕xf3 ♕xd3 19.♕xb7 ♕d4! and I think the position is approximatively equal.

– 16.♖a3 ♘b5! 17.h3! (17.♖a5 b6! 18.♖xb5 ♕xb5 19.♗f1 a5; 17.♖b3 ♘d4 and the rook must come back to a3) 17...♘xa3 18.hxg4. Here Black has a choice. The computer likes both: 18...♕xd3 19.♕xd3 ♖xd3 20.bxa3 a5 and 18...♘b5 19.♗f1 ♕xg4 20.♕a4 c6.

– After 16.♖e3 ♗h6! White has nothing better than to return the rook to e1.

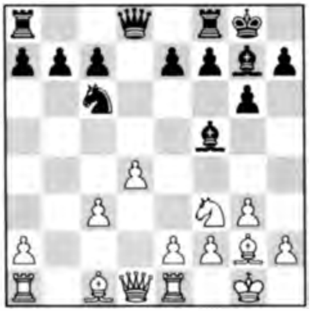
● 10.♘xd5 ♕xd5 brings White nothing.

● 10.♘g5 ♘db4!. A very strong move because now e4 isn't possible. The d4-pawn is under attack and the c2-square is very weak: 11.d5 (11.e4?! ♗g4!) 11...♘e5 (11...

♘d4!?) 12.♖f1 h6 13.♘ge4 c6 and the position is very unclear.

- 10.e4 is the most logical move, transposing to the game after 10...♘xc3 11.bxc3 ♗g4.
- 10.♘h4 ♗e6 11.e4 ♘xc3 12.bxc3 ♘a5 with a very decent position.

10.bxc3

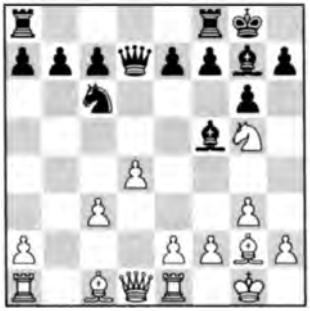


10...♕d7

10...♗e4 was played twice. It's logical to prevent e4 but I don't think this is enough to equalize: 11.♗f1! (White is now threatening ♘g5 followed by e4. 11.e3 ♘a5 12.♘d2 ♗xg2 13.♔xg2 c5=, Poulsson-Zwaig, Oslo 1973) 11...♘a5 (11...e5 12.♘d2 ♗f5 13.d5! ♘a5 14.e4 ♗d7 15.♗a3 ♖e8 16.♗b4±) 12.♘g5N (12.♘d2!? ♗c6 13.e4 b6±, Burne-Andreassen, ICCF email 2007) 12...♗c6 13.e4 and I prefer White in this position.

11.e4

- 11.♗f4 and now: 11...♗e4 12.♗f1 (12.♘e5 gives nothing: 12...♗xe5 13.dxe5 ♕xd1 14.♖exd1 ♗xg2 15.♔xg2 ♖fd8 16.♖ab1 b6 17.♔f3 ♔g7=) 12...♘a5 (12...e5!? is also possible: 13.dxe5 ♕xd1 14.♖axd1 h6 15.h4 ♖fe8 16.♗g2 ♖e7 17.e3 ♖b8 18.♖e2 ♗xf3 19.♗xf3 ♘xe5=) 13.♘d2!? (13.♘g5 ♗d5 14.e4 ♗c4 15.♗h3 e6 with a very complicated position) 13...♗f5 14.e4 ♗g4 15.♕c2 b6 and I think Black is OK even if the most difficult is coming.
- 11.♘g5! is a very strong novelty. It's because of this move that I searched and found 9...♕d7! as mentioned above.



Now the computer recommends 11...♘xd4 but I don't really believe in it: 12.cxd4 ♕xd4 13.♗a3 ♕xa1 14.♕xa1 ♗xa1 15.♖xa1 c6 16.e4 ♗c8 17.e5 ♖e8 18.♖b1 a5 19.f4 a4 20.♔f2 I think this endgame is very unpleasant for Black.

11...♕c8 looks too ugly: 12.♕b3 h6 13.♘f3±.

So, after 11...h6 12.e4! the critical position is reached. I failed to find an easy way to equalize:

– 12...hxg5 13.exf5 ♕xf5 14.♗a3 (14.♕b3 ♖ab8 15.♗e4 ♕f6 16.♗a3 ♖fc8 17.♖ad1 e6 18.♕a4 ♗f8) 14...♖ab8 15.♖b1 ♗f6 16.♕e2 (threatening 17.♖b5) 16...a6 17.♖b2. A critical position. I think the position is unclear but even with a pawn up, Black's position is dangerous because of the activity of White's bishop pair.

– after 12...♗g4 13.f3 ♗h5 14.♘h3 g5 15.g4 ♗g6 16.f4 I really don't like Black's position.

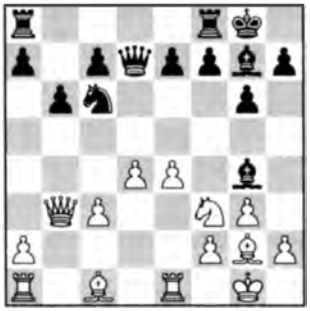
- Black has counterplay after 11.♕b3 b6 12.♘g5 h6 13.e4 ♘a5 14.♕d1 (14.♕b4 ♗g4 15.h3 hxg5 16.hxg4 e5) 14...♗g4 15.f3 ♗h5 16.g4 ♗xg4 17.fxg4 hxg5 18.e5 ♖ad8 19.♗xg5 c5.

11...♗g4 12.♕b3

12.♖b1 doesn't seem very clever, because Black wants to play ...♘a5 anyway.

12.♗e3 ♘a5 13.♕d3 c5! (thematic) 14.d5 b6 15.♘d2 ♖ad8 is unclear. Black can play ...f5 sometimes or simply ...♕a4.

12...b6



13.♕d5

This move is a confession of failure, but other moves also fail to impress:

– 13.♗f4 ♗xf3 (13...♘a5 followed by ...c5 is even simpler) 14.♗xf3 e5! 15.dxe5 ♘xe5 16.♗e2 ♕h3 17.♖ad1 ♘g4 18.♗xg4 ♕xg4 is equal.

– 13.♘g5 ♘a5 14.♕c2 h6 15.h3 (15.♘f3 ♖fd8 followed by ...c5) 15...hxg5 16.hxg4 e5! (16...♕xg4 17.e5 ♖ad8 18.♖e4±) 17.♕d1! (17.d5 ♕xg4; 17.♗xg5 ♕xg4 18.♗e3 ♘c4=) 17...♖ac8! (17...exd4 18.e5 ♖ad8 19.♗xg5±) 18.d5 c6 19.♗xg5 (19.d6?! ♗f6 and the pawn on d6 is too weak; 19.dxc6 ♕e7!=) 19...cxd5 20.exd5 ♖xc3 with a balanced position.

– After 13.♗e3 ♘a5 (13...e5!?) 14.♕b4 ♖ac8 (after the sacrifice 14...c5 15.dxc5 ♘c6 16.♕a3 ♖fd8 even the computer likes Black's position) 15.♖ad1 (15.♘e5 ♗xe5 16.dxe5 c5∓) 15...♖fd8 16.♖d2 ♕e8 I really like Black's position. He can opt for ...c5 or ...e5.

13...♖fd8 14.♕xd7 ♗xd7 15.e5 ♘a5

Black has nothing to worry about. **16.♗a3** 16.♘g5 ♖ac8 17.e6 fxe6 18.♘xe6 ♗xe6 19.♖xe6 c5! is also equal. **16...c5**

Draw.

☐ **Levan Pantsulaia**
■ **Matthieu Cornette**
Cappelle-la-Grande 2011

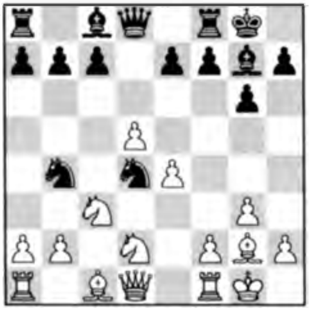
1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.g3 g6 3.♗g2 ♗g7 4.0-0 0-0 5.c4 d5 6.cxd5 ♘xd5 7.d4 ♘c6 8.♘c3 ♗f5 9.♘g5

A very aggressive approach. Even if at the time this move was a novelty, I was prepared. Other knight moves are:

- 9.♘d2 is an interesting idea from the young grandmaster Rodshtein.

9...♘db4 is the sharpest move, and now:

– 10.e4 ♗c8 11.d5 ♘d4



(a very strange position) 12.♘b3 ♘bc2 13.♘xd4 (13.♖b1 ♘xb3 14.axb3 ♘b4 15.♗g5 a5= followed by ...b6 and ...♗a6) 13...♘xd4 14.♗e3 e5 (14...c5!?) 15.dxe6 (15.f4 c5=) 15...♗xe6 followed by ...c6 or ...c5 with even chances.

– 10.e3 ♗c2 11.♕f3 e5! 12.d5 e4! 13.♘dxe4 ♘e5 and Black has the d3-square.

– 10.d5 ♗c2 11.♕e1 ♘d4 12.a3 ♘a6 13.b4 (13.e3 ♘b3 14.♘xb3 ♗xb3 15.♕e2 ♕d7 16.e4 ♘c5=) 13...♗f5 14.♖a2 ♘c2 15.♕d1 ♗xc3 16.♖xc2 ♗xc2 17.♕xc2 ♗g7 White has some compensation for the exchange.

Instead 9...♘b6 10.e4 ♗d7 11.♘b3 ♕c8 12.♗g5 h6 13.♗e3 ♗h3 14.♕e2 ♗xg2 15.♔xg2 ♖d8 16.♖ad1 was somewhat better for White, Rodshtein-Zhou Jianchao, Moscow 2011. Likewise, 9...♘f6 doesn't seem logical to me: 10.♘b3±.

However, 9...♘xc3!? is another possibility 10.bxc3 ♕d7!? and now crucial is 11.e4 ♗g4 12.f3 (12.♕c2 ♘a5 followed by ...c5 as usual) 12...♗xd4+! (the point) 13.cxd4 ♕xd4+ 14.♖f2 ♕xa1 15.♘b3 ♕b1 16.fxg4 ♖ad8 with a very unclear position. While after 11.♘e4 ♕e8! and 11.♖e1 ♗h3 12.♗h1 e5! I don't think Black's position is inferior.

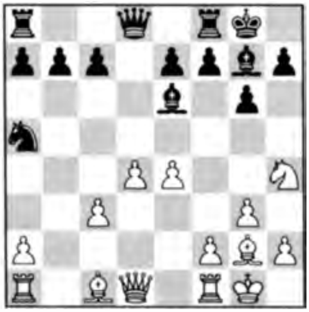
● 9.♘e1 was played by Gelfand against Mamedyarov and then by Mamedyarov with white! 9...♗e6 and now:

– 10.e3 ♘xc3 11.bxc3 ♗d5 12.♗xd5 (12.♕c2 ♗xg2 13.♘xg2 ♘a5= followed by ...c5) 12...♕xd5 13.♕b3 ♖fd8 14.♘d3 (14.♕xd5 ♖xd5 is nothing) 14...b6 15.♕xd5 ♖xd5 16.c4?! ♖a5 17.a4 e5∓, Gelfand-Mamedyarov, Astrakhan 2010.

– 10.♘c2 ♘xc3 11.bxc3 ♘a5 12.e4 ♕d7 13.♗f4 and now 13...c6!? is the simplest way to equalize. The next move is 14...♘c4. Mamedyarov-Vachier-Lagrave, Moscow 2010, instead continued 13...♖ac8 14.h4 (14.♘e3 ♘c4 15.d5 ♘xe3 16.♗xe3 ♗g4 17.f3 ♗h3=) 14...♗g4 15.♗f3 ♗h3 16.♖e1 c5 with unclear play.

– 10.e4 ♘xc3 11.bxc3 ♗c4 12.♘d3 ♘xd4! 13.cxd4 ♕xd4 14.♘b2 ♗xf1 15.♕xf1 ♖ad8 followed by ...b6 and ...c5.

● 9.♘h4 is not so impressive but looks more logical to me than 9.♘e1: 9...♗e6 (logical) 10.e4 ♘xc3 11.bxc3 ♘a5 (as always) and now:



– 12.♘f3 c5 13.d5 ♗d7!? (13...♗g4) 14.♕d3 (after 14.e5 ♗b5 15.♖e1 ♗c4 Black's position is good because the d5 pawn is weak. 14.♕c2 ♘c4 15.♗f4 ♕a5) 14...b5 15.♗f4 ♘c4 leads to a very unclear position.

– 12.e5 ♗d5 13.♗xd5 ♕xd5 14.♗a3 (14.♕f3 c6=) 14...♖fe8 15.♘g2 ♘c4 16.♘e3 (16.♘f4 ♕c6 followed by ...e6) 16...♘xe3 17.fxe3 f6! (Black has no problem at all) 18.♕d3 fxe5 19.e4 ♕d7 20.d5 e6 draw, Zhou Jianchao-Vachier Lagrave, Moscow 2010.

– After 12.d5 ♗d7 13.♕d3 c6! (the thematic break) 14.♗g5 cxd5 15.exd5 h6 16.♗e3 (16.♗d2 ♖c8∓) 16...♕c7 17.♖ac1 ♖ac8 18.♗d4 e5! 19.dxe6 ♗xe6 the position is still about equal but White has to be accurate to keep the balance.

9...♘xc3 10.bxc3 ♘a5

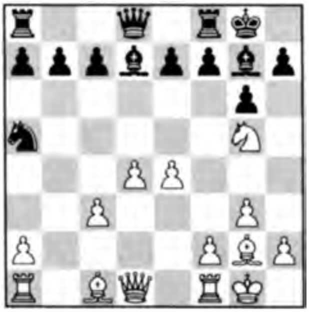
10...h6?! 11.♘e4 followed by ...♘c5

11.e4

11.♗f4 h6 12.♘e4 b6 13.♘d2 ♖c8 14.e4 ♗e6 with an unclear position. There will follow ...♕d7 and Black will have the choice between ...c6 and ...c5.

11.♕a4 c5! followed by ...♗d7 and ...♖c8.

11...♗d7



12.e5

– 12.♖b1 c5 13.e5 (13.dxc5 ♕c8 14.♗e3 h6 15.♘f3 ♘c4 16.♕d3 ♘xe3 17.♕xe3 b6! is thematic, Black seizes the initiative; 13.♖e1 ♖c8; 13.d5 b5!) 13...cxd4 14.cxd4 h6 15.♘e4 (15.♘f3 ♗e6=) 15...b6 16.♗e3 ♖c8 (16...♗e6? would now be a mistake because of 17.d5!) followed by ...♗c6 or ...♗e6 is equal.

– 12.♗f4 c5 13.e5 h6 14.♘e4 cxd4 15.cxd4 ♖c8 16.♖c1 (after 16.d5 g5 the e5 pawn is very weak) 16...b6 17.♕e2 ♗e6 18.♖xc8 ♕xc8 19.♖c1 ♕d7 20.d5!? ♗xd5 21.♖d1 ♗c4 22.♖xd7 ♗xe2=.

– 12.♕e2 c5 13.♗e3 a6 14.♖fc1 h6 15.♘f3 ♗b5 followed by ...♘c4.

12...c5 13.♖e1 cxd4

Not 13...h6?! 14.e6! hxg5 15.exd7 ♕xd7 16.♗xg5±.

14.cxd4 ♖c8 I think the position is balanced. **15.h4**

15.e6 gives White nothing: 15...♗xe6 16.♘xe6 fxe6.

15...♖c4!?

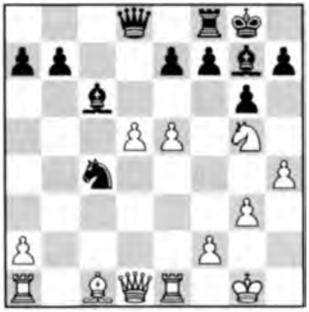
With the idea to sac an exchange! Instead, 15...♗f5 was the most logical move, when Black has no problems.

16.♗d5

Play is unclear after 16.♗e3 ♗a4 17.♕d2 ♖c2 18.♕d3 ♘c4 19.♖ec1 ♘xe3 20.♕xe3 b6. Instead 16...♗c6?! (the move I intended to play) is not so strong after 17.e6!.

16...♗c6! 17.♗xc4 ♘xc4 18.d5

After 18.♘e4 ♕d5 Black has definitely enough compensation for the exchange.



18...♗xe5??

It's very difficult for me to explain why I played such a bad move, especially as I saw the right varation.

18...♕xd5! is of course the best move!: 19.♕xd5 ♗xd5 20.f4 (20.♗f4 h6) 20...f6! 21.♖d1 e6 22.exf6 ♗xf6 23.♖b1 ♖c8 with an unclear position, but only Black can be better.

Also unbalanced is 18...♗xd5 19.♗f4 ♕a5 20.♕d4!.

19.dxc6 ♕xd1 20.♖xd1 ♗xa1 21.♗f4?

After this move Black is back in the game.

– 21.c7! ♗e5 (21...♘d6 22.♗f4) 22.♘xh7!. Ouch! This move wins on the spot.

– 21.cxb7!? ♗e5 22.♖d7! ♗d6 23.♗f4! ♗xf4 24.gxf4 ♘d6 25.♖xe7 ♖b8 26.♖d7 h6 was my main line, but even this is losing after 27.♖xd6 hxg5 28.♖d7.

21...♗e5 22.♗xe5 22.♖c1 b5!. **22...♘xe5 23.cxb7 ♖b8 24.♖b1 ♘d7 25.♘e4 ♔f8 26.a4 ♔e8 27.a5 a6 28.♖c1 ♔d8 29.♘g5 ♘e5! 30.f4 h6 31.♘e6+ fxe6 32.fxe5 ♖xb7 33.♖c6 ♔d7 34.♖xa6 ♖b5 35.♖a7+ ♔e8 36.a6 ♖xe5** Draw.

☐ **Radoslaw Wojtaszek**
■ **Maxime Vachier-Lagrave**
Warsaw European Blitz 2010

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♗g7 4.♗g2 0-0 5.♘c3 ♘c6 6.♘f3 d5 7.cxd5 ♘xd5 8.0-0 ♗f5 9.♕b3!?

If the strong Polish grandmaster plays this move it must deserve some attention.

● 9.e3 is quite solid: 9...♘xc3 (the most logical move) 10.bxc3. Black has a choice:

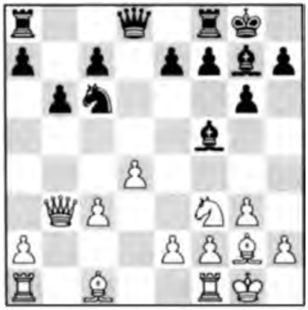
– 10...♗e4!? (the simplest) 11.a4 (11.♘d2 ♗xg2 12.♔xg2 ♘a5 followed by ...b6 and ...c5.; 11.♖e1 ♘a5 12.♗f1 c5 13.♘d2 ♗c6=) 11...♘a5 12.♗a3 ♘c4 (after 12...b6 I think Black has no problems) 13.♘d2 ♗xg2 14.♔xg2 ♘xa3 15.♖xa3 c5= Ni Hua-Yang Kaiqi, Olongapo City 2010.

– 10...♘a5 (the move I played is also logical) 11.♘d2 c5 12.♘b3 cxd4 13.cxd4 ♖b8 14.♘xa5 ♕xa5 15.♗d2 ♕a6 16.♕b3 ♗d3 17.♖fc1 e5! when after 18.♗b4 Black was OK in Manea-Cornette, Aix-les-Bains ch-EUR 2011. The best chance for White was 18.♗d5! exd4 19.e4!.

● 9.♘xd5 ♕xd5 was what I played in a rapid tournament and many times on internet: after 10.♘e5?! (10.♘h4 ♕xd4 11.♘xf5 gxf5 – even if it's clear that White has some compensation, it's not enough to pretend having an advantage) 10...♕xd4 11.♘xc6 bxc6 and only Black can be slightly better.

9...♘b6

9...♘xc3!? (this novelty looks perfectly playable) 10.bxc3 (10.♕xc3?! ♘xd4∓) 10...b6 (10...♗e4?! 11.♕xb7!±). The rest is quite simple:



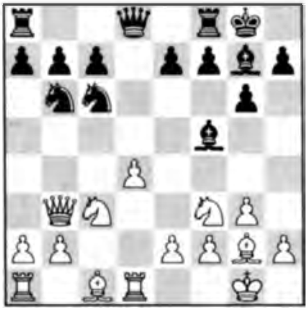
– 11.♘h4 ♗d7 12.♖d1 (12.♗g5 ♖c8 followed by ...♘a5 and ...c5) 12...♘a5 13.♕b4 ♖c8 14.♗e3 (White is trying to prevent ...c5) 14...♗e6 (with the idea ...♗d5) 15.d5 c5!. A very strong move. Black has no problems.

– 11.♗f4 ♘a5 12.♕a4 (12.♕b5 ♗e4 13.♖ad1 ♖c8 14.♘e5 ♗xg2 15.♔xg2 ♕e8=) 12...♗e4 13.♖ac1 ♖c8 14.♖fd1 ♕e8=.

– After 11.♕b5 ♗e4 12.♖d1 ♘a5 I don't see any reason why White should be better.

10.♖d1

10.d5 gives an interesting position after 10...♘a5 11.♕b4 ♘ac4 12.e4 a5 13.♕b3 ♗g4 14.♗f4 ♕d7.



10...♕d7

10...a5!? is a very interesting alternative:

– 11.d5 a4! (an important intermediate move) 12.♘xa4 (12.♕a3 ♘e5 with an unclear position) 12...♘a5 13.♕b4 ♘c6! 14.♕e1 (14.♕b3 ♘a5 with a draw by repetition) 14...♘b4! (a crazy move!) 15.♕xb4 (15.♘xb6 ♘c2∓) 15...♖xa4 16.♕b3 ♖c4 17.♘e1 ♗d7 18.♖d2 ♕a8 and in spite of White's extra pawn, Black has a strong initiative.

– 11.e4 a4 12.♕c2 ♗g4 13.♘e2 (13.♘b5 ♖a5!) 13...e5!? with a double-egded position.

– 11.a4 ♘b4 (Black should be OK with such a square) 12.e4 ♗g4 13.♗f4 c6 14.♘a2 (14.♘e2 ♖c8=) 14...♗e6! 15.d5 ♘6xd5! (an important blow that gives Black a decent position) 16.♘g5 (16.exd5 ♗xd5 17.♕e3 ♘c2 18.♕c1 ♘xa1 19.♕xa1 ♕b6) 16...♘xf4 17.♘xe6 ♘xe6 18.♖xd8 ♖fxd8 with powerful compensation.

11.d5 ♘a5 12.♕b4 ♘ac4 13.♘d4 a5 14.♕b5 14.♕c5!? may be an improvement for White.

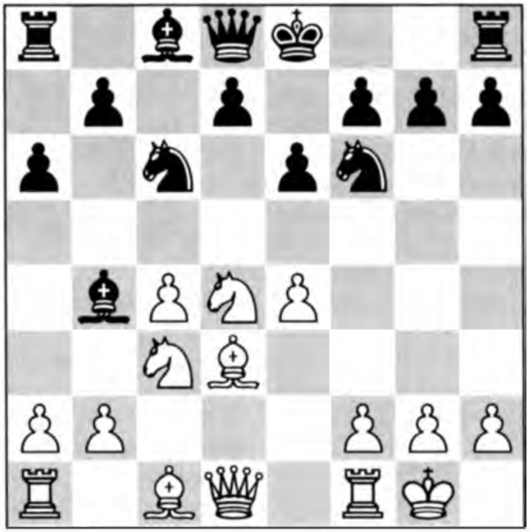
14...♘d6 15.♕xd7 ♗xd7 16.♗g5 ♖fe8

This position is equal, but as this was a blitz game the remainder is not so relevant. Black won on move 56.

CHAPTER 13

Max Illingworth

Sicilian: the Illingworth Gambit



Sacrificing a piece with 8.0-0!

The Kan (or Paulsen) Sicilian has a well-deserved reputation of being solid yet very flexible, and it is far from easy to prove an advantage against it. The gambit I propose against the critical 5.c4 ♘f6 6.♘c3 ♗b4 (7.♗d3 ♘c6 8.0-0!) is not only very surprising, but also puts Black under immediate pressure and offers good chances of achieving an edge out of the opening. This means that the gambit can be effective even against an opponent who is aware of the line.

☐ **Max Illingworth**
■ **Yuan Zhao Zong**
Cammeray Australian Open 2011

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 a6 5.c4 ♘f6 6.♘c3 ♗b4

6...♕c7 is slightly more popular, but White's chances should be slightly preferable in the main line with 7.a3, and those looking for an SOS-style alternative should investigate 7.♕e2!?.

7.♗d3 ♘c6 8.0-0!

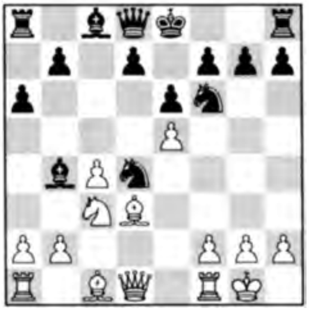
Astonishing! I have a confession to make at this point – I did not come up with this idea independently. It was proposed by 'brabo' on ChessPub Forum, and this gambit was discussed by some of the members of the Forum. However, as I am the first (and at the time of writing, only) person to play this gambit in a tournament game, I think it is fair to call 8.0-0 the 'Illingworth Gambit'.

8...♘xd4

A surprised opponent may decide to decline the sacrifice with 8...♕c7. I will consider this in the theoretical section.

9.e5

Now Black cannot retreat with 9...♘g8, because after 10.♕g4 White is threatening to win the h8 rook with ♕xg7 as well as regain the lost piece with ♕xd4, and after 10...♘e7 11.♕xd4 ♘c6 12.♕g4 White has a very pleasant position.



9...♗e7

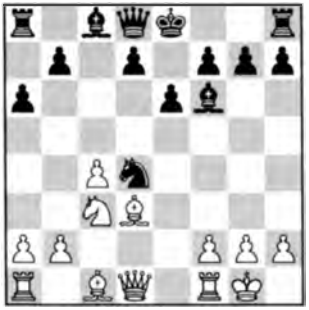
A solid move, with the idea that after the bishop recaptures on f6, the d4-knight will be protected and Black's bishop will be well placed on the long diagonal.

Black's main alternatives are 9...♘c6 and 9...0-0, which I will analyse in the theoretical section.

10.exf6

10.♗e3!? ♘c6 will transpose to the game after 11.exf6 ♗xf6, but White has an interesting alternative in 11.♘a4!?, when 11...d6 (the computer line 11...0-0 12.♗b6 ♕e8 13.exf6 ♗xf6 feels unnatural to me: after 14.c5± Black's c8-bishop and a8-rook are entombed, and I would definitely prefer White's position) 12.exf6 ♗xf6 13.♘b6 ♖b8 14.♗e4 0-0 15.♕d2 gives White good long-term compensation for the pawn, as Black cannot easily complete his development and the d6-pawn is quite vulnerable. However, I think my choice in the game is more critical, intending to clamp down on the d6-square with ♘e4.

10...♗xf6

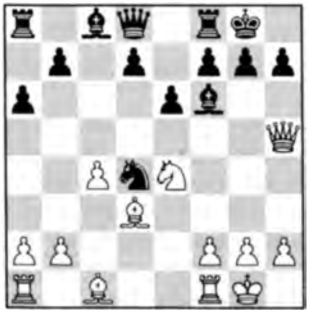


11.♗e3

This is not the only move, but this is certainly the most natural, continuing development and preventing castling due to the discovered attack with ♗xh7.

That said, 11.♘e4!? deserves attention, for example:

- 11...0-0 12.♕h5!? (12.♘xf6+ ♕xf6 13.♗e3 ♘f5 14.♗xf5 ♕xf5 15.c5 is better for White, who has succeeded in trapping the c8 bishop, but 13...♘c6!? with the idea of ...d5 is a better try. The tempting 12.c5?! allows the surprising 12...d5! 13.cxd6 ♗e5, when Black will get his pieces into the game, with good chances)



and now:

– 12...♘f5 13.♘xf6+ (13.g4 g6 14.♕h3 ♘d4 15.♗h6 ♖e8 16.♘d6 ♖e7 gives White an initiative, but this seems unnecessarily risky – if Black manages to complete his development after moves like ...b5 and ...♗b7 then White may regret playing g4) 13...♕xf6 14.g4 g6 15.♕g5! ♕xg5 16.♗xg5 ♘d4 17.♗f6 ♘c6 and White can force a drawish endgame if he wishes with 18.c5 b6! (otherwise Black is struggling) 19.♗e4! bxc5 20.♗xc6 dxc6 21.♖fc1 ♖b8 22.♖xc5 with equality. Black will have to return the extra pawn to bring his c8 bishop to life.

Of course, White can maintain the pressure with 18.♖fd1 d5 19.g5 with good compensation for the pawn even after the exchange of queens, but it is encouraging to know that the worst-case scenario for White after 11.♘e4 is an equal endgame.

– instead, 12...g6 13.♘xf6+ ♕xf6 14.♗g5 ♕e5 15.♕h4 gives White fantastic compensation in his bishop pair, lead in development, half-open d- and e-files for his rooks and a strong initiative.

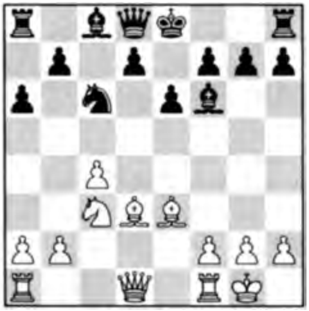
● 11...♗e7 is more ambitious, keeping the bishop pair, but after 12.c5 d5 (12...0-0 13.♘d6 ♗xd6 14.cxd6 f5 15.♗e3 ♕f6 16.♗c4! ♘c6 17.♗b6 ♕xb2 18.♖b1 favours White) 13.cxd6 ♗xd6 14.♗e3 ♘c6 15.♘xd6+ ♕xd6 16.♖c1 only White can be better with Black's king stuck in the centre for some time.

11...♘c6

By moving the knight, Black prepares to castle.

11...d6 is the alternative, offering the extra pawn back to catch up in development, but White can keep the initiative with 12.♖e1! ♗e5 13.f4 ♗f6 14.♗xh7 and White will have the compensation without the pawn deficit.

Simply bad is 11...0-0? 12.♗xd4 ♗xd4 13.♗xh7+ ♔xh7 14.♕xd4±.



12.♘e4!?

On the ChessPub Forum 'brabo' gave 12.c5 an exclamation mark, but my over-the-board inspiration seems just as good.

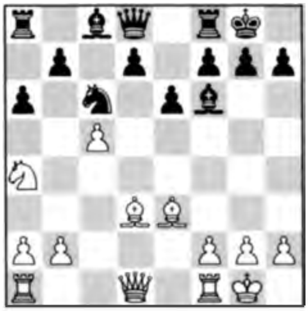
● 12.♕h5!? was brabo's other idea (intending 12...♕a5 13.♕xa5 ♘xa5 14.c5 when White's compensation endures into the endgame):

– 12...d6 13.♖ad1 ♗e7 14.♖fe1 ♕a5 15.♕g4 g6 16.♗h6 and White is better as Black's king will remain vulnerable even if he castles queenside.

– The counter-sacrifice 12...b5 comes up short after 13.cxb5 axb5 14.♘xb5 d5 15.♗c5 ♗e7 16.♗xe7 ♕xe7 17.♖ac1 ♗b7 18.♖fe1 and with White threatening ♖xe6 – ...♕xe6 ♘c7 – Black will have to play ...♔f8 after which his position will be very unpleasant.

– It's not clear if 12...♕a5 13.♕xa5 ♘xa5 14.c5 is better for White after 14...d5! 15.cxd6 ♗d7, but 14.♗c5 looks like a good alternative.

● 12.c5 0-0 (12...♗e7 with the idea of ...d6 is inadvisable as this opens up the centre for White's better developed pieces: 13.♕e2 – 13.♘e4, see 12.♘e4 ♗e7 13.c5 – 13...d6 14.cxd6 ♗xd6 15.♖fd1 ♕c7 16.g3 0-0 17.♖ac1 ♖d8 18.♘a4 with an edge for White, as given by brabo on ChessPub Forum). Now 13.♘e4 will transpose to the main game, but brabo's 13.♘a4 is a good alternative:



– 13...g6 looks strongest. 'Matemax' on ChessPub Forum suggested the idea of ...e5, ...♘d4 and ...d6, freeing Black's position, but this seems a bit too slow by Black. 14.♕b3 (or 14.♕d2 ♗e7 15.♖ad1 d5 16.cxd6 ♕xd6 17.♘b6 ♖b8 18.♘c4 ♕d5 19.♕c3 with a complicated position where I would rather be White) 14...d5 (14...♘d4!?) 15.cxd6 b5! 16.♘c5 (16.♗e4 ♖b8!) 16...♕xd6 17.♘e4 ♕d8 18.♘xf6+ ♕xf6 19.a4 with sufficient compensation for the pawn.

– After 13...♗e5 'brabo' recommended 14.f4, but I would prefer the computer's 14.♘b6! ♖b8 15.♘c4 ♗c7 (forfeiting the bishop pair can't be in Black's best interests) 16.♕d2 f5 17.♗g5 ♕e8 18.♖fe1 and White has the better chances, as Black cannot complete his development easily. White can later play ♗f4 to ensure complete control over the d6-square.

– 13...e5 was also suggested by Matemax, but runs into 14.♘b6 ♖b8 15.♗f5 ♘d4 16.♗xd4 exd4 17.♕d3 with a clearly better position for White – ♕g3 will win the exchange – as given by 'brabo'.

12...0-0

This is not the only move, but it seems best to get castled as soon as possible.

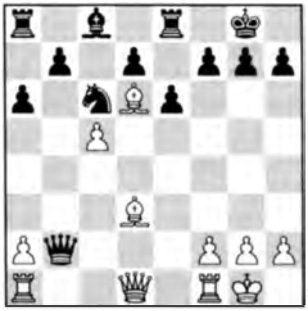
– 12...♗xb2?! is too greedy to be good: 13.♘d6+ ♔f8 14.♖b1 ♗e5 15.♗c5 and Black may be up two pawns, but his king is precariously placed and he still has the problem of developing his queenside.

– 12...♗e7 is the computer's suggestion, when the position after 13.c5 (rather than 13.♕g4 g6 14.♘g5 d5 which is pretty solid for Black, who is still a pawn up) 13...f5 14.♘d6+ ♗xd6 15.cxd6 0-0 is not clear at all. For example, play could continue 16.a4 b6 17.♕d2 ♗b7 18.♖fc1 ♖c8 19.♗f1 with a complex struggle ahead.

13.c5!?

This move is quite interesting, sacrificing a second pawn to clamp down on the d6-square, but I don't think it gives White an advantage.

Perhaps I should have grabbed the bishop pair with 13.♘xf6+ ♕xf6, but even here it is far from clear whether White has an advantage or only sufficient compensation: 14.♗c5 (14.♕c2 g6 15.♕b3 is also possible, for instance 15...d5 16.cxd5 exd5 17.♗c5 ♖d8 18.♖fe1 with 'only' sufficient compensation for the pawn; 14.♕d2!? d5 15.♗g5 ♕d4 16.♖ac1 is similar) 14...♖e8 15.♗d6! ♕xb2 16.c5



and I'd rather be White in this unclear position, though he does need to start an attack on the kingside before Black can consolidate with moves like ...b5 or ...b6.

13...♗xb2

Zhao correctly grabs the pawn as otherwise

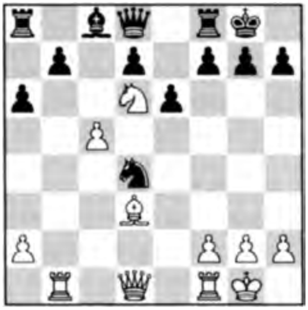
White has achieved the very useful c5 for free.

13...d5 14.cxd6 ♗xb2 15.♖b1 ♗d4 16.♗c4 favours White, as the d6 pawn is more likely to be a strength than a weakness.

14.♖b1 ♗d4

14...♗e5 15.f4 ♗c7 16.a4 f5 17.♘d6 ♗xd6 18.cxd6 b5 19.axb5 axb5 20.♗xb5 is not clear either: Black has consolidated his position but White retains long-term compensation due to his superior minor pieces and the d6-pawn wedged in Black's position.

15.♗xd4 ♘xd4 16.♘d6



It looks bizarre to exchange the dark-squared bishops in this manner, but Zhao had a clever tactical idea in mind.

16...♘b5!

Now White has to either allow Black to exchange on d6 or open the a-file for Black's rook. My choice is probably the lesser evil.

17.♗xb5 axb5 18.♖xb5

18.♕d2 b6 19.cxb6 ♕xb6 20.♖xb5 gives White one more pawn than in the game, but setting the c8-bishop free isn't worth it.

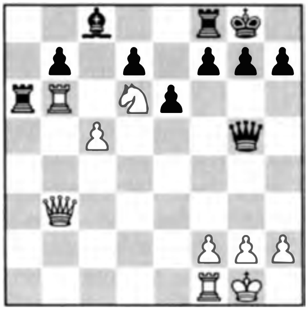
18...♖xa2 19.♕b3 ♖a6

I wasn't sure what was going on in the position at this stage. Black is essentially down a piece, but the c8-bishop defends Black's b7- and d7-pawns. The game continuation suggests that the position is balanced.

20.♖b6

20.♖d1 may be marginally more accurate, since Black isn't threatening ...b6 in the near future.

20...♕g5!



Active defence – in the game Zhao is able to create just enough counterplay to maintain the balance.

21.♕b4 ♕d5 22.h3 ♖a2 23.♕c3 f5

My last few moves were not the most accurate, and now Black may even be a little better, since I have to be careful with my king, and if my b6 rook moves then ...b6 becomes a serious possibility.

24.♖e1

With this move, I unintentionally set up a sneaky threat.

24...h6?!

A good move, except that it doesn't stop White's threat of ♘e8!.

25.♕e5?!

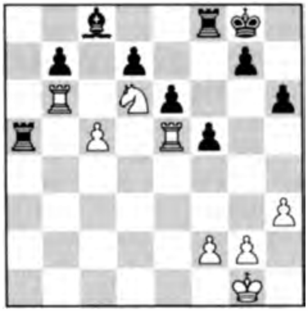
Now Black is doing well again.

25.♘e8! ♖xe8 26.♖d6 wins the queen, however it's hard to imagine Black losing after 26...♕c6 27.♖xc6 bxc6.

25...♕xe5 26.♖xe5

White should be able to draw this endgame, but he has to display a bit of care.

26...♖a5



27.f4!

Stopping Black from playing ...g5 easily; perhaps Black should have played ...g5 a move earlier.

27...g5 28.fxg5 hxg5 29.g4!

Now all of the pawns will be liquidated with gxf5, and ...f4 doesn't come close to a win either.

29...♖a1+ 30.♔h2 ♖a2+ 31.♔g1 ♖a1+ 32.♔h2

And drawn.

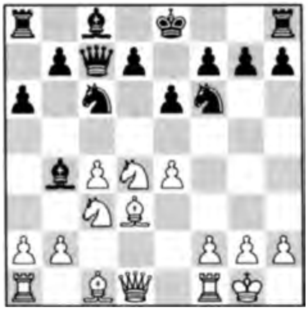
I was very pleased that my opening held out against Australia's number one player.

Theoretical Section

Now we will consider Black's other answers to 8.0-0.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 a6 5.c4 ♘f6 6.♘c3 ♗b4 7.♗d3 ♘c6 8.0-0 ♘xd4

- 8...♗xc3?! 9.bxc3 would leave White a full tempo ahead on the 8.a3 ♗xc3 9.bxc3 variation, which can only be favourable for White.
- Allowing e5 with 8...0-0?! 9.♘xc6 dxc6 10.e5 gives White a risk-free edge due to his space advantage after 10...♘d7 11.♖e1 ♘c5 12.♗c2.
- 8...d6 is a safe alternative: 9.♗e3 (the tempting 9.♘xc6 bxc6 10.♕a4 isn't so good after 10...♖b8! 11.e5 ♘g4 12.♕xc6+ ♗d7 followed by ...♘xe5, with superb counterplay for Black) 9...0-0 10.♘xc6 bxc6 and Black is solid but White can claim a pull after 11.♘a4! (a typical plan in this pawn structure) 11...♗a5 12.c5 d5 13.e5 ♘d7 14.f4 due to his space advantage and more active pieces.
- 8...♕c7



was suggested by 'drkodos' on ChessPub Forum, but this in fact transposes to 7...♕c7 8. 0-0 ♘c6, which is known to favour White slightly based on the game Karpov-Miles, Brussels 1986: 9.♘f3 (if White for some reason wishes to avoid 9.♘f3 then 9.♘xc6 dxc6 10.♗e3 e5 11.♘a4 or 9.♗e3 with the idea of 9...♘e5 10.♘f3!N ♘xc4 11.♗xc4 ♕xc4 12.♘a4! as mentioned by 'sssthepro' on ChessPub Forum also offer good chances of an advantage) 9...0-0 10.♗d2 b6 (this looks best even though Karpov went on to win) 11.♖c1 ♕b8 (11...♘g4!? offered more chances of equality) 12.♕e2 ♗d6 13.♔h1 ♗c7 14.♗b1 ♗b7 15.♖cd1 h6 16.b3 ♖e8 17.♖de1 d6 18.♗e3 ♘g4 19.♗c1 ♘ge5 20.♗b2 ♗d8 21.♖d1 ♗f6 22.♘e1 and White had a small edge.

9.e5

We covered 9...♗e7 in Illingworth-Zhao, which leaves the moves 9...0-0 and 9...♘c6 to consider, as 9...♗xc3 10.bxc3 ♘c6 11.exf6 ♕xf6 will transpose to 9...♘c6.

Variation A

9...0-0

Castling was suggested by 'JudgeMeek' on ChessPub Forum. Now 'brabo' analysed 10.♗e3, mentioning 10.exf6 and 10.♗g5 in passing.

10.♗e3!

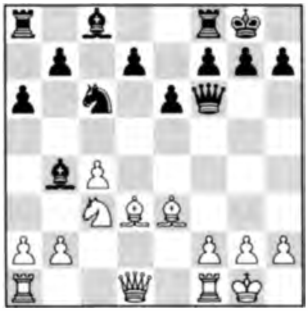
Instead 10.exf6 ♕xf6 11.♘e4 is also interesting, but I don't think White is objectively better after 11...♕e5! 12.g3 (or 12.f4 ♕c7 when White can and probably should force a draw with 13.♘f6+ gxf6 14.♗xh7+ ♔xh7 15.♕h5+) 12...♗e7 13.♗f4 ♕a5 when it's not so easy to stop Black achieving counterplay with ...d5, ...e5 or ... f5.

Likewise, 10.♗g5 ♗e7 (Black cannot allow his kingside pawn structure to be damaged) 11.exf6 ♗xf6 12.♗xf6 ♕xf6 doesn't look worse for Black, for example 13.c5 (13.♕h5 h6 14.♕c5 isn't an improvement due to 14...d6! 15.♕xd6 ♖d8 16.♕g3 b5 when it is Black who gains the initiative) 13...♕e5 14.♘a4 d5 15.♘b6 ♖b8 16.♕d2 and the position is dynamically balanced, since Black still has problems completing development.

After 10.♗e3 the move 10...♘f5 transposes to A2 below after 11.♗xf5 exf5 12.exf6 ♗xc3 13.bxc3 ♕xf6. We will first investigate 10...♘c6.

Variation A1

10...♘c6 11.exf6 ♕xf6



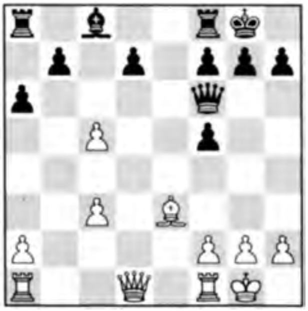
12.♕c2

This idea of brabo's is probably White's best try for an edge. I tried to make 12.c5!? work, but after 12...♕e5 (12...♗xc3 13.bxc3 ♕xc3 14.♖c1 ♕b2 15.♗f4! feels better for White) unlike in the illustrative game, Black can't get his a8 rook into play. 12...d5!? 13.cxd6 ♕d8 14.♘a4 ♗xd6 15.♘b6 ♖b8 16.♖c1 is dynamically balanced) 13.♘a4 f5 14.g3 f4! 15.♗xf4 ♖xf4 16.gxf4 ♕xf4 Black has sufficient compensation for the exchange.

12...♕h4! 12...h6 13.♖ad1 ♗e7 14.♘e4 ♕e5 15.f4 ♕c7 16.c5 is better for White as Black once again has problems developing his queenside. **13.g3 ♕h3 14.c5 f5 15.f4** With good long-term compensation but probably not enough for an edge after 15...d6 16.cxd6 ♗xd6 17.♖ad1 ♗e7.

Variation A2

10...♗xc3 11.bxc3 ♘f5 12.♗xf5 exf5 13.exf6 ♕xf6 is better for White after brabo's **14.c5!**



but Black should be able to hold, for instance:

– 14...d5! (suggested by JudgeDeath, aiming to liquidate to a drawn opposite-coloured bishop endgame) 15.cxd6 f4 (the computer prefers 15...♖d8, but 16.♗c5 ♗d7 17.♖e1 is also better for White) 16.♗c5 (16.♗b6!? ♗d7 17.♖e1 ♖fe8 18.♕d3 f3! is fine for Black) 16...♗d7 17.♖e1 (17.♗d4 ♕xd6

18.♗xg7 ♕xd1 19.♖axd1 ♔xg7 20.♖xd7 is a drawish endgame) 17...♖fe8 18.♖e7 ♗c6 19.f3 ♕xc3 20.♖c1 – here Brabo gives 'large compensation for the pawn', an assessment I agree with.

– 14...♕xc3 15.♖e1 (brabo) 15...♕c4 16.♕d2 d5 17.cxd6 ♗e6 18.♗b6 with wonderful compensation for the pawn.

– 14...♖e8 was also suggested by JudgeDeath: 15.♖e1 (15.♕d5!? ♕xc3 16.♗d4 ♕d2 17.♖ad1 ♕f4 18.♖fe1 may be even better – Black will have to eventually return one of the pawns to complete development, and White has a strong initiative) 15...♖e4 16.f3 ♖e6 17.♕d2 may well be tenable for Black, but White's position is clearly more pleasant.

Variation B

9...♘c6 10.exf6 ♕xf6

If Black inserts 10...♗xc3 11.bxc3 ♕xf6 then White has more than one route to an advantage:

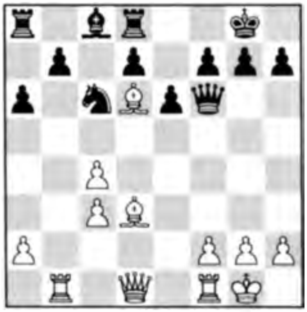
– 12.♖b1 0-0 13.♗a3 (13.♕c2!? g6 14.♗a3 ♖e8 15.c5 ♘e5 – 15...d5? 16.cxd6 b5 17.c4± doesn't even give Black a pawn for his difficulties – 16.♗e2 ♘c6 17.♖fe1 ♕g7 18.♕b3 as given by 'brabo' also favours White, and 15.♗d6!? may be even better) 13...♖d8 (13...♖e8 could transpose to 13.♕c2 after 14. ♕c2 g6, though 14.♗d6!? ♕xc3 15.c5 may be even stronger) 14.♗d6! This idea is most effective when Black plays ...♖d8 as now the rook would be stronger on e8 (14.♕c2 d5! gives Black more activity than necessary): 14...♕xc3 (otherwise Black is just worse) 15.♖b3 ♕f6 16.♕b1 (the computer's 16.♖b6 also favours White – Black is essentially two pieces down) 16...g6 17.c5 ♘d4 18.♕b2 ♕g7 19.♖b6 (brabo) and once again White is definitely better – Black can hardly move.

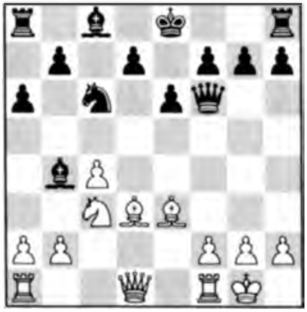
– 12.♗a3 as played by 'Matemax' in two 3-minute games against an IM is also good: 12...♕xc3 13.♗d6 ♘e5 (13...♕d4 14.c5 b6 15.♖c1 is rather strong for White, as Black cannot evict the dark-squared bishop from the a3-f8 diagonal, meaning that the black king will be stuck in the centre for a long time) 14.♗e2 ♘xc4 15.♖c1 ♕xc1 16.♕xc1 ♘xd6 (sssthepro) and Black has got rid of the pesky dark-squared bishop, but White should keep an advantage as stated by ChessPub member 'MNb': 17.♕a3 ♘f5 18.♖c1 and Black's retarded development is a more significant factor than his material advantage.

11.♘e4

Sacrificing more material with 11.c5!? ♗xc5 12.♘e4 ♕e5 13.♘xc5 ♕xc5 14.♗e3 ♕e5 15.♖e1 0-0 16.♕c2 may appeal to some, but the more restrained 11.♘e4 is probably better.

The computer's 11.♗e3!?





isn't a move I would have thought of, but it does seem quite logical, intending a quick c5. Note that the greedy 11...♗xc3 (11...0-0 transposes to 9...0-0 10.♗e3 ♘c6 11.exf6 ♕xf6) 12.bxc3 ♕xc3 13.♖c1 ♕a5 14.c5 gives White very nice compensation in view of his dark-square bind.

11...♕e5

Not 11...♕e7 12.a3 ♗c5 13.♗g5! ♕f8 (13...f6?! 14.♗xf6!) 14.b4± followed by c5 with a dreadful position for Black.

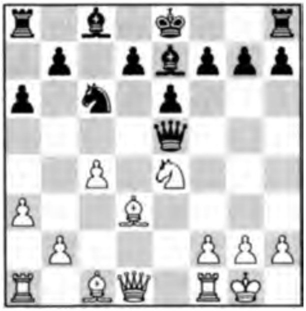
11...♕d4 is also bad, due to 12.♗e3! ♕xb2 13.♖b1 ♕e5 14.f4 ♕c7 15.c5 with a ferocious attack.

12.a3

Throwing in this move doesn't hurt White. 12.♘g5 deserves attention, improving the position of the knight. Play could continue 12...h6 13.♘f3 ♕c7 14.a3 ♗e7 15.♗e3 0-0 16.♕b3 with chances for both sides.

12...♗e7

12...f5 stops White from meeting ...f5 with ♘c3 as in our main line, but 13.axb4 (13.♘g5 ♗e7) 13...fxe4 14.b5! maintains White's initiative: 14...♘e7 (14...exd3 15.bxc6 bxc6 16.♕xd3 0-0 17.♗e3 is better for White. This isn't the first time in this line that White has achieved an opposite-coloured bishops position with the much stronger bishop) 15.♗c2 0-0 16.♗d2 d5 17.♗c3 and I think White can claim an edge here due to his domination of the dark squares.



13.♖e1!

13.♗d2 is too slow after 13...d5 14.cxd5 ♕xd5 15.♗f4 e5 and Black is starting to consolidate.

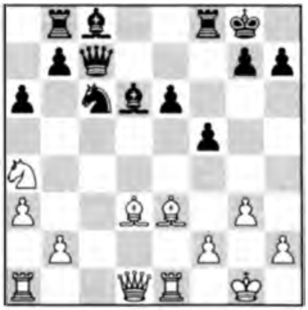
13...f5

Black has a few other moves, the most significant of which is 13...d5. If Black can get away with this then he will be doing very well, but after 14.f4! (14.♘c3 ♕d6 15.cxd5 exd5 is okay for Black) 14...♕c7 15.cxd5 exd5 16.♘c3 ♕d6 17.♕h5 ♗e6 18.f5 ♗d7 19.f6! ♕xf6 20.♘xd5 White has an inexorable initiative.

14.♘c3 ♕f6

This is not the only square for the queen: 14...♕d6!? is a typical computer move, but it's not so bad, e.g.:

- 15.♘a4!? 0-0 16.c5 ♕c7 17.g3 which is hard to assess after 17...♖b8 18.♗e3 d5 19.cxd6 ♗xd6 but if pressed I'd rather be White after 20.♗b6 ♕e7 21.♖c1.

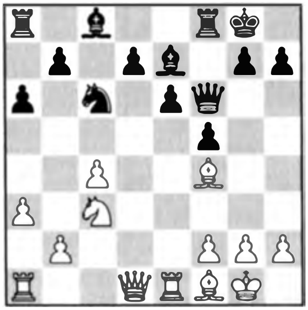


- 15.g3 0-0 (15...♘e5 16.♗f4 ♕xd3 17.♗xe5 ♕xd1 18.♖axd1 is good for White, who has a pleasant dark-square bind that gains in importance as more pieces are exchanged) 16.♗f4 ♕d4 17.♘a4 with chances for both sides – White has typical compensation but Black is very solid.
- 15.♕h5+ g6 16.♕h3 0-0 17.♗h6 ♖f7 18.♖ad1 also gives White good play for the pawn.

15.♗f4

The alternative 15.♘a4 0-0 16.♘b6 ♖b8 17.♗f4 looks good, but Black has a strong reply in 17...♕d4! 18.♗xb8 ♕xb6 19.♗f4 ♕xb2, when Black has returned the extra material to curtail White's initiative and stands well.

15...0-0 16.♗f1



'brabo' stops here, stating 'White has excellent compensation for the pawn'. Objectively the position should be equal, but White's position does seem easier to play. If Black returns the pawn with

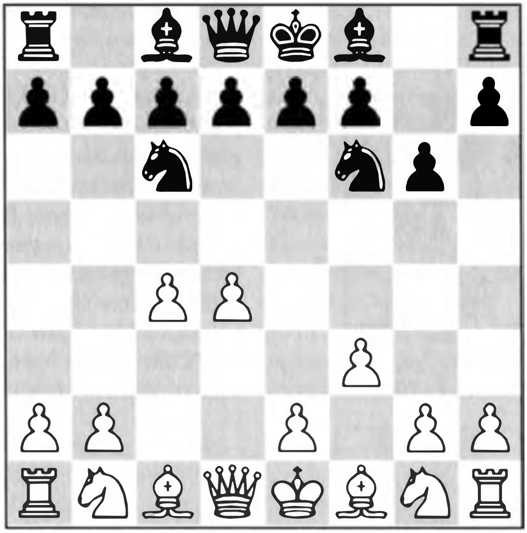
16...d6!? to complete development, then **17.♗xd6 ♖d8 18.♗xe7 ♕xe7 19.♕f3** gives White a tiny edge.

Conclusion: The Illingworth Gambit puts Black under immediate pressure, and can give White both strong short-term and long-term compensation, as we have seen in several variations where Black was unable to complete his development easily. My gambit doesn't guarantee an edge for White, but it looks like a better try than other eighth moves, and I've shown more than one way for White to fight for an advantage against each of Black's critical tries.

CHAPTER 14

Jeroen Bosch

Avoiding the King's Indian Sämisch



1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.f3 ♘c6!?

☐ **Momchil Nikolov**
■ **Wang Yue**
Zurich 2010

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.f3

An intriguing move that is employed by many players whose repertoire includes the Sämisch King's Indian. It is a move order weapon pur sang: the only idea is to avoid the Grünfeld proper, and to lure those Grünfeld-guys into unfamiliar territory. However, recently the adherents of Ernst Grünfeld are starting to strike back with a vengeance. For, the results of the surprising 3...♘c6!? are thoroughly encouraging.

3...♘c6

Before you condemn this move, please note that some players really like to 'tango' – they are happy to invite their queen's knight to the dance after 2.c4. Now, obviously the inclusion of 2...g6 3.f3 favours the second player: for even though the pawn on g6 takes away a square from the knight, things are worse for White, who can't develop his king's knight to its 'natural square'.

Before we embark on our investigation of the topical 3...♘c6!?, let's briefly discuss the points of 3.f3 and some alternative methods to combat 3.f3.

- First there is the natural 3...♗g7, when White is happy to reach a Sämisch after 4.e4 0-0 5.♘c3 (note that 5.♗e3 is a move order weapon that holds some promise for the other side) and now 5...d6 leads to the position that White was hoping for all along. However, Black could try to muddy the waters with any of the following:

- 5...♘c6 – not as surprising as on move 3 but certainly an interesting option. After 6.♗e3 (6.d5 ♘b4!?) 6...e5! was a big success in Gheorghiu-W.Watson, London 1980. After some typical King's Indian tactics: 7.d5 ♘d4 8.♘ge2 c5! 9.dxc6 dxc6 10.♘xd4 exd4 11.♗xd4 (11.♕xd4 ♘d5 12.♕d2 ♘xe3 13.♕xe3 favours Black too) 11...♘xe4! 12.♗xg7 ♕h4+ 13.g3 ♘xg3 14.♗f6! ♖e8+ 15.♘e4 ♖xe4+! 16.fxe4 ♕xe4+ 17.♔f2 ♗g4! Black was winning.
- Also deserving of attention are 5...c6 6.♗e3 d5 7.e5 ♘e8, and
- the pawn sacrifice 5...c5 6.dxc5 b6.

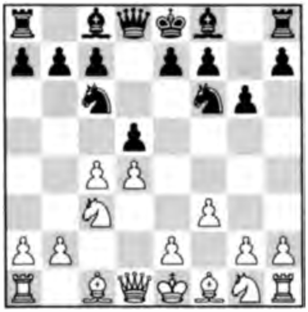
● Secondly, White argues that 3...d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.e4 favours him, since Black cannot make the usual exchange on c3 to obtain typical Grünfeld counterplay with ...c5 later on. Still, the position after 5...♘b6 6.♘c3 ♗g7 7.♗e3 is highly theoretical, and also very popular among Grünfeld players.

● Moves like 3...c5 or 3...d6 are not particularly interesting, but 3...e5!? certainly is! This bold counter in the centre (an idea of Adorjan) owes much of its popularity to the game Kramnik-Leko, Tilburg 1998 (0-1 after 45 moves). The 'main' line goes: 4.dxe5 ♘h5 5.♘h3 ♘c6 6.♗g5 ♗e7 7.♗xe7 ♕xe7 8.♘c3 ♕xe5 and so on.

4.d5

White must pick up the gauntlet. Black's idea is reminiscent of Alekhine's Defence: White's central pawns are lured forwards, when Black reasons that they will provide him with some clear targets.

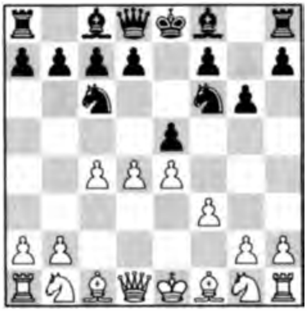
With 4.♘c3 White allows his opponent to get back into a Grünfeld set-up with 4...d5.



And now:

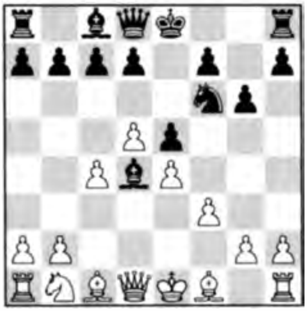
- 5.cxd5 ♘xd5 6.e4 ♘xc3 7.bxc3 e5! 8.♗b5 (8.d5 ♘a5 9.h4 ♗c5! 10.♗a3 ♕d6 already favoured Black in Zhang Ziyang-Ni Hua, Xinghua Jiangsu 2011) 8...♗d7 9.♘e2 ♗g7 10.♗e3 (here 10.♖b1 ♘a5 11.♗d3 ♕h4+!? 12.g3 ♕e7 13.0-0 0-0 14.♗e3 ♖ad8 15.♕c1 b6 16.♖f2 f5 17.♗g5 ended in a repetition after 17...♗f6 18.♗h6 ♗g7 19.♗g5, Kuzubov-Timofeev, Ohrid 2009) 10...0-0 11.d5 ♘a5 12.♗d3 b6 13.0-0 ♘b7! 14.c4 c5 15.dxc6 ♗xc6 16.♘c3 was equal in Anand-Carlsen, Linares 2009. Black has the better pawn structure, White has a stronghold on d5 for his knight.
- 5.e4!? dxe4 6.d5 ♘e5 7.fxe4 ♗g7 8.♘f3 ♘fd7 9.♗e3 0-0 should not unduly worry Black, after 10.♕d2 f5 11.♗h6 ♘xf3+ 12.gxf3 ♘e5 13.♗e2 ♗xh6 14.♕xh6 fxe4 (14...♕d6) 15.♘xe4 e6 he had no difficulty in equalizing in Caruana-Howell, Biel 2010.
- 5.♗g5 ♗g7 6.e3 e6 7.cxd5 exd5 8.♗b5 0-0 9.♘ge2 h6 10.♗h4 ♘e7 11.g4 b6 12.♕d2 c5 was the blindfold game Kramnik-Dominguez, Nice 2010. An exciting but balanced position.

Another point of 3...♘c6 is revealed after 4.e4, when Black can play 4...e5.



And now the lines fork:

– 5.d5 ♘d4 6.♘e2 ♗c5 (rather than taking up the typical fianchetto position the bishop controls the dark squares weakened by White's third move) 7.♘xd4 ♗xd4.

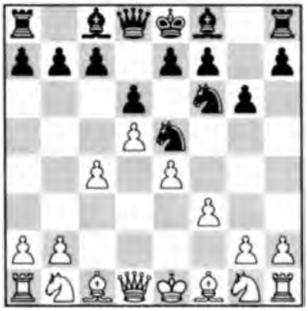


Black is doing well. For example: 8.♘c3 (8.♘a3 ♘h5!? 9.g3 d6 10.♘c2 ♗b6 11.♗e3 ♗xe3 – 11...0-0! – 12.♘xe3 0-0 13.♗d3 c5 draw, Michenka-Neubauer, Tatranske Zruby 2009) 8...♘h5 9.g3 d6 10.♗d3, Kuzmin-Kurnosov, St. Petersburg 2004, and now simply 10...0-0 is very comfortable for Black.

– After 5.♘e2 exd4 6.♘xd4 ♗g7 (6...♗c5!?) it is telling that the natural 7.♗e3? blunders a pawn because of 7...♘xe4! 8.fxe4 ♕h4+.

– 5.dxe5 ♘xe5 6.♗e3 (6.♘c3 ♗c5) 6...♗g7 7.♘c3 0-0 8.♕d2 d6 as in Laznicka-Dvoirys, Pardubice 2007, is a typical King's Indian, where Black is not doing badly in the development department.

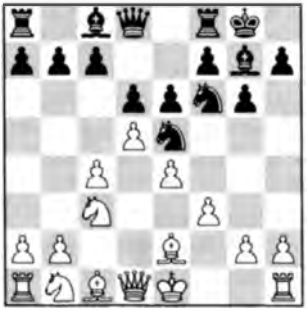
4...♘e5 5.e4 d6



6.♘c3

The most natural move, although White does well to remember that after 6...♗g7, play has actually transposed to the Sämisch King's Indian (admittedly that was the point of 3.f3) in a version where he often prefers to postpone d4-d5: 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♗g7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 ♘c6!? 6.d5 (here 6.♗e3 and 6.♘e2 are far more popular!) 6...♘e5.

Black has done extremely well after the time-consuming 6.♘e2 ♗g7 7.♘ec3 (7.♘g3 h5!? was suggested by Svidler) 7...0-0 8.♗e2 e6 (immediately targeting the pawn – as explained earlier this is why Black has provoked d4-d5 in the first place) and now:



● 9.0-0 exd5 10.cxd5 c6. After one exchange on d5, Black targets the pawn again. This is essential to gain sufficient counterplay: 11.dxc6 (11.♗e3 cxd5 12.exd5 ♖e8 13.♕d2 ♗f5 14.♘a3 a6 15.♖ac1 ♖c8 was quite satisfactory for Black in Postny-Eljanov, Moscow 2006; White is clearly worse after 11.f4? ♕b6+ 12.♔h1 ♘eg4) 11...bxc6 12.♗e3 ♖e8 13.♘d2 d5 (Black has certainly solved all his opening problems) 14.♘b3 dxe4 15.♕xd8 ♖xd8 16.fxe4 ♗g4! 17.♗g5?! ♗xe2 18.♘xe2 ♖d6 19.♘c5?! ♘fd7 20.♘xd7 ♘xd7 and Black already won a pawn, and later the (blitz)game, in Mamedyarov-Carlsen, Moscow 2009.

● 9.f4 ♘ed7 10.0-0 (10.dxe6 fxe6 11.0-0 ♘c5 12.♕c2 b6 13.♗e3 ♗b7 14.♘d2 a5 is unclear according to Svidler – it looks pleasant enough for Black) 10...exd5 11.cxd5 ♖e8 12.♗f3 ♘c5 13.♖e1:

– Now after 13...h5 14.h3 b5 15.e5 dxe5 16.fxe5 ♘fd7 17.e6 ♘e5 Black won a complicated game in Nakamura-Svidler, Amsterdam 2009 (the game with extensive notes by Peter Svidler may be found in New In Chess 2009/7).

– However, according to Svidler it was even better to play the immediate 13...b5!, when similar complications as in the game occur without having weakened pawn g6.

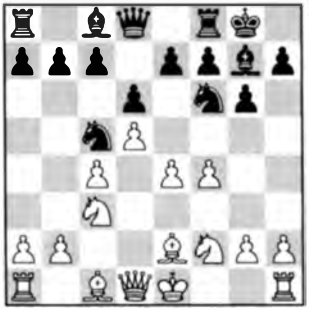
6...♗g7

It makes sense to develop the bishop before attacking the centre.

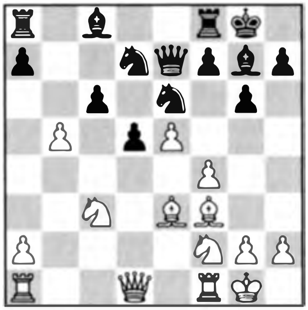
Against Kramnik at the 2010 Olympiad in Khanty-Mansiysk, Navara tried the audacious 6...c6 7.f4 ♘ed7 8.♗e3 e5 9.dxe6 fxe6 10.♘h3 (Black's positional idea is 10.♘f3 e5 11.fxe5 ♘g4 12.♗g5 ♕b6) 10...e5 11.f5 (11.♗e2!?) 11...♕a5. The game eventually ended in a draw, but at present the position looks clearly preferable for White.

7.f4 ♘ed7 8.♘f3

It is not clear whether the knight is not better placed on f2. From this square it controls square g4 and protects the e-pawn. Play could continue 8.♘h3 0-0 9.♗e2 ♘c5 (in principle Black needs to play both ...e6 and ...c6. Therefore it was wrong to play 9...c6 10.♘f2 cxd5 11.cxd5 ♘b6?! for after 12.a4 ♗d7 13.a5 White had a substantial space advantage. He quickly gained the upper hand after 13...♘c8 14.0-0 e6 15.dxe6 fxe6 16.♕b3 in Kurnosov-Vokarev, Olginka 2011) 10.♘f2

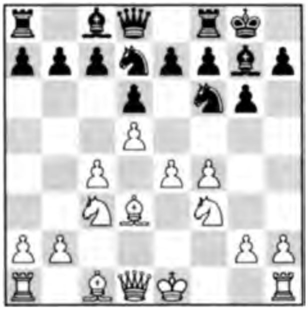


10...e6 (I would prefer this plan over 10...♖e8 11.0-0 e5 12.f5!? – this pawn sacrifice is more dangerous than 12.dxe6 ♗xe6 13.♕c2 ♗d7 14.♗f3 ♗c6 15.♗d2 a5 16.♖fe1± Grischuk-Kurnosov, Moscow 2010 – 12...gxf5 13.exf5 ♗xf5 14.♘g4 ♗xg4 15.♗xg4 ♘xg4 16.♕xg4 ♕d7 17.♖f5 and White is better despite being a pawn down. The Chinese champion quickly converted his positional edge in Ding Liren-Areschenko, Ningbo 2011) 11.0-0 exd5 12.cxd5 c6 (the principled approach, but play is very sharp of course) 13.dxc6 bxc6 14.♗f3 ♕e7!? 15.♗e3 d5!? (inviting great complications) 16.e5 ♘fd7 17.b4 (17.♖c1 ♘e6 followed by ...♗b7 and ...f6 is the way to go when White plays more quietly) 17...♘e6 18.b5 This looks very strong, but Giri had calculated excellently:



18...♘b6! 19.f5!? (19.bxc6 d4 20.♗xd4 ♖d8 21.♘b5 – 21.♘e2 ♗a6 22.c7 ♕xc7 23.♗xa8 ♘xa8∓ – 21...♗a6 22.♘d6 ♗xf1 23.♔xf1 and the engines will tell you that play is about equal!) 19...gxf5 20.♗xb6 axb6 21.bxc6 ♗xe5 22.♘xd5 and now 22...♕g5 was objectively better than 22...♕h4 23.g3 ♕g5 as in Grischuk-Giri, Wijk aan Zee 2011. Later in the game White missed a good chance, and then Giri missed an even better chance before it all ended in a draw...

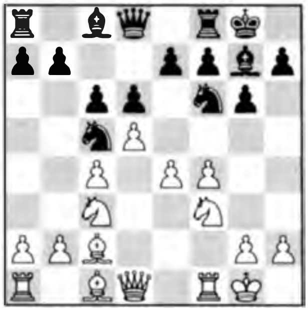
8...0-0 9.♗d3



White has built up an impressive centre and has gained some space, yet Black has sufficient counterplay. He holds a (very) slight advantage in development, and he can attack the advanced d5-pawn easily. In the subsequent game extracts Black is almost always very OK, and it would appear that White has to find improvements earlier on.

9...e6

The other pawn move also comes into consideration: 9...c6 has the advantage of immediately opening up possibilities for the queen along the diagonal b6-g1: 10.0-0 ♘c5 (equally good looks 10...♕b6+ 11.♔h1 ♘c5 12.h3? – 12.♗c2 transposes below to the main line in this note after 12.♔h1 – 12...♕a6 – 12...♘h5! – 13.g4?! cxd5 14.exd5 ♘xd3 15.♕xd3 and now 15...h5 would have been even better than the game continuation 15...e6 Ward-Conquest, Scarborough 1999) 11.♗c2 and now:



● 11...♕b6 12.♔h1 (12.♗e3? ♕xb2 13.♗d4 ♘xd5!) 12...♗g4 13.♖b1, and now:

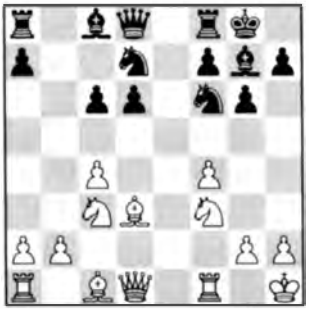
– 13...cxd5 14.cxd5 ♖ac8 15.♗e3 ♕b4! 16.h3 ♘cxe4!? (16...♗xf3 17.♕xf3 ♘fd7) 17.♗xe4 ♖xc3! (17...♘xe4 18.hxg4 ♘g3+ 19.♔g1 ♘xf1 20.♕xf1±) 18.bxc3 and after this interesting exchange sacrifice the players agreed to a draw in Jussupow-Spassky, Linares 1983. The move order in this game was 5...♘c6 6.d5 ♘e5 and so on via a regular Sämisch King's Indian.

– 13...a5 is the most recent example from this position: 14.♗e3 ♘fd7 15.♕e2 ♕c7 draw, Vitiugov-Tomashevsky, Moscow 2011. There is of course a lot of play left in the position, although the chances are probably about equal.

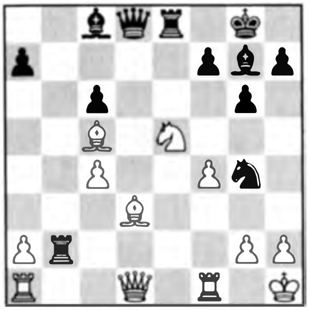
● Bad is 11...e6? 12.dxc6 bxc6 13.e5 dxe5 14.♕xd8 ♖xd8 15.fxe5 ♘fd7 16.♗g5 ♖f8

17.♖fe1±, Yang-Bykhovsky, Lubbock 2011.
● Also quite reasonable is 11...cxd5 12.e5 (12.cxd5 ♕b6) 12...♘fd7! 13.♕xd5 (13.exd6 dxc4=; 13.♘xd5 e6∓) 13...♘b6 14.♕d4 ♗g4 which favoured Black in I.Sokolov-Martinovic, Cetinje 1991.

10.0-0 exd5 11.exd5
More ambitious is 11.cxd5 c6! 12.♗e3 (12.h3?! cxd5 13.exd5 ♕a5 14.♗c2 ♘b6 15.♗b3 ♖e8 clearly favoured Black in Mohota-S.Hansen, Pattaya 2011; 12.dxc6 bxc6 13.♔h1 ♘c5 is fine for Black) 12...♘g4 (12...cxd5) 13.♗d4 (a sacrifice, but if White has to give up this bishop for the knight he can never be better. Black's dark-squared bishop would be a monster) 13...♗xd4+ 14.♘xd4 ♘e3 15.♕d2 ♘xf1 16.♖xf1 ♖e8 17.♔h1 c5 18.♘db5 ♘f8 was a (too) optimistic exchange sacrifice in Bitan-Deepan, Bhubaneswar 2010.
11...c6 Also not bad is 11...♘c5 12.♗c2 ♖e8. **12.dxc6** Black is slightly better after 12.♔h1 cxd5 13.cxd5 ♘c5. **12...bxc6 13.♔h1**



Black is already slightly more comfortable, and it is White who has to take care. The remainder of the game is not very interesting for our purposes, so I will restrict myself to a few short comments.
13...♘c5 14.♗e3 14.♗c2 ♗e6 gives Black the initiative. **14...♘g4** 14...♖b8 with the idea of 15.♖b1?? ♘xd3 16.♕xd3 ♗f5 was strong too. **15.♗g1** 15.♗xc5 dxc5∓. **15...♖b8 16.♘a4 ♖e8** 16...♘xd3 17.♕xd3 ♖b4!∓. **17.♘xc5 dxc5 18.♗xc5 ♖xb2 19.♘e5?**

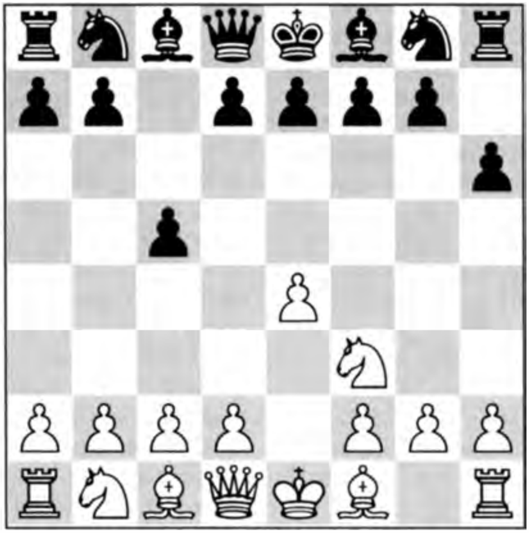


19...♗xe5 Also winning is 19...♖xe5 20.fxe5 ♕h4 21.♗g1 (21.h3 ♕g3–+) 21...♘xh2! 22.♕e1 (22.♗xh2 ♗xe5–+) 22...♕g5 23.♖f2 ♘g4!. **20.fxe5 ♘xe5?** Losing a substantial part of Black's advantage. 20...♘xh2! was winning in view of 21.♔xh2 ♕h4+ 22.♔g1 ♖xg2+ 23.♔xg2 ♗h3+. **21.♗c2 ♕xd1 22.♗xd1 ♘d3?! 23.♗d4 ♖d2 24.♗xa7 c5 25.♗f3 ♗e6 26.a4 ♗xc4 27.♖fb1** 27.♔g1 and White has drawing chances with his bishop pair and passed a-pawn. **27...♘e5 28.♖e1 f6? 29.♗xc5 ♖c8 30.♗e3 ♘xf3 31.gxf3 ♖c2** Now White should be able to draw without too many difficulties. Black later wins the game (again); probably because of the FIDE tempo. **32.♔g1 ♗d5 33.♖f1 ♖e2 34.♖ae1 ♖a2 35.♖a1 ♖cc2 36.♖xa2 ♖xa2 37.♗b6?** 37.♗d4! ♔f7 38.♖a1. **37...♖xa4∓ 38.♔g2 ♖a3 39.h4 ♔f7 40.♗c7 ♔e6 41.♔g3 ♔f5 42.♗d6 ♖b3 43.♗c5 h5 44.♔f2 g5** 44...♖xf3+ 45.♔g1 ♔g4 46.♖xf3 ♗xf3 47.♗d4 ♔xh4 48.♗xf6+ is a draw. **45.hxg5 fxg5 46.♗e3 ♖b2+ 47.♔g3 h4+ 48.♔h3 ♖b3 49.♗d2 ♗xf3–+ 50.♗e1 ♔g6 51.♔h2 ♖b2+ 52.♖f2 ♖b1 53.♖f1 ♔h5 54.♖xf3 ♖xe1** White resigned.

CHAPTER 15

Sinisa Drazic

Sicilian: the Bücker-Welling Variation



1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 h6!?

After playing chess for over a quarter of a century, I am more and more inclined to implement something new on the chess board. This is certainly inspired by the advance of modern chess technology and the activity of many chess 'parrots', who with their modern programs and notebooks in their hands, are ready to beat you in any corner of chess theory. The only way out of this situation is to move the boundaries and wrong-foot such opponents as early as possible.
In this article I will present you some of my recent efforts, with a surprise on the second move in the most popular chess opening: the Sicilian Defence!
As 2...h6!? is never played in high level games, I started very slowly and carefully with putting it in my practice, and until now with very decent results.

In this article, we will investigate the most popular and dangerous moves for White, and some active strategies for Black. You won't find much on 2...h6 in any of the current opening manuals. There is, however, one very good article written by Stefan Bücker more than twenty years ago, and published in New In Chess Yearbook 18.
He has dubbed 2...h6 the Bücker-Welling Variation.

☐ **Igor Malakhov**
■ **Sinisa Drazic**
Rijeka Ech 2010

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 h6 3.d4

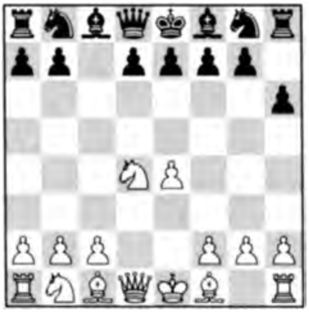
Just like in the O'Kelly Variation with 2...a6 (see SOS-7, Chapter 3, p.25) Black has prepared himself for 3.d4 and is therefore happy to see White 'fall' for it.

- 3.c3 is more quiet, White intends to build up his centre as usual, arguing that he has gained a useful tempo (why 2...h6). Black's best solution is to play some kind of French hybrid position with 3...e6 4.d4 d5 (see Doric-Drazic). For 3...g5 see Palac-Sulava below.
- 3.c4 similarly postpones d4. See Borgo-Drazic where I went for 3...d6 and 4...g5. The immediate 3...g5 is also possible.
- I do not think that 3.d3 poses a serious threat. Here 3...♘c6 4.g3 g5 is a Basman favourite.
- 3.♘c3 is a good move. Play may transpose into the Haberditz Variation.

3...cxd4

I have also played in 'Basman-style' with 3...g5 4.♗c4 (4.d5) 4...♗g7 5.♘e5 e6 6.♘xf7?! ♔xf7 7.♕h5+ ♔e7 8.e5 ♘c6 9.f4 ♕e8 10.♕g4 b5! 11.♗d3 cxd4 12.♘d2 ♔d8 13.0-0 ♘ge7 14.♘e4 ♘f5 and White had not nearly enough for his piece and lost in Sarcevic-Drazic, Pula 2010.

4.♘xd4



4...♘f6

Dubious is 4...e5?! when 5.♘b5 ♘f6 6.♘1c3 d6 transposes to the main game. However, 5.♘f5! is a strong reply. I give a sample line of what may happen after 5...d5: 6.♗b5+ ♘c6 7.exd5 ♗xf5 8.dxc6 ♕xd1+ 9.♔xd1 0-0-0+ 10.♘d2 b6 11.c3 ♗d3 12.a4 a6 13.♗xd3 ♖xd3 14.♔c2 ♖d5 15.♘c4 ♔c7 16.♗e3 ♗c5 17.b4 ♗xe3 18.♘xe3 ♖d8 19.b5 and White wins.

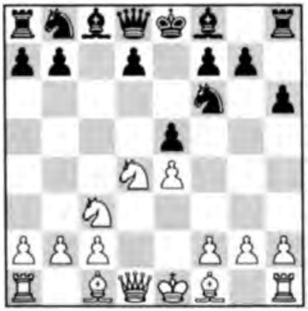
5.♘c3

Not 5.f3 e5 and Black is fine.

5...e5

Black wants to play the 'Lasker Sicilian', with good chances to confuse White in his plans. Indeed, ♗g5!? is no longer on the cards.

Alternatively, I have never tried 5...d6!?, but who knows?



6.♘db5

A serious reply is 6.♘f5, when after 6...d6 7.♘e3 ♗e6 8.♗c4 ♗e7 9.0-0 0-0 10.♘ed5 ♘bd7 11.♗e3 ♘g4 12.♕e2 ♘xe3 13.♘xe3 ♘b6 14.♖ad1 White held a slight edge in Kristensen-Jaksland, Denmark 1992.

More aggressive is 6...d5, which Bücker deems incorrect because of 7.♗b5 ♘c6 8.exd5 ♗xf5 9.dxc6 ♕xd1+ 10.♘xd1 0-0-0.

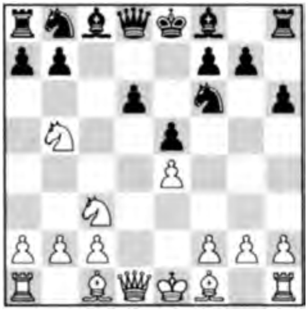
Instead 6.♘f3 ♘c6 (6...d6) is known from the Sveshnikov Variation, and does not really promise White anything. Play could continue 7.♗e3 ♗b4 8.♗c4 ♘xe4 9.♕d5 (9.♗xf7+ ♔xf7! 10.♕d5+ ♔f8 11.♕xe4 d5∓) 9...♘d6 10.♘xe5 ♕f6!! 11.f4 ♗xc3+ 12.bxc3 ♘xc4 13.♕xc4 (13.♘xc4 ♕xc3+ 14.♔f2 ♕xc2+ 15.♔f3 0-0 16.♘d6!?, with very interesting play!) 13...♘xe5 14.♕e4 d6 15.♗d4 0-0 16.fxe5 dxe5 and Black won in Poswiatowski-Prus, Grodzisk Mazowiecki 2007.

Naturally, White can also play 6.♘de2 and now 6...♘c6 7.♘g3 or 6...♗c5 7.♗e3!? as in Dekker-Welling, Eindhoven Dutch semi-finals 1988.

Bucker calls 6.♘b3 'solid and good'.

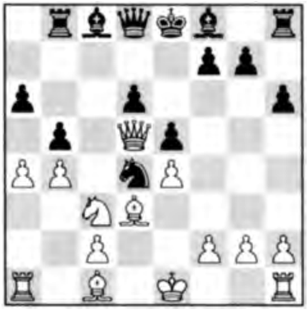
6...d6

Here is the point of 2...h6 if you like. Black has managed to play ...e5 without allowing White to fight for control over square d5 with ♗g5. Nor can White check on d6 as in the Haberditz Variation which arises after 6...♘c6 – we will examine this via the move order with 3.♘c3.



7.a4

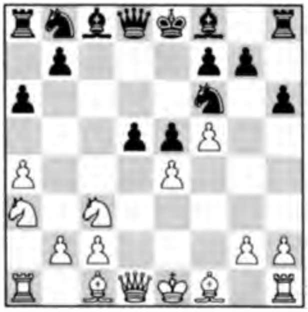
- 7.♘d5 ♘xd5 8.♕xd5 (one of the critical positions in the main line with 3.d4. 8.exd5 a6 9.♘c3 ♗e7∓ 10.♗e2 0-0) 8...♘c6 9.♗e2 (this looks natural, but it's a losing move! When I first saw this game, I was shocked how Black could so quickly develop the initiative after a normal move like 9.♗e2; instead 9.♗e3 a6 10.♘c3 ♗e6 11.♕d2 ♖c8 12.a3 ♕a5 13.f3 ♕c7 14.♕f2 b5 15.♗d3 ♕b7 16.0-0 g5 17.♘d5 ♗xd5 18.exd5 ♘e7 19.♖fd1 ♗g7 20.♕e2 ♖a8 21.a4 0-0 22.axb5 axb5 23.♗xb5 ♘xd5 24.♗f2 ♘c7 25.♗c4 ♖xa1 26.♖xa1 ♕xb2 and Black won in Schneider-Stephan, Brakel 1967) 9...a6 10.♘c3 (10.♘a3 is the best move in this position, which means that White has done something wrong at an earlier point!) 10...♘d4! 11.♗d3 ♖b8 12.b4 (White actually creates square a5 to evacuate his queen! 12.♗e3 ♗e6) 12...b5! 13.a4



13...♗e6. No queen, no game! 0-1, Ridarcikova-Srienz, Bratislava 1991.

- A sample line after 7.♘a3 is 7...♗e6 8.♗c4 ♕c8 9.♗xe6 fxe6 10.0-0 ♗e7.

7...♗e6 8.f4 a6 9.f5!? ♗c8 10.♘a3 d5



11.exd5

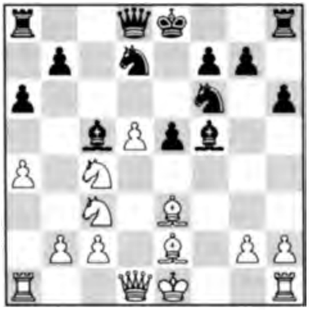
Or 11.♘xd5 when Black loses after 11...♘xe4 12.♗e3 ♕h4+ (very romantic but wrong) 13.g3 ♘xg3 14.hxg3 ♕xh1 15.♘c7+ ♔e7 16.♗c5+ ♔f6 17.♕d8+ ♔xf5 18.♕xc8+.

Correct is 11...♘xd5 which leads to unclear play after 12.exd5 ♗xf5 13.♘c4 ♗c5 14.♗e3 ♘d7.

11...♗xf5 12.♗e2 ♗c5 13.♘c4 ♘bd7

So material is equal and Black has all his light pieces developed; he can be happy with the outcome of the opening.

14.♗e3



Of course White wants to go with his king to the safer side.

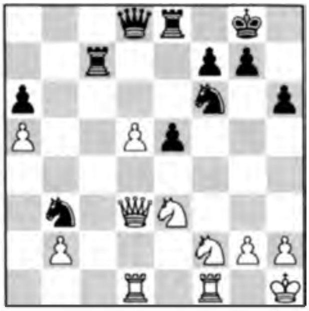
14...♗xe3 15.♘xe3 ♗g6 16.a5 0-0 17.0-0

Both sides have taken their safety precautions and now start setting the board on fire.

17...b5 18.♔h1 ♖c8 19.♗d3 ♗xd3 20.♕xd3 ♘c5 21.♕f5 b4 22.♘cd1 ♖e8

Black does not fully equalize after 22...♘xd5 23.♕xe5 ♘xe3 24.♘xe3 ♖e8 25.♕f4 ♕c7 26.♕xc7 ♖xc7 27.♘d5 ♖b7 28.♖ae1 ♔f8 29.♖xe8+ ♔xe8 30.b3 (30.♖f4 b3) 30...♘e6 31.♔g1 ♖b5 32.♖d1 and White is slightly better.

23.♘f2 ♖c7 24.♖ad1 b3 25.cxb3 ♘xb3 26.♕d3



26...♘d4

26...♘c5 probably gives more chances for a longer fight: 27.♕a3 ♕b8 28.b4 ♘ce4 29.♘xe4 ♘xe4 30.♖c1 ♖ec8.

27.♕xa6 ♘xd5 28.♘fg4 ♘xe3 29.♘xe3 ♕b8 30.♕d6 ♖a7 31.♕a3 ♕b3 32.♕c5 ♖b7 33.♘c4 ♖b5 34.♕c7 ♖b7 35.♕c5 ♖b5 36.♕c7 ♖b7

Draw.

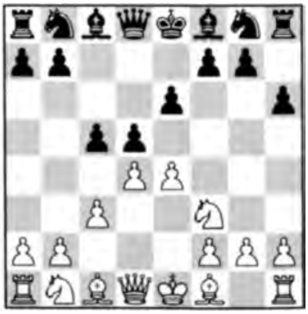
☐ **Nenad Doric**
■ **Sinisa Drazic**
Rijeka Mediterranean Open 2010

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 h6 3.c3 e6

For 3...g5!? see the next game.

4.d4 4.♗e2 d6 5.d3 b6 6.0-0 ♗b7 7.♘bd2 ♘f6 ½-½ was Fercec-Drazic, Rijeka 2010.

4...d5



5.exd5

White can also opt for the Advance Variation in the French Defence with 5.e5, when Black has played the unusual ...h6. If you don't like this then check out 3...g5!?.

5...exd5

5...♕xd5 6.♗d3 (6.♗e3 cxd4 7.cxd4 ♗b4+ 8.♘c3 ♘c6 9.a3 ♗xc3+ 10.bxc3 ♘f6 11.♗d3 0-0 12.0-0 ♖d8) 6...♘f6 7.0-0 ♘c6 8.♖e1 ♗e7 9.♗e3 cxd4 10.cxd4 0-0 11.♘c3 ♕d6 with a normal IQP position in Hartung-Schammo, Luxembourg 1997/98.

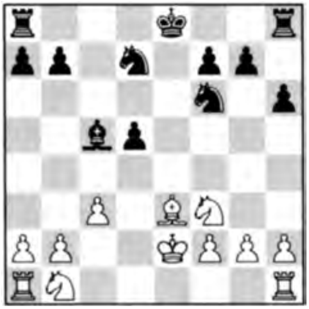
6.♗b5+ ♗d7 7.♕e2+

Alternatives are 7.♗xd7+ ♘xd7 8.0-0 ♗e7 and 7.a4.

7...♕e7 8.♗xd7+ ♘xd7 9.dxc5 ♕xe2+ 10.♔xe2 ♗xc5 11.♗e3

Black is also comfortable after 11.♖d1 ♘gf6 12.♗e3 ♗xe3 13.♔xe3 0-0-0 14.♔e2 ♖he8+ 15.♔f1 ♘c5.

11...♘gf6



12.♘bd2

Or 12.♗xc5 ♘xc5 13.♖d1 0-0-0 14.♘a3 ♖he8+ 15.♔f1 ♘a4 16.♖ab1 ♖d7 with a balanced position.

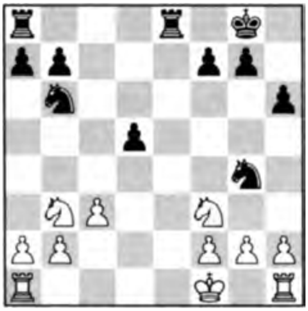
12...0-0 13.♘b3

Or 13.♖hd1 ♖fe8 (13...♗xe3 14.fxe3 ♖fe8 15.h3) 14.♘f1.

13...♗xe3 14.♔xe3

White runs risks after 14.fxe3 ♖fe8 15.♖hd1 a5 16.a4 (16.h3 a4 17.♘bd4 ♘b6 18.♘d2 ♖e7 19.♔d3 ♖ae8 20.♖e1 unclear) 16...♘b6 17.♖d3 (17.♘bd4 ♘c4∓) 17...♘c4 18.♖a2 ♘g4 19.♖xd5 ♘cxe3 20.♖xa5 ♘xg2+ 21.♔f1 ♘2e3+ 22.♔g1 ♖ad8∓.

14...♘g4+ 15.♔e2 ♖fe8+ 16.♔f1 ♘b6



Black will now use the position of White's king to provoke some weaknesses in the opponent's pawn structure.

17.♘c5 ♘c4! 18.♘d3 a5 19.♘d4 ♘ge5 20.♘xe5 ♖xe5 21.♘f3 ♖e7 22.b3

A weakness is created!

22...♘a3 23.♘d4! ♖c8 24.♖c1 b5

Time is very important now!

24...g6 25.h4 ♔g7 26.♖h3

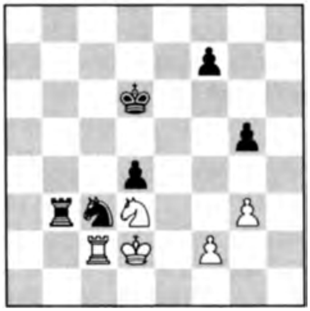
25.♘e2 ♖ce8 26.♘d4 ♖c7 27.♘e2 b4 28.cxb4 ♖xc1+ 29.♘xc1 ♘c2 30.g3

Bad is 30.♘e2? d4 31.g3 d3 32.♘c3 axb4 33.♘d1 ♖e1+ 34.♔g2 d2 35.f4 ♖xd1. But playable was 30.♘d3 axb4 31.h4.

30...axb4 31.♘d3 ♖a8 32.♘c1 ♖e8 33.♘d3 Black wins after 33.♔g2 ♘e1+ 34.♔f1 d4. **33...♖a8 34.♘c1 ♔f8 35.♔e2 ♔e7 36.♖d1** 36.♔d2. **36...♔d6 37.♖d2 ♘a3 38.♘d3 ♘b1 39.♖c2 ♘c3+ 40.♔d2 ♘xa2**

Black has won a pawn, but the win still involves a lot of hard work.

41.h4 g6 42.♖b2 ♖a7 43.♖c2 ♖a3 44.♖b2 g5 45.hxg5 hxg5 46.♖c2 ♘c3 47.♘xb4 ♘e4+ 48.♔e2 ♖xb3 49.♘d3 ♘c3+ 50.♔d2 d4



51.♖b2?

In such positions it is a cardinal sin to exchange rooks. Almost every knight endgame with a pawn up is winning!

51...♘e4+ 52.♔e2 ♖xb2+ 53.♘xb2 ♔d5 54.♔f3 f5 55.♔e2 ♔c5 56.♘a4+ ♔b5 57.♘b2 ♘c5 58.♔d2 ♔b4 59.f3 ♔b5 60.♔e2 ♔c6 61.♔d2 ♔d5 62.♔e2 ♘d7 63.♘d3 ♔c4 64.♔d2 ♔d5 65.♘b4+ ♔c5 66.♘d3+ ♔c4 67.♘b2+ ♔d5 68.♘d3 ♘e5 69.♘e1 g4 70.fxg4 fxg4 71.♘g2 ♔e4 72.♔e2 ♘d3 73.♘h4 ♘b2 74.♔d2 ♘c4+ 75.♔e2 d3+ 76.♔f2 ♘e3 77.♔e1 ♘f5 78.♘g6 ♘xg3 79.♔d2 ♘f1+ 80.♔e1 ♘e3 81.♔d2 g3 82.♘h4 g2

White resigned.

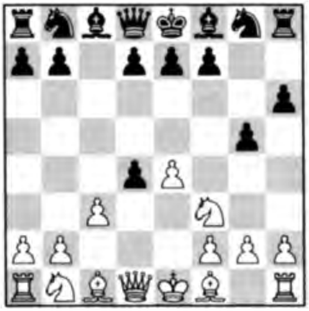
☐ **Mladen Palac**
■ **Nenad Sulava**
Montecatini Terme 1995

The interesting fact is that I was present at the same tournament, and this game drew my serious attention, because both players were good friends of mine, and I felt a high tension between them. Sulava as a very original player surprised the theoretical expert Mladen Palac and there arose some kind of hybrid of the Panov Attack in the Caro-Kann, with a very unusual early ...g5!

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 h6 3.c3 g5

Basman's move, and a main idea of 2...h6!?.

4.d4 cxd4



5.cxd4

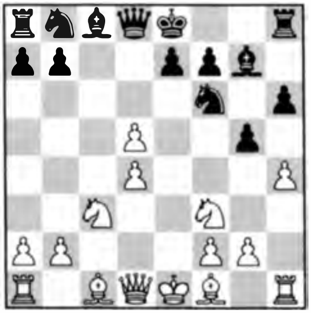
Unusual but not necessarily bad is 5.♕xd4 ♘f6 6.e5 ♘c6 7.♕a4 ♘d5 8.h4!? gxh4 9.♕xh4 d6 10.♕e4 dxe5 11.♘xe5 ♕d6 12.♘xc6 bxc6 13.♘d2 Casper-Rechel, Germany Bundesliga 1994/95.

5...d5 6.exd5

6.e5 ♘c6 7.♘c3 ♗g4 8.♗e2 (8.♗b5 e6 9.♕a4 ♘e7; 8.♗e3) 8...e6 and this looks like a French, with the bishop on g4, and an 'slightly' exposed black kingside.

6...♘f6 7.♘c3 ♗g7 8.h4

Black has a difficult choice now, to take on h4 and to destroy his kingside, or to play 8...g4, with unclear consequences.



8...g4 9.♘e5 a6 10.♗e2 h5 11.0-0

Nothing is gained by 11.f3 ♘xd5 12.fxg4 ♘xc3 13.bxc3 ♗xe5 14.dxe5 ♕xd1+ 15.♗xd1 ♗xg4 16.♗xg4 hxg4 17.♖b1 b5. But it was also normal to play 11.♕b3 b5 (11...0-0 12.♗g5 ♘bd7) 12.a4.

11...♘bd7 12.♗g5 ♘b6 13.♕b3 0-0

Play favours White after either 13...♘fxd5 14.♘xd5 ♘xd5 15.♗c4, or 13...♘bxd5? 14.♗xf6 exf6 15.♘xf7 ♔xf7 16.♗c4.

14.♖fe1 ♘h7!?

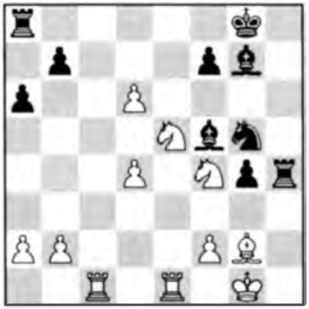
Inviting complications.

15.♗xe7 ♕xe7 16.♕xb6 ♕xh4 17.g3 ♕d8 18.♕xd8 ♖xd8 19.♗f1 Perhaps 19.♘a4!?. **19...♘g5 20.♗g2 ♗f5 21.♘e2 ♖d6 22.♘f4 ♖h6**

Black has found a very interesting way to attack in the middlegame without queens. White is a pawn up, but this doesn't help so much, because he has no dynamic potential in his position. On the other hand, Black is a pawn up on the kingside, an active rook and bishop pair.

23.♖ac1 h4 24.gxh4 ♖xh4 25.d6

Now White has his own trump, but Black is ready to strike.



25...♘f3+! 26.♗xf3 gxf3 27.♘d5 ♔h7

Preventing the check on e7, and freeing the g-file for the other rook.

28.♘e7 ♗e6 29.♘xf3 ♖g4+ 30.♔f1 ♖d8 31.d5 31.♖c3 ♖xd6 32.♔e2 ♗xd4 33.♘xd4 ♖dxd4∓. **31...♗d7 32.♖e3 ♗h6 33.♖c7 ♗b5+ 34.♔e1 ♗xe3 35.fxe3 ♖xd6 36.♖xb7? ♖g2 37.a4 ♖h6! 38.♘g5+ ♖xg5 39.axb5 ♖g2 40.♔f1 ♖xb2 41.bxa6 ♖h1** Mate.

☐ **Giulio Borgo**
■ **Sinisa Drazic**
Milan 2010

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 h6 3.c4

The critical 3.c4, perhaps the move which made me most nervous, before the decision to play the risky move 2..h6!?.

3...d6

Black will play for dark-square control a la the Myers Defence (1.c4 g5) as all normal Sicilian lines will lead to bad Maroczy's. The immediate 3...g5 is also playable.

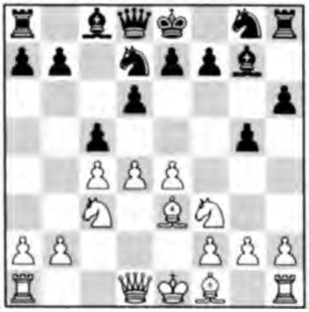
3...♘c6 makes no sense, because after pushing d2-d4, Black has no time to push g7-g5, which was already prepared by ...h6! – 4.d4 g5 5.d5 g4 (5...♘a5 6.h4 g4 7.♘e5 – or 6...gxh4 7.♗d2 ♗g7 8.♗c3±) 6.dxc6 gxf3 7.cxd7+ ♗xd7 8.♕xf3 ♗g7 9.♘c3.

Just bad is 3...e6 4.d4 cxd4 5.♘xd4 ♘f6 6.♘c3.

4.d4 g5 4...cxd4 5.♘xd4 ♘f6 6.♘c3 is not tested yet! **5.♗e3** If 5.♘c3 then 5...♗g7 6.d5 ♗xc3+ 7.bxc3 ♘d7.

5...♗g7 6.♘c3 ♘d7

I decided to keep the tension in the centre at any cost.



7.h3?!

This move made me very happy. It seems that White does not have a clear idea how to undermine Black's strategy. Besides, he will lose a tempo if he decides to play h3-h4 later on.

7...a6 8.♕d2 e6 9.0-0-0 ♕a5 10.♔b1 ♘e7 11.♗e2

The remaining time for White was 44 minutes, which means half his time has already been consumed after only 11 moves. The surprise is working well!

11...♘g6 12.h4

Only five moves before h2-h3 was played!

12...g4 13.♘e1 h5 14.f4

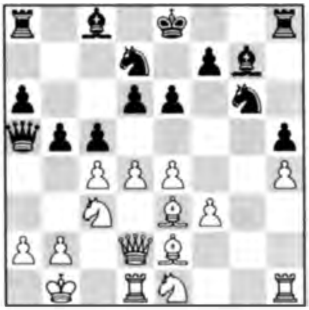
White should keep the tension in the centre with 14.♘c2!.

14...gxf3

This move takes me almost 15 minutes, because of the change of the pawn structure, and estimating the consequences of opening the g-file.

15.gxf3 b5

Heightening the tension. Chess can be fun!



16.e5

Or 16.cxb5 axb5 17.♗xb5 0-0 18.dxc5 dxc5 19.♗xd7 ♖d8. Defintely not 16.♘c2? b4.

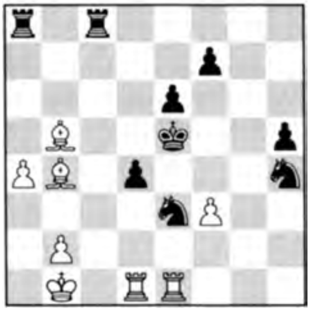
16...cxd4

Here White had left himself with 21 minutes against my 51.

17.♘e4 ♕xd2 18.♘xd6+ ♔e7 19.♗xd2 ♗xe5 20.♘xc8+ ♖hxc8 21.cxb5 axb5 22.♗xb5 ♘b6

Almost by force, a position similar to a Meran has arisen, with the 'small' difference that the white king is on the other side of the board. White has a weakness on h4, and his passed pawns are almost blocked, due to the activity of the black pieces, especially the rooks.

23.♗b4+ ♔f6 24.♘d3 ♘d5 25.♘xe5 ♔xe5 26.♖he1+ ♘e3 27.a4 ♘xh4



28.♗d6+

Black is also clearly better after 28.♗c3 dxc3 29.♖xe3+ ♔f6 30.bxc3 ♘g2 31.♖e2 (31.♖ed3 ♘f4 32.♖e3 ♘d5) 31...♘f4 32.♖c2 ♖c5.

28...♔f6 29.♖xd4 ♘hf5

White was in time-trouble, Black had 36 minutes left.

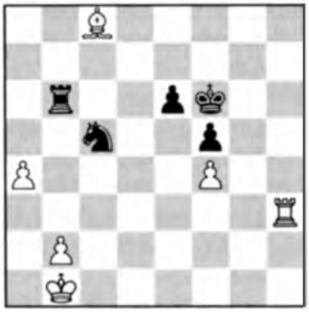
30.♖d3 ♘xd6 31.♖xd6 ♘f5

31...♘d5 32.♗c6 ♖a6 33.♗b7 (33.♖xd5 exd5 34.♗b7 ♖ca8 35.♖h1 ♔g5) 33...♖xd6 34.♗xc8 ♘b6 35.♗b7 ♘xa4.

32.♖d2 h4 33.♖h2 ♖g8 34.♗c6 ♖a6! 35.♗b5 ♖d6 36.♖c1 ♖g3 37.♗c6 ♘d4 38.♗e4 ♔g5 39.♖ch1 f5 40.♗b7 ♖b6 41.f4+ ♔f6 42.♖d1 ♘b3

The bishop is dominated.

43.♗c8 h3 44.♖dh1 ♘c5 45.♖xh3 ♖xh3 46.♖xh3



46...♘xa4

Black would win after 46...♖c6 47.♖c3 ♖xc8 48.b4 ♖b8 49.♖xc5 ♖xb4+ 50.♔c2 ♖xa4. Unfortunately White has 47.b4!! ♘xa4 48.♗d7 ♖a6 49.♗xa4 ♖xa4 50.♖b3.

47.b3 ♘c5 48.♔c2 ♔e7

48...♖c6.

49.♖e3 ♔d6 50.♖e5 ♖c6 51.♗xe6 ♘xe6+ 52.♔d3

52.♔b2 ♖c5.

52...♘xf4+

White resigned.

3.♘c3 – Transposing to the Haberditz Variation

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 h6 3.♘c3

A clever move order in my opinion.

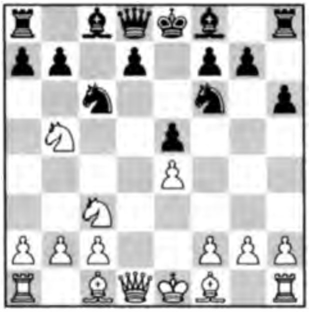
3...♘c6

Alternatively, there is 3...g5 4.d4 ♗g7, or 4...g4 5.♘g1 cxd4 6.♕xd4 ♘f6 7.h3 ♘c6 8.♕d3 d6 with a slight advantage for White according to Bücker in Yearbook 18. It seems strange to go for a 'normal' Sicilian with ...h6 included: 3...e6 4.d4 cxd4 5.♘xd4 d6, or 3...d6 4.d4 cxd4 5.♘xd4 ♘f6 6.♗c4.

4.d4 cxd4 5.♘xd4 e5

Again 5...♘f6 6.♗c4 d6 is a strange Sicilian with ...h6. A blunder is 6...♘xe4?? 7.♘xe4 d5 8.♘xc6 bxc6 9.♗b3 dxe4 10.♗xf7+.

6.♘db5 ♘f6



7.♘d5!?

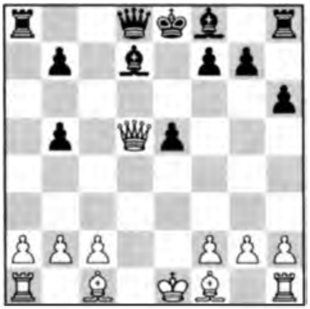
This is the Haberditz Variation. In SOS-2 (Chapter 10, p.78) Dimitri Reinderman wrote on this line. See also the SOS Files of volume 4.

7.♘d6+ looks like the best move in this position if you ask me. After 7...♗xd6 8.♕xd6 ♕e7 9.♘b5 the star move is 9...♖b8 as reported by Reinderman. Instead 9.♕xe7+ ♘xe7 10.♗e3 d6 is a slight edge for White.

7...♘xd5 8.exd5 a6

8...♘b8 9.d6±.

9.dxc6 axb5 10.cxd7+ ♗xd7



White has a slightly better pawn structure, but Black has free development and a central pawn as Reinderman pointed out. Chances are about equal.

☐ **Giuseppe Fabriano**
■ **Michael Basman**
London 1993

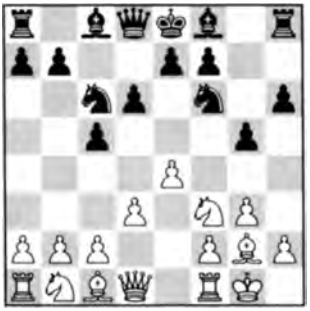
1.e4 h6 2.♘f3 c5

Via a small transposition we have arrived in our favourite Sicilian. Probably this is one of the more 'theoretical' positions of the highly original player Michael Basman, who always plays wild and original chess. This game is no exception, and he shows that if you want to beat strange openings, you should play more directly and accurately than White does in this game!

3.d3 d6 4.g3 ♘c6 5.♗g2 ♘f6 6.0-0

A sample line of what could happen after 6.♘bd2 is 6...e5 7.0-0 ♗e7 8.♘h4 g6 9.c3 ♘h5 10.♘df3 ♗g4.

6...g5



The move ...g5 is much stronger after White has castled of course.

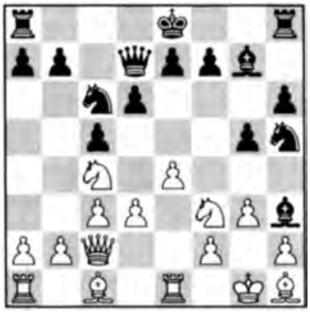
7.♘bd2

Play would be unclear after 7.h4 gxh4!? 8.♘xh4 e6 9.♗e3 ♗e7 10.♘d2 h5 11.♗g5 ♘g4 12.♗xe7 ♕xe7 13.c3 ♗d7.

7...♗g7 8.c3 ♗g4 9.♖e1 ♕d7 10.♕c2 ♗h3 11.♗h1

Better was 11.♘f1 ♗xg2 12.♔xg2, or 11...♘h5 12.♘e3 ♗xg2 13.♔xg2 e6 14.♕d1 0-0-0 15.d4 cxd4 16.cxd4 ♔b8.

11...♘h5 12.♘c4



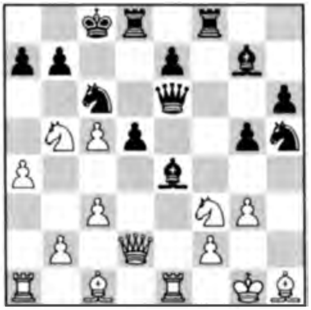
12...f5!?

I don't know many players who would play such move in this position!

13.a4 f4 14.e5 0-0-0

Black's attack is already underway, while White is getting nowhere fast on the queenside.

15.d4 ♗f5 16.♕d2 d5 17.♘a3 ♖hf8 18.dxc5 ♗e4 19.e6 ♕xe6 20.♘b5 fxg3 21.hxg3



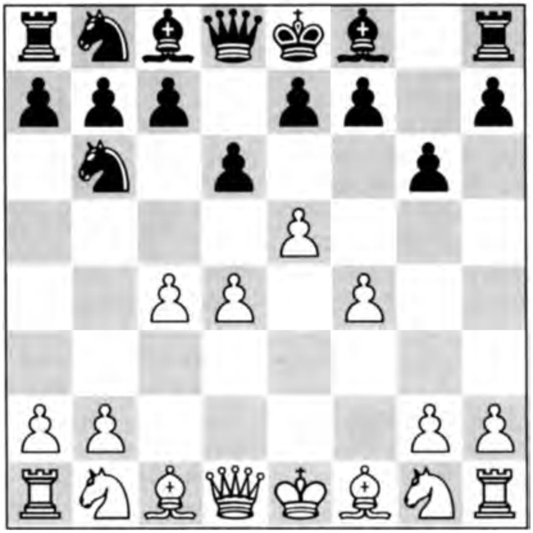
21...♘xg3!! 22.fxg3 ♕g4 23.♖xe4 dxe4 24.♘fd4 ♕xg3+ 25.♗g2 ♗e5

White resigned.

CHAPTER 16

Jeroen Bosch

Fianchetto in the Alekhine Four Pawns



The less explored 5...g6!?

☐ **Ivan Denisov**
■ **Alexander Khalifman**
Aix-les-Bains ch-EUR 2011

1.e4 ♘f6 2.e5 ♘d5 3.c4 ♘b6 4.d4 d6 5.f4

The famous Four Pawns Attack. With a little help from his Alekhine-opponent White is setting up the most impressive pawn centre imaginable. Now if Black doesn't watch out, he will be 'crushed like a bug' as Alburt and Schiller have crudely expressed it in their old book on the Alekhine (Batsford, 1985). Having said that, I feel that most Alekhine players ought to welcome 5.f4. Indeed, the Modern Variation 4.♘f3 is the way to claim a theoretical edge, and White's space advantage may easily turn against him when Black gets in his levers ...c5 or ...f6, or makes use of the loose squares surrounding White's king, or simply develops forcing White to protect his far-advanced pawns. A legitimate question is: Hasn't White simply fallen for Black's provocative first move, and walked right into it? Well, it's not nearly that simple either. I fully agree with John Cox who formulated Black's predicament when talking about the main line as follows: 'Black has to tread a narrow path, and for a rare line like the Four Pawns Attack a reply which leads to less explored play might be preferable. Moreover there are a couple of virtually forced draws lurking in the main line'. (John Cox, *Starting Out: Alekhine's Defence*, Everyman 2004, p.127). In a recent Everyman publication (Timothy Taylor, *Alekhine Alert!*, 2010) the same sentiment is expressed. It should surprise no one that we advocate a line which leads to less explored play in this SOS chapter!

5...g6

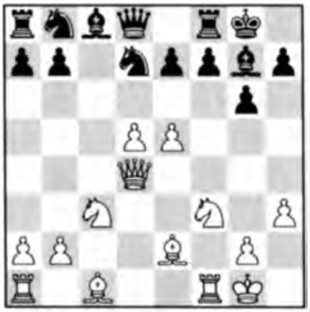
Fully playable is 5...dxe5 6.fxe5 and now:

- 6...♘c6 7.♗e3 ♗f5 8.♘c3 e6 9.♘f3 when 9...♗e7 is the sound main line (the following alternatives also occur: 9...♗b4, 9...♗g4, 9...♕d7 and 9...♘b4). However, things do get hairy after the sharp 10.d5 unless you have fully memorized the theory (and repeated the complex lines ever so often) and are not averse to a draw.
- The even sharper 6...c5 7.d5 e6 8.♘c3 exd5 9.cxd5 c4 was rehabilitated by Alexander Shabalov owing to 10.♘f3 ♗b4 11.♗xc4 ♗xc3+! 12.bxc3 ♘xc4 13.♕a4+ ♘d7 and so on. However, the problem is 10.d6 when I would prefer White – although there is a full battle ahead of course.
- 6...g6 looks similar to our line, but has the disadvantage that the diagonal for White's dark-squared bishop is opened too soon.

6.♘c3

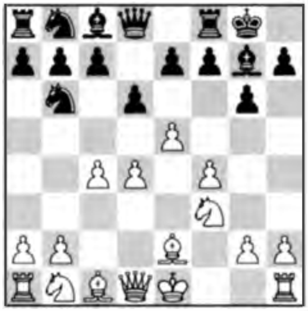
The most demanding reply.

- Less accurate is 6.♘f3, mainly because White loses out on early h4-h5 options when Black castles too soon (Black obtains the option of ...♗g4, rendering the attack harmless). Anyway, it is hard to believe that White can do without ♘c3, for options with ♘bd2 do not look very threatening. 6...♗g7 7.♘c3 (7.♗e3 0-0 8.♗e2 dxe5 transposes to 6.♗e2 ♗g7 7.♘f3 0-0 8.♗e3 dxe5 below) 7...0-0 8.♗e3 ♗e6 transposes to the note to White's 8th move in our main game after 8.♘f3 0-0.
- 6.h3?! – White understandably wants to prevent a pin on his king's knight, but a tempo is still a tempo (although Alekhine players have their own personal outlook on opening rules like don't play twice with the same piece in the opening of course): 6...♗g7?! (slightly inflexible perhaps, Black could have taken advantage of the weakening of the e1-h4 diagonal. 6...dxe5 7.fxe5 c5 8.d5 e6 is much stronger and looks like the refutation of 6.h3 in my opinion) 7.♘f3 0-0 8.♗e2 ♗e6! (this is the star move in the fianchetto system. Protecting the c4 pawn would be very annoying for White, while d4-d5 has the drawback of 'overreaching'. The Ukrainian grandmaster Vladimir Sergeev is the main proponent of this system) 9.d5 ♗c8 10.♘c3 c6 (taking advantage of the outpost on d5) 11.0-0 cxd5 12.cxd5 ♘6d7 (more natural is developing with 12...♘8d7, but Black's Alekhine knight will be harrassed with 13.a4, forcing the weakening 13...a5 – 13...dxe5?! 14.a5 – when White is a little better after 14.♕d4 ♘c5 15.♗e3) 13.♕d4?! (13.exd6 exd6 14.♗e3 is stronger and preserves a slight edge; 13.e6 fxe6 14.♘g5 ♘c5 is sharp and unclear) 13...dxe5 14.fxe5



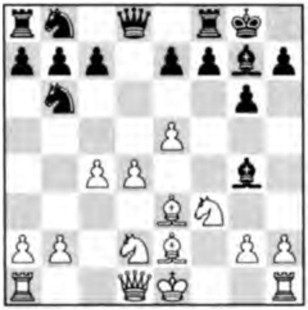
14...♘xe5! (the point of his 12th move) 15.♘xe5 ♘c6 16.♕h4 (16.♘xc6 ♗xd4+ 17.♘xd4 ♕b6 and while it is nice to have a lot of pieces, White's position is rather loose here) 16...♘xe5 gave Black an extra pawn in Mrva-Sergeev, Bardejov 1996.

- The slightly subtle 6.♗e2 is an alternative. Still, can White really do without ♘c3? However, Black should take care as in these lines the wonder move ...♗e6 is hardly ever strong; because of the absence of the knight on c3 Black does better to react immediately in the centre. 6...♗g7 7.♘f3 0-0



and now after 8.♗e3 dxe5 (now 8...♗e6 is inaccurate in view of 9.♘bd2) there is:

– 9.fxe5 ♗g4 10.♘bd2. This is the point of delaying the development of the queen's knight. White will now be able to take back on f3 with the knight defending d4. Black, however, will obtain counterplay with ...c5.

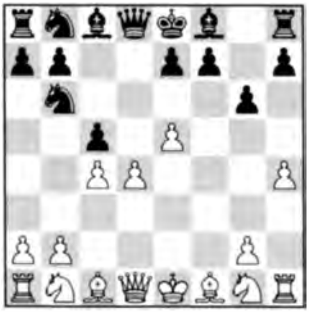


10...c5 (10...e6 11.0-0 ♘8d7 12.h3 ♗xf3 13.♘xf3 ♕e7 is too slow, although Black eventually won in Nagy-Sergeev, Szombathely 2003) 11.dxc5 (Black's play is straightforward after 11.d5 ♘8d7 12.0-0 ♕c7 13.♗f4 ♗xf3 14.♘xf3 ♘xe5) 11...♘6d7 12.0-0 ♕c7 was sharp but OK for Black in the old game Quinones-Darga, Amsterdam 1964.

– 9.♘xe5 also deserves to be investigated: 9...c5 10.d5 (Black is alright after 10.dxc5 ♘6d7 – 10...♕xd1+ 11.♔xd1 ♘a4 12.♔c2 ♘d7 is also good enough for equal chances in a sharp queenless middlegame – 11.♘xd7 ♘xd7 12.♘c3 ♕a5 13.♕d2 ♘xc5 14.♘d5 ♕xd2+ 15.♔xd2 and the ending is equal after 15...♘a4!, since 16.♘xe7+?! ♔h8 17.b3 is well-met by 17...♖d8+!, but not 17...♗xa1? 18.♖xa1±) 10...♘8d7 11.♘xd7 ♗xd7 12.♘c3 ♕c7 13.0-0 ♘c8 (the knight is moved to the ideal d6-square) 14.♖c1 ♕a5 15.♕d2 ♘d6 16.♗d3 ♖ac8 17.♕e2 a6 and Black was already slightly better in Gretarsson-Polaczek, Reykjavik 1990.

You should know what to do against 8.0-0 too: 8...dxe5! (I don't like 8...♗e6 for two reasons: 9.d5 ♗g4 10.♘g5!? looks dangerous, and surely White is better after 9.b3 c5 10.d5 ♗g4 11.♗b2) 9.fxe5 ♗g4 (the correct move order; not 9...c5 10.d5 ♗g4 11.♗f4 – again correct is 11.♘g5!, when White is better – 11...♘8d7 12.♘bd2 ♕b8! and Black gained the upper hand in Nedela-Velicka, Filseck 1999) 10.♘bd2 (10.♘c3 c5) 10...c5 11.♘b3 (11.dxc5 ♘6d7; 11.d5 ♘8d7) 11...cxd4 12.♘fxd4 ♗xe2 13.♕xe2 ♕c7! 14.c5 ♘d5 15.e6 f5 16.♘b5 ♕c6 and White's pawn weaknesses are more important than his slight initiative, Bernardo-Szmetan, Mar del Plata 1996.

● 6.h4? dxe5! 7.fxe5 c5 (7...♘c6)



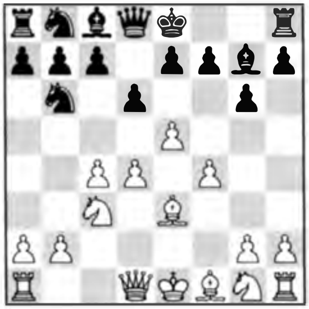
8.d5 and after eight consecutive pawn moves White is over-extended. Black soon won after 8...♗g7 9.♗f4 e6 10.♘c3 exd5 11.cxd5 0-0 12.h5 ♘8d7 13.♘f3 ♘xe5! and so on in Asensio Linan-Narciso Dublan, Montcada i Reixac 2011.

6...♗g7 7.♗e3

Developing the queenside first is White's most accurate move order.

– If White has no ambitions whatsoever, then he can play 7.c5?! dxc5 8.dxc5 ♕xd1+ 9.♔xd1 ♗g4+ when 10.♗e2 looks equal, but 10.♔e1 ♘6d7 11.♗e3 ♘c6 12.♗c4 g5! saw Black slowly seize the initiative in Gikas-Haakert, Germany Bundesliga 1987/88.

– 7.♘f3 0-0 8.♗e3 ♗e6 transposes to the comments on the next move after 8.♘f3.



7...♗e6!

White's move order makes this move essential. You should really keep this finesse in mind when you want to adopt this system as Black.

Too slow is 7...0-0?! 8.c5 ♘6d7 and now either 9.h4 with a dangerous attack, or 9.♘f3 with a positional edge.

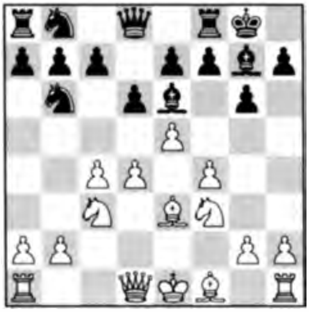
8.d5

Valentin Bogdanov provides this move with an exclam in his book on the Alekhine (Gambit, 2009), and it must indeed be crucial to the evaluation of 7...♗e6.

● With the bishop on e6 8.c5 is of course nothing because of 8...♘d5 when Black has an easy game.

● 8.♕b3 is well-met by 8...a5, when in order to prevent ...a5-a4 White has to weaken the b4-square: 9.a4 ♘a6 10.♖d1 ♘b4 11.♘f3 d5 12.cxd5 (12.c5 ♘c4) 12...♘4xd5 13.♘xd5 ♗xd5 14.♕c2 ♗xf3 15.gxf3 ♘d5 and Black has a clear structural edge, Kotek-Sergeev, Czechia 1997/98.

● 8.♘f3 0-0 (an important position that may also be reached via 6.♘f3)



and now:

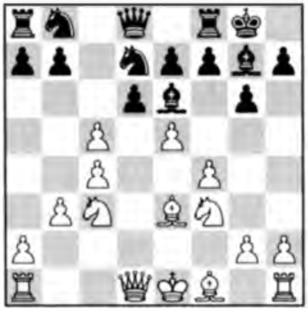
9.♕b3 a5 10.♘g5! (10.a4 is met by 10...♘a6 when the knight will be excellently placed on b4) 10...a4 11.♘xe6 axb3!? (stronger is 11...fxe6 12.♕d1 ♘c6 for in the ending 13.c5 below is a problem) 12.♘xd8 ♖xd8 13.a3 ♘c6 is rightly given as equal by Cox. 14.0-0-0?! ♘a5 15.c5 dxc5 16.dxc5 ♖xd1+ 17.♘xd1 ♘bc4∓ Brener-Pushkin, Soviet Union 1988. However, White should investigate the immediate 13.c5 which seems to favour him and is neglected by other sources.

Too passive is **9.♘d2?!** dxe5 10.fxe5 c5 11.d5 (11.dxc5 ♘6d7 is excellent for Black of course. White's centre has crumbled to dust) 11...♗f5 12.♗f4 (not 12.♗xc5 ♘8d7; 12.g4 is rather loosening after 12...♗c8) 12...e6! 13.d6 ♘c6 14.♘f3 ♘d7 (14...♗g4) 15.h3? ♘dxe5 16.♗xe5 ♗xe5 (or

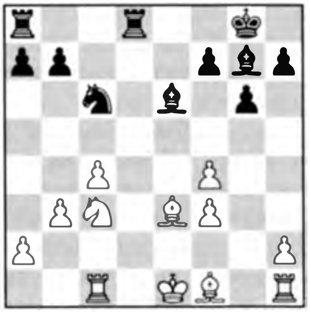
16...♘xe5) 17.g4 ♗xc3+ 18.bxc3 ♗e4 and Black was winning in S.Schmidt-Haakert, Germany tt 1988/89.

9.b3 is the normal move, but by means of a tactical trick Black can now make use of the unprotected knight on c3. 9...c5! and now:

– 10.dxc5 ♘6d7! (this is the point of 9...c5, the move 9.b3 has left the c3 knight unprotected)



11.cxd6 (11.♖c1 dxe5∓, Fedorov-Sergeev, Warsaw rapid 2004) 11...exd6 12.♕xd6 (12.♗e2 dxe5 13.♕d2 ♘c6 14.♖c1 exf4 15.♗xf4 ♘c5 leaves White with a slight disadvantage just after the opening, Sevian-Taylor, Los Angeles 2011) 12...♘xe5! 13.♕xd8 (13.fxe5 ♕xd6 14.exd6 ♗xc3+ is the trick I mentioned above) 13...♘xf3+ 14.gxf3 ♖xd8 15.♖c1 ♘c6



Black is fully developed, with a sound pawn structure. He has more than enough for the pawn: 16.♘e4 (16.♔f2 ♘e7 17.♗e2 ♘f5 18.♖hd1 ♖xd1 19.♗xd1 ♘xe3 20.♔xe3 ♖e8 was a slightly better ending for Black in Stopa-Narciso Dublan, Montcada i Reixac 2011) 16...♘b4 17.♘c5 Grabher-Ager, Austria 2002/03, and now simply 17...♘xa2 is troublesome for the first player.

– 10.♗e2 cxd4 11.♗xd4? (11.♘xd4 dxe5 12.♘xe6 fxe6 13.♕xd8 ♖xd8 14.♖c1 was a better chance) 11...♘c6 12.exd6? ♘xd4 13.♘xd4 ♕xd6 and Black is completely winning, Lefebr-Korostelev, Cheliabinsk 2008.

– While 10.d5 ♗g4 also favours Black.

9.d5 ♗g4 clearly favours Black compared to the main line, where after White's more accurate move order Black is forced to return to c8 with the bishop after d5. 10.♕d2 (10.♗e2 ♗xf3; perhaps White should have considered muddying the waters with 10.h3 ♗xf3 11.♕xf3 dxe5 12.f5) 10...c6! (not 10...♗xf3 11.gxf3 dxe5 12.f5 and White will castle queenside with unclear play) 11.c5!? (11.0-0-0 cxd5 12.cxd5 dxe5 13.fxe5 ♘8d7 14.e6 leaves Black a pleasant choice between 14...fxe6 15.dxe6 ♘e5 16.♕xd8 ♖axd8 17.♖xd8 ♖xd8 18.♘xe5 ♗xe5 with a superior ending, and 14...♘e5 15.exf7+ ♖xf7 16.♘xe5 ♗xe5 17.♗e2 ♗xe2 18.♕xe2 ♗xc3 19.bxc3 ♘a4 20.♗d4 ♕xd5 with a pawn up but with the queens still on) 11...♘xd5 12.♘xd5 cxd5 13.♕xd5 ♘c6 Black is fully developed and we can conclude that White has let himself be provoked by the typical Alekhine strategy. 14.cxd6 ♗xf3 15.gxf3 exd6 16.♗b5? ♕h4+ 17.♔e2 dxe5 with a winning attack in J. Bauer-Sergeev, Sala 1993.

● 8.b3!? is better played immediately, rather than with the inclusion of 8.♘f3 0-0 as we saw above: 8...0-0 when best is

9.♕d2 and now:

– 9...dxe5 10.fxe5 c5 11.d5 ♗f5 12.♘f3 ♘8d7 is fine for Black.

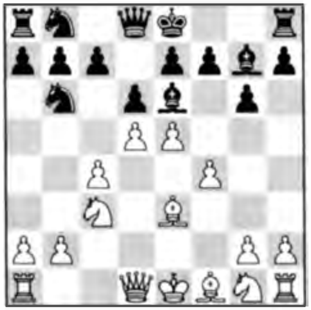
– Here too Black should not play 9...c5?! for, after 10.dxc5 ♘6d7 11.cxd6 exd6 12.♕xd6 ♘xe5? (12...♘c6 13.♗e2 ♖e8 14.♕d2 f6 15.♘f3 fxe5 16.0-0! exf4 17.♗xf4 ♘de5 18.♘g5?! ♗f5 – 18...♕xd2 19.♗xd2 ♗f5= – 19.♘d5± Fercec-Kostrun, Pula 2002) there is no intermediate check on f3 as there was after 8.♘f3 0-0 9.b3 above. Interestingly, it favours White to lose a tempo with 9.♕d2!.

– 9...a5!? 10.♘f3 a4 is another way to seek counterplay.

We already investigated 9.♘f3?! c5 10.dxc5 ♘6d7!.

Note that 9.♖c1 should be met by 9...dxe5 (with c3 protected it is a mistake to play 9...c5?! 10.dxc5 ♘6d7? 11.cxd6 exd6 12.♕xd6 and with no tricks along the diagonal, Black has insufficient compensation for the pawn, Dabo Peranic-Kostrun, Pula 2002) 10.fxe5 c5 11.d5 ♗f5.

● After 8.♗e2 Black can play 8...♘xc4!? (8...0-0 9.d5 ♗c8 – 9...♗f5 – 10.♘f3 ♗g4 could still be a little better for White) 9.♗xc4 ♗xc4 10.♕a4+ b5 11.♘xb5 ♗xb5 12.♕xb5+ ♘d7 and this has not been tested in practice, but it looks quite OK for Black.



8...♗c8

It may look strange to undevelop the bishop, but in combination with Khalifman's 10th move it may well be best.

Riskier is 8...♗f5, as the bishop sometimes provides White with a target: 9.♘f3 (9.♗e2 0-0 10.♘f3 e6 11.dxe6 ♗xe6 12.c5!?) 9...e6?! (9...0-0! 10.♗e2) 10.exd6 cxd6 11.♗d4 ♗xd4, Mazyrin-Korostelev, Cheliabinsk 2008, and now 12.♘xd4±.

9.♘f3

White should think about his development, and he should not fear ...♗g4 (Black has already moved his bishop twice).

– Too sharp is 9.e6 fxe6 10.h4 exd5 11.cxd5 e6 12.♗d4 ♕e7 13.♗xg7 ♕xg7 14.dxe6 ♘c6 15.♘f3 ♗xe6, Flores-Llanos, Buenos Aires 1998.

– The same goes for 9.c5 ♘6d7 10.cxd6 exd6 11.e6 fxe6 12.dxe6 ♘f6 13.♕b3 ♕e7 14.0-0-0 ♕xe6 15.♕xe6+ ♗xe6 16.♖e1 ♘c6 17.♘f3 ♔d7 18.♘g5 ♗f5∓, Arribas Lopez-Navarro Cia, Pamplona 2008.

9...0-0

● Sergeev has played the immediate 9...c6, when 10.♗e2 0-0 11.0-0 ♗g4 looks somewhat better for White:

– 12.♕d2 ♗xf3 13.♖xf3 cxd5 14.cxd5 dxe5 15.fxe5 ♗xe5 16.♗h6 and now Sergeev sacrificed the exchange and held on to the draw rather easily: 16...♘8d7 (16...♗g7? 17.♖h3!) 17.♗xf8 ♕xf8 18.♘e4 ♕g7 19.♖af1 ♘f6 20.♘xf6+ exf6 21.d6 ♖d8 22.♖d3 ♘c4 23.♕b4 ♘xd6 24.♖fd1 ♕h6 25.g3 ♕f8 26.♗f3 ♕e7 27.♔g2 ♔g7 28.a4 b6 29.b3 h5 30.♕d2 draw, Petr-Sergeev, Usti nad Orlici 2006.

– 12.exd6! exd6 13.♗d4 (13.dxc6 ♘xc6 and Black has sufficient activity for the weak pawn on d6) is slightly better for White.

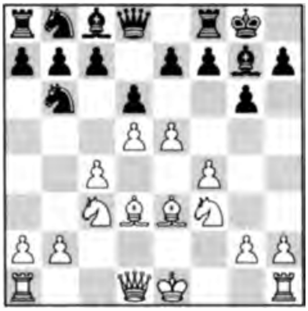
– 12.e6 fxe6 13.♘g5 is met by 13...♘xc4!

● 9...♗g4 10.h3 ♗xf3 11.♕xf3 dxe5 12.c5 exf4 13.♗b5+ (13.♗xf4 ♘6d7 14.d6 is also interesting) 13...♘6d7 14.♕xf4 0-0 15.0-0 c6! 16.♗c4 with compensation for the pawn in Zvara-Stocek, Czechia 2009.

10.♗d3

Ambitious, but Khalifman comes up with a good reply.

Simply 10.♗e2 can be met by any of the standard replies, but then White should be a little better. The computer rather likes the piece sacrifice following 10...♘8d7!? (10...c6, 10...♗g4, 10...e6), but this looks too dangerous: 11.0-0 (11.♗d4!?) 11...dxe5 12.c5 (12.fxe5 ♘xe5 13.♘xe5 ♗xe5∓) 12...exf4 13.♗d4 (13.♗f2! ♗xc3 14.bxc3 ♘xc5 15.♗xc5 ♕xd5 favours White) 13...♘xd5 14.♘xd5 e5 15.♗f2 (15.♗c3 c6 16.♘b4 a5 17.♘c2 ♖e8∓) 15...e4 16.♗h4 ♘f6 17.♘xf6+ ♗xf6 18.♗xf6 ♕xf6.



10...e6!

Both of White's central pawns have advanced and they are easy targets.

10...♗g4!? 11.0-0!? dxe5 12.fxe5 and if Black now takes the pawn, White will obtain enough piece play. However, Black can also continue to attack White's centre with 12...c6 or 12...e6 (12...♘8d7 13.c5 ♘c8 14.♕b3; 12...♗xe5 13.♗h6; 12...♗xf3 13.♕xf3 ♗xe5 14.♗h6).

11.0-0 ♘a6

Black would be more flexible after 11...exd5!?.

12.♗e2

Now that White is moving back and forth with the bishop, Black may do the same:

12...exd5 13.cxd5 ♗g4

Black has counterplay against White's centre.

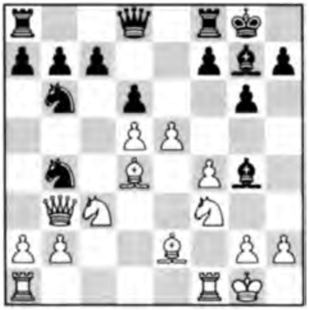
14.♗d4

The alternatives do not pose Black any real problems either: 14.♕b3 ♗xf3 15.♗xf3 dxe5 or 14.♗xa6 bxa6 15.h3 ♗xf3.

14...♘b4

Black equalizes with 14...dxe5.

15.♕b3



15...c5 16.dxc6

16.♗e3 ♗f5! with counterplay. For example: 17.♖ac1 ♗d3! 18.♗xd3?! ♘xd3 19.♖cd1 c4.

16...♘xc6 17.♗xb6

This exchange does not promise anything.

17...♕xb6+ 18.♕xb6 axb6 19.exd6 ♖fd8

Black will retrieve the pawn with even chances.

20.♖fd1 ♗f8 21.h3

The safest way to the draw against his stronger opponent.

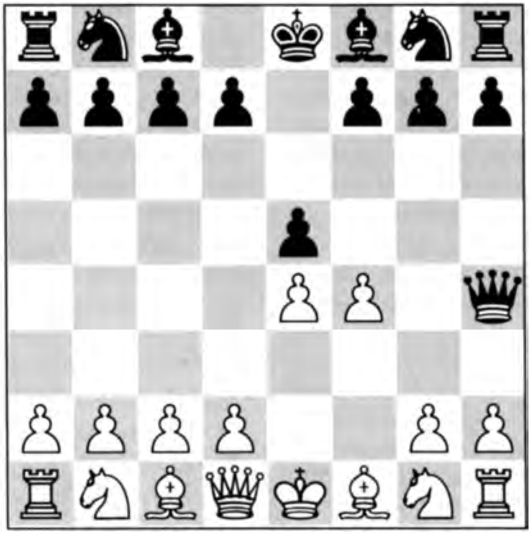
21...♗xf3 22.♗xf3 ♗xd6 23.g3 ♗c5+ 24.♔g2 ♗d4 25.a3 ♗xc3 26.bxc3 ♔f8 27.♔f2 ♖xd1 28.♗xd1 ♖d8 29.♗e2 ♘a5

And the players agreed to a draw.

CHAPTER 17

Arthur Kogan

King's Gambit – a Patzer Check



1.e4 e5 2.f4 ♛h4+!?

1.e4 e5 2.f4!?

The King's Gambit! My students often think that the idea behind this gambit is to create attacking positions. However, I teach them that in reality the main idea in nearly all gambits is first of all to try to surprise (not with the Queen's Gambit!), and secondly to obtain maximum control of the centre and more space for the pieces to smile, and only then to attack the king! The King's Gambit is a romantic way of playing, that many have thought to refute after long analysis, but do you have enough time or enough motivation to memorize it all? I guess that by buying this SOS book you and I both think in the same way: we both like fun in chess and we both like to make our opponents shake their heads in surprise!

The King's Gambit is not that common anymore, but there still are many aggressive players who like to use it from time to time. One example from 2010 was the fantastic win of Polgar against Topalov! In that game she played the 3.♗c4 line, allowing ...♛h4 to hide her king on f1, and then win time versus the black queen, making her pieces smile thanks to her central pawns! However we will not allow something like this to happen!

2...♛h4+!

The exlamation mark is for the surprise effect! If a patzer sees a check... is what our opponent will surely think. However, in reality I first saw this funny looking move in a game of GM Murey as White in which the result of the opening was completely against the usual aggressive spirit of the King's Gambit! The problem with playing a main line versus the King's Gambit is that there is so much analysis that you need to memorize (and keep up-to-date). Just ask yourself: is all that work worth it for the few King's Gambit games that you will encounter in your life? I think 2...♕h4 check is a good practical choice, and in analysing it I found it a cool SOS-weapon which I successfully played myself.

Just for fun I give you the game J.Polgar-Topalov, Mexico City rapid 2010, that I mentioned above:

2...exf4 3.♗c4 d5 4.exd5 ♕h4+ 5.♔f1 ♗d6 6.♘f3 ♕h5 7.♘c3 ♘e7 8.d4 0-0 9.♔f2 ♘d7 10.♖e1 ♘b6 11.♗b3 ♘exd5 12.♘xd5 ♘xd5 13.c4 ♘e3 14.♗xe3 fxe3+ 15.♖xe3 ♗f5 16.c5 ♗f4 17.♖e7 ♗g4 18.♖e4 ♕f5 19.♗c2 ♗h5 20.♖e5 ♗xf3 21.♔xf3! ♕f6 22.♖f5 ♕h6 23.♖xf4 ♖ae8 24.♕d3 f5 25.h4 ♖e4 26.♕d2 ♖e7 27.♖e1 1-0.

3.g3

Although we now have to move our lady again, the weakening of White's kingside may well be worth it! This is a very important psychological point as well, for the main danger in the King's Gambit is the attack on f7 with a bishop on c4, and an open f-file and crazy sacrificial ideas. However, can you imagine a bishop on c4 ignoring the white square weaknesses made by g3? Needless to say that we don't fear a bishop fianchetto, but that doesn't mean that the case is closed. No! Black has lost time with his queen and White will try to use his advantage in development. So let's continue to prove our case that 2...♕h4 was correct!

3.♔e2? is in the spirit of Steinitz, but such things must not be exaggerated! Funnily, it was tried by a few players, probably because they prepared the line 2...exf4 3.d4?! ♕h4+ 4.♔e2. However, here Black still didn't lose the centre and he can get a clear edge in more than one way, for example: 3...d5!, a counter gambit in the Olala spirit, opening files and diagonals and making the black pieces smile! (3...♕xf4 4.♘c3 ♘c6 5.♘f3 ♘d4+∓ is also good, Schmitt-Anders, Bad Homburg 2009) 4.♘f3 ♗g4 5.d3? dxe4 6.dxe4 ♘c6 7.c3 ♘f6 8.♕e1 ♕h5 9.♘d2 exf4 10.♔d1 0-0-0 led to a simple win in Tejada-Padros, Spain cr 1985.

3...♕e7!

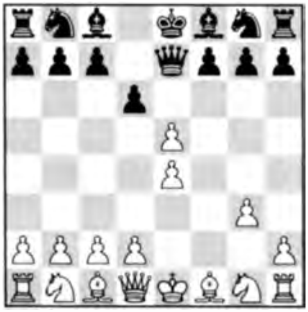
This may look strange, but the idea is to keep control of the centre, and to keep an eye on the unprotected pawn on e4. From this position we will investigate 4.fxe5 and 4.♘c3, as well as the witty 4.♕e2.

☐ **Dirk van Dooren**
■ **Rikard Medancic**
Schwarzach 2009

1.e4 e5 2.f4 ♕h4+ 3.g3 ♕e7 4.fxe5

This is a critical line, as is 4.♘c3! which we will investigate later on (Leignel-C.Foisor, Bethune 1997).

4...d6!



Another surprise! This is the main point of 3...♕e7 and the reason why I liked this line so much.

Instead, 4...♕xe5? will just help White to gain some tempi for development and central control. For some reason it was played a few times by the expert Christina Foisor. I guess she simply likes to dance with her queen? 5.♘c3:

– 5...♘c6 6.♘f3 ♕e7 and now 7.d4! (7.♗c4 d6 8.d3 ♗g4 9.♘d5 ♕d7 10.c3 ♗xf3 11.♕xf3 ♘e5∓ Cabello Fernandez-C.Foisor, Oviedo rapid 1993) is strong, when 7...d5 (or 7...d6 8.♗g5) 8.♘xd5 ♕xe4+ 9.♕e2 is a better endgame for White.

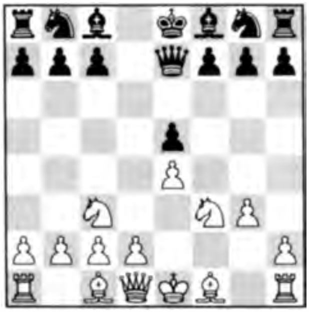
– Or 5...♘f6 6.d4 ♕a5 7.♗d2 ♗b4 and now 8.e5! is a logical novelty – 8.a3 ♗xc3 9.♗xc3 ♕b6 10.♕f3 d5 gave Black counterplay in Cantero Martin-Mora, Barcelona 2001 – 8...♘d5 9.a3±.

5.♘c3

5.exd6 leads to an endgame that we will encounter in the next game (Borner-Kogan, Biel 1991).

After 5.♘f3 dxe5 6.♗g2 ♗g4 7.0-0 ♘d7 8.d3 ♘gf6 9.♔h1 ♕e6! 10.♕e1 ♗c5 11.♘bd2 0-0 12.♘c4 ♖fe8 13.b4 ♗f8 14.♗b2 ♗xf3 15.♖xf3 b5 16.♘e3 ♘b6 17.♖f5 ♘fd7 18.♗c3 c5 19.a3 ♖ac8 Black had nice counterplay in Sluka-Mokry, Czech tt 1996/97.

5...dxe5 6.♘f3



6...♘f6!

This is the most flexible move. It is better to wait for White to commit his kingside bishop before playing ...c6, as a quick ...♘c6 (with the idea of ...♘d4 or ...♘a5) can be a good reply when White develops the bishop to c4.

Therefore 6...c6?! seems worse even though Black managed to win in a game between two GMs: 7.♗c4 ♗g4 (7...♗h3 8.d4) 8.d3 ♘d7 9.0-0 ♘gf6 10.♔g2 b5 11.♗b3 ♘c5 12.h3 ♗xf3+ 13.♕xf3 a5 14.d4! (this is very strong) 14...a4 15.♗g5 (and now 15.♗xf7+! would have been the correct follow-up: 15...♔xf7 16.dxc5 ♕xc5 17.g4 h6 18.h4 with a very nice initiative) 15...axb3 16.axb3 (16.dxc5) 16...♖xa1 17.♖xa1 ♘e6 18.dxe5 ♕b7! 19.♗xf6 gxf6 20.exf6 ♗d6 (Black is taking over the attack) 21.♘e2 ♖g8∓ and Black later won in Rodriguez-Spangenberg, Mar del Plata 1999.

7.♗c4

7.d3 ♘c6 8.♗g5 ♕b4! 9.♖b1 and now 9...♗e6! intending to castle queenside is stronger than 9...h6?! 10.♗xf6 gxf6 11.♘d2 ♗e6 12.♘d5 which was played in Obukhov-Solovjov, Alushta 2002.

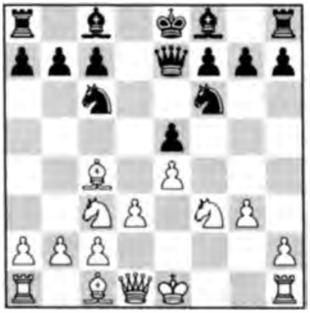
7...♘c6!

This is the reason why Black should postpone ...c6. The knight is very active and can annoy the bishop.

8.d3

8.0-0?? blunders a piece after 8...♕c5+.

8.a4 ♗h3! looks great for Black! Again, queenside castling is up next.



8...♘a5!

Black is getting rid of the most dangerous piece that White has.

9.♗b3 ♘xb3 10.axb3 h6!?

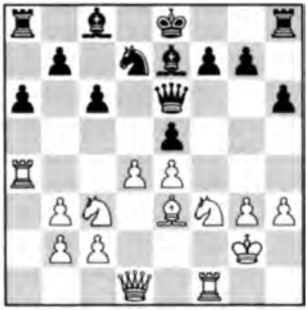
Also interesting is 10...♗h3.

11.h3 c6

11...♕e6 is another option.

12.♗e3 a6 13.♖a5 ♘d7 14.0-0 ♕e6 15.♔g2 ♗b4 16.♖a4 ♗e7 17.d4?

Missing the hidden threat!



17...♘b6

Black has a huge edge after this discovered attack.

The remainder is no longer relevant for our analysis of the opening of course.

18.♖a5 ♕xh3+ 19.♔f2 ♘d7 20.♘xe5? ♕h2+

20...♘xe5 21.♖xe5 ♗g4!.

21.♔e1 ♘xe5 22.♖xe5 ♕xg3+ 23.♗f2 ♕g4 24.♕d3 ♕d7 25.♖g1 f6 26.♖h5 ♗b4 27.♕g3 g5 28.♖gh1 ♕g7 29.♗e3 ♗e6 30.♔d1 0-0-0

Now Black's king is safe and the outcome is no longer in doubt.

31.♘a4?

Threatening mate, but Black has a simple and strong reply.

31...♗d6 32.♕f3 ♔b8 33.♖f1 ♕f7 34.♔c1 ♖df8 35.♖fh1 ♕g6 36.d5? cxd5 37.exd5 ♗f5 38.♕d1 ♖e8 39.♗g1 ♗xc2

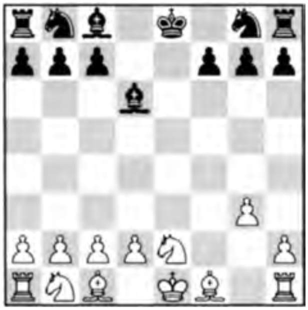
And White resigned. (39...♗f4+! 40.♔b1 ♗xc2+ 41.♕xc2 ♖e1+−+.)

☐ **Daniel Borner**
■ **Artur Kogan**
Biel 1991

1.e4 e5 2.f4 ♕h4+ 3.g3 ♕e7 4.fxe5 d6 5.exd6

Instead of 5.♘c3 as in the previous game.

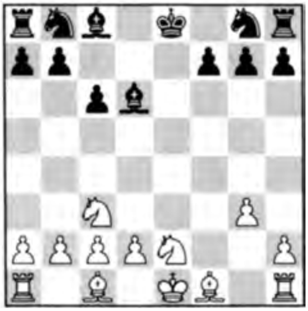
5...♕xe4+ 6.♕e2 ♕xe2+ 7.♘xe2 ♗xd6



When I was young I discussed this position with GM Murey (who often played the King's Gambit). I was more in Black's favour here, while he took the white side. According to my practice and my analysis the ending is most probably about equal, but Black has good chances to seize the initiative! All we need from an SOS line, right?

8.♗g2

- 8.d3 was played in the stem game of the 2...♕h4 line (at least according to my database). A game between two famous GMs! I guess you will be surprised to learn that the strategist Ulf Andersson was once a fan of gambits! Yes, we all get old within time... 8...♗d7 9.♗g2 ♗c6 10.♗xc6+ ♘xc6 11.♗f4 ♗xf4 12.♘xf4 ♘f6 and now the players agreed a draw, Andersson-Keene, Nice ol 1974.
- 8.♘bc3 c6! (not 8...♘c6 9.♘b5) and now:



– 9.♗g2 ♘e7 (9...♘a6!?) 10.d3 0-0 11.♖b1 ♗c5 (11...♘a6) 12.♘a4 ♗b4+ 13.♗d2 ♘a6 14.a3 ♗d6 15.b4 ♘c7 was unclear in Olesen-Shvidler, Tel Aviv 1995.

– 9.b3 ♘f6 10.♗b2 ♗g4 (here 10...0-0 11.♗g2 ♖e8 12.0-0-0 ♗g4 13.♖de1 ♘bd7 is OK for Black) 11.♗g2 ♘bd7 12.h3 and here 12...♗xe2 (12...♗f5 13.0-0-0 0-0-0 14.♖hf1 ♗g6 15.♘f4 was slightly better for White in Murey-Eng, Beer-Sheva 1985) 13.♘xe2 h5!? is decent enough, as is 13...0-0 planning ...♖e8 and ....a5.

8...h5!?

An interesting practical choice to disturb my opponent.

No worse is 8...♘c6 9.d4 ♗g4 10.c3 0-0-0 11.h3 ♗xe2 12.♔xe2 ♗xg3 13.♗g5 f6 14.♔f3 ♗d6 15.♗e3 f5, Moskovets-Korobov, Alushta 2002.

9.d4 h4 10.♗f4 ♗xf4 11.♘xf4 ♘f6 12.♘d2 hxg3 13.hxg3 ♖xh1+ 14.♗xh1 ♘c6 15.c3 ♗g4 16.♔f2 0-0-0

Black should have sufficient counterplay to compensate for White's stable centre.

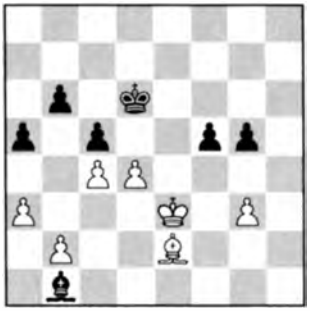
17.♖e1 g5!? 17...♖h8. **18.♘d3 ♗f5 19.♗xc6**

19.♘c5 is best met by 19...b6!.

19...♗xd3 20.♗f3 ♖h8 21.♖h1 ♖xh1 22.♗xh1 ♘g4+ 23.♔f3 f5

And I went on to win this slightly more comfortable endgame for Black:

24.♗g2 ♔d7 25.♗h3 ♘f6 26.♔e3 ♗c2 27.♗g2 b6 28.c4 a5 29.♗f3 ♔e6 30.♗e2 ♘e4 31.♘xe4 ♗xe4 32.a3 c5 33.♗d1 ♗b1 34.♗e2 ♔d6



35.♗d3??

This is a huge mistake, White could keep the draw with 35.♗h5.

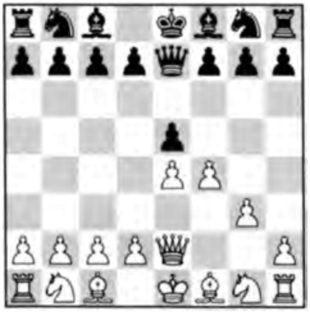
35...cxd4+ 36.♔xd4 ♗xd3 37.♔xd3 a4! Fixing White's structure and winning the game. **38.♔d4 f4 39.gxf4 gxf4** And White resigned as the pawn ending is lost.

☐ **Nicolas Leignel**
■ **Christina Foisor**
Bethune 1997

1.e4 e5 2.f4 ♕h4+ 3.g3 ♕e7 4.♘c3!

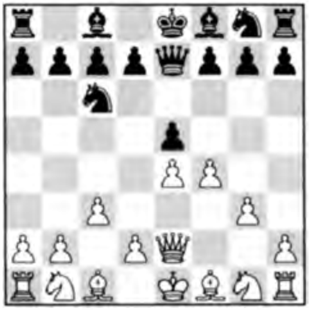
Developing and planning ♘d5 is also very logical of course.

Witty and interesting is 4.♕e2!?



– A very creative SOS-like reply with the queen! It even led to a win of an amateur player (2060) versus GM Mitkov! So, we should not underestimate it: 4...♘f6 5.fxe5 ♕xe5 6.♘c3 ♗b4 7.♘f3 ♕c5 8.e5 ♘g4 9.♘e4 ♕d5 (9...♕e3 is funny, but not good enough 10.♕xe3 ♘xe3 11.♗d3±) 10.c3± and with d4 and ♗g2 coming White is dominating! Luco-Mitkov, Metz 1992.

– A stronger reply is 4...♘c6!, with ...♘d4 in mind: 5.c3?! was played in the only game in my database, but here I would recommend a counter King's Gambit surprise with 5.♘f3 d6 with ...♗g4 coming. Black is fighting for control over square d4, he could even castle queenside, and ...g6 and ...♗g7 are also on. Black is OK!.



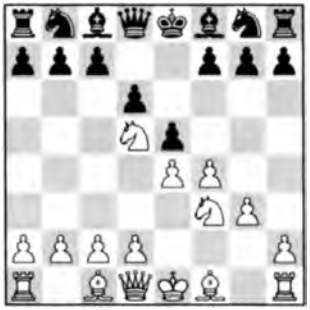
5...f5!! (I prefer White after 5...♘f6 6.d3 – 6.fxe5 ♕xe5 7.♗g2± – 6...d5 7.exd5 ♘xd5 – 7...♗g4 – 8.♗g2 ♕e6 9.♘h3 Bengtson-Mukharji, USA 1995) 6.exf5 (6.d3 fxe4 7.dxe4 ♘f6∓; 6.fxe5 fxe4! 7.♕xe4 ♘f6∓ and Black is the one with a clear edge in development!) 6...d5 7.♗h3 ♘h6 with the initiative. Also good is 7...e4 8.♕h5+ ♔d8 and Black has central control and will win tempi on White's queen.

4...d6!

The best reply in my opinion. After 4... exf4?, which was once the usual choice of Christina Foisor, White is better: 5.d4 (5.d3!? fxg3 6.hxg3 c6 7.♕e2 ♘a6 8.♘f3 d6 9.♗g5 ♕c7 10.0-0-0 also gave White a superior position in Pautrot-C.Foisor, Montpellier 1997) 5...fxg3 6.♗f4 (6.♘f3 d6 7.♗g5 f6 8.♗f4 ♘c6 9.♕d3 ♕f7 10.0-0-0 and White won in Stocek-Vokac, Prerov 2001) 6...c6 7.♕d2 b5 8.0-0-0 f6 9.e5± and this led to another disaster for Black in Chaderon-C.Foisor, France 1998.

5.♗c4

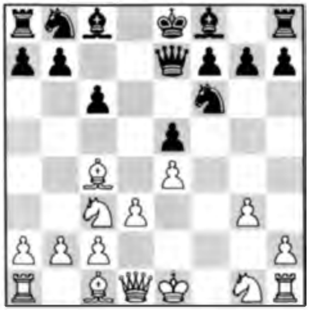
Or 5.♕f3!? ♘f6 6.b3 ♘c6 7.♗b5 ♗d7 8.♘ge2 ♘b4! 9.♗d3 d5! 10.exd5 0-0-0! 11.♗b2 ♗g4! and Black had achieved a killing attack and won in Olala style (as played by my Spanish student Juan Luis Ramiro), Ramon-Ramiro, La Puebla de Alfinden 2010. After the attacking 5.♘d5 Black has 5...♕d8 6.♘f3



6...c6! (6...♘f6!? is also playable, as after 7.♗c4 ♗e6 8.d4 ♗xd5 9.exd5 exf4 10.♗xf4 ♗e7 11.0-0 0-0 12.♗b3 ♘bd7 White is a little better, but Black held in Vouldis-Plachetka, Bled 2002) 7.♘e3 (7.♘c3 ♘f6!? – or 7...exf4 8.gxf4 d5! with unclear play – 8.fxe5 – 8.d3 ♘bd7 with ...b5 ideas is a good Philidor! The light-squared bishop will be passive on e2 or g2 – 8...dxe5 9.♘xe5 ♗c5 is a good gambit, as the black king will feel much safer than his opponent's, right? 10.♗g2 – 10.♘a4?! is met by 10...♗d4! 11.♘f3 ♘xe4 – 10...0-0? 11.♘e2 ♖e8 12.d4 ♗b6 13.c3 c5! with obvious compensation) 7...exf4 8.gxf4 ♘f6 9.d3 d5

10.e5 ♘h5! looks good for Black, as 11.f5 is met by 11...d4.

5...c6 6.fxe5 dxe5 7.d3 ♘f6



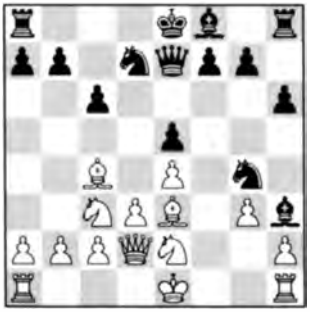
8.♘ge2?!

Against the stronger 8.♘f3 my choice would be the prophylactic 8...h6!, to prevent ♘g5 or ♗g5 (8...b5!? 9.♗b3 ♘a6 10.♘g5 ♗g4! 11.♘e2 ♗h5 is another option. But I don't like 8...♗g4?! 9.h3 ♗h5 10.g4 ♗g6 11.♗e3 and while Black went on to win in Carbonnel-Dobrev, France 2008, this is not a dream bishop on g6) 9.0-0 (9.a4 ♗h3) 9...♗h3 10.♖e1 b5 11.♗b3 ♘g4 looks more to the point.

8...♗h3!

This emphasizes the point of 2...♕h4+!. Having provoked g3 Black takes advantage of the weakened light squares.

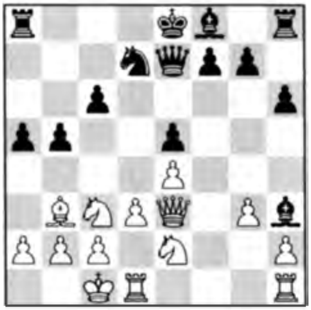
9.♗g5 ♘bd7 10.♕d2 h6 11.♗e3 ♘g4



Black already has a very comfortable edge.

12.0-0-0 Black is also much better after 12.♘g1 ♘xe3 13.♘xh3 ♘xc4 14.dxc4 ♘b6.

12...♘xe3 13.♕xe3 b5 14.♗b3 a5!

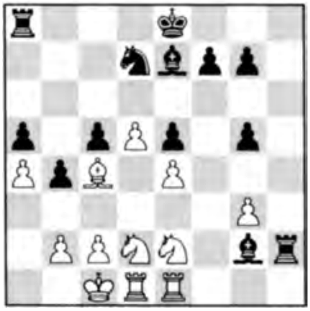


Gaining more and more space, and annoying White's pieces!

15.a4 b4 16.♘b1 ♕g5!

What could be better than solving the problem of the queen by exchanging into a clearly better endgame, owing to the weakness on h2 and the two Olala Bishops!

17.♕xg5 hxg5 18.d4 ♗g2 19.♖he1 ♖xh2 20.♘d2 ♗e7 21.d5 c5 22.♗c4



22...g4! 23.♗b5 ♗g5 24.♗c6 0-0-0!

Always nice to castle this late into the game. Christina went confidently on to win the game:

25.♘g1 ♗h1! 26.♗b5 ♘f6 27.♗d3 c4! 28.♗xc4 ♘xe4 29.♖e2 ♖xe2 30.♘xe2 ♗xd2+ 31.♖xd2 ♘xd2 32.♔xd2

And White stopped the clock.

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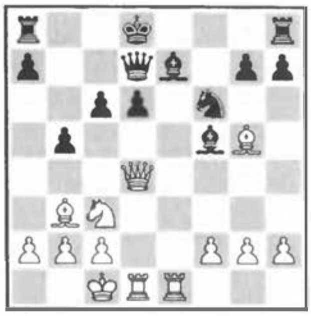
Jeroen Bosch

The SOS Files



Winning the SOS Competition

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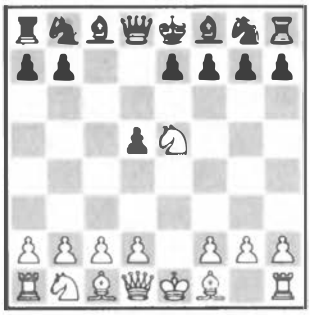
Ian Rogers

Refining Fischer's Plan



Caro-Kann Exchange with 4.♘e5

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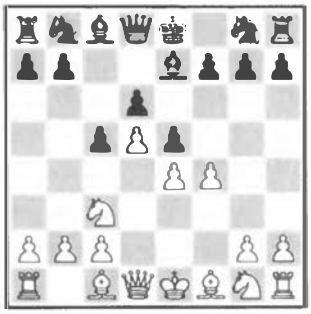
Alexander Beliavsky

Destroying the Benoni Wall



Alekhine's 5.f4

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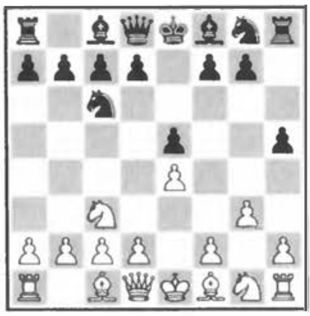
Maxim Notkin

When I was Young

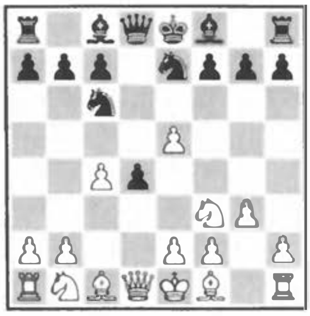


3...h5 against the Vienna

CHAPTER 5 – page 38

Jeroen Bosch

Morozevich's Pet Line in the Albin



The Sideline 5...♘ge7

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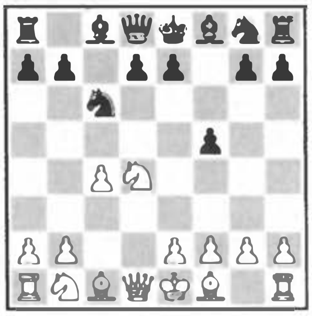
Michal Krasenkow

The Dutch in the English?



Combining ...c5 and ...f5

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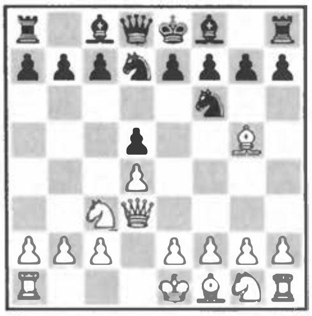
Dorian Rogozenko

Follow the Experts



4.♕d3 in the Richter-Veresov

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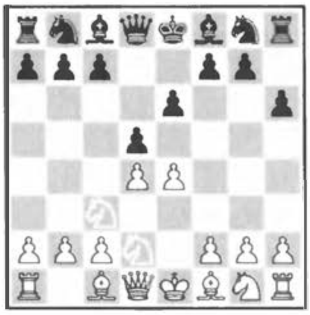
Jeroen Bosch

Let's wait and see: 3...h6 in the French



3...h6 – sur place!

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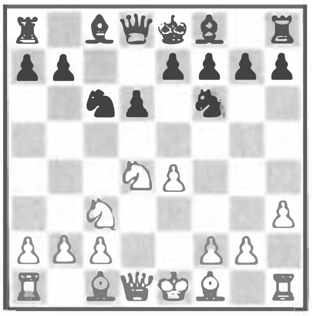
Sergei Movsesian

Play like a Beginner



6.h3 against the Classical Sicilian

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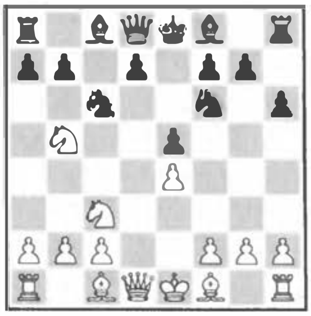
Dimitri Reinderman

The Haberditz Variation



Play 6...h6 in the 'Sveshnikov'

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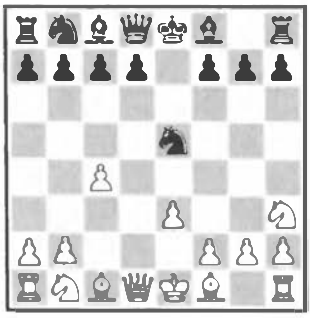
Jeroen Bosch

Get the Edge on the Budapest



Play 5.♘h3!?

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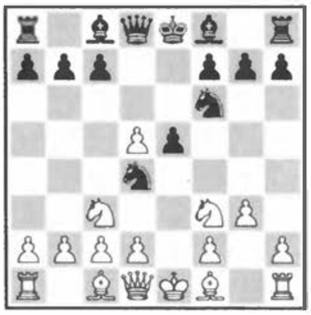
Igor Glek

Gambit Lines in the Glek Variation



Is this the Belgrade Gambit?

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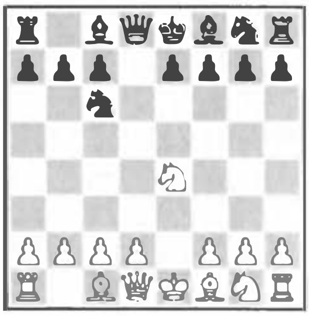
Jeroen Bosch

Beating the Van Geet

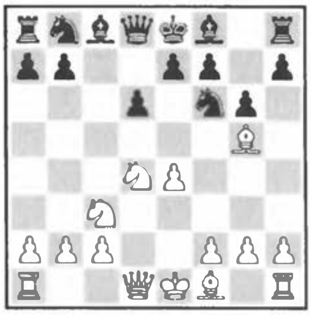


1.♘c3 d5 2.e4 dxe4 3.♘xe4 ♘c6

CHAPTER 14 – page 108

Dorian Rogozenko

A Latvian Speciality vs the Dragon



Bishop Aggression 6.♗g5 and 7.♗b5

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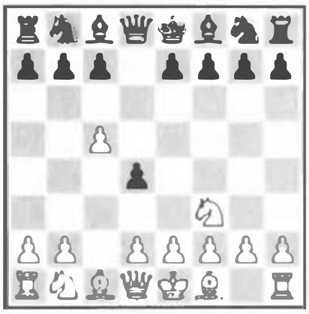
Mihai Grünberg

It is Better Playing White

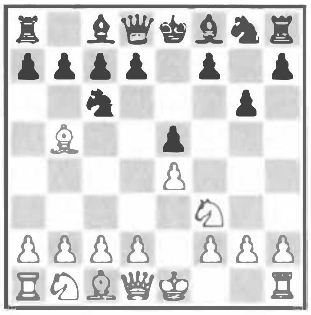


1.♘f3 d5 2.c4 d4 3.c5!?

CHAPTER 16 – page 121

Glenn Flear

The Solid but Tricky Fianchetto Spanish

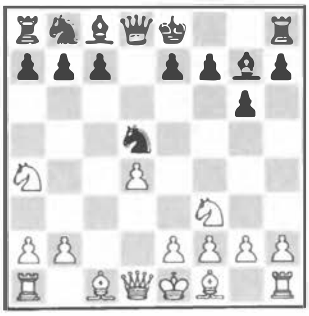


1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 g6!?

CHAPTER 17 – page 133

Jonathan Rowson

The Improved Nadanian



6.♘a4 in the Grünfeld

CHAPTER 1

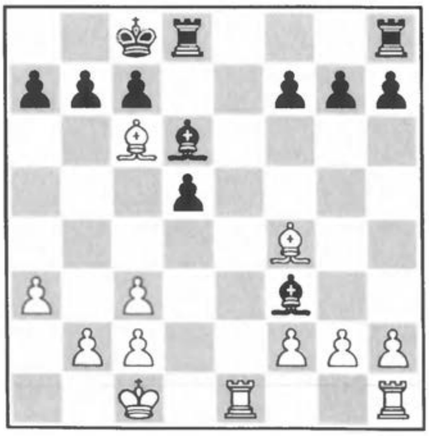
Jeroen Bosch

The SOS Files

Grandmaster Draw in the Gunsberg
(SOS-1, Chapter 1, p.10)
From this book onwards, we shall keep you informed on previous SOS ideas – making sure that you keep up with important SOS victories, and the occasional mishap!
Let's start with a grandmaster draw in the Gunsberg Variation.

☐ **Stefan Kindermann**
■ **Zoltan Gyimesi**
Austria tt 2003/04

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.a3 d5
Please note that 4...g6 5.♘xe5!? corresponds rather nicely with our appetizer in Chapter 12. In Nevanlinna-Nyysti, Finland tt 2003/04, Black returned the piece after 5...♘xe5 6.d4 ♘c6 7.d5 ♗g7 8.dxc6 bxc6 9.♗d3 with even chances. Interestingly, Nyysti had previously lost a game with 7...♘b8 8.e5 ♘g8 9.d6. This was against Magnus Carlsen. Yes, the Norwegian boy wonder sure knows his SOS!
White was better in Kuzmicz-Nemeth, Balatonlelle 2004, after 4...d6 5.d4 ♗g4 6.d5 ♘d4 7.♗e3 ♘xf3+ 8.gxf3 ♗d7 9.♕d2 c6 10.♗c4 ♖c8 11.dxc6 bxc6 12.f4 exf4 13.♗xf4.
5.♗b5 ♘xe4 6.♕e2
The principal move is 6.♘xe5 when Skovgaard-Jaeger, Copenhagen 2004, turned out badly for Black after 6...♕f6 7.♘d3N (7.♘f3) 7...♘xc3 8.dxc3 ♗e6 9.♗f4 ♖c8 10.♕d2 a6 11.♗xc6+ bxc6 12.♘b4 ♗xb4 13.axb4 0-0 14.0-0±.
Instead of 6...♕f6, the move 6...♕g5 may lead to wild complications: 7.♘xc6 ♕xg2 8.♖f1 ♘xc3 (I am rather looking forward to a future contribution following 8...a6 9.♘xd5 axb5 10.♘xc7+ ♔d7 11.♘xa8 ♔xc6 and in this theoretical position (with reversed colours) the question is how useful the additional move a3 is) 9.dxc3 a6 10.♕e2+ ♕e4 11.♕xe4+ dxe4 12.♘d4+!? (12.♗a4 ♗d7) 12...axb5 13.♘xb5 ♔d7 14.♗f4 ♔c6 15.c4 and White had the slightly better chances in Morgan-Schroeder, cr 2003/04. This was a reader submission for our SOS contest.
6...♘xc3 7.♕xe5+ ♕e7!
This equalizing move was already given in SOS-1. Our present grandmaster 'duel' confirms this verdict. Instead 7...♗e7 8.♕xc3 0-0 9.♗xc6 bxc6 10.♕xc6 was better for White in Kristjansson-Azarov, Goa 2002.
8.dxc3 ♗d7 9.♕xe7+ ♗xe7 10.♗f4 0-0-0 11.0-0-0 ♗g4 12.♖de1 ♗xf3 13.♗xc6 ♗d6
A nice intermediate move that makes for an esthetic diagram.



14.♗xd6 ♗xg2 15.♖hg1 ♖xd6 16.♖xg2 bxc6 17.♖xg7 ♖f6 18.♖e7 ♖f8= 19.♖xh7 ♖xf2 20.♔d1 ½-½

An SOS Is Stronger Than You Think

(SOS-1, Chapter 2, p.22)

It is with great pleasure that I present the following three games, correcting erroneous judgments from SOS-1. In all cases our SOS line turns out to contain even more bite than I thought.

☐ **John Bartholomew**
■ **Gennady Zaichik**
Philadelphia 2004

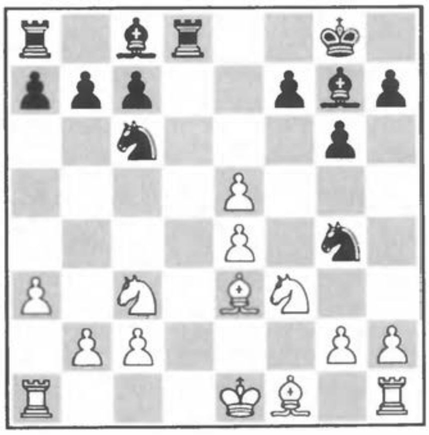
1.e4 g6 2.d4 ♗g7 3.♘c3 d6 4.f4 ♘f6 5.a3 0-0 6.♘f3 ♘c6 7.♗e3

I incorrectly gave this a dubious mark in SOS-1, preferring instead 7.♗e2 or 7.e5.

7...e5 8.dxe5 dxe5 9.♕xd8!

Going for this ending is much better than 9.fxe5 ♘g4 10.♗c5 ♘cxe5! from the game Sepp-Fridman, Riga 1995 (via transposition). This was the game upon which I had based my previous judgement.

9...♖xd8 10.fxe5 ♘g4



Structurally there is nothing wrong with Black, but White has some annoying time-gaining moves at his disposal.

11.♗g5 ♖f8 12.♘d5 ♘cxe5

Here 12...♘gxe5 was stronger with the tactical point 13.♘xc7 (13.0-0-0 seems to preserve an edge) 13...♘xf3+ 14.gxf3 ♗xb2.

13.♘xc7 ♖b8

Of course, now 13...♘xf3+ 14.gxf3 leaves the g4-knight en prise.

14.♗e7 Winning the exchange. **14...♘c6 15.♗xf8 ♗xb2!** The best chance. **16.♖b1 ♗c3+ 17.♔e2 ♔xf8 18.♘d5** Giving back the exchange for a superior ending. **18...♘d4+ 19.♔d3! ♘f2+ 20.♔xc3 ♘xf3 21.gxf3 ♘xh1 22.♔d4! ♘f2 23.h4 ♘h3 24.c4 h6 25.a4 g5 26.♗xh3! ♗xh3 27.hxg5 ♗d7** 27...hxg5 28.♖h1 ♗c8 29.♖h8+ ♚g7 30.♖d8 wins a piece. **28.gxh6 ♗xa4 29.♖g1 f6 30.♖g7 ♗e8 31.♘xf6 ♖d8+ 32.♔c3 ♗f7 33.♘h7+ 1-0**

More a3 Fun

(SOS-1, Chapter 3, p.29)

The following game sees White effortlessly outplaying a GM in a vintage a3-SOS.

☐ **Davor Rogic**
■ **Drazen Sermek**
Croatia tt 2004

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♘c6 6.a3

Well, here's that funny move again. In SOS-1 we argued that given the right opponent this could be an apt moveorder weapon to outfox the chap on the other side of the board. Sermek decides upon one of the more principal approaches, questioning the usefulness of 6.a3.

6...d5 7.exd5

My main line in SOS-1 was 7.♗b5 ♗d7 8.exd5 exd5 9.0-0 ♗e7 10.h3 0-0 11.♘f3, as played by Nigel Short.

7...exd5 8.♗e2 ♗e7 9.0-0 0-0

I considered this position to be equal (and therefore recommended 7.♗b5). However, it seems that I underestimated the strength of this particular SOS – in the game Rogic demonstrates that White's position is a lot easier to handle than Black's.

10.♗f4 a6?!

To avoid a knight jump to b5.

11.♗f3 ♘xd4?! 12.♕xd4

White has pressure against the isolated pawn and is better.

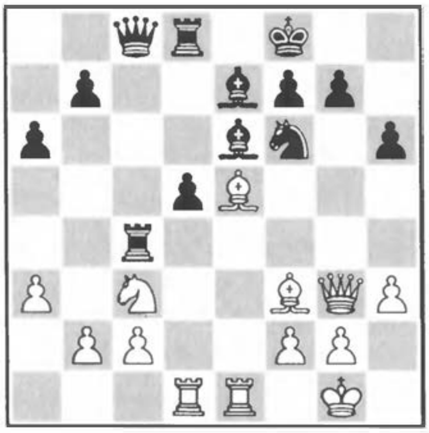
12...♗e6 13.♖ad1 ♖c8 14.♖fe1 ♕d7 15.h3 ♖fd8 16.♗e5!

Again White is increasing the pressure. With rather simple means Rogic has obtained superior chances.

16...♖c4 17.♕d2 ♕c8 18.♕g5!

Directing her majesty towards the enemy zone. This move underlines the coordination of White's forces. Because of the tactical problems on square g7, the isolated pawn is now difficult to defend.

18...h6 19.♕g3 ♔f8



20.♗xd5! ♘xd5

20...♗xd5 21.♘xd5 loses on the spot.

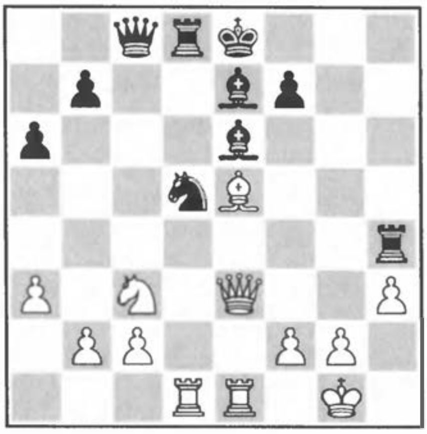
21.♕xg7+ ♔e8 22.♕h8+ ♔d7 23.♕xh6

With three pawns and an attack for the piece.

23...♖h4

23...♕c6 is more stubborn.

24.♕e3 ♔e8



25.♕g3?

White misses a good chance: 25.♖xd5! ♗xd5 (25...♖xd5! 26.♘xd5 ♗xd5 27.♗f6 ♖e4 28.♕xe4 ♗xe4 29.♖xe4 ♕xc2 30.♖xe7+ ♔f8±) 26.♘xd5 ♖xd5 27.♗f6+–.

25...♖h6? 26.♕g8+?

Again a sac on d5 was possible: 26.♘xd5! ♖xd5 27.♖xd5 and now 27...♗xd5 28.♗f6 wins material in all lines: 28...♖xf6 (28...♗e6 29.♕g8+ ♔d7 (29...♗f8 30.♗g7) 30.♕xc8+ ♔xc8 31.♗xe7) 29.♕g8+ ♔d7 30.♖xe7+.

26...♔d7 27.♕g7

Here 27.♘xd5 ♖xg8 28.♘b6+ ♔c6 29.♘xc8 ♗xc8 favours Black.

27...♗f8 28.♕g3 ♔e8 29.♘e4 ♖g6 30.♕f3 ♕xc2 31.♖c1

and possibly in time trouble the players agreed to a most illogical result: draw.

A Simple SOS Win

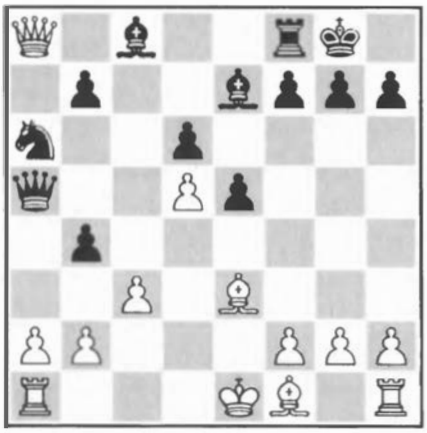
(SOS-1, Chapter 12, p.98)

It is hard to face the Sveshnikov. The next game is a major confidence booster for our SOS recipe.

☐ **Ioannis Papadopoulos**
■ **Robert Ris**
Aghia Pelagia 2004

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 e5 6.♘db5 d6 7.♘d5

♘xd5 8.exd5 ♘b8 9.♕f3 a6 10.♕a3 ♗e7 11.♗d2 11.♗g5!?. **11...0-0 12.♗b4 axb5** 12...♗g4!?. **13.♕xa8 ♘a6 14.♗d2 ♕b6 15.♗e3 ♕a5+ 16.c3 b4**



All this can be found on page 102 of SOS-1, where I now stated that White should force the draw with 17.♖c1 since Black has excellent compensation after 17.♗d2 bxc3 18.♗xc3 ♕xd5. After 17.♖c1, Paragua-Poliakov, Goa 2002, was drawn after 17...♕xa2 18.cxb4 ♕xb2 19.♖xc8 ♕xb4+ 20.♗d2 ♕b1+ 21.♗c1 ♕b4+ 22.♗d2.

In our present game Mr Papadopoulos played the much simpler and much stronger

17.♗xa6!N

which wins almost outright!

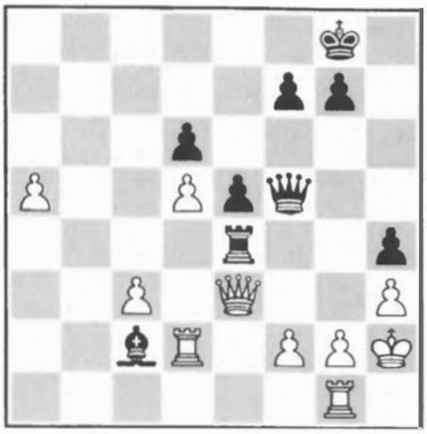
17...bxc3

Here 17...bxa6 18.♕c6 just wins.

18.0-0

Castling into safety, White remains an exchange up.

18...bxa6 18...cxb2 19.♖ab1 bxa6 20.♖xb2±. **19.bxc3 ♗f5 20.♕b7 ♗f6 21.♕b3 h5 22.♖fd1 ♕c7 23.♖ac1 ♖b8 24.♕a4 h4 25.h3 ♕d8 26.♕xa6 ♗g5 27.♕e2 ♖a8 28.♖d2 ♖a4 29.♗xg5** 29.c4. **29...♕xg5 30.♕e3 ♖f4 31.♔h2** Here White could have won with 31.a4! ♗e4 32.f3 ♗xf3 33.♖e1!. However, not 33.a5? ♗xg2 34.♖xg2? ♖f1+ and it is Black who wins. **31...♗e4 32.♖g1 ♕f5 33.a4 ♗c2! 34.a5 ♖e4** Black has strong counterplay. **35.♕f3 ♖f4 36.♕e2 ♖e4 37.♕f3** Or 37.♖xc2 ♖xe2 38.♖xe2 ♕f4+ 39.♔h1 ♕a4. **37...♖f4 38.♕e3 ♖e4**



39.a6 ♖xe3 40.fxe3 ♕d7? A mistake in timetrouble, correct was 40...♕c8!.

41.♖a1! **1-0**

White wins after 41...♗a4 42.♖b2.

The ...♗d6 Saga Continues

(SOS-1, Chapter 4, p.40)

I recommended 4...♗d6 as a means to play for a win as Black against the Spanish Four Knights. I soon experienced the truth of that remark myself, see below.

☐ **Saidali Yuldashev**
■ **Sergey Kayumov**
Abu Dhabi 2004

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗b5 ♗d6 5.d3

Jan Pinski has suggested the creative 5.g4 in his book *The Four Knights* (2003). He diffused his own bomb though, by remarking that Black is OK after 5...♗c5!.

More normal is 5.0-0 0-0 and now:

● 6.d4 (this pseudo-active move gives Black all the chances) 6...♘xd4 7.♘xd4 exd4 8.♕xd4 ♖e8! (preparing 9...♗e5)

9.h3?! ♗e5 10.♕d3 c6! (10...♗xc3 also wins a safe pawn, but the text is even more ambitious) 11.♗a4 a5 (threatening to win the bishop) 12.♗b3 b5 13.a4 b4 14.♘e2 ♘xe4 (now Black has won the pawn under even more favourable circumstances) 15.♕f3 d5 16.♘g3 ♘c5 17.♗e3 ♘xb3 18.cxb3 ♗xb2 and White resigned in Willemze-Bosch, Dieren 2003, as he remains two pawns down for nothing. Playing an SOS is even better than writing about one!

● 6.d3 h6 (avoiding 7.♗g5 with an unpleasant pin) 7.a3 ♖e8 8.h3 ♗f8 9.♖e1 d6 10.♗e3 a6 11.♗c4 ♗e6 12.♗xe6 ♖xe6 13.♘d5 ½-½ Ghaem Maghami-Harikrishna, Abu Dhabi 2004.

5...0-0

Not having castled yet, Black might like to play 5...h6, and now:

● 6.♘e2 0-0 7.c3 ♖e8 8.0-0 a6 9.♗a4 b5 10.♗c2 ♗f8 11.♘g3 d5 12.h3 g6 13.a4 ♗b7 14.♖e1 ♗g7 with a superior Ruy Lopez for Black in Slapikas-Asauskas, Vilnius 2004.

● 6.♗e3 a6 7.♗a4 0-0 8.h3 b5 9.♗b3 ♗b4!? (preparing to strike in the centre with ...d5) 10.0-0 ♗xc3 11.bxc3 d5 12.exd5 ♘xd5 13.♗d2 ♖e8 with approximate equality in Schurade-Gustafsson, Höckendorf 2004.

6.a3

White prepares a retreat square for his king's bishop, and prevents a possible ...♗b4. What is more, he cleverly postpones castling.

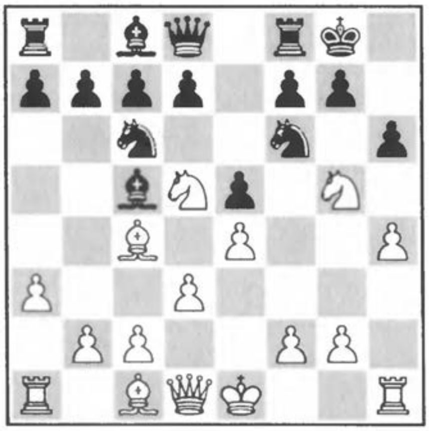
6...♖e8

The danger of combining castling with playing 6...h6?! was demonstrated in Smeets-Pavasovic, Wijk aan Zee C 2004. Indeed, that's what White was waiting for! He needed no further provocation to launch a kingside attack with 7.g4! ♗e7 (7...♘xg4 8.♖g1 is too dangerous) 8.♗xc6! dxc6 9.h3 ♕d6 10.♘h4 ♘d5! 11.♘f5 ♗xf5 12.gxf5 ♘xc3 13.bxc3 b5?! (13...♖fd8! was the correct way to proceed according to Smeets. Black plans to evacuate his king to the queenside, while holding the kingside with ...♗f6) 14.♗e3 a5 and now according to Smeets 15.♖g1! a4 16.♕h5 ♔h7 17.♔e2 preparing to double the rooks on the g-file would have given White a decisive attack.

7.♗c4

Eying the f7 square. Black did not fear 7.♗g5 because of 7...♘d4! 8.♘xd4?! exd4 planning 9.♘d5? c6 10.♘xf6+ gxf6 11.♗h6 f5 12.♗c4 ♕h4.

7...♗c5 8.♘g5 ♖f8 9.♘d5 h6 10.h4!?



10...d6

Of course Black does not take on g5. Now it appears though that White has sinned against one of Steinitz's rules – attacking while he did not have an advantage.

11.c3 ♘xd5 12.exd5 ♘e7 13.♕h5 ♗f5 14.♘e4 ♗xe4 15.dxe4 f5 Not f7, but f2 is a weak square! **16.f3 fxe4 17.fxe4 ♗f2+ 18.♔e2 ♕d7 19.♗d2 ♖f7 20.♔d3 ♖af8 21.♖af1 ♗g3 22.♖xf7 ♖xf7 23.♖h3 ♗f4 24.♗e1 g6 25.♕e2 h5 26.♖h1 ♔g7 27.♖f1 ♘g8 28.g3 ♗h6 29.♖xf7+ ♕xf7 30.♕f2?** 30.♔c2 **30...♘f6 31.a4?! a6 32.♕f3 ♕d7! 33.♗b3 ♕h3 34.♗d1 ♘g4 35.♗e2 ♕h2 36.b4? ♕g1** Black has cunningly infiltrated and is totally winning. **37.♕f1 ♕e3+ 38.♔c2 ♕c1+ 39.♔d3** And White resigned as 39...♕b1+ 40.♔c4 ♘e3 mates.

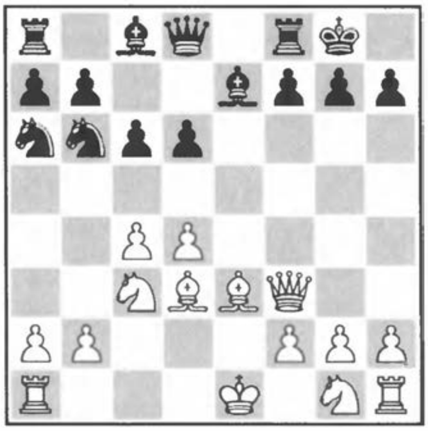
SOS Warning

(SOS-1, Chapter 11, p.94)

A note of warning for readers eager to play Kortchnoi's 7.♕f3 in the Alekhine. Black's play in the following game deserves to be subjected to careful scrutiny.

□ **Vladimir Kovalenko**
■ **Vladimir Sergeev**
Kiev 2004

1.e4 ♘f6 2.e5 ♘d5 3.d4 d6 4.c4 ♘b6 5.exd6 exd6 6.♘c3 ♗e7 7.♕f3 0-0 8.♗e3 c6 9.♗d3 ♘a6



So far Black had mainly tried 9...d5 when SOS-1 gives 10.c5 ♘6d7 11.♘ge2 b6 with a tiny edge for White (p.95). I like Sergeev's move. Black simply develops, aiming for either ...♘b4 or simply ...♘c7 – the central push d6-d5 can wait.

10.a3

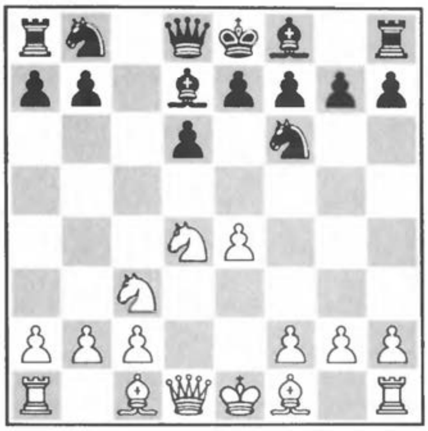
10.♘ge2? ♘b4∓ illustrates a main point of 9...♘a6.

10...♘c7 11.♘ge2 d5 Only now. **12.c5 ♘c4 13.♗c1 ♗f6 14.b3** 14.0-0 **14...♘a5 15.♗c2** 15.♖b1 removes the rook from the a1-h8 diagonal. **15...b6 16.0-0 bxc5 17.dxc5 ♗a6** Now Black is just better. **18.♗b2 ♖e8 19.♖fe1 ♖b8! 20.b4 ♘c4 21.♗c1 ♘e6 22.♗f4? ♖b7 23.♗d3 ♖be7** With his wonderful piece coordination Black is ready to strike. **24.♗xc4? ♗xc4** 24...♘d4 also wins. **25.♗d6 ♘d4** **0-1**

Kupreichik Reigns Supreme

Both grandmasters Sedlak and Krum Georgiev have been rather successful with the Kupreichik Variation. Some fragments to convince you of its viability.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♗d7



● **6.♗e2 ♘c6 7.♗e3 e6 8.♘db5 ♕b8 9.0-0 ♗e7 10.f4 0-0 11.♗f3 ♖c8 12.♕e2 a6 13.♘d4 b5 14.a3 ♕c7 15.♖fd1 ♖ab8** With a very pleasant Scheveningen-like position. White missed an intermediate move when he embarked upon. **16.e5?! dxe5 17.♘xc6** 17.♗xc6 exd4! (17...♗xc6 18.♘xc6 ♕xc6 19.fxe5= was White's idea) 18.♗xd7 dxc3! 19.♗xc8 cxb2 20.♖ab1 ♖xc8 and Black is better. **17...♗xc6 18.♗xc6 exf4!** with advantage for Black in Kakkanas-Kr.Georgiev, Thessaloniki 2003.

● **6.♗c4 e6 7.♗e3 ♘c6 8.♗b3 a6 9.♕e2 ♖c8 10.0-0-0 ♘a5 11.g4 ♖xc3!** A typical Sicilian exchange sacrifice. **12.bxc3 ♘xe4 13.♗d2 d5 14.f3 ♘xd2**

15.♕xd2 ♗a3+ 16.♔b1 0-0 and Black was better, S.Ilic-Kr.Georgiev, Thessaloniki 2003.

● **6.f3 ♕b6 7.g4 h6** 7...♘c6. **8.h4 e6 9.♘b3 a6 10.♕e2 ♕c7 11.♖g1 g6 12.♗e3 b5 13.a3 ♘c6 14.0-0-0 ♗e7 15.g5 hxg5 16.hxg5 ♘h5 17.f4 b4 18.axb4 ♘xb4 19.f5 exf5 20.♖d4** with this intermediate move White aims to gain control over square d5 unclear, Kiril Georgiev-Sedlak, Topola 2004.

● **6.f4 ♘c6 7.♘f3 g6!?** 7...e6 **8.♗d3 ♗g7 9.0-0 ♗g4! 10.♕e1 ♗xf3 11.♖xf3 ♘d4 12.♖f1 ♘d7 13.♕f2 0-0 14.♗e3 ♘c6 15.♔h1 ♕a5 16.♗d2 ♕b6** and now White should not be over-optimistic about his chances with **17.♕h4 ♕xb2 18.♖ab1 ♕a3 19.e5?** 19.♖b3 ♕a5 20.♖b5 ♕d8 21.♖xb7 ♘c5 22.♖bb1 e6. **19...dxe5 20.f5 ♘f6 21.♖f3 ♖fd8 22.fxg6 hxg6 23.♖h3 ♖d4 24.♘e4 ♕xa2 25.♖f1 ♖xe4! 26.♗xe4 ♕c4 27.♗d3 ♕xh4 28.♖xh4 ♖d8** and Black won in Fedorchuk-Sedlak, Esbjerg 2004.

● **6.♗e3 ♘g4 7.♗g5 h6 8.♗h4 g5 9.♗g3 ♗g7 10.♘f5?!** 10.♗e2; 10.♕d2; 10.h3. **10...♗xf5 11.exf5 ♗xc3+ 12.bxc3 ♕a5! 13.♖b1 ♘f6 14.♗b5+ ♘c6 15.0-0 0-0 16.♖e1 ♖ae8** White may have the bishop pair, but Black has a better pawn structure. **17.h4 ♕xc3 18.hxg5 hxg5 19.♕c1 ♘h7 20.♖e4 ♕f6 21.♕d1 ♕xf5 22.♗d3 ♕d7 23.♖e3 f6 24.♗c4+?** 24.♗g6! ♖d8 (24...♔g7 25.♕h5 ♖h8 26.♗xe8 ♖xe8 27.♗xd6!) 25.♗h2 enables the rook to join the attack along the third rank. **24...♔g7 25.♗e6 ♕c7 26.♕g4 ♘d8 27.♗b3 f5 28.♕h5 e5 29.♖d1 ♘f7 30.♕f3 f4** with a superior position, Nevednichy-Sedlak, Petrovac 2004.

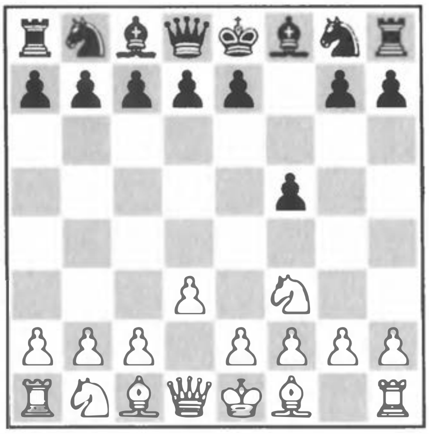
And the Winner is...

(SOS-1, Chapter 16, p.127)

At the end of SOS-1 readers were called upon to send in their games with any of the SOS ideas mentioned in the book. We received some entertaining entries. However, months before the final date of submission it became clear that we had a winner! Magnus Carlsen conjured up a powerful novelty to blow former World Championship Candidate Sergey Dolmatov off the board in a mere 19 moves. Such is the SOS power of Youth. We hereby proudly present the winner of the 1st Prize:

☐ **Magnus Carlsen**
■ **Sergey Dolmatov**
Moscow 2004

1.♘f3 f5 2.d3



I dubbed this the Improved Lisitsin Gambit in SOS-1. Magnus must have prepared it specifically for Dolmatov, who is known to be a great connoisseur of the Dutch.

2...d6 3.e4 e5 4.♘c3 ♘c6 5.exf5 ♗xf5 6.d4 ♘xd4

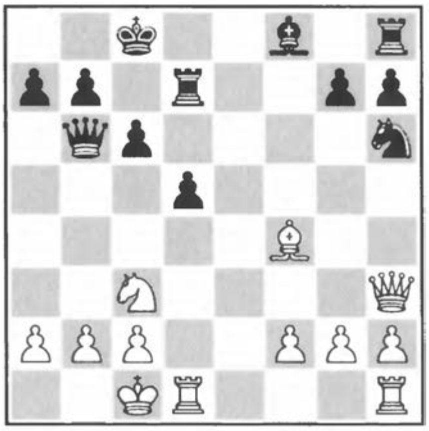
The main game in SOS-1 went 6...♘b4 7.♗b5+ c6 8.♗a4 e4 9.♘g5 d5 and now 10.f3! was shown to favour White in Krasenkow-Kindermann, Panormo 2001.

7.♘xd4 exd4 8.♕xd4 ♘f6

The main alternative is 8...c6 when 9.♗f4!? is strong:

● 9...♗xc2 invites some rather direct play by White: 10.♔d2! ♗g6 11.♖e1+ ♔d7 (11...♔f7 12.♗c4+d5 13.♘xd5+−) 12.g3!? ♕b6 13.♗h3+ ♔d8 (13...♔c7 14.♗xd6+! ♗xd6 15.♕xg7+ ♔b8 16.♔c1! ♕xf2 17.♘e4 wins) 14.♗g5+ ♔c7 15.♘d5+ 1-0 Seel-Horstmann, Bad Wiessee 2003.

● 9...♕b6 10.♕d2 d5 11.0-0-0 0-0-0 12.♗d3 ♗xd3 13.♕xd3 ♘h6? (Black wants to prevent the queen check on f5, but creates an even more devastating possibility. Still 13...♘f6 14.♕f5+ ♖d7 15.♗e5 ♗e7 16.♗d4, followed by 17.♖he1, gives White a nice edge too) 14.♕h3+ ♖d7



15.♘xd5! ♕d8 (15...cxd5 16.♖xd5 ♕c6 17.♖hd1 is the simple point of White's sacrifice) 16.♗xh6 cxd5 (16...gxh6 17.♘f6+−) 17.♖xd5 ♔c7 18.♗f4+ 1-0, Sandner-Rechel, Germany Bundesliga 2003/04. White seems to be having all the fun in these lines.

9.♗c4!

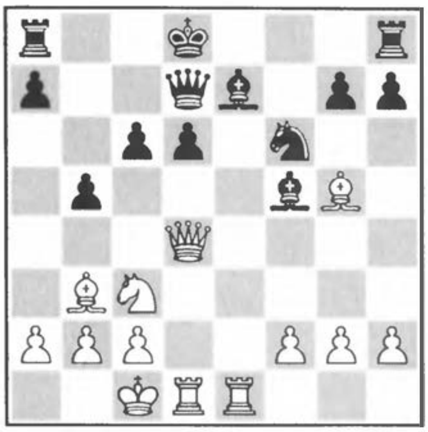
Sacrificing the c2-pawn and improving upon Romanishin-Malaniuk, Tallinn 1987, which went: 9.♗d3 ♗xd3 10.♕xd3 c6 11.0-0 ♗e7 with equal play.

9...c6 10.♗g5 b5

The more natural 10...d5 fails to 11.0-0-0 ♗e7 12.♕e5!, followed by 13.♖he1, with a crushing attack.

11.♗b3 ♗e7 12.0-0-0 ♕d7 13.♖he1 ♔d8

After 13...0-0-0 14.♕f4! it is hard to prevent 15.♖xe7 as 14...♖he8 is met by 15.♗f7. Also strong is 14.g4 ♗xg4 15.♖xe7.



14.♖xe7!

A devastating sacrifice that decides the game.

14...♕xe7

Taking with the king is equally bad after 14...♔xe7 15.♗xf6+ gxf6 16.♖e1+ and a subsequent ♕xf6 decides.

15.♕f4 ♗d7 16.♘e4! d5

16...♖f8 17.♘xd6 winning.

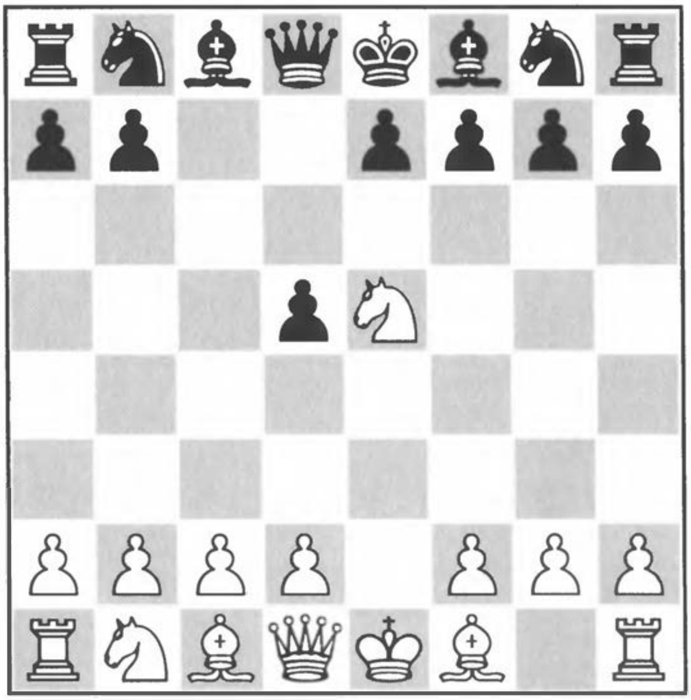
17.♘xf6 h6 18.♗h4 g5 19.♕d4! 1-0

Dolmatov threw in the towel in view of 19...gxh4 20.♘xd5!.

CHAPTER 2

Ian Rogers

Refining Fischer's Plan



NIC KEY CK1.4

Caro-Kann Exchange with 4.♘e5

At first sight, 1.e4 c6 2.♘f3 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.♘e5!?, the subject of this SOS article, does not look like a very sophisticated positional system.

In fact, when first faced by this plan, in the 2004 Bangkok Open in a game which decided first place, I could not take the system seriously and soon found myself suffering without a pair of bishops and without counterplay. Yet the 4.♘e5 system is just a refinement of the old 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.♗d3 ♘c6 5.c3 plan, which was used with such success by Fischer in the 1970 USSR versus Rest of the World match. In the old 4.♗d3 system, White usually makes great efforts to avoid playing ♘f3, because then Black's ...♗g4 will set up an annoying pin. Yet e5 is the best square for White's knight, so what better way to avoid the pin than to send the knight there immediately? Of course moving one's only developed piece twice in the opening is not quite according to orthodox theories. However, if you have read this far in an SOS chapter, such niceties are unlikely to prove too great an obstacle to trying out an original and sometimes dangerous plan. Apart from Internet games, where 4.♘e5 has been quite popular, there have been only a few dozen tournament games with 4.♘e5, with the Czech player Cernousek being the line's main advocate. However in 2004, 4.♘e5 has been adopted by a number of other strong players, with the high point being Marie Sebag's inspiring victory over WGM Xu Yuanyuan (see below).

1.e4 c6 2.♘f3 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.♘e5!?

4.d4 ♗g4 would be exactly the type of position White is trying to avoid.

After 4.♘e5!? a knight-move is called for. However, 4...♘d7 looks awkward. After 5.d4 e6 White should probably choose either 6.♗d3 or 6.f4, even though 6.♗b5 ♘f6 7.0-0 ♗e7 8.♕e2 0-0 9.♘d2 ♘xe5 10.dxe5 ♘d7 11.♘b3 f6 12.exf6 ♖xf6 13.♗g5 ♖g6 14.♗xe7 ♕xe7 15.f4 was also a little better for White in Labib-Ezat, Tanta City Open 2001.

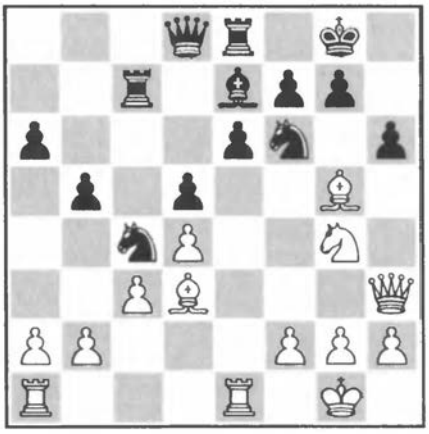
Therefore Black should play either:

A) 4...♘f6
B) 4...♘c6

Variation A

4...♘f6 5.d4

It is probably too early to play 5.♗b5+!?, after 5...♗d7 6.♘xd7 ♘bxd7 7.d4 (7.0-0 is well met by 7...a6) the game Tworuszka-Steczek, Poland tt 2003, went 7...e6?!, and after 8.0-0 ♗e7 9.c3 0-0 10.♘d2 ♖c8 11.♖e1 a6 12.♗d3 ♖e8 13.♘f3 White built up a typical 4.♘e5 attack. The game continued: 13...b5 14.♕e2 ♘b6 15.♘e5 ♗f8 16.♕f3 ♖c7 17.♕h3 ♘c4 18.♗g5 h6 19.♘g4 ♗e7 20.♘xh6+! gxh6 21.♗xh6 ♗f8 22.b3! ♗xh6 23.♕xh6 ♘d6 24.♖e3 ♘fe4 25.♗xe4 ♘xe4 26.♖h3 f5 and now White took a perpetual check with 27.♕h8+ and 28.♖h7+ when 27.f3! would have capped off the attack – White reaches at least a rook endgame with an extra pawn.

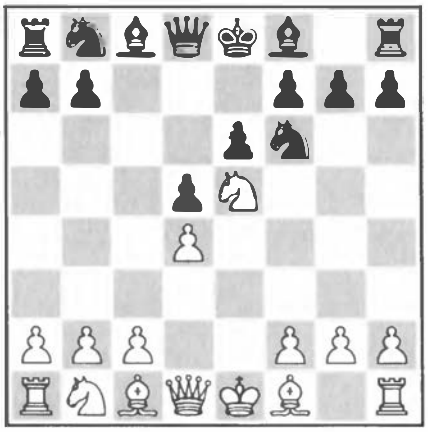


Instead of 7...e6 (after 7.d4) Black should play 7...♕a5+! 8.♘c3 e6 9.0-0 ♗b4 when he has no problems.

A1) 5...e6
A2) 5...♗f5
A3) 5...g6

Variation A1

5...e6

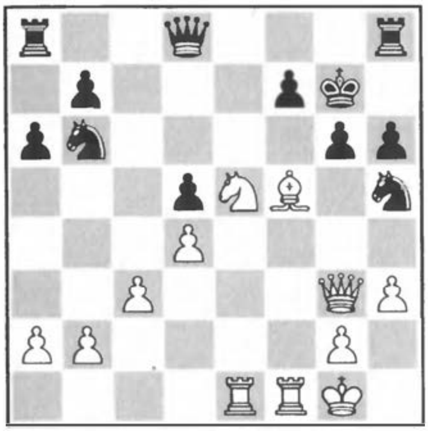


This is just what White is hoping for; the c8 bishop will now have little or no influence on the game. White can continue

6.c3

Here 6.♘d2 has also been popular, e.g. 6...♗d6 (6...♗e7 7.c3 0-0 8.♗d3 ♘bd7 9.f4 ♘e8 10.♕c2 f5 11.♘df3± Capece-Nathans, Ybbs 1968) 7.f4 ♘c6 8.c3 ♕b6 9.♗d3 or 9.♘df3 ♘e4 10.♗d3 f6, Cherad-El Imam, Algiers 2000, and now 11.♘c4! would have been good for White.

6...♗e7 7.♗d3 ♘bd7 8.f4 ♕c7 9.0-0 ♘b6 10.♘d2 ♗d7 11.♕e2 a6 12.♘df3 h6 And now White could just build up the pressure but chose to crash through with **13.f5! exf5 14.♗f4 ♕d8 15.♘xd7 ♕xd7 16.♕e5 g6 17.♖ae1 ♔f8 18.♕e3 ♘g4 19.♕c1 ♗d6 20.h3 ♗xf4 21.♕xf4 ♘f6 22.♘e5 ♕d8 23.♗xf5 ♔g7 24.♕g3 ♘h5**



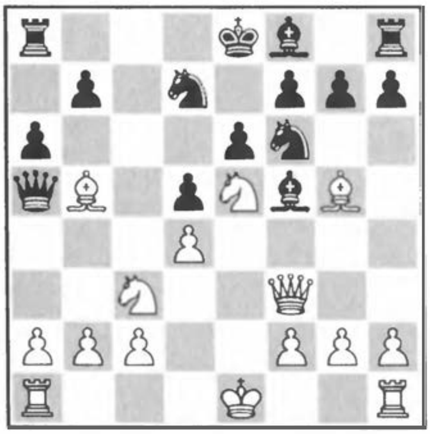
25.♗e6!! ♕e8 26.♕g4 ♕xe6 27.♖xf7+ ♕xf7 28.♘xf7+– Shevelev-Roumegous, Paris 2000.

Variation A2

5...♗f5

The bishop move looks extremely dangerous in view of

6.♗b5+ ♘bd7 7.♕f3 e6 8.♗g5 ♕a5+ 9.♘c3 a6



10.♕h5!!

although matters are not entirely clear after **10...g6! 11.♗xf6 axb5 12.♕h4 ♗b4!?**

Now White can grab the rook on h8, but not recapture on c3. However, Black will then have fair compensation for the exchange, so

13.0-0

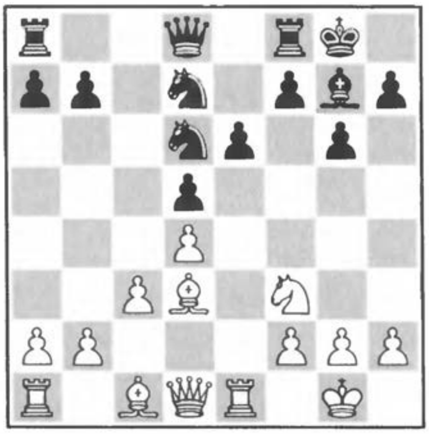
Maybe the most sober idea, with attacking chances even after the removal of the f6 bishop.

Variation A3

5...g6 6.♗b5+

Rather innocuous looks 6.♗d3 as it is hitting the g6 pawn. Play may continue 6...♗g7 7.♘d2 0-0 (7...♘c6 8.♘df3 0-0 9.c3 ♘d7 10.♘xd7 ♗xd7 11.♗f4 ♗g4 12.0-0 f6! gave Black serious counterplay in Sebag-Vogel, European Women's Championship, Dresden 2004) 8.0-0 ♘c6 9.♘df3 ♘g4 10.♘xc6 bxc6 11.♖e1 ♖e8 12.h3 ♘f6 13.c3 ♕b6 14.♕e2 a5 15.♘e5 ♗a6 16.♗xa6 ♕xa6 and Black had equalised in Hakki-Magerramov, Damascus (Arab Clubs) 2003.

6...♗d7 7.♘xd7 ♘bxd7 8.0-0 ♗g7 9.♖e1 0-0 10.c3 ♘e4 11.♘d2 ♘d6 12.♗d3 e6 13.♘f3



And here a draw was agreed in Antonio-Rogers, Bangkok Open 2004.

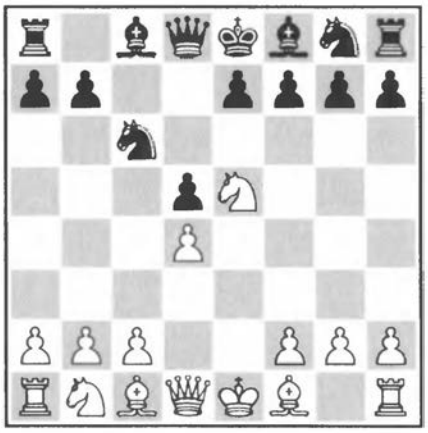
White has all the chances, with h4-h5 in the air, but was half a point ahead in the tournament with only two rounds to play. Therefore he went for the safe result.

Variation B

4...♘c6

The most logical move.

5.d4



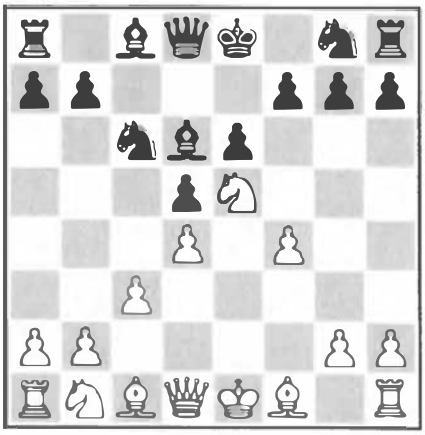
Black has tried a lot of ideas here, although never 5...f6?? 6.♕h5+, nor, curiously, 5...♘xe5!? 6.dxe5 when the e5 pawn should not be too difficult for White to maintain.

5...♘f6

The alternatives are:

- **5...♕c7?!** The early queen-move was used in one of the original 4.♘e5 games, but the attempt to grab a pawn after **6.♗f4** 6.♗b5!? a6 7.♗xc6+ bxc6 8.0-0±. **6...♕b6** came badly unstuck after **7.♘c3! ♘f6 8.♘b5** Here Black was lucky to find a way to hang on with **8...a6! 9.♘xc6!** Capturing the queen with 9.♘xf7 ♔xf7 10.♗c7 ♕xb5 11.♗xb5 axb5 is far from clearly good for White. **9...axb5** Still White maintained an edge and went on to win after **10.♘e5 b4 11.♗d3 e6 12.0-0 ♗e7 13.♖e1 0-0 14.♖e3± ♕d8 15.♖h3 g6 16.♗h6 ♖e8 17.♕f3 ♖a5 18.g4 ♗d6 19.♗g5 ♗e7 20.♖xh7! ♖f8 21.♖h4 ♘d7 22.♕h3 ♗xg5 23.♖h8+ ♔g7 24.♕h7+ ♔f6 25.♘xf7!+–** Sinulingga-Bordonada, Nice Olympiad 1974.

- **5...e6?!** Shutting in the bishop is again dubious. **6.c3 ♗d6 7.f4!?**



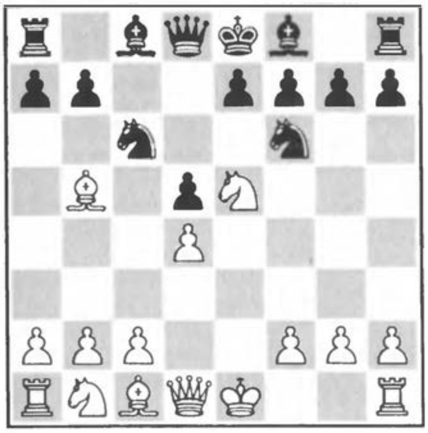
Here 7.♗b5?! ♘e7 8.f4 0-0 9.♗d3 ♕c7 is far less convincing, e.g. 10.♕c2 (10.♕h5 g6 11.♕h4 walks into 11...♘xd4! and 10.0-0 f6 is similar to the game) 10...h6 11.0-0 f6 12.♗h7+ ♔h8 13.♘g6+ ♘xg6 14.♗xg6 ♗d7 and Black was ready to break in the centre in Shevelev-Erenburg, Israel tt 2002. **7...♘f6 8.♗d3 ♘e4!** – 8...0-0 9.♘d2 is very comfortable for White. **9.0-0 0-0 10.♘d2 f5 11.♘df3** And, despite the knight on e4, White should later be able to play for g4 while Black is struggling for a plan.

- **5...♕b6!? 6.c3 ♘xe5 7.dxe5 e6 8.♗d3** This leads to a French-style position where White should be able to keep a slight edge, e.g. 8...♗d7 9.♕e2 a6 10.♗e3 ♗c5 11.♗xc5 ♕xc5 12.♘d2 ♘e7 13.♘b3 ♕b6 14.0-0 (14.♕g4 ♗b5! 15.♗xb5+ axb5 16.♕xg7 ♖g8 17.♕xh7 ♖xg2 gave Black excellent counterplay in Cernousek-Medvegy, Budapest Elekes Memorial 2004) 14...♗b5 15.♗xb5+ ♕xb5 16.♕xb5+ axb5 17.♘d4 with an endgame where Black will have to work very hard to earn a draw.

Our main game continued:

6.♗b5!

This pin is White's most aggressive option, enabling her to exert a pressing initiative.



6.c3 is less incisive, although after 6...g6 7.♗d3 again looks innocuous, e.g 7...♗g7 8.0-0 0-0:

– 9.f4 is well met by 9...♗f5! (9...♕b6 10.♔h1 ♘e4 11.♕e2 f5 12.♘d2 a5 13.♘df3 a4 14.a3 ♕c7 15.♗e3 worked out well for White in Muniz-Escofet, Uruguay Championship, Montevideo 2004. However 9...♘e8!? is interesting, e.g. 10.♘d2 ♘d6 11.g4?! f6 12.♘xc6 bxc6 13.f5 e5 14.fxe6ep ♗xe6 and Black generated good counterplay against the white king in Zarnicki-Belov, ACP Internet Blitz Tournament 2004) 10.♗xf5 gxf5 with easy equality.

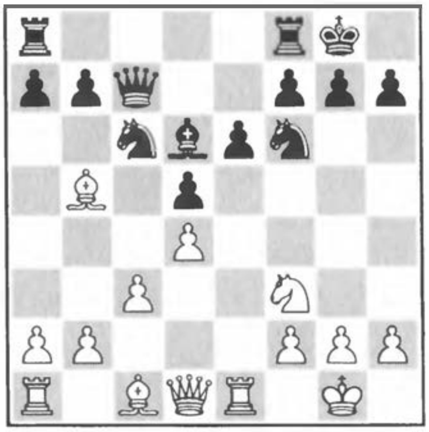
– 9.♖e1 and now Black choose the moment to play: 9...♘xe5! (9...♘d7 10.♘xd7 ♕xd7 11.♘d2 e5 12.dxe5 ♘xe5 13.♘b3 ♘xd3 14.♕xd3 ♕f5 15.♖d1 ♕xd3 16.♖xd3 led to an ending eventually won by White in Labib-Molina, Bled Olympiad 2002) 10.dxe5 ♘g4 11.♗f4 ♕b6 12.♕d2 (12.♕e2 is even worse after 12...f6 13.exf6 ♖xf6! 14.♗g3? ♖e6) 12...f6 13.exf6 ♕xf6 14.♗g3 ♗h6 15.♕e2 ♗f4! with a nasty attack, e.g. 16.f3 ♗xg3 17.hxg3 ♕b6+ 18.♔h1 ♘f2+ 19.♔h2 ♖f6!.

However, instead of 7.♗d3, the pin with 7.♗b5 is still annoying: 7...♗d7 8.♘xd7 ♕xd7 9.0-0 and the game is likely to transpose to the Antonio-Rogers game mentioned earlier.

6...♕b6?!

Amazingly, after this move Black seems already to be in serious trouble.

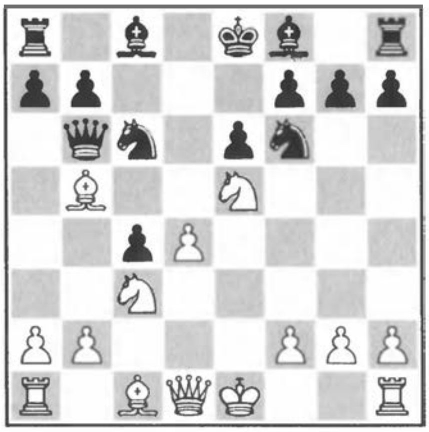
6...♗d7 is far more natural, although after 7.♘xd7 ♕xd7 8.c3 e6 9.0-0 ♗d6 10.♘d2 0-0 (10...a6 11.♗d3 0-0 12.♖e1 b5 13.a3 ♖ab8 14.♘f3 h6 15.♘e5 White had an edge in Cernousek-Matras, Frydek Mistek 2004. It should be noted that the minority attack rarely seems to be a serious problem for White in these types of position, whereas White's kingside attack can flare up quite quickly – the reverse of the situation in most Exchange Queen's Gambit variations) 11.♖e1 ♕c7 12.♘f3 White has the typically comfortable set-up he is aiming for in the 4.♘e5 line.



12...h6 (Black is trying to negate a possible ♗d3 followed by ♗g5 but in doing so makes other options such as ♗d3-c2 and ♕d3 more attractive later) 13.♗d3 (13.♕e2 looks better, hoping to put another knight on e5) 13...♖fe8 14.h3 ♖ab8 15.♕e2 ♘d7 16.♗d2 a6 17.a4!? ♖e7! (Black has defended well and is now thinking about doubling on the e file and playing ...e5. Instead of calmly waiting for ...e5 and making the most of the resulant isolated d-pawn, White now panicks) 18.c4?! when after 18...dxc4 19.♗xc4 ♘f6 20.♗c3 ♕b6 21.♘e5 ♗xe5 22.dxe5 ♘d5 the position was dead equal in Cernousek-Polak, Brno 2004.

7.c4! dxc4 8.♘c3 e6

8...♗d7 9.♗e3 is also very awkward for Black, although perhaps better than the game.



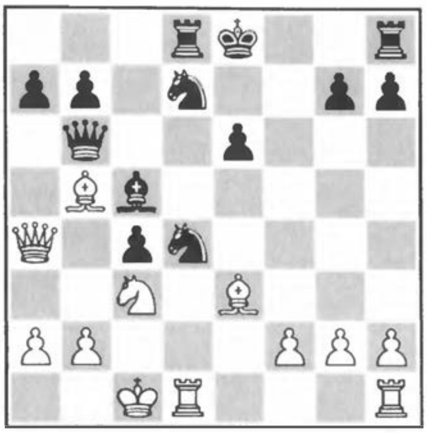
9.♕a4! ♗d7 10.♘xd7 ♘xd7 11.♗e3! ♖d8

This looks and is ugly, but the obvious alternative 11...♕c7 walks into 12.d5 ♘ce5 13.0-0-0 (13.dxe6!?) 13...♘d3+ (13...a6 14.dxe6 fxe6 15.♗f4! is also very strong for White) 14.♔b1 when the fall of the c pawn will leave the d3 knight stranded – and Black's king is still a long way from leaving the centre of the board.

12.d5 ♘d4 13.dxe6 fxe6

13...♕xe6 14.0-0-0 ♘xb5 15.♘xb5, followed by 16.♖he1, is also hopeless for Black.

14.0-0-0 ♗c5



15.♗xd7+! ♖xd7 16.♕xc4

Suddenly Black has no defence against the threat of 17.♘a4. Yuanyuan tries a tricky defence but with the king still on e8, all the tactics are bound to favour White.

16...♕c7 17.♗xd4 ♕f4+ 18.♔b1 ♗xd4 19.♕xe6+ ♖e7 20.♕xe7+! 1-0

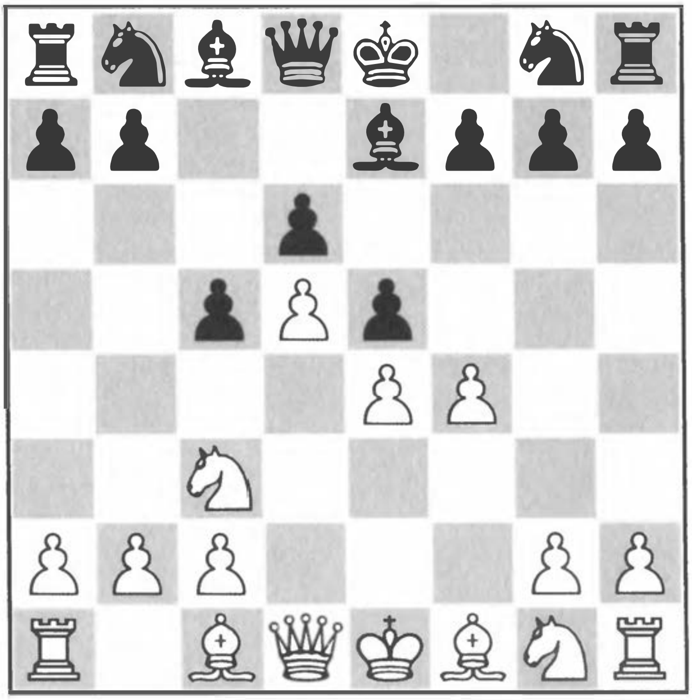
This was the game Sebag-Xu Yuanyuan, Cannes 2004 from the match France-China.

A fine win by Sebag and a great advertisement for the SOS counter to the Caro-Kann – 4.♘e5!

CHAPTER 3

Alexander Beliavsky

Destroying the Benoni Wall



NIC KEY OI 9.14

Alekhine's 5.f4

1.d4 c5 2.d5 e5 3.e4 d6 4.♘c3 ♗e7 5.f4

The Benoni Wall is usually applied by players who want to avoid open positions and well-developed theoretical lines. Incidentally, I don't understand why this system is called by the old Hebrew name 'Benoni' which means 'son of sorrow'. Nobody knows who gave the system its name. Perhaps it is really such a sad position? Common sense in chess says that usually it is sensible to play 'contra-lines': meaning that if your opponent wants to open the position, you better try to close it and visa versa. So White's best strategy against the Benoni Wall is to open the position. For this purpose the system with 5.f4! is eminently suitable and indeed the most direct approach to tear down the Benoni Wall. There is nothing surprising in the fact that this variation was introduced into modern practice by the great Alexander Alekhine.

[*Editorial note*: It was Alekhine who played the correct move order (4.♘c3 and 5.f4) in a simultaneous exhibition in 1935. However, Bogoljubow had played 4.f4 *against* Alekhine one year earlier in their World Championship match.]

Positive elements of an early f4 plan are a clear advantage in development, and the opening of the centre as part of a counter strategy. There is only one negative aspect to

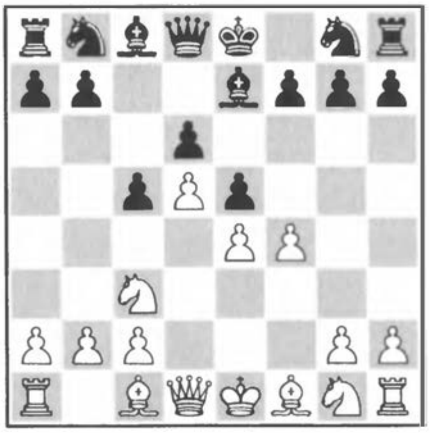
5.f4: the weakening of the e5 square, which may become a stronghold for a black knight. However, Black has a huge disadvantage in space, and, as we know from similar positions in the closed Ruy Lopez, it is not nearly enough for him to just control the e5 square. What is more White will often create threats on the f-file. In addition, White's advantage in development means that he can sometimes realize the central break e4-e5. Naturally, White could have implemented his plan on the fourth move as well (4.f4). However, please note that in that case Black will find a much better way of developing his kingside by means of the manoeuvre ♘g8-e7-g6 controlling e5. After 4.♘c3 Black has nothing better than 4...♘f6 or 4...♗e7. We will examine the merits of this system by means of two games.

☐ **Alexander Beliavsky**
■ **Mark Dvoretsky**
Vilnius 1975

1.d4 c5 2.d5 e5 3.e4 d6 4.♘c3 ♗e7

By developing the bishop Black keeps more options open. Note that 4...♘f6 5.f4 will usually transpose to lines with ♘f6 mentioned below.

5.f4



5...exf4

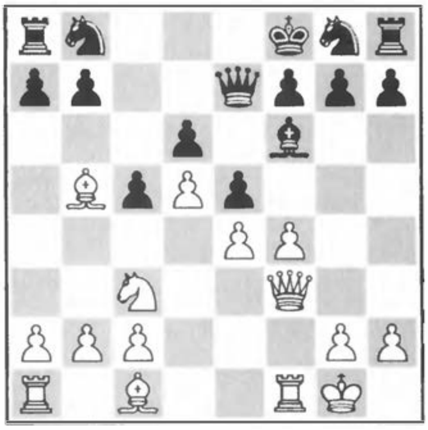
I can't say that this move is forced. However, the alternatives to keep the e5 stronghold (and not assisting White in developing his bishop for free – 6.♗xf4!) were not very successful in practice.

– 5...♘d7 6.♘f3 a6 7.fxe5 ♘xe5 8.♘xe5 dxe5 9.♗e2 ♘f6 10.0-0 0-0 11.a4 b6 12.♕e1 ♕d6 (the typical plan of transferring the knight to the blockading square does not work here: 12...♘e8 13.♗e3 ♘d6 14.a5±) 13.♕g3 ♗d7 14.♗e3 ♔h8 15.h3 ♘e8 16.♗g4! ♗xg4 17.♕xg4 c4 18.♖ab1! with a serious advantage for White in P. Nikolic-Ivanovic, Borovo 1981.

– 5...♗f6 6.♘f3 ♗g4 7.♗b5+

A) 7...♘d7 8.0-0 a6 9.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 10.fxe5 ♗xf3 11.exf6!+–.

B) 7...♔f8 8.0-0 ♗xf3 9.♕xf3 ♕e7



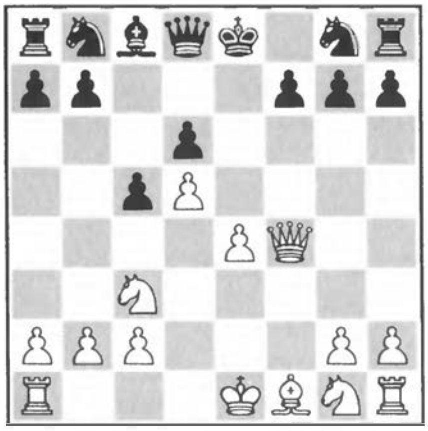
10.g4! a6 11.g5 axb5 12.gxf6 ♘xf6 13.fxe5 dxe5 14.♗g5! (White is wasting no time to recapture a pawn) 14...b4 15.♘e2 ♖a6 16.♘g3 with a strong initiative in Maksimovic-Djuric, Bjelovar 1979.

– 5...a6 6.fxe5 dxe5 7.a4 ♘f6 8.♘f3 ♗g4 9.♗e2 ♗xf3 10.♗xf3 0-0 11.0-0 ♘e8 12.♗e3 ♘d7 13.♗g4! ♘df6 14.a5 ♘d6 15.♖a4! b5 16.axb6ep ♕xb6 17.b3 with strong positional pressure in Lobron-Ivanovic, Reggio Emilia 1984/85.

6.♗xf4 ♘f6

Here 6...♗g5 looks like a serious option. White keeps his advantage however after

7.♕d2 (nothing serious is gained by 7.♗xg5 ♕xg5 8.♘f3 ♕e3+ 9.♕e2 ♕xe2+ 10.♗xe2 ♘d7 11.♗b5 f6! 12.0-0 ♔e7 13.a4 ♘h6 14.♘d1 ♘f7 15.♘e3 ♘de5 with equality, Zilberstein-Dolmatov, Daugavpils 1978) 7...♗xf4 8.♕xf4



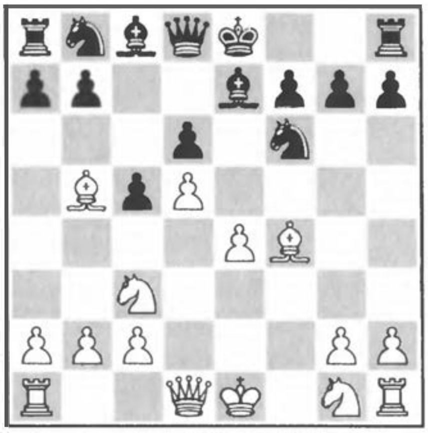
A) after 8...♕f6 9.♕xf6 ♘xf6 10.♘b5 ♔d7 11.♘f3 ♘xe4 12.♗d3 a6 (12...♘f6 13.0-0-0) 13.♗xe4 axb5 14.0-0 White has a huge development advantage.

B) 8...a6 9.e5! ♕e7 10.♘f3 ♘d7 11.0-0-0 dxe5 (after 11...♘xe5 12.♕g3! ♘f6 13.♘xe5 dxe5 14.d6 ♕e6 15.♕xg7 ♖g8 16.♕h6 Black has big problems) 12.♕g3 ♕f6 13.d6 ♕g6 14.♘d5 ♕xg3 15.hxg3 ♔f8 16.♘g5 h6 17.♘c7 ♖b8 18.♗c4 with very unpleasant threats in Shariyazdanov-Malakhov, Ekaterinburg 1996.

Black can switch to completely wild positions with 6...g5?! 7.♗g3 h5 8.h3 h4 9.♗h2 a6 10.♕d2 (interesting is 10.e5!?) 10...♘d7 11.♘f3 f6 12.e5!? (not bad is 12.♗d3 ♘h6 13.0-0♘f7 14.a4 0-0 15.♘d1! aiming for the f5 square) 12...♘xe5 13.♗xe5 fxe5 14.♗d3 ♘h6 15.♗g6+ ♔d7 16.♘e4 ♔c7 17.0-0-0 ♖g8 18.♘xe5! with huge complications, N. Nikolic-Ivanovic, Herceg Novi 2000.

7.♗b5+

This idea is typical for other Benoni positions, but here it is not the best option. Black's main problem is space – especially square d7 for which there are too many pieces. For 7.♗e2, see the next game.



7...♘bd7

After 7...♗d7 8.♗xd7+ (illogical is 8.e5 dxe5 9.♗xe5 ♗xb5 10.♘xb5 ♕a5+ 11.♘c3 ♘bd7 12.♘f3 0-0 13.0-0 c4! 14.♔h1 ♗b4! and Black turned the tables in Kaidanov-Dobson, Buenos Aires 2003) 8...♘bxd7 9.♘f3 0-0 10.0-0 ♘g4 11.h3 ♘ge5 12.♘xe5 dxe5 13.♗g3 ♗f6 14.d6 and White has the initiative, Volzhin-Tsebekov, Krasnodar 1997.

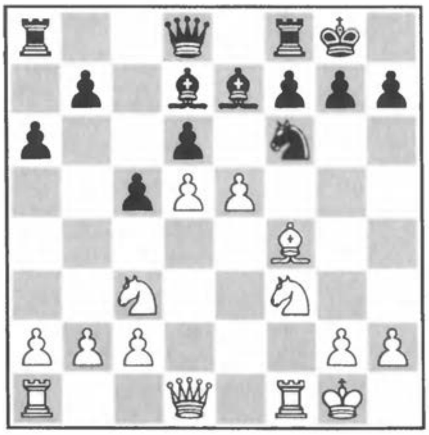
8.♘f3

A serious option is 8.a4 preventing Black's play on the queenside.

8...0-0 9.0-0

Now I would prefer 9.a4 a6 10.♗d3 ♘g4 11.♕d2 ♖e8 12.h3 ♘ge5 13.♘xe5 ♘xe5 14.♗xe5 dxe5 15.0-0 b6 16.♖f3 ♖f8 17.♕e2 with a slight advantage.

9...a6 10.♗xd7 ♗xd7 11.e5!



11...dxe5

Haba preferred 11...♘e8 against Kistner, Crailsheim 1995. After 12.♘e4 ♗b5 13.♖f2 dxe5 14.♘xe5 ♘d6 15.♘xd6 ♗xd6 16.c4 f6 17.♘g6 hxg6 18.cxb5 axb5 he had the advantage. However, after 12.♕d2! he would have experienced major problems.

12.♘xe5?!

Stronger is 12.♗xe5, trying to play d5-d6.

12...♗d6 13.♕f3

I had overlooked the simple tactic 13.♘xf7 ♖xf7 14.♗xd6 ♗g4! winning a piece.

13...♕c7 14.♘xd7 ♕xd7 15.♖ad1 ♖ae8 16.h3 b5 17.b3 ♗e5

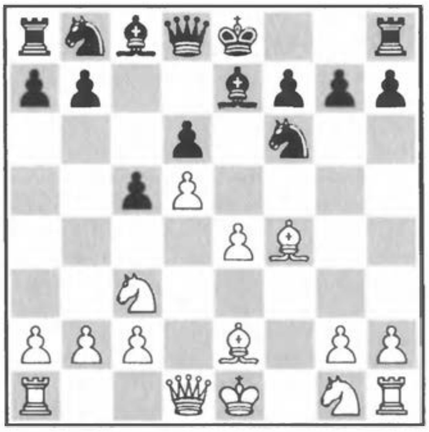
Black now has a very pleasant position.

18.d6 ♗d4+ 19.♔h1 ♗xc3 20.♕xc3 ♘e4 21.♕a5 f5 22.♕xa6

And here I disliked my position after 22...♖a8 and offered a draw, which my opponent accepted.

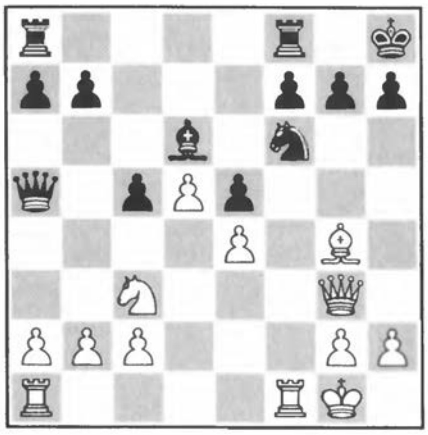
☐ **Alexander Beliavsky**
■ **Bozidar Ivanovic**
Yugoslavia tt 1995

1.d4 c5 2.d5 e5 3.e4 d6 4.♘c3 ♗e7 5.f4 exf4 6.♗xf4 ♘f6 7.♗e2



7...0-0

This is the normal move, but for Ivanovic it is too timid. Against Komarov (Budva 1996) he played 7...♕a5?! 8.♕d2 0-0 9.♘f3 ♗g4 10.0-0 ♗xf3 11.♗xf3 ♘bd7 12.♕f2 ♘e5 13.♗xe5! dxe5 14.♕g3 ♗d6 15.♗g4! ♔h8 (15...♕d8 to bolster the defence was the only move)



16.♖xf6! gxf6 17.♕h4 with a raging attack.

8.♘f3 ♘h5!?

Once more Ivanovic is trying to play unusual chess. After the normal 8...♗g4 White can obtain a small advantage with 9.♘d2! (also possible is 9.0-0 ♘bd7 10.♕d2 ♖e8 11.♖ae1 a6 12.e5! dxe5 13.♘xe5 ♗xe2 14.♖xe2 ♗d6 15.♘d3 ♕c7 16.♖fe1, with the better position in Giorgadze-Patino Romaris, La Coruna 1996) 9...♘h5 10.♗e3 ♗xe2 11.♕xe2 g6 12.0-0 ♘d7 13.♘c4 ♘b6 14.♗h6 ♘g7 15.♘e3 ♗g5! 16.♗xg5 ♕xg5 17.♖f3 ♘d7 18.♖af1 ♘e5 19.♖g3 ♕e7 20.a4 ♖ab8 21.♘cd1!, Butnorius-Yermolinsky, Krasnodar 1980.

Simple development with 8...♘bd7 leads to White's advantage after 9.0-0 ♖e8 10.e5! dxe5 11.♘xe5♘b6 12.♗b5! ♗d7 13.d6 ♗f8 14.♘xd7 ♘fxd7 15.♘d5 ♘xd5 16.♕xd5, Dao Thien Hai-Malakhov, Menorca 1996.

It is also dangerous to employ a plan from the modern Benoni: 8...♘a6 9.0-0 ♘c7 10.a4 b6 11.h3 a6 12.♕d2 ♗b7 13.♖ab1! b5 14.axb5 axb5 15.b4!, Tibensky-Manik, Slovakia 1997/98, with a clear advantage.

9.♗e3 f5 10.exf5

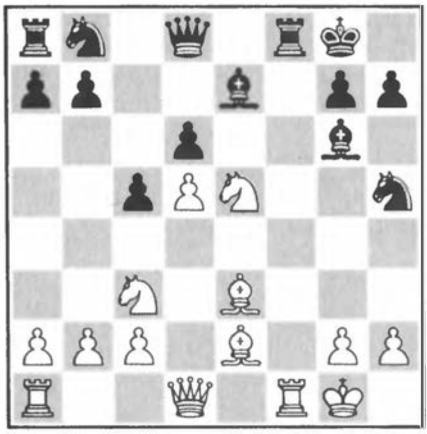
Naturally, it would be a bad positional mistake to allow f5-f4.

10...♗xf5 11.0-0 ♗g6

There is no other way as 11...♘f6 12.♘h4

♗d7 13.♘f5 is very pleasant for White.

12.♘e5!



Fritz does not consider such moves – chess is still alive!

12...♖xf1+ 13.♔xf1 ♘g3+

13...♕f8+ 14.♔g1 ♘f4 15.♘xg6 ♘xe2+ 16.♕xe2 hxg6 17.♖f1 and White is virtually winning.

14.hxg3 dxe5 15.♗f3

This threatens d5-d6, and therefore forces Black to block White's d-pawn.

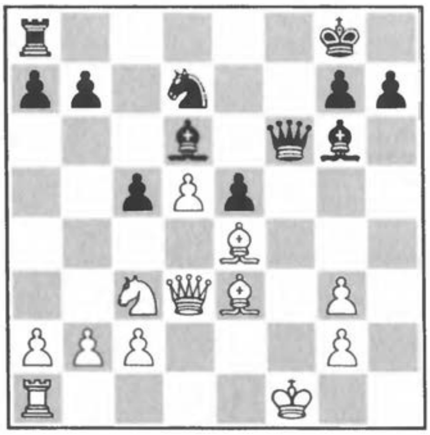
15...♗d6 16.♗e4!

This is a very important move in White's positional concept. The exchange of the light-squared bishops will emphasize the weakness of the squares e4 and e6.

16...♘d7 17.♕d3

Worse is 17.♗xg6?! ♕f6+ 18.♔g1 ♕xg6.

17...♕f6+



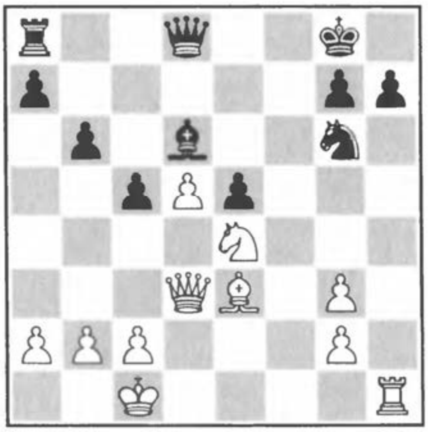
18.♔e2!

White transfers his king to the other flank. Thus, White obtains good attacking chances on the kingside.

18...♗h5+ 19.♔d2 ♘f8 20.♖h1 ♗g6 21.♗xg6 ♘xg6 22.♘e4 ♕d8

After 22...♕e7 White has a decisive blow: 23.♖xh7! ♔xh7 24.♘g5+ ♔h6 (24...♔g8 25.♕xg6) 25.♕f5.

23.♔c1 b6



24.♖xh7!

The most energetic way, but possibly White has a simpler win available in the form of 24.♘g5!.

24...c4

24...♔xh7 25.♘g5+ ♔g8 26.♕xg6 is an easy win.

25.♕e2

Forcing Black to take the rook.

25...♔xh7 26.♕h5+ ♔g8 27.♕xg6 ♗c5

Or 27...♗e7 28.d6 ♗f6 29.♗g5! winning.

28.♗g5!

Preparing ♘e4-f6.

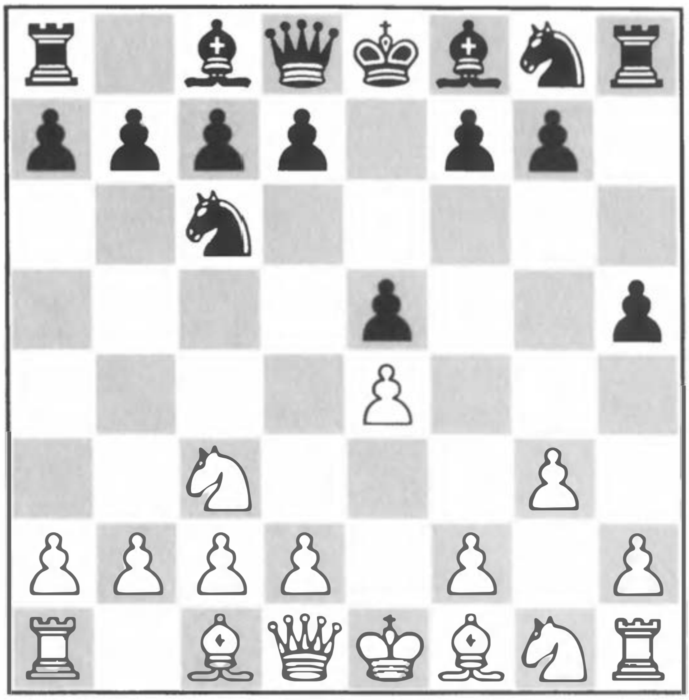
28...♗e7 29.d6 ♕f8 30.♕e6+! ♔h7 31.♕h3+ ♔g6 32.♗xe7 ♕f5 33.♕xf5+ ♔xf5 34.♘g5

Black resigned.

CHAPTER 4

Maxim Notkin

When I was Young



NIC KEY VG 4.6

3...h5 against the Vienna

1.e4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.g3 h5

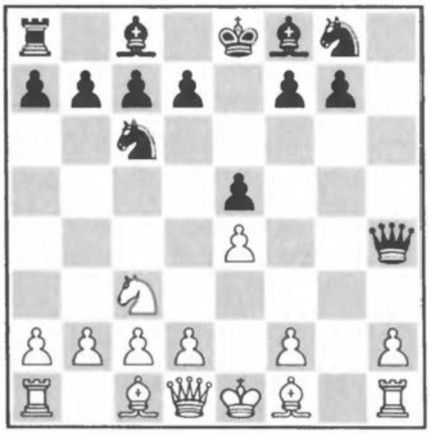
When I was young... Well this sounds like a good way to start my memoirs, but is surely irrelevant for a theoretical article. However... when I was young attending a Moscow chess school our entire group was studying a universal opening method that had been shown to our trainer by one of his former pupils. The set of openings for White included the Vienna Game with 3.g3 and the Closed Sicilian. All you had to do in the opening was to make the moves e4, ♘c3, g3, ♗g2, ♘ge2, d3, 0-0, h3, ♔h2 – almost independently of what your opponent was playing. Next, you launched a kingside attack by pushing the f-pawn. To complete the picture I'd like to mention that against the French Defence and the Caro-Kann my friends applied the scheme e4, d3, ♘d2, ♘gf3, g3, ♗g2, 0-0, and so on; while in the Pirc the fianchetto with ♘c3, ♘ge2, h3 and ♗e3 worked well. White's ideas were extremely plain, but to fight them wasn't an easy task. It's a common thing: when someone plays a secondary line knowing it inside out he often has the advantage in the middlegame. For, to find an antidote you have to dedicate several hours to this set-up during your home preparation. However, as a rule you don't want to waste your precious time on such silly things. After all, you still have to learn by heart five main lines in the Najdorf, and to explore three dangerous variations of Ruy Lopez. I did not want to submit to my mates' influence and continued to play the classical openings with White. Yet, in our friendly blitz games when I was Black they often beat me using their boring lines. This made me angry, of course. To my regret at that time Alexander Khalifman had not yet demonstrated to poor people like me the way to solve this particular problem in the open games. The following game was played in the final round of the USSR Youth Championship. The win allowed Khalifman to become junior champion for the second time. Before him only Petrosian and Kasparov had achieved the same feat. To my surprise I did not find this historic game in the ChessBase Megabase, and I hope it will be interesting for the readers to look at the Battle of the Giants as Young Men.

☐ **Alexey Dreev**
■ **Alexander Khalifman**
Kirovabad 1984

1.e4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.g3 h5!? 4.♘f3 h4

That's the point!.

5.♘xh4 ♖xh4 6.gxh4 ♕xh4



The exchange sacrifice gives Black a fast and harmonious development and a possibility to create threats at rather an early stage.

7.♗g2 ♗c5 8.0-0 ♘f6 9.♕f3 d6 10.♕g3 ♕h7!? 11.d3 ♘d4 12.♗e3 ♗d7

Black plays as if he hasn't sacrificed anything, and, indeed, White's material advantage is hardly noticeable.

Bad is 12...♘xc2? 13.♗xc5 ♘xa1 14.♖xa1 dxc5 15.♘b5+–.

13.b4?

Correct is 13.♗xd4 ♗xd4 14.♘e2 ♗b6 15.a4 a5, when Black has sufficient compensation.

13...♗b6!

Apparently, Dreev counted on 13...♗xb4? 14.♗xd4exd4 15.♘e2, taking the initiative.

14.♖ac1 ♘h5 15.♕h4 c6! 16.f3

It's too late for 16.♗.xd4 as Black replies 16...♗d8! trapping the queen! White's major piece is in deep trouble, since moves like 16.a4 cannot save her majesty on account of 16...♗d8 17.♗g5 f6 18.♗e3 g5.

16...♘f5! 17.exf5 ♗xe3+ 18.♔h1 ♗xc1 19.♖xc1 ♗xf5 20.♖e1 ♔d7

And Black converted his extra pawn.

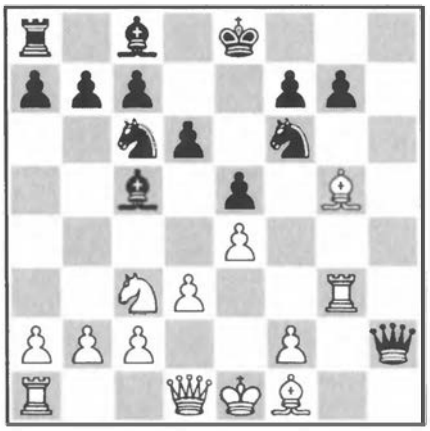
In general play in the 3...h5 variation can be divided into several classes.

1. White accepts the exchange sacrifice – the statistics here are awful for him.
2. White allows the opponent to advance h5-h4 and then to take on g3 or to play h4-h3.
3. White takes on h4 with the pawn.
4. White is trying to prevent h5-h4, or to diminish its effect. This division is handy, as our line does not require precise 'move-by-move' knowledge. Moreover, Black sometimes inserts 3...♗c5 4.♗g2, and sometimes plays 3...h5 straightaway. Therefore, the positions may differ, while the ideas remain the same. Let's study some more examples of Black's victorious play when he is the exchange down.

☐ **Nigel Short**
■ **Lubosh Kavalek**
Prague 1990

1.e4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.g3 ♗c5

I've had a lot of fun analyzing the encounter Balster-Halasz, Dortmund 1991: 3...h5 4.♘f3 h4 5.♘xh4 ♖xh4 6.gxh4 ♕xh4 7.♖g1!? ♗c5 (7...♕xh2 8.♖g2 ♕h7) 8.♖g3 (it appears that both opponents do not value the h2 pawn – 8.♖g2!? deserved attention) 8...♘f6 9.d3 d6 10.♗g5 ♕xh2



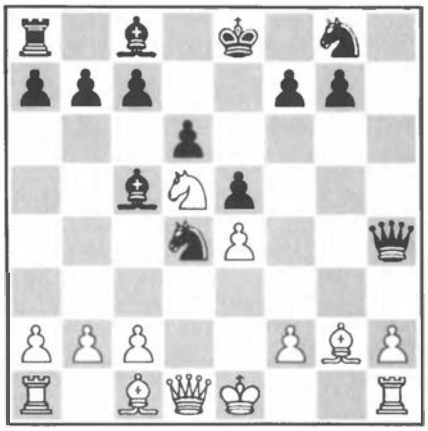
A) now 11.♖g2! was strong with the idea of 11...♕h1 12.♗xf6 ♗h3 (12...gxf6?? 13.♖g8+ ♔d7 14.♕g4+ ♔e7 15.♘d5+ mate) 13.♖xg7 ♕xf1+ 14.♔d2 ♕xf2+ 15.♔c1±.

B) 11.♕d2 ♘h5 12.♖g2 ♕h1 13.0-0-0 ♘d4 14.♘d5 ♘f3? 15.♕e2? (15.♕a5!+−) 15...♘d4 16.♕d2 ♗b6 17.c3 ♗h3! 18.f4! and here Black committed his cavalry – 18...♘f3! 19.♕e2 ♗xg2 20.♗xg2 ♘g1! 21.♕f1? (21.♕g4! ♕h2 22.fxe5 dxe5 23.♔b1 with a clear advantage to White) 21...♕h2 22.♘xb6 ♘g3! 23.♕f2 axb6 24.♔b1 ♘h3! (astonishing!) 25.♕f3 ♘xf4 26.♗xf4 exf4 27.e5 ♕h5! 28.♕xh5 ♘xh5 29.♖h1 g6 30.♗xb7 ♖a7 and Black soon won the ending.

4.♗g2 h5 5.♘f3 h4 6.♘xh4 ♖xh4 7.gxh4 ♕xh4 8.d4 ♘xd4

One of the earliest games in which the exchange sacrifice was played – Hartston-Mariotti, Skopje Olympiad 1972 – went 8...♗xd4 9.♕e2 (the d4 square is occupied by the bishop so the knight is unable to disturb the white queen, but other problems appear) 9...♗xc3+! (nipping in the bud the idea of ♘d5) 10.bxc3 d6 11.0-0 (11.♕e3) 11...g5! 12.♕e3 f6 13.♕g3 ♕h7 14.♗f3 ♘ge7 15.♖e1 ♘g6 16.♗e3 ♔e7 17.c4 b6. We see that Black's play is very simple, while for White it's much more difficult to come up with something substantial.

9.♘d5 d6!



The computer does not see this move, or to put it more precisely, does not appreciate its true value.

Another attempt to leave the c7 pawn unprotected was made in G.Mohr-Leventic, Pula 1997. After 9...♘f6, instead of the correct 10.♘xc7+, White opted for 10.♘xf6+ gxf6 11.0-0 d6 12.♔h1 ♔e7 and lost in 20 moves. Meanwhile the capture on c7 was a right decision. In the event of 10...♔d8 11.♘xa8 Black has no resources left for a successful attack e.g. 11...♘b3 (11...♘g4 12.♖f1) 12.0-0 ♘g4 (12...♘xa1 13.♗e3) 13.♕xg4! ♕xg4 14.axb3+−.

10.♘e3?!

Correct was 10.♗e3 with unclear play. And 10.♘xc7+ won't do in view of 10...♔f8! (10...♚d8?! 11.♘xa8 ♗g4 12.♕d2 threatening 13.♕g5+) 11.♘xa8 ♗g4 12.♗g5!? (12.♕d3 ♘f3+ 13.♔d1 ♘e1+!–+; 12.♕d2 ♗f3) 12...♕xg5 13.♕d2 ♕h4 14.c3 ♗f3! and Black's minor pieces are stronger than White's rooks.

10...♘f6 11.c3 ♗g4 12.♘xg4?

12.♕d3 ♘f3+ 13.♔e2!!∞ – hats off to Mr Fritz!

12...♘xg4 13.♖f1 ♘e6?

GM Plachetka gave a winning line 13...♘xf2! 14.♖xf2 ♘b3 15.♕f3 ♕xf2+ 16.♕xf2 ♗xf2+ 17.♔xf2 ♘xa1 18.b3 a5 19.♗b2 ♘c2 20.♗f1 ♘b4! 21.cxb4 axb4–+.

14.♕e2 ♘xh2 15.♖h1 ♔e7 16.♔d1 ♖h8 17.f3 ♕g3 18.♗d2 ♗f2! 19.♗f1 ♖h4 20.♕d3 ♘c5 21.♕e2 ♘xf3 22.♖xh4 ♘xh4 23.♔c2 ♘f3 24.♖d1 ♘xd2 25.♖xd2 ♗e3∓

A draw was agreed here, even though Black could still play for win.

The first ever registered game in the 3...h5 variation took place in the 4th match game Mieses-Marshall.

☐ **Jacques Mieses**
■ **Frank Marshall**
Berlin 1908

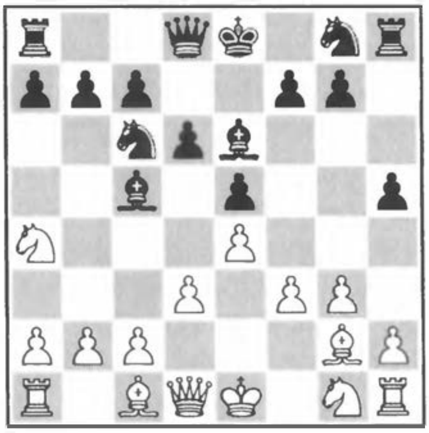
1.e4 e5 2.♘c3 ♗c5 3.g3 ♘c6 4.♗g2 h5 5.d3

There have been several games where Black voluntarily stopped pushing his h-pawn. Maybe such a strategy lacks logic, or consistency, but it does not necessarily lead to a bad result.

– 5.♘f3 d6 6.♘a4 ♘ge7 7.d3 f6 8.0-0 a6 9.♘xc5 dxc5 10.♗e3 b6 11.a3 g5 12.♘e1 ♘g6 13.b4 cxb4 14.axb4 h4 (after 14...♘xb4 15.d4 (or 15.c3 ♘c6 16.d4) White takes the initiative, although the position is far from clear) 15.b5 ♘d4 16.bxa6, Turov-Acs, Budapest 1997, 16...♗xa6∞.

– 5.h3 d6 6.d3 ♘ge7 7.♘ge2 ♗e6 8.♘a4 (my school friends' *idée fixe* 8.0-0 ♕d7 9.♔h2 comes into serious consideration. True, in case of 9...0-0-0 10.f4 f6 the kingside offensive is not that dangerous) 8...♕d7 9.♘xc5 dxc5 10.♗e3 b6 11.f4 f6 12.♕d2 0-0-0 13.0-0-0?! (13.a3; 13.f5 ♗f7 14.0-0) 13...♗xa2!? 14.b3 ♘b4 15.♔b2 ♗xb3! 16.cxb3 (perhaps better is 16.♔xb3 ♕e6+ 17.♔c3! – but not 17.c4 ♖xd3+ 18.♕xd3 ♘xd3 19.♖xd3 ♘c6∓) 16...♘xd3+ 17.♔b1 ♕b5 18.♕a2? (18.♕c2 ♘b4 19.♕c4 ♕xc4 20.bxc4 ♘ec6=∞) 18...c4 19.♕a4 ♕xb3+ 20.♕xb3 cxb3 21.♖d2 c5 and the avalanche swept White away, Popchev-Mitkov, Skopje 1991.

5...d6 6.♘a4 ♗g4 7.f3 ♗e6



8.♘e2

More natural is 8.♘xc5 dxc5 9.f4, and if 9...♗g4, then the odd-looking 10.♕d2 – compare this to Morozevich's move ♕d7 in the Albin Counter-Gambit (see Chapter 5: Morozevich's Pet Line in the Albin).

8...h4 9.♘xc5 dxc5 10.♗e3 h3 11.♗f1

The penetration at h3 is not always an achievement. True, it leads to the bishop's humiliating withdrawal to its initial position, but later on the pawn may become a weakness as happens in some lines of the Modern Benoni.

11...♕e7 12.g4 0-0-0

Stronger was 12...c4!.

13.b3 g6

Here 13...♘d4 suggested itself. Probably Marshall disliked this move in view of another humble retreat: 14.♘g1! and the h3 pawn is doomed.

14.♕d2

14.♘g1 f5 15.♗xh3 fxe4 16.fxe4 ♕d7.

14...f5 15.gxf5 gxf5 16.exf5 ♗d5 17.♗g5 ♘f6 18.♕e3 ♕d6

The immediate 18...♘d4 was simpler and better.

19.0-0-0 ♘d4 20.♘xd4 cxd4 21.♕f2 ♕a3+

The whole idea of the queenside offensive is dubious.

By sticking to his central strategy – 21...♖df8! – Black could have maintained a good position.

22.♔b1 ♖d6 23.♗c1 ♕a5 24.♖g1 ♖a6 25.a3 ♗c6 26.♕e1! ♕c5 27.♕b4! ♕xb4?

Better was 27...♕d5.

28.axb4 ♗xf3 29.♖e1±

The weakness of Black's pawns secures White a clear edge in the ending.

29...e4?!

29...♘d5 30.♗d2.

30.dxe4 ♗xe4 31.♗xa6 bxa6 32.♗g5 ♘d5 33.♔b2 ♗g2 34.♖e5

And White won.

☐ **Sandor Rosta**
■ **Tamas Halasz**
Hungary tt 1992

1.e4 e5 2.♘c3 ♗c5 3.g3 ♘c6 4.♗g2 h5 5.d3 h4

I believe this should be considered main continuation.

6.♘d5

The game Suarez-Fucek, Buenos Aires 1993, saw 6.♘f3 d6 7.♗g5 f6 8.♗e3 h3 9.♗f1 ♗g4 10.♗e2 ♘ge7 11.♗xc5 dxc5 12.♕d2 (in this position 12.♘xe5? is a bad idea – 12...♗xe2 13.♘xc6 ♗xd1 14.♘xd8 ♗f3–+) 12...♕d7 13.0-0-0 ♗xf3 14.♗xf3 ♘d4 15.♗e2 b5 (15...0-0-0) 16.♔b1? (a retreat for the knight should have been prepared with 16.♖df1 b4 17.♘d1) 16...b4 17.♘d5 ♘xd5 18.exd5 ♕xd5 and Black was simply a pawn up.

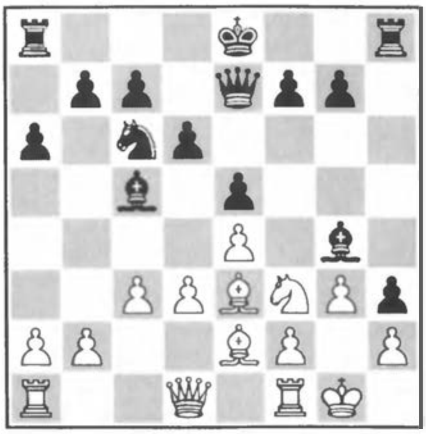
6...d6 7.c3 a6 8.♘f3

In Dominiguez-Isaev, Moscow Olympiad 1994, White transposed the game into another subdivision of our classification by playing 8.g4. Black, however, obviously thought he was still in the 'White allows the opponent to play h4-h3' type of positions. (That at least is my subjective explanation.) This misunderstanding led to the venturous 8...h3?! (8...♘ge7=) 9.♗xh3 (9.♘xh3 was good as well) 9...♘ce7 10.♘e3 d5 11.♗g2 d4 12.♘f5 dxc3 13.♘xg7+ ♔f8 14.♘f5 cxb2?! 15.♗xb2 ♘g6 16.♘f3 ♘f4? (16...♗xf5 17.gxf5 ♘f4) 17.♗xe5! ♘xd3+ (17...♘xg2+ 18.♔f1 f6 19.♗g3+–) 18.♔e2 ♗xf5 19.♕xd3! ♗d7 and here White could have terminated the game by 20.♖ad1! (in the game 20.a4 f6 was played, and Black even won) 20...♗b5 21.♕xb5! winning.

8...h3 9.♗f1 ♗g4

The alternative 9...♘ge7 is more flexible.

10.♗e3 ♘ge7 11.♗e2 ♕d7 12.♘xe7 ♕xe7 13.0-0



13...♗xf3?!

A positional mistake. Without the light-squared bishop the drawbacks of the having the pawn on h3 become evident. After 13...♗xe3 14.fxe3 ♗d7 the position would have been equal.

14.♗xf3 ♗xe3 15.fxe3 ♕g5 16.♕e2±

White doubles the rooks along the f-file, puts the bishop on g4 and stands better. In conclusion, Black should be careful before advancing his h-pawn to h3. Indeed, sometimes it's more favourable to keep the pressure on the kingside and to be able to exchange on g3.

White seldom takes on h4 with the pawn, but it happened once in one of my own games. Naturally I'm unable to pass it over in silence.

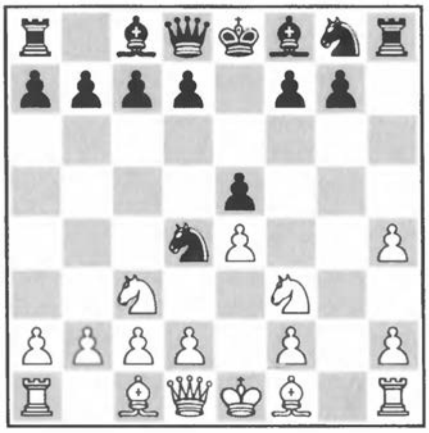
☐ **Sergey Pestov**
■ **Maxim Notkin**
Moscow 1994

1.e4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.g3 h5

The game Vorotnikov-Hennings, Leipzig 1979, saw 3...♗c5 4.♗g2 h5 5.♘f3 h4 6.gxh4 d6 7.h3 ♘ge7 8.d3 ♘g6 9.♗g5 f6 10.♗e3 ♗xe3 11.fxe3 ♘xh4 12.♘xh4 ♖xh4 13.d4 when the position is roughly equal. Black has a better pawn formation but the opponent's spatial advantage hampers the manoeuvres of his pieces. After 13...♕e7 14.♕d2 ♕f7 15.d5 ♘d8 16.♕f2 Black made an inaccurate move 16...g5?! weakening the squares f6 and f5 which allowed White to get a slight edge by 17.0-0-0 a6 18.♘e2±.

Note that after 6...♖xh4 White will not gain material. He continues to develop the pieces as follows: 7.d3 ♖h8 8.♗g5 f6 9.♗e3 ♗b6 10.♕e2 d6 11.0-0-0. The game Bastijanic-Zelic, Pula 1994, is worth studying a bit more as White won with the help of a nice queen sacrifice – 11...♗g4 12.h3 ♗h5 13.h4 ♘ge7 (13...♘d4! 14.♗xd4 ♗xd4 15.♕d2 ♗b6) 14.♖dg1 ♘g6 15.♗h3 ♘f4?! 16.♗xf4! ♘d4? 17.♘xd4! ♗xe2 18.♘cxe2 ♗xd4 19.♘xd4 exd4 20.♖xg7 with a decisive attack.

4.♘f3 h4 5.gxh4 ♘d4!?



6.d3

The line 6.♘xe5 ♕f6! (6...d6 7.♘f3 ♗g4 8.♗e2 ♘xe2 9.♕xe2 ♖xh4 10.♖g1±) 7.♘g4 ♘f3+ 8.♔e2 ♕f4 is too crazy.

6...c6 7.♘xd4 exd4 8.♘e2 ♗c5 9.c3

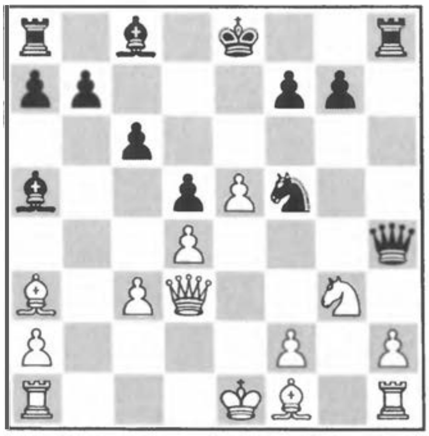
White unblocks his opponent's dark-squared bishop intending to set a new barrier immediately.

Nonetheless 9.♖g1!? was stronger trying to seize the initiative on the kingside.

9...dxc3 10.bxc3 ♕xh4 11.♘g3 ♘e7 12.d4 ♗b6 13.♗a3?!

Better is 13.e5. The text move allows Black to solve his last problem – the light-squared bishop's development.

13...d5 14.e5 ♘f5 15.♕d3 ♗a5!



With this trick Black avoids the exchange on g3 which would have improved White's pawn chain.

16.0-0-0 ♕f4+ 17.♖d2 ♗e6 18.♔b2 0-0-0 19.♘xf5 ♗xf5 20.♕e3 ♕e4!?

This move falls into the same category as 15...♗a5. I don't want to help my opponent improve his pawn structure.

21.♕xe4 ♗xe4 22.♖g1 g6 23.h3 ♔d7 24.♖g4 ♗f5 25.♖f4 ♔e6

The ending is clearly better for Black thanks to the weakness of the h3 pawn. Before winning it, only a little preparation is needed to restrict White's possible counterplay.

26.h4 ♖dg8 27.♗d3 ♗d8 28.c4 ♖xh4 29.♗xf5+ gxf5 30.cxd5+ cxd5 31.♖xh4 ♗xh4

And Black realized his extra pawn.

I'll use another game of mine as a bridge to the final part of this survey. It was one of the greatest frustrations in my chess career.

☐ **Vladislav Vorotnikov**
■ **Maxim Notkin**
Moscow 1997

1.e4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.g3 h5

Here my experienced opponent suddenly plunged into deep thought. Two years before this game I had a bad position against Marinkovic (see below), and, therefore, I considered 4.h3 as the most unpleasant move for Black. When Vorotnikov finally played.

4.♘f3

and I replied

4...h4

I was quite satisfied as for some reason I was sure that here White had no other option except for 5.gxh4 and 5.♘xh4. And I was ready to play these positions. The next move shocked me.

5.g4!

Played after another 15 or 20 minutes of hesitation. All my anticipation of sacrifices and attacks collapsed in the twinkling of an eye. In the following positional play I made some mistakes and like two years ago found myself in troubles.

5...♗c5 6.h3 a6

A needless move, for, after 6...♘ge7, 7.♘a4 is harmless in view of 7...♗d6.

7.d3 d6

Again better is 7...♘ge7 and in the event of 8.♗g5 Black has 8...♘d4! saving the h4 pawn.

8.♗g5 f6 9.♗e3 ♘d4

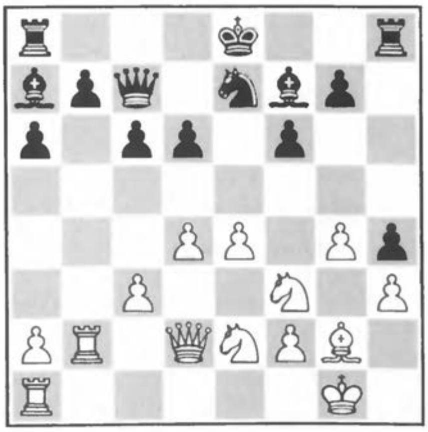
After 9...♘ge7 I did not like 10.d4, but 9...♗xe3 10.fxe3 ♗e6 11.d4 ♗f7 was preferable.

10.♗xd4 exd4

Showing an excessive respect for the pair of bishops.

It is better to cede the one which capacity is reduced by its own pawns: 10...♗xd4 11.♘xd4 exd4 12.♘e2 c5 and White has only a small advantage.

11.♘e2 c6 12.♗g2 ♘e7 13.♕d2 ♕b6 14.0-0 ♗e6 15.c3 dxc3 16.bxc3 ♕c7 17.d4 ♗a7 18.♖fb1 ♗f7 19.♖b2



At this point a certain opinion about my position formed itself in my mind. To be honest it wasn't the first time I felt something similar when playing the 3...h5 line of the Vienna

Game. Here it is: 'I'm alright, all my pieces stands well or at least have good prospects, but what is this damned pawn doing at h4?!!' I could have castled kingside, I could have done many useful things had this silly piece of wood remained at h7 where in fact it is destined to be! The game went

19...♖d8

Or 19...b5 20.a4 and Black is worse on both flanks.

20.g5!? f5 21.exf5 ♘xf5 22.g6! ♗c4

Dismal is 22...♗xg6 23.♘f4 ♗f7 24.♖e1+ ♘e7 25.♘g5+–.

23.♕g5 ♖f8

Only computers play 23...0-0 here.

24.♘f4 ♔d7! 25.♗f1?

In the event of 25.♘xh4 I planned to play 25...♘h6 (25...♘xh4 26.♕xh4 ♔c8 27.d5), but after 26.d5! cxd5 27.♖ab1 (premature is 27.♘e6 ♖xf2! 28.♖xf2 ♗xf2+ 29.♔xf2 ♕b6+ 30.♘d4? ♕b2+) 27...b5 28.♘e6! White wins the exchange as 28...♔xe6? loses the queen to 29.♖e1+ ♔d7 30.♖e7+. True, Black would have retained some counterchances, but objectively his position is bad. In the game after

25...♗xf1 26.♖xf1 ♖de8

I managed to draw somehow.

Let's search for samples of more successful play for Black in the lines where White meets h5-h4 with g3-g4.

☐ **Alexander Finkel**
■ **Zoltan Almasi**
Bratislava 1993

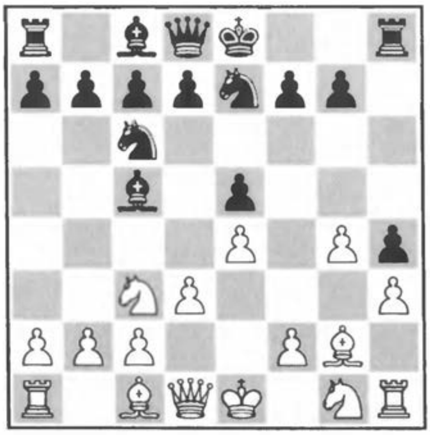
1.e4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘c6

Mieses also won Game 8 in his match against Marshall, Berlin 1908: 2...♗c5 3.g3 ♘c6 4.♗g2 h5 5.h3 h4 6.g4 d6 7.♘a4 (7.d3 ♗e6 8.f4 exf4 9.♗xf4 ♘ge7 10.♘ge2 ♘g6 11.♗h2 ♘d4 12.♕d2 ♕d7 13.0-0-0 0-0-0 14.♔b1 ♔b8= Marinkovic-Markovic, Belgrade 1991) 7...♗e6 8.d3 g5? 9.c3 (Black is unable to prevent d3-d4 therefore his plans of a blockade along the dark squares fail. Perhaps Marshall thought that after ♘a4 Mieses would take the bishop?) 9...a6 10.♘f3 f6 11.d4! exd4 12.cxd4 ♗b4+ 13.♘c3 ♗c4 14.♕c2 ♕e7 15.♗d2 0-0-0 16.b3 ♗xc3 17.♗xc3 ♗f7 18.0-0 ♗g6 19.♘d2 d5 20.♖fe1 ♕d7 21.♕b2 ♘ge7 22.b4!± dxe4 23.♘xe4 ♗xe4 24.♗xe4 ♕d6 25.b5 axb5 26.♕xb5 ♘d5 27.♖ab1 ♘b6 (not 27...♘xc3?? 28.♗f5+, but 27...b6 was stronger) 28.d5 ♘a7 29.♕a5 ♔b8 30.♗d4 ♘ac8 31.♗c5 ♕d7 32.d6! ♘xd6 33.♖xb6! cxb6 34.♗xb6 ♘c8 35.♗f5 ♕d6 (35...♘xb6□ 36.♗xd7 ♘xd7+–) 36.♗xc8 ♔xc8 37.♖c1+ ♔d7 38.♕f5+ ♔e8 39.♕g6+ Black resigned. An excellent game!

3.g3 h5 4.h3

Another way of stopping the h-pawn – 4.h4 is not popular. Zarnicki-Akopian, Rio Gallegos 1986, went 4...d6 5.d3 ♗g4 6.♗e2 ♕d7 7.♗xg4 hxg4 8.♗e3 g6 9.♕d2 ♗h6 10.♗xh6 ♖xh6 11.♘d5 ♖h5 12.♘e2 f5 13.0-0-0 0-0-0 with an equal game.

In the next pair of examples two strong GMs were apparently confused by that deceptive move order that I faced in the game against Vorotnikov: 4.d3 h4 5.g4 ♗c5 6.h3 ♘ge7 7.♗g2



A) 7...♘d4 8.♘ge2 ♘xe2 9.♘xe2 ♗b6?! (9...d5) 10.f4 d6 11.d4! ♗e6 (11...exd4

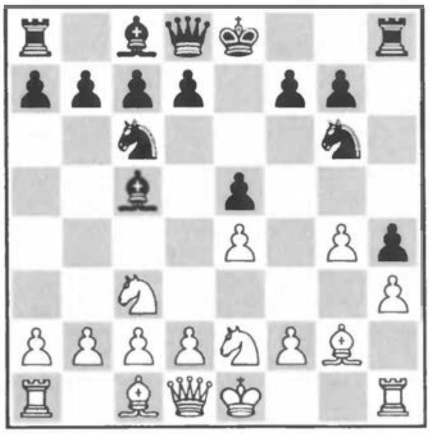
12.♘xd4 0-0 13.♘f3!? and the h4-pawn is weak) 12.♕d3 exd4 13.♘xd4♘c6 14.♘xc6 bxc6 15.♗d2 f6? (a decisive weakening) 16.e5! dxe5 (16...d5 17.f5 ♗c8 18.e6) 17.♗xc6+ ♔f8 18.f5 ♗f7 19.♗xa8 ♕xa8 20.0-0-0+– J.Pedersen-Aronian, Morso 2002.

B) 7...♘g6 8.♗e3 ♗b6 (8...d6!?) 9.♘ge2 d6 10.♕d2♘d4?! (10...♗e6) 11.♗xd4! exd4 12.♘d5 c6 13.♘xb6 ♕xb6 14.c3 dxc3 15.bxc3 (a clever exchange manoeuvre led to a position where White's pawn centre looks formidable) 15...♗d7 16.f4 0-0-0 17.d4 ♘e7 18.a4 g6 19.c4! (maybe it's not the strongest move but I attach the mark of exclamation for the fidelity to principle) 19...f5 20.exf5 gxf5 21.g5 ♘g6 22.0-0 and in the end White won, Cabe-Xu Jun, Manila 1991.

4...h4

I tested 4...♗c5, but, after 5.♘a4 ♗e7 6.♗g2 h4 7.g4, it turned out that the bishop takes the knight's square. My following play was not too impressive – 7...♘f6 (7...a6!?) 8.♘c3 ♗c5 9.d3 ♘d4 10.f4 exf4 11.♗xf4 c6 (11...d6) 12.♕d2d5 13.e5♘h7?! (13...♘d7) 14.0-0-0 ♘e6 15.♗h2 ♘hf8 16.♘f3 ♘g6 17.d4 ♗b4 18.♗f1 a5?! 19.♕e3 a4 20.♘e2 a3 21.b3 and Black suffers from a lack of constructive ideas while White has various means of active play on the kingside, Marinkovic-Notkin, Tivat 1995.

5.g4 ♘ge7 6.♗g2 ♘g6 7.♘ge2 ♗c5



8.d3

In the event of 8.♘d5!? ♘ce7 9.♘xe7 ♕xe7 10.c3 ♗b6 11.d4 d6, correct is 12.0-0 and White has a stable edge.

Instead, the game Finkel-Tseitlin, Beer-Sheva 1997, saw 12.♕d3 0-0 13.0-0 c5 14.♔h1 cxd4 15.cxd4 ♕f6 (Finkel suggests 15...d5!?, but I don't think it solves all Black's problems) 16.g5! ♕e7 17.f4 exf4 18.♘xf4 ♘xf4 19.♖xf4 ♗e6? (19...♕xg5! 20.♖xf7 ♕g6 21.♖xf8+ ♔xf8± Finkel) 20.♖xh4±.

Analysing the situation I conclude that White's worst piece is the queen's knight. It hinders in building of the strong pawn centre by c2-c3 and d3-d4. That's why White is trying to exchange it. Hence, Black should not facilitate his opponent's task. So, in reply to 8.♘d5, the move 8...♘d4!? comes into consideration with unclear play.

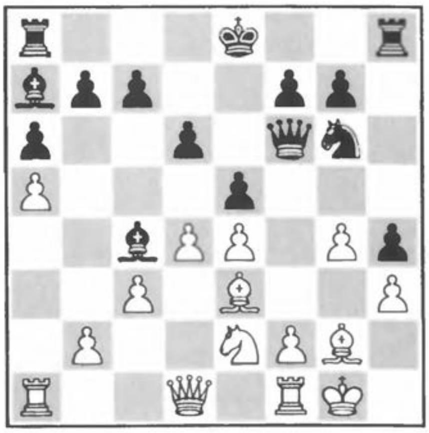
8...♘d4 9.♘xd4 ♗xd4 10.♘e2 ♗b6 11.c3

Here 11.d4 is somewhat impatient. After 11...exd4 12.f4 d6 13.♘xd4 ♕f6 14.♘e2 ♗d7 15.♕d3 Jonker-Klip, Dieren 1990, 15...0-0-0 16.g5 ♕e7 17.♗d2 a complicated position with mutual chances arises.

11...♕f6 12.d4 d6 13.a4

Simpler is 13.0-0.

13...a6 14.♗e3?! ♗e6 15.a5 ♗a7 16.0-0 ♗c4!



The first positional achievement – Black has prevented f2-f4.

17.♖e1 ♘f8!? 18.♕d2 ♘e6

From here the knight controls two important squares.

19.d5?!

White could keep the balance with 19.g5 ♕g6 20.f4 exf4 21.♘xf4 ♘xf4 22.♗xf4 0-0-0.

19...♗xe3 20.♕xe3 ♗xe2 21.dxe6 ♗c4 22.exf7+ ♕xf7

White is left with a bad bishop – his position is slightly worse.

23.♕g5 ♖h6 24.♖ad1 ♕e7

Here 24...♖f6!? 25.♕xh4 0-0-0 deserved attention with full compensation for the pawn.

25.♕e3

White could break free with 25.♕xe7+ ♔xe7 26.f4! equalizing.

25...♖f6 26.♗f1 ♗e6 27.♗e2 ♖f4 28.c4 ♔f8 29.♔g2

Missing one more possibility of active play – 29.b4 ♔g8 30.c5.

29...♔g8 30.b3 ♖af8 31.f3 ♕g5 32.♖d3 ♗d7 33.♖c3 ♗c6 34.♖f1 ♕f6 35.♗d3 ♗d7 36.♗e2 ♔h8 37.♖cc1 ♕g5 38.♖c3 ♗e6

The last 7-8 moves are typical of time-trouble play.

39.b4 ♗g8 40.♖d1 ♕f6

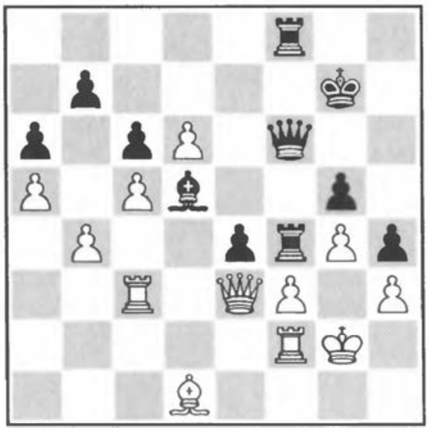
The time control is passed and a tough finish begins.

41.c5 d5! 42.exd5 e4! 43.d6

Clearly not 43.fxe4? ♖f2+ 44.♔g1 ♖xe2!.

43...c6! 44.♖f1 ♗d5 45.♖f2 g5 46.♗d1 ♔g7

Almasi unhurriedly improves the positions of his pieces. It reminds me of Kharlov-Topalov, Tripoli 2004, but with all the rooks on the board.



47.♗e2 ♔h6 48.♗d1 ♖f7 49.♗e2 ♕g7 50.♕c1? ♕e5?!

Immediately decisive was 50...exf3+ 51.♗xf3 ♕e5–+.

51.♗c4

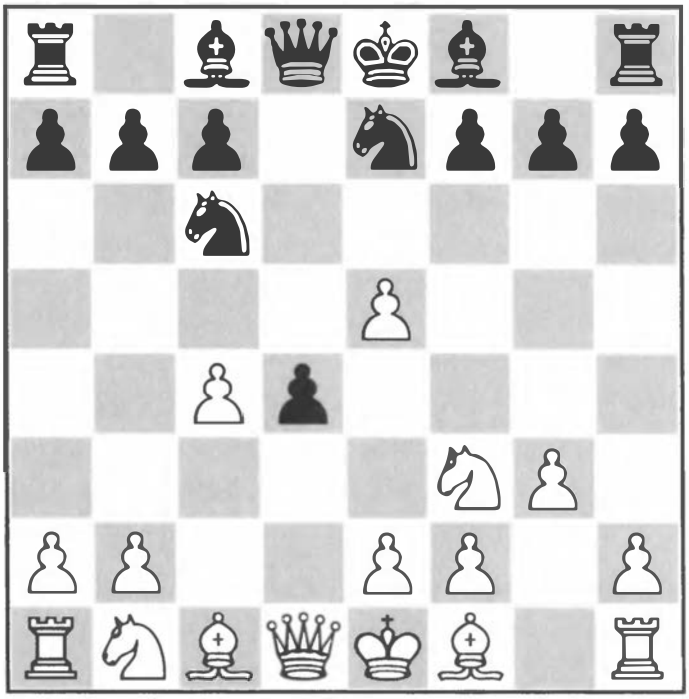
White also loses after 51.♔h1 exf3 52.♗d3 (52.♗f1 ♖e4) 52...♖xb4–+.

51...exf3+ 0-1

CHAPTER 5

Jeroen Bosch

Morozevich's Pet Line in the Albin



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The Sideline 5...♘ge7

Alexander Morozevich is famous for his adventurous chess. In the 2004 Amber tournament he twice played the Albin Counter-Gambit. Now the Albin does not enjoy a very respectful reputation, but Morozevich's interpretation is well worth studying.

☐ **Boris Gelfand**
■ **Alexander Morozevich**
Monaco (blindfold) 2004

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e5

The Albin Counter-Gambit is not a common guest in games between world class players. Historically, perhaps only the first game of our eponymous hero fell into this category. For it was in New York 1893 that Adolf Albin first played his daring gambit against none other than World Champion Emanuel Lasker. This debut could hardly be called a success, though, as after 3.dxe5 d4 4.♘f3 ♘c6 5.a3 ♗g4 6.h3 ♗xf3 7.gxf3 ♘xe5 8.f4 ♘c6?! (8...♘g6 had to be played) 9.♗g2 ♕d7 10.b4 a6 11.♗b2 White's game was preferable.

3.dxe5 d4 4.♘f3 ♘c6 5.g3

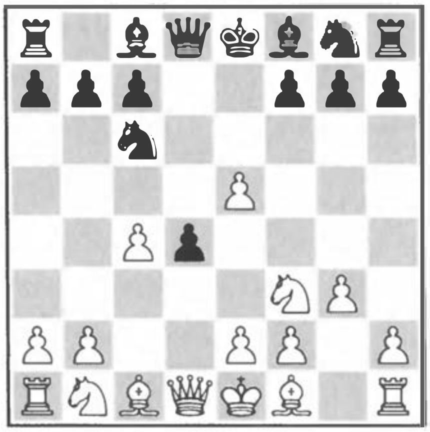
The strongest move at this stage and by far the most popular line. The alternatives 5.a3 and 5.♘bd2 are less critical.

After **5.a3** the move 5...♗e6 seems enough for near-equality. A virtually equal ending arises after 6.e3 dxe3 7.♕xd8+ ♖xd8

8.♗xe3 ♘ge7 9.♘c3 ♘g6 10.♘b5 ♖d7 11.♘bd4 ♘gxe5 12.♘xe5 ♘xe5 13.♘xe6 fxe6 14.♗e2 ♘d3+, forcing the exchange of White's bishop pair, as in Farago-Mestel, Belgrade 1982.

By analogy to our main game a set-up with 5...♘ge7 comes into consideration. For example, 5...♘ge7 6.g3 ♘g6 7.♗g2 ♘gxe5 8.♘bd2 ♗e7 9.0-0 0-0 (9...a5) 10.b4 d3 11.b5 ♘d4 with equal play, Pinter-Souleidis, Dortmund 1998.

Stronger is **5.♘bd2**, when a game Szilagyi-Kadas, Hungary 2000, went 5...♘ge7 (the main line is 5...♗g4) 6.a3 a5 7.♘b3 (7.g3 may be met by 7...♘g6 or 7...a4) 7...♘g6 8.♘bxd4 ♘cxe5 9.♗d2 (9.♘xe5 ♘xe5 10.♗f4, followed by 11.e3, looks much better) 9...c6 10.♕c2 ♗c5 11.♗c3 0-0 12.0-0-0 ♕e7 13.♘f5 ♗xf5 14.♕xf5 ♘xf3 15.gxf3 ♗xf2 and Black was slightly better.



5...♘ge7!?

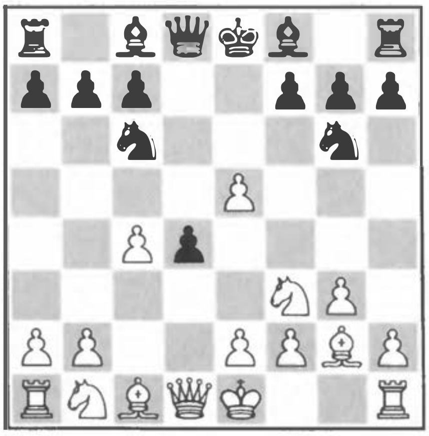
In what is already a fairly uncommon gambit this is a sideline. Fans of the Albin Counter-Gambit usually try to checkmate their opponents as soon as possible with the coffee-house set-up: ♗g4, ♕d7, 0-0-0, ♗h3 and h5. White's position is too solid, though, for such a one-sided strategy to succeed (with best play that is). White should remember one of the golden rules when playing against a gambit: 'return material in time'. Alternatively he may just crudely start an attack of his own on the queenside where Black's king has found a not-too-safe haven. Two sample lines that are sort of mainstream Albin theory arise after 5...♗g4 (5...♗e6 is also played) 6.♗g2 ♕d7 7.0-0:

– Here it would be nice if 7...♗h3 would work. However, now is the time to throw a spanner in the works with the standard 8.e6!. Since Black is forced to take this pawn with the bishop, White gains valuable time for developing his own initiative. The game Dzindzichashvili-Manievich, Israeil Championship 1978, illustrates why this is known to favour White: 8...♗xe6 9.♕a4 0-0-0 10.♖d1 a6 11.♘c3 ♘f6 12.♗g5 ♗e7 13.♗xf6 ♗xf6 14.♘d5±.

– 7...0-0-0 8.♘bd2 h5 9.b4! (there is no need for 9. h4, White's counter-attack is very strong) 9...♗xb4 (9...♘xb4 10.a3 ♘a6 11.♘b3 was also better for White in Van der Wiel-Tiviakov, Albin theme tournament, Groningen 2001) 10.♕a4 h4 11.♖b1 hxg3 12.♖xb4 ♘xb4 13.♕xb4 ♗h3 14.fxg3, and White's minor pieces are stronger than Black's rook. More importantly, Black's attack is going nowhere.

6.♗g2 ♘g6

The whole point of 5...♘ge7 – Black simply wants to retrieve his gambit pawn. If he succeeds, his advanced d4-pawn constitutes a fair trade-off against White's powerful g2 bishop.



7.♗g5

This is the most ambitious move. White develops with tempo and it is not immediately obvious how Black should reply.

The natural 7.0-0 deserves separate treatment. See the game Piskov-Mozny below. Two minor alternatives:

● Alekhine once played 7.♕a4, and Black had no problems after 7...♗b4+ 8.♘bd2 0-0 9.0-0 Alekhine-Pires, Lisbon 1941. And now 9...a5!? – a suggestion of Raetsky and Chetverik – planning to take back the gambit pawn on e5 looks good.

● Possible is 7.♗f4 ♘xf4! (the move order cannot be inverted, for after 7...f6? 8.exf6 ♘xf4 White has 9.f7+!) 8.gxf4 f6 9.♘bd2 fxe5 10.fxe5 ♗f5, with a highly complicated game in Tiviakov-Ligterink, Albin theme tournament Groningen 2001.

7...♕d7!

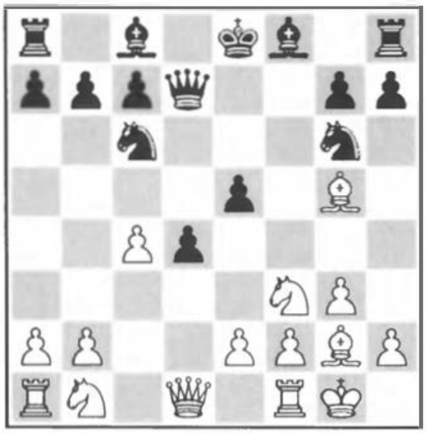
Morozevich (temporarily) blocks his own bishop. This odd-looking move is in fact far stronger than the natural response 7...♗e7, for after 8.♗xe7 Black must take back with the king (which has indeed been tried) in order not to remain a pawn down.

Maxim Chetverik (author of a book on the Albin Counter-Gambit together with Alexander Raetsky) has championed 7...f6?!. However, after 8.exf6 gxf6 9.♗d2 Black's pawn structure is too compromised, with no clear dynamic compensation in sight.

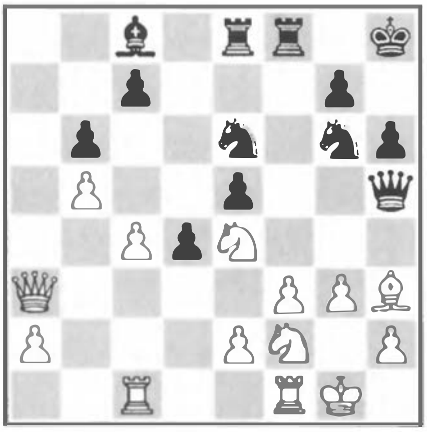
8.0-0

There is a main alternative here in the form of **8.e6!?**. This well-known Albin ploy may well be White's best bet for a small advantage. As the d4 pawn needs protection Black must take back with the f-pawn on e6: 8...fxe6 9.0-0 e5.

Starting from this position there are two Morozevich efforts, the first one dating back to more than 10 years ago. Let's examine the games Krasenkow-Morozevich and Van Wely-Morozevich in detail:



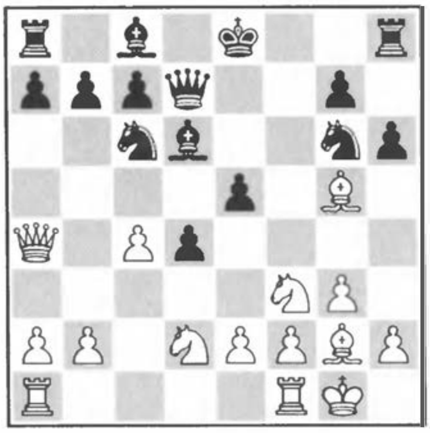
● 10.♘bd2 h6 11.♗h4 ♗e7 12.♗xe7 ♕xe7 13.♕c2 ♕f7 14.♘e1 0-0 (play is about equal) 15.♘d3 ♔h8 16.b4 ♗g4 17.♖ae1 ♖ae8?! (17...a6 to prevent White's next is stronger) 18.b5 ♘d8 19.♕a4± ♕f5 20.♘e4 (the alternatives are also promising: 20.♕xa7 ♗xe2 21.♖xe2 ♕xd3 22.♖fe1 and 23.♗e4 is uncomfortable to meet; or 20.f3 ♕g5 21.e3) 20...♕h5 21.f3 ♗e6 22.♖c1 ♘f7 23.♕xa7 ♗c8 24.♕c5 ♘g5 25.♘df2 ♘e6 26.♕a3 b6 27.♗h3!



(White has a huge advantage, so the young Morozevich sacs a piece) 27...♘gf4 28.gxf4 ♘xf4 29.♗xc8 ♘xe2+ 30.♔g2 ♖xc8 31.♘g3 ♕g6 32.♖ce1 d3 33.♖xe2 (returning material to end the complications) 33...dxe2 34.♖e1 h5 35.♕d3 ♕g5 36.♘h3 ♕h6 37.♖xe2+– h4 38.♘f1 ♖cd8 39.♕e4 ♖d4 40.♕xe5 ♕g6+ 41.♕g5 ♕d3 42.♕h5+

♔g8 43.♖d2 ♕xc4 44.♖xd4 ♕xd4 45.♘g5 ♕d3 46.♘e3! ♖d8 47.♕f7+ ♔h8 48.♕h5+ ♔g8 49.♕f7+ ♔h8 50.♕e6 ♖a8 51.♔h3 ♕b1 52.♘f7+ ♔g8 53.♘g5+ ♔h8 54.a3 ♕d3 55.♘f7+ ♔h7 56.♘g5+ ♔h8 57.♘g4 ♖f8 58.♘e5 ♕f1+ 59.♔g4 1-0 Krasenkow-Morozevich, Podolsk 1993.

● 10.♕a4 ♗d6 (10...h6 11.♗d2 ♗e7 is quite reasonable) 11.♘bd2 h6



12.c5!? (an inspired answer) 12...♗f8 (12...♗xc5 13.♕c2 hxg5 14.♕xg6+ ♕f7 15.♕xf7+ ♔xf7 16.♘xg5+±; 12...hxg5 13.cxd6 g4 14.♘g5 ♕xd6 15.♘c4, and Black's king will not find a safe place) 13.♗h4 a5!? (13...♗xc5?! 14.♕c2 ♘xh4 15.♘xh4 is a pawn up in an unenviable position) 14.a3 ♖a6?! (this is too much – 14...♕e6 15.b4 ♗d7 was better) 15.♖fe1 ♕f5 16.♖ac1 ♗e7 17.♗xe7 ♘xe7 18.e3 (White has started the middle game, whereas Black still has to finish the opening) 18...0-0 19.exd4 exd4 20.b4 (20.♕c4+ ♔h8 21.♘b3 nets a pawn) 20...axb4 21.♕b3+ ♔h8 22.axb4 b5! 23.cxb6ep ♖xb6 24.♕a3 ♕f7 25.♖c5 ♘d5? 26.b5?! (26.♖xd5! ♕xd5 27.b5+–) 26...♘cb4 27.♘e4 ♗f5 28.♘e5?! ♕e7 29.f4? ♗xe4 (29...♘c2!–+) 30.♖c4 ♘xf4? (30...♗xg2 31.♘g6+ ♖xg6 32.♖xe7 ♘xf4 33.♕xb4 ♗d5 34.♖e4! ♘h3+ 35.♔g2 ♘f4+ with a draw or 35...♗xe4+ 36.♔xh3 ♖f5 to play on) 31.♖xe4+– d3 32.♘g6+ ♘xg6 33.♖xe7 ♘xe7 34.♕xb4 ♖d6 35.♖xc7 ♘f5 36.♖d7 ♖ff6 37.♖xd6 ♖xd6 38.♗f3 d2 39.♗d1 ♖d8 40.♕c5 ♘d6 41.♕c7 1-0 Van Wely-Morozevich, Monaco rapid 2004.

Theoretically there may not be much wrong with Black after 8.e6!?. However, considering Morozevich's practical results here it may well be the line you will encounter most when you start playing this SOS-line.

In practice the move **8.♕a4** has also been tried. White was better in Kachiani Gersinska-Sträter, German Bundesliga 1998/99, after 8...h6 9.♗f4 ♘xf4 10.gxf4 ♕g4!? 11.0-0 ♗d7 12.♕b3 ♕xf4!? (12...♖b8) 13.♕xb7 ♖b8 14.♕xc7 ♖xb2?! 15.♘bd2 ♗e7 16.♖fb1±.

However, on move 14 Black should play 14...♖c8! 15.♕b7 ♖b8.

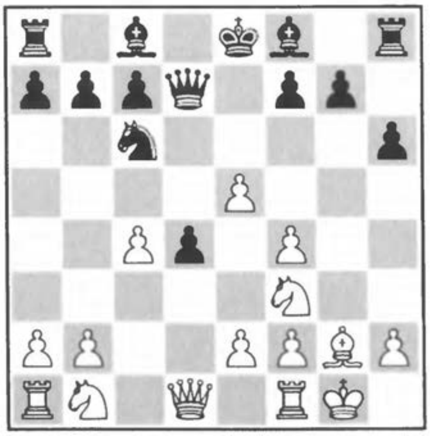
8...h6!N

This, and not his previous move, is Morozevich's crucial novelty. Black had previously tried 8...♘gxe5 9.♘bd2 ♘xf3+ 10.♘xf3 ♗c5. White is simply better here after 11.♘e1! Gärtner-Baumgartner, Austrian Team Championship 1995/96.

9.♗f4

Allowing Black to grasp the initiative with his forceful answer. Still whether you are playing blindfold or not, nobody likes to play a move like 9.♗c1.

9...♘xf4 10.gxf4



10...g5! 11.♘bd2

Taking twice on g5 does not come into consideration. After 11.fxg5 hxg5 12.♘xg5, both 12...♘xe5 and 12...♕g4 13.f4 ♕h4 are good.

11...gxf4 12.♘e4

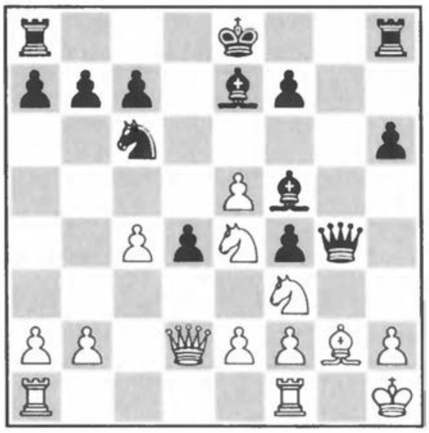
This is inaccurate; both 12.♘b3 or the immediate 12.♔h1 are stronger.

12...♗e7 13.♕d2?

A bad move, according to Morozevich. But Black also has a pleasant position after 13.♔h1 ♖g8.

13...♕g4 14.♔h1 ♗f5

Demonstrating that White's 12th and 13th moves were an unfortunate combination.



15.♘xd4?

This blunders a piece, but Black has a more than satisfactory position after any of the alternatives. For example:

A) 15.♘f6+ ♗xf6 16.exf6 0-0-0

B) 15.♘e1 0-0-0

C) 15.h3 ♕h5 16.♕xf4 ♗xh3 17.♘g3 ♕g4 18.♕xg4 ♗xg4, and Black is better in this ending.

15...♖d8

This is stronger than 15...0-0-0 as 16.♘xc6 ♖xd2 17.♘xe7+ is check! Still, even here Black is vastly superior after 17...♔d8 18.♘xf5 ♖d7.

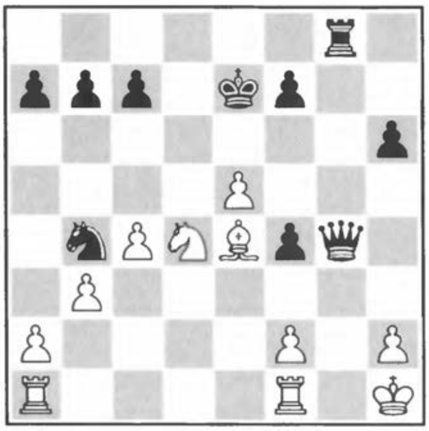
16.♘xf5

This queen sacrifice is not the best defence. 16.♘f6+ ♗xf6 17.♗xc6+ bxc6 18.exf6 c5 19.♕a5 cxd4 (19...♖xd4 20.♕xc5 ♖d7 21.♕c6!) 20.♖g1 ♕h3 21.♕xc7 offers White some slight chances of survival. After a forced sequence Black now obtains a decisive material advantage.

16...♖xd2 17.♘xe7 ♔xe7 18.♘xd2 ♕xe2

Black is winning. The following moves speak for themselves.

19.♘f3 ♖g8 20.b3 ♘b4 21.♘d4 ♕g4 22.♗e4



22...♖g5

This suffices for the win. It is perhaps only here that we notice that Morozevich is playing blindfold. Had he been permitted one cursory look at the board he would have played 22...♘d3, when White has no satisfactory defence against the threat of 23...♕g1 and 24...♘f2 mate!

23.♖g1 ♕d7 24.♘f3 ♖xg1+ 25.♖xg1 ♘d3 26.♖g2 c6 27.♗h7 a5 28.♘h4 ♘xe5

White resigned.

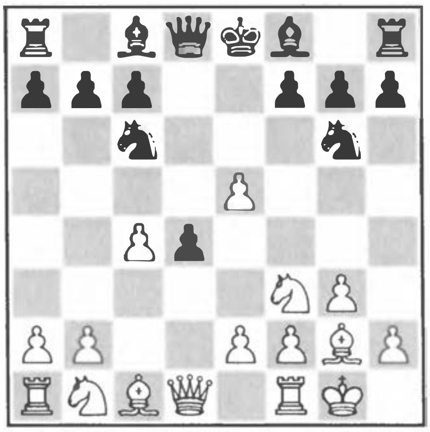
We have seen the merit of Morozevich's idea against White's most ambitious set-up: 7.♗g5. However, White has another simpler approach to play for an opening advantage: 7.0-0. Let's have a look at a special contribution by IM Mark Ginsburg.

A Tightrope Act

A contribution by Mark Ginsburg

☐ **Yury Piskov**
■ **Milos Mozny**
Clichy 1990

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e5 3.dxe5 d4 4.♘f3 ♘c6 5.g3 ♘ge7 6.♗g2 ♘g6 7.0-0

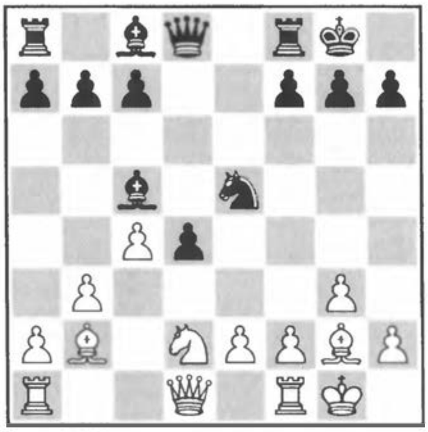


White simply castles and doesn't bother about the gambit pawn. His play is based on a slight lead in development. While Black immediately regains his material, he can achieve equality only by accurate play.

7...♗e7?!

Black should immediately win back his pawn with 7...♘gxe5! when there are two main continutions:

- Less testing now is 8.♘bd2 ♗e7 9.b3 0-0 10.♗b2 ♘xf3+ 11.♘xf3 ♗f6 12.♕d2. Burn-Schlechter, Barmen 1905, now went 12...♗g4?!, when White missed the powerful 13.♕f4! ♕d7 14.♖ad1 ♖ad8 15.e3 and White is on top. Instead of 12...♗g4 Black should play 12...♖e8! 13.♖ad1 ♗g4 14.♕f4 ♖xe2 15.♗xd4 ♗xf3 16.♗xf6 ♕xf6 17.♕xf6 gxf6 18.♗xf3 ♖xa2 with an equal ending.
- More to the point is 8.♘xe5 ♘xe5 9.b3! (aiming to transpose to our main game Piskov-Mozny. Not active enough is 9.♘d2 ♗e7 10.♘f3 ♘xf3+ 11.♗xf3 0-0 12.♗f4 Lautier-Raetsky, ACP blitz 2004. Instead of the game continuation 12...c5?!, Black has 12...♗h3 13.♖e1 c6 with equal chances) 9...♗c5! (not 9...♗e7 10.♗b2 ♗f6 11.♘d2 c5 12.♘e4 ♗e7 13.e3 and we've transposed to Piskov-Mozny) 10.♗b2 (the natural continuation, 10.b4 ♗e7 is nothing special for White) 10...0-0 11.♘d2



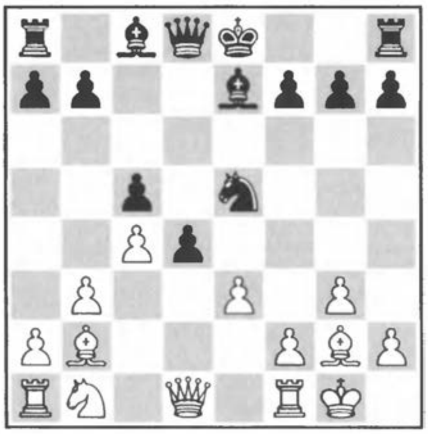
This is the critical position. If Black is not careful, White will obtain an edge. The following lines illustrate the difficulties that Black faces:

- 11...♗b6 12.b4!±
- 11...♗g4? 12.♘e4±
- 11...f5?! 12.a3 a5 13.b4!±
- 11...a6 12.♘e4 ♗a7 13.e3±

Fortunately, there is one move that saves the day. Black has 11...a5! and I cannot see more than equality in variations stemming from this move.

8.b3 ♘gxe5 9.♘xe5 ♘xe5 10.♗b2 ♗f6

Ideally, Black would like to play 10...c5 here. Unfortunately, the tactics are against him. White can exploit his small lead in development with the thematic 11.e3! (11.♗e4? ♕b6 12.♕c2 h5 gave Black a good position in Babula-Mozny, Czech Republic 1994)

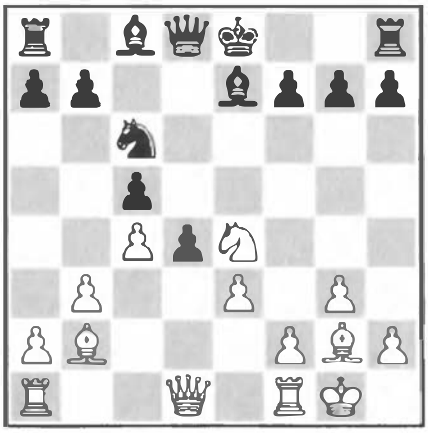


- 11...♗g4?! works well after 12.f3? ♗f5 13.e4 (13.exd4? ♘d3) 13...♗e6 with equality. Far stronger is 12.♕d2 when 12...♘f3+ 13.♗xf3 ♗xf3 14.exd4 leaves White clearly on top.
- So Black is forced to play 11...♗f6 12.exd4 cxd4 13.♘d2 when White is ahead in development, has a target on d4, and stands better. A sample line is: 13...♗g4 14.♕b1! ♕d7 15.f4! ♘c6 16.♖e1+ ♔f8 (not 16...♗e7?? 17.♗a3+–) with a huge edge for White.

11.♘d2 c5 12.♘e4

Driving back the bishop, which prepares his next thematic break.

12...♗e7 13.e3! ♘c6



14.♘xc5!

With this powerful blow Piskov optimally uses his edge in development.

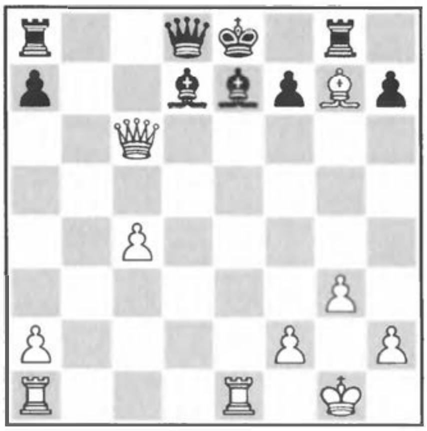
14...♗xc5 15.exd4 ♘xd4?

The only way to limit the damage was 15...♗e7! 16.d5 ♘b4 17.a3 ♘a6 18.♗xg7 ♖g8 19.♗d4 and White is clearly better, but not outright winning as in the game.

16.b4 ♗xb4

Or 16...♗b6 17.c5.

17.♕a4+ ♘c6 18.♗xc6+ bxc6 19.♗xg7! ♖g8 20.♕xc6+ ♗d7 21.♖fe1+ ♗e7



22.♖xe7+ ♕xe7

22...♔xe7 23.♕f6+ ♔e8 24.♖e1+ ♗e6 25.♖xe6+ fxe6 26.♕xe6++–.

23.♕xa8+ ♕d8 24.♕e4+ ♕e7 25.♕xh7 1-0

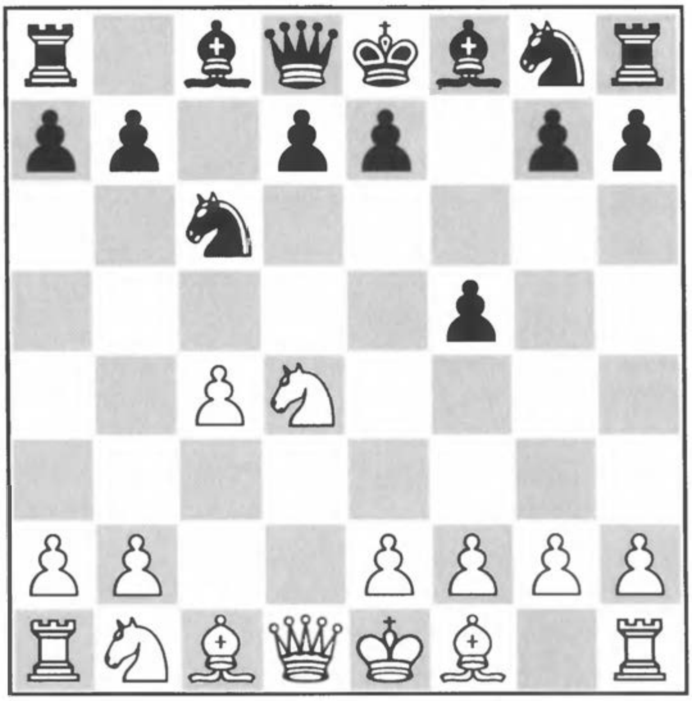
A crushing win by Piskov!

So, after 7.0-0 Black should avoid the disasters of Piskov-Mozny, and perform a tightrope act by means of 7...♘gxe5 8.♘xe5 ♘xe5 9.b3 ♗c5 10.♗b2 0-0 11.♘d2 a5! to gain equality. Nobody said that playing the Albin Counter-Gambit was easy!

CHAPTER 6

Michal Krasenkow

The Dutch in the English?



NIC KEY EO 49.7

Combining ...c5 and ...f5

1.♘f3 c5 2.c4

This order of moves is often used by players aiming for solid play, without major risks. These players want to avoid the Benko Gambit, the Modern Benoni and other double-edged openings. After

2...♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4

it is not easy for Black (especially if he wants to win) to complicate matters, either in the Maroczy system (4...g6 5.e4) or in the classic line (4...♘f6 5.♘c3 e6 and now, say, 6.a3). However, he has another option. Admittedly, it is a risky one, but it will set White a real positional challenge.

4...f5!?

Black prevents the Maroczy set-up (e2-e4) and now intends to play ...g7-g6. The f5 pawn can be useful in future play (similarly to the Dutch Defence, Black can start a kingside attack). The question is: Can White make use of the tempo Black spends in such a careless way?

An important thing to point out is that White should now give up 'solidness' and play actively to refute Black's set-up!

I am ashamed to admit my own failure to solve the problems when I faced this move in my game against Nigel Short in Round 2 of the FIDE World Championship in Libya 2004.

The provocative 4...f5 was applied for the first time back in 1928 by German IM Kurt Richter. However, he failed to demonstrate any worthy ideas, gave up a pawn and quickly lost (see below). In the nineties the bishop pawn lunge was picked up by Latvian IM (now GM) Normunds Miezis, who developed it into an orderly system.

Some of his followers have tried another move order: 2...g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 f5!?, which generally led to the same positions. Here are two games in which that didn't happen:

● Dragomaretsky-Pestov, Moscow 1990: 5.♘c3 ♗g7 6.e4 fxe4 7.♘xe4 ♕a5+ 8.♘c3 ♘f6 9.♘b3 ♕e5+ 10.♗e2 0-0 11.0-0 ♘e4 12.♘xe4 ♕xe4 13.♗f3 ♕f5 14.♕e2 ♘c6 15.♗e4 ♕f6 16.♖b1 d6 17.♗d2 ♕h4 18.♗d5+ ♔h8 19.♗c3 with a positional plus for White.

● Zhachev-Pestov, Moscow 1990: 7...♘c6 8.♘b3 (8.♗e3 ♕a5+ 9.♘c3 – see below) 8...♘f6 9.♘xf6+ ♗xf6 10.♗e2 b6 11.0-0 ♗b7 12.♖b1 ♕c7 13.♗e3 ♘e5 14.♗d4 ♕c6 15.f3 d6 16.♖f2 0-0 with complex play.

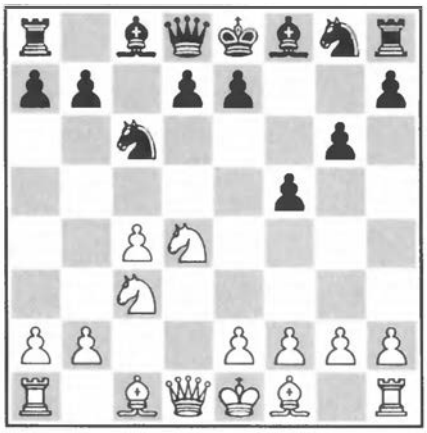
Back to the diagrammed position. White has two major plans depending on the way he develops his f1 bishop. Of course, developing it to g2 is more ambitious than to e2. White can also start with 5.♘c3 and define his plan on the next move. Let us first divide the material into two main lines:

A) 5.♘c3
B) 5.g3

Nothing special is gained by 5.e3 (not followed by ♘c3). There has been only one game with this plan, in which Black had no problems: 5...g6 6.♗e2 ♗g7 7.♘xc6 dxc6 8.0-0 ♘f6 9.♕c2 0-0 10.♘a3 ♗e6 11.c5 ♗d5 12.♖d1 ♕c7 13.♗d2 ♘e4 Srebrnic-Grabics, Punat 2003.

Variation A

5.♘c3 g6



In the first game played with this system Black just gave up the f5 pawn, which hardly deserves following: 5...♘f6? 6.♘xf5 g6 7.♘e3 ♗g7 8.g3 b6 9.♗g2 0-0 10.0-0 ♗b7 11.♖b1 Kostic-Richter, Berlin 1928.

After 5...g6, White is at the crossroads:

A1) 6.e4
A2) 6.g3
A3) 6.e3

The following two moves were proposed by WGM S.Prudnikova but have not been tested in practice yet:

– **6.♗f4!?** d6 7.♘d5 ♗g7 8.e3
– **6.♘xc6** dxc6 7.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 8.♗f4 ♗g7 9.0-0-0+ ♔e8 10.♔c2 e5 11.♗g5.

She evaluates the position as slightly better for White in both cases but I am sure GM Miezis has a different opinion on this subject! In the first case I don't see any achievements for White after 8...♘f6 (the f4 bishop is placed extremely awkwardly). In the second case – what is White going to do after 11...h6 as 12.♖d8+ ♔f7 is senseless (the rook will be pushed back on the next move)? In the game Prudnikova-Kalevic, Belgrade 1999, she played **6.h4** ♗g7 7.♘xc6 dxc6

8.♕xd8+ (8.♕b3!? e5 9.♗d2 ♘e7 10.0-0-0 ♕c7 11.e4 is recommended by Prudnikova – why not 9...♘f6 ?) 8...♔xd8 9.♗d2 e5 10.g3 ♘f6 11.e4 ♖e8 12.♗g2 ♗e6 13.b3 ♔c7 14.♖c1 ♖ad8 15.♘d5+ ♔b8 16.♘xf6 ♗xf6 17.♗c3 fxe4 18.♗xe4 ♗f5 19.♗xf5 gxf5 20.♔e2 ♔c8 21.♖cd1 ♖d7 22.♖he1 draw.

Variation A1

6.e4

Black is well-prepared for this attack!

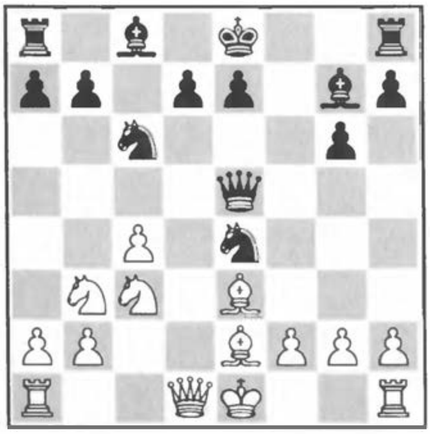
6...fxe4 7.♘xe4 ♕a5+ 8.♘c3 ♗g7 9.♗e3 ♘f6

9...♘h6!? is also possible although in the following game White obtained an advantage, due to Black's inaccurate play: 10.♗e2 0-0 11.0-0 ♕e5?! 12.♘f3 ♕b8?! 13.♕d5+! ♔h8 14.♕e4 ♘f5 15.♖ad1! A.Rodriguez-Leyva, Matanzas 1998. Instead of 11...♕e5?!, GM A.Rodriguez recommends 11...♗xd4! 12.♗xd4 ♘f5 13.♘b5 (or 13.♗e3 ♘xe3 14.fxe3 ♖xf1+ 15.♗xf1 d6 16.♕d5+ ♔g7) 13...♘fxd4 14.♘xd4 ♕e5 15.♘xc6 bxc6 and Black is OK.

10.♘b3

Worse is 10.♗e2?! ♘e4 11.♕d3 ♘xc3 12.bxc3 0-0 13.h4?? ♘xd4 14.♗xd4 e5 and Black wins a piece, Mirkovic-Nestorovic, Niska Banja 2004.

10...♕e5! 11.♗e2 ♘e4



As distinct from the above game Dragomaretsky-Pestov, this manoeuvre now brings Black a real benefit.

12.♘xe4

The unnatural 12.♘a4?! proved a bad choice in Kuenitz-Miezis, Bad Wildbad 2000: 12...d6 13.0-0 0-0 14.♗f3 ♗f5 15.♕d5+ ♔h8 16.♖ad1 ♕xd5 17.cxd5 ♘e5 with initiative for Black.

12...♕xe4 13.0-0 ♗xb2

This is the difference!

14.♘c5 ♕h4 15.♖b1 ♗d4 16.♘xb7

Regaining the pawn but allowing Black to complete his development; 16.g3 is harmless due to 16...♕f6 17.♘e4 ♕e5.

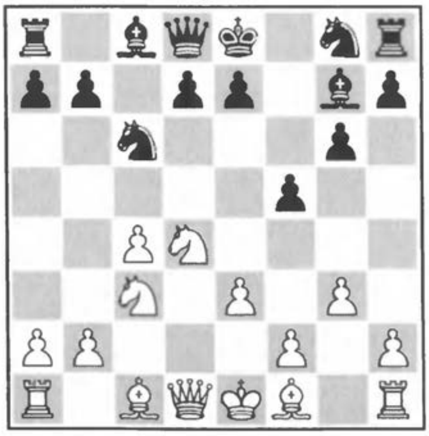
16...0-0 17.♗f3 ♗e5 18.g3 ♕f6 19.♗d5+ e6

Draw, Collas-Khamrakulov, Campillos 2004.

Variation A2

6.g3 ♗g7 7.e3

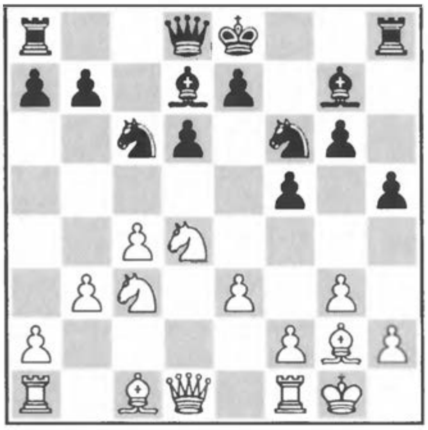
To 7.♘c2 Black can now reply with 7...♗xc3+!? destroying the white pawn structure (quite a typical method in such positions), e.g. 8.bxc3 ♕a5 9.♘e3 d6 10.♗g2 ♗d7 11.0-0 ♖c8 12.c5?! (this sacrifice doesn't bring White any profits) 12...♕xc5 13.c4 ♘f6 14.♗b2 0-0 15.♖c1 b6 16.♘d5 ♘e4! 17.e3 ♖f7 18.♕e2 ♕a5 19.♖fd1 ♕a4 20.f3 ♘c5 21.♗a1 h6 22.♕b2 ♔h7 and White's compensation for the pawn is in doubt, Loncar-Doric, Rijeka 2004.



Black must now develop his light-squared bishop. Accordingly, he has two plans:

Variation A21

7...d6 8.♗g2 ♗d7 9.0-0 ♘f6 10.b3 h5!?



An original idea, typical for GM Normunds Miezis. Jackelen-Miezis, Bonn 1995, continued instead: 10...0-0 11.♗b2 g5 12.♕c2! ♕c8 13.♖fe1 (preventing ...f4) 13...♖f7 14.♘d5 ♘g4 15.♖ad1 ♘xd4 16.♗xd4 ♗xd4 17.exd4 e6 18.h3 ♘h6 19.♘c3 and White is clearly better.

11.♗b2 h4 12.♘d5 hxg3 13.hxg3 ♔f7 14.♘xf6 ♗xf6 15.♘xc6 ♗xc6 16.♗xf6 ♔xf6 17.e4

Looks formidable but Black holds his ground.

17...♕d7 18.f4 fxe4 19.♕d4+ ♔f7 20.f5?

A senseless pawn sacrifice.

20...gxf5 21.b4 e3 22.♗d5+ ♔g6 23.♖ae1 e5

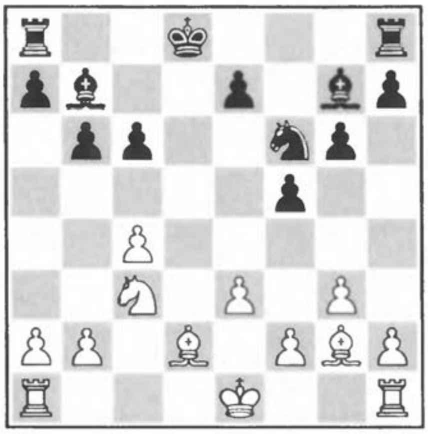
with a clear advantage for Black in Schuurman-Miezis, Winterthur 2001. This looks fine from Black's point of view, but what was Miezis going to do after 11.h4! ... ?

Variation A22

7...b6 8.♘xc6

Apparently, the only way to prevent Black's comfortable development.

8...dxc6 9.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 10.♗d2 ♘f6 11.♗g2 ♗b7



12.e4

12.0-0-0 ♔c7 13.e4 can be met with 13...♘g4! 14.♖hf1 ♖ad8 15.exf5 gxf5 16.♖de1 e5 17.h3 ♘h6 18.f4e4 19.g4 ♗a6! with good counterplay, Fahrner-Miezis, Graz 1999.

12...c5

Also interesting is 12...e5!?.

13.0-0-0 ♔e8 14.♘d5 ♔f7?! 15.exf5 gxf5 16.♗c3 ♖ad8

16...e6? 17.♘xf6 ♗xg2 18.♖d7+ ♔g6 19.♖e1!.

17.♖he1! e6 18.♗xf6 ♗xf6 19.♘xf6 ♗xg2 20.♘d7! ♔e7 21.♘e5

with a clear advantage for White in Kengis-Miezis, Bonn 1995. Instead of the obvious (but inaccurate) 14...♔f7, 14...♖d8!, preventing 15.exf5, was much more precise. In case of 15.♗c3 there follows 15...fxe4. Black appears to be fine in this line.

Variation A3

6.e3 ♘f6

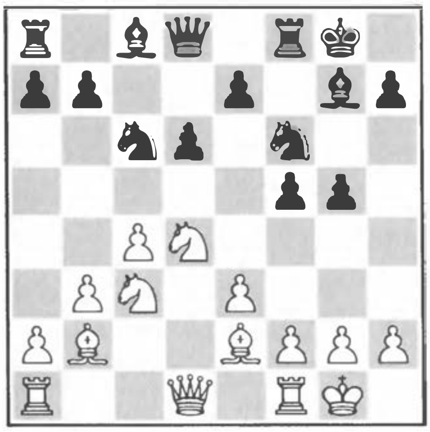
Black did quite well without ...♘f6 in the following game: 6....♗g7 7.♗e2 b6 8.♘xc6 dxc6 9.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 10.♗d2 ♗e6 11.0-0-0 ♔e8 12.e4 ♘h6 13.f3?! ♖f8 14.♖he1 f4 15.g3 ♗e5 C.Foisor-Miezis, Baden 2000. Of course, White played too passively (e.g.

13.♗f3! was much stronger).

7.♗e2 ♗g7 8.0-0 d6 9.b3

Too passive is 9.♘c2. In Banas-Miezis, Passau 1994, there followed 9...0-0 10.♖b1 a5 11.b3 ♘d7 12.♗b2 ♘c5 13.♘d4 ('correcting' the mistake) 13...♗d7 14.♘db5 ♘e5 15.h3 ♗c6 16.♘d4 f4 17.exf4 ♖xf4 18.♘d5 ♗xd5 19.cxd5 ♕b6 with good counterplay for Black.

9...0-0 10.♗b2 g5!?



Normal development didn't work too well in the following game: 10...♗d7 11.♖c1 a6 12.♖e1 ♖b8 13.♘d5 ♘e4 14.f3 ♘f6 15.♘f4 ♕c8 16.c5! e5 17.♘xc6 bxc6 18.♘h3 and Black is in trouble, Kokarev-E.Gasanov, Voronezh 2003.

11.♘d5

A logical reaction but the position remains unclear.

11...♘e4 12.♘xc6 bxc6 13.♗xg7 ♔xg7 14.♘c3 ♘f6 15.♕d2 ♖b8 16.♖ac1 ♕a5 17.♖fd1 ♗e6 18.h4 h6 19.c5 d5

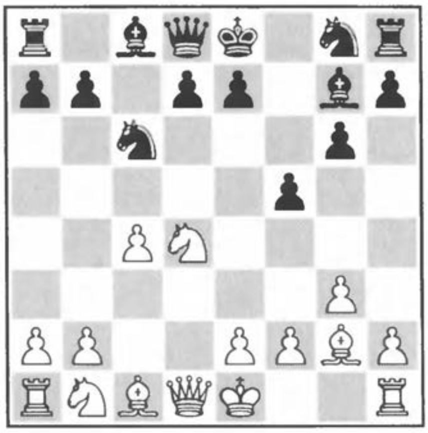
Giffard-Miezis, Paris 1996.

Variation B

5.g3

It is quite logical to develop the f1 bishop at once, in order to prevent the development of the black light-squared counterpart (at least to b7 or a6). The move 5...d6 has not been tried yet but it doesn't look too promising.

5...g6 6.♗g2 ♗g7



This position sometimes arises in practice via another move order: 1.♘f3 c5 2.c4 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 f5 5.g3 ♗g7 6.♗g2 ♘c6. White has now several replies. Possible is 7.♗e3!? ♘f6 (or h6) 8.h3 which has not been tested in practice yet. The following moves have:

B1) 7.♘c2
B2) 7.♘b3
B3) 7.e3

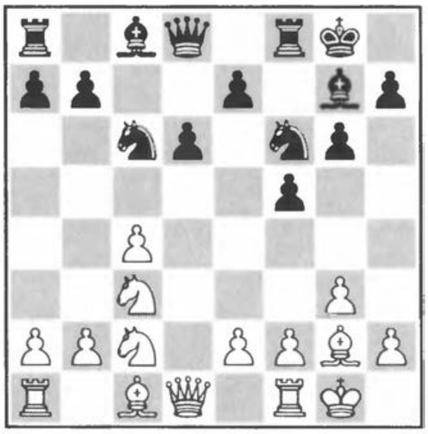
Variation B1

7.♘c2?!

Amazingly, this passive move was awarded an exclamation mark by GM Mihai Marin! Fairly harmless is 7.♘b5 ♘f6 8.♘5c3 0-0 9.0-0 b6 10.b3 ♗b7 11.♗b2 ♖f7 12.♕d2 ♕f8 13.♘a3 ♖d8 14.♖ad1 ♘a5 with equality, Botvinnik-Smyslov, 20th World Championship match game, Moscow 1958.

7...b6!

The right plan. The standard **7...d6** is what White expects: 8.0-0 ♘f6 (8...♗e6 deserves attention: 9.♘e3 ♖c8 10.♘d5 ♘a5 11.♘a3 ♕d7 12.♗d2?! – 12.♕d3! was much better – 12...♘xc4 13.♘xc4 ♖xc4 14.♖c1 ♖xc1 15.♕xc1 ♗xd5 16.♗xd5 e6 17.♗g2 ♘e7 and White did not obtain sufficient compensation for the pawn in Hultin-Bellon, Gothenburg 2004) 9.♘c3 0-0



– 10.♖b1 ♗d7 11.b3 a6 12.♗b2 ♖c8 (12...b5!? 13.♕d2 ♕a5 with counterplay, according to Marin) 13.♘d5 b5 14.♗xf6 ♗xf6 15.♘xf6+ ♖xf6 16.♘e3 ♘a5 17.cxb5 axb5 18.♘d5 ♖f7 19.♘f4 with an unclear position, Engqvist-Bellon, Stockholm 2001.

– 10.♕d2!? ♗d7 11.b3 deserves attention according to M.Marin.

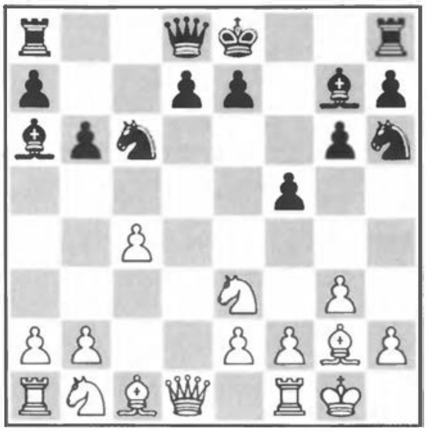
– 10.b3!? (this exchange sac is best) 10...♘e4!? 11.♘xe4 ♗xa1 12.♘xa1 fxe4 13.♘c2! ♗f5 14.♘e3 ♕d7 15.♗b2 ♖f7 16.♕c2 h5 17.♗xe4 ♗xe4 18.♕xe4 ♔h7 19.f4 with a strong initiative for White in Marin-Pogorelov, Benasque 1997.

The immediate queen development is also unfavourable for Black: **7...♕b6** 8.♘c3 ♗xc3+ 9.bxc3 ♕a5 10.♕d2 d6 11.♘b4 ♗d7 12.♘d5 (M.Marin), or **7...♕a5+!?** 8.♘c3!? (8.♕d2!?) 8...♗xc3+ 9.bxc3 ♕xc3+ (9...♘f6 is probably more appropriate than this pawn-eating) 10.♗d2 ♕xc4 11.♘e3 ♕d4 12.♘d5 ♖b8 13.♗c3 ♕xd1+ 14.♖xd1 e5 15.♘b4 d6 16.♖xd6 with an obvious positional advantage for White in Vekshenkov-Galliamova, Novi Sad 1989.

8.0-0 ♗a6

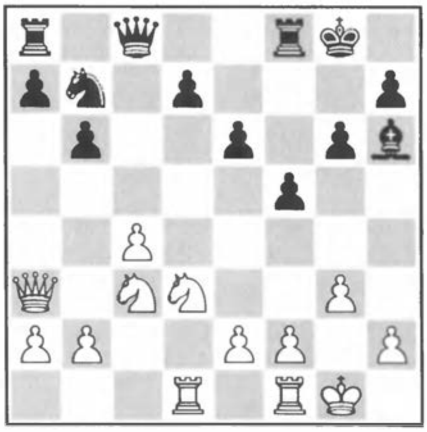
8...♗b7 is illogical: 9.♘e3 ♘f6 10.♘c3 0-0 11.♘ed5 d6 12.♗g5 ♕d7 13.♕a4 with a strong pressure. Black decided to give up a pawn and gradually lost: 13...h6 14.♘xf6+ ♗xf6 15.♗xh6 ♖f7 16.♗d2 Donaldson-Barbre, Kissimmee 1997.

9.♘e3 ♘h6!



Black's plan is ...♘f7, e6, g5 etc. White's pieces are placed passively and it is not easy for him to counteract it.

10.♘c3 0-0 11.♕a4 ♗b7 12.♘ed5 e6 13.♘b4 ♘a5! 14.♗xb7 ♘xb7 15.♗xh6 ♗xh6 16.♖ad1 ♘c5 17.♕a3 ♕c8 18.♘d3 ♘b7!



With an excellent position for Black, Krasenkow-Short, Tripoli 2004.

Variation B2

7.♘b3

Slightly more active than 7.♘c2.

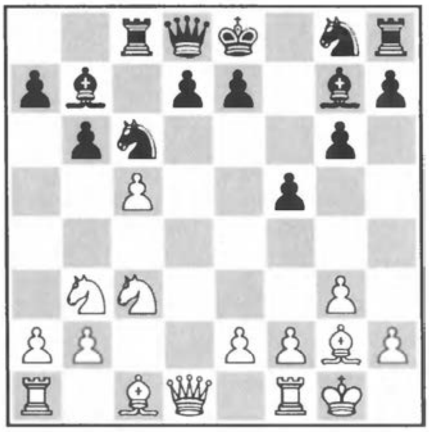
7...b6!?

Or 7...♘f6 8.♘c3 0-0 9.0-0 b6 10.♗d2 ♗a6 11.c5 ♔h8 12.♖c1 ♗c4 with a good position, Egger-Seibold, Germany Bundesliga B 1987/88.

8.0-0 ♗b7 9.♘c3 ♖c8!?

Pressuring the c4 pawn and preparing ...♗xc3 bxc3 ♘a5!.

10.c5!



10...♘f6?!

According to Yudasin 10...♘a5! is better: 11.♘xa5 ♗xg2 12.♔xg2 bxa5 13.♘a4 ♘f6 – threatening ...♘e4 – 14.f3 ♕c7 with an unclear position.

11.♗g5 h6?

Again 11...♘a5! was preferable.

12.♗xf6 ♗xf6 13.♕d2! ♘a5 14.♘xa5 ♗xg2 15.♔xg2 bxa5 16.♘d5! ♗g7 17.♖ac1

and White obtained a clear advantage (Timman-Yudasin, Yerevan Olympiad 1996).

Variation B3

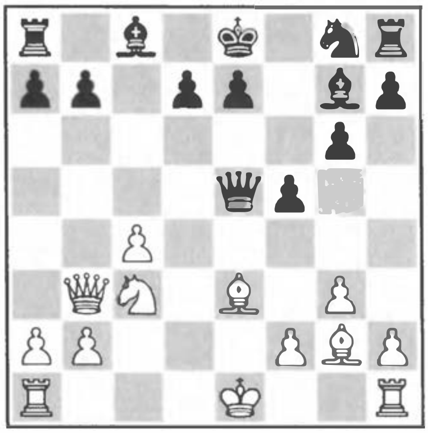
7.e3!

This move deserves the most serious attention. Black can't play either ...d6 or ...b6 and must resort to tactical measures:

7...♘xd4 8.exd4 ♕b6 9.♘c3!

White must sacrifice a pawn without hesitation!

9...♕xd4 10.♕b3 ♕e5+ 11.♗e3



11...♗h6?!

Logical but bad. 11...♘f6 12.0-0 0-0 is more accurate, but White certainly has good compensation for the pawn.

12.0-0 ♗xe3 13.fxe3 ♘f6 14.e4 h5!? 15.exf5 gxf5

15...h4 16.♘d5!

16.♖ae1 ♕c5+ 17.♔h1 h4 18.♘d5 ♘xd5 19.♗xd5 ♕d6 20.♕c3 ♖h6 21.g4! fxg4 22.♕d4 ♖h7 23.♕xg4 ♖h8 24.♕g7

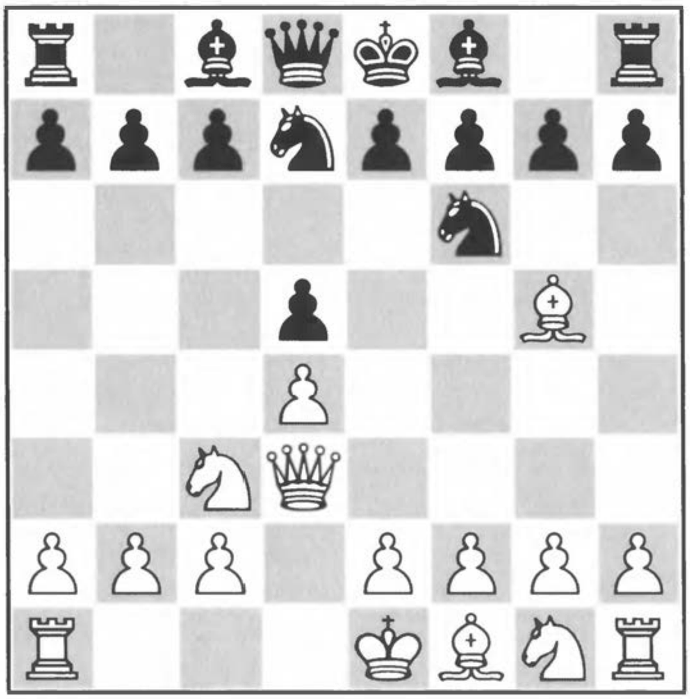
And Black had to resign. Johansen-Miezis, Jakarta 2001.

To which extent does this pawn sacrifice 'refute' the whole 4...f5 system? Hm... let's wait for Normunds Miezis' new games or... try to look into the position yourself, dear Reader!

CHAPTER 7

Dorian Rogozenko

Follow the Experts



NIC KEY QP 12.1

4.♕d3 in the Richter-Veresov

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 d5 3.♗g5 ♘bd7 4.♕d3

I must admit right from the beginning that this system does not bring an opening advantage for White in the classical sense. That is not to say that it is not unpleasant for your opponent. These days several strong players, such as J. Hector, K. Chernyshov or M. Khachian score almost 100% from the diagrammed position. The point is that by playing 4.♕d3 White aims for fast development with 0-0-0 and e2-e4. Thus White quickly gets an initiative and centralized pieces. Therefore accurate play from Black is required. Sometimes White can support the advance e2-e4 by playing f2-f3. Actually 4.f3 is another interesting option for White instead of 4.♕d3, as can be seen in the annotations of the last game from this article.

However, let's take things a bit slower. Already 2.♘c3 is in many ways a rather unpleasant surprise for your opponent, who can forget about his main opening repertoire and instead is forced to play 'your' type of positions. If he is not a Pirc player against 1.e4, then 2...d5 is the most likely reply after 2.♘c3. The next move 3.♗g5 has some similarities with the Trompowsky (1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗g5), meaning that here White is also ready take on f6, breaking his opponent's pawn structure and considerably limiting his counterplay. But unlike the case of the Trompowsky, here the knight on c3 renders the active answer ♘f6-e4 far less attractive for Black. Some Black players are ready to allow ♗g5xf6, but many aren't. This can be seen from the fact that 3...♘bd7 is the most frequent move in practice. Nevertheless, in order to present a complete repertoire, we also need to examine Black's alternatives to 3...♘bd7. These are 3...♗f5, 3...c6, 3...c5, 3...g6, and 3...♘e4. After 3...e6 White has nothing better than transposing into the French Defence with 4.e4, so against a French player the choice of this system with White will not contain the element of surprise, but still remains perfectly playable, of course.

I must add that the diagrammed position can also be reached after 1.d4 d5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 (the most popular choice in the practice) 3.♗g5 ♘bd7 4.♕d3.

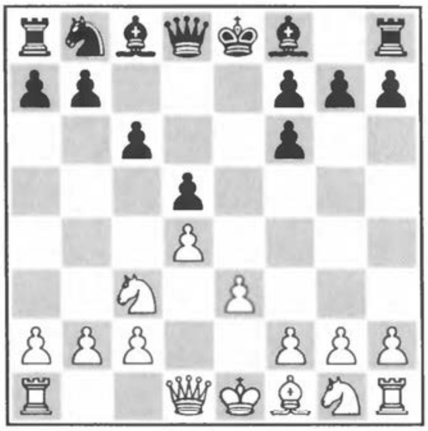
Finally, about the name of this system. Three players of the past started lots of their games with the move order 1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 d5 3.♗g5: Saviely Tartakower, Kurt Richter and Gavriil Veresov. I think that this opening can be named after any of them. It is also worth mentioning that in later years this system was used periodically by many talented players, such as for instance Mikhail Tal, Tony Miles, Alexander Morozevich and Levon Aronian. We'll examine four games taken from modern practice, and played by the best White specialists of this system. In my annotations to these games I'll try to cover Black's most popular options to meet 3.♗g5.

☐ **Konstantin Chernyshov**
■ **Alexander Beliavsky**
Ohrid 2001

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 d5 3.♗g5 g6

An important sideline that allows White to capture on f6. Let us first investigate the other alternatives to 3...♘bd7: 3...c6, 3...♗f5, 3...♘e4, and 3...c5.

● 3...c6 4.♗xf6 exf6 (4...gxf6 5.e4 dxe4 6.♘xe4 ♗f5 7.♗d3 e6 8.♘f3 ♘d7 9.♘g3 ♗g6 10.h4 ♕c7 11.h5 ♗xd3 12.♕xd3 0-0-0 13.0-0-0± Alburt-Furman, Daugavpils 1971) 5.e3



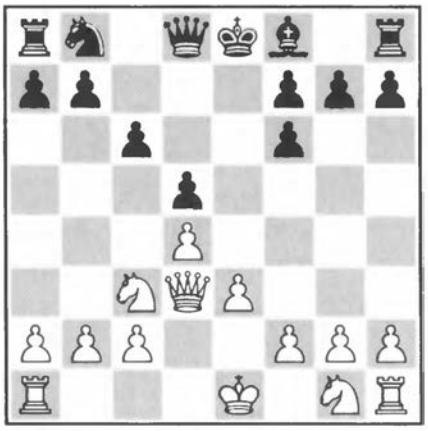
A) 5...f5 6.♗d3 ♗e6 7.♘f3 ♘d7 8.0-0 ♗d6 9.♘e2 g6 10.a4 a6 (10...0-0 11.b3±) 11.b3 b5 12.♕c1 (12.♘f4!? 0-0 13.♘xe6 fxe6 14.c4±) 12...0-0 13.c4 bxc4 14.bxc4 c5! 15.♘f4 (15.a5!?) 15...♗xf4. Black now equalizes: 16.exf4 dxc4 17.♗xc4 ♗xc4 18.♕xc4 cxd4 19.♖fd1 ♕a5 20.♘xd4 ♕c5 21.♕a2 ♖fc8 22.♘f3 ½-½ Chernyshov-Anka, Gyula 2000.

B) 5...♕b6 6.♖b1 ♗b4 (6...♘a6 7.a3) 7.♗d3! 0-0 (7...♕a5 8.♘e2 ♕xa2 9.0-0 ♕a5 10.e4=/∞) 8.♘e2 ♗g4 9.0-0 ♖d8 10.a3 ♗d6 11.f3 ♗h5 12.e4± Stewart-McLaughlin, cr BCCA-ch 1995/96.

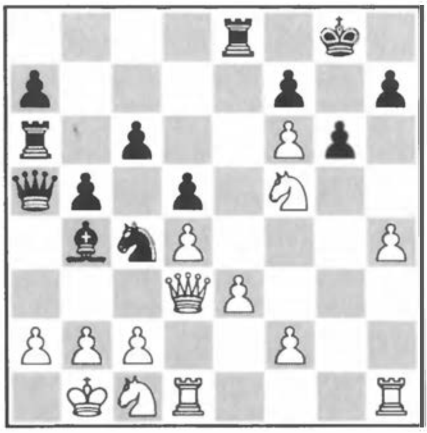
C) 5...g6 6.g3 f5 7.h4 h5 8.♕d3 ♗e6 9.♗g2 ♘d7 10.♘h3 ♘f6 11.♘e2 ♗b4+ 12.c3 ♗d6 13.♕c2 ♘e4 14.♘hf4 ♕d7 15.♘d3. A typical manoeuvre whereby White is slowly improving the position of his knights. 15...0-0-0 16.0-0-0 ♔b8 17.♔b1 ♕e7 18.♔a1 ♗c8 19.♘ef4 ♖he8 20.♗f3 ♕c7 21.♖he1 ♖e7 22.♖e2 ♖de8 23.♕a4 ♗d7 24.♖c1 ♗e6 25.♘xe6 ♖xe6 26.c4 dxc4 27.♕xc4 ♕a5 28.b4 ♕b6 29.♖b2 ♖6e7 30.♘c5± Voloshin-Pushkarev, Minsk 1993.

D) 5...♗f5 6.♗d3 ♗xd3 (6...♕d7 7.♗xf5 ♕xf5 8.♘ge2 ♗d6 9.♘g3 ♕e6 10.♕f3± g6

11.0-0 f5 12.♘ce2 ♘d7 13.♘f4 ♕e7 14.b3 h5 15.c4 h4 16.♘ge2 and again White achieved the typical initiative, which he converted into a full point in Chernyshov-Kosteniuk, Moscow 2001; 6...♗g6 7.♘ge2 ♗b4 8.0-0 ♕e7 9.♘f4! (White shouldn't fear 9...♗xc3 10.bxc3, after which he can follow up with c3-c4 and also use the b-file) 9...♘d7 10.♘ce2 ♗d6 11.♘g3! ♗xd3 12.♕xd3 g6 13.♘fe2 f5 14.b3! ♘f6 15.c4 0-0 16.c5 ♗c7 17.b4 a6 18.a4 ♖fe8 19.b5± Khachian-Mnatsakanian, Yerevan 1994) 7.♕xd3



D1) 7...♗b4 8.♘e2 0-0 9.0-0-0 ♘d7 10.g4 (according to Gufeld, White has better chances to build a kingside attack) 10...♖e8 11.h4 b5 12.♔b1 ♘b6 13.♘g3 ♖b8 14.♘ce2 ♘c4 15.♘f5 ♖b6 16.g5 ♖a6 17.♘c1 ♕a5 18.gxf6 g6

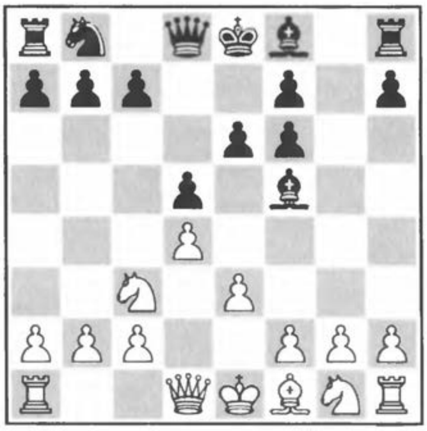


19.h5! gxf5 20.♕xf5 ♖e6 21.♕f4 ♔f8 22.♖hg1+– Gufeld-Ujtumen, Tbilisi 1971.

D2) 7...♘d7 8.♘ge2 ♗d6 9.e4!? dxe4 10.♘xe4 ♗b4+ 11.c3 ♗e7 12.0-0 0-0 13.c4 ♘c5 14.♘xc5 ♗xc5 15.♖ad1 ♖e8 16.♘g3 ♗d6 17.♖fe1±. The pawn majority on the queenside secures White an advantage. Black couldn't hold a draw in Bagheri-Zozulia, Elancourt 2004.

● 3...♗f5 This can be considered one of the main answers to 3.♗g5.

A) 4.♗xf6 gxf6 (4...exf6 5.e3 c6 6.♗d3 transposes to 3...c6) 5.e3 e6



A1) 6.♗d3 ♗g6 7.f4 c5 (after 7...f5 White must play 8.♘ce2 c5 9.c3 ♗h5 10.♕d2) 8.f5! exf5 9.♕f3 ♘c6 10.♘ge2 ♕d7 11.0-0 White has an obvious advantage, Chernyshov-Ovetchkin, Smolensk 2000.

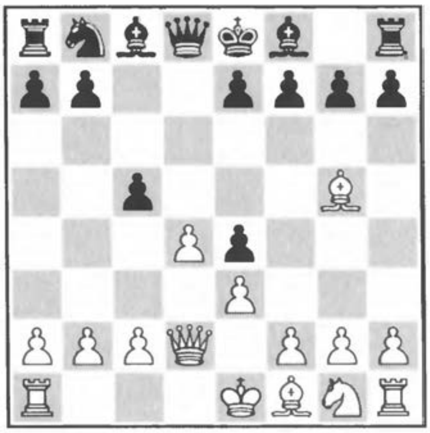
A2) 6.♘ge2 ♗d6 (6...c5 7.♘g3 ♗g6 8.h4 h6 9.h5 ♗h7 10.♗d3±) 7.♘b5 ♗e7 8.♘g3 ♗g6 9.c4 c6 10.♘c3 h5 and now in the game Miles-Hort, Amsterdam 1982, White played the somewhat weird 11.♘ge2. According to Hort White would have had an advantage after the simple 11.♗d3.

B) Another plan worth considering is 4.f3. White intends ♕d2 and 0-0-0:

B1) 4...♗g6 5.♕d2 e6 (5...♘bd7 6.0-0-0 e6 7.♘h3 ♗e7 8.♘f4 ♘g8 9.♗xe7 ♘xe7 10.e4± Khachian-Strikovic, Cannes 1996) 6.0-0-0 ♗b4 7.♘h3 ♘bd7 8.a3 ♗e7 9.♞f4 c5 10.dxc5 ♘xc5 11.e4 with initiative, Khachian-Goletiani, Yerevan 1996.

B2) 4...♘bd7 5.♕d2 h6 6.♗h4 e6 7.e3 c6 8.♘ge2 ♗e7 9.♗f2 b5 10.g4 ♗h7 11.♘g3 ♘b6 12.h4 with a complicated, doubled-edged position, Hector-Fridh, Malmö 1986.

● 3...♘e4 4.♘xe4 (White can also consider to play 'à la Hodgson' with 4.h4 In the following game this strategy paid off: 4...♘xg5 5.hxg5 ♗f5 6.♘f3 ♘c6 7.♕d2 ♕d7 8.e3 0-0-0 9.a3 f6 10.0-0-0 ♔b8 11.♗e2 ♘a5 12.♖h4 ♕c6 13.♖dh1 e6 14.♗b5 ♕b6 15.♕e2 a6 16.♗d3 ♖c8 17.e4 dxe4 18.♘xe4± Mamedjarova-Erdogan, Batumi 2002) 4...dxe4 5.e3 (5.♕d2 c5 6.dxc5 ♕xd2+ 7.♗xd2 e5 8.b4 ♘c6 9.e3 ♗e6 10.a3 g6 11.♘e2 ♗g7 12.♘c3 f5 13.♘b5 0-0-0 14.♘d6+ ♔b8 15.0-0-0± Schneider-Langeweg, Porz 1991) 5...c5 6.♕d2



A) In Maryasin-Manor, Israel tt 2002, Black lost quickly after 6...♘c6 7.d5 ♘e5 8.0-0-0 g6 9.f4! exf3ep 10.♘xf3 ♘xf3 (10...♗g7 11.♕c3!) 11.gxf3 ♗g7 12.d6! f6 13.♗b5+ ♔f7 14.♗f4 ♗e6 15.♕c3 f5 16.♗e5 ♗xe5 17.♕xe5 ♕b6 18.♗d7! 1-0.

B) 6...♕d5 7.♗f4 cxd4 8.c4! ♕d7 9.exd4 e6 10.a3 ♗d6 11.♖d1 0-0 12.♘e2 ♕c7 13.♗xd6 ♕xd6 14.♘c3 f5 15.♗e2± Fomina-Limberg, Tallinn 2000.

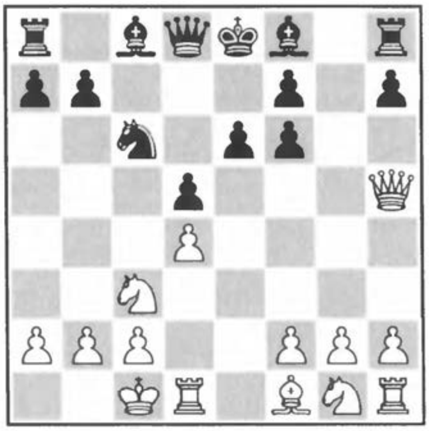
● 3...c5 4.♗xf6 gxf6 (4...exf6 5.e3 ♗e6 6.♘ge2 ♘c6 7.g3±) 5.e3 cxd4 (or 5...♘c6 6.♕h5) 6.exd4:

A) 6...h5 7.♕f3! e6 (7...♗e6 8.♗b5+ ♘c6 9.♘ge2±) 8.0-0-0±.

B) 6...♘c6 7.♕h5!

B1) 7...♘xd4 8.0-0-0 e5 9.♘f3 ♘xf3 (or 9...♗c5 10.♘xe5) 10.♗b5+ ♗d7 11.♖xd5+–.

B2) 7...e6 8.0-0-0



This is a complicated position, in which White has certain positional advantages – better development, a better pawn structure, and an active queen:

B21) 8...♗g7 9.g4!? ♗d7 10.f4 (10.♗g2 ♕b6 11.♘ge2 0-0-0 12.♕xf7 ♖dg8 13.♕h5 ♔b8 14.f4 f5 15.gxf5 ♘xd4 16.♘xd4 ♗xd4 17.fxe6 ♗xe6 18.♗f3 ♖c8 19.♖he1 ♖xc3 20.♖xd4 ♕xd4 21.bxc3 ♕xf4+ with equality in Maksimovic-Rodriguez, Beograd 1980) 10...♕c7 11.♘ge2 ♘e7 12.♖g1 b5 13.f5 with a clear initiative. This position occurred twice in two little-known correspondence games, both won by White.

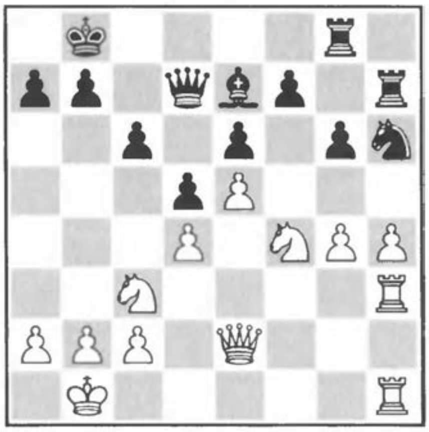
B22) 8...♗b4 9.♘ge2 ♗d7 10.h4! ♕e7 11.♖h3 0-0-0 12.♖e3 White is slightly better, Mohr-Farago, Bled 2001.

B23) 8...♕a5 9.♔b1 ♖b8 10.♘ge2 b5 11.♘c1 b4 12.♘3e2 ♕b6 13.f4 ♗d6 14.f5! exf5 (14...e5 15.♕h6±) 15.g3 ♗e6 16.♗h3 ♖g8 17.♖he1 ♖g5 18.♕xh7 ♘e7 19.♘f4 ♔d7 20.♘xe6 fxe6 21.♕f7+– Khachian-Hamid, Fajr 1992.

4.♗xf6

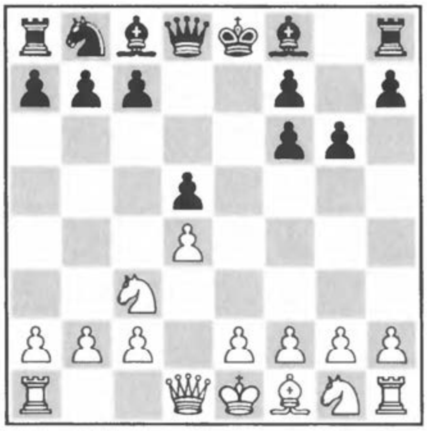
As you might have noticed from the variations above, I believe that given the opportunity White should stick to the initial idea and break the opponent's pawn structure by taking on f6. Nevertheless, White has almost always an alternative plan to play for a quick 0-0-0.

In the following game White took advantage of his lead in development even in a closed type of position. 4.♕d2 ♘bd7 (after 4...♗g7 White's idea is to trade the dark-squared bishops with 5.♗h6) 5.0-0-0 c6 6.f3 h6 7.♗xf6 ♘xf6 8.e4 h5 (8...♗g7 9.e5±) 9.e5 ♘g8 10.♗d3 ♘h6 11.♔b1 ♗f5 12.♘ge2 ♗xd3 13.♕xd3 e6 14.♘f4 ♕d7 15.♕e2 0-0-0 16.g4 (suddenly Black is facing big problems with his kingside pieces. The next part is very instructive) 16...hxg4 17.fxg4 ♗e7 18.♖d3 ♖h7?! 19.h4 ♖g8 20.♖dh3 ♔b8



21.♘a4! (that is what space advantage is all about – the possibilities to switch pieces between flanks quicker than your opponent) 21...b6 22.♖b3 ♕c7 23.♖hh3 ♖c8 24.h5 g5 25.♘d3± ♔a8 26.♘dc5! (fantastic play by White, who totally outplays his talented opponent) 26...♗xc5 27.dxc5 b5 28.♘c3 (in spite of being a piece down, White has a large advantage. He is ready to open up the queenside and build a decisive attack. Black's pieces on the kingside are simply too far to help) 28...♖b8 (28...♖hh8 29.a4 a6 30.axb5 axb5 31.♘xb5 cxb5 32.♕xb5+–; 28...d4 29.♘xb5 cxb5 30.♕e4+ ♕c6 31.♕xh7+–) 29.a4 a6 30.axb5 axb5 31.♘xb5!+– cxb5 32.♖xb5 ♖b7 33.♖xb7 ♔xb7 34.♖b3+ ♔c8 35.♕a6+ ♔d8 36.♕a8+ ♔d7 37.♖b7 ♘xg4 38.♕a4+ Schneider-Leko, Nettetal 1991.

4...exf6



5.♕d3!?

This amazing move is possible even here. White keeps many options open, such as e3 or e4, the king might castle long, and also White can first start pushing the kingside pawns in order to blockade the kingside and get squares for the knights.

The usual plan would be 5.e3 ♗g7 6.♗d3 I believe that this is objectively the right plan to develop the pieces, but Chernyshov is very successful with his unusual play in the opening. 6...0-0 (stronger is 6...f5) 7.♕f3 c6 8.g4! ♖e8 9.0-0-0 a5 10.♘ge2 a4 11.a3 b5 12.♘a2 Miles-Spassov, Surakarta 1982. According to Miles, White already has a big positional advantage.

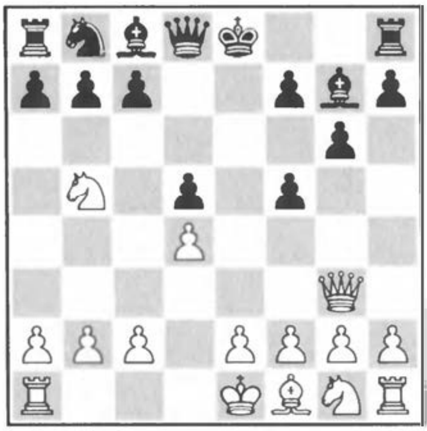
5...f5

Chernyshov has played exactly this position before, so the entire system wasn't an opening surprise for Beliavsky. 5...c6 6.h4 f5 7.h5 ♘d7 8.f4 ♗d6 9.e3 ♕e7 10.♗e2 ♘f6 11.hxg6 fxg6 12.♘f3 ♗d7 13.♘e5 0-0-0 14.0-0-0 ♘e4 15.♘xe4 dxe4 16.♕c3 ♔b8 17.♗c4 (White is slightly better. Next Black traded both light pieces, but still White kept a marginal edge) 17...♗xe5 18.dxe5 ♗e6 19.♗xe6 ♕xe6 20.b3 h5 21.♖d4 ♖xd4 22.♕xd4 ♕e7 23.♖d1 and in the game Chernyshov-Sinkovics, Gyula 2000, White converted his slight advantage.

6.♕g3!? ♗g7

Instead of the fianchetto, 6...♗d6 unexpectedly runs into 7.♕e3+ ♗e7 (7...♗e6 8.♘xd5) 8.♕e5 attacking both h8 and d5.

7.♘b5



With original play in the opening Chernyshov manages to confuse his experienced opponent.

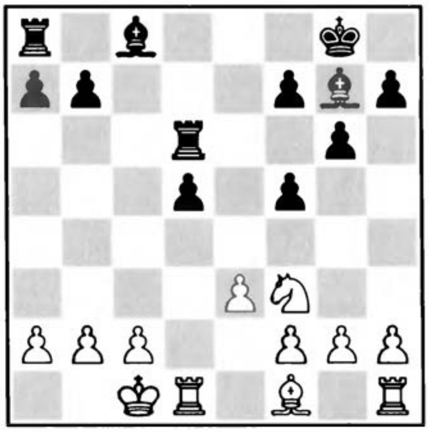
7...♘a6 8.♕a3 c5

As rightly pointed out by A.Finkel, Black should have opted for an endgame with 8...♕e7. I doubt, though, that this ensures 'easy equality', as Finkel considers. The endgame is complicated and both sides have their chances. In a rather closed position White's knights are certainly good pieces. Black's main problem is the lack of space for his bishops. A possible continuation would be: 9.♕xe7+ ♔xe7 10.♘c3 (10.e3 f4!?) 10...c6 (after 10...♗xd4 11.♘xd5+ the king feels uncomfortable in the centre, for instance: 11...♔f8 12.c3 ♗g7 13.e3 c6 14.♗xa6 cxd5 15.♗d3±) 11.e3 f4 12.♗xa6 bxa6 13.♘a4!? (using the weaknesses in the opponent's pawn formation) 13...♖e8 14.♘e2 ♔d6 15.♔d2 fxe3+ 16.fxe3 ♖b8 (16...♗h6 17.♘f4) 17.♘f4 ♖b7 18.♖ae1 ♖be7 19.♘c5. Black has problems with his structure. White will push the a-pawn, blockading the doubled pawns and later will attack them with the knights.

9.dxc5 0-0 10.e3 ♕e7

10...f4 11.0-0-0 fxe3 12.fxe3±.

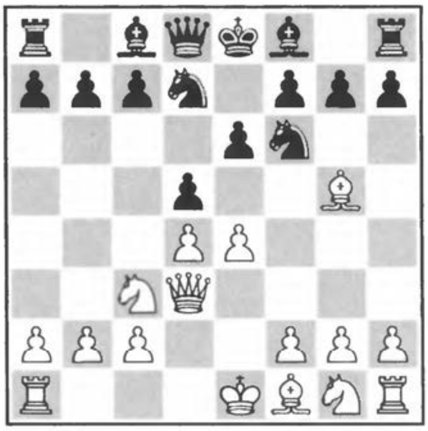
11.♘d6 ♘xc5 12.♕xc5 ♖d8 13.0-0-0 ♕xd6 14.♕xd6 ♖xd6 15.♘f3



White got what he was aiming for – a better endgame with limited active possibilities for Black. Not willing to defend in passivity, in the next part Beliavsky is trying to get some counterplay, but he fails. **15...b5** 15...♗e6 16.♘d4±. **16.♘d4 b4 17.♗e2 ♗e6 18.♖d3 a5 19.♖hd1 a4 20.♗f3 ♖a5 21.a3!** It turns out that the advance of the queenside pawns has merely aggravated Black's problems. Now his position is difficult. **21...bxa3 22.♖xa3 ♖b6 23.c3 ♗f8 24.b4! ♖a8 25.♔d2** This is technically winning for White: two weaknesses on a4 and d5, plus better pieces will soon result in a material advantage. **25...f4 26.♖da1 fxe3+ 27.fxe3 ♗d7 28.♗xd5 ♖e8 29.♖f1 ♖e7 30.♔d3 ♗g7 31.e4 ♗e8 32.♖a2 ♖c7 33.♖b1 ♗f8 34.b5 a3 35.c4 ♗c5 36.♘c2 ♖a7 37.♖ba1 ♔g7 38.♖xa3 ♗xa3 39.♖xa3 ♖c7 40.♘d4 ♖b8 41.♖a6 ♔f8 42.b6 ♖c5 43.♔c3** Black resigned.

☐ **Jonny Hector**
■ **Humpy Koneru**
Wijk aan Zee II 2003

1.d4 d5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.♗g5 ♘bd7 4.♕d3 e6 5.e4



This position is usually attributed to the French Defence, but this is only partially correct. In the French Defence one can hardly see White playing a move like ♕d1-d3 at all. Moreover, the diagrammed position never arises via a French Defence move order. Even after the next few moves, when we'll have a standard 'French pawn structure', one will have difficulties to find those positions arising via the starting moves 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5. All because of the same reason – the move ♕d3, which does not exist in the theory of French Defence. Moreover, in the French Defence with 3...dxe4 Black very rarely combines both ...♘bd7 with ...♗e7, so in our case I would not name it French Defence at all, or at least we can talk about a very specific type of French Defence.

5...dxe4 6.♘xe4 ♗e7 7.♘xf6+ ♗xf6

Hector later faced the other recapture too. After 7...♘xf6 8.♘f3 0-0 9.0-0-0 b6 10.♘e5! ♗b7 11.♕h3 ♘e4 (possibly better is 11...h6 12.♗e3 ♘d5 although making a pawn move in front of the king without being forced to do also has its drawbacks; 11...♘d5!?) 12.♗e3 f5 13.f3 ♘d6 14.♗d3. The strong knight on e5 and the possibility to attack with g2-g4 secure White a stable advantage. 14...♕e8 15.♖he1 b5 16.g4 ♗d5 17.♔b1 a5 18.gxf5 exf5 19.♖g1 ♖f6 20.♗g5 ♖e6 21.♗xf5 ♘xf5 22.♕xf5 c6 23.f4± Hector-Sprenger, Hamburg 2003.

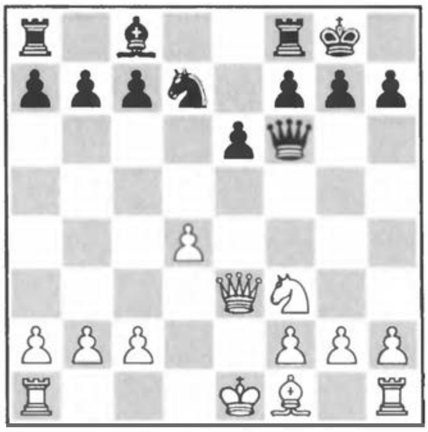
8.♗xf6 ♕xf6

This is stronger than 8...♘xf6 9.♞f3 0-0 10.0-0-0±. In these pawn formations in order to equalize completely Black must break in the centre, either with the help of ...c5, or ...e5. Otherwise White's space advantage will always secure at least a slight advantage. That's why Black keeps the knight on d7: to support the central pawn advances.

9.♘f3 0-0

9...c5 10.0-0-0 cxd4 11.♕xd4 ♕xd4 12.♘xd4 a6 13.g3 b6 14.♗g2 ♖a7 15.♘c6 ♖c7 16.♖d6± Tolnai-Balogh, Budapest 2000.

10.♕e3!



With this move White stops 10...e5. Instead 10.0-0-0 allows 10...e5, with equality.

10...c5 11.0-0-0

Inaccurate is 11.♗d3 cxd4 12.♕xd4 ♕xd4 13.♘xd4 ♘c5 14.♗c4 ♗d7 15.0-0-0 ♖fd8 16.♖he1 a6 17.♘b3 ♘xb3+ 18.♗xb3 ♗c6= Rösch-Orsag, Germany Bundesliga B 1996/97.

11...b6

After this natural move Black finds herself in big trouble. Still, life is also difficult after:

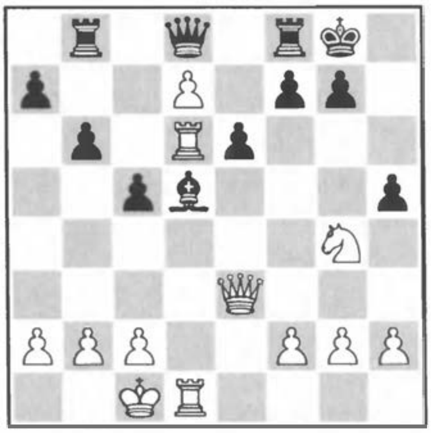
11...cxd4 12.♖xd4, and now

A) 12...e5 13.♖e4 ♕e6 14.♗c4 ♕c6 15.♗b3 ♖e8 (15...♘f6 16.♖c4±) 16.♖f4! (16.♘xe5±) 16...♖f8 (16...♘f6 17.♘xe5+–) 17.♖xf7♖xf7 18.♖d1+– with multiple threats. White will win back more material than he sacrificed.

B) 12...♘c5 was the only way to develop. However, White keeps better chances thanks to development advantage and a perspective of kingside attack. 13.♘e5 b6 14.♗e2 (or 14.♗b5) and Black still does not have 14...♗b7 because of 15.b4 followed by 16.♘d7.

12.♗b5! cxd4

A few months later Hector played this position again: 12...♕e7 13.d5! ♘f6 14.♗c6 ♖b8 15.d6 ♕d8 16.d7 ♗b7 17.♘e5 ♘g4 18.♘xg4 ♗xc6 19.♖d6 ♗d5 20.♖d1± h5



21.c4! ♗xc4 22.♘e5 ♗d5 23.♖1xd5 exd5 24.♘c6+– Hector-Lindberg, Malmö 2003.

13.♖xd4 ♕e7

Or 13...♘c5 14.♘e5±.

14.♗c6 ♖b8 15.♖hd1 ♘f6

The only way to keep material equality for a while was 15...♘c5 16.b4 ♘a6 (16...♗b7 17.♘e5 ♖fc8 (17...♖bc8 18.♗xb7 ♘xb7 19.♖d7+–) 18.♖d6!+–) 17.a3 but it would have hardly changed the result – White has strong pressure.

16.♕e5!+– ♗a6

16...♗b7 loses as well: 17.♖d7 ♘xd7 18.♖xd7 ♕b4 19.♗xb7 ♕a4 20.♕d4 ♕xa2 21.♘e5+–.

17.♖a4 ♖bc8

17...♗b7 18.♖xa7+–.

18.♘d4 ♘g4 19.♕f4 h5 20.♖xa6

The rest is easy. **20...e5 21.♘f5 ♕f6 22.♕f3 ♖xc6 23.♕xc6 ♕xf5 24.♕f3 ♕g5+ 25.♔b1 ♘xh2 26.♕g3 ♘g4 27.f3 ♖d8 28.♖xd8+ ♕xd8 29.♕e1 ♘f6 30.♖xa7 e4 31.fxe4 ♘xe4 32.a4 f5 33.♕e2 ♕g5 34.♖b7 ♕g6 35.♕b5 ♕g4 36.♖xb6 h4 37.a5 ♘d2+ 38.♔a2 ♘c4 39.♖c6 ♘e3 40.a6 ♕d4 41.c3**

Black resigned.

☐ **Melikset Khachian**
■ **Igor Koniushkov**
Moscow 1996

1.d4 d5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.♗g5 ♘bd7 4.♕d3 c6

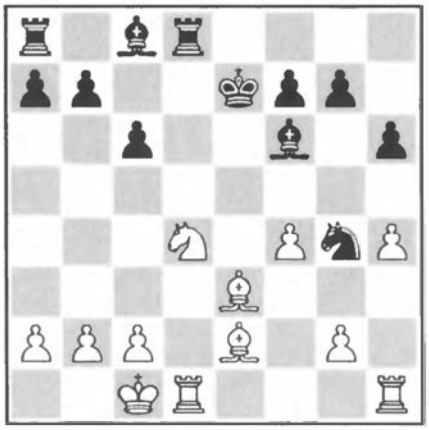
4...h6 5.♗h4 c6 6.0-0-0 (6.e4? ♘xe4 7.♘xe4 dxe4 8.♕xe4 ♕a5+ 9.c3 g5 10.♗g3 f5 followed by 11...f4 wins a piece for Black) 6...b5 7.♘f3 ♕a5 8.♘d2 e6 9.e3 ♗e7 10.f3 ♕b6 11.♗f2 a5 12.e4. The position is difficult to evaluate. Black has space on the queenside, White in the centre and soon on the kingside. In the game Gelashvili-Halkias, Yerevan 2000, White won after a long and complicated strategical battle.

5.e4

The main idea behind 4.♕d3. Nevertheless, another specialist of the system prefers to castle queenside and push the kingside pawns instead: 5.♘f3 g6 6.0-0-0 ♗g7 7.h3 0-0 8.g4. I doubt the objective strength of this approach and therefore I recommend the central strategy (5.e4). 8...b5 9.♘e5 ♘xe5 10.dxe5 ♘d7 11.f4 b4 12.♘a4 f6 13.exf6 exf6 14.♗h4 ♕a5 15.♕b3 ♖e8 16.♗g2 ♔h8 17.e4 dxe4 18.♖d6 and White later converted his positional plusses in Chernyshov-Boguszlavszkij, Harkany 2001. However, the result had little to do with the outcome of the opening.

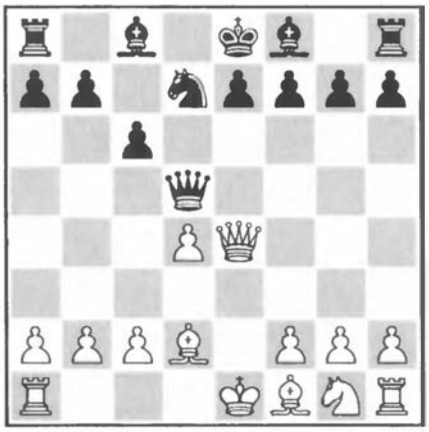
5...♘xe4

5...dxe4 6.♘xe4 e6 7.♘f3 ♗e7 (compared to the previous game, we have the moves ♘f3 and c6 included, which clearly favours White) 8.♘xf6+ (8.♗xf6±) 8...♗xf6 9.h4 h6 10.♗e3 ♕e7 11.0-0-0 e5 12.♕e4 exd4 13.♕xe7+ ♔xe7 14.♘xd4♘e5 15.♗e2 ♖d8 16.f4 ♘g4



17.♘xc6+ bxc6 18.♗c5+ ♔e8 19.♖de1+– Khachian-Miller, Los Angeles 2003.

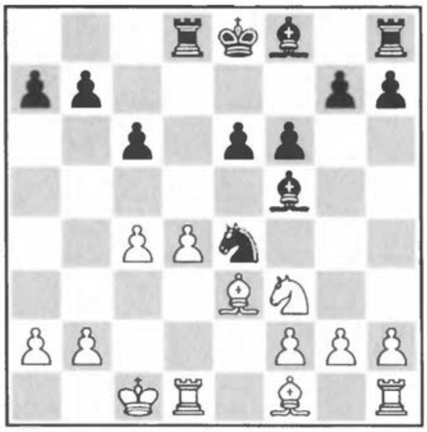
6.♘xe4 dxe4 7.♕xe4 ♕a5+ 8.♗d2 ♕d5



9.♕e3

9.♕h4 ♘f6 10.c4 ♕e4+ 11.♕xe4 ♘xe4 12.♗e3 g6 13.♗d3 ♘f6 14.♘f3 ♗g7 15.h3 0-0 16.0-0-0. White has much easier play in the endgame: 16...a6 17.♖he1 b5 18.♘e5 ♗b7 19.g4 ♖fd8 20.g5 ♘d7 21.f4 ♖ac8 22.♗e2 ♖c7 23.♗d2! ♘xe5 24.♗a5! ♘xc4 25.♗xc7+– Khachian-Liu, Los Angeles 2003.

9...♘f6 10.♘f3 ♗f5 11.c4 ♕e4 12.♘e5 ♖d8 13.♕xe4 ♘xe4 14.♗e3 f6 15.♘f3 e6 16.0-0-0



The position is close to equal, but Black still has to fight for it. **16...♔f7 17.♘h4! ♘d6 18.c5 g5 19.♘xf5 ♘xf5 20.♗c4 ♘xe3 21.fxe3 f5 22.♔c2 h5 23.b4 a6 24.e4! fxe4 25.♖hf1+ ♔e7 26.♖fe1 ♖h6 27.♖xe4 ♗g7 28.d5! cxd5 29.♖xd5 e5 30.a4 ♖f8 31.♖d2 b6?** 31...♖f4 32.♗d5±. **32.♗xa6 bxc5 33.b5+– ♖d6 34.a5 ♖xd2+ 35.♔xd2 ♖f2+ 36.♖e2 ♖xe2+ 37.♔xe2 ♔d6 38.♗b7 e4 39.b6 c4 40.a6**

Black resigned.

☐ **Konstantin Chernyshov**
■ **Peter Szekely**
Pardubice 2002

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 d5 3.♗g5 ♘bd7 4.♕d3

Another interesting way to prepare e4 is the immediate 4.f3. To give a few examples:

A) 4...h6 5.♗h4 e6 6.e4 ♗e7 7.e5 ♘h5 8.♗xe7 ♕xe7 9.♘h3! c5 10.g4! ♕h4+ 11.♔e2 cxd4 12.♕xd4 f6 13.♕f2! ♕xf2+ 14.♔xf2 fxe5 15.gxh5+– Khachian-Kostin, Pardubice 1996.

B) 4...c6 5.e4 dxe4 6.fxe4 ♕b6 (6...♕a5 7.e5 ♘e4 8.♗d2 ♘xd2 9.♕xd2 e6 10.♘f3 ♗b4 11.a3 c5 12.♖b1 ♗xc3 13.bxc3 ♕xa3 14.♗d3 with very good compensation for the pawn, Miladinovic-Charbonneau, Montreal 2000) 7.♘f3 e5 (7...♕xb2 8.♗d2=∞) 8.dxe5 ♘g4? (8...♕xb2∞) 9.♕d2 ♘dxe5 10.h3!± ♘xf3+ 11.gxf3 ♘e5 12.0-0-0± Morozevich-Lazarev, Alushta 1993.

C) 4...c5 5.dxc5 e6 (5...♕a5 6.♗xf6 ♘xf6 7.♕d4 e5 8.♕xe5+ ♗e6 9.e3! 0-0-0 10.♘e2 ♗xc5 11.♘d4 ♗d6 12.♕g5 h6 13.♕h4 g5 14.♕f2 ♗a3 15.♘b3 ♕b4 16.bxa3 ♕xc3+ 17.♕d2 ♕xd2+ 18.♔xd2± Khachian-Minasian, Yerevan 1994) 6.e4 (6.b4!? ♗e7 7.♖b1 a5 8.a3 b6 9.c6 ♘e5 10.b5 ♗xa3 11.e4 was unclear in Khachian-Donchenko, Moscow 1995) 6...d4?! 7.♕xd4 ♗xc5 8.♕d2 a6 9.0-0-0 ♕c7 10.♕f4 e5 11.♕g3 0-0 12.♔b1± Aronian-Bokros, Szeged 1994.

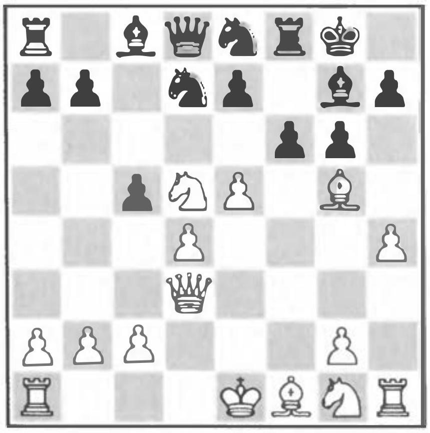
4...g6 5.f3

Preparing e4. The immediate 5.e4 also comes into consideration: 5.e4 dxe4 6.♘xe4 ♗g7 7.♘f3 0-0 8.0-0-0 c6 9.♔b1 b5 10.h3 a5 11.g4± Khachian-Casella, Costa Mesa 2002.

5...♗g7 6.e4 c6

The alternative is 6...dxe4 7.fxe4. Two games by Hector are relevant here:

A) 7...0-0 8.e5 ♘e8 9.h4 c5 10.♘d5 f6



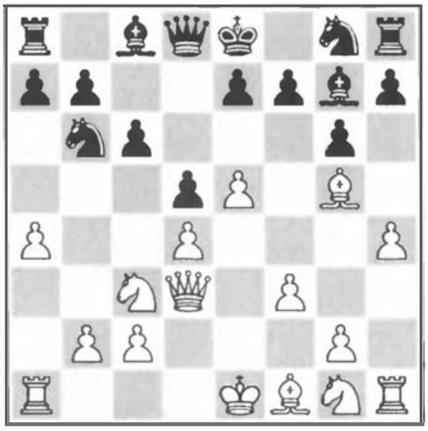
11.♕b3 e6 (11...fxg5 12.♘xe7+ ♔h8 13.♘xg6+ hxg6 14.hxg5++−; 11...♔h8 12.exf6 exf6 13.♗e3±) 12.♘xf6+ ♘dxf6 13.0-0-0 ♕b6 14.exf6 ♘xf6 15.dxc5 ♕xc5 16.♗c4± Hector-Moberg, Sweden tt 2001/02.

B) 7...c6 8.♘f3 h6 9.♗e3 ♘g4 10.♗g1 e5 11.d5 0-0 12.0-0-0 ♕a5 13.♘d2! ♕c7 14.h3 ♘gf6 15.g4 cxd5 16.exd5 ♘b6 17.♗g2 ♗d7 18.♗h2! ♖fe8 19.♖de1 ♖ad8 20.d6 ♕c8 21.♖xe5 ♗c6 22.♗xc6 ♕xc6 23.♖d1± Hector-Ingbrandt, Sweden tt 2003/04.

7.e5 ♘g8 8.h4 ♘b6

Not 8...h5 9.e6!.

9.a4



The position is highly unusual for any opening.

9...♘c4

Or 9...h5 10.a5!? (10.♘d1±) 10...♘c4 (10...♗f5 11.♕d1 ♘d7 12.g4 ♗e6 13.♘ge2 hxg4 14.♘f4) 11.♘d1 ♘xa5 12.♘e3 and White has good compensation.

10.b3 ♗f5 11.♕d1 ♘b6 12.♕d2

Amazing play by White – the third move with the queen and a lot of other moves with pawns. And the result? White has a space advantage and possibilities to play on both wings!

12...f6

Otherwise Black cannot develop at all.

13.exf6 exf6 14.♗f4 ♘e7 15.♘ge2 h6

I think this is a serious inaccuracy. Now Black won't be able to castle, because pawn h6 will be hanging.

15...0-0 16.0-0-0±.

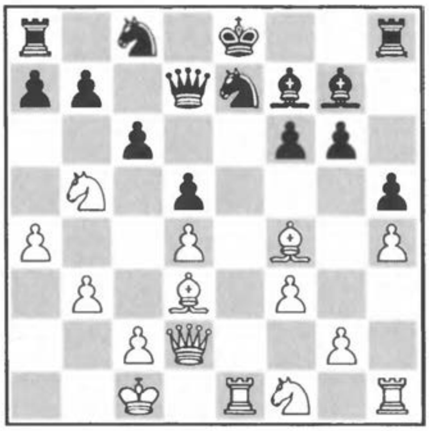
16.♘g3 ♗e6 17.♗d3 ♗f7 18.0-0-0 ♘bc8 19.♖de1 h5

19...g5 20.♘f5±.

20.♘f1 ♕d7?

Trying to prevent the advance g2-g4 (20...0-0 21.g4±), but...

21.♘b5!



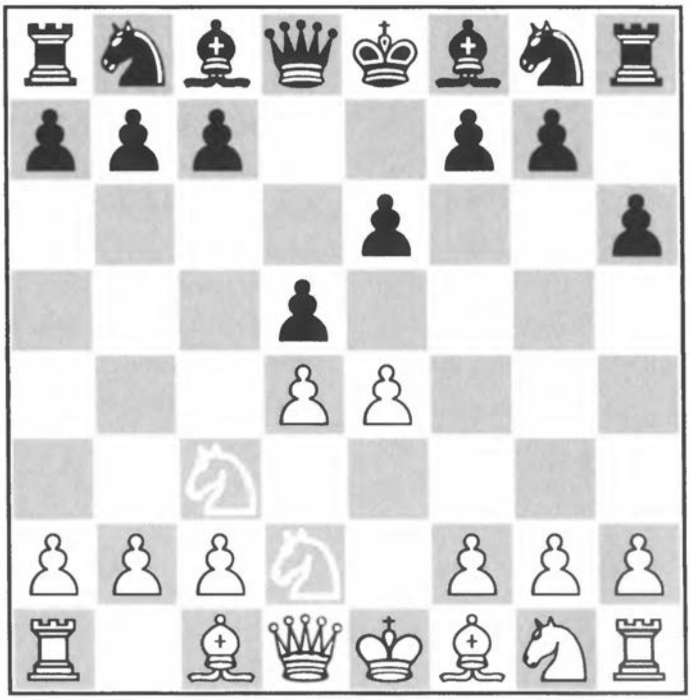
Truly amazing play. Black must have been very surprised indeed to realize that he is already lost. **21...0-0 22.♘c7 ♖b8 23.♘a6 bxa6** 23...♖a8 24.♘c5 ♕d8 25.♘xb7+–. **24.♗xb8 ♘d6 25.♗xd6 ♕xd6 26.♕c3+– f5 27.g3 ♕f6 28.f4** 28.♕c5!+–. **28...c5! 29.♘d2 ♘c6 30.♕xc5 ♘xd4 31.♖e5 ♘c6 32.♘f3± ♖d8 33.♖he1 ♗f8 34.♕c3 d4 35.♖e6 ♕xe6 36.♖xe6 dxc3 37.♖xc6 a5 38.♖xc3 ♗e8 39.♘e5 ♗d6 40.♗b5 ♗xe5 41.fxe5 ♗xb5 42.axb5 ♖d5** The rook ending is winning of course. **43.♖c6 ♖xe5 44.♖xg6+ ♔f7 45.♖g5 ♖xb5 46.♖xh5 a6 47.c3 ♔g6 48.♖g5+ ♔f6 49.♔c2 ♖b8 50.g4 fxg4 51.♖xg4 ♖h8 52.♔b2 ♔e7 53.♖d4 ♔e6 54.♔a3**

Black resigned

CHAPTER 8

Jeroen Bosch

Let's wait and see: 3...h6 in the French



NIC KEY FR 4.1 and FR 14.1

3...h6 – sur place!

This SOS chapter brings you a complete repertoire against 3.♘c3 and 3.♘d2 in the French based on the move 3...h6!?. As I will demonstrate below, this little pawn move is part of a subtle – indeed prophylactic – opening system in which, depending upon your opponent's set-up, you have the opportunity to opt for a favourable, typically 'French', position. If, at first sight, you feel that 3...h6 surely is too ridiculous for words and are afraid to end up as the laughing stock of the tournament hall or your local chess club... Well, don't be! This line was invented by French IM Bricard, and is regularly played by grandmasters Legky and Eingorn. Morozevich is another recent convert.

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 h6
1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 h6

We will examine the concrete ideas behind 3...h6 with the help of two complete games: Gashimov-Eingorn, Bled 2002 (3.♘c3), and Shaw-Eingorn, Bad Wiessee 2003 (3.♘d2). It is useful, however, to start off with a short philosophical introduction.

In general, the semi-closed nature of the French Defence lends itself almost ideally to 'slow' (prophylactic) play. If 3...h6 looks odd, then what about 3...a6? Surely that looks equally insipid. However, just think of 3.♘d2 a6, which is a respectable line, as after 4.♘gf3 c5 there is no check on b5. Against both 3.♘c3 and 3.♘d2 other 'slow moves' are playable too, for example, 3...♘c6 and 3...♗e7. Versus 3.♘c3 both Petrosian and Bronstein have been successful with 3...♗b4 4.e5 ♕d7!?, when 5.a3 ♗f8! is a main line. I will give you one final example of backward chess in the French, because it links up so well with one of the main ideas behind Gashimov-Eingorn, as explained below: 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♗e7!? 4.♗d3 ♘c6 5.♘f3 ♘b4! 6.e5 ♘xd3+ 7.cxd3 h6(!) 8.h4 ♗f8(!) 9.♗d2 ♘e7 10.♖c1 ♗d7 11.h5 a5 12.a4 ♖c8 13.♖h3 ♘c6 14.♘a2 ♖a8 15.♔f1 ♕b8 16.♔g1 ♕a7 17.♗e3 ♕b6 18.♘c3 ♘e7, and Black had a good position in Hracek-Seirawan, Ceska Trebova 1998. By the way, 6.♗e2 would have been met by 6...♘f6 7.e5 ♘e4.

So on the basis of the above argument, let us accept for the moment that the French has its own peculiar idiosyncrasies which allow you to take certain liberties as regards general rules of good opening play. Then the next question is: what are the positive features of 3...h6?

One of the useful points of 3...h6 is that Black protects square g5. This is immediately obvious by pointing to the classical main line 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗g5. Moreover, in many middle-game positions Black has to play h6 at some point to guard square g5, and the dark squares on the kingside in general. To extend this point still further, not only does Black need to guard the g5 square, in many early middle-game positions he actually plays g5, threatening the white knight on f3 which defends d4 and e5.

However, to end this introduction and come back to concrete play (and remember chess is a very concrete game!), the move 3...h6 has some very specific points. Thus, after 3.♘c3 h6 4.♘f3 ♘f6 White would like to play 5.e5. Yet this is solidly met by 5...♘e4!, as after 6.♘xe4 dxe4 the extra tempo is detrimental to White (note that 3...h6 has taken away the option of ♘g5). This compares favourably with the (slightly dubious) line 3.♘c3/d2 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘e4 5.♘xe4 dxe4.

Another specific point of 3...h6 – also against 3.♘c3 – is that 4.♗d3 is met by 4...♘c6 attacking d4, when after 5.♘f3 ♘b4!? an interesting position arises. By the way, after 3.♘d2 h6 4.♗d3 Black has 4...c5 as a concrete and perfectly playable line (a possible ♗b5 check at some point would give Black the extra move h6 – so no ♗g5!).

It is also useful to point out that after both 3.♘c3 h6 and 3.♘d2 h6 the move 4.e5 gives Black good play after 4...c5, as the knights are obstructing White's natural play in this French Advance type of position. Similarly, there is nothing to be gained from the French Exchange Variation deferred with 4.exd5 (again a knight on c3 or d2 makes no particularly strong contribution).

So, dear reader, thank you for bearing with me so far. I hope your attitude towards 3...h6 is now somewhat similar to Polonius's as he comments upon Hamlet's ramblings: 'Though this be madness, yet there is method in't.'

☐ **Vugar Gashimov**
■ **Viacheslav Eingorn**
Bled Olympiad 2002

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 h6 4.♗d3

This develops a piece and protects the e4 square, so that 4...♘f6 will be met by 5.e5. White's main alternative is 4.♘f3, which we shall examine in some detail:

I **4.♘f3** ♘f6 (White is of course slightly better after 4...dxe4 5.♘xe4 ♘d7 6.♗d3 ♘gf6 7.♕e2 ♘xe4 8.♗xe4, when in Panajotov-Ivanov, Pamporovo 2001, Black blundered with 8...♘f6? 9.♗xb7!±), and here the line forks:

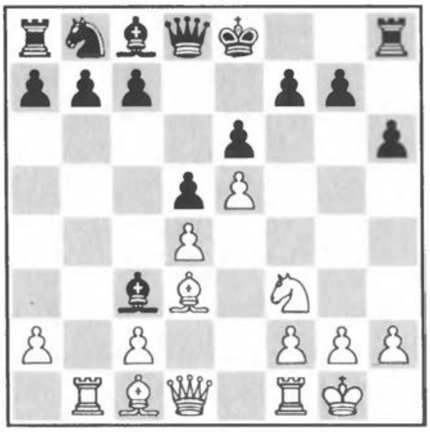
A) 5.♗d3 and now Black has a choice:

A1) 5...♘c6 6.0-0 (here 6.e5!? ♘d7 7.a3

is better for White in my opinion) 6...♗e7 7.e5 ♘d7 8.♗e3 ♘b4 9.♗e2 c5 10.a3 ♘c6 11.♗b5 a6 12.♗xc6 bxc6 13.♘e2 cxd4 14.♘exd4 ♕c7 15.♗f4 c5 16.♘b3 g5 17.♗g3 a5 18.a4 ♗b7 19.♕e2 ♗a6 20.♕e3 ♗xf1, and Black was winning, although he ended up losing in Barsky-Sebald, Dortmund 1999. The move 5...♘c6 is not the most logical choice here, as it does not attack d4.

A2) Better looks Eingorn's suggestion of 5...c5!? which has not been tested in practice.

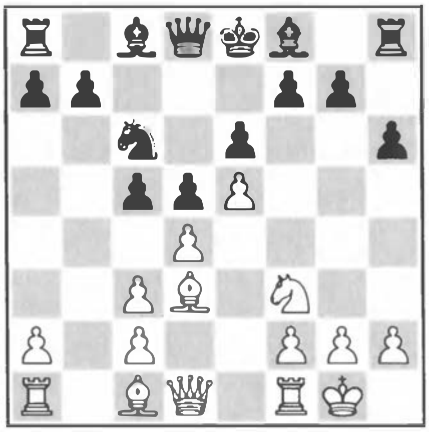
A3) White must be prepared to sacrifice material after: 5...♗b4 6.e5 ♘e4 7.0-0 ♘xc3 8.bxc3 ♗xc3 9.♖b1



White has reasonable compensation owing to his good development, and the awkward position of the bishop on c3. Tournament practice has seen:

- 9...a5 10.♖b3 ♗b4 11.c4 b6 12.♕c2 ♗e7 13.cxd5 exd5 14.♗b5+ ♔f8 15.♗e3 with good compensation in Bruzon-Arencibia, Havana 2004.
- 9...c5 (this looks more natural) 10.♖b3 cxd4 11.♗a3 a6 12.♕c1 (planning 13.♕f4) 12...g5! 13.h4 g4 14.♘h2 ♕xh4 15.g3 ♕h5 and White did not have enough in A.Horvath-Borgo, Zemplinska Sirava 2004.

B) 5.e5 is solidly met by 5...♘e4! (Black takes advantage of the inclusion of 3...h6 and 4.♘f3 when compared to the line 3...♘f6 4.e5 ♘e4?!, since White cannot take on e4 now – 6.♘xe4 dxe4 7.♘g1 c5 is nice for Black – he must allow a Winawer structure without obtaining the dark-squared bishop in return) 6.♗d3 ♘xc3 7.bxc3 c5 8.0-0 ♘c6



White may have an edge in development but Black has a structural advantage here. Bluvshtein-Legky, Montreal 2003, went 9.♗e3 ♕a5 10.dxc5 ♕xc3 11.♘d4 a6?! (stronger is 11...♗d7 12.♘b5 ♕xe5 13.♖e1 a6 14.♘d6+ ♗xd6 15.f4 ♕xe3+!? (or 15...♕c3) 16.♖xe3 ♗xc5) 12.♘xc6 bxc6 13.♕g4 ♕xe5 14.♕a4 ♕c7 15.♗d4 ♗d7 16.♖ae1, and White had excellent compensation, although he later lost due to a blunder.

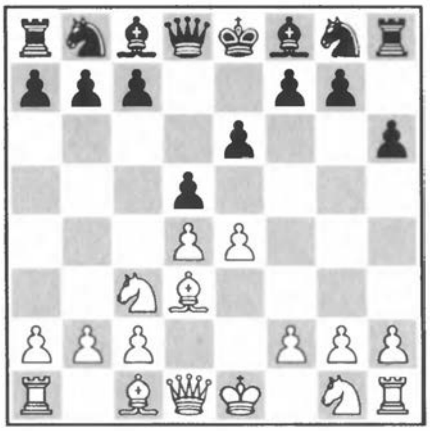
II Practice has also seen **4.♗e3**, when White gains a slight plus after 4...♘f6 5.e5 ♘fd7 6.f4. Widmer-Fischinger, Schwarzach 2000, went: 6...g6 7.♘f3 b6 8.♕d2 c6 9.♕f2 ♗a6 10.♕g3 ♗xf1 11.♖xf1±.

The inventor of 3...h6 twice played 4...♗b4 5.a3 (sacrificing a pawn. Or 5.e5 c5 6.dxc5 ♘e7 7.♘f3 ♘f5 8.♗d2 ♗xc5 9.♗d3 ♘c6 10.♕e2 0-0 11.0-0-0 ♘fd4 12.♘xd4 ♗xd4 13.f4 f6, and Black was fine in Letreguilly-Bricard, St Affrique 2002) 5...♗xc3+ 6.bxc3 dxe4 7.f3 ♘c6 8.♗b5 ♗d7 9.♘h3 exf3 10.♕xf3 ♕f6 11.♕g3 ♘ge7 12.♖f1 ♕g6 13.♕f2 ♘d5 14.♘f4 ♘xf4 15.♗xf4 0-0-0, with an interesting position, Guedon-Bricard, St Affrique 2002.

III Nothing much is gained by 'transposing' to the Exchange Variation: **4.exd5** exd5 5.♗d3 ♘f6 6.♘ge2 c5 (Black is not forced to play this, of course) 7.dxc5 ♗xc5 8.♗f4 0-0 9.♕d2 ♘c6 10.a3 ♖e8 11.0-0 a6, and Finkel assesses this position from the game Skripchenko-Bricard, Montpellier 1998, as unclear.

IV A cheeky answer to 3...h6 is **4.a3**. The main point is 4...♘f6 5.e5. Black may go for an acceptable Rubinstein Variation with 4...dxe4 5.♘xe4 ♘d7. Compared to the normal line Black has prevented a future ♗g5, while a3 serves no useful purpose.

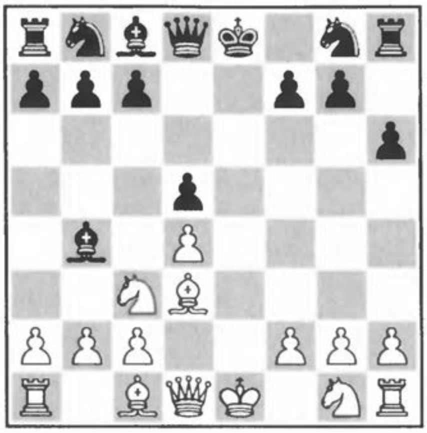
Let us return to our main game after 3...h6 4.♗d3. How can Black take advantage of White's last move?



4...♘c6!

This emphasizes the downside of 4.♗d3: pawn d4 is undefended. While this is easily fixed with 5.♘f3, Black has another surprise in store.

It is also logical to implement c5 at some point (again this would stress the disadvantage of 4.♗d3). However, the immediate 4...c5?! is met by 5.exd5 exd5 6.dxc5, when White is slightly better, as 6...♗xc5 fails to 7.♗b5+, winning a pawn. Bricard goes his own way here with 4...♗b4, which prepares 5...♘f6. Nothing special now is gained by 5.♕g4!?, as 5...dxe4 6.♕xg7 ♕f6 7.♕xf6 ♘xf6 8.♗c4 ♘c6 looks OK for Black (this is an analysis by Finkel who assesses it as ∞). Instead, after 4...♗b4, Bricard has twice encountered 5.exd5 exd5.



- 6.♕f3!? ♘c6 7.♘e2 ♕f6!? (an interesting sacrifice) 8.♕xd5 ♘ge7 9.♕f3 ♕xf3 10.gxf3 ♗f5 11.♗e4 0-0-0 12.♗e3 ♗xc3+ 13.bxc3 ♗xe4 14.fxe4 f5 15.f3 ♖he8 16.h4 fxe4 17.fxe4 ♘f5! 18.exf5 ♖xe3 19.♔f2 ♖de8 20.♖ae1 ♔d7 21.♘g3 ♖xc3 22.♖xe8 ♔xe8 23.♘h5 ♘xd4 24.♘xg7+ ♔f7, and Black is winning. Van Elst-Bricard, Toulouse 1998.
- 6.a3 ♗e7 7.♕f3 (otherwise Black has easy equality) 7...♘f6 8.h3 c5 only now 9.dxc5 ♘c6 10.♘ge2 (perhaps 10.b4!?) 10...♗xc5 11.♗f4 ♗e6 12.0-0-0 a6 13.♗c4 d4 14.♗xe6 fxe6 15.♘e4 ♘xe4 16.♕xe4 ♕f6 17.♗g3 Black is slightly worse, but he drew in Fressinet-Bricard, Val d'Isère 2002.

5.♘f3 ♘b4!

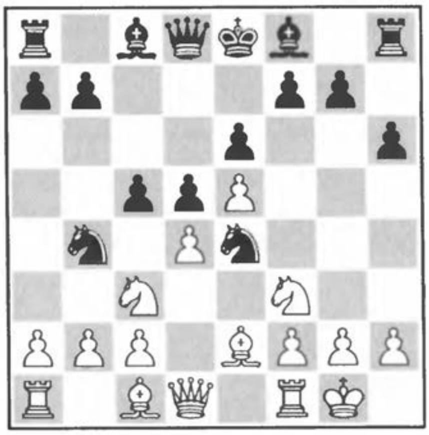
The point of Black's set-up is that after chasing away the bishop he can finally implement the manoeuvre 6...♘f6 7.e5 ♘e4.

6.♗e2

The most sensible answer. Naturally, White does not allow the exchange of his bishop. The alternative is 6.♗b5+. The point of this check is to disrupt Black's coordination after either 6...♗d7 7.♗e2 or 6...c6 7.♗e2. Let us investigate both options:

Covering the check with the bishop has received no practical tests yet: 6...♗d7 7.♗e2 dxe4 8.♘xe4 ♗c6 9.♘g3?! ♗xf3 10.♗xf3 ♕xd4! So White should not play 9.♘g3 and settle for 9.♘c3 or 9.♘ed2. However, in either case Black should be fine. A final thought is 6.♗b5+ ♗d7 7.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 8.♘e5!? – food for thought.

Recent experience has seen: 6...c6 7.♗e2 ♘f6 8.e5 ♘e4 9.0-0 c5

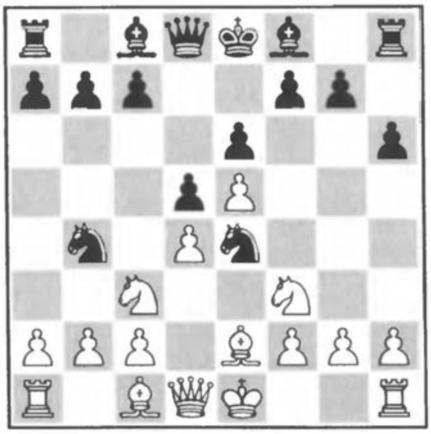


- 10.a3 ♘xc3 11.bxc3 ♘c6 12.♘e1 ♕a5 13.♗d2 ♕a4 14.♘f3 b6 15.dxc5 ♗xc5 16.♘d4 ♘xd4 17.cxd4 ♕xd4 18.♗b5+ ♗d7 19.♗xd7+ ♔xd7 20.♕e2 ♕c4 with insufficient compensation in Vratonjic-Certic, Petrovac 2004.
- 10.♗e3 ♘xc3 11.bxc3 ♘c6 12.dxc5 ♕a5 13.♘d4 ♕xc3 14.♘b5 ♕xe5 15.♕d2 and White has enough for the pawn, De la Riva-Legky, France tt 2004.

6...♘f6

Finally Black starts developing his kingside.

7.e5 ♘e4



The pawn chain reveals that Black has played the French Defence. However, the knights are most unusually placed at e4 and b4. Their aggressive placement is an achievement in itself. Naturally, Black will not be able to keep them there, but White will have to make a concession in the process of kicking them back. White cannot take on e4, as he will lose the d4-pawn. Nor is he able to avoid the exchange of a pair of knights. Of course, 8.♘b1 (to prevent the exchange) 8...c5 9.c3 ♘c6 is too slow. Gashimov's next move allows the swap on c3, but gains some time.

8.a3

Otherwise Black will execute the strategically desirable 8...c5. The game Delorme-Legky, France tt 2003, saw: 8.♗e3 c5 9.dxc5 ♘xc3 10.bxc3 ♘c6 11.0-0 ♕a5 12.c4 (stronger is 12.♘d4 which would transpose to De la Riva-Legky above – see the note to 6.♗e2) 12...♗xc5 13.cxd5 exd5 14.♘d4 (or 14.♕xd5 ♗xe3 15.♕xa5 ♗xf2+ 16.♔xf2 ♘xa5∓) 14...♗xd4! (giving up his 'good' bishop to give the 'bad French' bishop an excellent outpost) 15.♗xd4 0-0 16.f4 ♗f5 17.c3 ♖ac8 18.♗g4 ♘xd4 19.cxd4 ♗c2 20.♕e2 ♖c4 21.e6 ♗e4 22.♖ac1 ♖xc1 23.♖xc1 fxe6 24.♗xe6+ ♔h8∓.

In A.Kovacevic-Certic, Petrovac 2004, play was about equal after 8.0-0 c5 9.♗e3 cxd4 (9...♘c6) 10.♘xd4 ♘xc3 11.bxc3 ♘c6 12.c4 ♗e7 13.cxd5 exd5 14.f4 0-0.

8...♘xc3

There is no point in preserving the knight on its outpost. After 8...♘c6 9.♕d3 will force the exchange anyway, without compromising the white pawn structure 9...♘xc3 10.♕xc3 (Eingorn).

9.bxc3 ♘c6 10.0-0 ♘a5

In playing the knight to the edge of the board, Eingorn plays his seventh(!) knight move in a row. Still, his play is entirely logical: c5 is being prepared. Although only the knights have left their stables, Black can easily get away with keeping the rest of his army on the bottom rank. After all, the position is closed and he has no weaknesses.

11.♕d3

White would like to play the standard attacking move 11.♘g5 if it wasn't for Black's pawn on h6. Perhaps he should have settled for a more passive square with 11.♘e1, preparing the march of the f-pawn.

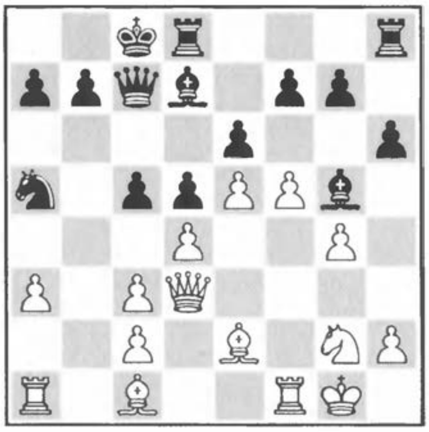
11...♗d7 12.♘e1

Preparing to attack the base of Black's pawn chain with f4-f5. Black similarly goes

12...c5 13.f4 ♕c7 14.g4 0-0-0

Nothing wrong with this move, but 14...g6, to stop f5 for the moment, looks playable too.

15.f5 ♝e7 16.♘g2 ♝g5



It goes too far to call this a point of 3...h6, but the move was necessary in view of 17.f6.

A typically tense situation with castling on opposite sides of the board has arisen. Black is fine and I'm sure that a supporter of the Winawer would feel quite confident here. Note that Eingorn commits a serious inaccuracy on move 23 and blunders two moves later in a difficult position.

17.♗f4 ♘c6 18.♗g3 ♕a5

Eingorn evaluates this position as unclear.

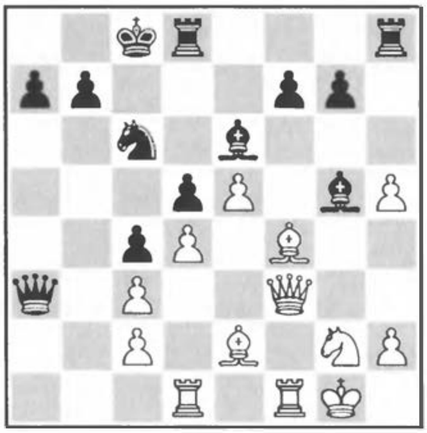
19.♖ad1

Not 19.h4? c4 20.♕f3 ♗d2∓.

19...h5 20.fxe6

Again 20.h4 is not possible because of 20...c4 21.♕f3 hxg4 22.♕xg4 ♗h6∓.

20...♗xe6 21.gxh5 c4 22.♕f3 ♕xa3 23.♗f4



23...♗e7?

Correct was 23...♗h6 24.♗xh6 gxh6, as indicated by Eingorn.

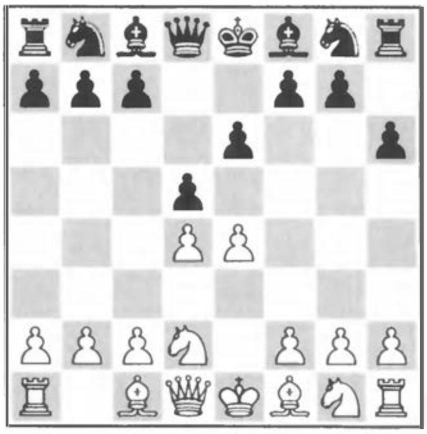
24.♗d2 ♕b2 25.♘e3 ♗g5?

This is a blunder, 25...♕b6 had to be tried.

26.♘xc4! dxc4 27.♗xg5+– ♖de8 28.♕e4 f6 29.♗c1 ♕b6 30.♗e3 f5 31.♕g2 ♖d8 32.♖b1 ♕a5 33.♗f3 ♗d5 34.♗xd5 ♕xd5 35.♕xd5 ♖xd5 36.♖xf5 b5 37.♔g2 a5 38.♔f3 b4 39.♔e4 ♖hd8 40.♗g5 bxc3 41.♗xd8 ♖xd4+ 42.♔e3 ♖xd8 And White won.

☐ **John Shaw**
■ **Viacheslav Eingorn**
Bad Wiessee 2003

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 h6



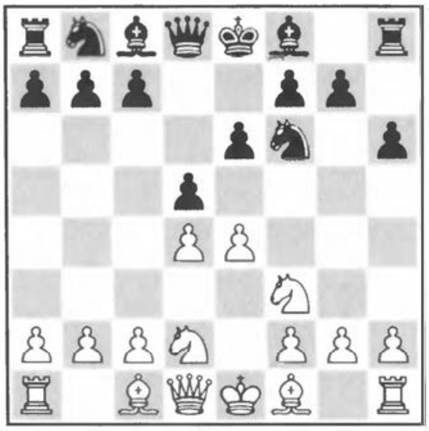
In a way this looks even more pointless than after 3.♘c3. Having placed the knight on d2, White will not be able to play ♗g5 any time soon. Even worse, after 4.♘gf3 ♘f6 5.e5 (the main line) Black cannot even favourably exchange his knight with 5...♘e4 as 6.♗d3 forces 6...♘xd2 7.♗xd2, with a big edge in development. Waiting for White to commit himself is one of the big points of 3...h6 against the Tarrasch. Compare this to the two main lines: 3...c5 and 3...♘f6. In the 3...c5 line White will play his g1-knight to f3, while in the 3...♘f6 line White will usually play ♘g1-e2 and ♘d2-f3 (I am oversimplifying matters, of course, for the sake of argument). Thus it follows that with 3...h6 Black uses the cyclist's technique of *sur place*. He will vary his approach (a set-up with c5 or with ♘f6) in accordance with White's actions. In my opinion, this strategy (3...h6 against the Tarrasch) is riskier than 3...h6 versus 3.♘c3.

4.♘gf3

After this move plans with an early c5 no longer make sense. For example, 4...c5 5.exd5 exd5 6.♗b5+ and in this normal position from the Tarrasch 3...h6 is a waste of time compared to 4.♘gf3. It is against the alternatives for 4.♘gf3 that 4...c5 forms a good reply:

- 4.c3 c5 (playable is 4...dxe4 5.♘xe4 ♘d7 when White is slightly better) 5.exd5 exd5 6.♘gf3 ♘c6 7.♗b5 cxd4 8.0-0!? ♗d7 (8...dxc3!?) 9.♘b3 ♘f6 10.♖e1+ ♗e7 11.♗xc6 (11.♘bxd4) 11...bxc6 12.♕xd4 0-0 13.♗f4 ♖e8 14.h3 ♕b6 15.♘e5 ♖ad8 16.♖ad1± Conquest-Bricard, Reykjavik 2000. Instead of 5...exd5, Black can also take back with the Queen. In Kudrin-Atalik, Lindsborg 2003, Black equalized easily after 5...♕xd5 6.♘gf3 cxd4 7.♘xd4 ♘f6 8.♘2f3 ♗c5 9.♗e2 ♘c6 10.♘xc6 ♕xc6 11.0-0 ♕c7 12.♗d3 0-0 13.♕e2 b6.
- 4.♗d3 c5 (but not 4...♘f6 5.e5 ♘fd7 6.♘e2±) 5.dxc5 ♗xc5 6.♘gf3 ♘f6 7.e5 (7.exd5=) 7...♘fd7 8.♘b3 ♗b6 9.♗f4 g5!? 10.♗g3 ♘c6 11.h3 ♕e7 12.c3 ♘c5 13.♘xc5 (13.♗c2) 13...♕xc5 14.♘d2? ♘xe5!∓ Midoux-Bricard, Toulouse 1998.

4...♘f6



5.e5

Clearly the way to proceed, as 5...♘e4 6.♗d3 is better for White.

Nothing is gained by: 5.exd5 exd5 6.♗d3 ♗d6 7.0-0 0-0= 8.♖e1 ♘c6 9.c3 ♗g4 10.♕b3 ♖b8 11.♘e5 ♗xe5 12.dxe5 ♘d7 13.♕xd5 ♘dxe5, with equality in Manik-Eingorn, Vienna 2003.

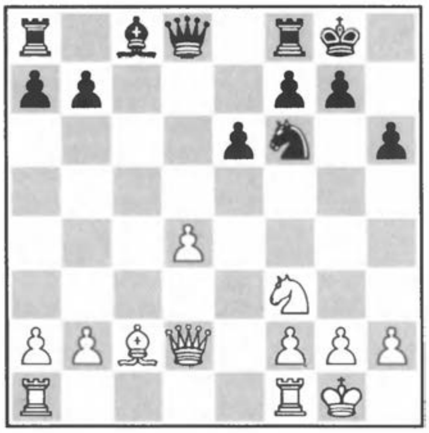
A more serious attempt is 5.♗d3. It is possible to go for positions similar to the Rubinstein Variation with 5...dxe4 6.♘xe4 ♘xe4 7.♗xe4 ♘d7, when White has his normal opening advantage.

More ambitious, though, is 5...c5:

A) 6.dxc5 dxe4 (here 6...♗xc5 transposes to Midoux-Bricard above) 7.♘xe4 ♘xe4 8.♗xe4 ♕xd1+ 9.♔xd1 ♗xc5 10.♔e2 0-0?! (now White gains a pleasant endgame edge; 10...♘d7 is stronger) 11.♗e3± ♗xe3 12.♔xe3 f5 13.♗d3 ♘c6 14.♖ad1 e5 15.♗c4+ ♔h7 16.♗d5 e4 17.♗xc6 bxc6 18.♘e5± Marciano-Bricard, French Championship, Narbonne 1997.

B) 6.c3?! cxd4 7.cxd4 dxe4 8.♘xe4 ♗b4+ 9.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 10.♕xd2 ♘xe4 11.♗xe4 ♘d7

12.0-0 ♘f6 13.♗c2 0-0. Black has exchanged two sets of minor pieces, which is good for him, as he is playing against an isolated pawn. His chances are no worse.

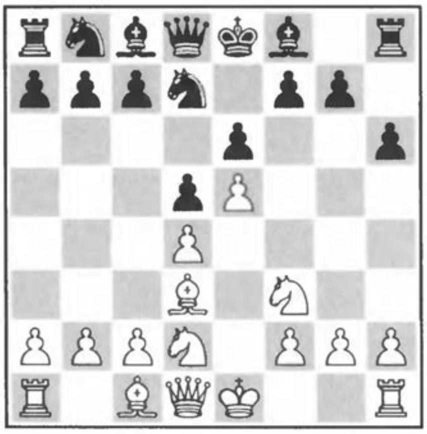


14.♘e5 ♕b6 15.♖ad1 ♖d8 (15...♗d7 allows White to equalize with 16.d5! exd5 (16...♗b5 17.dxe6! ♕xe6 18.♖fe1 ♕xa2? 19.♕b4! ♗c6 20.♗b3 ♕a6 21.♕e7±) 17.♘xd7 ♘xd7 18.♕xd5 ♘f6 19.♕b3=) 16.f4!? ♗d7 17.g4!? ♗b5 18.♖f2 ♘d7 19.♕e3 ♖ac8 20.♗b1 ♖c7 21.h4 ♘f8 22.g5 h5 23.♖fd2 g6 24.♗e4 ♗c6 25.♗xc6 bxc6. Now that White's offensive on the kingside has been stopped it is clear that he has merely created weaknesses in his own camp. Nevednichy-Eingorn, Bad Wörishofen 2002.

C) 6.exd5 ♕xd5 7.dxc5 ♗xc5 8.0-0 b6 9.♘b3 ♗e7 10.♗f4 ♗b7 11.c4 ♕d8 12.♘e5 ♘c6 13.♘xc6 ♗xc6 14.♕e2 ♕d7 and after this accurate move – Black prepares to answer 15.♖ad1 with 15...♕b7 – the players agreed a draw in Dolmatov-V.Popov, St Petersburg 2004.

5...♘fd7 6.♗d3

The high level rapid encounter – Vallejo-Morozevich, Monaco 2004 – led to mutual chances after 6.c3 c5 7.a3!? ♗e7 8.♗d3 a5 (aiming for 9...a4) 9.b3 b6 10.♗b5 (to answer 10...♗a6 with 11.a4!) 10...♘a6! 11.0-0 ♘c7 12.♗e2 a4 13.b4 ♗a6.



6...c5

The standard way to operate against White's pawn chain. Bricard has played a slower plan in the past: 6...b6!? 7.0-0 a5 8.a4 ♗a6 9.♕e2 ♕c8 10.♖d1 ♗xd3 11.♕xd3 ♕a6 12.c4 ♘c6 13.b3 ♘b4 14.♕b1 ♗e7 15.♗a3 c6∓ Szylar-Bricard, Toulouse 1998.

7.c3

White played more aggressively in Ginsburg-Eingorn, Metz 2003, with 7.c4. I will give the game with brief comments: 7...cxd4 8.cxd5 ♘c5 9.♗b5+ ♗d7 10.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 (here 10...♘bxd7! is stronger) 11.d6 ♕b5 (this looks dangerous, but the tactics don't work for Black) 12.♘xd4 ♕b4 (not 12...♘d3+ 13.♔f1 ♕xe5 14.♘2f3 ♕e4 15.♗e3±) 13.♘f3 ♘d3+ 14.♔f1 ♘c6 15.♕e2 ♘f4 (the best choice considering: 15...♘xc1 16.♖xc1 ♕xb2 17.♖b1 ♕xa2 18.♖xb7± and 15...♕b5 16.♘e1 ♘cxe5 17.f4+–) 16.a3 (16.♕c4 is an alternative) 16...♕a4 17.b3 ♘xe2 (better than 17...♕a5 18.♕e4 ♕a6+ 19.♘c4 or 18...♘g6 19.♗b2) 18.bxa4 ♘c3 19.♗b2 (or 19.♘c4 ♘xa4 20.♗e3 (20.♖b1 0-0-0) 20...f6 21.♘d4 ♘xe5 22.♘xe5 fxe5 23.♘xe6 ♔d7) 19...♘xa4 20.♖b1 f6! 21.exf6 ♘xb2 22.♖xb2 0-0-0! 23.fxg7 ♗xg7 24.♖b3 ♖xd6 25.♔e2 b6 26.♖c1 ♔d7 27.♘c4 ♖d5 28.♘e3 ♖d6 (Black has no reason to avoid the draw, since 28...♖a5 29.♖d3+ ♔c7 30.♘d4 ♗xd4 31.♖xd4 ♖c5 32.♖xc5 bxc5 33.♖h4 and

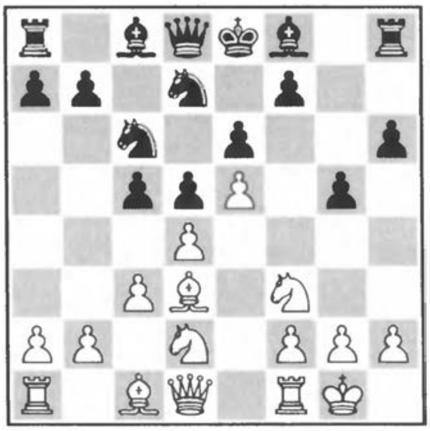
28...♘d4+ 29.♘xd4 ♖xd4 30.♖bc3 are both better for White) 29.♘c4 ♖d5 30.♘e3 ♖d6 31.♘c4 ½-½.

7...♘c6

We have reached a position from the French Tarrasch: 3.♘d2 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘fd7 5.♘gf3 c5 6.c3 ♘c6 7.♗d3, where Black plays all sorts of moves but not 7...h6. Note that in practice Black does play 7...g5!? – a set-up that comes closest to our main game.

8.0-0 g5!?

This radical follow-up of 3...h6 is, of course, not forced.



9.dxc5

Black obtains a decent game after 9.h3 ♕b6 10.dxc5 ♘xc5 11.♗c2 ♘d7 12.♖e1 ♗g7 13.c4 0-0 14.cxd5 exd5 15.♘b3 ♘dxe5 16.♘xe5 ♘xe5, Jansa-Legky, France tt 2004.

9...♗xc5

Here 9...♘dxe5 10.♗b5 ♘xf3+ 11.♘xf3 .♗xc5 12.c4 gives White considerable play for the pawn.

10.♘b3 ♗b6 11.♖e1 ♕c7

Building up the pressure on e5. After 11...g4 12.♘fd4 White will get clear structural compensation for the pawn he is going to lose on e5.

12.♗b5 ♘c5

An alternative is 12...a6!? 13.♗a4 (13.♗xc6 bxc6 14.a4 c5 15.a5 ♗a7) 13...♗xf2+!? 14.♔xf2 b5. The rest of the game sees Eingorn defending well to hold his slightly inferior position.

13.♗e3 ♘xb3 14.axb3 ♗d7

This threatens 15...♘e5.

15.♗xc6 bxc6 16.b4

Likewise, 16.♗xb6 ♕xb6 17.b4 c5 18.bxc5 ♕xc5 also transposes to the game.

16...c5

Otherwise 17.♗xc5 would strangle Black.

17.bxc5 ♗xc5 18.♗xc5

White could also try 18.♗d4 or 18.b4.

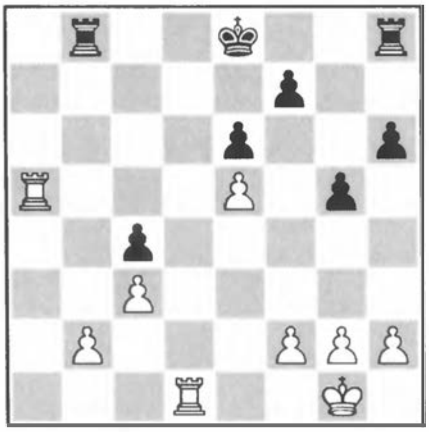
18...♕xc5 19.♘d4 ♖b8 20.♖a2 a5!?

To play a4 on the next move.

21.♘b3

Winning a pawn, but Eingorn has assessed the double rook ending that arises as a draw.

21...♕c4 22.♖xa5 ♗a4 23.♘d2 ♗xd1 24.♘xc4 dxc4 25.♖xd1

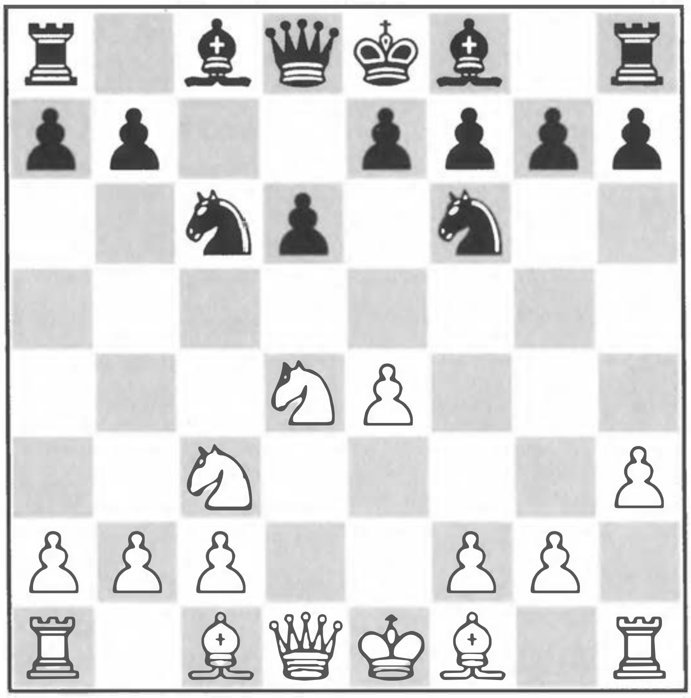


White is a pawn up, but b2 and e5 are weak. There is little White can do to prevent the transition to a drawish single rook ending. **25...0-0** Always nice to castle this late. **26.♖d2 ♖fd8 27.♖xd8+ ♖xd8** Because of the weak back rank, Black gains the time to keep White's rook passive. **28.g4 ♖b8 29.♖c5 ♖xb2 30.♖xc4 ♖e2** The active rook and the weak e- and c-pawns ensure that White has no winning chances. **31.♖c5 ♖e1+ 32.♔g2 ♔g7 33.c4 ♔g6 34.h3 h5 35.♔f3 h4** Now even h3 is weak. **36.♖b5 ♖h1 37.♔g2 ♖c1 38.♖c5** Draw.

CHAPTER 9

Sergei Movsesian

Play like a Beginner



NIC KEY SI 25.1

6.h3 against the Classical Sicillian

White has many options against the Classical Sicilian. The Rauzer (6.♗g5), the Sozin/Velimirovic (6.♗c4) or the Boleslavsky/Scheveningen complex (6.♗e2). Theoretically the Rauzer is perhaps the best option, but all of them have a perfect right to exist, and may cause Black players some headaches. However, make no mistake about it: they will not surprise your opponent. In the 'classical' Scheveningen move order – 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 e6 – White has the Keres Attack with 6.g4. Now wouldn't it be nice if something like that existed here too?

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♘c6 6.h3

Preparing 7.g4? Surely, such a beginner's move can never be a serious option? However, please don't dismiss 6.h3 straightaway. Sergei Movsesian has played this move with great success. He demonstrates his pet line in three annotated games.

☐ **Sergei Movsesian**
■ **Jesper Hall**
Malmö 1999

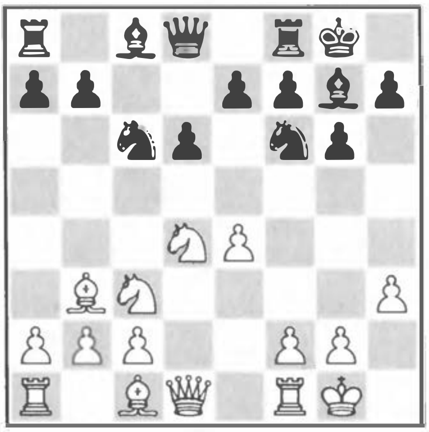
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 d6 6.h3 g6

Black goes for the Dragon. 'Show me where h3 comes in useful now'. Now White could very well play the fianchetto variation with 7.g3 (as in Movsesian-Stocek, Czech tt 1998/99), or even the extended version 7.g4. Even more subtle would be 7.♘de2, not only postponing the choice between the normal and the extended fianchetto, but also avoiding 7...♘xd4. White can also play 7.♗c4 which may lead to positions usually reached via the Accelerated Dragon – and, yes, h3 is useful there, too!

7.♗c4 ♗g7 8.♗b3 0-0

Another option is the risky 8...♘xe4!?, when after 9.♘xc6 ♗xc3+ 10.bxc3 bxc6 11.♕d4 ♘f6 12.♗h6 ♕b6 13.♕h4 White has certain compensation for the sacrificed pawn, though a tough black defender may opine that he still has some things to prove...

9.0-0



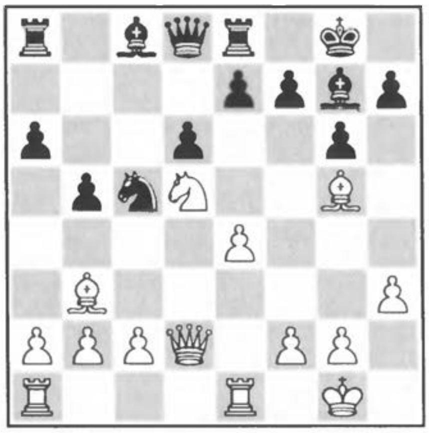
9...♘xd4 10.♕xd4 ♘d7 11.♕d1 ♘c5 12.♖e1 a6

Too aggressive is 12...a5 13.♗c4 a4 14.a3 ♗e6 15.♘d5 when White has the slightly better position.

13.♗g5

White's aim is to increase the pressure on the e7-pawn. In this game Black failed to solve the problems, as even several exchanges didn't help.

13...♖e8 14.♕d2 b5 15.♘d5



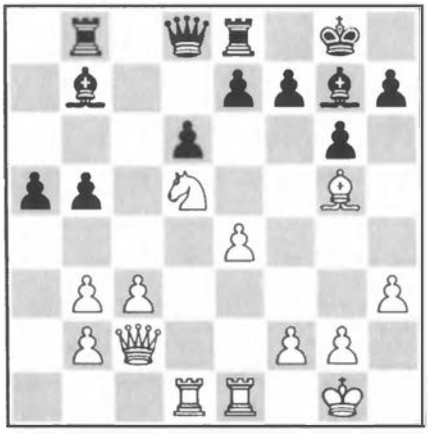
15...♗b7

15...♗xb2 is followed by a strong blow 16.e5! ♗xa1 17.exd6 ♕xd6 18.♗xe7 ♕c6 19.♖xa1 ♘xb3 20.axb3 ♗b7 21.c4! with a strong attack, as 21...bxc4 22.bxc4 ♕xc4 loses due to the simple 23.♘f6+ ♚g7 24.♘xe8+ ♖xe8 25.♕b2+.

16.c3 ♖b8 17.♗c2 ♘a4 18.♗b3 ♘c5

18...♘b6 19.♘xb6 ♕xb6 20.♕f4! e6 21.♖ad1 ♗e5 22.♕h4 with a pleasant advantage.

19.♖ad1 ♘xb3 20.axb3 a5 21.♕c2



Preparing e4-e5 and forcing Black to weaken the position.

21...h6 22.♗f4 ♗xd5 23.♖xd5

Now White targets Black's weak pawns and also the attack on the kingside suddenly starts.

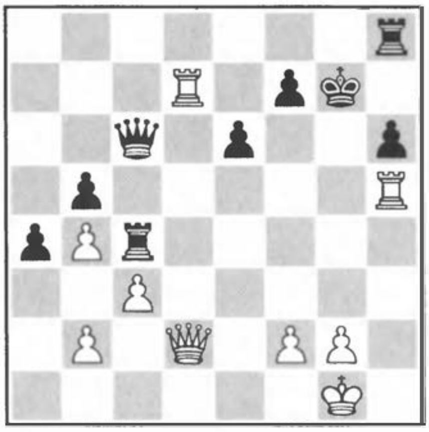
23...♕b6 24.h4! a4 25.b4 ♖bc8 26.♕d2 ♔h7 27.e5± dxe5 28.♗xe5 e6 29.♖d7 ♗xe5

29...♖cd8 30.♖xf7 ♖xd2 31.♖xg7+ ♔h8 32.♖b7++–.

30.♖xe5 ♔g7 31.h5 ♖c4 32.hxg6 ♔xg6 33.♕d3+ ♔g7 34.♖h5 ♕c6

Black is also lost after 34...♕b8 35.♖xh6 (35.g3) 35...♔xh6 36.♖xf7 ♖h8 37.♖f6+ ♔g5 38.♕g6+ ♔h4 39.♖f3+–; or 34...e5 35.♖xf7+ ♔xf7 36.♕h7+ ♔f8 37.♖f5+.

35.♕d2 ♖h8



36.♖g5+ ♔f8

36...hxg5 37.♕xg5+ ♔f8 38.♕e7+ ♔g7 39.♕xf7+ ♔h6 40.♕f6+ ♔h5 41.♕xh8+; 36...♔f6 37.♖g3+–.

37.♖d8+ ♔e7 38.♖xh8 hxg5 39.♕d8

Mate.

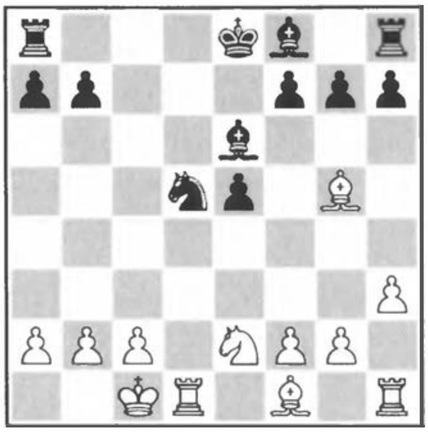
☐ **Sergei Movsesian**
■ **Vladimir Baklan**
Groningen 1998

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♘c6 6.h3 e5

Black is trying to clarify the situation in the centre, as White's 6.h3 looks so slow, but there are some drawbacks...

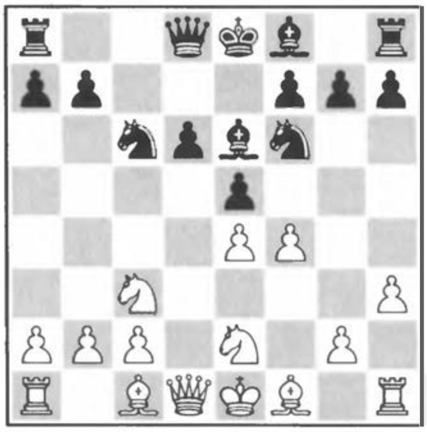
7.♘de2 ♗e6

Here 7...d5 looks too risky: 8.exd5 ♘b4 9.♗g5 ♘bxd5 10.♘xd5 ♕xd5 11.♕xd5 ♘xd5 12.0-0-0 ♗e6



13.♘f4!! ♗e7 14.♗b5+ ♔f8 15.♗xe7+ ♘xe7 16.♘xe6+ fxe6 17.♖d7 ended as a disaster for Black in Mikhaletz-Kravets, Lvov 1997.

8.f4



Positions arising after 6... e5 seemingly have nothing to do with 'normal' Sicilians at all! 8...exf4 gave White very comfortable attacking play, with excellent control over the d5-square. 9.♘xf4 ♗e7 10.♗e3 0-0 11.♕d2 ♘e5 12.0-0-0a6 13.g4♖c8 14.♔b1 b5 15.g5 ♘fd7 16.h4± Movsesian-Milov, Panormo (blitz) 2002.

8...♘h5!? 9.g3 exf4 10.♗xf4 ♗e7 11.♕d2

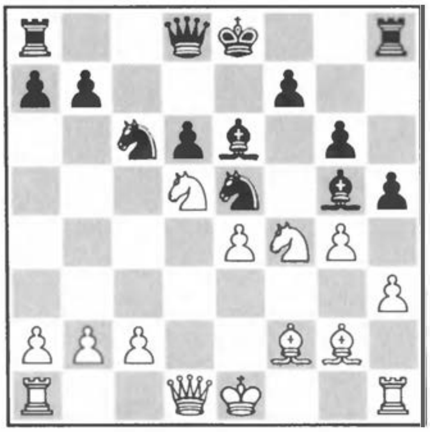
♘e5 12.♘d4 ♘xf4 13.♗b5+! ♗d7 14.gxf4 ♗h4+ 15.♔e2 ♘c6 16.♘f3 0-0 17.♖ad1± and White is better – again due to his control over the d5-square. Movsesian-Peptan, Groningen 1997.

Baklan plays yet another move in this complicated position.

8...g6!? 9.g4 ♘d7 10.♗e3 ♗e7!? 11.♗f2

Of course, White would like to play 11.f5 but after 11...♗h4+ 12.♔d2.♗c4 Black gets perfect play.

11...exf4 12.♘xf4 ♘de5 13.♗g2 ♗g5 14.♘cd5 h5



With this sharp move Black starts a kingside offensive. Instead, 14...♘e7 doesn't solve the d5 square problem 15.0-0 ♘xd5 16.♘xe6 fxe6 17.exd5±.

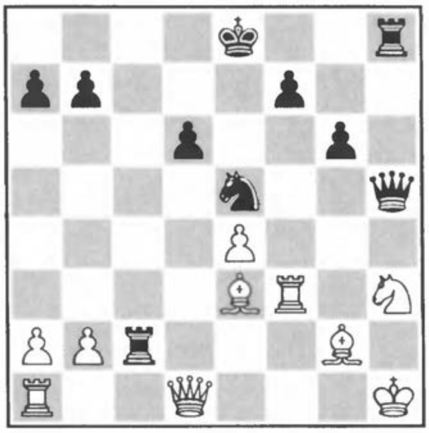
15.gxh5 ♗xf4 16.♘xf4 ♕g5 17.♕c1 ♖c8 18.0-0 ♗c4?!

Black had several options here:

● 18...gxh5 19.♘xe6 ♕xc1 20.♘g7+ ♔f8 21.♖axc1 ♔xg7 22.♖cd1±.

● Probably the best practical move was 18...♗xh3!? 19.♘xh3 ♘f3+ 20.♔h1 ♕xh5 21.♗e3 ♘ce5 22.♕d1 ♖xc2!. After this spectacular move White can either take the knight or the rook:

– Capturing the knight with 23.♖xf3 loses on the spot because of



23...♕xf3!!. However, not the more natural 23...♘xf3 24.♕xc2 ♕xh3+ 25.♗xh3 ♖xh3+ 26.♔g2 ♖h2+ 27.♔xf3 ♖xc2 28.♗d4 winning.

– Taking the rook leaves good practical chances to survive after 23.♕xc2 ♕xh3+ 24.♗xh3 ♖xh3+ 25.♔g2 ♖h2+ 26.♔g3 ♖xc2 27.♖xf3 ♘xf3 28.♔xf3 ♖xb2 29.♗xa7 f5.

19.♖d1 gxh5 20.♖xd6?!

This is clearly not White's best option. Simply 20.b3 ♗a6 21.c4! would have brought White a big advantage. For example, 21...b5 22.♖xd6 bxc4 23.♕e3±.

20...♖g8 21.♔h1 ♗e2! 22.♕e3 ♘c4 23.♕xe2!?

Sacrificing the exchange rather than going for the unclear 23.♖xc6 ♘xe3 24.♖xc8+ ♔d7 25.♖xg8 ♕xf4!.

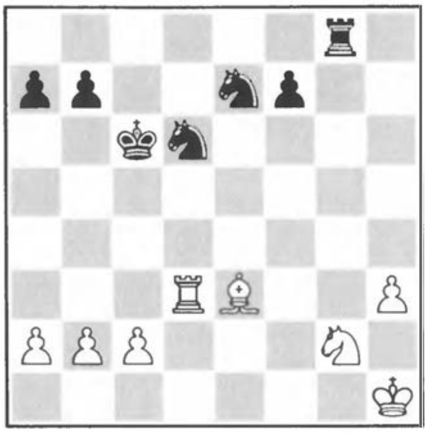
23...♘xd6 24.♗e3 ♕e5 25.♕f3∞= ♖xg2

Black was already pretty short of time and out of practical considerations decides to simplify the position.

26.♘xg2 ♕xe4 27.♕xh5 ♔d7 28.♖d1 ♖g8 29.♕d5?!

Much easier was 29.♕xf7+ ♘e7 30.♕f2 ♖xg2 31.♕xg2 ♕xe3 32.♕xb7+ ♔e6 33.♕b3+ ♕xb3 34.axb3 and White should win.

29...♕xd5 30.♖xd5 ♘e7 31.♖d3 ♔c6



32.♗f4?

If you don't see a clear plan? Just grab the pawn and think later! 32.♗xa7!.

32...♘e4 33.♔h2 ♘d5 34.♖f3 f6 35.c4

35.♗c1! was stronger.

35...♘e7 36.♖e3 f5 37.♘h4 ♖e8 38.♖e1 ♔d7 39.♔g2 ♔e6 40.♔f3 ♘c6?

40...♖h8 41.♗g3 ♔f6 and Black shall hold on.

41.♖d1 ♘e7 42.♘g2 ♖h8 43.h4 ♘g6 44.♖h1 ♘e5+ 45.♗xe5 ♔xe5 46.♖d1! ♘f6 47.♘f4 ♖g8 48.h5 ♘e4 49.♘g6+ ♔f6 50.♔f4 ♘c5 51.♖d6+ ♘e6+ 52.♔e3 ♔f7

52...♖d8 53.c5 ♔f7 54.♘f4 is to no avail either

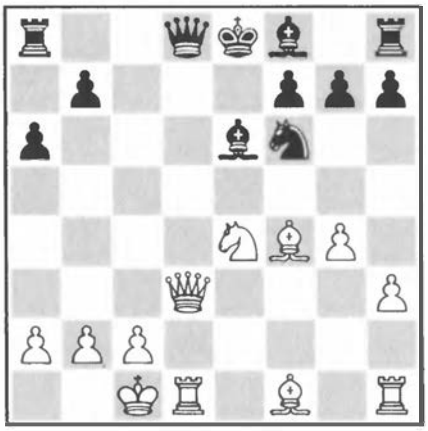
53.♖d7+ ♔f6 54.♖xb7 ♔g5 55.♖xa7 f4+ 56.♔f3 ♘d4+ 57.♔e4 ♘c6 58.♖f7 ♖e8+ 59.♔d5 ♘b4+ 60.♔c5 ♘d3+ 61.♔d4 1-0

☐ **Sergei Movsesian**
■ **Mladen Palac**
Croatia tt 1999

1.e4 c5 2.♘c3 d6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.d4 cxd4 5.♘xd4 ♘c6 6.h3 e6

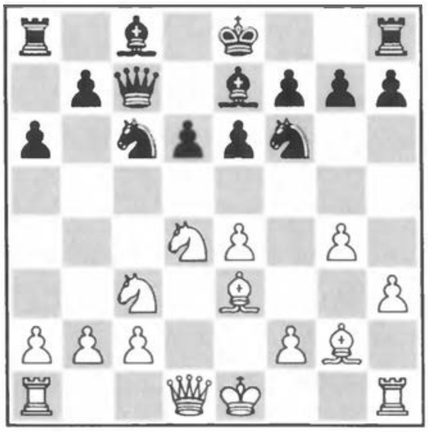
One of the main lines against 6. h3. Black is going to develop his pieces in a 'classical' way. White gets an advanced fianchetto and an extra tempo for a kingside attack, but Black's position remains very solid.

Instead of 6...e6 Black can also play 6...a6. After 7.g4 a position is reached – via a different move order – from my game against Ftacnik: 7...♘xd4 8.♕xd4 e5 9.♕d3 ♗e6 10.f4 exf4 11.♗xf4 d5 12.0-0-0 dxe4 13.♘xe4



13...♘d5? (13...♕xd3 was obligatory here: 14.♘xf6+ gxf6 15.♗xd3 0-0-0 16.♗e4 ♖xd1+ 17.♖xd1 h5 18.♖d3 and Black must now find the only move 18...b5! 19.♖c3+ ♗c4 with unclear play) 14.♕b3! ♕d7 15.♗c4 0-0-0 16.♖d3 and Black found himself completely pinned in Movsesian-Ftacnik, Czech tt 1997/98.

7.g4 a6 8.♗g2 ♕c7 9.♗e3 ♗e7



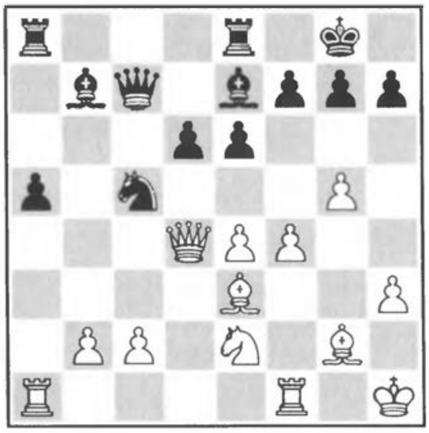
10.f4 ♘d7 11.g5 b5

Another option is 11...0-0 12.h4 b5 13.0-0 ♘xd4 14..♗xd4 b4 15.♘e2 ♖e8 16.f5?! (probably the more patient 16.♘g3!? would be a better idea here) 16...♘e5 17.♘f4 a5 18.g6? (this just blunders Black's only defence after a piece sacrifice) 18...hxg6 19..♗xe5 dxe5 20.♘xg6 fxg6 21.fxg6 ♕c5+ 22.♔h2 ♕e3–+ Manik-Solak, Batumi 1999.

12.0-0 ♗b7 13.♔h1 0-0 14.♘ce2

This plan turns out to be too slow, Black is in time to create sufficient play at the queenside. The typical 14.a3 was preferable.

14...♖fe8 15.a4 bxa4 16.♖xa4 ♘c5 17.♖a1 ♘xd4 18.♕xd4 a5!

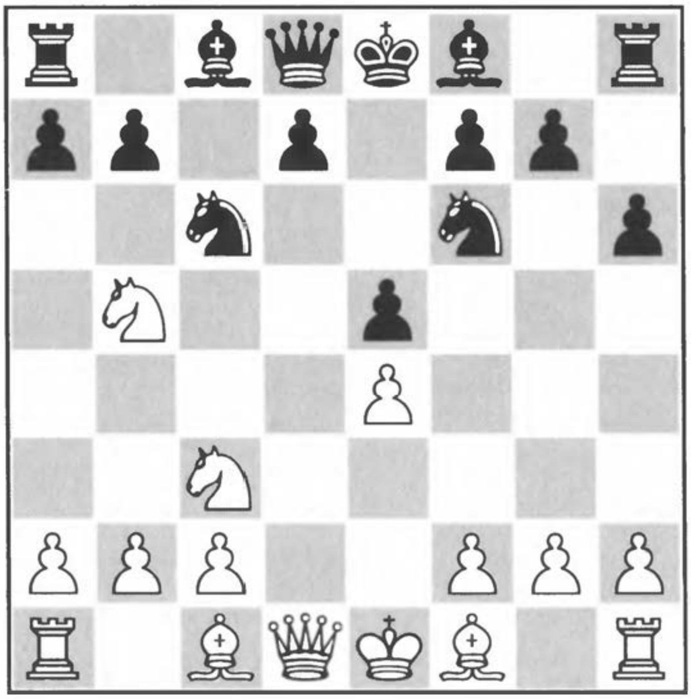


19.♘g3 ♗f8 20.♕c3 ♖ec8 21.♗d4 ♘d7 22.♕e3 g6 23.♖f2 e5 24.♗c3 exf4 25.♖xf4 ♘e5 26.♖af1 ♗a6 27.♖1f2 ♗c4 28.♗d4 a4 29.♔h2 ½-½

CHAPTER 10

Dimitri Reinderman

The Haberditz Variation



NIC KEY SI35.2

Play 6...h6 in the ‘Sveshnikov’

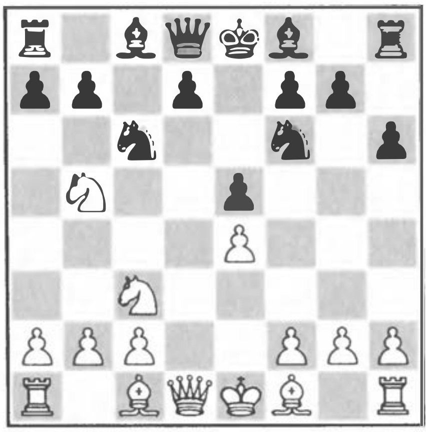
The Sveshnikov Variation gives Black active play and is theoretically sound. A lot of top players are playing it with Black, and trying to avoid it with White. The Sveshnikov rules and completely owns 1.e4. However, there is one tiny disadvantage to the Sveshnikov: there are not many sound sidelines for Black. In the Najdorf/Scheveningen you can play b5, ♗b7, ♗e7, ♕c7, ♘c6/♘d7, 0-0 in many move orders, but in the Sveshnikov there are often just one or two good moves. That makes it easier for White to prepare, since all you have to do is look at the main line. However, in a 5-minute-game on ICC, someone deviated already on move 6 against me. ‘6...h6? Never looked at that, but I suppose it’s just good for White’ I thought, but alas, though I played normal moves, the opening was a success for Black. So I checked my books and database to see what I had done wrong, but it turned out that I had played the theoretical recommendation. Maybe 6...h6 was not so bad after all!? I decided to keep the move in mind for a suitable occasion, which was this game in the loser’s final of the play-offs of the Dutch league.

☐ **Dennis de Vreugt**
■ **Dimitri Reinderman**
Netherlands tt 2004

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4

♘f6 5.♘c3 e5 6.♘db5 h6

This is sometimes called the Haberditz Variation. The point is to prevent 7.♗g5. The main disadvantage of 6...h6 is that it allows the knight check on d6. See the next game for 7.♘d6+.



7.♘d5

Some other tries:

– 7.♗e3 d6 8.♘d5 ♘xd5 9.exd5 ♘b8 (not 9...♘e7? 10.c3! a6 11.♕a4+–) 10.c4 a6 11.♘c3 ♗e7 12.♗d3 ♗g5 13.♕d2 ♗xe3 14.♕xe3 0-0 15.0-0 ♘d7 16.♖ac1 f5= and the players agreed a draw in Zaitsev-Gheorghiu, Sochi 1976.

– 7.♗c4 a6 (7...d6 8.♘d5 ♘xd5 9.♗xd5 is good for White) 8.♘d6+ ♗xd6 9.♕xd6 ♕e7 10.♕xe7+ ♔xe7 11.♗e3 d6 12.0-0-0 ♗e6 13.♘d5+ ♗xd5 14.exd5 b5 15.♗b3 ♘a5 16.f3 ♖hc8= Karpov-Hug, Graz 1972.

– 7.♗e2 is not so innocent. 7...d6 8.♘d5 ♘xd5 9.exd5 ♘b8 10.c4 is a little better for White. 7...a6 8.♘d6+ ♗xd6 9.♕xd6 ♕e7 has never been tried, but should be OK, since a6 is a useful move here (it prevents 10.♘b5).

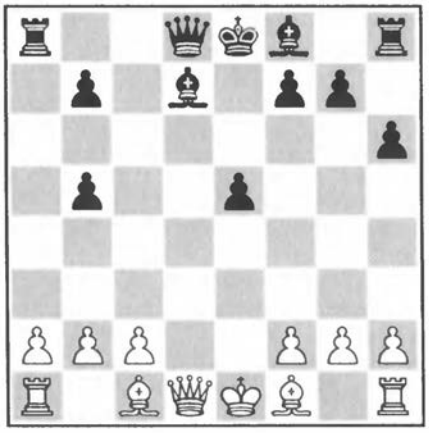
7...♘xd5 8.exd5 a6

Compared to the normal Sveshnikov line (6...d6 7.♘d5 ♘xd5 8.exd5) we cannot say that h6 is such a useful extra move in this position – it weakens the kingside. However, not having played d6 makes the text possible!

9.dxc6

Here 9.♘c3 ♘d4 10.♗d3 d6 11.0-0 g6 is OK for Black.

9...axb5 10.cxd7+ ♗xd7



In this position Black has two weaknesses: pawn b5 and the kingside. In exchange for that, Black can develop freely and has an extra centre pawn.

11.♗d3

Now I had to think for myself, and there follows a series of second best moves. Fortunately the damage wasn't so bad.

11...♗d6

11...♗c6 followed by 12...♕d5 is better, when Black is close to equality. For example, 11...♗c6 12.0-0 ♕d5 13.♕g4 h5 14.♕h3 ♗e7 15.♗e3 ♗d7 16.♗f5 ♗xf5 17.♕xf5 g6 18.♕d3 ½-½, Vitolinsh-Lutikov, Soviet Union 1970.

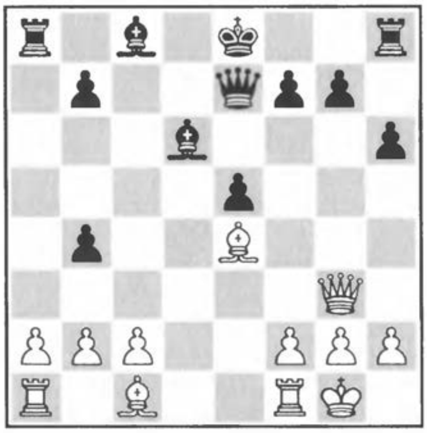
12.0-0 b4

After 12...0-0 13.♕e2 with the double threat 14.♗xb5 and 14.♕e4 is annoying. But 12...♕c7 still keeps everything together.

13.♗e4 ♗c8

I didn't like the position after 13...♗c6 14.♗xc6+ bxc6 15.♕g4 ♕f6 16.♕e4 (or 16.♕c4). After 16...0-0 17.♕xc6 ♖fc8 18.♕e4 ♕g6 19.♕xg6 fxg6 20.♖d1 ♗e7 21.c3 White has some winning chances in the endgame.

14.♕f3 ♕e7 15.♕g3



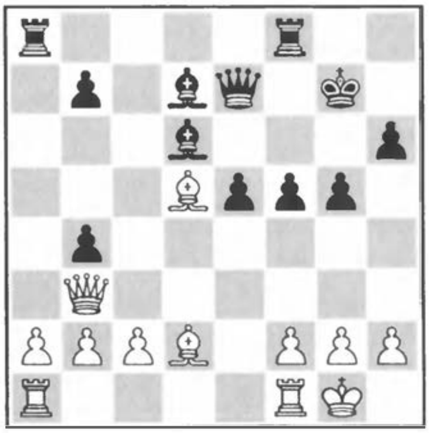
15...g5!?

I calculated 15...g6 16.f4 exf4 17.♗xf4 ♗xf4 18.♖xf4 0-0 19.♗xg6 fxg6 20.♕xg6+ ♕g7 21.♖xf8+ ♔xf8 22.♖f1+ ♔g8 23.♕e8+ ♔h7 24.♖f7+– here and wasn't very happy. 15...f5 and 15...♔f8 are bad also, so after a process of deduction and elimination I got to 15...g5, which had the bonus of reducing my fear for the move f4. There is a fourth alternative in 15...♕f6 but after 16.f4 exf4 17.♗xf4 ♗xf4 18.♕xf4 ♕b6+ 19.♕f2 ♕xf2+ 20.♖xf2 White is better.

16.♕f3 0-0 17.♗d2

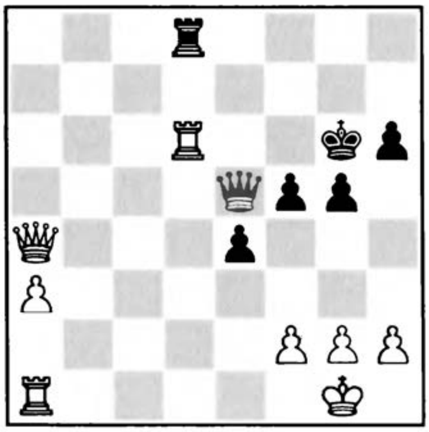
White must be better here, but 17.♕h5 ♔g7 18.h4 f5 19.♗d3 e4 20.hxg5 exd3 21.♕xh6+ ♔g8 22.♕g6+ ♔h8 is only a draw. 17.♗f5 is another logical move, when I wanted to play 17...♔g7 and 18...♕f6. Maybe 17.g4!? is best.

17...f5 18.♗d5+ ♔g7 19.♕b3 ♗d7



Now the position is about equal.

20.a4 bxa3ep 21.bxa3 ♗a4 22.♕b2 ♖ac8 23.c4 b5! 24.♖fc1 bxc4 25.♗xc4 ♖b8 26.♕c3 ♔g6 27.♗d5 e4 28.♕a5 ♖b5 29.♕xa4 ♖xd5 30.♗b4 ♕e5 31.♗xd6 ♖xd6 32.♖d1 ♖fd8 33.♖xd6



33... ♖xd6

Something very strange happened here. I had considered 32...♖d3 instead of 32...♖fd8, and the image of the rook on a1 hanging stayed in my mind. When Dennis took on d6, I thought he had blundered. I did a short check that I was really winning and took the rook on a1. The Fide rules don't allow this move though, since I was in check, as Dennis pointed out. Oops. So, I put the queen and rook back, and took on d6 with the rook, thinking about whether the extra moves would cause trouble with the digital clock, which keeps score of the amount of moves made. In the meantime Nijboer and Timmerman on the board next to me were laughing their heads off about my illegal move(s).That's plural yes: I had totally forgotten about the touch-and-move rule, and so had Dennis. Fortunately it doesn't make a big difference, after 33...♕xd6 chances are still about equal.

34.♖d1 ♖xd1+ 35.♕xd1 e3 36.fxe3 ♕xe3+ 37.♔f1 ♕xa3

OK, now Black is even better. I could vaguely remember having read that 3 versus 2 on a wing in a queen endgame gives serious winning chances to the side with a pawn up. Maybe my memory is wrong though, I have no idea how Black should try to win it. It showed, as Dennis had no trouble making a draw.

38.♕d5 ♕a6+ 39.♔f2 ♕a7+ 40.♔f1 ♕f7 41.♕c6+ ♔h7 42.♕d6 h5 43.♕d8 g4 44.♕g5 f4 45.♔f2 ♕a7+ 46.♔f1 ♕a1+ 47.♔f2 ♕b2+ 48.♔f1 ♕c1+ 49.♔f2 ♕e3+

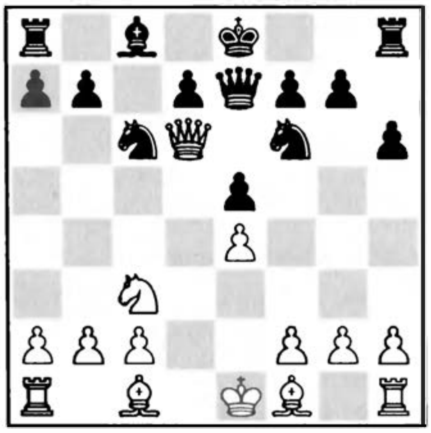
Draw.

☐ **Aarne Saastamoinen**
■ **Jyrki Salonen**
Tampere 1998

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 e5 6.♘db5 h6 7.♘d6+

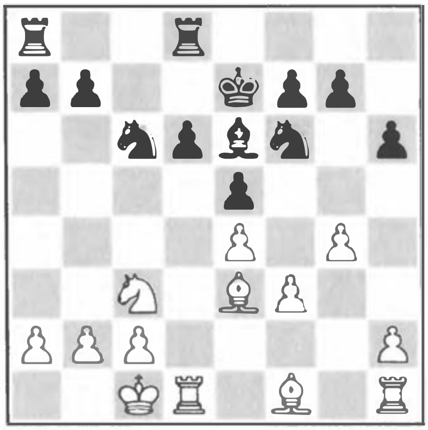
This natural check is the main line.

7...♗xd6 8.♕xd6 ♕e7



9.♘b5

More logical than 9.♕xe7+, though that move has been played more. After 9...♔xe7 10.♗e3 (10.b3 d6 11.♗a3 ♖d8 12.0-0-0 a6 13.♘d5+ ♘xd5 14.exd5 ♘b8 15.c4 with a tiny advantage for White) 10...d6 11.0-0-0 ♗e6 12.f3 White has scored very well in practice, for example 12...♖hd8 13.g4 ♖ac8 14.h4 ♘e8 15.♖h2 a6 16.g5 hxg5 17.hxg5 b5 18.♗b6 ♖d7 19.♘d5+ ♗xd5 20.exd5 ♖b7 21.♗e3 ♘b8 22.f4 ♘d7 23.♗h3 ♖c4 24.♖e2 with a clear advantage for White in Stein-Miagmasuren, Sousse 1967. However, things are not that bleak. Let us go back to the position after 12...♖hd8 13.g4.



Instead of Miagmasuren's 13...♖ac8 Black can play 13...d5!, since after 14.♗c5+ ♔e8 15.♘b5 ♖ac8! 16.♘d6+ ♖xd6 17.♗xd6 dxe4 Black gets two pawns for the exchange. However, see the postscript below.

9...♖b8!

This was a new move, also played by my opponent on ICC. Previously, Black took on d6, but after 9...♕xd6 10.♘xd6+ ♔e7 11.♘f5+ ♔f8 12.b3! White is better according to theory. There are two main roads now:

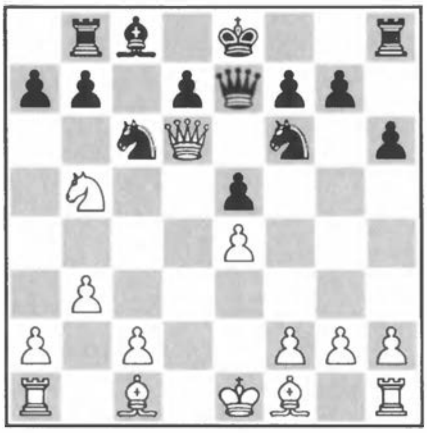
– 12...d5 13.♗a3+ ♔g8 14.exd5 ♘xd5 15.♘d6 ♖b8 16.♗c4 ♗e6 17.0-0-0 with a pleasant game for White in Spassky-Gheorghiu, Bath 1973, and

– 12...♘xe4 13.♗a3+ ♔g8 14.♘d6 ♘xd6 15.♗xd6 'and Black can hardly move'.

Actually, concerning the second line, I am not sure if theory is right here: after all Black has an extra centre pawn, and I can't find anything convincing for White if Black just develops. Still, 9...♖b8 is safer.

10.b3

Otherwise the knight has to go back to c3.



10...♘xe4 11.♕xe7+ ♔xe7 12.♗a3+ d6 13.f3

Or 13.0-0-0 ♖d8 14.f3 a6 15.fxe4 axb5 16.♗xb5 ♖a8 17.♔b2 ♘d4=.

13...a6!

Again this intermediate move is necessary and good.

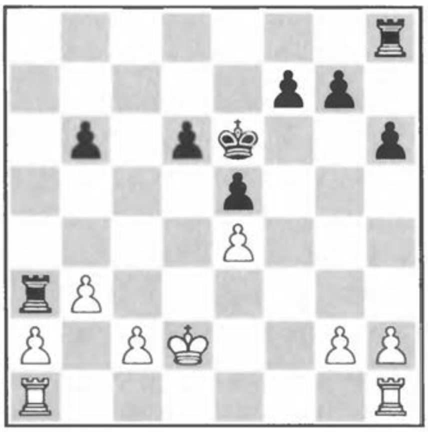
14.fxe4 axb5 15.♗xb5 ♖a8 16.♗xc6

Better is 16.♗b2, but Black is equal after 16...f5 or 16...♘b4!?.

16...♖xa3

After 16...bxc6 Black is also a little better.

17.♗d5 b6 18.♔d2 ♗e6 19.♗xe6 ♔xe6



Black can be very happy with the outcome of the opening. The rest of the game is not important from a theoretical point of view. Black outplays his opponent to obtain a winning rook ending, only to spoil it in the end when White succeeds in (barely) saving his skin.**20.♔c3 g6 21.g4 f6 22.♖hd1 h5 23.gxh5 ♖xh5 24.♖d2 ♖a7 25.a4 ♖h4 26.♖e1 ♖ah7 27.♖ed1 ♖d7 28.♖g1 g5 29.♖e1 d5 30.exd5+ ♖xd5 31.♖xd5 ♔xd5 32.♖f1 ♔e6 33.b4 f5 34.♖a1 ♔d5 35.a5 ♖h3+ 36.♔b2 bxa5 37.♖xa5+ ♔d4 38.b5 ♖xh2 39.b6 ♖h7 40.♖a7 ♖h6 41.b7 ♖b6+ 42.♔c1 ♔c4 43.♖a5 ♖xb7 44.♖xe5 ♖f7 45.♔d2 g4 46.♔e3 f4+ 47.♔f2 ♔d4 48.♖g5 g3+ 49.♔f3** **½-½**

So is 6...h6 a sound move or mainly good for its surprise value? It seems to me that it's better than theory gives it credit for. So if you like to play the Sveshnikov with Black, but want to avoid your opponent's preparation, or if you like to get an ending straight from the opening, try it!

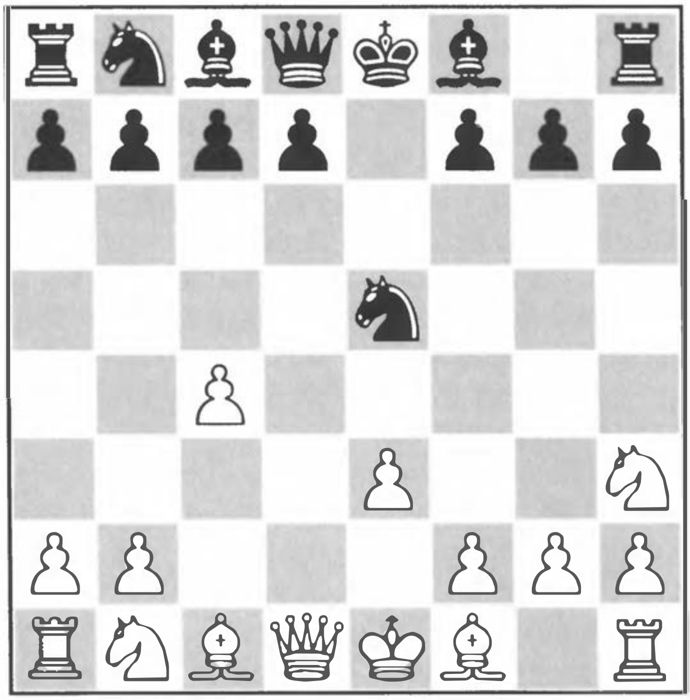
Postscript by the author

After writing this article, I played a lot of blitzgames with this variation on ICC. It seems that White can improve on Stein's play against Miagmasuren: 6...h6 7.♘d6+ ♗xd6 8.♕xd6 ♕e7 9.♕xe7+ ♔xe7 10.♗e3 d6 11.0-0-0 ♗e6 12.f3 ♖hd8 and now, instead of Stein's 13.g4, White obtains an advantage with 13.♔b1 followed by 14.♘d5+. Alas, I don't see a good way to avoid this as Black.

CHAPTER 11

Jeroen Bosch

Get the Edge on the Budapest



NIC KEY VO 17.1

Play 5.♘h3!?

The Budapest Gambit is an attempt on Black's part to solve his opening problems by radical means. Budapest players prefer dynamic piece play over patient manoeuvring to solve the positional demands of the position. Our SOS recipe is to move a knight to the edge of the board. Budapest players will be surprised at not encountering one the main lines (4.♘f3 or 4.♗f4) for which they are so well prepared. More importantly, we will see that this line promises White a stable opening edge.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e5 3.de5 ♘g4 4.e3

This blocks the c1 bishop, and forces the knight to take back the gambit pawn. However, for White's dark-squared bishop the a1-h8 diagonal is most suitable.

4...♘e5 5.♘h3!?

This move may look odd at first sight, but is positionally well-founded. The knight is on its way to the excellent square f4, from where it will control the important d5 square. One may compare this to the Dutch Defence, where in many lines ♘g1-h3-f4 is an accepted manoeuvre. By the way, if you want to increase the shock effect you can also use the move order 4.♘h3 ♘e5 5.e3.

The first three lines are divided according to where Black will develop his dark-squared bishop. In Line D we examine the prophylactic 5...♘g6.

A) 5...♗c5
B) 5...♗b4
C) 5...g6
D) 5...♘g6

Before we investigate these main lines, I will cite a few minor alternatives.

● **5...b6 6.♗e2 ♗b7 7.0-0 a5 8.♘c3 ♘a6 9.b3 g6 10.♗b2 ♗g7 11.f4! ♘c6 12.♕d2 0-0 13.♘d5± f6 14.♗f3 ♘c5 15.♘f2 d6 16.g4!? ♔h8?! 17.g5 f5** 17...fg5 18.♗g7 ♔g7 19.♕b2 ♔f7 20.♘g4→ **18.♗g7 ♔g7 19.♕c3 ♔f7 20.♘f6±** Ward-Lodhi, London 1988.

● **5...♕h4?! 6.♘f4 c6 7.♗e2 d6 8.♘c3 g5?! 9.♘h5 g4 10.♘e4 ♗e7 11.♘eg3 0-0 12.0-0 ♗e6 13.b3 ♘bd7 14.♗b2 ♖ad8 15.♕c2 ♘f6 16.♘f6 ♗f6 17.♖ad1 ♗e7 18.c5±** Rowson-Keogh, Bunratty Masters 1997.

● **5...d5?! 6.cd5** 6.♕d5 **6...♗h3 7.gh3 ♗b4 8.♘c3 0-0 9.♗g2 ♘bd7 10.0-0± f5 11.d6?!** 11.♕b3; 11.♘e2 **11...♗d6 12.♗b7 ♖b8 13.♗g2 ♘c5 14.♕e2 f4! 15.ef4 ♘ed3** Kohlweyer-Lochte, Bad Wiessee 1999.

The following two moves will usually transpose into one of the main lines:

● **5...d6** This is a good move. After **6.♘f4 g6** play transposes to line C.

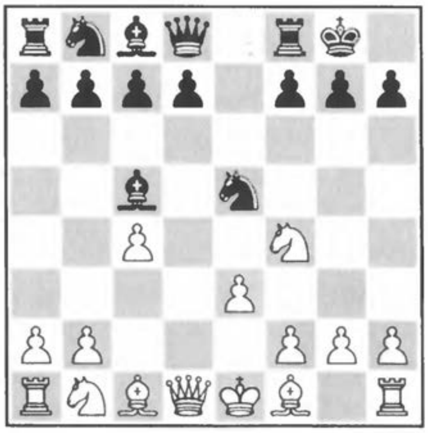
● **5...♘bc6** This move has little independent significance. Black will have to develop his dark-squared bishop to either b4, c5 or g7 anyway. And after 6.♘c3 Black may even transpose to the ♘g6 line. **6.♘f4** 6.♘c3 ♗b4 7.♗d2 (7.♘f4 ♗c3!∓) 7...0-0 (7...d5? 8.cd5 ♗g4 Fominykh-Chigvintsev, Omsk 1996. 9.♕b3+−) 8.♘f4 ♖e8 9.♗e2 ♗f8 10.0-0 d6 11.♘fd5 ♘e7 12.f4 ♘d7 13.e4± Ubilava-Toshkov, Varna 1986. **6...♗b4** Developing the b8 knight to c6 is not so good in the ♗b4 line; 6...♗c5 and 6...g6 are the alternatives. **7.♗d2 ♗d2 8.♕d2 0-0** 8...d6 9.♘c3 ♗e6 10.♘fd5 a6 11.♗e2 ♕d7 12.0-0 0-0 13.f4 ♘g6 14.e4 f5 15.g4!± Jouhki-Poranen, Vantaa 1991. **9.♗e2 d6 10.♘c3 ♗f5 11.0-0 a6** White is clearly better. He has full control of the d5 square, and there is little Black can do to prevent White's central pawns from advancing. **12.♘fd5 ♘e7 13.f4! ♘5g6 14.e4 ♗d7 15.f5 ♘d5 16.♘d5 ♘e7 17.f6!** Drasko-Bröhl, Porz 1991.

Variation A

5...♗c5

Developing the bishop to c5 is, of course, standard in the main line 4.♘f3 ♗c5 5.e3 ♘bc6 6.♗e2 ♘ge5 etc. In this line the move ♗c5 makes sense: White is forced to play 5.e3, restricting his c1 bishop. Moreover, Black often gets attacking chances against the white king. In our SOS line White has already played e3 on his own accord. More importantly, White has an extra defender on the kingside – the h3 knight will go to f4 and cannot be exchanged against Black's restless 'Budapest knight'.

6.♘f4 0-0



7.♗e2

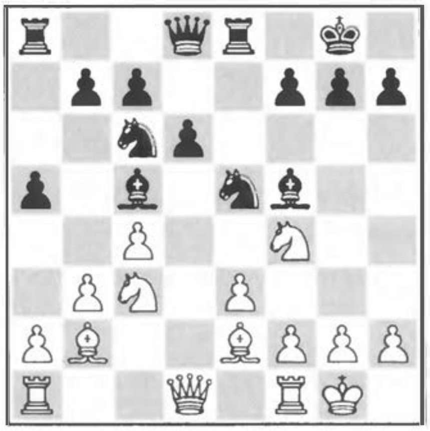
Also good is 7.♘c3 ♖e8 8.♗e2 a5 9.b3!? (deliberately postponing kingside castling) 9...♖a6 10.♗b2 ♖h6 (standard Budapest fare, but pointless with the king still on e1)

11.♕c2 ♘bc6 12.a3d6 13.♘cd5 ♘g4 14.h3 ♘ce5 15.b4 ♗a7 16.ba5!? c6 17.♘b6 ♗b6 18.ab6 ♕b6 19.0-0± Khenkin-N.Jussupow, Bad Wiessee 1998.

7...d6 8.0-0 ♘bc6 9.♘c3 a5 10.b3 ♗f5

In Maksimovic-Mukic, Pula 1988, Black played: 10...♖e8 11.♗b2 ♘g6!? After 12.♘h5 (12.♘cd5) 12...♘ce5 13.♔h1 ♕h4 14.♘d5 c6. White should now have played 15.♘g7! ♔g7 16.♘c7±. In the game 15.♘c7 ♘g4 16.h3 ♘e3! yielded Black a dangerous attack: 17.fe3 ♖e3 18.♗g4 (18.♖f3 ♗h3 19.♖e3 ♗g2 20.♔g2 ♗e3; 18.♗f3 ♗h3) 18...♗g4 19.♕g4 ♕g4 20.hg4 ♖c8∓.

11.♗b2 ♖e8



Both sides have made sensible developing moves. Still, White's control over d5 and the fact that Black's chances on the kingside are illusory give White the better chances. This verdict has been borne out in practice. There are in fact several plans that promise White a pleasant journey to Rome.

– **12.♔h1** (White prepares a central advance with e4 and f4) 12...♘e7 13.e4 ♗d7 14.♘h5! f6 15.f4 ♘5g6 16.♕d3 ♖f8 17.♖ad1±, Borik-Blauert, Germany Bundesliga B 1987/88.

– **12.♕d2** (White decides to play on the queenside. He will prepare b4 with ♘cd5 and a3. Black's next plays right into his hands) 12...♕h4?! 13.♘cd5 ♖ac8 14.a3 ♗a7 15.♕c3 ♘d8? 16.♕a5 ♗b8 17.♕d2±, Conquest-Schön, Germany Bundesliga 1987/88.

– **12.a3** (always a useful move) 12...♘e7?! 13.♘a4 ♘7g6 (13...♗a7 14.c5) 14.♘g6 ♘g6 15.♘c5 dc5 16.♕e1. With simple means White has achieved a superior position in the game Skembris-Anagnostopoulos, Cappelle la Grande 1995.

Variation B

5...♗b4

A very popular move. Black speeds up his development. The exchange of the dark-squared bishops favours him in principle. After a subsequent d6 Black has better dark-square control than White.

6.♗d2

The best move. After 6.♘d2 Black can simply continue with 6...d6 or, more aggressively, with 6...d5. Inferior is 6.♘c3 ♗c3 7.bc3 d6, and Black is already better.

6...♗d2

It is hardly favourable to postpone the exchange:

– **6...♕e7** 7.♘f4 c6 8.♗e2±.

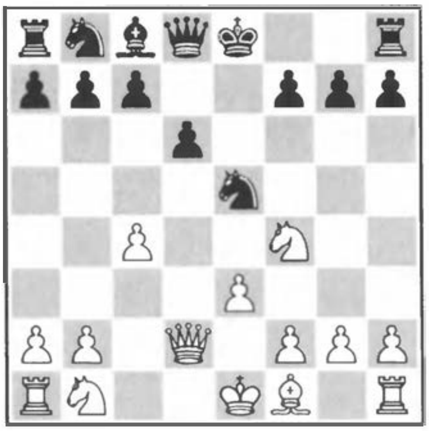
– **6...♘bc6** 7.♘f4 d6 8.♗e2 ♗f5 9.0-0 ♗d2 10.♕d2± 0-0 11.♘c3 a6 12.♖ac1 ♘g6 13.♘fd5 ♘ce5 14.e4 (again Black has no effective means to counter the advance of White's central pawns) 14...♗g4 15.f3 ♗e6 16.f4 ♗d5 17.♘d5 ♘d7 18.f5 ♘ge5 19.f6, Kaufman-Heiston, Western Mount Vernon 1998.

– **6...a5** 7.♘f4 ♘a6 8.♗e2 ♘c5 9.0-0 ♖a6 (the well-known shift of the rook to the kingside) 10.♗c3! (provoking Black into playing d6, which would render his last move pointless) 10...♗c3 11.♘c3 ♖h6 (this looks premature – 11...0-0±) 12.g3 d6 13.a3 g5? (Black is too eager to attack. 13...0-0 14.b4 ♘e6 15.♖e1±) 14.♘h5 ♕d7 15.f4! gf4 16.ef4 ♘c6 (16...♘g4 17.♘d5+–) 17.b4 ♘e6 (17...ab4 18.♘d5) 18.♘d5 ♔f8 19.♗g4 ♕e8 20.b5 ♘e7 21.f5+–, Lima-De Andrade, Brasilia 1998.

7.♕d2 d6

The most natural reply. The violent 7...d5? simply fails to 8.♕d5 ♕d5 9.cd5 ♗h3 10.gh3±, Kohlmeyer-Hania, Ghent 1999. More interesting is 7...♘g6 8.g3!? (8.f4) 8...d6 9.♗g2 ♘c6 (better is 9...0-0 10.0-0 a5 11.♘c3 ♘a6) 10.0-0 ♘ce5?! 11.f4 ♘g4 (11...♘c4 12.♕d4) 12.♘c3 0-0 13.♘g5 ♖b8 14.♘f3 ♖e8 15.♖fe1 ♘f6 16.e4 with a white edge in Malaniuk-Pastorini, Montecatini Terme 1995.

8.♘f4



8...♘bd7

Less good is 8...♗e6, because after 9.♘e6 fe6 10.♗e2 ♘bc6 11.f4± White is better. The game Khenkin-Maidla, Stockholm 1996/97, instructively continued: 11...♘d7 12.♗h5! g6 13.♗f3 ♘c5 14.0-0 a5 15.♘c3 0-0 16.♘b5 ♖f7 17.♘d4 ♕e8 18.♘b3!? ♘b3 19.ab3 b6 20.b4! ab4 21.♖a8 ♕a8 22.♕c2±.

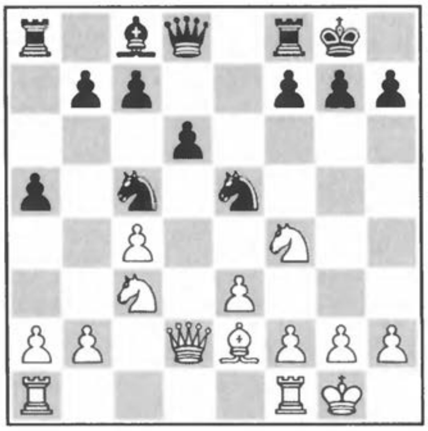
Not very flexible is 8...♘bc6; in Atalik-Ortigala, Mar del Plata 2003, White was better after 9.♘c3 0-0 10.♗e2 ♗g4 11.f3 ♗e6 12.b3 ♕h4 13.g3 ♕e7 14.0-0.

9.♘c3 ♘c5

Or 9...0-0 10.♗e2, and now:

- 10...♘c5 11.0-0 ♗f5 12.f3! h6 13.e4 ♗h7 14.b4 ♘e6 15.♘e6 fe6 16.f4 ♘c6 17.b5 ♘e7 18.♖ad1 ♕e8 19.c5! ♖d8 (19...dc5 20.♗c4 wins back the pawn.) 20.cd6 ♖d6 21.♕e3± Soffer-Mauerhofer, Bern 1991.
- 10...♘f6 11.0-0 ♗g4 12.f3 ♗e6 13.b3 ♖e8 14.♖ad1 b6 15.♘e6 ♖e6 16.♖fe1 ♘ed7 17.♗f1 ♖e8 18.g3!? ♘c5 19.♗g2 ♕d7 20.e4 ♖ad8 21.f4 a5 22.♕c2 ♕c8 23.♘b5 ♘a6 24.a3 ♕g4 25.♘d4 ♕g6 26.♘c6 ♖c8 27.b4 ab4 28.ab4 with a white advantage in Davies-Tchakvetadze, Hamburg 1993.

10.♗e2 a5 11.0-0 0-0



A typical position has arisen. White has more space and can play on the queenside or in the centre (by slowly advancing his e- and f-pawns).

12.b3

12.♖ad1 ♖e8 (according to Atalik, 12...f5! is stronger, 13.b3 ♘f7 14.♕b2 Atalik-Mohr, Podlehnik 2001) 13.♘fd5 ♗e6 14.e4 ♗d5 15.♕d5 ♘ed7 16.f3± Alexandrov-Pankratov, Moscow 1996.

12...♗f5

White has a slight advantage here. Two examples:

- 13.f3 f6 14.♖ad1 ♖e8 15.♖fe1 ♘f7 16.♗f1 c6 17.e4 ♗e6 18.♕f2± Skembris-Mohr, Portoroz 1993.
- 13.♖ad1 ♔h8 14.f3 b6 15.e4 ♗d7 16.♘fd5 f5 (16...f6) 17.f4 ♘g6 18.ef5 ♗f5 19.g3 ♖a7!? 20.♗f3± Lev-Porper, Tel Aviv 1991.

Variation C

5...g6

A healthy move. It is Lalic's main recommendation in his *The Budapest Gambit*

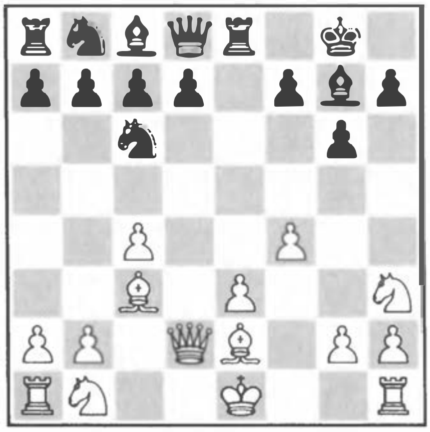
(1998). However, 5...d6 6.♘f4 g6 may actually be a more accurate move order. Black prevents 5...g6 6.f4!? in this way. Our main game actually arose via the 5...d6 move order.

6.♘f4

The customary follow-up to 5.♘h3. However, there is an alternative plan at this stage: 6.f4!? In connection with White's next an interesting way of exchanging the dark-squared bishops. 6...♘ec6 (after 6...♗b4 7.♗d2 White achieves his aim) 7.♗d2. The point of 6.f4. Now that the diagonal a1-h8 is vacated, White can oppose Black's fianchetto bishop. The main disadvantage of White's set-up is time.

– **7...d6** 8.♗c3 is a good intermediate move.

– **7...♗g7** is natural, but allows White to execute his plan. 8.♗c3 0-0 (8...♗c3 9.♘c3 merely helps White to develop) 9.♗e2 ♖e8 (9...♕h4 10.♘f2 ♖e8 11.♗g7 ♔g7 12.♘c3 ♘a6 13.♕d2 ♘c5 14.0-0 is another plausible sample line. White has a pleasant edge) 10.♕d2

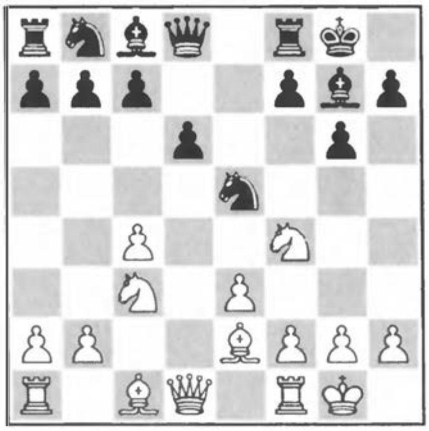


Attacking e3 with 10...♕e7?! is dubious because of 11.♗g7 ♔g7 12.♘c3± ♕e3? 13.♕e3 ♖e3 14.♘d5+–. So, Black should settle for 10...d6 11.♘f2 ♘d7 12.♗g7 ♔g7 13.♘c3±.

– **7...♗c5!?** (aiming at the e3 weakness, but what is that pawn doing on g6 now?) 8.♘c3 d5? (violent, but Black is unable to justify this in the game) 9.♘d5 (9.cd5 ♗h3 10.dc6 ♗c8 11.♘e4±) 9...♗h3 10.gh3 ♕h4 11.♔e2 ♘a6 12.♗e1 ♕h5 13.♔f2 ♕d1 14.♖d1 0-0-0 15.a3 ♘e7 16.b4 ♘d5 17.cd5±, Bianchi-Mailliez, Paris 2000.

So, in conclusion, if Black uses the 5...g6 move order, then 6.f4 is a very interesting alternative to the more common 6.♘f4.

6...♗g7 7.♗e2 0-0 8.0-0 d6 9.♘c3



This position has occurred quite often in practice.

9...♘bd7

Less good is 9...♗e6?! 10.♘e6 fe6 11.f4 ♘ed7 12.♘e4 a5 13.♗g4 ♖e8 14.♕f3 ♕c8 15.♕h3 ♘f8 16.♖b1 ♘bd7 17.♗d2 ♘f6 18.♘f6 ♗f6 19.e4± Romanov-Biehl, Schwäbisch Gmünd 2003.

Now White should postpone e3-e4 until a more appropriate moment:

10.e4 ♘c5 11.♗e3 c6 12.♕d2 ♘e6 13.♖ac1 ♘f4 14.♗f4 ♗e6 15.b3 ♕a5 16.♗h6 ♗h6 17.♕h6 f5

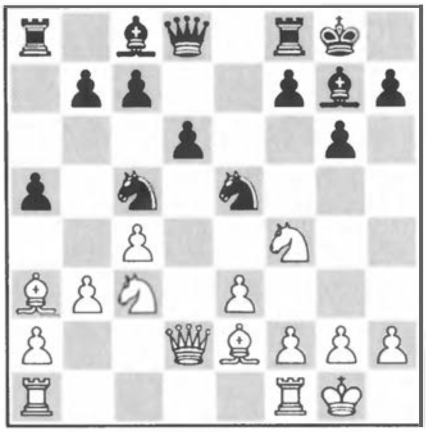
With equality in Malaniuk-Sune Berg Hansen, Lyngby 1991.

Instead, there are two possible queen moves.

C1) 10.♕d2
C2) 10.♕c2

Variation C1

10.♕d2 a5 11.b3 ♘c5 12.♗a3



12...♗d7

Stronger than 12...b6 13.♖ad1 ♔h8 14.♘fd5 f5 15.f3 g5? 16.f4! ♘f7 17.fg5 ♘g5 18.♗b2 ♗e5? (18...♗d7) 19.♘b5! ♘ce6 20.♗e5 de5 21.♕b2+– Khenkin-Marchand, Bratto 2002.

13.♖ad1 b6

Here Black should seriously consider 13...a4 14.b4 ♘e6 15.♘fd5 f5 16.f4 ♞f7 17.c5 dc5 18.bc5 ♗c6∓ Martinez Martin-Del Rio Angelis, Dos Hermanas 2002.

After the text the game is pretty unclear, but Black is not worse.

14.♕c1 ♖e8 15.♘fd5 f5 16.♘b5 c6 17.♘d6 cd5 18.♘e8 ♕e8 19.♗c5 bc5 20.cd5∞ ♗b5 21.♖fe1 ♖c8 22.♗c4? ♗c4 23.bc4 ♕a4!∓

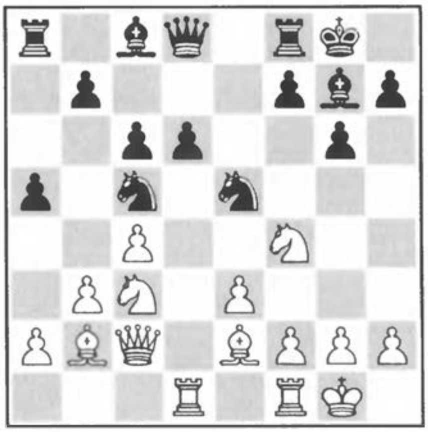
Zaiats-Gurieli, Kuala Lumpur Interzonal 1990.

Variation C2

10.♕c2 a5 11.b3

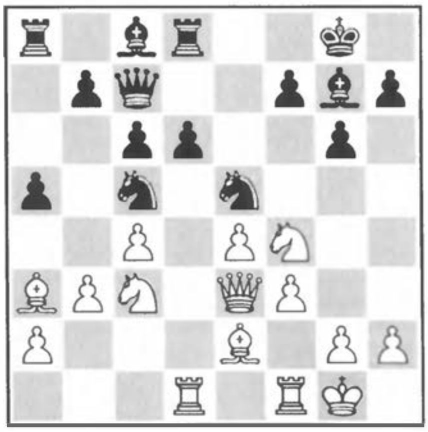
Stronger than the passive 11.♗d2 ♘c5 12.♖ad1 f5 13.♘a4?! (13.b3 planning 14.a3 and b4 is stronger, as Lalic has indicated. The position is about equal) 13...b6 14.♘c3 (White has deliberately provoked b6 to prevent Black taking away the d5 square with c6 – which would now be too loosening. However, there is nothing wrong with the a5-b6-c7-d6 structure. White, clearly the stronger player, had no advantage and lost in the end) 14...♗b7 15.♘cd5 ♖f7 16.♗c1 ♕h4 17.b3 ♖e8 18.♗b2 ♗c8 19.f3 g5! 20.♘d3 ♘cd3 21.♗d3 f4! with an attack, M. Gurevich-Tisdall, Akureyi 1988.

11...♘c5 12.♗b2 c6 13.♖ad1



A typical King's Indian position, albeit with a pawn on e3! White's space advantage guarantees him a slight edge.

13...♕c7 13...♕e7. **14.♕d2 ♖d8 15.e4 ♕b6 16.♗a3 ♗g4 17.♕e3 ♕c7?!** Better 17...♗e2 18.♘fe2±. **18.f3!** 18.♗c5 dc5 19.♕c5 ♗f8 20.♕e3. **18...♗c8** 18...♗d7; 18...♗e6 19.♘e6 ♘e6 (19...fe6 20.f4 ♘f7 21.e5) 20.f4±.



19.♘cd5! cd5 Or 19...♕b8 20.♘b6+–. **20.♘d5 ♕b8** 20...♕d7 21.♘b6 ♕c6 22.♗c5+–. **21.♗c5 dc5 22.♘e7 ♔f8 23.♖d8 ♔e7 24.♖g8** and White was winning, Agrest-Budnikov, Katowice 1992.

Variation D

5...♘g6

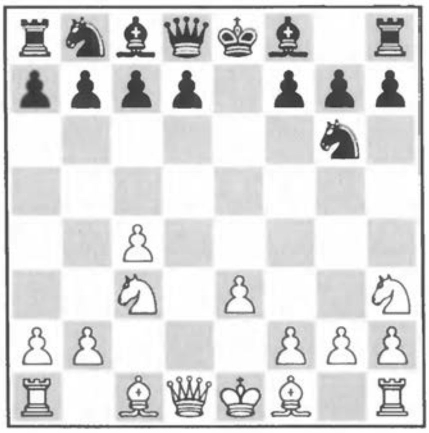
Prophylaxis. Black takes away the f4 square from the h3-knight – hoping to glue it to the edge of the board. White has some creative replies at his disposal. In the first line we will encounter an early ♕h5. In line D2 White gets a safe edge by financhettoing his f1 bishop.

D1) 6.♘c3
D2) 6.g3

Variation D1

6.♘c3

Also playable is the immediate 6.♕h5!? (preparing ♘g5, covering h3 – this becomes relevant after Black plays d6 – and preventing ♗c5) 6...♘c6 (6...♗b4 7.♘d2?! – 7.♗d2 ♗d2 (7...♘c6) 8.♘d2 ♕f6 9.0-0-0 – 7...♕f6! 8.♖b1 d6 9.a3 ♕f5, and Black is fine, P. Meister-Bartsch, Germany Bundesliga B 1994/95) 7.♘c3 ♗b4 8.♗d2 d6 9.♗e2 ♕f6 (aiming to exchange queens with ♕f5; 9...a5 10.0-0 ♘ce5 11.f4 ♘d7 12.♘f2 ♘f6 13.♕g5 0-0, Marin-De la Villa Garcia, Szirak Interzonal 1987 was also satisfactory for Black in the stem game) 10.a3 ♗a5 11.b4 ♗b6 12.0-0 ♕f5 13.♕f5 ♗f5, with equality.



6...♗c5

– **6...d6** 7.♕h5 (even here!) 7...♘d7 8.♘f4!? ♘f4 9.ef4 ♗e7 10.♗d3 ♘c5 11.♗c2 ♗e6 12.♕e2 0-0 13.0-0 ♗f6 14.f5 ♗c3 15.fe6 ♗f6 16.ef7± Sagalchik-Furdzik, New York 1997.

– **6...♗b4** 7.♗d2 d6 8.♘g1!? (8.g3 is sensible and leads to positions examined below) 8...♘c6 9.♘f3 0-0 10.a3 ♗c3 (10...♗a5 11.b4 ♗b6 12.♘d5) 11.♗c3 a5 12.b3 a4 13.b4 ♗e6 14.♗e2 ♘h4 15.♘h4 ♕h4 16.♖c1 ♖fd8 17.0-0± Bischoff-Pirrot, St Ingbert 1998.

– **6...♘c6** 7.♕h5 transposes to the comments concerning 6.♕h5.

7.♕h5! d6 8.♘g5!

Much more energetic than 8.♗d2 ♘d7 9.♕g5 ♘f6 10.♘f4 h6 11.♕g3 ♘f4 12.♕f4 0-0 13.♘d5 ♘g4 14.h3 ♘e5 15.b4 ♗b6 16.♗c3 ♗e6 17.♗e2 ♗d5 18.cd5 a5!∓ Ionescu-Anagnostopoulos, Badalona 1995.

8...♘d7 9.♘ge4 0-0 10.♗e2 ♘f6 11.♘f6 ♕f6 12.♘d5±

The knight swap has done nothing to relieve Black's plight.

12...♕d8 13.b4 ♗b6 14.♗b2 c6 15.♘b6 ♕b6 16.♗c3 ♗e6 17.c5! ♕d8

White is also better after 17...dc5 18.bc5 ♕c7 19.0-0.

18.0-0 d5 19.f4! f5 20.♗d3 ♖f7 21.♗d4±

Drasko-Chatalbashev, Cacak 1991.

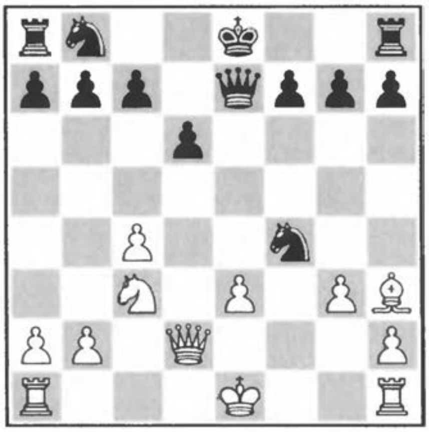
Variation D2

6.g3

Apart from preparing to fianchetto the bishop, White protects h3 with a piece and takes away the h4 square from Black's queen and knight. In practice White has done very well with 6.g3.

6...♘c6

Or 6...♗b4 7.♗d2 ♗d2 8.♕d2 d6 9.f4 (after the exchange of the dark-squared bishops it has become even more important to put pawns on dark squares) 9...♕e7?! 10.♘c3 ♗h3? (this looks like a clever tactic but is in fact a blunder. Nikolaidis has seen one move further) 11.♗h3 ♘f4 (since 12.gf4 loses to 12...♕h4 Black must have thought he was winning a vital pawn?)



12.♗c8! (this amusing double attack decides the game) 12...♘c6 13.♗b7 ♘a5 14.♗a8 ♘c4 15.♕d4 ♘e3 16.♔d2 1-0 Nikolaidis-A.Ivanov, St Petersburg 1993.

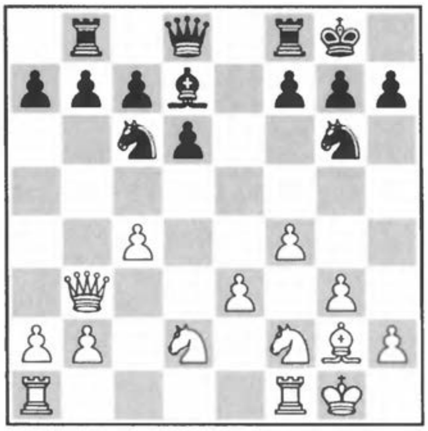
7.♗g2 ♗b4

In Almeida-Fuentes, Havana 1999, Black played the creative 7...♘ce5 8.♕b3 ♕f6 9.f4 ♗b4, but White kept his opening advantage with 10.♗d2 ♗d2 11.♘d2 ♘c6 12.0-0 0-0 13.♘e4 ♕f5 14.♘hf2 d6?! 15.♗h3 (greedy but it works) 15...♕a5 16.♗c8 ♖fc8 17.♕b7±.

8.♗d2 ♗d2

Or 8...0-0 9.♗b4 ♘b4 10.♘c3 d6 11.0-0 ♗e6 12.b3 ♕c8 13.♘g5 ♗g4 14.f3 h6 15.♘ge4 ♗h3 16.♕d2 ♗g2 17.♔g2 ♖e8 (17...f5 was better) 18.♖ad1 ♘c6 19.♘f2 ♘ce7 20.e4± Drasko-Marchand, Montecatini Terme 1997.

9.♘d2 d6 10.0-0 0-0 11.♕b3 ♖b8 12.f4 ♗d7 13.♘f2±



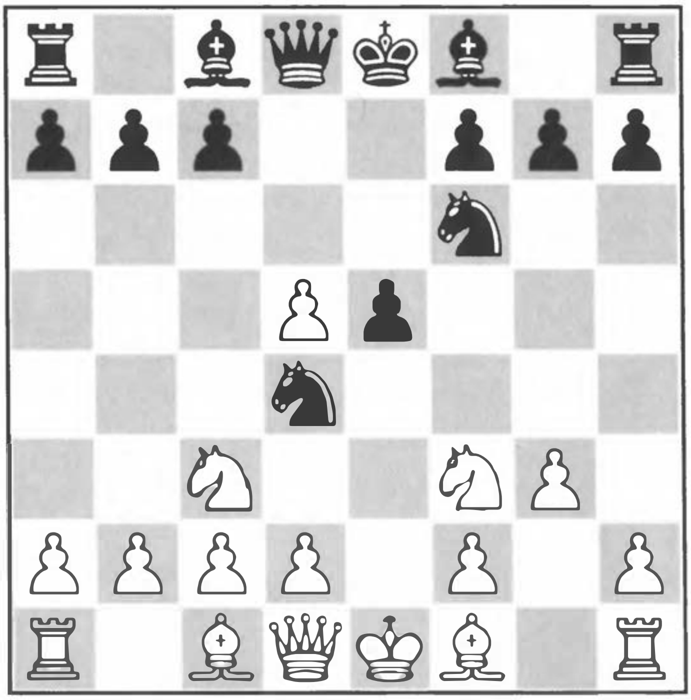
13...♖e8 14.♖fe1 b6 15.♕c3 a5 16.♘f3 ♘f8 17.b3

White has more space, Shulman-Getz, Philadelphia 2002.

CHAPTER 12

Igor Glek

Gambit Lines in the Glek Variation



NIC KEY SO 1.6

Is this the Belgrade Gambit?

The Glek Variation of the Four Knights Opening has become an acceptable way of playing for a slight edge with White. It may not be the Ruy Lopez, but as Black it can be tough to play against a well-prepared opponent. In this chapter the main protagonist of 4.g3 attacks his own line with two gambit continuations: 4...♘xe4!? and 4...d5 5.exd5 ♘d4!?. Both lines aim to demonstrate that the extra tempo (4.g3) is detrimental to White's position.

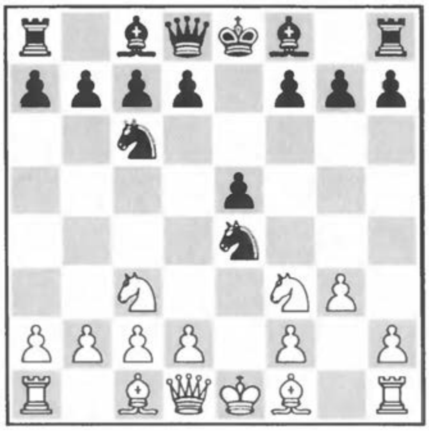
Let us take a brief look at the rather silly line: 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘xe5?!. White sacrifices a piece to obtain a mighty pawn centre after 4...♘xe5 5.d4. However, after Black's strongest move 5...♘g6, he will not obtain sufficient compensation. I don't want to claim a White edge after 5...♘c6 6.d5 – but, at least, it's a game. It is obvious from these comments that 4.g3 can be regarded as some sort of weakness after 4...♘xe4!? (perhaps still somewhat dubious, but by no means as silly as 4.♘xe5).

While the Belgrade Gambit – 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.d4 exd4 5.♘d5 – is clearly not so dubious, it also does not represent White's best bet for an opening advantage in the Four Knights. Yet, after the inclusion of 4.g3 (and with reversed colours) we will see that it suddenly becomes an excellent surprise weapon for Black against the Glek Variation!

We will treat the piece sacrifice 4...♘xe4 as a 'light appetizer', while the tactical complications of 4...d5 5.exd5 ♘d4 will be our 'main course'.

Appetizer

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.g3 ♘xe4!?



However, you might feel about this piece sacrifice, don't condemn it outright. No less a player than Macieja has dared it – against Smirin in 2004. Before we investigate the piece sacrifice, it is perhaps useful to draw one more SOS parallel. In the first volume of *Secrets of Opening Surprises* the intriguing Gunsberg Variation (4.a3!?) was investigated on page 19. After one of Black's main continuations, 4...g6, Magnus Carlsen has played 5.♘xe5 ♘xe5 6.d4 ♘c6 7.d5 (and now 7...♘b4 is obviously not on, see the main line in the text) Carlsen-Nyysti, Helsinki 2002.

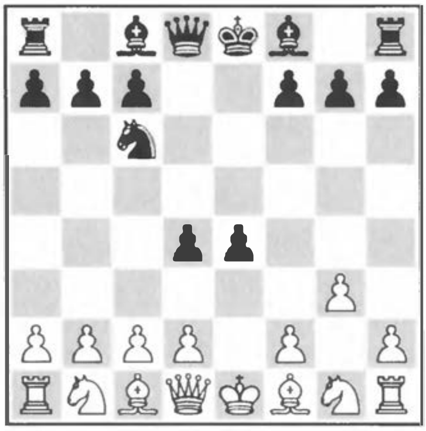
5.♘xe4 d5 6.♘c3

The only retreat square, since White's fourth has taken away the g3 square. No good is 6.♘eg5 after either 6...h6 or 6...e4.

6...d4 7.♘b5!?

The most enterprising continuation. If White does not want to refute 4...♘xe4 he can opt for: 7.♗g2 dxc3 8.bxc3 which leads by way of an amusing transposition to the line 4...d5 5.exd5 ♘xd5 6.♗g2 ♘xc3 7.bxc3. This was how Magnus Carlsen, who had prepared the piece sacrifice especially for this game, was outfoxed by and lost to Elena Sedina, St Vincent 2003.

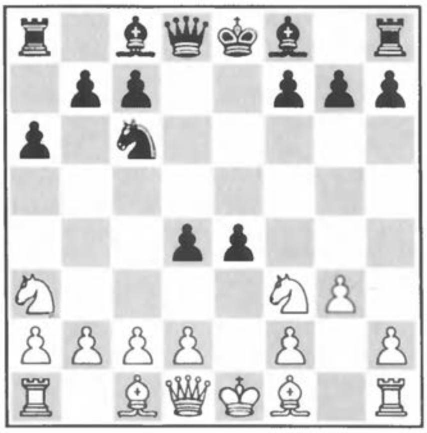
Much more passive is 7.♘b1? e4 8.♘g1.



Nevertheless, Black has only one pawn for his knight.

Serious attention deserves 7.♘e4 considering that it was Smirin's choice when faced with the piece sacrifice. After 7...f5 8.♘eg5 e4 9.♗c4 exf3 10.♘xf3 (10.♗f7+ ♔d7 11.♗e6+ ♔e8; 10.♘f7 ♕e7+ 11.♔f1 ♘e5) 10...♕e7+ 11.♔f1 ♗e6 12.d3 ♗xc4 13.dxc4 ♕d7 14.♔g2 0-0-0 play was about equal in Smirin-Macieja, Czech tt 2003/04.

7...a6 8.♘a3 e4

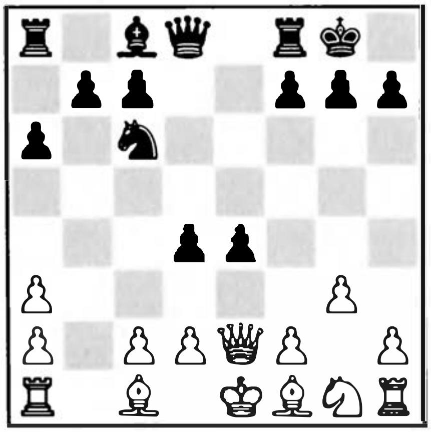


9.♘h4!?

In two games White chose 9.♕e2?! but this move is dubious against accurate play:

● 9...♕e7 10.♘g1 ♘e5 11.h3 d3 (11...♗d7 12.♗g2 ♗c6 13.d3) 12.♕e3 ♗f5 13.cxd3 exd3 14.♗g2 0-0-0 15.♘f3 (an alternative is 15.g4) 15...♘xf3+ 16.♗xf3 ♕f6 (after 16...♕d7 17.0-0 White is winning) 17.♘c4 b5 18.g4 bxc4 19.gxf5 ♔d7 20.♕f4 ♗c5 21.♕xc4 ♖he8+ 22.♔f1 ♖e5 23.b4 ♖xf5 24.♗g4 and White won in Nordahl-Hersvik, Kristiansund 2001.

● 9...♗xa3! 10.bxa3 0-0 11.♘g1 (or 11.♘h4 d3 and Black is better). Clearly, Black has tremendous compensation for the piece. White's pieces are a sorry sight on the first rank.



Black crashes through with 11...d3! 12.cxd3 (after 12.♕d1 ♘d4 13.cxd3 ♖e8 14.♗g2 ♘c2+ 15.♔f1 ♕xd3+ Black is winning) and now after 12...♘d4! Black's attack should win.

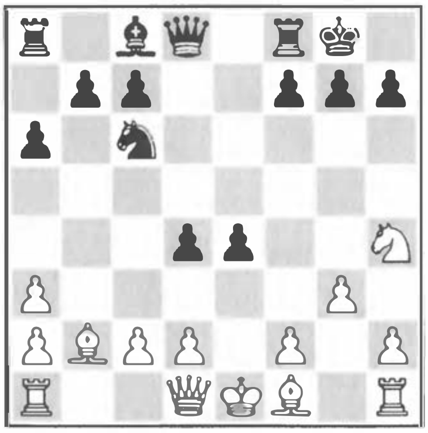
In the game Al Modiahki-Hakki, Teheran Zonal 2001, there followed instead: 12...♕d4!?, which is also not bad, though not quite as winning as 12...♘d4. Nevertheless, let's follow the game for some more spectacular tactics: 13.♖b1 exd3 14.♕e3 ♕d5 15.f3 ♗f5 16.♔f2 ♖fe8 17.♕f4 ♕c5+ 18.♔g2 ♖e1 19.♘h3 (Black managed to lose this winning position by means of two consecutive blunders) 19...♖ae8? (he could have reaped the gains of his previous play by 19...♖xc1 20.♖xc1 ♗xh3+ 21.♔xh3 ♕xc1) 20.♘f2 h6? (and here 20...♕xf2+! would still lead to an amusing draw: 21.♔xf2 ♖8e2+ 22.♗xe2 ♖xe2+ 23.♔g1 ♖e1+ 24.♔f2 ♖e2+ with perpetual check) 21.g4!+– ♗g6 22.♗xd3 ♖1e2 23.♗xe2 ♖xe2 24.d4! ♘xd4 25.♗e3 ♘e6 26.♗xc5 ♘xf4+ 27.♔g3 and White wins.

By the way, also after the retreat 9.♘g1!? – some might argue that a piece is still a piece...

9...♗xa3 10.bxa3 0-0

Also insufficient is 10...d3 11.♗b2!

11.♗b2



Personally, I don't believe in the reality of Black's attacking chances here. A piece is a high price to pay for some positional compensation.

Let's follow my analysis:

11...♖e8 12.♗e2 ♗h3 13.♗g4 ♗xg4 14.♕xg4 ♘e5 15.♕h3 ♘f3+ 16.♔d1 ♕f6 17.♕f5 ♕b6 18.♖b1 g6 19.♕d5

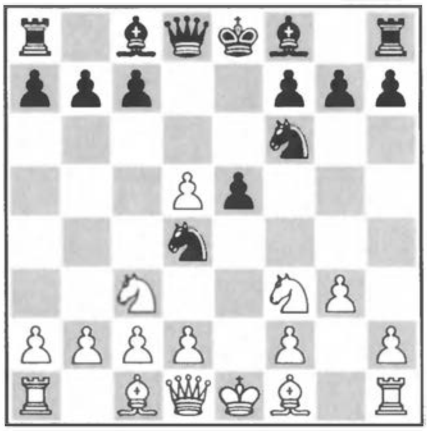
Bad is 19.♕f4? g5 20.♕g4 h5 21.♕xh5 gxh4.

19...♖e5 20.♕d7 ♖b5 21.♘xf3 exf3 22.♔c1

and White is winning.

Main Course

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.g3 d5 5.exd5 ♘d4!?



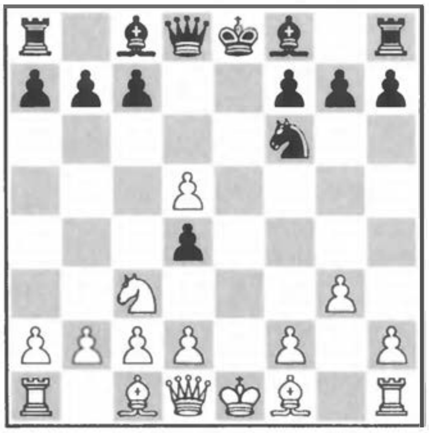
So let's play the 'Belgrade Gambit' with colours reversed and the additional move g2-g3!?. In this line Black sacrifices only a pawn...

Now White has three possibilities:

A) 6.♘xd4
B) 6.♘xe5
C) 6.♗g2

Variation A

6.♘xd4 exd4



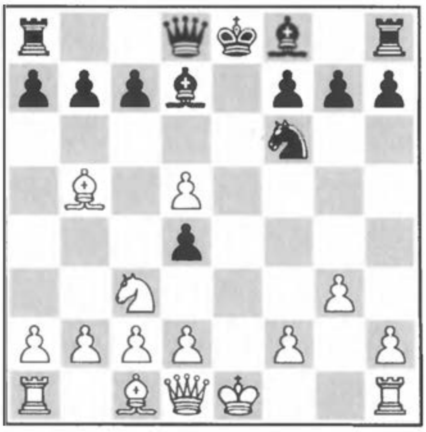
7.♗b5+

Here the correspondence player Labahn has analysed 7.♘b5 ♗c5 8.♕e2+ ♔f8 9.♗g2 a6 10.b4 ♗b6 11.♘a3 ♗g4 with excellent compensation for Black. White should interpolate 7.♕e2+ ♗e7 before playing 8.♘b5, after 8...0-0 9.♗g2 ♘xd5 10.♘xd4 ♘b4 11.c3 c5 12.cxb4 cxd4 13.0-0 ♗xb4 play is equal.

7...♗d7

It is also possible to play 7...♘d7. Two samples of how play might proceed:

- 8.♘e2 a6 9.♗a4 ♗c5 10.0-0 0-0 11.♘f4 ♗d6 12.d3 ♘c5 13.♗b3 ♘xb3 14.axb3 ♗xf4 15.♗xf4 g5 (15...♗h3 16.♖e1 g5 17.♕h5) 16.♗d2 ♗h3 17.♖e1 ♕xd5 18.f3 g4 19.♖e4 f5 20.♖f4 ♖fe8 21.♖a4 c5 and Black's game is clearly preferable.
- 8.♕e2+ ♗e7 9.d6 cxd6 10.♘d5 a6 11.♗xd7+ ♗xd7 12.0-0 ♗c6 and Black is fine.



8.♕e2+

Again interpolating this check is White's most accurate option.

8...♕e7

8...♗e7 9.d6 cxd6 (9...dxc3 10.dxe7 cxd2+ 11.♗xd2 ♕xe7 12.♕xe7+ ♔xe7 13.♗b4+ ♔d8 14.0-0-0±) 10.♗xd7+ and here the lines fork, depending upon how Black recaptures on d7:

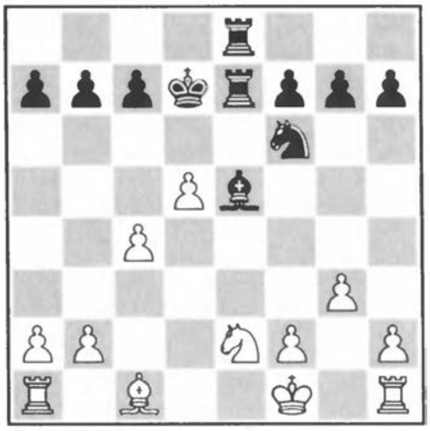
- 10...♘xd7 11.♘d5 ♖c8 12.0-0 ♖xc2 and now either 13.♕g4, or 13.♖e1 ♘e5 14.f4 d3 15.♕f1 ♘g6 16.♕xd3±.
- 10...♕xd7 11.♘b5 0-0 12.0-0 d5

13.♘xd4 ♖fe8 14.♕f3 ♗c5 15.♘b3 ♗b6 16.d4 ♕h3 17.♗d2±.

9.♗xd7+ ♔xd7 10.♕xe7+

But not 10.♘b5 ♕c5 11.♕d3 ♖e8+ 12.♔f1 ♘xd5.

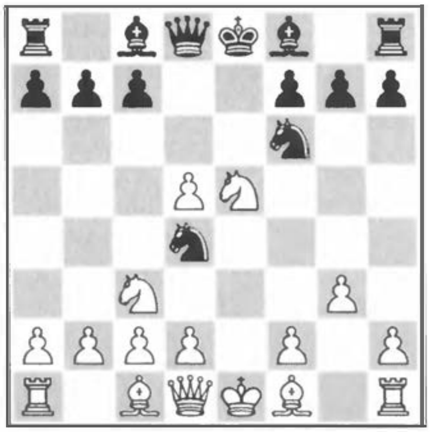
10...♗xe7 11.♘e2 ♖he8 12.♘xd4 ♗c5+ 13.♘e2 ♖e7 14.d4 ♗xd4 15.♔f1 ♗e5 16.c4 ♖ae8



And Black's huge lead in development gives him excellent compensation.

Variation B

6.♘xe5

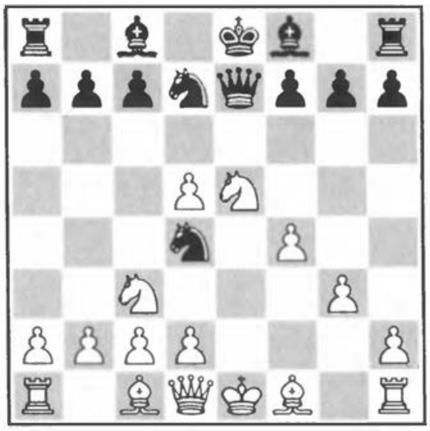


Taking the second pawn is ambitious, but very risky for White. Black can pin the knight along the e-file (B1) or simply continue his development (B2).

B1) 6...♕e7
B2) 6...♗d6

Variation B1

6...♕e7 7.f4 ♘d7



Here the inclusion of 4.g3 makes the main line of the Belgrade Gambit unplayable: 7...♘g4 8.d6 ♕xd6 9.♘b5 ♕b6 10.♘xd4 ♘xe5 11.♕e2 ♕xd4 12.c3 ♗g4 13.♕xe5+ ♕xe5+ 14.fxe5±. Also bad is 7...♗g4 8.♗e2±.

8.d6

Losing is 8.d3 f6. Black also gets the better chances after 8.♗b5 and now:

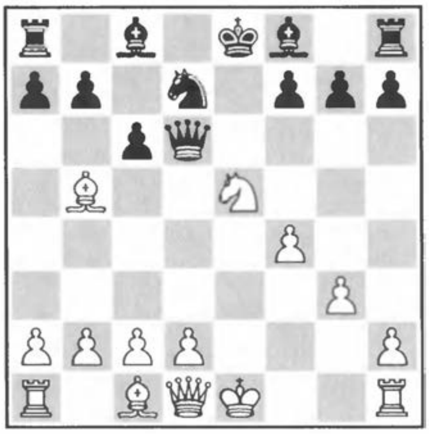
- 8...♘xb5 9.♘xb5 ♘xe5 10.fxe5 a6 11.♘d4 ♕xe5+ 12.♕e2 ♕xe2+ 13.♘xe2 ♗f5 with compensation.
- or 8...c6 9.dxc6 ♘xe5 10.fxe5 ♕xe5+ 11.♗e2 ♗c5 12.♖f1 0-0 13.d3 ♗g4 14.♗f4 ♕e6 15.cxb7 ♘xe2 16.♘xe2 ♖ae8 17.b8♕ ♕xe2+ 18.♕xe2 ♖xe2+ 19.♔d1 ♖xb8 20.♗xb8 ♖e8+ 21.♔d2 ♗e3+ 22.♔c3 ♖c8+ 23.♔b4 ♖xb8+ 24.♔c3 ♗e6 and Black is slightly better.

8...♕xd6

After this move play gets a rather forced character. Losing alternatives are:

- 8...♕e6? 9.♗c4.
- 8...cxd6? 9.♘d5 ♕d8 10.♘xd7.

9.♘b5 ♘xb5 10.♗xb5 c6



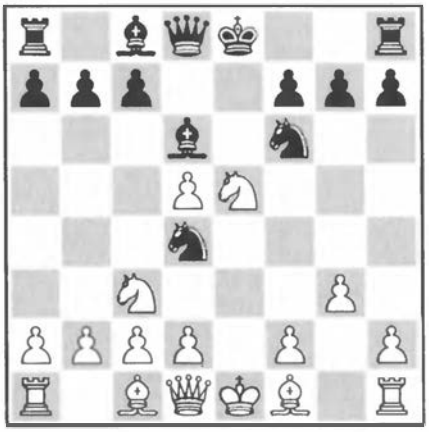
11.♗c4

This gives White a slight plus. Black has no problems after 11.♘xd7 ♗xd7 12.♗e2 (or 12.♕e2+ ♗e7 13.♗c4 0-0 14.0-0 ♗f6 with the initiative) 12...♗h3 13.d3 ♕e6 14.c3 0-0-0 15.♕b3 ♖d5 16.♔f2 ♗c5+ 17.d4 ♖e8 18.♗d3 ♖xd4 19.♕xe6+ ♖d7+ 20.♗e3 ♗xe6 (or 20...♖xe6 21.♗xc5 ♖xd3 22.♖ad1=) 21.♗xc5 ♖xd3 22.♖ad1 ♖xd1 23.♖xd1 b6 24.♗d4 with equality.

11...♘xe5 12.♕e2 f6 13.fxe5 13.d3 ♗g4 14.fxe5 ♕d4 15.c3 ♕xc4 16.dxc4 ♗xe2 17.♔xe2 fxe5. **13...♕xe5** 13...fxe5 14.d3±. **14.♕xe5+ fxe5 15.d3** 15.♖f1 ♗h3 16.♖f7 b5 17.♗b3 c5. **15...♗h3 16.♗e3** with only a very slight edge for White in the ending.

Variation B2

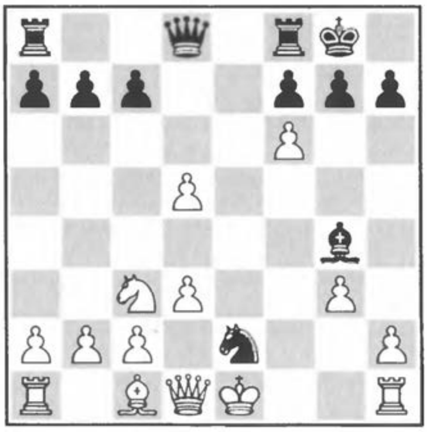
6...♗d6!?



Black plays in real gambit style!

7.♘c4

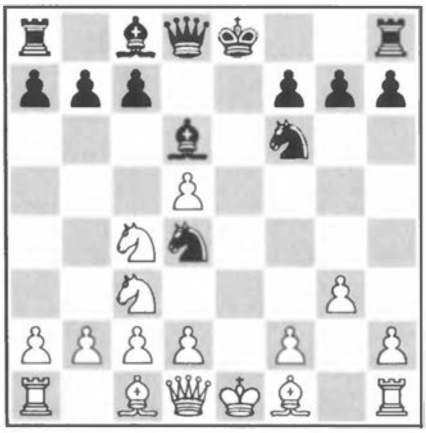
This is forced, as after 7.f4 ♗xe5 8.fxe5 ♗g4 9.♗e2 ♘xe2 (9...♗xe2 10.♘xe2 ♕xd5 11.0-0♕xe5 unclear) 10.exf6 0-0 11.d3 (not 11.♘xe2? ♖e8 12.0-0 ♗xe2 and Black is winning) a spectacular position arises in which Black has an attractive choice.



He may either play the simple 11...♖e8, or opt for the following forcing line:

11...♕xf6 12.♘xe2 ♖fe8 13.♖f1 ♕b6 14.♖f2 ♖xe2+ (14...♖e7 15.h3) 15.♖xe2 ♕g1+ 16.♔d2 ♕xd1+ 17.♔xd1 ♖e8, when both

- 18.h3 ♗f3 (18...♗xe2+ 19.♔d2 ♗f1) 19.c4 ♖xe2 20.♗d2 with unclear play, and
- 18.c4 c6 19.dxc6 bxc6 with compensation, should cause him no headaches.



7...♗xg3!?

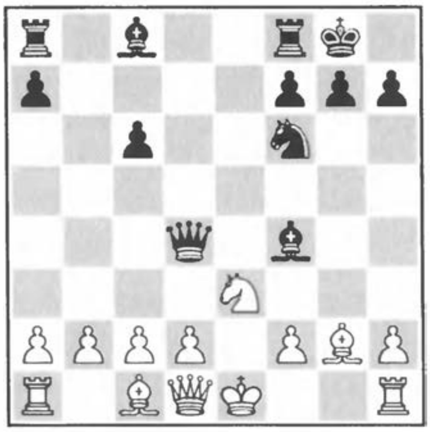
At this stage there is a serious alternative in the form of: 7...♗g4 8.♗e2 ♕e7 9.♘e3 ♘xe2 10.♘xe2 ♗f3 11.0-0 ♘xd5 12.♕e1 ♘xe3 13.fxe3 ♗g4 14.d3 when White is only slightly better.

Instead of 8...♕e7 Karsten Müller has recommended 8...♘xe2 9.♘xe2 0-0 10.0-0 ♗f3!.

8.♘e3

Black will obtain a dangerous initiative after both: 8.fxg3 ♗g4 9.♗e2 ♘xe2 10.♘xe2 ♕xd5, and 8.hxg3 ♗g4.

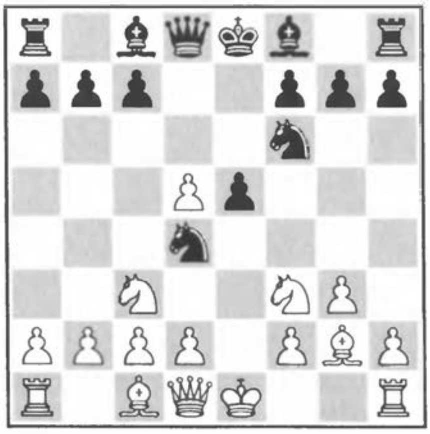
8...♗f4 9.♘b5 c5 10.dxc6ep 0-0 11.♘xd4 ♕xd4 12.♗g2 bxc6$\overset{\infty}{=}$



This position is rather similar to certain positions in the Gambit Variation of the Two Knights Defence (5...♘a5). It seems that Black has good compensation for the pawn.

Variation C

6.♗g2



This is White's safest option.

6...♗g4

This pin is best, although Black has an alternative in 6...♗c5:

Perhaps this is one of the few exceptions when White should just grab the e-pawn. White is better after 7.♘xe5 0-0 8.0-0 ♖e8 9.♘f3 (but not 9.♘a4 ♗d6 10.♘c4 b5 11.♘xd6 ♕xd6 12.♘c3 b4 13.♘a4 ♗g4 14.f3 ♗d7, with initiative) 9...♗g4 10.d3 ♘xd5 11.♘xd5 ♘e2+ 12.♔h1 ♕xd5 13.♘g5 ♕e5 14.f3 ♗h5 15.♘e4 ♘xc1 16.♘xc5 ♕xc5 17.♖xc1 and has kept his small material advantage.

Still, one improvement in the above line can change the verdict. After 7.0-0 there follows 7...♗g4. If White now aims to take the pawn he is looking for trouble, e.g. 8.♖e1 0-0 9.♖xe5 (9.d3 ♘xd5 10.♖xe5 ♘xc3 11.bxc3 ♕f6 12.♗f4 ♘xf3+ 13.♗xf3 ♗d6=) 9...♕d6 10.♖e1 ♖fe8 with compensation.

As so often in this gambit variation it is better for White not to take the second pawn on e5!

Instead of 8.♖e1 White can also play the quiet 8.d3 when the lines fork:

- 8...♘xd5 9.♘xd5 ♕xd5 10.♘xd4 ♕xd4 11.♕e1 0-0 (11...0-0-0? 12.♗e3 ♕d6 13.♗xc5 ♕xc5 14.♕e4+–) 12.♗xb7 ♖ab8 13.♗g2±.
- 8...0-0 9.♗e3 (9.♗g5 h6 10.♗xf6 ♕xf6 11.♘e4 ♘xf3+) 9...♖e8
  - 10.h3♘xf3+ 11.♗xf3 ♗xe3 12.hxg4 ♗d4 13.g5 ♗xc3 14.gxf6 ♗xb2 15.♖b1 ♕xf6 (15...♗d4 16.♖xb7±) 16.♗e4 ♗d4 17.♖xb7 ♗b6 and Black is fine.
  - 10.♘e4 ♘xe4 11.dxe4 ♕f6 12.♗xd4 and White is better.

In general, there are too many problematic lines for Black after 6...♗c5. Finding an improvement in one line is clearly not enough. So it is better to concentrate our efforts on 6...♗g4.

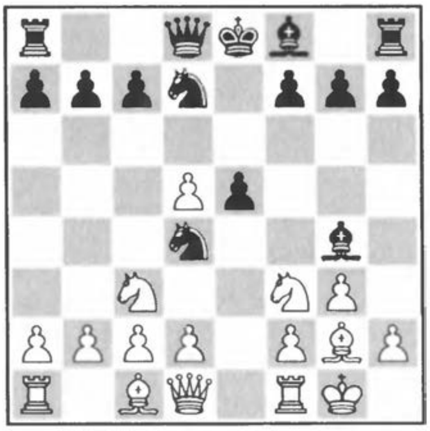
Now White has two main possibilities:

C1) 7.0-0
C2) 7.h3

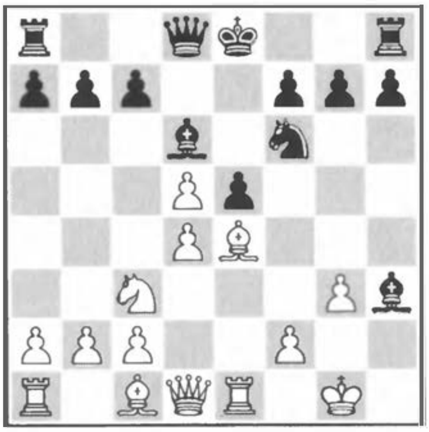
Variation C1

7.0-0 ♗b4

In practice the direct 7...♘d7!? has also occurred.



Black now threatens 8...♕f6, so White must act.
8.h3 ♘xf3+ 9.♗xf3 ♗xh3 10.♖e1 ♗d6 11.♗e4 (preventing Black from castling) 11...♘f6 (bad is 11...h5 12.d4 f5 (12...♗g4 13.f3 exd4 14.♘e2) 13.dxe5) 12.d4

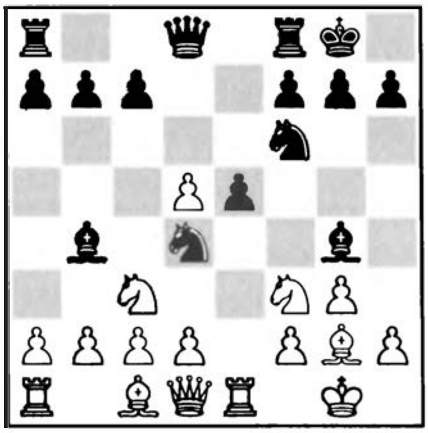


The critical position. The game Dzhumaev-Coleman, Mumbai 2004, now went: 12...0-0 13.dxe5 ♗xe5 14.♗xh7+ ♚xh7 15.♖xe5±. Instead of castling Black should play: 12...exd4! 13.♕xd4 (13.♗f3+ ♗e7 14.♕xd4 0-0 15.♗f4 ♗d6) 13...0-0 14.♗g5 ♗d7 (14...♖e8 15.♗xh7+!; 14...h6 15.♗xf6 ♕xf6 16.♕xf6 gxf6 17.♘b5) 15.♗g2 h6 16.♗xf6 ♕xf6 17.♕xf6 gxf6 18.♘e4 ♗e5 19.c3 ♗f5 and White has a slight edge.

8.♖e1 0-0!?

After the first sacrifice there is no choice but to sac the e-pawn too.
Timid is 8...♕d6 9.a3 ♗a5 and now:

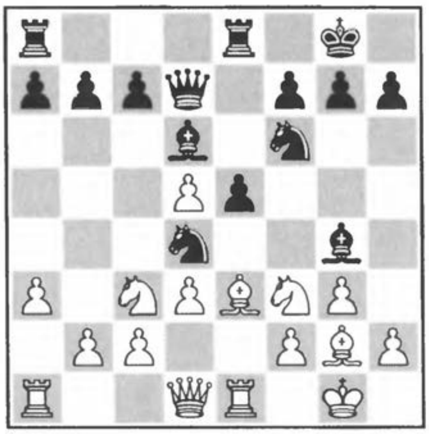
- 10.b4 ♗b6 11.♘a4 (11.♗b2 0-0 12.d3 ♖ae8 13.♘e4 ♘xe4 14.dxe4 f5 15.exf5 ♘xf3+ 16.♗xf3 ♗xf2+ 17.♔xf2 ♖xf5→) 11...♘xd5 12.♘xb6 axb6 13.♗b2 0-0 14.♗xd4exd4 15.h3 ♗h5 16.g4♗g6 17.♘xd4 ♘f4 and Black has good compensation.
- 10.h3! ♗xf3 (or 10...♘xf3+ 11.♗xf3 ♗xh3 12.d4) 11.♗xf3 ♗xc3 12.dxc3 ♘xf3+ 13.♕xf3 and White keeps his extra pawn.



9.a3

Again it is quite dangerous to take the second pawn: 9.♖xe5 ♕d6 10.♖e3 ♗c5 11.♘e4 ♘xe4 12.♖xe4 f5 13.♖f4 ♖ae8 and Black has the initiative.
After 9.h3 ♘xf3+ 10.♗xf3 Black should not play 10...♗xh3 11.♖xe5 ♕d7 12.d4 ♗d6 13.♖e1 (13.♗f4!?) when Black has to prove his compensation. Stronger is simply 10...♗xf3; after 11.♕xf3 ♖e8 White has nothing special.

9...♗d6 10.d3 ♕d7 11.♗e3 ♖fe8=∞

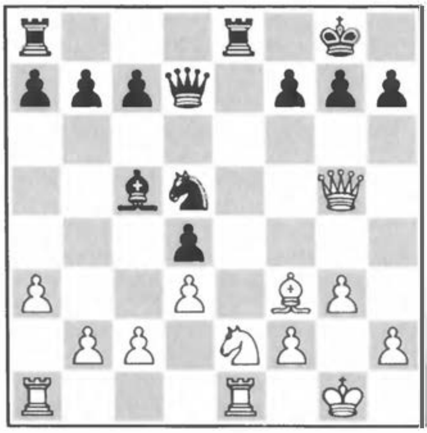


Black has pressure for the pawn. White has probably nothing better than:

12.♗xd4 exd4 13.♘e2 ♗c5

This is stronger than the immediate 13...♗xf3 14.♗xf3 ♗e5 15.c4 dxc3ep 16.♘xc3 (not 16.bxc3 ♘xd5 17.d4 ♗f6 18.c4 ♘e7) 16...♗xc3 17.bxc3 ♘xd5 (or 17...♖xe1+ 18.♕xe1 ♖e8 19.♕b1 ♕f5 20.♗e4 ♕e5 21.♕b3±) 18.c4 ♖xe1+ 19.♕xe1 ♖e8 20.♕a5 ♘b6 21.♖d1 (stronger than 21.♕xa7 ♕xd3 22.♕xb7 ♘xc4 23.♕b5 ♖f8 24.♗g2 ♕c3 25.♖d1 ♘xa3) 21...a6 22.♗xb7 ♘xc4 23.♕xa6 and White is better.

14.♕d2 ♗xf3 15.♗xf3 ♘xd5 16.♕g5



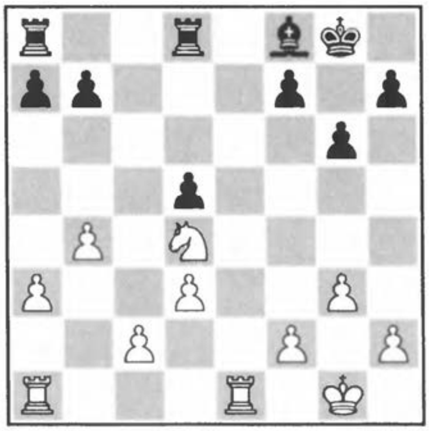
16...c6

After 16...♖ad8, Black's weak back rank is a real cause of anxiety, e.g., 17.♘xd4 ♗xd4 18.♕xd5 ♕xd5 19.♗xd5 c6 (19...♖xe1+ 20.♖xe1 ♗xb2 21.♖e7±) 20.♗f3 ♗xb2 21.♖xe8+ ♖xe8 22.♖b1 ♗xa3 23.♖xb7 and White has a serious edge.

17.♗xd5 ♕xd5

Bad is 17...cxd5 18.♘f4 f5 19.♕h5±, planning 20.♕f3.

18.♕xd5 cxd5 19.♘f4 ♖ed8 20.b4 ♗f8 21.♘e2 g6 22.♘xd4



22...♖ac8!?

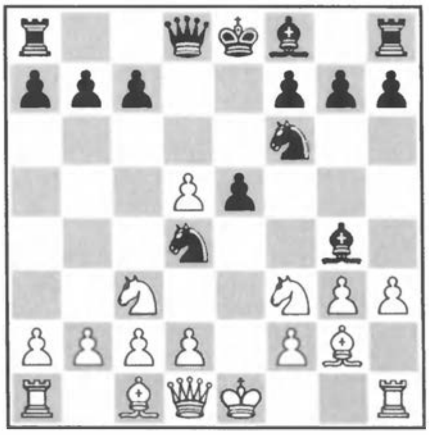
Stronger than the natural 22...♗g7 23.c3 ♖ac8 24.♖ac1 ♗xd4 25.cxd4 ♔f8±.

23.♖a2 ♗g7 24.♘b3 ♔f8

Black clearly has compensation, as it is hard for White to improve his position.

Variation C2

7.h3

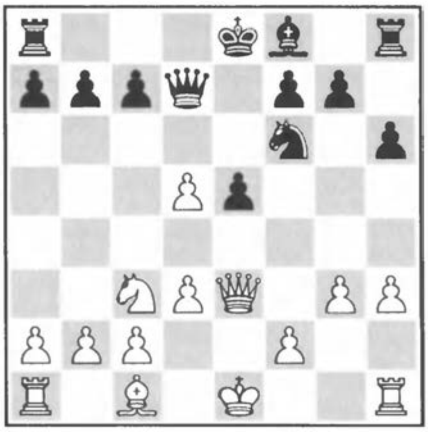


White admits that he cannot keep the gambit pawn. However, by forcing Black to release the tension, he plays for a small opening advantage. Possibly this is the best choice against our 'Belgrade Gambit'.

7...♘xf3+ 8.♗xf3 ♗xf3 9.♕xf3 ♗b4

Black can also prepare queenside castling with 9...♕d7, after 10.d3 the immediate 10...0-0-0 allows the annoying pin 11.♗g5. Play may continue 11...♗b4 (11...♗e7 12.♕e3 or 12.0-0-0) 12.♗xf6 gxf6 13.♕xf6 ♕xd5 14.0-0.

Therefore, 10...h6 is sensible – planning 11.♗d2 0-0-0 12.0-0-0 ♘xd5. White, on the other hand, should play 11.♕e3:



- ● 11...♗b4 12.♕xe5+ ♔f8 13.♔f1 ♖e8 14.♕d4 c5 15.♕c4 b6 16.♗d2±.
- ● 11...♗d6 12.♗d2 0-0 13.♕f3 ♘h7 14.g4 f5 15.gxf5 ♖xf5 16.♕g4 ♘f6 17.♕g6±.

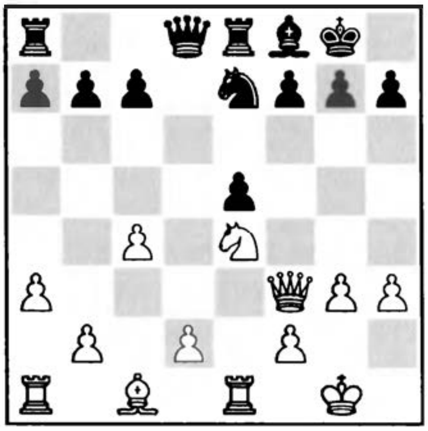
10.0-0 0-0 11.♖e1

The game Houska-Pirrot, Germany Bundesliga 2003/04, now went 11.d3 ♕d7 12.♔h2 ♗xc3 13.bxc3 ♘xd5 14.♖e1 ♖fe8 15.♗d2 c5 16.♖ab1 b6 17.a4 ♘c7, and although White won it is clear that she has nothing special at this stage.

Indeed, after 11.d3 Black can also play the simple 11...♗xc3 12.bxc3 ♕xd5 13.♕xd5 ♘xd5 14.♗d2 ♖fe8 15.c4 ♘e7 16.♗c3 ♘c6 17.♖ab1 b6 18.♖fe1 f6 when he is OK, and won the ending, in Gavrilakis-Gustafsson, Aghia Pelagia 2004.

11...♖e8 12.d3

Too sophisticated is 12.♘e4. After 12...♘xd5 13.a3 ♗f8 (but not 13...♗e7 14.♘c3 ♘xc3 15.bxc3 c6 16.♖xe5 ♕d7 17.♔g2) 14.c4 (14.d3 ♕d7) 14...♘e7! (stronger than 14...♘b6 15.b3 ♕d7 16.g4 ♖ad8 17.♗b2 c6 18.♖e3 with a slight advantage for White)



it is Black who plays for the win! 15.♘g5 f6 16.♘e6 ♕c8 17.♘xf8 and now Black should recapture in the right way:

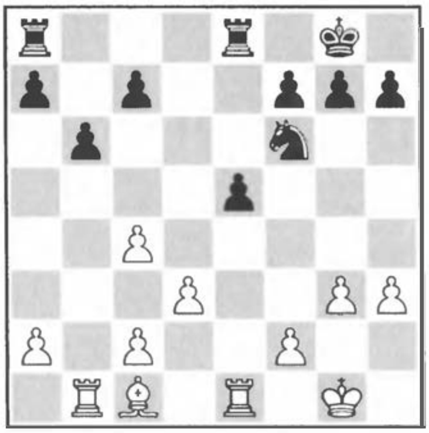
Bad is 17...♔xf8 18.♖xe5 ♕xh3 and now 19.d4 ♘g6 20.♖xe8+ ♖xe8 21.♗d2, or 19.♖h5 ♕e6 20.♕xb7!. In both cases White is slightly better.

However, after the correct 17...♖xf8! Black is just better because of the weaknesses in White's camp (h3, d4). A sample line would be 18.d4 ♘c6 19.dxe5 (19.♗e3 ♕xh3) 19...fxe5 20.♕d5+ ♔h8 (20...♖f7) 21.♔g2 ♕f5 22.♗e3 ♖ad8 23.♕b5 ♘d4 24.♗xd4 ♕f3+ 25.♔g1 exd4 (25...♖xd4) 26.♖f1 d3.

12...♗xc3 13.bxc3 ♕xd5

Worse is 13...♘xd5. The following manoeuvres are characteristic of the Glek Variation: 14.♖b1 b6 15.c4 ♘f6 (15...♘c3 16.♖b3±) 16.♗b2 ♘d7 17.♖e3 and White is slightly better.

14.♕xd5 ♘xd5 15.♖b1 b6 16.c4 ♘f6



Here 16...♘c3 only leads the knight astray – 17.♖b3 ♘xa2 18.♗b2 a5 19.c3 ♖ad8 20.♖a1 ♖xd3 21.♖xa2±.

17.♔g2 ♘d7 18.f4 f6 19.fxe5 ♘xe5 20.♗f4 ♔f7

Black has no problems to keep the balance in this endgame.

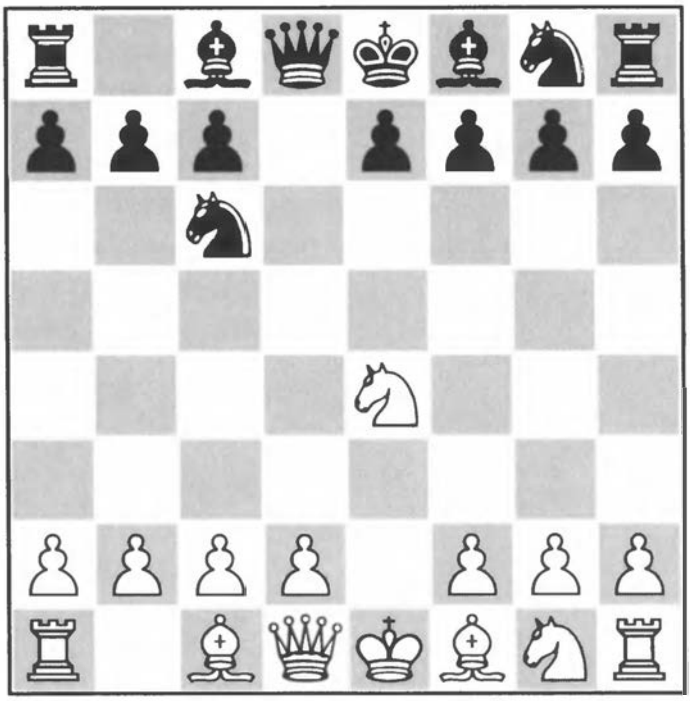
Conclusion

So we have demonstrated that against the Glek Variation the reversed Belgrade Gambit – 4...d5 5.exd5 ♘d4!? – leads to quite playable positions for Black. Probably, only 6.♗g2 leaves White some chances for a small opening advantage. Clearly more practical tests are needed, of course. And, yes, with such a heavy main course there is no room left for a desert.

CHAPTER 13

Jeroen Bosch

Beating the Van Geet



NIC KEY VO 12.3

1.♘c3 d5 2.e4 dxe4 3.♘xe4 ♘c6

The Dutch IM Dick van Geet has made a large contribution to the theory and popularization of 1.♘c3 and scored some nice results with it. The Van Geet Opening has independent significance, even though play often transposes into 1.e4 lines. Both White and Black have to be alert to all sorts of transpositions or near-transpositions. While Caro-Kann and French Defence players have little to worry about, 1...e5 and 1...c5 players should beware.

The following entertaining game is used as a model for an SOS weapon versus 1.♘c3. If the fairly sharp 3...♘c6!? is not to your liking, don't worry, some other suggestions are presented here, too.

☐ **James Plaskett**
■ **Jonathan Speelman**
Gibraltar 2003

1.♘c3 d5

1.e4 e5 players ought to watch out here: 1...e5 cannot be recommended, since 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 contains quite a few pitfalls. Actually, 1...♘f6 2.e4 e5 is a good option for the 1.e4 e5 player.

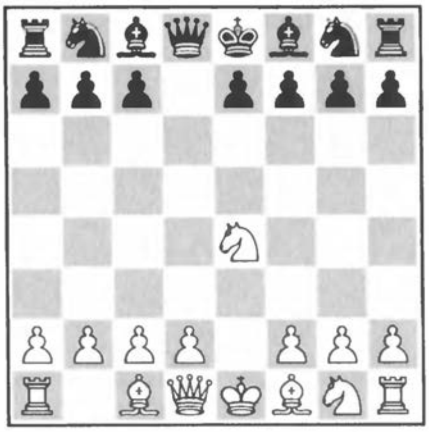
2.e4

This position is sometimes reached via the Scandinavian move order: 1.e4 d5 2.♘c3. While this is not too common, it was in fact the actual course of our present game.

2...dxe4

Black aims for an open position with plenty of active piece play (for both sides!). At this stage there are numerous alternatives, of course. Thus, 2...e6, 2...c6 and 2...♘f6 all lead to positions from regular 1.e4 openings (the French, Caro-Kann and Alekhine respectively) while 2...d4 3.♘ce2 is an important and independent line in the Van Geet Opening.

3.♘xe4



3...♘c6!?

This is what this SOS is all about. Black intends to develop quickly, putting his pieces on natural squares. A general developing set-up is: ♗f5 (or ♗g4), e6, ♘f6, ♗e7 and 0-0. Naturally, it is no good to switch to automatic pilot. It surely makes sense to see what your opponent does and the current game is an excellent case in point.

As mentioned above, we will look at some alternatives here. They are given in ascending SOS order.

A) **3...e6** is a little meek. White need not even transpose into the Rubinstein French.

B) **3...c6** The previous remark applies here, too. White may try to find a more useful move than 4.d4.

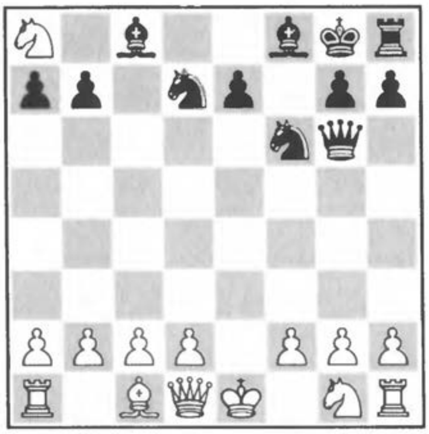
C) **3...e5?!** This is actually quite careless, after 4.♗c4 we have one of those typical Van Geet positions where Black has to perform a tightrope act to stay in the game:

– 4...♗e7 5.♕h5 ♘h6 6.d3 1-0 (Van Geet-Sande, cr Volmac 1986) was obviously not to Black's liking. Likewise,

– 4...♗f5 5.♕f3 ♗g6 6.♘g5! leaves Black in dire straits.

– 4...♘c6 is comparatively best.

D) **3...♘d7** is a very reliable line. Black plays Karpov's favourite Caro-Kann without having 'wasted' a move on ...c6. Even here there is a trap to avoid, though: 4.♗c4 (4.d4 ♘gf6 5.♘xf6+ ♘xf6 6.♘f3 ♗g4= is just like a very innocent Caro-Kann – again without c6) 4...♘gf6 allows a tactic 5.♗xf7+ ♔xf7 6.♘g5+ ♔g8 7.♘e6 ♕e8 8.♘xc7 ♕g6 9.♘xa8



9...♕xg2 (perhaps 9...♘d5!? 10.♕f3 ♘7f6 gives enough compensation, Krajnak-Obsivac, Olomouc 1998) 10.♕f3 ♕xf3 11.♘xf3 ♘e8 12.a4, and White looks better. The game Krajnak-Obsivac is worth looking into, though. Then 4...♘gf6 becomes a clever move to provoke the complications after 5.♗xf7+. Instead of 4...♘gf6 the other knight may also go to f6. So, 4...♘df6 is quite safe for Black, as is 4...e6.

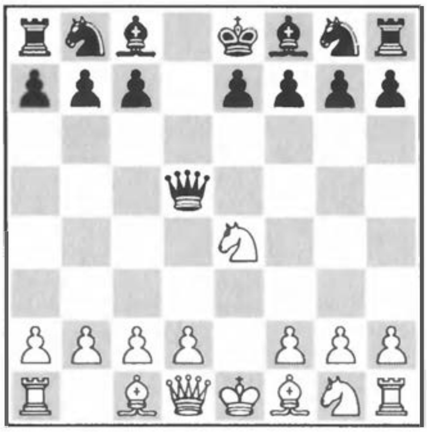
On the whole, 3...♘d7 is very sound, but no points for surprise value!

E) **3...♗f5** leaves White a choice between:

– 4.♕f3!? The point of this move is 4...♕d5 5.♘d6+ ♕xd6 6.♕xf5, and White is possibly slightly better. However, as Wahls points out, 4...♗g6! is strong. For as Wahls demonstrates, 5.♘c5? c6 6.♘xb7? ♕b6 7.♕b3 ♘d7 loses, as the knight is trapped.

– Stronger is 4.♘g3 ♗g6 5.♘f3 or 5.h4 h6 6.♘f3. The position resembles the classical Caro-Kann, but without the pawn moves d4 and c6. Food for thought. The game A.Hoffmann-Kacheishvilli, New York Masters 2004, saw Black gaining the upper hand fairly quickly: 4.♘g3 ♗g6 5.♘f3 ♘d7 6.♗c4 e6 7.d3 ♘gf6 8.♕e2 ♗e7 9.♗d2 0-0 10.0-0-0 c6 11.♔b1 ♖e8 12.♖he1 b5 13.♗b3 a5 and Black's attack is well on its way.

F) **3...♕d5!?**



This is a very witty answer, only playable if the Scandinavian is part of your repertoire. In fact, White has little better than to 'acquiesce' with 4.♘c3 ♕a5. Some alternatives:

– 4.♘g3 ♘c6 5.♘f3 e5, as in Rauber-Prié, Yerevan Olympiad 1996.

– 4.d3 is passive, but perhaps a tad better for White.

– 4.♕f3 ♗f5 5.♘d6+ Klip-Baekelant, Belgium tt 2001/02, is an amusing transposition to 3...♗f5. Superior is Wahls' suggestion of 4...♘c6 5.♘c3 ♕e5+, with equality. White was too ambitious in Karagiannis-Tzerniadianos, Aghia Pelagia 2004: 4...♘c6 5.♘e2 e5 6.♘2c3 ♕e6 7.♘b5?! ♕d7 8.♗c4 a6 9.♘g5 ♘h6 and now White is forced to retreat his forces, after 10.♘c3 ♘d4 11.♕g3? ♘xc2+ 12.♔d1 ♘xa1 13.♕xe5+ ♕e7 Black was winning.

So if you want a safe and reliable line versus 1.♘c3, then play 3...♘d7. If you want the Scandinavian: play 3...♕d5. And if you want to win in 13 moves: play like Speelman!

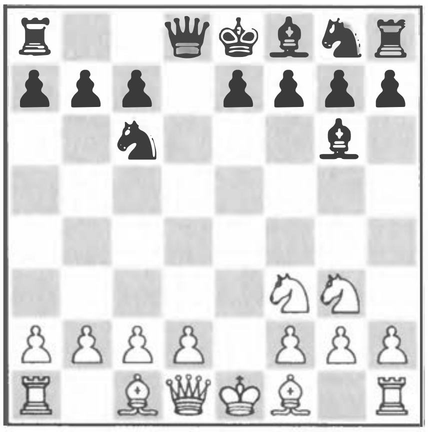
4.♗b5?!

This move is very logical, but Black's reply refutes the whole idea. There are two main alternatives: 4.♘f3 and 4.♗c4. Here are some examples of how play might develop:

A) 4.♘f3

A1) 4...♗g4 5.♗c4 (5.h3 ♗h5 6.♘g3 ♗g6 7.♘h4 ♘f6 8.♘xg6 hxg6 9.c3!? was Sergeev-Londyn, Trinec 2002; and 5.♗b5 ♕d5 is nice for Black – compare with Plaskett-Speelman) 5...♘f6!? 6.h3!? ♗f5 7.♘g3 ♗g6 8.0-0 e6 9.d4 ♗d6, and Black is fine, Bosman-Van der Werf, Bussum tt 1992.

A2) 4...♗f5 5.♘g3 ♗g6

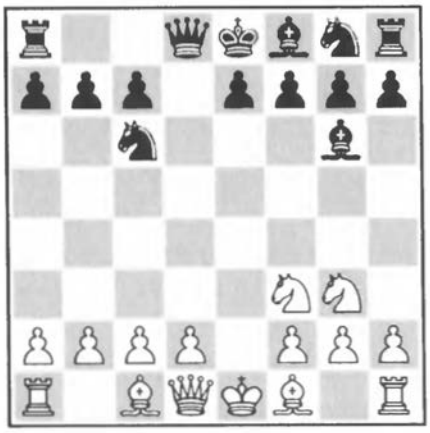


– 6.♗b5 ♕d5? 7.c4 ♕d6 8.d4 0-0-0 9.0-0 a6 10.♗xc6 ♕xc6 11.♗f4 was Garbarino-Needleman, Buenos Aires 1993. Of course Black should play 6...♕d6.

– 6.d4?! ♘b4! is primitive but effective: 7.♗b5+ c6 8.♗a4 ♕a5 9.c3 ♘d3+ 10.♔f1 ♘f6 11.♗c2 ♘xc1 12.♕xc1 e6, and Black is slightly better, Marquardt-Ott, Bad Wiessee 1998.

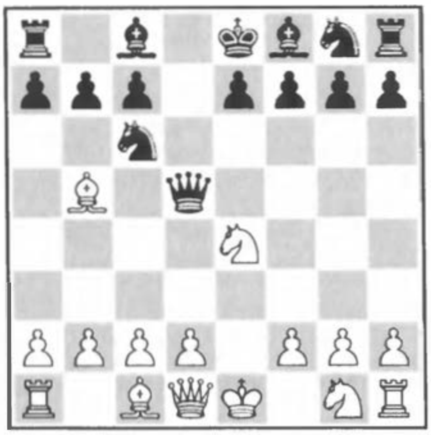
– 6.h4!? is interesting.
– 6.♗c4 e6 7.d3 a6 8.♗d2 h6 9.♕e2 ♘f6 10.0-0 ♗e7 11.a4 0-0 with equal chances, Bertholee-Ljubojevic, Antwerp 1997. Black later won in great style.

B) 4.♗c4 ♗f5 (4...♘h6!? 5.d3 ♘f5 6.♘e2 g6 7..♗d2 ♗g7 8.♗c3 e5, and Black was slightly better in Kristensen-N.J.Fries Nielsen, Aarhus 1981) 5.♘g3 ♗g6



– 6.♘f3 e6 7.d4 ♘f6 8.0-0 ♗e7 is fairly equal, Figueroa-Paz, Mar del Plata 1991.
– 6.h4 h6 7.h5 ♗h7 8.♘f3 e6 9.d3 ♘f6 10.♕e2 ♗e7 looks like an easy Caro-Kann for Black, Bibik-Tarasov, Lahti 1999.
– 6.♘1e2 e5 7.d3 ♘f6 8.0-0 ♗c5 9.♗e3 ♗xe3 10.fxe3 ♘g4 11.♕c1 ♕g5, is OK for Black, Schlindwein-Hammes, German U-17 Championship 1991.

4...♕d5!



Excellent! Black ignores his typical developing scheme and opening rules like 'don't play the queen too soon'. Her majesty can perform miracles from the central d5 square. She attacks two minor pieces, defends c6 and eyes the diagonal a8-h1 (in particular the g2 square).

5.♕e2

White lost the thread in Den Hartog-Konijn, Hengelo 2001, with 5.♘c3 ♕xg2 6.♕f3 ♗h3.

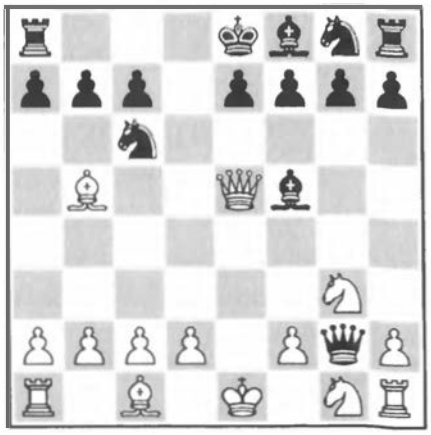
5...♗f5 6.♘g3

6.f3 is too ugly to consider, but having got this far, White should probably swallow his pride and play 6.♗xc6+ ♕xc6 7.d3 ♘f6 8.♘xf6+ ♕xf6∓, as in Sziva-De Kleuver, Dutch Women Championship 1998.

6...♕xg2

A curious moment. It is difficult to condemn Speelman's move, which after all does win him the game in a mere 13 moves. However, if the analysis on move 9 holds up, then 6...♕xg2 must be regarded as a mistake. Luckily, there is a strong alternative available here in the form of 6....♗xc2!.

7.♕e5!

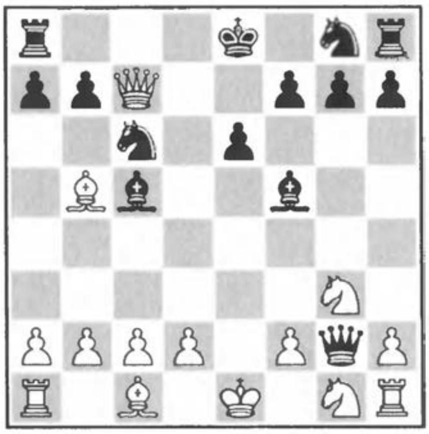


The point of Plaskett's previous move. The move 7.♘f3 fails to 7...♗g4, which wins on the spot.

7...e6 8.♕xc7

Forced, as 8.f3? does not trap the queen on account of 8...♗d6. White now threatens to take on b7.

8...♗c5



As there is no satisfactory defence to White's threat Black has to counter-attack. Play is razor-sharp and one mistake may decide the game.

9.♕f4

This is an admission of failure.

Executing the threat is no alternative:

A) 9.♕xb7 ♗xf2+ (9...♕xf2+? 10.♔d1+–) 10.♔d1 ♗g4+ 11.♘1e2 ♗xe2+ 12.♗xe2 ♖b8, and now, if the queen goes, bishop takes g3 decides, so White is forced to play 13.♗f1 ♕f3+ 14.♗e2 ♕xh1+ 15.♘xh1 ♖xb7 16.♘xf2, and Black is an exchange up.

B) 9.♔d1 ♘e7 10.♕xb7 0-0 and Black is fully developed and ready for execution.

C) 9.d4 ♗xd4 10.♗e3 ♗xe3 11.fxe3 ♘e7 is good for Black, too.

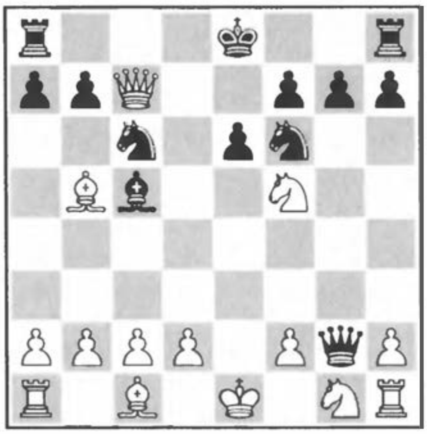
However, the next move needs to be investigated in depth:

D) 9.♘xf5!?

D1) 9...exf5 10.♕xb7+–

D2) 9...♕xh1 10.♔f1! ♔f8 11.♕xb7 ♖d8 12.♗xc6 ♕xh2 13.♘e3, or even 13.d4, and in both cases White is better!

D3) 9...♘f6! This is best, the lines now fork:



D31) 10.♕xb7 0-0 11.♕xc6 ♗xf2+ 12.♔d1 ♘d5 13.♘e7+ ♔h8 14.♘xd5 exd5–+.

D32) 10.♘g3 ♗xf2+ 11.♔d1 ♗xg3 12.♕xb7 0-0 13.♕xc6 ♘e4–+.

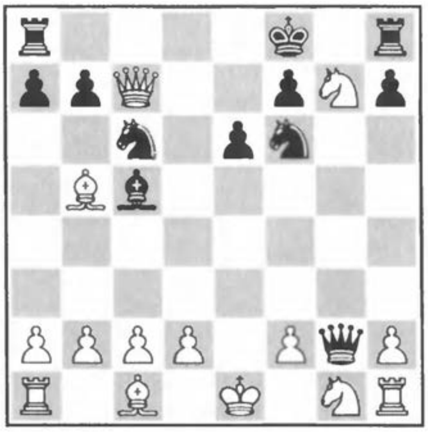
D33) 10.♘d6+ ♗xd6 11.♕xb7 0-0, and Black is better.

D34) 10.♗xc6+!? bxc6 11.♘xg7+ ♔f8 with two possibilities:

D341) 12.♘xe6+ fxe6 13.♕f4 ♔e7 14.♕f3 ♗xf2+ 15.♔e2 ♖hg8, with nice compensation.

D342) 12.♕f4 ♕xh1 13.♘xe6+ ♔e7 14.♘xc5 ♕xg1+ 15.♔e2 ♖he8 16.d3 ♔f8+ 17.♗e3 ♕xa1 18.♕xf6 ♔g8 19.♕g5+, with perpetual check.

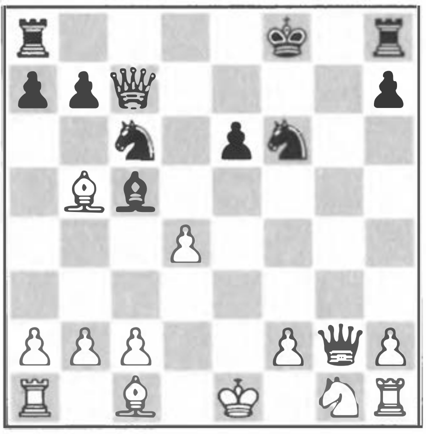
D35) 10.♘xg7+! ♔f8 and now:



D351) not 11.♕f4 ♘d4 12.♕xf6 ♕xh1

13.♘xe6+ ♘xe6 14.♕xh8+ ♔e7, and Black wins, but

D352) 11.♘xe6+ fxe6 12.d4!



Now White has excellent attacking chances, e.g. 12...♕xh1 13.♗h6+ ♔e8 14.0-0-0, with a winning initiative. Also 12...♗b4+ fails to impress after 13.c3 ♕xh1 (13...♘xd4 14.♗h6+ ♔g8 15.cxb4 ♘xb5 16.♕e7+−) 14.♗h6+ ♔e8 15.0-0-0.

In summary, White can make a draw with 9.♘xf5 ♘f6 10.♗xc6+ (line D342). He would even get excellent chances with 9.♘xf5 ♘f6 10.♘xg7+ ♔f8 11.♘xe6+ (line D352).

9...0-0-0

Black has other options, but who could find fault with this developing move that unpins the knight as well.

10.♗xc6

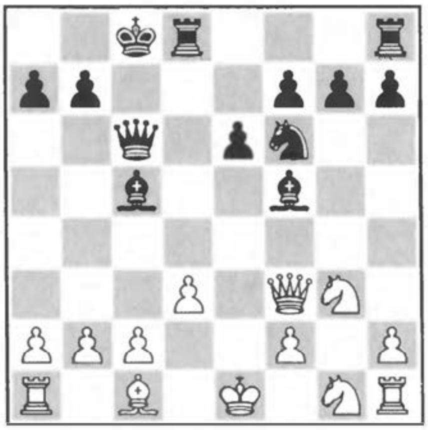
This is more or less forced, as 10.d3 ♘b4 is awkward to meet: 11.♗a4 ♗xd3; 11.♔d1 ♗xf2; 11.♕d2 ♗xf2+.

Also bad is 10.♗f1 ♕d5 11.c4 (11.♗c4 ♗xf2+ 12.♔xf2 (12.♕xf2 ♕xc4) 12...♕c5+ 13.♔g2 ♖d4) 11...♕d4, with a pleasant edge.

10...♕xc6 11.d3 ♘f6

Black is fully developed and has no weaknesses. The opposite holds true for his opponent.

12.♕f3



Defending the rook so that ♘f5 could finally be on the cards. The following neat tactic puts an immediate stop to White's suffering, though.

12...♗b4+ 13.♗d2

There is no way out: 13.c3 ♗xc3+, while 13.♔f1 ♗h3+ wins the queen.

13...♕xc2!

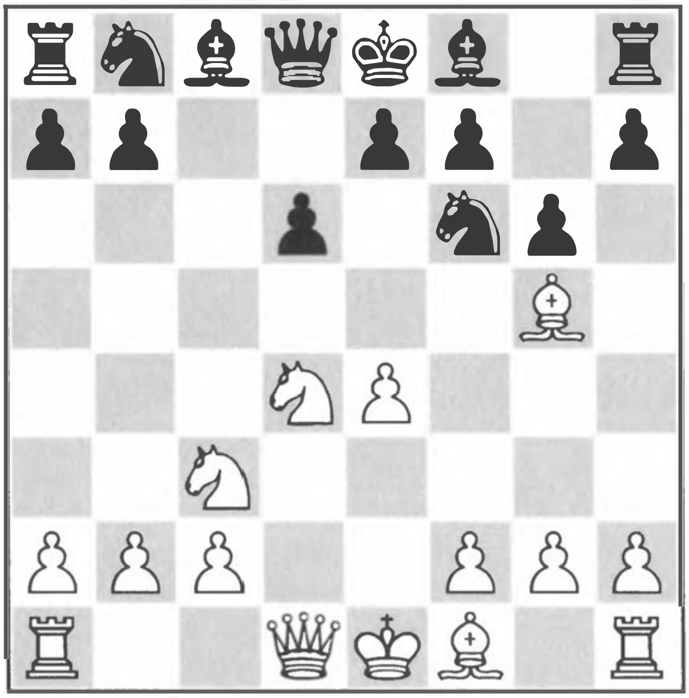
And Plaskett resigned, as 14.♗xb4 ♕xb2 15.♖d1 ♕xb4+ 16.♔f1 ♗xd3+ leaves him three pawns down.

In conclusion, it is easy for White to go wrong after 3...♘c6!? Indeed, after 4.♗b5 ♕d5! Black is already slightly better. The position after 9.♘xf5!? is worth analysing. This move gives White the advantage, so Black should refrain from 6...♕xg2 and play 6...♗xc2 instead.

CHAPTER 14

Dorian Rogozenko

A Latvian Speciality vs the Dragon



NIC KEY SI 15.1

Bishop Aggression 6.♗g5 and 7.♗b5

The Sicilian Defence is usually the biggest problem for 1.e4 players. Some players prefer to play 'Anti-Sicilian' lines, since there are simply too many variations in Open Sicilians. Such an approach has some drawbacks, though, the biggest one is perhaps that once you are used to those Anti-Sicilians you will find it much more difficult to switch to Open Sicilian type of positions.

Here I would like to present a system that is easy to study, but, at the same time, both ambitious and aggressive. It can also serve as a good starting point for getting used to those sharp positions with kings on opposite wings. Does this sound too good to be true? Let me convince you with the games below!

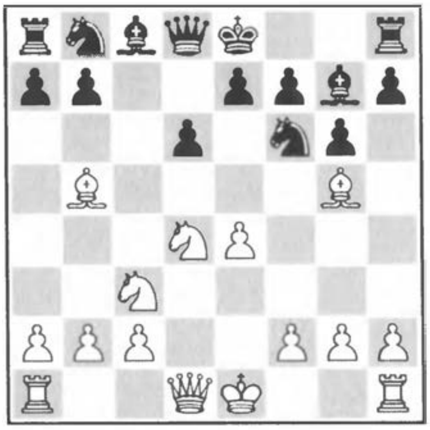
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 g6 6.♗g5

This is an old and somewhat forgotten continuation. White can connect it with two possible plans. In the beginning White players used to follow-up with ♕d2 and 0-0-0, in a way similar to the Yugoslav Attack. Later the Latvian Master Alvis Vitolinsh found new and dangerous ideas for White in a different set-up: ♗b5+, then ♕e2 and 0-0-0. This will be our present subject. In this second case White can create dangerous threats because of the central advance e4-e5. Black must avoid quite a few traps in this opening line, and, he should actually know the theory very well in order to avoid quick problems.

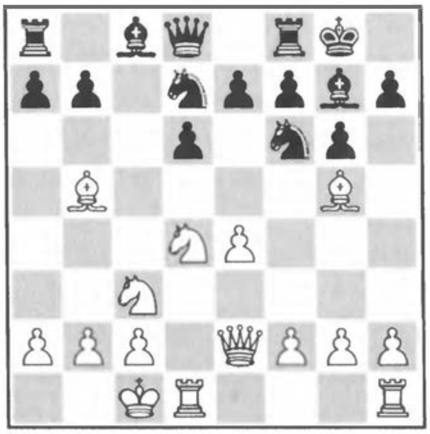
From the modern GMs who employ this plan with White I should like to single out Alexander Shabalov (another former Latvian). He scored 100% with it so far, although against much lower rated opponents, one must add.

☐ **Alvis Vitolinsh**
■ **Boris Alterman**
Naberezhnie Chelni 1988

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♞xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 g6 6.♗g5 ♗g7 7.♗b5+



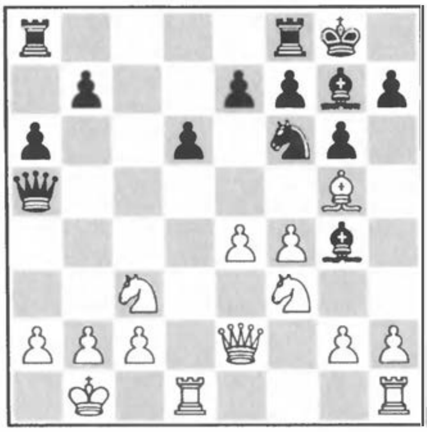
7...♗d7
The most natural and strongest answer. Another possibility is 7...♘bd7 8.♕e2 0-0 9.0-0-0,



and now:

A) 9...♕a5?! 10.♘b3 ♕c7 11.♗xd7 ♗xd7 (11...♕xd7 12.e5±) 12.♗xf6± Lakos-Kahn, Balatonbereny 1996.

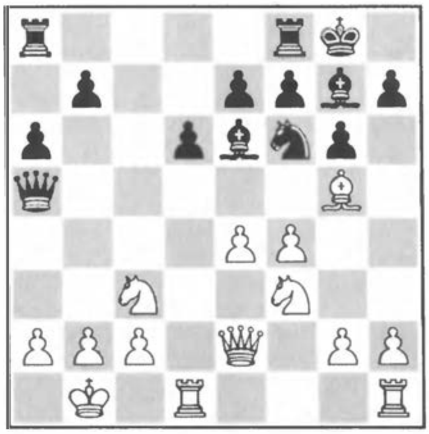
B) 9...a6 10.♗xd7 ♗xd7 11.f4 (White has a typical slight advantage thanks to his better control in the center and the constant threate4-e5) 11...♗g4 12.♘f3 ♕a5 13.♔b1



B1) 13...♖fe8 14.h3 ♗xf3 15.♕xf3 ♖ac8 16.♖he1 ♖c5 17.♖e3 ♖ec8 18.e5 dxe5 19.fxe5 ♖xe5 20.♕xb7 ♖e8 21.b4 ♕a3 22.♖xe5 ♕xc3 23.♖c5 ♕g3 24.♗c1+- Gy.Horvath-Ahn, Budapest 1996.

B2) 13...♖ac8 14.♗xf6! exf6 (14...♗xf6 15.♘d5±) 15.f5± Bratanov-Trent, Porto San Giorgio 2000.

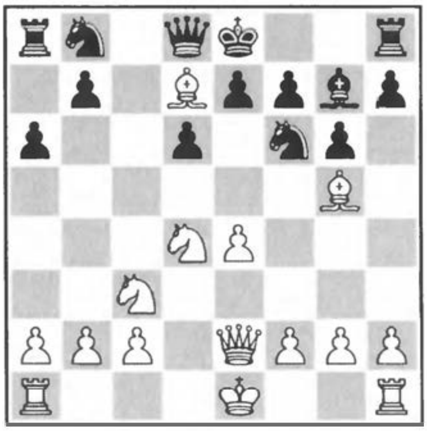
B3) 13...♗e6



14.♗xf6! ♗xf6 15.♘d5 ♗xd5 16.♖xd5 ♕b6

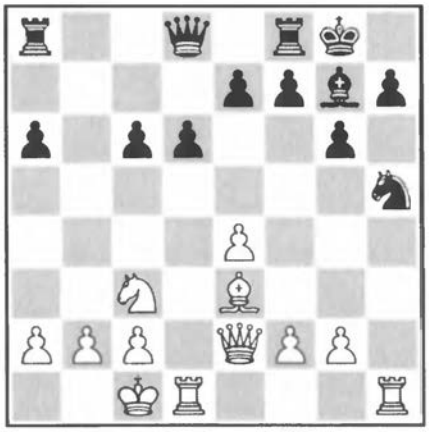
17.e5 ♗g7 18.♖hd1 ♖fd8 19.c4 ♖ac8 20.b3 dxe5 21.fxe5 ♖xd5 22.♖xd5 a5 23.♖b5 ♕c7 24.♕e4 b6 25.♕d4 ♖b8 26.♖d5 a4 27.♖d7± Yurtaev-S.B.Hansen, Copenhagen 1991.

8.♕e2 a6 9.♗xd7+



9...♘bxd7

Let us examine the alternative captures. Let's start with the artificial looking 9...♘fxd7. Black plans to develop the queen's knight on c6, but as usual the absense of the other knight from f6 offers White more chances for a kingside attack. 10.0-0-0 ♘c6 11.♗e3 0-0 (it is probably better to delay castling and play 11...♖c8 first) 12.h4 ♘f6 (12...h5 13.g4 hxg4 14.h5 is dangerous) 13.h5!? (13.g4→) 13...♘xh5 14.♘xc6 bxc6



15.♖xh5 gxh5 16.♕xh5≌.

Black may also take back with the queen: 9...♕xd7 10.0-0-0

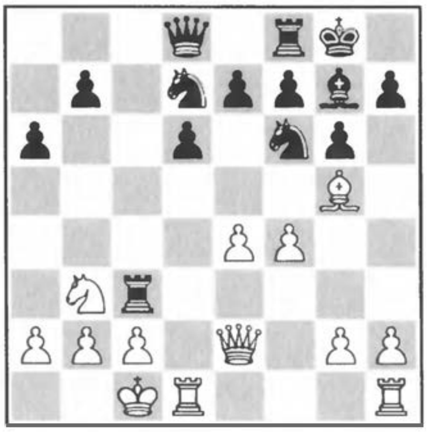
– 10...0-0 11.♗xf6 (11.f4!?) 11...♗xf6 12.♘d5 ♗xd4 13.♖xd4 ♘c6 14.♖d3±.

– 10...♘c6 11.♘xc6 ♕xc6 (11...bxc6 12.e5±) 12.♘d5±.

10.0-0-0

There is an interesting alternative at this stage: 10.h4!? ♖c8 11.♖h3 h5 12.0-0-0 0-0 13.♔b1 e6 14.♘b3 ♖c6 15.f4 ♕c7 16.♖hd3± b5 17.a3 ♖c8 18.♖1d2 ♖b8 19.♕d1 b4 20.axb4 ♖xb4 21.e5 ♘e8 22.♕f3 ♘b6 23.♗d8! ♕d7 24.♗xb6 ♖bxb6 25.g4→ A.Frolov-Palkövi, Siofok 1990.

10...0-0 11.f4 ♖c8 12.♘b3 ♖xc3



A standard exchange sacrifice in order to get counterplay. In the game White defends pawn c3, then builds his own play, proving that his chances are preferable.

13.bxc3 ♕c7 14.♖d3± e6

I think that 14...♘b6 15.♖hd1 (15.e5?! ♘fd5) 15...♘c4 would have kept more practical chances for Black. But not 15...♖c8 16.e5±.

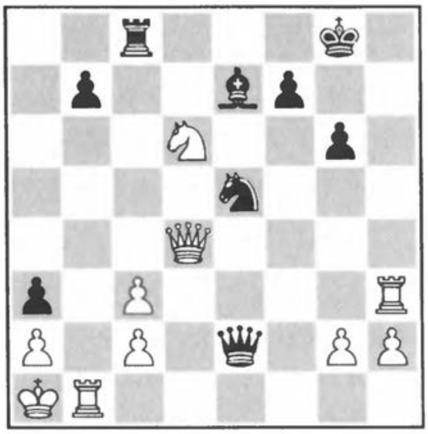
15.f5 ♘e5 16.♖h3 exf5 17.exf5 ♖c8 18.♖d1 ♕c6

18...a5 19.fxg6 hxg6 (19...fxg6 20.♕b5±) 20.♖d4±.

19.♗xf6 ♗xf6 20.♕f2 a5 21.fxg6 ♗g5+ 22.♔b1 hxg6 23.♕d4 a4

23...♕xg2 24.♖g3 ♕e2 25.♖xg5 ♘f3 26.♖xg6+ fxg6 27.♕xd6±.

24.♘d2 ♕b5+ 25.♔a1 a3 26.♖b1 ♕e2 27.♘e4 ♗e7 28.♘xd6+–



With precise play White has achieved a winning position.

28...♖d8 29.♕e4 ♕xe4 30.♘xe4 f5 31.♘f2 ♖d2 32.♘d3 ♗f6 33.♘xe5 ♗xe5 34.♖xb7 ♖xg2 35.♖e3 ♖g1+ 36.♖b1 ♖xb1+ 37.♔xb1 ♗xh2 38.c4

In spite of all efforts Black ends up in a technically lost position.

38...♔f7

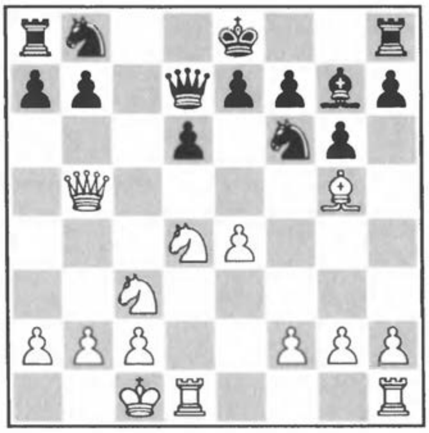
38...f4 39.♖f3 g5 40.c5 ♔f7 41.c6 ♔e7 42.♖d3 f3 43.♖xf3 ♔d6 44.♖xa3+–; 38...g5 39.c5 g4 40.c6 ♗c7 41.♖e8+ ♔f7 42.♖c8+–.

39.c5 g5 40.c6 g4 41.♔c1 ♗d6 42.♖c3 ♗c7 43.♔d1 f4 44.♔e2 ♔e6 45.♖d3 ♗b6 46.c4 f3+ 47.♔f1 ♗c7 48.c5 ♗b8 49.♔f2 ♗c7 50.♖d4 ♗b8 51.♖d8 ♗c7 52.♖d4 ♗b8 53.♖xg4 ♔d5 54.♖a4 ♔xc5 55.♖xa3 ♔xc6 56.♔xf3 ♗e5 57.♔e4 ♗c7 58.♔d4 ♗b6+ 59.♔c4 ♔b7 60.♔b5 ♗c7 61.♖h3 ♗b8 62.♖h7+ 1-0

☐ **Alvis Vitolinsh**
■ **Leonid Yurtaev**
Frunze 1979

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 g6 6.♗g5 ♗g7 7.♗b5+ ♗d7 8.♕e2 ♘c6

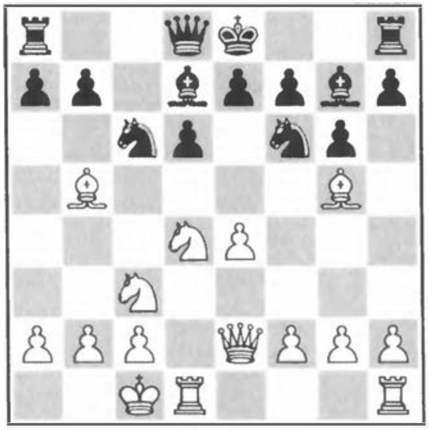
Exchanging on b5 brings no relief: 8...♗xb5 9.♕xb5+ ♕d7 10.0-0-0



Shabalov was twice successful from this position:

- 10...♘c6 11.♘b3 ♘e5 12.f4 ♘eg4 13.♕e2 ♕c7 14.h3 h6 15.♗h4 g5 16.♗e1+– Shabalov-Chehayeb, Las Vegas 1993.
- 10...a6 11.♕xd7+ ♘bxd7 12.f4 ♖c8 13.♖he1 h6 14.♗h4± g5 (14...0-0 15.e5) 15.♘f5! ♔f8 16.e5!± Shabalov-Leykekhman, Newark 1995.

9.0-0-0



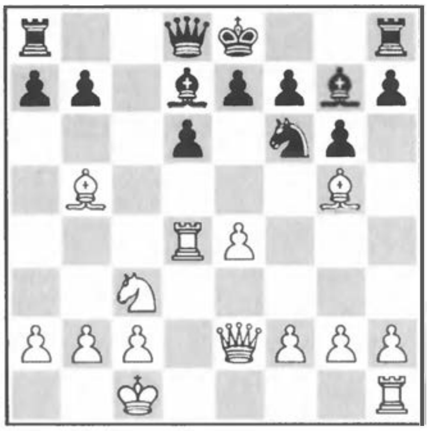
9...♘xd4

9...♖c8 10.♗xc6 (A.Schneider's recommendation of 10.♞xc6 bxc6 11.♗a6 ♖b8 12.e5 seems far from clear because of 12...♕a5!) 10...bxc6 11.f4 0-0 12.e5 dxe5 13.fxe5 ♘d5 14.♘xd5 cxd5 15.♖hf1! (the correct move.

It is instructive to see how in the next part White follows a 'dark-squared strategy', leaving opponent's light-squared bishop effectively without a job. 15.e6? fxe6 16.♘xe6 ♕b6! 17.♘xg7 ♖f2!∓ Ghinda-Sax, Malta ol 1980) 15...♖b8 16.c3 ♖b6 17.♖f2± a5 18.♕e3 a4 19.a3 ♕c7 20.♖e1 ♕c4 21.♔b1 ♕c5 22.♔a1± ♖fb8? 23.♘f5! ♕xe3 24.♘xe7+ ♔f8 25.♖xe3± Schula-Stoklasa, Nymburk 1997.

The best move is 9...0-0 which leads to the main line, see the next game.

10.♖xd4



It is amazing that here Black already faces serious problems.

10...♕a5

10...0-0 11.e5! ♘e8 (11...dxe5 12.♖xd7 ♘xd7 13.♖d1+–) 12.exd6+–; 10...h6 11.e5! hxg5 12.exf6 ♗xf6 13.♖xd6+–.

11.e5!± ♗xb5

11...dxe5 12.♖xd7 ♘xd7 13.♖d1 0-0-0 (13...♖d8 14.♕g4 f5 15.♕c4+–) 14.♗xe7±.

12.♕xb5+ ♕xb5 13.♘xb5 dxe5 14.♘c7+ ♔f8 15.♖b4 ♖c8

15...♖b8 16.♘a6±.

16.♖xb7 a5

White is also winning after the immediate 16...♘e4 17.♗e3 ♗f6 18.♖xa7 ♔g7 19.♖d1 ♘d6 20.g4 h6 21.b3 ♖hd8 22.c4 e4 23.c5 ♘e8 24.♖xd8 ♖xd8 25.♖a8 1-0 Lakos-Werner, Balatonbereny 1996.

17.♖d1 ♘e4

17...h6 18.♗e3 ♔g8 19.♘d5+–.

18.♗e3 ♘d6 19.♖a7 ♘c4 20.♗c5 ♗h6+ 21.♔b1 ♔g7

21...♘d2+ 22.♔a1 ♘e4 23.♗b6 ♖b8 24.♘d5 e6 25.♗c7+–.

22.♗xe7 ♖b8 23.♘e6+ ♔g8 24.♖d8+ ♖xd8 25.♘xd8 ♔g7 1-0

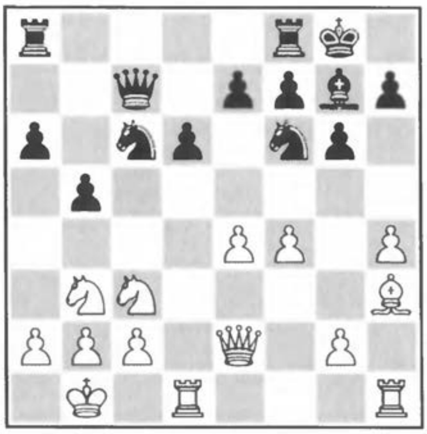
☐ **Alvis Vitolinsh**
■ **Erling Mortensen**
Riga 1981

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 g6 6.♗g5 ♗g7 7.♗b5+ ♗d7 8.♕e2 ♘c6

This is the main line. Let us consider kingside castling too. 8...0-0 9.0-0-0 ♕a5 (9...♗xb5 10.♕xb5 ♘bd7 11.f4 ♕b6 12.♖he1 ♕xb5 13.♘dxb5 a6 14.♘c7 ♖ac8 15.♘7d5 ♖fe8 16.e5 dxe5 17.fxe5 ♘xd5 18.♘xd5 ♔f8 19.e6± Vitolinsh-Itkis, Moscow 1983) and now:

A) Less clear is 10.f4 ♗g4 (10...♘c6? 11.♘b3 ♕b6 12.♗xf6 ♗xf6 13.♘d5± Shabalov-Vicary, Philadelphia 1993) 11.♘f3 ♘h5 Vitolinsh-Smirin, Kuldiga 1987.

B) 10.♔b1! a6 (10...♘c6?! is answered by 11.♘b3) 11.♗xd7 ♕xg5 (11...♘bxd7 12.f4±) 12.h4 ♕a5 13.♗h3 ♘c6 14.♘b3 ♕c7 15.f4 b5 (15...e6 16.g4 b5 17.h5±)



B1) 16.g4! White has the advantage after this advance: 16...b4 (16...h5? 17.♘d5; 16...♘a5? 17.e5) 17.♘d5 ♘xd5 18.exd5 ♘a5 19.♘xa5 ♕xa5 20.h5±.

B2) 16.♘d5 16...♘xd5 17.exd5 ♘a5 18.♘xa5 ♕xa5

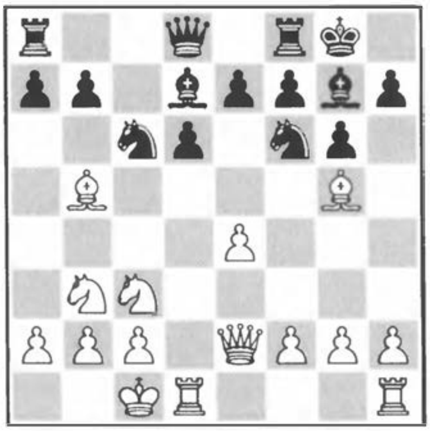
B21) 19.f5!? ♕b4 20.c3 ♕xh4 (20...♗xc3 21.a3 ♕b3 22.♖d3) 21.fxg6 hxg6∞.

B22) 19.♕f3!?.

B23) 19.♕d2 ♕xd2 20.♖xd2 and a draw was agreed in Blodstein-Fedorov, Voskresensk 1993. I believe that even after the exchange of queens White has the slightly better chances.

9.0-0-0 0-0 10.♗xc6

White bravely accepts the challenge to enter the complications. But this is not the only way. A good alternative is 10.♘b3.



White plans the standard attack with h4-h5. If Black stops it by playing ...h5, then White will continue as in the Yugoslav attack – f3 and g4. It is worth mentioning that here White has certain advantages in comparison to the Yugoslav Attack: the bishops on g5 and b5 exert pressure on Black's position, which together with the advance e4-e5 can be really dangerous for Black. 10...♖e8 (10...♕c7? 11.♗xf6 exf6 12.♘d5± Anka-A.Horvath, Balatonbereny 1993; 10...a6?! 11.♗xc6 ♗xc6? 12.e5±) 11.h4 a6?! 12.♗xc6 bxc6 13.h5 ♕b6 (13...♘xh5 14.♖xh5!? gxh5 15.♕xh5=∞) 14.hxg6 fxg6 15.e5 ♘d5 16.♘xd5 cxd5 17.e6 ♗c6 18.♕f3 ♖f8 19.♕h3 h5 20.♗e3 ♕b4 21.♖d4 ♗xd4 22.♗xd4 ♖f4 23.♕g3 ♖g4 24.♕xg4 1-0 Martinez-Calzetta Ruiz, Palma de Mallorca 1992.

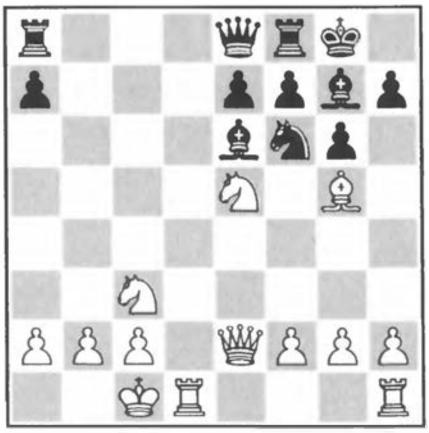
10...bxc6 11.e5 dxe5

Here Black has no choice and must sacrifice a pawn. 11...♕a5? 12.♘b3 happened in several games. Black can resign, since he is losing a piece.

12.♘xc6 ♕e8

Again forced, as 12...♕c7? 13.♘xe7+ ♔h8 14.♗xf6 ♗xf6 15.♘ed5 is just bad: 15...♗g5+ 16.f4 ♗xf4+ 17.♘xf4 exf4 18.♕e7 ♖fd8 19.♘d5 ♕b7 20.♕f6+ ♔g8 21.♘e7+ 1-0 Geldiev-Atabaev, Ashkhabad 2000 (21...♔f8 22.♖de1 and mate on h8 follows).

13.♘xe5 ♗e6



This is an important position for the whole 6.♗g5 line. Black sacrificed a pawn and has long-term compensation in the form of open files on the queenside, which is usually enough in the Dragon to get good counterplay. Nevertheless, the position of Black's pieces is far from optimal yet, and White has good control over the central files. All this makes the evaluation very unclear, with chances for both sides. I think that

White has objective reasons to think that he should be able to defend and keep the extra pawn. White's main task is to trade queens. Sometimes even after returning the pawn and trading queens White will have the advantage in the endgame. This is due to either a better control over the central squares, or the better position of White's king which can quickly support the queenside pawn majority.

14.♖he1

The best continuation for White. He must bring all pieces into play.

14...♖c8

Bad is 14...♖d8?!, because after 15.♕b5 White achieves his aim: 15...♕xb5 16.♘xb5 ♖xd1+ 17.♖xd1 a6? 18.♘c7 ♗f5 19.♘c6+– Medvegy-Popescu, San Agustin 1997. More interesting is 14...♕c8!? 15.f3 (15.♕b5 ♕c7 16.♕c6 ♕a5 17.♕b5 ♕c7 18.♕c6 ♕a5 19.♕b5 ½-½ Vokarev-Fedorov, Krasnodar 1998) 15...♖b8 16.♖d3 ♕b7 17.b3 ♖fc8 18.g4 ♕b4 19.♕d2 ♕a3+ 20.♔b1 a5 21.♕c1 ♕b4 22.♗d2 ♕c5 23.♘a4 ♕b5 24.♘c3 ♕c5 25.♘a4 ♕b5 26.♕a3 ♘d5 27.f4 ♘b4 28.♖c3∞ f6? 29.♘xg6 hxg6 30.♖xe6 ♕d5 31.♖e2± Kiss-Wukits, Aschach 1992.

15.♕a6

Mortensen wrote in his comments that White is slightly better here.

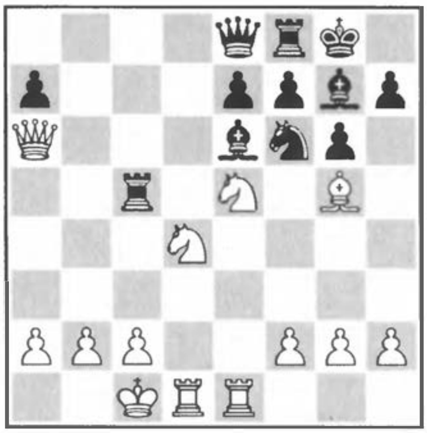
Serious attention deserved 15.♕b5. For instance:

A) 15...♕xb5 16.♘xb5 a6 (16...♖c5 17.♘xa7±) 17.♘d4±.

B) 15...♘g4 16.♘xg4 ♗xg4 17.♕xe8 ♖fxe8 18.f3 ♗xc3 (18...♗e6 19.♘d5) 19.♖xe7 ♖xe7 20.♗xe7 ♗e6! 21.bxc3 ♗xa2 22.♖d7±.

15...♖c7 16.♘b5 ♖c5 17.♘d4

The present game is the only one available with this position, therefore it is impossible to give a final verdict. More practical tests are needed. In case you find the present position too complicated, please keep in mind that there were several playable alternatives available earlier on (10.♘b3, 15.♕b5).



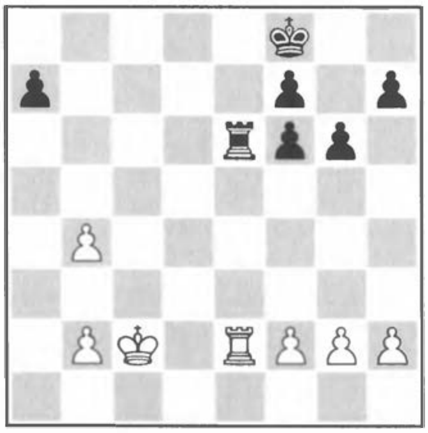
17...♗d5 18.♘b3 ♗xb3 19.axb3 ♕b8 20.♗xf6 ♗xf6 21.♘d7 ♕xb3 22.♘xf6+ exf6 23.♖e2 ♖fc8

23...♖b8 24.♕xf6±.

24.♕xc8+ ♖xc8 25.♖d8+ ♖xd8

25...♔g7 26.♖xc8 again White has some advantage, according to Mortensen.

26.cxb3 ♔f8 27.♔c2 ♖d6 28.b4 ♖e6



29.♖xe6??

An incredible blunder. After 29.♖d2 White is slightly better, though a draw is the most likely outcome.

29...fxe6–+ 30.♔d3 ♔e7 31.♔c4 ♔d6 32.f4 h6 33.h4 h5 34.b5 e5 35.fxe5+ fxe5 36.b4 ♔e6 37.♔c5 ♔f5

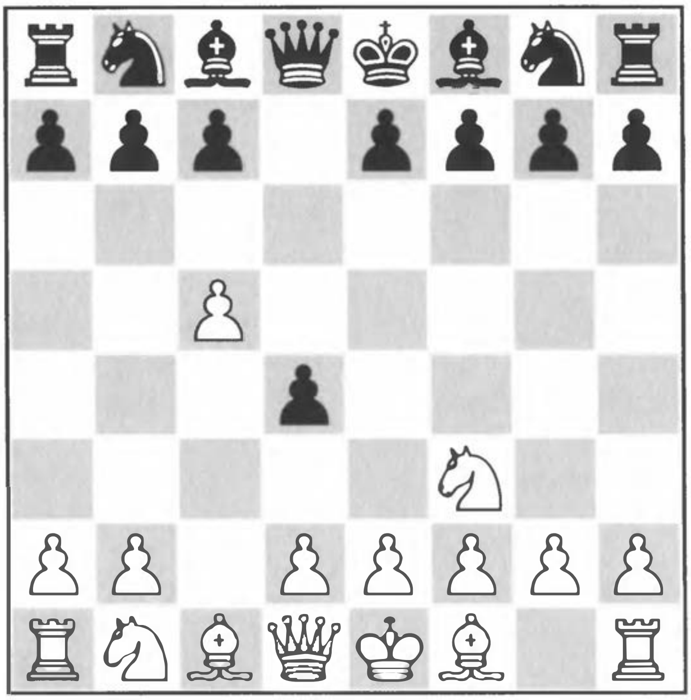
38.♔d5 e4 39.♔d4 ♔f4 40.b6 axb6 41.b5 0-1

The general impression from this game is that although the normal result should have been a draw, Black was the side fighting for it. The variation from the last game represents in my opinion the best way for Black to meet 6.♗g5, which actually means that 6.♗g5 certainly deserves more attention from White players. Indeed, not all your opponents will be willing to play a positional pawn sacrifice right from the very beginning of the game. Thus, in practice, you may well encounter some of the other, less promising, lines for Black.

CHAPTER 15

Mihai Grünberg

It is Better Playing White



NIC KEY RE 13.1

1.♘f3 d5 2.c4 d4 3.c5!?

1.♘f3 d5 2.c4 d4 3.c5!?

The story of this variation is quite simple. It was born out of a natural desire to play something new. Something that had not been analysed by the theory sharks, who are eager to push their analysis to the 25th move and beyond. In Stefan Bücker's book *Der Geier: Ein Hypermodernes Verteidigungskonzept gegen 1.d4* (Franckh, Stuttgart 1986) I found the following original variation: 1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 c5 3.d5 c4!?. Bücker called this line the *Habichd* ('gotcha') its main idea being to encircle the d5-pawn to win it later on. I played this line successfully with Black. Later on I decided that it would be even stronger to play this idea with White!

The idea of playing openings with reverse colours comes from the brilliant Danish grandmaster Bent Larsen. There is a complex and interesting philosophy behind playing lines with the advantage of an extra tempo. Unfortunately, such an approach does not guarantee automatic success. Unless your opponent blindly plays the main line as he would play with reversed colours. Be that as it may, the line we will examine here will certainly present your opponent with plenty of practical problems to solve over the board.

□ **Mihai Grünberg**
■ **Cristian Popescu**
Romania tt 1998

1.♘f3 d5 2.c4 d4 3.c5!?

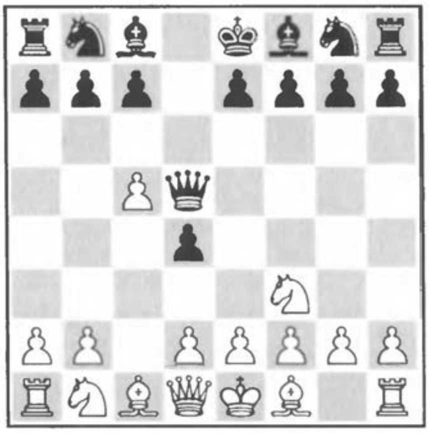
The idea of this move is to block the c5 square for a natural defender of the d4-pawn, and to free the c4-square for the knight or bishop. Approximately the same reasoning lies behind the move 3.b4.

However, in my opinion Black is OK after both 3...c5, and 3...g6 followed by c5. Two examples by Predrag Nikolic from the Bosna tournament:

– 3.b4 c5 4.e3 dxe3 5.fxe3 cxb4 6.d4 g6!? 7.♗d3 ♗g7 8.0-0 ♘h6! 9.♘bd2 0-0 10.♕e2 ♗f5 11.♘e4 ♘c6 12.♗b2 ♕c7 13.h3 e5∓ Seirawan-Nikolic Sarajevo 1987.

– 3.b4 g6 4.g3 ♗g7 5.d3 e5 6.♗g2 ♘e7 7.0-0 0-0 8.♘bd2 a5 9.b5 c5! 10.bxc6ep ♘exc6 11.♖b1 ♘a6 12.♘e1 ♖e8 13.♘c2 ♘ab4 14.♖b2 ♗f8 15.a3 ♘a6∓ Dizdarevic-Nikolic, Sarajevo 1987.

3...♕d5

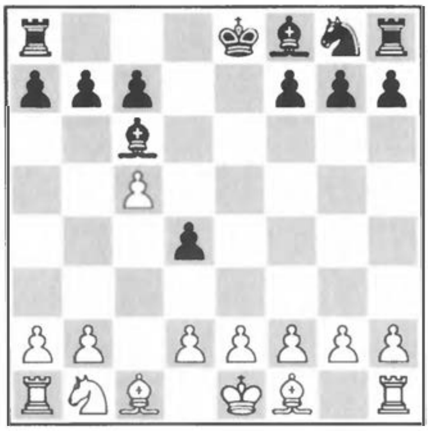


Attacking the c5-pawn and supporting e5. There are plenty of alternatives at this stage:

A) 3...♘a6 4.♕a4+ (4.c6!? ♘c5 5.♕c2 ♕d5 6.b4±) 4...c6 5.♕xd4 ♕xd4 6.♘xd4 ♘xc5 7.♘f3 g6 8.d4 ♘e4 9.♘c3 ♘gf6 10.♗f4 ♗g7 11.♗e5 0-0 12.e3 and White is slightly better.

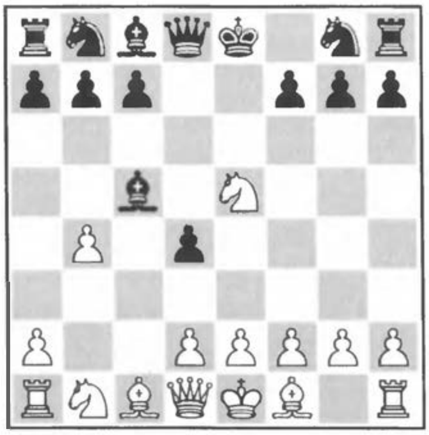
B) 3...c6 4.♕c2! ♕d5 5.e3 (5.e4!? dxe3ep 6.fxe3 ♗f5 7.d3 ♗g4 8.♘bd2 and White is slightly better) 5...♗f5 (5...e5 6.b4±) 6.♕c4 d3 (6...dxe3 7.fxe3 ♘f6 8.♘c3 ♕xc4 9.♗xc4 e6 10.d4 with equal play) 7.♕b4↑ ♘d7 (7...♕d7 8.♘e5 ♕c7 9.♗xd3±) 8.♕xb7 ♖b8 9.♕xa7 e5 10.♘c3 ♕xc5 11.♕xc5 ♗xc5 12.♘h4 with a winning position.

C) 3...♘c6 4.♕a4 ♗d7!? (4...♕d5 transposes to the main line) 5.♘xd4 e5 6.♘xc6 ♗xc6 7.♕c4 ♕d4 8.♕xd4 exd4

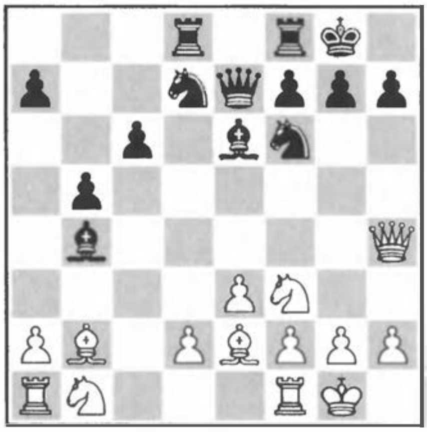


9.b4 a5 10.♗b2 axb4 11.♗xd4 ♘h6 12.a3 bxa3 13.♖xa3 ♖xa3 14.♘xa3 ♘f5 15.e3 ♘xd4 16.exd4= b6 17.♘c4 bxc5 18.♘e5 ♗d5 19.♗b5+ ♔e7 20.dxc5 ♔e6 21.♘d3.

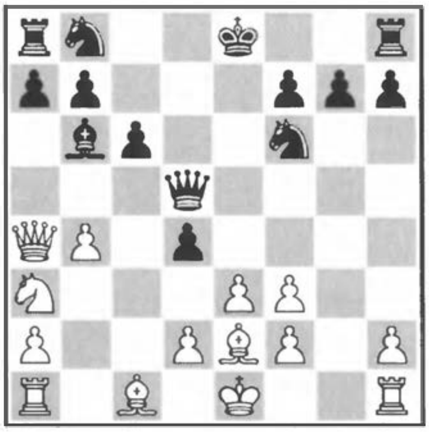
D) 3...e5! 4.♘xe5 ♗xc5 5.b4! (5.♕a4+ ♘d7 6.e3 ♘f6∓ is less promising for White) when Black has a choice:



D1) 5...♗e7 6.♕a4+ c6 7.♗b2 ♘f6 8.♘f3 b5 9.♕b3 ♗e6 10.♕d3 ♗xb4 11.♕xd4 ♕e7 12.♕h4 ♘bd7 13.e3 ♖d8 14.♗e2 0-0 15.0-0, with equality.



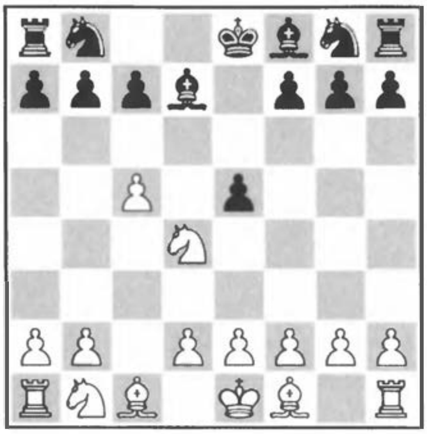
D2) 5...♗b6 6.♕a4+ (6.♘c4? ♘f6 7.♗b2 0-0 8.a3 ♗e6 9.♘xb6 axb6∓; 6.a4!?) 6...c6 (6...♘d7 7.e3 ♘f6 8.♗b2 0-0 9.♘f3 ♖e8 10.♗e2 ♘e5 11.♘xd4 ♗g4 12.♘f3 ♗xf3 13.gxf3±) 7.♘f3 ♗g4 (7...♘f6 8.♘a3 0-0 9.e3 ♗g4 10.♗e2 ♘bd7 11.♘c4 ♖e8 12.♗b2∞) 8.♘a3 ♘f6 9.e3 ♗xf3 10.gxf3 ♕d5 11.♗e2



And now 11...♘bd7 12.♕b3 with equal play, or 11...♘g4 12.♘c4 ♗c7 13.e4 ♕d8 14.fxg4 d3 15.♗b2 dxe2 16.♕c2, unclear.

4.♕a4+ ♘c6

4...♗d7!? (perhaps the move which solves Black's problems in this variation) 5.♕xd4 ♕xd4 6.♘xd4 e5



A) 7.♘c2 ♗xc5 8.b4 ♗d6 9.♘c3 ♘f6 10.a3 c6 11.g3 a5 12.bxa5 ♘a6 13.♘a4, with compensation.

B) 7.♘b3 ♘a6 (7...a5!) 8.d4 exd4 9.e3 ♘xc5 10.♘xd4 ♘f6 11.♘c3 0-0-0 12.♗c4 ♘fe4, unclear.

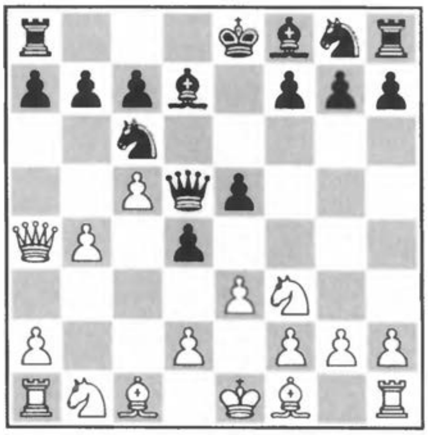
C) 7.♘f3 ♘c6 8.♘c3 ♗xc5 9.d3 ♘ge7 10.♗d2 f6 11.♖c1, with equality.

5.b4 e5

The most natural move, 5...♗g4 6.♘a3 e5 7.h3 (7.♘b5!? cutting off the option to castle queenside, also deserves attention) 7...♗xf3 (7...♗h5 8.g4 ♗g6 9.♗g2∞) 8.exf3! with a good game for White after ♗c4, 0-0, f4.

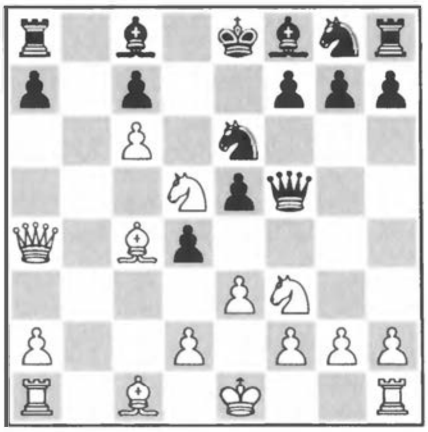
6.e3 ♗d7

Inferior is 6...a6?! 7.b5 ♕xc5 8.♗a3 ♘b4 9.bxa6+ c6 10.♕xb4 ♕xb4 11.♗xb4 ♗xb4 12.♘xe5±; 6...♗g4 7.♗e2 ♗xf3 (7...0-0-0 8.♗b2) 8.♗xf3 e4 9.♗e2 d3 10.♗d1 planning 0-0, f3, ♗b2, and White has a good game.



7.b5 ♕xc5

7...♘d8?! 8.♗c4 ♕e4 9.♘c3! ♕f5 (9...dxc3?? 10.♗xf7+ ♘xf7 11.♕xe4+−) 10.♘d5 ♘e6 11.c6 bxc6 12.bxc6 ♗c8



13.0-0 dxe3? (13...♘e7 14.exd4 ♘xd5 15.♗xd5 exd4 16.♗xe6+−) 14.fxe3 ♗d6 15.♗a3 ♗xa3 16.♘d4! ♕xf1+ 17.♖xf1 ♗d6 18.♘b5 ♘e7 19.♘xd6+ cxd6 20.♘b6 1-0 Grünberg-Rahman, Cairo 2000.

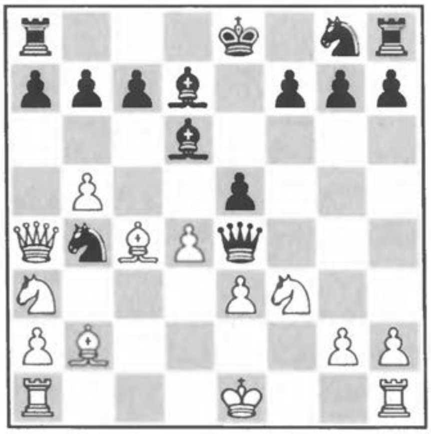
8.♘a3!

Moving the knight to the edge is stronger than 8.♗b2 dxe3 9.bxc6 ♗xc6 10.d4 exf2+ 11.♔xf2♗xa4 12.dxc5♗xc5+ 13.♔e1 f6∞.

8...♘b4

Here 8...♕b4 is met by 9.♕c2. Alternatively, 8...e4 leads to an interesting position after 9.bxc6 ♗xc6 10.♗b5 exf3 11.♗xc6+ ♕xc6 12.♕xc6+ bxc6 13.gxf3⩲.

9.♗b2 dxe3 10.fxe3 ♗d6 11.d4 ♕d5 12.♗c4 ♕e4



White has won some useful tempi to develop. Now, however, the queen appears to have taken up a threatening position. White's next move demonstrates that the first player is still in control.

13.0-0-0! ♘h6

13...♕xe3+ 14.♔b1 e4 15.♖he1 ♕f4 16.♘e5±.

14.♖he1 0-0 15.♕b3 exd4

Or 15...♗g4 16.dxe5 ♗c5 17.♗d4 ♗e7±.

16.♖xd4 ♕e7

Stronger is 16...♕g6 17.♖xd6 ♘xa2+! (17...♕xd6?! 18.♕c3 ♘f5 19.♖d1 ♕e7 20.e4+−) 18.♕xa2 cxd6∞.

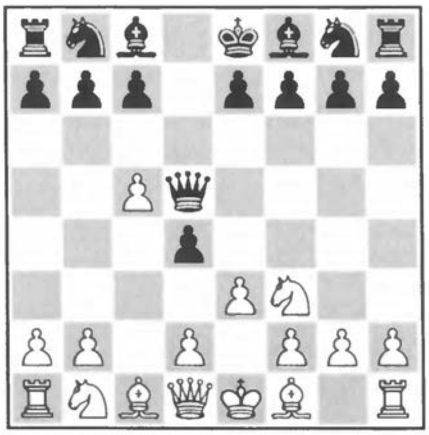
17.♕c3 ♘f5 18.♖g4

Black resigned.

When the joy of this victory had subsided, I remained worried because of the variation starting with 4...♗d7, which seems to solve all problems for Black.

Trying to improve the variation I have found a line which in my opinion leads to a complicated fight still offering White good chances. So at the fourth move there could follow instead of 4.♕a4+,

4.e3!?

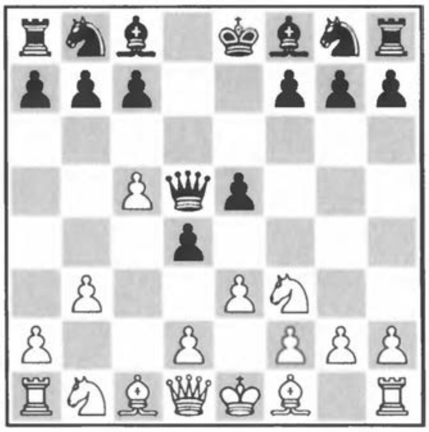


This leaves Black the following options:

A) 4...dxe3 5.fxe3 ♕xc5 6.d4 ♕h5 7.♘c3 ♘f6 8.e4 c6 9.♗e2 with a strong initiative for the pawn.

B) 4...♘c6 5.exd4 ♘xd4 6.♕a4+ ♘c6 7.d4 and White has the advantage.

C) 4...e5 and now the strange move 5.b3!?



C1) 5...♗xc5 6.♗c4 ♕d6 7.♘g5 ♘h6 8.♘e4 ♕e7 9.♘xc5 ♕xc5 10.♗a3 offering nice prospects to White.

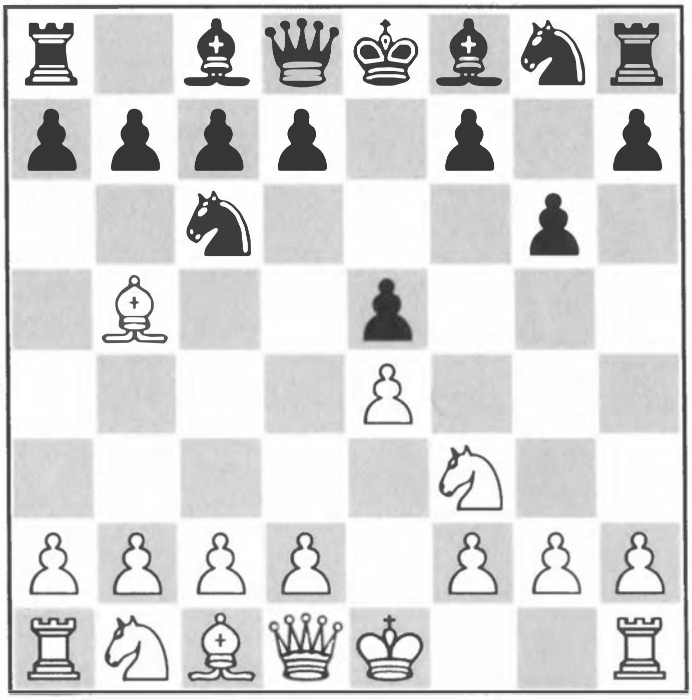
C2) 5...♕xc5 6.♗a3, followed by ♗xf8, leading to an unbalanced and complicated position where White has good chances.

The conclusion would be that 4.♕a4 is the right reply to the move order 3...♘c6 and 4...♕d5. When Black plays 3...♕d5 the reaction 4.e3 is more promising. Of course it is difficult to draw a final conclusion, as long as there have been no top grandmasters who have employed this variation. Anyhow it is clear that this SOS line leaves a lot of room for improvising, personal analysis, and stands for a genuine confrontation of ideas.

CHAPTER 16

Glenn Flear

The Solid but Tricky Fianchetto Spanish



NIC KEY RL 3.1

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 g6!?

One of the best qualities of the regular Spanish is its solidity. Classical development plus a strong point on e5 give Black a solid game, even if White has more options.

One of the downsides is that White can meet 3...a6 with 4.♗xc6. The Exchange Variation is acknowledged by most as pretty dull and against sensible White play it's hard for Black to generate winning chances. Of course 4.♗a4 is more popular, but navigating all that theory can be hard work and even then getting full equality is no easy matter.

An interesting try for Black is 3...g6!? where Black threatens to develop his king's bishop to g7. In a number of lines where ♗xc6 gets played Black gets a more dynamic game than in analogous positions from the pure-exchange variations.

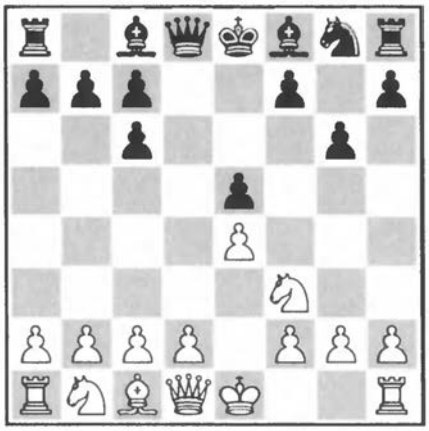
To hope to punish his opponent White would really like to play more vigorously in the centre before Black can complete his development. With this in mind the sharper lines with 4.d4 are critical and sometimes dangerous... but for both players!

In my opinion, Black's 'Fianchetto Spanish' sets White new problems and it's not that easy for him to get anything concrete out of the opening. Perhaps the best try after 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 g6 is to play 4.c3 a6 5.♗c4! with some chances for White to obtain typical Spanish-pressure.

Play through the following lines and see if you can be tempted to put your king's bishop on g7!

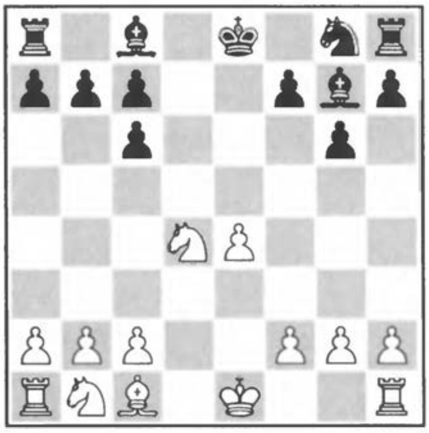
☐ **Yakov Geller**
■ **Evgenia Ovod**
Novaya Ladoga 2001

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 g6 4.♗xc6 dxc6



5.d3

Just like in the regular Exchange Variation White should not take on e5 (because of 5...♕d4). Likewise, nothing is gained by immediately creating the kingside majority with 5.d4. After 5...exd4 6.♕xd4 ♕xd4 7.♘xd4 ♗g7



the bishop is nicely placed and Black has an easier game than in many lines of the Exchange Variation. 8.♘b3 (or 8.♘e2 ♗d7 9.♘bc3 0-0-0 10.♗e3 f5= 11.0-0-0, ½-½ Komliakov-Malaniuk, Krasnodar 2001)

A) A simple way to develop harmoniously is 8...b6 9.c3 (White presumably didn't like the idea of 9.♘c3 being met by 9...♗xc3+!?) 9...♗b7 10.♗f4 0-0-0 11.♘1d2 ♘f6 12.f3 ♘d7 13.♖d1 ♘e5, Bazan-Soppe, La Falda 1977.

B) 8...♘f6 9.♘c3 ♘d7!? (also interesting is 9...0-0 10.f3 ♘e8 11.♗d2 ♘d6 and the c4-square is beckoning) 10.♗d2 (10.♗f4 ♘e5 11.0-0-0 0-0 12.f3 b6 leaves Black solid and the knight on e5 is nicely installed) 10...a5 11.a4 ♘b6!? 12.♘d1?! (too passive – instead, 12.♗f4! is best) 12...♘c4 13.♗c1 f5 and Black was already better in Kerkay-Lein, St Paul 2000.

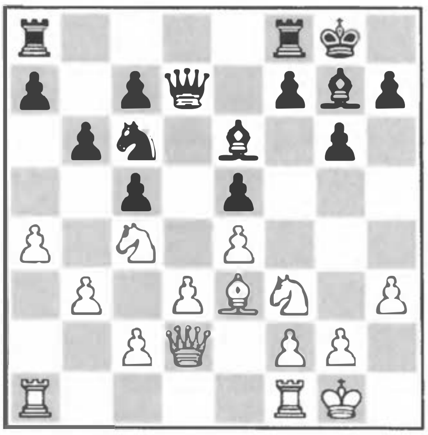
5...♗g7 6.0-0

The immediate 6.♘bd2 doesn't give Black time to get his knight to c6. However, after 6...♘h6 7.♘c4 f6 8.♕e2 0-0 9.h4 ♗e6 10.h5 g5 11.♘e3 ♖e8 12.♘h2 ♕d7 13.♗d2 ♗f8 14.♕f3 ♔g7 15.a3 ♗c5 16.♖d1 ♖ad8, Vasiukov-Mi.Tseitlin, Budapest 1989, Black had a dynamic position.

6...c5 7.♘bd2 ♘e7 8.♘c4 ♘c6

Black already has comfortable development.

9.a4 0-0 10.h3 ♗e6 11.♗e3 b6 12.♕d2 ♕d7 13.b3



13...f5!

Taking the initiative.

14.exf5 gxf5 15.♗h6 f4 16.♗xg7 ♕xg7 17.♔h2 ♗d5 18.♕e2?

Here 18.♖g1 holds things together for the moment, but after 18...♖ae8 19.♖ae1 ♖e6 Black has pressure.

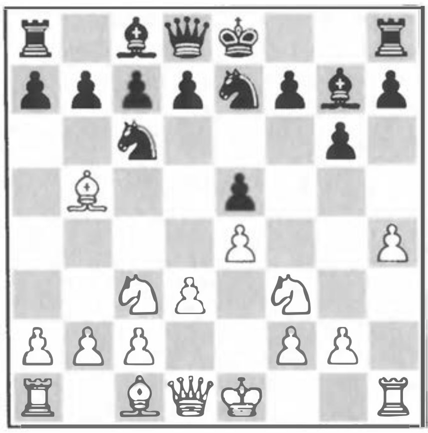
18...♘d4! 19.♕xe5 ♗xf3 20.♕xg7+ ♔xg7 21.gxf3 ♘xc2 22.♖g1+ ♔h8 23.♖ac1 ♘d4

And White's pawns are a total shambles.

24.♖g4 ♖ae8 25.a5 ♘xb3 26.♖b1 ♘d4 27.axb6 axb6 28.♖a1 ♘xf3+ 29.♔g2 ♘e1+ 30.♔f1 ♘xd3 31.♖a7 ♖e1+ 32.♔g2 f3+ 33.♔h2 ♘xf2 34.♖h4 ♖g8 0-1

☐ **José Capablanca**
■ **W. Cole**
London simul 1913

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 g6 4.♘c3 ♗g7 5.d3 ♘ge7 6.h4!?



A typical reaction for some folk against fianchetto-developments.

6...d5!

Central action is the right answer!

6...♘d4 7.h5 c6 8.♗a4 d6 9.♗g5 h6 10.♗xe7 ♕xe7 11.hxg6 fxg6 12.♘xd4 exd4 13.♘e2 ♕g5 14.♕d2 turned out in White's favour in Conlon-Trent, Scarborough 2001.

7.exd5

Pushing the h-pawn – 7.h5 – is well-met by 7...♗g4!?.

7...♘xd5 8.♗g5 f6 9.♗d2 ♘xc3 10.bxc3 ♗d7 11.h5 ♘e7 12.♗c4

Otherwise 12.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 13.h6 ♗f8 14.♖b1 0-0-0 is fine for Black. Note that the h6-pawn is in danger of eventually being rounded up.

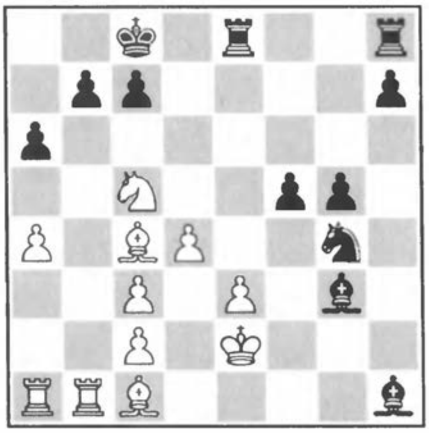
12...♗c6 13.♕e2 ♕d6 14.a4 0-0-0 15.h6 ♗f8 16.0-0 ♘f5 17.♖fb1 ♘xh6

The great Capablanca can't find any compensation.

18.♗e3 a6 19.d4 e4 20.♘d2 f5 21.g3 ♘g4 22.♗f4 ♕f6 23.♘b3 g5!

Mr Cole's technique is convincing and he now wins without any problems.

24.♗c1 ♖e8 25.♔f1 ♕h6 26.♔e1 ♕h1+ 27.♕f1 e3 28.fxe3 ♗d6 29.♕xh1 ♗xg3+ 30.♔e2 ♗xh1 31.♘c5



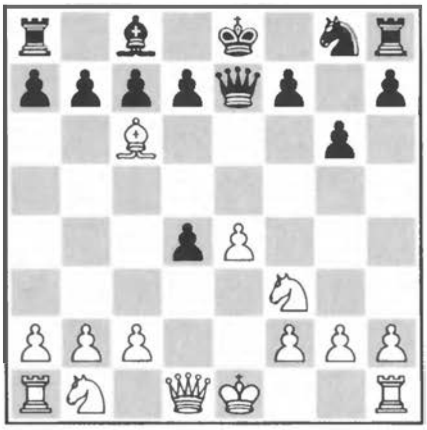
31...f4!

The big f-pawn is more important than the exchange.

32.♗e6+ ♖xe6 33.♘xe6 f3+ 34.♔d3 ♘f2+ 35.♔c4 ♘e4 36.♔d3 f2 37.♗a3 ♗g2 38.d5 h5 39.♗e7 ♖g8 40.c4 ♗e5 41.♘d4 ♗xd4 42.♔xd4 ♘d2 43.♖d1 f1♕ 44.♖xf1 ♘xf1 45.e4 h4 0-1

☐ **Anna Zozulia**
■ **Julian Radulski**
Marseille 2004

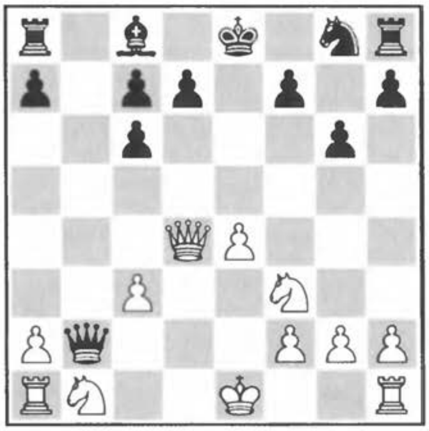
1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 g6 4.d4 exd4 5.♗g5 ♗e7 6.♗xe7 ♕xe7 7.♗xc6



7...♕b4+!?

The main line continues 7...dxc6 8.♕xd4 ♘f6 9.♘c3 ♗g4 10.♘d2 c5 with a reasonable game, but the text is more ambitious.

8.c3 ♕xb2 9.♕xd4 bxc6!



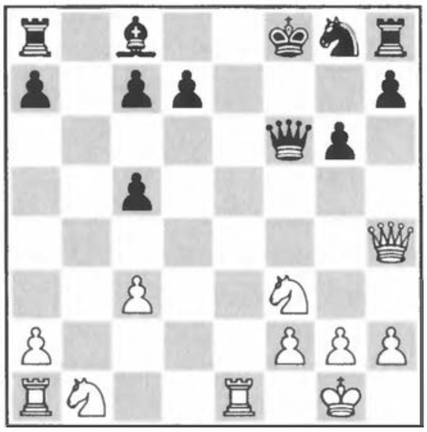
Far stronger than 9...♕xa1? as after 10.0-0 f6 11.e5 dxc6 12.exf6 White has a killing attack.

10.0-0

10.♕xh8?? gets mated after 10...♕c1+ 11.♔e2 ♗a6+ 12.c4 ♗xc4 mate.

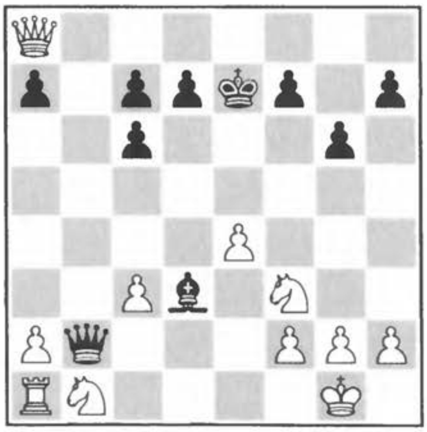
10...♗a6

Also worthy of further tests is 10...f6, e.g. 11.e5 (if 11.♘bd2 then 11...♕b6) 11...♕b6 12.♕h4 c5 13.exf6 ♔f8 14.♖e1 ♕xf6



15.♕c4 (after 15.♕e4 ♖b8 16.♕e8+ ♔g7 17.♘bd2 Black simply develops with 17...♘h6) 15...d6 16.♘bd2 ♗f5 17.♖e3 ♖e8 18.♖xe8+♔xe8 19.♕a4+ ♔d820.♖e1 ♘e7 21.c4 g5 22.♘b3 ♖f8 23.♕xa7 g4 Szewczyk-Ziemacki, cr 1998, and Black was on top.

11.♕xh8 ♗xf1 12.♕xg8+ ♔e7 13.♕xa8 ♗d3



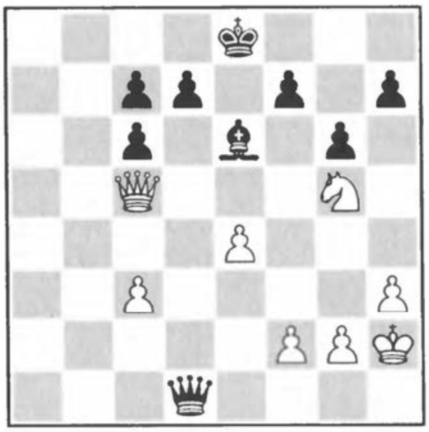
Black has a rook and piece less, but because of White's back-rank weakness he wins all the material back and even comes out a pawn up.

14.h3 ♕xa1 15.♕xa7 ♗xb1 16.♕d4

♗xa2+ 17.♔h2 ♗e6

The Black queen is out of play, so White should use her extra time to win back the pawn and just about equalize. Nevertheless Black's opening idea has been a clear success.

18.♕c5+ ♔e8 19.♘g5 ♕d1



20.e5?

After 20.♘xh7 ♕d6+ 21.♕xd6 cxd6 22.♘g5 ♗c4 the advantage of bishop over knight is rather nominal and a draw seems likely.

20...♕d5 21.♕e3 h5 22.♘h7 ♔d8 23.♘f6 ♕a5 24.♕d4 ♔c8 25.f4 ♕a2 26.♕c5 ♗d5 27.♕f8+ ♔b7 28.♕b4+ ♔a6!

Hiding from checks and forcing a very promising queen ending.

29.♘xd5 ♕xd5 30.♕a4+ ♔b7 31.♕b4+ ♕b5 32.♕e7 ♕c4 33.g3

33.♕xd7 is also hopeless after 33...♕xf4+ 34.♔h1 ♕c1+ 35.♔h2 ♕xc3 36.♕xf7 ♕xe5+ 37.♔h1 ♕e1+ 38.♔h2 ♕b1 and the forward c-pawn is ready to advance.

33...♕e2+ 34.♔g1 ♕d1+ 35.♔h2 ♕d2+ 36.♔h1 ♕d5+ 37.♔h2 c5 38.c4 ♕d2+ 39.♔h1 ♕e1+ 40.♔g2 ♕e2+ 41.♔g1 ♕xc4 42.♔h2

Or 42.♕xd7 ♕d4+.

42...♕a2+ 43.♔g1 ♕d5 44.♔f2 c4 45.♕b4+ ♔c6 46.♕a4+ ♔b6 47.♕b4+ ♕b5 48.♕d2 c3 0-1

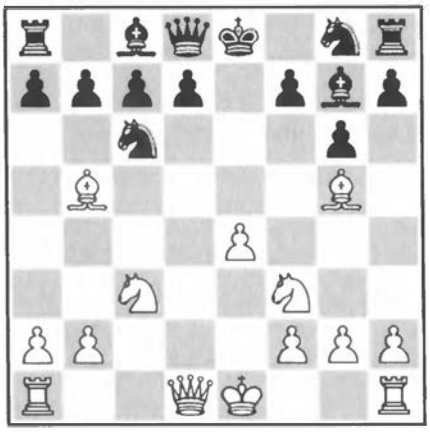
White resigned as 49.♕xc3 is met by 49...♕c5+.

☐ **Devaki Prasad**
■ **Vasily Smyslov**
Calcutta 1995

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 g6 4.d4 exd4 5.c3

A dangerous Gambit line recommended by Khalifman. However, if Black is prepared he can obtain a good position, read on...

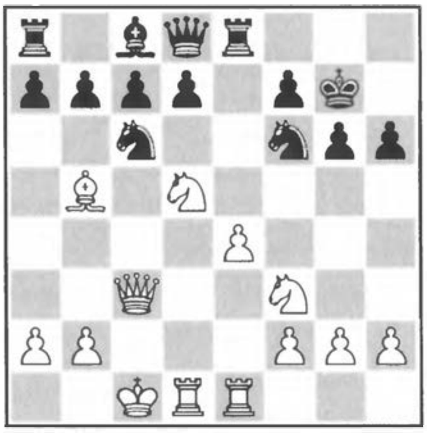
5...dxc3 6.♘xc3 ♗g7 7.♗g5



7...f6?!

Black does best to avoid this move. Instead, moving either knight to e7 is playable, e.g. 7...♘ce7 8.0-0 (as this doesn't seem very effective perhaps White should consider 8.♗a4!? or 8.♕d2) 8...h6 9.♗h4 g5 (also possible is 9...c6 10.♗e2 g5 11.♗g3 d5) 10.♗g3 ♘f6 (10...c6!?) 11.h4 g4 12.♘d4 0-0?! (I prefer 12...a6 13.♗e2 d6) 13.e5♘h5 14.♕xg4♘xg3 15.♕xg3 d6 16.exd6 ♕xd6 17.♕xd6 cxd6 18.♖ad1 ♘g6 with equal chances, Kalygin-Romanov, Tula 2003.

Or 7...♘ge7 8.♘d5 h6 9.♗f6 ♗xf6 10.♘xf6+ ♔f8 11.♕d2 (threatening to come to c3 with a decisive effect, so Black must do something about the intrusive knight) 11...♘g8! 12.♘d5 (naturally White tries to keep the pressure on) 12...♞f6 13.♕c3 ♔g7 14.0-0-0 ♖e8 15.♖he1



White has a lead in development and an annoying pin for the pawn, but Black can escape with my suggestion 15...d6! 16.♗xc6 (16.e5 can be diffused safely with 16...♘xd5 17.♖xd5 ♔g8) 16...bxc6 17.♕xc6 (17.♘f4 also requires the calm retreat 17...♔g8∞) 17...♗e6 with a comfortable game.

Khalifman's analysis continues with the inferior 15...a6 16.♗xc6 (16.♗c4 doesn't impress after 16...d6) 16...bxc6 17.♘b4 ♗b7 18.♘e5 d6 19.♘exc6 ♗xc6 20.♘xc6 ♕c8 21.h3! ♕e6 22.b3 ♔h7 23.e5±. But if Black has to give the pawn back anyway, he should at least find a more opportune moment!

8.♗f4 ♘e5

After 8...♘ge7 9.♕b3 a6 10.♗e2 d6 11.0-0 ♗d7 12.♖ac1 ♕c8 13.♖fd1 HarZvi-Ballon, Agios Nikolaos 1995, White had strong pressure for the pawn.

9.♘d4?!

Black's idea can be shown to be suspicious after 9.♕d4! ♘xf3+ 10.gxf3 ♘e7 11.♗a4 ♘c6 (11...a6!? 12.♕c5!) 12.♕c4 a6 13.♘d5 b5 14.♕c3 ♖a7 15.♗b3 ♘e5 (15...♖b7 16.♖c1) 16.♗e3 ♖b7 17.f4 ♘g4 18.♗d4 c6 19.♖c1 with the initiative, Khalifman.

9...c6 10.♗e2 ♘e7 11.h4 h5

Black halts the advance of the h-pawn.

12.♕d2 d5

Now is the right time to strike in the centre.

13.0-0-0 0-0 14.♘b3 b5! 15.exd5 b4 16.♘a4 cxd5

and Black was on top.

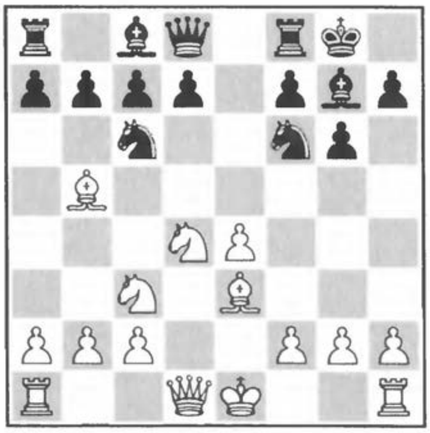
☐ **Andreas Dückstein**
■ **Vasily Smyslov**
Bad Wörishofen 1991

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 g6 4.d4 exd4 5.♘xd4

This is analogous to Larsen's line of the Philidor (1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 exd4 4.♘xd4 g6) or a line of the Three Knights (1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 g6 4.d4 exd4 5.♘xd4). In comparison, Black has a good version of these in that:

1. He hasn't committed himself to ...d6.
2. The bishop on b5 isn't so great.
3. White doesn't have time for the 'Yugoslav Attack' (f3, ♗e3, ♕d2, long castling and h2-h4) because Black reacts quickly in the centre with ...d5. Black easily equalizes in the following sample lines.

5...♗g7 6.♗e3 ♘f6 7.♘c3 0-0



8.f3

Clearly, 8.0-0 can be met by 8...♘g4!, for instance, 9.♕xg4 ♘xd4 10.♗d3 d5!? (or 10...d6 11.♕d1 ♘e6 12.♗c4 ♖e8 13.♖e1 ♗d7 14.♕d2 ♗c6 15.♗d5 ♕d7 16.♖ad1

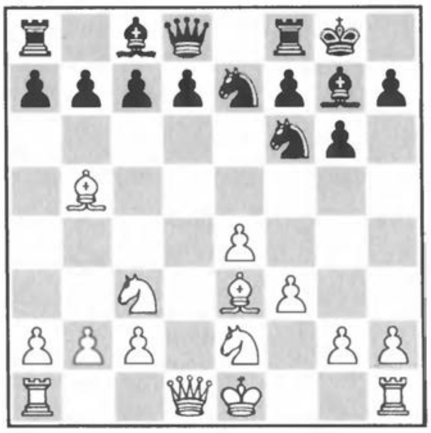
♖ad8 Velikhanli-Mamedov, Abu Dhabi 2001, and Black has a satisfactory game) 11.♕g5 dxe4 12.♘xe4 ♗f5 13.♖ad1 h6 14.♕xd8 ♖axd8 15.c3 ♖fe8 16.f3 ♘c6 17.♗f4 ♘e5 with full equality, Belov-Vul, Tula 2000.

8...♘e7

Black prepares to hit back with ...d5.

9.♘de2

Christensen-Beliavsky, Copenhagen 2003, went: 9.♕d2 d5! 10.e5 ♘d7 11.e6 ♘e5 12.exf7+ ♘xf7 13.♘b3 c6 14.♗e2 ♘f5, and Beliavsky had already grasped the initiative.



9...d5!

It's clear that hitting back at the centre with a quick ...d5 is Black's right idea. Preparing this with the preliminary 9...c6 also seems effective e.g. 9...c6 10.♗c4 d5! (better than the over-enthusiastic 10...b5?! 11.♗b3 b4 12.♘a4 d5 13.0-0 ♕c7 Braslavsky-Krstic, Salzburg 2003, because Black has unnecessarily loosened his queenside structure) 11.exd5 ♘fxd5 12.♗xd5 cxd5 13.♕d2 ♘f5 14.♗c5 ♖e8 15.0-0 d4, Vartapetyan-Kobalia, Herculane 1994, and Black was already better.

10.exd5 ♘fxd5 11.♗g5

After 11.♗c5 Black can sacrifice the exchange for dark-squared dominance, e.g. 11...c6 12.♘xd5 ♘xd5 13.♗xf8? ♗xf8 14.♗d3 (14.♘c3? ♕e7+ 15.♗e2 ♘e3 with a vicious attack) 14...♘e3 15.♕d2 ♘xg2+ and Black is much better. White's rooks are not much help in stemming Black's strong initiative, e.g. 16.♔f2 ♕h4+! 17.♞g3 (17.♔xg2 ♗h3+ 18.♔g1 ♗c5+) 17...♗h3 with a winning attack.

11...c6 12.♘xd5 cxd5 13.c3 ♕d6

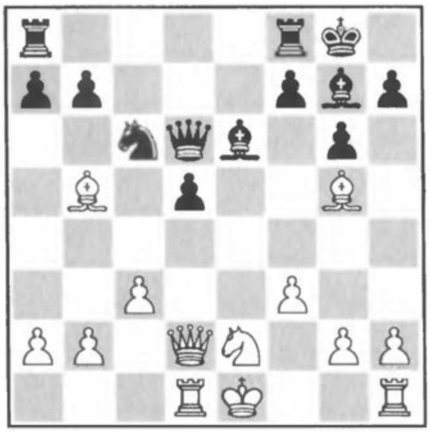
The isolated pawn is not a significant problem. White has problems to complete development and so has little hope of putting any pressure on Black's centre.

14.♕d2

Taking a hot pawn with 14.♗xe7 ♕xe7 15.♕xd5 is dodgy because of the exposed dark squares.

Furthermore Black has at least 15...♖d8 16.♕e4 ♕g5 winning back the pawn and perhaps more.

14...♘c6 15.♖d1 ♗e6



16.♘d4?

16.♗h6 playing for equality would have been better.

16...♘xd4 17.cxd4 ♖fc8 18.♗e3

18.0-0 ♕b6 19.♗e2 ♗f5 also leaves White on the defensive.

18...♕b6 19.♗a4 ♖c4! 20.b3

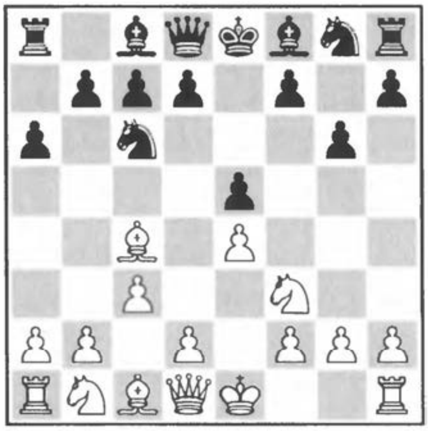
If 20.♗b3 then 20...♖b4 21.0-0 a5 and ...a4 is coming.

20...♖c7 21.0-0 ♖ac8

With a clear advantage to Black.

☐ **Victor Bologan**
■ **Vladimir Akopian**
Moscow 2002

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 g6 4.c3 a6 5.♗c4!



This could be White's best chance to keep something out of the opening.

5...d6 6.d4 ♕e7

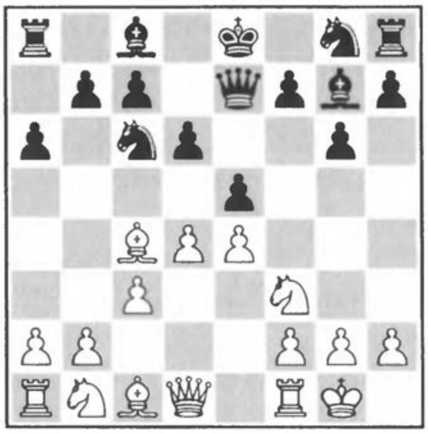
This bolsters the e5-point. The immediate 6...♗g7 often transposes. After 6...♗g7 White can try 7.♗g5 to try and disrupt normal black development:

● 7...f6 is a slight concession but Black can still manoeuvre to equality e.g. 8.♗h4 ♘h6 9.dxe5 dxe5 10.♘bd2 ♕e7 11.0-0 ♘f7 12.b4 ♘cd8 13.♘e1 ♗e6 14.♘c2 ♘d6 15.♗xe6 ♘xe6 16.♘e3 0-0 17.♕b3 ♔h8 Magem Badals-Anic, France 2001.

● Even 7...♘f6!? is playable as after 8.dxe5 dxe5 9.♕xd8+ ♘xd8 10.♘xe5 ♘xe4 11.♗xd8 Black equalizes with 11...♗xe5.

● 7...♕d7!? 8.0-0 h6 9.♗h4 ♘f6 10.♖e1 0-0 11.♘bd2 ♖e8 12.a4 b6 13.♗f1 ♗b7 with just a minimal advantage to White (space, flexible position etc.) Lobron-Salov, Wijk aan Zee 1993, but Black's position is hardly worse than that in most other Spanish variations.

7.0-0 ♗g7



8.dxe5

White opens the a3-f8 diagonal for his bishop. 8.d5 (blocking the centre immediately releases the pressure) 8...♘d8 9.♘a3 f5!? 10.exf5 gxf5 11.♖e1 ♘f6 12.♗g5 ♘f7 13.♗h4 0-0∞, Computer XBP-Martinovsky, Chicago 1994.

The most challenging is 8.h3! where White retains the tension:

A) 8...♘f6 9.♖e1 0-0 10.♗g5 h6 11.♗h4 g5 (11...♕e8?! 12.♞bd2 ♘h5 13.♘f1 ♘f4 14.♘e3 with a pleasant edge to White, Shirov-Giorgadze, Barcelona 2000) 12.♗g3 ♘h5 13.♘xe5 dxe5 14.♕xh5 exd4 15.♗d5 with a complicated struggle favouring White slightly, Rytshagov-Vetemaa, Tallinn 1997.

B) 8...h6 9.♗e3 ♘f6 10.♘bd2 0-0 11.♖e1 ♔h8 12.a4 b6 13.♕c1 ♗d7 14.♗f1 ♘g8 15.dxe5 dxe5 16.♘c4 a5 17.b3, Lanka-Kortchnoi, Debrecen 1992, with a small edge for White.

8...♘xe5

Also playable is 8...dxe5!? 9.b3 ♗e6, and now:

A) 10.♗a3 ♕d7 (10...♕f6! 11.♗xe6 ♕xe6 12.♕d5 ♕f6 yields nothing tangible for White) 11.♘bd2 ♘ge7 12.♘g5 ♗xc4 13.♘xc4 h6 14.♕xd7+ ♔xd7 15.♖ad1+ ♔e8 16.♘f3 f6 favoured White slightly in Cs.Horvath-Bellini, Arnhem 1987.

B) 10.♕e2 ♖d8 11.♘bd2 (11.♗a3 is logical but not dangerous after 11...♗xc4

12.♕xc4 ♕f6 with ...♘ge7 and 0-0 to follow) 11...♘f6 12.♘g5 ♗xc4 13.♘xc4 ♘h5 14.♘h3 ♕e6 15.♗a3 ♗f8 16.♗xf8 ♔xf8 17.♘e3 ♘f4 ½-½ Varavin-Mukhametov, Novosibirsk 1989.

9.♘xe5 dxe5 10.b3 ♘f6

If the note to 8...dxe5 is anything to go by then Black can consider 10...♗e6! 11.♗a3 ♕f6 against which I can't see anything to undermine Black's plan of ...♘e7 followed by 0-0 e.g. 12.♗xe6 (12.♕d3 ♖d8; 12.♘d2 ♘e7) 12...♕xe6 13.c4 ♘e7 14.♘c3 ♘c6 (14...c6 yields an edge to White after 15.♕d6; and worse is 14...0-0? which loses material to 15.♘d5) 15.♕d5 (15.♘d5 0-0-0!?) 15...♖d8! 16.♕xe6+ fxe6 with equal chances.

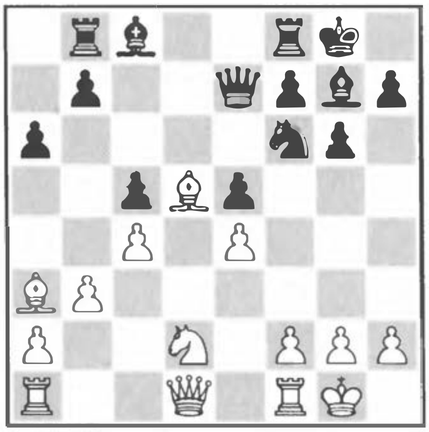
11.♗a3 c5 12.♗d5 0-0 13.c4

In S.Polgar-Smyslov, Munich 2000, 13.b4?! led to a crushing Black win after 13...♖d8 14.bxc5 ♘xe4 15.c4 ♕c7 16.♖e1 ♗f5 17.g4 ♘xf2!.

13...♖b8

Perhaps 13...♖a7!?.

14.♘d2



14...b5?!

More solid is 14...b6! 15.♕c2 ♘h5 16.g3 ♔h8.

15.♕c2 b4 16.♗b2 ♘h5 17.a3! a5 18.axb4 axb4 19.g3 ♔h8 20.♖fe1 f5?!

This essentially helps White but it's hard to just sit and wait. On the queenside White has the a-file and a target on c5 and the mighty bishop on d5 is a nuisance for Black. So White has the better chances even without this loose move.

21.exf5 ♗xf5 22.♕d1 ♗h3 23.♕e2 ♖be8 24.♘e4

It's already hard to find a satisfactory continuation for Black.

24...♘f6 25.♘xf6 ♕xf6 26.f4 ♕f5 27.♗xe5 ♗xe5 28.fxe5

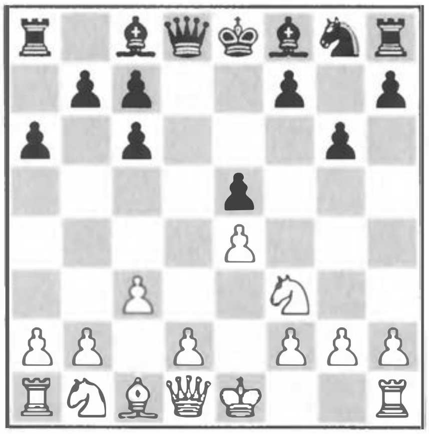
And White won easily.

☐ **Krysztof Jakubowski**
■ **Krysztof Spicak**
Polanczyk 2000

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 g6 4.c3 a6 5.♗xc6

Another type of exchange variation. The fact that White has already played c2-c3 means that he will have to take into consideration his d3-square.

5...dxc6



6.d4

The fluid centre doesn't worry the player with the bishop pair.

After 6.♘xe5 the pawn can be recuperated in two ways 6...♕g5 (6...♕e7 7.d4 f6 8.♘f3 ♕xe4+ 9.♗e3 ♗d7 10.♘bd2 ♕f5 11.♕b3

0-0-0 12.0-0-0 ♕b5 13.♖he1 ♕xb3 14.axb3 b6 15.h3 h5 16.♘e4 ♖h7 and Black had reasonable chances, Della Morte-N.Diaz, Tres de Febrero 2003) 7.d4 ♕xg2 8.♕f3 ♕xf3 9.♘xf3 ♗g7 10.♗f4 ♗g4 11.♘e5 ♗e6 12.♘d2 0-0-0 13.0-0-0 f6 14.♘ec4 ♘h6 15.f3 ♘f7 16.b3 b6 17.♔c2 ♔b7 18.h4 ♘d6 19.♘e3 ♖he8 with balanced chances, Haanpaa-Lehti, Helsinki 2001.

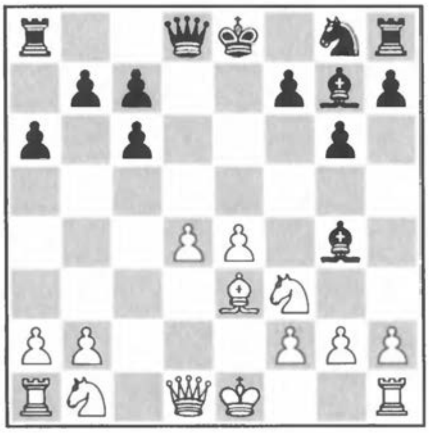
After the alternative 6.0-0 ♗g7 7.d4 (White can't get anything from the routine 7.d3 ♘e7 as Black simply completes development and then makes pressure against d3 a priority) 7...exd4 8.cxd4 ♘e7 9.♘c3 ♗g4 10.♗e3 0-0 11.h3 ♗xf3 12.♕xf3 f5 (the cheeky 12...♗xd4!? is more ambitious) 13.♗g5 ♕d7 Black was OK in Chandler-Spassky, Vienna 1986.

6...exd4 7.cxd4

This central pawn structure is prone to attack down the semi-open d and e files as well as along the a1-h8 diagonal.

7.♕xd4 ♕xd4 8.cxd4 (the white centre is ripe for attack) 8...♗g7 9.♘c3 ♗g4 10.♗e3 ♘e7 11.h3 ♗xf3 12.gxf3 0-0-0 13.0-0-0 f5 (Black continues to press against the centre) 14.♘e2 ♖he8 15.♖hg1 ♗f6 16.♗g5 ♗xg5+ 17.♖xg5 ♘d5 18.e5 c5 and Black was on top, Marteau-Anic, Montpellier 2000.

7...♗g4 8.♗e3 ♗g7



9.0-0?

Necessary was 9.♘bd2.

9...c5! 10.♘bd2? cxd4 11.♗xd4 ♕xd4!

And Black is already winning.

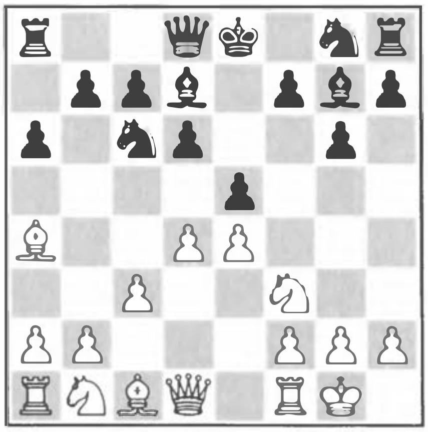
12.♕b3 ♕xb2 13.♕e3 ♕b6 14.♕f4 ♗xf3 15.♖ab1 ♕d6 16.♕xf3 ♕xd2 17.♖xb7 ♕c3 18.♕d1 ♘e7 0-1

☐ **Alexander Khalifman**
■ **Nigel Short**
Moscow 2001

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5

Now after 3...g6 4.c3 a6 5.♗a4 d6 6.d4 play transposes to one of the principal lines in the Steinitz Deferred Variation. There follows a summary of how play might develop in this line.

3...a6 4.♗a4 d6 5.c3 g6 6.d4 ♗d7 7.0-0 ♗g7



Now White has tried several ideas. The best chance for an advantage is to close the centre, exchange light-squared bishops and play in King's Indian style i.e. A queenside push acknowledging that Black will gain counterchances with ...f5.

8.d5

Let us examine the alternatives:

A) 8.♖e1 ♘ge7

● 9.d5 ♘a5 10.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 11.b3

Anand-Short, Merida 2001, and now Black should continue with Anand's suggested 11...b5! 12.c4 c5! 13.♗d2 ♘b7=. Instead of 11.b3 the game S.Polgar-Kamsky, New Delhi 1990, went 11.♘bd2 b5 12.b4 ♘b7 13.a4 0-0 14.c4 c5 and Black was OK.

● 9.♗e3 0-0 10.♘bd2 (10.d5 ♘a5!) 10...exd4 11.cxd4 d5 12.e5 ♘f5 13.♘f1 ♘xe3 14.♘xe3 ♘e7= Morovic Fernandez-Gluckman, Bled Olympiad 2002.

● 9.dxe5 ♘xe5 10.♘xe5 dxe5 11.♗g5 h6 12.♗e3 ♗xa4 13.♕xa4+ ♕d7 14.♕xd7+ ♔xd7= Bertona-Soppe, Buenos Aires 2000.

B) 8.dxe5 (rather tame) 8...dxe5 (safest but most dull is 8...♘xe5 9.♘xe5 dxe5 10.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 11.♕xd7+ ♔xd7 12.♖d1+ ♔e6= Bryzgalin-Malaniuk, Krasnodar 2001) 9.♗g5 ♘ge7 (9...f6 is also possible) 10.♘bd2 0-0 11.♘b3 ♕e8 12.♘c5 ♗c8 13.b4 f6 14.♗e3 ♔h8 15.♗b3 ♘d8 16.♘d2 f5 with counterplay despite a slightly constricted game Ulibin-Safin, Abu Dhabi 2001.

C) Following 8.♗g5 f6 9.♗e3 ♘h6 10.dxe5 Black can recapture with either pawn to obtain a satisfactory game: 10...dxe5 (or 10...fxe5 11.♗g5 ♕c8 12.♕c1 ♘f7 13.♗e3 0-0 14.b4 ♘fd8 15.♘bd2 ♘e6 Nurkic-Mikhalchishin, Opatija 2003) 11.♗c5 ♗f8 12.♕d5 ♗xc5 13.♕xc5 ♕e7 14.♕xe7+ ♔xe7 15.♘bd2 ♘f7 16.h3 ♘d6 17.♖fd1 ♖hd8 18.♘e1 ♘a5 19.♗xd7 ♖xd7 20.♔f1 ♖ad8 Babaev-Malaniuk, Polanica Zdroj 2001.

D) 8.♗e3 ♘f6 9.♘bd2 0-0 10.d5 (10.dxe5 ♘xe5 11.♘xe5 dxe5 12.f3 ♗xa4 13.♕xa4 ♕d3 gave nothing for White in Topalov-Azmaiparashvili, Madrid 1996) 10...♘e7 11.♗xd7 ♕xd7 12.♘e1 ♘g4 13.♗g5 f5 with adequate counterchances for Black in Ye Jiangchuan-Short, Beijing 2003.

8...♘ce7 9.♗xd7+

After 9.c4 Black has

A) 9...b5!? gaining space on the queenside. Then after 10.cxb5 axb5 11.♗c2 h6 12.b4 ♘f6 13.♘c3 0-0 14.♖e1 ♕b8 15.♗d3 c6 16.dxc6 ♗xc6 17.♕e2 d5 Black was playing for more than equality, Tukhaev-Malaniuk, Simferopol 2003.

B) or following 9...h6 10.♘c3 Black should still continue with 10...f5 as in the main game. Instead, 10...♘f6 is possible but Black is slower getting his kingside play off the ground: 11.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 12.b4 a5 13.♗a3 axb4 14.♗xb4 0-0 15.c5 ♘h5 16.cxd6 cxd6 17.a4 ♖a6 18.♘d2 ♘f4 19.♘b5 f5, Potkin-Kobalia, ICC (Internet) 2003.

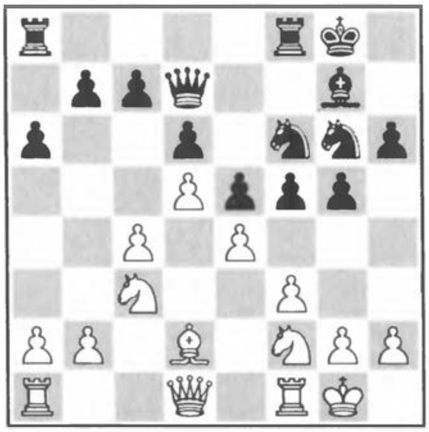
9...♕xd7 10.c4 h6 11.♘c3 f5 12.♘e1

In Hamdouchi-Malaniuk, Groningen 1997, Black stood well after 12.exf5 gxf5 13.♘h4 ♗f6! 14.f4 e4 15.♕e1 b5 16.g4 bxc4 17.♘xf5 ♘xf5 18.gxf5 ♕xf5.

12...♘f6 13.f3 0-0 14.♘d3 g5 15.♗d2

Black obtained enough counterplay following 15.exf5 ♘xf5 16.♘f2 ♘d4 17.♘fe4 ♘h5 18.♗e3 ♘f4 19.g3 ♘g6 20.♔g2 ♖f7 in Agnos-Smagin, London 1989.

15...♘g6 16.♘f2



Black has made good progress, but there is always a danger that he will miss his light-squared ('good') bishop in the middlegame.

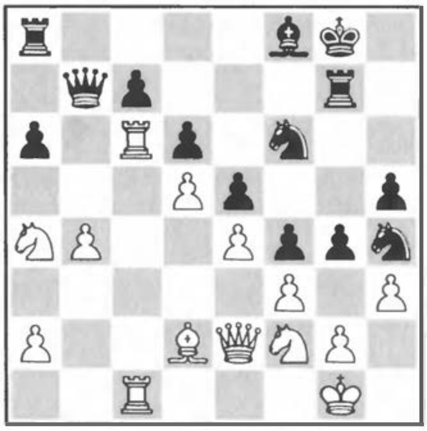
16...f4 17.b4 ♖f7 18.c5 ♗f8

It's reminiscent of a King's Indian. Without the light-squared bishops Black's kingside attack isn't as dangerous here, but he is at least well-prepared to create chances with ...g4.

19.♘a4 ♖e8 20.♖c1 h5

Another idea is 20...c6!? competing directly for influence in the centre.

21.c6 ♕c8 22.cxb7 ♕xb7 23.♕e2 ♖g7 24.♖c6 ♖a8 25.♖fc1 ♘h4 26.h3 g4

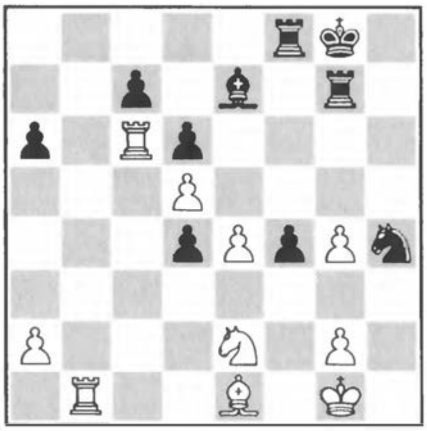


The complications that follow should favour White.

27.fxg4 hxg4 28.♘xg4 ♘xg4 29.hxg4 ♕b5 30.♕d1 ♗e7 31.♗e1 ♖f8 32.♘c3

White is better after 32.♘b2!? intending to meet 32...f3 with 33.♗xh4 ♗xh4 34.gxf3 ♕xb4 35.♘c4.

32...♕xb4 33.♖b1 ♕d4+ 34.♕xd4 exd4 35.♘e2

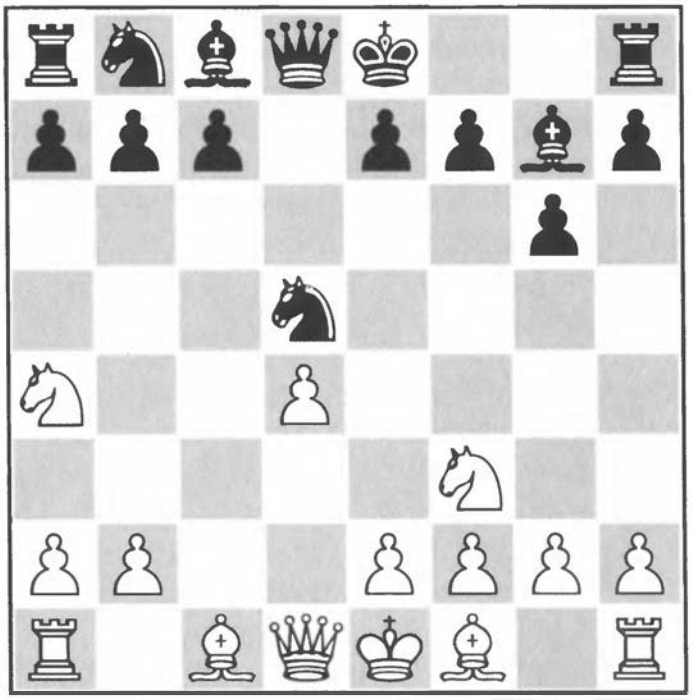


35...♘xg2!= 36.♔xg2 f3+ 37.♔f1 fxe2+ 38.♔xe2 ♖xg4 39.♖xc7 ♗g5 40.♔d3 ♖f3+ 41.♔c4 ♖xe4 42.♖b8+ ♖f8 43.♖xf8+ ♔xf8 44.♗f2 ♖e2 45.♗xd4 ♖c2+ 46.♗c3 ♖xa2 47.♔b3 ♖e2 48.♖c6 ½-½

CHAPTER 17

Jonathan Rowson

The Improved Nadanian



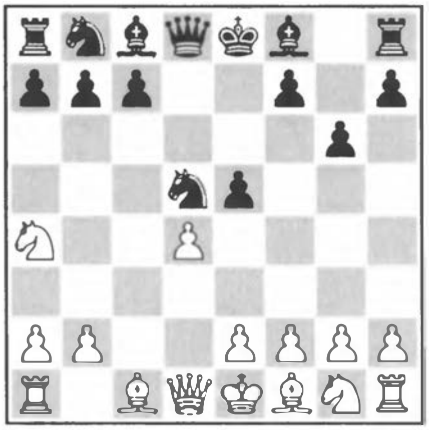
NIC KEY GI 3.4
and GI 7.2

6.♘a4 in the Grünfeld

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.♘f3 ♗g7 6.♘a4

When Nadanian introduced 5.♘a4!? a few years ago, I was in the middle of writing my book *Understanding the Grünfeld*. It was clear that this move was just too cool to be ignored, and that unless Black found a clear antidote, it would soon charm its way to popularity. In my book I wrote: 'One good way to look at this move is simply to see it as early prophylaxis. White realizes that Black's main pawn-break is ...c5 and decides to put a stop to it. He also realizes that his extra centre pawn is a long-term asset and is wary of occupying the centre immediately... It's almost like White can't believe his luck at having made the exchange of c- ford-pawn and needs a move or two to get over the surprise before there are any further upsets!' Later in the same chapter I added that 'As a general comment, I think it is important not to underestimate the dangers present when White just holds the structure with the pawn on d4 and prevents Black's central breaks. It may seem that Black is in little danger when White has not played e4, but it often turns out that on completing development Black finds it hard to do anything significant while White can use his slightly greater central control to creep around the edges...' Therefore the ♘a4 concept does put some pressure on Black, most of all to find an effective pawn break.

Moreover, a well-prepared White player can find ways to make these pawn breaks problematic. For these reasons, 5.♘a4 did indeed become quite popular and was even used by Kortchnoi to defeat Sutovsky. However, although many Black players simply played 5...♗g7 and got on with the game, those who studied the line closely came to the conclusion that White had chances for an edge there, but that 5...e5! was a more challenging response.



The challenging 5...e5!

Indeed, I recommended 5...e5 in my book and it now looks like 6.dxe5 ♘c6! (Avrukh/Mikhalevski) poses some questions about White's development to which nobody seems to have found an answer. In chess we often make the mistake of rejecting a promising concept simply because we can't find a way to implement it move by move. This variation is a good example of how a little flexibility can keep a concept alive, with just a slight shift in move order. In this case, White can simply wait a move before playing his knight to the rim, and prevent the ...e5 antidote in the process. The drawback of this approach is that the early commitment of the knight means that White can no longer play f3 and might run into ♗g4 before he is ready for it. Still, there is nothing to make ♘a4 unplayable and I can confidently state that White is at least not worse in this line. So should Black be scared? I doubt it, but without ... e5, it does mean that he is back to working things out over-the-board and can easily drift into a worse position if he fails to find the right moment for a central pawn break. Thus although this line may not impress the world's elite, it remains an excellent surprise weapon because you can pose your opponent fresh problems with minimal risk. Let's divide the material after 6.♘a4 into the following lines:

A) Minor Alternatives
B) 6...♗g4
C) 6...♘b6
D) 6...♘f6
E) 6...0-0
F) 6...♗f5

Variation A

The following moves have not been very popular in practice.

- **6...c6**. Solid but a little passive. Putting the knight on c7 raises some interesting possibilities for both sides, but this would not be enough to put me off playing this way with White. After 7.e4 ♘c7 8.♗e3 ♗g4 9.♗e2 ♘e6 10.e5 we have transposed into an analysis by Nadanian. He assesses the position as slightly better for White.
- **6...f5**. There are no games with this dubious move, and I guess White should just continue developing with g3, ♗g2 and 0-0 and then slowly play for e4.
- **6...♘c6**. Nobody has tried this yet, and it is probably too committal, but I'm not totally sure. 7.e4 ♘b6 8.♗b5!? looks better for White, but without practical tests I wouldn't guarantee it.
- **6...♘d7** looks a little passive – White was better in Toth-Gara, Budapest 1998, after 7.e4 ♘5b6 8.♗e3 (or 8.♗e2 0-0 9.0-0 ♘xa4 10.♕xa4 c5. In such lines Black has some

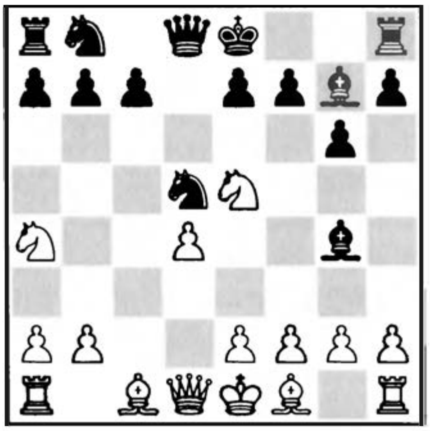
chances of equalizing, but the misplaced knight on d7 also gives White chances to be better) 8...♘xa4 9.♕xa4 0-0 (9...c5 10.♖d1! cxd4 11.♗xd4! ♗xd4 12.♖xd4±) 10.♗e2 (also possible is 10.♖d1!?) 10...♘f6 11.♕c2 ♘g4 12.0-0 (and here 12.♗f4!? comes into consideration) 12...♘xe3 13.fxe3 ♗h6 14.♕c3±.

Variation B

6...♗g4!?

Ambitious and quite critical but unexplored. 7.♘e5 ♗f5!? leads to complications that will favour the well-prepared player.

7.♘e5



● 7...♗c8!? Rowson. Not sure how good this is, but such cheeky moves have always appealed to me – in this case ♘b4 is something resembling a threat.

● 7...♗f5!? Rowson 8.♘c5! (8.e4 ♗xe4 9.♘c5 ♘f6 10.♕a4+ ♔f8 11.♘xe4 ♘xe4 12.♕b3 ♘d6 13.♗e2=∞; 8.f3 ♘b4! 9.e4 ♕xd4! 10.♕xd4 ♘c2+ 11.♔f2 ♘xd4 12.♘xf7 ♗d7! 13.♘xh8 ♗xa4 14.♘xg6 hxg6 15.b3 ♗d7 16.♗b2 c5 with a big edge for Black) 8...b6 9.♕a4+ ♔f8∞. I suspect White has chances to be better here, but I'm not sure exactly how he should go about it. One idea is 10.g4!? ♗c8 11.♘e4 and now 11...f6 12.♘d3 ♗xg4 13.♗g2 with a random position – which is what you often get from a random variation. However, for what its worth, I think White has very good compensation here.

● 7...♗xe5 8.dxe5 ♘b4! Nadanian leaves this with the assessment 'unclear' but my intuition tells me that White should have a way to be better here. 9.♗h6!? looks like the best place to start looking for the initiative.

Variation C

6...♘b6

This is quite sophisticated, White doesn't have to weaken his centre with e4 but perhaps he should, because otherwise it is difficult to prevent both ...c5 and ...e5.

Given a certain amount of accuracy this move should not cause any real problems. What follows is a vintage Grünfeld from Jozsef Horvath.

7.♗f4

Also interesting are 7.♗g5!? and 7.e4!?.

7...0-0 8.♖c1

I like 8.♗e5!?. This is a little hard to believe, but it would bother me if I was Black.

8...♘c6 9.e3 e5! 10.♗g5 ♕d6 11.♘xb6 axb6 12.d5 ♘b4 13.a3 e4! 14.♘d4 ♘xd5

And Black was clearly better in Topakian-J.Horvath, Austria tt 2002/03.

Variation D

6...♘f6

Single-minded and probably slightly inferior. This prevents e4 but there is more to ♘a4 than that and White retains a space advantage.

7.g3

Here 7.♗f4!? might be even more dangerous because it allows White to take control of the c-file more quickly. The game Friedrichs-Van de Mortel, Belgium tt 2000/01, went: 7.♗f4 0-0 8.e3 ♘bd7. And now, instead of the game continuation 9.♗e2, White should have played 9.♖c1! c6

10.♘c3 ♘h5!? with an unclear game.

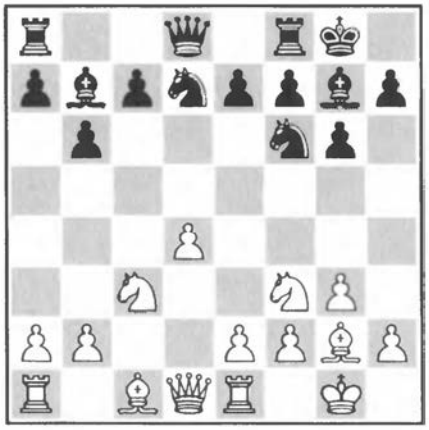
7...b6

Browne-Yermolinsky, US Championship, Denver 1998, went 7...♘c6 8.♗f4 ♘d5 9.e3 ♗f5 10.♘h4 ♗d7 11.♘c5 b6 12.♘xd7 ♕xd7 13.♖c1 ♘d8 14.♘f3±.

8.♗g2 ♗b7 9.0-0 0-0 10.♖e1

10.♗f4!?.

10...♘bd7 11.♘c3



11...♖e8

The alternative is 11...c5!? 12.d5 a6:

- 13.a4 b5! 14.axb5 axb5 15.♖xa8 ♕xa8 (15...♗xa8!?) 16.♘xb5 (16.e4 b4 17.♘b5 ♕a5) 16...♘xd5 17.♘c7 ♘xc7 18.♕xd7 ♘d5.
- 13.e4! b5 14.e5 ♘g4 15.♗f4± and it seems that White can keep control of the centre.

12.e4 e6

It's not so easy for Black to break free, e.g: 12...c5 13.d5 e6 (13...♘g4!? 14.♘g5!?↑) 14.dxe6 ♖xe6 15.e5 ♘e8 16.♘g5±.

13.♖b1 ♖b8

13...c5 14.e5 ♘d5 15.♘e4!.

14.♗f4 ♘h5 15.♗g5 f6 16.♗e3 ♗f8 17.b4± ♔h8 18.g4 ♘g7 19.e5 f5 20.♘g5 ♕e7 21.♗xb7 ♖xb7 22.♕f3 ♖eb8 23.♕h3 h5 24.gxh5 ♘xh5 25.♘f3 ♗g7 26.♘h4 ♕f7 27.♘e2 ♔g8 28.f4 ♘f8 29.♔f2 ♗h8 30.♖g1 ♕h7 31.♘xg6 ♘xg6 32.♖xg6+ ♕xg6 33.♖g1 ♕xg1+ 34.♘xg1 ♘g7 35.♘f3 ♔f7 36.♘g5+ ♔e7 37.♕h7 ♔d7 38.♘f7 1-0

Zielinska-Bednarska, Zakopane tt 2000.

Variation E

6...0-0

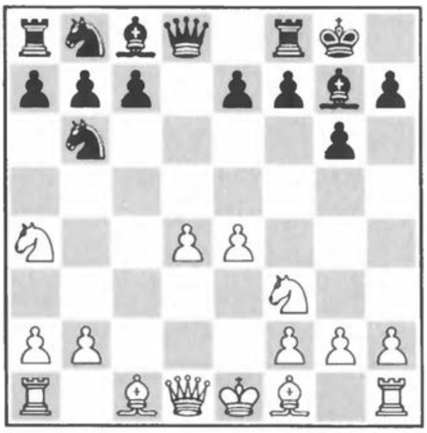
This is the automatic and most popular response. Now, after

7.e4 ♘b6

move orders are critical but it is still not totally clear which one is best. Instead of 7...♘b6, Black sometimes plays 7...♘f6.

After 7...♘f6 play might continue: 8.♗d3 ♗g4 (a good alternative is 8...e5 – Rowson) 9.e5 ♘d5 and now 10.0-0? fails to 10...♗xf3 (10...♘c6 11.♗e4) 11.♕xf3 ♘c6 12.♘c5 ♘db4!∓ Nadanian. However, White has the stronger 10.♗e4!±.

In Kahlbacher-Badstüber, Oberwart 1998, White played 8.♘c3 in reply to 7...♘f6. After 8...c5 9.d5 ♗g4 10.♗e2 a6 11.a4 ♘fd7 12.0-0 White was slightly better. Instead of 11...♘fd7, 11...♘bd7!? looks better.



As mentioned above, there are several possible move orders. In practice, White has mainly tried:

E1) 8.♗e2
E2) 8.♗e3

There are two interesting alternatives:

● **8.♘c5**

This looks premature, but it is not so easy to deal with.

8...♘6d7 9.♘b3 b6

Interesting is 9...a5!?.

And now instead of the game continuation 10.♗d3?!, White should have played 10.♕c2!?, Pazos Gambarrotti-Arias, Medellin 2003.

● **8.h3**

This might be playable. The advantage of keeping the bishop on c1 is that b2 is protected. I guess Black should try something quite fast.

8...♘xa4

Inferior is 8...f5?! 9.♘xb6 axb6 10.♗c4+ ♔h8 11.e5!±. Best is possibly 8...♘c6 9.♗e3 f5!? which looks critical – now Black has an important f5-f4 resource.

9.♕xa4 c5 10.dxc5 ♕c7 11.♕a3!

and although this looks like a bit of a dodgy pawn grab, there is no clear refutation in sight.

Variation E1

8.♗e2

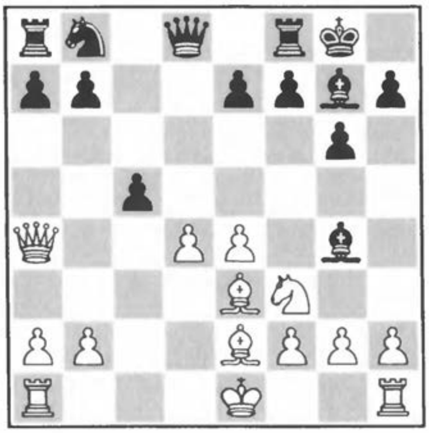
In Nadanian-Pelletier, Cannes 1997, there followed 8...♘xa4 9.♕xa4 b6 10.♗e3! (according to Nadanian 10.0-0?! ♗b7 is equal. Not sure if this is true though, because White can still play 11.♕c2 Rowson) 10...♗b7 11.♕c2± ♘d7 12.♖d1!? (12.0-0) 12...e6 13.0-0 h6?! (13...♖c8 14.♗g5 ♕e8±)14.♗b5! White intends to play 15.♗c6 and has a pleasant edge.

8...♗g4 9.♗e3

This position also arises after 8.♗e3 ♗g4 9.♗e2 – though in that move order White often prefers 9.♘c5. Instead of 9.♗e3 as in the game, worse is 9.♘c5 ♗xf3 10.♗xf3 ♕xd4 11.♕xd4 ♗xd4 12.♘xb7 ♘c6∓.

9...♘c6

9...♘xa4 10.♕xa4 c5 is very close to equality – I don't think White can claim much here.



– 11.dxc5 ♗xb2 12.♖b1 ♗c3+ 13.♔f1 (this move looks like White's best try, but with the king on f1 I find it hard to believe that White can be better here) 13...♗c8!? (this is not really in the spirit of the Grünfeld, but it might be necessary. 13...♘c6 14.♖xb7 ♕c8 15.♖b3 ♗g7 16.♗a6 ♕d7 17.♖b7 ♕e6 18.h3 ♗xf3 19.gxf3±) 14.h4!. But who knows, maybe there is some initiative here.

– 11.♖d1 cxd4 (11...♗xf3 12.dxc5! ♕c7 13.♗xf3 ♗xb2 14.0-0±) 12.♗xd4 ♗xd4 13.♘xd4 ♗xe2 14.♘xe2 ♕b6 with equal play. Instead of 13.♘xd4, 13.♖xd4 has also occurred. After 13...♕b6 14.♖b4 ♕c7, White should play 15.0-0 ♘c6 with equality, rather than 15.♕b3 ♘c6! and Black had a clear edge in Nadanian-Malisauskas, Minsk 1997.

10.d5 ♗xf3?!

10...♘e5! 11.♘xe5 ♗xe2 12.♕xe2 ♘xa4! (12...♗xe5 13.♘c5!±) 13.f4 e6 14.♕c2 ♘b6 15.dxe6 ♗xe5 16.exf7+ ♖xf7 17.fxe5 ♕e7 18.0-0-0∞.

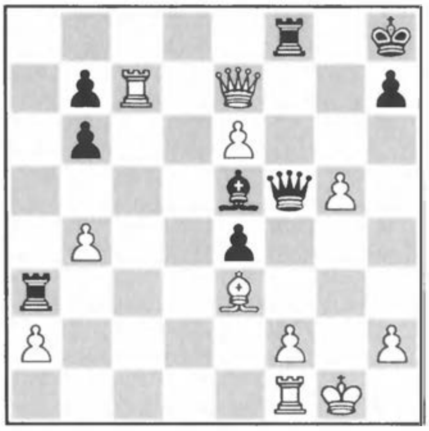
11.gxf3 ♘e5 12.♘xb6 axb6 13.f4 ♘d7 14.e5± ♘c5 15.b4

The alternative is 15.h4.

15...♘e4 16.♗f3 f5 17.♕b3 ♕d7 18.0-0

Much better is 18.♗e2! intending f3 – Black will lose a piece.

18...♔h8 19.♖ac1 g5 20.♕c4 ♖a3 21.♗xe4 fxe4 22.e6 ♕d6 23.fxg5 ♕e5 24.♕xc7 ♕xd5 25.♕xe7 ♕f5 26.♖c7 ♗e5



27.♗f4 ♗xc7 28.♗xc7 ♖aa8 29.♗xb6 ♕g4+ 30.♔h1 ♕f3+ 31.♔g1 ♕g4+ 32.♔h1 ♕f3+ ½-½

Ashley-Romanishin, Cannes 1998.

Variation E2

8.♗e3

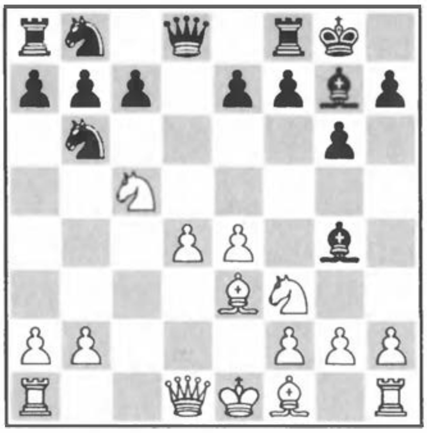
and now:

- 8...♗g4: Narciso Dublan-Nestorovic
- 8...♘xa4: Kortchnoi-Sutovsky

☐ **Marc Narciso Dublan**
■ **Dejan Nestorovic**
Belgrade 2001

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.♘a4 ♗g7 6.e4 ♘b6 7.♗e3 0-0 8.♘f3 ♗g4 9.♘c5

Rather than 9.♗e2, see E1. This was one of the first lines given by Nadanian, and it still looks promising for White.



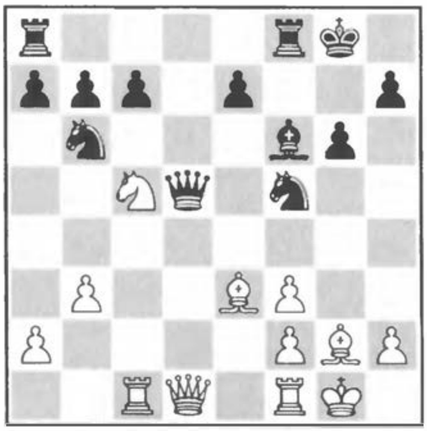
9...♘c6 10.e5!?

A new move. The older 10.♘xb7 ♕b8 11.♗a6! is still an attractive option too. The game Nadanian-Aronian, Armenia 1997, went 11...♘b4 12.♘c5 ♗xf3 13.gxf3 ♖d8 14.♕b3! ♘d7!? (rather than 14...♘xa6 15.♘xa6 ♕c8 (15...♕b7 16.♘c5) 16.♘b4! ♕h3 (16...♗xd4? 17.♗xd4 ♖xd4 18.♘c6 ♖d7 19.♘e5+–) 17.♔e2±, Nadanian) 15.♗c4! with a clear edge for White.

10...♗xf3 11.gxf3 ♕d5

An alternative is 11...♖b8.

12.♗g2 f5 13.exf6ep ♗xf6 14.0-0 ♘xd4 15.♖c1 ♘f5 16.b3



16...♘h4

Here 16...♘d6!? would have been unclear.

17.♕xd5+ ♘xd5 18.♘xb7 ♗e5 19.♖c5 ♘f4 20.♖xe5 ♘fxg2 21.♖xe7 ♖xf3 22.♗d4 ♖f7 23.♖xf7 ♔xf7

24.♖c1 ♖e8 25.♖xc7+ ♔g8 26.♗c3 ♘f4 27.♘d6 ♖d8 28.♖g7+ ♔f8 29.♖f7+ ♔g8 30.♖xf4 g5 31.♖f6 1-0

☐ **Viktor Kortchnoi**
■ **Emil Sutovsky**
Dresden zonal 1998 (3)

Comments: Jeroen Bosch

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.♘a4!? ♗g7 6.e4 ♘b6 7.♗e3 0-0 8.♘f3 ♘xa4 9.♕xa4 c5 10.♖d1

Well-played! White takes possession of the (soon to be opened) d-file and annoys his opponent's queen. Note that Kortchnoi makes all the necessary moves before completing his kingside development. Now relinquishing the pressure with 10...cxd4 11.♘xd4 would clearly be in White's favour. But neither 10...♗g4 11.dxc5 ♕c7 12.♕a3 Barsov-Bernard, Wijk aan Zee III 1997, nor 10...♗d7 11.♗b5 cxd4 12.♘xd4! (12.♗xd4 Kharlov-Vakhidov, Linares Open 1997) are capable of equalizing. Sutovsky decides to move his queen from the d-file and to maintain the tension.

10...♕b6 11.♖d2!

Simply covering b2, this move also prepares the eventual doubling up of the rooks.

11...♗d7 12.♕a3

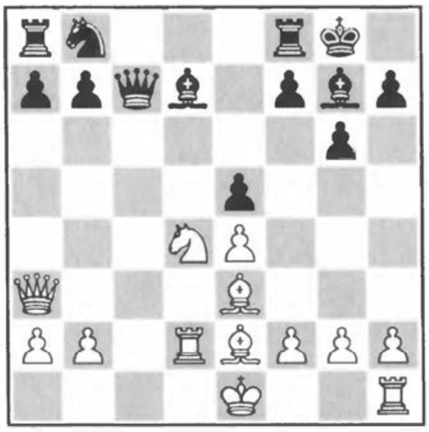
Forcing Black to release the tension.

12...cxd4 13.♘xd4 ♕c7

In Jelen-Kos, Slovenian Championship, Krsko 1997, White gained a quite considerable endgame plus after 13...♖c8 14.♗e2 ♕c5 15.♕b3 ♕b6 16.♕a3 ♕c5 17.♕xc5 ♖xc5 18.0-0 ♖c8 19.♘b3 ♗e8 20.♗g4 e6 21.♘c5.

14.♗e2 e5

Black blocks his Grünfeld bishop but gains more influence in the centre. More importantly though Black has problems completing his development. The natural 14...♘c6 is answered by 15.♘b5 ♕c8 16.0-0 a6 17.♘c3 when the knight prepares to visit the hole on b6. Preparing ♘c6 with 14...a6 fails to 15.♕xe7 ♖e8 16.♕a3 ♖xe4 17.0-0 and now a hole on d6 has been created (17...♘c6 18.♘b5 and 19.♘d6).



15.♖c2

This intermediate move is criticized by Kortchnoi. He recommends 15.♘b5! ♗xb5 16.♗xb5 a6 (bad is 16...♘c6 17.♖c2 and Black's pawn structure will be destroyed; a returning motif from now on) 17.0-0 ♘c6 18.♗c4!?. After 18...♘d4 19.♗d5 the active knight on d4 is not enough compensation for the pair of bishops. Moreover, the knight could be undermined with a future f4.

15...♕d8

15...♘c6? is still impossible. After 16.♘xc6 ♗xc6 17.♗b5 we have transposed to the previous note.

16.♘b5 ♘c6 17.♘d6 ♕b8 18.♗c4 ♘d4 19.♗xd4 exd4 20.0-0

In his analysis Kortchnoi proves that White only gains a tiny edge after 20.f4 ♗e6 21.♗xe6 fxe6 22.0-0.

20...♗e6?

This is the critical moment, where Black could have profited from White's slightly inaccurate 15th move. With 20...♗e5! Black could have forced White into playing the unclear piece sacrifice 21.♘xf7. After 21...♖xf7

22.f4 ♗g7 23.♕b3 ♕e8 24.♕xb7 ♖d8 25.♗xf7+ ♕xf7 26.♖c7 White would regain his material investments. Still, Kortchnoi feels that a dynamic equilibrium has arisen.

21.♗xe6 fxe6 22.♖fc1

Eleven moves ago a doubling up of the rooks was prepared, now that they have finally teamed up it is with particular force. Both 23.♖c8 and 23.♖c7 are threatened, and it is no surprise that Black's position collapses quickly.

22...♗e5?

Another mistake in a difficult position. According to Kortchnoi the only defence was 22...♗h6 when 23.♖e1! (23.♖c8 ♗xc1 24.♖xb8 ♖axb8 is less clear) 23...♖d8 24.e5 gives White a winning edge. Kortchnoi analyzes 24...♗f8 25.♕b3 ♗xd6 26.exd6 ♖xd6 (26...♕xd6 27.♖xe6 ♕d5 28.♖e8+ loses instantly) 27.♖xe6 ♖xe6 28.♕xe6+ ♔h8 29.♕f6+ ♔g8 30.♕xd4 and since Black's king lacks protection the win is merely a matter of time.

23.♖c7 ♗xd6 24.♕xd6 ♖f7 25.♕xe6

Black resigned.

Variation F

6...♗f5

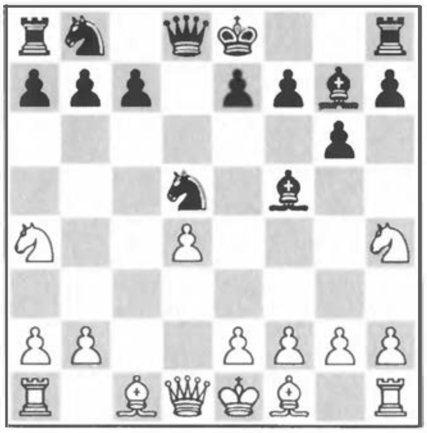
This is perhaps the most logical move-White can no longer play f3 so the bishop is more stable here and prevents e4 for the time being.

☐ **Ashot Anastasian**
■ **Stefan Kristjansson**
Antalya 2004

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.d4 ♗g7 4.♘c3 d5 5.cxd5 ♘xd5 6.♘a4 ♗f5

This move makes a lot of sense as a response to ♘a4 because it takes control of e4. In fact I think it might turn out to be Black's most reliable move, even though it runs into the slightly outrageous:

7.♘h4!



I refer to this move as 'absurdly consistent' in *Understanding the Grünfeld* but didn't take it very seriously at the time. However, it is the most testing move here.

Alternatively, 7.♘c5!? is met by 7...b6! (7...♘d7? 8.e4! ♘xc5 9.dxc5 ♗xe4 10.♕a4+) 8.e4 (8.♘b3 ♘b4) 8...bxc5 9.exf5 gxf5 10.dxc5 e6. I prefer Black here, due to the excellent knight on d5 and potential play down the b-file. However, it cannot be denied that White also has some positional assets.

7...♘c6

There are some alternatives at this stage:

- 7...0-0 8.♘xf5 (8.g3!? – there might be something to be said for delaying the capture of the bishop, because after ♗g2 White will also threaten e4 – 8...♘c6 9.♗g2!∞) 8...gxf5 9.e3 ♘d7 (in my book, I suggest that Black might be OK here, but a few years on I would definitely prefer White) 10.♘c3!?±.
- 7...♗c8!? looks submissive, but it is now difficult to find a good move for White.

A) 8.g3?! ♘c6! 9.♗g2?! (9.e3 e5!; 9.♘f3 ♗f5!; 9...♗g4!?) 9...♘xd4! 10.e3 g5! 11.exd4 gxh4 12.♘c3 ♗e6 and Black is a pawn up and in control.

B) 8.♘f3!?. Not a theoretical test of course, but the fact that White has the option is worth knowing about, because it might discourage some Black players from playing this way.

C) 8.e4

C1) 8...♘f6!? 9.♘c3 0-0 (9...c5!?) 10.♗e2. I don't pretend that White is really better here, but nor is he worse. Most importantly, as a result of his knight manoeuvres, he is probably having more fun.

C2) 8...♘b6 9.♗e3 0-0 10.♘f3 transposes into something relatively normal, where White has chances to be better.

C3) 8...♘b4!? 9.♘f3 (9.a3? ♕xd4!; 9.d5? e6) 9...♗xd4 consistent, but perhaps a little risky – White can develop quite reasonable compensation, e.g: 10.♗c4! 0-0 (10...c5!? 11.♗h6∞) 11.♗h6 ♗g7 12.♗xf7+! ♔xf7 13.♕b3+ e6 14.♗xg7 ♘d3+ (14...♔xg7 15.♕xb4 ♘c6 16.♕c3+ ♕f6±) 15.♕xd3! ♕xd3 16.♘e5+ ♔xg7 17.♘xd3±.

8.♘xf5

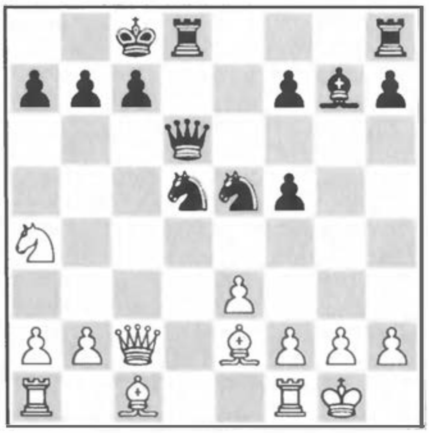
But not 8.e3 ♗c8!.

8...gxf5 9.e3 e5 10.dxe5

More testing might be 10.♘c5!?, but it can quickly become very complicated, e.g. 10...♕d6 11.♕a4 (11.♗d2!?) 11...exd4 12.♘xb7 ♕b4+ 13.♕xb4 ♘dxb4 14.♔d1 ♖b8 15.♘c5 (15.a3!?) 15...dxe3 16.fxe3 ♔e7! and Black is dangerously active.

10...♘xe5 11.♗e2 ♕d6 12.0-0 0-0-0 13.♕c2

Perhaps 13.♕b3!?.



13...f4!?

Given the result of this game, it would be easy to assume that White was always better and that Black played the opening badly. However, it is really not so clear.

13...♕g6 is also possible, but I don't think that Black was worse in the game.

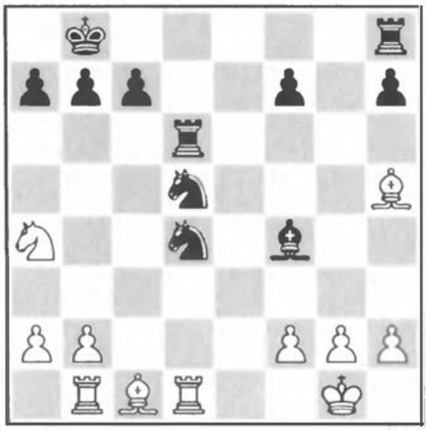
14.exf4 ♘c6 15.♗g4+?!

Here 15.♕f5+ ♔b8 16.♗c4 looks better, when the position is unclear (to me at least).

15...♔b8 16.♕c5 ♘d4 17.♕xd6 ♖xd6 18.♖b1 ♗h6

The stronger 18...♖e8! gives Black chances to be better.

19.♗h5 ♗xf4 20.♖d1



20...♗xc1?!

Essential was 20...♗e5! 21.♗xf7 ♘b6! and Black is at least not worse.

21.♖xd4 ♘f4 22.♖xd6 cxd6 23.♗xf7

Now White is in control.

23...♖c8 24.g3 ♘d3 25.♗e6 ♖c7 26.♗f5 ♘e5 27.♔g2 d5 28.♘c3 ♗xb2 29.♘xd5 1-0

All things considered, my tentative conclusion is that Black has his fair share of the chances if he plays 6...♗f5 and follows up accurately, but I believe White has prospects of an advantage against all the other continuations if he pays close attention to move orders.

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To Jonathan

SECRETS OF
OPENING
SURPRISES

JEROEN BOSCH

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Preface

The title of a book should ideally tell the reader something about its contents. The title – *Secrets of Opening Surprises* – clearly suggests, and indeed promises, a few things. There can be no doubt that this book proclaims to be about openings. The addition of the word 'surprises' may suggest to the reader that he will find out something new, or unexpected. Finally, the author, in chosing this title, purports to reveal certain 'secrets'.

What is an opening surprise? Or indeed what sort of move in the opening phase of a chess game do we consider to be surprising? The general rules of opening play state quite clearly that you should: (1) gain influence in the centre, (2) develop your pieces, and (3) bring your king into safety. Therefore, you should *not*: make to many pawn moves, move more than once with the same piece, develop your queen too early, etc, etc. It follows logically that a surprising move in the opening will often appear to go against these general rules of good opening play. A move that surprises your opponent is of course not synonymous with a good move. Thus, 1.f3 is surprising but also bad.

The question of quality is an important one. The opening variations that you will find in this book are not the so-called main lines. These lines are strong (which is why they have become main lines), but demand continuous study and will certainly not surprise your opponent. Are the 'surprise variations' presented in this book less good than 'main lines'? Let us not beat about the bush: from a certain 'objective' (Kasparov-like) viewpoint they will indeed be 'weaker'. However, the variations presented in this book have all been played by grandmasters! Hence, this should give you a certain guarantee about their quality. Moreover, it is quite possible that your results are better with a variation that requires not too much study, surprises your opponent and is good fun to play.

Let us consider the next element: What secrets can this author reveal? In *New in Chess* 1998/8 I wrote an article called 'Svidler's Opening Secret' about a Peter Svidler speciality: 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.♗g5 ♗g7!?. Two issues on, Svidler commented (in a game annotation), with tongue-in-cheek, upon the logical inconsistency of that title: ' if it really was a secret [Jeroen Bosch] would not know about it, right?'. So true, so true. Apart from the novelties and the original analyses in this book, there are no 'secrets' in the strictest sense of the word in this book. The secretive element in this book lies in presenting to the reader an opening idea that he may not have known about, or thought possible, but one that has been played successfully by one or more strong players.

This book contains no less than 18 of such opening ideas. Some of them for White, some of them for Black. In some cases they provide you with a weapon against a complete opening, in other cases an idea against a particular variation is given. The material has been divided into 6 sections of more or less equal length. The first 4 sections (16 chapters in all) are thematically organized. Thus, section I deals with an early a3 for White in several lines. Section II illustrates that bishops may be developed in surprising ways. In section III is demonstrated that early queen moves can be quite strong. Pawn aggression is the constitutive element of section IV. The final sections of this book are organized somewhat differently in that each has only one chapter. In section V the subject is a line for White against the French. Section VI presents an original Sicilian for Black. These final two chapters are much longer. They contain a detailed theoretical section followed by illustrative games.

Secrets of Opening Surprises is written for players who like to refresh their opening arsenal with some lesser-known and interesting ideas. I hope that the reader will have as much fun in studying these SOS lines, as I had in 'discovering' them and analysing them. I wish the reader success in testing out these SOS variations..

Jeroen Bosch
Nijmegen, August 2003

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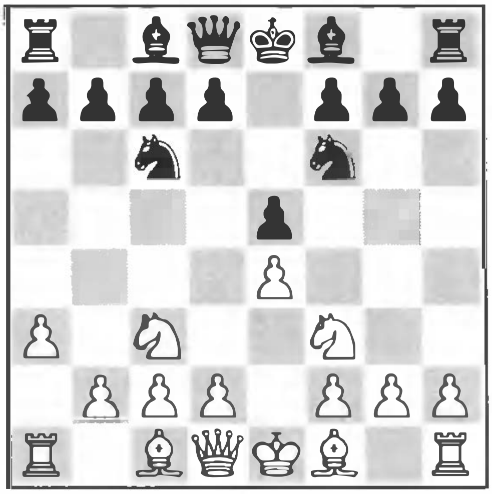
Section I: The left hook a3!?

This section caters for 1.e4 players who are looking for weapons against 1...e5, the Pirc, or the Sicilian Four Knights. In these first 3 chapters I will demonstrate that an early a3 will pose your opponent some new and unexpected problems. Chapter 1 deals with, what I have called, the Gunsberg Variation of the Four Knights.

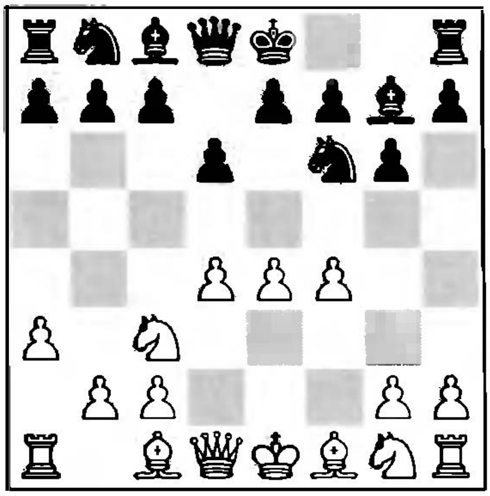
1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.a3



Compared to 4.♗b5 and 4.d4 the move 4.a3 does not make a big impression at first sight. However, it is a clever waiting move that, if you don't mind the use of hyperbole, places Black in a kind of *Zugzwang*. He should decide in which opening the move 'a6' (White's extra tempo) is not useful. Black is in a real quandary here!

The idea behind the move 5.a3 in Chapter 2 is more straightforward.

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 g6 4.f4 ♗g7 5.a3



With his last little pawn move White has prevented Black from leashing out with 5...c5 (a main line after 5.♘f3). This is the SOS way to play the Austrian attack. Plenty of strong grandmasters are playing this line with considerable success.

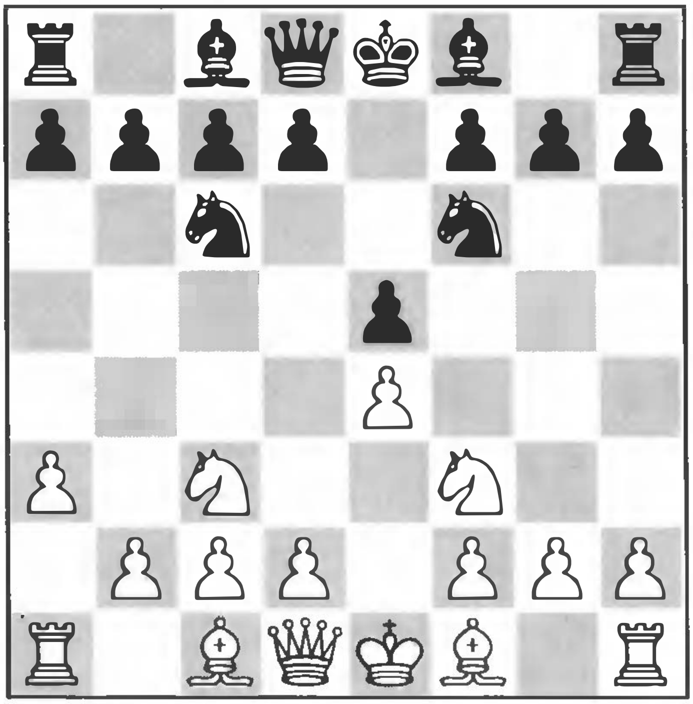
In Chapter 3 we will meet the Sicilian Four Knights with 6.a3.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cd4 4.♘d4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 e6 6.a3

Together with Chapter 12, this book provides the reader with a repertoire against the Sveshnikov. Most 6 move alternatives for White allow 6...♗b4. Clearly, 6.a3 has a point there! It is mainly a move order weapon, though, and ample lines are suggested for the interested reader.

CHAPTER 1

The Gunsberg Variation



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4.a3: an awesome waiting move

Let me start off by expressing my SOS-admiration for a theoretical contribution made by Isidor Gunsberg. Gunsberg scored a decent result in a World Championship's match versus Steinitz, New York 1890/91. In the Four Knights, Gunsberg was fond of the awesome move 4.a3!
Now before you fall off your chair laughing and skip the rest of this chapter, allow me to explain. The little pawn move is a waiting move of superior order: White is playing Black but with a very useful extra tempo. A brief scheme to convince you of the possibilities of 4.a3:

- 4...♗b4, the 'Spanish Four Knights' is prevented;
- 4...♗c5 is answered by 5.♘e5!;
- 4...d5. the 'Scotch Four Knights,' is met by 5.♗b5 when a3 is useful and the opponent is lured into unknown territory;
- 4...g6, the 'Glek variation', is somewhat under a cloud these days anyway, besides White has some extra ideas here too.
- 4...a6, provokes White into playing 5.d4! (ed4 and ♗b4 is no longer on);
- 4...d6 and 4...♗e7, are perhaps best, however Black is forced into passivity after 5.d4.

Before we start our investigation proper let me briefly mention some similar ideas. Hugh Myers wrote a book on a3-lines in the open games calling them Mengarini's opening. The American Ariel Mengarini liked to play 1.e4 e5 2.a3. This is a less forcing move order though. Myers feels that after 2...f5 White's second move has little merit. We may think of other set-ups too. Myers himself advocated 1.e4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.a3. This is indeed quite a tricky move order. Its main idea is shown after 3...d5 4.ed5 ♘d5 5.♕h5! A reversed Scotch with the important difference that the best move ♘d5-b4 is obviously not on. There are some other ideas connected to the Vienna move order too. For example, 3...♗c5 4.♘f3 ♘g4 (the Two Knights) 5.d4 ed4 6.♘a4 and again a3 proves its usefulness. However, I think that 4...d6 is an easy equalizer, and besides Black can always play 3...♘c6 when White has nothing better than to transpose into Gunsberg's Four Knights. Therefore we will concentrate on 4.a3 in the Four Knights. Naming this the Gunsberg Variation strikes me as most logical, considering that he was both the first and the strongest player to regularly adopt 4.a3.

I Black falls for it

1. e4 e5
2. ♘c3 ♘c6
3. ♘f3 ♘f6
4. a3 ♗c5

This allows a simple tactic, which is known with colours reversed too (4.♗c4 ♘e4).

5. ♘e5 ♘e5

This is better than 5...♗f2?! 6.♔f2 ♘e5 7.d4 ♘fg4? (7...♘g6 8.e5 ♘g8 9.h4!? d5 10.ed6 ♕d6 11.♘b5 ♕d8 12.♕e1 ♔f8 13.h5 Cvorovic-Stipic, Pula tt 1992) 8.♔g1 ♕h4 9.♕e2 ♘g6 10.g3 ♕h5 11.h3 ♘f6 12.♕h5 ♘h5 13.♔h2± Bhend-Avram, Lenk 1991.

However, 5...0-0 may well be a better idea. For example, 6.♗e2 ♘d4 7.♘f3 (7.♘d3!?) 7...♖e8 8.0-0 (8.d3 d5) 8...♘e4 was equal in Tarrasch-Duras, Nuremberg 1906. Likewise, 6.♘c6 dc6 7.♗e2 ♕d4 8.0-0 ♘e4 was also equal in Van de Oudeweetering-Wemmers, Dutch Team Championship 2000.

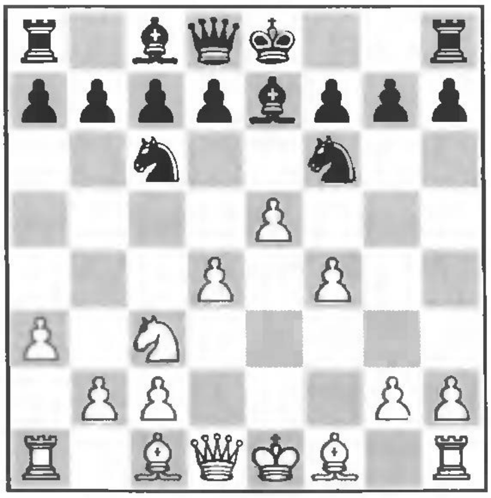
6. d4 ♗d6

6...♗d4 7.♕d4 d6±.

7. f4

7.de5 ♗e5 8.♗d3 0-0 9.0-0 is almost equal for Black. Worth investigating though is 8.♘b5!? (White is planning f4) 8...a6 (8...d5 9.f4 ♘e4 (9...♗d6 10.e5) 10.fe5 ♕h4 11.g3 ♘g3 12.hg3 ♕g3 13.♔d2 ♕f4 14.♔c3 and wins) 9.f4 ♗f4 10.♗f4 ab5 11.e5 with decent compensation in Hofstetter-Labahn, cr 1993.

7. ... ♘c6
8. e5 ♗e7



Grandmaster Patrick Wolff played this position twice with White:

● **9.ef6 ♗f6 10.d5 ♕e7 11.♔f2 ♘d8** 11...♗d4 12.♔g3 ♗c3 13.bc3 ♕d6 **12.d6!? ♕d6 13.♕d6 cd6 14.♘d5** and White had an edge in Wolff-COMP KChess, Harvard 1993.

● **9.d5 ♘d5 10.♘d5 d6 11.ed6 ♕d6 12.♘e7 ♕e7 13.♔f2 0-0 14.♗d3 ♗f5 15.♗f5 ♕c5 16.♗e3 ♕f5 17.g4 ♕e4 18.♖c1** White has no advantage of course. He won after a hard struggle. 18...f5 19.g5 ♖fe8 20.♕f3 ♕c4 21.b3 ♕f7 22.♖cd1 ♖e4 23.♖d3 ♖ae8 24.h4 ♕e7 25.♖a1 ♘d8 26.♖ad1 ♘f7 27.a4 b6 28.c4 ♘d6 29.c5 ♘f7 30.♖c1 ♕e6 31.♖cc3 ♘d8 32.cb6 cb6 33.♔g3 ♘c6 34.♗f2 ♘b4 35.♖d4 ♘d5 36.♖cc4 a6 37.a5 ba5 38.♖c5 ♘b4 39.♕c3 ♖d4 40.♗d4 ♘d5 41.♕c1 ♖d8 42.♗e5 ♕f7 43.♖c8 ♖c8 44.♕c8 ♕f8 45.♕a6 ♘e7 46.♕a5+– ♕c8 47.♗d6 ♘c6 48.♕d5 ♔h8 49.b4 ♘d8 50.♗c5 ♘e6 51.h5 1-0 Wolff-Lesiège, Montreal 1993.

II The Improved Scotch

1. e4 e5
2. ♘c3 ♘f6
3. ♘f3 ♘c6
4. a3 d5

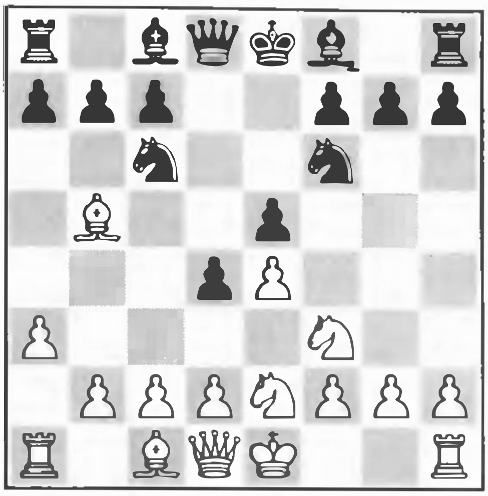
Now White can play 5.ed5 ♘d5 6.♗b5 reasoning that Black is quite OK in the Scotch Four Knights. However, if you want to make use of your extra tempo it is better to play

5. ♗b5

when the lines fork:

A) 5...d4
B) 5...de4
C) 5...♘e4

A) **5. ... d4**
6. ♘e2



A1) **6...♘e4 7.d3** Without a3 (so with colours reversed) Black would now give check on b4. **7...♘f6 8.♘e5 ♕d5**

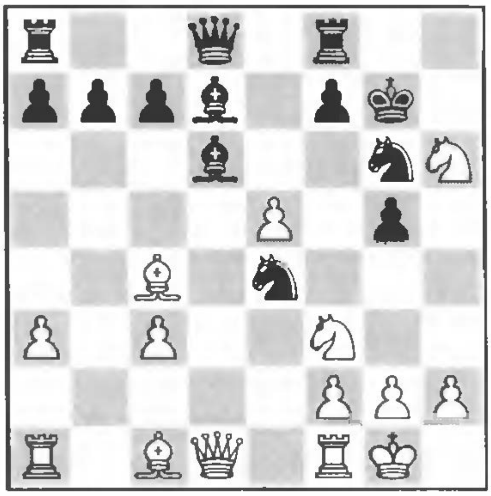
A11) **9.♗c6 bc6 10.♘f3 c5 11.♘f4 ♕d8 12.0-0** Welling-Paci, Cappelle la Grande 2001.

A12) Taking with the knight is also interesting: **9.♘c6 bc6 10.♗c4** or 10.♗a4 ♕g2 11.♖g1 ♕d5 12.♘d4 ♗d7 13.♗e3 and White is much better, Pachman. **10...♕g2 11.♖g1 ♕h2 12.♗f4** with compensation (Pachman), again the pawn on a3 is very useful with regard to the check on b4.

A2) **6...♗d6 7.d3 ♗g4?!** 7...h6?! 8.0-0 (8.♘ed4 is a none-too-convincing recommendation of Steinitz: 8...ed4 9.e5 0-0) 8...0-0 9.♘g3 ♘e7 and now instead of 10.♘h4?, Gunsberg-Pollock, 1888, Steinitz gives 10.♘e5 ♗e5 11.f4 which indeed promises White an advantage. **8.♘g3 ♘h5 9.h3 ♘g3 10.fg3 ♗h5?! 11.0-0 0-0 12.g4 ♗g6 13.♕e1±** (13.♗c6±) Bosch-Lipinsky, Germany Bundesliga 2001 (15).

A3) In honour of Gunsberg, one of his

crushing wins: **6...♗d7 7.d3 ♗d6 8.♘g3 ♘e7 9.♗c4 h6?! 10.0-0 g5 11.c3! dc3** 11...c5 12.♕b3 **12.d4!? ♘g6 13.bc3 0-0 14.♘f5 ♘e4 15.♘h6 ♔g7 16.de5**



16...♗e7 16...♘e5 17.♘e5 ♗e5 18.♘f7! ♖f7 19.♗f7 wins **17.♘f7!+– ♘c3 18.♕c2 ♖f7 19.♗f7 ♔f7 20.♕c3 g4 21.♖d1!?** In truly romantic style **21...gf3 22.e6 ♔e6 23.♕b3 ♔f6 24.♗b2 ♔g5 25.♕e3 ♘f4 26.♖d5** 1-0 Gunsberg-Zukertort, London 1888.

B) 5. ... de4

This looks bad.

6. ♘e5 ♕d6

7. d4 ed3?

Black must play 7...a6 8.♗c6 bc6 9.♗f4 ♕e6 10.0-0 ♘d5 11.♘d5 cd5 12.c4 ♗d6 13.♕a4 (½-½ Bhend-Flear, San Bernardino 1991) 13...♗d7 14.♕c2, Van de Oudeweetering-Van Gisbergen, Enschede 1994.

8.0-0 ♗e6 No better was 8...a6 9.♗c6 bc6 10.♗f4 ♕d4 11.♕f3 ♘d5 12.♖fe1 ♗e6 13.♖e4 ♕b6 14.♘f7!+– Mihevc-Markovic, Yugoslavia 1991. **9.♗f4 ♕c5 10.♘d3 ♕e7 11.♘e5 ♕c5 12.♕f3 0-0-0 13.♗c6 bc6 14.b4 ♕b6 15.♗e3 ♕a6 16.b5** 1-0 Stocklin-Rodel, Zurich 1993.

C) 5. ... ♘e4!?

With colours reversed (so without a3) this is one of the main lines.

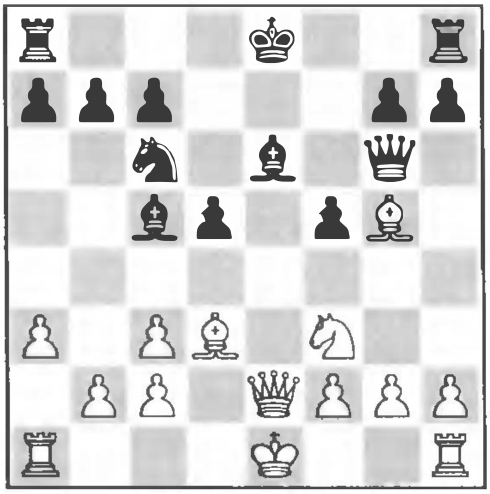
6. ♘e5

6.♕e2 ♕d6! (6...♘c3 7.♕e5 is equal) 7.♘e4 de4 8.♕e4 ♗d7 is more than OK for Black.

6. ... ♕f6

Black has an exciting alternative here: 6...♕g5 7.♘c6 ♕g2 8.♖f1 a6 9.♘d5 (9.♗a4) 9...ab5 10.♘c7 ♔d7 11.♘a8 ♔c6 is a theoretical position with colours reversed, here White has a3 extra. This is useful but it is not clear to what extent. Kover-Umberto, cr 1997.

7.♘f3 ♗e6 8.♕e2 ♘c3 8...♕g6 9.dc3 ♗c5 10.♗g5 ♕g6 11.♗d3 f5 11...♕h5 12.♗f5!?

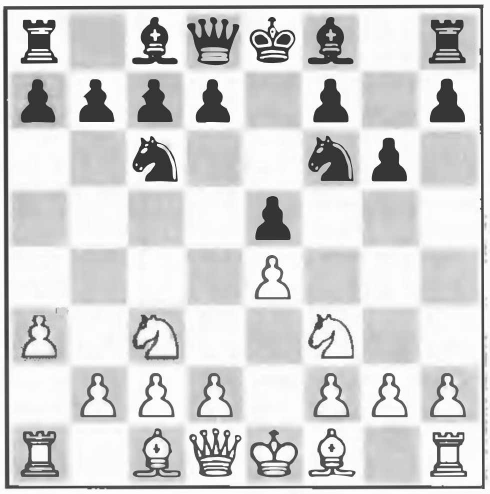


White is clearly better now and won quite nicely. **12.♘h4!? ♕g5 13.♕e6 ♘e7 14.♘f5 ♖f8** 14...♕g2 15.0-0-0 ♕g5 16.f4 ♕f4 17.♔b1+– ♕g5 18.♗b5 c6 19.♖d5 **15.f4! ♕g2** 15...♕f4 16.♖f1 ♕g5 17.h4 ♕g2 18.0-0-0+– **16.0-0-0 ♖f6 17.♕e5 ♗d6 18.♘d6 cd6**

19.♕h5 ♔f8 20.♖hg1 ♕f2 21.♖df1 ♕e3 22.♔b1 h6 23.♕g4 ♖f7 24.♖g3 ♕d2 25.♖g2 25.♗e2!+– (Welling) **25...♕e3 26.♖e2 ♕b6 27.♖fe1 ♘g8 28.♗g6 ♘f6 29.♕e6** 1-0 Welling-Granados, Martinenc 2001.

III The Reversed Glek Variation

1. e4 e5
2. ♘f3 ♘c6
3. ♘c3 ♘f6
4. a3 g6



There are several playable ideas here for White:

- **5.♗b5 ♕e7 6.d3 ♘d8!?** was Gunsberg-Gunston, Manchester 1890.
- **5.d4 ed4 6.♘d4 ♗g7 7.♘de2** by analogy to the main lines versus 4.g3, White may consider 7.♘c6 bc6 8.♗c4, 8.♗d3 and 8.♗e2.**7...d6 8.g3 0-0 9.♗g2** Cigan-Mikac, Bled tt 1996.
- **5.d4 ed4 6.♘d5!?** a kind of Belgrade gambit with a3 and g6 thrown in.
- Speculative and spectacular is **5.♘e5!? ♘e5 6.d4 ♘c6** and now **7.d5** with considerable compensation. Not, however, **7.e5 ♘g8 8.♗c4 d6** and White had not enough in R.Hendriks-Jonkman, Zwolle 2001.

Most often White just plays:

5. ♗c4 ♗g7

Some players blunder with 5...♘e4. 6.♘e4 only realising at this stage that 6...d5? is met by 7.♗d5. Still what to make of 6...♗g7 7.♘c3 e4 8.♘g1 0-0 9.♘ge2 ♕h4 Zecevic-Rade, Pula tt 1994? White should win, but didn't. And how about 6....f5 7.d3?! fe4 8.de4 Utasi-Lukacs, Budapest 1990?

6. d3 d6

6...0-0 7.h4 d6 8.♗g5 ♗e6 9.♘d5 ♗d5 10.♗d5 h6= G.Horvath-Lukacs, Balatonbereny 1996.

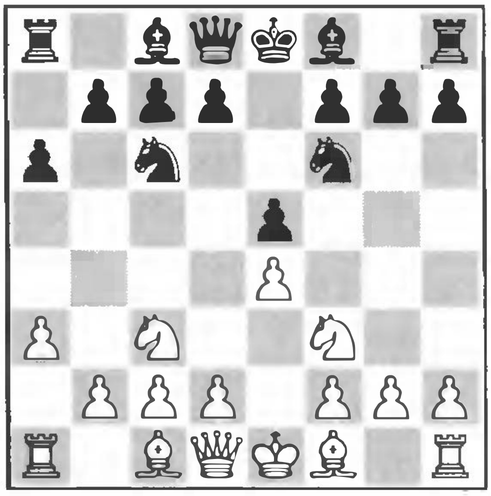
7. h3 ♗e6

7...0-0 8.♗g5 h6 9.♗e3 a6 10.♕d2 ♔h7, Van de Oudeweetering-Van Wessel, Netherlands tt 2000.

8.♗e3 h6 9.♗e6 fe6 10.d4 ed4 11.♘d4 ♕d7 12.♘c6 ♕c6 13.♕d3 ♘d7 14.♗d4 ♘e5 15.♕g3 0-0-0 16.0-0-0 ♕d7 17.♗e5 ♗e5 18.f4 ♗c3 19.♕c3 The position is quite equal. Black won after some inaccuracies by White **19...♕e7 20.h4 h5 21.g3 ♔b8 22.e5 d5 23.♕d3 ♖hg8 24.♔b1 c5 25.c4 ♕f7 26.♔a2 b6 27.♖h2 ♖d7 28.♖hd2 ♖gd8 29.♔a1 ♔c7 30.♕c2 a5 31.cd5 ♖d5 32.♖d5 ed5 33.♖e1 ♕e6 34.♖d1 d4 35.b3 a4 36.ba4 c4 37.♕e4 c3 38.♖d4 ♕b3** 0-1 Hamdouchi-Adams, Cannes rapid 2001.

IV Waiting tactics

1. e4 e5
2. ♘f3 ♘c6
3. ♘c3 ♘f6
4. a3 a6



Calling White's bluff? This counter-waiting move is not entirely insipid.

5. d4 ed4

6. ♘d4

The Belgrade Gambit 6.♘d5 with the additional a3 a6 is worth investigating.

6. ... d6

There are some alternatives:

- 6...♗c5 is possible. But the Scotch main line with ♗b4 has been prevented.
- 6...♘d4 7.♕d4 d6 Gutschow-Jakobi, Germany 1989, eases White's task.
- 6...♘e4(!) had already been recommended by Myers and it may well be Black's best option here. It is also possible after 4.d4 ed4 5.♘d4 ♘e4(!) 7.♘e4 ♕e7 8.f3 d5 and in the 'ordinary' version (without a3 a6) White now has 9.♗b5. So the inclusion of a3 a6 is useful for Black!

7.♗e2 ♗e7 8.0-0 0-0 9.♔h1 ♖e8 10.f4 ♗f8 11.♘c6 11.♗f3 ♘d4 12.♕d4 ♗g4 **11...bc6 12.♗f3** White is slightly better, Bhend-Gattenlohner, Zurich 1997.

V Showing restraint

Black avoids all the traps and simply develops with 4...d6 or 4...♗e7. Yet, such set-ups, reminiscent of the Steinitz variation of the Ruy Lopez, may not be to everyone's taste. Still we must acknowledge that the value of the extra move 4.a3 is neglible. Since concrete variations are less important here we will end this article with some annotated games.

☐ **Isidor Gunsberg**

■ **Joseph Blackburne**

Bradford 1887

1.e4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.♘f3 ♘c6 4.a3 d6 5.h3

This looks like a beginner's move, but White is preventing ♗g4. 5.♗c4?! ♘e4 6.♘e4 d5 7.♗d3 de4 8.♗e4 ♗d6 was Nimzowitsch-Kashdan, Bled 1931. White equalises at best.

5...♗e7 6.d4 0-0

6...ed4 7.♘d4 0-0 8.♗e2 ♖e8 (8...d5) 9.0-0 h6 10.f4 ♗f8 11.♗f3± Repkova-Starr, Yerevan Olympiad 1996.

7.d5 ♘b8 8.♗e3 ♘e8

8...c6 is what Steinitz recommended.

9.g4 ♔h8 10.♕d2 c5?! 11.♘e2 b5 12.♘g3 a6 13.♗e2 g6 14.♗h6 ♖g8

14...♘g7 is preferable but White is better anyway.

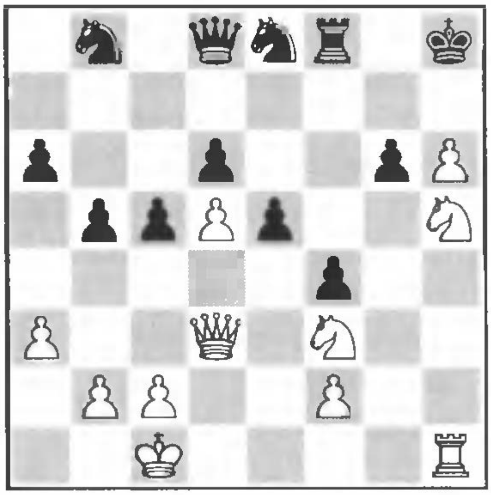
15.0-0-0 ♗f6 16.♖dg1 ♖a7 17.g5 ♗g7 18.♗g7 ♖g7?

18...♘g7 was necessary.

19.h4 f5 20.ef5 gf5 21.h5 f4?

21...e4 22.h6 ♖g6 23.♕c3 (23.♘e4 fe4 24.♘h4 may well be stronger) 23...♔g8 24.♘h4 ♖g5 25.♘gf5 is given by Steinitz as winning, but 25...♗f5 26.♘f5 ♖f7 is still not so easy.

22.h6 ♖g8 23.♘h5 ♖f7 24.♗d3 ♗f5 25.♗f5 ♖f5 26.♕d3 ♖ff8 27.g6 ♖g6 28.♖g6 hg6



29.♘h4!

As Steinitz put it: 'The way Mr. Gunsberg conducts the attack in the latter part of the game deserves the highest commendation.'

29...gh5 30.♘g6 ♔g8 31.h7! ♔h7 32.♘e7 Mating. **1-0**

☐ **Paul Motwani**
■ **Luc Winants**
Belgium tt 2001

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.a3 d6 5.d4 ed4

● 5...♗e7, see 4...♗e7 5.d4 d6 Hort-Quast below.

● 5...♗g4 6.♗b5 ed4 7.♕d4 ♗e7 (7...♗d7 8.♕d3± Rüfenacht-Lematchko, Switzerland tt 1994) 8.e5 de5 9.♕d8 ♖d8 10.♘e5 gave White a small edge in Smallbone-Ashton, England 2000.

● 5...♗g4 6.d5 ♘d4 7.♗e2 ♘e2 8.♕e2 c6 9.h3 ♗d7 was played in two games between Nanu and Vajda.

6.♘d4 ♗e7 7.♗e2 0-0 8.♗e3

Preparing to castle queenside.

8...♖e8

8...d5.

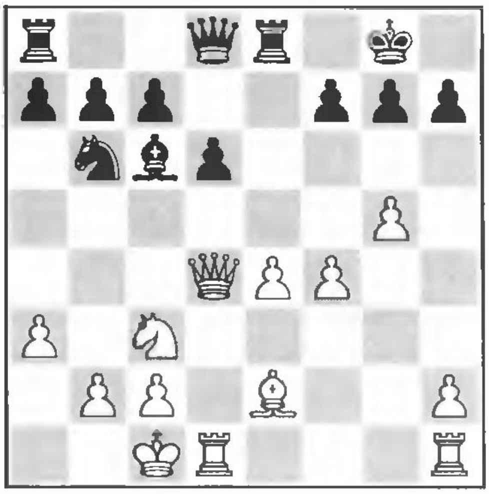
9.♕d2 ♘d7

This regrouping seems too cumbersome. Better is 9...♘d4 10.♗d4 ♗e6.

10.0-0-0 ♗f6 11.f4 ♘b6 12.g4

Crude but quite effective. White just gains a lot of space. Black now has to seek relief in exchanges.

12...♗d7 13.g5 ♗d4 14.♗d4 ♘d4 15.♕d4 ♗c6



16.♖he1

Overlooking Black's idea. 16.♗f3 prevents further exchanges. when White's position is preferable.

16...♘a4! 17.♘d5

17.♘a4 ♖e4 is the tactical justification.

17...♘b6 18.♗d3 18.♘c3 ♘a4 **18...♗d5 19.ed5 ♕d7 20.f5 ♖e1 21.♖e1 ♖e8 22.♖e4 ♖e4 23.♕e4 f6 24.g6 ½-½**

☐ **Vlastimil Hort**
■ **Michael Quast**
Germany Bundesliga 1995

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♘c3 ♘c6 4.a3 ♗e7 5.d4 d6 6.♗e2

Perhaps this is best. Some alternatives:

A) 6.♗b5 ed4 (6...♗d7 7.♗c6 – 7.♕d3 – 7...♗c6 8.♕d3 was Tarrasch-Fleischmann, Hamburg 1910) 7.♘d4 ♗d7 8.0-0 0-0 9.♖e1 ♘d4 10.♕d4 ♗b5 11.♘b5

♘d7 12.a4!? Wahls-Piket, Novi Sad Olympiad 1990.

B) 6.d5 ♘b8 7.h3 0-0 8.♗e3 c6 Nurmamedov-Mats, Moscow tt 1979.

C) 6.h3 0-0 7.♗e2 ed4 8.♘d4 d5! is comfortable for Black, Bhend-Ziatdinov, Lenk 1991.

6...0-0 7.0-0 ♗g4 7...ed4 **8.d5 ♗f3 9.♗f3 ♘d4 10.♗e3**

White is slightly better.

10...c5 11.a4 a6 12.a5 ♘e8 13.♗g4 g6 14.♗h3 ♘g7 15.♘a4 f5

15...♕a5 16.c3

16.♘b6 ♖b8 17.c3 ♘b5 18.♗h6 ♖f7 19.♗g7 ♔g7 20.ef5 gf5 21.♕c2 ♔g6

21...e4 22.f3+–

22.♗f5! **1-0**

☐ **Mark Hebden**
■ **Jonathan Ady**
London 1986

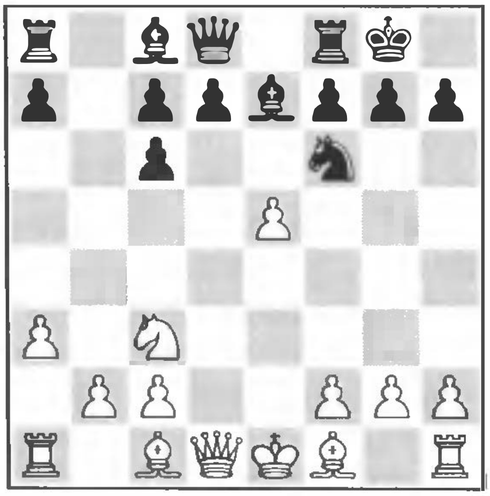
1.e4 e5 2.a3!?

Hebden goes for Mengarini's move order.

2...♘f6 3.♘c3 ♘c6 4.♘f3 ♗e7 5.d4 ed4 6.♘d4 0-0

Black is ready for 7...d5, which is his reply to both 7.♗e2 and 7.♗e3.

7.♘c6 bc6 7...dc6 8.♕d8 ♖d8± **8.e5**



8...♘d5!?

Sacrificing a pawn. The alternative is 8...♘e8 9.♕d4 (9.♗d3) 9...f6 10.f4 fe5 11.fe5 d5 12.♗e3 ♘f6!? 13.ef6 ♗f6 14.♕c5 ♖e8 and Black had good compensation for the piece in V.Gurevich-Ivanov, Soviet Union 1978.

9.♘d5 cd5 10.♕d5 ♖b8

10...c6!?

11.♗d3 d6 12.0-0 ♗b7 13.♕d4 de5 14.♕e5 ♗f6 15.♕g3 ♖e8 16.♗f4 ♖e7 17.♖ad1 ♕e8 18.♗c7

and White won.

RECENT GAMES

☐ **Jeroen Bosch**
■ **Paul van der Sterren**
Breda 2001

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.a3 g6 5.♗c4

Rather meek was 5.g3 ♗g7 6.♗g2 0-0 7.0-0 d6 8.d3 h6 9.h3 ½-½ Palac-Sax, Medulin 2002.

5...♗g7 6.d3 d6 7.0-0

About equal was 7.♗g5 ♗e6 8.♕e2 h6 9.♗d2 ♕d7 10.h3 a6 11.0-0-0 0-0-0 12.♘d5 ♗d5 13.♗d5 ♘d5 14.ed5 ♘d4 15.♘d4 ed4, Ganguly-Babu, Nagpur 2002.

7...0-0 8.h3 ♗e6 9.♗g5

Black is slightly better after 9.♗e6 fe6 10.♗e3. No better is 9.♘d5 ♗d5 (9...h6) 10.ed5 ♘e7.

9...h6 10.♗h4 ♕d7

Black has a comfortable position.

11.♖e1 ♘h5?!

Stronger are 11...♖ae8 or 11...♔h7.

12.♘d5! ♘f4 13.♗g3 g5 14.c3 f5 15.♗f4! gf4

Not 15...ef4 16.ef5+–.

16.♘h4

16.ef5 ♖f5.

16...fe4 17.de4 ♘d8 18.♗b3!

Here 18.♘f5 is answered by 18...♔h8. While, 18.♕g4 is only useful after 18...♗g4?? 19.♘f6 ♔h8 20.♘g6 mate!

18...c6

Or 18...a5 19.♘f5.

19.♘b4 a5 20.♘d3

With the idea of ♘c5.

20...♘f7 21.♗e6 ♕e6 22.♕g4

22.♘f5 ♔h7.

22...♕g4 23.hg4

White is somewhat better.

23...d5? 24.♘f5 ♖fe8 25.♖e2! de4

25...b6 26.ed5 cd5 27.♖ae1±.

26.♘c5 b6 27.♘e4 a4?

Stronger was 27...♖ad8.

28.♖d1 ♖ad8 29.♖d8

29.♖ed2 ♖d2 30.♖d2 ♖d8 31.♘e7 ♔f8 32.♘c6 ♖d2 33.♘d2 ♘d6 34.f3 with a clear advantage.

29...♖d8

Here 29...♘d8 is answered by 30.♖d2 or 30.♘ed6.

30.♘e7 ♔f8 31.♘c6 ♖d1 32.♔h2 ♔e8 33.f3

But not, 33.g3? f3 34.♖d2 (34.♖e3 ♖b1) 34...♖e1.

33...♔d7 34.♘b4 ♘d6 35.♘f2

35.♖d2 ♖d2 36.♘d2 b5

35...♖b1 36.♘fd3 ♘c4 37.g3 ♘e3?T 38.gf4 ef4 39.♘c2?T

Winning was 39.♘f4 ♗e5 40.♘d3.

39...♘c4 40.♘cb4

40.♘d4 ♗d4 41.cd4 ♖d1 (41...♔d6!) 42.♘f4 ♖d4.

40...b5 41.♘d5 ♗f8!? 42.♔g2

Winning was 42.♘5f4! ♗d6 43.♔g3 ♖d1 44.♔h3.

42...♗d6 43.♔f2 ♔c6 44.♘5b4 ♔d7 45.♘d5 ♔c6 46.♘5b4 ♔d7 47.♖e1! ♖e1 48.♔e1 ♗b4 49.cb4!

49.ab4 ♔d6 (49...♘b2 50.♘b2 a3 51.♘d3+–) 50.♔d1.

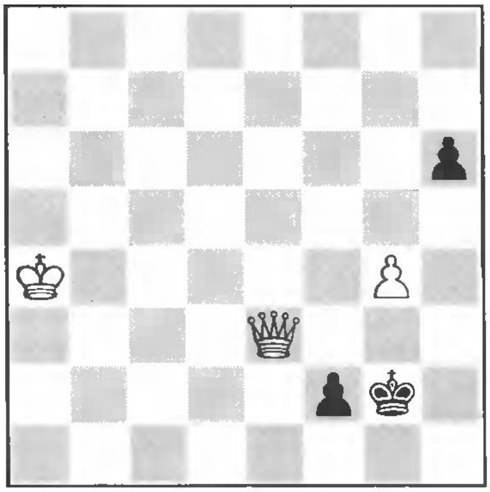
49...♔d6 50.♔e2!

50.♔d1 ♘e5 51.♔e2 (51.♘e5 ♔e5 52.♔c2 ♔d4 53.♔d2 ♔c4=) 51...♘c4.

50...♔d7 51.♔d1! ♔d6 52.♔c2 ♘e5 53.♘e5! ♔e5 54.♔d3 ♔d5 55.♔c3 ♔e5 56.b3 ab3 57.♔b3 ♔d4 58.a4 ba4 59.♔a4 ♔e3 60.b5 ♔f3 61.b6 ♔g2 62.b7 f3 63.b8♕ f2 64.♕b7 ♔g1 65.♕b6 ♔g2 66.♕c6 ♔g1 67.♕c5 ♔g2 68.♕d5 ♔g1 69.♕d4 ♔g2 70.♕d2 ♔g1 71.♕e3

71.♕h6 f1♕ 72.♕e3 ♔g2 73.g5.

71...♔g2



72.♕e4

White wins with 72.♕e2!! ♔g1 73.g5! hg5 (73...f1♕ 74.♕f1 ♔f1 75.gh6) 74.♕g4 ♔h2 75.♕f3 ♔g1 76.♕g3 ♔f1 77.♔b3 g4 78.♔c2 ♔e2 79.♕d3 ♔e1 80.♕d1 mate.

72...♔g1 73.g5? f1♕ 74.♕g4 ♔h2 75.g6

75.♕h4 ♔g2 76.gh6 ♕a6.

75...♕a6

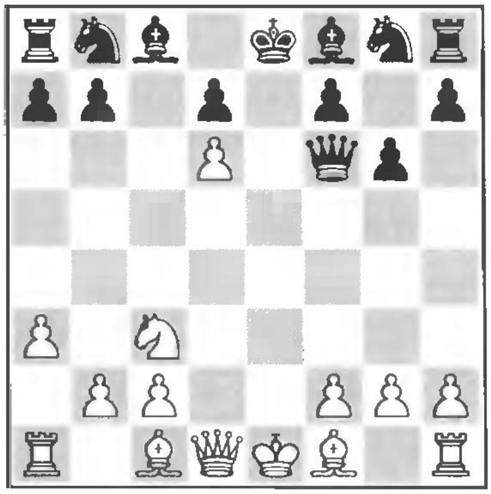
White cannot avoid a perpetual.

76.♔b4 ♕b6 77.♔c4 ♕c6 78.♔d3 ♕d5 79.♔e3 ♕b3 80.♔f2 ♕c2 81.♔e1 ♕c3 82.♔f2 ♕c2 83.♔e3 ♕c3 84.♔e2 ♕c2 85.♔e1 ♕c3 86.♔f2 **½-½**

☐ **Pawel Blehm**
■ **Larry Kaufman**
Washington 2002

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.a3 g6 5.d4

5.♘e5!? ♘e5 6.d4 ♘c6 7.d5 was a recommendation in the original article. Norway's biggest talent Magnus Carlsen bravely tried it out. His game against Nyysti (Helsinki 2002) went: 7...♘b8 8.e5 ♘g8 9.d6!? cd6 10.ed6 ♕f6 (10...♗g7 11.♘d5!)



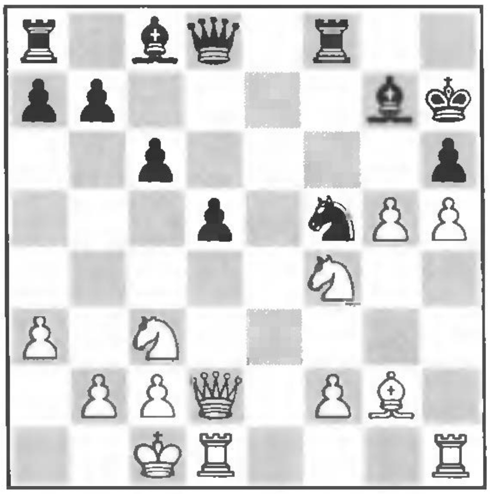
analysis diagram

11.♞b5 ♘a6 12.♗c4 ♗h6 13.♕e2 ♔f8 14.♗e3 ♗e3 15.fe3 ♕h4 16.g3 ♕h5 17.♕f2 ♕f5 18.♕e2 (18.♕f5!? gf5 19.0-0 with compensation) 18...♕h5 19.♕f2 ♕f5 20.♕e2 ♞h6!? 21.♖f1 ♕h5 22.♕f2 ♕e5!? 23.0-0-0 and White still had plenty of compensation for the sacrificed piece.

5...ed4 6.♘d4 ♗g7 7.♘de2

7.♘c6 bc6 8.♗d3 0-0 9.0-0 ♖b8 10.♖b1 d5 11.ed5 ♞g4! 12.♗f4 cd5 13.♗e2!± Ganguly-Haslinger, Torquay 2002.

7...0-0 8.g3 d6 9.♗g2 ♔h8?! 10.h3 ♘g8?! 11.g4± f5 12.ef5 gf5 13.g5! f4 14.♗f4 ♘d4 15.♗e3 ♘f5 16.♕d2 ♘e3 17.♕e3 ♘e7 18.h4! d5 19.0-0-0 ♘f5 20.♕d2 c6 21.h5 h6 22.♘f4 ♔h7



23.♘e4! ♕b6 24.♘f6 ♖f6

24...♗f6 25.gf6 ♖f6 26.♕c3±.

25.gf6 ♗f6 26.♘d3 ♘d6 27.♗h3 ♘c4 28.♕b4+– ♕c7 29.♕e1 ♕d6 30.♕e2 ♘a3 31.♗c8 ♖c8 32.♕g4 ♖g8 33.♕f5 ♔h8 34.♖hg1 ♗g5 35.f4 ♖f8 36.♕g6 ♖f6 37.♖g5 hg5

37...♖g6 38.♖g6 ♕f8 39.ba3.

38.♕g5 ♘c4 39.♘e5 ♕e6 40.♖g1 ♕e7 41.♕g8 Mate. **1-0**

☐ **Marijan Petrov**
■ **Nikolay Managadze**
Nikea 2002

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.a3 d6

An alternative is 4...♗c5 5.♘e5 ♘e5 6.d4 ♗d6 7.de5 ♗e5 8.♞b5!? a6 9.f4 ab5N 10.fe5 ♘e4 11.♕g4 d5 12.♕g7 with an advantage, Molander-Van Hoolandt, Gausdal 2002. Black can improve with 5...0-0 6.♘d3 ♗b6 7.♗e2 ♖e8 8.e5 ♘e5 9.♘e5 ♖e5 10.d4 ♖e8= Janev-Pina, Odivelas 2001.

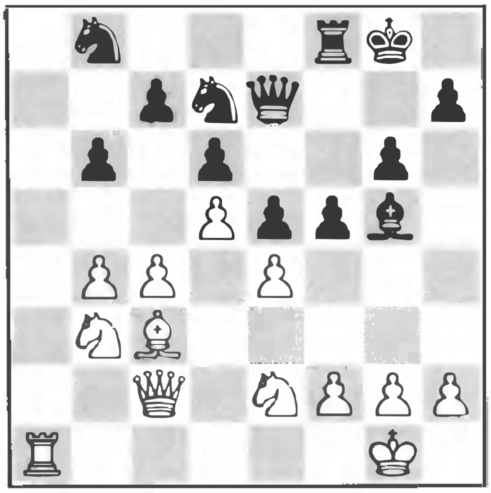
5.d4 ♗e7

Or 5...♗g4 6.d5 (6.♗b5) 6...♘b8 (6...♘d4) 7.♗e2 c6 8.0-0 ♗e7 9.♘e1!? Gombac-Mikac, Pula 2002.

6.♗e2 ♗g4 7.d5 ♘b8 8.0-0 0-0 9.♘d2 ♗e2 10.♘e2± ♘fd7 11.c4 g6 12.b4 a5 13.♗b2 b6 14.♕c2 ♗g5 15.♘b3 ♕e7 16.♗c3

White is better. The position is reminiscent of a King's Indian where White is a lot faster on the queenside.

16...ab4 17.ab4 ♖a1 18.♖a1 f5



19.ef5! gf5 20.♖a7 ♘f6 21.♘g3 f4 22.♘f5 ♕d7 23.h4! ♘e8 24.♖a8!+–

Or 24.hg5 ♖f5 25.♖a8+–.

24...♖f5 25.♖b8 ♖f8 26.hg5 f3 27.♘d2 fg2 28.♕d3 ♖f4 29.♘e4 ♔f7 30.♘d6! cd6 31.♕h7 ♘g7 32.♖g8 1-0

☐ **Rune Djurhuus**
■ **Andreas Moen**
Gausdal 2002

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♘c3 ♘c6 4.a3 d5 5.♗b5 ♘e4

Weak is 5...de4?! 6.♘e5 ♕d6 7.d4 ed3 8.0-0 d2N 9.♗d2 ♗e6 10.♕f3! ♘d5 11.♖fe1 ♗e7 12.♖ad1 0-0 13.♗f4+– Radulski-Matsuura, Bled 2002. After 5...d4 6.♘e2 ♗d7 7.d3 ♗d6 8.0-0 (8.♘g3 was Gunsberg-Zukertort, London 1888) 8...h6 9.♘e1 (alternatives are 9.c3 and 9.♘g3) 9...♘e7 10.♗d7 ♕d7 11.f4 ef4 12.♘f3 ♘c6 13.♘f4 ♘e5 with a good position, Blehm-Socko, Warsaw 2002.

6.♘e5

The alternative is 6.♕e2 ♘c3 (or 6...♕d6!?) 7.♕e5, and now:

A) 7...♗e7 8.♕c3 0-0 9.♗c6 bc6 10.♕c6 ♗f5 11.d3 ♗f6 12.0-0 ♗g4 13.c4 ♗f3 14.gf3 dc4 15.dc4 ♖b8 16.♗f4! ♖b2 17.♖ad1 ♕e7 18.♖d7 and White is better, Kristjansson-Azarov, Goa 2002;

B) 7...♕e7! 8.dc3 ♗d7= Yousry-Gross, Cairo 2002.

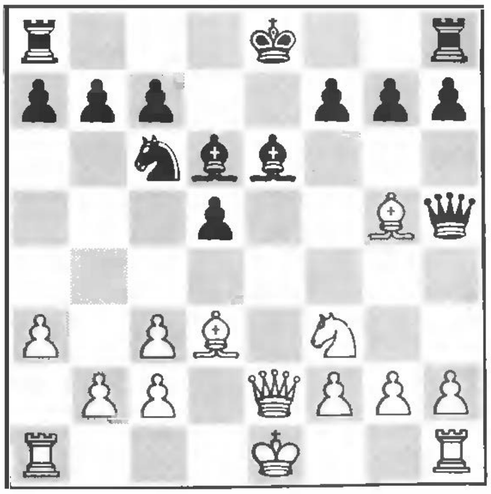
6...♕f6

6...♕g5 leads to exciting play.

7.♘f3 ♗e6 8.♕e2 ♘c3 9.dc3 ♗d6N

9...♗c5

10.♗g5 ♕g6 11.♗d3 ♕h5



12.♗f5

12.h3 ♘e5 was Karttunen-Sepp, Finland

2002.

12...♘e5! 13.♗e6 fe6

Or 13...♘f3 14.gf3 0-0 15.♗d5 ♖ae8 with compensation.

14.♘e5

14.♕b5 c6 15.♕b7 ♘f3 16.gf3 0-0 17.♗f6!?.

14...♕e2

14...♕g5 15.♘f3 ♕e7

15.♔e2 ♗e5 16.♖ae1= ♔d7 17.♔d3 ♗d6 18.c4 ♖hf8 19.♖e2 ♖f5 20.♗d2 ♖af8 21.f3 ♖h5?! 22.h3 ♖f7 23.cd5 ed5 24.f4! d4

24...♗f4 25.♖f2 (but not 25.♖f1 g5 with the idea 26.g3? ♖h3) 25...♖hf5 (25...g5 26.g3) 26.♖hf1+−.

25.♖e4 c5 26.g4

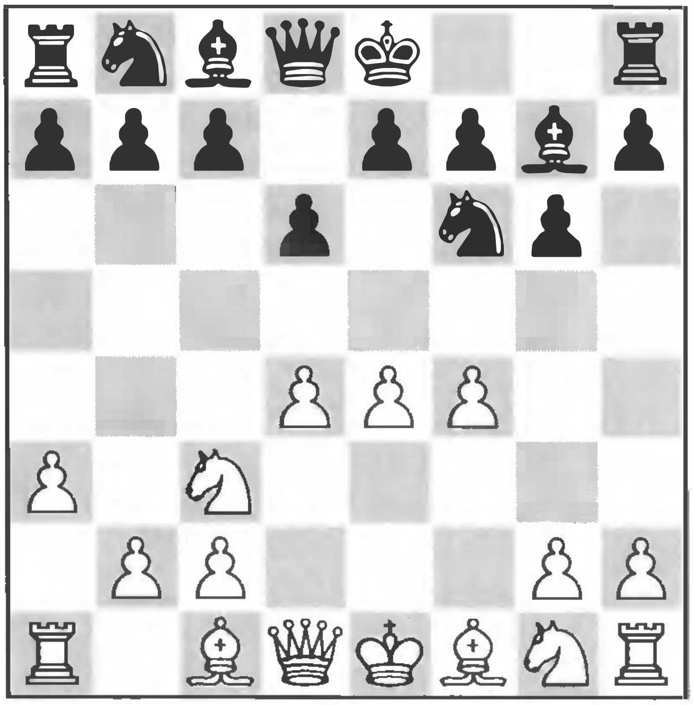
Now White has a distinct edge.

26...♖d5 27.b4 cb4 28.ab4 ♔c6 29.♖f1 ♖d7 30.♔c4 d3 31.c3 a5 32.♔b3 ab4 33.c4!? ♖a5 34.♖e6 ♖a3 35.♔b2 ♖a4 36.f5 ♔c5 37.♖c1 ♖e7? 38.♗e3 1-0

Resigns, e.g. 38...♔c6 39.c5 ♖e6 40.cd6 ♔d6 41.fe6+−.

CHAPTER 2

Your SOS weapon versus the Pirc



NIC KEY PU 11.1

Austrian Attack with 5.a3:

White's most aggressive option versus the Pirc is undoubtedly the Austrian Attack. After 1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 g6 4.f4 ♗g7 5.♘f3 Black has two main systems at his disposal: 5...0-0 and 5...c5. Both systems differ distinctly in character, and as White one must be well-prepared to enter the theoretical ramifications of these lines. If the tactical nature of the Austrian Attack attracts you but the workload that accompanies this choice does not, then the following variation might be your thing.

1. e4 d6
2. d4 ♘f6
3. ♘c3 g6
4. f4 ♗g7
5. a3!?

What on earth could be the idea behind this insipid looking move? Isn't one supposed to develop one's pieces in the opening?

Let me try to explain the point of 5.a3!?. After the normal 5.♘f3 Black can play the active 5...c5 because of the tactical justification 6.dc5 ♕a5! and now 7.♗d3 ♕c5 leads to a Dragon-like position that is OK for Black. However. after 5.a3 c5?

6.dc5, 6...♕a5 is met by 7.b4! (7...♕d8 8.e5, with advantage). So 5.a3 prevents Black's most active system! The move a3 also takes away the b4 square from Black's pieces. The relevance of this can be shown by comparing another move that prevents 5...c5, viz. 5.♗d3 (protecting e4). Here Black has 5...♘c6! 6.d5 (6.♘f3 ♗g4) 6...♘b4, with good play.

Finally, 5.a3 is a subtle waiting move. After 5...0-0 6.♘f3 White will await Black's answer before deciding upon his set-up (♗e3 and ♕d2, ♗e2 and 0-0, ♗d3 and 0-0, a quick e5 etc.). In practice, the position after 6.♘f3 is often reached via the move order 5.♘f3 0-0 6.a3. This strikes me as less logical, as it gives Black the extra option of 5...c5.

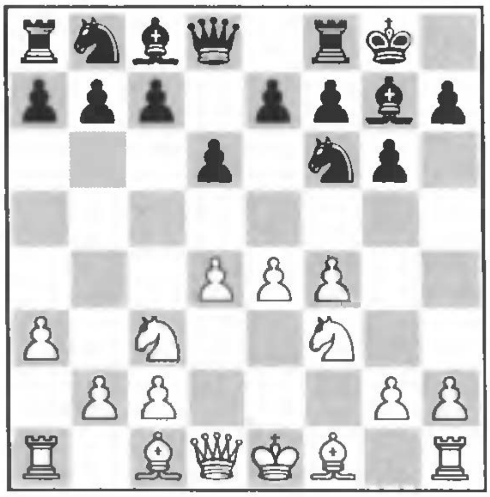
After such a move as 5.a3 Black has, of course, many different set-ups at his disposal. We will investigate them in turn by means of four illustrative games.

☐ **Mladen Palac**

■ **Miljenko Medic**

Pula 2002

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 g6 4.f4 ♗g7 5.a3!? 0-0 6.♘f3



6...c6

A passive move after which aggressive play will gain White a substantial edge. Here are some alternatives that are not very popular in practice:

A) 6...b6 7.♗d3 a6?! 8.0-0 c5 9.e5 ♘e8 10.♗e4 ♖a7 11.dc5 was quite good for White in Van den Brink-Kohler, Leeuwarden 1993.

B) 6...♘bd7 7.e5 ♘e8 8.♗e3 b6 (8...♘b6 9.♕d2 c6 10.h4 h5 11.♗d3 was Murey-Pfleger, Royan 1988. Black eventually won, but at this stage White's position looks more attractive) 9.h4 c5 10.h5 ♘c7 11.hg6 hg6 12.♕d2 ♗b7 13.♕f2 was crude but rather effective in David-Kastanieda, Istanbul Olympiad 2000.

C) 6...c5!? is interesting. Black tries to show that a3 has not prevented c5 at all. 7.dc5 ♕a5 8.b4 ♕d8. Now 9.cd6 is answered by 9...♘e4, while 9.♗e3 ♘fd7 is given as unclear by Nunn and McNab in *The Ultimate Pirc*. The game Motwani-McNab, Aberdeen 2001, therefore continued 9.♖b1 ♘fd7 10.♕d2 dc5 11.e5 cb4 12.ab4 ♘b6 13.♗d3 ♘c6, when things were still rather unclear.

7.♗e3

Also good is 7.♗e2 ♘bd7 8.e5 ♘d5 9.♘e4 b5 10.a4 b4 11.h4 a5 12.h5, with an edge in David-Nouro, Stockholm 1998.

7...♘bd7 8.e5 ♘e8 9.h4

Against a passive black set-up this aggressive thrust works well.

9...h5

Stopping the h-pawn short in its tracks but also weakening his kingside.

10.♗d3 ♘c7

10...♘b6 looks essential. Now Palac crashes through.

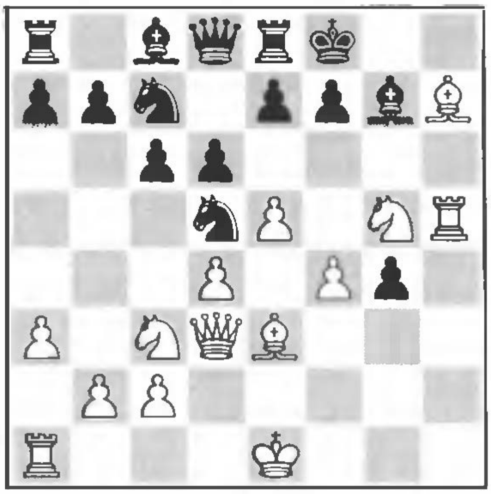
11.g4! hg4 12.h5 gh5

12...gf3 13.♕f3, and the attack is too powerful.

13.♖h5 ♖e8

13...f5 14.♞g5.

14.♗h7 ♔f8 15.♘g5 ♘b6 16.♕d3 ♞bd5



17.♘f7! ♕d7

17...♔f7 18.♕g6 ♔f8 and now 19.♘d5 wins: 19...♞d5 (19...cd5 20.♖g5 ♘e6 21.♖f5 ♗f6 22.♕g8 mate) 20.♖g5.

18.♘g5 ♘e3 19.♕e3 g3 20.♕g3 de5 21.fe5 ♕d4 22.♗e4 ♔g8 23.♖h8

Winning the queen.

23...♔h8 24.♕h4 ♔g8 25.♗h7 1-0

☐ **Igor Glek**
■ **Spartaco Sarno**
Saint Vincent 2002

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 g6 4.f4 ♗g7 5.♘f3 0-0 6.a3 ♘a6 7.e5

Or 7.♗e3 c5 8.♗a6!? (8.dc5 ♘c5 9.e5 ♘g4 10.♗g1 b6 11.h3 ♘h6 12.♗c4 ♗b7, and Black is definitely not worse. Forster-Neubauer, Montecatini 1997) 8...cd4 9.♗d4 ba6 10.♕d3 ♗b7 11.0-0-0 ♕c8 12.h3 ♗c6 13.♘d5 ♗d5 14.ed5 ♕b7 15.c4, and White had a slight edge in Palac-Sinanovic, Pula 2001.

7...♘d7

7...de5 8.fe5 ♘d5 9.♘e4 c6 10.c4 ♘dc7 11.♗e2 gave White a huge edge in Murey-Bernard, Cappelle la Grande 1993.

8.♗e3 c5

Trying to undermine White's 'Austrian' centre.

9.♗a6

Black now plays some necessary intermediate moves.

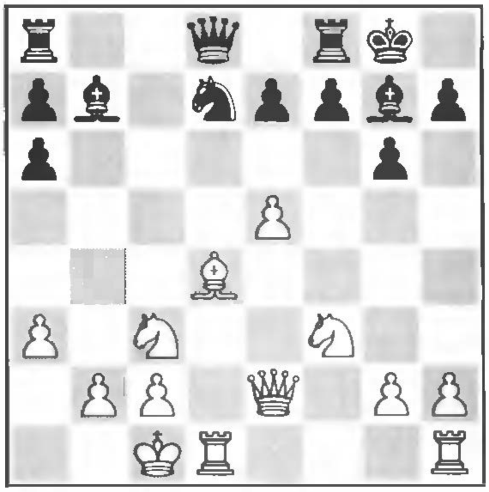
9...cd4

9...ba6 10.dc5, planning 10...de5 11.c6.

10.♗d4 de5

10...ba6 11.ed6.

11.fe5 ba6 12.♕e2 ♗b7 13.0-0-0



Opposite castling often leads to double-edged play. Here Black has the bishop pair, but less space. White's position looks a lot easier to play. The march of the h-pawn once again suggests itself.

13...♘b6 14.h4

14.e6 ♗f3 15.♕f3 ♗d4 16.♕e4 fe6 or 16...f5 is unclear.

14...♕c8 15.h5 ♕g4 16.h6!

Locking the bishop in its cage. 16.hg6 fg6, and Black is OK.

16...♗h8 17.♗b6! ab6 18.♘d5± ♖fd8 19.♘b6 ♖ab8 20.♖d8 ♖d8 21.♔b1 ♕e6 22.♘c4 f6 23.♖d1 ♖c8

23...♖d1 24.♕d1 ♕c4 25.♕d8 ♔f7 26.e6! (not 26.♕h8 ♕f1 27.♔a2 ♕c4, with a perpetual) 26...♕e6 (26...♔e6 27.♕g8+–) 27.♕h8 winning.

24.♕d3 ♗f3 25.gf3 fe5

25...♕c4 26.♕c4 ♖c4 27.♖d8 ♔f7 28.♖h8.

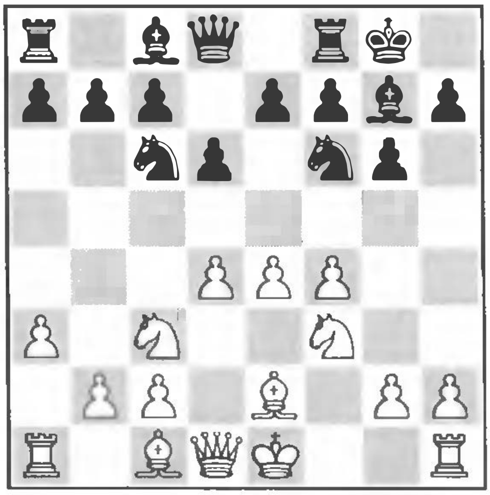
26.♘d2 ♗f6 27.♘e4 ♕c6? 28.♕b3 ♔f8 29.♖d5 ♕e8 30.♘f6! ef6 31.♕b7 1-0

□ **Rini Kuijf**
■ **Martin Roobol**
Netherlands tt 1999/2000

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 g6 4.f4 ♗g7 5.a3 0-0 6.♘f3 ♘c6

Though it is not exactly clear what White's best move is after 6...♘c6, it must be said that playing ♘c6 is usually more effective when White's bishop is already on d3. Moreover, after a3 Black no longer has the b4 square for his knight.

7.♗e2



This exploits the fact that Black's best lines versus 6.♗e2 will always include c7-c5. Let us examine the alternatives:

A) 7.d5 ♘b8 8.♗d3 c6 9.dc6 ♘c6 10.0-0 ♕a5 11.♗d2 ♗g4 was equal in Kuijf-Cuijpers, Hilversum 1989.

B) 7.♗e3?! e5 8.fe5 de5 9.de5 ♘g4 10.♗c5 ♘ce5 was Sepp-Fridman, Riga 1995. After 11.♕d8 ♖d8 12.h3 ♘f3 13.gf3 ♘e5 Black was fine.

C) 7.e5 de5 (7...♘e8) 8.fe5 ♘h5 9.♗e3 ♗g4 10.♕d2 f6 11.♗c4 ♔h8 12.e6, and White had a dangerous attack. Milov-Ludgate, Port Erin 1994.

7...♗g4

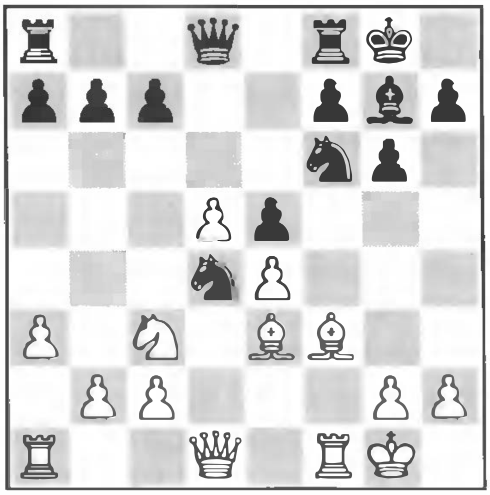
7...e5 8.de5 de5 9.♕d8 ♖d8 10.fe5 ♘g4 11.♗g5 ♖e8 12.♘d5 is better for White.

8.♗e3 ♗f3 9.♗f3 e5 10.fe5 de5 11.d5 ♘d4

This was Black's idea, but Kuijf's next move emphasizes his positional edge.

12.0-0!

Certainly not 12.♗d4? ed4 13.♕d4 ♘e4!.



12...c6 13.♔h1 ♘e8

13...cd5 looks better.

14.♗e2 cd5 15.♘d5 ♖c8 16.c3 ♘e2 17.♕e2 ♘c7 18.♖ad1 ♘d5 19.♖d5 ♕c7 20.♖c5!

Converting his positional plus into a material one.

20...♕b8 21.♖c8 ♕c8

21...♖c8 22.♕f2!

22.♗a7

Now White is winning.

22...♕c6 23.♗g1 ♖d8 24.h3 ♗h6 25.♗e3! ♗e3

Or 25...♕e4 26.♕f2 ♗f4 27.♗f4 ef4 28.♕f4 ♕f4 29.♖f4 (planning ♖b4) and wins.

26.♕e3

White is a sound pawn up and eventually managed to convert his advantage.

26...♕c4 27.♖f2 ♖d1 28.♔h2 ♖d7 29.♕e2 ♕a4 30.♖f3 ♕d1 31.♕c4 ♕d6 32.♕b5 ♔g7 33.♖f1 h6 34.♕e2 f6 35.♖f2 ♕b6 36.♖f3 h5 37.♖g3 ♔h7 38.♕c4 ♔g7 39.♕c8 ♕c7 40.♕e8 ♖f7 41.♖d3 ♕e7 42.♕e7 ♖e7 43.♔g3 ♔f7 44.♖d6 ♖c7 45.♖b6 g5 46.♔f3 h4 47.a4 ♔g6 48.a5 ♖c5 49.a6 ba6 50.♖a6 ♖c7 51.♖d6 ♖a7 52.♖d2 ♖a1 53.♔e3 g4 54.hg4 ♔g5 55.♖c2 ♔g4 56.c4 ♖e1 57.♔f2 ♖e4 58.c5 ♖f4 59.♔e3 ♖b4 60.c6 ♖b8 61.c7 ♖c8 62.b4 f5 63.b5 ♔g3 64.b6 f4 65.♔e4 1-0

☐ **Alberto David**
■ **Roman Slobodjan**
Berlin 1997

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 g6 4.f4 ♗g7 5.♘f3 0-0 6.a3 ♗g4 7.♗e3

The alternative is 7.h3 ♗f3 8.♕f3 ♘c6 (probably stronger is 8...♘fd7 9.e5 c5 10.♕b7 cd4 11.♞b5 ♕b6 12.♕b6 ab6 13.ed6 ed6 14.♗d2, and a draw was agreed in Moreno-Narciso, Pamplona 2001. 14...♘c5 gives Black sufficient counterplay) 9.♗e3 e5 10.de5 de5 11.f5 ♘d4 12.♕f2 (White is much better here, as was borne out in practice) 12...gf5 (12...♘h5 13.0-0-0 c6 14.♔b1 ♕e7 15.g4 ♘f4 16.♗f4 ef4 17.♖d4+– Illescas-Gurevich, Madrid rapid 1988) 13.ef5 ♖e8 14.0-0-0 ♘d5 15.♘d5 ♕d5 16.♔b1 ♖ad8 17.f6 ♗f8 18.♗d3 e4 19.♗e2, winning a piece: Milov-West, Moscow Olympiad 1994.

7...♘fd7

7...d5 8.e5 ♘e4 9.♗d3 ♘c3 10.bc3±, David-Luetke, Groningen 1995.

8.♗e2 e5

This was Black's idea, but 8...c5 is probably stronger.

9.fe5 de5 10.d5 ♘b6 11.0-0

White has a pleasant edge.

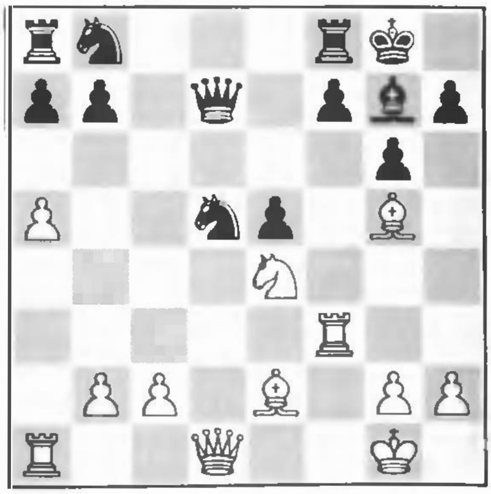
11...c6 12.a4! cd5 13.a5 ♗f3

Also insufficient are 13...d4 14.ab6 de3 15.♕d8 ♖d8 16.♖a7 and 13...de4 14.♕d8 ♖d8 15.ab6 ef3 16.gf3.

14.♖f3

Not !4.♗f3 ♘c4.

14...de4 15.♘e4 ♘d5 16.♗g5 ♕d7



David has a brilliant sacrifice up his sleeve that quite clearly illustrates the risk Black is taking in this SOS Austrian Attack.

17.♖f7!! ♕f7

Or 17...♔f7 18.♗c4 ♔g8 19.♘c5 ♕f5 20.♕d5 ♔h8 21.♖f1+–. Also bad is 17...♖f7 18.♗c4 ♘f4 (18...♘c7 19.♞d6 ♘e6 transposes) 19.♞d6 ♞e6 20.♘f7 ♔f7 21.♕f3, winning.

18.♗c4 ♔h8 19.♕d5 ♕c7

19...♕d5 20.♗d5 ♘c6 21.a6.

20.♘d6 ♘c6

20...h6 is neatly answered by 21.♗d8! ♕d7 22.♖f1 ♖f1 23.♔f1 winning.

21.♘f7 ♖f7 22.♕f7 ♕d6 23.c3 ♕c5 24.♔h1 ♘a5 25.♗f6! 1-0

RECENT GAMES

☐ **Glenn Flear**
■ **Vitaly Tseshkovsky**
Hastings 2002/03

1.d4 d6 2.e4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 g6 4.f4 ♗g7 5.a3

Regular New In Chess contributor Glenn Flear became a 5.a3 fan after reading the original SOS article in *New In Chess Magazine*.

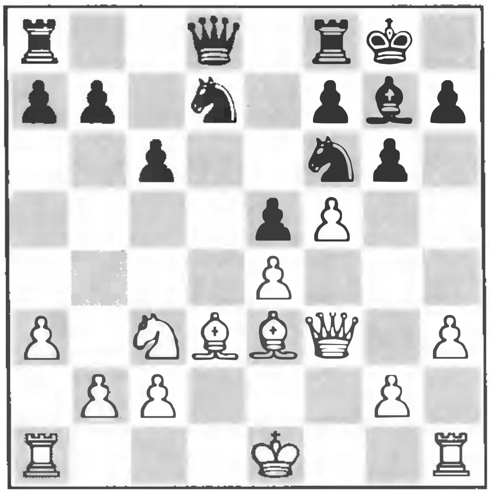
5...0-0 6.♘f3 c6 7.♗d3

Both 7.♗e3 and 7.♗e2 give White an advantage as well (see game 1 Palac-Medic). Too hasty though is 7.e5 ♞fd7 8.♗e3 c5! 9.♗b5 cd4 10.♗d4 de5 11.fe5 ♘c6 12.♗c6 bc6 13.e6 fe6 14.♗g7 ♔g7 15.♕d4 e5! Bosch-G.Janssen, Dieren 2002.

7...♗g4 8.h3

Also good is 8.0-0 e5 9.de5 de5 10.f5 ♘bd7 11.h3 ♗f3 12.♕f3 ♘c5 13.♗e3 ♘d3 14.♖ad1± Sedina-Qendro, Milan 2002.

8...♗f3 9.♕f3 e5 10.de5 de5 11.f5 ♘bd7 12.♗e3



White has a clear edge because of his two bishops and his space advantage on the kingside.

12...♘h5?! 13.0-0-0 ♕e7 14.h4 ♘f4 15.♗c4 b5 16.♗a2 ♖ab8 17.g3 ♘h5 18.g4

Winning a tempo for his attack. As Chris Ward has pointed out this is stronger than 18.fg6 hg6 19.♕g4 a double attack, since after 19...♘df6 20.♕g6 b4 21.ab4 ♕b4 Black has good counterplay.

18...♘f4 19.g5 b4 20.ab4

20.f6 ♘f6 21.gf6 ♕f6 is not a good idea because of the threat of discovered check on d3.

20...♕b4 21.♗b3 ♘c5 22.♗c5 ♕c5 23.f6

Naturally White is winning now.

23...♗h8 24.h5 ♖fd8

24...♞h5 25.♖h5 gh5 26.♕h5+–.

25.hg6 hg6 26.♖h4

26.♗f7 ♔f7 27.♖h7 ♔g8 28.♖dh1 ♘h5 29.♖7h5 gh5 30.♕h5 (Chris Ward), is a stylish end.

26...♖d1 27.♕d1 ♘h5 28.♖h3 ♖f8 29.♔b1

29.♖h5 gh5 30.♕h5+–.

29...♕f2 30.♔a2 ♕f4 31.♕g1 a5 32.♖d3 a4 33.♗c4 a3 34.ba3 ♕h4 35.♕c5

This threatens ♕f8 and mate, Black may safely resign but probably had no time left...

35...♘f6 36.gf6 ♗f6 37.♕c6 ♕f2 38.♗b3 ♔g7 39.♘d5 ♗d8 40.♕c3 ♖e8 41.♘b4 ♖h8 1-0

☐ **Glenn Flear**
■ **Jonathan Mestel**
England tt 2002/03

1.d4 d6 2.e4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 g6 4.f4 ♗g7 5.a3 0-0 6.♘f3 b6 7.♗d3

Or 7.e5 de5 8.de5 ♕d1 9.♘d1 ♘e4 10.♗c4 ♗b7 11.♞f2 e6 12.♗e3 ♘d7 13.♞e4 ♗e4 14.0-0-0 ♗f3 15.gf3 ♖ad8 with approximate equality. Moreno Carnero-Seul, Bermuda 2003.

7...♗b7 8.0-0

This is perhaps too slow, 8.e5!? looks like an improvement.

8...c5! 9.e5 ♘d5 10.♘d5 ♗d5 11.dc5

11.c4 ♗f3! (11...♗b7 12.d5 e6 is playable too) 12.♕f3 ♘d7 undermines White's centre successfully.

11...de5 12.♘e5 bc5

Black has equalized.

13.c4?!

Stronger are 13.♕e2 and 13.♗e3.

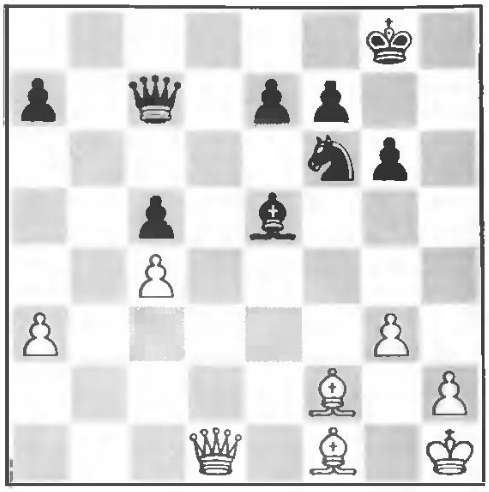
13...♗b7 14.♗e3 ♘d7 15.♘f3?!

This is too optimistic.

15...♗b2 16.♖b1 ♗f3! 17.♖f3 ♖b8 18.♗f1 ♕c7

White has no compensation for the pawn. His next makes matters worse.

19.f5?! ♗e5 20.g3 ♖b1 21.♕b1 ♖b8 22.♕d1 ♘f6 23.fg6 hg6 24.♔h1 ♖b2 25.♖f2 ♖f2 26.♗f2



26...♗d4! 27.♗d4 ♕d6 28.♕a4 ♕d4

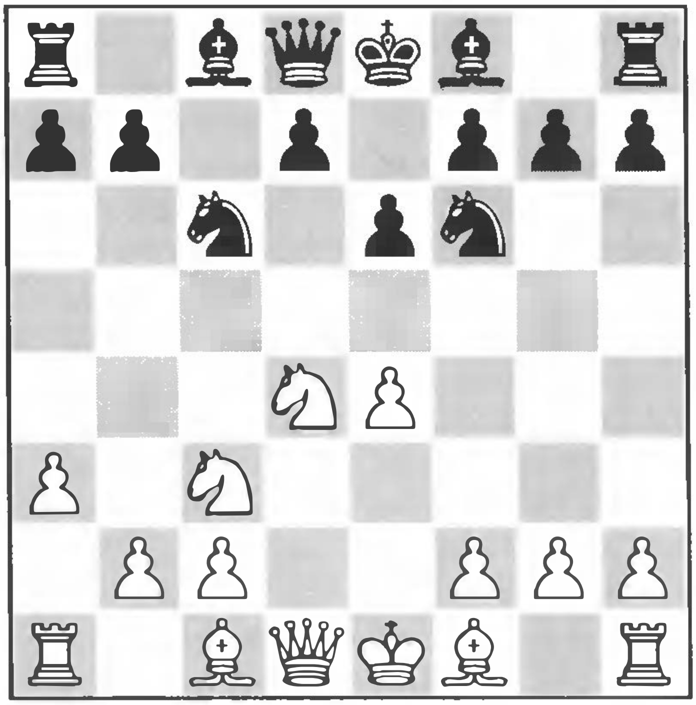
White's king cannot be protected against the combined power of queen, knight and e-pawn.

29.♕a7 ♕e4 30.♔g1 ♕e3 31.♔h1 ♔g7 32.♕b7 ♕c1 33.♔g1 ♕e3 34.♔h1 ♕c1 35.♔g1 e5 36.a4 ♕a3 37.♕a8 e4 38.♗e2 ♕a1 39.♔g2 ♕b2 40.♔f1 ♕a1 41.♔g2 ♕e1 0-1

White resigned as 42.♗f1 ♕d2 43.♔g1 (43.♔h3 g5) 43...♘g4 wins.

CHAPTER 3

Outfox your opponent



NIC KEY SI 34.7

Play 6.a3 in the Sicilian

This chapter presents a move order weapon for the first player against the Four Knight's Sicilian. While there are independent lines, there are also a lot of transpositions possible to other Sicilian variations. The Scheveningen, the Sozin, the Taimanov and even the Sveshnikov and Boleslavsky systems are used for comparison below. So one of the main ideas of 6.a3 is to lure your opponent into unknown territory. Unknown to him, that is! Naturally, if you want to use this move order weapon well, you should make sure that the line you (or your opponent) are aiming for is part of *your* repertoire.

1. e4 c5
2. ♞f3 ♞c6
3. d4 cd4
4. ♞d4 ♘f6
5. ♘c3 e6

In practice Black mainly uses the Four Knights move order, for two reasons: either because he wants to play the Sveshnikov, but wants to prevent some variations that he finds unpleasant after the immediate 5...e5 (mainly 6.♘db5 d6 7.♘d5), or because he wants to play the line 6.♘db5 ♗b4, where Black's play is quite straightforward and it is not so easy to prove a white advantage. Still, most players will of course go for 6.♘db5 anyway, unless they prefer the line 6.♘c6 bc6 7.e5. Other 6th move alternatives are strongly met by 6...♗b4 (6.♗e2 ♗b4, 6.g3 ♗b4 or 6...d5, 6.♗e3 ♗b4). This immediately explains part of the usefulness of our next move.

6. a3!?

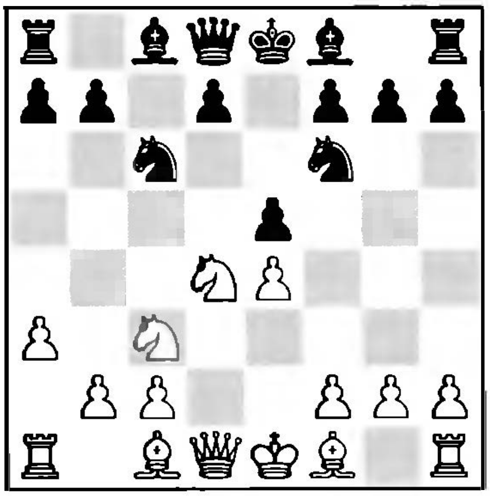
Now that 6...♗b4 has been prevented, Black has to change tack. Note that 6...♗c5 is no good after 7.♘c6 bc6 8.e5 ♘d5 9.♘e4, attacking the bishop. We will investigate the following lines:

A) 6...e5
B) 6...a6
C) 6...♕c7
D) 6...d5
E) 6...d6
F) 6...♗e7

Lines A, B and D lead to independent play. The other three lines will often transpose to other Sicilians.

Variation A

6. ... e5



A witty answer! Black opts for the Sveshnikov anyway with the extra move a3. The point of his belated e5 becomes clear after: 7.♘db5 d6 8.♗g5? a6 9.♗f6 gf6, when the extra tempo is to White's detriment. The usual square of retreat is not available to the knight. Instead of 8.♗g5? White should play 8.♘d5! ♘d5 9.ed5, and here the extra move (a3!) might come in handy.

7. ♞b3

Exploiting the fact that Black's strongest reply (♗b4 again) in the corresponding Sveshnikov line is not on. With the same reasoning White may also play 7.♘f3. This would be my personal preference.

7. ... d6

8. g3

Instead, 8.♗e2 ♗e6 9.♗e3 ♗e7 10.0-0 0-0 11.f4 ef4 12.♖f4 d5 was equal in Te Llalemand-Ptacnikova, Bled ol 2002.

8...♗e6 9.♗g2 ♗e7 10.♘d5 0-0 11.0-0±

The game Pablo Marin-Saez Moya, Ayamonte 2002, continued **11...♖c8 12.h3 ♗d5 13.ed5 ♘a5 14.♘a5 ♕a5 15.♗e3 e4 16.♖e1 ♕d5 17.♕d5 ♘d5 18.♗a7± f5 19.f3 ♘f6 20.fe4 fe4 21.♗e4 ♘e4 22.♖e4 ♗d8 23.♖f1 ♖c2 24.♖b4 ♗f6 25.♖f2 ♖f2 26.♗f2 ♖f7 27.♔f1 ♖c7 28.a4 ♔f7 29.a5 ♔e6 30.♖b6 ♖c1 31.♗e1 ♖b1 32.♖b7 ♗c3! 33.a6 ♗e1 34.a7 ♖a1?** 34...♗b4 35.♔g2 ♖b2 36.♔f3 ♖a2 **35.a8♕ ♖a8 36.♔e1 ♔f6 37.♔d2 ♖a1 38.♖d7 ♖g1** 38...♖a6 39.b4 **39.♖d6 ♔e5 40.♖d3 ♖g2 41.♔c3 ♖h2 42.h4 ♔e4 43.♖d7 ♔f5 44.♖g7** 1-0.

Variation B

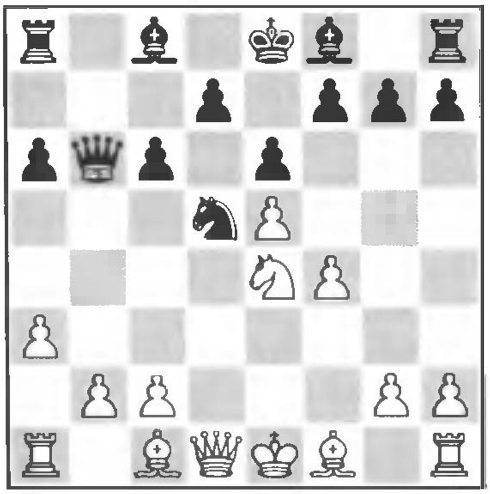
6. ... a6

Usually a6 should be more useful than a3 in a Sicilian, but in this concrete position this is not the case.

7. ♞c6

7.♗e2 has been played more often but is less strong. After 7...♗e7 8.0-0 play may transpose to a Scheveningen but Black has some extra options involving an early d5. Less good is 7...d5 8.ed5 ♘d5 9.♘c6 bc6 10.♘e4 Englisch-Schottländer, Leipzig, 1st DSB Congress 1879(!).

7. ... bc6
8. e5 ♘d5
9. ♘e4 ♕c7
10. f4 ♕b6



This position has to be compared to the 'normal line': 6.♘c6 bc6 7.e5 ♘d5 8.♘e4 ♕c7 9.f4 ♕b6. Via our 6.a3 move order we have the same position with the extra pawn moves a3 and a6. As it turns out, this difference gives White a large edge. In the normal line White has the following options:

- 10.c4; and here Black often uses both the b4 square (♗b4) and the a6 square (♗a6). So including 6.a3 a6 should favour White.
- 10.♕f3 ♗e7 11.a3(!) was the game Sherzer-San Segundo, New York Open 1988. This clearly illustrates the usefulness of 6.a3.
- 10.♗d3 ♗a6(!) 11.a3(!) was Tseshkovsky-Sveshnikov, Soviet Championship, Tbilisi 1978. Further comments are superfluous.

11. ♕f3

A good move, but as explained above, the alternatives 11.c4 and 11.♗d3(!) are also strong.

11. ... f5
12. ef6 ♘f6
13. ♘f6 gf6
14. ♗d2

Also good is 14.♗d3. In the subsequent complications Schekachev loses his way and the game: **14...d5 15.♗c3 ♗e7 16.0-0-0 ♗d7 17.♕h5 ♔d8 18.♕h6 ♖f8 19.♕h4? a5 20.♕e1? ♔c7 21.g3 c5 22.♗g2 d4!** Black is better **23.♗a8 dc3 24.♕c3 ♖a8 25.♕d3 ♗d6 26.♕h7 ♖b8 27.♖d6** 27.b3 c4 **27...♕b2 28.♔d2 ♔d6 29.♖d1 ♗c6** 0-1 Schekachev-Bellamine, Metz 2001.

Variation C

6. ... ♕c7

This move has little independent value. In practice play most often transposes to some other line of the Sicilian.

7. ♗e3

7.♗e2 a6 8.0-0 is actually a Taimanov, when the standard continuations are 8...♗e7 and 8...♘d4. Instead of 8.0-0 Ermenkov once went for a Scheveningen set-up with 8.f4 d6 9.♗e3 ♗d7 10.0-0 ♘d4 11.♗d4 ♗c6 12.♕d3 ♗e7 13.♖ae1 0-0 14.♔h1 and got a winning advantage after 14...♖ac8 15.♕g3 g6 16.f5 e5 17.♗e3 ♔h8 18.♕h4 ♕d8 19.♗g5 ♖g8

20.♗g4 ♖c7 21.fg6 ♖g6 22.♗f5 Ermenkov-Skembris, Kavala Balkaniad 1990.

7. ... a6

8. ♗e2

The Taimanov is again the normal way to reach this position: 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cd4 4.♘d4 e6 5.♘c3 ♕c7 6.♗e2 a6 7.0-0 ♘f6 8.a3 or 6.♗e3 a6 7.♗e2 ♘f6 8.a3 are the common move orders.

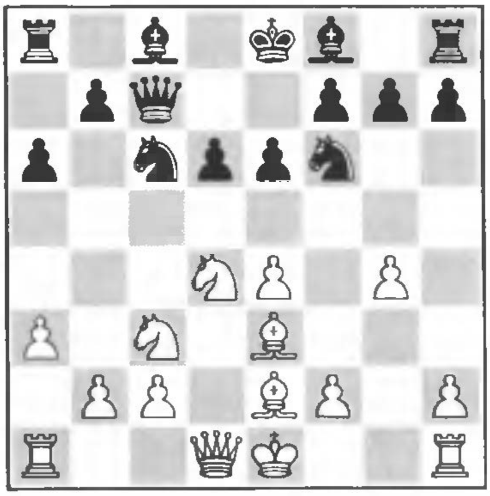
Another possibility is 8.f4 d6 9.♕f3. This position is also usually reached via a Taimanov move order: 6.♗e3 a6 7.a3 ♘f6 8.f4. Tal won some nice games as White in this line. One crushing example via our SOS move order is Moroz-Yagupov, Czestochowa 1992: 9...♗e7 10.♗d3 0-0 11.0-0 ♘d4 12.♗d4 e5 13.♗f2 ♗g4 14.♕g3 ef4 15.♕f4 ♗e6 16.♘d5 ♗d5 17.ed5 ♘d5 18.♕f5! ♘f6 19.♖ae1 ♖ae8 20.♕h3 g6 21.♗d4 ♘d7? 22.♗g6! 1-0.

8. ... d6

Other possibilities at this stage:

- 8...b5 9.♘c6 dc6 10.f4, as in Belikov-Gasanov, Czestochowa 1992.
- 8...♗e7 9.0-0 0-0 10.f4 d6 11.♕e1 ♘d4 12.♗d4 b5 13.♕g3 ♗b7 is one of the absolute main lines of the Scheveningen.

9. g4!?



Avoiding the Scheveningen that would be on the cards after 9.0-0 or 9.f4.

9. ... h6

10. h4

This is more like a Keres Attack. Black's next fails to solve his problems.

10. ... ♘d4

11. ♕d4 e5

12. ♕d3!?

Correctly sacrificing a pawn for a powerful knight on d5. 12.♕d1 ♗e6 is OK for Black.

12. ... ♗g4

12...♘g4? 13.♘d5 with ♗b6 to follow.

13. ♗g4 ♘g4

14. ♘d5 ♕c6

15. f3!?

Stronger than 15.♗b6 ♖c8 16.0-0-0 ♘f6, and Black's position is preferable.

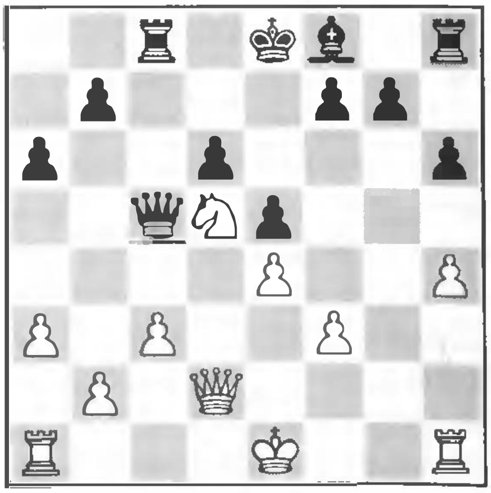
15. ... ♘e3

16. ♕e3 ♖c8

Not 16...♕c2? 17.♖c1+−.

17. c3 ♕c5

18. ♕d2



White has excellent compensation for the pawn. **18...h5 19.♕g5!? ♕a5 20.f4!? ♕a4** 20...♖c4 21.0-0-0! ♖e4

22.♕f5+– 21.♕f5! ♕d7? Now White is winning. It must be admitted, though, that it is not easy either to defend Black's position after 21...♖d8 22.♘c7, or 21...♖c4 22.0-0. **22.♕d7 ♔d7 23.♞b6 ♔c7 24.♘c8 ef4 25.0-0 ♔c8 26.♖f4+– f6 27.♔f2 ♗e7 28.♖g1 g5 29.♖f5 ♔d7 30.♖h1 ♔e6 31.a4 ♗d8 32.♔e2 ♗e7 33.a5 ♗d8 34.b4 ♖h7 35.♔d3 g4 36.♖h2 b6 37.ab6 ♗b6 38.♖g2 ♖h8 39.♖d5 ♖h7 40.♔e2 ♗d8 41.♖g3 ♗c7 42.♖gd3 ♖h8 43.♔f2 ♔f7 44.♔g2 ♔g6 45.♖3d4 ♖a8 46.♖c4 ♖a7 47.♖c6 a5 48.ba5 ♗a5 49.♖dd6 ♔g7 50.♖d5** 1-0 Short-Lalic, Gibraltar 2003.

Variation D

6. ... d5

Black reasons that the 'wasted' 6.a3 (not a developing move) justifies action in the centre.

7. ♗b5

Too meek is 7.ed5 ed5 (7...♘d5 8.♘d5 ♕d5 9.♘b5!? ♕d1 10.♔d1 Petrov-Fakhiridou, Kavala 2001, is a possibility for endgame lovers) 8.♗e2 ♗e7 9.0-0 0-0, and White has no advantage.

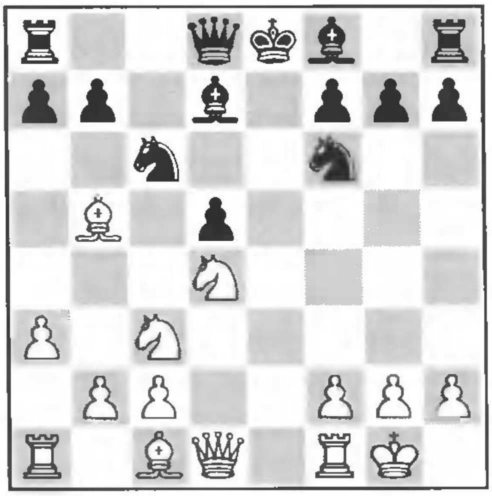
7. ... ♗d7

8. ed5 ed5

Bad is 8...♘d4? 9.♗d7 ♕d7 10.♕d4 ♗e7 11.♗e3 ed5 12.0-0-0 0-0 13.♘d5± Mohr-Lenic, Dobrna 2002.

However, 8...♘d5 is perhaps stronger: 9.♘d5 ed5 10.0-0 ♗e7 11.♗e3 (11.♘b3?! a6 12.♗c6 bc6 13.♗e3 0-0 14.♗c5 ♖e8 15.♗e7 ♕e7 16.♕d4 ♕g5!, and Black is already slightly better, Shabalov-Khmelnitsky, US Championship, Parsippany 1996) 11...♗f6 12.c4 dc4 13.♘c6 bc6 14.♗c4 0-0 15.♕c2 ♕c8! 16.♖ad1 ♗f5 17.♕c1 ♗e4 18.f3± ½-½ Golubev-Krasenkow, German Bundesliga 2002/03.

9. 0-0



9. ... ♗e7

10. h3

Preparing White's next. Bad was 10.♘b3?! ♗g4! 11.f3 ♗e6 12.♗e3 0-0 13.♗c6 bc6 14.♘a4?! ♘d7 15. ♘ac5 ♕b6! 16.♕d4 ♘c5 17.♘c5 ♗f6, and Black was better in Suetin-Manor, Berlin 1995. An alternative, though, is 10.♖e1 0-0 11.♗g5 Pierrot-Rosito, Mar del Plata 2001.

10. ... 0-0

11. ♞f3 ♗e6

12. ♗d3

White is not much better here, but Short outplays his lower-rated opponent in the game. **12...♕d7** 12...d4 **13.♖e1 ♖fe8 14.♗f4 a6 15.♞e5 ♞e5 16.♗e5± g6? 17.♕f3 ♞h5 18.♖ad1 ♕c6 19.♘e2 b5 20.♞d4 ♕b6 21.c3± ♖ad8 22.♖e2 ♖d7 23.♖de1 ♗f8 24.g4 ♘g7 25.♕f6 ♖b7 26.♗c2 ♕c5 27.♔g2 ♕e7 28.♕e7 ♖be7 29.♗b3 ♖d7 30.f4! ♗d6? 31.♗g7! ♔g7 32.f5** 1-0 Short-Ellison, Port Erin 1998.

Variation E

6. ... d6

A sensible move. Black just continues in Scheveningen/Rauzer style. Naturally, 7.♗g5 is not a good idea now (a3 looks totally stupid). However, depending upon your repertoire there are two main choices: the Sozin or the Scheveningen. In neither case does an early a3 lead to highly critical lines. On the other hand, in both the Sozin and the Scheveningen the move makes sense. And remember, this SOS is all about wrong-footing your opponent! There are actually many transpositions into normal theoretical lines. We are not delving deeply into the theory of either line, although we will see into what directions play might develop. By the way, the games quoted here all derived from our SOS move order.

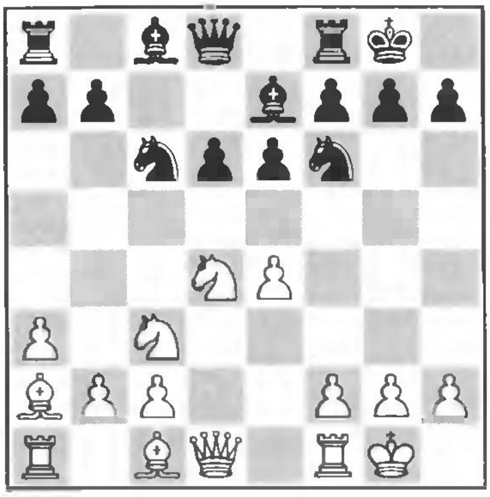
Variation E1

7. ♗c4 ♗e7

8. 0-0 0-0

In Beshukov-Srienz, Antalya 2002, White got an edge after 8...♕c7 9.♗a2 0-0 10.♔h1 ♗d7 11.f4 ♖ad8 12.♘f3 ♗c8 13.♕e1 b6 14.e5 ♘e8 15.♕g3 d5 16.f5.

9. ♗a2



A quiet line from the Sozin has arisen. It is a favourite of the Russian grandmaster Semen Dvoiris.

9. ... ♗d7

Black has other moves at this stage, of course.

● 9...♘d4 10.♕d4 ♗d7 (10...b6 11.♕d3!? planning ♗f4 and ♖ad1 is a recommendation of Beliavsky and Mikhalchishin) 11.f4 ♕b6 12.♕b6 ab6 13.♗d2, and White was slightly better in Dvoiris-Beshukov, Cappelle la Grande 1999.

● 9...a6 10.♔h1 (10.♗e3) 10...♘d4 11.♕d4 b5 12.f4 ♗b7 13.f5 e5 14.♕d3 h6 15.♗d2 a5!? 16.♕b5!? ♗a6 17.♕c6 ♗f1 18.♖f1 ♕b8 19.♗c1 ♖c8 20.♕a4, and White had enough compensation in Dvoiris-Cifuentes, Hoogeveen 2000. Yet the game continuation 20...♖c3 21.bc3 ♕c7 22.♗d2 was not a good idea.

10. ♗e3 ♘d4

Here 10...♘e5 11.♕e2 ♘eg4 12.♗d2 ♕b6 13.♘b3 ♖fc8 14.♖ad1?! ♘e5 15.♗e3 ♕c7 16.♘d2 b5!∓ is a well-known game Medina-Polugaevsky, Las Palmas 1974 (note: not via the 6.a3 move order). Instead of 14.♖ad1 Beliavsky and Mikhalchishin give 14.h3 ♘e5 15.♗e3 ♕a6! as ±.

11. ♗d4 ♗c6

12. ♕d3

This looks stronger than 12.f3 b5!= (Polugaevsky).

12. ... ♕d7

12...b5!?.

13. ♖ad1 b6

14. ♕g3 ♕b7

15. e5

The game Lutikov-Bikov, Soviet Championship, Kharkov 1967, went **15...de5 16.♗e5 ♖ad8 17.♗c4 ♖d1 18.♖d1 ♖d8 19.♗d3** White is slightly better because of his chances on the kingside **19...g6 20.♖e1 ♘e4?! 21.♘e4 ♗e4 22.♗c3** 22.♗e4 ♕e4 23.♕c3 ♕f5= **22...♗d5** 22...♗d3 23.♕e5± **23.h4 ♕c6 24.h5 ♕e8 25.hg6 hg6 26.♕h3 f6 27.♖e3** Even stronger than 27.♕h6 **27...e5 28.♗g6! ♕g6 29.♖g3 ♕g3 30.♕g3 ♔f7 31.♕d3 ♔e6 32.♕h3 ♔f7 33.♕h7 ♔e6 34.♗b4** 1-0.

Variation E2

7. f4

This will eventually transpose into a kind of Scheveningen – if Black has no objections. The same can be said for the moves 7.♗e2 and 7.♗e3:

A) 7.♗e2

A1) 7...e5 8.♘f3 h6 9.0-0 ♗e6 10.♖e1 ♗e7 11.h3 0-0 12.♗f1, and we have transposed into a Boleslavsky with the (useful) extra tempo a3. Zelcic-Mrva, Montecatini 1997.

A2) 7...♗e7 8.0-0 0-0 9.♗e3 with a Scheveningen-like position in which White has committed himself to an early a3. So play is about equal:

- 9...♕c7 10.f4 a6 (10...♘d4 11.♗d4 e5) 11.♔h1 ♗d7 12.♗f3 ♘d4 13.♗d4 ♗c6 Andrade-R.Janssen, Tallinn 1997.
- 9...♘d4 10.♗d4 b6 11.f4 ♗b7 12.♕d3 ♖c8 13.♕g3, as in Psakhis-Christiansen, Philadelphia 1989.
- 9...a6 10.f4 ♕c7 11.♕e1 ♘d4 12.♗d4 b5 13.♕g3 ♗b7 14.♖ae1 is a perfect transposition to one of the absolute main lines of the Scheveningen. This occurred in Belikov-Annakov, Zhavoronki 1995.

A3) 7...♗e7 8.0-0 0-0 9.♔h1. This is an unfortunate experiment by Kotsur.

A31) 9...a6 10.f4 ♕c7 11.♗e3 ♖e8 12.♕e1 ♖b8!? 13.♕g3 d5 14.e5 ♘e4 15.♘e4 de4 16.c3 ♘d4 17.♗d4 b5, and Black was fine in Kotsur-Kharlov, Ekaterinburg 1997.

A32) After 9...e5!? the king is not useful on h1 in these positions. 10.♘f3 h6 11.b3 ♗e6 12.♗b2 ♖c8= Kotsur-Fillipov, Perm 1997.

B) 7.♗e3 ♗e7 8.♗e2 (here 8.f4 transposes to our main game, please don't continue: 8...0-0 9.♗d3?! e5! 10.♘f5? ♗f5 11.ef5 d5 12.fe5 d4! 13.ef6 ♗f6∓ Moroz-Horvath, Bolzano 1998) 8...0-0, which transposes to the previous line (A: 7.♗e2).

7. ... ♗e7

The recent game Sax-Sakelsek, Nova Gorica 2002, went 7...a6 8.♗e3 e5!? 9.♘de2!? (9.♘f3) 9...♗e7 10.f5 b5 11.♘g3 ♗b7 12.♘h5 0-0 13.♘d5!? ♘h5 (13...♘e4? 14.♕g4) 14.♕h5 ♘d4, with unclear play.

8. ♗e3

Here 8.♗e2 0-0 9.0-0 is also possible, of course, while 8.♘f3 0-0 9.♗d3 transposes to the game Ermenkov-Inkiov, Bulgaria 1980 (see 6...♗e7).

8. ... e5!?

To give the game an independent character. After 8...0-0 9.♗e2 a6 10.0-0 ♕c7 11.♕e1 ♘d4 12.♗d4 e5 Black had equalized in Lutikov-Matulovic, Sukhumi tt 1966.

9. ♘f3 ♘g4

Preferable is 9...ef4 10.♗f4 0-0.

10. ♗c1 0-0

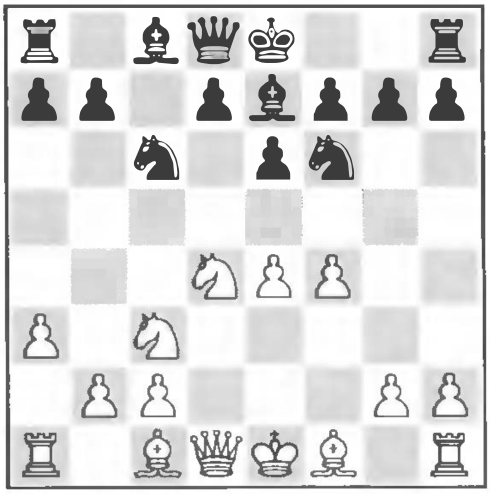
Now 10...ef4 11.♗f4 0-0 12.♕d2 is perhaps a bit better for White. After 10...♕b6 11.♕e2 Black's pieces will shortly be forced to retreat.

11. f5! g6
12. fg6 hg6
13. ♘d5 ♘f6
14. ♘e7 ♕e7
15. ♗g5

White is just better now; Nunn tries to complicate matters. Please remember that this was a rapid game. **15...d5 16.ed5 e4 17.♘d4 ♕e5 18.♗f6 ♕f6 19.dc6 e3 20.♘f3 ♕b2 21.♗d3+– ♕c3 22.♔e2 ♕c6 23.♖b1 ♗g4 24.♖b4! ♗f3 25.gf3 ♖ad8 26.♖c4 ♕d6 27.♕a1 ♖fe8 28.♖h4 ♖e5 29.f4 ♕f6 30.♕e5 ♕h4 31.♕e3 ♔f8 32.♔d1 ♖e8 33.♕d4 ♔g8 34.♔c1 ♖e6 35.♖f1 a6 36.♗c4 ♖f6 37.♔b2 ♔g7 38.♖f2 b5 39.♗d3 ♕g4 40.♕e5 ♕h4 41.♕d4 ♕g4 42.♖f1 ♕h4 43.♕f2 ♕g4 44.f5 b4 45.a4 a5 46.♕f4 ♕h3 47.♕e5 ♕h5 48.♖g1** 1-0 Ljubojevic-Nunn, Monaco rapid 1995.

Variation F

6. ... ♗e7
7. f4



This move gives the whole system more of a bite. The following moves have also been tried in practice:

- 7.♘c6?! bc6 8.e5 ♘d5 9.♘e4 ♕c7 10.f4 f5 is not so impressive from our modern viewpoint, Lasker-Lipschütz, New York 1901.
- 7.♗c4 d5 8.ed5 ♘d5 9.♘c6 bc6 10.♗d2 ♗c5 11.♕e2 ♖b8 12.b3 0-0 13.♗d3 h6 14.0-0 ♕b6 ½-½ Speelman-Lutz, Munich 1992.
- 7.♗e3 0-0 8.f4 d6 9.♗e2 e5 10.♘b3 ef4 11.♗f4 ♗e6 12.0-0 d5= Ljubojevic-Lautier, Linares 1995.
- 7.♗e2 d5 (7...0-0 8.0-0 d6 will be that same Scheveningen again) 8.ed5 ♘d5 9.♘c6 bc6, and now both 10.♘e4 (Zagrebelny-Siriam, Calcutta 1996) and 10.♘a2 (Kotsur-Kozirev, Omsk 1996) are slightly better for White. He will go for c4 and ♗f3 to claim ± because of his pawn structure.

7. ... 0-0

No better is 7...d5 8.e5 ♘d7 9.♗e3 0-0 10.♗e2 ♘d4 11.♗d4 f6 12.ef6 ♘f6 13.0-0 ♗d7 14.♕d2 ♖c8 15.♕e3, and White had a nice advantage in this French-like middlegame. Mitkov-Skripchenko, Cappelle la Grande 1994.

Correct, however, is 7...d6, when White, if he does not want to play the Scheveningen, can try 8.♘f3 0-0 (8...a6 9.♗d3 ♕c7 10.0-0 b5 11.♕e1 ♗b7 12.♕g3 g6 was unclear in Malevinsky-Popov, Vilnius 1978) 9.♗d3 e5 10.0-0 ef4 11.♗f4 ♗g4 (11...♗e6) 12.♔h1 ♘d4 13.♗e3 ♘f3 14.gf3 ♗h5 15.♗d4± Ermenkov-Inkiov, Bulgaria 1980.

8. e5

Alternatively, 8.♘f3 d5 9.e5 ♘e4 10.♗d3 ♘c3 11.bc3 ♕b6 12.♕e2 f6 looks odd, but after 13.h4 White got a nice attack in M.Petrov-Nedev, Leon 2001.

8. ... ♘e8

Here 8...♘d5!? should be investigated.

9. ♘f3 f6

The move 9...d6 is likewise answered by 10.♗d3.

10. ♗d3 fe5
11. fe5 d6
12. ed6 ♘d6
13. 0-0

White has the better pawn structure and attacking chances on the kingside. **13...♕b6 14.♔h1 ♗d7 15.♕e1 ♖ae8 16.♗e3! ♕c7** 16...♕b2? 17.♖a2 traps the queen **17.♕g3 ♕a5 18.♕h3 g6** 18...♘f5 19.g4 **19.♖ad1 ♗c8 20.♗h6 ♖f7 21.♞e4 ♘e4 22.♗e4 ♖d8 23.♗d2 ♕c7 24.♗d3** Lutikov gives his opponent no chances for further exchanges **24...♖d5 25.♕g4 ♞e5 26.♘e5 ♖f1 27.♖f1 ♕e5** Without the defending rook on f7 Black cannot protect his bare king **28.♕f3 ♕g7 29.♗h6! ♖f5** Desperation. If 29...♕h6 30.♕f7 ♔h8 31.♕e8+–) **30.♗f5 ♕h6 31.♗g4** 1-0 Lutikov-Khasin, Soviet Championship, Moscow 1961.

Section II: Surprising bishop moves

We have been taught that 'knights are to be developed before bishops', we know that we should not place a bishop in front of a central pawn, and clearly we play g6 to develop the bishop to g7. Nothing is sacred in this section!
In Chapter 4 we see an attractive way to the Spanish Four Knights.

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♞c6 3.♞c3 ♞f6 4.♗b5 ♗d6

This SOS line provides the second player with an ideal fighting system. Rather than play both d6 and ♗e7, Black develops the bishop so as to protect e5. He has a very clear development scheme in mind: 0-0, ♖e8, ♗f8 and d5. If all goes well you have won a useful tempo!

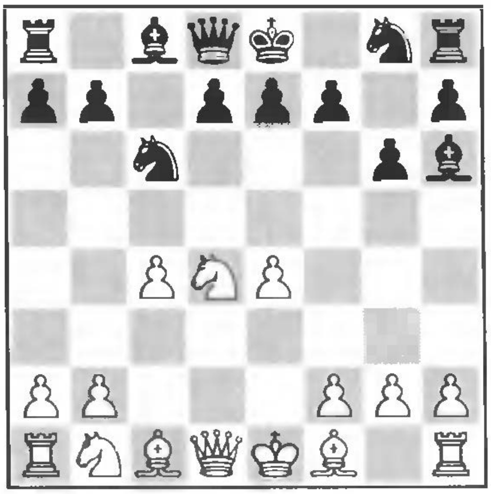
Chapter 5 is all about meeting, or rather avoiding, the Nimzo or Queen's Indian with White.

1.d4 ♞f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗g5

This 'Surprise Indian' tries to lure Black into a Queen's Gambit or into unknown territory. Play can become very positional, but also very wild and unclear. Usually, it is White who swings the pendulum though.

In chapter 6 we treat an early surprise in the Maroczy.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♞c6 3.d4 cd4 4.♞d4 g6 5.c4 ♗h6



Black's last move was first played by Tiviakov, one of the world's greatest experts in this opening. It looks very odd, but has in fact a very sound positional foundation: the exchange of the dark-squared bishops.

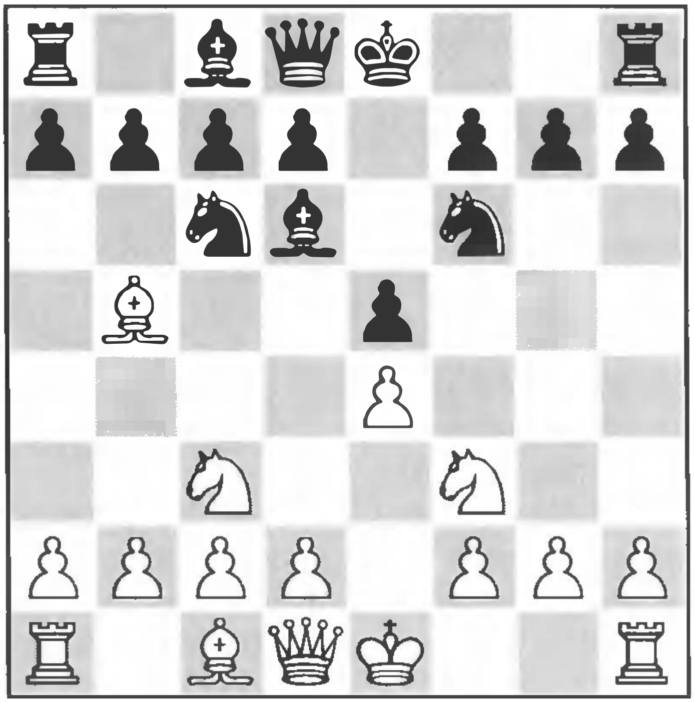
The final chapter in this section returns to the ♗d6 idea of Chapter 4.

1.b3 e5 2.♗b2 ♞c6 3.e3 ♘f6 4.♗b5 ♗d6

A complete defence against 1.b3 with a distinct SOS flavour is what Chapter 7 offers you. The ideal scheme of development is similar to Chapter 4. Many grandmasters have adopted this line and you will find several crushing wins amongst the examples.

CHAPTER 4

Sokolov's surprise



NIC KEY KP 10.1

4...♗d6: a clever development scheme

It is not so easy for Black to play for a win against the Spanish Four Knights. A not too ambitious White player might use the symmetrical positions arising after 4...♗b4 for immediate peace negotations. True, Rubinstein's 4...♘d4 often gives rise to very sharp play indeed. However, 5.♘d4 ed4 6.e5 dc3 7.ef6 ♕f6 8.dc3 works like a cold shower on any fighting intentions that Black might have.

This SOS chapter presents a perfectly playable alternative in the form of 4...♗d6!?. It is an ideal weapon for those 1...e5 players who also seek to play for a win as Black. Seen in that light it should come as no suprise that we find Ivan Sokolov behind the black pieces in our main game.

□ **Harmen Jonkman**
■ **Ivan Sokolov**
Leeuwarden ch-NL 2002

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1. e4 e5
2. ♘f3 ♘c6
3. ♘c3 ♘f6
4. ♗b5 ♗d6!?

Why obstruct your own d-pawn with this unnatural looking move, thereby inhibiting the development of your light-squared bishop? Let us examine the merits of 4...♗d6:

It develops a piece and counters White's threat of bishop takes c6. Moreover, Black is planning to follow a normal Spanish development scheme: 0-0, ♖e8, ♗f8 and d5. The idea is known from the Archangel Ruy Lopez:

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 b5 6.♗b3 ♗b7 7.d3 ♗d6!? This is rather similar to positions mentioned below. Let us follow the game Bologan-Potapov, Moscow 1998, for a bit: 8.a3 0-0 9.♘c3 h6 10.h3, and if Black had now played 10...♗c5 he would have reached a perfect transposition to our main game. By the way, concerning this whole ♗d6 idea... The reader might like to compare this with chapter 7, which presents a defence to 1.b3.

5. d3

This threatens to pin the knight with ♗g5 and therefore tries to show that the bishop is misplaced on d6.

Let us investigate some alternatives:

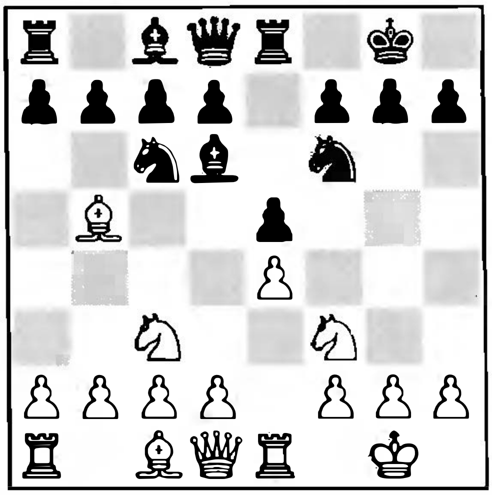
A) 5.d4 ed4 6.♞d4 ♞d4 7.♕d4 ♕e7. Black is planning ♗e5 at some stage and is definitely OK here.

B) 5.♗c6?!, as in Swic-Malaniuk, Polanica Zdroj 2001, must be inaccurate, since after 5...dc6 the bishop is very well placed on d6 in this type of Spanish exchange position.

C) 5.0-0 0-0

C1) 6.d3 h6 7.♘e2 (this is an interesting plan. White repositions his knight Ruy Lopez fashion to g3, from where it will assist in a possible kingside attack. The bishop on d6 obstructs the d-pawn, so Black has no time to counter this plan with d7-d5) 7...♖e8 8.♘g3 a6 (8...♗f8 planning d5 is a serious alternative. However, after 9.c4! d6 10.h3 ♗d7 11.♖e1 g6 12.♗d2 ♗g7 13.♗c3 ♖e7 14.♗a4 White was slightly better in Gallagher-Boudre, France 2001) 9.♗c6 (with the knight already on g3 this exchange is more promising) 9...dc6 10.b3 ♗e6 (10...♗g4 looks better) 11.♗b2 ♘d7 12.d4 and now instead of 12...ed4 13.♘d4, with a nice advantage, Gallagher-Cooper, English team championship 2001, Black should have played 12...♗g4, with a decent game;

C2) 6.♖e1 ♖e8

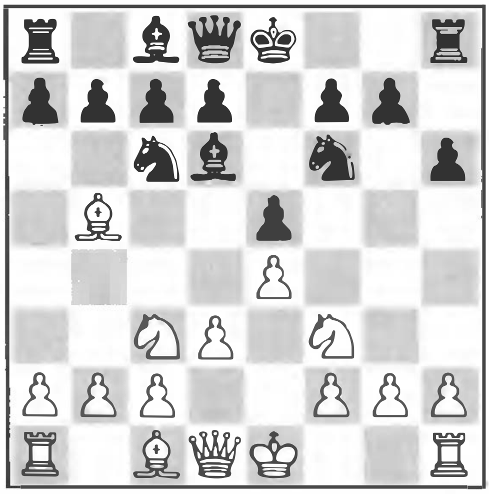


C21) 7.h3 ♞d4 8.♗c4 c6 9.a3 ♗c7 is another useful way of reshuffling the pieces. It is about equal, Bunzmann-Hector, Fürth 2000;

C22) 7.d4 ed4 8.♘d4 ♘d4 9.♕d4 is well met by 9...♗e5, followed by c6, and Black is fine. E.g. 10.♕d3 c6 11.♗a4 a5 12.a3 b5 13.♗b3 ♗a6 14.♕f3 ♕b8 15.g3 c5, and Black had the initiative in Barglowski-Malaniuk, Bydgoszcz 2001. The actual move order in this last game was 6.d4 ed4 7.♘d4 ♖e8 8.♖e1 ♘d4 9.♕d4 ♗e5, etc.

5. ... a6

So far Black had mainly tried 5...h6. Sokolov's inclusion of 5...a6 6.♗a4 is useful. Let us examine some games with 5...h6, since the main ideas are of course very similar.



A) 6.a3 b6!? (uncommon but not bad) 7.♗c6!? dc6 8.h3 c5 9.♗e3 ♘d7 10.♕d2 ♗b7, and with the centre under firm control Black has a bright future ahead of him, Seibold-Hector, Fürth 2000.

B) 6.0-0 0-0 7.♘e2 a6 8.♗a4 b5 9.♗b3 ♘a5 10.♘g3 ♖e8 11.h3 ♗f8 is Koscielski-Rabiega, Bad Wiessee 2000. Note how Black has once again completed his general plan of castling, ♖e8 and ♗f8 in preparation of d7-d5. The fact that he has played ♗d6 rather than ♗e7 and d7-d6 means that he will eventually have saved a tempo.

C) 6.♘e2 a6 7.♗a4 0-0 8.♘g3 ♖e8 9.c3 ♗f8 shows the typical Ruy Lopez scheme already mentioned above. Black is ready for d5 and has completely equalized. In Nikolenko-Gorbatov, Moscow 1995, a draw was agreed.

D) 6.♗e3 0-0 7.h3 a6 8.♗a4 b5 9.♗b3 ♗b4!? (Black aims to push d5 as quickly as possible) 10.0-0 ♗c3 11.bc3 d5 12.ed5 ♘d5, and things are about equal, Frog-Kholmov, Moscow, Alekhine Memorial 1996.

E) 6.h3 is a tricky waiting move. Black is well-advised to develop his queenside first (a6, b5, ♗b7/♘a5) not falling into 6...0-0?! 7.g4!, with a dangerous attack:

E1) 7...a6, and now instead of 8.♗c6 dc6 9.♘e2 ♘h7 10.♘g3 c5 11.♘f5 ♖e8 12.♗e3 ♗f8 13.♕d2, with an unclear position, Podlesnik-Pavasovic, Ljubljana 2002, White should have simply continued with 8.♗a4, when it is more difficult for Black to open the centre.

E2) 7...♖e8 8.g5 (8.♖g1 is also possible) 8...hg5 9.♗g5 ♘d4 10.♘d5 ♗e7 11.♘e7 ♕e7 12.♘d4 ed4 13.♖g1 c6 14.♕f3 ♕b4 15.♔d1 and now Black should continue 15...♘e4! 16.de4 ♕b5 17♗f6 gf6. Instead 15...♕b2?! was played in Emelin-Kharlov, Moscow 2002, and here 16.♕f6 g6 17.♗c1 ♔h7 18.♗b2 cb5 19.♗b4 is given as winning for White by Dolmatov and Zviagintsev.

E3) 7...♘d4 is essential according to Dolmatov and Zviagintsev.

Let us go back to Sokolov's 5...a6.

6. ♗a4

After the exchange on c6, the bishop is again well-placed on d6, e.g. 6.♗c6 dc6 7.h3 h6 8.♗e3 ♕e7 9.♕e2 ♗e6 10.a3 b5 11.a4 0-0, Koscielski-Mikhalchishin, Dortmund 2001.

6. ... h6

Preventing ♗g5.

7. h3

A useful waiting move that contains a trap (cf. Emelin-Kharlov above). However, the immediate 0-0 may be stronger. Another alternative is to regroup the knight with ♘c3-e2-g3.

7. ... b5

8. ♗b3 ♗b7

After 8...♘a5 there could follow 9.0-0 ♘b3 (9...♗b7) 10.ab3 ♗b7 11.d4 with a white plus.

9. a3

Another useful waiting move that preserves the bishop (after a possible ♘a5) and tries to lure Black into castling.

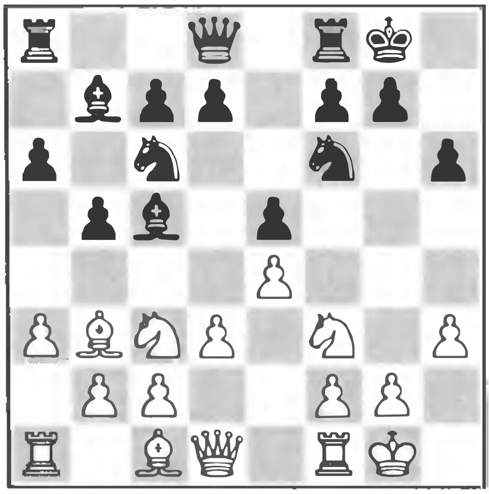
9. ... ♗c5

9...0-0? 10.g4! is what White was hoping for.

10. 0-0

White no longer has any useful waiting moves.

10. ... 0-0



I have mentioned above how this position could also have arisen via the Ruy Lopez Archangel.

11. ♘d5

11.♗e3 is playable of course, but not 11.♘h4?! ♘d4.

11. ... ♘d4!

Not 11...♘d5 12.♗d5, when White is slightly better. Note that 12.ed5 would be met by 12...♘d4.

12. ♘d4

Or 12.♘e5 ♘b3 13.♘f6 (13.cb3 ♘d5 14.ed5 ♗d5) 13...♕f6 14.♘g4 (14.♘d7? loses to 14...♕d6) 14...♕e6 15.cb3, and Black has lovely compensation for the pawn.

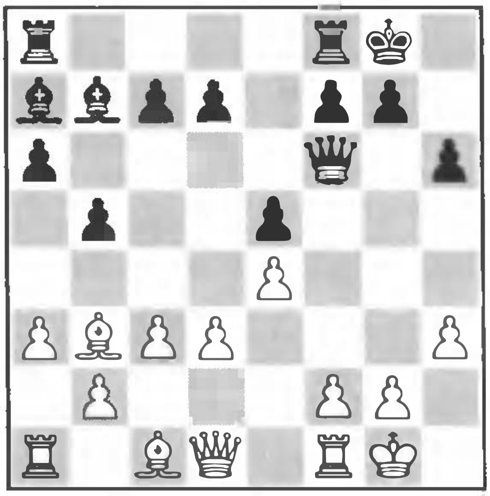
12. ... ♗d4

13. c3 ♗a7

14. ♘f6

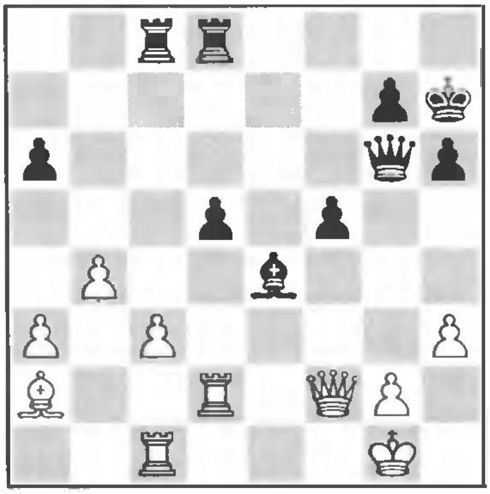
Not 14.♘e3 d5.

14. ... ♕f6

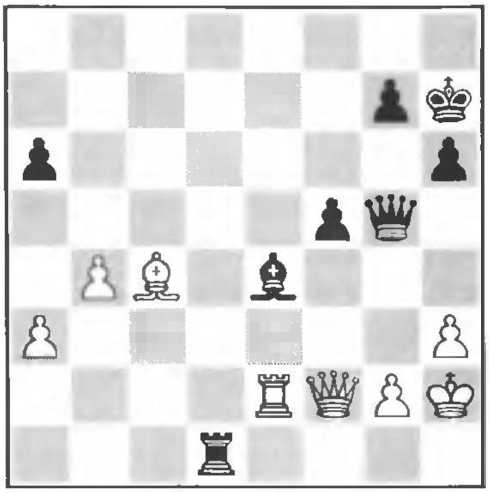


Black has an equal game. From a theoretical SOS perspective we can be fully satisfied. I will give the rest of the game with light comments.

15.♔h1 Preparing f4. The alternatives are: 15.♗e3, and 15.♕g4 ♖ad8 16.♗e3 ♗e3 17.fe3 ♕e7=. **15...c5!? 16.f4 ef4 17.♗f4** Or 17.♖f4 ♕e7 18.♗d2=. **17...♕g6 18.♕d2** 18.♗c2 d5; 18.♗a2 c4. **18...c4!?** Typical of Sokolov's play, he energetically grabs the initiative. **19.dc4 ♗e4 20.cb5 ♕f5!** Making use of a little tactic to take back on b5 with the queen. 20...ab5 21.♗d5 would be slightly better for White. **21.♔h2 ♕b5 22.♗a2 d5** Now Black has the more active position. **23.♖ad1 ♖ad8 24.b4?!** This creates a weakness on c3. But it is not yet the losing move, of course. Simply 24.♖fe1 was better. **24...♖fe8 25.♖fe1** This threatens c4. After the immediate 25.c4 dc4 26.♕d8 ♖d8 27.♖d8 ♔h7 the rooks are not coordinating. **25...♗b6 26.♗e3 ♗c7 27.♗f4 ♕c6 28.♗c7 ♕c7 29.♔g1 ♕g3 30.♖e3** With accurate calculation White could have forced a draw here: 30.♗d5! ♖d5? (correct is 30...♗d5! 31.♖e8 ♖e8 32.♕d5) 31.♖e4! ♖d2 32.♖e8 ♔h7 33.♖d2 ♕c3 34.♖a2. **30...♕g6 31.♕f2 f5** Threatening f4. **32.♖e2 ♔h7 33.♖ed2 ♖c8 34.♖c1?** 34.♗d5 ♖c3 35.♗e4 fe4 36.♖d6 ♖e6 is better for Black, but nevertheless it had to be tried. The game continuation is clearly worse. **34...♖ed8**



35.c4? White walks into some rather nice tactics. **35...dc4! 36.♗c4** Alternatively, 36.♖c4 ♖d2 37.♕d2 ♖d8 38.♕f2 ♖d1 39.♔h2 ♕d6 is immediately winning for Black, while 36.♖d8 ♖d8 37.♗c4 ♕g5! 38.♖e1 ♖d2 39.♖e2 ♖d1 40.♔h2 leads to the following position.



analysis diagram

Here the natural 40...♕c1 fails to 41.♖e4! ♖h1 42.♔g3 ♕g5 43.♖g4 fg4 44.♗d3 ♔g8 45.♗c4, with perpetual check. However, 40...♗g2! 41.♕g2 ♕f4 42.♕g3 ♖h1 just wins. **36...♗g2!** Sufficient for the win, even though 36...♕g5! is even stronger, as it wins a full exchange. **37.♕g2 ♖d2 38.♕g6 ♔g6 39.♗f7 ♔f7 40.♖c8 ♖d3** This rook ending is an easy win. **41.♖c7 ♔g8 42.a4 ♖h3 43.a5 ♖b3 44.♖c4 ♔h7 45.♔f2 g5 46.♔e2 f4 47.♔d2 f3 48.♖c7 ♔g6 49.♖c6 ♔h5 50.♖a6 g4 51.♖b6 g3 52.a6 g2 53.♖b5 ♔h4 54.a7 g1♕ 55.a8♕ ♕e3**

White resigned.

RECENT GAMES

☐ **Paolini Sequera**
■ **Jonny Hector**
Bled ol 2002

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗b5 ♗d6 5.0-0 0-0 6.d3 h6 7.h3 b6!?

Hector is fond of this move. See line A after 5...h6 6.a3 b6!? Seibold-Hector, Fürth 2000.

8.♘e2

In principal this manoeuvre (♘c3-e2-g3) is a good plan. The square f5 is vulnerable and a knight there would give White good attacking chances.

8...♗b7 9.c3 ♖e8 10.♘g3 ♗f8

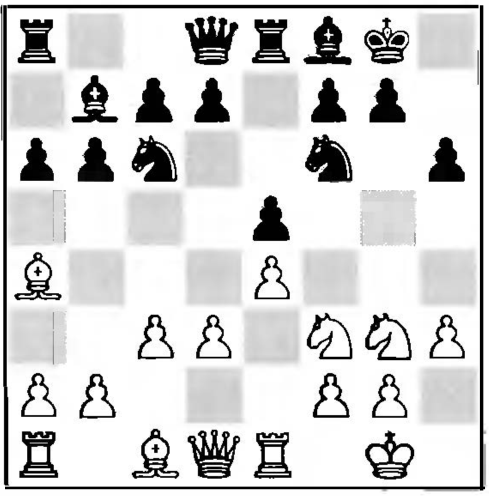
Here we are again. Everything according to our 'Archangel scheme'.

11.♖e1

Planning d4, however Hector gets the central thrust in first.

11...a6 12.♗a4

For, 12.♗c4 would be answered by 12...♘a5.



12...d5

Black has an easy game after the alternative 12...b5 13.♗b3 ♘a5 14.♗c2 and now 14...d5 or 14...c5.

13.♕e2?!

Here 13.ed5 ♕d5 14.c4 is a better try.

13...b5 14.♗c2 ♕d7 15.♞h4 g6 16.♕f3 ♘h7

16...♗g7? 17.♗h6.

17.ed5 ♘a5 18.♘e4 ♗d5

Black has a slight advantage.

19.♕g3 ♗g7 20.♘f3 ♘b7 21.♘ed2 ♘d6 22.♘h2

White lacks space meaning that his pieces have no good squares.

22...♕c6 23.♘hf1 ♘f5 24.♕h2

A perfect illustration of the previous point. This is no way to treat a lady!

24...♖ad8 25.♘e3 ♘e3 26.fe3 e4 27.d4

This gives Black a big positional advantage. However, after 27.♘e4 ♗e4 28.de4 Black has – among others – 28...♗c3 29.♖e2 ♗e5.

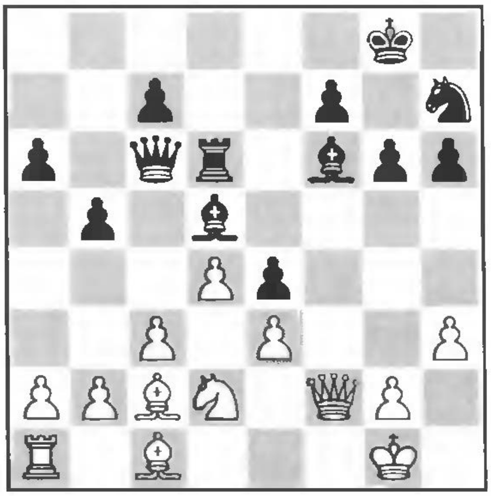
27...♗f8

Ready to harrass the queen.

28.♕g3 ♗d6 29.♕f2 ♖e6 30.♖f1 ♖f6 31.♕h4 ♗e7 32.♖f6

32.♕h6? ♖f1 33.♘f1 ♗g5 loses the queen.

32...♗f6 33.♕f2 ♖d6



Having exchanged one pair of rooks

Black directs another one along the sixth rank. The undeveloped pieces on the queenside will be duly missed in the defence.

34.♞f1 ♗e7 35.♗d2 ♖f6 36.♕e1 ♕e6

Attacking a2 and regrouping his pieces.

37.b3 ♗d6 38.♕e2 c5 39.♗d1 ♗c7 40.♖c1 c4

Gaining even more space.

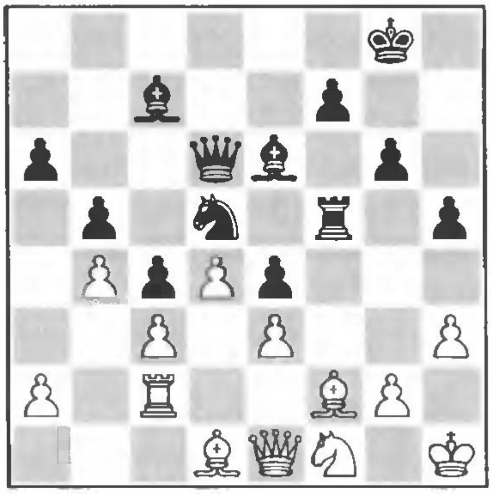
41.b4 ♕d6 42.♗e1 ♖f5 43.♖c2

Not 43.♗g3? ♖f1.

43...♗e6

Changing the piece that blocks the d4 pawn.

44.♗f2 ♘f6 45.♔h1 ♘d5 46.♕e1 h5



Cramping White still further. White's next is a desperate attempt to break out.

47.g4? hg4 48.hg4 ♖f6 49.♗g1

49.♗h4? ♖f1 50.♕f1 ♘e3–+.

49...g5

Blocking the intrepid g4-pawn.

50.♖f2 ♕d7

Winning g4 and the game.

51.♖g2 ♖h6

Here 51...♘c3 would have won faster.

52.♗h2 ♖h3 53.♔g1 ♗h2 54.♖h2 ♗g4 55.♖h3 ♗h3 56.♞g3 ♕e6 57.♗c2 f5 58.♗d1 f4 59.ef4 gf4 60.♔h2 ♗f5

60...fg3 61.♕g3 ♔f8 62.♕h3 ♕h3 63.♔h3 ♘c3 also wins.

61.♘h5 ♕e7 62.♕f2 ♕g5 63.♔h1 ♗g4 64.♗g4 ♕g4 65.♕g2 ♕g2 66.♔g2 ♔f7

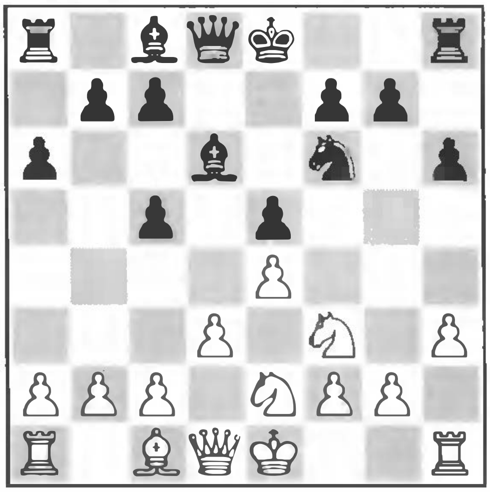
White resigned.

☐ **Bogdan Podlesnik**
■ **Dusko Pavasovic**
Dobrna 2002

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♞c3 ♞c6 4.♗b5 ♗d6 5.d3 h6 6.h3 a6

6...0-0?! 7.g4 a6 was a previous game between these two players (Ljubljana 2002). See E1 in the comments under 5...a6.

7.♗c6 dc6 8.♞e2 c5



In general Black has easy play in such a position.

9.b3 ♗e6 10.♗b2 ♘d7 11.g4 h5 12.g5 h4 13.♕d2 ♕e7 14.♞c3 ♘f8 15.♞d5 ♗d5 16.ed5 ♞g6 17.♕e3 0-0-0 18.0-0-0 f5!

Black is better.

19.♖de1? e4!–+ 20.♘d2 ♗f4 21.♕e2 ♖d5 22.f3 e3 23.♞b1 ♗g3 24.♕e3 ♕e3 25.♖e3 ♗f4 26.♔d2 ♖e8 27.♖e1 ♖d7

28.♘c3 ♗g5 29.♘d1 ♖de7 30.♖g1 ♗e3 31.♞e3 ♖e3 32.♖g6 ♖f3

White resigned.

☐ **Victor Vehi Bach**
■ **Miguel Rada Equiza**
Pamplona 2002

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗b5 ♗d6 5.d3 a6 6.♗c6 dc6 7.♘e2 h6 8.♘g3 ♗g4

8...♗e6

9.h3 ♗e6 10.d4

Otherwise Black plays c5 with a good position.

10...ed4 11.e5 ♗b4 12.♗d2 ♗d2 13.♕d2 ♘h7 14.♘d4 ♕d5! 15.♕e3!? 0-0-0

15...♕g2 16.♘e6 fe6 17.0-0-0 0-0 18.f4 gives dangerous compensation.

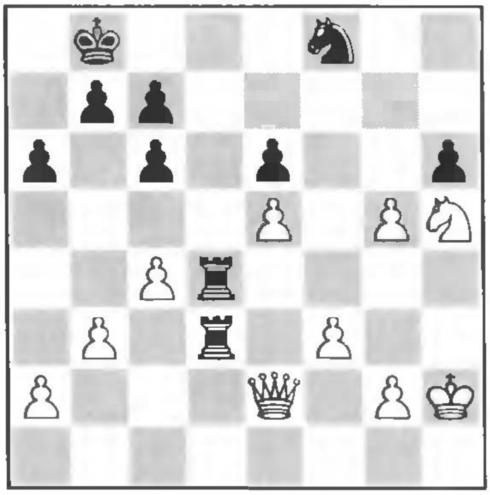
16.♘e6 fe6 17.0-0 ♔b8 18.♘h5 g5 19.b3 ♘f8 20.c4 ♕d4 21.♖ad1?!

21.♕d4 ♖d4 22.♖ad1

21...♕d1 22.♖d1 ♖d1 23.♔h2 ♘d7 24.f3 ♖d8 25.♘g3 ♘f8 26.♘h5 ♖1d2 27.h4 ♖8d4

Stronger is 27...♖8d3!

28.hg5 ♖2d3 29.♕e2



29...♖d2

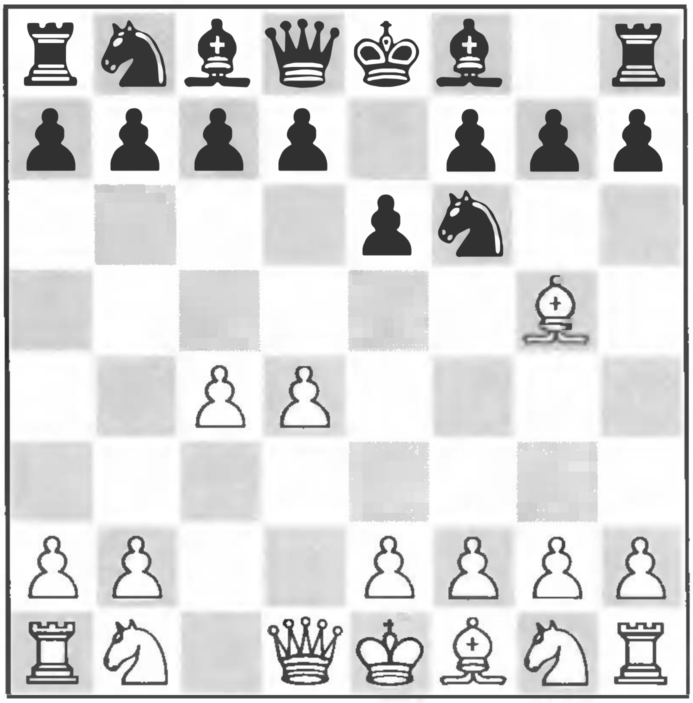
29...hg5! and Black is better, but Black was obviously satisfied with a draw versus his higher-rated opponent.

30.♕e3 ♖2d3 31.♕e2 ♖d2 32.♕e3 ♖2d3

Draw.

CHAPTER 5

Play the Surprise Indian!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3.♗g5: the first blow

1. d4 ♘f6
2. c4 e6
3. ♗g5

In playing 3.♗g5, White sins against Lasker's rule that knights ought to be developed before bishops. Modern chess is, of course, less rule-bound, and we may have excellent, and indeed very 'modern', reasons for delaying either 3.♘c3 or 3.♘f3. The theory of these two knight moves has developed enormously since Lasker's days, and keeping up with the Nimzo-Indian or the Queen's Indian is a tremendous task. This chapter, then, is meant to tempt the reader into committing a small sin for the higher sake of avoiding book-knowledge and dealing the first blow. That is not to say that 3.♗g5 is a new concept. On the contrary, the rule that everything that's old and well-forgotten is a surprise holds true for many an SOS chapter and certainly for this one. A brief history of 3.♗g5 should mention Euwe and Haberditz, the first theoreticians to investigate what they called 'the Neo-Indian'. In the 1980s, Seirawan was responsible for a brief surge in popularity when he played 3.♗g5 four times against top opposition (scoring a respectable 2½ out of 4). Keene then dubbed it 'the Seirawan Attack', which is disrespective of chess history but sounds nice. Other notable 3.♗g5 adherents include Kholmov, Meister, R. Sherbakov and Kortchnoi. Leaving history aside, we will now turn to the moves.

3. ... h6

This is clearly the main line. Black either acquires the bishop pair or, by inserting 3...h6 4.♗h4, increases his possibilities. However, let's examine a few alternatives first:

A) 3...d5 is a solid move; after either 4.♘c3, 4.e3 or 4.cd5!? the game will most likely transpose to a Queen's Gambit of some sort. Respectable as the Queen's Gambit clearly is, it is hardly a 1.d4 player's worst nightmare.

B) 3...♗e7. This move is also most likely to transposes into QGD waters after 4.♘c3 d5 – note that after 4...c5 White should play 5.dc5! and not 5.d5? ♘d5.

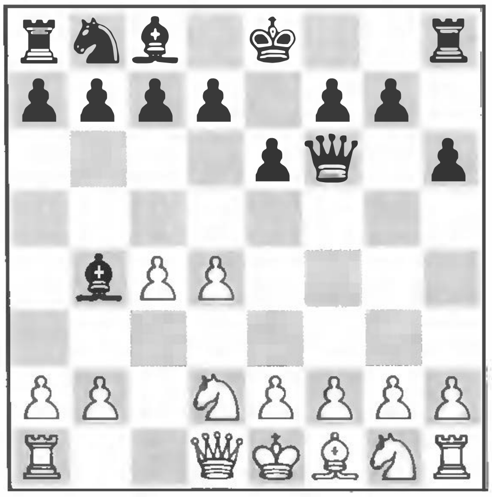
C) 3...c5 4.d5 (4.♘f3 cd4 5.♘d4 leads to a line from the Symmetrical English) 4...ed5 (Euwe rightly indicated 4...♕a5 5.♕d2 ♕d2 6.♘d2±) 5.cd5 h6?! (this is a dubious set-up, but the stronger 5...♕b6 6.♗f6 (6.♕d2 now runs into 6...♘e4) 6...♕f6 7.♘c3 is also slightly better for White) 6.♗h4 ♕b6?! 7.♕d2! (more ambitious than 7.♗f6 ♕f6 Nicolai-Romanishin, Dortmund 1976) 7...♘e4 8.♕f4 f5 9.♕f5 ♕b4 10.♘c3 ♘d6 11.♕g6 ♘f7 12.♕e4, and Black's risky strategy has clearly backfired: White is winning Kortchnoi-Kosten, London 1982.

D) 3...♗b4 Black's most important alternative to 3...h6. 4.♘c3 now transposes to the Leningrad Variation of the Nimzo-Indian. So to give 3.♗g5 its own arena White should play 4.♘d2, when we are at a crossroads:

D1) 4...♘e4 is unambitious; Black will at best be able to draw an inferior ending: 5.♗d8 ♗d2 6.♕d2 ♘d2 and now Sosonko's suggestion of 7.♔d2 ♔d8 8.f4! may well be stronger than 7.♗c7 ♘c4 8.b3 ♘a6 9.♗f4 ♘a3 10.♔d2 with only a small edge, Haberditz-Lengheim, Vienna 1952.

D2) 4...d5 was recommended by Euwe. The theory gives 5.e3 c5 6.a3 ♗d2 7.♕d2 cd4 8.ed4 ♘c6 9.♘f3 0-0 10.♗d3 dc4 11.♗c4 ♘e4 Müller-Fischer, Vienna 1952 as equal. This verdict is correct, but in my opinion White should play 6.dc5! and have the better chances.

D3) 4...h6; now, after 5.♗h4, we have transposed to the main line (see below). However, with the bishop already on b4, taking on f6 comes into consideration (as opposed to 3...h6 4.♗f6 – this also illustrates why 3...h6 is Black's best choice, White's options are more restricted). Let me give one tame and one wild example of how play could continue after 5.♗f6 ♕f6:



6.a3 ♗d2 7.♕d2 0-0 (7...d6 8.e3 e5 9.♘e2 was seen in the postal game Euwe-Napolitano, 1953; White won, but this is due to the difference in playing strength and Black's next move 9...ed4?!, which hands White a pleasant edge) 8.e3 d6 9.♗d3 e5 10.♘e2 ♘c6 (10...♘d7!? has also been recommended) 11.d5 ♘e7 12.0-0 ♗f5 13.e4 ♗d7, with equal chances, Seirawan-L.Portisch, London 1982.

Much more exciting was the game Kholmov-Furman, Baku 1951: **6.♘f3** c5 7.a3 ♗a5?! (7...♗d2 8.♕d2 cd4 9.♘d4±) 8.b4 cb4 9.♕a4 ♘c6 10.♘b3 ♕d8 11.d5 ba3 12.♔d1 ed5 13.cd5 ♗c3 14.♖a3 0-0 15.dc6 dc6, and Black has definite compensation for the piece.

4. ♗h4

The exchange on f6 is quite harmless: 4.♗f6 ♕f6 5.♘c3, and now:

A) 5...g6 6.♘f3 ♗g7 7.e3 d6 8.♗e2 0-0 9.0-0 e5 10.♖c1 ♘d7 11.♕d2 ♖e8 12.de5 de5 13.♖fd1 e4 14.♘d4 ♕e5 15.b4 ♘f6 16.h3 ♗d7= Sideif Zade-Short, Baku 1983.

B) 5...b6 6.♘f3 ♗b7 7.e3 g6 8.♗d3 ♗g7 9.♗e4! ♗e4 10.♘e4 ♕e7 11.♕a4 0-0 12.0-0 d6 (12...♘c6(!)) 13.♖ad1, and White is slightly better, Seirawan-Short, London 1982. This is from Seirawan's brief spell with 3.♗g5. However, 7...♗b4 was simpler, giving Black equality in what is essentially a position from the Queen's Indian.

C) 5...♗b4!? is probably best; play has transposed to a very innocuous line of the Nimzo-Indian (1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♗g5 h6, and here everyone prefers 5.♗h4 to 5.♗f6 ♕f6).

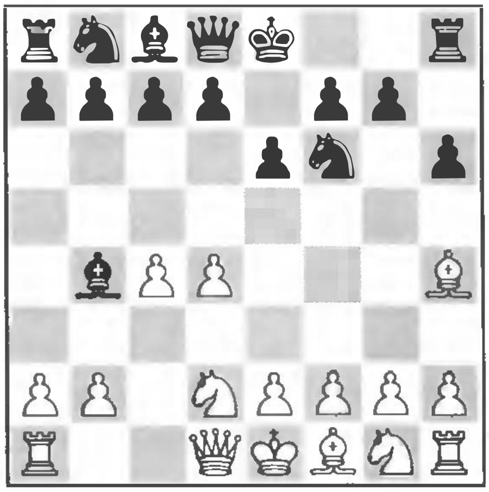
4. ... ♗b4

Black declares his willingness to transpose to the Leningrad Nimzo-Indian. Note that 4...g5 5.♗g3 ♗b4 is inaccurate since, in addition to 6.♘d2, which is our main line, White might prefer 6.♘c3, which is once again a Nimzo-Indian, but here Black has committed himself to an early g5. In line with this, White should meet 4...g5 5.♗g3 ♘e4 with 6.♘c3 rather than with 6.♘d2, when besides 6...♗b4 Black also has 6...♘g3 7.hg3 ♗g7, R.Rodriguez-Romanishin, Riga Interzonal 1979. Some other possibilities:

A) 4...c5!? 5.d5 ed5 6.cd5 d6 7.♘c3 ♗e7 (worse is 7...g5 8.♗g3 ♘h5?, when 9.♕a4 is annoying: 9...♕d7 10.♘b5 ♘g3 11.hg3 ♔d8 J.Rodriguez-Ginzburg, Buenos Aires 1993) 8.♗g3 ♘h5 9.e3 ♘g3 10.hg3 a6 11.a4 ♗f6= Meister-Obukhov, Kuibyshev 1990.

B) 4...b6 5.♘c3 ♗b7 6.f3!? d5 7.cd5 ed5 8.e3 ♗e7 9.♗d3 0-0 10.♘ge2 ♘e4!? 11.♗e7 ♘c3 12.♗d8 ♘d1 13.♖d1 ♖d8 14.♖c1 c6 15.g4, and White had a pleasant plus in Meister-V.Atlas, Podolsk 1990.

5. ♘d2



White does not allow any structural weaknesses (as he would after 5.♘c3 and a future ♗c3), but the knight is more passive on d2. Therefore Euwe recommended 5...d5!? in the 1950s. Bad now is 6.♘f3 dc4! 7.a3 ♗a5 8.♗f6 ♕f6 9.♕a4 ♘c6 10.♕c4 ♗d2 11.♔d2∓ Spiridonov-Schinzel, Polanica Zdroj 1981. White can claim a slight edge with 6.e3 c5 7.dc5 ♘c6 8.♘f3 ♗c5 9.a3 0-0 10.♕c2 ♗e7 11.♗e2 Gofshtein-Kutsyn, Kiev 1986.

The lines diverge here. In variation A we will examine the forcing 5...g5 6.♗g3 ♘e4. Striking in the centre with 5...c5 will be the subject of line B.

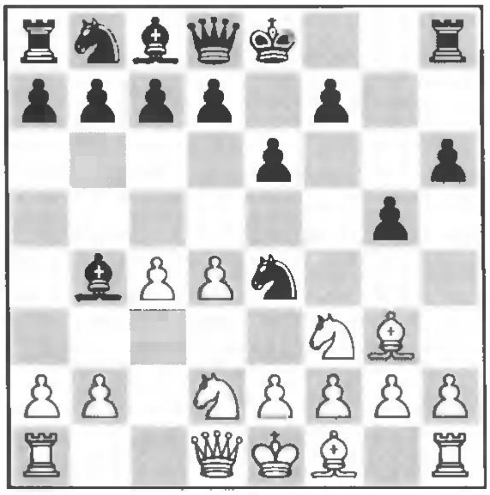
Variation A

5. ... g5

6. ♗g3 ♘e4

6...b6 7.♘f3 ♗b7 8.a3 ♗e7 9.e3 d6 10.♕c2 c5 11.0-0-0 ♘bd7 12.♔b1 ♕c7 13.♗d3 ♘h5 was more or less equal in Sherbakov-Kholmov, Cheliabinsk 1991.

7.♘f3



The diagram position promises a sharp struggle. Black has momentarily taken the initiative, he plays for piece activity. His pieces lack permanent strongholds, however, and they might be hanging in the air. White plays for the better pawn structure, reasoning that g5 is too weakening. It seems that White holds stronger arguments to claim an edge, but of course only concrete analysis, and time, will tell. Some examples are in order:

A) 7...g4 8.a3 ♗a5 9.b4 ♘g3 10.hg3 gf3 11.ba5 c5 12.♘b3 ♘c6 13.d5, and White is better, Olexa-Josef, Brno-Prague 1929(!).

B) 7...f5 8.e3 g4 9.a3 ♘g3 10.hg3 ♗f8!? D.Bischoff-Schneider, Dortmund 1988.

C) 7...h5 8.♕c2 ♘d2 9.♘d2, and now:

C1) 9...h4 10.♗e5 ♗d2 11.♔d2 (a typical move in this line, the queen is needed on c2 to prevent f6 and the loss of the bishop) 11...♖h6 12.d5 d6 13.♗c3 e5 14.e3 ♕f6 Haberditz-Stöckl, Vienna 1952. And here Euwe rightly considers 15.f3 as ±.

C2) 9...♗d2 10.♔d2 (again this is forced: 10.♕d2? loses to 10...h4 11.♗e5 f6) 10...♘c6 11.h4 d6 (11...♘d4? 12.♕c3+–) 12.♕c3 e5. The theory calls this unclear, but I would prefer White, Sherbakov-Karpman, Belgorod 1991.

D) 7...♘c6 8.a3! (this pawn sacrifice is probably best, 8.e3 leads to a more or less equal position. e.g. 8...h5 9.♕c2 (9.d5 h4 10.♗c7 ♕c7 11.dc6 dc6= Bazan-Recalde, Sao Paulo 1960) 9...♘d2 10.♘d2 ♗d2 11.♔d2 (cf Scherbakov-Karpman (C2 above), with a white pawn on h4 instead of on e3) 11...h4 12.♗e5 ♘e5 (12...♖h6 13.f4) 13.de5 Z.Szabo-Török, Györ jr 1992, and the correct move is 13...d6 instead of 13...g4?) 8...♗d2 9.♘d2 ♘g3 10.hg3 ♘d4 11.♘e4 e5?! 12.e3 ♘e6 13.♕f3 d6 14.0-0-0 ♔f8 15.c5! g4 16.♕f5± Nogueiras-Calvo Minguez, Torremolinos 1984; after the subsequent 16...♘d4 17.♕h5 ♗f5 18.ed4 ♗e4 19.♕g4 d5 20.f3 ♗g6 21.de5 White was winning easily.

Rather than the dubious 11...e5 Black should play 11...♘c6, when 12.♕d2 forces the weakening 12...f6. Then 13.0-0-0, preventing d5, gives compensation for the pawn according to Estevez. I suspect that the position is about equal.

Variation B

5. ... c5

6. a3

6.dc5 ♗c5 7.e3 b6 8.♘gf3 ♗b7 9.♗d3 ♗e7 10.0-0 was slightly better for White in Meister-Ikonnikov, Cheliabinsk 1989. Black should investigate 6...♘a6!?

6. ... ♗d2

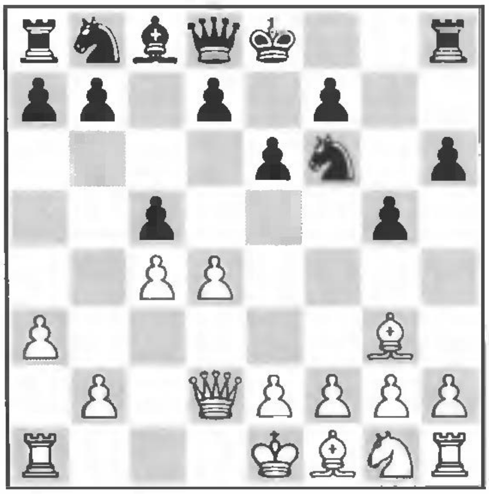
7. ♕d2 g5

Consistent, Black plays for the initiative.

A) 7...♘c6 8.♗f6 (better is 8.dc5 g5 9.♗g3 ♘e4 10.♕c1 see below) 8...♕f6 9.dc5 a5 10.♘f3 a4 11.e3 ♕e7 12.♕d6 ♖a5= Sidorov-Brodsky, Kstovo 1994.

B) 7...cd4 8.♕d4 ♘c6, and now either 9.♕d1 (Euwe) or 9.♕c3 Kortchnoi-Sosonko, Netherlands tt 1982.

8. ♗g3



8. ... ♘e4

This is best. The alternative is 8...♘c6, when 9.0-0-0 ♘d4 10.♕d3 d6 11.e3 ♘f5 12.♗e5 offers some compensation for the pawn, Gliksman-V.Sokolov, Kraljevo 1967. Ivkov's recommendation of 9.dc5 ♘e4 10.♕c1!, however, is much simpler; White is just better.

9. ♕e3 ♘g3

10. hg3 ♕a5

If Black does not hold on to the initiative, his dark-square weaknesses will take their toll. This position is quite interesting and relatively uninvestigated. The following moves are possible:

A) Dubious is 11.b4?! cb4 12.♕d2 d5 13.cd5 ed5 14.♘f3 (14.♕b4 ♕b4 15.ab4 ♘c6) 14...♘c6 15.♘e5 ba3 16.♘c6 ♕d2 17.♔d2 bc6, and Black was better in Seirawan-Andersson, Tilburg 1983.

B) Bad is 11.♕d2 ♕d2 12.♔d2 cd4 13.♘f3 ♘c6 14.♘g5 ♘a5! 15.♔d3 ♘b3 16.♖d1 b6, and the ending favours Black.

C) Playable is 11.♕c3 ♕c3 12.bc3, of course, with an equal ending, according to Sveshnikov.

D) Interesting – and who is willing to try this out? – is 11.♔d1!?. Black's weaknesses may be more important than the untypical position of the king on d1. Moreover, the black king is not entirely safe either. Meanwhile dc5 is being threatened, while a future ♘f3 will stress the pin along the h-file. Black's initiative is certainly gone. Food for thought!

RECENT GAMES

☐ **Abdulla Al-Rakib**
■ **Sarunas Sulskis**
Calcutta 2002

1.d4 ♞f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗g5 c5

A similar set-up is 3...h6 4.♗h4 c5, after 5.d5 d6 6.♘c3 ♗e7 7.♘f3 0-0 (planning ♘d5) 8.♗g3 ed5 9.cd5 ♘h5 10.e3 ♘d7 11.♗e2 play was about equal in Golod-Anastasian, Ubeda 2001.

4.d5 ed5 5.cd5 h6

The alternative is 5...d6. Play may continue: 6.♘c3 ♗e7 7.♘f3 0-0 8.e4 ♗g4 9.♗e3 (better than 9.♗e2 ♗f3 10.♗f3 ♘d5 11.♕d5 ♗g5 12.♕b7 ♘d7) 9...♘bd7 10.♗e2 a6 11.♘d2 (stronger is perhaps 11.a4) 11...♗e2 12.♕e2 b5 Husari-Ghaem Maghami, Sanaa 2002.

6.♗h4 ♕b6 7.♘c3

Stronger is 7.♕d2! as in Kortchnoi-Kosten, London 1982.

7...♕b2 8.♗f6 gf6 9.♖c1 f5 10.e3 d6 11.♗b5 ♘d7 12.♞ge2 ♕b4 13.0-0 ♗g7 14.♕d3 0-0 15.♗d7 ♗d7 16.♖b1 ♕a5 17.♖b7 ♗c8! 18.♖b3

The ending after 18.♖b5 ♗a6 19.♖a5 ♗d3 is clearly in Black's favour.

18...♗a6 19.♘b5

19.♕c2 ♗c3–+.

19...♖ab8 20.♖fb1 c4! 21.♕c4 ♖fc8 22.♕d3 ♖c5

White resigned because of 23.a4 ♕a4 24.♘ed4 ♗d4 25.ed4 ♖cb5–+.

☐ **Dimitri Tyomkin**
■ **Humpy Koneru**
Oakham 2001

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗g5 ♗b4 4.♘d2 h6

4...d5 5.e3 0-0 6.♘f3 b6 7.♖c1 ♗b7 8.♗e2 (8.cd5 is stronger) 8...dc4 9.♖c4 ♗d2 10.♕d2 ♘bd7 11.♖c1 c5 12.0-0 ♘e4! with equality, Bozinovic-Zaja, Velika Gorica 2002.

5.♗h4 d5

In Efimov-Vallin, Bordeaux 2003, Black fared well with: 5...b6 6.f3?! (6.♘f3!) 6...♗b7 7.e4? ♗d2! 8.♕d2 ♘e4 9.♗d8 ♘d2 10.♗c7 ♘f1 11.♔f1 ♗a6.

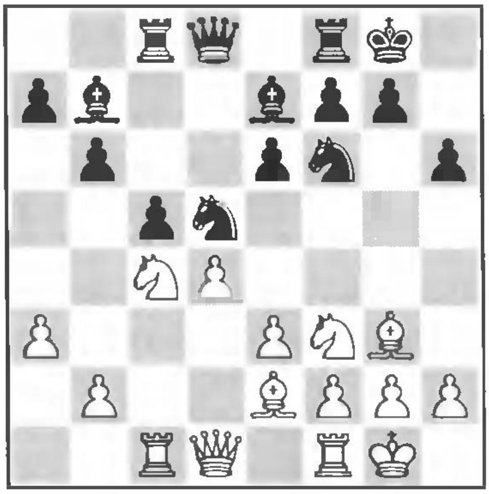
6.e3

Bad is 6.♘f3?! dc4!. After 6.a3 ♗e7 7.e3 0-0 8.♘gf3 ♘bd7 9.♕c2 (9.♖c1) Black equalized in Tyomkin-Shahade, Paget Parish 2001, with: 9...c5! 10.cd5 ♘d5 11.♗e7 ♕e7 12.♗b5 cd4 13.♘d4 ♘7f6 14.0-0 ½-½.

6...0-0 7.a3 ♗e7 8.♘gf3 b6 9.cd5 ♘d5 10.♗g3

White has a small but definite plus.

10...♗b7 11.♗e2 ♘d7 12.0-0 c5 13.♖c1 ♖c8 14.♘c4 ♘7f6



15.dc5! ♗c5 16.b4 ♗e7 17.♘fd2 b5? 18.♘a5 ♗a8 19.♗e5

Protecting c3 and transferring the bishop to the main diagonal.

19...♘d7 20.♗a1 ♗f6? 21.♖c8 ♕c8 22.♗b5 ♖d8

22...♘c3 23.♗c3 ♗c3 24.♕c2 and White is better.

23.♕c1! ♕b8

23...♘c3.

24.♗f6 ♘7f6 25.♗e2 ♕e5 26.♘ac4 ♘c3 27.♗f3 ♗f3 28.♘e5 ♞e2 29.♔h1 ♗g2 30.♔g2 ♘c1 31.♘df3 ♘d3 32.♘c6 ♖d7 33.b5

White is better.

33...♘e4 34.♖b1 ♖b7

34...♘df2.

35.a4 ♘dc5

35...♘df2 36.♘a7 ♖a7 37.b6 ♖b7 38.a5 ♘g4 39.a6.

36.a5 ♞c3 37.♖c1 ♘5a4 38.b6+– ♘b5

38...ab6 39.a6 ♖c7 40.a7.

39.♘d8 ♖b8 40.♘c6 ♖b7 41.♘fd4 a6 42.♘b5 ab5 43.♘d8 ♖b8 44.b7 1-0

☐ **Jerry Simon**
■ **Dennis de Vreugt**
Bermuda 2002

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗g5 h6 4.♗h4 ♗b4 5.♘d2 g5

5...♘c6 6.e3 g5 7.♗g3 ♘e4 8.♘f3 h5 9.♕c2 ♘d2 10.♘d2 h4 11.♗e5 ♗d2 12.♔d2 (12.♕d2?? f6) 12...♘e5 13.de5 d6 14.ed6 cd6 15.♗d3 ♕f6 with about equal chances, Simon-Karklins, Saint Paul 2000. Instead of 6.e3 White can try: 6.a3 ♗d2 7.♕d2 ♘e4 8.♗d8 ♘d2 9.♔d2 (9.♗c7) 9...♔d8 10.♔c3.

6.♗g3 ♘e4 7.♘f3 ♘c6

Weaker is 7...d6?! 8.a3 ♗d2 9.♘d2 ♘g3 10.hg3 b6 11.e3 ♗b7 12.♕c2 ♕e7± 13.c5!? Nguyen Chi Minh-Peter, Clermont 2003.

8.a3 ♗d2 9.♘d2 ♘g3 10.hg3 ♘d4 11.♘e4 ♘c6

Here 11...e5?! 12.e3 ♘e6 13.♕f3 d6 14.0-0-0 gives White excellent compensation, Nogueiras-Calvo Minguez, Torremolinos 1984.

12.♕d2 f6 13.0-0-0

So far the players have followed an analysis of Estevez, who considered that White had adequate compensation.

13...♕e7 14.e3 f5 15.♘c3 d6 16.♗e2 ♗d7 17.♗h5

The position of Black's king gives White enough for the pawn.

17...♔d8 18.g4 fg4 19.♗g4 ♘e5 20.♗e2 ♗c6 21.f4 ♘d7 22.♗d3 ♘c5 23.♗c2 ♕f6 24.♕d4 ♔e7

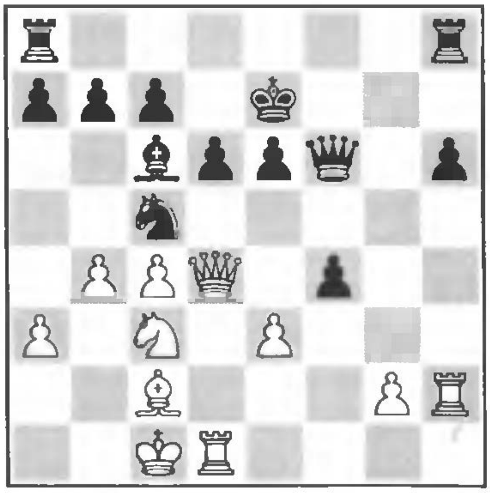
When Black exchanges queens there follows: 24...♕d4 25.ed4

- 25...♘d7 26.d5+–;
- 25...♗g2 26.♖h2 ♗f3 27.♖f1±;
- 25...♘a6 26.fg5±.

25.♖h2 gf4

Or 25...e5!?.

26.b4



26...e5 27.♕d2 ♘e6

27...fe3 28.♕e3 ♘e6 29.b5 merely transposes.

28.b5 fe3 29.♕e3 ♕g5 30.♕g5 hg5 31.♖h8 ♖h8 32.bc6 bc6

This is a very unclear ending, Black clearly has compensation for the piece.

33.♗e4 ♘d4 34.♔d2 ♘b3?

This is very bad, the knight was well-placed on d4.

35.♔e2 ♘a5? 36.♔d3 ♔e6 37.♖f1

White is now much better because of the off-side position of the black knight.

37...♔e7 38.♖f5 ♖g8 39.g4 ♖g7 40.♗g2

And since he cannot prevent ♘e4, Black resigned.

☐ **Boris Avrukh**
■ **Yannick Pelletier**
Biel 2000

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗g5 h6

3...♗b4 4.♘d2 c5 5.♘f3 (stronger are 5.a3 or 5.dc5) 5...cd4 6.♘d4 h6 7.♗h4 ♘c6 8.♘c2 ♗e7 9.e3 0-0 10.♗e2 d5 and Black has equalized comfortably, Bozinovic-Senff, Biel 2001.

4.♗h4 ♗b4 5.♘d2 c5 6.dc5 ♘a6!?

This was my recommendation in the original article. Avrukh responds well.

Alternatively, 6...♘c6 7.♘f3 ♗c5 8.e3 0-0 9.♗e2 ♗e7 10.0-0 a6 11.♕c2 d6 12.♖fd1 ♕c7 13.♖ac1 ♖d8 14.h3 ♗d7 15.♗g3 ♕b6 16.a3 ♖ac8 17.b4 a5 18.c5! dc5 19.♘c4 ♕a7 20.b5 with a clear edge, Abdulla-Liang Chong, Calcutta 2001.

7.♘f3 ♘c5 8.a3 ♗d2 9.♘d2 d5 10.b4 ♘cd7 11.cd5 ed5 12.♘b3± 0-0 13.e3 ♘e5 14.♕d4!

14.♗e2 ♘g6 15.♗g3 (not 15.♗f6 ♕f6 16.♕d5? (16.0-0=) 16...♗e6–+) 15...♘e4 with counterplay.

14...♖e8 15.♗e2 ♗g4

White is also better after 15...g5 16.♗g3 ♘c6 17.♕b2.

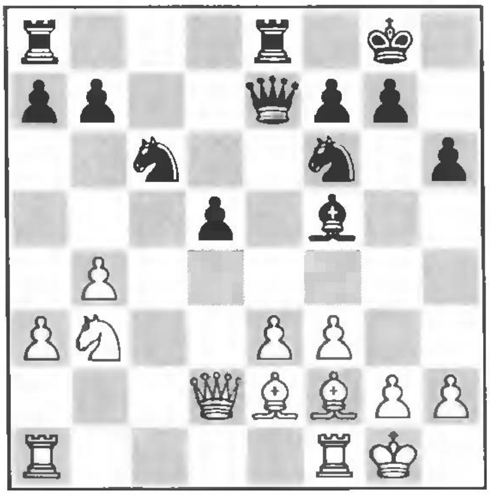
16.f3 ♗f5 17.0-0 ♘c6

17...♘g6 18.♗f6 (18.♗f2) 18...♕f6 19.♕f6 gf6 20.♔f2 and White is better.

18.♕d2

Not 18.♗f6? ♘d4 19.♗d8 ♘b3–+.

18...♕e7 19.♗f2±



19...a6 20.♖ac1 a5!? 21.b5 a4

Bad is 21...♕a3 22.♖c3! ♘e7 23.e4 de4 24.♗c5+–.

22.♘c5 ♘a5 23.♗d1 ♘b3! 24.♗b3

Clearly stronger than 24.♘b3 ab3 25.♗b3 ♖a3 with equality, as 26.♗d5?? ♖d3 loses on the spot.

24...ab3 25.♘b3 ♖a3 26.♘d4 ♗d3 27.♖fe1 ♗c4 28.e4!? de4 29.♖c4 e3 30.♖e3 ♖e3 31.♗e3 ♕e3 32.♕e3 ♖e3 33.♖c7

White still has the intitiative in this ending, but Pelletier defends well.

33...♖d3 34.♘f5 ♖d7 35.b6 h5 36.h4 g6 37.♘e3 ♔f8 38.♘c4 ♖e7 39.♖c8 ♖e8 40.♖c7 ♖e7 41.♔f2 ♘d5 42.♖c8 ♖e8 43.♖c5 ♘f4 44.♖c7 ♖e7 45.g4 f6 46.gh5 ♘h5 47.♘d6 ♘f4 48.h5!?

48.♘b7 ♘d5=.

48...♘d5!

Bad are 48...♘h5 49.♘b7, and 48...gh5 49.♖c8 ♔g7 50.♘f5+–.

49.♖c5 ♘b6 50.♖b5 ♘d7 51.hg6 ♘e5

52.♘f5 ♖d7 53.g7 ♔g8= 54.♖a5 ♘c6 55.♖a8 ♖d8 56.♖a4 ♖d5 57.♖a8 ½-½

☐ **Boris Avrukh**
■ **Boris Gulko**
Istanbul ol 2000

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗g5 h6 4.♗h4 ♗b4 5.♘d2 c5 6.a3 ♗d2 7.♕d2 g5

A main alternative is 7...cd4:

A) 8.♘f3 ♘c6 9.♘d4 ♘e4 10.♗d8 ♘d2 11.♘c6 dc6 12.♔d2 ♔d8 13.♔c3 c5 14.g3 ♗d7 15.♗g2 ♔c7 16.♖hd1 ♗c6 17.♗c6 ♔c6 18.♖d3±/= Ivanov-Aseev, St Petersburg 2000.

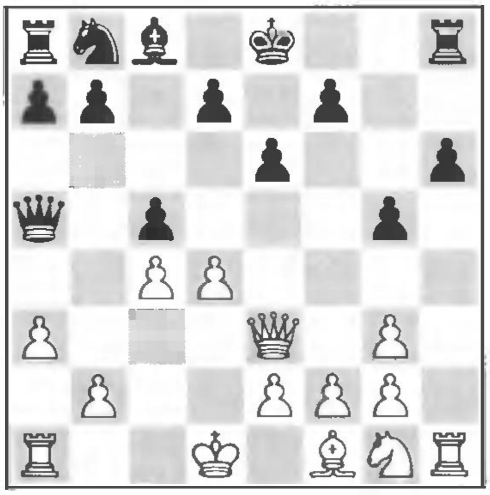
B) 8.♕d4 ♘c6 9.♕c3 (9.♕d1 is the alternative) 9...0-0!

B1) 10.0-0-0? ♘e4;

B2) 10.♘f3 g5 11.♗g3 ♘e4;

B3) 10.♗f6 ♕f6 11.♕f6 gf6 12.e3 b6 13.♘f3 ♗a6 with equality, Bosch-Ligterink, Dutch tt 2002.

8.♗g3 ♘e4 9.♕e3 ♘g3 10.hg3 ♕a5 11.♔d1



This was the novelty I suggested at the end of the original article.

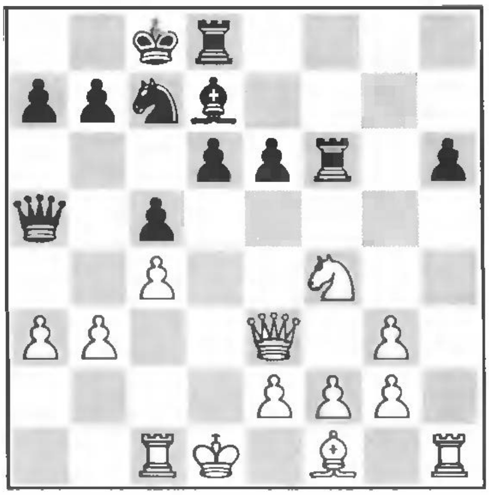
11...d6 12.♘f3 ♗d7 13.d5

13.♘g5? ♗a4 14.b3 cd4 Black better.

13...♘a6 14.♘g5 ♘c7 15.♖c1!? ♖g8 16.♘e4 0-0-0!? 17.♘f6

Is 17.♘d6 ♔b8 18.♘f7 really too dangerous?

17...♗a4 18.b3 ♖g6 19.♘h5 ♗d7 20.♘f4 ♖f6 21.de6 fe6



22.♕c3

This forces the exchange of queens, rendering White a safe plus.

22...♕c3 23.♖c3 b5 24.e3 bc4 25.bc4 e5 26.♘d3 ♗c6 27.♖h2 ♘e6 28.♔e1 ♔c7 29.♖b3 ♘g5 30.♗e2 ♖df8 31.f4 ♘e4 32.fe5 de5 33.♘e5 ♗a4 34.♖b2 ♖e6 35.♘d3 ♘g3 36.♘f4 ♖a6 37.♘d5

37.♗f3.

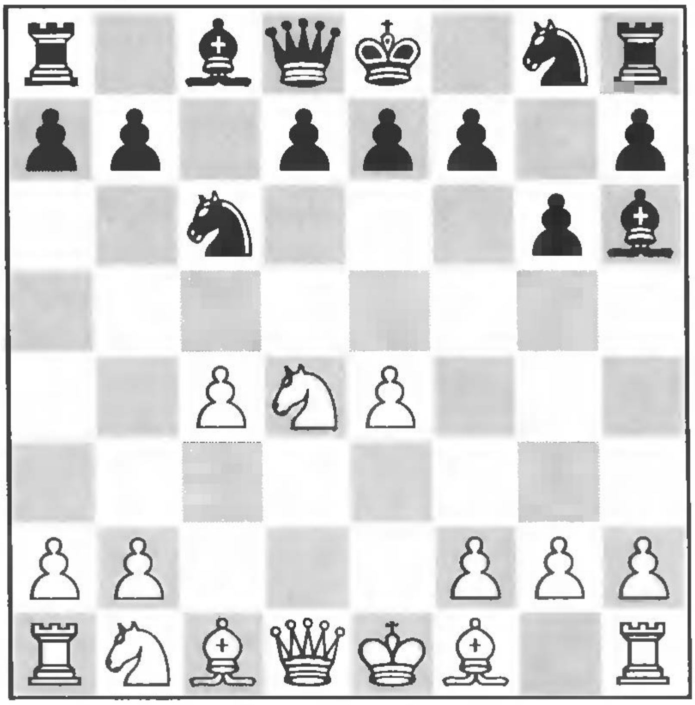
37...♔c8 38.♗g4 ♗d7 39.♗d7 ♔d7 40.♖b7 ♔c8 41.♖b3 ♖f1 42.♔d2 ♖a1?!

Black draws immediately with 42...♖f2 43.♔d3 (43.♔d1 ♖f1=) 43...♖e6 44.♘f4 (not 44.♖b5?? ♘e4–+) 44...♖d6 45.♘d5 ♖e6 with a repetition.

43.♖h4 ♖6a3 44.♖a3 ♖a3 45.♖h6 ♘e4 46.♔e2 ♖a2 47.♔f3 ♘d2 48.♔f4 ♘c4 49.g4 ♔d7 50.♘f6 ♔e7 51.♘d5 ♔d7 52.♘f6 ♔e7 53.♘e4 ♖e2 54.♘c5 ♖e3 55.♖h7 ♔e8 56.♘e4 ♖e1 57.♔f5 ♖a1 58.g5 ♖a5 59.♔f6 ♖a6 60.♔g7 ♘e3 61.♔h8 ♘f5 62.♖b7 ♔f8 63.♘f6 ♘e7 64.♘d7 ½-½

CHAPTER 6

TN on move 5!



NIC KEY SI 33.5

This is not a slip of the hand!

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cd4 4.♘d4 g6 5.c4 ♗h6!?TN

It looks as if the bishop has got out of control and shot past its natural square g7. However, this is not the case. What if I told you that the 'TN' in the title stands for: TIVIAKOV'S NOVELTY. In a game against Beshukov, Tiviakov played 5...♗h6!? instead of his usual Gurgenidze variation (5...♘f6 6.♘c3 d6 7.♗e2 ♘d4). Isn't it reassuring, in a time when novelties are sometimes found well beyond move 20, that a strong grandmaster comes up with something new on move 5! The move actually has a sound positional basis: Black is going to exchange the dark-squared bishops. Since White has put pawns on c4 and e4, he can no longer control the central dark squares after this exchange. The ultimate goal for Black is to play good knight versus bad (light-squared) bishop.

Before we investigate Tiviakov's idea, however, we will take a look at a similar manoeuvre in the Hungarian variation.

1. e4 c5
2. ♘f3 d6
3. d4 cd4

4. ♕d4 ♗d7

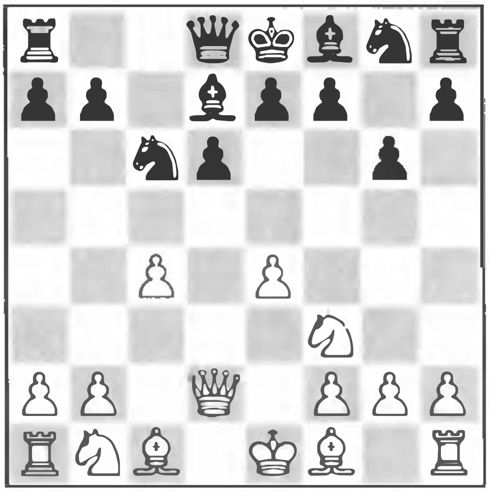
4...♘c6 5.♗b5 ♗d7 6.♗c6 is more common, but the text is perfectly reasonable. Black intends ♘c6, gaining a tempo on the queen. The only way to take advantage of 4...♗d7 is by settling for a Maroczy set-up.

5. c4 ♘c6

6. ♕d2

White intends b3 and ♗b2 anyway, so it is logical to withdraw the queen to d2 rather than to d1.

6. ... g6



The most natural move is now 7.♘c3. However, according to theory this is bad because of Ciocaltea's 7...♗h6!. The queen is forced back to a lesser square. There are two possibilities:

– After 8.♕d1 Black plays 8...♗g7, when Bishop takes c3 is threatened, and if White wants to prevent this he has to settle for the passive 9.♗d2.

– 8.♕c2, when the queen is exposed (on the c-file because of a future ♖c8, and because of a possible ♘b4). An extreme example of what might happen: 8...♗g7 9.b3 ♘f6 10.♗b2 ♕a5 11.a3? ♘e4! 12.b4 ♘b4 13.ab4 ♕b4 14.♖c1 ♘c5 15.♗a1 (15.♗e2 ♗f5) 15...♘b3 16.♕b2 a5 17.♗d3 b5! 18.0-0 (18.cb5 ♘c1 19.♕c1 ♖c8) 18...bc4 19.♗e2 ♘a1 20.♕a1 0-0 21.♖fd1 e6 22.♘d4 d5 and Black was winning in Packroff-Schöneberg, East German Championship, Erfurt 1973.

The strength of 7...♗h6 in this example lies in the fact that White's most harmonious set-up (♕d2, ♘c3, b3, ♗b2) is disturbed, giving Black good counterplay after the paradoxical 8...♗g7.

By adapting his move order White may try to avoid these problems.

7. b3

The idea is that 7...♗h6 is now answered by 8.♕c3. Play therefore usually continues: 7...♗g7 8.♗b2 ♘f6 9.♘c3 0-0. This is the main line which is not relevant for our present purposes.

The sideline 8...♗b2 (instead of 8...♘f6) is more interesting from our point of view: 8...♗b2 9.♕b2 ♘f6. Black's play is not devoid of logic: he has already exchanged the dark-squared bishops and has therefore achieved his strategic aim. Although the theory gives White a slight edge, it has been played by world-class players and therefore deserves attention. A few examples to show how these Maroczy positions without dark-squared bishops are played:

A) 10.♘bd2 0-0 11.♗e2 ♘h5!? 12.0-0 (Aronin has recommended 12.g3 as slightly better for White) 12...♘f4 13.♖fe1 e5 14.♗f1 ♗g4 happened in Bannik-Spassky, Soviet Championship, Moscow 1957. Black intends ♗f3, followed by ♘f4-e6-d4; he is already slightly better;

B) 10.♗e2 0-0 11.♘c3 ♘h5. The same manoeuvre as in the previous example. 12.0-0 ♘f4 13.♘d5 ♘e2 14.♕e2 ♗g4 15.♕e3 e5, and Black had an easy game in Sefc-Petrosian, Vienna 1957. White was duly impressed, as witness the next few moves 16.♘e1? ♘d4 17.f3 ♗e6 18.♘c3? ♕a5 19.♘e2 ♘e2 20.♕e2 b5! 21.cb5 ♗b3 22.♖f2 ♗a4∓;

C) 10.♘c3 0-0 (10...♗g4!?) 11.♗e2 ♗g4 12.♘d2 (12.♖d1 e5 13.0-0 ♗f3 14.♗f3 ♘d4 15.♗e2 is given as slightly better for White by Boleslavsky. The idea is that after ♗d3 and ♘d5 the Black knight may be dislodged from his outpost with f4) 12...♗e2 13.♘e2 a6 14.0-0 b5 15.♘c3 b4 16.♘d5 ♘d7 17.♘f3 ½-½ in Savon-Bronstein, Soviet Championship, Leningrad 1971.

The examples illustrate the type of position that White should avoid.

Rather passive was 7...♕a5 8.♕a5 ♘a5 9.♗b2 f6 10.♘c3 ♖c8 11.♗e2 ♗g7, as played in Dückstein-Teufel, Bamberg 1968. White is slightly better, of course, but Black held on to the draw. I will come back to this game.

Interestingly, after 7.b3 the game Galego-Silva, Portuguese Championship 1992, nevertheless continued:

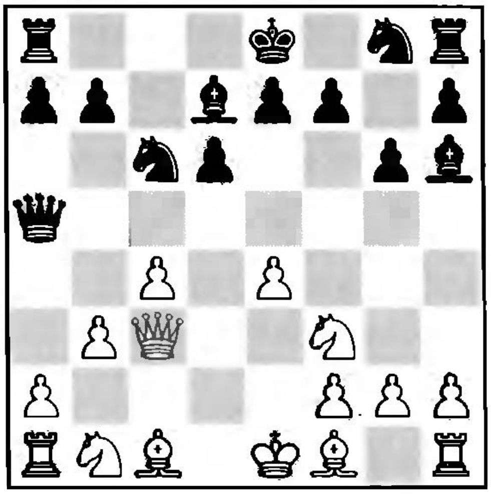
7. ... ♗h6

The move that White thought to have avoided with 7.b3.

8. ♕c3

Nothing is gained by 8.♕b2 ♕a5 9.♘c3 (9.♗d2 ♗d2 10.♘bd2 ♘f6 or 9.♔d1 ♘e5 10.♘e5 ♗c1 11.♕c1 ♕e5) 9...♗c1 (9...♗g7 10.♗d2) 10.♖c1 ♘f6.

8. ... ♕a5!



Black is playing an improved version of Dückstein-Teufel, see the note above. **9.♕a5 ♘a5 10.♗b2** 10.♗h6 ♘h6 11.♘c3 is equal, compare this to Tiviakov's Maroczy below. **10...♘f6 11.♘c3** 11.♗f6 ef6 12.♘c3 is the alternative. **11...0-0 12.♗d3 ♖fc8** And Black is fine, the game continued. **13.0-0 a6 14.♖fe1 ♖ab8 15.♖ad1 b5 16.e5 de5 17.cb5 ab5 18.♖e5 ♘c4!? 19.♗c4 bc4 20.♖e7 cb3 21.ab3** This is a mistake. The stronger 21.♘e2 is answered by 21...♗f8 22.♖e3 ba2 23.♗f6 ♖b1. **21...♖b3 22.♘d5 ♘d5 23.♖d7 ♖b2 24.♖7d5 ♖cc2** Suddenly White is in big trouble. **25.♖f1 ♖f2 26.♘e1** 26.g3 ♗e3 also loses. **26...♗e3**

White resigned.

What did we learn from this survey of the Hungarian variation? It also has the move ♗h6, but it is more forceful (it attacks the queen). Black usually plays it to disturb White's piece coordination. However, we also saw several examples in which the bishops were traded, when the position becomes rather similar to the main object of our study. So let us return to Tiviakov's

5...♗h6 in the Maroczy. The move was introduced in the following game from the European championship.

☐ **Sergey Beshukov**
■ **Sergey Tiviakov**
Saint Vincent 2000

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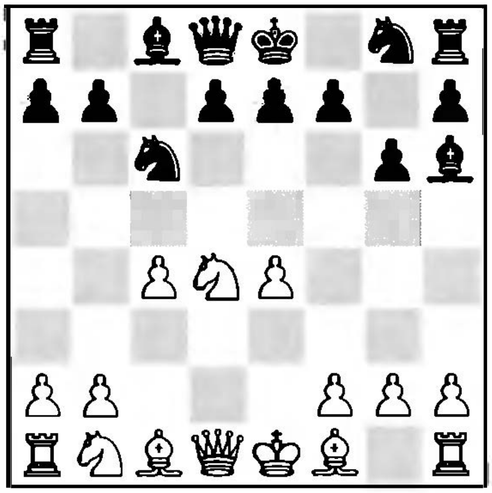
1. e4 c5
2. ♘f3 ♘c6
3. d4 cd4
4. ♘d4 g6
5. c4 ♗h6



Tiviakov deserves the highest praise for finding and playing this move. Theory only investigates 5...♘f6 and 5...♗g7. Nevertheless, the idea to exchange bishops is the main theme in the following well-researched line: 5...♗g7 6.♗e3 ♘f6 7.♘c3 0-0 8.♗e2 d6 9.0-0 ♗d7 10.♕d2 ♘d4 11.♗d4 ♗c6 12.f3 a5 13.b3 ♘d7. Nowadays White prefers to keep his bishop with 14.♗e3 or with the subtle 14.♗f2. If White wants to keep his bishop so badly, then why not offer the exchange at a point when it cannot be avoided?

6. ♗h6

The move played by Beshukov. Its advantage is that the knight is now stranded at h6. A drawback is that Black develops with tempo. Besides, the knight may come in useful for preparing f5 (it can also be regrouped with ♘g4-e5/f6). Let us briefly examine the alternatives:

A) 6.f4. This avoids the exchange, but weakens White's position somewhat. Bad now is 6...e5? 7.♘b5. Interesting is 6...♕b6, which is best met by 7.♘b5. The natural 6...d6 7.♘c3 ♘f6 8.♗e2 0-0 is also good.

B) 6.♘c3 ♗c1 (6...d6) 7.♖c1 ♘f6 looks OK for Black. A typical Maroczy position, but one in which the dark-squared bishops have already been exchanged.

C) 6.♘c6?! The idea of this move is that 6...bc6 7.♕d4 leads to interesting play: 7...♕a5 (7...f6) 8.♗d2 (8.♘c3 e5) 8...♗d2 9.♘d2 e5 10.♕d6, and White is better.
However, after 6...dc6 7.♕d8 ♔d8 8.♗h6 ♘h6 9.♘c3 e5 Black is slightly better in the endgame.

6. ... ♘h6
7. ♘c3 0-0

Sensible play. 7...♕b6 is less good; after 8.♘b3 a future ♘d5 or c5 will be annoying. Equal to the text is 7...d6 (Tiviakov).

8. ♗e2 d6

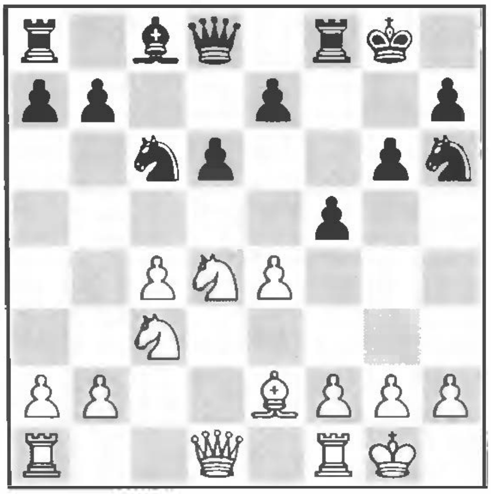
8...f5 is given as an alternative by Tiviakov.

9. ♕d2?!

I think that this merely helps Black. After 9.0-0 Tiviakov (on his webpage) gives 9...♗e6 and 9...f5 without any further comments. Let us examine both lines:

A) 9...♗e6 is a noncommittal move. White can just continue to develop with moves like b3, ♕d2 and ♖c1. Or he can try something more purposeful with 10.♘c6!? bc6 11.♕d2 ♔g7 (11...♘g4 12.♗g4 ♗g4 13.f4 is better for White) 12.b4!?.

B) 9...f5.



This utilizes the position of the knight on h6. There is a danger, however, after 10.ef5 (10.♕d2) 10...♘d4 (10...♘f5 may well be better) 11.♕d4 ♘f5 12.♕d2 ♗d7. By a curious transposition of moves we have arrived at Tal-Kupreichik, Sochi 1970! I'll give this game in full:

5...♗g7 6.♗e3 ♘h6 7.♘c3 d6 8.♗e2 0-0 9.0-0 f5 10.ef5 ♘d4?! 11.♗d4 ♗d4 12.♕d4 ♘f5 13.♕d2 ♗d7 14.♗f3 ♗c6 15.♗d5 ♔g7 16.♖fe1 e5 17.c5 dc5 18.♖e5 ♖e8 19.♖ae1 ♕d6 20.♖e6 ♖e6 21.♖e6 ♕d7 22.♕f4 ♗d5 23.♕e5 ♔f7 24.♖f6 ♔g8 25.♘d5 ♕a4 (25...♖e8 26.♖g6 hg6 27.♘f6 ♔g7 28.♘d7 ♖e5 29.♘e5) 26.h3 ♖d8? 27.♖f5 1-0.

Curious and best avoided. In general Black should watch out when playing f5. He improves the activity of his pieces (knight on f5, open f-file), but structurally he gets into an inferior position (three pawn groups, white squares are weaker, as might be his king).

9. ... ♘g4

This looks good. The knight is on his way to better pastures (e5 or f6).

10. ♗g4

Tiviakov gives 10.0-0 ♘ge5=, perhaps 11.♘c2!? is still a try to avoid further exchanges.

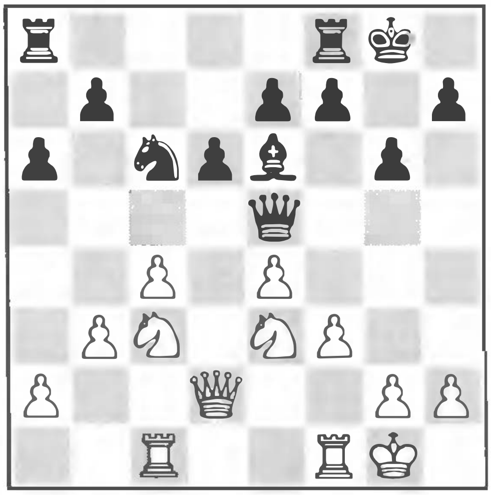
10. ... ♗g4
11. h3 ♗e6
12. b3 ♕b6

By now Black has full equality, and even a choice of plans. Tiviakov gives both 12...♘d4 13.♕d4 ♕a5= and 12...♕a5 (planning a6 and b5) as viable alternatives.

13. ♘c2

Avoiding an immediate draw with 13.♖d1, when the exchanges on d4 will lead to full equality.

13. ... a6
14. ♘e3 ♕c5
15. ♖c1 ♕e5
16. 0-0



16. ... ♕f4(!)

The queen is well-positioned here. The

players now agreed a draw. Tiviakov gives 16...g5 as interesting.

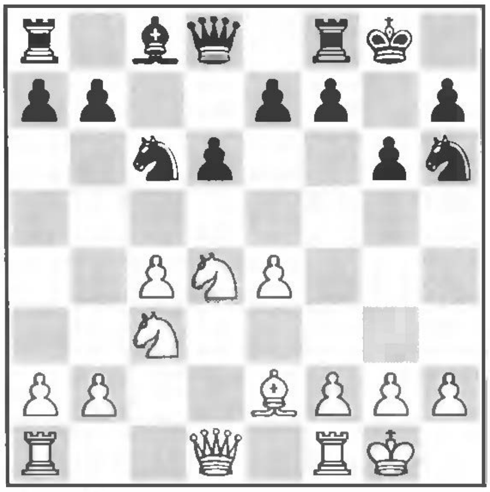
It is impossible to evaluate 5...♗h6 on the basis of one game, of course. Nevertheless, the move is certainly playable, an outright refutation is not on the cards. So why not surprise your next opponent with this TN, and let us see how this line develops!

RECENT GAMES

Meanwhile Tiviakov's 5...♗h6 has received some further tests. Below you will find some lightly annotated games.

□ **Andras Flumbort**
■ **Goran Kosanovic**
Paks 2001

1.♘f3 c5 2.c4 ♘c6 3.d4 cd4 4.♘d4 g6 5.e4 ♗h6 6.♗h6 ♘h6 7.♘c3 0-0 8.♗e2 d6 9.0-0



9...♘d4!?

The dangers of 9...f5 were illustrated in the comments to Beshukov-Tiviakov.

10.♕d4 ♗e6 11.♖ad1 ♕a5 12.♕d2 ♔g7

After 12...♘g4 13.♘d5 White is slightly better.

13.♔h1 a6 14.f4 f6 15.♗d3 ♖ac8 16.♘d5

16.b3 b5.

16...♕d2 17.♖d2 ♗d5 18.ed5 f5

The ending is about equal.

19.♖e1 ♔f7 20.♔g1 ♘g8 21.a4 a5 22.b3

Draw.

□ **Miguel Munoz**
■ **Goran Kosanovic**
Budapest 2001

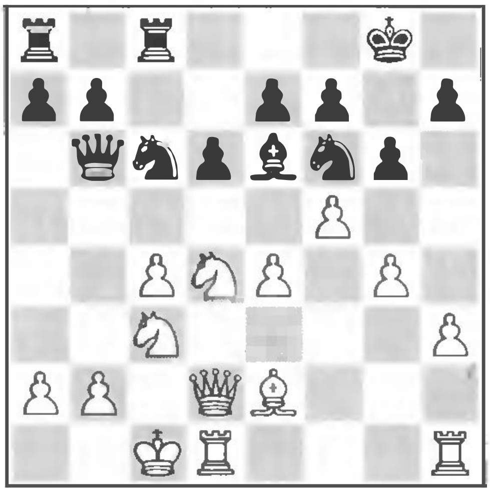
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cd4 4.♘d4 g6 5.c4 ♗h6 6.♗h6 ♘h6 7.♕d2 ♘g4 8.♘c3 0-0 9.h3

9.♗e2 d6 would transpose to Beshukov-Tiviakov.

9...♘f6 10.0-0-0!? ♕b6 11.f4 d6

Note how Black will now continue to make useful moves before exchanging on d4.

12.♗e2 ♗e6 13.g4 ♖fc8 14.f5



Forcing Black to exchange.

14...♘d4 15.♕d4 ♕d4 16.♖d4 ♗d7 17.g5 ♘e8 18.♗g4

18.♘d5 ♔f8 19.♗g4.

18...e6 19.fe6 ♗e6 20.♗e6

20.♘d5 ♔g7.

20...fe6 21.b3

Chances are about even.

21...♖c5 22.h4 a6 23.♔b2 ♖ac8 24.a4 ♖8c7 25.♖f1 ♖f7 26.♖f7 ♔f7 27.b4 ♖e5 28.♘d1 a5 29.b5 ♖c5 30.♔b3 ♔e7 31.♘f2 ♖c8 32.♘g4 b6 33.e5 ♖c5 34.ed6 ♘d6 35.♘f6 ♖f5 36.♘h7 ♘b7 37.♘f6 ♘c5 38.♔c2 ♖f2 39.♔d1 ♖h2 40.♘g8 ♔f7 41.♘h6 ♔e7 42.♘g8 ♔f7

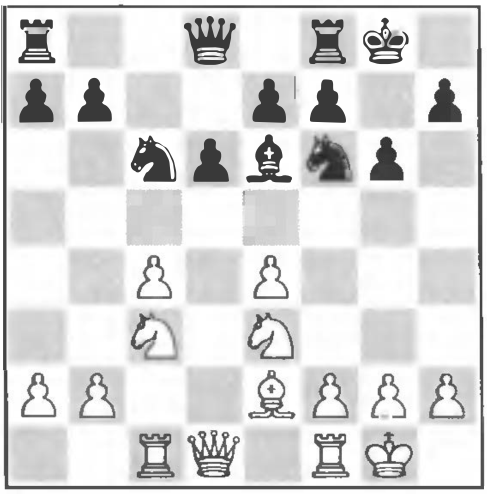
Draw.

☐ **Joseph Gallagher**
■ **Chris Beaumont**
England tt 2002

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cd4 4.♘d4 g6 5.c4 ♗h6 6.♘c3 d6 7.♗e2 ♗c1 8.♖c1 ♘f6 9.0-0 0-0 10.♘c2

10.♔h1 ♕b6 11.♘c6 bc6 12.b3 gave Black no problems in Kwiatkowski-Singer, Laczna 2002.

10...♗e6 11.♘e3



11...♕a5

11...♕b6 planning ♕d4 makes more sense.

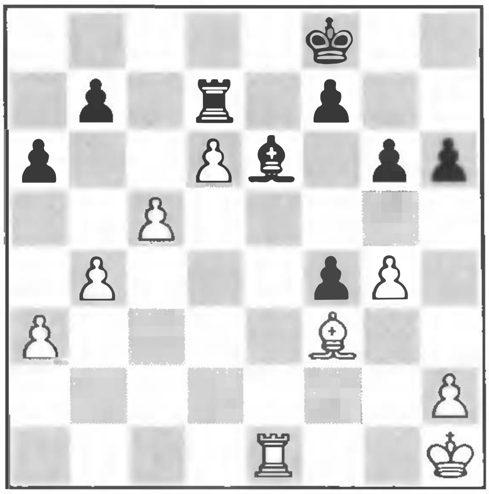
12.♔h1 ♖ac8 13.f4 ♕b6 14.♕d2 ♕d4 15.♖fd1 ♕d2 16.♖d2 a6 17.g4 h6 18.c5! ♘b4

18...dc5 19.e5 (followed by f5).

19.a3 ♘a2 20.♘a2 ♗a2 21.♗f3 e5

21...♖c5 22.♖c5 dc5 23.e5 and White has the advantage.

22.♖d6 ef4 23.♘d5 ♘d5 24.ed5 ♖fd8 25.♖d8 ♖d8 26.d6+– ♖d7 27.b4 ♔f8 28.♖e1 ♗e6

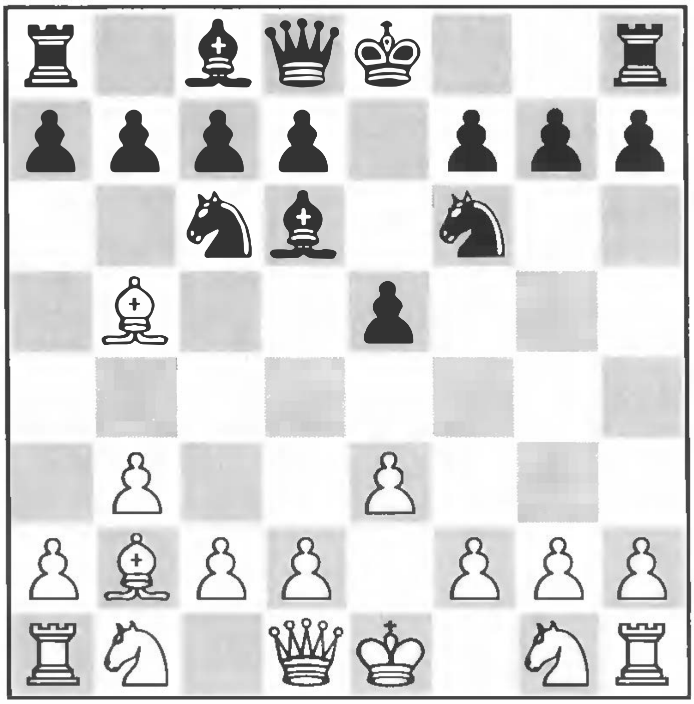


29.♗b7! ♖b7 30.♖e6!

Black resigned as 30...fe6 31.c6 ♖b6 32.c7 ♖c6 33.d7 will queen.

CHAPTER 7

A bishop's wonder move



NIC KEYVO 8.8

4...♗d6: the SOS reply to 1.b3

This chapter presents a complete defence against the so-called Nimzowitsch-Larsen attack: 1.b3. Our system naturally has a distinct SOS character. Thus it involves the developing move 4...♗d6, placing the piece in front of the d7-pawn, and an early ♘a5, avoiding a possible exchange (♗c6).

☐ **Klaus Bischoff**
■ **Emil Sutovsky**
Essen 2001

---

1. b3 e5
2. ♗b2 ♘c6
3. e3

Keeping all options open, this move best illustrates the flexibility of the Nimzowitsch-Larsen attack. After 3.c4 ♘f6 4.e3 Black may go for a very decent reversed Sicilian 4...d5. To give an encouraging example: 5.cd5 ♘d5 6.a3 ♗d6 7.♕c2 ♕e7 8.d3 f5 9.♘c3 ♘d4 10.ed4 ♘c3 11.de5 ♗e5 12.♗e2 ♘e2 13.♘e2 ♗b2 14.♕b2 0-0 15.0-0 f4 and Black was clearly better in Hetzer-Stripunsky, New York 2000. However Black may also adopt the same scheme of development as in our main game: 4...♗d6 5.♘c3 0-0 followed by ♖e8, e4 and ♗e5 or alternatively ♖e8, ♗f8 and d5.

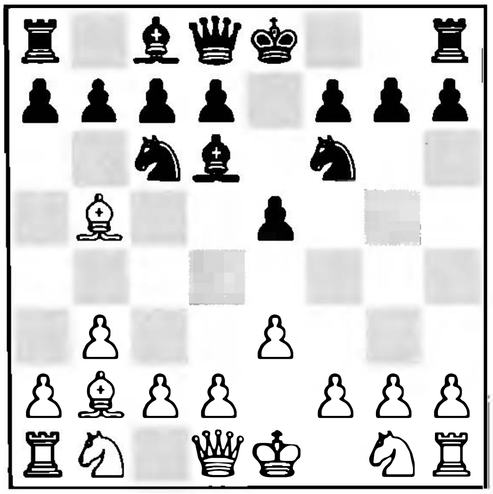
3. ... ♘f6

Of course, 3...d5 4.♗b5 ♗d6 5.f4 is not necessarily bad for Black but exactly the kind of thing that White was looking forward to when he chose 1.b3.

4. ♗b5

4.c4 transposes to the 3.c4 line given above, while 4.♘f3 is well met by 4...e4. Again the miracle move of this SOS is also playable: 4...♗d6 5.d3 0-0 6.♘bd2 ♖e8 7.a3 was Bischoff-Khenkin, Germany Bundesliga 2000/01. Note that 7.♘c4 is answered by 7...♗b4 8.c3 ♗f8.

4. ... ♗d6!?



This is what this SOS is all about. Black protects his e5-pawn, without giving White any clear targets. The drawback of this odd development of the bishop is that it appears to disturb the coordination of the black forces. However this is only seemingly the case. Black has, in fact, a few wonderfully organic set-ups in mind. Thus, he might play a6 and after ♗c6 dc6 his light-squared bishop joins the fray. Alternatively, he may simply continue 0-0, ♖e8 and now either ♗f8 and d5 or e4 and ♗e5. Finally, sometimes ♘e7 (♘a5) is played followed by c6, ♗c7 and d5. In all cases Black firmly takes control of the central squares that were so generously neglected by his 1.b3 opponent. This is hardly a modern idea, for it was first played nearly one-and-a-half century ago by the great German champion Adolf Anderssen. It is nevertheless still effective, as our present game proves.

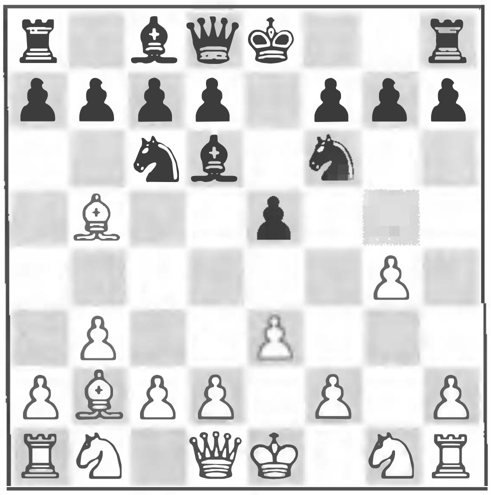
5. ♘e2

A logical move that fails to bring any advantage. Yet, White has not been particularly successful with the alternatives either.

A) The stem game of 4...♗d6 continued meekly with **5.d3** but developed quite originally after 5...♘e7!? 6.d4!? ed4 7.♗d4 ♘f5 8.♗b2 ♘h4 9.♗f1 b6 10.♘f3 ♘g6 11.♗d3 ♗b7 Suhle-Anderssen, Breslau 1859.

B) Equally unpromising is **5.♘c3** 0-0 6.♘ge2 ♘e7 7.d4 c6 8.♗d3 ed4 9.♘d4 ♗b4 10.a3 ♗a5 11.♘f5 d5 and Black was fine in Bellon Lopez-Narciso Dublan, Havana 1999.

C) The bayonet attack **5.g4?!** is dubious here:



5...0-0 6.♘c3 ♗b4 7.g5?! ♗c3 8.dc3 ♘e4 9.h4 d5 10.♕f3 ♘d6 11.♗c6 bc6 12.0-0-0 a5 13.♘e2 a4 14.♘g3 ♗e6 15.♘h5 ab3 16.ab3 ♖a2 17.♕g3 ♘c4! with a winning attack in Arencibia-Efimov, Saint Vincent 2001.

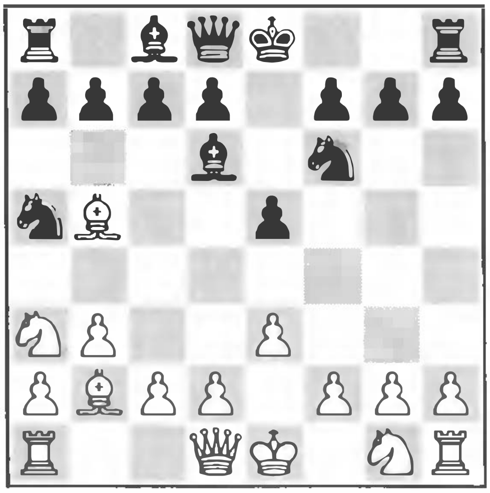
D) Preparing f4 with **5.♘h3** is also dubious, after 5...a6 6.♗e2 ♗e7!? (aiming to attack the h3-knight) 7.f4 d6 8.♘f2 ef4 9.ef4 0-0 10.♗f3 d5 and Black was OK in Parkin-Bryson, Scottish Championship, Glasgow 2000.

E) **5.a3** looks insipid but is actually quite cunning. White realizes the strength of ♗d6 versus his ♗b5 set-up and simply switches to a ♗e2 and c4 set-up. Both sides will lose some tempi moving their bishops around. Rogers-Sherbakov, Hastings 1993/94, continued: 5...0-0 6.♗e2 ♗e7 7.c4 e4?! 8.♘c3 d5?! 9.cd5 ♘e5 10.♘e4 ♘e4 11.♗e5 ♕d5 12.♘f3 and Black did not have enough compensation for the pawn.

Instead of 6...♗e7 another solution would be 6...♖e8 7.c4 ♗f8; in the game ♗e7 disturbs the coordination of Black's pieces. However, 7...e4 is not forced either; after the normal 7...d5 8.cd5 ♘d5 would transpose to 1.b3 e5 2.♗b2 ♘c6 3.c4 ♘f6 4.e3 d5 5.cd5 ♘d5 6.a3 ♗e7 (6...♗d6 would be preferable in this move order) 7.♗e2 0-0.

F) **5.♘f3** e4 (5...♕e7 is playable too) 6.♘d4 ♘d4 7.♗d4 c6 8.♗e2 0-0 9.c4 ♕e7 preparing ♗e5 was fairly equal in McMichael-Parker, England Team Championship 1996. After 5...e4 the original 6.♘h4 has also been played, after 6...0-0 7.0-0 ♗e5 8.♗e5 ♘e5 9.f4 ef3 10.♘f3 ♕e7 11.♘c3 d5 Black's position is perhaps already the more attractive. Mikhalevski-Avrukh, Ramat Aviv 1998.

G) **5.♘a3** Keene's suggestion of almost 25 years hence. Now if you are only looking for equality then 5...a6 should suffice: 6.♗c6 (6.♗e2 ♗e7 7.♘c4 e4 8.d4 Belikov-Filipenko, Smolensk 1992) 6...dc6 7.♘c4 ♕e7 8.♘e2 0-0 9.0-0 b5 10.♘d6 cd6 11.f4 ♗g4!= Lein-Gruzmann, Grieskirchen 1998. However, more in SOS style is to give your opponent a taste of his own medicine with 5...♘a5!?



The idea is simply that it renders ♘c4 harmless. For example: 6.♘c4 ♘c4 7.♗c4 0-0 8.♘e2 c6 9.♘g3 ♗c7 10.0-0 d5 with easy equality in Gelashvili-Hector, Istanbul ol 2000. After 6.♘f3 a6 7.♗e2 ♕e7 8.♘b1 is a sad retreat. In the game Hodgson-Speelman, England Team Championship 1998, the players called it a day after 8...0-0 9.c4 b6 10.♘c3 ♗b7 11.0-0 ♖fe8 12.d3 ♗a3 13.♕c1 ♗b2 ½-½.

Best is the prophylactic 6.♗e2, when after 6...a6 there is a parting of the ways:

G1) 7.♘c4?! proved spectacularly in-effective after 7...♘c4 8.bc4?! ♕e7 9.a4 0-0 10.♘h3 ♗c5 11.f4? ♗e3! 12.♗e5 ♗a7 13.♘f2 d6 14.♗b2 ♖e8 15.d4 ♘g4 0-1 Sakaev-Sveshnikov, Gausdal 1992.

G2) Better is 7.c4 c5!? (not obligatory) 8.♘f3 ♘c6 9.d3 0-0 10.0-0 ♖e8 11.♘c2 ♗f8 12.d4 and White was somewhat better in Teske-Berndt, German Bundesliga 1999.

G3) 7.♘f3 e4 8.♘d4 g6 9.c4 0-0 10.♘b1 ♖e8 11.♘c3 ♗e5 12.d3 d5 13.cd5 ed3 14.♕d3 ♘d5 15.♘d5 ♕d5 16.♗f3 ♕d6 17.0-0-0 ♕b6 18.♕c2 ½-½ Hodgson-Barsov, York 1999.

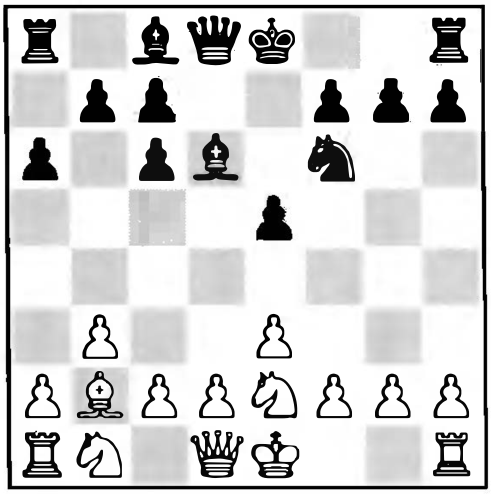
H) Miles has tried **5.♗e2!?**. Its main idea is comparable to line E. His opponent, Ekström, rose to the occasion and both players produced the following bizarre tactics: 5...0-0 6.c4 ♖e8 7.♘c3 ♗f8 8.d3 d5 9.cd5 ♘d5 (so far so good, a kind of Sicilian with colours reversed has arisen) 10.♘f3 ♗b4 11.♕d2 ♗g4 12.h3 ♗h5 13.a3 ♗c3 14.♗c3 ♘d4!? 15.♘d4 (15.ed4 ♗f3 16.gf3 ♘c3 17.♕c3 ed4 with compensation) 15...♘c3 16.♘c6 ♕d5! 17.♗h5 (17.e4? ♕c6 18.♗h5 ♘b5∓) 17...♕g2 18.♖f1 ♕c6 19.♖c1 ♕h6 20.♗f7 ♔f7 21.♕c3 c6 22.♕c4 and the game is fairly equal (½-½, 56) Miles-Ekström, Ohrid 2001.

5. ... a6

Consistent, although there is nothing wrong with 5...0-0 of course: 6.0-0 ♖e8 7.♘g3 (7.♗c6 bc6 8.d3 ♗f8 9.♘g3 d5 Kharlov-Epishin, Elista 2001) 7...e4 8.♗e2 ♗e5 9.♗e5 ♘e5 10.d4 ed3 11.cd3 d5 12.d4 White has at best a very slight edge, Morozevich-Sveshnikov, Podolsk 1993.

Not good is 5...♘e7?! 6.♘g3 c6 7.♗d3! ♗c7 8.♘h5 ♘h5 9.♕h5 ♘g6 10.f4! ♕e7 11.0-0 e4 12.♗e2 0-0 13.f5 ♘e5 14.f6 with a dangerous initiative, Arencibia-Huerta, Merida 2000.

6. ♗c6 dc6



7. ♘bc3

7.♘g3 invites 7...h5 when after 8.♘c3 h4 9.♘ge4 ♘e4 (9...h3!? Keene) 10.♘e4 ♗f5 11.♘d6 ♕d6 12.d3 0-0-0 13.e4? ♗e4! Black went on to win in Solbrand-Bator, Stockholm 1993.

7.d4 e4 8.c4 0-0 9.♘bc3 ♖e8 10.h3 (10.0-0? loses to 10...♗h2 11.♔h2 ♘g4) 10...b5 was Garcia Padron-Romero Holmes, Spain tt 1995.

7.d3 to prevent e4 is probably best. 7...0-0 8.♘d2 ♕e7 9.h3 was equal in the game Arencibia-Estremera Panos, Malaga 2000.

7. ... e4

8. ♘g3 ♕e7

9. ♕e2 0-0

10. 0-0-0

Ambitious and looking for trouble. However, everything isn't spick-and-span either after castling kingside. After 10.0-0 ♗g4 11.f3 ef3 12.gf3 ♗h3 would be OK.

However, Black can also play more aggressively with 10...h5!? after 11.♘h5 ♗h2 12.♔h2 ♘g4 13.♔g3 (13.♔g1 ♕h4) 13...♕g5 14.♘e4 ♕h5 the lines fork:

A) 15.♖h1 ♕g6 16.f3 ♘e3 17.♔f2 ♘c2 18.♕d3 ♘b4!, but not 18...♘a1? 19.♘f6 gf6 20.♗f6 and mates.

B) 15.f4!

B1) 15...♕h2 16.♔f3 ♕h5 (16...♕h7 17.♖h1 ♘h2 18.♔g3 ♕e4 19.♖h2; 16...♗f5 17.♘g3!) 17.♖h1 ♕g6;

B2) 15...♕g6 16.♘g5 (16.f5 ♗f5 17.♖f5 ♕f5 18.♕g4 ♕g4 19.♔g4 f5) 16...f6 17.♕c4 ♔h8 18.♗a3 ♖e8 19.♖h1 ♘h6 20.♕f7 ♗f5 21.♕g6 ♗g6 and things are still unclear.

10. ... ♗a3

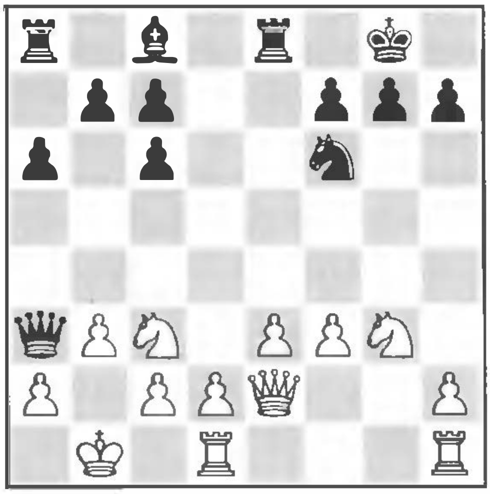
Exchanging an important defender.

11.♗a3 ♕a3 12.♔b1 ♖e8 13.f3

13.♕c4 to answer 13...♗e6 with 14.♕a4 was a safer option.

13. ... ef3

14. gf3



Black now pushes his a-pawn to start a devastating attack.

14. ... a5

15. ♘ge4 ♘e4

16. fe4 a4

17. d3 ♗e6

18. ♕d2

Suicidal is 18.♘a4 b5 19.♘c3 b4 20.♘a4 ♖a4 21.ba4 and now the fastest win is 21...♗a2 22.♔a1 ♕c3 23.♔a2 ♖a8 24.♔b1 ♖a4 mating.

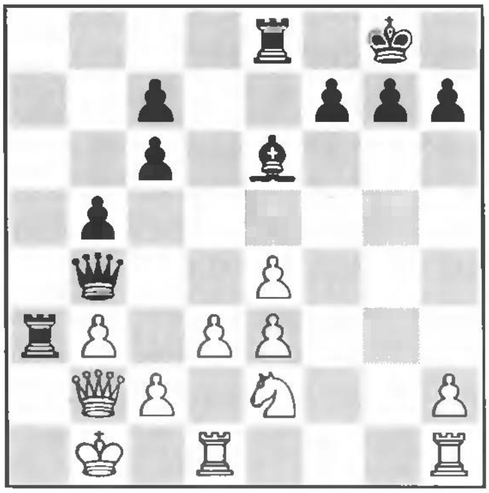
18. ... b5

19. ♕c1 ♕b4

20. ♕b2 ab3

21. ab3 ♖a3

22. ♘e2



Running away with the king is also insufficient: 22.♔c1 ♖ea8 (but not 22...♗b3 23.♘b1) 23.♔d2 (23.♖hg1 ♖a1 24.♔d2 ♖1a2 25.♖a1 ♗b3) 23...♖a2 24.♖a1 ♗b3 25.♖hb1 leaves Black with two good options: 25...♖a1 26.♖a1 ♖a1 27.♕a1 ♗a4 or25...♕a5 26.♖a2 ♗a2 27.♕a2 (27.♖a1 b4) 27...♕a2 28.♘a2 ♖a2. In both cases Black is a healthy pawn up.

22. ... ♖ea8

Threatening ♕a5.

23. ♖hg1 g6

24. ♕c3

If 24.♘f4 ♗b3.

24. ... ♕d6

25. ♘f4

Or 25.e5 ♖a1 26.♕a1 ♖a1 27.♔a1 ♕e5 28.♔b1 ♕e3.

25. ... b4

26. ♕b2 ♕c5

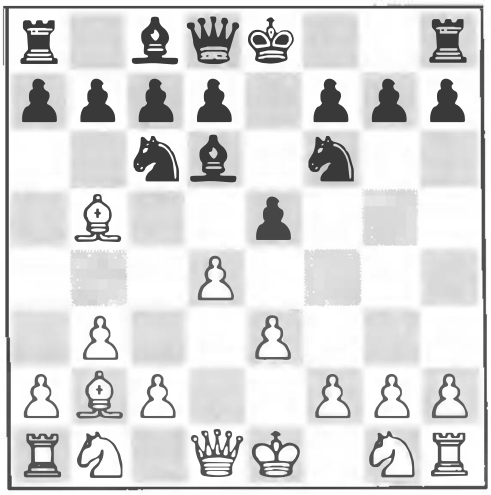
White resigned. There is no sensible defence against the threat ♕c3 and ♖a1 mate, for example 27.♘e6 ♕c3.

RECENT GAMES

The following two recent games clearly demonstrate the strength of 4...♗d6!?.

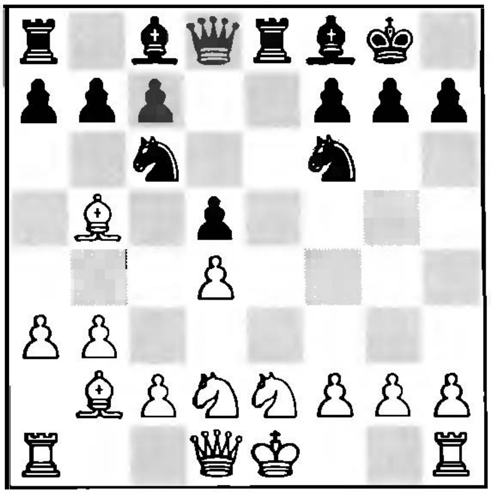
☐ **Pavel Blatny**
■ **John Bartholomew**
Las Vegas 2002

1.b3 e5 2.♗b2 ♘c6 3.e3 ♘f6 4.♗b5 ♗d6 5.d4



This move was not mentioned in the main article. Black gets an easy game by playing natural moves. Skytte-Palliser, Witley 2001, went 5.a3 0-0 6.♗e2 ♘e7!? (both 6...♗e7 and 6...♖e8 are mentioned under E. 5.a3. The knight move illustrates another way of regrouping: c6, ♗c7 and d5 is Black's plan) 7.♘f3 ♘g6 8.d3 c6 9.h4!? ♖e8 10.h5 ♘f8 11.h6 g6 12.c4 ♗c7 13.e4 d5 and Black was slightly better. Shulman was confronted with 5.♘e2, after 5...0-0 (the alternative for 5...a6 which was what Sutovsky played in the main game.) 6.d3 ♘e7 (Shulman also opts for this re-shuffling of the pieces. It is here particularly strong as the b5-bishop is in danger of being trapped. Naturally, 6...♖e8 is also good.) 7.d4 e4 8.♘g3 c6 9.♗e2 ♗c7 10.c4 d5 11.♘d2 ♖e8 Black was better in Lawson-Shulman, Toronto 2002.

5...ed4 6.ed4 0-0 7.a3 ♖e8 8.♘e2 ♗f8 9.♘d2 d5



Black is a little better here.

10.0-0 ♗f5 11.♘g3 ♗g4 12.f3 ♗d7 13.♗d3 ♗d6 14.♖f2 ♘e7 15.♘df1 ♘g6 16.♘f5 ♗f8 17.g3 c5 18.♘1e3 ♖c8 19.♕d2 c4 20.♗f1 ♕b6 21.b4 ♘e7 22.♘h4 ♘g6!?

Ready to repeat moves versus the grandmaster? Instead 22...g6, planning ♗h6, is possible.

23.♘hg2 ♗d6 24.♗c3 ♕c7 25.♗e2 h5! 26.♘f1 ♗h3 27.♖e1 h4 28.♕g5 ♘h7 29.♕h5 ♘f6 30.♕g5 ♘h7 31.♕d5

Forcing Black to win the game.

31...hg3 32.hg3 ♗g3 33.♘g3 ♕g3 34.♗f1 ♘f4 35.♕b5 ♗d7

Alternatively, 35...♖e1 36.♗e1 ♗g2

37.♗g2 ♘g2 also wins.

36.♕d7 ♘h3 37.♔h1 ♘f2 38.♔g1 ♘h3 39.♔h1 ♖ed8 40.♕b7 ♘f2 41.♔g1 ♘g5 42.♗e2 ♘gh3 43.♔f1 ♘d3

White resigned.

☐ **Milan Zurek**
■ **Zbynek Hracek**
Czech Republic tt 2002

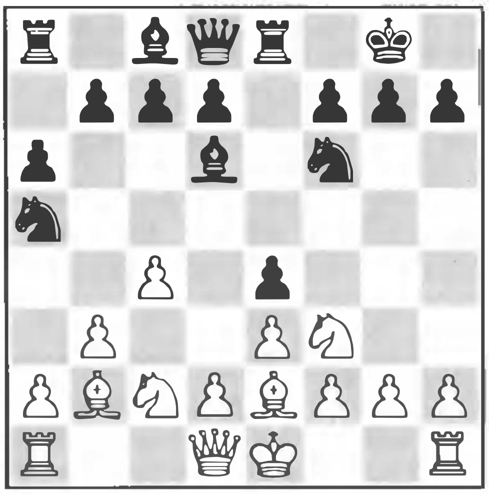
1.b3 e5 2.♗b2 ♘c6 3.e3 ♘f6 4.♗b5 ♗d6 5.♘a3 ♘a5!? 6.♗e2

This prophylactic move is best. After 6.♘c4 ♘c4 7.♗c4 0-0 8.♘f3 ♕e7 9.a4 c6 10.0-0 ♗c7 11.♗a3 d6 12.h3 e4 13.♘d4 c5 14.♘b5 ♗b8 15.d4 a6 16.♘c3 d5! and Black won in Shutalev-Sibaev, Samara 2002.

6...a6 7.c4 0-0

7...♘c6 8.♘c2 0-0 9.d3 ♖e8 10.♘f3 ♗f8 11.e4 d6 12.h3 ♘e7 13.0-0 ♘g6 14.♖e1 c5 Grabuzova-Prudnikova, Varna 2002.

8.♘f3 ♖e8 9.♘c2 e4

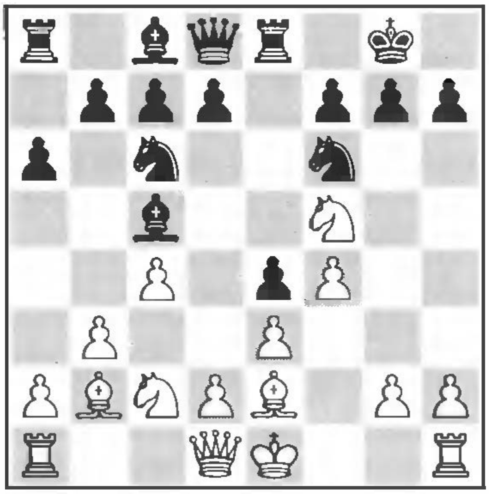


Preferable is 10.♘fd4 c5 11.♘f5 ♗e5, although Black is still OK.

10...♘c6 11.f4

Black also has an easy game after the alternatives: 11.♘f5 ♗e5, or 11.d4 ed3ep 12.♗d3 ♗e5.

11...♗c5 12.♘f5



12...d5 13.cd5 ♘b4! 14.♘cd4?

14.♘b4 ♗f5 15.♘c2 ♘d5 was better though not too attractive either.

14...♕d5 15.a3?

Losing 15.♘g3 had to be tried.

15...♘d3 16.♗d3 ed3 17.b4

What else? For, 17.♕f3 ♕f3 18.gf3 ♗d4! loses a piece.

17...♗d4 18.♘d4 ♕g2 19.♖f1

Here 19.♕f3 fails to 19...♖e3! 20.de3 d2 21.♔d1 ♗g4.

19...♗g4 20.♘f3 ♘e4

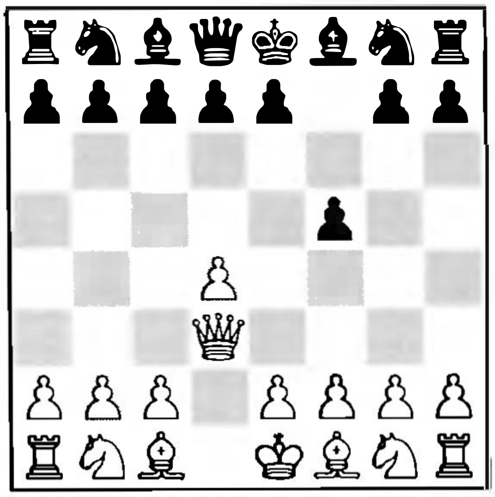
And White resigned as there is no satisfactory defence to the threat of 21...♗h3.

Section III: Early queen moves

Beginners often make the mistake of moving their queen too early in the game. However, the queen is not only vulnerable. Because her majesty is so powerful there can also be very concrete reasons for developing her.

In Chapter 8 you will find Alapin's way of meeting the Dutch.

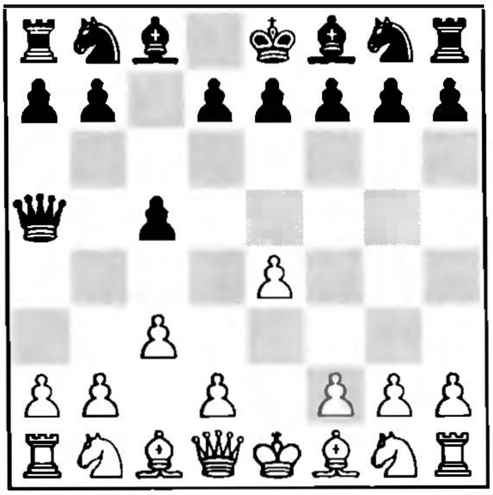
1.d4 f5 2.♕d3



This line works especially well against players of the Leningrad Dutch. After 2.♕d3 Black is more or less forced to play the Stonewall. This is certainly not to everyone's taste. However, combined with an early g4 White may even try to tear down that Stonewall!

Chapter 9 demonstrates that Tarrasch was not as dogmatic as is often thought.

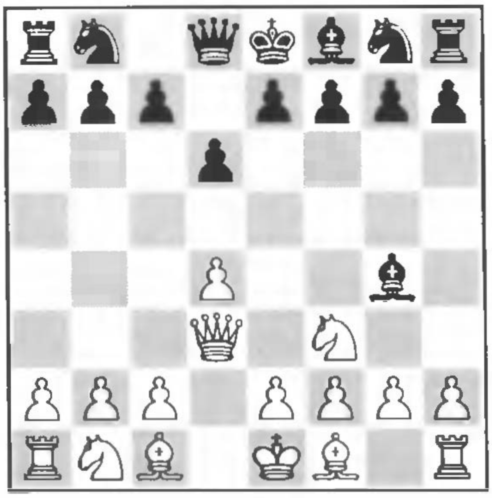
1.e4 c5 2.c3 ♕a5



With this queen sortie, Black aims to prevent the main idea of 2.c3. White can no longer form his ideal centre. Moreover, chasing the queen away turns out to be a double-edged affair.

In Chapter 10 we present the reader with a SOS line against the so-called 'Hodgson variation'.

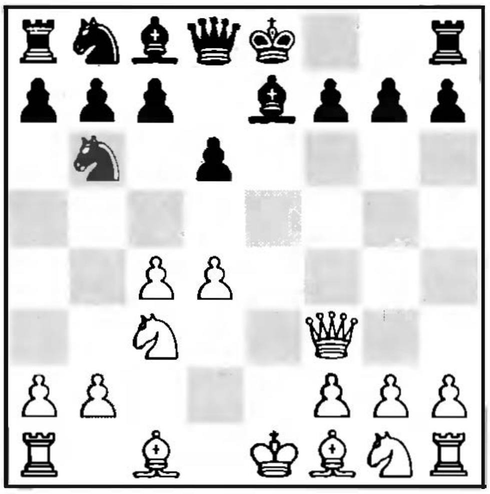
1.d4 d6 2.♘f3 ♗g4 3.♕d3



With his last move White poses a threat (♕b5 check) and defends against a possible ♗f3. The line is good enough to preserve a slight opening edge.

Moving your queen out early can make sense in the Alekhine too.

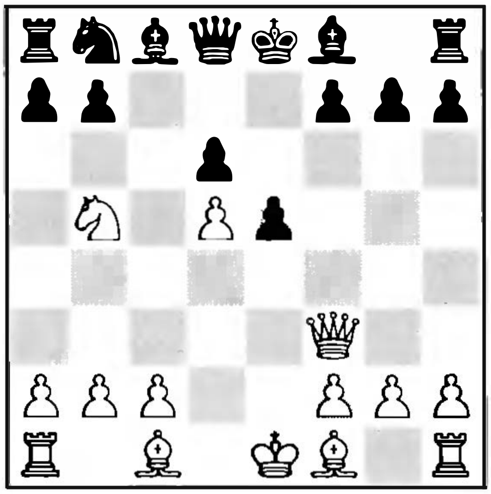
1.e4 ♘f6 2.e5 ♘d5 3.d4 d6 4.c4 ♘b6 5.ed6 ed6 6.♘c3 ♗e7 7.♕f3



This is a creative way of meeting the Alekhine – first played by none other than Viktor Kortchnoi. White prevents d5. possibly intends to castle queenside, and prepares a kingside attack. That should be quite enough for one move!

A tactical way to meet the Sveshnikov is the subject of Chapter 12.

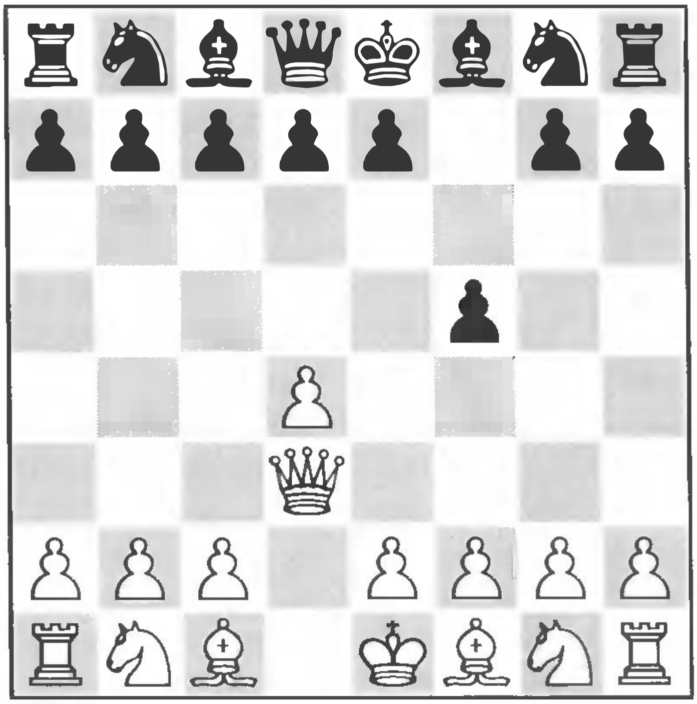
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cd4 4.♘d4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 e5 6.♘db5 d6 7.♘d5 ♘d5 8.ed5 ♘b8 9.♕f3



This line clearly demonstrates that it can make sense to use your strongest piece early in the game. Quick wins are possible using such crude threats as ♕c3 and ♘c7, or ♕a3 followed by ♗d2-b4. Coffeehouse chess of a high order.

CHAPTER 8

Alapin bites the Dutch



NIC KEY HD 12.1

One of Alapin's many thought-provoking ideas

Alapin was a great theoretician (think of his 2.c3 against the Sicilian), and his odd-looking 2.♕d3 is not a bad surprise to spring on lovers of the Dutch Defence. What is the point of this queen move, which thwarts the rules of respectable opening play?

On a technical level the answer is: 'White attacks the f-pawn and prepares for the strategically desirable move e2-e4. Not only does he hope to gain active play in the centre, but he may also get chances against the black king (whose position has been weakened by the bold advance of the f-pawn).' On a more subjective level, the answer could be: 'White is forcing his opponent to play a type of position he resents, thus gaining a marked advantage in the psychological department.'

Let me explain what I mean by the latter. After 2.♕d3 the 'theory' considers 2...d5 as Black's best option, preventing e2-e4 and moving into the territory of the so-called Stonewall. There is nothing against the Stonewall as such (Botvinnik used to play it all the time, with great results), but it isn't everyone's cup of tea!

Certainly those players who play the Dutch in order to get the dynamic Leningrad will think twice before pushing their d-pawn to the fifth rank. 'The dark squares will be weak forever', 'How will I ever get my e-pawn to e5', and 'I didn't play the Dutch to get into this sort of straightforward, slow and solid position,' will be thoughts that are sure to wreck their brain during the game.

Enough cheap psychology, let's play some moves:

A Black allows e4: 2...d6 and others

Most books on the Dutch will settle for the remark that Black must not allow e4, usually quoting a few helpful examples. The following game is especially popular:

2...g6?! 3.e4 fe4 4.♕e4 ♘f6 5.♕h4 ♗g7 6.♘f3 b6 7.♘c3 c5 8.♗h6 0-0 9.♗g7 ♔g7 10.0-0-0, and Black was in trouble in Fairhurst-Dreyer, Dublin 1957.

Note how well White's plan worked here: play e4, get the queen to the kingside, develop the knights, put the bishop on g5 or even better h6, and castle queenside. Against a co-operative opponent (like Mr. Dreyer) this will do the trick. One more example to get the hang of it (this time against 2...e6):

2...e6 3.e4 fe4 4.♕e4 ♘f6 5.♕h4 ♕e7 6.♘f3 ♘c6 7.♘c3 d6 8.♗g5 ♕f7 9. 0-0-0 ♘e7 10.♗d2 h6 11.♗d3 ♗d7 12.♖he1 ♕h5 (the queen swap doesn't make things easier for Black) 13.♕h5 ♘h5 14.♗c4!, once again with a pleasant edge. Hamann-Ofstad, Halle 1963.

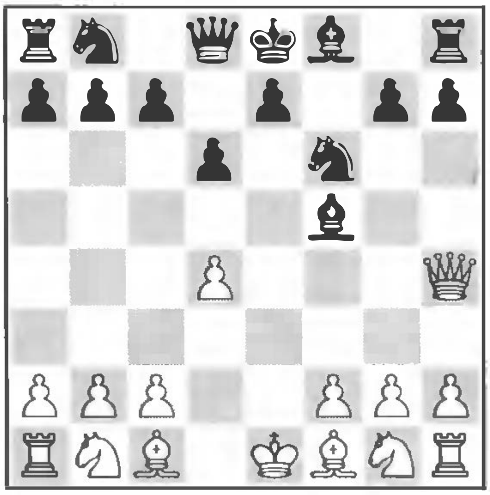
So far I have done nothing more than quote from the classics. By the way, 3.g4!? is not bad either against 2...e6 (we are going to see more of this move later). Needless to say (but I'll show you anyway), it's silly not to play one of these pawn moves attacking f5:

2...e6 3.♘d2?! d5 4.c4 ♘c6!? 5.♘gf3 ♘f6 6.g3 ♘e4 7.♗g2 ♗e7 8.0-0 ♗f6 9.cd5 ed5 10.a3 a5 11.b3 0-0 12.♗b2 ♖e8 13.♖fd1 ♕d6 14.♖ac1 ♗e6 15.e3 ♗f7! 16.♕b5 ♖ab8 17.♖c2 g5!. Fine Stonewall play by Black, who won convincingly on the kingside, Skembris-Yilmaz, Pucarevo zonal 1987.

Having dismissed 2...g6 and 2...e6, I am going to temper our happiness a bit. I am not so sure how well our simple e4-plan works against 2...d6. In any case, things are not as straightforward as the 'theory' seems to suggest.

No more beating about the bush, then, here goes:

1. d4 f5
2. ♕d3 d6
3. e4 fe4
4. ♕e4 ♘f6
5. ♕h4 ♗f5!



This is the main problem (some sources just stop after 5.♕h4). Black develops a piece and attacks c2 at the same time. White loses more time while Black develops fairly harmoniously, making up for his slightly inferior structure.

6. c3 e6

In Hassabis-Mayers, Hastings Masters 1995, Black quickly gained an advantage after 6...♘bd7 7.♗c4 e5 8.♘e2 ♗e7 9.♕g5 ♗g6 10.f3 c6 11.♕d2 d5 12.♗d3 e4.

7. ♕g3

White fared no better with 7.♘e2 in Meier-Galdunts, Germany 1996. After 7...♗e7 8.♗g5 0-0 9.♘g3 ♗g6 10.♗c4 d5 11.♗b3 ♘c6 12.♘d2 e5 Black was slightly better.

7. ... ♘bd7
8. ♘d2 g6
9. ♗d3 d5
10. ♗f5 ef5
11. ♘e2 ♗d6!

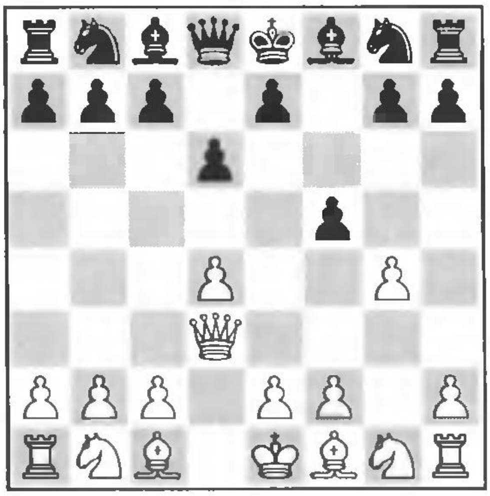
White's strategy has clearly failed. Black has more active play, the game Lev-Soffer, Tel-Aviv 1990, continued:

12.♕d3 ♕e7 13.0-0 0-0-0 14.♘f3 ♖de8 15.♖e1 ♘e4 16.♗f4 g5 17.♗d6 ♕d6 18.♘g3 ♕f6 19.c4 g4! 20.♘d2 ♕g5 21.♘de4 de4 22.♕e3? 22.♕a3 **22...f4–+ 23.♘e4 fe3 24.♘g5 h6 25.♖e3 hg5 26.♖ae1 ♔d8 27.h3 gh3 28.gh3 ♘f6 29.♔g2 ♘h5 30.♖e8 ♖e8 31.♖e8 ♔e8 32.♔f3 ♔f7 33.♔e4 ♔f6 34.d5 c5 35.dc6 bc6 36.b4 ♔e6 37.a4 ♘f6 38.♔d4 ♘d7 39.a5 c5 40.bc5 ♘e5 41.a6 ♘c6 42.♔e4 ♘b4 43.f4 gf4 44.h4 ♘a6 45.c6 ♘c5 46.♔f4 ♔d6 47.h5 ♘e6 48.♔e3 ♘g7**

White resigned.

So what to do against 2...d6? Here comes the answer!

2. ... d6
3. g4!?



This idea is well known in several versions. Notably, 1.d4 f5 2.g4 fg4 3.h3 g3(!) and 1.d4 f5 2.h3 preparing g4. It is not a bad idea to combine this wing gambit with 2.♕d3. The queen controls the b1-h7 diagonal, prepares e4 and might operate along the third rank.

3. ... fg4
4. h3 g3

Accepting the pawn sac is dangerous, e.g. 4...gh3?! 5.♗h3 ♘f6 6.♗g5. 5.♘h3!?, planning ♘g5 or ♘f4(-g6) is not bad either.

5. fg3

Here 5.♕g3 is also possible. The game Barva-Garbisu de Goni, Rotterdam 1998 5th World Universities Championship, developed along somewhat curious lines: 5...♘f6 6.♘c3 ♘c6 7.♗g5 e6 (7...♘d4!?) 8.0-0-0 ♗e7 9.♘f3 ♘d5 10.♘d5 ed5 11.♖g1 g6 and now 12.e3 instead of 12.♗e7?, and White is better.

5. ... ♘f6

6. ♗g2

Here 6.e4 can also be considered.

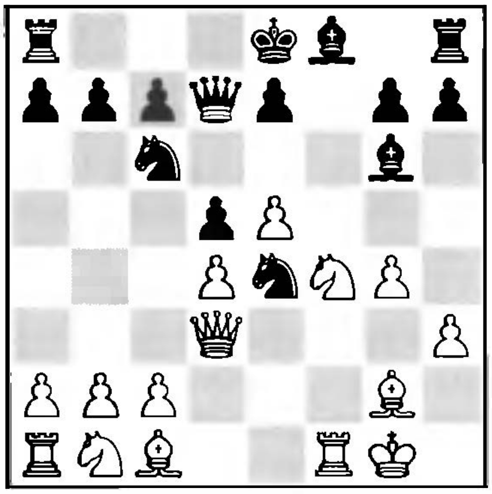
6. ... ♘c6

Stopping e4 with 6...d5 also gives White the more active position after 7.♘c3 ♘c6 8.♗g5 e6 9.♘f3.

7. e4 d5?!

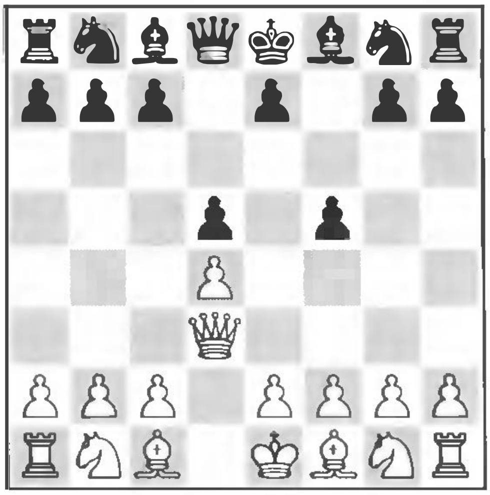
According to Peicheva, 8.c3 is a good reply to 7...e5.

8. e5 ♘e4
9. ♘e2 ♗f5
10. 0-0 ♕d7
11. g4 ♗g6
12. ♘f4



White is clearly better, although she later blundered in time trouble and lost. V. Peicheva-Al. Karpov, Bankia 1989: **12...♗f7 13.c4 e6 14.cd5 ed5 15.♗e3 g5! 16.♘h5** Not 16.♘d5? ♗d5 17.♗e4 ♘b4. **16...0-0-0 17.♘c3 ♗g6 18.♘e4 de4 19.♗e4 ♘d4** 19...♘e5 20.♗b7 ♔b7 21.♕b3 ♔a8 22.de5 ♖b8 23.♕c4± Peicheva. **20.♗g5± ♗e7 21.♗g6?** A blunder; 21.♗f6 and White is better. **21...hg6 22.♘f6 ♕e6 23.♖fe1 ♕c6 24.♖f1 ♘e6 25.♕g6 ♖h3 26.♘e4 ♗g5** White resigned.

B Black settles for the 'Stonewall': 2...d5



So we did it, we lured Black into the Stonewall! Unfortunately, we can't rest on our laurels just yet. As I said above, the Stonewall is a respectable line of the Dutch. Still, White has a number of possibilities to try and break down that wall. I'll give them in increasing order of SOS-value, although you may choose for yourself which approach best suits your own particular style.

B1 Just play that Stonewall (3.g3 etc.)

This is not a shocking follow-up to 2.♕d3, of course, and it is not the way to prove an opening advantage (why play ♕d3 in a Stonewall). However, if you prefer quiet positional play this could be your choice.

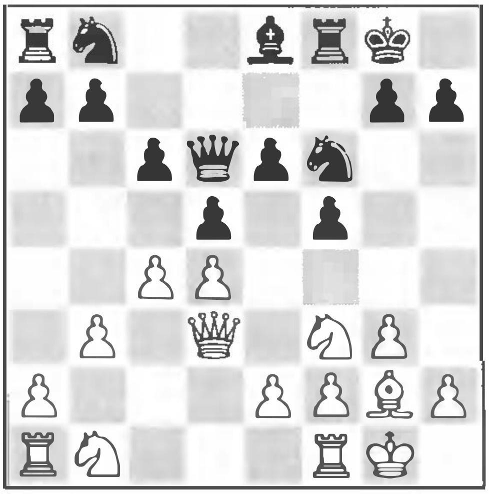
3. g3 ♘f6
4. ♗g2 e6
5. c4 ♗d6

The most active spot for the bishop, but there is nothing wrong with the e7-square. Ostojic-Malaniuk, Pula 1990, went (via 3.c4): 3.c4 e6 4.♘f3 ♘f6 5.g3 ♗e7 6.♗g2 0-0 7.0-0 ♘e4 8.♘c3 b6 9.♘e5 ♗b7 10.♘e4 de4 11.♕c3 ♗f6 12.b3 c5 and Black was OK.

6. ♘f3 0-0
7. 0-0 c6
8. b3

White wants to swap the dark-squared bishops, emphasising the weakness of, particularly, e5. Another way to do this is by putting the bishop on f4. See, Stromer-Yrjölä, Cappelle la Grande 1992, which went (via transposition): 8.♘c3 b6 9.♗f4 ♗a6 10.b3 ♗f4 11.gf4 ♘bd7 with approximate equality. The game now continued: 12.♘g5?! ♖e8 13.♕h3 h6 14.cd5 cd5 15.♘f3 ♘e4 16.♖fc1 ♖c8 17.♘e5 ♘e5 18.♗e4 ♘g6, and White was in trouble.

8. ... ♗d7!
9. ♗a3 ♗e8
10. ♗d6 ♕d6

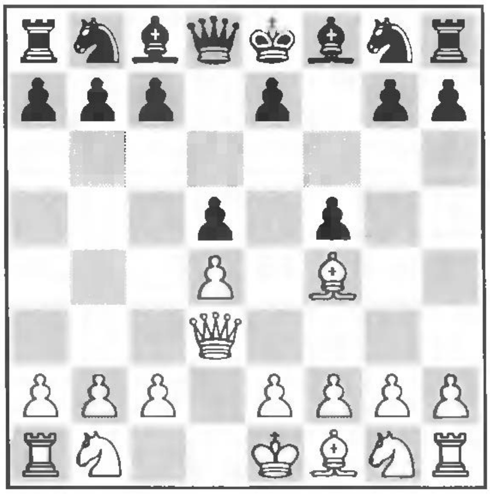


White has succeeded in swapping the dark-squared bishops, but as so often in the Stonewall his so-called 'good' bishop is no better (or even worse) than Black's 'bad' one. The position is about equal. However, Black went on to win in a model game: **11.e3 ♘bd7 12.♘c3 ♗h5 13.♘d2 ♘e4 14.f4 ♖ac8 15.c5 ♕e7 16.b4 g5 17.a4 gf4 18.ef4 ♘df6 19.♖ac1 b6 20.♘b3 ♖b8 21.♘a2 ♗e8 22.♖c2 h5 23.h4?! ♔h8 24.♖f3 ♖g8 25.♔h2 ♗d7 26.♗h3 ♖g6 27.♔h1 ♖bg8 28.♖g2 ♖g3! 29.♖gg3 ♖g3 30.♖g3 ♘f2 31.♔g2 ♘d3 32.♖d3 ♘e4** 0-1 Gavrikov-Psakhis, Tallinn 1983.

B2 Avoid the fianchetto (3.♗f4)

Why fianchetto the light-squared bishop, when you know it will bite on granite. So we're going to play e3, but first we're going to put the dark-squared bishop outside the pawn chain.

3. ♗f4



White used the ♗f4 set-up in Sorokin-Rozhkovan, Vladivostok 1995, but chose a different move order. However, after 3.c4 c6 4.♘c3 ♘f6 5.♘f3 e6 6.♘e5 ♗d6 7.♗f4 0-0 8.e3 ♘h5!? 9.♗e2 ♘f4 10.ef4 ♘d7 11.cd5! ed5 12.0-0 ♘e5 13.fe5 ♗b4 14.f4 White was still slightly better.

As Bellin correctly points out, Black can easily go wrong here with the natural 3...e6 (as, for instance, Alekhine did against Kmoch in Bad Semmering 1926).

3. ... e6?

Funnily enough, White can now use his second move to his advantage by setting up an unusual battery with

4. ♕g3!

After the forced

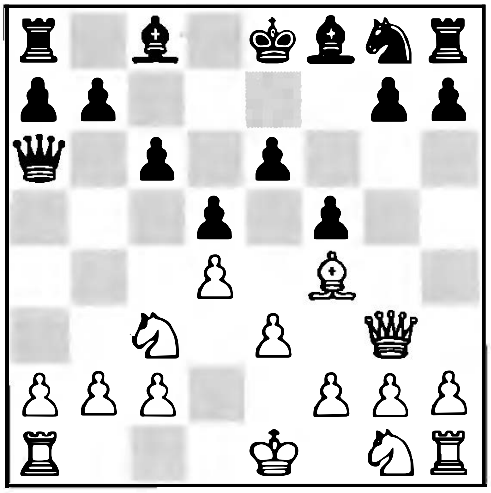
4. ... ♘a6
5. e3 c6
6. ♗a6

Black has

6. ... ♕a5

Check! Taimanov (1983) therefore calls the whole line after 4.♕g3 'not dangerous' for Black. Bellin (1990), however, plays on for a few more moves:

7. ♘c3 ♕a6



8. ♗d6

Or 8.♗e5, and White dominates on the dark squares and is much better. Perhaps 5...c5 is slightly stronger, but after 6.♗a6 ♕a5 7.♘c3 ♕a6 8.♗e5 White is still a lot better. Not only did the great Alekhine allow this, but his rival Euwe did not use this possibility when he played 2.♕d3 in a correspondence game more than 50 years later! The game Euwe-Praagman, Dutch correspondence championship 1982, went 3.♗f4 e6? 4.♕g3! ♘a6 5.e3 c6 6.♘c3 (6.♗a6!) 6...b6 7.♗e5 ♕d7 8.0-0-0 ♗b7 9.f3 0-0-0 10.e4 ♘e7 11.♘h3 ♘g6 12.ef5 ef5 13.f4 ♘c7 14.♗d3 ♘e5 15.fe5, and in this bad position, Praagman made a typical correspondence blunder. Instead of writing down 15...g6 he sent 15...♘e6? by mail, blundering the f5 pawn.

Coming back to the position after 3.♗f4, Black should play 3...♘f6 instead of 3...e6, preventing 4.♕g3 in view of 4...♘h5/4...♘e4. White should then play along the lines of Sorokin-Rozhkovan, mentioned above. This position is virtually unexplored, and play could continue:

3. ... ♘f6
4. ♘f3 e6
5. c4 ♗e7

5...c6 6.e3 ♘e4 7.♘fd2 b6 8.♘e4 fe4 9.♕c2 ♗d6 10.♗g3 0-0 11.♘c3 Van der Werf-Cozianu, Strzybnica 1987.

6.e3 c6 7.♕b3!? 0-0 8.♘c3 ♘bd7

8...♔h8 9.0-0-0!?± Van der Werf-Bosch, Dutch junior championship, Hilversum 1988.

9. ♗d3 ♘h5
10. ♘e5

And White was slightly better in Van der Werf-Th.Nielsen, Eeklo 1987.

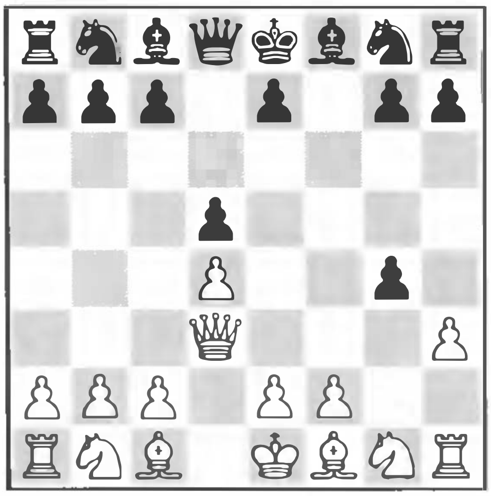
B3 Tear down that wall (3.g4!?)

If you don't want to combat the Stonewall in the traditional way (3.g3) or an original but still solid way (3.♗f4), then there is nothing left but to do it in a violent way (3.g4). Top Surprise Points for this one!

3. g4 fg4

3...e6 4.gf5 ef5 and now, for example, 5.♗f4 and White's position is preferable.

4. h3



4. ... g3

Accepting the sacrifice is unattractive, both after 4...gh3 and after 4...♘f6. After the latter move the game Galego-Dias, Viseu 2000, continued 5.hg4 ♗g4 6.f3 (also possible is 6.♗h3 ♗h3 7.♘h3 with compensation, but not 6.♕b5 ♘c6 7.♕b7 ♘d4) 6...♗e6 (6...♗h5!?) 7.♘h3 ♕d7 8.♘g5 ♗f5 9.e4 de4 10.fe4 ♗g4 11.♕b3! (a funny kind of double attack), White is better and won after 11...e6 12.♕b7 ♗d6 13.♗e3 ♗g3 14.♔d2 0-0 15.♗d3 h6 16.♕a8 hg5 17.♘c3 ♗f3 18.♖h3 ♘h5 19.♕a7 e5 20.♗c4 ♔h7 21.♖ah1 ♔g6 22.♕c5 ed4 23.♕g5 1-0.

5. ♕g3

Getting the maximum out of that 2.♕d3 move. However, the natural 5.fg3 is also not bad. In Sorensen-Mortensen, Copenhagen 1994, White won quickly after: 5.fg3 ♘f6 6.♘c3 c6?! 7.e4 de4 8.♘e4 ♘e4 9.♕e4 ♕a5? 10.♗d2 ♕d5 11.♗g2 ♗e6 12.♕e2 ♕c4 13.♕e3! ♗d5 14.♗d5 ♕d5 15.♘f3 ♘d7 16.b3 0-0-0 17.c4 ♕d6 18.♘g5 e5 19.♘f7 ♕d4 20.♕d4 ed4 21.♘h8 ♘e5 22.0-0 1-0.

5. ... ♘f6

5...♕d6 hoping for 6.♘c3 ♕g3 7.fg3=, is no good since White has 6.♗f4 ♕b4 7.♕c3! (Nijboer).

6. ♘c3 ♗f5

7. ♗f4 ♘h5

Of course 7...♗c2 8.♗c7 ♕c8 9.♖c1 is horrible. And, after 7...c6 8.0-0-0 ♘bd7 (8...♘h5) 9.♗c7! ♕c8 10.♘f3 is annoying.

8. ♕g5 g6

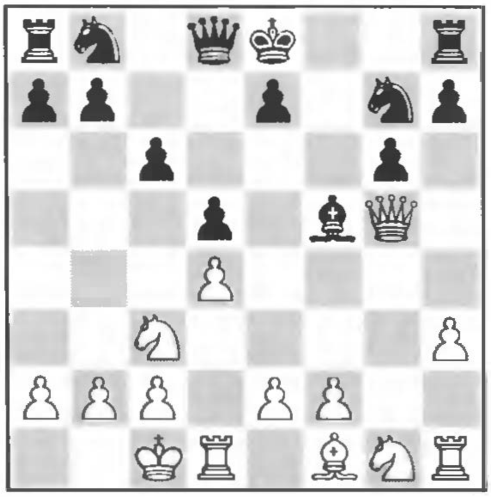
9. ♗e5 ♗g7

Too passive is 9...♖g8 10.0-0-0 ♘c6 11.e4!? de4 12.♗b5.

10. ♗g7 ♘g7

11. 0-0-0 c6

This is better than 11...0-0?! 12.f3 b5 13.e4 de4 14.fe4 b4 15.ef5 bc3 16.fg6 cb2 17.♔b1 ♘d7 18.♗c4 e6 19.♕h6 hg6 20.♕g6 ♕f6 21.♕g2 ♘b6 22.♕c6 ♖ad8 23.♘e2 ♖d6 24.♕c5 ♕f5 25.♗d3 ♕f7 26.♘c3 ♕d7 27.♖df1 ♖b8 28.♕g5 ♖d4 29.♕g6 ♖h4 30.♖hg1 c5 31.♕g3 1-0 Abildlund-Jorgensen, Randers 1996.



The game Welling-Bosch, Den Bosch 1999, continued:

12. ♕h6?! ♘h5!

Dangerous is 12...0-0 13.♘f3 ♘d7 14.♘g5 ♘f6 15.f3 ♕c7 16.e4 ♕f4 17.♔b1.

13. ♘f3 ♕d6

14. e3 ♕f6

14...♘d7?! 15.♘h4!? (15.♗e2 ♕f6 (15...0-0-0 16.♘g5) 16.♘e5 leads back to the game) 15...♕f6 16.♘f5 ♕f5 17.♗e2!.

15. ♘e5 ♘d7

16. ♗e2 ♕g7!

16...♘e5 17.de5 ♕e5 18.♗h5 gh5 19.♕h5; 16...♘g7 17.♘g4.

17. ♕g7

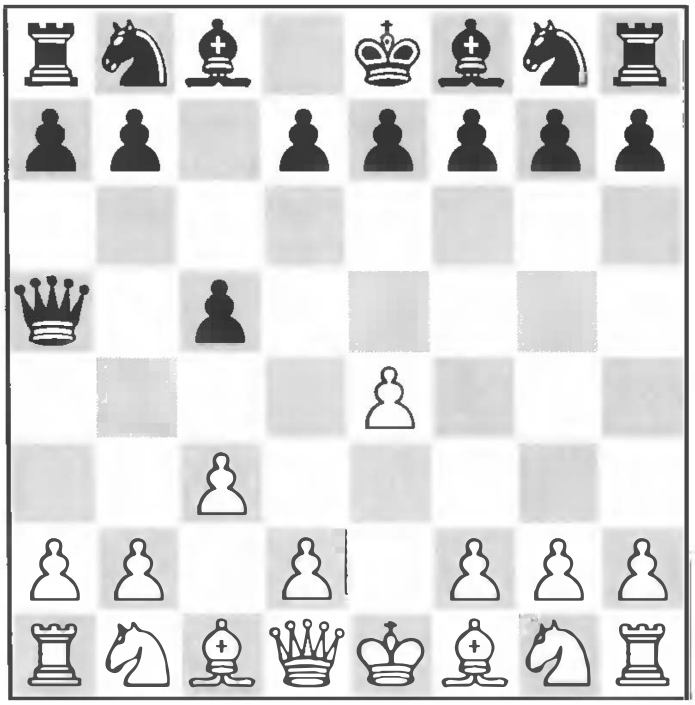
17.♕g5 ♕f6 18.♕h6 with a repetition of moves.

17...♘g7 18.♘d7 ♔d7 19.♗g4 ♖af8 20.f4 ♘e8 21.♖dg1 ♘d6 22.b3 ♔c7 23.♗f5 gf5 ½-½

Instead of 12.♕h6?! White should continue 12.f3 or 12.e3, with interesting play.

CHAPTER 9

Another Tarrasch Variation



NIC KEY SI 46.1

Preventing 3.d4 after 1.e4 c5 2.c3 ♕a5

For many Sicilian players 2.c3 is quite annoying. While objectively less strong than 2.♘f3 and 3.d4, the Alapin is less combative than the open Sicilian. If you are looking for unclear positions and a weapon versus 2.c3 then why not try Tarrasch's recipe versus the father of the whole line: 2...♕a5!?. The stem game:

☐ **Simon Alapin**
■ **Siegbert Tarrasch**
Vienna 1898

1. e4 c5
2. c3 ♕a5!?

This move shows that Tarrasch was not as dogmatic in his own games as chess lore has it. The queen move contradicts the rules of opening play. 'Don't play your queen out early in the game.' Please note, however, that 2.c3 can hardly be called a developing move either. What's more, it even takes away the natural square of the queen's knight. The point of 2...♕a5 is simply to prevent White from building up his ideal centre with d4.

3. ♘f3 ♘c6
4. ♘a3

A logical move. White aims to gain a

tempo on the intrepid queen.

4. ... e6

5. ♘c4

5.♗e2 d5 6.ed5 ed5 7.d4 c4 8.♘c2 ♗d6 9.♗g5 ♘ge7 10.♘e3 0-0=, Bedouin-Movsesian, Bourbon 1997.

5. ... ♕c7

The queen has ended up on her regular Sicilian spot. Also, the knight on c4 is not so comfortably placed itself – it may be kicked away by either d5 or b5.

6. d4 cd4

7. ♘d4

7.cd4 is objectively best. However, after 7...d5 8.ed5 ed5 9.♘e3 ♘f6 10.♗d3 ♗d6 11.0-0 0-0 Black has comfortable equality, H. Hoffmann-Vökler, Germany 1991.

7. ... a6

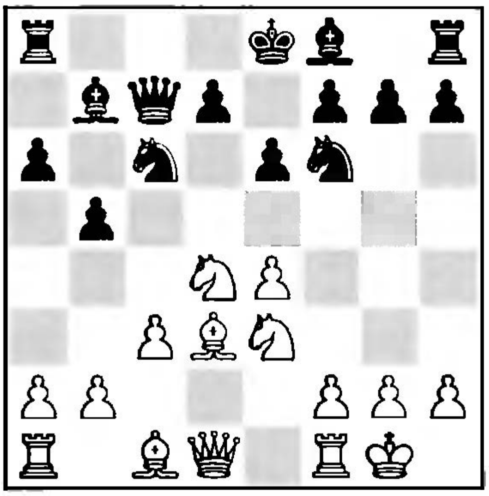
8. ♗d3

8.♗g5 b5 9.♘d2 ♗b7, and a 100 years on Black was also slightly better in Stoker-Truman, cr 1989.

8. ... b5

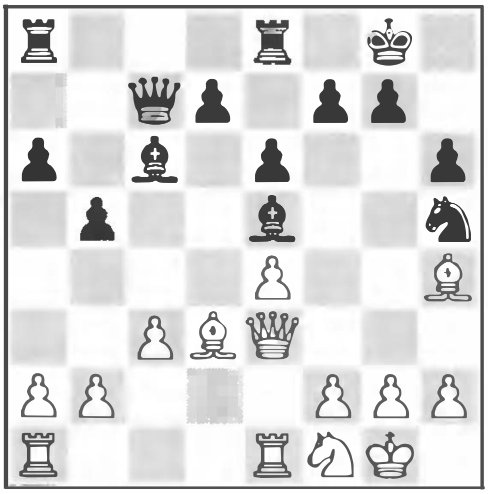
9. ♘e3 ♘f6

10. 0-0 ♗b7



Seeing this position no one would guess that this game started off as a 2.c3 Sicilian! Black's set-up corresponds to a modern Taimanov. Alapin's pieces – the e3 knight in particular – are clumsily placed. So we can safely conclude that Black has a small edge already.

11.♘f3 Trying to re-shuffle his pieces somehow. **11...♗d6 12.♖e1 ♘e5 13.♘e5 ♗e5 14.♘f1 0-0 15. ♕e2 ♗c6 16. ♗g5 ♖fe8 17.♕e3** Threatening f4. **17...h6 18.♗h4 ♘h5!**



A knight on the rim...! More evidence that the *Praeceptor Germaniae* was not too dogmatic not to break his own rules when necessary. Tarrasch is going for dark-square-domination. **19.♗g3 ♘f4 20.♗c2 g5!** With a bind on the dark squares. **21.♘d2 ♕d8 22.♘f3 f6 23.♘e5 fe5 24.f3 ♔h8** Tarrasch is preparing a kingside attack. Alapin appears blissfully unaware of what is hanging over him. **25.♕c5 ♕f6 26.♕d6 ♖g8 27.a4 ♖af8** Transferring all his forces to the kingside. **28.♗d3 h5! 29.ab5 ab5 30.♖f1 h4 31.♗f4** White is in a bad way: 31.♗f2 g4, and Black is just winning; 31.♗e1 g4, when 32.fg4 ♖g4 wins as

does 32.♔h1 ♘d3 33.♕d3 gf3 34.gf3 ♕g6 35.♕e2 ♗e4. 31...gf4 32.♔f2? There is no time to run, 32.♖f2 was called for. **32...♖g5 33.♖h1 h3! 34.gh3 ♖fg8 35.♔e1** It is also too late for 35.♗f1 ♕g6 36.♔e1 (36.h4 ♖g1−+) 36...♗e4!. **35...♖g2 36.♗e2 ♗e4! 37.fe4 f3 38.♗f1 ♖g1!**
White resigned.

A nice game by Tarrasch and a just reward for playing the anti-dogmatic 2...♕a5. Or should we say that Alapin the eponym was rightfully punished for inventing 2.c3?
In our modern times 2...♕a5 is also played from time to time. Its supporters include such creative grandmasters as Movsesian, Romanishin and Kupreichik. Let us examine 2...♕a5 in the form of a theoretical overview:

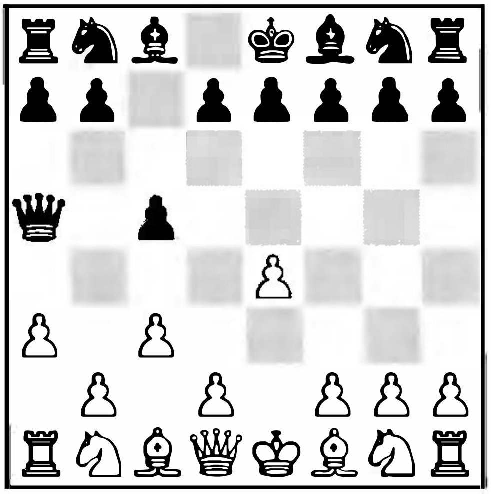
A) Alternatives for 3.♘f3
B) 3.♘f3 ♘c6 everything but 4.d4 and 4.♗c4
C) 3.♘f3 ♘c6 4.d4
D) 3.♘f3 ♘c6 4.♗c4

Variation A

There are several alternatives for 3.♘f3, which we will examine one by one.

● 3.b4
This pawn sacrifice was first played by Marshall.
3...cb4 4.cb4 ♕b4 5.♘c3 ♘c6
For historical reasons, and for Marshall's imaginative rook switch, here is the stem game: 5...e6 6.♖b1 ♕a5 7.♘f3 ♗e7 8.♗e2 ♘f6 9.0-0 ♘c6 10.♖b5 ♕c7 11.d4 a6 12.♖g5 0-0? 13.e5 ♘d5 14.♘d5 ed5 15.♖g3 d6? 16.♗h6. White wins the exchange, Marshall-Loman, London (second match game) 1902.
6.♘f3 e6 7.♖b1 ♕a5 8.♗c4 a6 9.a4 ♘f6 10.♕e2 ♗e7 11.0-0 d5
And now that White's temporary activity has gone Black is clearly better, Castaldo-Romanishin, Saint Vincent 2000.

● 3.a3!?



While refusing to develop pieces this in fact not such a bad move. Both b4 and d4 are prepared.
Bad is 3...e5? 4.♘f3 ♘c6 5.♗c4 ♗e7 6.♕b3 ♘h6 7.d4!, and White is better. Pavasovic-Mrva, Mitropa Cup 1997.
Playable is 3...♘c6 4.♘f3 d6 5.d4 ♘d4! 6.♘d4 cd4 7.b4 ♕c7?! (7...♕e5 should be investigated here) 8.cd4 ♘f6 9.♗d3 g6 10.0-0 ♗g7 11.h3 0-0 12.♗e3, and White was slightly better, Pavasovic-Vombek, Krsko 1997.
Finally, the game Kharlov-Camara, Sao Paulo 1991, was equal after 3...e6 4.♘f3

♘c6 5.d4 ♘d4 6.♘d4 cd4 7.b4 ♕e5 8.♕d4 ♕c7 9.♘d2 ♘e7 10.♘f3 ♘c6 11.♕e3.

● 3.♘a3 e6 4.e5!?

Here 4.♘f3 ♘c6 transposes to Alapin-Tarrasch, while 4.♘c4 ♕c7, followed by d5, is OK for Black.

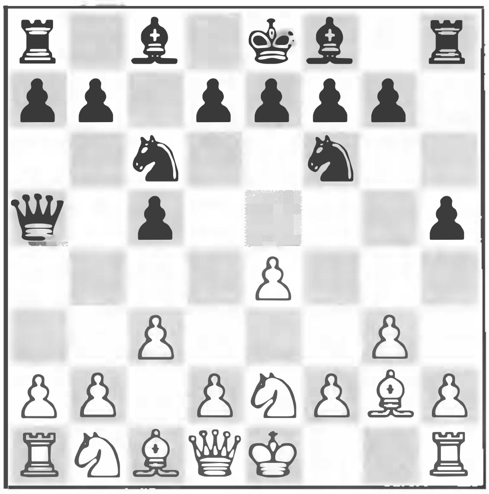
4...♘c6 5.♘f3 ♕c7 6.d4 cd4 7.cd4 ♗a3 8.ba3 ♘ge7

and according to Rozentalis the game is very unclear. Rozentalis-Kupreichik, Minsk 1983.

● 3.g3

Saving the best for last. Of all the moves besides 3.♘f3 this one looks best.

3...♘c6 4.♗g2 ♘f6 5.♘e2 h5!?



Of course Black has more modest alternatives. The text is an ambitious and double-edged attempt to gain control of the dark squares.

6.h3 h4 7.g4 ♘e5

Movsesian played this twice:

– 8.d4 cd4 9.f4 d3 10.fe5 de2 11.♕d4 ♘h7, with a very unclear position, was seen in Kacheishvili-Movsesian, Pula 1997. Gallagher has recommended 10.♘d4± as an improvement.

– 8.d3 ♕a6!? (a creative solution to the demands of the position. By forcing c4 Black gains more dark-square control) 9.c4 ♕d6 10.♘f4 e6 11.♘c3 a6, and in this complex position there are chances for both sides. Ponomariov-Movsesian, World Junior Championship, Zagan 1997.

Variation B

3. ♘f3 ♘c6

We will investigate only this move. Naturally Black has alternatives at this stage, e.g. 3...e6, played by Romanishin. Note that 3...d6 is best countered by 4.♗c4.

4. a3

We shall take this as the main line. White prepares 5.d4 cd4 6.b4 (compare 3.a3). Some quiet alternatives:

– 4.d3 is rather meek; 4...♘f6 5.♘bd2 d5 6.♘b3 ♕b6 7.ed5 ♘d5 8.d4 cd4 9.♘bd4 ♗g4 10.♕a4 ♗d7 11.♗b5 f6!?, planning e5, and Black has a good position. Bogut-Movsesian, Neum 2002.

– 4.♗e2 d6 5.0-0 ♘f6 6.d3 e5 7.♘bd2 ♗e7 8.a3 ♕c7 9.b4 0-0 10.b5 ♘b8= Shrentzel-Rabiega, Berlin 1997.

–- 4.g3 Less good than 3.g3; including 3.♘f3 ♘c6 favours Black. 4...♘f6 5.♕e2 (It is important that 5.e5?! does not work: 5...♘g4 6.d4 cd4 7.b4, and now White got a nice advantage in the game De la Riva-Moreno, Torrevieja 1997, after 7...♕d8? 8.cd4 d6 9.h3. However, 7...♕d5! would have been very strong.) 5...d5 6.ed5 ♘d5 7.♗g2 ♗g4 8.h3 ♗h5 9.0-0 e6 10.d3 ♕c7 11.♘bd2 ♗e7 12.♘c4 0-0 with equality, Rozentalis-Movsesian, Hastings 1996/97.

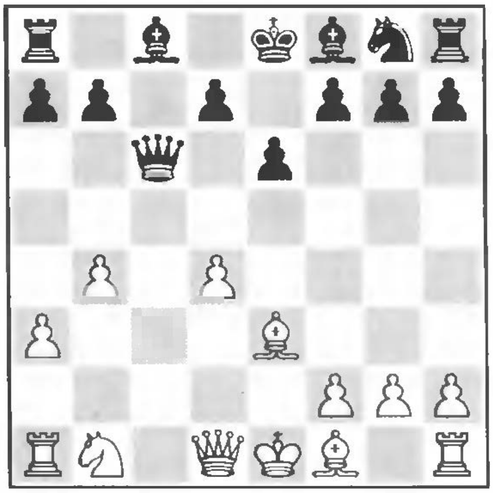
4. ... e6
5. d4 ♘d4
6. ♘d4 cd4
7. b4

Now 7...♕c7, as played in Sveshnikov-Kupreichik, Soviet Union 1984, is no good. After 8.cd4 ♘f6 9.♗d3 d5 10.e5 ♘d7 11.♖a2 ♘b6 12.♖c2 ♕d8 13.♕g4 g6 14.♗g5 ♗e7 15.♗h6 White had a huge edge in this French-like position. So Black must follow Rozentalis' suggestion of

7. ... ♕e5
8. cd4

8.♕d4 should be equal.

8. ... ♕e4
9. ♗e3 ♕c6



Rozentalis now feels that White has good compensation. However, (as he notes) in the absence of practical tests it is impossible to give a clear verdict.

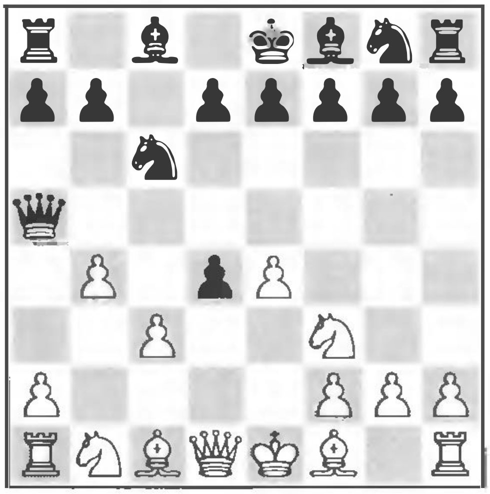
Variation C

3. ♘f3 ♘c6
4. d4

In a way this is White's most consistent move.

4. ... cd4
5. b4

Otherwise Black is just fine.



5. ... ♕c7

Only someone like Kupreichik could come up with 5...♕d8!? 6.b5 ♘a5 7.♕d4 (7.cd4 d5) 7...d6 8.c4 e5 9.♕d1 ♗e6 10.♘g5 ♘f6 11.♘e6 fe6 12.♗d3 ♗e7 13. 0-0 0-0, with approximate equality. Michalczak-Kupreichik, Münster 1997.

6. b5 ♘e5
7. ♘e5

Better than taking on d4: 7.cd4 ♘f3 8.gf3 d5! 9.♗e3 de4 10.fe4 ♘f6 11.f3 e5 12.de5 ♕e5 13.♕d4 ♕h5 14.♘d2 ♗e7 15.♗e2, and Black was slightly better in Rausis-Moor, Neuchâtel 1996.

7. ... ♕e5
8. ♕d4

Here 8.cd4 ♕e4 9.♗e3 e6 should not yield White enough.

8. ... ♕c7

White has a small endgame plus after 8...♕d4 9.cd4.

9. a4

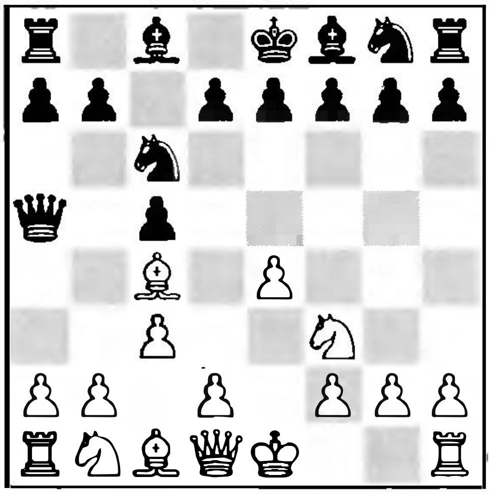
Or 9.e5 b6; 9.c4 e6, followed by b6.

9...e5 10.♕c4 ♕c4 11.♗c4 ♘f6 12.f3

d6 13.♗e3 ♗e6 14.♘d2 d5
With an equal position. This was the stem game of 4.d4. Makropoulos-Ljubojevic, Athens 1981.

Variation D

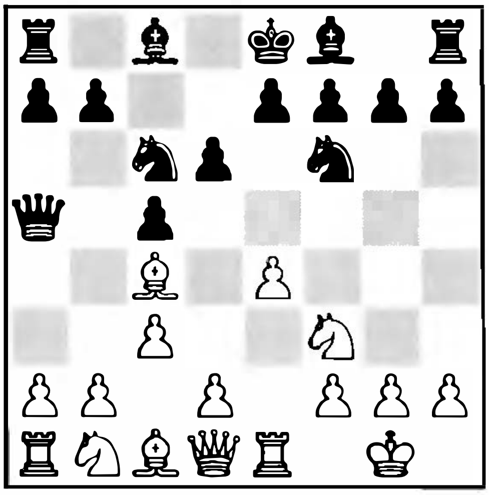
3. ♘f3 ♘c6
4. ♗c4



This is the main line in Rozentalis and Harley's book on the Alapin: *Play the 2.c3 Sicilian.* White is not bothered by 2...♕a5, he makes no direct attempt to refute it, but simply continues his development. Ideally he will castle kingside, put his rook on e1, and play d4. This is a very sensible strategy!
To understand the dangers we will first investigate some natural responses that, in my opinion, do not even come close to equalizing.

Thus :
● **4. ... b5**
is best met by
5. ♗d5!
This is stronger than the more popular 5.♗b3.
5. ... ♗b7
5...♘f6 6.0-0 is also better for White.
6. d4 ♘f6
7. dc5 e6
8. b4 ♕c7
9. 0-0
And this piece sacrifice gave White a tremendous position in Van Mil-Baltus, Dieren 1993.

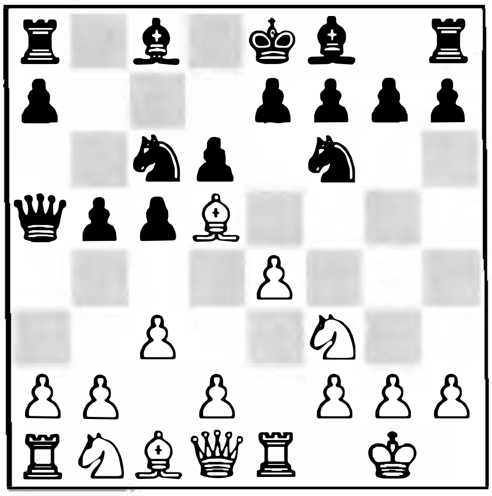
What if Black quietly continues with his development too?
● **4. ... d6**
5. 0-0 ♘f6
6. ♖e1



It turns out that he is a little slow. While the database statistics are fairly OK for Black from this position, this is a reflection of the respective playing strengths rather than of the objective merits of Black's position.
– Very often Black now continues with **6...♗g4?** and quite often he gets away with it too! In fact, Black is walking a tightrope after **7.♕b3 ♘d8 8.e5!** One point is **8...♘d7 9.♗f7! ♘f7 10.e6**

Pridal-Palas, Czech Republic U18 Championship 1997. No picknick either is **8...♗f3 9.ef6 ♗c6 10.fe7 ♗e7 11.d3** as first played in Pridal-M.Movsesian, Czech Republic tt 1997.

– Movsesian has played **6...b5 7.♗d5!**



7...♗d7. Keitlinghaus-Movsesian, Lazne Bohdanec 1996, now went **8.b4 cb4 9.cb4 ♕b6**, with approximate equality. However, Rozentalis and Harley rightly point out that White achieves everything he ever aimed for when he goes **8.d4 e6 9.♗b3** instead.

– Possibly Black's best option is to 'transpose' to some sort of Ruy Lopez with **6...e5**. However, it is not clear what the queen is doing on a5. White should have a comfortable ± position.

In my opinion, there's no need for Black to despair. though. The antidote is presented in the next section.

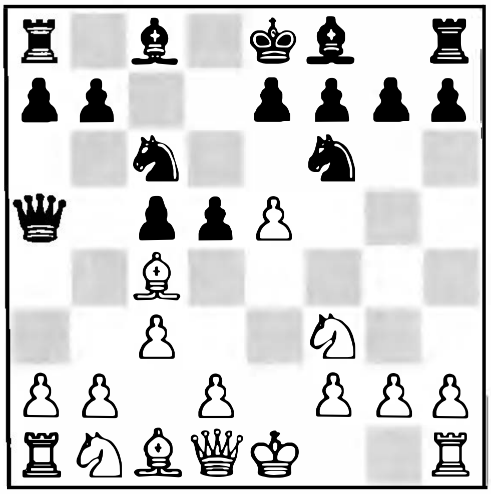
● **4. ... ♘f6**

5. e5

The natural response. Too quiet is 5.d3 e6 6.♗b3 d5 7.e5 ♘d7 Baklan-Bezold, Berlin 1997. Black is not obliged to go for the 'French' – 5...d6 was also possible.

5. ... d5!

This is the point! Black makes use of the bishop on c4. Very suspect is 5...♘g4 6.♕e2 ♕c7 7.d4 cd4 8.♗f4.



6. ♗b3

No advantage results from either capture: 6.ed6 e6 or even simply 6...ed6; and 6.ef6 dc4∓.

6. ... ♘g4

7. ♗d5

Good for Black is 7.♕e2 c4 8.♗c2 ♕c7.

7. ... ♘ge5

8. ♘e5

Favourable for Black is 8.0-0 c4 9.♗c6 ♘c6 10.d3 cd3 11.♕d3 ♗f5, Hablizel-Priehoda, Passau 1997.

8. ... ♘e5

9. ♕e2

Or 9.d4 cd4 10.♕d4 e6!, with an equal position.

After White's last move Holt-Brustkern, St. Helier 1999, continued: **9...♘c6 10.♕f3 ♘e5 11.♕e4 ♕c7 12.d4 cd4 13.0-0** , and now 13...e6 would have been equal. Even simpler. though, is the direct

9. ... ♕c7

After **10.d4** there would follow **10...cd4 11.♗f4 ♘d3 12.♕d3 ♕f4 13.0-0 a6!**. But not 13...e6? 14.♗b7!

So when next confronted with 2.c3: play the Tarrasch Variation!

RECENT GAME

The following game was played after publication of Rozentalis' book on 2.c3 and the publication of this SOS article in *New in Chess Magazine*. Rozentalis employs a novelty but achieves little against Miezis' defence.

☐ **Eduardas Rozentalis**
■ **Normunds Miezis**
Gausdal 2003

1.e4 c5 2.c3 ♕a5 3.♘f3 ♘c6 4.♗c4 ♘f6 5.d3

5.e5 d5!

5...e6 6.♗g5N d5! 7.ed5 ed5 8.♗f6

Or 8.♗b3 ♗e6 9.♗f6 gf6 and Black is not worse.

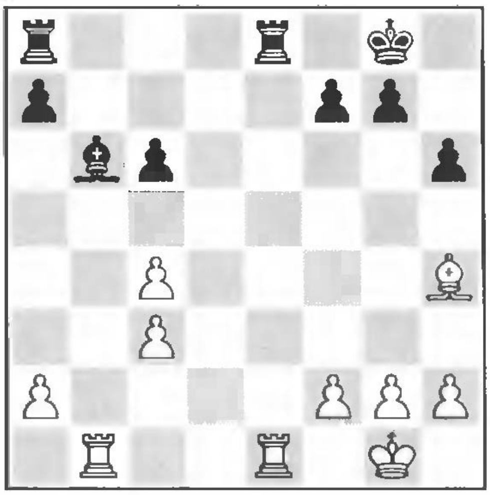
8...dc4 9.♗h4 cd3 10.♕d3 ♗e6 11.0-0 c4 12.♕e2 ♗d6 13.♖d1 ♗c7 14.♘a3 0-0! 15.♘c4 ♕a6 16.b3 h6

Taking his time. White has no good way of covering c4.

17.♘d4

17.♘fd2 ♘a5 but not 17...♘e5 18.♗g3!

17...♗c4 18.♕c4 ♕c4 19.bc4 ♖fe8 20.♖ab1 ♗b6 21.♘c6 bc6 22.♖e1



White cannot keep a healthy extra pawn as Miezis' next move demonstrates.

22...♗a5 23.♖e3 ♗b6

Here 23...♖e3 24.fe3 ♗c3 25.♖b7 a5 is also possible, but the text is even more accurate.

24.♖ee1

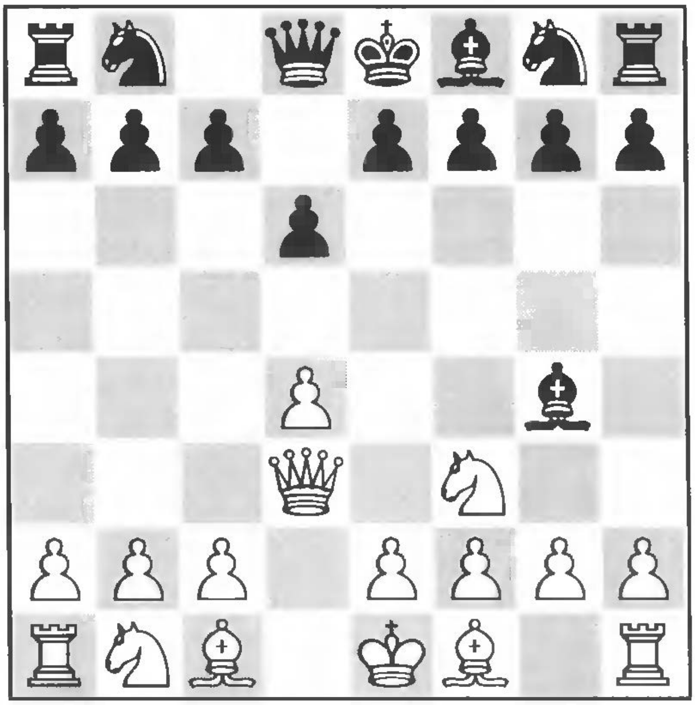
24.♖d3 is answered by 24...♖e4 or 24...♖e2.

24...♗a5

Draw.

CHAPTER 10

Surprising Hodgson



NIC KEY RE 20.4

Yet another early ♕d3 system

The system 1...d6 and 2...♗g4 – which was baptized 'the Hodgson Variation' by Yrjölä and Tella in their 2001 book on 1...d6 *An explosive chess opening repertoire for Black* – is a good fighting system for Black. It is especially popular among English grandmasters – the names Miles, Hodgson, and Adams spring to mind. In reply to 3.e4 Black plays 3...♘f6 4. ♘c3 e6, with rather good chances to equalize. White's other main move 3.c4 may be answered by 3...♗f3, fracturing White's pawn structure (or alternatively by 3...♘d7). If neither 3.e4 or 3.c4 is to your liking, then the recipe we present in this SOS chapter might be of interest to you.

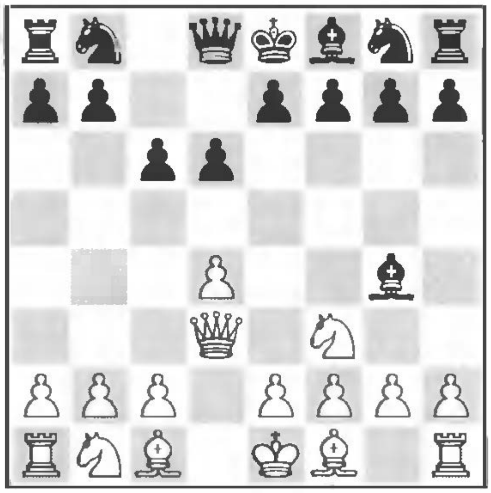
☐ **Yury Kruppa**
■ **Arnaud Jossien**
Cappelle la Grande 2000

1. d4 d6
2. ♘f3 ♗g4
3. ♕d3!?

A multi-purpose move. First of all, in the event of ♗f3, White plans to take back with a piece, leaving his structure intact. Moreover, having established a simple threat (♕b5 check) White keeps the initiative.

In view of the 'threat' 3...♗f3, Lev Gutman played 3.♘g5 in a recent game. Although this move receives full marks for surprise value, its objective merits are negligible. After 3.♘g5?! h6 4.♘e4 d5!? 5.♘c5 ♗c8!? 6.♘d3 ♘f6 Black had a good position in Gutman-Schlindwein, Altenkirchen 2001. A similar 'over-reaction' was 3.♘fd2 d5!? 4.c4 c6 5.♘c3 e6 6.♕b3 ♕b6, and Black had a pleasant Slav in Belotelov-Dovzik, Paks 2000. One may well wonder when 3.♘g1 will receive its first outing.

3. ... c6



This slightly passive move is more or less forced. Black has no decent alternative available, even though Yrjölä and Tella's above-mentioned book will tell you otherwise.

A) Thus 3...♘c6?! invites 4.d5 ♘b8 5.♕b5 (5.h3 ♗d7 6.e4 e5 7.de6 fe6 8.♗g5± Ciglic-Novacan, Slovenia 1994 is cited in the above-mentioned book) 5...♘d7 6.♕b7, and White is just a pawn up.

B) 3...♘d7 deserves slightly more attention.

B1) The indifferent 4.♗g5 has been played a couple of times, one example being 4...c6 5.♘c3 ♕a5 6.h4 Vogler-Bezold, Wiesbaden 1990. Black has in fact several ways to get a good position.

B2) It is interesting to see how Gutman's idea works out under these circumstances: 4.♘g5!?. First of all 4...h6 is met by the funny move 5.♘h7!?, while after 4...♘gf6 Black must take into account the double attack 5.♕b3, when 5...e6 is forced. Now the immediate 6.♕b7 gives Black reasonable compensation after 6...h6 7.♘f3 ♗f5. However, it makes sense for White to interpolate 6.f3!? before taking on b7. Unfortunately, Black has the sobering reply 4...e6!, e.g. 5.♕e4 (5.♘h7? ♗f5) 5...♗f5.

B3) Best, it seems to me, is the novelty 4.♕e4!, attacking the bishop and the pawn on b7. Black has little better than 4...♗f3 5.♕f3, when White has a small edge because of his bishop pair.

4. c4

The correct way to gain a slight plus.

A) It makes little sense to play 4.e4 – then why play 3.♕d3? After 4...♘f6 (4...♘d7 5.♗e2 ♘gf6 6.♘bd2 e5, in Philidor style, is also fine, Seba-Altounian, Bratislava 1993) 5.♘bd2 (5.♘c3 e6 6.h3 ♗h5 7.♗g5 ♗e7 8.♗e2 ♘bd7= Bugajski-Czerwonski, Warsaw 1997) 5...e6 6.c3 ♗e7 7.g3 0-0 8.♗g2 d5 Black had a nice position in Lagrotteria-Miles, Toscolano 1996.

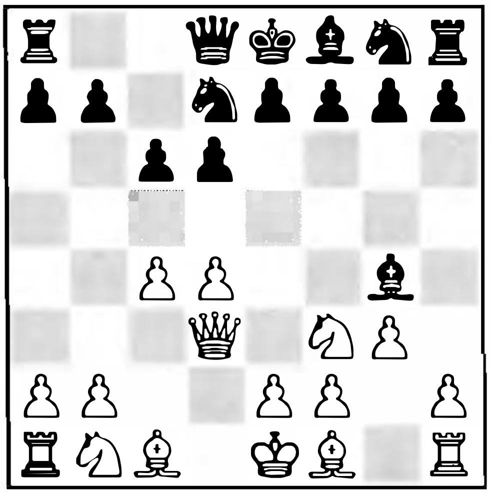
B) After 4.♘c3 Black has plenty of satisfactory moves: 4...♘d7, 4...♘f6 and 4...e6 are all fine and will in all likelihood transpose to 4.e4. However, Black should avoid 4...d5?! 5.♘e5 ♗h5?, falling for a well-known trick 6.♕h3! (this leaves Black in deep trouble) 6...♘f6 7.g4 ♗g6 8.♘g6 fg6± Hubert-Lutke, Germany 1997/98; 5...♗c8 is forced;

C) Finally, our tricky knight manoeuvre is again nothing special: 4.♘g5 e6! (4...♘f6 5.♕b3+−) 5.f3 ♗h5 (5...♗f5 6.e4 ♗g6 7.♕b3 ♕b6 8.♗e3 ♘f6 9.♘d2 d5= Zurek-Jansa, Czech tt 1998) 6.♘h3 d5 7.♘f4 ♗g6 8.♕b3 (8.♘g6) 8...♕b6, and Black is certainly not worse, Gil Capape-Danailov, Zaragoza 1992.

4. ... ♘d7

White gained a typical slight plus in Benkovic-Sanduleac, Palanka 2001, after 4...♘f6 5.g3 ♗f3 6.♕f3 ♘bd7 7.e4 e5 8.d5 ♗e7 9.♘c3.

5. g3



5. ... ♘gf6

Two other moves have been tried at this stage:

– 5...♗f3 (this eases White's task) 6.♕f3 e6 7.♗g2 ♘gf6 8.0-0 (8.e4 is perhaps more accurate) 8...♗e7 (Black could try 8...d5) 9.e4 0-0 10.♘c3± Pataki-Dovzik, Paks 2000.

– 5...e6 (planning 6...d5) 6.e4 ♕b6 7.♘bd2 d5!? 8.ed5 cd5 9.c5 ♕c7 10.b4 a5 11.♕a3! and again White had some advantage in Kruppa-Okhotnik, Rowy 1999.

6. ♗g2 e5

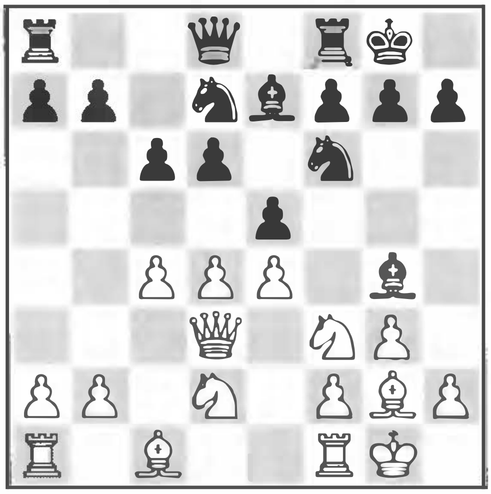
7. ♘bd2 ♗e7

8. 0-0

Not, of course, 8.h3?, provoking an exchange at a point when it inconveniences White most. 8...♗f3 9.ef3?! (9.♘f3? e4−+; 9.♗f3 d5!?) 9...♕b6 10.♘b3 a5 11.♗e3 a4 Nunnikhoven-Willmoth, Malaga 2001.

8. ... 0-0

9. e4



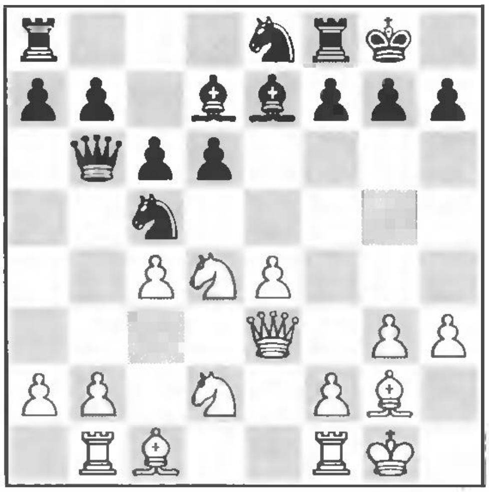
Black has opted for an Old Indian set-up. However, the position of the bishop on g4 here does not favour him. He will either have to exchange this bishop for a knight – leaving White the bishop pair and a pleasant plus – or leave it hanging in the air somehow.

So White should be satisfied with the outcome of the opening. If this position is to your liking, then 3.♕d3 is something for you! As this is a book on openings, the rest of the game is given with light commentary.

9. ... ed4

Surrendering the centre, but more or less solving the problem of his bishop: it is going to withdraw.

10. ♘d4 ♘c5
11. ♕e3 ♕b6
12. h3 ♗d7
13. ♖b1 ♘e8



It is better to stake a claim for some queenside space with 13...a5. Then 14.b3 leads to a position similar to those often reached in the g3 King's Indian. The difference being the bishop on e7, of course. **14.b4 ♘e6 15.♘f5 ♗g5** This was Black's idea, but exchanging the dark-squared bishops will bring no relief. **16.♕d3 ♖d8 17.♘f3 ♗c1 18.♖fc1 ♕c7 19.♖d1 ♗c8 20.♖d2 g6 21.♘e3 ♕e7 22.a3** White has a nice space advantage and good squares for his pieces. Black, on the other hand, is left struggling to defend his weaknesses in a box that is too small. **22...♘f6 23.♖e1 ♖fe8 24.♖de2 h6** Overlooking White's next? 24...♕c7 was called for. **25.♘d5!** In reply to 25.♘f5 Black still has 25...♕f8. **25...cd5 26.ed5 ♕c7 27.de6 ♗e6 28.♘d2 ♖c8? 29.♕d4! ♘d7 30.♕a7** White is winning now, of course. **30...♖b8 31.♕d4 ♖a8 32.♖e3 ♖ec8? 33.♖e6** Deciding matters. **33...fe6 34.♖e6 ♘f8 35.♖d6 ♖a3 36.♗d5 ♔h7 37.♖f6 ♖d8 38.♕e4 ♖d5** Understandable desperation. **39.♕d5 ♔g7 40.♕d4 ♖d3 41.♖g6**

Black resigned.

RECENT GAME

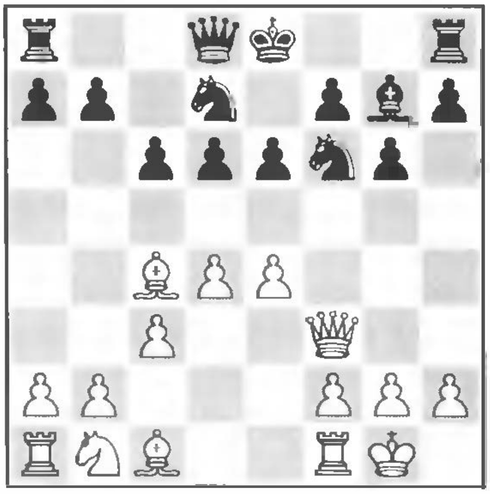
☐ **Heikki Kallio**
■ **Georg Seul**
Bermuda 2003

1.♘f3 d6 2.d4 ♗g4 3.♕d3 ♘d7 4.♕e4! The novelty I recommended in the original article. Black has to give up the bishop without structural compensation.

4...♗f3 5.♕f3 c6 6.e4 g6 7.♗c4 This encourages Black to put his pawns on the white squares.

7...e6 8.c3 ♗g7 9.0-0 The prophylactic 9.♗b3 looks good.

9...♘gf6



10.♗g5

White keeps a small edge with 10.♖e1.

10...♕a5 11.♗e3 ♘e4! 12.♗e6 fe6 13.♕e4 ♕f5 14.♘d2 0-0 15.♕f5 gf5

15...ef5

16.♗g5 d5 17.♘f3 e5 18.de5 ♘e5 19.♘e5 ♗e5 20.♖ad1 ♖ae8 21.♖fe1 ♔f7 22.g3 ♗g7 23.♗e3 a6 24.f3 ♗e5 25.♔f2 b5 26.♗c5 ♖g8 27.♖e2 ♗c7 28.a4 ♖e2 29.♔e2 ♖b8 30.b4 a5 31.ab5 ab4 32.cb4

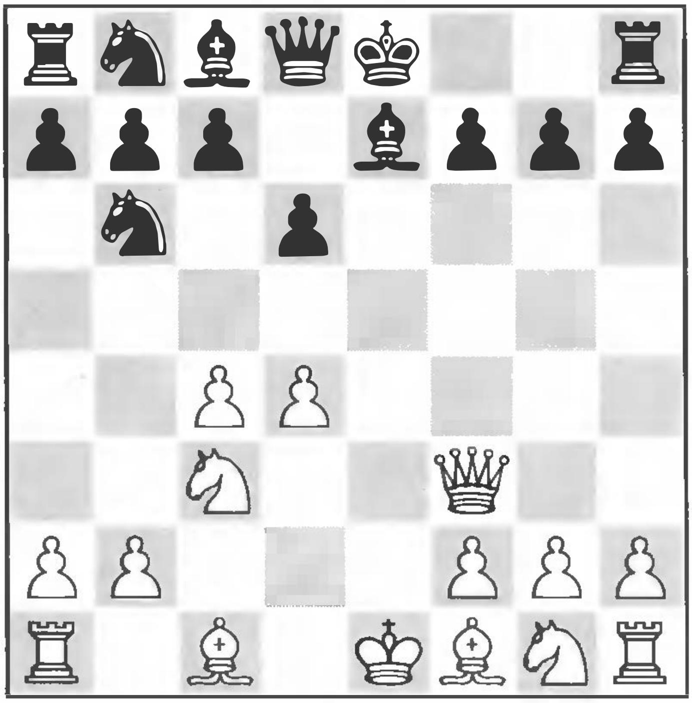
32.bc6 b3 gives compensation, not 32...bc3 33.♖d5 and White is better.

32...♖b5 33.♖d4 ♗e5 34.♖d3 ♔e6 35.♖e3 ♔f6 36.♖a3 ♔e6 37.♖e3 ♔f6 38.♔d3 f4 39.gf4 ♗f4 40.♖e8 ♖b7 41.h3 ♗g3 42.♖g8 ♗e5 43.♖c8 ♖c7 44.♖g8 ♔e6 45.♖e8 ♔f5 46.♖f8 ♔e6 47.f4 ♗g7 48.f5

Draw.

CHAPTER 11

A surprising queen sortie



NIC KEY AL 7.3

7.♕f3 in the Alekhine

☐ **Emanuel Berg**
■ **Jan Timman**
Malmö 2002

1.e4 ♘f6 2.e5 ♘d5 3.d4 d6 4.c4 ♘b6 5.ed6 ed6

In contrast to 5...cd6, which is more enterprising than 5...ed6 but also riskier, Black aims for a solid position. He intends to play ♗e7, 0-0, ♘c6, ♗g4 or ♗f5, followed by d5. It is difficult to stir things up a bit after the solid 5...ed6. Or is it? This SOS chapter investigates the matter further from a 'surprising' point of view.

6.♘c3 ♗e7

The alternative 6...♘c6 may be met by 7.♗e3 when, after 7...♗e7, 8.♕f3 transposes.

7.♕f3!?

This invention of Viktor Kortchnoi's has more to it than mere surprise value. The early queen development has several points. White controls the d5 square (thus preventing d6-d5), he prevents the development of Black's c8-bishop for the moment and he prepares queenside castling. A typical development plan would be: ♗e3, ♗d3, 0-0-0, ♘ge2 or ♘h3. Then White is ready to roll on the kingside, where Black will have tucked away his king. However, please don't follow this plan, no matter what. Sometimes castling queenside is too dangerous. At other times the development of bishop f1 should be postponed, and again at other times you will need to act in the centre first. Black now has three natural continuations.

7...c5

This strike in the centre was Timman's choice. Let us investigate the alternatives:

A) 7...0-0

A1) 8.♗d3 c6 (in my opinion, 8...♘c6! looks better as after 9.♗e3 there can follow 9...♘b4 (cf 7...♘c6 8.♗e3 0-0 when White will not play 9.♗d3 but 9.0-0-0)) 9.♘ge2 d5 10.c5 ♘6d7 11.♗c2 ♖e8 12.g4!? ♘f8 13.h4 b6 14.♗e3 bc5 15.0-0-0 with a kingside attack in Berg-De Firmian, Malmö 2001.

A2) 8.♗e3. Now 8...c6 (planning d5) works better:

A21) 9.0-0-0 d5 10.c5 ♘6d7 11.♗d3 b6 has occurred several times in practice. Black has good play.

A22) 9.♗d3, and castling kingside is to be preferred, even though White's advantage after 9...d5 10.c5 ♘6d7 11.♘ge2 b6 is minuscule.

B) 7...♘c6 8.♗e3 0-0 (8...♗e6!? is not bad either, as 9.d5 (9.b3 0-0) 9...♘e5 10.♕e4 is unclear. An alternative is 10.♕f4, while 10.♕g3 may be met by Blatny's 10. ...♗f5) 9.0-0-0 this is an important *tabiya* position for 7.♕f3:

B1) 9...♗e6 10.c5! (now 10.b3 must be too slow, I mention it here since this is important via transposition, cf 8...♗e6 9.b3 0-0) 10...♘c4? is a blunder that has occurred several times in practice (10...♘d7 11.h3±; 10...♘c8 11.♗a6! – Burgess – shows a good sense of humour) 11.♗f4!, and d5 cannot be avoided (first played in Leyva-Medina, Cuba 1994).

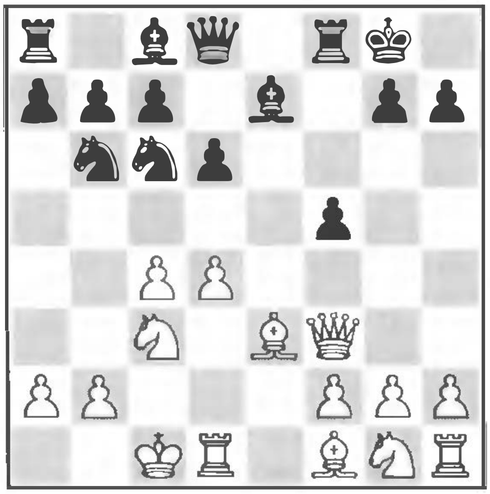
B2) 9...♗g5, when both 10.h4 and 10.♘h3 are slightly better for White.

B3) 9...♗f6

B31) 10.h4 ♗e6 (10...h6 is usually indicated as an improvement) 11.b3 d5 12.c5 ♘c8 13.♘h3 b6 14.♗g5 was better for White in Chernishov-Kopylov, Voronezh 1993.

B32) 10.♗d3 ♗d4 11.♗d4 ♘d4 12.♗h7 ♔h7 13.♕h5 ♔g8 14.♖d4 ♕f6 15.♘f3= is an analysis by Chernishov and Raetsky.

B4) 9...f5!?



This move does not deserve the 'dubious' sign that it often receives on the basis of Kortchnoi-Miles. Only Miles' next move is to blame. 10.g3 (10.c5 f4 11.cb6 fe3 12.bc7 ♕c7 13.♕d5 ♔h8 14.fe3 ♗f5, and Black has adequate compensation, Berg-Luther, Malmö 2002) 10...f4? 11.gf4 ♗f5 12.c5 ♘d7 13.♗h3! and White was better in the stem game Kortchnoi-Miles, Biel 1992. However, instead of 10...f4 Black should play 10...♗e6!. Black was

OK after both 11.c5 ♘c4 12.d5 ♘6e5 13.♕e2 ♘e3 14.♕e3 ♗f7 (Tan-Crouch, Scarborough 2001) and 11.b3 ♕c8 12.♘ge2 a5 13.a4 ♗f6 14.♘f4 ♗f7 15.h4 ♘b4 (Berg-Eriksson, Skara 2002).

So much for 7...0-0 and 7...♘c6. Let us continue with our main game.

8.dc5

8.d5 is just bad, Black is OK in this Benoni-like position.

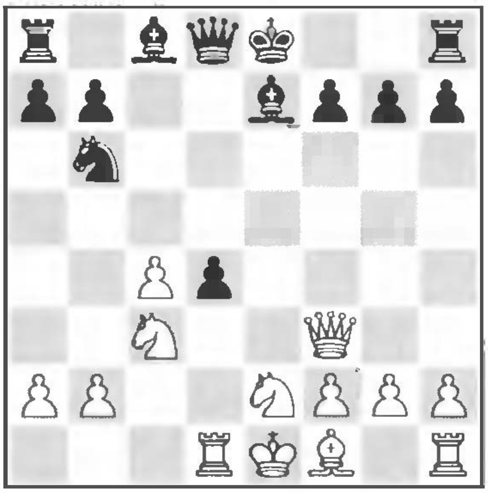
8...dc5 9.♗e3 ♘c6

Alternatively, 9...0-0 10.♖d1 ♘8d7 11.♗d3 is pretty uncomfortable for Black.

10.♖d1 ♘d4

An active choice; after 10...♕c7 11.♗f4 ♘e5 12.♕e4 Black is forced to play the ugly 12...f6. However, 10...♘d7 is an alternative. For example, 11.♗e2 (11.♗d3 ♘de5) 11...0-0 12.♘h3 ♕b6.

11.♗d4 cd4 12.♘ge2



12...0-0

This is superior to 12...♘c4 13.♘d4 ♘d6 14.♗b5 ♗d7 15.0-0 0-0 16.♖fe1 as in the game Berkvens-Burkart, Germany 2001. White has fine play owing to his pressure along the central files.

13.♘d4 ♗f6 14.♘db5 ♕e7 15.♗e2 ♘c4

No improvement is 15...♕b4 16.0-0 ♕b2 17.♖b1, and now:

A) 17...♕d2 18.♘e4 ♕h6 19.♘f6 ♕f6 20.♕f6 gf6 21.♘d6, with c5 and ♗f3 coming up.

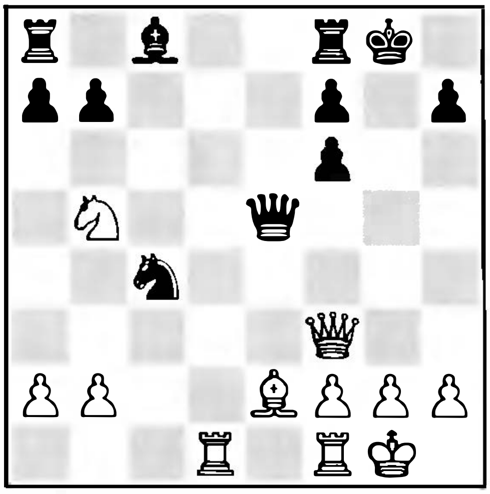
B) 17...♕c2 18.♗d3 ♕d2 19.♘e4 ♕h6 20.♘f6 ♕f6 21.♕f6 gf6 22.c5, and White is again better.

Perhaps 15...♗e6, mentioned in *British Chess Magazine*, is: after 16.b3 Black has some compensation.

16.♘d5 ♕e5 17.♘f6

Also good is 17.b3!?, intending 17...♘b6 18.♘f6 gf6 (18...♕f6 19.♕f6 gf6 20.♘d6) 19.0-0.

17...gf6 18.0-0



18...♕b5

Bad is 18...♘b2? 19.♖d5 ♕e7 20.♘c3, and White is winning after 20...♗e6 (20...♖d8 21.♖b1) 21.♖b5 ♘c4 22.♗c4 ♗c4 23.♕g4.

19.♖d4 ♕e5

Not the only possible queen move:

A) 19...♕f5 20.♕g3 ♕g6 21.♗c4 ♕g3 22.fg3!, with advantage.

B) 19...♕b2!? 20.♖c4 ♗e6 21.♖h4 (21.♖c3 ♖fc8) 21...f5 22.♗d3 ♕f6, and

Black's kingside is still a hard nut to crack.

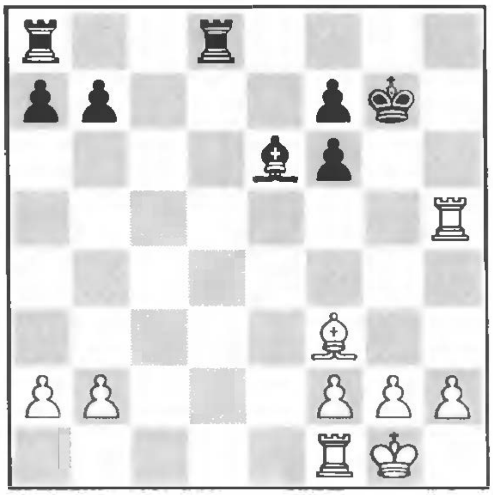
20.♖c4 ♗e6

Now 20...♕b2 21.♗d3 is much more dangerous than on the previous move.

21.♖h4 ♖fd8 22.♗d3 ♕g5

Forced because of 22...f5 23.♕h5.

23.♗h7 ♔g7 24.♖h5 ♕g4 25.♗e4 ♕f3 26.♗f3



26...♖ab8?

After defending well in a difficult position Timman makes a curious mistake. Clearly, 26...♖d2! was a much better defensive move. Because of his active rook Black has excellent drawing chances. Now Berg takes charge.

27.♖a5! a6 28.b3 ♖d2

By no means as strong as two moves ago.

29.h3 ♗c8

Planning b5 to lock in the white rook, however after

30.♖d5!

things have gone from bad to worse.

30...♖a2

For, 30...♖d5 31.♗d5 ♗e6 32.♗e6 fe6 33.♖c1 is a very easy win. White is a sound (passed) pawn up and his rook is active.

31.♖d8

This pin along the back rank paralyzes Black completely.

31...♖c2 32.♖e1 a5 33.♖ee8 f5 34.♗d5 ♗e6

Desperation, but 34...♖c7 35.♖g8 ♔f6 36.h4 also loses hopelessly.

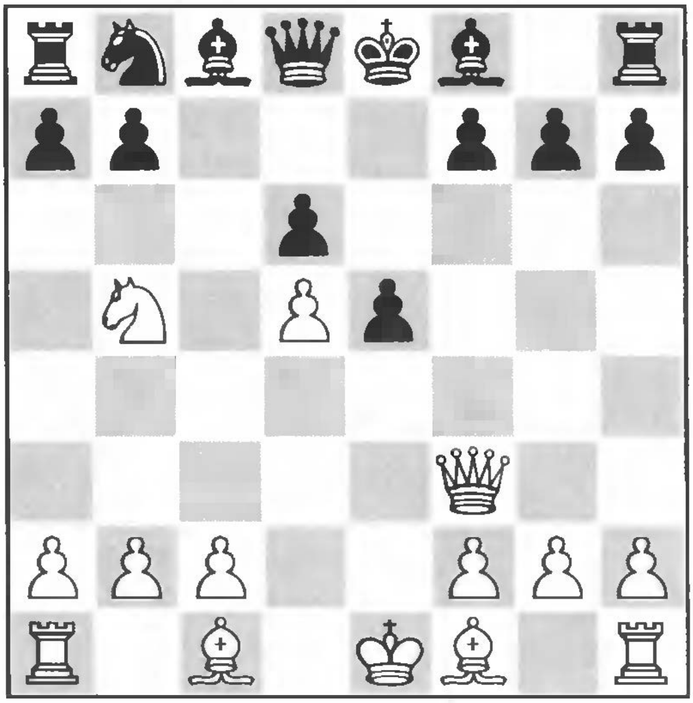
35.♖b8 ♗d5 36.♖e5 ♖c5 37.♔h2 ♔f6 38.f4 ♖b5 39.♖d8 ♗c6 40.♖d6

Black resigned.

In conclusion, 7.♕f3!? is an interesting way to liven things up a bit in the Alekhine Exchange Variation after 5...ed6. Black may settle for 7...0-0 (Timman's 7...c5 is rather risky) which gives White only a slight edge. The strongest reply to 7.♕f3 is probably 7...♘c6 8.♗e3, and now either 8...♗e6, or 8...0-0 9.0-0-0 f5!? with complicatons.

CHAPTER 12

A tactical weapon



NIC KEY SI 35.6

9.♕f3 in the Sveshnikov

The Sveshnikov has been causing 1.e4 players some headaches lately. White is currently unable to prove any advantage in the main lines. Therefore even Kasparov has occasionally deserted his beloved Najdorf as Black. Talking to Anand at Wijk aan Zee Grischuk sighed: 'hopefully something is found quickly against the Sveshnikov, so we can just play chess again'. Clearly, the top players hadn't found the recipe yet by the time Linares started. The 'Wimbledon of chess' saw an unusually high number of games where White preferred 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗b5 to 3.d4 and the theoretical ramifications leading up to 18.♔h1 or 18.♗b3, which is where home analysis starts these days.

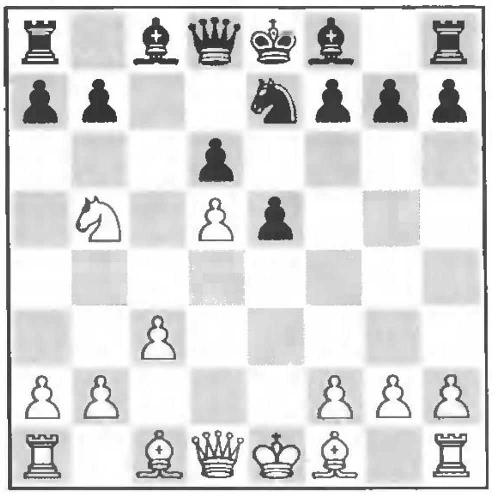
Naturally, this SOS chapter does not pretend to succeed where the top players have (so far!) failed to find anything substantial. However, since theoretical study guarantees no opening edge at present, it seems as good a time as any to try something else. Something surprising, something tactical, something a bit fishy. In short, why not try the diagrammed position the next time you're confronted by the Sveshnikov!

1. e4 c5
2. ♘f3 ♘c6
3. d4 cd4
4. ♘d4 ♘f6
5. ♘c3 e5
6. ♘db5 d6
7. ♘d5

The other Sveshnikov move order (5...e6 6.♘db5 d6) prevents this line of course. However, in that case we advise you to have another look at chapter 3.

7. ... ♘d5
8. ed5 ♘b8

Here 8...♘e7 is an important alternative. We will not delve into this, but it seems relevant to point out that after 9.c3



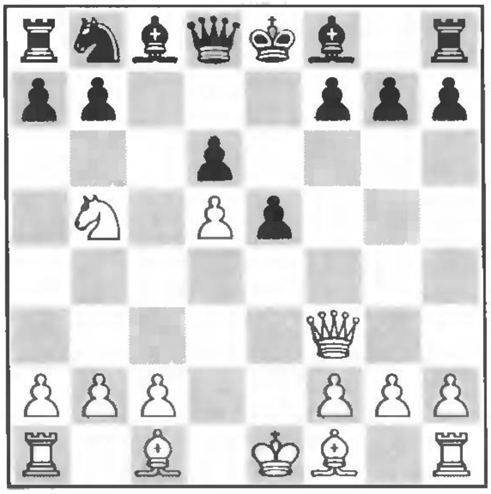
Black is forced to play 9...♘f5 for purely tactical reasons. Positionally, Black would never even consider to place the knight on f5 as it obstructs the natural f7-f5: forming that typical Sveshnikov pawn centre.

However the alternatives allow some crude tactics:

A) 9...a6 10.♕a4± wins material;
B) 9...f5 10.♕a4 ♔f7 is awkward;
C) 9...♘g6 10.♕a4 ♗d7 11.♕c4 forces the concession 11...♗b5 as 11...♖c8? 12.♕b4 is even worse.

So, because the knight is badly placed on f5 White keeps a small plus.

9. ♕f3



The 'normal' (read positional) move is of course 9.c4 when the main question is: who is faster? White on the queenside or Black on the kingside.

The main idea of 9.♕f3 is overtly tactical (some people would perhaps use stronger language here: anti-positional). White is playing for the same sort of tricks that were shown above after 8...♘e7 9.c3. The queen is ready to switch along the third rank. Thus, a future ♕a3 will attack d6, prepare ♕a4, and pin the a-pawn in case of a6 (keeping the knight on b5). The other tactical switch can be effective too: ♕c3 threatening ♘c7 can be quite an embarrassing move to meet.

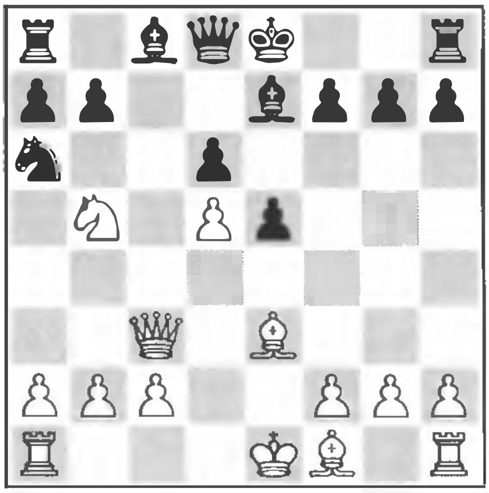
9. ... a6

Questioning the knight is clearly Black's strongest move. The alternatives give White at least a slight edge:

– 9...♗d7 and now after 10.♕a3 Black is forced to take on b5, leaving White with the slightly better position.

– 9...g6? 10.♕a3 b6 (10...a6 11.♗g5!) 11.♕c3! ♔d7 (11...♘a6 12.♕c6 ♗d7 13.♘d6 ♔e7 14.♗g5 f6 15.♘c8+–) 12.♗g5! ♗e7 13.♗e7 ♔e7 14.♕c7 (14.♘c7 wins outright) 14...♕d7 15.♕c4 ♘a6 16.0-0-0 ♕g4? 17.♕c6 ♗d7 18.♕d6 ♔d8 19.♕f6 1-0 Molander-Kunnas, Helsinki 1995.

– 9...♗e7 10.♕c3 ♘a6 11.♗e3



with the following options:

A) 11...0-0 12.♘a7 ♘c5 (or 12...♗d7 13.♗a6 ba6 14.0-0±) 13.♘c8 ♖c8 14.0-0-0± Guyot-De Lagontrie, Cannes 1995 ;

B) 11...b6 12.♕c6 ♗d7 13.♘d6 ♔f8 14.♕c3 (14.♕c4±) 14...♗d6 15.♗a6 ♕h4 16.0-0-0± Plenkovic-Zovko, Pula 2000;

C) 11...f5 12.♗a7 (12.♘a7 f4 13.♗b6 ♕b6 14.♘c8 ♕b4 15.♗a6 ♕c3 16.bc3 ba6 17.♘e7 ♔e7 18.♖b1 ♖hc8=) 12...0-0± Runic-Jelen, Pula tt 1990, with some compensation for the pawn.

10. ♕a3

This pin is one of the main points of 9.♕f3.

10. ... ♗e7

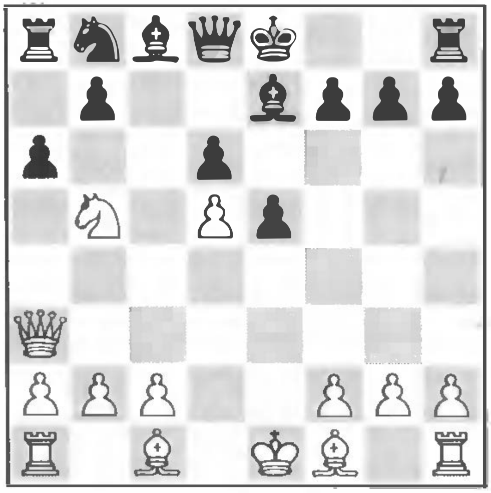
A main alternative here is 10...b6. After defending the rook with ♗b7, the white knight will have to retreat. However, it must be pointed out that the bishop is not well-placed on b7.

The move 11.♕a4 is double-edged as after 11...♘d7 (or 11...♗d7!?) 12.♘d6!? ♗d6 13.♕c6 ♕c7 14.♕a8 ♘b8 the queen is trapped. The game Kutuzovic-Zelenika, Rijeka 2001, went 15.c3 0-0 16.♗e3 f5 17.f3 ♖f7 18.a4 ♕d8 19.♗e2 ♖d7 20.0-0-0 ♕e7. Here, instead of the game continuation 21.a5 ♖a7 22.♕a7 ♕a7 23.♗b6 ♕e7–+, White should draw with 21.♗b6 ♗b7 22.♕a7 ♗c8 23.♕a8 ♗b7 or play 21.♗c4.

Much safer is 11.c4. Two examples:

– 11...♗b7 12.♘c3 ♗e7 13.♗e3 0-0 14.♕b3 ♘d7 15.♗e2 ♖b8 16.0-0 f5 17.f3 ♗c8 (17...♗g5) 18.♕c2 f4 19.♗f2 ♖f6 20.♘e4 ♖h6 21.b4± Armanda-Drei, Opatija 2001.

– 11...♗e7 12.♗e2 0-0 13.0-0 f5 14.f4 ♗b7 15.♘c3 ♘d7 16.♗e3 a5 17.♕b3 ef4 18.♗f4 ♗c8 19.♘b5 ♘c5 20.♕c2 again with a slight plus, Wise-McShane, Millfield ch-GB 2000.



How can White increase the pressure? We will investigate:

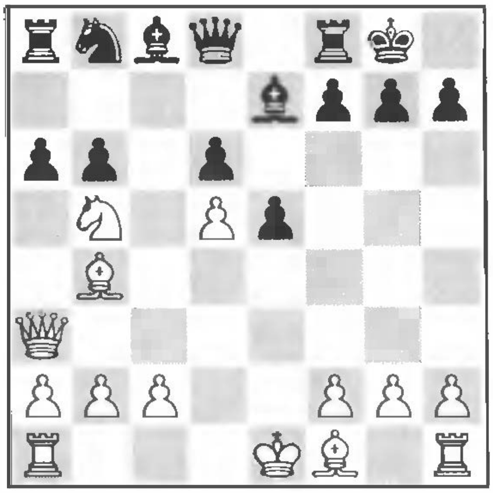
A 11.♗d2
B 11.♗g5!?

A) 11. ♗d2

White intends to attack d6 with ♗b4 (sometimes after the preparatory ♗a5).

11. ... 0-0
12. ♗b4

There is a clever idea behind 12.♗a5!?. By provoking b6 White ensures that his queen will not be trapped on a8 after a future ...ab5. After 12...b6 13.♗b4



analysis diagram

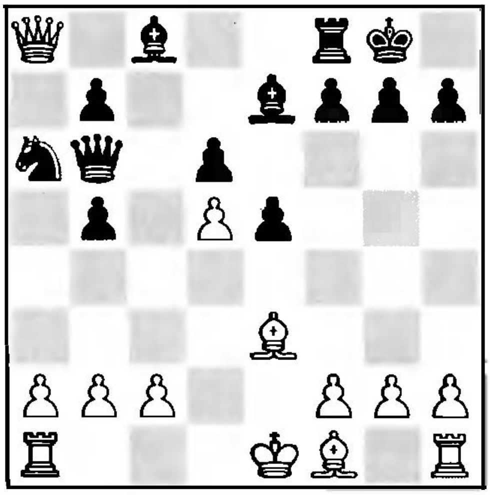
Black appears to be in big trouble. An example is Snarheim-Lonngren, Hallsberg jr 1999: 13...♘d7 14.♗d6 ♗d6 15.♘d6 ♘c5 16.♘c4 ♕d5 17.♘b6 ♕e4 18.♗e2 ♘e6 19.♘a8 (stronger was 19.0-0±) 19...♘d4 20.♕d3 ♕g2 (better 20...♘c2 with approximate equality) 21.0-0-0 ♗f5. However, Black has an excellent tactical defence at his disposal. With 13...♕d7! he protects d6 as 14.♘d6? fails to 14...a5 and 14.♗d6? to 14...ab5. Hence, White is forced to retreat the knight at an awkward moment (he hasn't played c4 yet). Thus after 14.♘c3 ♗b7 15.♕b3 ♕c7 16.♗e2 ♘d7 17.a4 ♘c5 18.♕c4 b5 Black was slightly better in Gullaksen-Cherniaev, Catalan Bay 2003.

12. ... ab5

This exchange sacrifice is quite playable, but not forced. Also good is 12...♗g4!? when after 13.♗d6 ab5 14.♗e7 Black has 14...♕d5! (but not 14...♖a3 15.♗d8±) 15.♕a8 ♕e4 with perpetual check: 16.♔d2 ♕f4 17.♔e1 (17.♔c3? ♗e6–+) 17...♕e4 18.♔d2 ♕f4 19.♔e1 ♕e4 20.♔d2 ½-½ Guyot-Popchev, Podgorica 1991.

After the text there follows a logical sequence.

13. ♕a8 ♘a6
14. ♗d2 ♕b6
15. ♗e3



White is a full exchange up, but his queen is trapped and his game as yet undeveloped. Clearly, Black has compensation, but is it enough? Here are two practical examples with light annotations. Black won the stem game (Markovic-Joksic) but White's play can be improved upon.

The second example suggests that both sides should be satisfied with the draw.

● **15...♕c7 16.c3 f5** (16...♗e6 17.♕a7 ♗d5 18.♗b5) **17.♕a7 f4 18.♗d2** (18.♗b6 ♕d7 19.a4 – 19.♗d3! – 19...ba4 20.♗a6 ba6 21.♕d7 ♗d7♗♝) **18...♗d7 19.a4 ♘c5 20.ab5 ♗g4 21.♕a2** (21.♕a5 ♕d7 22.♕b4) **21...e4 22.♕c4 ♗h4 23.g3** (23.♗e2 f3; 23.h3 ♖e8) **23...♖e8 24.♖a4? e3 25.♗e3 ♖e4 26.♖a8** (26.♕e4 ♘e4 27.♖e4 ♕a5 28.♗c1 ♕a1 29.♔d2 ♗f3) **26...♔f7 27.♕a2 ♖e3! 28.fe3 ♕e7–+ 29.♗e2 ♕e3 30.♕c4 ♗f6 31.♔d1 f3 32.♖e1 fe2 33.♖e2 ♘d3 34.♕c7 ♔g6 35.♔c2 ♕e2 36.♔b3 ♕d2** 0-1 Markovic-Joksic, Bela Crkva 1986.

● **15...♕a5 16.c3 b4 17.♖c1!** White rightly forces the draw. After 17.♗d2 bc3 18.♗c3 ♕d5 Black has excellent compensation. **17...♕a2 18.cb4 ♕b2 19.♖c8** 19.♗a6 ♕b4 20.♗d2 (20.♔f1 ba6 21.♖c8 ♕b1 22.♗c1 ♕c1 23.♖c1 ♖a8 24.♔e2±) 20...♕e4 21.♗e2 ♗g4 22.f3 ♗f3 23.♕f8 ♗f8 24.gf3∞. **19...♕b4 20.♗d2 ♕b1 21.♗c1 ♕b4 22.♗d2** ½-½ Paragua-Poliakov, Goa Wch-jr 2002.

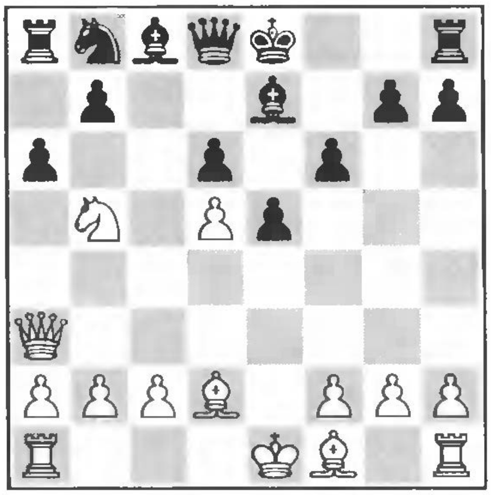
B) 11. ♗g5!?

Now that's a real shocker! Clearly, there is no need for 'the slow' 11.h4 (to prepare 12.♗g5), after 11...0-0 12.♗g5 f6 13.♗d2 f5 14.♗g5 ♗g5 15.hg5 ab5 16.♕a8 ♘a6 Black has excellent compensation, Gaggiottini-Ravagnani, Ischia 1997.

11. ... f6

Bad is 11...♗g5 12.♘d6 ♔d7 (12...♔f8 13.♘c8 ♔g8 14.♘d6 △ 14...♗e7 15.♘b7) 13.♘f7. The best reply to 11...♗f5!? is 12.♗e2.

12. ♗d2



So here we have the same position as in line A, but for the Black pawn on f6. At first sight the difference looks advantageous for White, but there are too few practical examples (only one!) too support this view.

The game Iordachescu-Genocchio, Lido Estensi 2002, went: **12...a5?** This is a clear mistake. **13.♕c3± ♘a6** 13...♔d7? 14.♘a7+–. **14.♕a5 b6 15.♕a4 0-0 16.c4 ♗f5 17.♕d1 ♕e8 18.b4 ♕g6 19.♕b3** 19.♕f3 **19...♗d7 20.♕g3 ♕f7** 20...♕e4 21.♕e3 ♕e3 22.fe3. **21.♗e2 f5 22.0-0 f4 23.♕f3 ♔h8 24.a4 g5 25.♕h5 ♕g7** 25...♕h5 26.♗h5 g4 27.f3 **26.♗g4+– ♗e8 27.♕h3 ♖f6 28.a5 ♗d8 29.ab6 ♗b6 30.♖a3 h5 31.♖fa1 ♕h7 32.♗e1 ♖h6** 32...hg4 33.♕h7 ♔h7 34.♖a6 ♖a6 35.♖a6 ♗b5 36.cb5 ♗d4 37.♖c6+– **33.♗f5 ♕b7 34.♗e6 g4 35.♗g4 ♗b5 36.cb5 ♘c7 37.♖a8 ♘a8 38.♗f3** 1-0.

White is slightly better after 12...b6 13.♗b4 (13.c4!?) 13...0-0 14.♗d6 ab5 15.♗e7 ♕d5 16.♕d3.

The only real test of Iordachescu's 11.♗g5!? is of course 12...0-0. Black continues just as in line A, and it is up to White to prove that the inclusion of f7-f6 makes a difference. So the following lines ought to be checked (by the serious student!):

- 13.♗a5 b6 14.♗b4 ♕d7;
- 13.♗b4 ♗g4 14.♗d6 ab5 15.♗e7 ♕d5;
- 13.♗b4 ab5 14.♕a8 ♘a6 15.♗d2 ♕b6 16.♗e3.

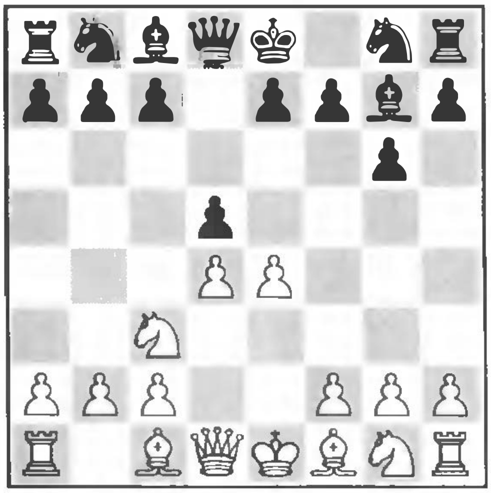
In conclusion, the whole line starting with 9.♕f3 is full of pitfalls – Black may easily go astray. The tactics are quite attractive and there is plenty of scope for 'private investigations'. On the other hand, on the basis of the material presented here White is not entitled to claim an edge. However, as there is no such thing as a an easy opening advantage at present against the Sveshnikov, there is every reason to try this SOS weapon.

Section IV: An SOS pawn thrust

This section discusses four opening variations in which the initiative is grabbed by means of an original pawn move in the early stages of the game. These SOS-pawn moves will shock your opponent.

Chapter 13 focusses on an aggressive pawn thrust for Black.

1.e4 g6 2.d4 ♗g7 3.♘c3 d5



This is a real shocker! White has no advantage after 4.♘d5 c6, so he has to take up the gauntlet with 4.ed5. Play will often resemble the Larsen variation of the Alekhine.

The reversed Sokolsky is the subject of chapter 14.

1.♘f3 b5

The idea of 1...b5 is to liven things up a bit after White's solid start. So here is a complete and provocative repertoire against 1.♘f3.

Chapter 15 provides the second player with an aggressive line against the Trompowsky.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗g5 e6 3.e4 c5

The 'normal' continuation after 3.e4 is 3...h6 when Black acquires the bishop pair at the expense of central influence and development. The 'Sicilian' move c5 undermines White's pawn centre, and is therefore much sharper. This SOS-recipe leads to exciting play where White may easily go wrong.

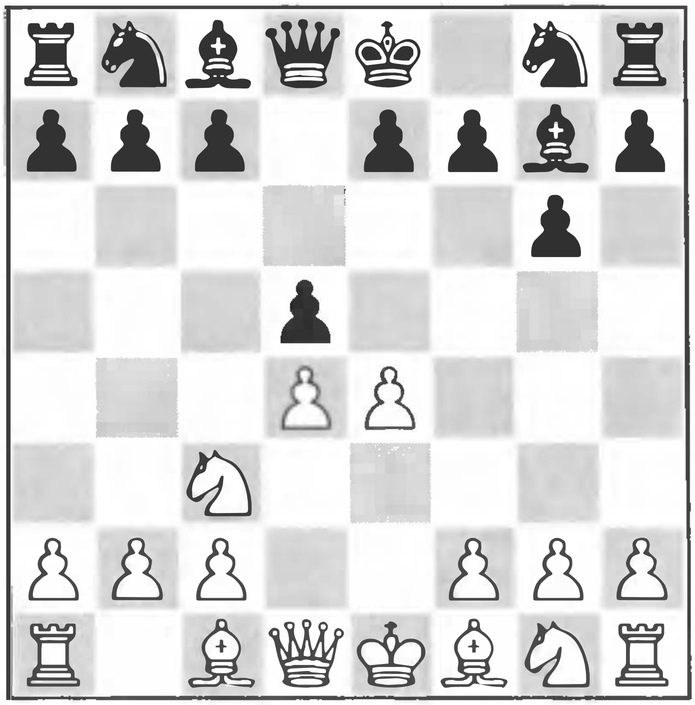
Don't play the Dutch against 1.♘f3 is the message of chapter 16.

1.♘f3 f5 2.d3

The Lisitsin gambit (or Lviv gambit as it is also called) is characterized by the sharp 2.e4. While this move has distinct SOS qualities (sharp, enterprising, original), it also has quite a history (Lisitsin-Botvinnik, Leningrad 1933!) and is therefore unlikely to suprise your opponent. The move 2.d3 is a subtle preparatory move and, as this chapter demonstrates, difficult to meet for the second player.

CHAPTER 13

Modern, Scandinavian or Alekhine?



KF 10.4

3...d5: an aggressive central thrust

New ideas that are both surprising and solid are hard to come by in the opening. If you don't like to memorise heaps of theory and still want to get through the opening stages unscathed, the subject of this chapter might be just what you've been looking for. Just study the next pages and you'll find all you need to know to avoid major problems in your next few games as Black. Easy to learn, easy to play!

1. e4 g6
2. d4 ♗g7

3. ♘c3 d5!?

A remarkable idea. Once you've convinced yourself that Black hasn't just inadvertently pushed his d-pawn one square too far it dawns on you that nothing is gained by 4.♘d5. After 4...c6 5.♘e3 ♕d4 6.♗d3 (6.♕d4 ♕d4 7.♘f3 ♗g7 provides instant equality) 6...♘f6 (stronger is perhaps 6...e5!? 7.♘f3 ♕d8 8.0-0 ♘e7) 7.♘e2 ♕d8 8.0-0 0-0 9.f4 ♘g4 10.♘g4 ♗g4 11.h3 ♗e2 12.♕e2 the position was only slightly better for White in the game Hector-Schulze, Berlin 1995.

Equally unpromising is 4.e5 c5 as in Skripchenko-Lakos, Porec 1998. Compare this to 1.e4 g6 2.d4 c6 3.♘c3 d5 4.e5 where Black has wasted a tempo on c7-c6.

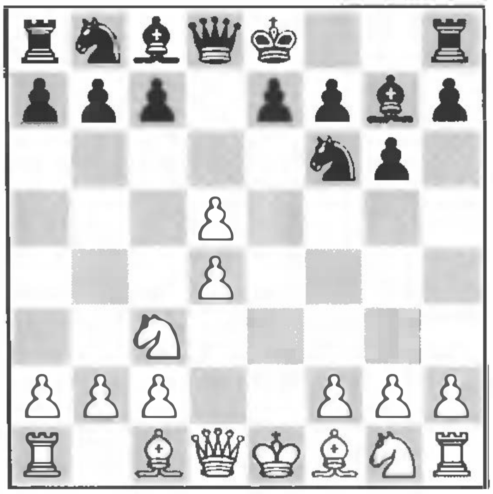
Similarly, 4.♘f3 de4 5.♘e4 is easy for Black, cf. 1.e4 g6 2.d4 c6 3.♘c3 d5 4.♘f3 ♗g7 5.h3 de4 6.♘e4 (h3 is much more useful than c6).

All this leaves

4. ed5

as the only move to refute Black's concept.

4. ... ♘f6



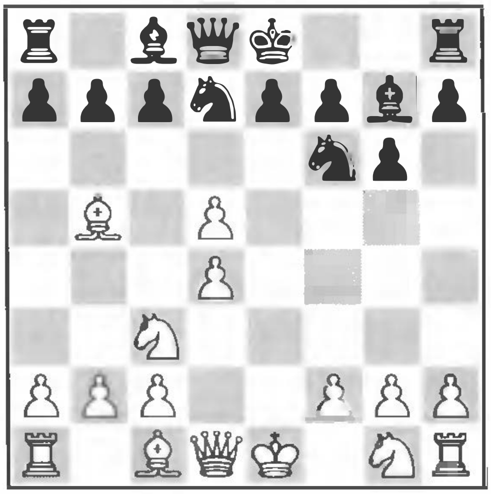
Compared to the Scandinavian 1.e4 d5 2.ed5 ♘f6 White has lost all sorts of c4-options. Seen from this light, Black calls 3.♘c3 an inaccuracy as it does not prevent d5! (as 3.c4 would of course). Still he does have to retrieve his pawn of course.

5. ♗c4

Strongest, White *überdecks* d5, making it as difficult as possible for Black to win the pawn back.

With the same purpose 5.♗b5 has also been played. This is less logical though as Black plans ♘b8-d7-b6 anyway! After 5.♗b5 he is even encouraged to play 5...♘bd7.

The game might continue:



A) 6.♘ge2 0-0 7.♗d7 ♕d7 8.♘f4 b6 9.0-0 ♗b7 10.♖e1 ♖e8 11.♖e5 ♖ad8 12.h3 c6 13.dc6 ♕c6 14.d5 ♕d6 15.♕e1 ♘d5 16.♖d5 ♗c3 17.♖d6 ♗e1 18.♖d8 ♖d8 19.♘d3 ♗a6!= Andersen-Schulz, Baden Baden 1991.

B) 6.♘f3 0-0 7.0-0 ♘b6 8.♗g5 (8.♖e1 ♘bd5 9.♘d5 ♘d5 10.h3±/= Lederman-Vydeslaver, Beer-Sheva 1991) 8...♘bd5 9.♘d5 ♘d5 10.♖e1 ♗g4 11.h3 ♗f3 12.♕f3 c6 14.♗c4 and Black has gained a tempo (♗b5-c4) and almost equalized, Svatos-Vokac, Czech Republic Championship, Usti nad Labem 1994. Compare this position to similar ones below.

The position strongly resembles the middlegames that may arise out of the Larsen variation of the Alekhine: 4...de5 5.♘e5 g6 (a respectable line).

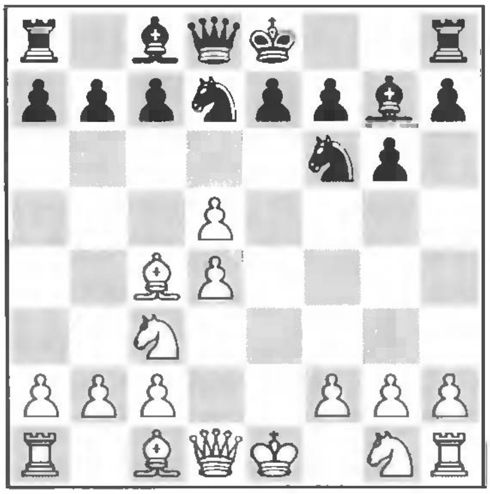
C) 6.♘f3 0-0 7.h3 ♘b6 8.0-0 ♘bd5 9.♘d5 ♘d5 10.c3 ♕d6 11.♗c4 (preventing c5) 11...b6 12.♖e1 ♗b7 13.♗g5 e6

14.♗h4 c5 15.♗g3 ♕e7 16.♕b3 and now not 16...♖ac8?? 17.♗d5 1-0 Gofshtein-Vydeslaver, Beer-Sheva 1991, but simply 16...♖fd8=.

A rather meek alternative is 5.♘f3 ♘d5 6.♘d5 ♕d5 7.♗e2 (or 7.c4 ♕d6 8.♗e2 c5 9.♗e3 cd4 10.♗d4 ♕b4=, as in Mahesh-Chandran-Bjelobrk, World Junior Championship, Calicut 1998) 7...c5 8.♗e3 cd4 9.♗d4 0-0 10.0-0 ♘c6 11.♗g7 ♕d1 12.♖fd1 ♔g7 13.♘d4 ♘d4 14.♖d4 ♗f5 15.c3 ♖fd8 with equality, Gyimesi-Banikas, World Junior Championship, Zagan 1997.

5. ... ♘bd7

This is more accurate than 5...0-0 in view of 6.♘ge2! ♘bd7 7.♗b3 ♘b6 8.♘f4 and Black has difficulties winning the pawn back, Yudasin-Vydeslaver, Beer Sheva 1992.



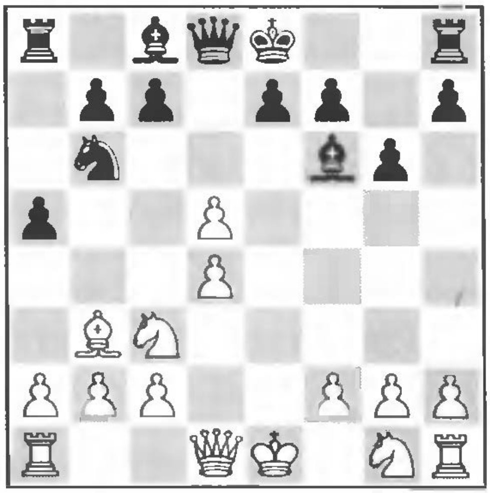
6. ♘f3

Now 6.♗b3 ♘b6 7.♘f3 will just transpose to the text.

And 7.h3 a5 8.a3 a4 9.♗a2 ♘bd5 10.♘d5 ♘d5 11.♘f3 0-0 12.0-0 c6 13.♗g5 ♗e6 14.♖e1 b5 15.♕d7 ♘c7 was equal in Andrey Sokolov-Plachetka, Ostrava 1994. This is a good example of Black's standard set-up.

White cannot keep his extra pawn with 6.♕f3 because of 6...♘b6 7.♗b3 ♗g4 8.♕g3 ♗f5 when Klovans-Gurevich, Dnepropetrovsk 1970 (possibly the stem game) continued 9.♕f3 ♗g4 10.♕g3 ♗f5 11.♘f3 ♘bd5 12.♘d5 ♘d5 13.0-0 0-0 14.♖e1, and White had only a slight edge.

However, White's most ambitious try is 6.♗g5!? as suggested in *Nunn's Chess Openings*, the only book I know to mention 3...d5!?. White intends to give up his bishop to keep the d5-pawn, thus turning 3...d5!? into a real sacrifice. After 6...♘b6 (6...0-0 7.♗b3 ♘b6 8.♕f3 ♗d7?! 9.♕f4 c6 10.d6 and White kept his extra pawn, Sadler-Turner, British Championship, Hove 1997) 7.♗f6 ♗f6 8.♗b3 it is useful for Black to throw in 8...a5!? (8...0-0 is worse, as shown in Keitlinghaus-Siebrecht, Dortmund Open 1998: 9.♘ge2 ♗g4 10.f3 ♗h4 11.♘g3 ♗f5 12.0-0 ♗g3 13.hg3±) when the lines diverge:



A) 9.a3 a4 10.♗a2 0-0 11.♘ge2 c6 12.dc6 bc6 13.0-0 ♗a6 14.♖e1 Martin

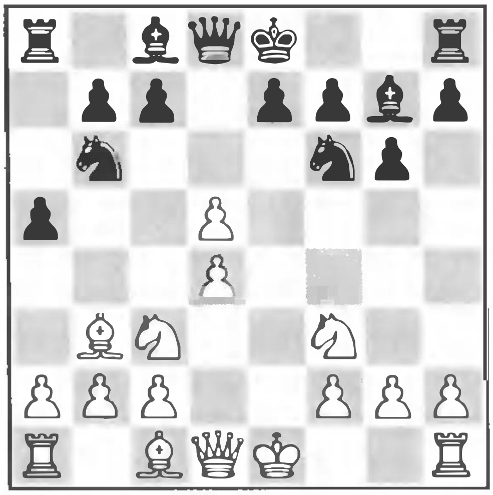
Gonzalez-Palacios, Alicante 1989, and now Black would have kept compensation for the pawn with 14...♗c4!? or 14...♘c4!?.

B) 9.a4 0-0 10.♘ge2 c6 11.dc6 bc6 12.0-0 ♗a6 13.♖e1 ♘c4 14.♖b1 ♘d6 15.♕d2 ♖b8 16.♖bd1 ♗c4 with pressure for the pawn, e.g. 17.♘c1 e6 18.♘e4 ♘e4 19.♖e4 ♕d5 20.♖ee1 ♗b3 21.♘b3 ♖b4 Keitlinghaus-Vokac, Prague 1992 (½-½, 45).

6. ... ♘b6

6...0-0 is also possible and usually just transposes.

7. ♗b3 a5!?



It is useful to gain space on the queenside, though there is nothing wrong with the natural 7...0-0. After 8.0-0 ♘bd5 9.♘d5 ♘d5 10.c3 ♗g4 11.h3 ♗f3 12.♕f3 c6 13.♖e1 e6 White only had a very slight plus in Bosch-Hennig, Netherlands cupfinal 1998. As I remarked earlier such positions are reminiscent of the ones that often arise after the moves 1.e4 ♘f6 2.e5 ♘d5 3.d4 d6 4.♘f3 de5 5.♘e5 g6 6.♗c4 c6 etc.

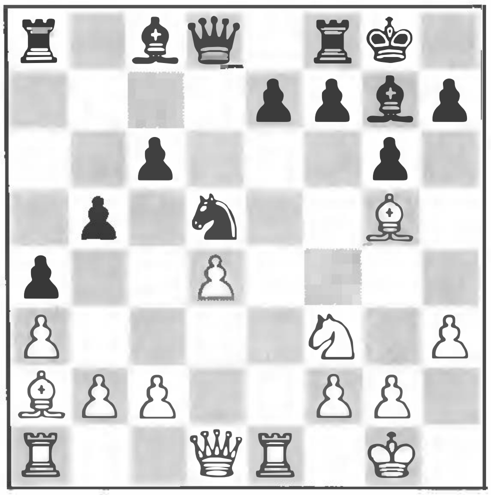
Variation A

8. a3 a4
9. ♗a2 ♘bd5
10. ♘bd5 ♘d5
11. 0-0 0-0
12. h3 c6
13. ♖e1 b5

Black's strategy is based on restraining White's queenside and fortifying his stronghold on d5.

14. ♗g5

White is setting up threats against e7 but it isn't quite clear how serious they are. In practice Black has twice chosen to ignore the loss of the e7-pawn.



Van der Wiel-Sznapik, Novi Sad Olympiad 1990, continued: 14...♗e6 15.♗d5 ♕d5 16.♗e7 ♖fe8 17.♗h4 ½-½; Black's white-square blockade compensates for the pawn.

Even more provocative was M.Ankerst-Vokac, Dortmund 1992: 14...h6! 15.♗d5 ♕d5 16.♗e7 ♖e8 17.♗c5 (17.♗h4 ♖e1∓) 17...♗f5 18.c3 ♗e4 19.♘d2? ♗g2 20.♕g4 ♗h3! 21.♕h3 ♕g5! and Black was winning.

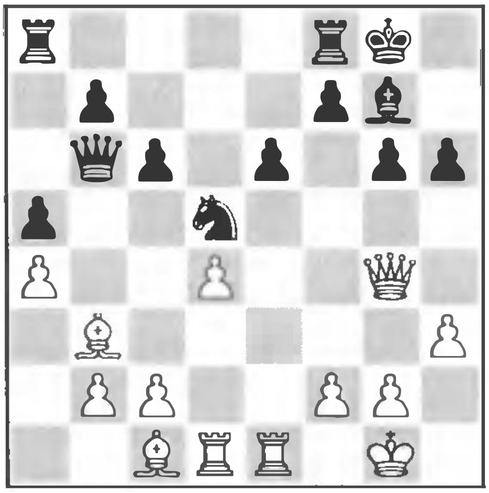
Variation B

8. a4 ♘bd5
9. ♘d5 ♘d5
10. 0-0 0-0
11. ♖e1

Or 11.h3 h6 (11...c6 12.♖e1 and now instead of 12...♕c7?! Magem-Palacios, Sevilla 1989, the Alekhine manoeuvre 12...♗e6 planning 13...♘c7 is interesting; 13.♘g5 ♗f5) 12.♖e1 e6 13.♘e5 ♘e7 14.♗f4 b6 15.♕d2 ♔h7 16.♖ad1 ♗b7 17.c3±/= Shaked-Turner, London 1997.

11. ... ♗g4
12. h3 ♗f3
13. ♕f3 e6
14. ♕g4 c6
15. ♗g5 ♕b6
16. ♖ad1 h6
17. ♗c1

And White has only a very slight edge in this characteristic position.



Bashkov-Vokac, Ostrava 1991.

Conclusion

Thus it seems that Black can mix the Modern Defence, the Scandinavian and the Alekhine and that he can get away with it as well! In the main lines White gains nothing special. At present 6.♗g5!? is the most dangerous try to refute 3...d5!?.

RECENT GAMES

In the following two games the alternatives for 6.♘f3 (our main line) are tested. In several games of Milovanovic as Black, his opponents chose the set-up with ♕f3. While it is clear that Black should play back and forth with the bishop for a bit (♗c8-g4-f5-d7 in Berescu-Milovanovic for instance), it is not clear what the most accurate treatment is (with or without a5 or even a6). The game De Firmian-Hennig deserves to be studied with care. Black clearly improves upon an older game (Sadler-Turner, 1997). Moreover, De Firmian opted for NCO's recommendation of 6.♗g5!?, but this got him nowhere. Indeed, his lower-rated opponent clearly outplayed him in the early middlegame only to miraculously squander his winning advantage later on.

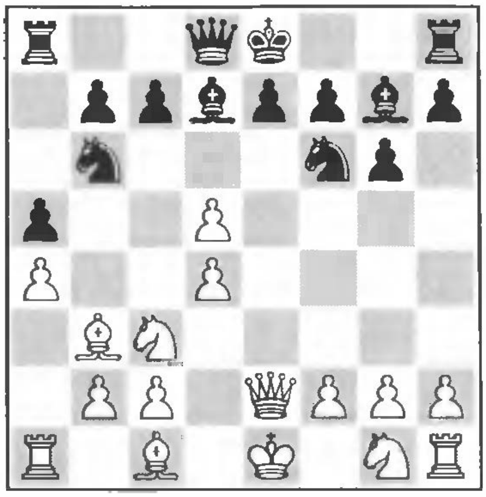
☐ **Alin Berescu**
■ **Ninoslav Milovanovic**
Kavala 2002

1.e4 g6 2.d4 ♗g7 3.♘c3 d5 4.ed5 ♘f6 5.♗c4 ♘bd7 6.♗b3 ♘b6 7.♕f3 a5!?

The immediate 7...♗g4 is more common; now 8.♕g3 was the stem game Klovans-Gurevich, 1970.

In Mikac-Milovanovic, Halkidiki 2000, play continued for only a little while: 8.♕d3N a5 (or 8...a6 9.h3 ♗c8 Parligras-Milovanovic, Kavala 2002) 9.a3 a4 10.♗a2 0-0 ½-½.

8.a4 ♗g4 9.♕d3 ♗f5 10.♕b5 ♗d7 11.♕e2



11...♗c8

Both 11...♗g4!? and 11...♗f5 could be tested.

12.♗g5 0-0 13.♕f3 ♗g4 14.♕g3 ♗f5 15.♗f6 ♗f6 16.♘ge2 h5

Perhaps 16...♕d6!? is better.

17.h3 ♕d7 18.0-0 h4 19.♕f3 ♖ad8 20.♖fe1 ♔g7 21.♖ad1± g5?! 22.♘e4 ♗e4 23.♕e4 ♘d5 24.c3 c6 25.♘c1 ♘f4 26.♘d3 ♘d3 27.♖d3± ♕d6 28.♖f3 e6 29.♕g4 ♖h8? 30.♗e6!+– ♖h6 31.♗b3 c5 32.dc5 ♕c5 33.♖f5 ♕c7 34.♔h1 ♕b6 35.f4 ♕b3 36.fg5 ♖h7 37.gf6 ♔h8 38.♖h5

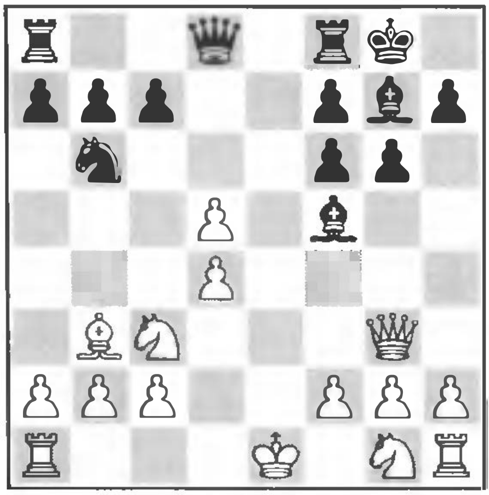
Black resigned.

☐ **Nick De Firmian**
■ **Dirk Hennig**
Germany Bundesliga 2002

1.e4 g6 2.d4 ♗g7 3.♘c3 d5 4.ed5 ♘f6 5.♗c4 ♘bd7 6.♗g5 0-0 7.♗b3 ♘b6 8.♕f3 ♗g4

Improving upon Sadler-Turner, 1997, where 8...♗d7?! was played.

9.♕g3 ♗f5 10.♗f6 ef6



Black's set-up in this game deserves attention. He makes no effort to regain the pawn, but just continues positionally. He has the advantage of the bishop pair. Moreover, the White bishop on b3 is obviously hindered by his own extra-pawn.

11.♘ge2 ♖e8 12.0-0-0 ♘c8! 13.♕f3 ♘d6 14.♘g3 ♗d7

Now everything is ready for a pawn march on the queenside.

15.♘ce4 b5 16.♘c5 a5 17.a3 f5

Black has excellent compensation for the pawn of course.

18.♘e2 ♖b8 19.♘f4 ♖e7 20.h4 ♕f8 21.♘d7 ♖d7 22.g4 fg4 23.♕g4 ♖e7 24.h5 ♖e4!

Threatening to take the knight.

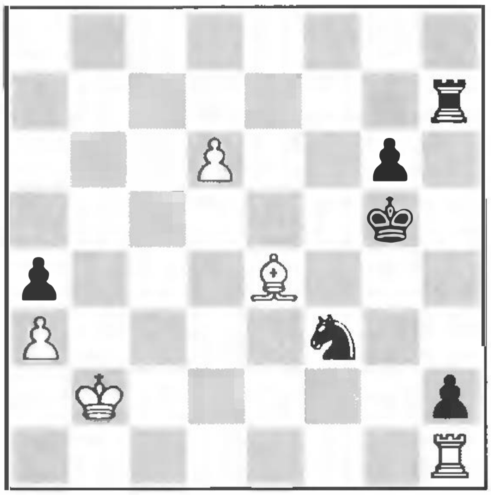
25.♔b1 ♗h6! 26.hg6 fg6 27.♕h3 ♖f4 28.♕h6 ♕h6 29.♖h6 a4 30.♗a2 ♖f2

Black has the advantage in this ending.

31.b3 ♖bf8 32.♖h3 ♔g7 33.♔b2 h5 34.♖g1 ♔h6 35.♖hg3 ♖8f6 36.♖c3 ♖f7 37.♖cg3 ♖g7 38.♖g5 h4 39.ba4 ba4 40.♔a1 ♖f1

40...♘b5.

41.♖f1 ♔g5 42.c4 h3 43.c5 ♘f5 44.♗b1 ♘d4 45.♔b2 h2 46.♖h1 ♖h7 47.d6 cd6 48.cd6 ♘f3 49.♗e4



49...♘e5

49...♔f4 50.♗f3 (50.d7 ♖d7) 50...♔f3 51.d7 ♖d7 52.♖h2 g5–+.

50.♔c3 ♔f6

50...♔f4.

51.♔d4 ♔e6 52.♔c5 ♖h5 53.♗g2 ♔d7

53...♘f7.

54.♔b4 ♖h4 55.♔c5 ♘d3 56.♔b5 ♘f4

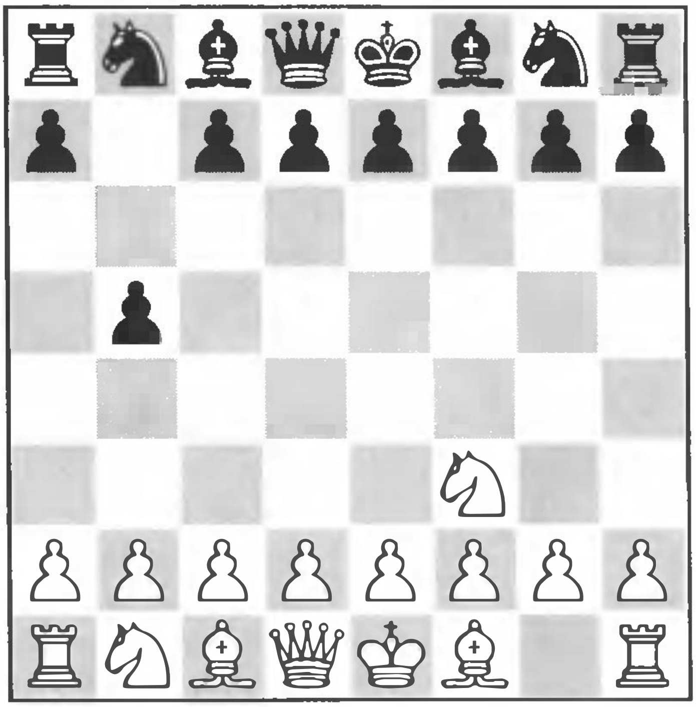
56...♔d6 57.♖d1 ♖d4.

57.♗c6 ♔d6 58.♖d1 ♔e5 59.♖e1 ♔f6 60.♖f1 ♔g5 61.♔a4 ♘e2 62.♔a5 ♘g3 63.♖b1 h1♕ 64.♗h1 ♘h1 65.♖g1 ♔f5 66.♔b5 ♘f2 67.♖f1 ♖f4 68.a4 g5 69.a5 ♘e4 70.♖f4 gf4 71.a6 f3 72.a7 f2 73.a8♕ f1♕ 74.♔b6 ♕f2 75.♔c7 ♕g3 76.♔b6 ♕g1 77.♔c7 ♕g7 78.♔b8 ♕e5 79.♔a7 ♕c5 80.♔b8 ♘f6 81.♕f3 ♔e6 82.♔b7 ♕b4 83.♔a7 ♘d7 84.♕c6

Draw.

CHAPTER 14

Only Mad Dogs and Englishmen?



NIC KEY RE 20.2

1...b5: an SOS reply to 1.♘f3

There are those who play 1.♘f3 to transpose into particular 1.d4 lines (thus avoiding the Grünfeld for example). Others prefer the sequence 1.♘f3, 2.g3, 3.♗g2, 4.0-0, 5.b3, 6.♗b2 and so on, almost regardless (or oblivious?) of the opponent's moves. Both types of 1.♘f3 players can be annoying to meet. Here is an SOS antidote to direct the course of play, or to liven things up a bit.

The move 1...b5 versus the Réti is particularly popular amongst English players. Perhaps Miles is to blame for beating Karpov with 1...a6 and 2...b5 more than 20 years ago. Apart from Miles, adherents of this reversed Sokolsky are Hodgson and Arkell.

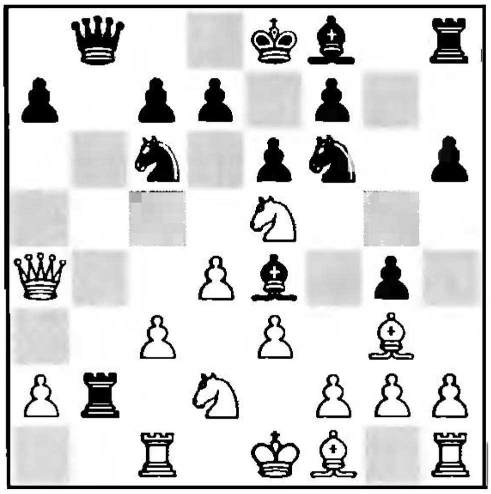
This article should provide you with plenty of ideas to combat 1.♘f3 with 1...b5. The material is divided along the different set-ups that White may opt for. The acid test, in my opinion, lies in 1.♘f3 b5 2.e4 ♗b7 3.♗b5.

Getting started

First a fun game to get into the spirit of things.

☐ **Tibor Karolyi**
■ **Julian Hodgson**
Brussels 1984

1.♘f3 b5 2.d4 ♗b7 3.♗g5 h6 4.♗h4 g5 5.♗g3 ♘f6 6.♕d3 ♗e4 7.♕b5 ♘c6 8.c3?! 8.♘bd2 ♖b8 9.♕a4 ♖b2 and Black has rather nice counterplay already. **10.♘bd2 ♕b8 11.♖c1 e6 12.e3 g4 13.♘e5**



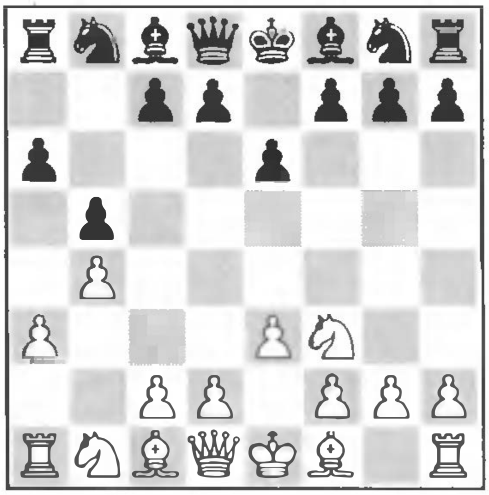
13...♖d2! 14.♔d2 ♕b2 15.♖c2 After 15.♔d1 ♗a3 Black also wins the rook. **15...♗c2 16.♕c2 ♘e4 17.♔d3 ♕b5 18.c4?** This loses quickly, but the king march is no pleasure trip either: 18.♔e4 f5 19.♔f4 ♘e5 20.de5 (20.♗b5 ♘g6 mate) 20...h5 21.♗h4 (21.♔g5 ♕c5) 21...♗h6 22.♗g5 ♗g5 23.♔g5 ♕e5 24.f4 gf3 and Black should win. **18...♘b4 19.♔e2 ♘g3 20.hg3 ♕e5** 0-1

White plays e3

The following game is played in true Beckettian spirit. I refer the interested reader to Beckett's novel *Murphy*, chapter 11, the chess game between Murphy and Mr Endon.

☐ **Mark Taimanov**
■ **Peter Svidler**
St. Petersburg 1996

1.♘f3 b5 2.e3 a6 3.b4 e6 4.a3



Recognizing the strength of Black's set-up, White is eager to copy his opponents moves. **4...♘f6 5.d4 a5** Breaking the symmetry. Murphy would have continued with d5 of course. **6.♗b5 ab4 7.0-0 ba3 8.♗a3 ♗a3 9.♖a3 ♖a3 10.♘a3 ♕e7 11.♕a1 0-0 12.♖b1 c5 13.♘c4 d5 14.♘ce5 ♕c7 15.dc5 ♕c5 16.c4 dc4** Although full symmetry has not been achieved, full equality is on the cards (the board that is). ½-½

This was partly tongue-in-cheek of course. However, 2.e3 does not really deserve serious treatment. The move is too modest to cause Black any problems. Just a brief overview:

1. ♘f3 b5
2. e3

Or 2.d4 ♗b7 3.e3 a6 which transposes. In Mikhalchishin-K.Arkell, Cappelle la Grande 1991. White developed his bishop outside the pawn chain: 3.♗f4 ♘f6 4.e3 a6

5.a4 b4 6.c4 bc3ep 7.♘c3 e6 8.♗d3 c5 9.e4 cd4 10.♘d4 ♘c6 11.♘c6 ♗c6 12.0-0 ♗e7 13.♕e2 ½-½. The position is about equal but still contains a lot of play.

2. ... a6

3. d4 ♗b7

Delaying development of the bishop is also quite sensible (thus avoiding an early ♕b3 – compare Miles' recommendation below). The game Vul-Tischbierek, Berlin 1997, went 3...e6 4.c4 bc4 5.♗c4 ♘f6 6.a3 d5 7.♗d3 c5 8.dc5 ♗c5 9.b4 ♗d6 10.♗b2 ♘bd7 11.♘bd2 ♗b7 and Black's chances are to be preferred.

4. c4

Nothing is gained by the inclusion of 4.a4 b4. After 5.c4 bc3 6.bc3 e6 7.♗d3 ♘f6 8.♘bd2 c5 9.0-0 cd4 10.cd4 ♘c6 11.♖b1 ♘b4 Black was already slightly better in Ljubisavljevic-Arkell, Uzes 1989.

Equally innocuous was 4.♗d3 ♘f6 5.0-0 e6 6.b3 c5 7.c4 bc4 8.bc4 ♗e7 9.♘c3 ♗f3!? 10.♕f3 ♘c6 11.♘e2 0-0 12.♖d1 ♖b8 13.♗c2 ♕c7 14.♗d2 ♘a5 15.♗a5 ♕a5 16.♗b3 ♖fe8 17.♖ac1 cd4 18.ed4 ♗a3 19.♖c2 e5 20.de5 ♖e5 21.g3 ♖be8 22.♘f4 h5 ½-½ Furman-Dzindzichashvili, Soviet Union 1973.

4. ... bc4

5. ♗c4 e6

6. ♘c3 ♘f6

7. 0-0 d5

8. ♗e2 c5

A kind of Queen's Gambit Accepted but then with bc4 instead of dc4. With an extra central pawn Black should have no problems. Yet Miles indicates 9.♕b3 with a slight advantage for White. The game Andersson-Miles, Tilburg 1984, went instead: 9.b3?! cd4 10.ed4 ♘bd7 11.a3 ♗d6 12.b4 ♘e4 13.♘a4 ♗c6 14.♗b2 0-0 15.♘c5 ♕b6 16.♖b1 a5∓ 17.♗a1 ab4 18.ab4 ♗b5 19.♕c2 ♘df6 20.♗b5 ♕b5 21.♘e5 ♗e7 22.♖fc1 ♘d6 23.♗c3 ♖a7 24.♖a1 ♖fa8 25.♖a5 ♕e8 ½-½.

White plays g3

I do not intend to cover this completely since play will often transpose to 1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 e6 3.g3 b5. This is a very respectable line played by Karpov, Timman and Andersson to name but a few.

1. ♘f3 b5

2. g3 ♗b7

3. ♗g2

Or 3.d4 ♘f6 4.♗g2 e6 5.0-0 and the above-mentioned transposition has taken place.

3. ... c5

Also playable are moves like 3...♘f6 and 3...e6. Interesting is 3...e5, after 4.d3 g6 5.0-0 ♗g7 6.♘c3 a6 7.a4 b4 8.♘e4 ♕e7 9.♗g5 f6 10.♗e3 d6 Black had good play in Guerra Bastida-Sulskis, Linares 2000.

4. 0-0 e6

In Romanishin-Hodgson, Ischia 1996, Black fianchettoed both bishops. After 4...♘f6 5.d3 g6 6.e4 ♗g7 7.e5 ♘d5 8.d4 cd4 9.♘d4 ♕b6 10.a4 ♘c7 11.♗b7 ♕b7 12.♘b5 ♘b5 13.ab5 ♕b5 14.♘c3 ♕b7 15.♖a5 White had a pleasant edge.

5. c3

This looks modest but actually contains more bite than 5.b3 ♘f6 6.c4 a6 7.♘c3 ♕b6 8.e3 ♗e7 9.♕e2 ♘e4 10.♗b2 0-0 11.♘e4 ♗e4 12.d3 ½-½ Foisor-Armas, Rumanian Championship, Predeal 1988.

5. ... ♘f6

6. ♕b3 ♗c6

7. d3 d6

Black should equalize here eventually. See the following two games by Gutman.

● Gutman-Grunfeld, Beer Sheva zonal 1985: 8.♗g5 ♗e7 (8...♘bd7 when 9.♘fd2 ♗g2 10.♔g2 ♖b8 is fine for Black. In the game Black is in for a rough time) 9.♘fd2 ♗g2 10.♔g2 a6 11.♗f6 ♗f6 12.a4 ♘d7 13.ab5 ab5 14.♘a3 b4 15.♘b5 ♖a1 16.♖a1 bc3 17.bc3 ♗e7 18.♘e4 ♘b8 19.♘bd6! ♗d6 20.♕b5 ♔e7 (20...♔f8 21.♖a8) 21.♖a7 ♘d7 22.d4+– cd4 23.♕g5 1-0

● Gutman-Kortchnoi, Hamburg 1997: 8.♘fd2 d5 9.e4 ♗e7 10.ed5 ed5 11.♘f3 ♘bd7 12.d4 c4 13.♕c2 0-0 and Black had no problems.

White plays e4

As I stated above this is the real test for 1...b5. Of course, 1.e4 is even stronger.

1. ♘f3 b5

2. e4 ♗b7

3. ♗b5

This is best. Quiet moves promise little. Thus, Kamsky-Hodgson, Amsterdam 1996, went 3.d3 a6 4.g3 d6 5.a4 ♘d7 6.♗h3 g6 7.0-0 ♘gf6 8.ab5 ab5 9.♖a8 ♗a8 10.♘a3 ♕b8 11.♗g5 ♗g7 12.♕d2 0-0 13.♖e1!? (according to Kamsky Black is better after both 13.♗d7 ♘d7 14.♗e7 ♖e8 15.♗g5 ♗b2 and 13.♕b4 h6! 14.♗e3 c6) 13...c5?! 14.b4! now White is slightly better because b5 will become weak. According to the American 13...e6 and 13...e5 are both OK for Black.

More to the point is 3.e5. White gains space and a tempo, impeding Black's development in the process. Black's must find an improvement over the following (start looking from move 5 onwards): 3.e5 a6 4.d4 e6 5.c4 bc4 6.♗c4 ♘e7 7.♘c3 d5 8.ed6 cd6 9.d5 e5 10.♕b3± Hodgson-K. Arkell, British Championship, Plymouth 1989.

3. ... ♗e4

4. 0-0

Merely transposing is 4.d4 ♘f6 5.0-0. 4.♘c3 speeds up development but loses out on central influence: 4...♗b7 5.d4 e6 6.0-0 ♘f6 7.♗g5 ♗e7 8.♖e1 0-0 9.♗f6 ♗f6 10.♘e4 ♗e7 11.c3 d6 12.♕d3 ♘d7 13.♗a4 ♘f6= Spiridonov-K. Arkell, Cannes 1998.

4. ... ♘f6

Black has an interesting alternative here in the form of 4...c6!?. After 5.♗a4 ♕a5 6.♘c3 ♗g6 7.d4 e6 play develops along totally different lines, Jäckelen-Tischbierek, German Bundesliga 1993/94.

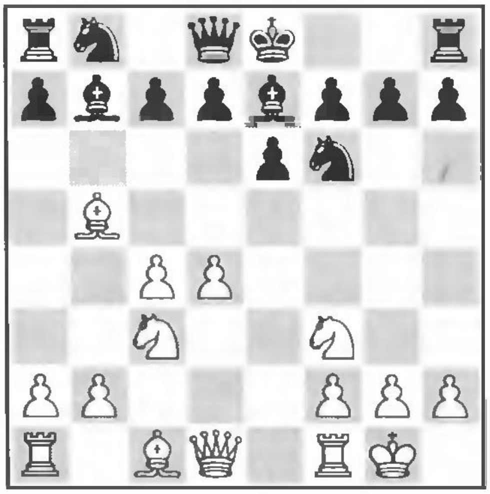
5. d4 e6

6. c4

6.♗e2 ♗e7 7.c4 ♗b7 8.♘c3 0-0 9.h3 d6 10.♗e3 ♘bd7 11.b4 ♘e4 12.♘e4 ♗e4 13.♘d2 ♗b7 14.♗f3± Szekely-Psakhis, Tallinn 1983.

6. ... ♗e7

7. ♘c3 ♗b7



This position has occurred several times in grandmaster practice. Considering its importance for the evaluation of the whole line we will continue our survey.

Line A

8. ♖e1

McNab-King, British Championship, Eastbourne 1990, went 8.h3 0-0 9.♗e3 d6 10.♖e1 ♘bd7 11.d5 e5 12.b4 g6 13.♗c6 ♕c8 14.c5 dc5 15.bc5 ♗c6 16.dc6 ♘c5 17.♘d5 ♘d5 18.♕d5 ♖d8 19.♕e5 ♘e6 20.♘d4 ♗d6 21.♕f6 ♖e8 22.♘f5 gf5 23.♗d4 ♘d4 24.♕g5 ♔f8 25.♕h6 ½-½.

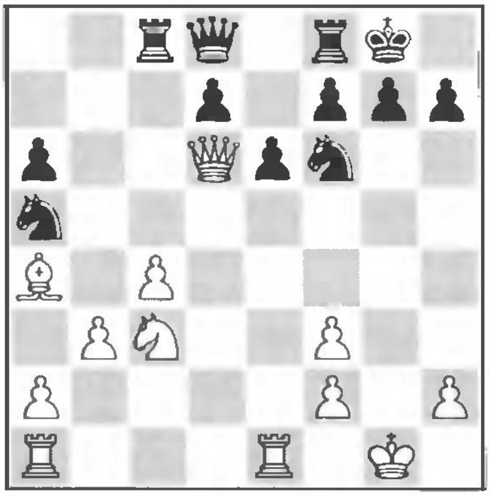
8. ... 0-0

9. d5

9.♗g5 d6 10.♕d3 c6 11.♗a4 ♘bd7 12.♖ad1 was slightly better for White in Keitlinghaus-Libeau, Bad Wörishofen 1989. However, the immediate 10...♘bd7 is stronger. White may consider the prophylactic 9.♗a4.

9. ... c6!

The right idea, Black now has good counterplay. Enjoy the following win by Giorgadze: **10.dc6 ♘c6 11.♗f4 ♖c8 12.♗d6 ♗d6 13.♕d6 ♘a5 14.b3 a6 15.♗a4 15.♗a6 ♖c6** 15...♗f3 16.gf3.



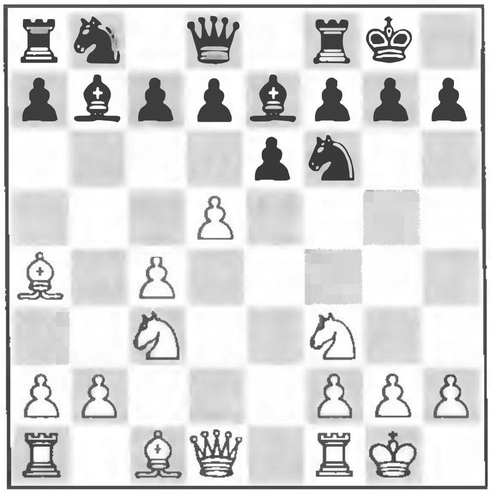
16...♘c4! 17.bc4 ♖c4 18.♕d3 ♕c7 19.♖ac1 ♖h4 20.f4 ♕f4∓ 21.h3 ♕h6 22.♕e3 g5 23.♔g2 d5 24.♖cd1 ♘h5 25.♖h1 ♕g7 26.♕f3 ♘f4 27.♔f1 ♖c8 28.♘b1 ♘h3 29.♗d7 ♖d8 30.♗c6 g4 31.♕g3 ♖h5 32.♗b7 ♖f5 33.♖d2 ♖f3 34.♕c7 ♕f6 35.♖h2 ♖f8 36.♖g2 h5 37.♗a6 ♘f4 38.♖g1 ♕a1 39.♕b6 ♖a8 40.♖g3 ♖a6 41.♕b8 ♔g7 42.♖f3 gf3 43.♖b2 ♖a2 44.♕e5 ♔g6 0-1 Belov-Giorgadze, Hamburg 1995.

Line B

8. ♗a4 0-0

9. d5

Or 8.d5 0-0 9.♗a4.



Black's position is fairly solid, but White has gained considerable space. How should Black continue his development? Attractive at first sight is 9...♘a6 followed by ♘c5. However, this does not meet the demands of the position since Black has now no means of pressurizing d5. See what happened in Wojtkiewicz-Bronstein, Reykjavik 1994: 9...♘a6 10.a3! ♘c5 11.♗c2 a5 12.♗e3 ed5 13.cd5 g6 14.♖e1 ♘h5 15.♘e5 ♘g7 16.♗d4 White was clearly better and won.

Correct is a plan with ♗b4 to exchange the c3-knight that defends d5, when White is going to pin the f6-knight. A sharp and original position where Black certainly has chances but needs to defend well. See the following two examples:

● Eingorn-Semeniuk, Kiev 1984: **9...♘a6 10.♖e1** 10.a3! prevents ♗b4. **10...♗b4 11.♗g5 ♘c5 12.♗c2 ♗c3 13.bc3 d6 14.♗h4 h6 15.♘d4** White has good attacking chances. **15...ed5 16.♘f5 ♘cd7 17.cd5 ♖e8 18.♕d2 ♗d5 19.♗a4!** An annoying pin. **19...♗e4** 19...♖e1 20.♖e1 ♗e6 was the alternative. **20.♗f6 ♘f6 21.♗e8 ♗f5 22.♗c6** and White won.

● Speelman-Hodgson, London 1985: **9...♗b4 10.♗g5 ♗c3** 10...h6 11.♗h4 g5 12.♘g5 hg5 13.♗g5 was given as unclear by Speelman. **11.bc3 h6 12.♗h4 ♘a6 13.♖e1 ♘c5 14.♗c2 ed5!?** 14...d6 see above. **15.cd5 ♗d5 16.♖e5** 16.♗f6 ♗f3 17.♗h7 ♔h7 18.♕c2 ♗e4 19.♖e4 ♕f6 20.♖e6 ♕g6 21.♖g6 fg6 is better for White – Speelman. **16...♗f3! 17.♕f3 d6 18.♖f5 ♘cd7 19.h3 ♖b8** 19...♕e7. **20.♗a4 ♘e5?** This is bad. According to Speelman, 20...♕c8 21.♗f6 ♘f6 22.♖f6 gf6 23.♖e1 with equality was correct. **21.♕f4 ♘d5?! 22.♗d8 ♘f4 23.♗c7+– ♘e2 24.♔f1 ♖b2 25.♗d6 ♘c4 26.♗f8 ♔f8 27.♖b5** 1-0.

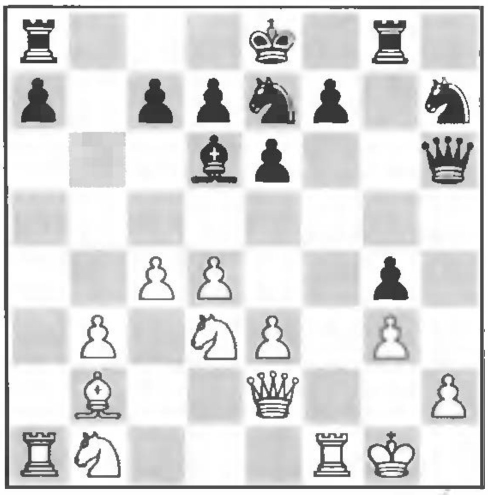
Odds and ends

1. ♘f3 b5
2. b3

Now an Englishwoman continued sensibly with 2...♘f6 3.c4 bc4 4.bc4 c5 5.♘c3 ♘c6 6.e3 g6 7.♗e2 ♗g7 8.0-0 0-0 9.♖b1 d6 10.d3 ♗d7 11.♗b2 ♖b8 12.♗a1 ♖b1 13.♕b1 ♕a5 ½-½ Sakhatova-S.Arkell, Manila Olympiad 1992. Obviously inspired by the Karolyi-Hodgson game the inventor of 5.♘a4 versus the Grünfeld went berserk in the following entertaining game:

☐ **Santiago Roa Alonso**
■ **Ashot Nadanian**
Linares 1998

1.♘f3 b5 2.b3 ♗b7 3.♗b2 e6 4.e3 b4 5.c4 ♘f6 6.g3 g5 6...♗e7 7.♗g2 0-0 would be fine for Black, but is not as much fun as the text. **7.♗g2 g4 8.♘h4 ♗g2 9.♘g2 ♖g8 10.0-0** 10.h3 h5 **10...h5 11.f3 ♘h7** A single-minded attempt at taking advantage of White's weakened control over h3 and f3. **12.♘f4 ♕g5 13.fg4 hg4 14.a3 ♘c6 15.ab4 ♗b4 16.d4 ♘e7 17.♕e2 ♕h6 18.♘d3 ♗d6**



19.c5 Winning a piece or allowing an attack? **19...♗g3 20.hg3 ♘g5** One cannot deny that Black's play has a certain consistency about it. **21.♘d2 ♖h8 22.♔f2 ♘f5 23.♔e1** 23.♖h1 ♘h3 24.♖h3 ♕h3 **23...♘g3 24.♕g4 ♕h2 25.♔d1** 25.♖f2 ♕h1 26.♘f1 **25...♘5e4**

26.♘e4 ♘f1 27.♕f3 f5 27...♕g2 28.♕g2 ♘e3 29.♔d2 ♘g2 **28.♘f6 ♔f7 29.♘e5** 29.♕f1! ♕h1 30.♕e1 ♕b7 **29...♔e7 30.♗c3 ♕g1 31.♘fd7** 31.♔e2 ♖h2 32.♔d3 ♕e3 33.♕e3 ♘e3 34.♔e3 ♖h3 35.♔d2 ♔f6 **31...♖h2** 31...♘h2 is an elementary win, but I presume that both combatants were in terrible time trouble. **32.♘c6 ♔d7 33.♘e5 ♔e7 0-1**

Following Nadanian's g5 plan is perhaps not advisable for those who seek the truth (or for those with weak nerves for that matter).

1. ♘f3 b5
2. a4 b4

Now for further analysis I would suggest 3.e4 ♗b7 4.♗c4!? with interesting play, which has hardly been tried out in practice. A meek alternative is 4.d3.
Corkett-K.Arkell, English Team Championship 1998, went instead: 3.c4 c5 4.b3 ♗b7 5.♗b2 ♘f6 6.e3 g6 7.d4 cd4 8.ed4 ♗g7 9.♘bd2 0-0 10.♗d3 d5 11.0-0 ♘c6 and Black was quite OK.
The eternal Réti fianchetto is also possible. In Vaulin-Sulskis, Bydgoszcz 1999, Black overreacted a bit: 3.g3 ♗b7 4.♗g2 g5!? 5.d3 g4 6.♘h4 ♗g2 7.♘g2 d5 (if at all then 7...♗g7 8.h3 h5 is essential to keep the pawn structure intact) 8.h3 gh3 9.♖h3 ♕d7 10.♖h1 ♘c6 11.♘d2 e6 12.♘b3 f5 13.♗g5 ♘e5 14.♗e3 ♘g6 15.♕d2 a5 16.♘f4 ♘f4 17.♗f4 White had a huge positional advantage and won.

1. ♘f3 b5
2. c3

Not as innocent as it looks. Against the Sokolsky 1...c6 is also not such a bad idea.

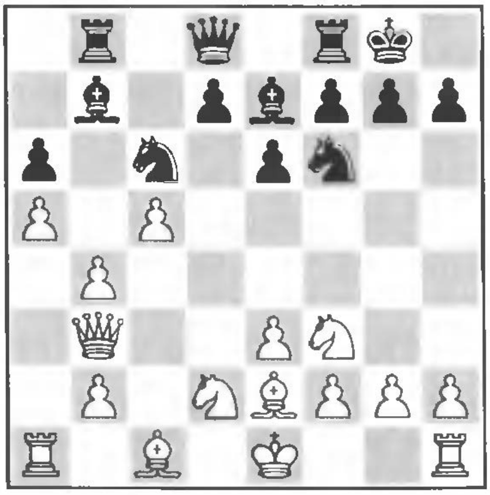
2. ... e6

So as to answer 3.a4 with 3...b4.

● 3.d4 ♗b7 4.♗g5 was Andersson-Littlewood, Hastings 1980/81, now 4...♗e7 5.♗e7 ♕e7 improves on the game which went 4...f6?! 5.♗f4 f5 6.♘bd2 ♘f6 7.e3 a6 8.♗g5 ♗e7 9.a4 b4 10.♗f6 ♗f6 11.♗d3 ♘c6 12.0-0 g6 13.♘b3 0-0 14.♘c5 ♗c8 15.♕e2 a5 16.♗b5 and White was better.

● 3.g3 has also been played. After 3...♗b7 4.♗g2 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♗e7 6.d3 Black should play 6...a6. In Kortchnoi-Hodgson, Brussels 1985, White gained a pleasant edge after 6...d6 7.a4! a6 8.ab5 ab5 9.♖a8 ♗a8 10.♕b3!

3.♕b3 a6 4.d4 ♗b7 5.♘bd2 ♘f6 6.a4 b4 7.a5 ♗e7 8.e3 0-0 9.♗e2 c5 10.dc5 ♘c6 11.cb4 ♖b8



And Black had compensation in Langeweg-Ivkov, Amsterdam IBM 1972, although he later went wrong: **12.e4 ♗a8 13.♕c3 ♖b4 14.0-0 ♘e4 15.♘e4 ♖e4 16.♗a6 ♗f6 17.♕d2 ♘d4 18.♘d4 ♗d4 19.♗e2 ♕c7 20.h3 ♖g4?** 20...♖h4 21.♕g5; 20...♗c5. **21.♗g4 ♕g3 22.♗f3**

♗f3 23.♕g5+– ♕g5 24.♗g5 ♗d5 25.♖ab1 ♗c5 26.b4 ♗d4 27.b5 ♖b8 28.♗e3 ♗e3 29.fe3 ♗c4 30.♖fc1 d5 31.a6 ♔f8 32.a7 1-0.

RECENT GAME

☐ **Folco Castaldo**
■ **Vlad Tomescu**
Reggio Emilia 2003

1.♘f3 b5 2.e4 ♗b7 3.♗b5 ♗e4 4.0-0 ♘f6 5.d4 e6 6.c4 ♗e7

6...c6 7.♗a4 ♕b6 is an interesting try:

A) 8.c5 ♗f3? (8...♕c7; 8...♕a6) and now not 9.♕f3, but 9.cb6 ♗d1 10.b7 winning on the spot.

B) 8.♘c3 ♗f3 9.♕f3 ♕d4 obviously Wite has compensation for the pawn, but is it enough? 10.♗f4 ♗d6 11.♗d6 ♕d6 12.♖fd1 ♕c7 13.c5 0-0 Vokac-Hasangatin, Karvina 2001.

7.♘c3 ♗b7 8.d5 0-0 9.♗a4 ♘a6

Bad is 9...a5?! 10.♖e1 ♘a6 11.♗f4 ed5 (11...♘c5 12.♗c2 d6 13.♗e3 ±) 12.cd5 ♗b4 13.♗c2! ♗c3 14.bc3 ♗d5 (14...♘d5 15.♕d3 ♘f6 16.♗g5) 15.♗g5 ♗e6 16.♕d3 ♘c5 17.♕d4 d6 18.♕h4 h6 19.♗h6! with a winning attack in Castaldo-Bertazzo, Milan 2003.

9...♗b4 as in Speelman-Hodgson, London 1985, was my recommendation in the main text.

10.♖e1 ♘c5

10...♗b4.

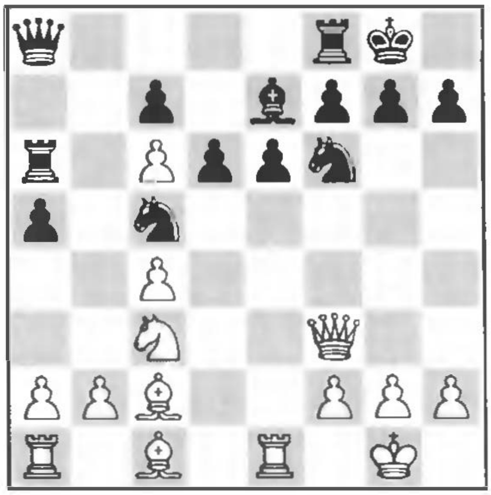
11.♗c2 a5 12.♘e5?!

Bad is 12.♗g5? ♘d5, but possible are 12.♗f4 and 12.a3, planning ♖b1 and b4.

12...d6 13.♘c6 ♗c6 14.dc6 ♖a6

Targetting the weak pawn.

15.♕f3 ♕a8



16.♗g5

16.♘d5 ed5 17.♖e7 dc4.

16...h6!

16...♕c6 17.♕h3

A) 17...h6 18.♗h6 gh6 19.♕h6+–.

B) 17...♘cd7 18.♘d5 ed5 19.♖e7 and White is better, e.g.:

– 19...dc4 20.♖d7 ♕d7 21.♗h7.

– 19...♖d8 20.♖d7 ♕d7 21.♗f5 ♕e7 22.♗f6 ♕f6 23.♕h7 ♔f8 24.♕h8 ♔e7 25.♖e1.

– 19...g6 20.♗f5 gf5 (20...♖d8 21.♗e6+–) 21.♕f5 ♕c4 22.♗f6 ♘f6 23.♕g5 ♔h8 24.♕f6 ♔g8 25.♖e3.

17.♗h6

Not correct but otherwise White just loses c6 without compensation.

17...gh6 18.♕f4

18.♕g3 ♔h8 19.♕f4 ♘g8–+.

18...♔g7 19.♖e3 ♖h8 20.♘d5 ed5 21.♖e7 ♖e8 22.♖f7?

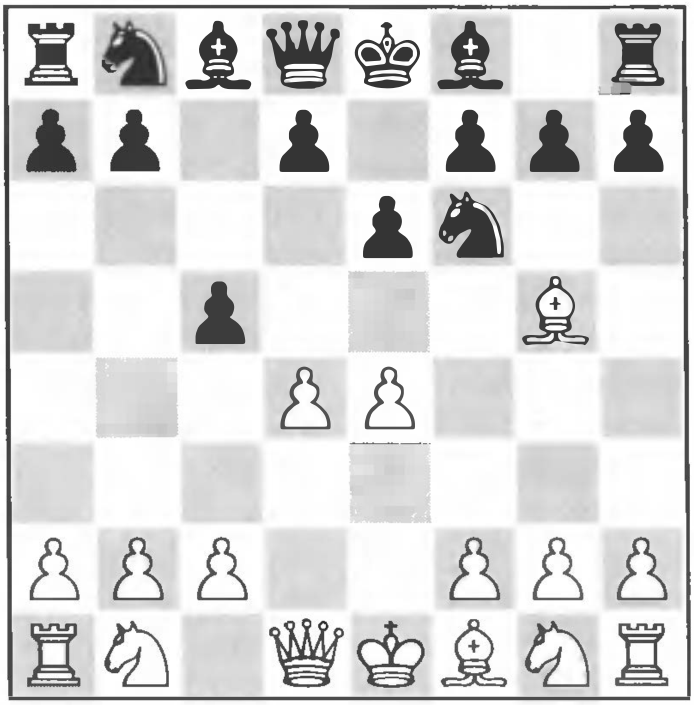
This accelerates the end, but White had nothing anyway. 22.♕g3 ♔f8 23.♖c7 ♕d8–+.

22...♔f7 23.♕h6 ♖g8 24.♖e1 ♕f8 25.♕h3 ♖a8 26.♗d1 ♖h8 27.♕f5 ♖e8

0-1

CHAPTER 15

Trumping the Tromp



NIC KEYQP 7.7

3...c5: the SOS alternative

Why counter an off-beat opening with an off-beat line? This is a question you might well ask when seeing the subject of this SOS chapter: the Trompowsky Opening. However, due to the efforts of several English players, with Julian Hodgson as their front man, the 'Tromp' has grown into a respectable opening. An opening with its own rules and theoretical lines against which it is not so easy to equalise.

The game we present here will provide you with a new and strong weapon to counter the Trompowsky.

☐ **Hikaru Nakamura**
■ **Leonid Yudasin**
New York 2001

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗g5 e6 3.e4 c5!?

The whole world plays 3...h6 here, but the text is a good SOS alternative.

4.e5

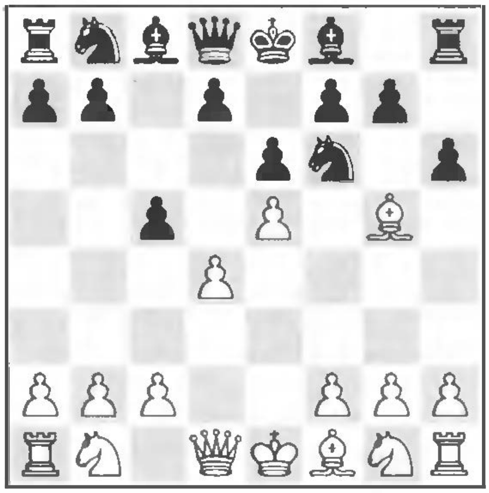
This is the most principled reply. Let us look at some alternatives:

A) 4.c3 ♕b6 5.♘d2 ♕b2 6.♘e2 gave White some compensation in D.Ionescu-Burnoiu, Bucharest 1999. On move 4 Black can also play 4...cd4!? answering 5.e5 with 5...♕a5 or 5...h6. If White takes back 5.cd4 ♕a5 6.♗d2, Black can play 6...♗b4 or 6...♕b6. Plenty of room for investigation!

B) 4.♘f3 cd4 5.e5 is an innocuous line, more commonly reached via the Torre Attack, i.e. 1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 e6 3.♗g5 c5 4.e4 cd4 5.e5. Teske-Bologan, Frankfurt 2000, continued 5...h6 6.♗c1 (6.♗h4 g5 is also OK for Black) 6...♘h7!? 7.♕d4 ♘c6 8.♕e4 d5 9.ed6 ♗d6 with a nice position.

C) 4.d5 (this is the main alternative to the text) 4...d6 (this is safest; 4...h6 5.♗f6 ♕f6 6.♘c3 must be slightly better for White; 4...ed5 5.e5 ♕e7 6.♕e2 h6 7.♗f4 ♘e4 8.f3 ♘g5 9.♘c3 d4 10.♘d5 ♕d8 11.e6 was Hodgson-Belkhodja, France Team Championship 1999) 5.♘c3 ♗e7 6.♗b5 (6.♘f3 0-0 threatens 7...♘d5) 6...♗d7 7.de6 fe6 8.♗d7 ♕d7 9.♘f3 ♘c6 and Black was fine in Marcelin-Lalic, Ubeda 2001.

4...h6



5.♗c1

Back to square one! One of Black's main ideas is that this retreat is more or less forced. The following game extracts show why this is:

A) 5.ef6 hg5 6.fg7 ♗g7 7.dc5 ♗b2 8.♘d2 ♕c7 9.♖b1 ♕c5 and Black is better, Reddmann-Nisipeanu, Hamburg 1998.

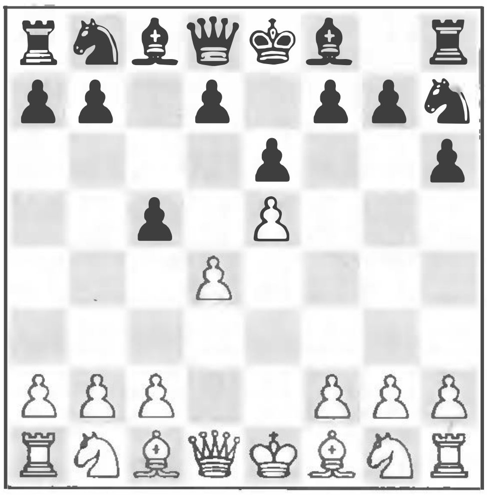
B) 5.♗f6 gf6 6.♘f3 cd4 7.ef6 ♕f6 8.♘bd2 d5, Rahman-Dunnington, British Championship, Scarborough 1999.

C) 5.♗h4 g5 6.♗g3 ♘e4 7.c3 cd4 8.♕d4 ♘g3 9.hg3 ♘c6 10.♕e3 b6 11.♗d3 ♕c7 12.f4 ♗b7 13.♘f3 0-0-0, Povah-Rowson, England Team Championship 1997.

In all cases Black's position was preferable. However, after the withdrawal of the bishop the knight must retreat too or expose itself to further attacks.

5...♘d5

Black's idea is reminiscent of an (improved) Alekhine's defence. He has lured White's centre forwards and is already attacking it too! Yet, there is a playable alternative in: 5...♘h7!?



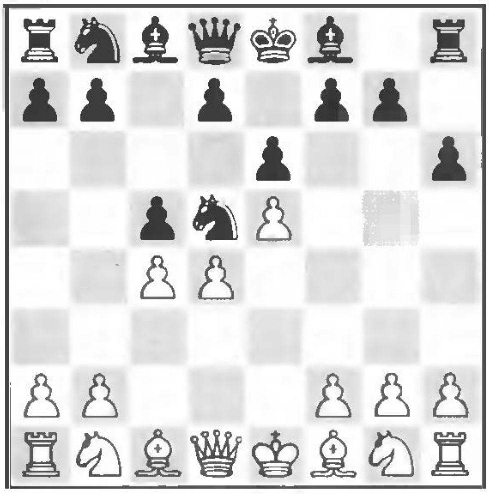
analysis diagram

6.♗d3 (6.d5 ed5 7.♕d5 ♘c6 8.♗c4 ♕e7 9.♘f3 ♘f6 10.♕f7 ♕f7 11.♗f7 ♔f7 12.ef6 d5 13.fg7 ♗g7, with excellent compensation for the minor investment in

B.Schmidt-Hellsten, Germany Bundesliga 2000/01) 6...cd4 7.♗h7 ♖h7 8.♘f3 ♘c6 9.0-0 d6 10.♗f4 de5 and in this unclear position the players called it a day in Slipak-Fiorito, Buenos Aires 2000.

Finally, I should like to point out that even 5...♘g8!? is not entirely stupid.

6.c4



6...♘b4!?

This is a novelty. The more mundane 6...♘b6 was an earlier Yudasin effort: 7.dc5 ♗c5 8.♘f3 d5 9.ed6 ♕d6 10.♕d6 (10.♗d2 was the stem game Hodgson-Ward, British Championship, Eastbourne 1991) 10...♗d6 11.♘c3 ♘c6 12.♗d2 ♘d7 13.0-0-0 ♔e7 14.♘b5 ½-½, Soffer-Yudasin, Israel Championship, Tel-Aviv 1994. Instead of 8.♘f3 White can go 8.♕g4, which is perhaps the reason why Yudasin preferred 6...♘b4 this time round.

Sorokin has played the even more provocative 6...♘e7, when 7.dc5 ♘bc6 8.♘c3 ♘e5 9.♘b5 ♘f5 10.♗f4 a6 11.♕a4 f6 led to great complications in Sargissian-Sorokin, Ubeda 2000.

7.d5

To stop the knight from reaching c6. After 7.a3 ♘4c6 the knight has been effectively re-routed to attack the squares d4 and e5. And 7.♘f3 cd4 8.♘d4 ♘8c6 is also good for Black.

7...d6

Immediately attacking the white pawn centre.

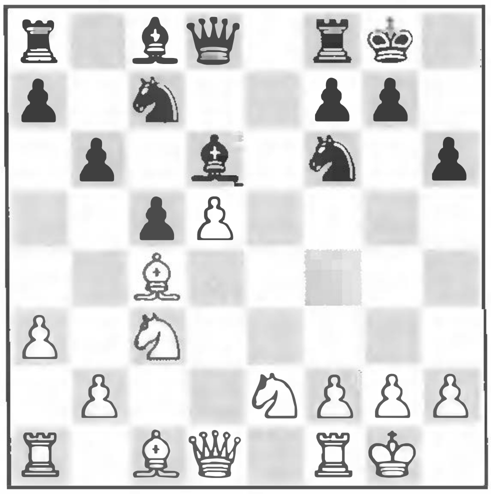
8.a3 ♘4a6 9.ed6 ♗d6

Note that Black is developing quickly and has fine dark square control. His position is already preferable.

10.♘c3 0-0 11.♗d3 ♘c7 12.♘ge2

After 12.de6 ♗e6 13.♘f3 ♘c6 Black has a lead in development.

12...ed5 13.cd5 ♘d7 14.0-0 ♘f6 15.♗c4 b6



The pawn on d5 is well blockaded and somewhat weak. In practice Black's position is much easier to play, as he has a clear-cut plan to besiege and indeed win d5.

16.♘g3 ♗e5

Threatening one of the pawn's defenders.

17.♘h5 ♗b7

Quietly continuing his plan. 17...♗c3

18.bc3 ♘fd5 falls into 19.♗h6! gh6 20.♗d5 ♘d5 21.♕d5 ♕d5 22.♘f6 ♔g7 23.♘d5, although even here, if anyone, Black is better.

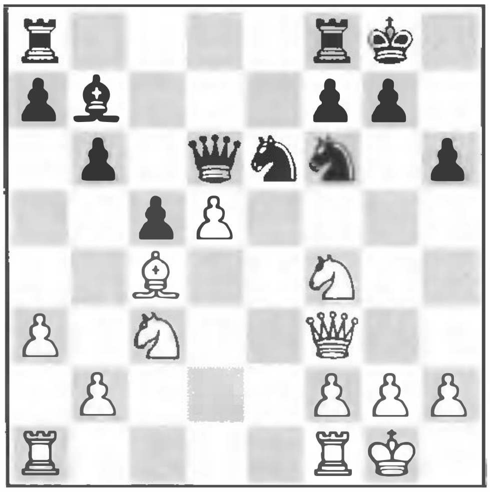
18.♗f4 ♗f4!

Again better than 18...♗c3 19.♗c7 (19.bc3 ♘cd5) 19...♕c7 20.bc3 with a slight edge for Black.

19.♘f4 ♕d6

Gaining time.

20.♕f3 ♘e6!



Making use of the opportunity. This knight certainly has a busy life.

21.♘e6?

This is cooperative. However, the alternative 21.♘h5 ♘h5 22.♕h5 ♘d4 is also better for Black. Only 21.♘fe2 prevents Black's advantage from growing.

21...fe6 22.♖ad1 ♘d5

Naturally 22...ed5 23.♘d5 is dead equal.

23.♘d5

So this was the idea. Rather than defending a weak pawn White sacrifices it for some positional compensation.

23...♖f3 24.♘f6 ♖f6 25.♖d6 ♖e8 26.♖e1

26.♖d7 ♖f7 and White cannot keep the pressure with 27.♖fd1? (27.♖d6) because of 27...♗c8 or even stronger 27...♗d5 28.♖7d5 ed5 29.♗d5 ♖e2 30.♗f7 ♔f7 with a winning rook ending.

26...♔f7 27.b4 cb4 28.ab4 ♖e7 29.f3 ♗c8

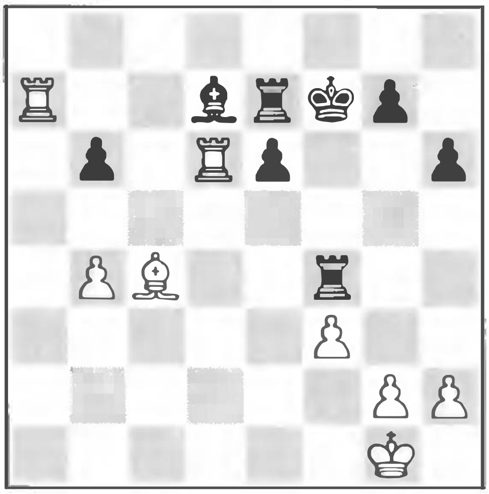
Black has an extra pawn, albeit a weak one. Yudasin's technique is up to the mark of course.

30.♖c1 ♗d7 31.♖a1 ♖f4!

This is very unpleasant.

32.♖a7?

The alternative 32.♖c1 does not give White a rosy future either: 32.♖c1 b5 33.♗a2 ♖b4 34.♖c7 ♗e8 35.♖e6 (35.♗e6 ♔f8 and Black is better) 35...♖c7 36.♖c6 ♔f8 37.♖c7 a5 and Black wins.



32...♗c8!

32...♖c4 33.♖dd7 ♖d7 34.♖d7 ♔f6 is a good rook ending, but the text wins a piece.

33.♗e6

33.♖e7 ♔e7 34.♖c6 ♗d7 wins more easily (35.♖c7 ♔d8).

33...♗e6 34.♖e7 ♔e7 35.♖b6

I give the rest without much comment.

35...♖c4 36.h3 ♖c2 37.♖a6 ♖b2 38.♖b6

♗c4 39.h4 ♔f7 40.h5 ♝d5 41.♖d6 ♗c4 42.♖b6 ♔g8 43.♖b8 ♔h7 44.♖b6 ♗f7 45.♖b5 ♝e8 46.♖e5 ♗c6 47.♖c5 ♗a4 48.♖c4 ♗e8 49.♖h4 ♔g8 50.♔f1 ♖d2!

Threatening 51...♖d5 to which there is no satisfactory reply.

51.g4 ♖b2 52.♖h1 ♔f7 53.♖h3 ♔f6 54.f4 ♖b4 55.♖f3 ♗d7 56.g5 hg5 57.fg5 ♔g5 58.♖g3 ♝g4

White resigned.

RECENT GAMES

☐ **Nigel Povah**

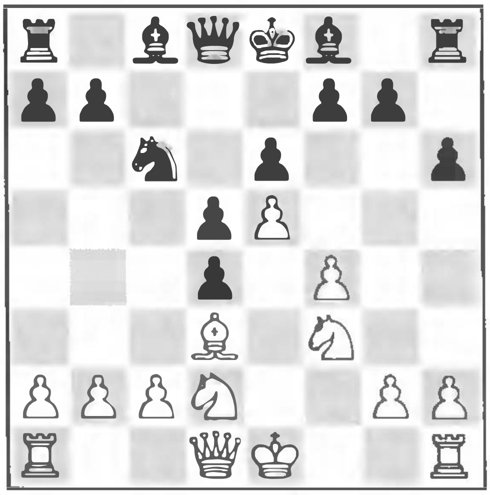
■ **Alexander Cherniaev**

England tt 2002/03

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♝g5 e6 3.e4 c5 4.e5 h6 5.♗d2

A novelty but not a good one. Likewise, after 5.♗f6 gf6 6.♘f3 cd4 7.♕d4 ♘c6 8.♕h4 ♗e7 9.♕h5 fe5 Black's position was more or less winning in Morel-Leygue, Creon 2002. As pointed out above 5.♗c1 is the main move.

5...♘e4 6.♗d3 ♘d2 7.♘d2 cd4 8.f4 ♘c6 9.♘gf3 d5



With two bishops and a pawn up Black's opening may be called a success.

10.a3 ♗c5 11.b4 ♗b6 12.♘b3 ♗d7 13.0-0 a6 14.♕e1 0-0 15.♔h1 ♖c8 16.g4

White has no compensation and seeks chances with this dubious move.

16...f6! 17.♕g3 fe5 18.fe5 g5! 19.♕h3 ♔g7 20.♘c1

Aiming for ♘e2-g3-h5, but this plan is obviously too slow.

20...♗c7 21.♘e2? ♘e5 22.♘e5 ♗e5 23.♘g3 ♗g3 24.♕g3 ♕c7 25.♕h3 ♕d6

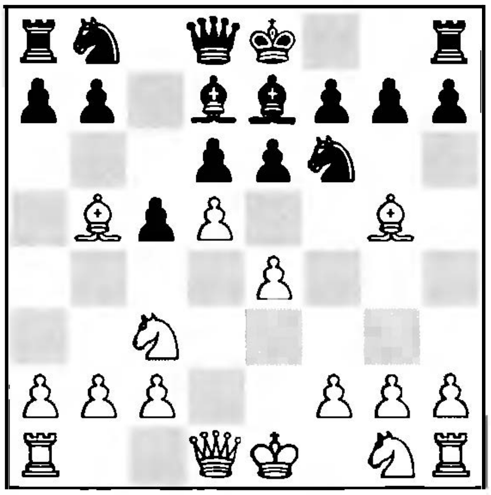
White resigned as he is simply two pawns down (26.♕h5 e5).

☐ **Simon Buckley**

■ **Francis Rayner**

England tt 2002/03

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗g5 e6 3.e4 c5 4.d5 d6 5.♘c3 ♗e7 6.♝b5 ♝d7



7.de6

No better was 7.♗d7 ♘bd7 8.de6 fe6 9.♘f3 0-0 10.♗f6 ♘f6 11.e5 de5 12.♕e2 ♘d5 13.♕e5 ♘c3 14.♕c3 ♗f6 15.♕b3 ♕d5 with a slight plus, Pert-Collinson, England tt 2002/03.

7...fe6 8.e5!? de5 9.♕e2 ♘c6 10.0-0-0 ♘d5 11.♕h5

11.♗e7 ♘c3.

11...g6 12.♗e7 ♕e7

12...♘c3!?.

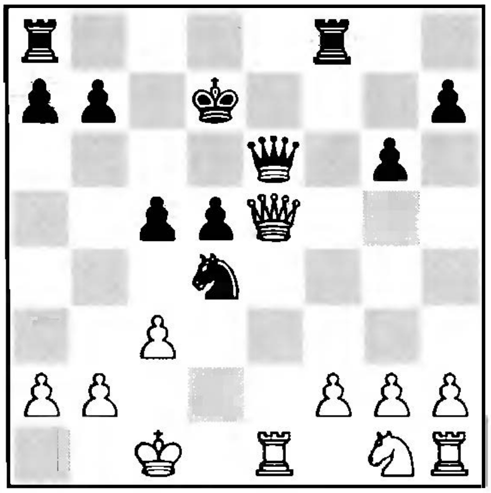
13.♕f3 ♘d4

13...♕g5!.

14.♘d5 ed5 15.♗d7 ♕d7 16.♕f6! ♖f8 17.♕e5 ♕e6

17...♔f7! 18.c3 ♖ae8.

18.♖e1! ♔d7 19.c3



19...♕f7??

This blunders the game. However, after 19...♖ae8 20.♕g7! (but not 20.cd4 ♕g8!–+ (20...♕f7? 21.♘f3+–)) Black is in trouble too, for instance: 20...♖e7 21.♖e6 ♖g7 22.♖e5 winning a pawn.

20.cd4 ♖ae8 21.♘f3 **1-0**

☐ **Christopher Dunworth**
■ **Daniel Gormally**
England tt 2001

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗g5 e6 3.e4 c5 4.d5 ♕b6

This is extremely risky, but if you have good nerves why not give it a try.

5.♗f6

5.♘c3 ♕b2 6.♗d2 is critical in my opinion. White has decent compensation for the pawn in view of his lead in development.

5...gf6 6.♕c1

6.♘d2 ♕b2 7.♘gf3 ♗g7 8.♗d3 ♕b6 and White did not have enough compensation in Mensch-Belotelov, Budapest 1998.

6...♗g7

6...♗h6!? 7.♕h6!? (7.♘d2 ♗d2 8.♕d2 ♕b2 is better for Black) 7...♕b2 8.♘e2 ♕a1 9.♘c3 ♕b2 10.♗d3 and White has a dangerous attack for his sacrificed material.

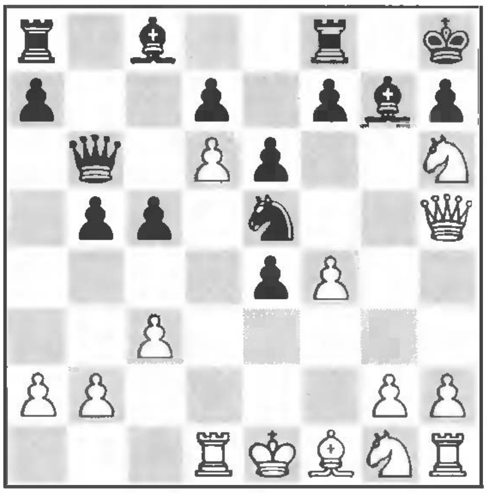
7.c3

7.♘d2 was stronger.

7...f5! 8.♘a3

This is a dubious pawn sacrifice.

8...fe4 9.♘c4 ♕c7 10.♕g5 0-0 11.d6 ♕c6 12.♖d1 b5! 13.♘e5 ♕b6 14.♘g4 ♔h8 15.♘h6 ♘c6 16.♕h5 ♘e5 17.f4



This was White intention, Gormally's next puts him out of business.

17...c4! 18.♔e2?

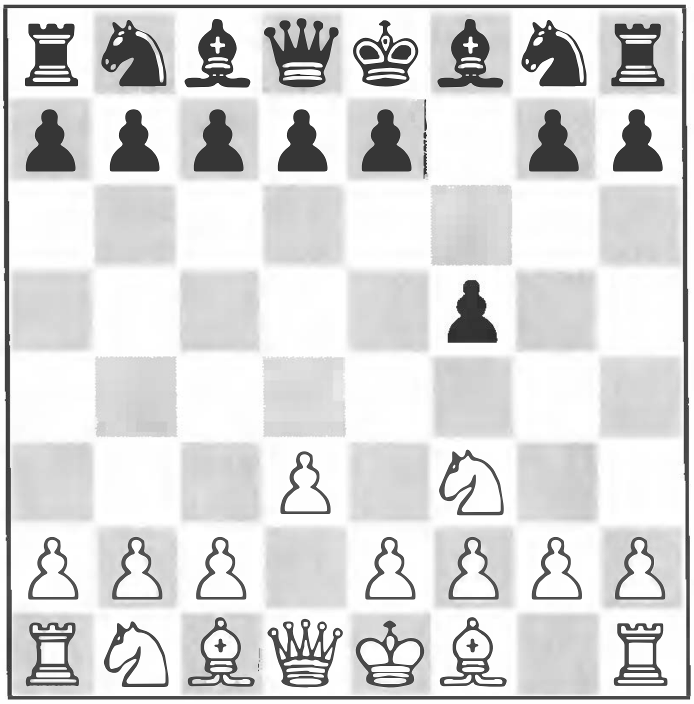
18.fe5 ♕e3.

18...♘d3 19.♘h3 ♕f2! **0-1**

20.♘f2 ♘f4 21.♔e1 ♘h5 22.♘hg4 f5 is curtains.

CHAPTER 16

The improved Lisitsin Gambit



NIC KEY HD 13.6

Trying to repair the omission of 1.e4!?

One of the reasons why many players love the Dutch is that you can play it against 1.d4, 1.c4 and 1.♘f3. One system to play as Black against all non-1.e4 players means reducing your theoretical workload and improving your practical understanding of it. Moving your f-pawn is an admittedly risky strategy, but it might pay off as you fight and win the battle for the e4-square. However, supporters of the Dutch should be warned against over-using 1...f5. In the Dutch proper (1.d4 f5) Black is well on his way to gain control of the e4 square. This does not hold true for 1.c4 f5 or 1.♘f3 f5, though. This SOS chapter is a case in point, demonstrating as it does the merits of 1.♘f3 f5 2.d3!?

☐ **Michal Krasenkow**
■ **Stefan Kindermann**
Panormo 2001

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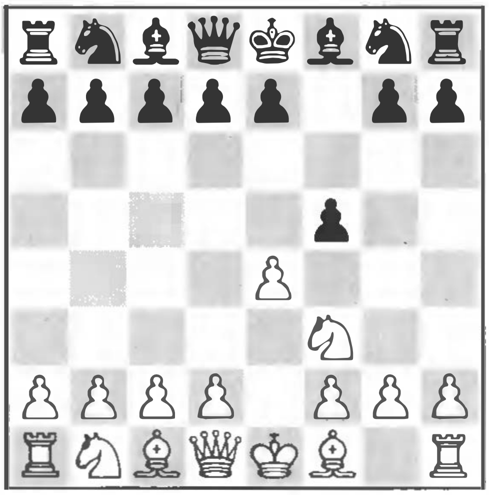
1. ♘f3 f5
2. d3!?

This modest-looking move is in fact an effective reaction to Black's first move. White prepares e4, arguing that 1...f5 is a weakening move. To understand the merits of 2.d3 we must compare this move to the Lisitsin Gambit (1.♘f3 f5 2.e4!?). This gambit is a violent attempt to crush the Dutch. Dangerous though it may be, it is more like a double-edged sword: risky for the victim as well as for its wielder.

By way of contrast (as well as to provide a playable SOS alternative) we hereby present a survey of Lisitsin's gambit: 1.♘f3 f5 2.e4!?

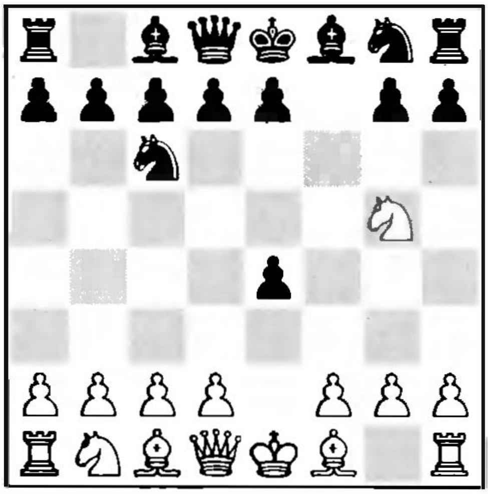


2...fe4 3.♘g5.

A) 3...d5 4.d3 ♕d6 (4...e3, as played by Malaniuk a couple of times, is also interesting) 5.de4 h6 6.♘f3 (6.♕h5 g6 7.♕h4 is also possible) 6...de4 is a well-known 'refutation' (as it was called by Kavalek). White has a major alternative on the fifth move, though: 5.♘c3 (this prepares a piece sacrifice) 5...h6 (5...♘f6 6.de4 h6!?) 6.♘b5 ♕c6 (worse is 6...♕b6?! 7.♕h5 g6 8.♘c7 ♔d7 – 8...♕c7 9.♕g6 ♔d7 10.♘f7 – 9.♘a8 because now the queen is attacked on the b6 square, 9...♕a5 10.♗d2 ♕d2 11.♔d2 gh5 12.♘f7, as indicated by Piket) 7.de4 hg5 8.ed5 ♕d7 9.♗g5 a6 10.♘c3 e5 11.♗d3, and White has good compensation for the piece. A verdict both based on the stem game Piket-Van Mil, Dutch Championship, Eindhoven 1992, and on subsequent games.

B) 3...e5 4.d3 e3 (4...ed3 5.♗d3 is suicidal) 5.♗e3 ♘c6 has always had a reliable reputation. However, in 1990 Michael Rohde discovered 4.d4!?, which is a serious challenge: 4...ed4 5.♘e4 ♘c6 6.♗c4 ♘f6 7.♗g5 ♗e7 8.♘f6 ♗f6 9.♕e2 ♗e7 10.♗d5, with good compensation, Rohde-Castro, Philadelphia Open 1990. Therefore, 3...♘c6 is perhaps stronger.

C) 3...♘c6!? (Kindermann's recommendation to avoid 3...e5 4.d4) 4.d3 (as 4.d4 d5! is OK for Black) 4...e3 5.♗e3 e5, and we have transposed to 3...e5 4.d3 without allowing Rohde's 4.d4.



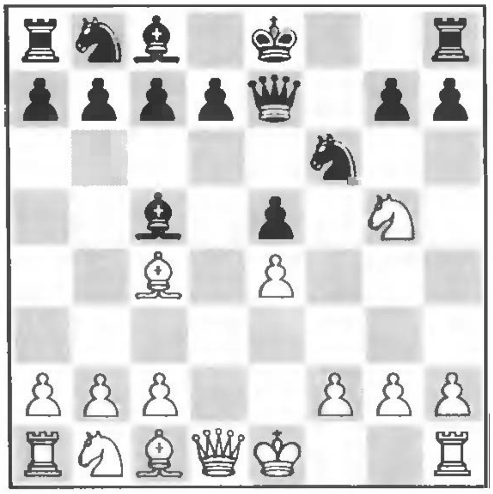
D) 3...♘f6 4.d3

D1) 4...ed3? 5.♗d3 g6 6.♘h7 ♖h7 7.♗g6 ♖f7 8.g4!, and White is better, according to Milic and Bozic.

D2) 4...d5 5.de4 h6 6.♘f3 de4 7.♕d8 ♔d8 8.♘e5 ♗e6 9.♘c3 ♘bd7 10.♘g6, and White is slightly better in this endgame, Lisitsin-Kortchnoi, Soviet Championship, Leningrad 1956 (via transposition).

D3) 4...e3 5.♗e3 e5 6.d4 ed4 7.♗d4 ♘c6 8.♗c4 ♗b4 (8...d5 9.♗f6 ♕f6 10.♕d5 ♘e5 11.♘e4 ♕f4 12.♘bd2, and White is better (Botvinnik)) 9.♘c3 d5 10.♕e2 ♕e7, and Black was not worse in Lechtynsky-Knaak, Tallinn 1979.

D4) 4...e5 5.de4 ♗c5 (5...♗b4 6.c3 ♗c5 7.♗c4 ♕e7 8.0-0 h6 9.♘f3 g5 10.b4 ♗b6 11.a4 a5 12.♗a3!, with an attack, Malakhatko-Miton, Cracow 1997) 6.♗c4 ♕e7



7.♗f7 (7.♘c3 ♗f2 8.♔f2 ♕c5 9.♔g3 ♕c4 10.♖f1 0-0 11.♖f6 gf6 12.♕h5= was the famous game Lisitsin-Botvinnik, Leningrad 1933) 7...♔f8 8.♗b3 h6 9.♘f3 d6 10.♘c3 g6 11.♕e2 ♔g7 12.♗e3, and according to Botvinnik White has an edge.

So far for our outing into the Lisitsin gambit. Let us now continue with 2.d3:

2. ... d6

This (rightly) receives an exclam from Romanishin in the *Encyclopaedia*. Here we present the alternatives:

A) 2...d5?! (going for the Stonewall is dubious with the pawn on d3) 3.c4 e6 4.cd5 ed5 5.g3 ♘f6 6.♗g2 ♗d6 7.0-0 0-0 8.♘c3 c6 9.e4 fe4 10.de4 de4 11.♘g5 ♕e7 12.♘ce4 ♘e4 13.♗e4, and White was much better in Blatny-Salai, Novy Smokovec 1990.

B) Likewise, a Leningrad set-up with 2...g6 also seems to favour White after 3.e4 d6 4.♘c3 ♘f6 5.ef5 ♗f5 6.d4.

C) 2...♘c6 3.e4 e5 4.♘c3 ♘f6 5.ef5 d5 (5...♗b4, as in Andrienko-Maliutin, Yurmala 1991, looks stronger) 6.d4 ed4 7.♘d4 ♘d4 8.♕d4 ♗f5 9.♗g5 ♗c2?! (9...♗e7 10.♕e5! Moreno-Castro Rojas, Barcelona 1993) 10.♖c1 ♗g6 11.♗f6 ♕f6 12.♕e3 ♔f7 13.♘d5 ♗b4 14.♘b4 ♖he8 15.♗c4 ♔f8 16.0-0 ♖e3 17.fe3 ♗f5 18.g4, and White was well on his way to win, Taimanov-Zaichik, Leningrad 1989.

D) 2...♘f6, White now has three playable set-ups:

D1) 3.♘bd2 d5 (3...♘c6(!) looks best in my opinion) 4.e4 de4 5.de4 ♘e4 (5...fe4 6.♘g5 gives nice compensation) 6.♗c4!? ♘c6 7.0-0 ♘d6 8.♗d5 e6 9.♖e1 ♕f6? (Gulko indicated the stronger 9...♗e7! 10.♗c6 bc6 11.♘d4, with a slight edge). Now Black was slaughtered: 10.♘c4! ♘c4 11.♗g5 ♘b2 12.♕d2 ♘c4 13.♕f4 ♕g6 14.♕c4 ♘d8 15.♕c7 ♗d7 16.♘e5 1-0 Gulko-Shmulevich, St Martin 1992.

D2) 3.♗g5 ♘c6 4.♗f6 ef6 5.d4!?, and White keeps an opening advantage, Speelman-Garcia Ilundain, Pamplona 1996.

D3) 3.e4 (this directs the course of play towards the Lisitsin Gambit) 3...fe4 (3...d6 4.e5!±; 4.ef5 ♗f5 5.d4±) 4.de4 ♘e4? (4...e5 is essential) 5.♗d3 ♘f6

6.♘g5, and White was much better in (among others) Lisitsin-Krogius, Leningrad 1949.

3. e4 e5

4. ♘c3

A previous Krasenkow effort saw 4.g3 ♘f6 5.♗g2 g6 6.c3 ♗g7 7.0-0 fe4 8.de4 0-0 9.♘g5, Krasenkow-Nikolic, Polanica Zdroj 1996.

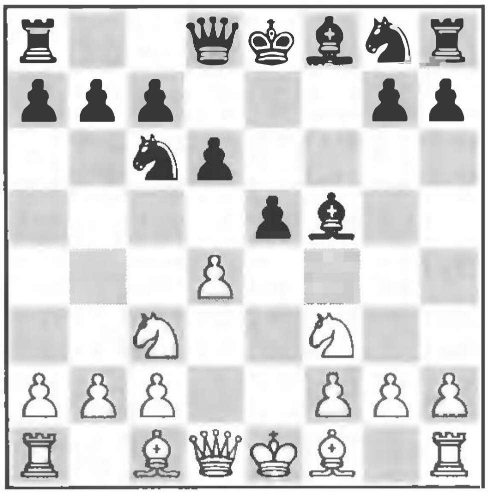
4. ... ♘c6

Black must not neglect the centre: 4...♗e7?! 5.d4 fe4 6.♘e4 d5 7.♘e5! de4 8.♗c4 ♘f6 9.♘f7 ♗g4 10.f3 ef3 11.gf3 (11.♘d8 f2) 11...♗b4 12.c3 ♕e7 13.♔f2 ♘e4 14.♔g1 (14.♔g2 ♗h3!) 14...♖f8 15.fg4, and White was much better in Borik-Renner, Germany Bundesliga 1999.

The other knight can also leave its stable: 4...♘f6. Romanishin has now analyzed 5.♗e2 ♗e7 6.0-0 0-0 7.♗g5 ♘c6 as equal. However, 5.ef5 ♗f5 6.d4 e4 7.♘h4 gives White a pleasant edge.

5. ef5 ♗f5

6. d4



6. ... ♘b4

This is an ambitious idea, but no improvement over 6...♘d4 7.♘d4 ed4 8.♕d4 c6 9.♗d3 ♗d3 10.♕d3 ♘f6 11.0-0 ♗e7, and Black had no particular problems in Lerner-Bareev, Soviet Championship, Kiev 1986 and Romanishin-Malaniuk, Tallinn 1987. What improvement did Krasenkow have in mind here?

7. ♗b5

Developing and defending.

7. ... c6

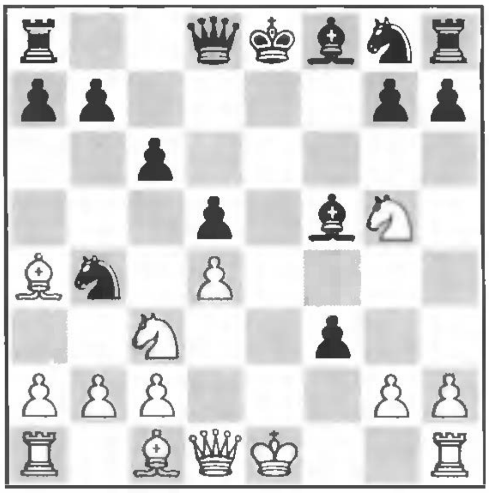
8. ♗a4 e4

9. ♘g5 d5

Black has formed a nice pawn chain, but he is unable to hold on to square e4.

10. f3 ef3

Here 10...♘f6 11.0-0 (11.fe4 ♗g4 12.♕d2 h6 leaves Black some counter-chances) 11...ef3 12.a3 transposes to the game.



11. 0-0!

A slight adaptation of (and pun on) Réti's famous quote gives us the rule that we should only recapture when there is no other useful move. Castling is the most flexible move here. The immediate 11.♕f3 allows 11...♕e7 12.♔d1 ♕d7, and White's play has lost momentum. However, instead of 12.♔d1, 12.♗e3 is stronger. After 12...♘c2 13.♗c2 ♗c2

14.0-0 White's lead in development gives him the edge.

11. ... ♘f6

Krasenkow notes that 11...♗g4 was Black's best bet. Although he demonstrates that Black's prospects after 12.♕e1 ♗e7 13.h3! are bleak.

12. a3 ♘a6

13. ♕f3

Only now. White has a huge lead in development, giving him a significant edge.

13. ... ♗g4

14. ♕d3! ♕d7

This prevents ♗c6.

15. h3!

Gaining control of the e6 square.

15. ... ♗h5

16. ♖e1 ♗e7

17. ♘e6 ♔f7

The intermediate 17...♗g6 is best answered by 18.♕f3 ♔f7 19.♘f4±. 18.♘g7 ♔f7 19.♕e2 is less clear after 19...♗d6. White has a nice edge here, of course, and several good options, but Krasenkow's move is by far the strongest and most beautiful solution.

18. ♘d5! ♘d5

Taking with the queen also loses: 18...♕d5 19.♗b3 ♗g6 (or 19...♕a5 20.♗d2 or 20.♘g7 ♔g7 21.♖e7 ♔f8 22.♖e5) 20.♕e2, and Black is running out of moves since 20...♕d6 is met by 21.♗f4.

19. ♕f5 ♘f6

20. ♗b3 ♗g6

The Black king cannot escape: 20...♔e8 21.♘g7 ♔d8 22.♕a5.

21. ♘g7!

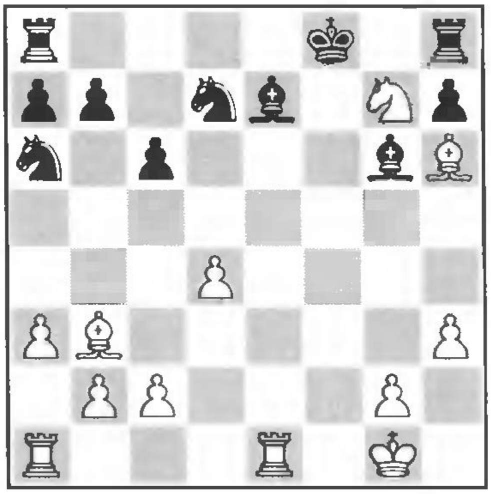
Continuing in style. 21.♘c7 ♔f8 22.♕d7 ♘d7 23.♘a8 was the prosaic solution.

21. ... ♔f8

21...♔g7 obviously fails to 22.♕d7 ♘d7 23.♖e7.

22. ♕d7 ♘d7

23. ♗h6



And Black resigned as he must give up several pieces to avoid being mated.

RECENT GAMES

☐ **Reiner Odendahl**

■ **Freddie van der Elburg**

Amsterdam 2002

1.♘f3 f5 2.d3 d6 3.e4 e5 4.♘c3 ♘f6

The main line is 4...♘c6 5.ef5 ♗f5 6.d4. Instead of 5.ef5 it is no good idea to play 5.d4 as 5...fe4 6.♘g5 ♗e7 7.♘ce4 d5 8.♕f3 ♘f6 9.♘f6 ♗f6 10.de5 ♘e5 11.♕g3 ♗f5 was very agreeable for Black in Czebe-Antal, Budapest 2001.

5.ef5 ♗f5 6.d4 e4 7.♘h4

This position is good for White. The present game, and the next, confirm this verdict.

7...♗e6 8.d5 ♗f7 9.♘f5

Black is cramped and his outpost (e4) is weak.

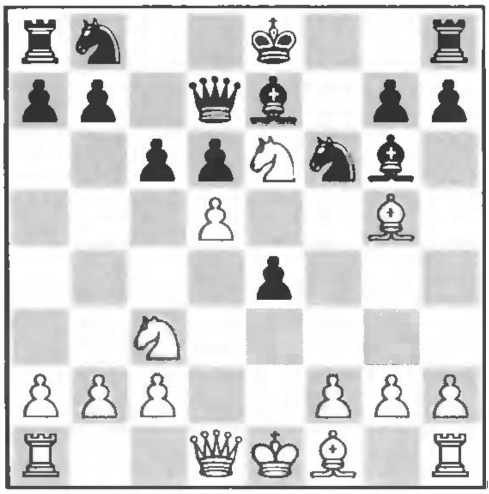
9...♗g6 10.♘d4

Now e6 is vulnerable.

10...c6 11.♗g5 ♗e7?

11...♕b6 looks best under the circumstances.

12.♘e6 ♕d7



13.♗c4!

This is stronger than 13.♘g7 even though White keeps an edge after 13...♔f7 14.♘e6 ♘d5 15.♘d5 cd5 16.♘f4!, but not 16.♗e7 ♕e6∞.

13...♘d5 14.♘d5 cd5 15.♘g7! ♔f8 16.♕d5 ♗g5

16...♔g7 17.♕d4 mates.

17.♘e6 ♔e8 18.♕g5 ♘c6 19.♕f6

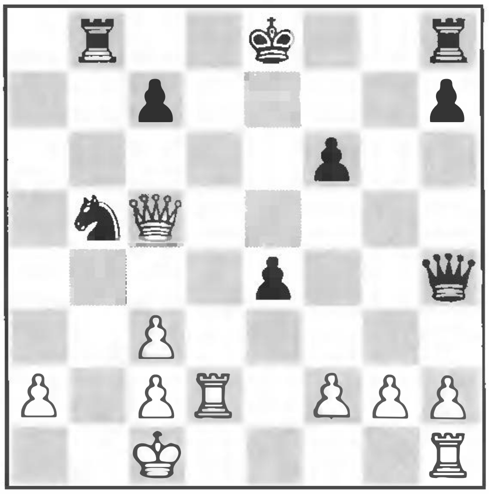
Black resigned as 19...♖g8 20.♘c7 ♕c7 21.♗g8 is too easy.

☐ **Stefan Löffler**
■ **Stefan Kindermann**
Austria tt 2002

1.♘f3 f5 2.d3 d6 3.e4 e5 4.♘c3 ♘f6 5.ef5 ♗f5 6.d4 e4 7.♘h4 ♗g4 8.♗e2 ♗e2 9.♕e2 d5 10.♗g5 ♗b4

This gives White a big edge. However, it is already too late to look for real improvements for Black: 10...♘c6 11.♗f6 gf6 (11...♕f6 12.♘d5 ♕h4 13.♘c7 ♔d7 14.♘a8±) 12.♕h5±; 10...♗e7 11.♘f5± or 10...c6 11.f3±; 10...h6 11.♗f6 even wins for White.

11.♕b5 ♘c6 12.♕b7 ♘d4 13.0-0-0 ♗c3 14.bc3 ♖b8 15.♗f6! gf6 16.♕a7 ♘b5 17.♕c5 ♕d6 18.♖d5! ♕f4 19.♖d2 ♕h4



20.a4! ♘d6 21.♕c6+– ♔f7

Or 21...♔d8 22.♖d6 cd6 23.♕d6 ♔c8 24.♕c6 ♔d8 25.♖d1 mating.

22.♕c7 ♔g6 23.♕d6 ♖b7 24.♕g3

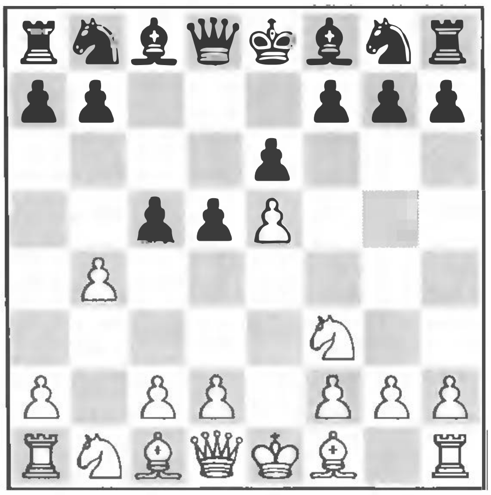
White is winning in this double rook ending.

24...♕g3 25.hg3 ♖hb8 26.♖dd1 ♖c8 27.♖h4 f5 28.♖d6 ♔g7 29.♔d2 ♖bc7 30.♖d5 ♔g6 31.♖d6 ♔g7 32.♖d5 ♔g6 33.g4 f4 34.♖h3 f3 35.gf3 ♖c3 36.♖d6 ♔g7 37.♖d7 ♔g6 38.♖d6 ♔g7 39.♖d7 ♔g6 40.♖hh7 ef3 41.♔d1 ♖c2 42.♖dg7 ♔f6 43.♖f7 ♔g6 44.♖hg7 ♔h6 45.g5 ♔h5 46.♖f3 ♖c1 47.♔e2 ♖8c2 48.♔e3 ♖c3 49.♔f4 ♖c4 50.♔f5 ♖c5 51.♔f6 ♖c6 52.♔f7 ♖a6 53.g6 ♖a7 54.♔g8 ♖a4 55.♖h3 ♔g4 56.♖g3 ♔f5 57.♖f7 ♔e6 58.g7 ♖a8 59.♖f8 ♖a7 60.♖e3 ♔d6 61.♖d8 1-0

Section V: Outflanking the French

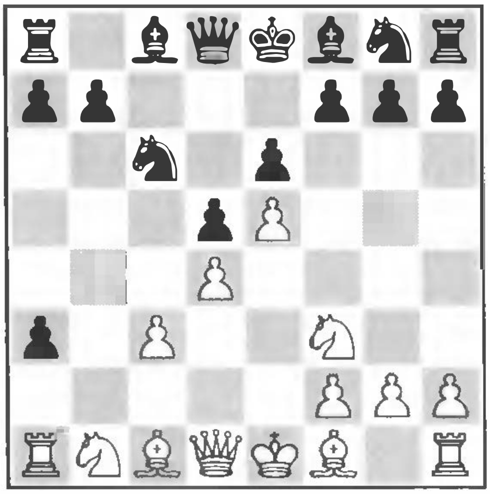
This section differs from the previous four in that it concentrates on one opening. Chapter 17 is substantially bigger and incorporates an introduction, a theoretical section and a games section. I offer the reader an interesting line to meet the French.

1.e4 e6 2.♘f3 d5 3.e5 c5
4.b4



The basic idea of this wing gambit is that the black c-pawn is lured away from the centre. Thus giving White a stable pawn chain: c3-d4-e5. This pawn chain provides White with a healthy basis to attack on the kingside, while the open files on the queenside will give positional pressure too. See the following *tabiya* position.

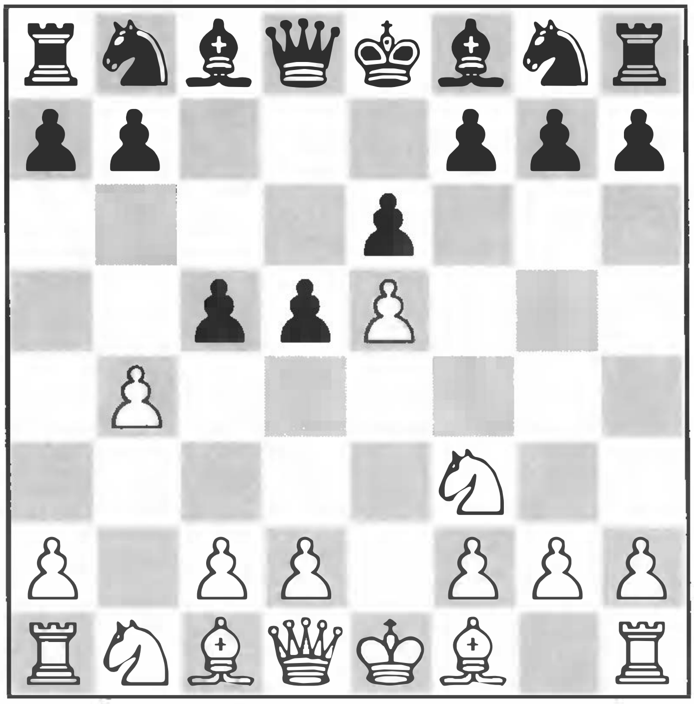
1.e4 e6 2.♘f3 d5 3.e5 c5
4.b4 cb4 5.a3 ba3 6.d4 ♘c6
7.c3



It is useful to compare this diagram to the position from the French Advance. after 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 ♘c6 5.♘f3. Clearly Black is able to attack the white pawn chain in an effective way there. This forces White to Überdeckung of his centre before he can even contemplate any offensive ideas. However, 'every advantage has its disadvantage' as the professor of Dutch soccer, Johan Cruyff, is wont to remark. The absence of pressure on the pawn chain is achieved at the cost of a pawn!

CHAPTER 17

French Wing Gambit



NIC KEY FR 1.1

Increase your central control: 4.b4

Around 1984 I was struggling against the French Defence. The positional intricacies of the Tarrasch or the Winawer were way beyond my overtly tactical style. And, besides, there was too much theory involved anyway. It was then that I hit upon the following reference in Suetin's book on the French: 1.e4 e6 2.♘f3 d5 3.e5 c5 4.b4!? cb4 5.a3 ba3 6.d4 ♘c6 7.c3 ♗d7 8.♗d3 f5 with a complicated game, which White must play in gambit style (Shashin-Naglis, Moscow 1970). I was enchanted. As a junior all I ever wanted was to play in 'gambit style' (whatever that means exactly) and the verdict 'unclear' sounded enticing too. Moreover, apparently all you needed to know was one game reference of only 8 moves! Nowadays I think I would have doubted the soundness of the idea precisely because of the typical lazy commentator's verdict and the suspicious lack of other material. Call it optimistic, naive or what you will, but I started playing this so called Wing Gambit and I was successful with it too. After some time other Dutch junior players started giving up there queenside against the French too, the most well-known of these are IM Martens and GM Reinderman. Over the years I spent a lot of time analyzing the positions after 4.b4 and refining my weapon time and again. I discovered that 'accepted theory' had little of relevance to say on the subject. The favourable exception being an article in *Skakbladet* by the Danish IM Mortensen who quoted Larsen in calling the Wing Gambit 'the most logical way' to meet the French. With the name of Mortensen we have also mentioned the biggest b4-hero. This article, then, aims to present the reader with a complete and exciting repertoire against the French. Although it is written from White's point of view, I have tried to be objective throughout and also indicated lines that are problematic.

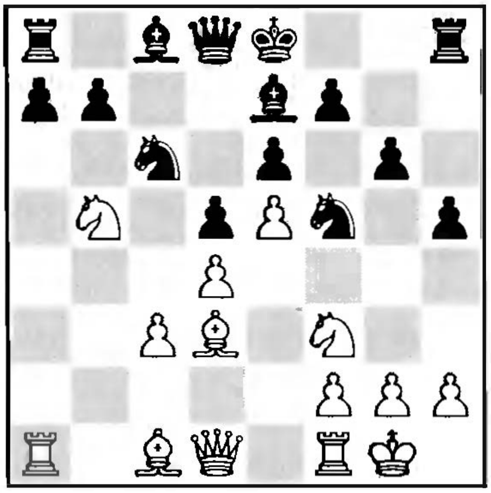
The next section contains a general description of White's strategy and some illustrative game excerpts to whet your appetite. This is followed by the principal part of this article: a theoretical overview of all the variations. The final section is made up of relevant games. A final piece of advice: a good way to start studying the Wing Gambit is to read the next section and to play through a few games from the study material to get a 'good feel' for the position. Later you can check your own efforts with the theory.

General ideas and typical manoeuvres

So what is the point of 4.b4?

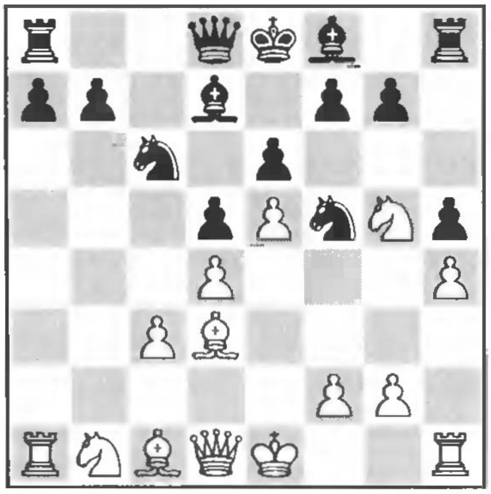
To answer this question let us consider one of the main line positions: 1.e4 e6 2.♘f3 d5 3.e5 c5 4.b4 cb4 5.a3 ba3 6.d4 ♘c6 7.c3. White has sacrificed two pawns, one of which he will retrieve at some point with either ♘a3 or ♗a3, but what has he got in return for his invested material? Well, first of all, there is the central chain c3-d4-e5. Due to the pawn on e5 White has more space, which means that he can attack on the kingside. Moreover he controls the dark central squares; the first player will often try to land a knight on d6. In the French Advance White holds the same central trump. Yet after 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 ♘c6 5.♘f3 ♕b6 it is clear that Black develops counterplay by pressurizing d4. In the subsequent play White must continuously guard his centre. Now compare this to the Wing Gambit. Since the Black c-pawn has been lured to a3, Black no longer has a lever to pressurize d4! In essence this is the sole point of White's 4.b4. Other factors to White's advantage, after say 7.c3, are his development which can continue almost unhindered. Black's development on the kingside is, however, severely hampered. (Incidentally, this is why the Wing Gambit is less good against the Sicilian, after 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.b4 cb4 4.d4 Black has 4...♘f6!). Black simply lacks space. Both his bishop and his knight need to be developed via e7 (a knight on h6 will be chopped off and the subsequent weakened structure (gh6) gives White attacking possibilities). Often the knight is played to e7 and then to (1) g6 where it will be harassed by h4-h5, or more often to (2) f5 when it chased away with g4 or exchanged with ♗d3 takes f5 when Black's structure will be weakened. The consequence of Black's developing problems is that his king is often stuck in the centre for a long time. All of this guarantees White good attacking possibilities and an attractive game. A final feature is the possibility to play for 'Volga compensation'. With the sacrifice of his a and b-pawns he has gained two open files, which can sometimes be used to put pressure on the queenside (often in combination with a knight on c5). To illustrate White's strategy here are some typical examples derived from practical play.

I Exchanging the dark-squared bishops



Bosch-Claesen
European Junior Championship
Arnhem 1989

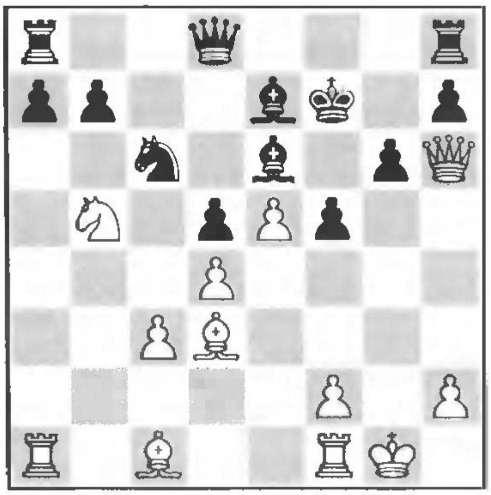
Black has managed to develop his kingside, having strengthened his knight on f5 with g6 and h5. Consequently, he has weakened even more dark squares and his king is not safe either. With **1.♗f5! ef5 2.♗a3!** White secures a stronghold on d6 for his knight, after **2...0-0 3.♕d2 ♗a3 4.♖a3 ♔g7 5.♕a2 a6 6.♖b1 ♘e7 7.♘d6 ♕c7** White had strong pressure on the queenside. For a decisive advantage a final piece is needed. **8.♘e1! ♖b8 9.♘d3 ♗d7 10.♘c5 ♗c6 11.♖ab3** and White has a nearly winning advantage. **11...f4** Desperation. **12.♕d2 f3 13.gf3 ♗b5 14.♕f4** and Black resigned, not even prematurely.



Bosch-Greben
Amstelveen Candidates 1994

This example resembles the previous one but contains an extra feature. It is useful to see several typical ideas united in one example. **1.♗f5! ef5 2.♗a3 ♗e6 3.0-0 g6 4.♗f8 ♔f8** The first phase is completed. Black's structure is broken up, and the dark-squared bishops exchanged. Now there follows a long knight manoeuvre. **5.♘a3 a6 6.♘c2 ♔g7 7.♘e1** Planning ♘d3-c5/f4. **7...b5 8.♘d3 ♕c8 9.♘f4 ♘e7 10.♕f3 ♖b8 11.♖fb1 ♖b6** Again White has concentrated his rooks on the open files on the queenside. Now the time has come to break through. **12.c4! ♕c4** 12...dc4 13.d5. **13.♕e3 ♕c8 14.♖c1** White takes control of the open file.

14...♕d7 15.♖c5 ♖c8 16.♕g3 Switching to the kingside once again, where there are no defenders. **16...♖h8 17.♖ac1 ♖h6 18.♖c7 ♕e8 19.♘ge6 1-0**. White wins material.

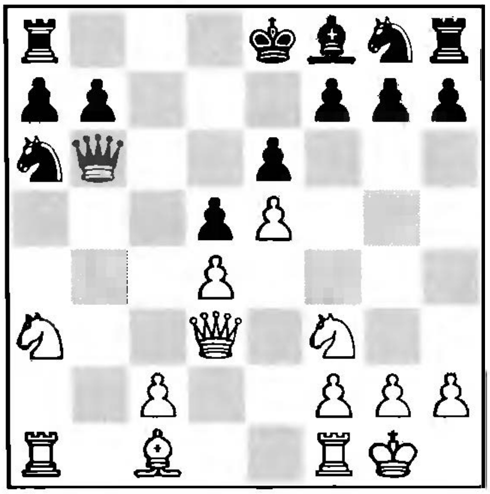


Mortensen-Tisdall
Torshavn 1987

A characteristic middlegame position. White has broken Black's pawn chain with g4 and gf5. Black has succeeded in developing all his pieces. White now tries to exchange bishops. **1.♗a3 ♗g5 2.♘d6 ♕d6 3.♕g5 ♕d8** Black has managed to get rid of the knight, but he is nevertheless horribly weak on the dark squares. **4.♕h6 a6 5.♖fb1!± b5 6.♗c1! ♖a7 7.♖a2 ♔e8 8.♖ba1 ♕b6 9.♕h4 ♖f8 10.♗a3 b4 11.♗b4 ♘b4 12.cb4 ♕b4 13.♖a6 ♖a6 14.♖a6 ♗c8 15.♖a8 ♕b7 16.♗b5** and Black resigned.

II The lever c4

A standard way of attacking Black's pawn chain, but one which should not be used lightheartedly. The exchange of dc4 gives Black a useful square on d5, and increases the power of Black's light-squared bishop. Hence, when White plays c3-c4 he must be sure that he is opening the position to gain a quick advantage, otherwise the opponent's positional trumps will cause his downfall. Above (Bosch-Greben) we already saw one good example of how the lever c4 may be used, here is another one.

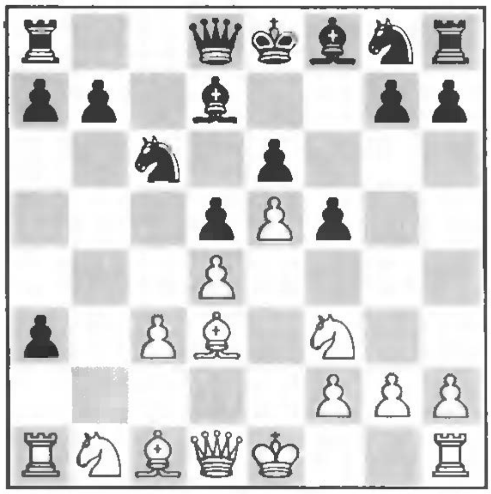


Bosch-Vedder
Arnhem 1988

Black has succeeded in exchanging his 'bad' (French) bishop for White's 'good' one. However, the price has been considerable for he is clearly behind in development. Hence, the time has come to open up the position. **1.c4! ♘c7 2.cd5 ♘d5** This knight is of course ideally placed. According to Tarrasch one badly placed piece means that the whole position is bad. The reverse is not true as can be seen from this example. One good piece does not make for a good position. White has gained square c4 for his knight, from which it is ready to jump to d6 after the exchange of bishops (this should be familiar by now). **3.♘c4 ♕c7 4.♗a3 ♘b4** Otherwise the knight reaches d6. Now disaster strikes from another side. **5.♗b4 ♗b4 6.♖fb1 ♗e7** White is fully developed and retrieved his slight material investment with **7.♘b6**. White soon won.

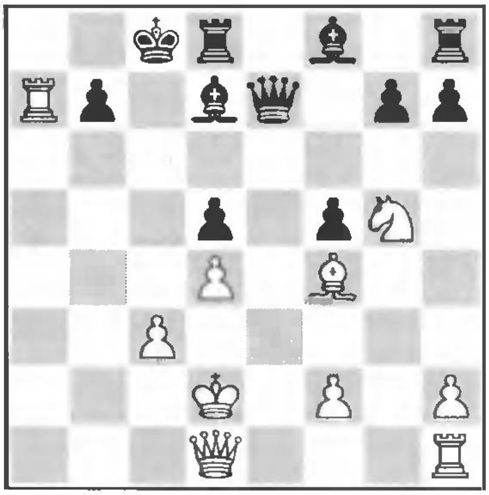
III The lever g4

If Black wants to do something about his lack of space and developing problems on the kingside, then f5 is a good move. It is in such positions that the lever g4 comes into operation.



Hald-Jensen
Copenhagen 1990

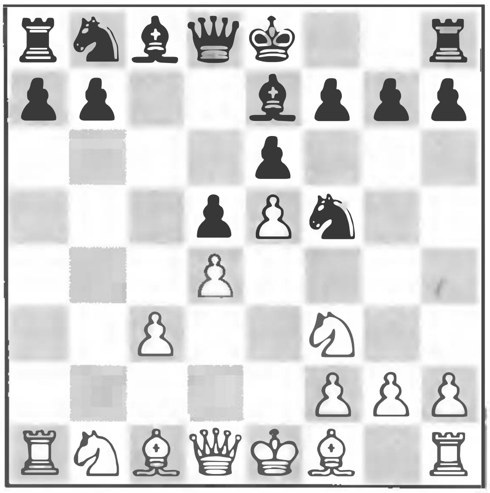
This is in fact a position with great theoretical value. After 1.e4 e6 2.♘f3 d5 3.e5 c5 4.b4 cb4 5.a3 ba3 6.d4 ♘c6 7.c3 ♗d7 8.♗d3 f5 the diagram is reached. White now plays **1.g4! ♘ge7 2.gf5 ♘f5 3.♘g5 ♕e7** A bad move, but nevertheless it was suggested by Keres. Consult the theoretical section for alternatives. **4.♘a3 0-0-0 5.♘b5** Or 5.♗f5 ef5 6.♘b5 ♔b8 (6...♘e5 7.♘a7 ♔b8 8.♗f4) 7.e6 which transposes to the game. **5...♔b8 6.♗f5 ef5 7.e6!** This forces the win. **7...♗e6 8.♗f4 ♔c8 9.♘a7 ♘a7 10.♖a7 ♗d7 11.♔d2**



11...b6? Black is lost anyway, 11...♗b5 12.♖e1 ♕f6 13.♖e6 catches the queen. **12.♖c7** Black resigned.

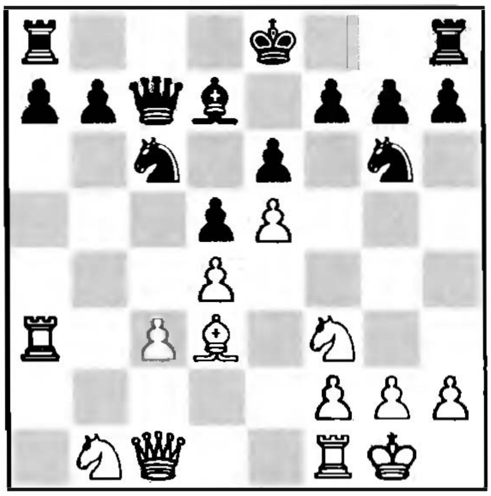
IV Gaining space on the kingside

To cramp Black even further, White may decide to advance his h- or g-pawn. Usually Black stops g4 or the advance of White's h-pawn with a timely h5. The drawback is that Black's king will not find a safe haven soon.



Mortensen-Farago
Esbjerg 1985

Black has developed his kingside, but 'forgotten' to play h5. **1.g4! ♘h4** 1...♘h6 can be answered by 2.♗h6 or even more simply by 2.h3. **2.♘h4 ♗h4 3.♗d3 ♘c6 4.0-0 ♗e7 5.f4** and White has a nice advantage, although Black later won.

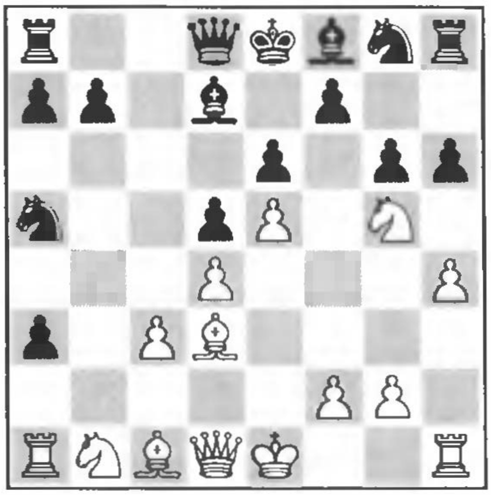


Rahls-Danerud
Travemünde 1989

The knight is badly placed on g6, and White's h-pawn is itching to make a career for himself. **1.h4 ♘a5 2.h5 ♘f8 3.♕g5 ♖g8 4.h6 g6?** 4...♘g6 is stronger but White still holds a considerable advantage. **5.♘bd2 b5 6.♕f6!** 6.♖fa1 ♘c4 7.♗c4 bc4 and White is better but not winning yet. The text is more devious. **6...♘c4 7.♗c4 bc4 8.♕g7** Black resigned.

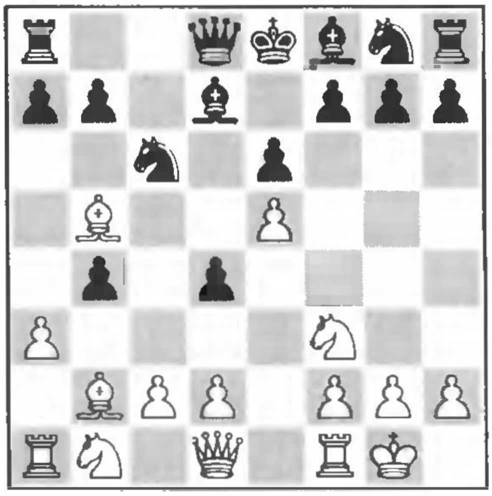
V Tactics

In a sharp line as the Wing Gambit tactics are very important of course. Direct blows may be necessary to destroy solid French positions. In the next four examples you can test your own ability.



Martens-Krays
Sas van Gent 1996

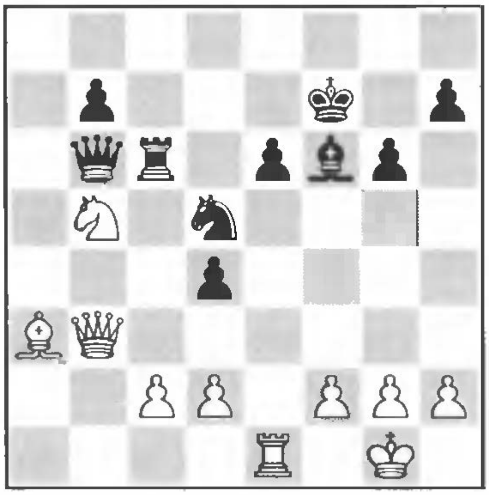
White to move, should he retreat his knight and lose time?
1.♘f7! ♔f7 2.♕f3 ♔g7 3.♗g6! ♘f6 3...♗e8(!) 4.♗d3 with good compensation. **4.♕g3 ♖g8 5.ef6 ♕f6 6.h5 ♔h8** 6...♘b3 7.♗f4+–. **7.♗f4 ♗g7 8.♘d2 ♘c4 9.♘c4 dc4 10.♖a3** White is better and later converted his edge.



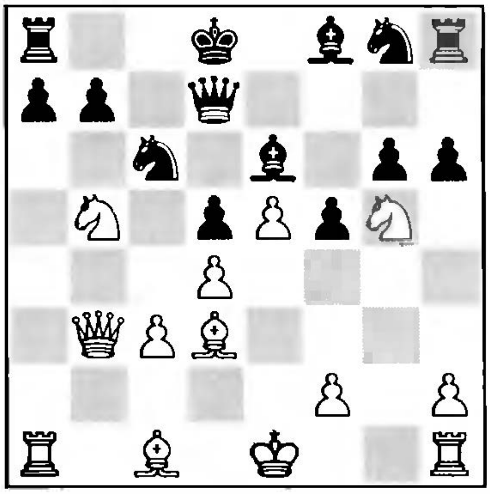
Bücker-Uhlmann
Bad Neuenahr 1991

Black to move, can he take e5?
1...♘e5 2.♘e5 ♗b5 3.♘f7! ♔f7 4.♕h5 g6

5.♕b5 ♕b6 6.♕c4 6.♕b6 **6...♗g7 7.ab4 ♘e7 8.♘a3 ♖hc8 9.♕b3 ♘d5 10.b5 a6 11.♖fe1 ab5** 11...♔g8∞. **12.♘b5 ♖a1 13.♗a1 ♖c6 14.♗b2 ♗f6 15.♗a3**

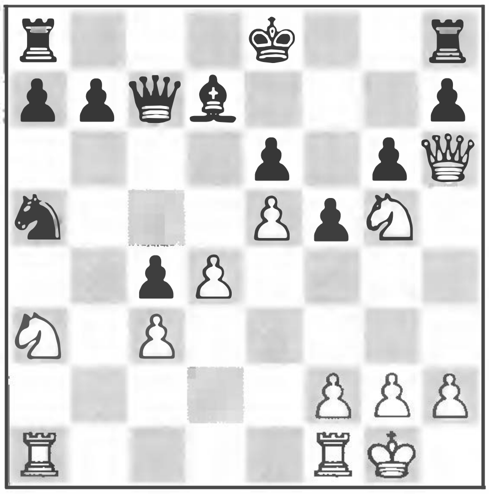


15...♘c7? 16.♕b4 e5 17.♕f8 ♔e6 18.♕c8 ♔d5 19.♕d7 ♔c4 20.♘c3 20.♘d6. **20...♕a5 21.♗f8 ♕a8 22.♘e4 ♕e8** 22...♕f8 23.♖b1+–. **23.♘d6 ♖d6 24.♕d6 ♕c6 25.d3** Black resigned.



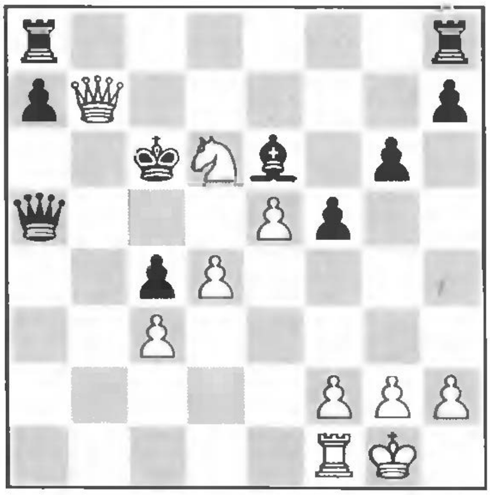
Pedersen-Laursen
Vejle 1991

White to move, a knight move?
1.♘a7! ♖a7 2.♘e6 ♔e8 2...♕e6 3.♕b6 ♔d7 4.♖a7 ♘a7 5.♕b7+–. **3.♖a7 ♘a7 4.♘f8** and Black resigned because of 4...♔f8 5.♕a3.



Bosch-Bergmann
Berlin 1991

Undoubtedly White is better after 1.♕g7, but is there something more forceful?
1.♘e6! ♗e6 2.♘b5 ♕b6 3.♘d6 ♔d7 3...♔d8 4.♖a5 **4.♖a5** 4.♕g7 is equally good. Black resigned after the text since 4...♕a5 5.♕g7 ♔c6 (5...♔d8 6.♘b7) 6.♕b7 mates.



I hope your appetite is whetted while we move on to the theory section.

Theory

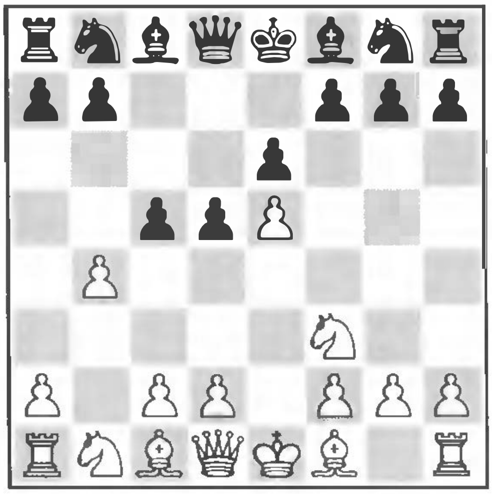
1. e4 e6
2. ♘f3 d5

2...c5 is a Sicilian of course, and other moves make no sense.

3. e5 c5

Clearly best, other moves are passive. Thus, 3...b6 may be answered by 4.c3 (preventing ♗a6), and moves like 3...♘e7 or 3...♗d7 can be answered by 4.d4 (with a good French Advance) or 4.a3!?, keeping the option of 4...c5 5.b4!?.

4. b4!?



We will now investigate: 4...b6 (chapter I); 4...d4 (chapter II); 4...c4 (chapter III); 4...cb4 (chapter IV).

Chapter I

4. ... b6

A modest reply, yet Black has a sound positional idea in mind. He aims to exchange the white-squared bishops, hoping to be better in the resulting French Advance structures that will arise. White's strongest option now is

5. c3!

This forces Black to make another preparatory move, because of the tactic 5...♗a6? 6.♗a6 ♘a6 7.♕a4. Other moves are less convincing:

5.bc5?! bc5 6.c3 is sometimes played, but the pawn exchange favours the second player. If White insists on the exchange he should try to change the pawn structure with 6.c4 as happened for instance in Rahls-Böhm, San Bernardino 1982. I don't have much faith in this plan.

With 5.a3 White wants to tempt Black into taking the pawn on b4 after all. The second player will of course refrain from taking it once again, and simply carry on with his positional plan 5...♗a6. In Dovzik-Matlak, Frydek Mistek Open 1996, Black was comfortable after 6.♗a6 ♘a6 7.♕e2 ♘c7 8.bc5 bc5 9.d4 c4 10.♗g5 ♘e7 11.0-0 h6∓.

Finally, Wind's recommendation of 5.d4 is sometimes played. In my opinion, 5...♕d7 (5...♗a6 is not bad either) is too strong an answer.

5. ... ♕d7

Inconsistent is 5...♘e7 6.d4 c4 7.a4 a6 8.h4 h5 9.♗g5± Barua-Naji, Asian Team Championship, Dubai 1992.

6. a3!?

In *New In Chess Yearbook* 9 Bücker condemned the text with a '?!' sign, but I cannot agree with this harsh verdict. There is an alternative available though in the form of 6.♘a3 (6.b5 and 6.bc5 are less serious). The idea of 6.♘a3 is that 6...♗a6 is well answered by 7.b5, and 6...cb4 7.♗b5 ♘c6 8.cb4 seems playable because 8...♗b4 fails to 9.♕a4 ♘ge7 10.♘d4. Besides White prepares ♘c2, followed by d4 with a slight edge. A fine example is Reinderman-J.Boersma, Dutch Open Championship, Dieren 1991: 6.♘a3 ♗b7 7.♘c2 ♘e7 8.♗e2 ♘g6 9.d4 ♗a6 10.h4 ♗e2 11.♕e2 h5±. However, there is a problem in the line 6.♘a3 cb4 7.♗b5 ♘c6 for after 8.cb4 I think that Black can simply play 8...a6! with an edge. In Hoiberg-Sorensen, Naestved 1988, White therefore tried the forcing 7.♗b5 ♘c6 8.♘d4 ♗b7 9.♕a4 ♘ge7 but saw now nothing better than 10.cb4 when after 10...a6 11.♗c6 ♘c6 12.♘c6 ♗c6 13.♕b3 ♗a4! Black already had a considerable advantage.

With 6.a3 White has fortified b4 and is now ready to play d4 moving the game into the waters of the French Advance.

6. ... ♗a6

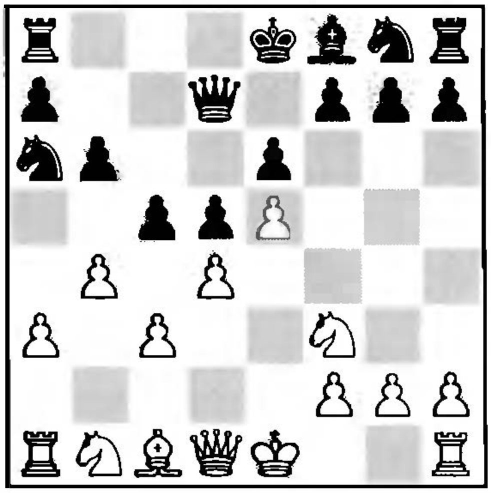
Much more critical is 6...d4?! to counter White's positional plan. However, according to an analysis of Mortensen this move can be refuted. After 7.cd4! cb4 8.d5! ♕d5 (Black cannot allow d6 of course, and 8...ed5 9.ab4 ♗b4 is too small a material gain for the initiative that White is going to develop) 9.ab4 ♗b4(!) Otherwise simply ♘c3 with a huge edge. 10.♕a4 ♘c6 11.♗b5 ♗d7! (11...♕e4 12.♔f1 ♗d7 and White has 13.♘c3; now 12.♗c6 fails to 12...♕c6 when c1 is hanging) 12.0-0 ♘ge7, the game Mortensen-Bjerring, Denmark 1986, ended peacefully after 13.♗a3 ♗a3 14.♘c3 ♕c5 15.♘e4 ♕b4 16.♘d6 ♔f8 17.♖a3 ♕a4 and so on. But, as Bjerring pointed out to his opponent after the game White could have played the remarkably cool 13.♖d1! when it is difficult to see a playable move for Black in the face of 14.♘c3.

7. ♗a6

Bad is 7.d3?! d4! as happened in Bücker-Borngässer, Heiden 1987. Because of this game Bücker gave 6.a3 a ‘?!’ but it is his 7.d3 which is the culprit.

7. ... ♘a6

8. d4

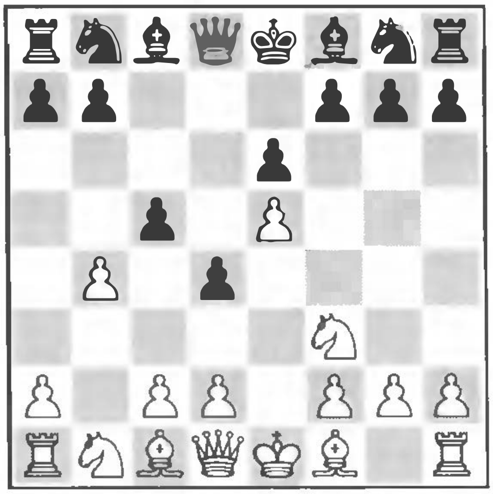


Although the white-squared bishops have been exchanged, White is still slightly better because of his space advantage. Bosch-Krans, Amstelveen 1992, continued 8...♘e7 9.0-0 ♘c7±. Instead of 9...♘c7 Black can try 9...♖c8, when 10.♕e2 improves upon 10.♖e1 as played in Salmensuu-Sakalauskas, Helsinki 2002. Hendriks-Eveleens, correspondence Dutch Championship 1993, ended in a quick draw after 8...cd4 9.cd4 ♘c7 10.0-0 a5 11.ba5 ♖a5 12.♗d2 ♖a7

13.♘c3 ♘e7 14.♗e3 ♘c6 15.♕b3 ♗e7 16.♕b6 0-0 17.♕b3 ♖b8 18.♕c2 ♖a3; but Black's optimistic play in this game could have been punished with 14.♕b3!±.

Chapter II

4. ... d4



The idea of this line, and that of the next, is to prevent White from forming the powerful pawn chain c3-d4-e5. Though hardly ever played, this line certainly deserves attention.

5. bc5 ♗c5

6. ♗a3 ♕a5

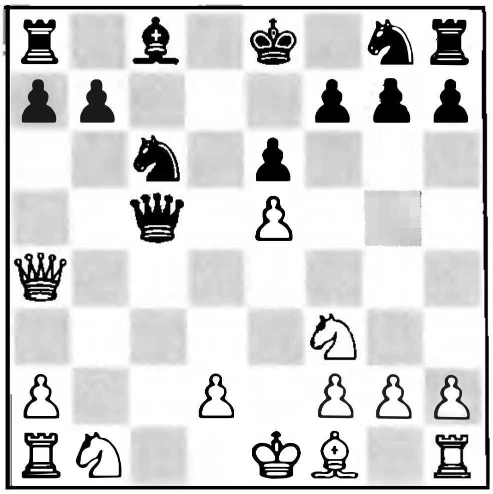
This move, although once played by Kortchnoi, is not necessarily Black's best. Mortensen gives 6...b6 7.♗c5 bc5 8.♘a3 which should certainly guarantee White a slight edge. However, 6...♘d7 needs to be investigated. In Los-Bosman, Dutch Team Championship 1992, Black quickly gained an endgame plus after 7.c3?! dc3 8.dc3 ♘h6 9.♗c5?! ♘c5 10.♕d8 ♔d8 11.♘a3 ♔e7. An alternative on move 7 is 7.♗b5 which should be answered by 7...♕b6 and not by 7...♗a3? 8.♘a3 ♕a5? 9.♘c4.

7. ♗c5 ♕c5

8. c3! ♘c6

9. cd4 ♘d4

10. ♕a4 ♘c6



After the text Mortensen feels that White gains the edge by 11.♘c3 planning ♘e4. He, therefore, gives 10...♗d7(?) an exclamation mark, only to refute it in his subsequent analysis! So, 10...♗d7? 11.♕d4 ♕c1 12.♔e2 ♗b5 13.d3! ♗d3 14.♕d3 ♕b2 15.♘bd2 ♕a1 16.♕b5 and White should win.

11. ♘c3 ♘h6

Boersma-Kortchnoi, Dutch Championship, Leeuwarden 1977, continued 11...♕a5 12.♕a5 ♘a5 13.♘b5 and only after a long game and several chances missed Black won. Instead of 12.♕a5 Boersma could have set his illustrious opponent for serious problems with 12.♕g4!

12. ♘e4 ♕b4

13. ♘d6 ♔e7

We have been following Bücker-Schmittdiel, German Championship, Bad Neuenahr 1991. That game ended in a quick draw after 14.♕b4 ♘b4 15.♖b1 ♘d5 16.♗c4 (16.♘c8 ♖hc8 17.♖b7 ♔f8=∞) 16...♘b6 17.♗d3. White cannot prevent the queen swap with 14.♕c2 (instead of 14.♕b4) because of 14...♘d4!. In my opinion, White keeps a pleasant endgame edge though with 14.♗b5! and now 14...♕a4 15.♗a4 or 14...♗d7 when there are several attractive options available. Note that 14...♕b2 is losing after 15.♗c6! ♕a1 16.♔e2 ♕h1 (or 16...♕b2 17.♘c4) 17.♕a3.

Chapter III

4. ... c4

Conceding square d4 without a fight looks bad, but Black intends to take on d3 after a future d3 or d4, thus forcing White to cover e5 with his pieces. Moreover he will lure the b4-pawn to b5 thus gaining square c5 for his own pieces. Yet, in the end I feel that Black's strategy should prove insufficient.

5. c3

The alternative here is 5.a3. In Los-Vaisser, Groningen Open 1991, there followed 5...a5 6.b5 ♕b6 7.d3 ♗c5?! 8.d4 ♗e7 9.a4±. Thought-provoking is the game Stripunsky-Moskalenko, Ukraine Championship, Simferopol 1990. After 5...b5(!) 6.a4 ♗b4 7.ab5 ♕b6 8.♗a3 ♗a3 9.♘a3 ♘h6 White went for the piece sac 10.♗c4!? dc4 11.♘c4 ♕c7 12.♘d6 ♔e7 13.0-0 ♗b7 14.c4 ♘d7 15.d4=∞ (see the study material).

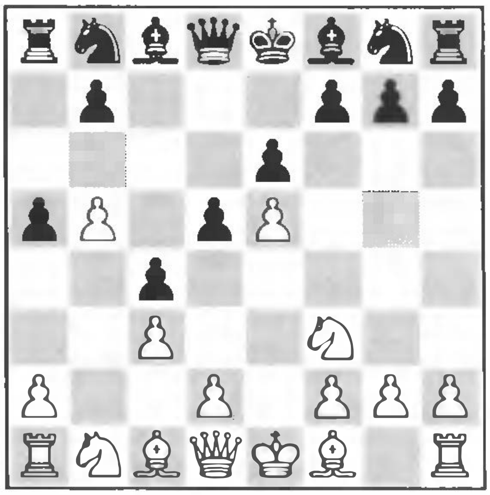
5. ... a5

Other moves are less good. For instance:

A) 5...f6?! 6.d4 cd3 7.♗d3 fe5 8.♘e5 ♘f6 9.♗g5 ♗d6 10.f4 0-0 11.0-0 ♘c6 12.♖e1± Kadas-Sugar, Tapolca 1986.

B) 5...♘e7 6.d3 cd3 7.♗d3 ♘d7 8.0-0 ♕c7 9.♖e1 ♘g6 (9...♘c6 10.♕e2 ♗e7 11.♗f4 a6 12.a4± Day-Ackermann, Ottawa 1966) 10.♕e2 ♗e7 11.h4!± Kadas-Horgosi, Jaszbereny 1977.

6. b5



Variation A

6. ... ♕b6

6...♗c5 7.d3 cd3 8.♗d3 ♘d7 9.0-0 ♘e7 10.♕e2 h6 11.a4± Hermann-Libeau, Germany Bundesliga 1992.

7. d3!

7.a4 should be answered by 7...♗c5(!) 8.d4 cd3 9.♖a2 and not by 7...♘d7 8.d4 cd3 9.♗d3 ♗c5?! 10.0-0 f5 11.♘bd2 ♘e7 12.♘b3 0-0 13.♘bd4 ♘g6 14.♕e2± Bücker-Vavra, Prague 1991.

7. ... cd3

Now 7...♗c5 is bad of course in view of 8.d4 ♗e7 9.a4.

8. ♗d3 ♘d7

In Dovzik-Malar, Hlohovec Open 1996, White gained a quick victory after 8...♗c5 9.0-0 ♘e7 10.a4 ♘d7 11.♘bd2!?

(11.♕e2) 11...♘g6 Now the following double pawn sacrifice is forced. 12.♘b3 ♘ge5 13.♘e5 ♘e5 14.♘c5 ♕c5 15.♗a3 ♕c3 16.♗e2 ♘c4 17.♗c4 ♕c4 18.♖c1 ♕f4 19.g3 ♕b8 20.♖e1=∞/±.

9. a4 ♘e7

10. 0-0 ♘g6

11. ♕e2 ♗e7

12. ♖a2!?±

Black has some problems because the natural 12...0-0? fails to 13.h4 ♘h4? 14.♘h4 ♗h4 15.♕h5. Dovzik-Ferenc Portisch, Nagykanizsa 1994, therefore continued with 12...f6, see the study material.

Variation B

6. ... ♘d7

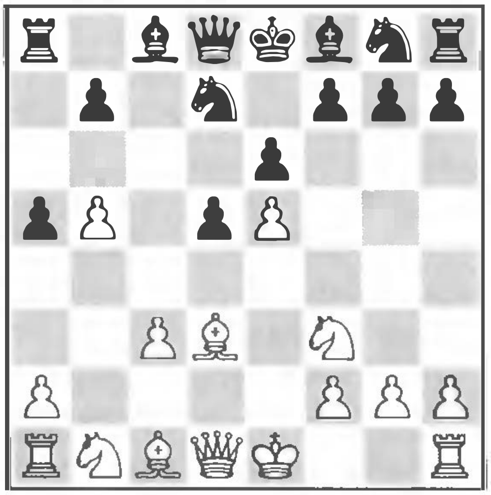
In my opinion this is stronger than 6...♕b6. The queen is more usefully placed on the diagonal b8-h2, and is still useful on d8 as well often preventing h4.

7. d4

Or 7.d3

7. ... cd3

8. ♗d3



The critical position in which it is not clear how Black should continue. Let me cite a few examples:

A) 8...♕c7 Black intends to pressurize e5, but this fails due to brilliant play by Mortensen. Her majesty should perhaps keep an eye open for the march of White's h-pawn. 9.♕e2 ♘e7 10.0-0 ♘g6 11.♖e1 ♗e7 12.h4! ♗h4 13.♘h4 ♘h4 14.♗a3 with a very dangerous initiative, Mortensen-Hansen, Gausdal Zonal 1987.

B) 8...♘c5 9.♗c2 ♘e7 10.0-0 ♘f5 11.♘d4 g6!? 12.♘d2 ♗d7 13.a4 ♖c8 14.♘2f3 ♗e7 15.♖e1 h5 16.g3 ♔f8 17.h4, Dovzik-Feher, Budapest 1992, and now instead of the incorrect 17...♘e4? Black should have played 17...♔g7 18.♗f4± (Dovzik).

C) 8...♘e7 9.0-0 ♘g6 10.♕e2 ♗c5 11.♖e1 0-0 12.a4 ♗a7 is not a bad try for Black, Martens-Romero Holmes, Wijk aan Zee II 1991.

D) Finally, what to make of the following? For 8...f6!? 9.♕c2!? ♘e5 10.♘e5 fe5 11.♗h7 ♗d6 12.♗g8 ♖g8 13.c4 ♕c7 14.♗a3 ♗b4 Naer-Moskalenko, Moscow 1995, I also refer to the section study material.

In my opinion the final two examples deserve to be studied carefully. Still, the only way to refute a gambit is by accepting it! Therefore we will now move on to 4...cb4.

Chapter IV

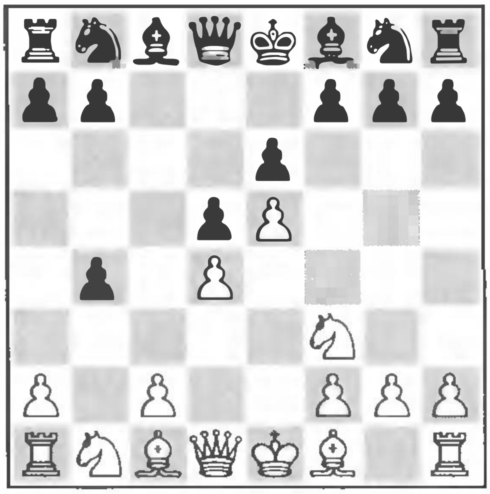
4. ... cb4

Black takes up the gauntlet. White can continue 5.d4?! (A) or 5.a3(!) (B).

Variation A

5. d4?!

This move is not advisable. The main reason for including it here is that the diagrammed position often arises by transposition from the Sicilian Wing Gambit (1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.b4 cb4 4.d4 d5 5.e5 or even 1.e4 c5 2.b4 cb4 3.d4 e6 4.♘f3 d5 5.e5).



5.d4 is less forcing than 5.a3, and it weakens the diagonal e1-a5. This means that after a future ♕a5, White will have difficulties removing the b4 pawn (ba3 will be check, and ab4 will never be a threat because of the pin anyway). Black seems to have two equally good lines at his disposal. In Variation A1 (5...♘e7) Black manages to complete his development, and in Variation A2 (5...♗d7) he is able to exchange the white-squared bishops without compromising his position.

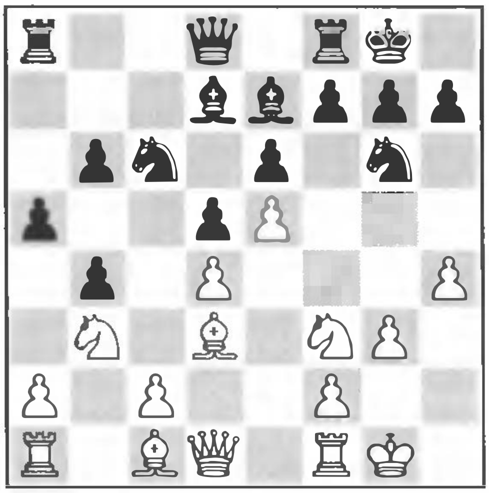
Variation A1

5. ... ♘e7

Apart from 5...♗d7 and the text there are several interesting options available:

A) 5...♕a5 6.♗b2 b3 7.c3 ba2 8.♘bd2 ♗d7 9.♕b3 ♘c6 10.♖a2 ♕c7 and White didn't have enough compensation in Rahls-Schulz, Germany Bundesliga 1994.

B) 5...b6 is an immediate attempt to get rid of the French bishop. After 6.♗b5 ♗d7 7.♗d3 ♘c6 8.0-0 ♘ge7 9.♘bd2 ♘g6 10.g3 ♗e7 11.h4 0-0 12.♘b3 a5



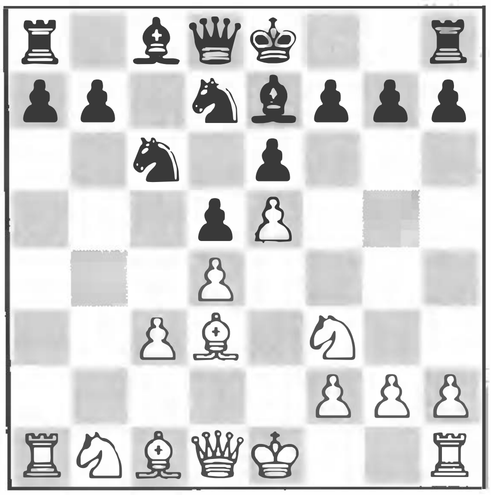
Black was better in Rahls-Hodgson, Biel Open 1992. Stronger is Heiming's suggestion of 6.a3 ♗a6 7.♗a6 ♘a6 8.c3!. After 8...b3 9.♕b3 ♕d7 White possibly has a slight edge.

C) 5...♘c6 6.a3 and now 6...♗d7 will transpose to 5.a3. However, 6...f6!? may well be stronger. After 7.ab4 both 7...♗b4 8.c3 ♗a5 and 7...fe5 8.b5 ♘d4 come into consideration. Also not bad is 6...♕a5 7.♗d3 ba3 8.♗d2 ♗b4 9.c3 ♗e7 10.♘a3 ♗a3 11.♕b3⩲/=, Cuartas-Hug, Dortmund 1980.

6. a3 ♘ec6

This is the point. Black develops his knights to c6 and d7 and his bishop to e7, thus avoiding a cluttering of pieces on the kingside. In the game Stein-Bukal, Dortmund II 1987 6...♕a5 7.♗d3 ♘bc6 8.0-0 ♗d7 9.♘bd2 ♕c7 10.♖e1 h6 turned out to be in Black's favour too.

7. ab4 ♗b4
8. c3 ♗e7
9. ♗d3 ♘d7



The critical position. 10.0-0 ♘b6 11.♘fd2 a6 12.♕g4 g6 (Chapu-Radu, Cappelle la Grande 1995) is better for Black, as was 10.0-0 0-0 11.♖e1 ♖e8 12.♗f4 ♘f8∓ (Wubs-Barsov, Zwolle 1993).

This means that White will have to play more aggressive on the kingside with 10.h4!?. In Rahls-Putzbach, Travemünde 1987, there followed 10...f6? 11.♘g5! fg5 12.♕h5 ♔f8 13.hg5 ♕e8 14.g6 h6± (Bücker). So, Black must improve upon 10...f6.

Variation A2

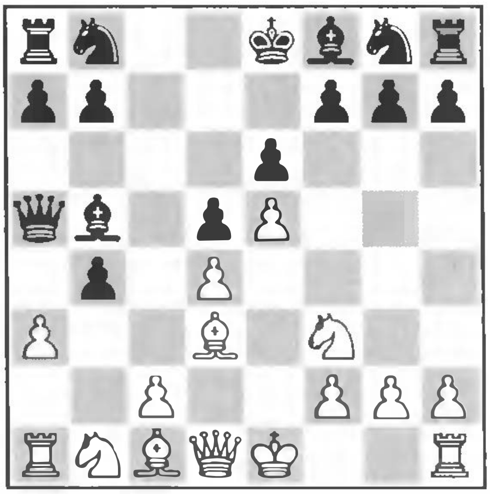
5. ... ♗d7(!)
6. a3

White can hardly do without this move. In the game Barendregt-Bronstein, European Team Championship, Hamburg 1965, 6.♗d3 was played. After 6...♘e7 (6...♕a5!? planning ♗b5) 7.a3 ♘bc6 8.ab4 ♘b4 9.♗e2 ♘f5 10.c3 ♘c6, Black was better.

6. ... ♕a5

6...♕c7 7.ab4 ♗b4 8.c3 ♗c3 9.♘c3 ♕c3 10.♗d2 ♕c7 11.♗d3 ♘c6 12.0-0 ♘ge7∓ Heimig-Möller, Germany Bundesliga 1982.

7. ♗d3 ♗b5



With simple means Black is claiming a material and a positional edge. Since 8.ab4 ♕a1 9.♗b5 ♘c6 10.♗d2 ♕b2 11.c3 a5 gives insufficient compensation for the exchange (Day-Hübner, World Junior Championship, Jerusalem 1967), White must allow the exchange of bishops: 8.0-0 ♗d3 9.♕d3 ♕a6 10.♕b3 ♘c6 11.♕b2 ♕b6⩱/∓, Vedder-Poulton, Gausdal 1990.

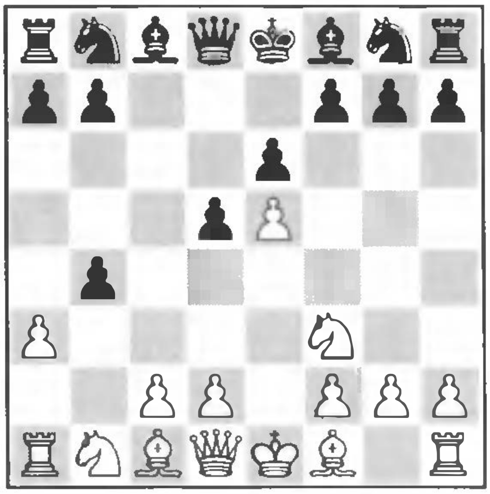
It is possible that some improvement may be found upon White's play in one of these lines. However, since nearly all variations are favourable for Black finding one improvement is simply not enough. Hence, my conclusion that 5.d4 is unplayable.

So let us examine 5.a3.

Variation B

5. a3

The lines now diverge. The main lines are Variation B4 and Variation B5 but the alternatives are not without interest.



B1) 5...♘h6
B2) 5...♕a5
B3) 5...d4
B4) 5...♘c6 6.ab4 ♗b4 7.c3
B5) 5...ba3 6.d4 ♘c6 7.c3 ♗d7 8.♗d3

Variation B1

5. ... ♘h6

Uncommon but not illogical. Black simply wants to develop his kingside. It turns out that he is unable to consolidate his position in this way, although energetic play is required to prove this.

6. ab4

Less natural is Bücker's 6.h4. After 6...f5 7.ab4 ♗b4 8.c3 ♗e7 9.d4 ♘f7 10.♗d3, Black should continue 10...♘c6 (as indicated by Bücker), and after 11.g4 g6 when I doubt whether White has sufficient compensation. Instead of 10...♘c6 the game Bücker-Rohlmann. Lengerich 1987 continued 10...♗d7?! 11.g4 fg4 12.♘g5 ♗g5 13.hg5 with an advantage for White.

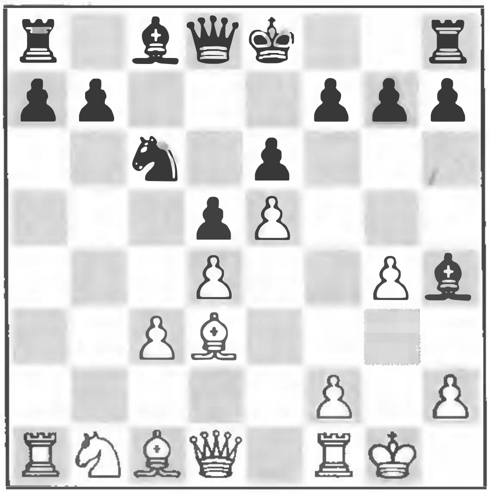
6. ... ♗b4
7. c3 ♗e7
8. d4 ♘f5
9. g4!

Also possible is 9.♗d3 ♘c6 10.g4 ♘h4 11.♘h4 ♗h4 12.0-0 which transposes to, and was in fact the move order used in Mortensen-Tisdall, see below.

9. ... ♘h4
10. ♘h4 ♗h4
11. ♗d3 ♘c6

Bad is 11...h5? as after 12.gh5 the move 13.♕g4 will be unpleasant to meet. Interesting is 11...f6!? which led to unclear play in the game Salmensuu-Zilberman, Panormo 2001, after 12.0-0 0-0 13.f4 fe5 14.de5 ♗e7 15.♕c2 ♗c5 16.♔g2 ♕h4.

12. 0-0



White has a nice game, he is ready to continue with f4-f5. Black, on the other hand, will have to retrieve his bishop at some point and is lacking a clear plan:

A) 12...0-0 13.f4 ♗e7 14.g5!? g6 15.♖f3 ♔g7 16.h4 ♖h8 17.h5 h6 18.hg6 hg5 19.fg5 fg6 20.♖f6! Williams-Grechihin, Bled ol 2002 (via transposition).

B) 12...♗e7 13.f4 ♗d7 14.♘d2 ♕c7 15.♗a3 ♗a3 16.♖a3, see Mortensen-Farago, Esbjerg 1985; White is better but Black should now have continued 16...0-0-0 according to Mortensen.

C) 12...f5(?) 13.gf5 ef5 14.♕h5 g6 15.♕h6 ♔f7 16.♘a3 ♗e7 17.♘b5 ♗e6±, see Mortensen-Tisdall, Torshavn 1987. For the final part of the game see the section on general ideas.

D) 12...g6 13.f4 f5 14.ef6 ♗f6 is a suggestion of Mortensen who feels that White may either continue quietly with 15.♘d2 or aggressively with 15.g5 ♗g7 16.h4.

Variation B2

5. ... ♕a5

Black prevents ab4 and wants to restrain his opponent on the queenside. In Variation A (5.d4) we saw the same idea. There it was stronger because of the discovered threat of check.

6. ♗b2

White covers the rook and plans a future ab4. A transposition to Variation A occurs after 6.d4, while 6.♗e2 is interesting.

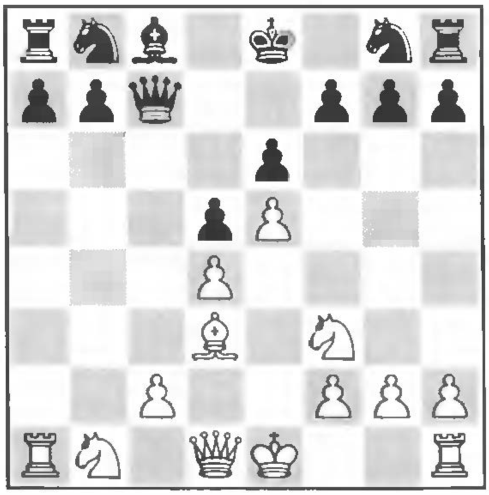
6. ... ♕b6!?

I have selected this prophylactic move of the Dane Kjeldsen as the main line. A natural idea is 6...♗d7, again aiming to exchange the white-squared bishops. White should continue quietly with 7.♗e2, when he is better after 7...♗b5 8.0-0 ♗e2 9.♕e2 ♘c6 (9...♗e7 10.ab4± Bosch-Rubingh, Dutch Junior Championship, Hilversum 1988) 10.ab4 ♕b4 11.♗a3 ♕c4 12.d3 ♕g4 13.♗f8=∞ Martens-Prakken, Dutch Team Championship 1993.

7. ab4

Also playable is 7.♗e2 ♗d7 8.0-0 a6 9.♗d4 ♕c7 10.ab4 ♗b4 11.c3 ♗e7 12.♕b3 with compensation, Bosch-Kjeldsen, Tarnowsky Gory 1988.

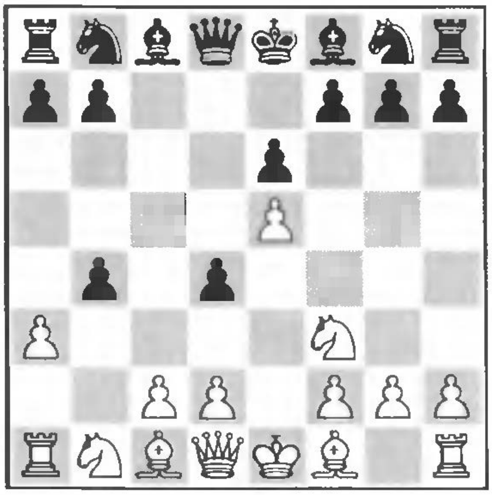
7. ... ♗b4
8. ♗d4 ♗c5
9. ♗c5 ♕c5
10. d4 ♕c7
11. ♗d3



White has compensation for the sacrificed pawn. Kjeldsen twice reached this position as Black. In the first game he played 11...a6 12.0-0 ♘c6 13.♘a3 ♘a5 (14.♘b5 was a threat) 14.♕e2 Christensen-Kjeldsen, Arhus 1988. The second time he went for the h-pawn with 11...h6 12.0-0 ♗d7 13.♘a3 Alkarsig-Kjeldsen, Arhus 1989 (see the study material).

Variation B3

5. ... d4



Djurhuus' pet line. Black gains space in the centre and prevents the typical advance French pawn chain (c3-d4-e5). He hopes to isolate the e5-pawn, and win it at some point. This is indeed a dangerous idea. White has two alternative roads to travel on.

Variation B31

6. ab4 ♗b4

7. c3!?

Sacrificing a pawn to get the queen into play. The alternatives are bishop moves, but none of them is particularly good:

A) 7.♗b2 ♘c6 8.♗b5 ♗c5 promises little. Los-Vanheste, Semifinal Dutch Championship 1991, went 9.0-0 ♘e7 10.d3 0-0 11.♘bd2 b6 12.♘e4 ♗b7∓. White should perhaps seek refuge in the messy 9.♕e2 ♘e7 10.c3 0-0 11.♖a4 ♗d7 12.cd4 ♗b4 13.♘c3 Reinderman-Ronneland, Hallsberg jr 1991.

B) 7.♗a3 ♗a3! 8.♘a3 ♘e7 9.♗d3 (as 9.♘b5 ♘bc6 10.♘d6 ♔f8 is nothing for White) 9...♘g6 10.0-0 ♘c6 11.♖e1 0-0 and Black's concept has succeeded: Martens-Djurhuus, World Junior Championship, Santiago 1990.

C) 7.♗d3 ♘c6 8.0-0 ♘ge7 9.♖e1 ♘g6 10.♗a3 ♗a3 11.♘a3 0-0 was equally unconvincing in Bosch-Lilley, York 1995.

7. ... dc3

8. ♕a4 ♘c6

9. dc3

Quite an unclear position. Black is a pawn up, but White's queen is ready to switch to the kingside with ♕g4 and he may get some pressure on the open files. I suspect that White does not have quite enough, but there is certainly room for improvisation. See Reinderman-Tondivar, Leeuwarden 1995 in the study material.

Variation B32

6. ♗b2 ♘c6

7. ♗b5 ♗d7

8. ♕e2

Worthy of investigation is 8.0-0. After 8...♘e5 9.♘e5 ♗b5 White has 10.♘f7 (see Bücker-Uhlmann, Bad Neuenahr 1991 in the section on general ideas). Dovzik-Kecskes, Eger Open 1994 went 8...ba3 instead, and after 9.♘a3 ♗c5

10.♘c4 ♘ge7 11.♘d6 ♗d6 12.ed6 ♘f5 13.♗d3 0-0 14.♗f5 ef5 15.♘d4 ♘d4 16.♗d4 ♗b5 17.♖e1 a draw was agreed upon.

8. ... a6

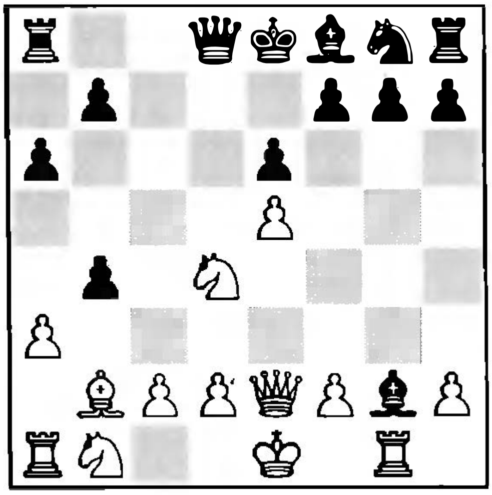
9. ♗c6

Bad is 9.♗d3 ♗c5 10.ab4 ♘b4 11.♗d4 ♗d4 12.♘d4 ♕b6 13.♕e4 ♘d3 14.♕d3 ♕b2 Gausel-Djurhuus, Norwegian Championship, Bronnoysund 1990.

9. ... ♗c6

10. ♘d4 ♗g2

11. ♖g1



An interesting position with roughly equal chances has arisen. The game Re-Miana, Semifinal Argentinean Championship, Rosario 1992 was drawn after 11...♗d5 12.ab4 ♕h4 13.c4 ♕h2 14.♔f1 ♕h5 15.♔e1 ♕h2 16.♔f1 ♕h3 17.♔e1 ♕h2. While in Santos-Dias, City Championship, Lisbon 1996, White quickly gained the edge after 11...ba3 12.♘a3 ♗d5 13.c4 (13.♘ab5 ab5 14.♕b5 ♗c6 15.♘c6 ♖a1 16.♗a1 bc6 17.♕c6 ♕d7 18.♕a8 ♕d8 is only equal, Djurhuus 1990) 13...♕b6 14.cd5 ♕b2 15.♘ac2 ♗c5 16.de6 ♗d4 17.ef7 ♔f7 18.♕c4+–.

Variation B4

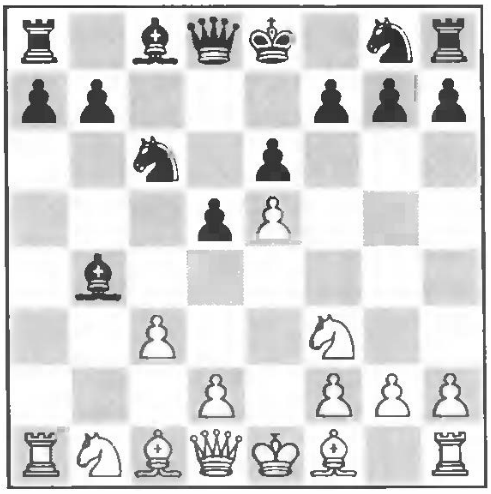
5. ... ♘c6

5...♗d7 6.ab4 ♗b4 7.c3 has no independent value. Black cannot do without ♘c6 anyway.

6. ab4 ♗b4

6...♘b4 7.c3 ♘c6 8.d4 transposes to Variation B42.

7. c3



Now Black must withdraw his bishop, the question is where to? If he wants to develop his g8-knight via e7, then ♗a5 or ♗f8 should be played.

On a5 the bishop does not obstruct the development of the kingside, and is eying c3. The drawback is that he might be lacking a defender on the kingside.

Putting the bishop on its original square is hardly consistent.

If Black wants to play in this way he should prefer 5...ba3 6.d4 ♘c6 7.c3, for in that case there is still a Black pawn on a3!

To my mind ♗e7 is most logical, yet this leaves the problem of the g8-knight which will probably have to be developed now via h6.

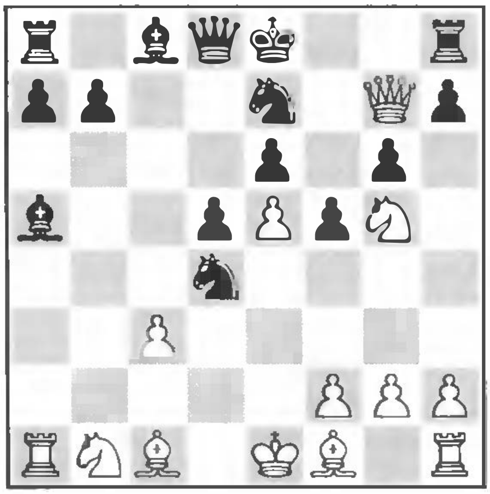
7. ... ♗a5

8. d4 ♘ge7

Most logical. Black completes his kingside development as fast as possible. Still, other moves are not without interest.

A) 8...♕c7!?. Black is playing for a trick, obstructing the natural 9.♗d3 because of 9...♘d4 10.♘d4 ♗c3 11.♗d2 ♕e5 12.♘e2 ♗a1 and White has lost too much material, although he won quickly in Padovani-Paetz, Berkeley 1984. Much better is 9.♗a3, though, when White's position is preferable.

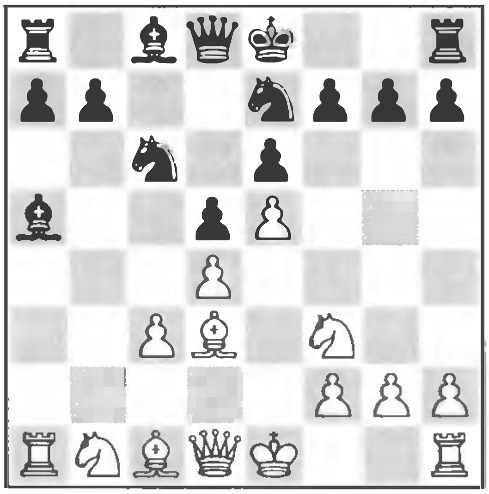
B) 8...f5. This gains space but weakens the dark squares on the kingside which makes the absence of the bishop felt. Hoiberg-Rudolph, Women Interzonal Malaysia 1990, went 9.♘g5 g6 (9...♘ge7(!) 10.♕h5 g6 11.♕h6 ♘d4 12.♕g7 with great complications is worth investigating for Black) 10.♘h3 ♗d7 unclear. Simpler is 9.♗d3 ♘ge7 10.0-0 (10.g4? fg4 11.♘g5 h6!) 10...♗d7 11.♘g5 0-0 12.h4 h6 13.♘h3 ♗e8 14.♘f4 ♗f7 15.h5 and White had plenty of compensation for the pawn in Bosch-Sims, Swansea 1987.



C) 8...f6 9.♗d3 ♘ge7 (9...a6 10.0-0 b5 11.♗d2 ♗b7 12.♖e1 f5 13.g4⩲, Hoiberg-Hassan, Moscow Olympiad 1994) 10.ef6 gf6 11.♗h6 ♘g6 12.♕c2 ♕e7 13.0-0 ♗d7 14.♘bd2 with excellent compensation in Bosch-Beulen, Dutch Junior Championship, Hilversum 1989.

D) 8...♗d7 9.♗d3 f5 10.h3 was Levi-Reeves, Australian Championship, Melbourne 1994. Also possible are 10.0-0 or 10.h4.

9. ♗d3



9. ... h6(!)

I like this move for Black. With the bishop on a5 he needs to control as many dark squares as possible on the kingside as I have already pointed out. There is also another good reason for this move: it prevents the classical bishop sacrifice on h7! Thus, 9...0-0? fails to 10.♗h7! ♔h7 11.♘g5

A) 11...♔g8 12.♕h5 ♖e8 13.♕h7 (or 13.♗a3) 13...♔f8 14.♕h8 ♘g8 15.♘h7 ♔e7 16.♗g5+–.

B) 11...♔g6 12.h4! ♕b6 13.♕g4 ♘f5 14.h5 ♔h6 15.♘e6 ♔h7 and now White wins with 16.h6! or with 16.♕f5!. After the latter move Black resigned in the correspondence game Dormann-Pollen, 1991. 16...♔g8 17.h6! wins for White.

Bosch-Walsh, Plymouth 1989 went 9...a6 10.0-0 b5!? (Black wants to destroy the pawn chain) 11.♘fd2!? b4 12.♘b3 ♗b6 13.♕g4 ♘g6 (13...0-0) 14.♗g5 with compensation. Perhaps even stronger was 14.♗b5!?.

10. 0-0 a6

11. ♗a3

Gaining space with 11.h4!? comes into consideration.

11. ... ♗d7

12. g3 b5

13. ♗c5 ♗b6

14. ♗b6 ♕b6

15. ♘bd2

With compensation, Westerinen-Brinck-Claussen, Esbjerg 1978. See the study material.

Variation B42

7. ... ♗f8

As I stated above, this set-up is inconsistent. In Variation B5 Black gets the same position with a, admittedly soon to be confiscated, pawn on a3. Still it takes time to actually capture the pawn, and White often prefers to postpone either ♘a3 or ♗a3 until Black has laid some of his cards on the table.

8. d4 ♗d7

Dzindzichashvili once played 8...♘ge7 9.♗d3 ♘f5 10.0-0 ♗e7 (Ansel-Dzindzichashvili, New York 1989), when White 'forgot' to play 11.g4! with excellent chances. Black realized this in Bosch-Claesen, European Junior Championship, Arnhem 1989, and therefore played the prophylactic 10...h5. Nevertheless he was worse after 11.♘a3 g6 12.♘b5 ♗e7 13.♗f5 ef5 14.♗a3. See the section on general ideas for the rest of the game.

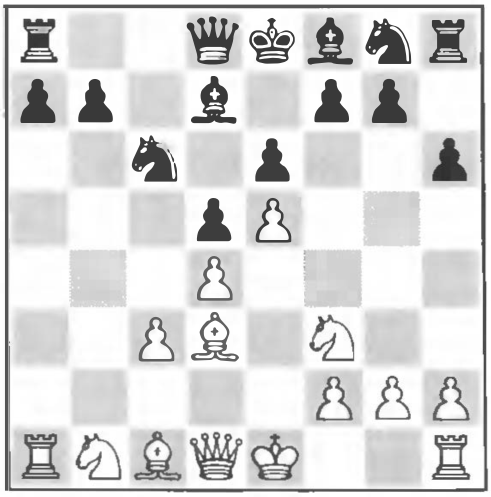
Reinderman-Gokhale, Oakham 1992, saw 8...f6 9.♗d3 fe5 10.♘e5 ♘e5 11.de5 ♘e7 12.♗g5 with an unclear position. 10.de5 is probably to be preferred.

9. ♗d3 h6

Again this move is playable.

A) 9...♘ge7 10.h4 h5 11.♘g5 ♘f5 12.♗f5 ef5 13.♗a3 should by now be a familiar idea. See Bosch-Greben, Amstelveen 1994, in the section on general ideas.

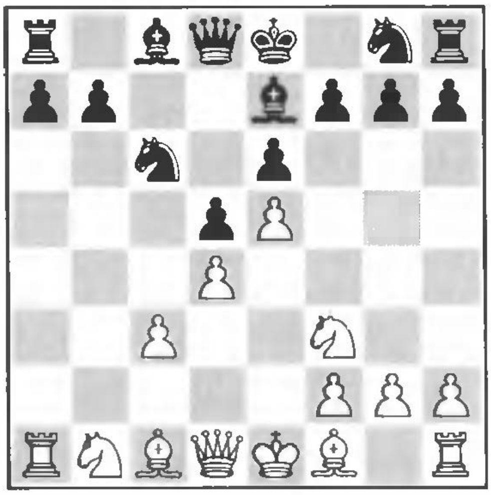
B) 9...f5 10.g4 should be compared to Variation B5. Now 10...fg4? 11.♘g5 ♘h6 12.♘h7 ♘e7 13.♗h6 gh6 14.♘f6 is bad, Vinzenz-Kappelt, Düsseldorf 1990. 10...♘ce7 is spectacular (10...♘ge7 transposes to Variation B5) 11.h3?! a6?! 12.♘g5 ♘h6 13.♘e6!? ♗e6 14.♗h6 gh6 15.gf5, La Rota-Reyes, New York Open 1988.



Dankert-Karpov, Munich 1979, now went 10.0-0 ♘ge7 11.g3 a6 12.♘h4 g6 13.♗e3 b5 14.♘d2 ♘a5. Stronger is 10.h4. For example, 10...a6 11.h5 ♘a7 12.♘a3 ♘e7 13.♘h4⩲, Drazic-Giocastro, Cattolica 1990.

Variation B43

7. ... ♗e7
8. d4



Again we are at a crossroads:
B431) 8...f6
B432) 8...♕c7
B433) 8...♗d7

Variation B431

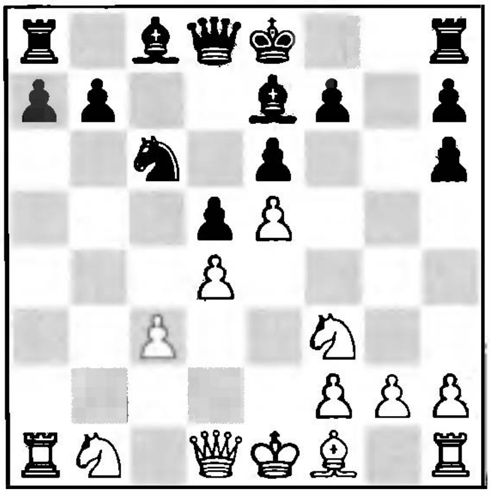
8. ... f6

Glek's favourite line. This move is played by grandmasters only. Hence, it deserves serious consideration.

The following moves are not main lines:

A) 8...f5 9.♗d3 ♘h6 10.h3!? (10.♗h6) 10...♘f7 11.g4 g6 12.gf5 ef5 13.h4⩲, Martens-Lempert, Hyères Open 1992.

B) 8...♘h6 9.♗h6 (9.h4 is preferred by Wing Gambit expert Dovzik) 9...gh6



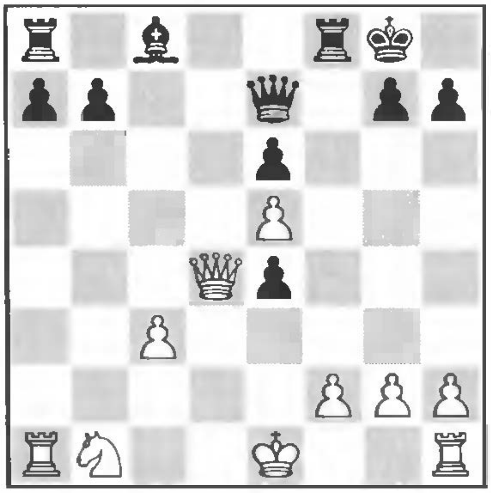
10.♕d2 (10.♕c1 ♗f8 11.♗d3 ♗d7 12.0-0 is rather similar, Dmitriev-Shliakhtin, Podolsk 1992; 10.♗d3 f5 11.♕d2 ♗g5 Reinderman-Andriessen, Netherlands 1992, should be answered by 12.♕b2 planning 13.h4) 10...♗f8 11.♗d3 ♗d7 12.0-0 with unclear play and compensation for the pawn. Peelen-Hoeksema, Semifinal Dutch Championship, Enschede 1990. Answering 8...♘h6 with 9.♗d3 is not a bad idea either. After 9...f5 White continues 10.♗h6 and after 9...♘f5 with 10.0-0, when 10...0-0 11.g4 should be a familiar reaction by now.

9. ♗d3 fe5
10. ♘e5

In my opinion, 10.de5 is stronger. After 10...♘h6 11.♗h6 gh6 12.♕d2(!) is best (12...♗g5 13.♕e2 planning 14.h4). Instead the game K.Schmidt-Vaiser, Paris 1990, continued 12.0-0 0-0 13.♖a3 ♖f7 14.♖e1 ♗d7 15.♘bd2 ♔h8 16.♘f1 ♕g8

17.♘g3 ♖af8 18.c4 ♖f3!∓.

10. ... ♘f6
11. ♗g5 ♘e5
12. de5 ♘e4!
13. ♗e7 ♕e7
14. ♗e4 de4
15. ♕d4 0-0



Normally speaking White aims for good knight versus 'bad' light-squared bishop in the French. But here something clearly has gone wrong. The knight is crippled (it lacks useful squares to jump to) whereas the 'bad' bishop is a giant. Black has the advantage after both 16.♖a7 ♖a7 17.♕a7 ♕g5, Buturin-Glek, Belgorod Open 1989, and 16.♕e4 ♗d7 17.♕e3 ♗b5, Reinderman-Glek, Groningen 1992.

Variation B432

8. ... ♕c7

A common move-order to reach this position is 6...♕c7 7.d4 ♗b4 8.c3 ♗e7.

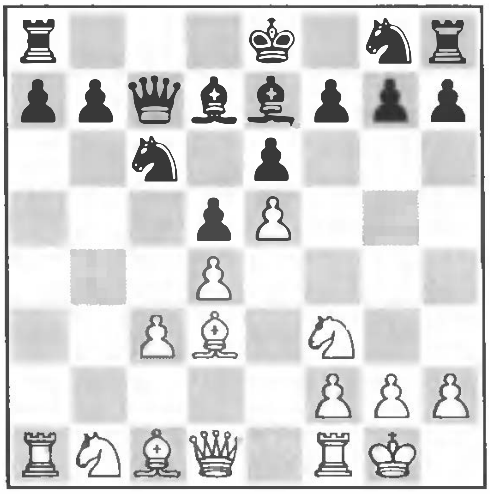
9. ♗d3 ♗d7

Sometimes Black touches the f-pawn:

A) 9...f5 10.♘a3 (normally speaking you would postpone this move, but with the queen on c7 is definitely a thought) 10...♘h6 11.♗h6 gh6 12.♕d2 0-0? 13.♘b5 ♕d8 14.♕h6±, Barendregt-Bonkenburg, Beverwijk 1966.

B) 9..f6 10.♕e2 (10.0-0 fe5 11.de5 ♘e5 12.♘e5 ♕e5 13.♗b5 ♔f8 14.f4 and White should not have enough for two pawns, although he won in Lahti-Haapamaki, Kuopio Kalakukko 1987; 10.♗f4!?) 10...fe5 11.de5 ♘h6 12.♗h6 gh6 unclear Nyholm-Si.Maus. Lyngby 1988.

10. 0-0



Black has not completed his kingside development yet, and should therefore be worse:

A) 10...♘h6 is once again answered by 11.♗h6;

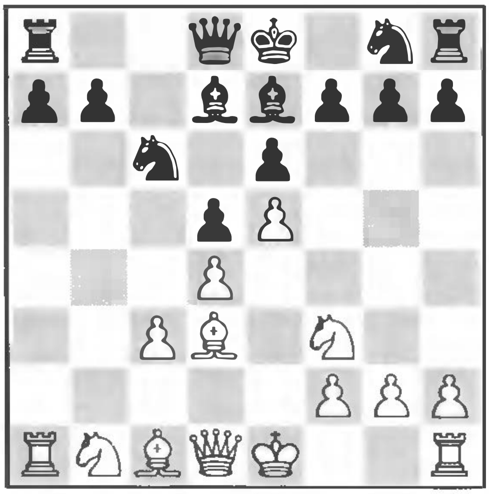
B) 10...♘a5 11.♘g5 f5 12.♗a3 ♘c4 13.♗e7 ♘e7 14.♕h5 g6 15.♕h6 ♘c6 16.♗c4 dc4 17.♘a3 ♘a5 18.♘e6!, Bosch-Bergmann, Berlin 1991. See the section on general ideas.

C) 10...f5 and now several moves come into consideration 11.♘g5 (Hoiberg-Petek, Thessaloniki Olympiad

1988), 11.g4?! (Stock-Nissen, Germany 1990), 11.h4!?, 11.♘a3!?.

Variation B433

8. ... ♗d7
9. ♗d3



Certainly the most popular tabiya position after 5...♘c6. The correct evaluation of this position is probably roughly equal. Hence, this is not a bad line for Black. On the other hand, White need not exactly fear this set-up either: he gets sufficient compensation for the pawn, and is probably more familiar with the resulting positions than his opponent.

Black has a choice of four logical moves:

- B4331) 9...f5 to forego White's play on the kingside;
- B4332) 9...a6
- B4333) 9...♖c8
- B4334) 9...♘a5

The final three moves all aim to start counterplay on the queenside.

In Ganbold-Villamayor, Istanbul ol 2000, Black was severely punsihed for playing 9...♕c7?!. The game continued: 10.♗f4 f5 11.g4 fg4 12.♘g5 ♗g5 13.♗g5 ♕f7 14.♕g4 ♘ge7 15.♖g1 ♘f5 16.♘a3 0-0 17.♘b5 ♔h8 18.♕h3 h6 19.♗f6!! A lovely finish! Black rightly threw in the towel (we leave the reader to check the lines for himself).

Variation B4331

9. ... f5
10. h4

It is not quite clear whether this is best. 10.g4? fg4 11.♘g1∓ Dannevig-Scholler Larsen, Copenhagen 1990, is too rash.

The modest 10.h3 should not be answered by 10...a6? 11.g4 ♘a5 12.gf5 ef5 13.♖g1± (Lucaroni-Werner, Budapest 1991), but by 10...h5!

However, 10.0-0 could well be best. After 10...♘h6, White should play 11.♗h6 gh6 12.♕d2=∞ rather than 11.♖e1?! 0-0?! (11...♘f7 12.♗f5 ef5 13.e6 0-0∓) 12.♗h6 gh6 13.♕c1 Cherkasov-Kakabadze, Naberezhnie Chelni 1988.

10. ... h5(!)

This looks odd, but it effectively stops some of White's standard manoeuvres. The first player should now seek compensation for his pawn deficit by exchanging the dark-squared bishops, hoping to infiltrate the weakened squares g5 and d6 at some point. Still, I don't think that Black is in trouble here, e.g. 11.♘g5?! g6 12.♖h3 ♘h6 13.♖g3 ♘f7 14.♗e2, Prokhorov-Kiseleva, Yalta 1995. Or 11.♗g5 g6 12.0-0 ♘h6 13.♕b3 ♗c8 14.♘a3 ♘f7 15.♗e7 ♕e7 16.♘b5 and now it should not be too difficult to improve over the suicidal 16...g5? Hünerberg-Schulte, Braunschweig 1986.

Variation B4332

9. ... a6

This is a bit slow, although a6 is nearly always a useful move.

10. h4 ♕c7!?

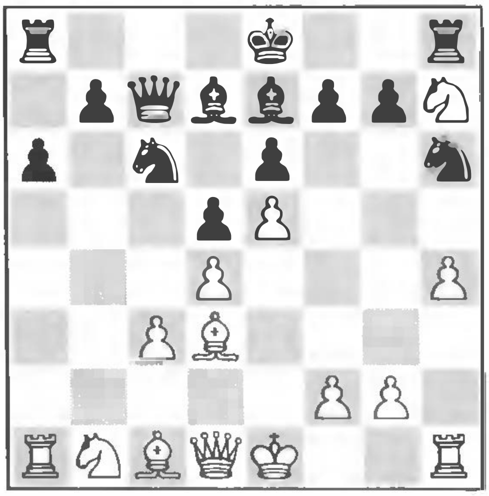
After 10...h5 11.♘g5 ♗g5 12.hg5 g6 both 13.♖h4 ♕c7 14.g4, Bosch-Schuit, Dutch Team Championship 1989 and the immediate 13.g4 h4 14.♘d2, Bosch-De Wolf, Antwerp 1991, are possible.

11. ♘g5

Not 11.♘a3 ♖c8 of course, but the text looks strong in view of 11...h6 12.♕h5. However, since Black can give back the pawn with reasonable play, 11.h5!? or 11.0-0!? may well be better.

11. ... ♘h6(!)

12. ♘h7



and now either 12...0-0-0, Van Voorthuijsen-De Ruiter, Netherlands 1991, or 12...♘f5, Peelen-Biebinger, Groningen 1990.

Variation B4333

9. ... ♖c8

10. h4

Again White has to choose between h4 or castling kingside. Patrick Chandler was once successful with the latter: 10.0-0 a6 11.♘e1!? ♘a7 12.♕g4 (this sortie is the point of ♘e1) 12...g6 13.♕g3 ♗b5 14.♗e3 ♗d3 15.♘d3 (P.Chandler-T.Muller, Moscow Open 1990, 1-0, 27). However, Black seems to be quite OK at this stage.

10. ... ♕c7

The alternatives are not worse:

10...♘a5 11.♘g5 ♕b6 12.♗c2 h5 13.♕f3 ♗g5 14.hg5 ♘b3, Nieuwelink-Brenninkmeijer, Dutch Championship semi-final, Eindhoven 1988. See the study material.

10...a6 11.♖h3?! h6 12.♖g3 ♗f8 13.♔f1 ♘a5 14.♔g1 ♕b6, Spraggett-Ross, Canadian Zonal 1989. See the study material.

11. ♗f4?! ♕b6
12. 0-0 ♕b2
13. ♖a4 a6
14. ♘g5 h6
15. ♕h5 ♘d8
16. ♗c1 ♕b3
17. ♖a1 ♗b5

And Black was slightly better in Cuartas-U.Geller, Siegen Olympiad 1970.

Variation B4334

9. ... ♘a5

10. h4

10.♕c2?! ♕b6 11.♘bd2 ♗b5, Bücker-Breutigam, Germany Bundesliga 1993, was good for Black. The alternative for the text is of course 10.0-0. After 10...a6 11.♘bd2 ♖c8 12.♘b3 ♘c4 13.♖e1 h5 14.♘fd2!? was an original way of getting play for the pawn, Rahls-Breutigam, Germany Bundesliga 1995. No less original was 11.♘e1?! h5 12.♖a2 (the start of a dubious and time-consuming plan) 12...♖c8 13.♖e2 ♘h6 14.♖e3 g6 15.♖h3 ♗c6 16.g4 ♔d7 but the resulting position clearly favours Black, Bücker-Hort, German Championship, Bad Neuenahr 1991).

10. ... a6

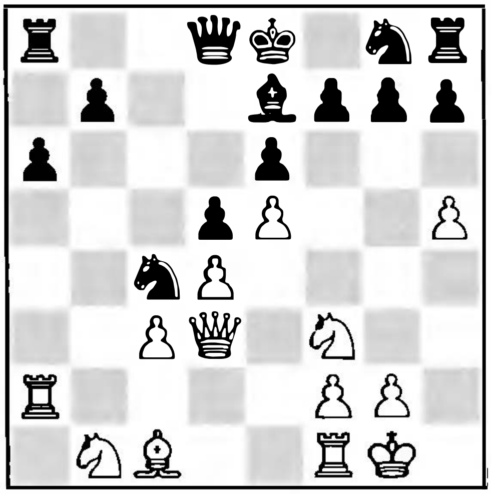
White had a slight edge in Reinderman-Vogel, Eindhoven 1989, after 10...♘c4 11.♘g5 ♘h6 12.♘h7.

11. 0-0 ♗b5

12. ♖a2 ♗d3

13. ♕d3 ♘c4

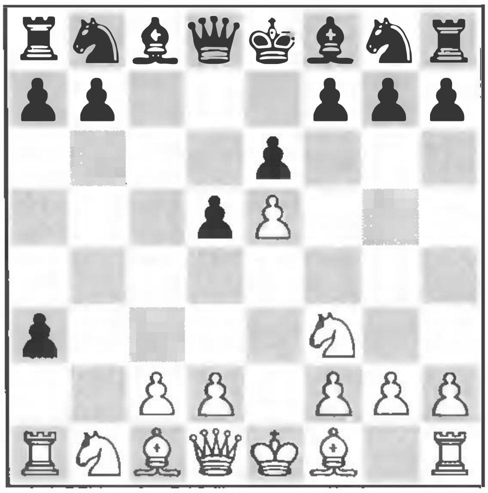
14. h5!



And despite the exchange of the light-squared bishops, White has nice compensation for the pawn in Reindennan-Pliester, Purmerend 1993. Black is unable to extricate his knight and rook on the kingside without making concessions.

Variation B5

5. ... ba3



6. d4

Some players prefer 6.c3 ♘c6 7.d4. There is little wrong with this move order. On the other hand, it is not quite clear exactly what they are avoiding, since 6.d4 ♕a5 is well-answered by 7.♗d2 (but indeed not 7.c3 a2!).

6. ... ♘c6

A) Black should not try to give 6...♗d7 independent value (of course there is nothing wrong with 6...♗d7 7.♗d3 ♘c6 8.c3). After 7.♗d3 both 7...♕b6 8.0-0 ♗b5 9.♘a3 ♗d3 10.♕d3 ♘a6 11.c4, Bosch-Vedder, Arnhem 1988 (see the section on general ideas) and

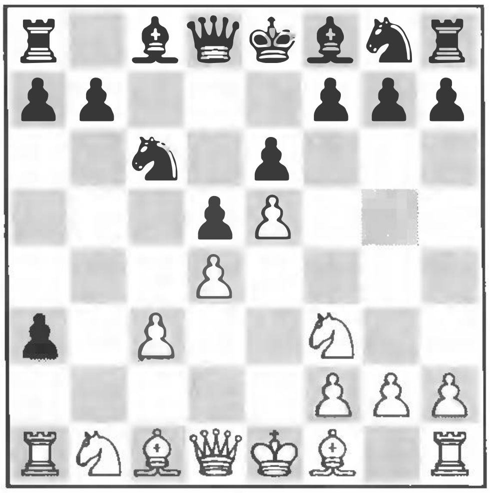
7...♗c6 8.0-0 ♘d7 9.♘a3 ♘e7 10.♘g5 g6 11.♕f3 ♘f5 12.♗f5 gf5 13.♘e6!, Jakobsen-Boe, Arhus 1992, are favourable for White. (In the latter game, however, White quickly went wrong after 13...♘e5 14.♕f5? instead of the superior 14.♕h5±).

Interesting, however, are:

B) 6...a2!? 7.♖a2 ♕b6 8.♗a3 ♗a3 9.♖a3 ♗d7 10.c3 ♘e7, T.Hjorth-Siepenkötter, Aalborg Open 1991.

C) 6...♘h6 7.d4 ♘f5 8.♗d3 ♘c6 9.h4 (9.0-0) 9...♕a5 10.♗a3 ♘fd4 11.♘d4 ♘d4 12.♗f8!?, Naer-Rapoport, Moscow Open 1994.

7. c3



Now Black has two sensible replies. He can strike in the centre or finish his queenside development.

B51) 7...f6

B52) 7...♗d7

Variation B51

7. ... f6

The alternatives are worse:

A) 7...♕a5 8.♗a3 ♗a3 9.♖a3 ♕c7 10.♗d3 ♘ge7 11.0-0 ♘g6 12.♕c1 ♗d7 13.h4! happened in Rahls-Danerud, Travemünde 1989. See the section on general ideas.

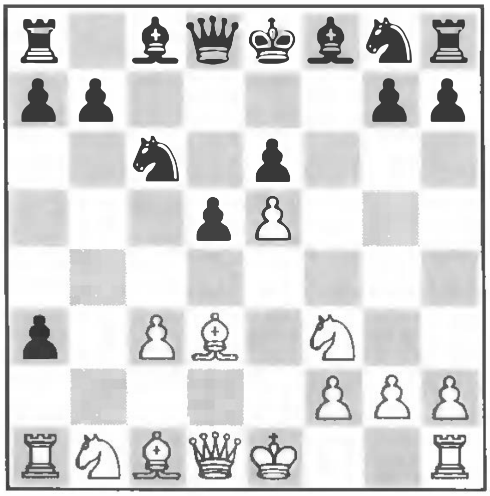
B) 7...♘ge7 and now 8.♗d3! is best (8...♘g6 9.h4!). Bad is 8.♗a3 ♘f8 9.♗f8 ♘f8 10.♗d3 f6 11.♘a3 fe5 12.♘e5 ♘e5 13.de5 ♘g6∓, Bosch-Blees, Dutch Open Championship, Dieren 1988. A slightly better way to take a3 is 8.♘a3 ♗d7 9.♗d3 (Cuartas-Calderon, Skopje Olympiad 1972), when Black should improve on 9...♘g6.

C) 7...f5 8.♗d3 ♘h6 9.♗h6 (9.♖g1?! ♗e7 10.♗h6 gh6 11.g4 fg4 12.♖g4 ♕a5 13.♕b3 ♕b6! Djurhuus-Hellsten, Asker 1997) 9...gh6 10.♘a3±, Bosch-K.Müller, Arnhem 1988 and Bosch-Peelen, Amstelveen 1994.

8. ♗d3 fe5

8...g6 9.0-0 fe5 10.♘e5 ♘e5 11.de5 ♗g7 12.♖e1 ♘e7 13.h4∞ was Reinderman-Escobedo Tinajero, World Junior Championship, Buenos Aires 1992; 10.de5!?.

9. de5



Black was OK in Gausel-Tiller, Norway

1987, after 9.♘e5 ♘e5 10.de5 ♘e7 11.♗a3 ♘c6 12.♕h5 ♔d7 13.♕f7 ♗e7 14.♕g7 ♕g8!.

9. ... ♕c7

The point of 7...f6 is of course to attack e5, so the text is consistent. Other moves have also been tried:

A) 9...♘ge7 10.♗a3?! (10.0-0) 10...g6 11.h4 ♗g7 12.♕e2 ♘f5 13.♗c1∞, Martens-Ricci, Hyères Open 1992.

B) 9...♗c5 10.♕c2 ♕c7 11.♗f4 ♗d7 12.♘a3 ♗a3 13.♖a3 ♘ge7 14.♗h7±, Bosch-R.Shaw, York 1995.

C) 9...♕a5 10.0-0 a2 11.♘a3 ♘h6 12.♖a2 ♘f7 13.♕e2 ♗e7 14.♘b5 ♕d8 15.♖e1≌, Dovzik-Burmakin, Hungary 1994.

10. ♕e2

White will continue 0-0 and ♖e1 with *Überdeckung* of e5. He is slightly better, since he has more space. For example, Bücker-Poldauf, German Championship, Bad Neuenahr 1991, continued 10...♘h6 11.0-0 ♘f7 12.♖e1 g6 13.♘a3 ♗c5 14.♘b5 with the initiative.

Variation B52

7. ... ♗d7

8. ♗d3 f5

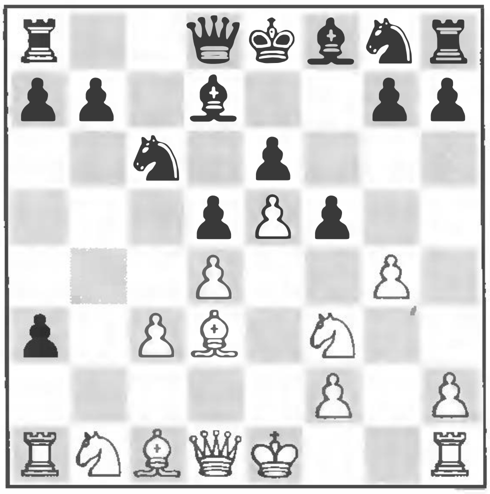
The old (ECO) main line.

8...♘a5 9.♘g5!? (9.0-0) 9...g6 10.h4 h6 11.♘f7! ♔f7 12.♕f3 ♔g7 13.♗g6, as in Martens-Krays, Sas van Gent 1996, was spectacular. See the section on general ideas.

However, a serious alternative to 8...f5 is 8...b5!?. Black wants to destroy the base of the pawn chain with a quick b4. He is counting on the tactic 9.♗b5?! ♘e5!, when 10.♘e5 ♗b5 11.c4?! dc4 (11...♗c4 12.♕a4; 11...♗d7≌) 12.♕f3 ♘f6 13.♕b7 ♗d7 keeps the extra material. Also bad is 9.0-0 b4 10.cb4 as both 10...♘b4 11.♘c3 ♖c8, Bosch-Peelen, Amstelveen 1994, and 10...♗b4 11.♘g5?! ♗e7, Steenberg-Wagenmakers, Netherlands 1996, give Black an edge. 9.♘g5 is probably too sharp: 9...b4 10.♘h7 ♗e7 11.♕h5 ♕b6 12.0-0 a5 13.♘f6 gf6 14.♕h8 0-0-0 15.♗a3 fe5!, Haub-Lazic, Munich Open 1992.

The best reply to 8...b5 originates from the stem game: 9.♘a3 b4 10.cb4 (here 10.♘b5 is an alternative: 10...a6 11.♘d6∞; 10...bc3 11.♗a3) 10...♗b4 11.♗d2 a6 (preventing ♘b5) 12.0-0 (12.♘c2!?) 12...♘ge7 13.♘c2 a5 14.♕e2 ♗d2 15.♕d2 h6 with approximate equality in Rahls-Junge, Germany Bundesliga 1987.

9. g4!



This move significantly changes the course of the game, and is responsible for the re-evaluation of the ‘old’ theory. White starts an immediate attack on the assumption that his stable centre legitimizes this. He is not afraid to leave his king in the centre for the time being.

In Dovzik-Schredder, Balatonbereny Open 1994, 9.h4 (by transposition) also worked out well for White after 9...a6 10.♘g5 ♘h6 11.♘a3 ♗e7 12.♕h5 g6 13.♕h6 ♗f8 14.♘e6! ♗h6 15.♘d8±; 9...a6 is of course too slow.

The preparatory 9.h3 gave White reasonably chances in Shashin-Naglis, Moscow 1970, after 9...g6 10.g4 ♘h6 11.♘a3 a6 12.♗g5 ♕c8 13.♗f6 ♖g8 14.♕d2 ♘f7 15.0-0. Keres’ suggestion of 9...♘ge7 may well be stronger, but more important: why waste a tempo on h3 when you can play g4 in one go?

9. ... ♘ge7

Simply bad was 9...g6? 10.gf5 ef5 11.♘a3 ♗e6 12.♘g5 ♕d7 13.♘b5 ♔d8 14.♕b3 h6 15.♘a7!, Pedersen-Laursen, Vejle 1991, see the section on general ideas. 9...fg4? 10.♘g5 is even worse.

10. gf5 ♘f5

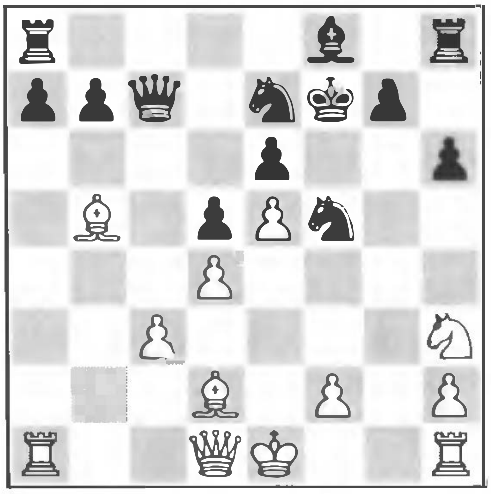
11. ♘g5

With ideas like 12.♗f5 ef5 13.e6.

11. ... ♘ce7(!)

Fortifying the square f5, and better than Keres’ 11...♕e7. As we saw above, 12.♘a3 0-0-0 13.♘b5 (13.♘f3? Cuartas-Padevsky, Siegen Olympiad 1970, is an unexplainable lapse: but 13.♗f5 ef5 14.♘b5 probably transposes) 13...♔b8 14.♗f5 ef5 15.e6 is winning: Hald-Jensen, Copenhagen 1990.

12. ♘a3 h6
13. ♘h3 ♕c7
14. ♘b5 ♗b5
15. ♗b5 ♔f7
16. ♗d2



Mortensen-Karlsson, Copenhagen 1985, is still crucial for the evaluation of 9.g4. White has enough compensation for the pawn with his bishop pair and space advantage. Black need not despair, however: he is a pawn up and has a fairly solid (though passive) position.

Conclusion

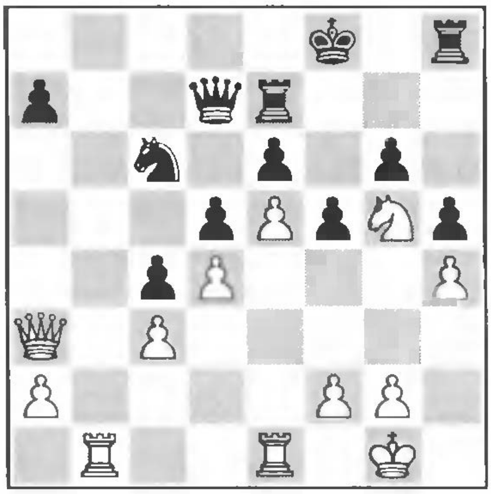
The Wing Gambit against the French is fully playable. Even though White may not always count on a ± position from the opening, he does get enough in return for the sacrificed pawn. The defender’s task is not so easy, especially from a practical point of view: nearly always he is confronted with entirely new problems at the board.

Study Material

Game to Chapter I

☐ **Dimitri Reinderman**
■ **Jan Boersma**
Dieren NL-open 1991

1.e4 e6 2.♘f3 d5 3.e5 c5 4.b4 b6 5.c3 ♕d7 6.♘a3 ♗b7 6...cb4! **7.♘c2 ♘e7 8.♗e2 ♘g6 9.d4 ♗a6 10.h4 ♗e2 11.♕e2 h5± 12.bc5 bc5 13.0-0 ♘c6 14.♗a3 c4 15.♗f8 ♔f8 16.♖ab1 ♘f4 17.♕d2 ♘d3 18.♘ce1! ♘e1 19.♖fe1 f5? 20.♕b2± g6 21.♘g5 ♖e8 22.♕a3 ♖e7**

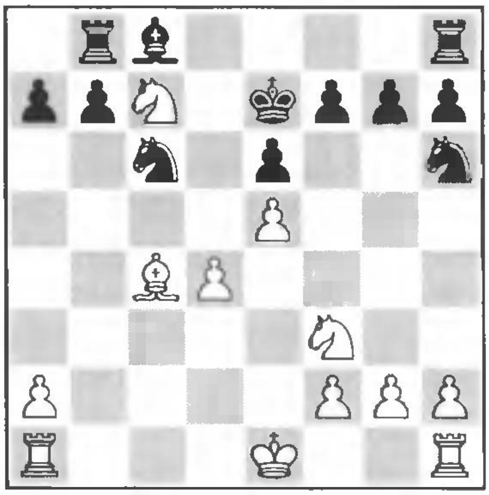


23.♕d6 ♔e8 24.♕d7 ♔d7 25.♖b7 ♔d8 26.♘f7 ♖f7 27.♖f7 ♘e7 28.♖b1 ♔e8 29.♖f6 1-0

Games to Chapter II

☐ **Paul Boersma**
■ **Viktor Kortchnoi**
Leeuwarden ch-NL 1977

1.e4 e6 2.♘f3 d5 3.e5 c5 4.b4 d4 5.bc5 ♗c5 6.♗a3 ♕a5 7.♗c5 ♕c5 8.c3 ♘c6 9.cd4 ♘d4 10.♕a4 ♘c6 11.♘c3 ♕a5 12.♕a5? 12.♕g4!± **12...♘a5 13.♘b5 ♔e7 14.♘c7 ♖b8 15.d4 ♘c6** 15...♗d7 16.d5 ed5 17.♘d5 ♔f8 **16.♗c4 ♘h6**



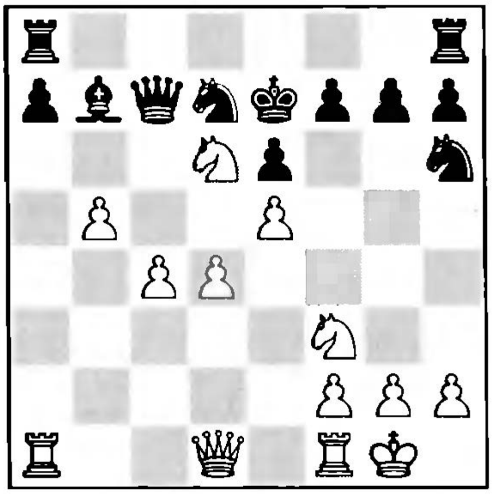
17.g4?! 17.0-0-0! ♖d8 18.♖he1± **17...♘g4 18.♖g1 h5 19.h3 ♘h6 20.0-0-0 ♔f8 21.♘h4! ♘e7 22.♔b2 ♘hf5 23.♘f5 ♘f5 24.d5 ed5 25.♗d5 ♘e7 26.e6 ♖h6 27.♖ge1 fe6** 27...♘d5? 28.e7; 27...♖f6!? **28.♗e6 ♘c6 29.♗d7! ♗d7 30.♖d7 ♔g8 31.♖g1 g6 32.♘e6 ♘e5 33.♖g7 ♔h8 34.♖e7 ♖h7 35.♖h7 ♔h7 36.f4 ♘c4 37.♔c3 b5 38.♖d1 ♖b7 39.♔b4 a6 40.♔c5 ♖e7 41.♘g5 ♔g7 42.♖d8 ♖c7** 42...♘e3 43.♔d6! ♘f5 44.♔c5= **43.♔d5** ≥ 43.♔d4= **43...♘b6! 44.♔d6 ♖c8 45.♖c8 ♘c8 46.♔c7 ♘e7 47.♔b6 ♔f6 48.♔a6 b4 49.♔b5 ♔f5 50.♔b4 ♔f4 51.♘e6 ♔g3 52.a4?** 52.♘g5 ♔h4 53.♘e4 ♔h3 54.a4 ♔g4 (54...♔g2 55.♔c5 h4 56.♘g5 h3 57.♘h3 ♔h3 58.a5=) 55.♔c5 ♔f4

56.♘f2 g5 57.a5 g4 58.a6 ♘c8 59.♔c6 g3 60.♘h3 ♔g4 61.♘g1= Boersma **52...♔h3 53.♔c5 ♔g4 54.a5 h4 55.a6 ♘c8 56.♔c6 h3 57.♔c7 ♘a7 58.♔b6 h2 59.♔a7 h1♕ 60.♘c7 ♕c6 0-1**

Games to Chapter III

☐ **Alexander Stripunsky**
■ **Viktor Moskalenko**
Simferopol ch-UKR 1990

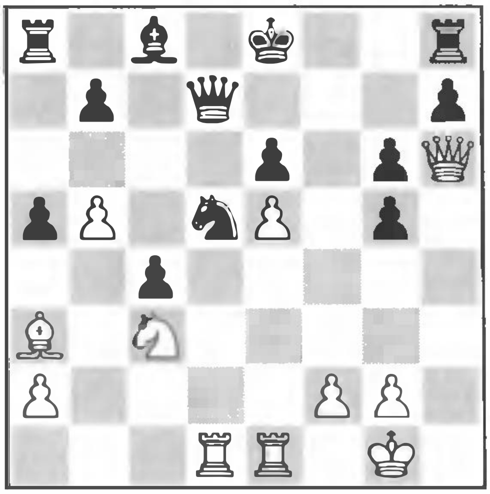
1.e4 e6 2.♘f3 d5 3.e5 c5 4.b4 c4 5.a3 b5!? 6.a4 ♗b4 7.ab5 ♕b6 8.♗a3 ♗a3 9.♘a3 ♘h6 10.♗c4!? dc4 11.♘c4 ♕c7 12.♘d6 ♔e7 13.0-0 ♗b7 14.c4 ♘d7 15.d4



15...f6≌/∞ 16.♘b7 ♕b7 17.ef6 ♘f6 18.♖e1 ♖he8 19.♘g5 ♔f8 20.♘e6 ♔g8 21.d5 ♖ac8 22.♕d3 ♘f7 23.♕d4 ♕b6 24.c5 ♕b5 25.h3 ♘d8! 26.♖a7 ♘e6 27.de6 ♕c5∓ 28.♕a4 ♕c4 29.♕a3 ♖e6 30.♖e6 ♕e6 31.♖e7 ♕f5 32.♕g3 ♕g6 33.♕b3 ♔h8 34.♕b7 ♖g8 35.♔h2 h6 36.♕b5 ♖d8 37.♖e3 ♕c2 38.♕b6 ♖g8 39.♖f3 ♕g6 40.♖g3 ♕f7 41.♕d4 ♖c8 42.♕f4 ♕d7 43.♖e3 ♖a8 44.♕e5 ♖e8 45.♕f4 ♖e3 46.♕e3 ♕e8 47.♕d2 ♕e4 48.♕a2 ♔h7 49.♕b2 ♘h5 50.♕a1 ♘f4 51.♕f1 ♘d3 52.f3 ♕f4 53.g3 ♕d2 54.♔h1 ♔g6 0-1

☐ **Erling Mortensen**
■ **Jens Christian Hansen**
Gausdal zt 1987

1.e4 e6 2.♘f3 d5 3.e5 c5 4.b4 c4 5.c3 a5 6.b5 ♘d7 7.d4 cd3 8.♗d3 ♕c7 9.♕e2 ♘e7 10.0-0 ♘g6 11.♖e1 ♗e7 12.h4! ♗h4 13.♘h4 ♘h4 14.♗a3↑ ♕d8 15.♕h5 ♘g6 16.c4! dc4 17.♗g6! fg6 18.♕g4 ♘b6 19.♘c3± g5 20.♕h5 g6 21.♕h6 ♕d7 22.♖ad1 ♘d5



23.♖d5 ed5 24.e6 1-0

☐ **Martin Martens**
■ **Alfonso Romero Holmes**
Wijk aan Zee 1991

1.e4 e6 2.♘f3 d5 3.e5 c5 4.b4 c4 5.c3 a5 6.b5 ♘d7 7.d3 cd3 8.♗d3 ♘e7 9.0-0 ♘g6 10.♕e2 ♗c5 11.♖e1 0-0 12.a4 ♗a7!? 13.♘a3 13.c4! ♘c5 14.♗c2 **13...♗b8 14.♗g6 fg6 15.c4 ♘c5 16.♗g5 ♕e8 17.♘c2 b6 18.cd5 ed5 19.♘cd4 h6 20.♗c1 g5 21.♕a2 ♗b7**

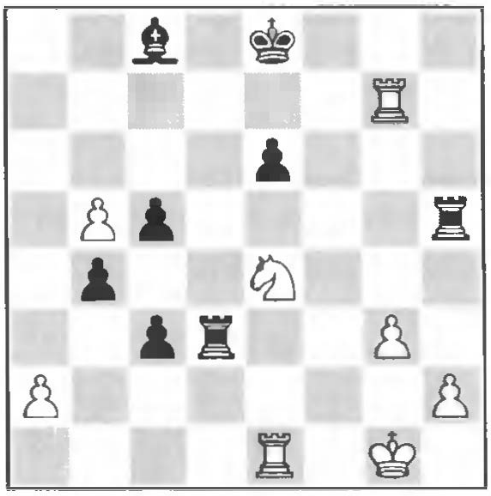
22.h3 ♗c7 23.♖e3 ♖c8 24.♗a3 ♗b8 25.♖ae1 ♖f4 26.g3∞ ½-½

☐ **Yury Dovzik**
■ **Ferenc Portisch**
Nagykanizsa 1994

1.e4 e6 2.♘f3 d5 3.e5 c5 4.b4!? c4!? 4...cb4!?; 4...b6!? **5.c3 a5 6.b5 ♕b6 7.d3!?** △ 7...♗c5 8.d4 △ 9.a4; 7.a4 ♗c5 8.♕e2 ♘e7∞ **7...cd3 8.♗d3 ♘d7 9.a4 ♘e7 10.0-0 ♘g6 11.♕e2 ♗e7 12.♖a2!?** 12.♖e1 0-0 13.h4 ♘h4 14.♘h4 ♗h4 15.♗h7∞ **12...f6!?** 12...0-0 13.h4! ♘h4? 14.♘h4 ♗h4 15.♕h5+– **13.ef6 ♗f6 14.♗g6 hg6 15.♕d3 ♔f7 16.♖e2 ♕d6 17.♖fe1 ♘c5 18.♕d1!? ♗d7 19.♘e5 ♗e5 20.♖e5 ♔g8 21.♗f4 ♕f8 22.♗g5± ♖c8 23.h4 ♗e8 24.♖1e3 ♗f7 25.♖f3 ♕e8 26.♘d2 ♘d7 27.♖e1 ♘b6 28.♖d3 ♕f8 29.♕g4 ♘c4 30.♘f3 ♘b2?!** 30...♘d6!? △ 31...♘f5 **31.♖d4!+– ♘c4** 31...♖c3 32.♘e5 **32.♗f4 ♖h5 33.♘g5 ♖e8 34.♗e5 ♕a3 35.♕f3 ♖g5 36.hg5 ♕a4 37.♖f4 ♖e7 38.♕h3** △ 39.♖h4 **1-0**
Dovzik

☐ **Evgeny Naer**
■ **Viktor Moskalenko**
Moscow 1995

1.e4 e6 2.♘f3 d5 3.e5 c5 4.b4 c4 5.c3 a5 6.b5 ♘d7 7.d3 cd3 8.♗d3 f6!? 9.♕c2!? ♘e5 10.♘e5 fe5 11.♗h7 ♗d6 12.♗g8 ♖g8 13.c4 ♕c7 14.♗a3 ♗b4 15.♗b4 ab4 16.♘d2 e4 17.♕b2 ♖h8 18.g3 e3!? 19.fe3 ♖a3 20.0-0 ♖e3 21.♘f3 21.♖ae1? ♖g3–+ **21...dc4 22.♕f2 ♖d3 23.♘g5 b6 24.♖ae1 ♕c5 25.♕c5 bc5 26.♖f7 ♖h5** 26...♖g8 27.b6 **27.♖g7 c3 28.♘e4**

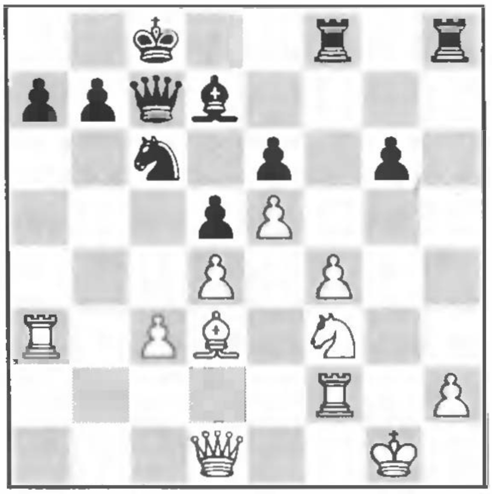


½-½

Games to Chapter IV – Variation A + B

☐ **Erling Mortensen**
■ **Ivan Farago**
Esbjerg 1985

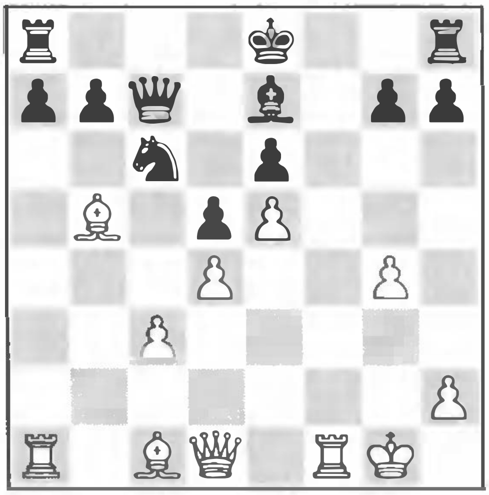
1.e4 e6 2.♘f3 d5 3.e5 c5 4.b4 cb4 5.a3 ♘h6 6.ab4 ♗b4 7.c3 ♗e7 8.d4 ♘f5 9.g4 ♘h4 10.♘h4 ♗h4 11.♗d3 ♘c6 12.0-0 ♗e7 13.f4 ♗d7 14.♘d2 ♕c7 15.♗a3 ♗a3 16.♖a3 h5?! 16...0-0-0(!) Mortensen **17.gh5 0-0-0 18.♖f2 g6?! 19.hg6 fg6 20.♘f3 ♖df8**



21.♕d2 21.♕c1! △ ♖g2-g4, ♖a2-g2 Mortensen **21...♔b8 22.c4? dc4 23.♗c4 ♘e7 24.♕a2 ♘c8 25.♘g5 ♖h4!→ 26.♗e6 ♖hf4 27.♖f4 ♕c1! 28.♔g2** 28.♖f1 ♕g5 29.♕g2 ♖f1−+ **28...♕f4 29.♘f3 ♗b5 30.♖c3 ♘b6 31.♕d2 ♕e4 32.d5? ♗e2** 0-1

☐ **Alexander Konstantinov**
■ **Andrey Nikitin**
Alushta 2002

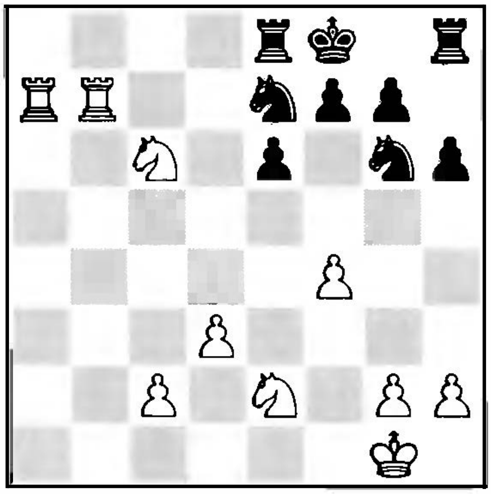
1.e4 e6 2.♘f3 d5 3.e5 c5 4.b4 cb4 5.a3 ♘h6 6.ab4 ♗b4 7.c3 ♗e7 8.d4 ♘f5 9.♗d3 ♘c6 10.g4 ♘h4 11.♘h4 ♗h4 12.0-0 ♗d7 12...g6 13.♘a3 (13.f4) 13...♗e7 14.♗h6 ♗g5 15.♗g5 ♕g5 16.♘b5 ♔f8 17.f4 ♕e7 18.f5!≅± Salmensuu-Wiley, Reykjavik 2000 **13.f4 ♗e7 14.f5!?** 14.♘d2 ♕c7 15.♗a3± Mortensen-Farago, Esbjerg 1985 **14...♕c7 15.♘a3 ♘a5** 15...a6 16.♘b5 ♕b8 17.f6 gf6 18.ef6 ♗f8 19.♗f4 e5 20.de5 ♗e6 (20...ab5 21.e6+−) 21.♘d6+− Lampen-Olsen, Gausdal 2000 **16.♘b5 ♗b5 17.♗b5 ♘c6 18.fe6 fe6**



19.g5!± g6 20.♕g4 ♕d7 21.♕h3 a6 22.♔h1 ♖c8 23.♗d3 ♔d8 24.♗g6 ♔c7 25.♗d3 ♖cg8 26.♖f7 h6 27.g6 ♘d8 28.♖h7 ♖h7 29.gh7 ♖h8 30.♗h6 ♘f7 31.♖f1 1-0

☐ **Martin Martens**
■ **Gerrit Prakken**
Nederland tt 1993

1.e4 e6 2.♘f3 d5 3.e5 c5 4.b4 cb4 5.a3 ♕a5 6.♗b2 ♗d7 7.♗e2 ♗b5 8.0-0 ♗e2 9.♕e2 ♘c6 10.ab4 ♕b4 11.♗a3 ♕c4 12.d3 ♕g4 13.♗f8≅ ♔f8 14.♘c3 ♘ge7 15.♖a4! d4 16.♖b1± ♖d8 17.♖b7 h6 18.♘d4 ♕e2 19.♘ce2 ♘e5 20.♖aa7 ♖e8 21.f4 ♘5g6 22.♘c6



22...f6 23.♘e7 ♘e7 24.♘d4 1-0

☐ **Ole Alkarsig**
■ **Jens Kjeldsen**
Arhus 1989

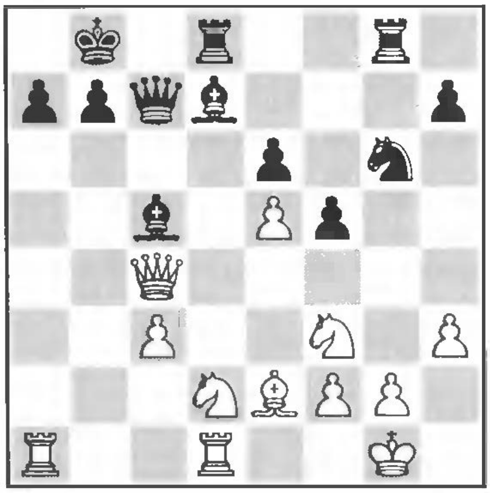
1.e4 e6 2.♘f3 d5 3.e5 c5 4.b4 cb4 5.a3 ♕a5 6.♗b2 ♕b6 7.ab4 ♗b4 8.♗d4 ♗c5 9.♗c5 ♕c5 10.d4 ♕c7 11.♗d3 h6 12.0-0 ♗d7 13.♘a3 ♘e7 14.♕d2 ♗c6

15.c3 ♘d7 16.♕f4 a6 17.♕g4 g6 18.♕h4 ♕d8 19.g4 b5 20.♘c2 ♘c8 21.♕h3 ♗b7 22.♘h4 ♘f8 23.f4 h5 24.♘f3 ♖h7 25.♘g5 hg4 26.♕g4 ♖h8 27.♘e3 ♘e7 28.f5 ef5 29.♗f5 gf5 30.♘f5 ♘f5 31.♕f5 ♕d7 32.♘f7 ♖g8 33.♔h1 ♕f5 34.♖f5 ♗c6 35.♘d6 ♔d8 36.♖af1 ♔c7 37.♖f7 ♔b6 38.♘f5 ♘e6 39.♘e7 ♖gf8 40.♖7f6 ♖f6

0-1

☐ Dimitri Reinderman
■ Babak Tondivar
Leeuwarden 1995

1.e4 e6 2.♘f3 d5 3.e5 c5 4.b4 cb4 5.a3 d4 6.ab4 ♗b4 7.c3 dc3 8.♕a4 ♘c6 9.dc3 ♗e7 10.♗e2 f5?! e6<; 10...h5 △ 11...♘h6 11.0-0 ♗d7 12.♕a2 ♘h6 13.♗h6 gh6 14.♖d1 ♕c7 15.♕d2 0-0-0 16.♕h6 ♗c5 17.♕f4 ♖hg8 18.h3 ♘e7 19.♕c4 ♔b8 20.♘bd2 ♘g6



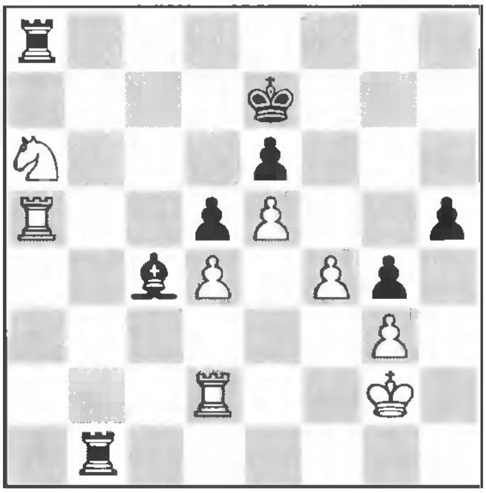
21.♘b3 ♗b6 22.♕c7 ♗c7 23.♘c5 ♗c8 24.♖db1 ♗e5 25.♘e5 ♘e5 26.♘a6 ♔a8 27.♘c7 ♔b8 28.♘a6

½-½

Variation B4

☐ Heikki Westerinen
■ Björn Brinck Claussen
Esbjerg 1978

1.e4 e6 2.♘f3 d5 3.e5 c5 4.b4 cb4 5.a3 ♘c6 6.ab4 ♗b4 7.c3 ♗a5 8.d4 ♘ge7 9.♗d3 h6 10.0-0 a6 11.♗a3 11.h4!? 11...♗d7 12.g3 b5 13.♗c5 ♗b6 14.♗b6 ♕b6 15.♘bd2⩲ ♘a5 16.♕e2 0-0 17.♗c2 ♖fc8 18.♕d3 g6 19.h4 ♔g7 20.h5 b4 21.cb4 ♘ac6 22.♕e3 ♘b4 23.♕f4 ♘c2 24.♕f6 ♔g8 25.♕e7 ♕d8 26.♕d8 ♖d8 27.♖a5 ♗b5 28.♖c1 ♖dc8 29.hg6 fg6 30.♘b3 ♖c3 31.♘c5 ♔f7 32.♖a2 ♖f3 33.♖cc2 ♔e7 34.♔g2 ♖ff8 35.♖c1 ♗c4 36.♖a3 ♖ab8 37.♖c2 ♖b1 38.f4 g5 39.♖f2 g4 40.♖d2 h5 41.♖a5 ♖fb8 42.♘a6 ♖a8

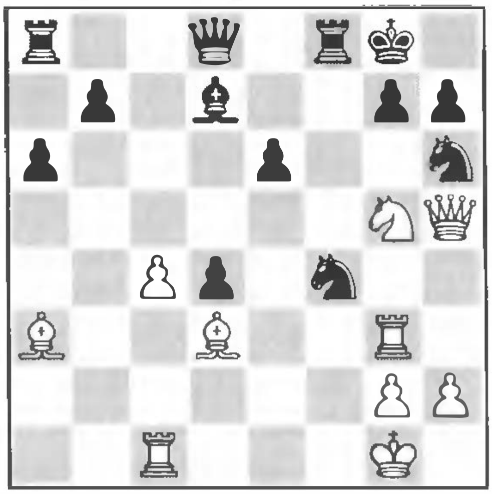


43.♘b4 ♖a5 44.♘c6 ♔d7 45.♘a5 ♖b5 46.♘c4 dc4 47.♖c2 ♖b4 48.♔f2 ♔c6 49.♖a2 ♔d5 50.♖a6 ♔d4 51.♖e6 ♖b2 52.♔e1 ♔e3 53.♔d1 h4 54.♖g6 hg3 55.♖g4 ♔f3 56.♖g8 g2 57.f5 ♖b8 58.♖g5 ♖d8 59.♔c2 ♖d4 60.f6 ♖g4

½-½

☐ **Olli Salmensuu**
■ **Bogdan Lalic**
Groningen 1999

1.e4 e6 2.♘f3 d5 3.e5 c5 4.b4 cb4 5.d4 ♘c6 6.a3 f6 7.ab4 ♗b4 8.c3 ♗a5 9.♗d3 ♗c7 9...fe5 10.♘e5 ♘f6 11.0-0 0-0 12.♗a3 ♖e8 13.f4=∞ Salmensuu-Abdel Razik, Tanta City 2000 **10.0-0 fe5 11.♘e5 ♗e5 12.de5 ♘e5 13.♕h5 ♘f7 14.♗a3 a6 15.♘d2 ♕g5 16.♕e2 ♘e7 17.c4 ♕e5 18.♕d1 ♕c7 19.♖c1 d4 20.♘e4 0-0 21.♕h5 ♘g6 22.f4 ♕d8 23.♖f3 ♗d7 24.♖g3 ♘h6 25.♘g5 ♘f4**



26.♕h6! gh6 27.♘e6 ♘g6 27...♔h8 28.♘d8 ♖fd8 29.♗e7 **28.♘f8!?** 28.♘d8 ♖fd8∓ **28...♗e8 29.♖f1 ♕h4 30.♗d6 ♕h5 31.♗e4 ♔h8 32.♗f3+– ♕a5** 32...♕h4 33.♖g6 hg6 34.♗e5 ♔g8 35.♗d5+– **33.♗d5 ♗f7 34.♖f7** 34.♘g6 hg6 35.♗e5 ♔g8 36.♖g6 **34...♕e1 35.♖f1 ♕e2 36.♗c5 ♕d2 37.♖g4** 1-0

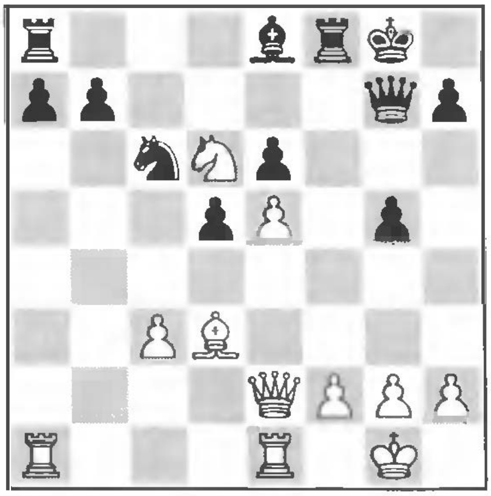
☐ **Sinisa Drazic**
■ **Andrea Giocastro**
Cattolica 1990

1.e4 e6 2.♘f3 d5 3.e5 c5 4.b4 cb4 5.a3 ♘c6 6.ab4 ♗b4 7.c3 ♗f8 8.d4 ♗d7 9.♗d3 h6 10.h4 a6 11.h5 ♘a7 12.♘a3 ♘e7 13.♘h4=∞ ♗c6? 13...♘b5 14.♘b5 ♗b5 **14.♕e2 b5 15.f4 ♗d7 16.♘c2 ♕c8 17.♗d2 ♘f5 18.♘f5 ef5 19.♘e3 ♗e6 20.g4± g6 21.hg6 fg6 22.gf5 gf5 23.♗f5 ♗f5 24.♕h5 ♔d8 25.♘f5 ♘c6 26.♕f7 ♕d7 27.♕f6 ♔c7 28.e6 ♕h7 29.♔f2 ♗e7 30.♘e7 ♘e7 31.c4**

1-0

☐ **Olli Salmensuu**
■ **Marko Manninen**
Finland tt 2000

1.e4 e6 2.♘f3 d5 3.e5 c5 4.b4 cb4 5.a3 ♘c6 6.ab4 ♗b4 7.c3 ♗e7 8.d4 f6 9.♗d3 fe5 10.de5 ♘h6 11.♗h6 gh6 12.♕d2 12.0-0?! 0-0 13.♘bd2 ♖f7 14.♖e1 ♕f8∓ Schmedders-Glek, Recklinghausen 1999 **12...♗g5 13.♕e2 ♕c7 14.0-0** 14.h4 ♗d8 ½-½ Ardelean-Ionescu, Satu-Mare 2002 **14...0-0 15.♘a3 ♕g7 16.♘b5 ♗d7 17.♘d6 ♗e8 18.♘g5 hg5 19.♖fe1**



19...♖b8 19...♗g6 20.♗g6 ♕g6 21.♘b7 Salmensuu-Pedersen, Torshavn 2000 **20.♗b5 ♗g6 21.♕e3 ♕h6 22.c4 ♘b4**

23.cd5 ♘d5 24.♕a7 ♘f4 25.♕e3 ♘d5 26.♕b3 ♖f2 27.♗d7 ♗c2 28.♕g3 ♖bf8 29.♖a8 ♖a8 30.♕f2 ♕g6 31.♗e8 ♖e8 32.♘e8 ♕e8 33.♕c2 ♕e7 34.♕c8 ♔g7 35.♕b8 h6 36.♔h1 b6

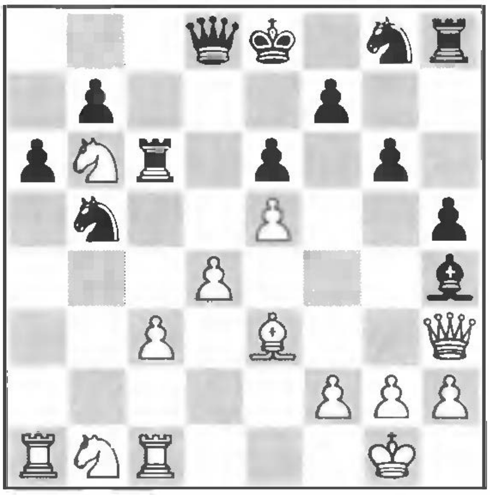
1-0

☐ Martin Martens
■ Jasper Geurink
Netherlands tt 2002

1.e4 e6 2.♘f3 d5 3.e5 c5 4.b4 cb4 5.a3 ♘c6 6.ab4 ♗b4 7.c3 ♗e7 8.d4 f5 9.♗d3 ♘h6 9...h5!? Martens **10.h3** 10.♗h6 **10...♘f7 11.g4 g6 12.gf5 ef5** 12...gf5 13.♖g1 **13.♕b3** this prevents ♗e6 for the moment: 13.h4 Martens-Lempert, Hyeres 1992 **13...0-0** 13...♘a5 14.♕b5 **14.♘bd2 ♔h8? 15.h4 b6 16.♘f1 ♗e6 17.♘g3 ♕d7 18.♕b1 h5 19.♘e2 ♖g8 20.♘f4 ♗f8 21.♖g1 ♘e7 22.♗a3 ♗h6 23.♗b5 ♕c8 24.♘e2 ♘c6 25.♗c1 ♗c1 26.♕c1 ♘cd8 27.♘f4 ♔h7 28.♖g3 a6 29.♗d3 ♖a7 30.♔d2 ♖g7 31.♕g1 ♘h8 32.♘g5 ♔h6 33.♕g2 ♗g8 34.♕f3 ♘e6 35.♘d5** 35.♗f5 **35...f4 36.♘f4** 36.♘e6 **36...♖ge7 37.♘ge6 ♖e6 38.♖ag1** 1-0

☐ Patrick Chandler
■ T. Muller
Moscow 1990

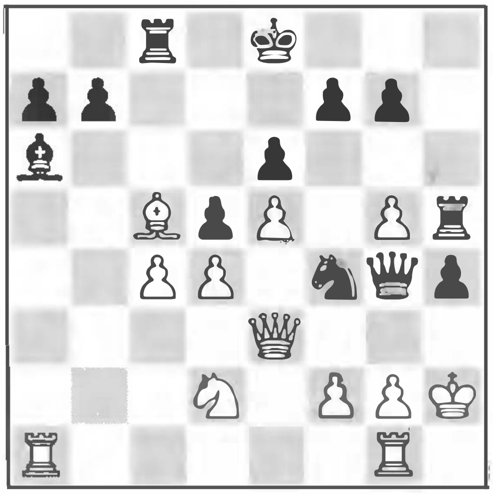
1.e4 e6 2.♘f3 d5 3.e5 c5 4.b4 cb4 5.d4 ♘c6 6.a3 ♗d7 7.ab4 ♗b4 8.c3 ♗e7 9.♗d3 ♖c8 10.0-0 a6 11.♘e1 ♘a7 12.♕g4 g6 13.♕g3 ♗b5 14.♗e3 ♗d3 15.♘d3 ♘b5∓ 16.♖c1 h5 17.♘f4 ♗h4 17...h4!? **18.♕h3 ♕e7? 19.♘d5 ♕d8 20.♘b6 ♖c6**



21.d5 ed5 22.c4 dc4 23.♘a3 ♘a3 24.♖d1 ♕e7 25.♘d5 ♕e6 26.♕h4 ♘e7 27.♘f6 ♔f8 1-0

☐ Kees Nieuwelink
■ Joris Brenninkmeijer
Eindhoven ch-NL 1988

1.e4 e6 2.♘f3 d5 3.e5 c5 4.b4 cb4 5.a3 ♘c6 6.ab4 ♗b4 7.c3 ♗e7 8.d4 ♗d7 9.♗d3 ♖c8 10.h4 ♘a5 11.♘g5 ♕b6 12.♗c2 h5 13.♕f3 ♗g5 14.hg5 ♘b3 15.♗b3 ♕b3 16.0-0 ♗b5 17.♖e1 ♗a6 18.♗a3 ♘e7 19.♗c5 ♕c2 20.♕e3 h4 21.♖c1 ♕f5 22.♘d2 ♘g6 23.c4 ♘f4 24.♔h2 ♕g4 25.♖g1 ♘e2 26.♖ge1 ♘f4 27.♖g1 ♖h5



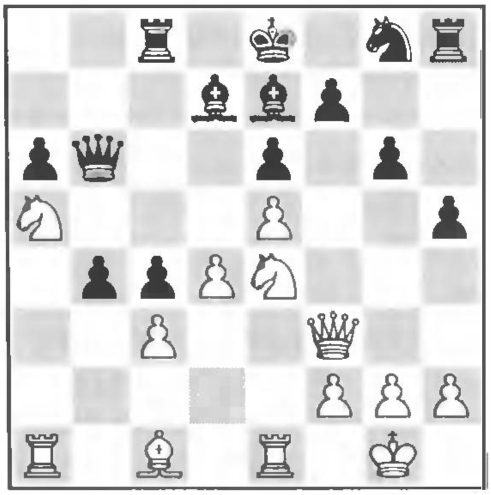
28.♖a6 ba6 29.♕b3 ♖c5 30.♕b8 ♔e7 31.♕d6 ♔e8 32.♕b8 ♔e7 ½-½

☐ **Kevin Spraggett**
■ **Paul Ross**
Canada ch 1989

1.e4 e6 2.♘f3 d5 3.e5 c5 4.b4 cb4 5.a3 ♘c6 6.ab4 ♗b4 7.c3 ♗e7 8.d4 ♗d7 9.♗d3 ♖c8 10.h4 a6 11.♖h3 11.h5 11...h6 12.♖g3 ♗f8 13.♔f1 ♘a5 14.♔g1 ♕b6 15.♗c2 ♘e7 16.h5 ♘f5 17.♖h3 ♘c4 18.♖a2 ♘e7 19.♘h4 ♔d8! 20.♖f3 ♗e8 21.♘a3 ♖c7 22.♖g3 ♘a5 23.♗d2 ♘ec6 24.♗d3 ♔c8 25.♘c2 ♘c4 26.♗c4 dc4 27.♘e3 ♘e7∓ ½-½

☐ **Peter Rahls**
■ **Martin Breutigam**
Germany Bundesliga 1995

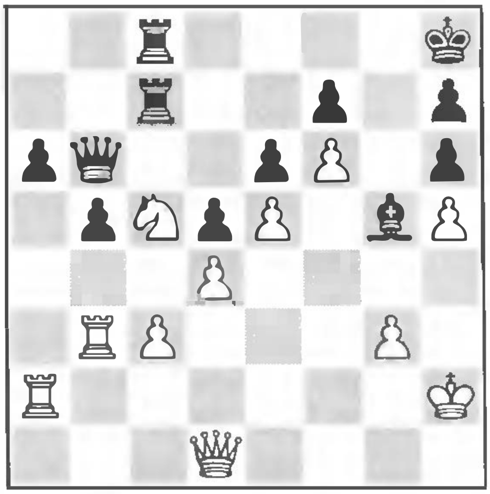
1.e4 e6 2.♘f3 d5 3.e5 c5 4.b4 cb4 5.d4?! ♘c6 5...♗d7 6.a3 ♗d7 7.ab4 ♗b4 8.c3 ♗e7 9.♗d3 ♘a5 10.0-0 a6 11.♘bd2 ♖c8 12.♘b3 ♘c4 13.♖e1 h5 14.♘fd2!? g6 15.♗c4 dc4 16.♘a5 b5 17.♕f3 ♕b6 18.♘e4 b4



19.♘b7! ♖c6 20.♘bd6 ♗d6 21.♘d6 ♖d6 22.ed6 ♕d6 23.♕a8+− ♔e7 24.♖a6 ♕c7 25.cb4 ♔f6 26.♖a7 ♕c8 27.♕f3 ♔g7 28.♗f4 h4 29.b5 h3 30.♖a8 ♕a8 31.♕a8 ♗b5 32.♗e5 1-0

☐ **Dimitri Reinderman**
■ **Leon Pliester**
Purmerend 1993

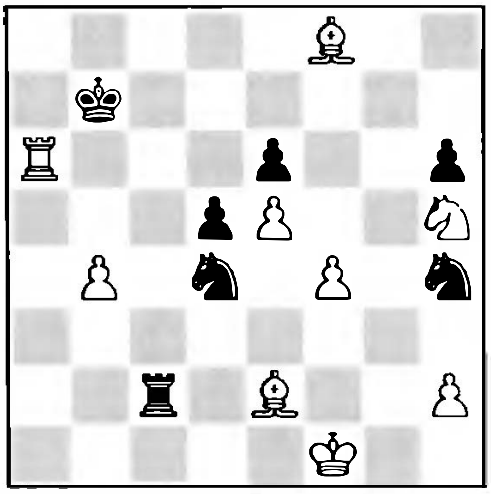
1.e4 e6 2.♘f3 d5 3.e5 c5 4.b4 cb4 5.a3 ♘c6 6.ab4 ♗b4 7.c3 ♗e7 8.d4 ♗d7 9.♗d3 ♘a5 10.h4 a6 11.0-0 ♗b5 12.♖a2 ♗d3 13.♕d3 ♘c4 14.h5!⩲ ♖c8 15.g3 ♘h6 16.♗h6□ gh6 17.♘h2 0-0 18.♘g4 ♔g7 19.♘d2 ♕c7 20.♖b1 ♘d2 21.♕d2 ♗g5 22.f4 ♗e7 23.♔h2 ♕c6 23...♕c3 24.♕c3 ♖c3 25.♖b7 ♖a3 26.♖c2 24.♖b3 ♖c7 25.f5 ♗g5 26.f6 ♔h8 27.♕d1 b5 28.♘f2! △ ♘d3-c5 28...♖fc8 29.♘d3 ♕b6 30.♘c5



30...a5 31.♕d3 b4 32.cb4 ab4 33.♖a4 ♖c5 34.dc5 ♕c5 35.♖ab4 ♗f6 36.ef6 ♕f2 37.♔h3 ♕f6 38.♕f3 ♕a1 39.♖b8 ♖b8 40.♖b8 1-0

☐ Erling Mortensen
■ Lars Karlsson
Copenhagen 1985

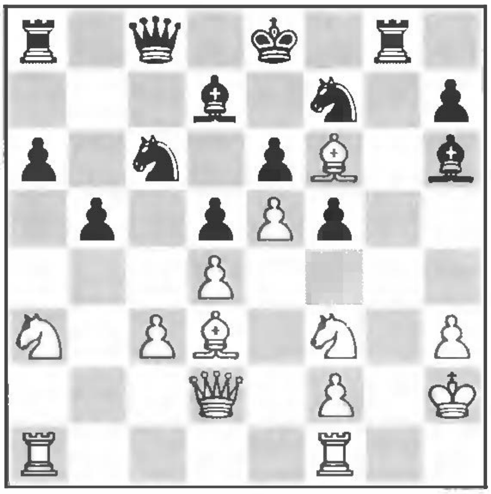
1.e4 e6 2.♘f3 d5 3.e5 c5 4.b4 cb4 5.a3 ba3 6.d4 ♘c6 7.c3 f5 8.♗d3 ♗d7 9.g4 ♘ge7 10.gf5 ♘f5 11.♘g5 ♘ce7 12.♘a3 h6 13.♘h3 ♕c7 14.♘b5 ♗b5 15.♗b5 ♔f7 16.♗d2⩲ g6 17.♖g1 17.0-0 △ ♔h1, ♖g1 **17...a6 18.♗d3 ♖g8 19.♘f4 ♕c6 20.♕f3 b5 21.♖b1 ♖b8 22.♕h3 ♖b7 23.♔f1 ♔e8 24.♔g2 g5 25.♘h5 ♔d8 26.♔h1 ♖g6 27.f4 g4 28.♖g4 ♖g4 29.♕g4 b4 30.cb4 ♕b6 31.♕g1 ♖c7 32.♖a1 ♕d4 33.♕d4 ♘d4 34.♖a6 ♘f3 35.♗e3 ♖c3 36.♗b6 ♔c8 37.♗e2 ♔b7 38.♗c5 ♘h4 39.♔g1 ♖c2 40.♔f1 ♘ef5 41.♗f8 ♘d4**



42.♖a7 ♔a7 43.♗c5 ♖c5 44.bc5 ♘hf5 45.♘g3 ♘g7 46.♗d1 ♔a6 47.♗a4 ♔a5 48.♗d7 ♘b3 49.f5 49.c6 ♔b6 **49...♘f5 50.♘f5 ♘c5!** 50...ef5 51.e6+− **51.♗e6 ♘e6 52.♘h6 ♔b4 53.♘g4 ♔c4 54.h4 ♘g7 55.♔f2 d4 56.♔f3 ♔d5 57.♔f4 d3 58.♘e3 ♔d4 59.♘f1 ♔d5 60.♘d2 ♔d4 61.♘f3 ♔d5 62.♔e3 ♘f5 63.♔f4 d2 64.♘d2 ½-½**

☐ Boris Shashin
■ Boris Naglis
Moscow 1970

1.e4 e6 2.♘f3 d5 3.e5 c5 4.b4 cb4 5.a3 ba3 6.d4 ♘c6 7.c3 f5 8.♗d3 ♗d7 9.h3 9.g4! **9...g6** 9...♘ge7 **10.g4 ♘h6 11.♘a3 a6 12.♗g5 ♕c8 13.♗f6 ♖g8 14.♕d2 ♘f7 15.0-0 b5 16.gf5 gf5 17.♔h2 ♗h6**



18.♖g1! ♘e7 19.♕b2 ♘g6 20.h4 ♗c6 21.h5 ♘e7 22.♘c2 ♕c7 23.♘b4 ♗b7 24.♘a6! ♖a6 25.♗b5 ♖c6 26.♖a7 ♖g1 27.♗c6 ♘c6 28.♖b7 1-0

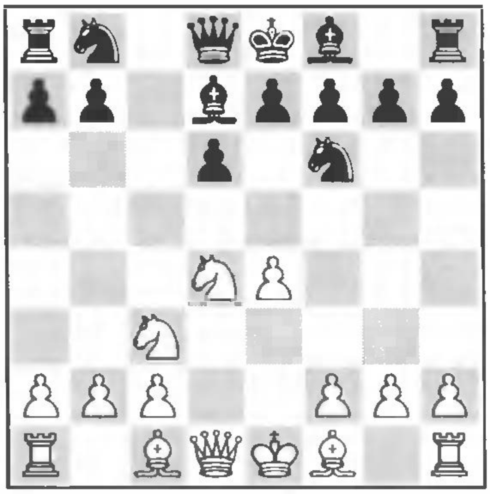
☐ Yury Dovzik
■ Jean-Philippe Gentilleau
Cannes 1992

1.e4 e6 2.♘f3 d5 3.e5 c5 4.b4 cb4 5.a3 f5!? 6.ab4 ♗b4 7.c3 ♗e7 8.d4 ♗d7 9.h4 ♘h6 10.♗h6 gh6 11.♕d2 ♗f8 12.♗e2 12.♗d3 **12...♗g7 13.♘a3 0-0 14.0-0 ♗c6** 14...a6 15.♘b5 ♗b5 16.♗b5 ♘d7 **15.♘b5 ♗b5 16.♗b5 ♘d7 17.c4 dc4 18.♗c4 ♕e7 19.♕a5 ♖fe8 20.♖fb1 ♘b6 21.d5 ed5 22.♗d5 ♔h8 23.♖b6! ab6 24.♕a8 ♖a8 25.♖a8 ♗f8 26.♘d4 ♕e5 27.♘e6 ♕e1 28.♔h2 ♕e5 29.f4 1-0**

Section VI: A surprising Sicilian

The Sicilian typically offers the second player good chances to fight for the initiative and it is the 1.e4 player's main concern. There are so many Sicilians – all fundamentally differing in nature – that it is hard to be well-prepared against all of them. The line that I advocate in Chapter 18: 'the Kupreichik Variation' makes matters even worse.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cd4
4.♘d4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♗d7

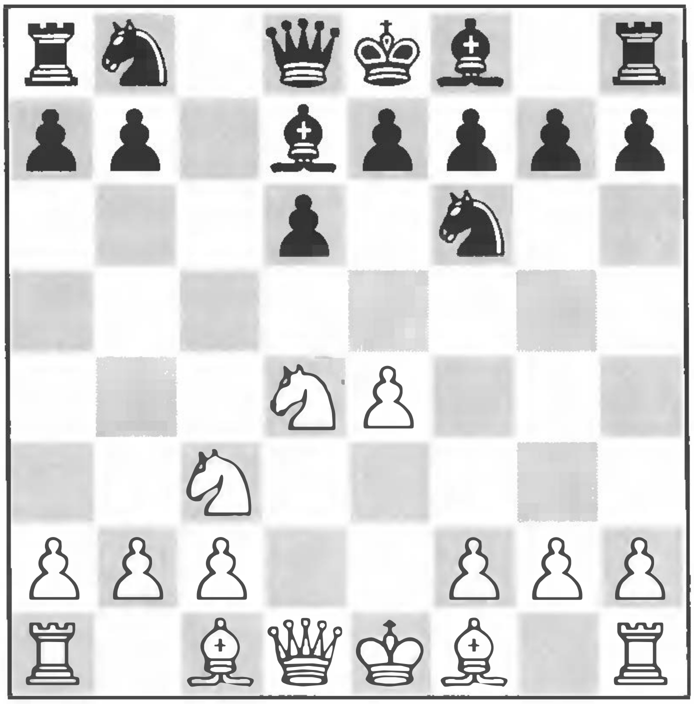


The move 5. ....♗d7 leaves White in a state of uncertainty concerning Black's future development plans. Indeed, as Black retains the option of developing with e5, e6 or g6, the Kupreichik Variation is a flexible Sicilian which is its main attraction. A full theoretical overview and an elaborate games section should provide the reader with an SOS Sicilian for his repertoire.

Is the characteristic 5...♗d7 a proper developing move? Black prepares either ♘c6, or a set-up with e5 and ♗c6. Still you may wonder how effective the bishop is placed on d7? This is more a philosophical question though. After all, it is also quite difficult to regard 5...a6 as the best developing move in the position.
Yet, Najdorf's little pawn move has come to be recognized as one of the strongest Sicilians. The Kupreichik actually has quite a lot in common with the Najdorf.
Other Sicilians that are worth knowing about when playing the Kupreichik are: the Rauzer (5...♘c6 6.♗g5), the Dragon (5...g6) and the Scheveningen (5...e6).
After 5...♗d7 6.♗g5 there are several direct transpositions to the Rauzer.
A Dragon-like set-up is possible after many of White's 6th move alternatives, but not after 6.♗g5 though.
The Scheveningen is typically on the cards after 6.♗e2 and 6.♗c4.

CHAPTER 18

The Kupreichik Variation



NIC KEY SI 3.6

5...♗d7: a flexible choice

For several years now the Russian grandmaster Viktor Kupreichik has been playing an original Sicilian of his own invention. After the age-old **1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cd4 4.♘d4 ♘f6 5.♘c3** the whole world is playing 5...a6, 5...♘c6, 5...e6 or 5...g6, followed by at least 10 more 'book moves'. Little improvisation and a lot of learning is not to everyone's taste, though, and certainly not to Kupreichik's. The Belarus grandmaster immediately leaves the well-trodden Sicilian paths with **5...♗d7!?**.

His success has inspired other grandmasters and among his 'apostles' are (in arbitrary order): Zviagintsev, Atalik, Kengis, Kveinis, Efimov, Balashov, Kogan, Wojtkiewicz and Larsen. Not a bad side you might feel – and the statistics are excellent too. However, a note of warning to the reader already eager to adopt 5...♗d7: the New In Chess Database reveals that this line is played by grandmasters only. First of all this means that the statistics are unreliable (Black was quite often simply the stronger player). But more importantly, I wondered whether there was an objective reason why so few club players went for the Kupreichik. After studying the games, which are rich in all sorts of Sicilian ideas, I came up with the following explanation: in order to play 5...♗d7 you need a basic understanding of the Najdorf, the Rauzer, the Dragon and the Scheveningen! Each of these lines could take a lifetime of study – never mind all four of them!

For those not deterred by this warning, read on!

After 5...♗d7 all the 'Najdorf moves' – 6.♗g5, 6.♗e2, 6.♗c4, 6.♗e3, 6.f3, 6.f4, 6.g3, 6.h3, and 6.♖g1 – come into consideration. Or as Zviagintsev put it more pessimistically: 'Practically all White's (6th move) replies set Black serious problems'! Things are perhaps not all that bad really, as the following theoretical overview may reveal.

A note of warning: there are transpositional possibilities galore. On the whole, I will concentrate on those games that are distinctly 'Kupreichik'. Still, one of the main ideas of 5...♗d7 is that Black remains flexible and defers his choice of set-up until White has put his cards on the table. Thus, Black may prefer a Scheveningen type of set-up versus one line, a Dragon scheme against another variation, and Boleslavsky-like development with e5 and ♗c6 to meet yet another White system.

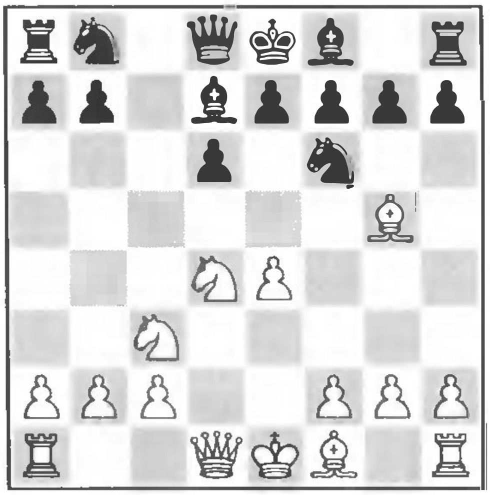
The material in the theoretical section is divided as follows:

1. e4 c5
2. ♘f3 d6
3. d4 cd4
4. ♘d4 ♘f6
5. ♘c3 ♗d7

A) 6.♗g5
B) 6.♗e2
C) 6.♗c4
D) 6.♗e3
E) 6.f3
F) 'the rest'

Variation A

6. ♗g5



Insofar as is possible to speak of a 'main line' in a non-theoretical line like the Kupreichik, it surely is 6.♗g5. White prevents Dragon-like set-ups and plays in the spirit of the Richter-Rauzer and the 6.♗g5 Najdorf. It should not surprise us, then, that transpositions to these two variations are possible. Thus, 6...♘c6 is a genuine Richter-Rauzer, while 6...e6 7.f4 a6 is a Najdorf and 6...e6 7.♕d2 a6 7.f4 a strange hybrid.

In practice, 6.♗g5 is the most common move. This popularity may partly be explained by its forcing character.

6. ... e6

Bad is 6...♗c6 7.♗f6 gf6 8.♕h5 ♘d7

9.♗c4 ♘e5 10.♗b3 ♘g6 11.f4 e6 12.f5 ♕a5 13.0-0-0 0-0-0 14.♕h3± Kindermann-Efimov, Portoroz tt 1998.

White's main moves now are: 7.f4, 7.♕d2 and 7.♘db5. Before we delve deeper into the matter here are some minor alternatives:

- 7.♕f3 h6!? 8.♗f6 gf6 9.0-0-0 a6 10.♕h5 ♘c6 11.♘c6 bc6 12.♗c4 ♕b6 and Black is ok in this funny Rauzer, Santo Roman-Efimov, Bastia rapid 1997.
- 7.♕d3 a6 8.f4 h6 9.♗h4 ♗e7 10.♘f3 ♗c6 11.0-0-0 ♘bd7 12.♕e2 0-0 13.♔b1 ♘e4! Belotti-Efimov, Reggio Emilia 1997.
- 7.f3 a6 8.♕d2 ♗e7 9.0-0-0 b5 10.♔b1 b4 11.♗f6 ♗f6 12.♘ce2 ♕b6∓ Tomczak-Szczechowicz, Barlinek 2002.

A1) 7.f4
A2) 7.♕d2
A3) 7.♘db5

Variation A1

7. f4 ♘c6

This is the main line, but possibly 7...♗e7 is stronger. The game Arakhamia-Kupreichik, Mariehamn 1997, went: 8.♕d2 a6 9.0-0-0 h6 10.♗h4 0-0 and in answer to 11.g4 Black executed the standard 11...♘e4 with a good game. After 7...♗e7 8.♕d2 Black can also opt for 8...h6!?, when 9.♗f6 ♗f6 10.♘db5 ♗b5 11.♘b5 0-0 12.0-0-0 ♕b6! 13.♕d6 (13.c3 d5 14.ed5 a6 15.♘d4 ed5∓) 13...♘c6 14.♕a3 ♖fd8 gives more than sufficient compensation for the pawn. Solleveld-Bosch, Dutch tt 1998.

8. ♘db5

Simply bad is 8.♗f6 ♕f6 9.♘db5 because of 9...0-0-0 10.♕d2 a6 11.♘a3 d5 12.ed5 ed5 13.♗e2 ♗b4 14.♔d1 ♗f5 and White resigned in Suknev-Sidorov, Yalta 1995.

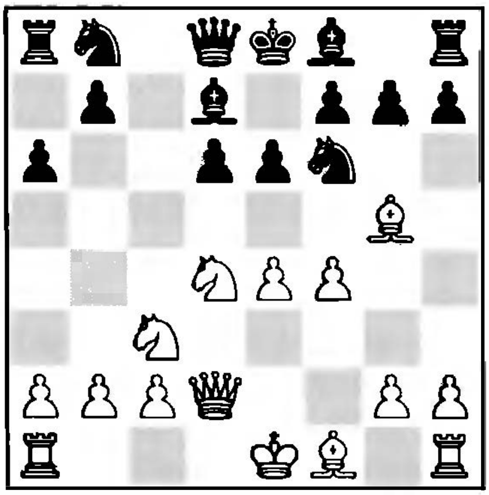
8...♕b8 9.e5 de5 10.♗f6 gf6 11.♕d2 f5 12.0-0-0 ♕d8 13.fe5 ♘e5 14.♕d4 with a dangerous initiative in Van den Doel-Kupreichik, Groningen 1996.

Variation A2

7. ♕d2 a6

This seems forced as White is ready for ♘db5 and 0-0-0 attacking d6. Yet, after 7...♗e7 8.♘db5 ♗b5 9.♗b5 ♘c6 10.0-0 0-0 11.♖ad1 ♖c8 12.♗e2 a6 White had at best a tiny edge in Kokarev-Kozlov, Voronezh 2002.

8. f4



Not in keeping with this Rauzer set-up is 8.♗e2. In Timoshenko-Jaracz, Lubniewice tt 1998, Black equalized with 8...♗e7 9.f4 ♕c7 10.♘f3 h6 11.♗h4 ♗c6 12.♗d3 ♘bd7 13.0-0 0-0 14.♔h1 b5

15.a3 e5.

Black also gets satisfactory play after 8.f3 b5 9.0-0-0 ♗e7:

- 10.h4 b4 11.♘b1 ♕b6 12.h5 h6 13.♗e3 ♕b7 14.♕f2 e5 15.♘b3 a5 Zude-Kupreichik, Bundesliga 1993.
- 10.♔b1 b4 11.♗f6 ♗f6 12.♘ce2 a5∓ Fercec-Kogan, Ljubljana 1998.
- 10.♗d3 0-0 11.h4 b4 12.♘ce2 a5 13.g4 ♘a6∓ Guth-Jaracz, Bad Wiessee 1998.
- 10.♗e3 h5!? 11.♗d3 b4 12.♘ce2 e5 13.♘f5 ♗f5 14.ef5 d5 with a complicated game in Hellers-Markovic, Sweden tt 2003.

The move 8.0-0-0 normally has little independent significance. Play may transpose to our main line (after 8...h6 9.♗f6 ♕f6 10.f4), or to 8.f3 (after 8...♗e7 9.f3). Not attractive is 8.0-0-0 h6 9.♗e3 (9.♗h4? ♘e4!) 9...♘g4 10.f4 ♘e3 11.♕e3 ♗e7 12.♔b1 ♘c6 13.e5 d5 14.g4 ♗c5∓ Mieles Palau-Teplitsky, Bled 2002.

8. ... h6

9. ♗f6

White must give up the bishop in view of the standard trick 9.♗h4? ♘e4.

9. ... ♕f6

10. 0-0-0 ♘c6

Most natural but 10...♕d8 is possible too. For example, 11.g3 (11.h4 ♗e7 12.♘f3 ♘c6 13.g4 ♕a5 14.g5 0-0-0 Sypnicki-Heberla, Zakopane 2001) 11...♘c6 12.♗g2 ♗e7 13.h4 ♕c7 14.♔b1 ♖c8 15.♖he1 0-0 with an equal game, Horvath-Antoniewski, Aviles 2000.

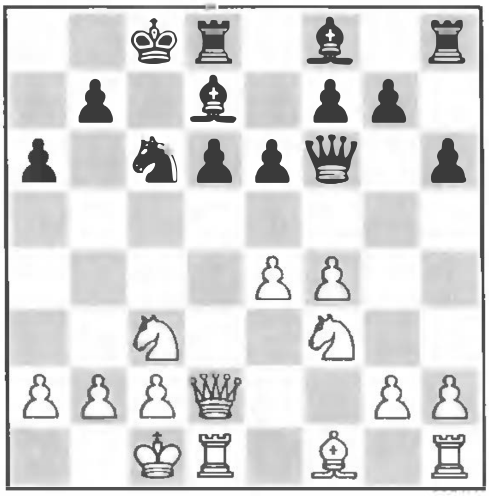
11. ♘f3

No good is 11.e5? because of 11...de5 12.♘db5 ♕d8 13.♘d6 ♗d6 14.♕d6 ♕e7 15.♘e4 Kotkov-Lein, Soviet Union 1971, and now 15...ef4 16.♕f4 0-0 17.♕c7 ♖fd8 would have given Black the advantage.

More to the point is 11.♘c6 ♗c6 in order not to lose time. White got an advantage in Tseitlin-Kupreichik, Groningen 1996, after 12.♕e3 g5?! 13.g3 gf4 14.gf4 0-0-0 15.♕b6! ♕f4 16.♔b1 ♕e5 17.♘d5!. Black can improve with 12...♕d8 as 13.♘d5 is not as strong as it looks after either 13...♗e7 or 13...ed5 14.ed5 ♗e7 15.dc6 bc6. Instead of 12.♕e3 the game Lau-Kupreichik, Munster 1997, went 12.g3 ♕d8 13.♗g2 ♕a5 14.♖he1 0-0-0 and Black was fine.

The manoeuvre ♕f6-d8-a5 is also known from the Rauzer. And in fact, after our text move 11.♘f3 we have via transposition reached a position from the Rauzer that is known to be satisfactory for Black.

11. ... 0-0-0



Equally good is 11...♕d8. Playing the queen retreat or castling queenside is largely a matter of taste. Too ambitious though is 11...g5?! as White has 12.fg5 hg5 13.e5! ♘e5 14.♘e4 with a substantial edge as in Moberg-Malmstig, Haninge 1997.

12. h4

After 12.♔b1 ♗e8 13.♕e3 ♕e7 14.h4 g6 15.g3 ♔b8 Black was comfortable in Timmermans-Bosch, Hoogeveen 1998. Shirov has recommended 12.♕e3.

12. ... g6

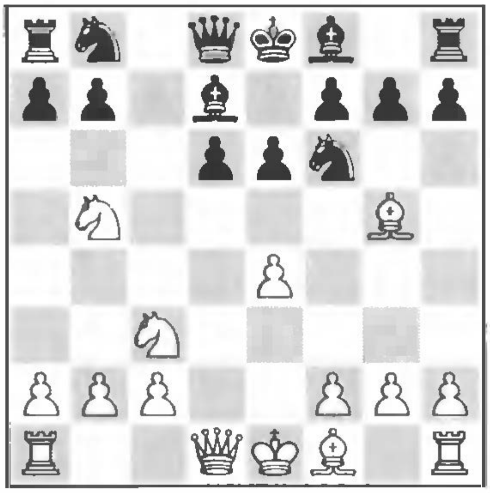
Or 12...♔b8 13.g4 ♕e7 14.♗c4 ♗c8 15.g5 g6 Bologan-Zviagintsev, Azov tt 1996.

13. ♕e3 ♕e7

With two bishops and a solid position Black has fine prospects here. See Psakhis-Kupreichik and Ciemniak-Kengis in the Study Material.

Variation A3

7. ♘db5



This move 'punishes' Black for omitting 5...a6.

7. ... ♗c6

So far the move 7...♗b5!? (originally a suggestion of Kupreichik's) has only once been played – in the Groningen 1997 tie-break rapid game Benjamin-Zviagintsev. That game went 8.♗b5 ♘c6 9.♕f3 h6 10.♗h4 ♗e7 11.e5 ♘d5 12.♗c6 bc6 13.♗e7 ♕e7 14.♕g3 and White was better.

8. ♗f6

This fracturing of Black's kingside pawns is the point of 7.♘db5. However, in the recent game Belikov-Kurnosov, Alushta 2002, White went for a Sveshnikov pawn structure arguing that the bishop does not belong on c6 but on e6, after:

8.♗f4!? e5 9.♗g5 a6 10.♗f6 gf6 11.♘a3 f5 12.♗d3 ♖g8 13.♘c4 White was better.

It is of course impossible to draw any definite conclusions on the basis of one game. Black should investigate 8...♘e4!? 9.♘e4 ♗e4 10.♗d6 ♘a6.

Less dangerous is 8.♕f3 a6 9.♘d4 ♗e7 10.0-0-0 ♕a5 Ivanovic-Kupreichik, Cetinje tt 1993.

8. ... gf6

9. ♕h5

This prepares queenside castling, tricks on e6 (after the inevitable ♘b5-d4), and blocks the Black h-pawn (h6-h5 is a good move in this type of structure).

9. ... a6

Not to be recommended is 9...♘a6?! 10.0-0-0 ♘c5 11.♗c4 ♕d7 12.♖he1 a6 13.♘d4± Kotronias-Efimov, Gausdal 1991.

10. ♘d4 ♗d7

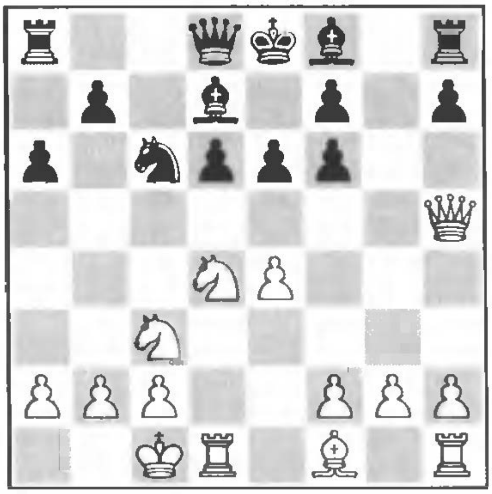
11. 0-0-0

It is useful to know that Black may strive to exchange queens as the resulting endings are nearly always in his favour. Thus 11.♗c4 is well answered by 11...♕c8! 12.♗b3 ♕c5! when 13.♕c5 dc5 14.♘f3 ♖g8 was slightly better for Black in Pikulinski-Wismont, Lubniewice 1998.

Perunovic-Ivanisevic, Lazarevac 1999, went instead 13.♘f5 ♘c6 14.♕h4 (here 14.0-0-0 0-0-0 15.♘g3 ♕f2 would have transposed to Ivanovic-Kupreichik, Becici tt 1994) 14...0-0-0! an excellent pawn sacrifice, see the study material.

The move 11.f4 is met by 11...♘c6 12.0-0-0 ♕b6 13.♘ce2 ♕a5! 14.♕a5 ♘a5 15.♘g3 ♗e7 and Black was already slightly better in Szelag-Heberla, Brzeg Dolny 2001.

11. ... ♘c6



White is at crossroads here.

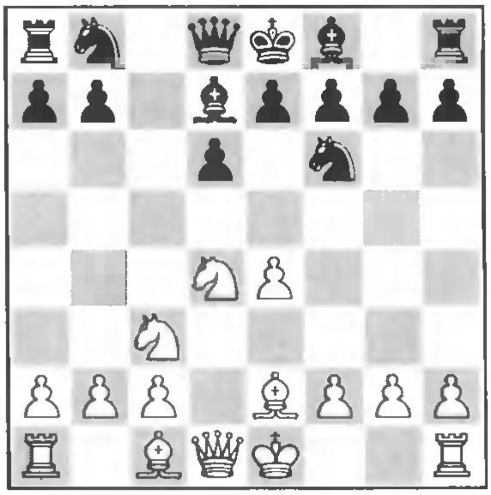
No good is 12.♗c4 ♕a5! again Black offers the queen exchange, the game Luther-Kupreichik, Minsk 1994 continued 13.♕e2 ♕g5 14.♔b1 ♘d4 15.♖d4 ♕g2 16.♖hd1 ♕h2 and White did not have enough compensation.

Unclear is 12.♘c6 bc6 (12...♗c6 13.♗c4± Kupreichik) 13.♗c4 ♕b6 Spasov-Kupreichik, Moscow 1994. Finally, White won quickly in Stripunsky-Balashov, Minsk 1996, after 12.♘b3 b5 13.f4 ♕c8 14.f5!. However, 12.♘b3 does not look very dangerous, Black's 12...b5 is simply bad.

Variation B

6. ♗e2

Black is playing all sorts of set-ups against 6.♗e2, and it is a matter of taste rather than objective strength which one you pick for your own repertoire. However, as so often you must beware of transpositions to other main line Sicilians! Thus, 6...g6 could easily become a Dragon, 6...e6 a Scheveningen, and in Bohnenblust-Blehm, Patras 1999, 6...♘c6 transposed into a regular Rauzer! Most consistent perhaps is the 'Najdorf move' 6...e5, followed by ♗c6 – this will be our main line.



6. ... e5

Some brief comments concerning the alternatives here:

● 6...♗c6 Efimov's move 7.0-0 ♘bd7 8.♗g5 (8.♖e1 e6 9.♗f1 ♗e7 10.f4 0-0 11.e5 ♘e8 12.♔h1 g6∓ Wagman-Efimov, St Vincent 2000) 8...e6 9.♗h5!? g6 10.♗e2 ♗e7 11.♘c6 bc6 12.♗h6 ♖b8 13.b3 ♕a5 14.♕d2 ♘g8 15.♗g7 ♗f6 and Black was ok in Zontakh-Efimov, Cutro 1998.

● 6...♘c6 7.♗g5 (7.♗e3 ♘d4!? 8.♗d4 ♗c6 9.♗d3 e5 10.♗e3 d5 was Burnett-Csom, Budapest 2000) 7...♕a5 8.♗f6 gf6 9.0-0 ♘d4 10.♕d4 ♖c8 and this is a Rauzer line, Bohnenblust-Blehm, Patras 1999.

● 6...g6 7.0-0 ♗g7 8.♗g5 0-0 (8...♘c6 9.♘b3 a6 10.a4 ♖c8 11.♔h1 ♗e6 (11...0-0 looks better) 12.f4 ♘d7 13.f5± Xie Jun-Larsen, Vienna tt 1993) 9.♕d2 ♘c6 10.♘b3 a6 11.a4 ♖c8 12.♖ad1 ♖e8 13.♔h1 Rublevsky-Kupreichik, Aalborg 1993; Black should now rely on 13...♘a5. Instead of 7.0-0 White can play the sharp 7.g4 after 7...h6 8.♗e3 e5 9.♘db5 ♗c6 10.♘d5 ♘d5 11.ed5 ♗b5 12.♗b5 ♘d7 13.♕d2 a6 14.♗e2 ♗e7 it is bad to castle: 15.0-0-0 ♗g5!∓ Velimirovic-Markovic, Subotica 2000. Better is 15.h4 ♗h4 16.g5 hg5 17.♗g5 ♗g5 18.♖h8 ♘f8 with compensation Cuijpers-Kupreichik, Bundesliga 1994.

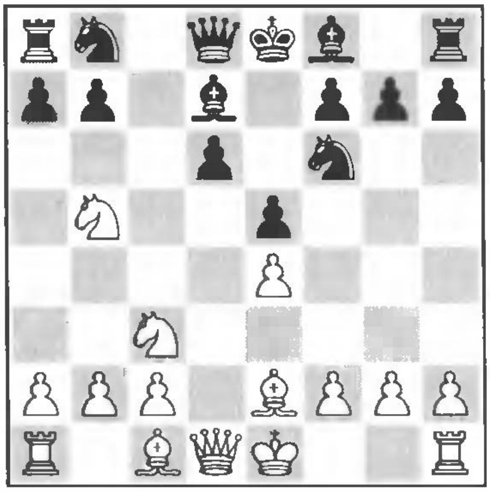
● 6...e6 7.♗e3 ♗e7 8.g4 h6 9.♕d2 a6 10.0-0-0 ♘c6 11.f3 b5 12.♘c6 ♗c6 13.♗d3 ♖c8 14.♔b1 d5 15.e5 d4 16.ef6 ♗f6 17.♘e4 ½-½ was Balogh-Kosanovic, Budapest 2002. However, playing the English attack after 6.♗e2 does not look like such a good idea. Regular Scheveningen positions are, for instance, reached after:

– 7.♗e3 ♘c6 8.f4 a6 9.0-0 ♗e7 10.♔h1 b5 11.a3 0-0 Laketic-Vuksanovic, Vrnjacka Banja 1999, and

– 7.0-0 ♗e7 8.f4 ♘c6 9.♘b3 0-0 10.♗e3 ♖c8 Benjamin-Zviagintsev, Groningen 1997. Clearly the Scheveningen falls outside the scope of this book. Though, I would not want to keep Zviagintsev's impressive concept from you: 11.♗f3 a6 12.a4 e5 13.f5 ♘b4 14.g4 h5! and Black had a good position!

Finally, after 6.♗e2 e6 I would like to mention the Keres-like 7.g4!? a position that you will only reach in the Kupreichik move order. After 7...h6 8.f4 e5 9.♘f5 ♗c6 10.♗f3 g6 11.♘g3 ♘bd7 12.f5 g5 Black was fine in Sturua-Zviagintsev, Pula 1997. The sharp 8.g5 (instead of 8.f4) is well-answered by 8...hg5 9.♗g5 a6 10.♕d2 b5!, see Velimirovic-Ivanisevic, Belgrade 1999 in the study material.

7. ♘db5



Most consistent, play now comes to resemble the Sveshnikov, other knight moves are less dangerous.

7.♘b3 ♗c6 8.♗g5 ♘bd7 and now:

● 9.♕d3 ♗e7 10.0-0 0-0 11.a4 a6 12.a5 ♖c8 13.♖fd1 ♖e8 14.♗f3 ♕c7 with an equal position. Gallagher-Wojtkiewicz, Bern 1996.

● Sharp but satisfactory for Black is 9.f3 h6 (9...♗e7 10.♕d2 0-0 11.0-0-0 a6 12.h4 b5 13.♔b1 b4 14.♘d5 ♗d5 15.ed5 a5 Gheng-Manea, Bucharest 2001) 10.♗e3 ♗e7 11.♕d2 0-0 12.0-0-0 a5

Shahade-Blehm, Paget Parish 2001.

● 9.♗g4!? ♗e7 10.♗d7 ♕d7 11.♗f6 ♗f6 12.♘d5 ♗d8 Rivera-Glavina, Salamanca tt 1998.

More testing deserves 7.♘f3 ♗c6 8.♗g5 ♘bd7 9.♘d2!? planning ♗c4, Stoica-Petre, Romania 2000.

7. ... ♗c6

Interesting is 7...♗e6!? 8.♘d5 ♗d5 9.ed5 a6 10.♘c3 ♘bd7 11.0-0 g6 Zaragatski-Vioreanu, Balatonlelle 2002.

8. ♗g5

This is stronger than 8.♘d5 ♘d5 9.ed5 ♗b5 10.♗b5 ♘d7 11.0-0 ♗e7 12.♕g4 g6 13.♗d7 ♕d7 14.♕d7 ♔d7 15.♗e3 ♖hc8∓ Spata-Paglilla, Vicente Lopez 2000. Instead of 13.♗d7 White should of course play 13.♗h6 after 13...f5 we have reached an unclear position, Van der Wiel-Kupreichik, Yerevan 1996.

8. ... a6

9. ♘a3

Here 9.♗f6 gf6 10.♘a3 deserves to be tested.

9. ... ♘bd7

To continue even longer in 'Sveshnikov fashion' with 9...b5 is not a good idea. Black equalized in Kirik-Jurkiewicz, Baku 2002, after 10.♘d5 ♘bd7 11.c3 ♘b6 12.♘c2 ♘bd5 13.ed5 ♗d7. However, White gets a pleasant positional edge after 10.♗f6! ♕f6 11.♘d5 ♕d8 12.0-0 ♗e7 13.c4!±, Solozhenkin-Kupreichik, St Petersburg 1996.

In general it must be said that it is not so clear whether the bishop on c6 (which true enough attacks e4) does not belong on e6 as in the Sveshnikov proper.

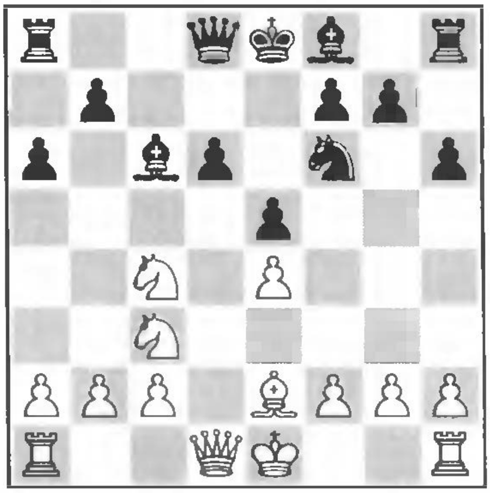
10. ♘c4

Here 10.♗g4 deserves attention as in the game Naiditsch-Bosch, Schaan 1998. The game Guroff-Roski, Bundesliga 1992, went 10.♘d5 ♗d5 11.ed5 ♕a5 12.c3 ♕d5 13.♕d5 ♘d5 14.♗f3 ♘c7 15.♗b7 ♖b8 16.♗c6 ♖b6 unclear.

10. ... h6

11. ♗f6 ♘f6

And the position should be about equal.



In Gomez Gomez-Andres Gonzalez, Aviles 2000, White got a slight edge after 12.♕d3 ♕c7 13.0-0 ♗e7 14.♘e3 g6 15.♘ed5 ♘d5 16.♘d5 ♗d5 17.♕d5. However, the immediate 12...♗e7 looks stronger.

Variation C

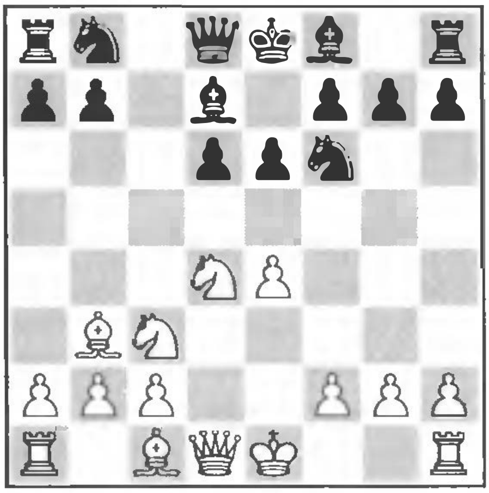
6. ♗c4

Sozin players will be tempted to answer 5...♗d7 with 6.♗c4. After 6...e6 we do indeed get positions familiar to Sozin or 6.♗c4 Najdorf players. Note that Kupreichik, here and in other lines, often 'takes advantage' of 5...♗d7 with moves like ♘a6-c5 and ♕d8-c8. Also possible after 6.♗c4 is the attempt to reach the Dragon.

6. ... e6

Possible is 6...♘c6 7.♗b3 g6 which is a theoretical line from the Sozin known as slightly better for White. The immediate 6...g6 worked well in Fedorov-Kupreichik, Minsk 1993 after 7.h3 ♗g7 8.0-0 0-0 9.♗b3 ♘a6!? 10.♖e1 ♘c5 11.♗g5 h6 12.♗h4 ♖c8 13.♘d5 e6 and after the exchanges on f6 play was equal. Instead of 7.h3 it is of course more dangerous to play 7.f3 ♗g7 8.♗e3 0-0 9.♕d2 ♘a6?! (9...♘c6 is the Dragon) 10.0-0-0 ♖c8 11.♗b3 ♘c5 12.♔b1 ♕e8 13.♗h6 and White is slightly better Gorelov-Kupreichik, Berlin 1992.

7. ♗b3



7.0-0 ♗e7 8.f4 ♘c6 9.♔h1 0-0 10.♗e3 ♘e4!? 11.♘e4 d5 was Areshchenko-Heberla, Oropesa del Mar 2001. Instead of 9.♔h1, 9.♗e3 0-0 10.♗b3 would be a regular Sozin.

Kengis-Kupreichik, Bundesliga 1995, went 7.♗e3 a6 8.♗b3 b5 9.0-0 ♗e7 10.f4 b4 11.e5 bc3 12.ef6 ♗f6 13.bc3 ♘c6 and Black was slightly better.

7. ... a6

In Velimirovic-Tosic, Subotica 2000, Black went 7...♘a6!? 8.f4 ♘c5 9.e5 ♘fe4 10.♘e4 ♘e4 11.♕f3 ♘c5 12.0-0 g6 13.♗e3 with sharp play.

8. f4 ♘c6

9. ♗e3 b5

10. ♕f3

10.a3 ♗e7 11.0-0 0-0 12.f5 e5 13.♘c6 ♗c6 was equal in Pozdniakov-Kupreichik, St Petersburg 1998.

10. ... ♕c8!?

Covering the squares c6 and e6.

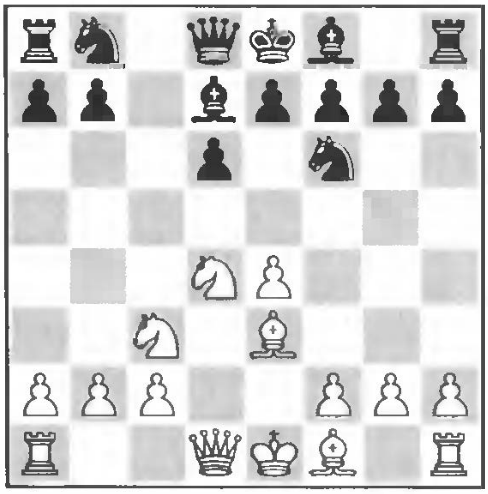
11. 0-0 ♗e7

12. ♖ae1 0-0

And Black was ok in Hendriks-Kupreichik, Groningen 1995 (see the Study Material).

Variation D

6. ♗e3



A natural move, especially considering the popularity of 6.♗e3 against the Najdorf. Most critical here is the 'Najdorf sequence' 6...♘g4 7.♗g5 h6 8.♗h4 g5

9.♗g3. Black ought to be fine here, since 5...♗d7 is probably more useful than 5...a6.

6. ... ♘g4

When Black goes for a Rauzer-like set-up he must realize that he has played the bishop to d7 rather early in the game. Not only does this mean that the bishop cannot be developed to b7, it may actually stand in the way of the f6-knight (when a quick g4-g5 is executed). An example is Nisipeanu-Kupreichik, Bad Wörishofen 1995, which continued: 6...a6 7.f3 e6 8.g4 h6 (necessary now) 9.♕d2 ♘c6 10.0-0-0 ♕c7 11.h4 ♘e5 12.♕g2 g6 13.g5 and White is better.

After 6...e5 7.♘f3!? ♗c6 8.♗c4! ♗e7 9.♕d3 White had a small advantage in Ionescu-Kutnik, Bucharest 1999. Of course, 6...♘c6 is playable but again you must realize that the bishop may not be optimally placed on d7 in this English Attack (♗e3, ♕d2, 0-0-0, f3, g4) type of position.

7. ♗g5

Just like in the Najdorf White can play 7.♗c1 aiming for 7...♘f6 8.f3.

7. ... h6

8. ♗h4 g5

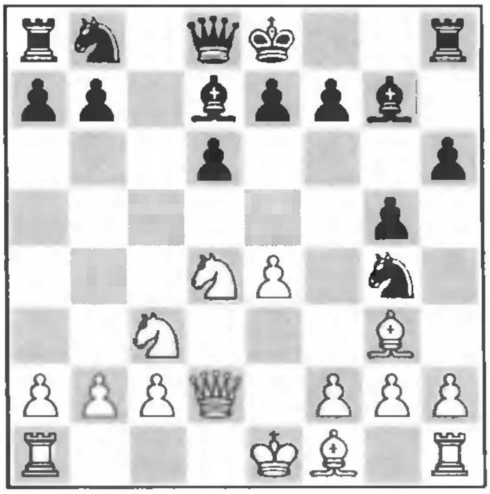
9. ♗g3 ♗g7

After 9...♘c6 10.♗e2 ♘ge5 11.♘f5 ♗f5 12.ef5 ♕d7 13.♘d5 0-0-0 14.♘e3 ♗g7 15.c3 White had a slight edge in Richagov-Kengis, Parnu II 1996.

10. ♗e2

The move 10.♗b5 (which takes 'advantage' of 5...♗d7 rather than 5...a6) gives Black excellent compensation for the pawn after 10...♘c6 11.♘c6 bc6 12.♗c6 ♗c6 13.♕g4 ♕a5. The move 10.h3 (which is also played in the Najdorf version) should be answered by 10...♘f6 rather than 10...♘e5 11.♘f5!.

Of equal merit to the text is 10.♕d2.



After 10...♘c6 11.♘b3 there are two options:

- 11...a5 12.a4 ♖c8 13.f3 ♘ge5 14.♘d5 ♘b4! Wehmeier-Atalik, Groningen 1997, or
- 11...♘ge5 12.h4 gh4 13.♗h4 ♘g6 14.♗g3 Senff-Belotelov, Budapest 1998, when Black should play 14...h5 instead of the weak game continuation 14...♘ce5? 15.f4 ♘g4 16.f5 ♘6e5 17.0-0-0±.

10. ... h5

In Sulipa-Kupreichik, Groningen 1997, play was unclear after 10...♕c8 11.♘d5 ♘e5 12.c3 ♘bc6 13.♘f5 ♗f5 14.ef5 0-0 15.f6!?.

11. ♗g4 hg4

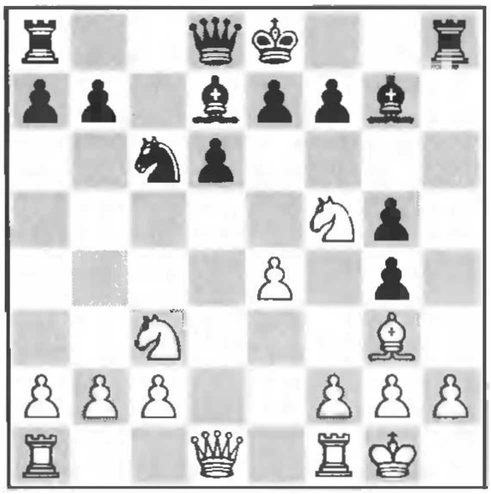
After 11...♗g4 12.f3 Black has lost the tempo a7-a6 compared to the Najdorf. With 11...hg4 Black is aiming to demonstrate that 5...♗d7 has been more useful than 5...a6 is in the Najdorf. Another important difference between these moves is that the b6 square has not been weakened.

12. 0-0

Black has adequate compensation for the exchange after 12.♘d5 ♘c6 13.♘f5 ♗f5 14.ef5 ♗b2 15.♖b1 ♕a5 16.♕d2 ♗d4 17.♕a5 ♘a5 18.♘c7 ♔d7 19.♘a8 ♖a8. Again this whole line exists in the Najdorf too.

12. ... ♘c6

13. ♘f5



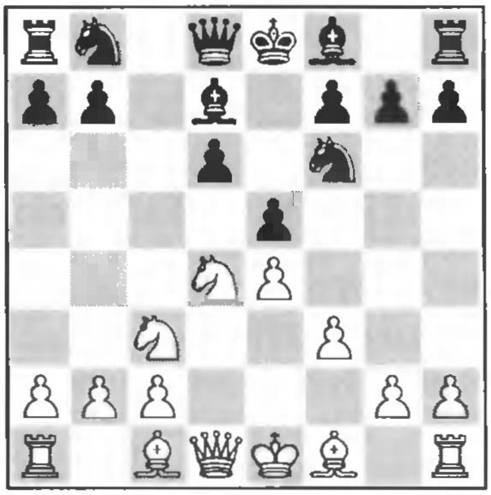
We have been following Timman-Bosch, Amsterdam 2000. Instead of 13...♗f5 14.ef5 ♗c3 15.bc3 ♘e5 when Black still had too play accurately to keep the balance, it would have been better to play 13...♗c3 14.bc3 ♕a5 15.♕g4 f6 and Black is fine.

Variation E

6. f3

With 6.f3 White prevents the knight sortie to g4 and plans the English Attack with ♗e3, ♕d2 and 0-0-0. Interestingly, in a game Wahls-Kupreichik (Velden 1996) the move order was: 6.♗e3 ♘g4 7.♗c1 ♘f6 8.f3.

6. ... e5



The Dragon is not such a good idea now, since Black has already committed himself to an early ♗d7, while White is going for the 'Yugoslav attack' anyway. Some alternatives:

- ● 6...♕b6 7.♘b3 ♘c6 8.♕e2 e6 9.♗e3 ♕c7 10.♕f2 ♗e7 11.g4 h6 12.0-0-0 and white was slightly better in Wahls-Kupreichik, Velden 1996 (because of the above-mentioned move order it was in fact 8...♕b6 and so on).
- ● 6...e6 7.♗e3 a6 8.g4 h6 9.♕d2 ♘c6 10.0-0-0 ♕c7 11.h4 0-0-0!? was Barbitsky-Kupreichik, St Petersburg 2000. While instead of Black's last Perunovic-Markovic, Valjevo 2000 went 11...♘a5 12.♖g1 g6 13.♘b3 ♗c6 ½-½. On the whole White ought to be slightly better in these positions since Black is obliged to play a7-a6 anyway. Hence, the Najdorf with 6.f3 should be more flexible since Black does not need to play ♗d7 at such an early stage.
- ● 6...♘c6 7.♗e3 ♖c8 8.♕d2 ♘d4 9.♗d4 e5 10.♗e3± Xie Jun-Riemersma, Breda pff 1999

7. ♘b3

The alternative is 7.♘db5 ♗e6 (7...♗c6 8.a4 a6 9.♘a3 d5 is OK for Black, Stoma-Antoniewski, Glogow 2001, but 8.a4 is just weak and should be replaced by 8.♗g5) 8.♗g5 a6 9.♘a3 (or 9.♗f6 gf6 10.♘a3 b5 11.♘d5) 9...♘c6 (possible is 9...♘bd7 10.♘c4 ♕c7 11.♘e3 ♗e7) 10.♘c4 and White was slightly better in Vajda-Kosanovic, Budapest 2002.

7. ... ♗c6

It is more flexible to play 7...♗e7 8.♗e3 0-0 when Black keeps the option of playing the bishop to e6 instead of to c6. This worked well in Sax-Ivanisevic, Bosnia Hercegovina 2001, after 9.♕d2 a5 10.a4 ♗e6! 11.♗b5 ♘c6 12.0-0 ♘b4 13.♕f2 ♕c8 14.♖fd1 d5 play was about equal. Likewise, Mamedov-Izoria, Baku 2002, went 9.♗e2 a5 10.a4 ♗e6!? 11.♘d2 ♕c8 12.0-0 ♘a6 13.f4 ef4 14.♗f4 ♘b4 when Black was somewhat better already.

8. ♗e3

Weaker are:

- 8.♘d5 ♗d5 9.ed5 ♗e7 10.♗e3 0-0 11.♕d2 ♘bd7 12.♗e2 ♕c8 13.c4 ♗d8! Turzo-Blehm, Calicut 1998, and
- 8.♗g5 ♘bd7 9.♕d2 ♗e7 10.h4 0-0 11.g4 a5 12.a4 ♘b6 13.♘b5 d5! Lawrenz-Kengis, Travemunde 1996.

8. ... ♗e7

9. ♕d2 a5

10. a4 0-0

11. 0-0-0 ♘a6

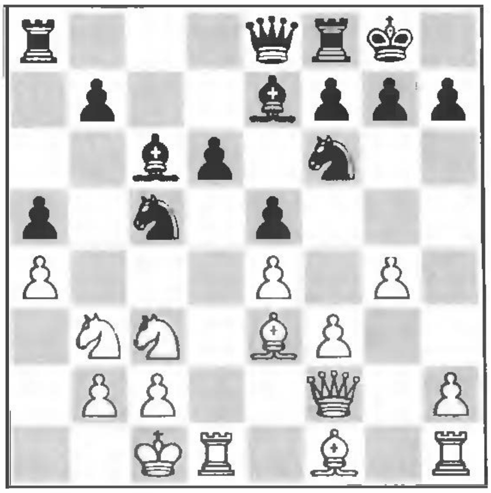
12. ♕f2

Stronger than 12.g4 ♘b4 13.g5 ♘d7 14.♔b1 ♘b6 15.♗b5 ♗b5 16.♗b6 ♕b6 17.♘b5 with equality, Hajnal-Kosanovic, Eger 2002.

12. ... ♘b4

Interesting is the immediate 12...♕e8 13.♗b5 (13.♘a5) 13...♘c7! 14.♗c6 bc6 15.♗b6 ♘e6 16.♘a5 c5 with compensation, Berthelot-Efimov, Monaco tt 2002.

13. g4 ♕e8



Kengis twice had this position as Black. Both games went 14.g5 ♘h5 15.♘b5 ♖c8 with unclear complications (see the study material). To be investigated is 14.♗b5!? since 14...d5 is worse for Black after 15.ed5 ♗b5 16.d6! Socko-Jakubiec, Polanica Zdroj 1999.

Variation F – 'the rest'

F1) 6.f4
F2) 6.g3
F3) 6.h3
F4) 6.♖g1

Variation F1

6. f4

This threatens a quick e5, so Black is more or less forced to play

6. ... ♘c6

7. ♗e2

Also possible is 7.♘f3 to play for a typical attacking scheme: ♗d3, 0-0, ♕e1-h4. Kupreichik once achieved a good position with 7...e6 8.a3 ♗e7 9.♗d3 ♕b6!? preventing White's natural development, Morawietz-Kupreichik, Bundesliga 1997.

7. ... g6

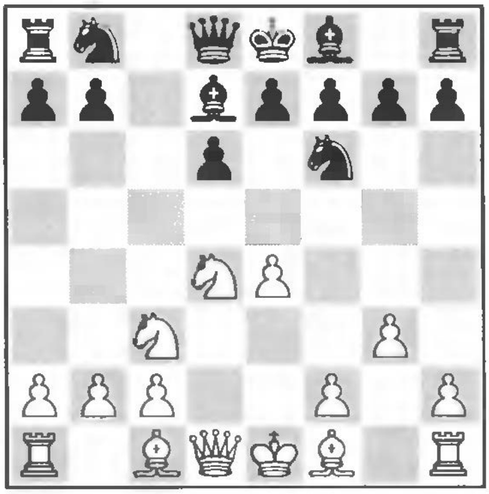
This is logical as a classical set-up (with ♗e2, ♗e3 and f4) achieves little against the Dragon.

8. ♗e3 ♗g7
9. ♕d2 0-0
10. 0-0

We have been following Mikhalchishin-Solak, Nova Gorica 2002. Having spent a tempo on ♗d7 is actually a disadvantage in this type of Dragon. Still, Black can equalize now with 10...♘d4! 11.♗d4 ♗c6.

Variation F2

6. g3



A modest move that should not cause Black any worries. I would recommend the standard 'Kupreichik' method: 6...e5 and 7...♗c6.

6. ... e5

Black often goes for the Dragon with 6...g6 (6...♘c6 7.♗g2 g6 8.♘de2 ♕c8 9.0-0 h5!? was unclear in Kofidis-Atalik, Ilioupolis 1995), after 7.♗g2 ♗g7 8.0-0 he can solidly continue with 8...♘c6 9.♘de2 (9.♘b3 0-0 10.♖e1 a5 11.a4 ♘b4 12.♘b5 ♗g4 13.f3 ♗e6 was Guseinov-Blehm, Aviles 2000) 9...0-0 10.h3 ♖c8 11.b3 ♘e5 when White was perhaps slightly better in Vladimir Georgiev-Kveinis, Capelle la Grande 1996. However, more adventurous (and more dangerous) is 8...♕c8!? 9.♖e1 h5 10.♘d5 h4 as in Stepanov-Blehm, Oropesa del Mar 1998.

7. ♘b3

There are other knight moves to consider:

- 7.♘db5 ♗c6 8.♗g5 a6 9.♗f6 gf6 10.♘a3 f5 is unclear.
- 7.♘f5 ♗f5 8.ef5 d5 9.♗g2 ♗b4 is probably about equal.
- 7.♘de2 ♗c6 8.♗g2 ♗e7 9.0-0 ♘bd7 Jens-Bosch, Dieren 2000. White should now play 10.♗g5 h6 11.♗f6 ♘f6 with equality.

7. ... ♗c6
8. ♗g2 ♗e7
9. 0-0 0-0
10. ♗e3

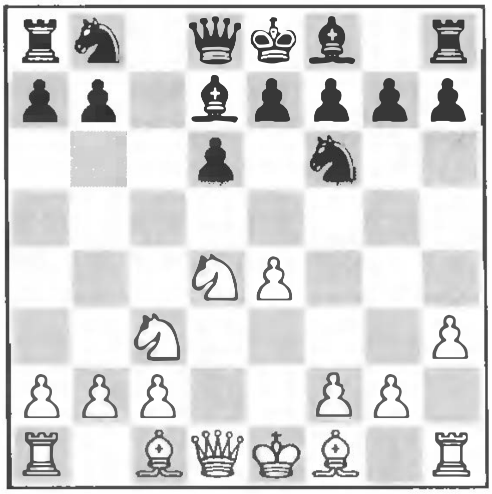
Or 10.♕e2 ♘bd7 11.a4 b6 12.♖d1 a6 13.♗e3 ♗b7 14.f4 ♖c8 15.f5 ♖e8 16.g4 h6 with approximate equality. Jakovenko-Solak, Yerevan 2000.

10. ... ♘bd7

And Black was very comfortable Wikstrom-Bosch, Gausdal 2002.

Variation F3

6. h3



Your next move is largely a matter of taste.

6. ... e5

Definitely playable is 6...♘c6 7.g4 ♘d4 8.♕d4 e5 and 9...♗c6. In Stoma-Radziewicz, Glogow 2001, Black went for the Dragon. After 6...g6 7.g4 h6 8.♗g2 ♘c6 9.♘de2 ♗g7 10.0-0 ♘e5 11.♔h1 g5 12.♘g3 h5! 13.gh5 g4 14.h4 ♘h5 it turned out that White's king was perhaps not so safe on the kingside.

7. ♘db5

After 7. ♘de2 ♗c6 Black obstructs the g4, ♗g2, ♘g3 set-up that White was aiming for.

7...♗c6 8.♗g5 a6 9.♘a3 ♘bd7 10.♘c4 h6 11.♗h4 g5 12.♗g3 ♘e4

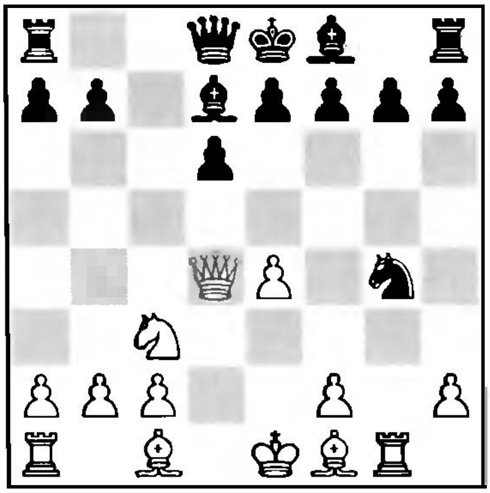
and after the subsequent exchanges play is completely equal. Watson-Kupreichik, Jyvaskyla 1991.

Variation F4

6. ♖g1

While playable against the Najdorf this move should be less dangerous here. Black has many good moves: 6...g6, 6...e5, 6...h6!? or even 6...h5!?. In one of the few practical examples Black played

6. ... ♘c6
7. g4 ♘d4
8. ♕d4 ♘g4!?



In the Najdorf this is bad because of 9.♘d5, but here the square b6 has not been weakened. So Bezgodov tries the following (dubious) exchange sacrifice.

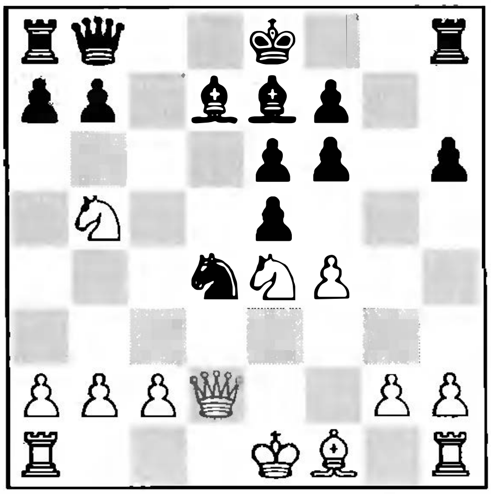
9.♖g4 ♗g4 10.e5 ♗f3 11.♗f4 de5 12.♕e5 ♕d6 13.♘b5 ♕e5 14.♗e5 ♖d8

White clearly has some compensation but Black should not be too worried. Bezgodov-Kurnosov, Samara 2002.

Study Material with 6.♗g5

☐ **Alexander Zubov**
■ **Kamil Miton**
Oropesa del Mar jr 1999

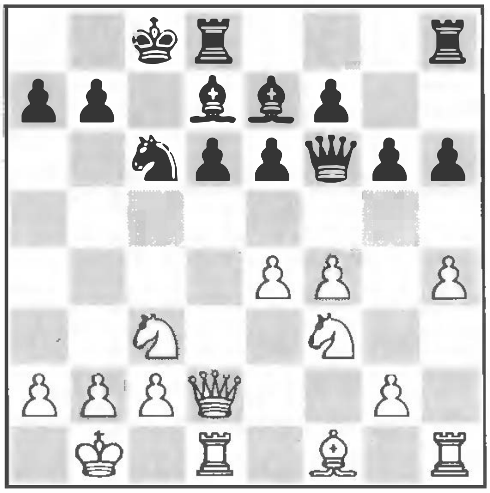
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cd4 4.♘d4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♗d7 6.♗g5 e6 7.f4 h6N 7...♘c6 8.♘db5 ♕b8 9.e5 de5 10.♗f6 gf6 11.♕d2 f5 12.0-0-0 ♕d8 13.fe5 ♘e5 14.♕d4⩲ Van den Doel-Kupreichik, Groningen 1996 **8.♗h4** 8.♗f6 **8...♘c6?! 9.♘db5 ♕b8 10.e5 de5 11.♗f6 gf6 12.♘e4** 12.♕d2!? **12...♗e7 13.♕d2 ♘d4**



14.fe5!? 14.♘d4 ed4 15.♕d4 ♕f4 **14...♘b5** 14...fe5? 15.♘d4 ed4 16.♕d4 **15.0-0-0 ♗c6 16.ef6 ♗f8** 16...♗d8 17.♗b5+− **17.a4 ♘d4! 18.♗c4** 18.♕d4 ♕f4 **18...♘f5 19.♗b5 ♗b5 20.ab5 ♕d8 21.♕f4 ♕a5 22.♔b1 h5 23.♖d3 ♖d8 24.♖hd1 ♖d3 25.♖d3 ♕e1 26.♔a2 ♕a5** ½-½

☐ **Uwe Rau**
■ **Viktor Kupreichik**
Bad Wörishofen 2001

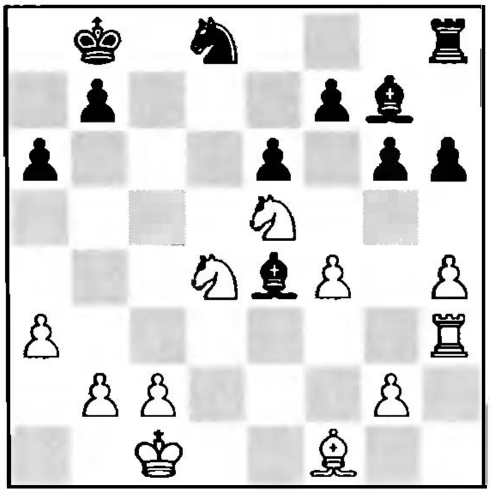
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cd4 4.♘d4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♗d7 6.♗g5 e6 7.f4 7.♕d3 a6 8.♗e2 h6 9.♗h4 ♘c6 10.♘c6 ♗c6 11.0-0-0 b5 12.♕e3 ♕a5 13.♘d5!± Marinkovic-Solak, Herceg Novi 2001; 7.f3 a6 8.♕d2 ♗e7 9.0-0-0 b5 10.♔b1 b4 11.♗f6 (11.♘ce2 ♘e4!) 11...♗f6 12.♘ce2 ♕b6∓ Tomczak-Szczechowicz, Barline 2002 **7...♘c6 8.♘f3** 8.♘db5 **8...h6 9.♗f6 ♕f6 10.♕d2 0-0-0** 10...a6 cf 7.♕d2 **11.h4 ♗e7 12.0-0-0 g6 13.♔b1**



13...♕g7 14.♕e3 ♔b8 15.♗b5 ♖c8 16.g3 ♖hd8 17.♖h2 ♘a5! 18.♗d7 ♖d7 19.♕d4 ♕g8!? 20.♕a4 ♘c6 21.♖hd2 a6∓ 22.♘e2 ♖dc7 23.c3 g5! 24.hg5 hg5 25.♘ed4 gf4 26.gf4 ♕g4 27.e5? ♘d4 28.♘d4 de5 29.fe5 ♕e4 30.♔a1 ♕e5 31.a3 ♕g5 32.♕b3 e5 33.♘f3 ♕f4 34.♕d5 f6 35.♘e1 ♖d8−+ 36.♕g2 ♖d2 37.♖d2 e4 38.♘c2 ♗c5 39.♔a2 e3 40.♖d8 ♔a7 41.♕g8 ♕e4 42.♖a8 ♔b6 43.♕b3 ♔c6 44.♘d4 ♗d4 45.♕a4 b5 45...♔d5 46.♖d8 ♔e6 47.♖d4 **46.♖a6 ♔d7 47.♕b5 ♔e7 48.cd4 ♖d7 49.♕c5 ♔f7 50.♕b6? ♕d5 51.♔a1 ♕d4 52.♕e6 ♔g7 53.♖a5? ♖b7** 0-1

☐ **Lev Psakhis**
■ **Viktor Kupreichik**
Lenk 1991

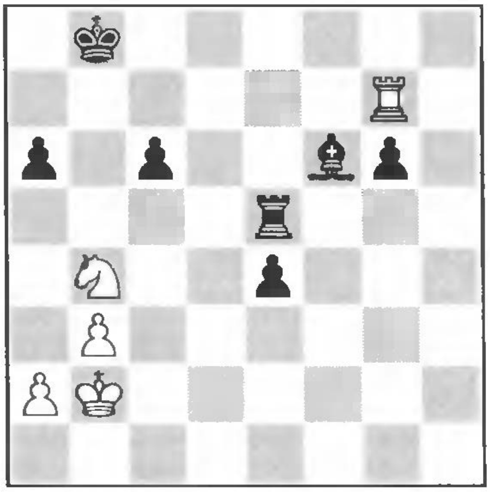
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cd4 4.♘d4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♗d7 6.♗g5 e6 7.♕d2 a6 8.f4 h6 9.♗f6 ♕f6 10.0-0-0 ♘c6 11.♘f3 0-0-0 12.h4 g6 13.♕e3 ♕e7 14.♘a4 ♗e8 15.♘b6 ♔b8 16.♖d3 d5! 17.a3! 17.ed5 ♘b4 18.♖b3 (18.♕e5 ♕c7∓) 18...♕c7∓ **17...de4 18.♕e4 ♗g7 19.♘c4 ♕c5 20.♖d8 ♘d8 21.♘ce5 ♗c6 22.♕d4!** 22.♘c6 ♘c6∓ **22...♕d4 23.♘d4 ♗e4 24.♖h3**



24...g5 24...♗e5! 25.fe5 ♘c6∓ **25.hg5 hg5 26.♖h8 ♗h8 27.g3 ♔c7 28.♔d2 f6 29.♘ef3 g4 30.♘h4 f5 31.c3 ♝d4 32.cd4 ♘c6 33.♔e3 ♘e7 34.♘g2 ♔d6 35.♔d2 ♘d5 36.♘e3 ♘f6 37.♔e1 b5 38.b4 ♔c6 39.♔f2 ♔b6 40.♔e1 a5 41.♔f2 ab4 42.ab4 ♗b1 43.♗g2 ♗a2 44.d5 ♗d5 45.♘d5 ♘d5 46.♗d5 ed5 47.♔e3** ½-½

☐ **Viktor Bologan**
■ **Vadim Zviagintsev**
Azov 1996

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cd4 4.♘d4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♗d7 6.♗g5 e6 7.♕d2 a6 8.0-0-0 h6 9.♗f6 ♕f6 10.f4 ♘c6 11.♘f3 0-0-0 12.h4 ♔b8 13.g4 ♕e7 14.♗c4 ♗c8 15.g5 g6 16.f5?! hg5 17.hg5 ♖h1 18.♖h1 ef5 19.ef5 ♗f5 20.♖h7 ♘e5 21.♗d5 ♗e6 22.♘d4 ♗d5 23.♘d5 ♕d7 24.b3 ♗e7 25.♔b2 ♖e8 26.♕f4 ♗d8 27.♘f3 ♕e6 28.♘e5 ♕e5 29.♕e5 de5 30.♖f7 ♗g5 31.♖g7 ♖e6 32.♖g8 ♔a7 33.c4 e4 34.c5 ♖e5 35.c6 bc6 36.♖g7 ♔b8 37.♘b4 ♗f6!



38.♘c6 ♔c8 39.♘a7 ♔d8 40.♖g6 ♖e6
0-1

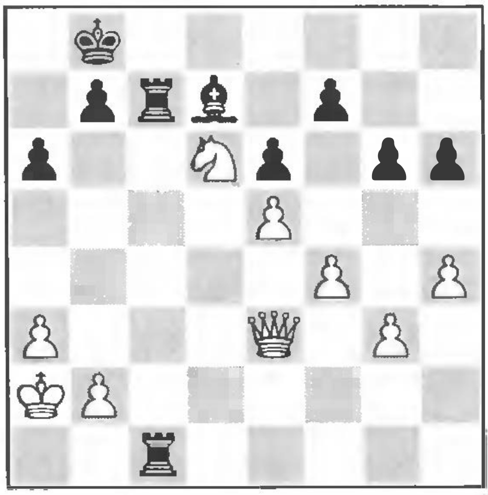
☐ **Ralf Lau**
■ **Viktor Kupreichik**
Munster 1997

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cd4 4.♘d4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♗d7 6.♗g5 e6 7.♕d2 a6 8.f4 h6 9.♗f6 ♕f6 10.0-0-0 ♘c6 11.♘c6 ♗c6 12.g3 ♕d8 13.♗g2 ♕a5 14.♖he1 0-0-0 15.a3 g6 16.♖e3 g5 17.♔b1 gf4 18.gf4 ♖g8 19.♗f3 h5 20.♕e2 h4 21.♗h5 ♗e8 22.♖ed3 ♗e7 23.♗f3 ♔b8 24.♔a2 ♖c8 25.♕d2 ♕c5 26.♔b1 ♖g1 27.♖g1 ♕g1 28.♔a2 ♕c5 29.♗g4 ♗f6 30.h3 ♕c4 31.♔b1 ♗c3 32.♖c3 ♕f1 33.♔a2 ♖c3 34.♕c3 ♗c6 34...♕f4? 35.♕h8+−

35.♕d2 ♕c4 36.b3 ♕c5 37.♕d3 ♔a7 38.♔b2 ♕f2 39.e5 d5 40.f5 ♕f4 41.fe6 ♕e5 42.♔a2 fe6 43.♕h7 ♔b6 44.♕h4 ♕e3 45.♕d8 ♔a7 46.♕d6 e5 47.b4 ♕f4 48.♕c5 ♔a8 49.a4 ♗a4 50.♕c8 ½-½

☐ **Robert Ciemniak**
■ **Edwin Kengis**
Suwalki 1999

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cd4 4.♘d4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♗d7 6.♗g5 e6 7.♕d2 a6 8.f4 h6 9.♗f6 ♕f6 10.♘f3 ♘c6 11.0-0-0 0-0-0 12.h4 12.♔b1 ♗e8 13.♕e3 ♕e7 14.h4 g6 15.g3 ♔b8 16.♖h2 ♕c7 17.♖hd2 ♗g7∓ Timmermans-Bosch, Hoogeveen 1998 **12...g6 13.♕e3 ♕e7 14.g3 ♗e8 15.♖h2 ♔b8 16.♖hd2 ♕c7 17.e5?! d5 18.♘e2 ♘a5 19.♘ed4 ♘c4 20.♗c4 ♕c4⧉∓ 21.♔b1 ♗b4 22.♖h2 ♗d7 23.♖c1 ♖c8 24.c3 ♗e7 25.♖hc2?! ♕c7 26.c4 dc4 27.♖c4 ♕c4 28.♖c4 ♖c4 29.♘d2 ♖c7∓ 30.♘e4 ♖hc8 31.a3 ♗c5 32.♘d6 ♗d4 33.♕d4 ♖c1 34.♔a2 ♖8c7 35.♕e3**



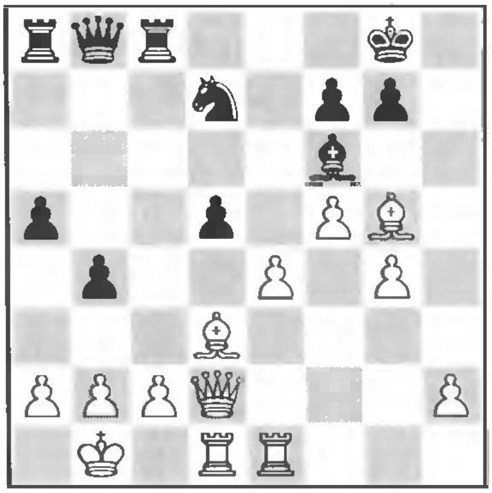
35...♗c6! 36.♕c1 ♗d5 37.♘c4 ♖c4 38.♕b1 ♖c1 0-1

☐ **Daniel Mieles Palau**
■ **Jan Teplitsky**
Bled ol 2002

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 ♘f6 4.♘c3 cd4 5.♘d4 ♗d7 6.♗g5 e6 7.♕d2 a6 8.0-0-0 8.f4 h6 9.♗f6 ♕f6 10.0-0-0 ♕d8 (10...♘c6) 11.g3 ♘c6 12.♗g2 ♗e7 13.h4 ♕c7 14.♔b1 ♖c8 15.♖he1 0-0= Horvath-Antoniewski, Aviles 2000 **8...h6 9.♗e3** 9.♗h4? ♘e4! 10.♕f4 ♘g5 11.♕e3 ♗e7 12.f4 ♘h7 13.♗e7 ♕e7∓ Tomczak-Heberla, Trzebinia 2002; 9.♗f6 ♕f6 10.♗c4 ♘c6 11.♘c6 ♗c6 12.♖he1 ♗e7 Zarychta-Szczechowicz, Lubnie wice 2002 **9...♘g4 10.f4 ♘e3 11.♕e3 ♗e7 12.♔b1** 12.♘f3 ♘c6 13.h4 ♕a5 14.♗c4 ♕c5∓ Van Geffen-Bosch, Dieren 2002 **12...♘c6 13.e5 d5 14.g4 ♗c5∓ 15.♘ce2 ♕b6 16.♗g2 ♘a5! 17.♕c1 ♗b5 18.b3 ♗e2! 19.♘e2 ♘c4 20.♖d3 ♖c8 21.♔a1 ♗a3 22.♕g1 ♗b2 23.♔b1 ♘a3!–+ 24.♔b2 ♖c2 25.♔a1 ♕g1 26.♖g1 ♖e2 27.♗f3 ♖h2 28.♖c1 ♖c2 29.♖c3 ♖c3 30.♖c3 ♔d7** 0-1

☐ **Ferdinand Hellers**
■ **Miroslav Markovic**
Sweden 2003

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cd4 4.♘d4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♗d7 6.♗g5 e6 7.♕d2 a6 7...♗e7 8.0-0-0 (8.♘db5 ♗b5 9.♗b5 ♘c6 10.0-0 0-0 11.♖ad1 ♖c8 12.♗e2 a6±/= Kokarev-Kozlov, Voronezh 2002) 8...a6 9.f4 ♕c7 10.♕e1 ♗c6 11.♖g1 ♘bd7 12.g4 h6 13.♗f6 ♗f6 14.♘d5 ♗d5 15.ed5 e5 Draoui-Georgiev, Clichy 2003 **8.f3 b5 9.0-0-0 ♗e7 10.♗e3** 10.h4 b4 11.♘b1 ♕b6 Zude-Kupreichik, Bundesliga 1993; 10.♗d3 0-0 11.h4 b4 12.♘ce2 a5 13.g4 ♘a6∓ Guth-Jaracz, Bad Wiessee 1998 **10...h5!? 11.♗d3 b4 12.♘ce2 e5 13.♘f5** 13.♘b3 a5 **13...♗f5 14.ef5 d5 15.♖he1 ♘bd7 16.♗g5 0-0 17.♘g3 ♕b8!? 18.♘h5 ♖c8 19.♘f6 ♗f6 20.♔b1 a5 21.g4** 21.♗f6! ♘f6 22.♕e2 **21...e4 22.fe4**



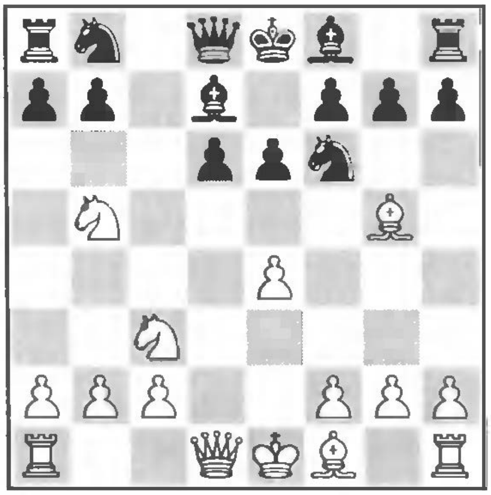
22...♗c3 23.♕f2 ♗e1 24.♖e1 a4 25.ed5 b3 26.f6 ♘e5 27.fg7 ♘d3 28.cd3 a3 29.♗f6 ♕b5 30.♖d1 ba2 31.♔a1 ♕b3 0-1

☐ **Joel Benjamin**

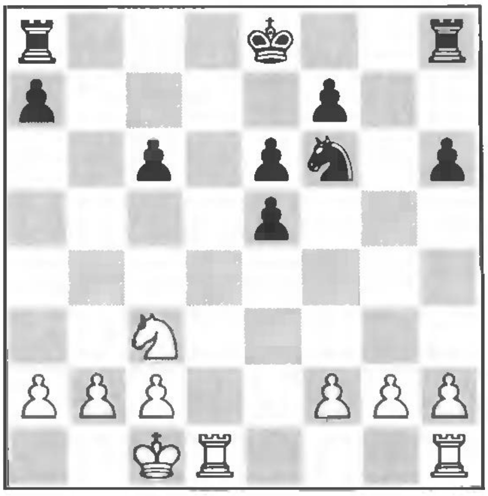
■ **Vadim Zviagintsev**

Groningen rapid 1997

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cd4 4.♘d4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♗d7 6.♗g5 e6 7.♘db5



7...♗b5!?N ?! Zviagintsev; 7...♗c6 8.♗f6 gf6 9.♕h5 **8.♗b5 ♘c6 9.♕f3** ! Zviagintsev; 9.0-0 a6 (∞ Kupreichik) 10.♗c6 bc6 11.e5 de5 12.♕f3 (± Bosch) 12...♕c7 13.♗f6 gf6 14.♕f6 ♖g8 **9...h6** 9...♖c8?! 10.0-0-0± △ 11.e5 **10.♗h4** 10.♗f6 ♕f6 11.♕f6 gf6= **10...♗e7 11.e5** 11.0-0-0 0-0 (11...♕c7 12.♗f6 ♗f6 13.♘d5 ed5 14.ed5 0-0 15.dc6 ♖ac8 16.♗d3 bc6 (16...♕b6) 17.♕f5 ♗g5 18.f4 g6 19.♕g4 ♗f6) 12.♗g3 (12.♗c6 bc6 13.e5 ♘d5 14.♗e7 ♕e7 15.ed6 ♕d6=) 12...♕c7= **11...♘d5□ 12.♗c6** 12.♗e7 ♘e7 13.0-0-0 (13.♖d1 d5=; 13.♗c6 bc6!±/=; 13...♘c6 14.♕g3!) 13...d5=; 12.♘d5 ed5 (12...♗h4 13.♘b4 0-0 14.♗c6!) 13.♗e7 ♕e7 **12...bc6 13.♗e7 ♕e7 14.♕g3** 14.ed6 ♕d6 15.0-0±/= **14...de5** ? Zviagintsev 14...0-0-0 (! Zviagintsev) 15.♕g7 (15.0-0±) 15...♘c3? (15...♖dg8! 16.ed6 ♖g7 17.de7 ♘c3 18.bc3 ♖g2 19.♖d1 ♖e8) 16.ed6± **15.♕g7 ♕f6 16.♕f6 ♘f6 17.0-0-0** ± Zviagintsev

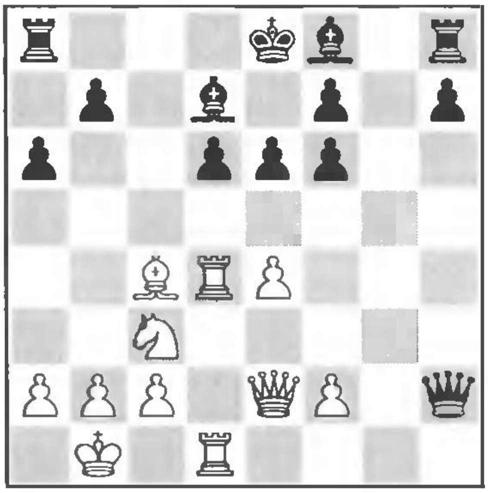


17...♘d5?! 17...♖d8 **18.♘e4 ♔e7 19.♖he1** 19.c4!?± **19...♖ad8 20.g3 h5 21.♖d3** 21.c4 ♘b4 **21...f5! 22.♘c5 e4**

23.♖a3 ♖a8 24.f3 ♔d6! 25.fe4 ♔c5 26.ed5 ed5 27.♖e6 ♖ac8 △ 28...h4; 27...♖hc8? 28.♖h6+– **28.♖a7 h4 29.♖g7 ♖hg8 30.♖gg6 ♖g6 31.♖g6 hg3 32.hg3 ♖f8!** △ 33...f4 **33.c3 f4 34.gf4 ♖f4 35.♔c2 d4 36.b4 ♔b6 37.c4 ♖f3 38.♔d2 ♖c3 39.b5 ♖c4 40.♖c6 ♖c6 41.bc6 ♔c6 42.♔d3 ♔d5** ½-½

☐ **Thomas Luther**
■ **Viktor Kupreichik**
Minsk 1994

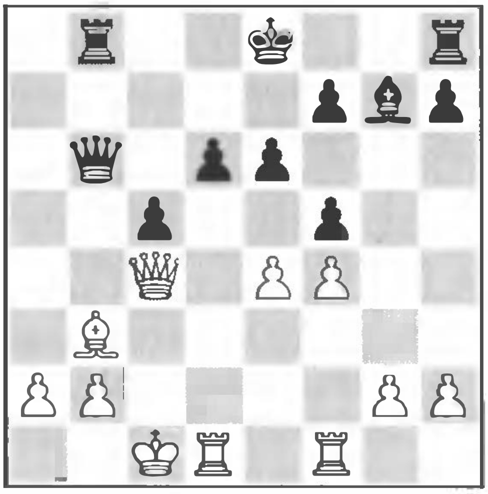
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cd4 4.♘d4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♗d7 6.♗g5 e6 7.♘db5 ♗c6 8.♗f6 gf6 9.♕h5 a6 10.♘d4 ♗d7 11.0-0-0 ♘c6 12.♗c4 ♕a5 ∓ Kupreichik **13.♕e2 ♕g5 14.♔b1 ♘d4 15.♖d4 ♕g2 16.♖hd1 ♕h2∓/–+**



17.♕f3 ♕e5 18.♘d5 ed5 19.♖d5 ♕e7 20.♖d6 ♖d8 21.a3 h5!–+ 22.♖6d5 h4 23.♕h1 h3 24.f4 h2 25.♗f1 ♕e6 26.♖5d2 ♕g4 27.♗g2 ♗e7 28.♗f3 ♕f4 29.e5 ♗g4 30.♗c6 bc6 31.♖d8 ♗d8 32.♕c6 ♔f8 33.♖d8 ♔g7 34.ef6 ♔h7 35.♖h8 ♔h8 36.♕e8 ♔h7 37.♕f7 ♔h6 38.♕g7 ♔h5 39.♕h7 ♔g5 40.f7 ♗e6 41.♕g7 ♔h4 42.♕h7 ♔g3 43.♕g6 ♔f2 44.♕e6 h1♕ 45.♔a2 ♕b7 0-1

☐ **Vasil Spasov**
■ **Viktor Kupreichik**
Moscow ol 1994

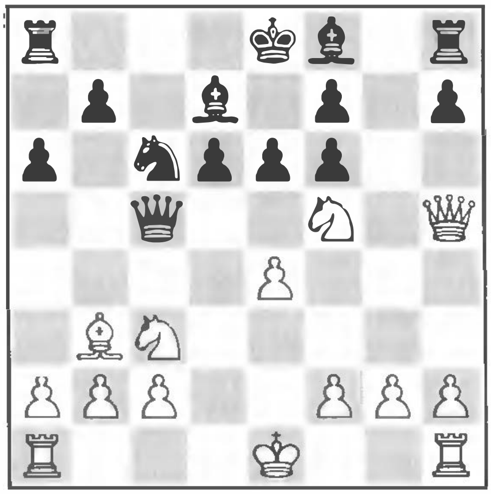
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cd4 4.♘d4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♗d7 6.♗g5 e6 7.♘db5 ♗c6 8.♗f6 gf6 9.♕h5 a6 10.♘d4 ♗d7 11.0-0-0 ♘c6 12.♘c6 bc6! 12...♗c6 13.♗c4± **13.♗c4 ♕b6∞ 14.♖hf1 ♖b8 15.♗b3 c5 16.♕e2 ♗b5 17.♘b5 ab5 18.c4** 18.c3 ♕a5∞ △ c4, b4 Kupreichik **18...bc4 19.♕c4 ♗g7 20.f4 f5!**



21.ef5 d5 22.♕a4 ♔e7 23.fe6 ♖hd8 24.ef7 ♖a8 25.♖fe1 ♔f7 26.♕e4 c4 27.♖d5 cb3 28.♕c4 ♔f8 29.♖d8 ♖d8 30.♕b3 ♖c8 31.♔b1 ♕g6 32.f5 ♕g2 33.a4 ♕h2 34.♔a2 ♖b8 35.♖e2 ♕f4 36.♕d5 ♕a4 37.♔b1 ♕d4 38.♕d4 ♗d4–+ 39.♔c2 ♗b2 40.♔d3 ♗f6 41.♔e4 h6 42.♔f3 ♖b5 43.♔g4 ♖b4 44.♔h5 ♔f7 45.♖e4 0-1

☐ **Milos Perunovic**
■ **Ivan Ivanisevic**
Lazarevac 1999

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cd4 4.♘d4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♗d7 6.♗g5 e6 6...♗c6?! 7.♗f6 gf6 8.♕h5 ♘d7 9.♗c4 ♘e5 10.♗b3 ♘g6 11.f4 e6 12.f5 ♕a5 13.0-0-0 0-0-0 14.♕h3± Kindermann-Efimov, Portoroz tt 1998 **7.♘db5** 7.♗f6?! gf6 (7...♕f6) 8.♗e2 ♘c6 9.0-0 ♗e7 10.♕d2 a6 11.♔h1 ♕b6∓ Moskovic-Dearing, Witley 1999 **7...♗c6 8.♗f6 gf6 9.♕h5 a6 10.♘d4 ♗d7 11.♗c4 ♕c8 12.♗b3 ♕c5 13.♘f5** 13.♕c5?! dc5 14.♘f3 ♖g8∓ Pikulinski-Wismont, Lubniewice 1998 **13...♘c6**

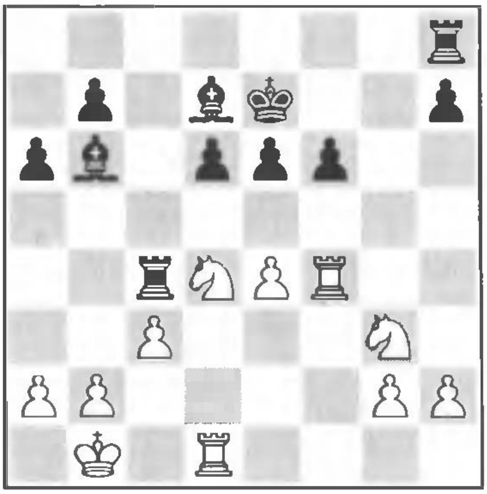


14.♕h4 14.0-0-0 0-0-0 15.♘g3 ♕f2 Ivanovic-Kupreichik **14...0-0-0!** 14...♗e7?! 15.♘e7 ♔e7 16.♕h3 b5 17.0-0 Ye Jiangchuan-Nyee Nyee Zaw, Yangon 1999; 14...ef5? 15.♕f6 **15.♕f6 ♖g8 16.♘g3** 16.♕f7? ♖g2 17.♘g3 ♘e5 18.♕f6 ♗e7–+ **16...♘e5 17.♕f4 h5≅ 18.♕h4 ♖g4 19.♕h3** 19.♕h5? ♗g7 △ 20...♖h8 **19...♗e7 20.♘f1 ♖dg8 21.♕e3 ♖g2∓ 22.♕c5 dc5 23.♘e3 ♘f3 24.♔e2 ♘d4 25.♔f1 ♖2g7 26.♘e2 ♗c6 27.c3 ♗e4!–+ 28.cd4 ♗h1 29.♖c1 ♗c6 30.d5 ♗d7 31.♔e1 b5 32.♔d2 c4 33.♘f4 ♗g5 34.♘h5 ♖h7 35.de6 ♗e6 36.♘g3 ♖h2 37.♘e4 ♖d8 38.♔e2 ♗e3 39.♔e3 ♖d3**

0-1

☐ **Marcin Szelag**
■ **Bartlomiej Heberla**
Brzeg Dolny ch-POL 2001

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cd4 4.♘d4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♗d7 6.♗g5 e6 7.♘db5 ♗c6 8.♗f6 gf6 9.♕h5 a6 10.♘d4 ♗d7 11.f4 11.0-0-0 ♕c7?! (11...♘c6 12.♗c4 ♘d4?! (12...♕a5∓ Kupreichik) 13.♖d4 b5 14.♗b3 ♕b6 15.♖hd1 ♖g8 16.f4 ♖g2 17.f5 ♖g5 18.♕h7 ♕c5 19.fe6 fe6 20.e5! Sprenger-Kosanovic, Paks 2001) 12.f4 ♕c5 13.f5 ♘c6 14.♘b3 ♕e3 15.♔b1 ♕g5 Toma-Jurkiewicz, Brzeg Dolny 2001 **11...♘c6 12.0-0-0 ♕b6 13.♘ce2 ♕a5 14.♕a5 ♘a5 15.♘g3 ♗e7∓ 16.♗e2 ♗d8! 17.♖hf1 ♔e7 18.♖f3 ♘c6 19.f5 ♘e5 20.♖f4 ♗b6 21.c3 ♖ac8 22.♔b1 ♘c4 23.fe6 fe6 24.♗c4 ♖c4**



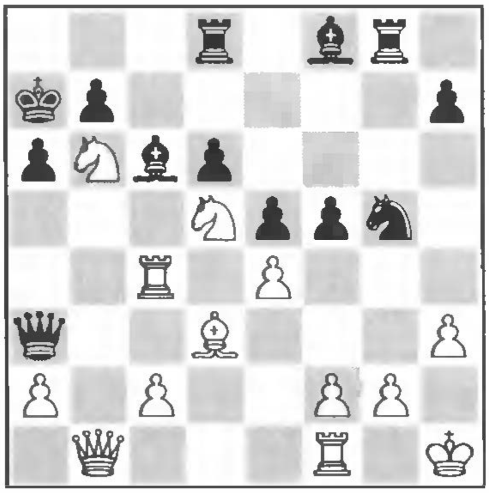
25.e5!? fe5! 26.♘df5 ef5 27.♖c4 a5≅ 28.♖e1 ♗e6 29.♖h4 f4 30.♘e4 d5 31.♘g5 ♗f5 32.♔a1 ♔f6 33.♘f3 ♗e3 34.♖h6 ♗g6 35.♘h4 ♖d8 36.♘g6 hg6 37.♖h7 b6 38.♔b1 ♔f5 39.♔c2 ♔e4 40.♖d1 g5 41.♖g7 f3 42.gf3 ♔f3 43.♖d3 e4 44.♖d1 ♔e2 45.♖h1 ♖c8 46.h4 gh4 47.♖h4 ♗f2 48.♖f4 e3

49.♖e7 b5 50.♖f2 ♔f2 51.♔d3= b4 52.cb4 ab4 53.♖e3 ♖a8 54.♖e2 ♔f3 55.b3 ♔f4 56.♔d4 ♔f3 57.♖c2 ♖a5 58.♖c5?? ♖c5 59.♔c5 ♔e4 60.♔b4 d4

0-1

☐ **Vladimir Belikov**
■ **Igor Kurnosov**
Alushta 2002

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cd4 4.♘d4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♗d7 6.♗g5 e6 7.♘db5 ♗c6 8.♗f4!? 8.e5? de5 9.♕d8 ♔d8 10.0-0-0 ♘bd7 11.♗e3 a6 12.♘a7 ♗d5∓ Van der Hoeven-Bosch, Dutch tt 2002 **8...e5 9.♗g5 a6 10.♗f6 gf6 11.♘a3 f5** 11...b5; 11...♘d7 **12.♗d3 ♖g8 13.♘c4 ♘d7** 13...♖g2 14.♘e3; 13...fe4 14.♗e4 ♗e4 15.♘e4 d5 16.♕d5!± **14.♘e3± ♘f6 15.♘f5 ♕b6 16.0-0 ♕b2 17.♕e1 ♕b4 18.♖b1 ♕c5 19.♘e3 0-0-0 20.♘cd5 ♘g4 21.♘b6 ♔b8 22.♘ed5 f5 23.h3 ♘h6 24.♖b4! ♘f7 25.♖c4 ♕a3 26.♕b1 ♘g5 27.♔h1 ♔a7**



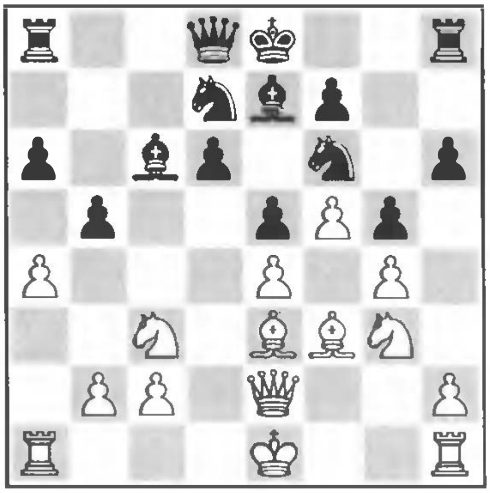
28.♖c6! bc6 29.♘c8 ♖c8 30.♕b6 ♔a8 31.♗a6 ♖g7 32.♗c8 32.♖b1 **32...♘h3** 32...cd5 33.♖b1 **33.♕c6 ♔a7 34.♕b6 ♔a8 35.♖b1 ♘f2 36.♕f2 ♕a2 37.♕b6**

1-0

Study Material with 6.♗e2

☐ **Zurab Sturua**
■ **Vadim Zviagintsev**
Pula tt 1997

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cd4 4.♘d4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♗d7 6.♗e2 e6 7.g4 7.0-0 ♗e7 8.f4 ♘c6 9.♘b3 0-0 10.♗e3 ♖c8 11.♗f3 a6 12.a4 e5 13.f5 ♘b4 14.g4 h5! Benjamin-Zviagintsev, Groningen 1997 (1) **7...h6 8.f4 e5 9.♘f5 ♗c6 10.♗f3 g6 11.♘g3 ♘bd7 12.f5 g5 13.a4 a6 14.♕e2 ♗e7 15.♗e3 b5**



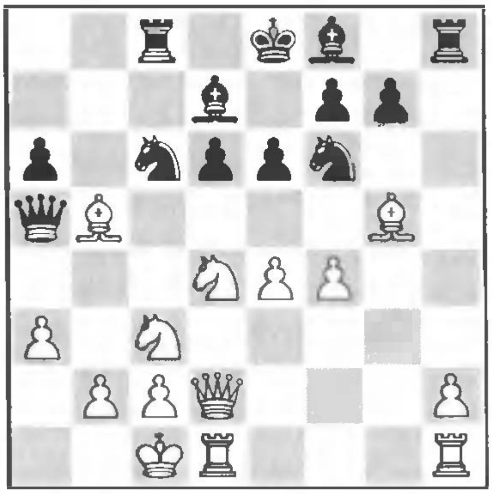
16.a5 ♗b7 17.♘d5 ♘d5 18.ed5 ♘f6 19.♕d3 ♖c8 20.c3 ♕c7 21.♘h5 ♘h5 22.gh5 ♕c4 23.♔e2 ♗d8 24.♕c4 ♖c4 25.♔d3 ♗c8 26.♗e4 ♗d7 27.b3 ♖c8 28.c4 ♔e7 29.h4 f6 30.♗d2 ♗c7 31.♗e3 bc4 32.bc4 ♖b8 33.♔c3 ♖b7 34.c5 ♖hb8 35.♗d2 ♖b2 36.♗c2 ♗c8

0-1

☐ **Dragoljub Velimirovic**
■ **Ivan Ivanisevic**
Beograd ch-YUG 1999

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cd4 4.♘d4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♗d7 6.♗e2 e6 7.g4 7.♗e3 ♘c6

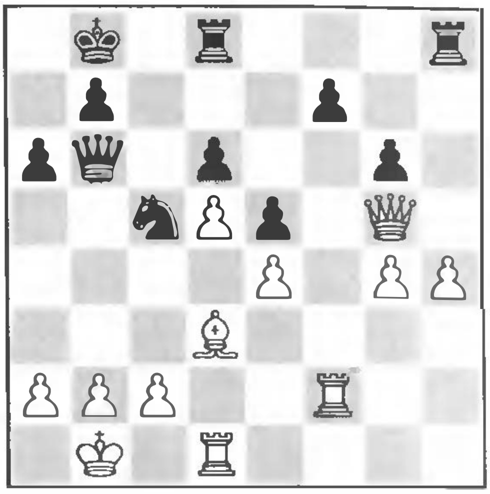
8.f4 a6 9.0-0 ♗e7 10.♔h1 b5 11.a3 0-0 Scheveningen; Laketic-Vuksanovic, Vrnjacka Banja 1999 **7...h6 8.g5N** 8.f4 e5 9.♘f5 ♗c6 10.♗f3 g6 11.♘g3 ♘bd7 Sturua-Zviagintsev **8...hg5 9.♗g5 a6 10.♕d2 b5! 11.a3 ♘c6 12.0-0-0 ♖c8 13.f4 ♕a5⇄ 14.♗b5**



14...♘d4! 15.♗d7 ♘d7 16.♕d4 f6! 17.e5 fg5 18.ed6 gf4 19.♕f4 ♖c3! 20.♖he1 20.bc3 ♕a3 21.♔b1 (21.♔d2 ♕d6) 21...♖h5–+ **20...e5 21.bc3 ♗d6 22.♖d3** 22.♖d6 ♕a3 **22...♗a3 23.♔d2 ♗c1!** 24.♔c1 ♕a1 25.♔d2 ♕e1 26.♔e1 ef4–+ 0-1

☐ **Dragoljub Velimirovic**
■ **Miroslav Markovic**
Subotica ch-YUG 2000

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cd4 4.♘d4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♗d7 6.♗e2 g6 7.g4 7.♗e3 a6 8.♕d2 ♗g7 9.f3 0-0 10.0-0-0 ♘c6 11.♗c4?! ♕c8!? (11...♖c8) 12.h4? (12.♗b3) 12...♘d4 13.♕d4 ♘g4–+ Jorgensen-E.Hansen, Copenhagen 1999 **7...h6 8.♗e3 e5 9.♘db5 ♗c6 10.♘d5 ♘d5 11.ed5 ♗b5 12.♗b5 ♘d7 13.♕d2 a6 14.♗e2 ♗e7 15.0-0-0?!N** 15.h4□ ♗h4 16.g5 hg5 17.♗g5 ♗g5 18.♖h8 ♘f8=∞ Cuijpers-Kupreichik **15...♗g5! 16.♔b1 ♗e3 17.fe3 ♘c5∓ 18.h4 ♕b6 19.♖hf1 ♖f8 20.♗d3 0-0-0 21.♖f2 ♕c7 22.e4 ♔b8 23.♕h6 ♖h8 24.♕g5 ♕b6 △ 25...♘a4**



25.♕e3 ♖h4 26.♖f7 ♖g4 27.♖h1 ♔a7 28.a3 ♖d7 29.♖hh7 ♖f7 30.♖f7 ♘e4 31.♕b6 ♔b6 32.♖d7 ♖g1 33.♔a2 ♘f2 34.♖d6 ♔c5 35.♖f6 ♘d3 36.cd3 ♖d1 37.♖g6 ♖d3 38.♖g7 b5 39.♖a7 e4 40.♖a6 e3 41.♖e6 ♔d5 42.♖e8 ♔d4 43.♔b1 ♖d2 44.♖d8 ♔e4 45.♖d2 ed2 46.♔c2 ♔e3 47.♔d1 ♔d3 48.b3 ♔c3 49.a4 ½-½

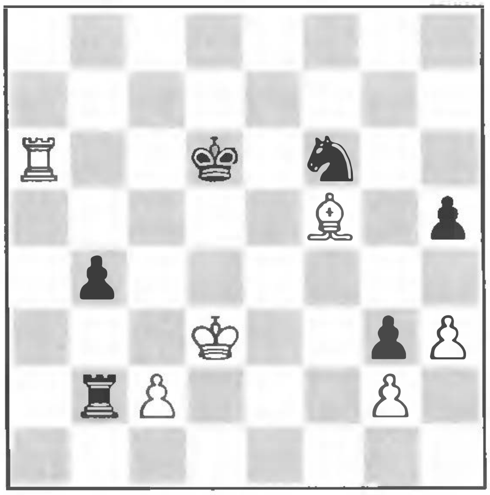
☐ **Jerzy Owczarzak**
■ **Bartlomiej Heberla**
Brzeg Dolny ch-POL 2001

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cd4 4.♘d4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♗d7 6.♗e2 g6 7.♗e3 7.♗g5 ♗g7 8.0-0 0-0 9.♕d2 ♘c6 10.♖ad1 ♘d4 11.♕d4 ♕a5 12.♕e3 ♗c6= Orlova-Zasztowt, Rowy 2000; 7.g4 h6 8.♗e3 ♘c6?! (8...e5 9.♘db5 ♗c6) 9.f3 ♗g7 10.♕d2 ♘e5 11.0-0-0 ♖c8 12.h4 ♘c4 13.♗c4 ♖c4 14.h5 g5 15.e5 de5 16.♘f5± Balogh-Kosanovic, Budapest

2002 **7...♗g7 8.g4 ♘c6** 8...h6 **9.g5 ♘g4 10.♗g4 ♗g4 11.♕g4** 11.♘c6 ♗d1 12.♘d8 ♗f3 **11...♘d4 12.♕d1 ♘c6 13.0-0 ♕d7∓ 14.f4 h6 15.gh6 ♖h6 16.♕d2 ♖h3∓ 17.♖f2 0-0-0 18.♖e1 ♖dh8 19.♘d5 ♔b8 20.c4 g5! 21.c5? dc5 22.♗c5 e6 23.♘b4 ♘d4–+ 24.♖e3? ♘f3 25.♖ef3 ♕d2 26.♖d2 ♖f3 27.fg5 ♗e5 28.♘d3 ♗c7 29.♘e1 ♖f4 30.♘g2 ♖g4 0-1**

☐ **John van der Wiel**
■ **Viktor Kupreichik**
Erevan ol 1996

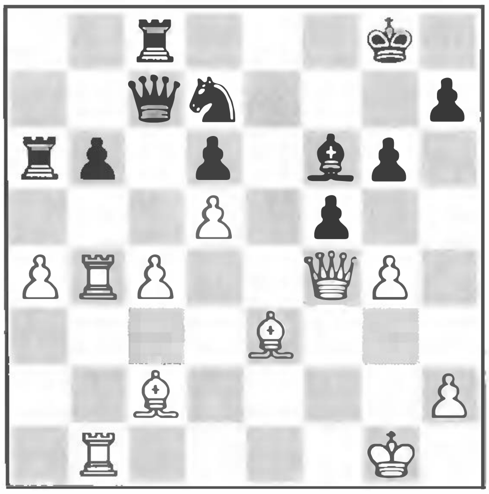
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cd4 4.♘d4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♗d7 6.♗e2 e5 7.♘db5 ♗c6 8.♘d5 ♘d5 9.ed5 ♗b5 10.♗b5 ♘d7 11.0-0 ♗e7 12.♕g4 g6 13.♗h6 f5∞ 14.♕b4 ♔f7 15.♗e3 f4 16.♗d2 ♖c8 17.♖ac1 ♘f6 18.♗e2 ♕d7 19.a4 ♗d8 20.a5 b6 21.a6 g5 22.♗b5 ♕f5 23.♕d6 ♗e7 24.♕e6 ♕e6 25.de6 ♔e6 26.♖fe1 ♖hd8 27.♗c3 ♖d5 28.♗d3 b5 29.♔f1 ♖c6 30.♖cd1 ♖a6 31.♗e5 ♖e5 32.♖e5 ♔e5 33.♖e1 ♔d6 34.♗f5 ♖a2 35.♖e6 ♔d5 36.♖e7 ♖b2 37.♖a7 g4 38.♔e2 b4 39.♔d3 h5 40.h3 g3 41.♖a5 ♔d6 42.fg3 fg3 43.♖a6



43...♔e7? 43...♔e5 44.♖a5 ♔d6 (44...♔f4? 45.♗g6 △ 46.♖f5; 44...♘d5? 45.♗e4) 45.♖a6= **44.♖e6 ♔f7 45.♖e1!! h4 46.♗e6 ♔g6 47.♔d2** △ 48.♔c1 **47...♘h5 48.♖f1 ♘g7 49.♗f7 1-0**

☐ **Gennady Kiselev**
■ **Valery Popov**
St Petersburg tt 1999

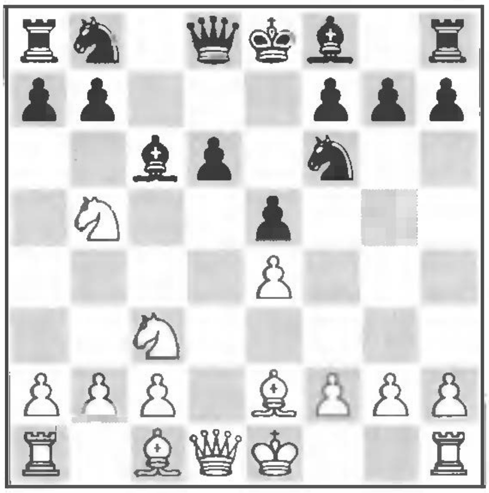
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 ♘f6 4.♘c3 cd4 5.♘d4 ♗d7 6.♗e2 e5 6...a6 7.a4 e5 8.♘b3 ♗c6 9.♗g5 ♘bd7 10.♕d3 ♗e7 11.0-0 0-0= Timmerman-Bosch, Nederland tt 1998 **7.♘b3** 7.♘db5 ♗c6 8.♗g5 a6 9.♘a3 ♘bd7 10.♗g4!? Naiditsch-Bosch, Schaan 1998 **7...♗c6 8.f3** 8.♗g5 ♘bd7 9.♗g4!? ♗e7 10.♗d7 ♕d7 11.♗f6 ♗f6 12.♘d5 ♗d8 Rivera-Glavina, Salamanca tt 1998 **8...♗e7 9.♗e3 0-0 10.♕d2** 10.0-0 d5 **10...a5 11.a4 ♘a6 12.♘d5 ♗d5 13.ed5 ♘b4 14.c4 b6=/∓ 15.0-0 ♖e8 16.♘c1 ♘d7 17.♘d3 ♘d3 18.♗d3 ♘c5 19.♗c2 ♗f6 20.♖a3 g6 21.b4 ab4 22.♕b4 ♖b8 23.♕d2 ♕c7 24.♖b1 ♖ec8 25.♖b5 ♘d7 26.♖b4 ♖a8 27.♖ab3 ♗d8 28.♖b1 ♖a6 29.♕f2 f5 30.f4 ef4 31.♕f4 ♗f6 32.g4**



32...♗e5 33.♕g5 ♗f6 34.♕f4 ♗e5 35.♕g5 ♗f6 ½-½

☐ **Salvador Gomez Gomez**
■ **Alberto Andres Gonzalez**
Aviles jr 2000

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cd4 4.♘d4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♗d7 6.♗e2 e5 7.♘db5 7.♘b3 ♗c6 8.♗g5 ♘bd7 9.f3 h6 (9...♗e7 10.♕d2 0-0 11.0-0-0 a6 12.h4 b5 13.♔b1 b4 14.♘d5 ♗d5 15.ed5 a5 Gheng-Manea, Bucharest 2001) 10.♗e3 ♗e7 11.♕d2 0-0 12.0-0-0 a5 Shahade-Blehm, Paget Parish 2001; 7.♘f3 ♗c6 8.♗g5 ♘bd7 9.♘d2 Stoica-Petre, Romania 2000 **7...♗c6** 7...♗e6!? 8.♘d5 ♗d5 9.ed5 a6 10.♘c3 ♘bd7 11.0-0 g6 Zaragatski-Vioreanu, Balatonlelle 2002



8.♗g5 8.♘d5 ♘d5 9.ed5 ♗b5 10.♗b5 ♘d7 11.0-0 ♗e7 12.♕g4 g6 13.♗d7 (13.♗h6 Van der Wiel-Kupreichik, Yerevan 1996) 13...♕d7 14.♕d7 ♔d7 15.♗e3 ♖hc8∓ Spata-Paglilla, Vicente Lopez 2000 **8...a6 9.♘a3** 9.♗f6 **9...♘bd7** 9...b5 10.♘d5 (10.♗f6 ♕f6 11.♘d5 ♕d8 12.0-0 ♗e7 13.c4± Solozhenkin-Kupreichik, St Petersburg 1996) 10...♘bd7 11.c3 ♘b6 12.♘c2 ♘bd5 13.ed5 ♗d7= Kirik-Jurkiewicz, Baku 2002 **10.♘c4 h6** 10...♕c7 **11.♗f6 ♘f6 12.♕d3 ♕c7 13.0-0 ♗e7 14.♘e3 g6 15.♘ed5 ♘d5 16.♘d5 ♗d5 17.♕d5± 0-0 18.♗c4 ♖ac8 19.♗b3 ♔g7 20.f4** 20.c3± **20...♕c5** ½-½

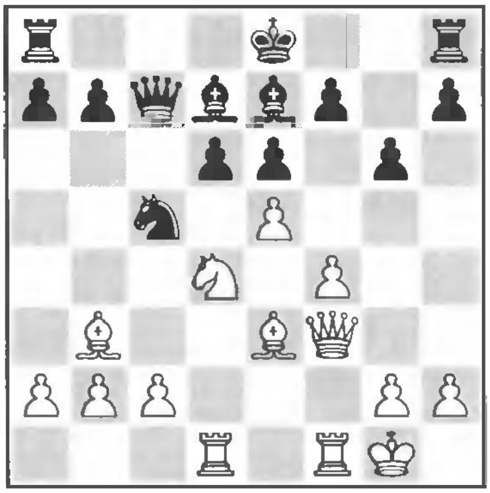
Study Material with 6.♗c4

☐ **Willy Hendriks**
■ **Viktor Kupreichik**
Groningen 1995

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cd4 4.♘d4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♗d7 6.♗c4 e6 7.♗b3 a6 8.f4 ♘c6 9.♗e3 b5 10.♕f3 ♕c8!? c6<, e6< **11.0-0 ♗e7 12.♖ae1 0-0 13.a3 ♖b8 14.g4** 14.f5 ♘e5 15.♕h3 ♘c4 **14...b4∓ 15.♘ce2** 15.ab4 ♖b4 **15...ba3 16.ba3 ♕b7 17.♘g3 d5! 18.e5 ♘e4 19.♘e4 de4 20.♕g3 ♗a3 21.f5 ♖fe8 22.♘c6 ♗c6 23.f6 ♕c7 24.fg7 ♗b2! 25.♗f4 ♗d4 26.♖e3 a5 27.♔h1 a4 28.♗c4 ♗a8 29.♗e2 ♕c2 30.♗g5 ♖b1** 0-1

☐ **Dragoljub Velimirovic**
■ **Miroslav Tosic**
Subotica ch-YUG 2000

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cd4 4.♘d4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♗d7 6.♗c4 e6 6...g6; 6...♘c6 **7.♗b3** 7.♘db5?! ♗c6 8.♗f4 e5 9.♗g5 a6 10.♗f6 gf6 11.♕h5 (11.♘a3 b5) 11...d5!∓ Moldovan-Kutnik, Eforie 1998; 7.0-0 ♗e7 8.♗e3 0-0 9.f4 ♘c6 10.♗b3 (Sozin) 10...♘a5 11.f5?! ♘b3 12.ab3 e5 13.♘de2 ♗c6 14.♘g3 d5∓ Prikhotko-Jakubiec, Polanica Zdroj 1999 **7...♘a6!?** 7...a6 8.f4 ♘c6 9.♗e3 b5 10.a3 ♗e7 11.0-0 0-0 12.f5 e5 13.♘c6 ♗c6= Pozdniakov-Kupreichik, St Petersburg 1998 **8.f4 ♘c5 9.e5 ♘fe4 10.♘e4 ♘e4 11.♕f3 ♘c5 12.0-0 g6 13.♗e3 ♕c7 14.♖ad1 ♗e7**

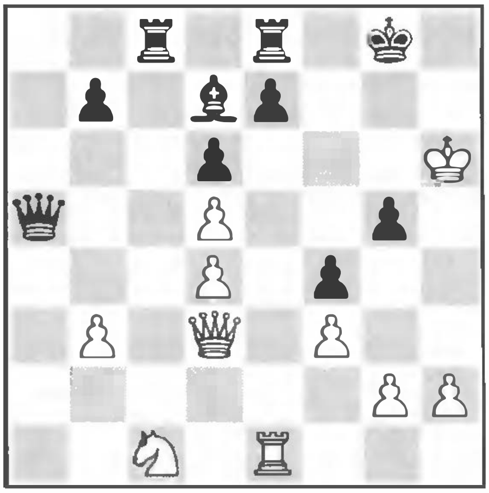


15.f5 ef5 16.♗f7 ♔f7 17.♘f5 ♗f5 18.g4 ♔g7 19.gf5 ♖hf8 20.f6 ♔h8 21.♕d5 ♗f6 22.ef6 22.ed6 **22...♖ae8 23.♗h6** 23.♗d4 **23...♖f7 24.♖de1 ♕d7 25.b4?** 25.♗g7 ♔g8 26.♖e8 ♕e8 27.♕d6 ♕e3 **25...♕g4 26.♕g2** 26.♔h1 ♘e4 27.♕f7? ♘f2–+ **26...♕d4 27.♔h1 ♘e4⇄ 28.c3 ♕c4 29.♖f4 d5 30.♖e3 ♕c6 31.♕f3 ♖f6 32.♖f6 ♕f6 33.♕f6 ♘f6** time?? 0-1

Study Material with 6.♗e3

☐ **Stefan Wehmeier**
■ **Suat Atalik**
Groningen 1997

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cd4 4.♘d4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♗d7 6.♗e3 ♘g4 7.♗g5 h6 8.♗h4 g5 9.♗g3 ♗g7 10.♕d2 ♘c6 11.♘b3 a5 12.a4 ♖c8 13.f3 ♘ge5 14.♘d5 ♘b4 15.c3 ♘d5 16.ed5 ♕c7 17.♗f2 0-0 18.♗e2 ♘c4 19.♗c4 ♕c4 20.♘a5 ♕a6 21.♘b3 ♗a4 22.♗d4 f6 23.♔f2 ♕b5 24.♘c1 ♕c4 25.♖e1 ♖fe8 26.♖e4 ♗b5 27.b3 ♕f1 28.♔g3 f5 29.♖e1 f4 29...♗d4 30.♖f1 (30.cd4 ♖c2) 30...♗c3 **30.♔g4 ♗d4 31.cd4** 31.♖f1? ♗c3 32.♕c2 ♗a1 33.♕g6 ♗g7 **31...♗d7** 31...♖c2 32.♕c2 ♕e1 33.♕g6 **32.♔h5 ♕b5 33.♖a5 ♕b6 34.♕d3 ♕a5 35.♔h6**

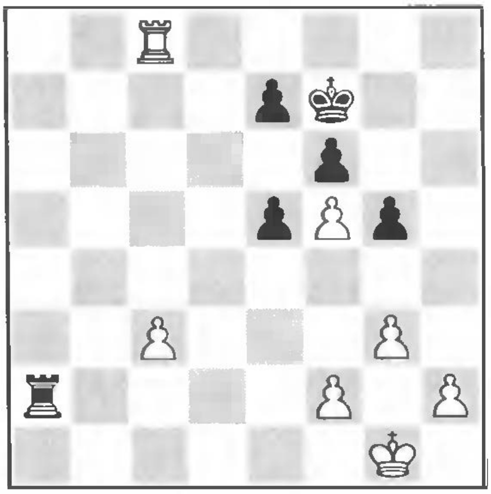


1-0

☐ **Jan Timman**
■ **Jeroen Bosch**
Amsterdam 2000

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cd4 4.♘d4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♗d7 6.♗e3 ♘g4 7.♗g5 h6 8.♗h4 g5 9.♗g3 ♗g7 10.♗e2 10.♗b5 ♘c6 11.♘c6 ♗c6 12.♗c6 bc6 13.♕g4 ♕a5≌ 14.0-0? h5; 10.h3 ♘f6; 10...♘e5 11.♘f5 **10...h5 11.♗g4 hg4** 11...♗g4 12.f3± **12.0-0** 12.♘d5 ♘c6 13.♘f5 ♗f5 14.ef5 ♗b2 15.♖b1 ♕a5 16.♕d2 ♗d4 17.♕a5 ♘a5 18.♘c7 (18.♖b5 ♗b6; 18...b6) 18...♔d7 19.♘a8 ♖a8≌ **12...♘c6 13.♘f5 ♗f5** 13...♗c3 14.bc3 ♕a5 15.♕g4 f6 **14.ef5 ♗c3 15.bc3 ♘e5**

15...f6 16.♖b1!?; 16.♕g4 ♕a5 **16.♗e5 de5 17.♕g4 f6 18.♖fd1** 18.♕e4 ♕c7 19.♖ab1 0-0-0± **18...♕c7 19.♕a4 ♔f7!** 19...♕c6 20.♕b3 **20.♕b3** 20.♖d7 ♕c3 21.♕b3 (21.♖ad1 ♖ad8) 21...♕b3 22.ab3 ♖hc8 23.c4 b5= **20...♔g7 21.♖d5 ♖hd8!** 21...e4? 22.g3 e3 23.fe3 ♖h3 24.c4; 24.♔g2 ♖ah8 25.♖h1; 21...♖ad8 22.c4 ♖h4 23.♖ad1± **22.♖ad1** 22.c4 ♖ac8 **22...♖d5** 22...b6 23.g3 **23.♕d5 ♕c6** 23...♖c8 24.♕e6 ♖d8 25.♖d3 ♖d6 26.♖d6 ed6 27.♕e8 ♕f7 28.♕f7 ♔f7+– **24.♕c6** 24.♕e6 ♕e6 25.fe6 f5 △ 26...♔f6 **24...bc6 25.♖d7 ♔f7 26.g3 ♖b8 27.♖a7 ♖b2 28.♖a6 ♖c2 29.♖c6 ♖a2 30.♖c8** 30.c4 ♔e8; 30...♖c2; 30.♖c4 ♖c2; 30...♔e8



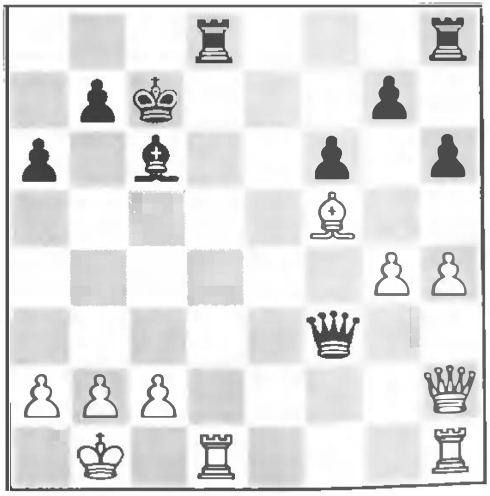
30...e4! 31.c4 ♖a1 32.♔g2 ♖a2 33.♔f1 e3 34.fe3 ♖h2 35.c5 ♖c2 36.c6 36.g4 ♖c4 **36...e5! 37.fe6** 37.♖c7 ♔e8; 37.♔e1 e4 38.♔d1 ♖c4; 37.c7 ♔g7 **37...♔e6 38.c7 ♔f5!** 38...♔d7 39.♖f8 ♖c7 40.♖f6+– **39.♔e1 ♔g4 40.♔d1 ♖c6 41.e4 ♔g3 42.♔e2 g4 43.♔e3 ♖c1** 43...♔g2 44.♖g8 **44.♔d3** 44.♔d4 ♔f2 45.♖g8=; 45.e5 fe5; 45.♔d5? g3 46.♔d6 g2 47.♖g8 g1♕ 48.♖g1 ♔g1 49.♔d7 ♔f2–+ **44...♔g2** 44...♔f2 45.e5 **45.♔d2 ♖c4** 45...♖c6 46.♔e3 g3 **46.♔e3 ♔g3** 46...g3 47.♔f4 f5! 48.♖g8 ♖c7 49.♖g3 ♔f2 50.♖f3 ♔g2= **47.♔d3**

½-½

Study Material with 6.f3

☐ **Alexey Barbitsky**
■ **Viktor Kupreichik**
St Petersburg 2000

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cd4 4.♘d4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♗d7 6.f3 e6 6...♘c6 7.♗e3 ♖c8 8.♕d2 ♘d4 9.♗d4 e5 10.♗e3 ♕a5 11.g4 h6 12.h4 a6 13.♗h3 ♗e7 14.0-0-0 ♗e6 15.g5↑ Xie Jun-Riemersma, Breda pff 1999 **7.♗e3 a6 8.g4 h6 9.♕d2 ♘c6 10.0-0-0 ♕c7 11.h4± 0-0-0 12.♕f2 d5 13.ed5 ♘d5 14.♘d5 ed5 15.♘c6 ♗c6 16.♗d4 ♕f4 17.♔b1 f6 18.♗d3 ♗d6 19.♗a7 d4 20.♗f5 ♔c7 21.♗d4 ♕f3 22.♗b6 ♔b8 23.♕d2 ♗c7 24.♗c7 ♔c7 25.♕h2**

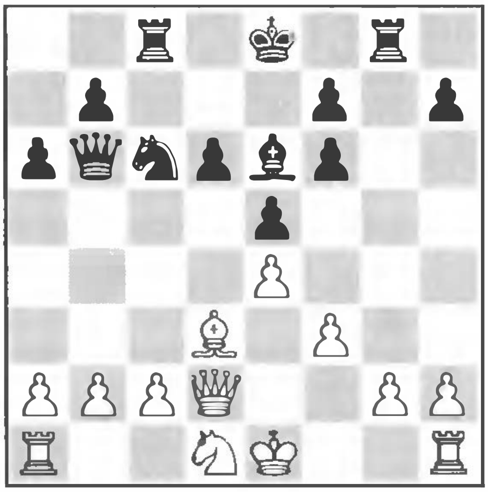


25...♔b6 26.♕g1 ♔c7 27.♕h2 ♔b6 28.♕g1 ♔c7 29.♕h2 ♔b6 30.♕g1 ♔c7

½-½

☐ Szidonia Vajda
■ Goran Kosanovic
Budapest 2002

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cd4 4.♘d4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♗d7 6.f3 e5 6...♘c6!? 7.g4 (7.♗e3) 7...♘d4 8.♕d4 e5 9.♕d3 ♗e7 10.g5 ♘h5 11.♘d5 0-0 12.♖g1 ♗e6 13.♗e3 ♗d5 14.♕d5 ♘f4 15.♗f4 ♕b6∓ Roebers-Bosch, Dutch cup 2001 **7.♘db5 ♗e6** 7...♗c6 8.a4 a6 9.♘a3 d5 10.ed5 ♘d5 11.♘d5 ♕d5 12.♗d3 ♗c5 13.♘c4 0-0 14.♗e3 ♗e3 15.♘e3 ♕d4∓ Stoma-Antoniewski, Glogow 2001 **8.♗g5 a6 9.♘a3** 9.♗f6 gf6 10.♘a3 b5 11.♘d5 **9...♘c6** 9...♘bd7 10.♘c4 ♕c7 11.♘e3 ♗e7 **10.♘c4 ♖c8 11.♘e3 ♕b6 12.♕c1 ♗e7 13.♗f6 ♗f6 14.♘ed5 ♕d8 15.♘f6 gf6** 15...♕f6 **16.♗d3 ♕b6 17.♘d1 ♖g8 18.♕d2**



18...♘b4?! 19.a3 ♘c6 20.♕f2 ♕c7 21.♘e3 ♕b6 22.c3± ♘e7 23.♖d1 h5 24.0-0 ♘g6 25.♔h1 ♕c5 26.g3 h4 27.g4 ♔e7 28.♖d2 ♘f4 29.♖e1 ♖h8 30.♗f1 ♖c6 31.♖ed1 b5 32.♖b1 ♕b6 33.c4 bc4 34.♗c4 ♖hc8 34...♗c4–+ **35.b3 ♕a5 36.♖a1 ♕c3 37.♖dd1 ♘h3 38.♕d2 ♕d2 39.♖d2 ♘g5** ½-½

☐ Nidjat Mamedov
■ Zviad Izoria
Baku jr 2002

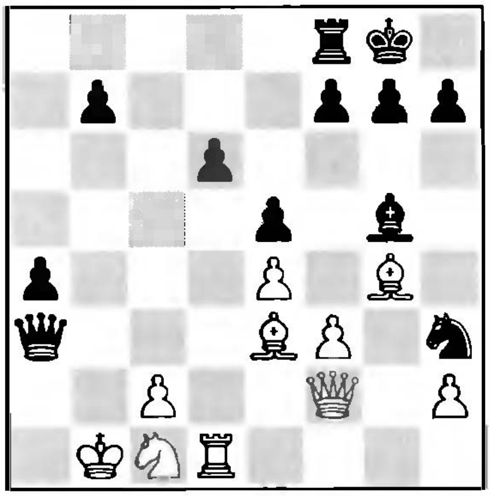
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cd4 4.♘d4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♗d7 6.f3 e5 7.♘b3 ♗e7 8.♗e3 0-0 9.♗e2 9.♕d2 a5 10.a3 (10.a4 ♗e6! 11.♗b5 ♘c6 12.0-0 ♘b4 13.♕f2 ♕c8 14.♖fd1 d5= Sax-Ivanisevic, Bosnia Hercegovina 2001) 10...♘a6 11.♖d1 ♗c6 12.♗c4 a4 13.♘c1 ♘c7 14.♘1a2± Sakalsek-Kovacevic, Bled 2002 **9...a5 10.a4 ♗e6!? 11.♘d2 ♕c8 12.0-0 ♘a6 13.f4 ef4 14.♗f4 ♘b4∓ 15.♔h1 ♖d8 16.♗d3 ♘g4 17.♕e2 ♘e5 18.♗e5?!** 18.♘f3 **18...de5 19.♘c4 ♕c5 20.♘e3 ♖ac8 21.♘cd5 ♗g5 22.♘b4 ♕e3 23.♕e3 ♗e3 24.♘d5** 24.♘a2 ♗d4 **24...♗d5 25.ed5 ♖d5∓ 26.♖ae1 ♗g5 27.♗e4 ♖dc5 28.♖d1 g6 29.♖d7 f5 30.♗b7 ♖8c7 31.♖c7 ♖c7 32.♗d5 ♔g7 33.c4 ♗e3 34.g4 ♔f6 35.♔g2 ♖c8 36.♖f3 f4 37.♖h3 h6 38.♔f3 ♔g5 39.♔e4 ♖b8 40.♔e5 ♖b2 41.c5 ♗c5 42.♖c3 ♗f8 43.♖c6 ♗g7–+ 44.♔e6 ♗d4 45.♗e4 ♖h2 46.♔d5 ♗f6 47.♖a6 ♖d2 48.♔e6 ♖e2 49.♔d5 ♖e3 50.♖a5 f3 51.♔c4 ♔g4 52.♗g6 ♗g5 53.♗d3 f2 54.♗f1 ♖e1 55.♗d3 ♖c1 56.♔b3 f1♕**

0-1

☐ Vlastimil Jansa
■ Edvins Kengis
Hamburg 1995

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cd4 4.♘d4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♗d7 6.f3 e5 7.♘b3 ♗c6 8.♗e3 ♗e7 9.♕d2 a5 10.a4 ♘a6 11.0-0-0 ♘b4 12.♕f2 0-0 13.g4 ♕e8 14.g5 ♘h5 15.♘b5 ♖c8 16.♗h3 ♗b5 17.♗c8 ♗a4 18.♗g4 ♕b5≌ 19.♘a1 ♘a2 20.♔b1 ♘c3 21.♔c1 ♘d1 22.♖d1 ♘f4 23.b3

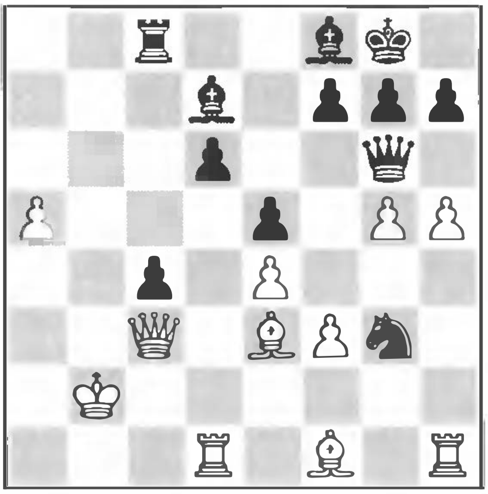
♗g5 24.ba4 ♕a4 25.♘b3 ♕a3 26.♔b1 a4 27.♘c1 ♘h3



28.♗h3 ♗e3 29.♕e2 ♗d4 30.♖d4 ed4 31.♘d3 ♖a8 32.♘b2 ♕c5 33.♔a2 a3 34.♘d1 ♖a6 35.♗d7 ♖b6 36.♗a4 ♖a6 37.♗b3 ♖a8 38.♕c4 ♕c4 39.♗c4 ♖c8 40.♗d3 ♖c5 41.♘f2 ♖a5 42.♗c4 ♖h5 43.♘g4 ♔f8 44.♗f1 ♖c5 45.♗d3 h5 46.♘f2 ♖g5 47.♘h1 ♖g2 48.h4 g5 49.hg5 h4 0-1

☐ **Pawel Blehm**
■ **Edwin Kengis**
Koszalin 1998

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cd4 4.♘d4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♗d7 6.f3 e5 7.♘b3 ♗c6 8.♗e3 ♗e7 8...d5? 9.ed5 ♘d5 10.♘d5 ♕d5 11.♕d5 ♗d5 12.0-0-0 ♗e6 13.♗b5 ♘d7 14.♖he1 f6 15.f4 e4 16.♗c5± Votava-Antoniewski, Czech tt 1998 **9.♕d2 a5 10.a4 ♘a6 11.♕f2 ♘b4 12.0-0-0 0-0 13.g4 ♕e8 14.g5 ♘h5 15.♘b5 ♖c8 16.♘a7N** 16.♗h3 ♗b5 17.♗c8 ♗a4 18.♗g4 ♕b5≌ Jansa-Kengis, Hamburg 1995 **16...♗a4 17.♘c8 ♕c8 18.♘a1 ♕e6 19.b3 ♖c8 20.c4 ♗d7 21.h4 ♕g6 22.♘c2 ♘c2 23.♕c2 a4 24.♔b2 b5 25.ba4 bc4 26.a5 ♗f8 27.♕c3 ♘g3 28.h5!**

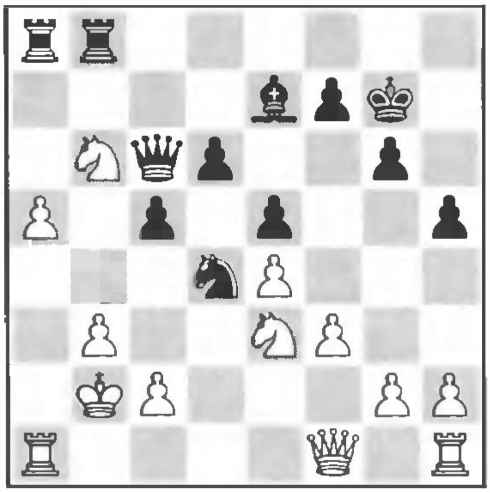


28...♘h5 29.♗c4 ♘g3 29...♗e6 30.♗e6 ♖c3 31.♗f5 ♖e3 32.♗g6 hg6 33.a6+−; 29...♗b5 30.♗f7 **30.♕b3 ♘h1 31.♖h1 h6 32.a6 d5 33.♗d5 ♕a6 34.♗f7 ♔h8 35.♖h2 ♗d6 36.gh6 ♖b8 37.hg7 ♔g7** time??; 38.♖g2 ♔h8 (38...♔f8?? 39.♖g8 ♔e7 40.♗g5X; 38...♔f6? 39.♖g6 ♔e7 40.♗g5 ♔f8 41.♖g8X) 39.♖h2 (39.♖g8?! ♖g8 40.♗g8 ♕e2 41.♔b1 ♗b5∓) 39...♔g7 40.♖g2= 1-0

☐ **Yannick Berthelot**
■ **Igor Efimov**
Monaco tt 2002

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cd4 4.♘d4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♗d7 6.f3 e5 7.♘b3 ♗c6 8.♗e3 ♗e7 9.♕d2 0-0 10.0-0-0 10.♗e2 a5 11.a3 a4 12.♘c1 d5∓ Docx-Antoniewski, Belgium 2003 **10...a5 11.a4 ♘a6 12.♕f2** 12.g4N ♘b4 13.g5 ♘d7 14.♔b1 ♘b6 15.♗b5 ♗b5 16.♗b6 ♕b6 17.♘b5 Hajnal-Kosanovic, Eger 2002 **12...♕e8** 12...♘b4 13.g4 ♕e8 **13.♗b5** 13.♘a5 **13...♘c7! 14.♗c6 bc6**

15.♗b6 ♘e6 16.♘a5 c5≌ 17.b3 ♘d4 18.♘c4 ♕c6 19.♔b2 ♖fb8 20.a5 g6 21.♖a1 h5 22.♘e3 ♔g7 23.♕f1 ♘d7 24.♘cd5 ♘b6 25.♘b6



♖a5 26.♖a5 ♕b6 27.♕a6 ♕b4 28.♖a3 28.♘c4 ♘c2!; 28.♖d1 ♖b6 (28...♘b3? 29.♖a4+−) 29.♕a7 ♖b7 30.♕a6 (30.♘d5? ♖a7 31.♖a7 ♕b5 32.♖e7 ♕e2−+) 30...♖b6 31.♕a8 ♖b8= **28...♘b5! 29.♘d5 ♕d4 30.♔b1 ♘a3 31.♕a3 ♗g5∓ 32.♕a7 ♖f8 33.♕a6 h4 34.♕d3 f5 35.♕d4 ed4 36.♖e1 fe4 37.♖e4 h3! 38.gh3** 38.♖g4 ♖f5 **38...♖f3 39.h4 ♗f6 40.♖e6? ♖f1 41.♔a2 d3!** 0-1

Study Material with 'the rest'

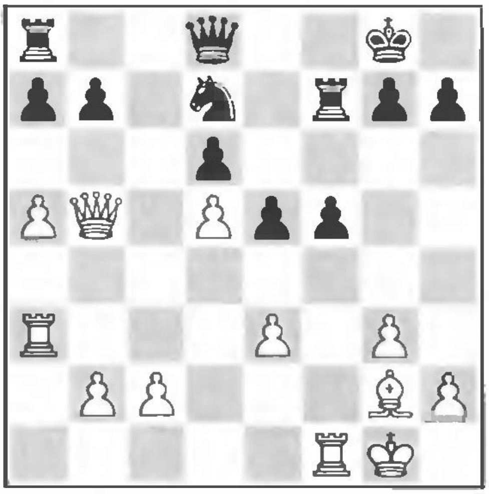
☐ **Timofej Stepanov**
■ **Pawel Blehm**
Oropesa del Mar jr 1998

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cd4 4.♘d4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♗d7 6.g3 g6 7.♗g2 ♗g7 8.0-0 ♕c8!? 8...0-0; 8...♘c6 **9.♖e1 h5 10.♘d5 h4 11.♗g5 hg3 12.hg3 ♘g8! 13.c3 ♘a6 14.♘f3?! f6 15.♗d2 ♘c5 16.♕c2 ♔f7 17.♘e3 ♗b5 18.c4 ♗c6 19.♘h4 e5!?**∞ △ ♘e6-d4 **20.♗b4 ♗f8 21.♗c5 dc5 22.♖ad1 ♗d7 23.♗f3 ♘e7 24.♖d3 ♗e6 25.♘d5 ♘c6 26.♗g2 ♘d4∓ 27.f4 ♗g4 28.♖f1 ♗d6 29.f5 g5 30.♘g6 ♖h6 31.♔f2 ♗h5 32.♘e3 ♕d7 33.g4 ♗g6 34.fg6 ♔g6 35.♘f5 ♖hh8**

0-1

☐ **Jelmer Jens**
■ **Jeroen Bosch**
Dieren 2000

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cd4 4.♘d4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♗d7 6.g3 e5!?N 6...g6; 6...e6; 6...♘c6 **7.♘de2** 7.♘f5 ♗f5 (7...d5 8.♘d5 ♗f5 9.♘f6 ♕f6 10.ef5 ♕f5 11.♗b5 ♘c6 12.0-0±) 8.ef5 d5 9.♗g2 ♗b4 10.0-0 ♗c3 11.bc3 ♘c6∞; 7.♘db5 ♗c6 8.♗g5 a6 9.♗f6 gf6 10.♘a3 f5 11.♗g2∞ **7...♗c6 8.♗g2 ♗e7 9.0-0 ♘bd7 10.♘d5** 10.♗g5 h6 11.♗f6 ♘f6 **10...♘d5!** 10...♗d5 11.ed5= **11.ed5 ♗b5 12.a4 ♗e2 13.♕e2 0-0** 13...a5Ⓢ (c5>) 14.♕b5! ♕c7 15.♗h3 g6 16.♗d7 ♕d7 17.♗e3 **14.a5 f5 15.♖a3 ♖f7!** △ ♗f6, ♗g5, b7< **16.♗e3?! ♗g5∓ 17.♕b5 ♗e3 18.fe3** 18.♖e3



18...e4! 19.♕b7? 19.g4 ♘e5 (19...fg4 20.♖f7 ♔f7 21.♕b7 ♔g8 △ 22.♗e4

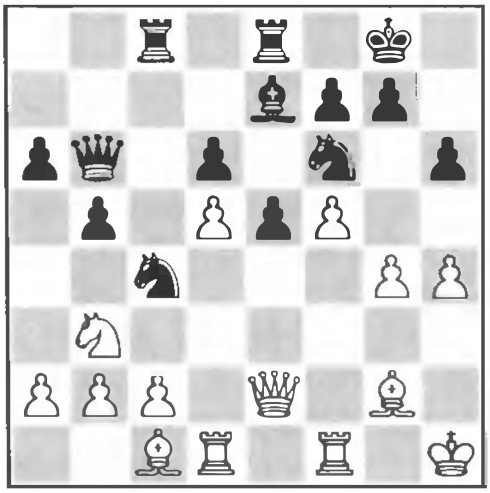
♘c5 23.♕b4 ♖b8 24.♕d4 ♕h4) 20.gf5 (20.♖f5 ♖f5 21.gf5 ♕g5) 20...♕g5→ **19...♖b8! 20.♕c6!?** 20.♕a7 ♘c5–+; 20.♕a6 ♘c5 21.♕e2 ♖b2∓ **20...♘c5 21.♖c3 ♖c7** 21...♖b2 22.♖c5! dc5 23.d6⇄ **22.♖c5 ♖c6 23.♖c6 g6** 23...♕a5 **24.a6** 24.b3 ♕a5 △ 25.♖d6 ♕c5 **24...h5?** g4<; 24...♖b2! 25.g4 ♕g5–+ **25.b3 ♖b6 26.♖d1! ♖c6 27.dc6 ♕c7 28.♗f1! ♕c6 29.♗c4 ♔f8 30.♖d5 ♕b6 31.♔f2 ♕b4 32.♖b5?** 32.♔e2? ♕c3 33.♖d2 g5–+; 32.c3! ♕c3 33.♖d6 ♕c2 34.♗e2= **32...♕d2 33.♗e2 d5–+ 34.c3** 34.♖b8 ♔e7 35.♖b7 ♔d6 36.♖a7 d4–+ **34...g5 35.♖b8 ♔e7 36.♖b7 ♔d6 37.♖a7 f4 38.gf4 gf4 39.ef4 d4! 40.♖a8** 40.cd4 ♕d4 **40...d3 41.a7 ♕e2 42.♔g1 ♕e3 43.♔f1 ♕f3 44.♔g1 e3 45.♖d8 ♔c7** 46.a8♕ ♕f2 47.♔h1 ♕f1X 0-1

☐ **Per Wikstrom**

■ **Jeroen Bosch**

Gausdal 2002

1.♘f3 d6 2.e4 c5 3.d4 cd4 4.♘d4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♗d7 6.g3 e5 7.♘b3 ♗c6 8.♗g2 ♗e7 9.0-0 0-0 10.♗e3 10.♕e2 ♘bd7 11.a4 b6 12.♖d1 a6 13.♗e3 ♗b7 14.f4 ♖c8 15.f5 ♖e8 16.g4 h6= Jakovenko-Solak, Yerevan 2000 **10...♘bd7 11.f4?! ♖e8** 11...ef4 12.♗f4! ♘e5 13.♘d4± **12.f5 b5** 12...♘c5 13.♘c5 dc5 14.♕d8 ♖ad8=; 12...b6 13.♘d5 **13.♕e2 a6!** △ b4, ♗b5; ♖c8, ♘b6; 13...b4 14.♘d5 ♗d5 15.ed5 a5 16.a3! **14.♘d5 ♗d5 15.ed5 ♘b6 16.♖ad1** 16.♘a5? ♘bd5 17.♘c6 ♕c7∓ **16...♘c4 17.♗c1 ♕b6** 17...a5 18.♘a1!; 17...♖c8 **18.♔h1** 18.♕f2 ♗d8; 18.♖f2 ♗d8 **18...♖ac8∓ 19.g4?** 19.♘a1 ♕a5! 20.a3 (20.b3 ♘a3) 20...b4 21.♘b3 ♕b5 22.ab4 ♕b4 △ a5-a4; 19.c3 b4 20.cb4 ♕b4 21.♘a1 ♕b7∓ **19...h6∓ 20.h4?**



20...♘h7 21.♕e1 ♕d8!–+ 22.f6 22.h5 ♗g5 **22...♗f6 23.♖f6 ♘f6 24.g5 ♘g4 25.♗e4** 25.gh6 ♕f6 **25...h5 26.♗f5 g6 27.♗g4** 27.♗c8 ♕c8–+ **27...hg4 28.♕e2 f5 29.gf6 ♕f6 30.♕g4 ♕f5 31.♕g2 ♖f8 32.♗h6 ♖f7** 32...♕h5 33.♗f8 ♕d1 34.♔h2 ♔f8 **33.♖g1 ♔h7 34.♗g5 ♕f3** 0-1

☐ **William Watson**

■ **Viktor Kupreichik**

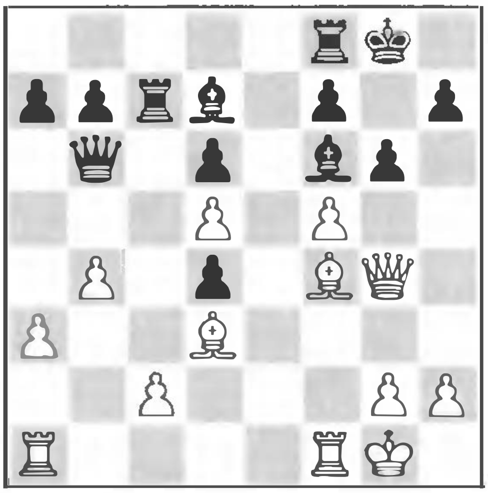
Jyvaskyla 1991

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cd4 4.♘d4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♗d7 6.h3 e5 7.♘db5 ♗c6 8.♗g5 a6 9.♘a3 ♘bd7 10.♘c4 h6 11.♗h4 g5 12.♗g3 ♘e4 13.♘e4 ♗e4 14.♘d6 ♗d6 15.♕d6 ♗c2 16.h4 16.♗e5 ♘e5 17.♕e5 ♕e7 18.♕e7 ♔e7= **16...♕e7 17.♕d2 ♗h7 18.hg5 hg5 19.♖c1 ♘c5 20.♕e3 ♘d7 21.♗d3 f6 22.♖c7 ♕d6 23.♖b7 0-0-0 24.♖b3 ♘c5 25.♖c3 ♗d3 26.♖h8 ♖h8 27.♕c5 ♕c5 28.♖c5 ♔b7 29.♖d5 ♗b5 30.f3 ♔c6 31.♖d1 ♖h1**

32.♔d2 ♖d1 33.♔d1 ♗f1 34.a4 ♗g2 35.♔e2 ♗h3 36.b4 ♗d7 37.♗e1 ♔d5 38.b5 ab5 39.ab5 ♗b5 40.♔f2 f5 41.♗a5 g4 42.fg4 fg4 43.♗d2 ½-½

□ **Dieter Morawietz**
■ **Viktor Kupreichik**
Germany Bundesliga 1997

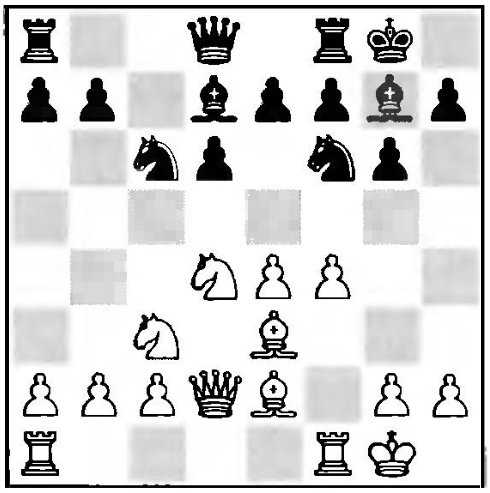
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cd4 4.♘d4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♗d7 6.f4 ♘c6 7.♘f3 e6 8.a3 ♗e7 9.♗d3 ♕b6!? 9...0-0 10.0-0 **10.♕e2 e5 11.f5 ♘d4 12.♘d4 ed4 13.♘d5 ♘d5 14.ed5 0-0 15.0-0 ♗f6 16.♕h5** 16.♕g4 △ 16...♖ac8 17.♗f4, 18.♕g3 **16...♖ac8 17.♗f4** 17.♖f3 ♖fe8 **17...♖c7 18.b4 g6 19.♕g4**



19...♗f5 20.♗f5 d3 21.♔h1 ♗a1 22.♖a1 ♖e8 23.h4? 23.♗d3 ♖ce7 **23...♕d4 24.♖f1 d2 25.♗g3 ♖e1!** 0-1

□ **Adrian Mikhalchishin**
■ **Dragan Solak**
Nova Gorica 2002

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cd4 4.♘d4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♗d7 6.f4!? ♘c6 7.♗e2 g6 7...e6 **8.♗e3 ♗g7 9.♕d2 0-0 10.0-0**



10...♖c8 10...♘d4! 11.♗d4 ♗c6= **11.h3 ♘a5? 12.♖ad1 ♘c4 13.♗c4 ♖c4 14.e5!± ♘e8** 14...de5? 15.fe5 ♘e8 (15...♖c3 16.ef6+−) 16.♘f3+− **15.♘b3 b6 16.♖fe1 ♗c8 17.♕e2 ♖c7 18.♘d4 e6 19.♘cb5 ♖c5 20.a4 ♕d7 21.ed6 ♘f6** 21...♘d6 22.♘e6+− **22.c3** 1-0

Author's Note

Most of the material in this book has previously appeared in New in Chess publications. Sections I, II, III and IV were published as so-called SOS articles in *New in Chess Magazine*. The basis of Sections V and VI may be found in several Yearbooks.
Still, I would like to stress that in the process of compilation numerous changes were made, and that all chapters in this book have been updated until May 2003. In the table below the reader may find information concerning the publication history of each chapter.

Section I: The left hook a3!?
1. The Gunsberg Variation
New in Chess 2001 issue 8
Minor textual changes. Recent games have been added.
2. Your SOS weapon versus the Pirc
New in Chess 2002 issue 5
Minor textual changes. Recent games have been added.
3. Outfox your opponent...
New in Chess 2003 issue 3
Minor textual changes.

Section II: Surprising bishop moves
4. Sokolov's surprise
New in Chess 2002 issue 6
Minor textual changes. Recent games have been added.
5. Play the Surprise Indian
New in Chess 2000 issue 1
Minor textual changes. Recent games have been added.
6. TN on move 5
New in Chess 2000 issue 8
Minor textual changes. Recent games have been added.
7. A bishop's wonder move
New in Chess 2001 issue 5
Minor textual changes. Recent games have been added.

Section III: Early Queen Moves
8. Alapin bites the Dutch
New in Chess 2000 issue 6
Minor textual changes.
9. Another Tarrasch Variation
New in Chess 2002 issue 8
Minor textual changes. A recent game has been added.
10. Surprising Hodgson
New in Chess 2002 issue 2
Minor textual changes. A recent game has been added.
11. A surprising Queen sortie
New in Chess 2002 issue 7
Minor textual changes.
12. A tactical weapon...
New in Chess 2003 issue 5
Minor textual changes.

Section IV: An SOS pawn thrust

13. Modern, Scandinavian or Alekhine?
New in Chess 1999 issue 4
Minor textual changes. Recent games have been added.

14. Only Mad Dogs and Englishmen?
New in Chess 2001 issue 2
Minor textual changes. A recent game has been added.

15. Trumping the Tromp
New in Chess 2001 issue 6
Minor textual changes. Recent games have been added.

16. The improved Lisitsin Gambit
New in Chess 2002 issue 3
Minor textual changes. Recent games have been added.

Section V: Outflanking the French

17. French Wing Gambit
Yearbook 40
Minor textual changes. The theory section has been updated. Considerable changes were made compared to the original study material in Yearbook 40.

Section VI: A Surprising Sicilian

18. The Kupreichik
Yearbook 47 and 56
A considerable part of this chapter has originally appeared in three surveys, as published in the Yearbook series. Yet, the original material has been completely re-worked and considerably enlarged and updated. This chapter was, then, specifically written for the present publication.

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